



Whose Behaviour Should Change?

A Behavioural Scientist's take on Extension

APEN Conference

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Matt Kealley

Q. How many behavioural scientists does it take to change a tyre?

A. One. And three others to work out why it needed to change

Behavioural scientists from Project Cane Changer changing a tyre. Innisfail 2018.

Today's Topics

1. Why bother with behavioural science?
2. Embedding behavioural science skills in extension

Change starts with us

Extension experts, scientists/researchers, policy makers, managers, all of us

Why bother with Behavioural Science?

3 Reasons

Rational Decision Making?

- We like to think we make decisions that are informed by –
 - Logic and reason (evidence)
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Return on investment (long term)
 - Wanting to do the best for ourselves

Irrational decision making?

- We often make decisions that are informed by –
 - Emotion (anger, frustration, pride, revenge, excitement)
 - What others around us think or do
 - “What dad always said”
 - Short termism
 - Pretty much anything other than logic and reason

Why bother with behavioural science?

Reason 1

Behavioural science can help us understand decision making, especially when it doesn't seem to make sense

How good are your driving skills?

a) Well above average

b) Above average

c) Average

d) Below average

e) Well below average



- The majority of people tend to rate themselves as above average or well above average driver (especially males)
- 94% of men rank themselves in the top half of athletic ability
- People scoring in the 12th percentile on humour estimate themselves as scoring in the 62nd percentile

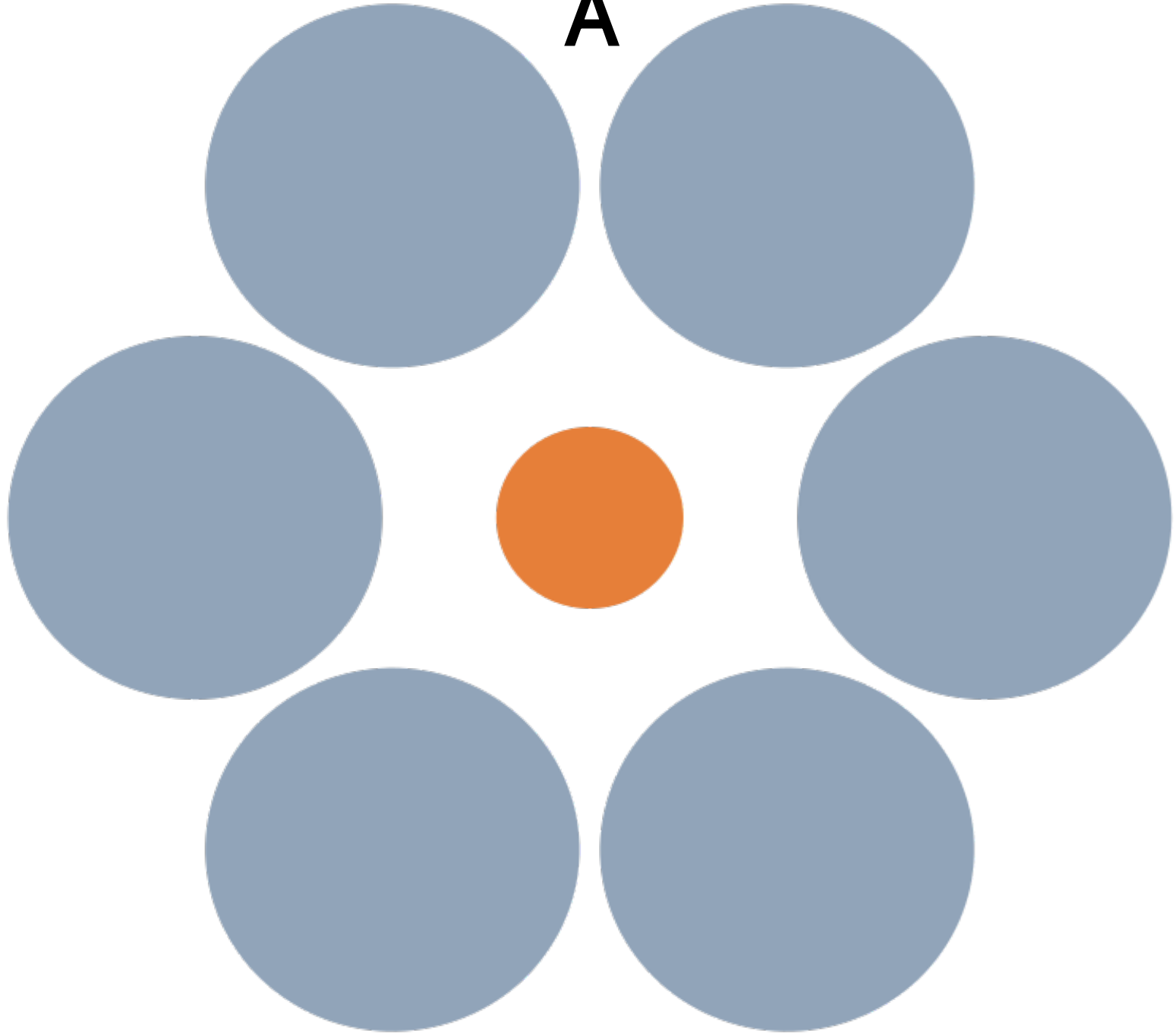
McKenna et al. (1991)
Dewar & Keller (2009)
Kruger & Dunning (1999)

