TRA

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE GUIDE

#2

Using social norms.

Do as I say not as I do.

Humans are copycats – the fact we need to tell others not to copy us shows us the power of social norms and herding behaviour.

We know that social norms are a powerful behaviour change tool – you often hear 'normalise this behaviour' and 'make it mainstream' – but using the power of social norms has more nuance to it than that.

TRA has distilled social norm theory into three distinct social norms to create the Norm Storming framework.

Understanding the current norms and which norms to harness can help get the best bang for your behaviour change buck.

TRA Norm Storming Framework

Our herding instinct, coming from unconsciously or consciously observing what others are doing (sometimes described as descriptive norms).

Most people seem to be doing…

I'd feel like the odd one out…

Societal
expectation
norms

Socially
observable
norms
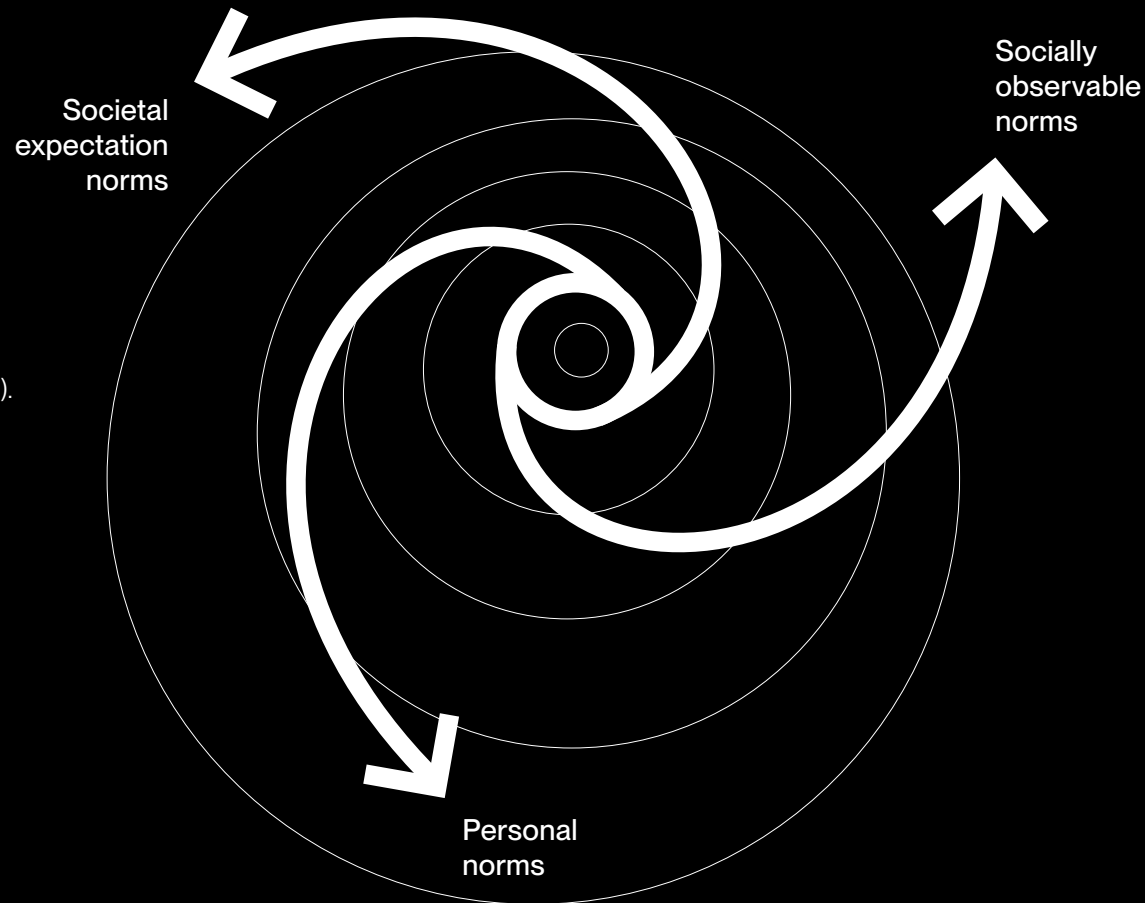
The way people are expected to behave, following customary etiquette and what society or social groups expect of us (sometimes described as injunctive norms).

