



FINISH LINE

GRADUATION BY DESIGN

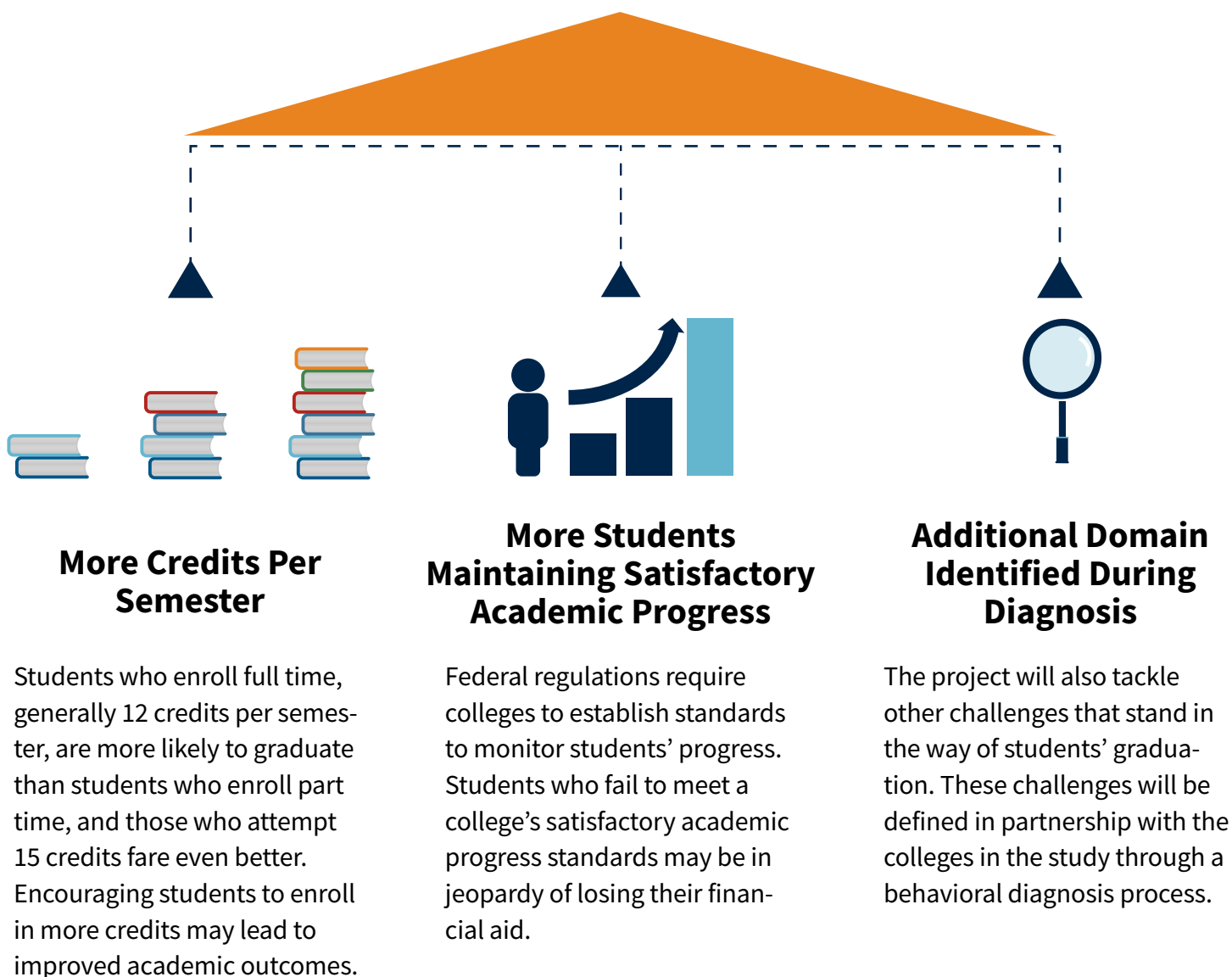
Can behavioral science improve college graduation rates?

Graduating from college is a challenge, particularly for low-income students and students who are older, have children, or have jobs. Such students often face personal, institutional, and structural barriers to success. Two of the most important factors that predict whether students will graduate from community college are the number of credits they attempt per semester and their academic performance in courses. However, most community college students enroll in fewer than 15 credits per semester, making it nearly impossible for them to graduate in two years. Many also struggle academically, failing to make satisfactory academic progress. As a result, their progress halts altogether and they lose financial aid. What can be done about these types of challenges?

