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EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

Psychological aspects of deceptive, aggressive and unstable behaviours, PTSD and psychotic episodes and effective response strategies

Author: [redacted]

The non-disclosed part contains personal data, such as names of individuals and/or characteristic features which could lead to the identification of individuals. The disclosure would undermine the protection of privacy and the integrity of the individual, in particular in accordance with European Union legislation regarding the protection of personal data and therefore has to be precluded pursuant to Article 4(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

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Learning outcomes:

SLO 1. Recognise and describe a defined range of indicators of anxious, deceptive, aggressive and emotionally unstable behaviours

SLO 2. Recognise and describe a defined range of indicators of intense/traumatic stress, PTSD and psychotic/dissociative episodes

SLO 3. Demonstrate effective de-escalation behavioural response strategies in line with the appropriate ethical and professional standards, and psychological context

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Session overview:

Indicators of anxious, deceptive, aggressive and emotionally unstable behaviours

Indicators of intense/traumatic stress, PTSD and psychotic/dissociative episodes

De-escalation behavioural response strategies

Role-plays - case studies

Nervous behaviour

Definition of anxiety

Anxiety

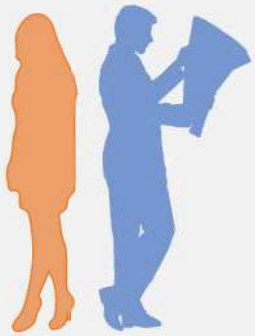
Anxiety is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behaviour

- Pacing back and fourth
- Somatic issues
- Rumination

Nervous behaviour

Indicators of anxiety

- Fingers that fidget
- Stretching it out
- Biting Nails
- Touching face
- Senseless Scrolling
- Taping feet
- Avoiding Eye Contact
- Speaking too quickly
- Checking the time



Aggressive behaviour

Definition of agression

Aggression

Aggression is an action or response by an individual with the intention of inflicting damage or unpleasantness on another person

- Intention of inflicting damage
- Harmful

- Reactive
- Unprovoked

Frustration

Aggressive behaviour

Deal with the persons with aggressive behaviour

DO	DON'T
Stay calm	Challenge or threaten a person
Adopt a non-threatening body posture	Argue or yell at the person
Ask open-ended questions	Turn your back to the person
Use the space for self-protection	Rush the person
Structure the work environment to ensure safety	Ignore verbal threats or warnings of violence
Make sure other people are safe	Try to disarm a person with a weapon or battle it alone

Mental space: it is not about you!

Deceptive behaviour

Definition of deception

Deception

Deception is an act or statement which misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true

Not the WHAT, but the HOW

Deceptive behaviour

Signs of deception

- Lack of self-reference
- Mean length of utterance
- Verb tense
- Narrative balance
- Answering questions with questions
- Lack of detail
- Equivocation
- Alluding to actions
- Oaths
- Euphemisms



Lack of self-reference

Deceptive people use language that minimizes references to themselves.

- ✓ Describe events in the passive voice.
- ✓ Substitute the pronoun "you" for "I".



Verb tense

Describing past events using the present tense suggests that people are ***rehearsing*** the events in their mind.



Answering questions with questions

A deceptive person will usually try to avoid answering the question at all. One common method of dodging questions is to respond with a question of one's own.



Equivocation

Expressions of uncertainty allow a deceptive person leeway to modify his or her assertions at a later date without directly contradicting the original statement.



Oaths

Deceptive subjects often use mild oaths to try to make their statements sound more convincing.



Euphemisms

Euphemisms portray the subject's behaviour in a more favourable light and minimize any harm the subject's actions might have caused.



