Placing Providers at the Center:
Understanding Provider Behavioral Influences and Designing Impactful Solutions

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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare provider behavior is directly linked to quality of care and can influence client actions and related health outcomes. To encourage and support desired behaviors, programs working to improve community health need to understand what influences provider behavior. Providers are people whose behavior is influenced by diverse factors at multiple levels. A better understanding and response to the complex system in which providers operate can improve the effectiveness of provider behavior change efforts.

OBJECTIVES

Breakthrough ACTION developed the Provider Behavior Ecosystem Map and the Provider Behavior Change Toolkit to help practitioners:
1. Take a deliberate systems approach to provider behavior change efforts.
2. Understand the diverse factors influencing provider behavior across the ecosystem and how they interact with one another.
3. Co-design and implement more effective provider behavior change initiatives together with providers.

METHODOLOGY

Breakthrough ACTION developed this suite of provider behavior change tools using human-centered design approaches centered on providers. The design included the following steps:
- Service delivery and social and behavior change stakeholders came together from around the world to establish goals, objectives, and audiences, and collaborated to designprototypes.
- Breakthrough ACTION facilitated interviews with providers (n = 21), conducted two literature reviews, and analyzed existing provider behavior change tools and resources to identify gaps.
- Breakthrough ACTION conducted three rounds of iterative testing for each tool. The project tested the Ecosystem in nine countries and the Provider Behavior Change Toolkit in four countries.

RESULTS

Provider Behavior Ecosystem Map
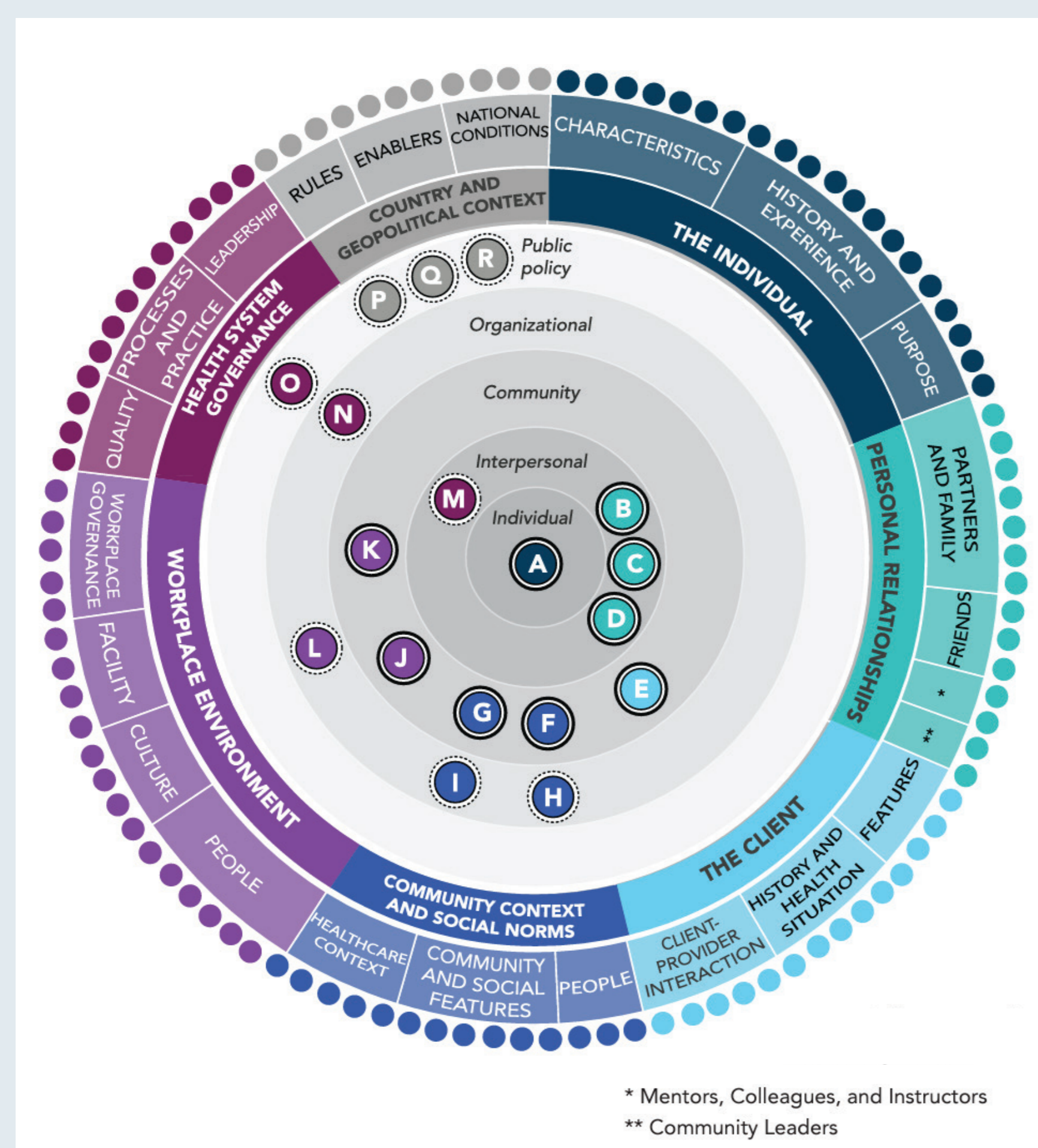
* Mentors, Colleagues, and Instructors
** Community Leaders