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

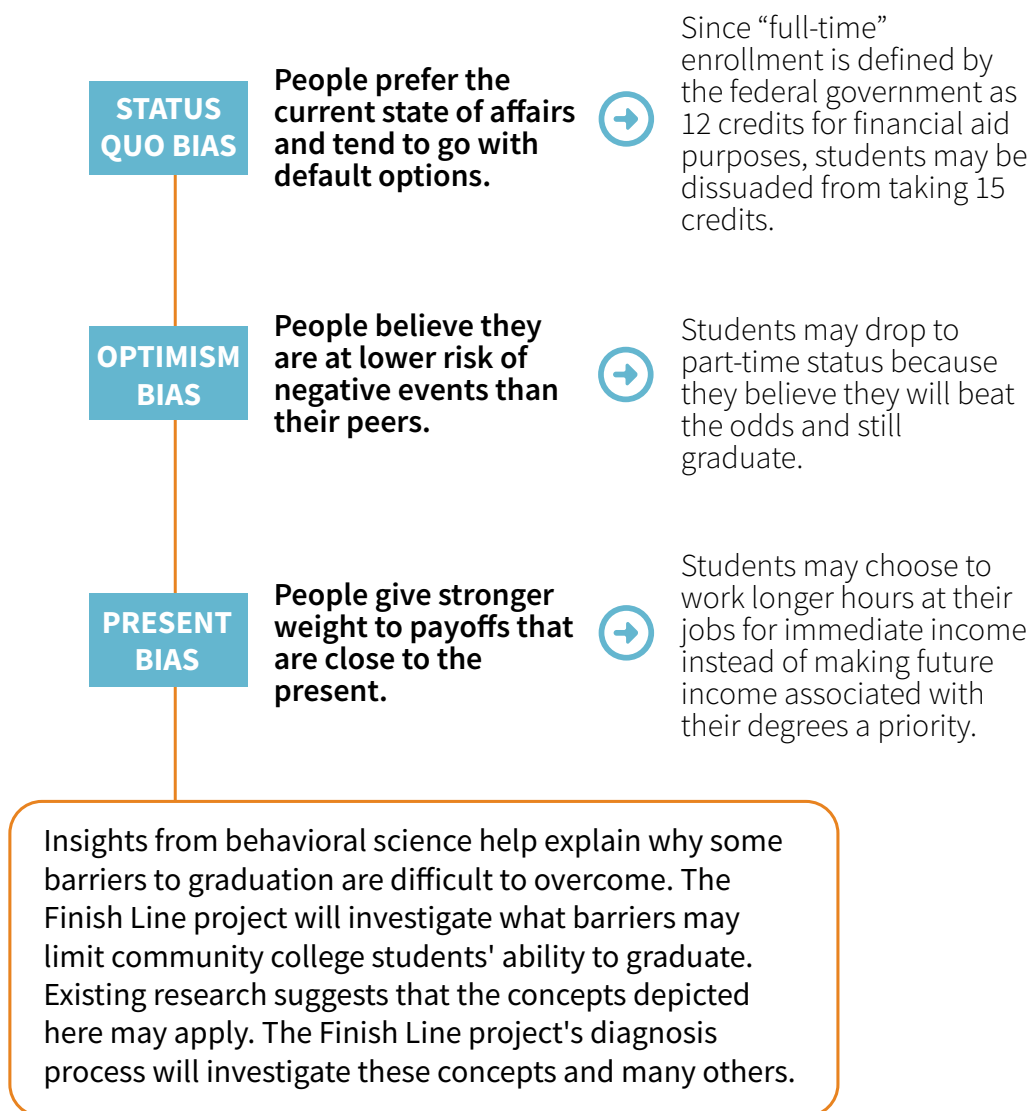


IMPROVE GRADUATION RATES USING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE