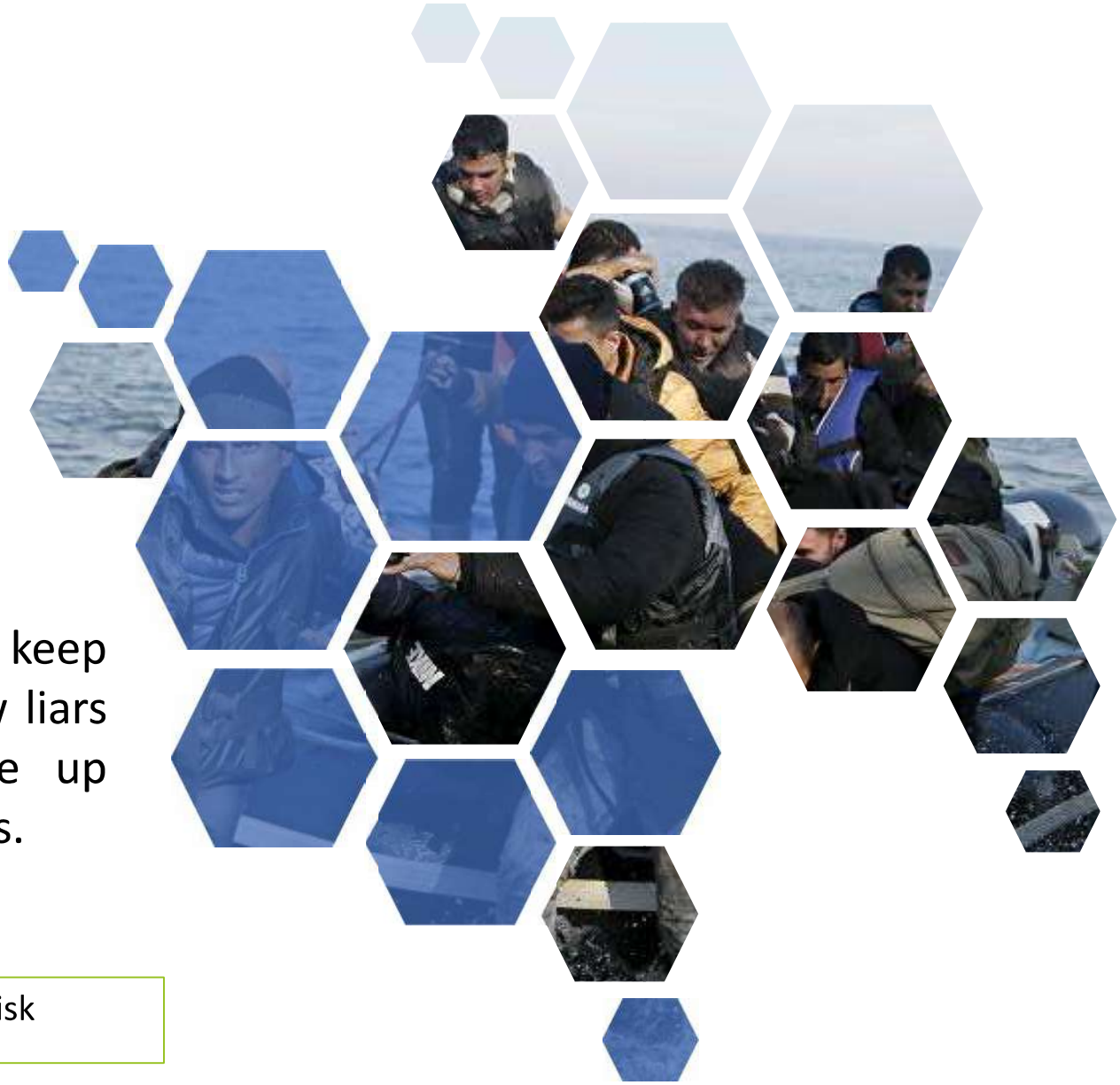
Alluding to actions

Deceptive subjects sometimes allude to actions without saying they actually performed them.



Lack of detail

Those who fabricate a story, tend to keep their statements simple and brief. Few liars have sufficient imagination to make up detailed descriptions of fictitious events.



Minimize the risk

Narrative balance
25/50/25

If one part of the narrative is significantly shorter than expected, important information may have been omitted.

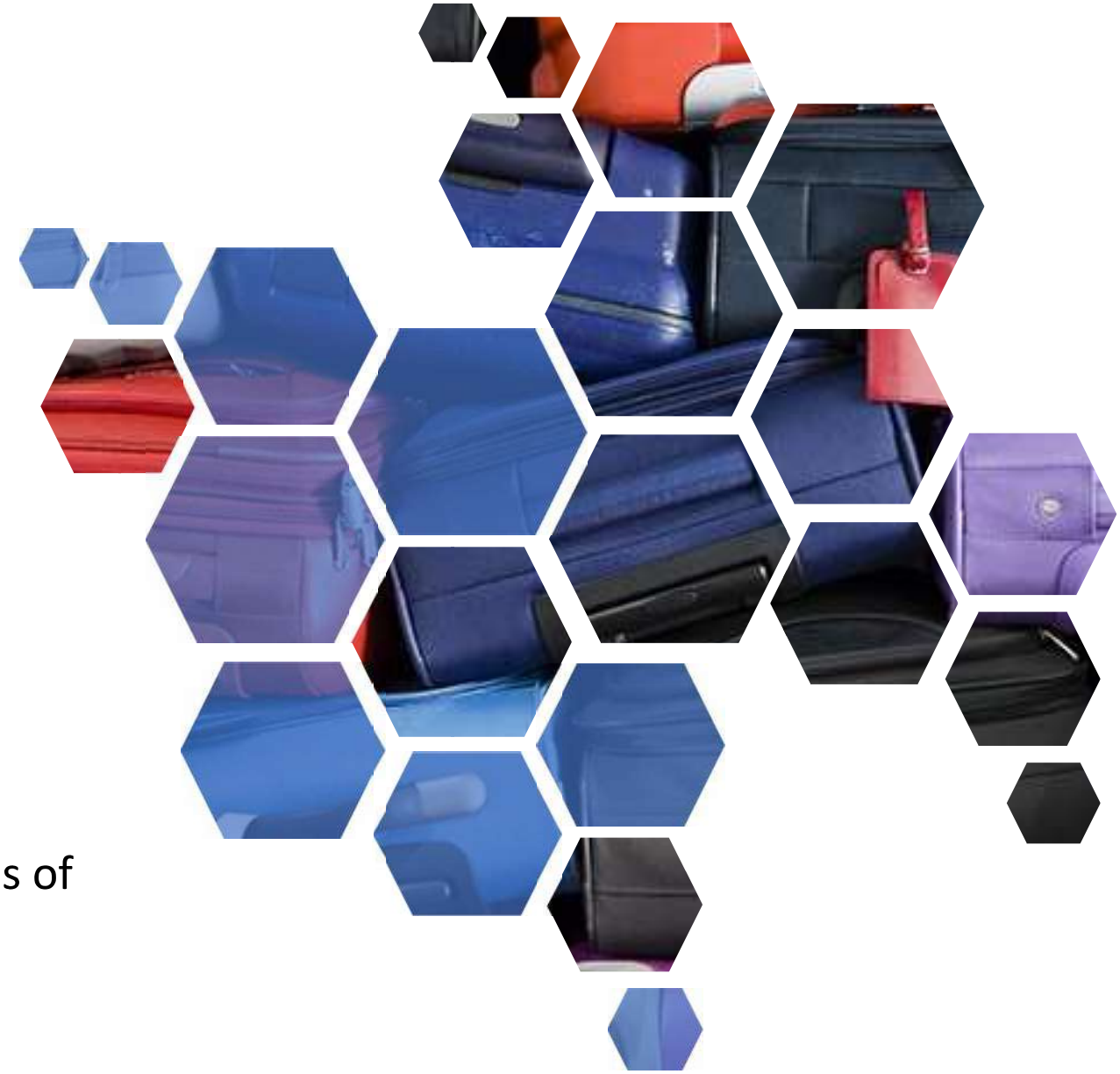
- Prologue 25%
- Critical event 50%
- Aftermath 25%



Mean length of utterance

MLU = Total number of words / Total number of sentences

Most people tend to speak in sentences of between 10 and 15 words.



