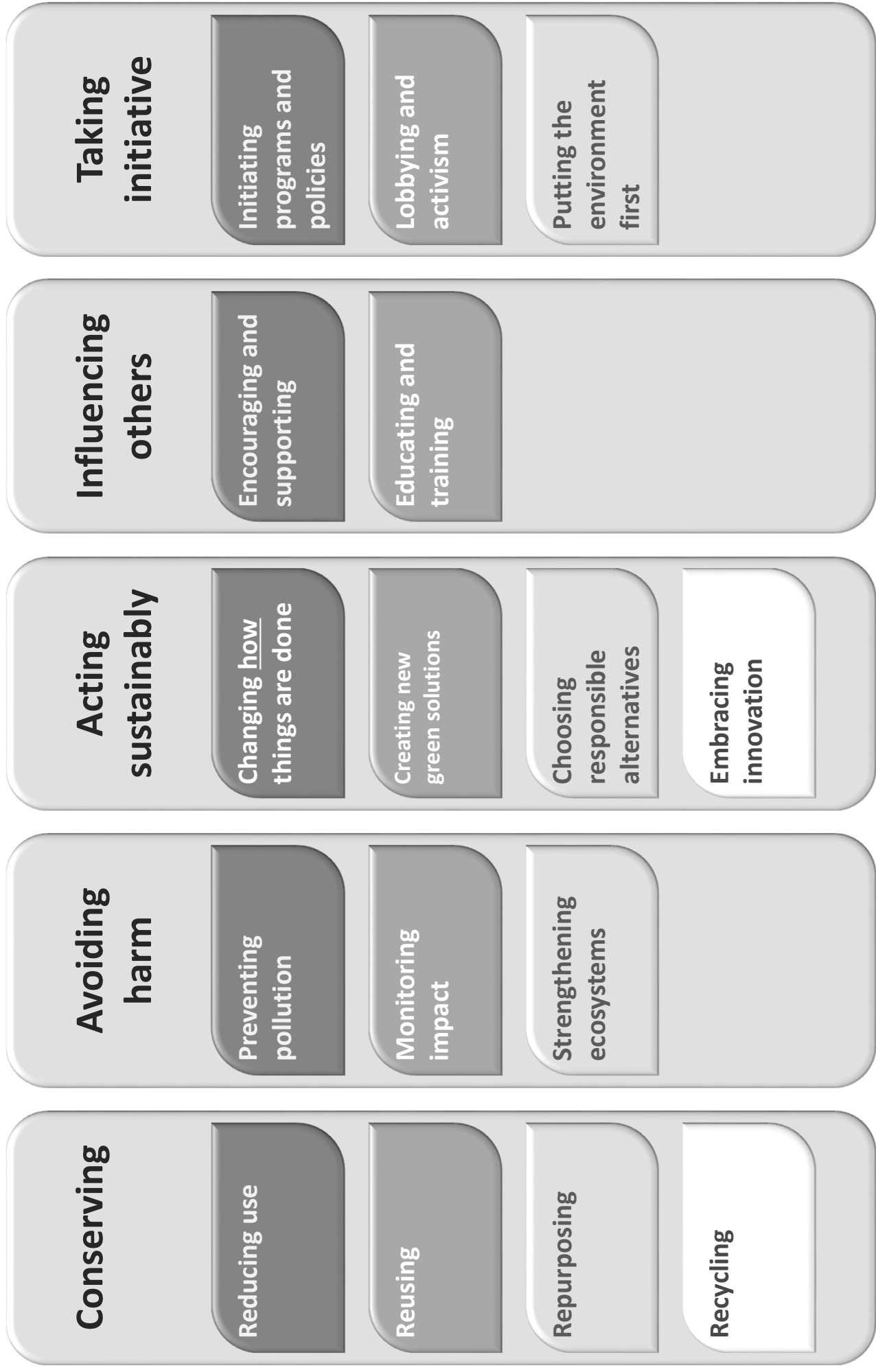


The Green Five



Based on research conducted by Dr. Deniz S. Ones, Dr. Stephan Dilchert, and their colleagues at the University of Minnesota and Baruch College, City University of New York

What are the Green Five?

