



# NUDGE FORGOOD

## An ethics framework for nudging

Nudge for good!



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Nudge dark!  
Sludge!

**Summary:** Insights from the behavioural sciences are increasingly used by governments and other organisations worldwide to “nudge” people to make better decisions. Furthermore, a large philosophical literature has emerged on ethical considerations on nudging human behaviour that has presented key challenges for the area but is regularly omitted from discussion of policy design and administration. We present and discuss FORGOOD, an ethics framework that synthesizes the debate on the ethics of nudging in a memorable mnemonic.

**A MINDSPACE for ethics:** It has become rather easy to design effective nudge interventions relying on behavioural science frameworks such as MINDSPACE and EAST. It is still difficult to evaluate the ethical acceptability of nudges. We present a “MINDSPACE for Ethics”.

**Bridging the gap:** We hope that FORGOOD can help bridging the gap between the debate on the ethics of nudging and the real-world applications of nudges. Our aim is to reduce unintentional mis-usages of behavioural science by encouraging ethical reflection in a systematic way. We view FORGOOD as a nudge for practitioners to apply behavioural science ethically, i.e. a nudge to “nudge for good”.

**It is the start:** We appreciate that further developments will require changes to the framework and welcome comments, adaptations and improvements on the framework.

### 7 Ethical Dimensions

### Key questions to consider before nudging

#### Fairness

Does the behavioural policy have undesired redistributive effects?

#### Openness

Is the behavioural policy open or hidden and manipulative?

#### Respect

Does the policy respect people’s autonomy, dignity, freedom of choice and privacy?

#### Goals

Does the behavioural policy serve good and legitimate goals?

#### Opinions

Do people accept the means and the ends of the behavioural policy?

#### Options

Do better policies exist and are they warranted?

#### Delegation

Do the policy-makers have the right and the ability to nudge using the power delegated to them?

**Discussion:** Did we capture all relevant dimensions? Are the dimensions we list too broad? How should we think of trade-offs across ethical dimensions? What about the trade-off between uptake and complexity? How should the framework be used?

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