Psychologically unstable persons

Definition of emotional instability

Emotional instability

Emotional instability usually means unpredictability in emotions and reactions to events

Extreme or unexpected reactions

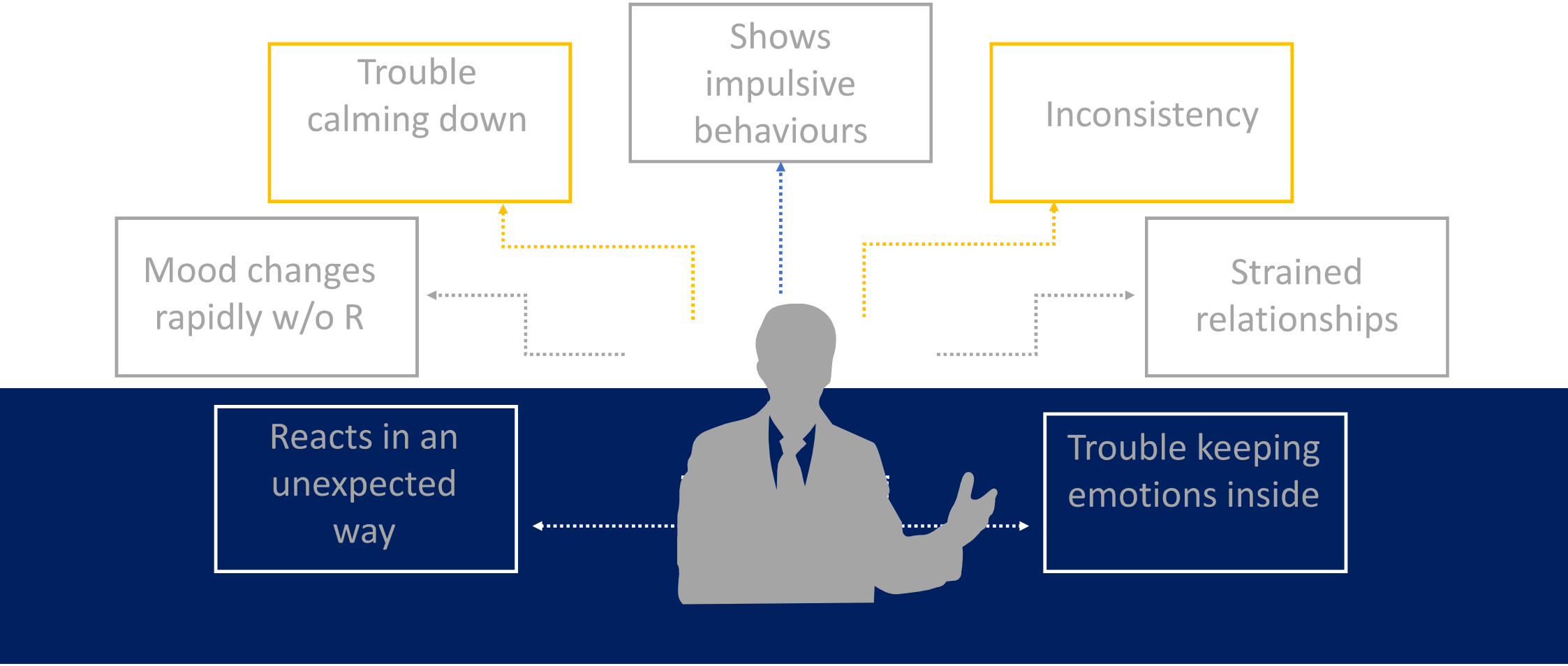
Breaking point

Coping mechs

Personality disorders

Psychologically unstable persons

Indicators of emotional instability



Psychotic episodes / behaviors

Psychotic disorders are severe mental disorders that cause **abnormal thinking and perceptions**.

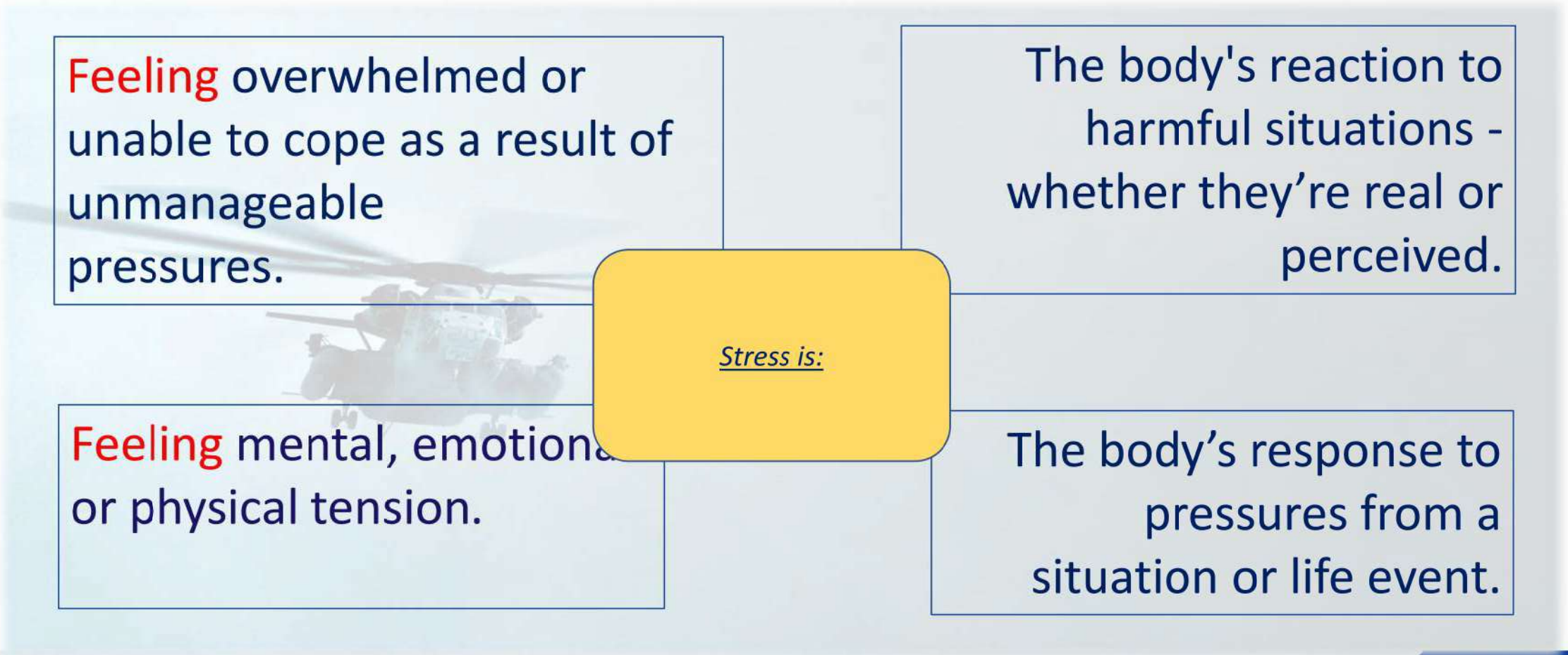
Disrupt perception, thinking, emotion, and behaviour.