The way we do things around here…

The law of the land…

Personal
norms

Our moral compass, obeying our personal beliefs and the expectations we hold for ourselves.

I think it's OK to…

I don't like the idea of…

Working towards a system in balance

To harness the power of the normative triad, we need to understand if the system is in or out of balance.
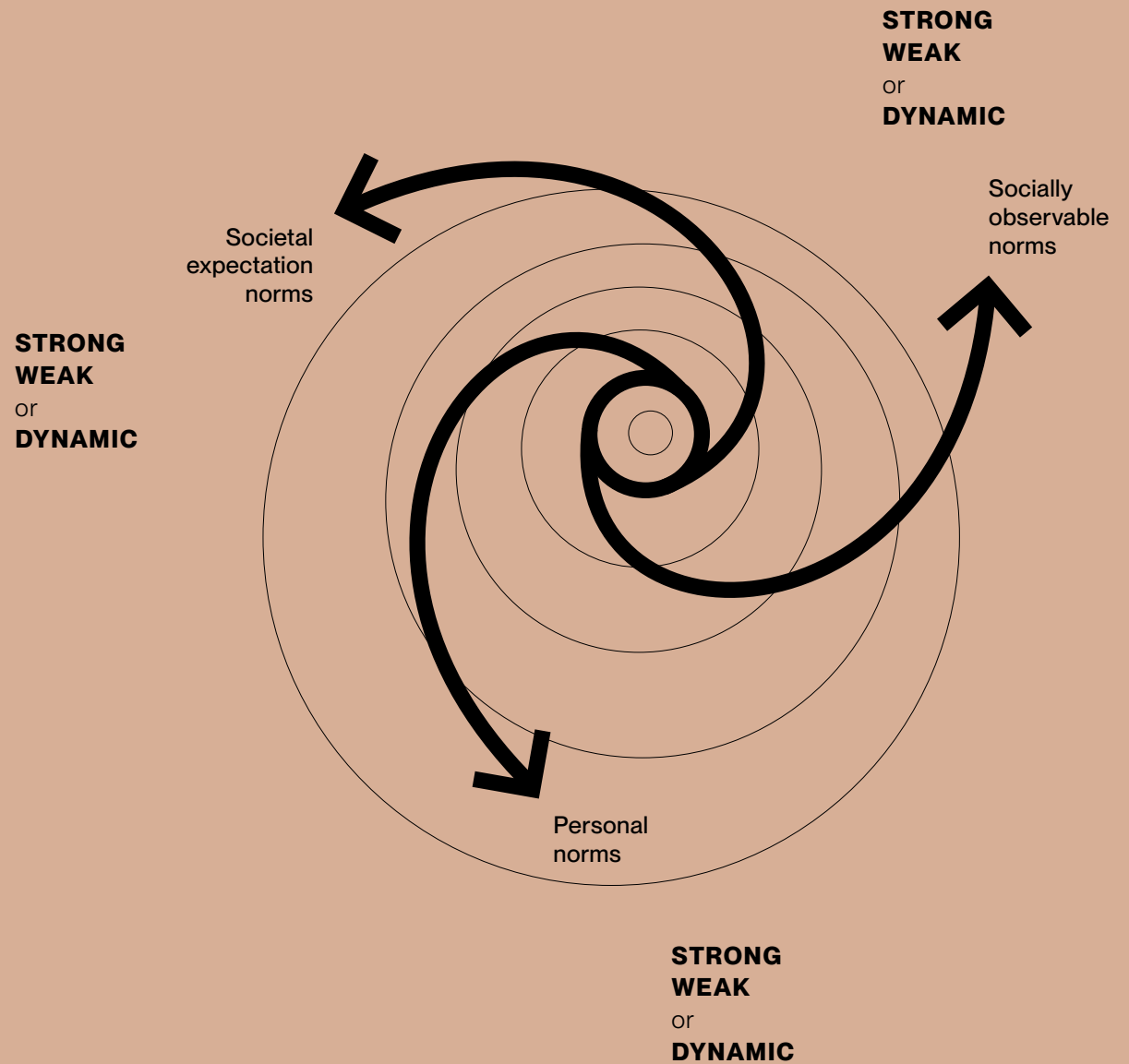
● **Step one**