The Provider Behavior Ecosystem Map presents the wide range of interrelated factors that may influence facility-based provider behavior, depending on context. The map places the provider at the center and includes **key actors and entities, influencing factors, and components** that influence provider behavior.

The Provider Behavior Ecosystem Map displays the key individuals, groups, and organizations that interact with a provider across the ecosystem.

KEY ACTORS

Provider
Intimate Partner(s) and Family Members Friends Classmates and Colleagues
Clients
Community Leaders Community Members Religious Institutions Community-Based Organizations
Supervisors Facility Leadership and Management Professional Associations
Instructors and Mentors Accreditation and Training Organizations Health System
International Bodies Government Agencies Donors

The map also presents core categories of factors and specific components influencing provider behavior across the system: **Individual Provider, Personal Relationships, Client, Community Context and Social Norms, Workplace Environment, Health System Governance,** and **Country and Geopolitical Context**. Finally, the map displays the interrelationships between components, demonstrating the need to think and act holistically to support provider behavior.

Provider Behavior Change Toolkit for Family Planning

The Provider Behavior Change Toolkit helps users: **(1)** identify, understand, and prioritize factors influencing provider behavior, and **(2)** design and implement locally appropriate, supportive provider-related initiatives that address root causes of behavior. Empathy is at the heart of the toolkit, encouraging users to approach provider behavior change efforts with humility and a desire to support providers.

The toolkit is designed to be implemented by a multidisciplinary team. It engages actors at various levels of the system to illuminate provider behavioral drivers and co-design activities to address those drivers. It follows a four-step process, and each step has an associated set of tools.