Delusions

Lose touch with reality

Halucinations

Stress Definition



Stress

Stress is NORMAL and UNAVOIDABLE

Individual differences on stress factors and responses

Common life events

Lack of control

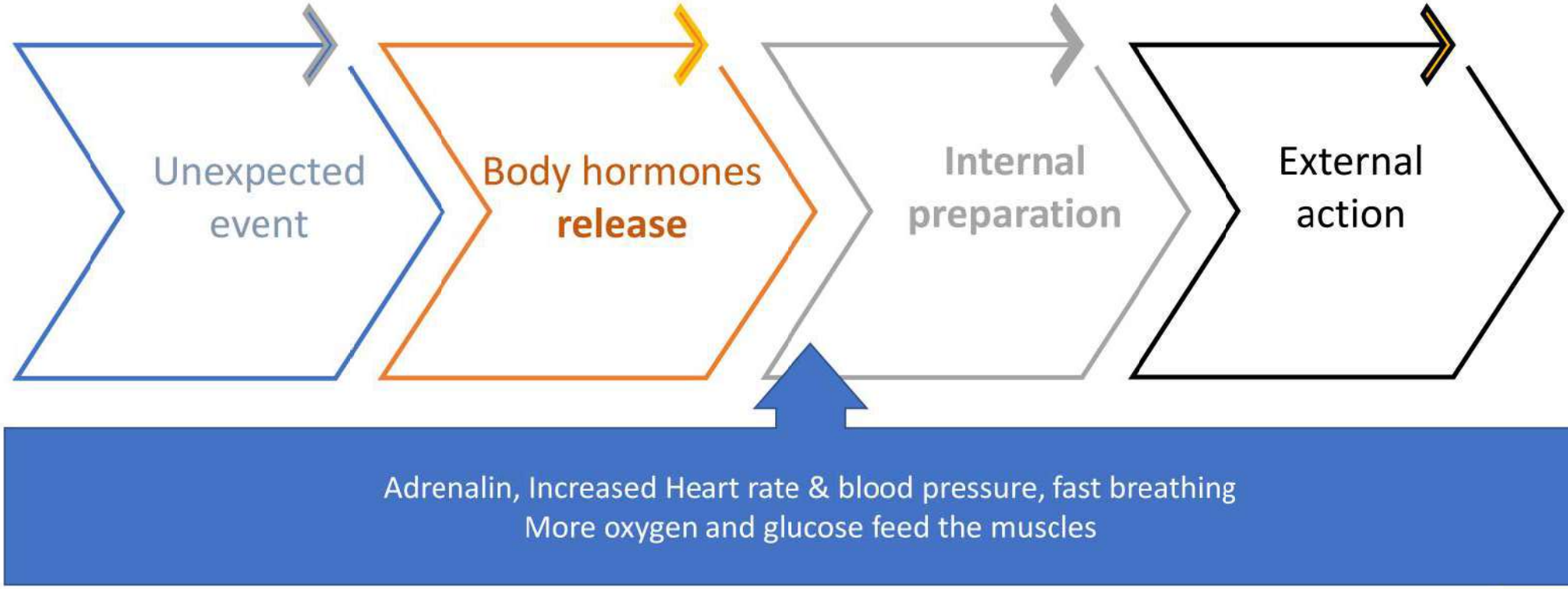
Unusual, unexpected events

Coping mechanisms

stress responses are NORMAL reactions to ABNORMAL events.

The mechanism of stress

Fight or Flight



Stress indicators

Physical

Trouble sleeping
Aches and pains (i.a. headaches)
Feeling tired
Sweating
Nausea
Chills, Thirst
Weakness
Heart rate +
Breathe –
Fatigue

Cognitive

Inability to concentrate
Memory, attention problems
Poor decision making and problem solving
Speech changes
Hypervigilance
Blaming
Decreased alertness

Emotional

Anxiety, panic
Senses of guilt
Grief
Mood swings
Feeling irritable
Depression
Enhanced sensitivity
Anger
Denial

Behavioral

Eat more or less than usual;
Drink alcohol, smoke or take medicines / drugs to relax;
Become more aggressive
Antisocial acts
Withdrawal
Procrastination
Speech change