Why bother with behavioural science?

Reason 2

Behavioural science can help us understand why some people don't think they need to change

A



B



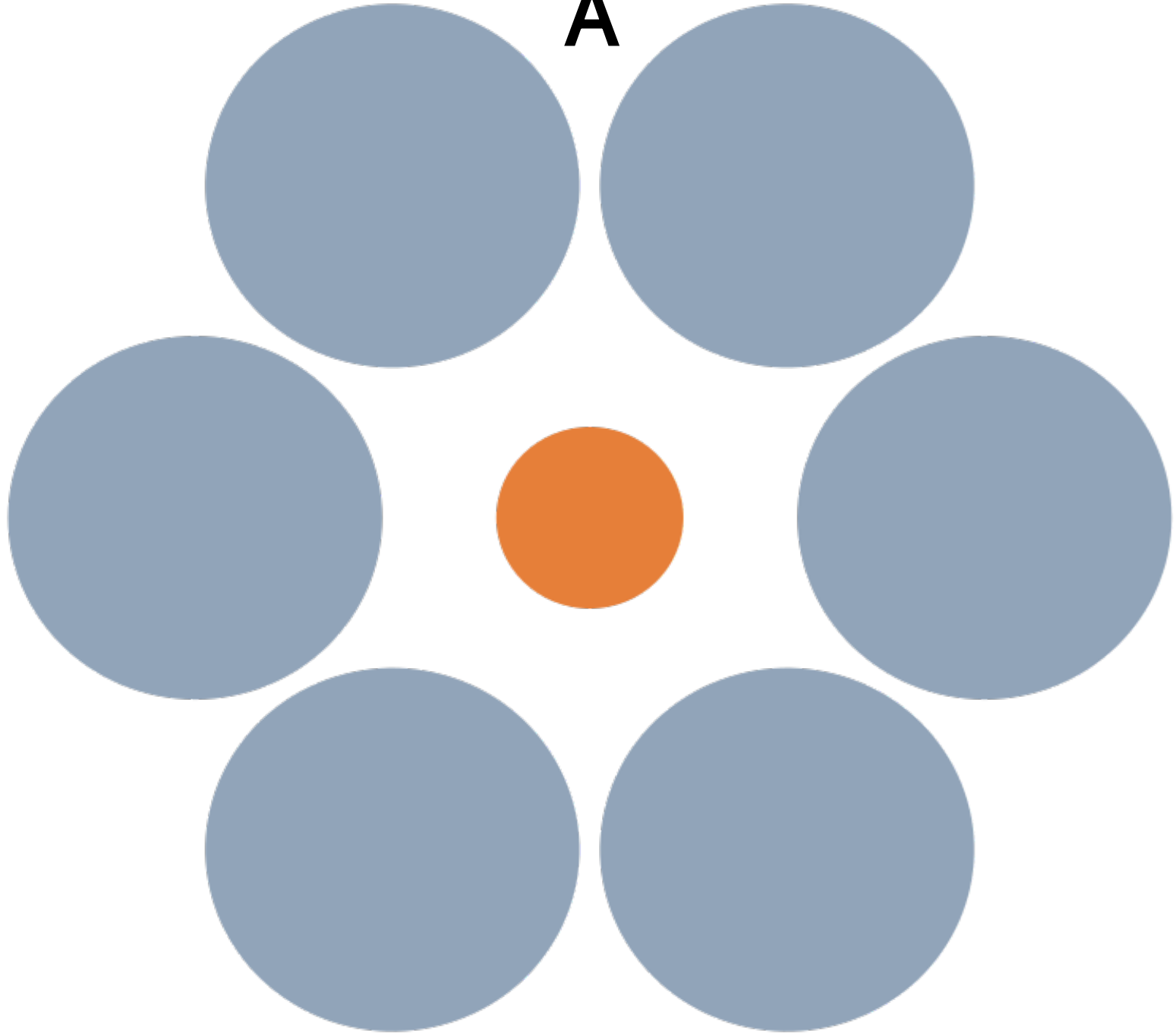
A



B



A



B



A



B



Why bother with behavioural science?

Reason 3

Behavioural science can help us understand why sometimes we see things that aren't there

Why bother with Behavioural science in extension?

1. Behavioural science helps us understand our own attitudes and practices as extension officers, the farmers we work with, and the social influences that affect us all
2. Behavioural science helps us be able to adapt (change) to present and future challenges (to *expand our horizons*)
 - Adoption of best practices
 - Climate adaptation and resilience
 - New technologies
 - Innovative research and development processes



Embedding behavioural science skills in extension



Behavioural Science Extension Training
Queensland Roadshow
June - September 2019



**QUEENSLAND
GOVERNMENT**

Department of Agriculture and
Fisheries

Roadshow details

- 5 locations (Biggenden, Rockhampton, Innisfail, Ingham, Townsville)
- 57 attendees (max 12 per group)
- 4 sectors (sugarcane, grains, grazing, horticulture)
- Mix of graduates and experienced extension professionals
- Participant workbooks, activities, powerpoints
- 2 behavioural science facilitators
- Training evaluation surveys
- Pre and post training interviews / follow ups

Top 3 learning requests

1. How to develop a better understanding of my own attitudes and behaviours
2. How to best communicate with farmers and build trust and rapport
3. How to motivate famers towards change

Training content sources

1. Psychological and behavioural science literature / evidence
2. Project Cane Changer learnings
3. Previous experience delivering extension training

Training Modules

MODULE ONE | The Psychology of Resistance

- Cognitive repertoire to modify the way extension professionals view their own attitudes and farmer behaviour