Define your behaviour change:

Get (who) .... to do (what) ....

● **Step two**

For your behaviour change context, determine whether the three norms are:

STRONGLY HELD
WEAKLY HELD
or
DYNAMIC (open to change)

● **Step three**

Consider other influences: See page 15

STRONG
WEAK
or
DYNAMIC

STRONG
WEAK
or
DYNAMIC

Societal expectation norms

Socially observable norms

Personal norms

STRONG
WEAK
or
DYNAMIC

Drinking culture on campus

STRONG

Students see other students drinking on campus, in bars, gigs, and in flats/dorms.
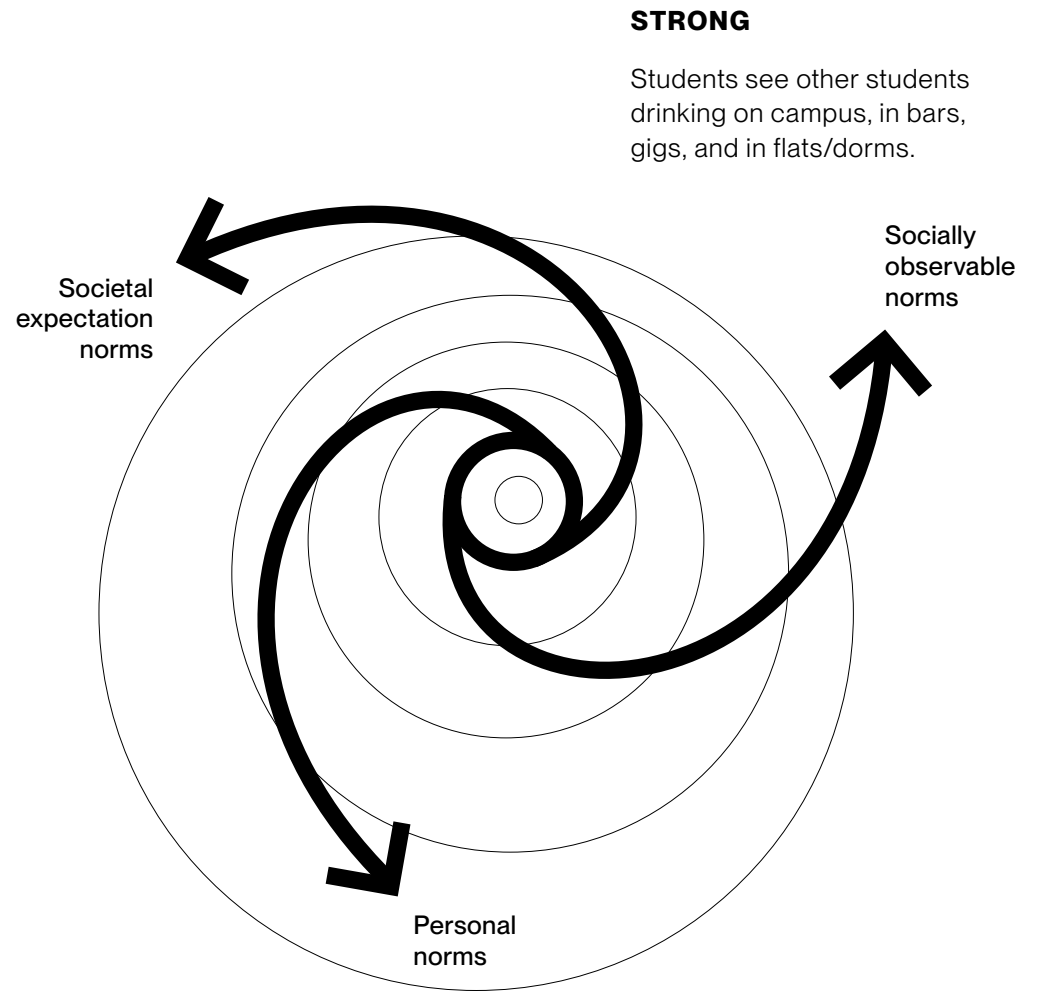
Pluralistic ignorance is when the minority position on a topic is perceived to be the majority, or when the majority is perceived to be minority.