The mechanism of stress



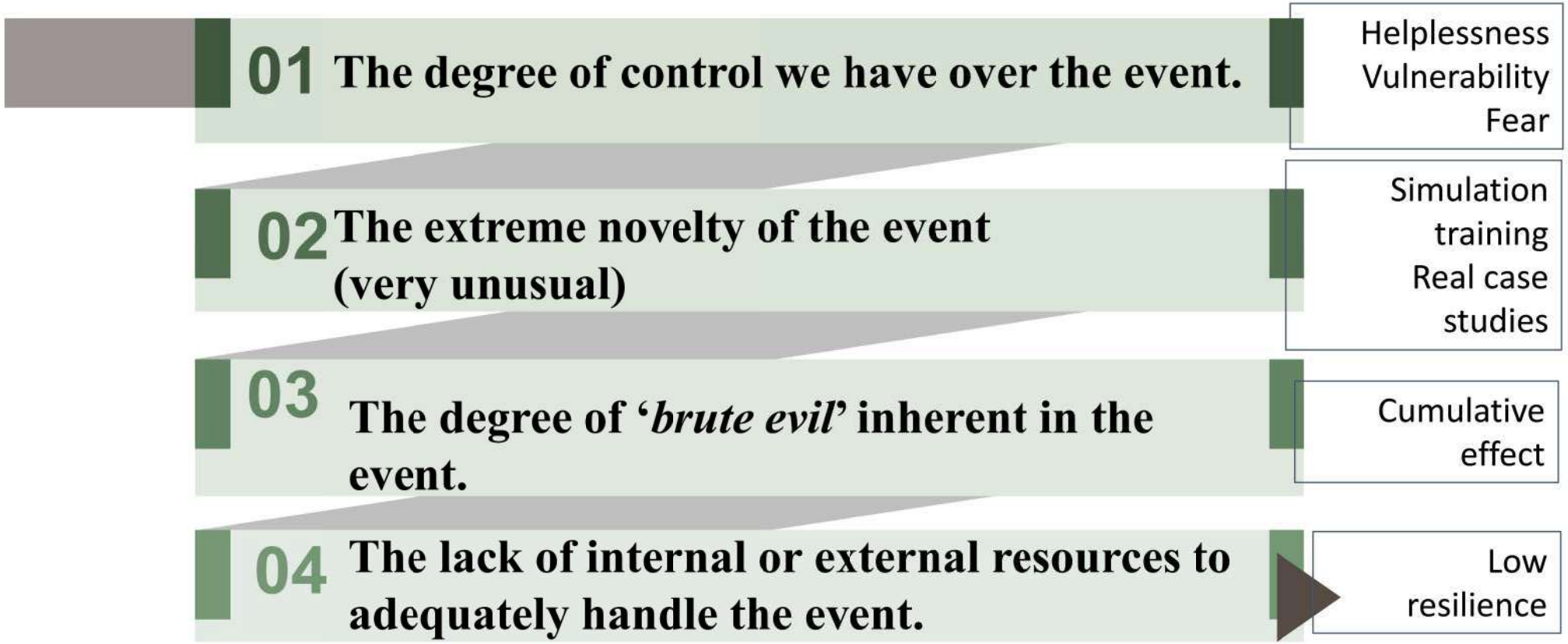
Incidents with traumatic potential



An event that we generally see as sudden, unexpected, incomprehensible, shocking, and personally disturbing, that could result in deep physical and emotional reactions which can interfere with present and future performance.

Abnormal

What makes a stressful event traumatic?



Critical incident :

- Witnessing the death of a person
- Serious injuries, many victims, mass panic
- Suicides of colleagues/ family members
- Natural disasters, wars
- Shooting (especially if ends in death)
- Harassment and threats, persecution
- Sexual assault
- Being taken hostage
- Extreme corruption

Physical,

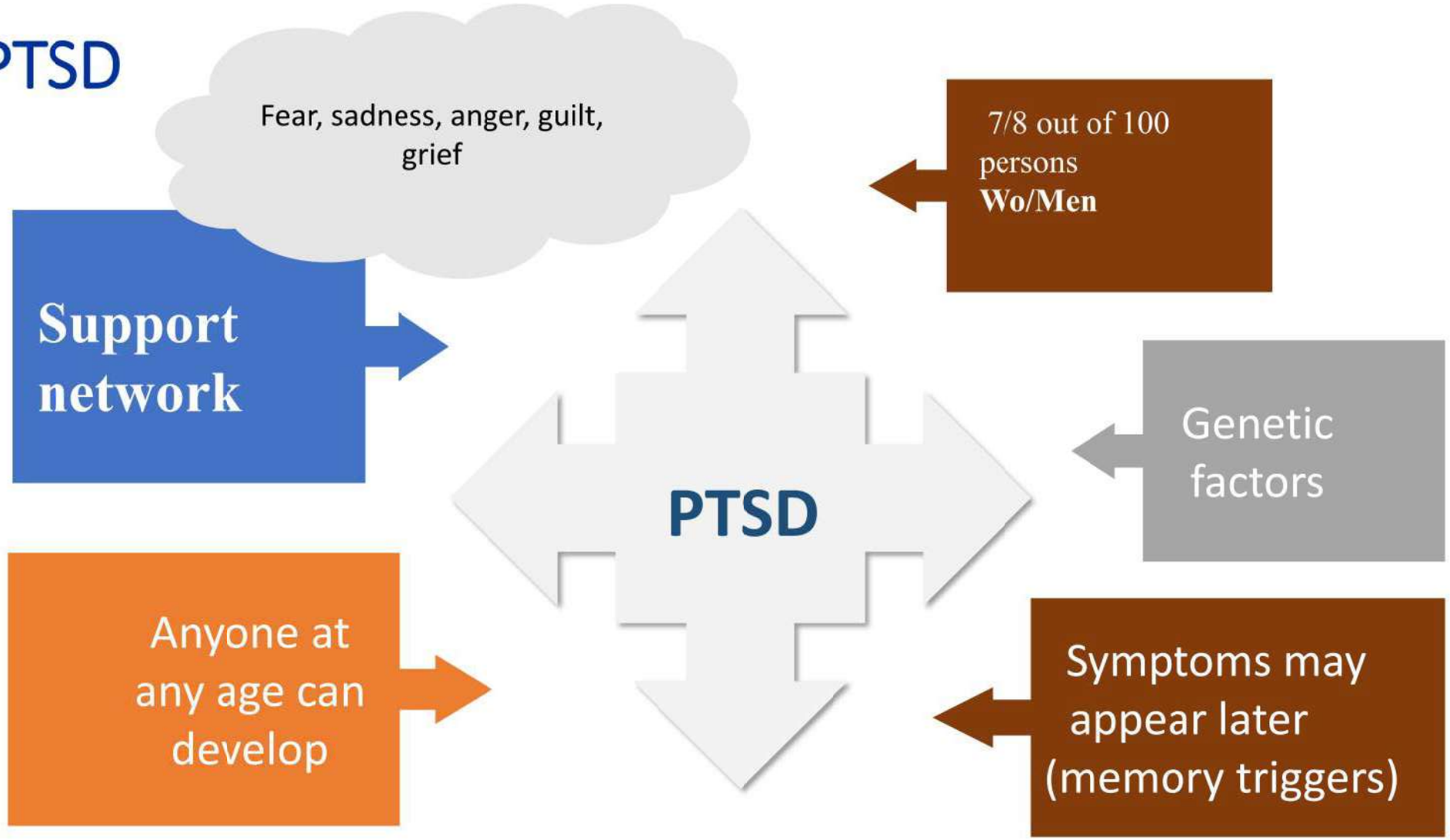
psychological,

behavioral,

emotional
and
relational

effects

PTSD


Fear, sadness, anger, guilt, grief
7/8 out of 100 persons
Wo/Men
Support network
PTSD
Genetic factors
Anyone at any age can develop
Symptoms may appear later (memory triggers)

PTSD


Re-experiencing the traumatic event
Avoidance and numbing
PTSD
Hyperarousal
Negative thought and mood changes

Some factors that increase risk for PTSD include:

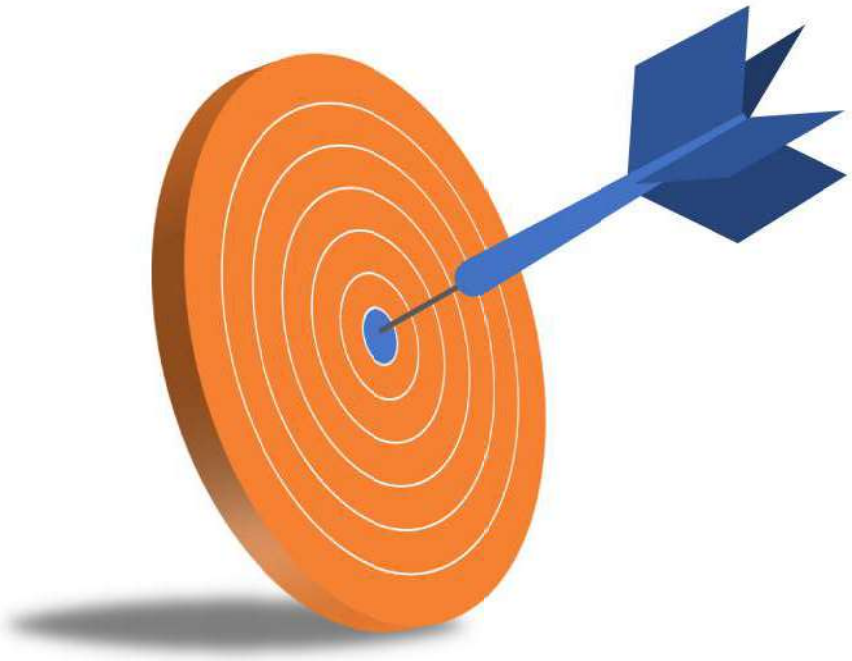
- Living through dangerous events and traumas
- Getting hurt
- Seeing another person hurt, or seeing a dead body
- Childhood trauma
- Feeling horror, helplessness, or extreme fear
- Having little or no social support after the event
- Dealing with extra stress after the event
- Having a history of mental illness or substance abuse

Factors that may promote recovery after trauma:

- Seeking out support from other people
- Finding a support group after a traumatic event
- Learning to feel good about one's own actions in the face of danger
- Having a positive coping strategy, or a way of getting through the bad event and learning from it
- Being able to act and respond effectively despite feeling fear
- Importance of the role of the Return counselling

Psychological aspects

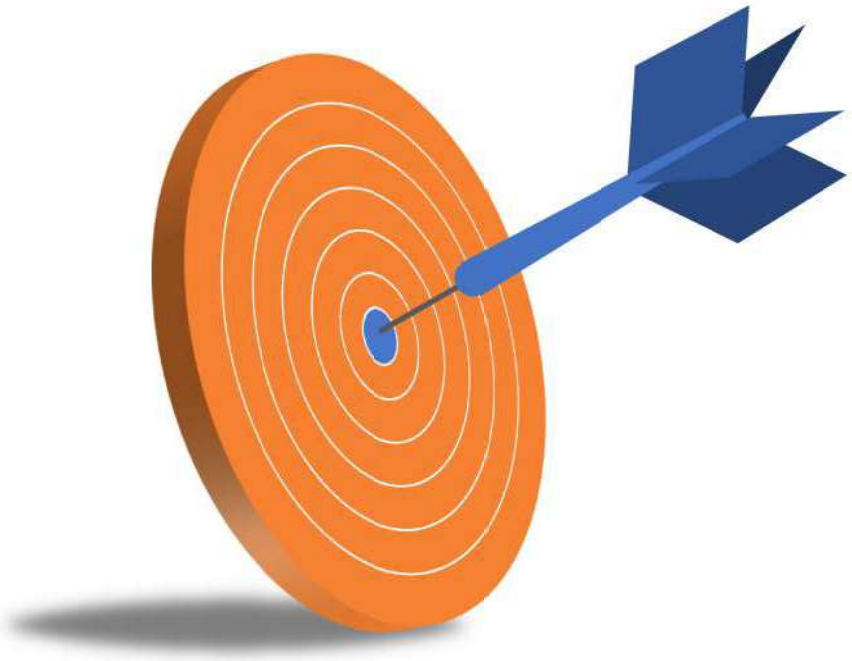
Behavioral strategies



Be empathetic and non-judgemental

Psychological aspects

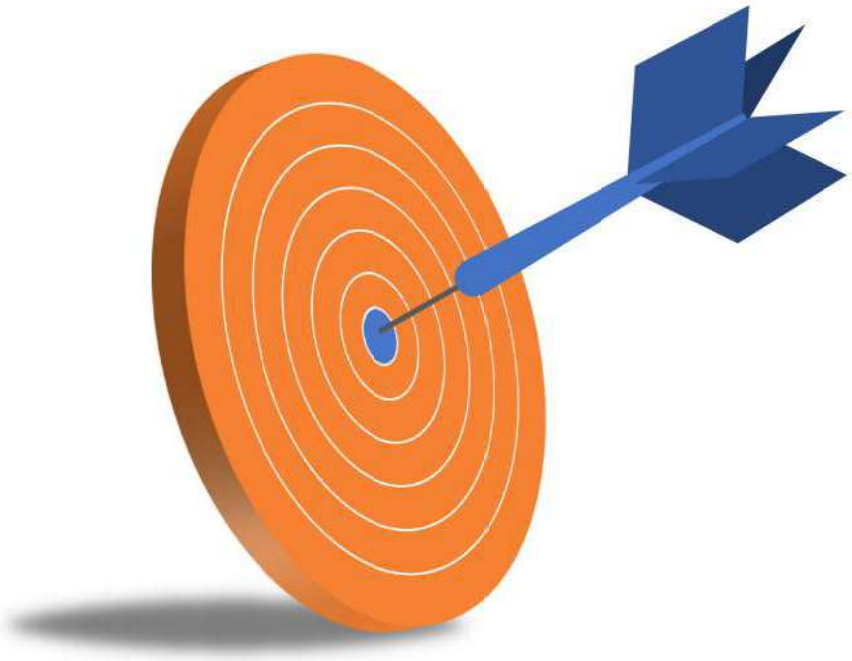
Behavioral strategies



Respect personal space (pay attention to cultural norms)