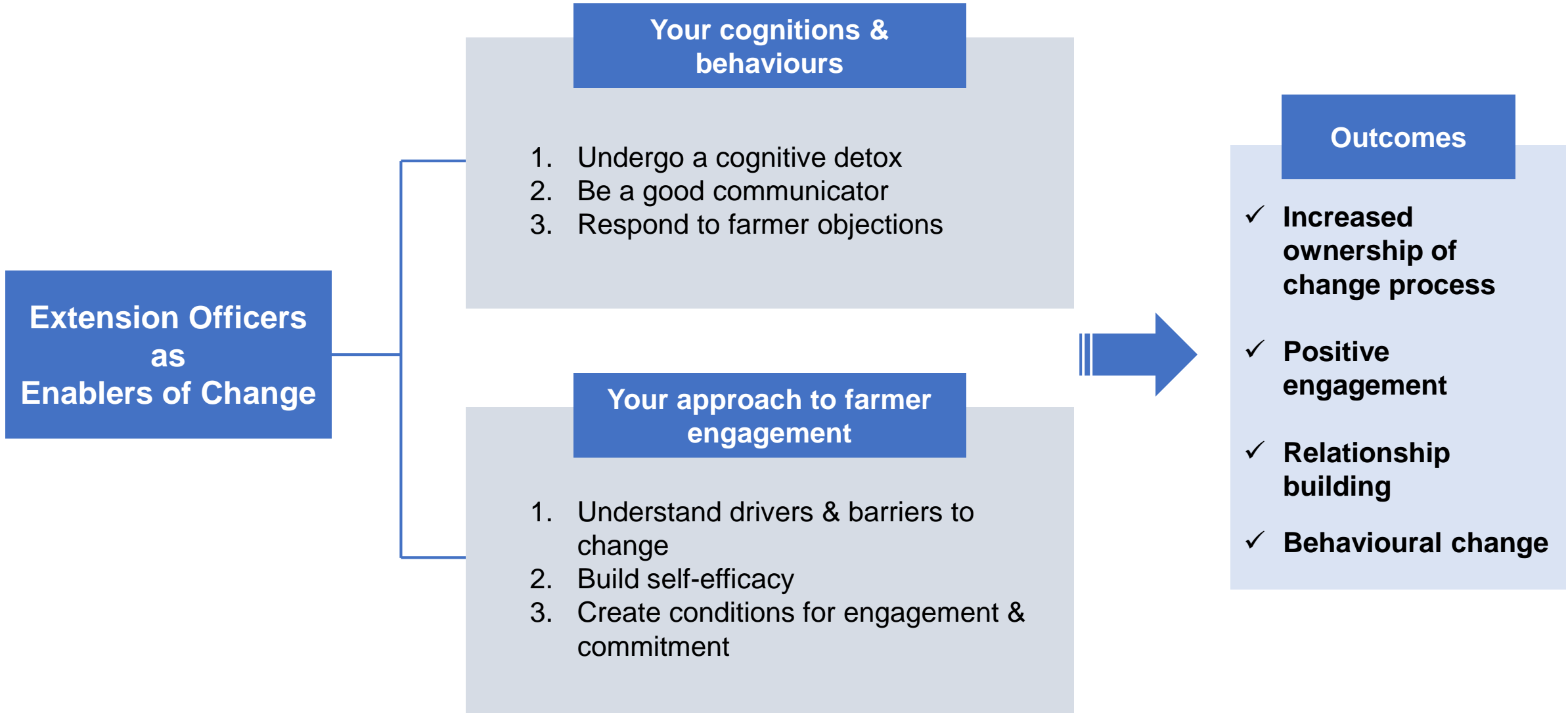
MODULE TWO | Toolkit for Change

- Social and behavioural tools to enhance farmer engagement and overcome resistance to change