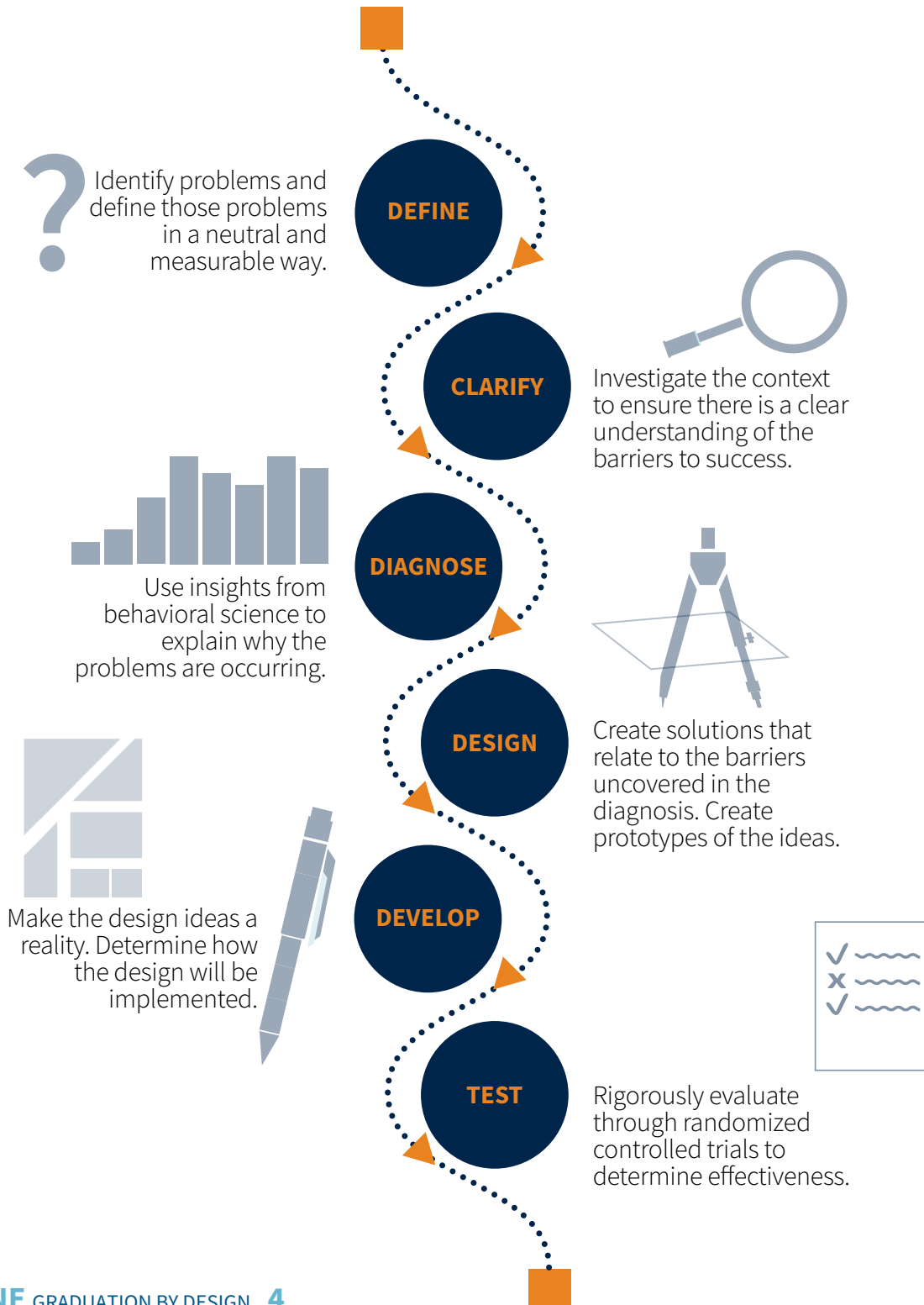
HOW MIGHT INSIGHTS FROM BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE HELP IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

Rather than assuming people are purely rational, behavioral science offers a more realistic appreciation of human behavior. Behavioral science research has demonstrated that people's attention, self-control, and cognitive resources are limited and often overwhelmed, making it unlikely that they will use all available information to make decisions.



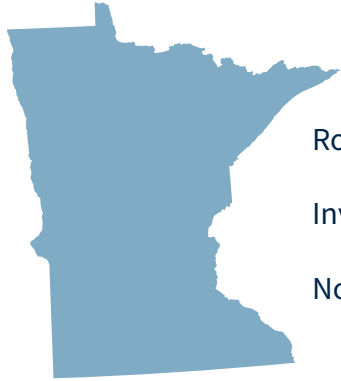
THE CENTER FOR APPLIED BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES (CABS) APPROACH

CABS uses a proven method to investigate problems and design solutions, which it will apply to refine its understanding of the barriers community college students face and to design innovative approaches to address them. MDRC is combining decades of research in postsecondary education with insights from behavioral science to generate promising solutions to the stubborn problem of low graduation rates.



PARTNER COLLEGES

We are partnering with three colleges in the Minnesota system to begin the diagnosis process.



Rochester Community and Technical College

Inver Hills Community College

Normandale Community College



MDRC's Center for Applied Behavioral Science (CABS) is an initiative that combines MDRC's expertise in social and education programs with insights from behavioral science. CABS develops innovative, lower-cost interventions, tests their impact through experimentation, and provides technical assistance to programs incorporating behavioral insights.



For more information about the Finish Line project, email Caitlin Anzelone, project director, at Caitlin.Anzelone@mdrc.org.