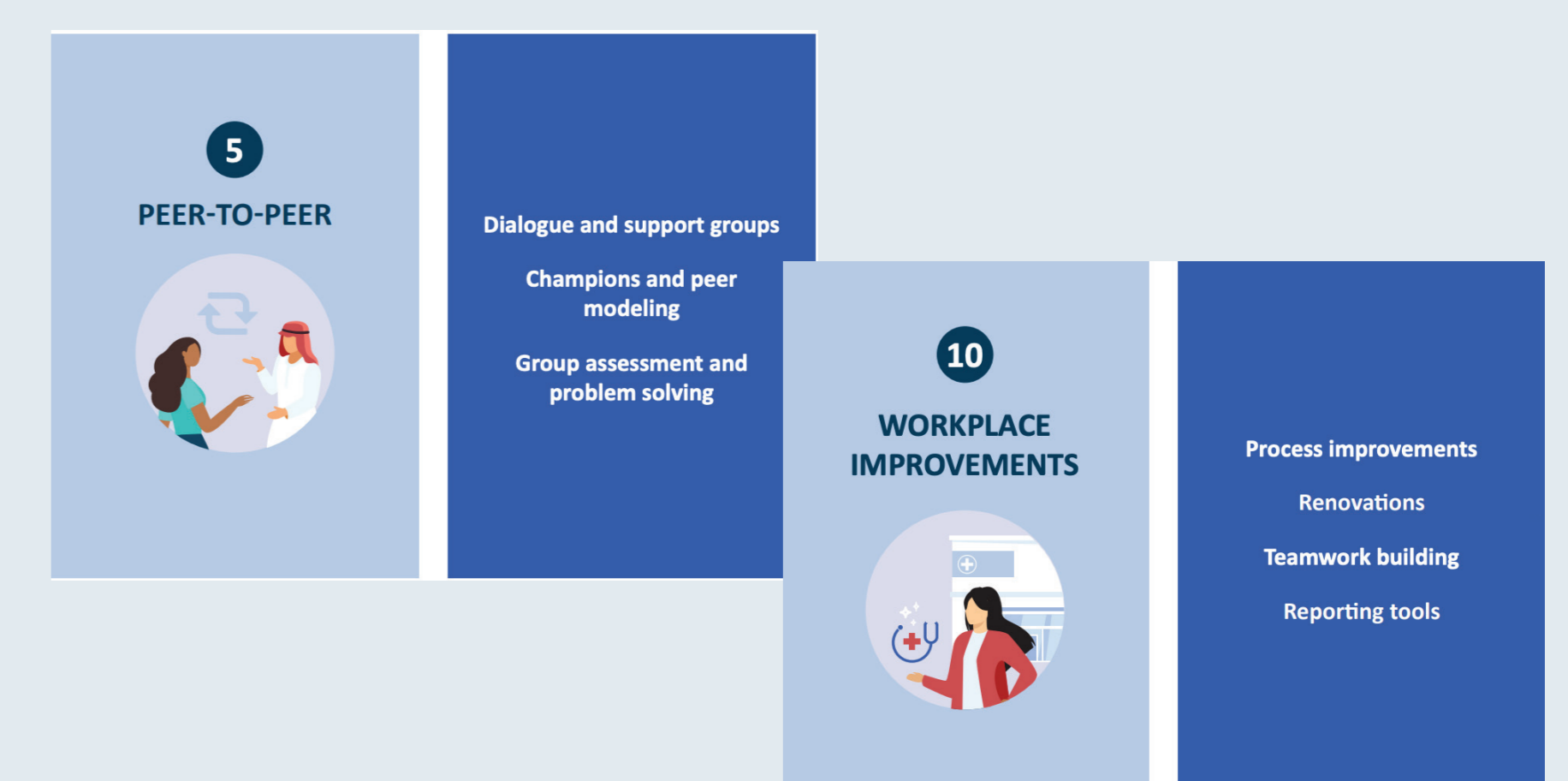1. **Prepare**: Become familiar with the tools and plan for implementation.

2. **Inquire**: Collect data on provider behavioral influences from multiple perspectives.

3. **Synthesize**: Make sense of the data and prioritize factors to address through program design.

4. **Act**: Generate and implement solutions to address prioritized factors.

PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- To be effective, provider behavior change efforts must consider the systemic realities of providers' work and design initiatives that address behavioral drivers at multiple levels.
- The Provider Behavior Ecosystem Map and Provider Behavior Change Toolkit can help practitioners better understand, prioritize, and address behavioral influence factors.
- More research is needed to deepen our understanding of provider behavioral drivers and how they interact across the ecosystem.
- Provider behavior change efforts need to meaningfully engage providers in the design, implementation, and evaluation processes.

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