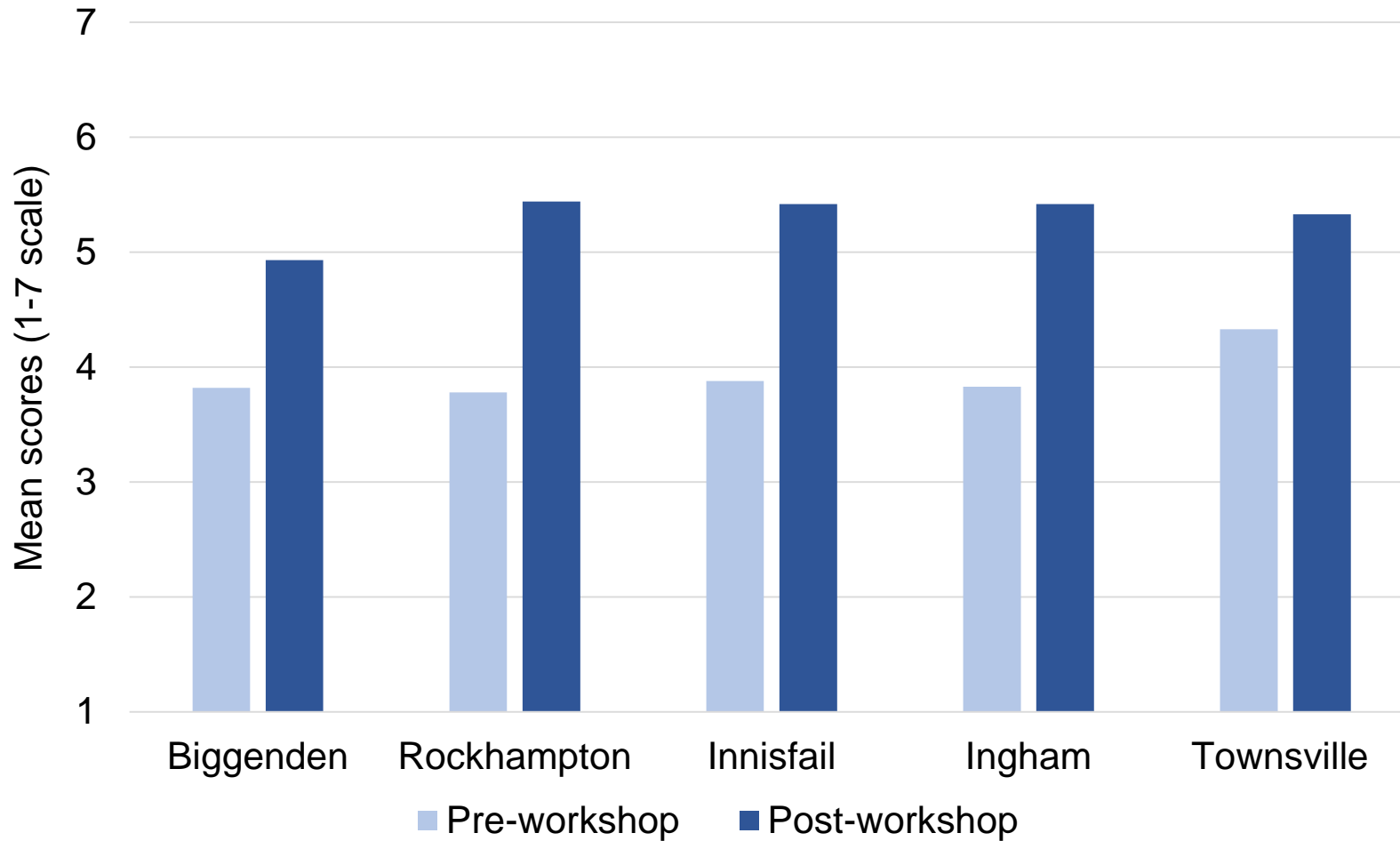
MODULE THREE | Putting it all into Practice

- Consolidate training learnings through a case study and creation of a personal implementation plan