Psychological aspects

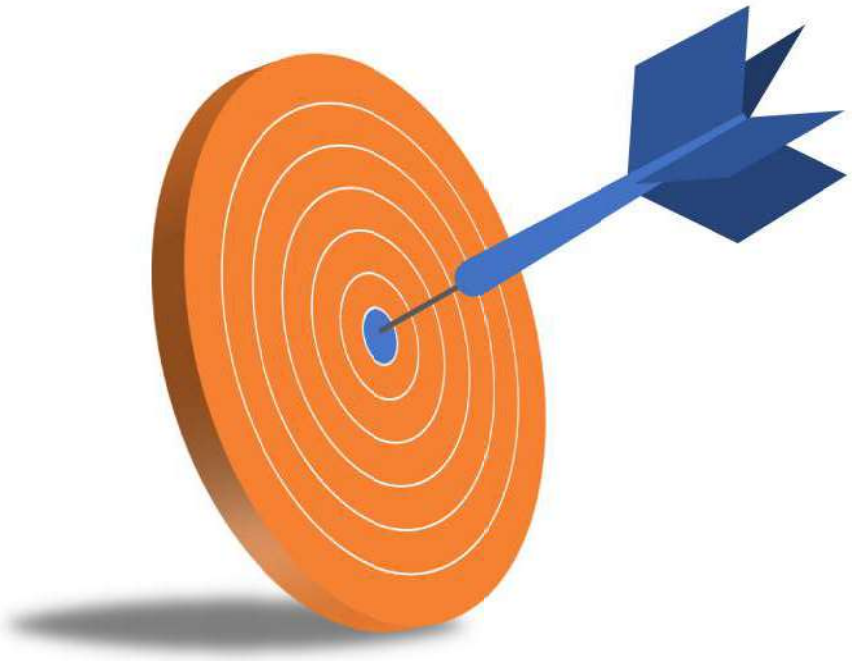
Behavioral strategies



Use non-threatening non-verbals

Psychological aspects

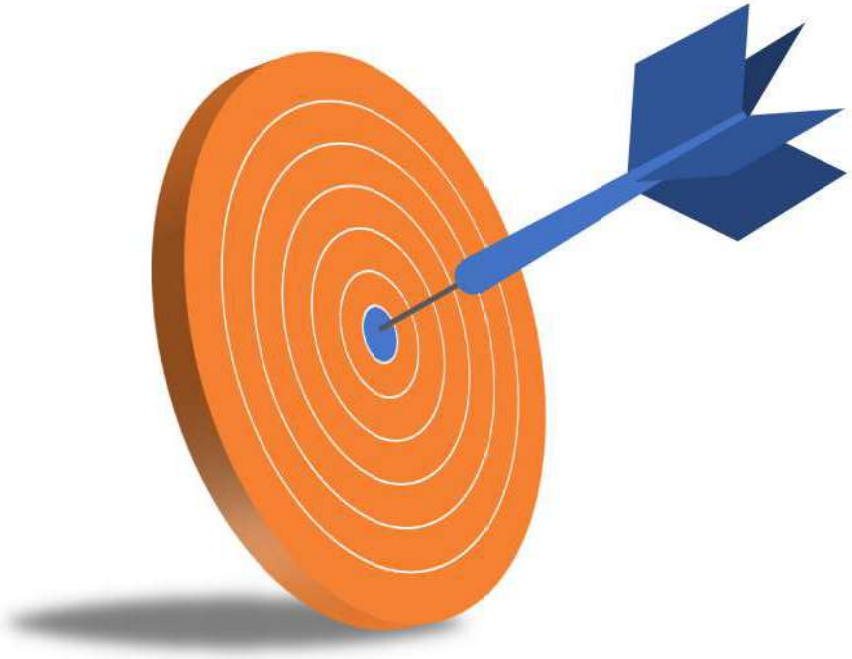
Behavioral strategies



Avoid overreacting

Psychological aspects

Behavioral strategies

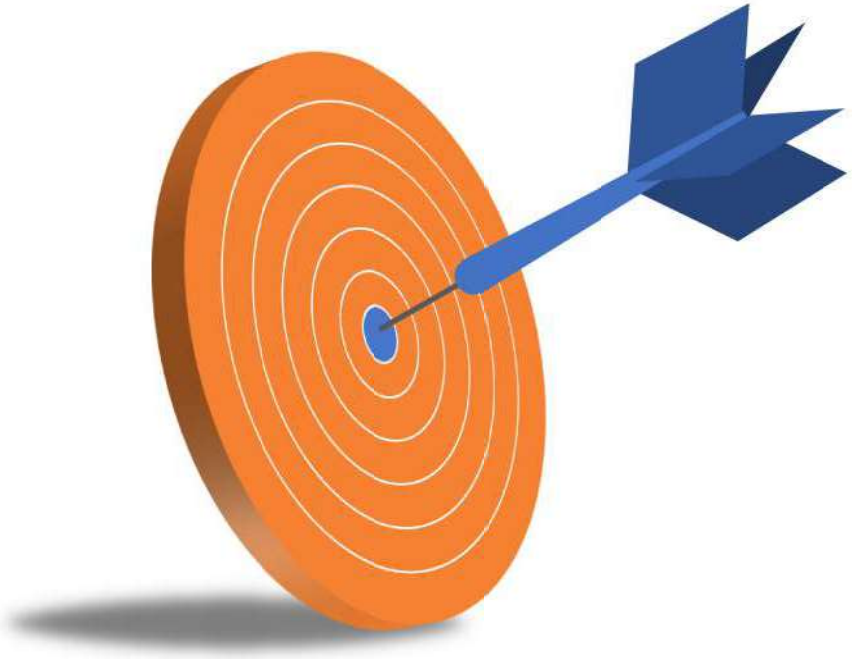


Focus on feelings

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Psychological aspects

Behavioral strategies

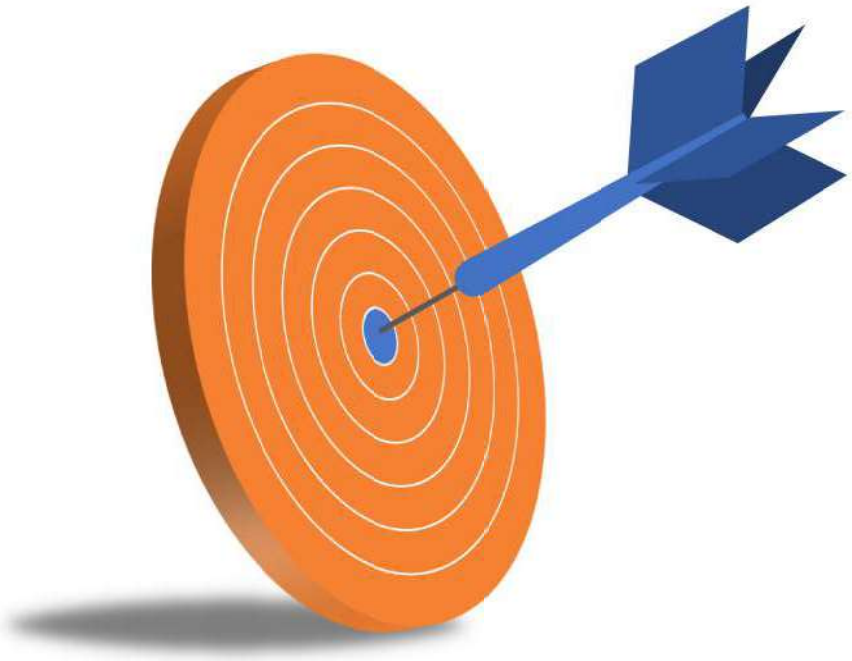


Ignore challenging questions

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Psychological aspects