We see this with drinking culture on campus, as individual levels of comfort with drinking practices on campus were much lower than the perceived average.

DYNAMIC

Less pressure for young people to drink excessively but still some expectation that 'students get drunk'.

Socially observable norms

Societal expectation norms

Personal norms

WEAK

Research exposed that students would rather not get black out drunk every Friday.

Racism

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control.

It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgements and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.

DYNAMIC

People are unsure whether New Zealand is a racist place – there are laws and policies around equality and diversity, but there are headlines and stories of inherent racism.

DYNAMIC

Not everyone is seeing (or are able to interpret) racist acts and micro-aggressions.

Socially observable norms

Societal expectation norms

Personal norms
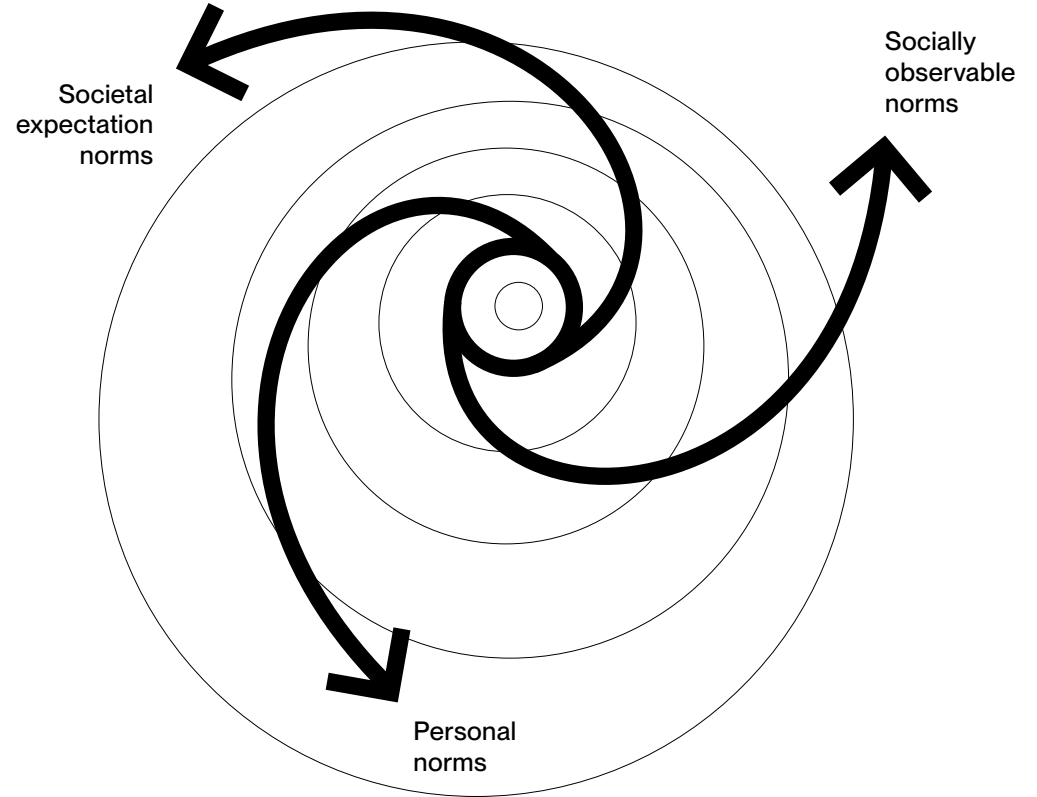
STRONG

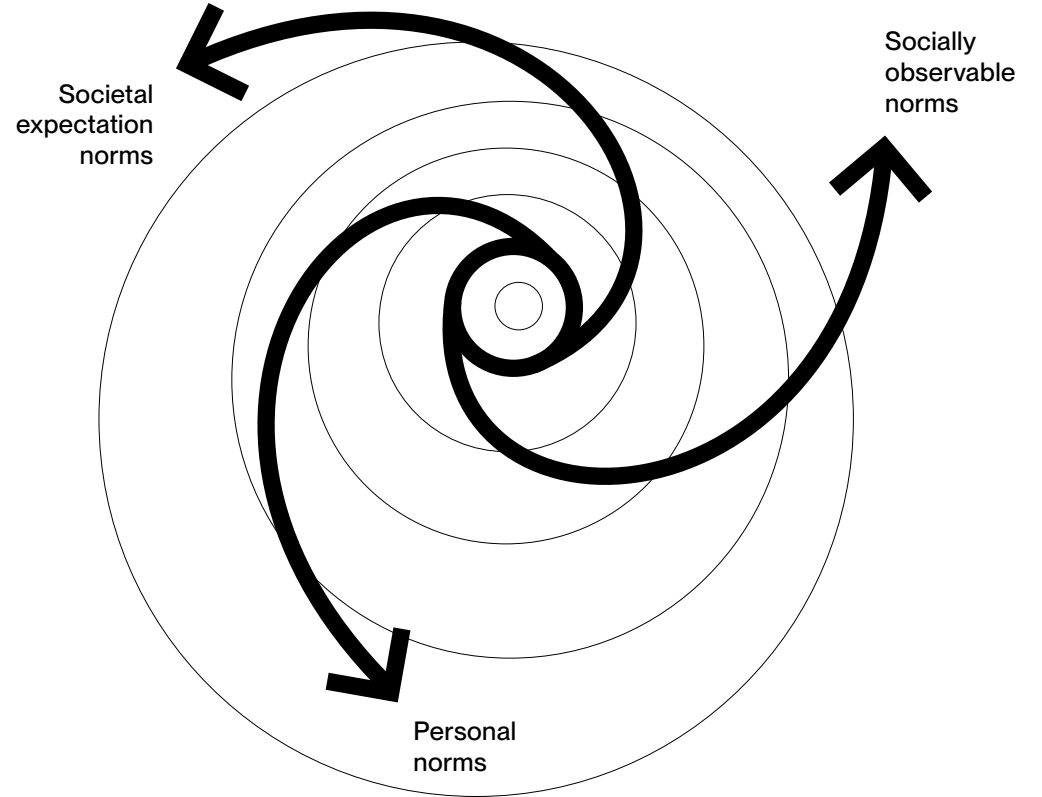"I'm not racist" – most people do not believe they are racist.

Drinking and driving

'Ghost Chips' made it a socially observable norm to tell your friends not to drive drunk.

'That's a Fail' uses police as societal authority and embarrassed drivers to show that drink driving is socially unacceptable in our culture.

Societal expectation norms

Socially observable norms

Personal norms

'The Legend' uses personal norms that dial up personal beliefs about oneself.

Consider other influences

● **Step one**

Define your behaviour change:

Get (who) .... to do (what) ....

● **Step two**

For your behaviour change context,
determine whether the three norms are:

STRONGLY HELD
WEAKLY HELD
or
DYNAMIC (open to change)

● **Step three**

Consider other influences:

Pluralistic ignorance

No one wants to, but everyone believes
that everyone else wants to.

New situations

When there are no social norms in place.

Misascribed intent

Interpreting someone's behaviour at
face-value without knowing their motive.

Unconscious bias

When our personal norms are
compromised by unconscious behaviour.

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