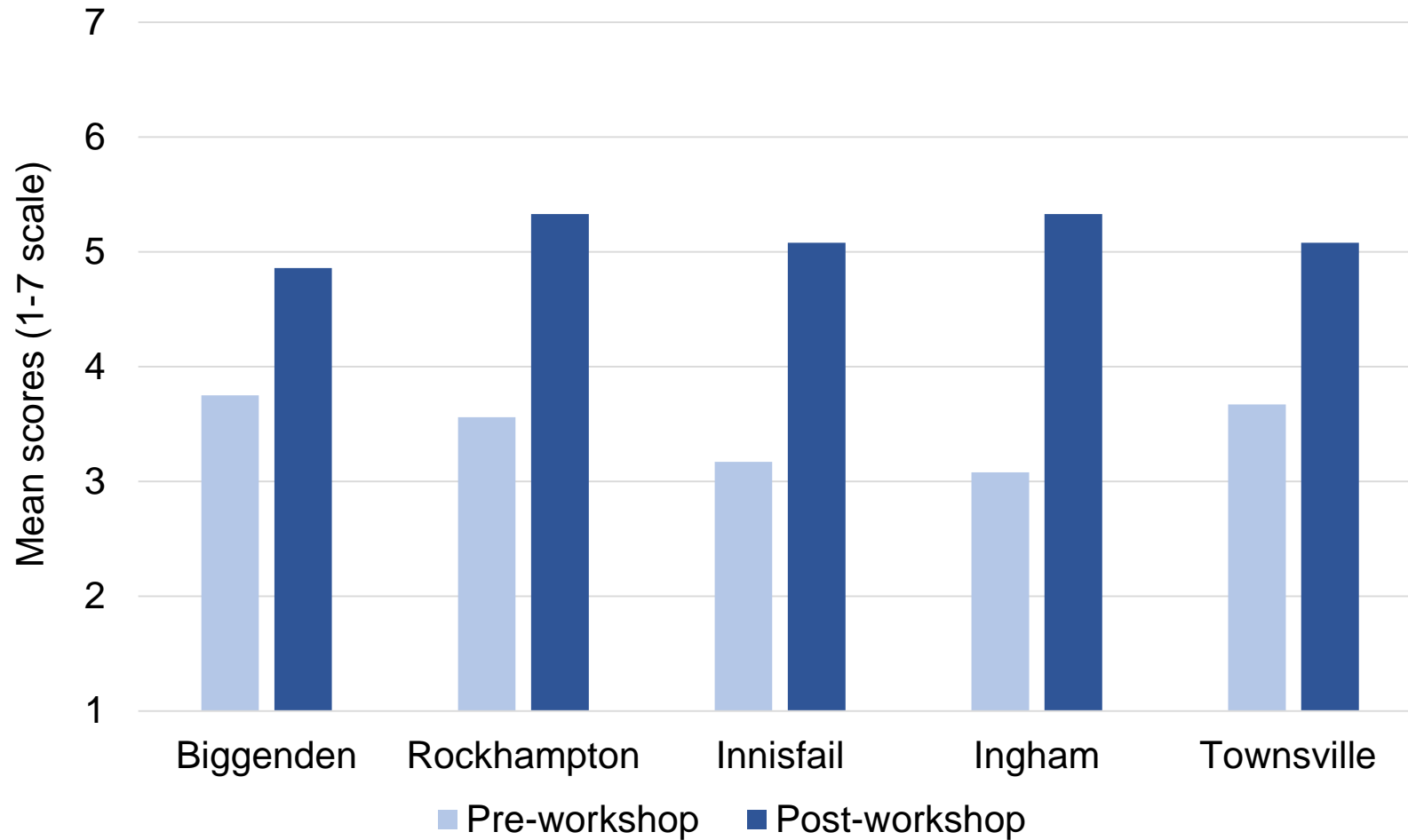
Extension Toolkit for Behavioural Change



Rate your understanding of the psychological reasons behind farmers' resistance to change