- The Green Five model is a taxonomy for understanding the many kinds of environmental behaviors people perform in their lives—at work, at home, and in the community.
- The Green Five taxonomy was developed based on psychological research with more than 5,000 people conducted by Dr. Deniz S. Ones, Dr. Stephan Dilchert, and their colleagues.
- The Green Five focuses on people’s behavior—what people **do**, not outcomes or resources
- Each domain of the Green Five contains behaviors with common psychological cores and includes several subcategories that are driven by similar motives

Conserving

- Behaviors aimed at *avoiding waste and preserving resources*
- Includes the “3 Rs plus one”: Reducing use, Reusing, Repurposing, Recycling
- Psychological core: Frugality and thrift



Avoiding Harm

- Behaviors that *reduce impact and mitigate environmental damage*
- Includes: Preventing pollution, Monitoring impact, Strengthening ecosystems
- Psychological core: Cautiousness and self-control
Altruism and responsibility

Acting sustainably

- Behaviors aimed at *adapting and changing* to be more sustainable
- Includes innovating: Changing *how* things are done, Creating new green solutions
- And choosing sustainably: Choosing responsible alternatives, Embracing innovation
- Psychological core: Adaptability and openness to change



Influencing Others

- Behaviors that *spread sustainability* to other individuals
- Includes: Encouraging and supporting, Educating and training
- Psychological core: Sociability, leadership, teaching

Taking initiative

- Behaviors that *break the mold and reject the status quo*
- Includes: Initiating programs and policies, Lobbying and activism, Putting the environment first
- Psychological core: Entrepreneurship, risk-taking, and self-sacrifice



A Taxonomy of Environmental Motives

Environmental Concern

Responsibility

*Health and
Safety*

*Financial and
Self-Interest*

Altruism

Convenience

Ability and Support

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Environmental motives – Why are people green?

People do things that are good for the environment for many reasons. Often, they don't even realize that what they are doing is good for the environment. Similarly, the barriers to sustainable behavior are more than just lack of awareness. To promote sustainable behavior, we need to consider what motivates the people whose behavior we want to change and adjust our programs to meet their needs.

Environmental Concern

Naturally, many people perform green behaviors out of concern for the environment. Traditional messages emphasizing nature and the planet will appeal to this motive.

Ability and Support

A major barrier to green behavior is people not knowing how to behave sustainably or feeling like they're not allowed or supported to do so. Educational information and messages showing that green behavior is encouraged by coworkers and the administration will appeal to this motive.

Convenience

Another major barrier to green behavior is when they are difficult or take a lot of effort. If people have to go out of their way to be sustainable, they often won't think it's worth it. To remove this barrier, make sure green options are easily available and convenient. Try to incorporate sustainability into people's well-established habits.

(Lack of) Responsibility

People often behave unsustainably out of carelessness or laziness. For example, they may accidentally put compostable items in the trash. To combat this barrier, place cues and reminders for green behavior in appropriate places.

Health and Safety

Many environmental behaviors, such as biking to work or avoiding toxins in food, are motivated primarily by concerns about health or safety, rather than directly by environmental concern. Emphasizing how green options are healthier or safer will appeal to this motive.

Altruism

Some people behave sustainably because they want to help others and feel it is the right thing to do. To appeal to this motive, emphasize how other people benefit from the cleaner, healthier environment sustainability will bring.