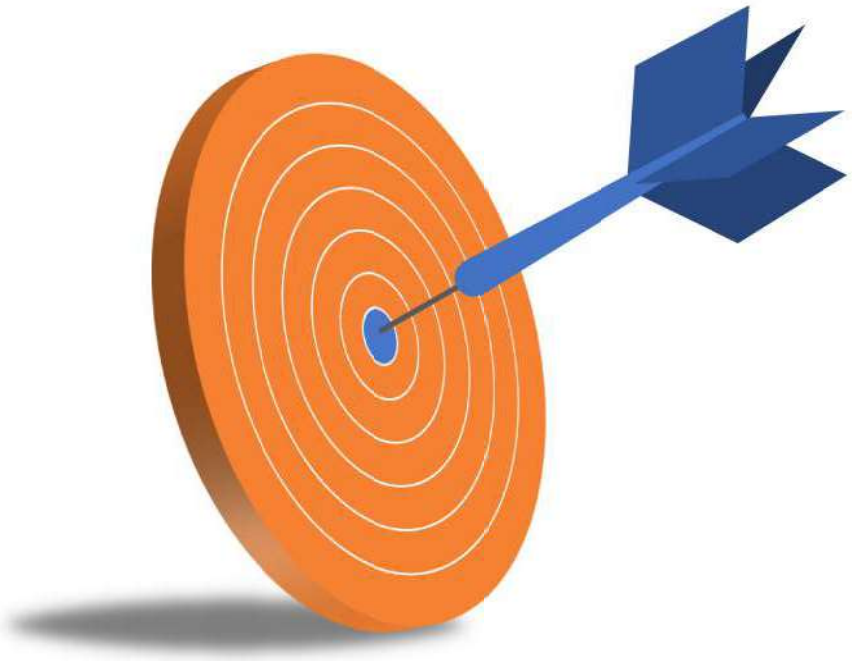
Behavioral strategies



Set limits, respectfully, gently but firmly

Psychological aspects

Behavioral strategies

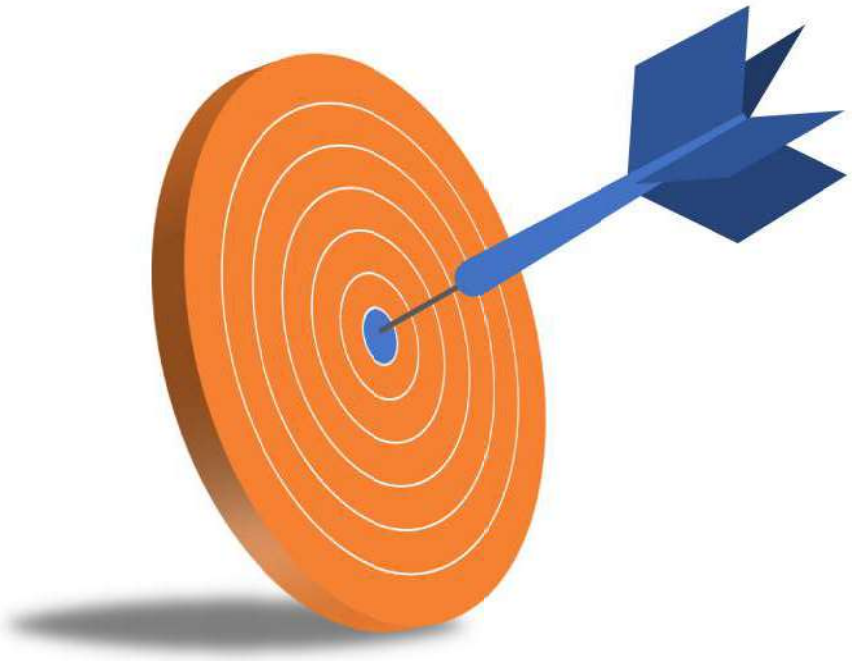


Pick your ‘battles’

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Psychological aspects

Behavioral strategies

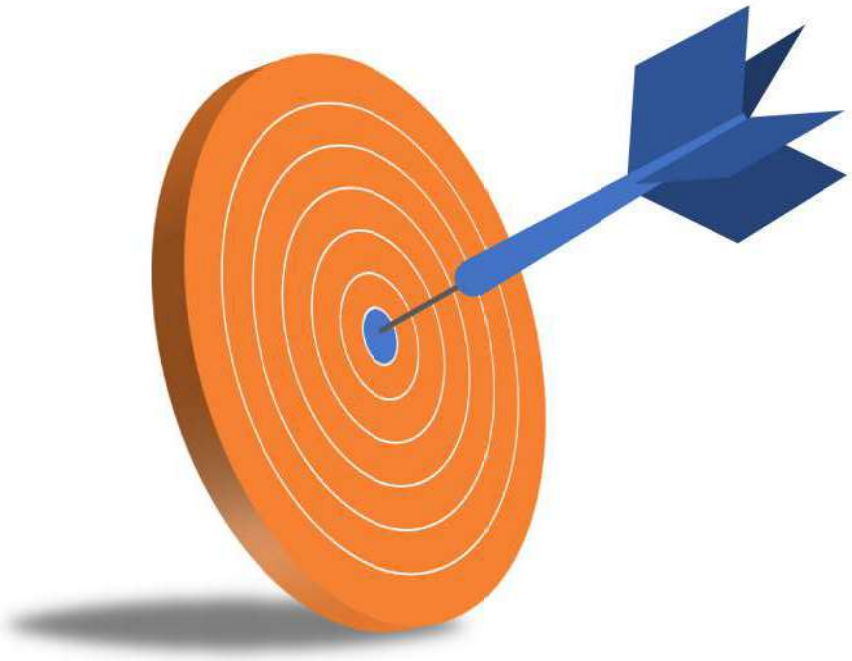


Silence is golden

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Psychological aspects

Behavioral strategies



Allow time for decisions, don't rush

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Case studies - role play