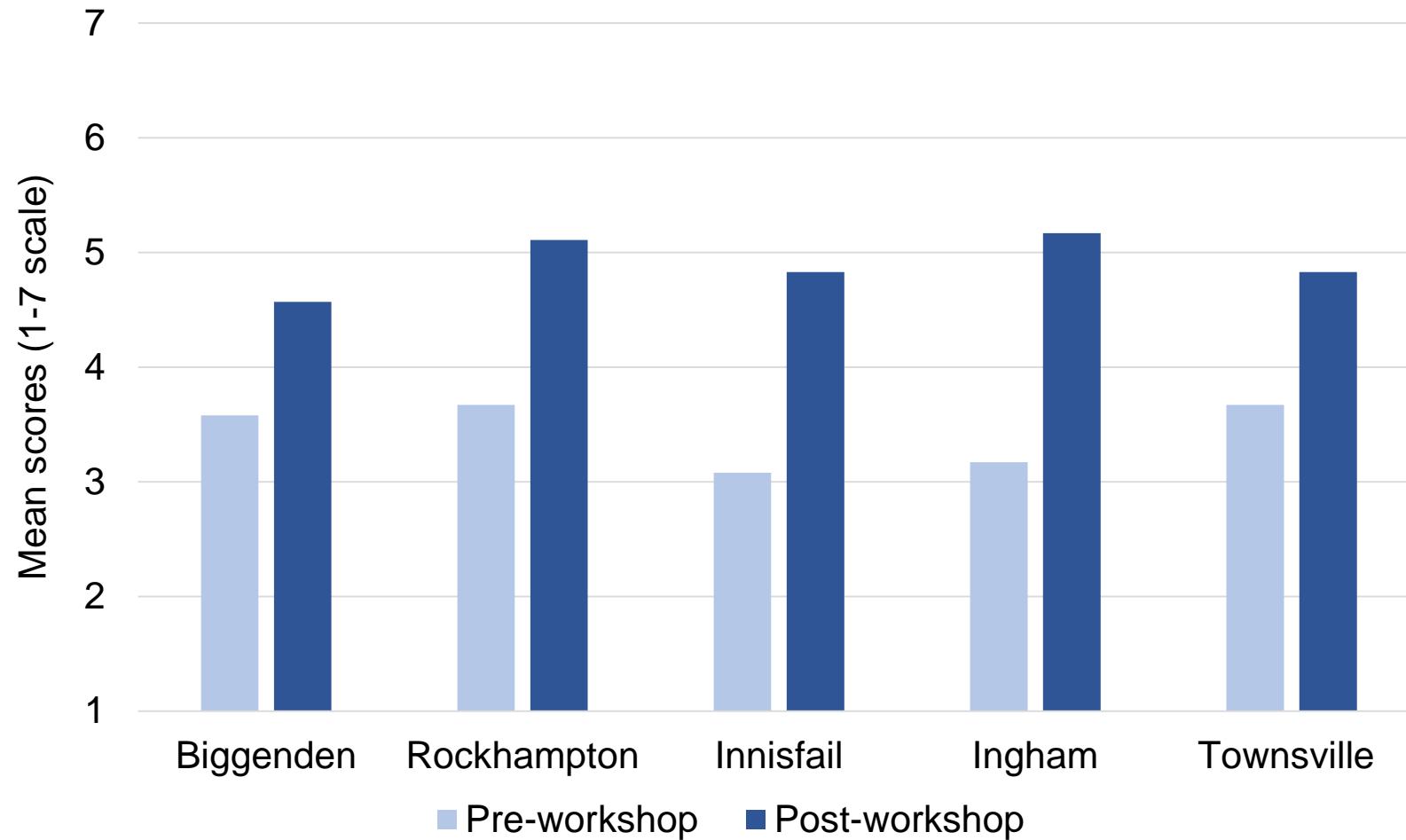


Rate your understanding of the cognitive and behavioural skills used to enhance farmer engagement





Rate your ability to apply behavioural science with farmers





What extension officers thought

“Great to see the importance of improving the ability to deal with the human element being rolled out in training.”

“Valuable tools and considerations when working with growers as well as friends, family, and colleagues.”

“A good overview of growers’ engagement – enjoyed the references to underlying theory.”



What people (really) thought?

“Would have liked the training to be set at a higher level – risk people switching off as they feel they know it.”

“Good workshop, but pitched at a low level with many experienced extension officers in the room.”

“How do you call yourselves innovative?”

The most common frustrations?

- *“Farmers won’t listen”*
- *“It’s a no brainer”*
- *“Our funding is about to run out”*
- *“I don’t get it, this will literally save them thousands”*
- *“They seem so stuck in their ways”*
- *“Some farmers are great, it’s the disengaged ones that are hard”*
- *“The sugar price is low, no one wants to adopt new stuff now”*
- *“Half the industry is in drought, forget it”*

The Fish Story (David Foster Wallace)

There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, "Morning, boys, how's the water?"

And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, "What the hell is water?"

The Fish Story (David Foster Wallace)

The immediate point of the fish story is that the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are the hardest to see and talk about.

The really important kind of freedom involves attention, and awareness, and discipline, and effort, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them, over and over, in myriad petty little ways, every day. That is real freedom. The alternative is unconsciousness, the default setting, the "rat race" - the constant gnawing sense of having had and lost some infinite thing.

We have to keep reminding ourselves, over and over:

"This is water, this is water."

Change starts with us

Thank you

John Pickering

Behaviour Innovation



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