Financial Concern and Self-Interest

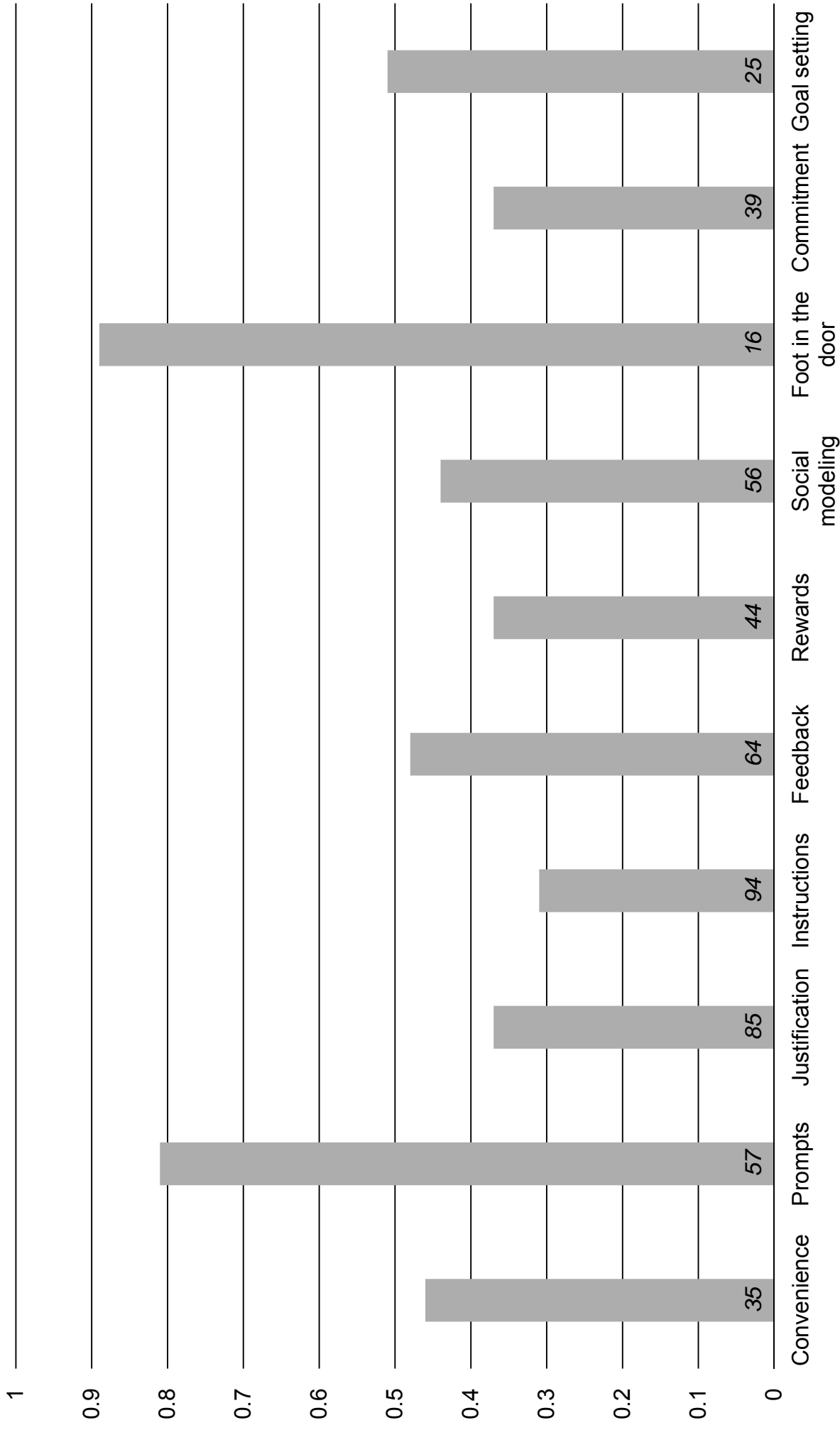
Sometimes, the strongest motivator for sustainability can be self-interest. People will be more likely to act sustainably if you show that these behaviors will save them money or make them look good. You can also appeal to this motive by offering incentives and rewards for green behavior.

Want more information?

More information on using psychological science to inform sustainability programs and a variety of resources developed from Green Five research, including an organizational benchmarking tool, an environmental behavior survey, scientific research papers, and our edited book showing how companies are using psychology to promote sustainability amongst their employees can be found at our team web site: greenfive.org/mdc

Effectiveness of Interventions

From Osbaldistan and Schott (2012, *Environment and Behavior*)



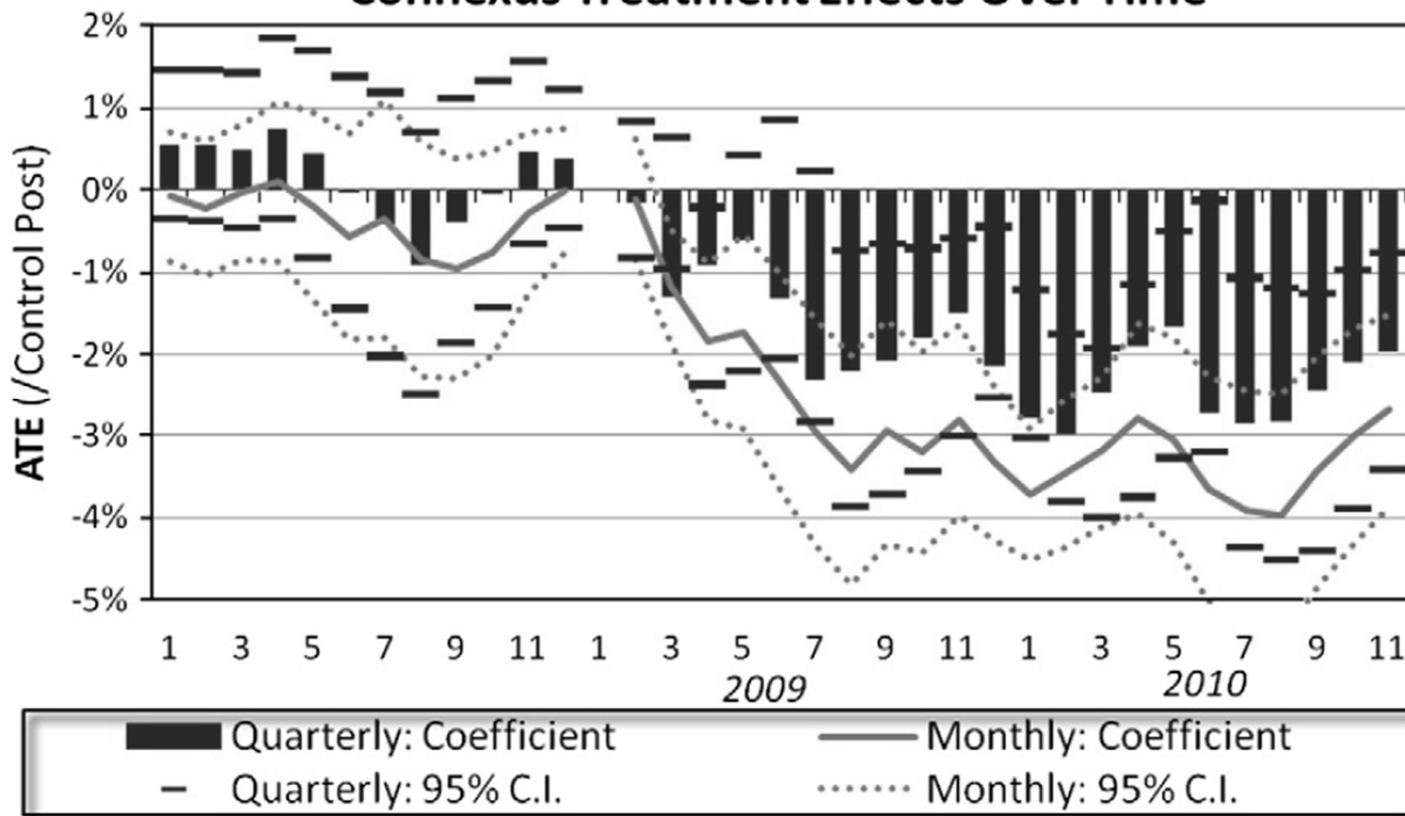
Bar height indicates standardized effects scaled to allow comparisons across studies. Numbers at base of bars are the number of studies contributing to the effect estimate.

Effects of OPOWER interventions

Allcott, H. (2011, *Journal of Public Economics*)

Examined effectiveness of an energy reduction intervention combining feedback, goal setting, and social norms.

Connexus Treatment Effects Over Time



Effects by Baseline Usage Decile

