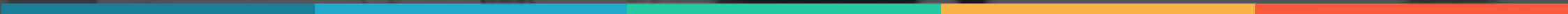










Managing Challenging Conversations & Conflict



Objectives

At the end of the session, you will be able to....

-  Identify and use techniques to overcome communication barriers
-  Prepare and structure effectively in order to communicate difficult messages and manage challenging conversations
-  Define and describe how to identify conflict
-  Explain positions and interests and why conflict is so hard to resolve
-  Identify the stages of and use the five methods of dealing with conflict
-  Facilitate effective communication in difficult circumstances

Conversation – Social Care Context?



‘an oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions or ideas’

‘communication is more than a simple exchange of information’

What People Want

1

They want to talk about their fears

3

They want a role in deciding the outcome

5

They want a good reason for any decided outcome

They want you to acknowledge that their concerns are valid

2

4

They want to hold on to the familiar, what they know, like and/or want



Planning & Prep – Results

Language	Objectives	Information	Resources	Location
Age	Gender	Previous Contact	Roles	Welfare
Refreshments	Trauma	Post Meeting?	Culture Diversity	Conflict
Barriers	Ground Rules	Route Map	Forms Templates	Purpose
Entry/Exit Plan	Record	Who Else?	Topics	Structure

Me', 'You' and Us' ?

Pg 11 Research in Practice - Difficult Conversations in Social Care

Question	Me	You
Why are we having this conversation? What is the legal and practical context of this meeting?		
What is the aim of the conversation? What do we want to happen? What needs to change?		
What emotions might be triggered? Both parties may feel strongly about the issues raised in different ways. How can this be supported safely?		
How does previous experience impact on this conversation? What assumptions or inferences might be made based on past experiences? How does this situation compare?		

Table 1: Questions to support planning for conversations in practice.

The conversation itself represents 'US' coming together.

Structuring Your Message

1. Context

2. The Headline

3. The Detail

4. Reason for Bad News

5. The Rationale

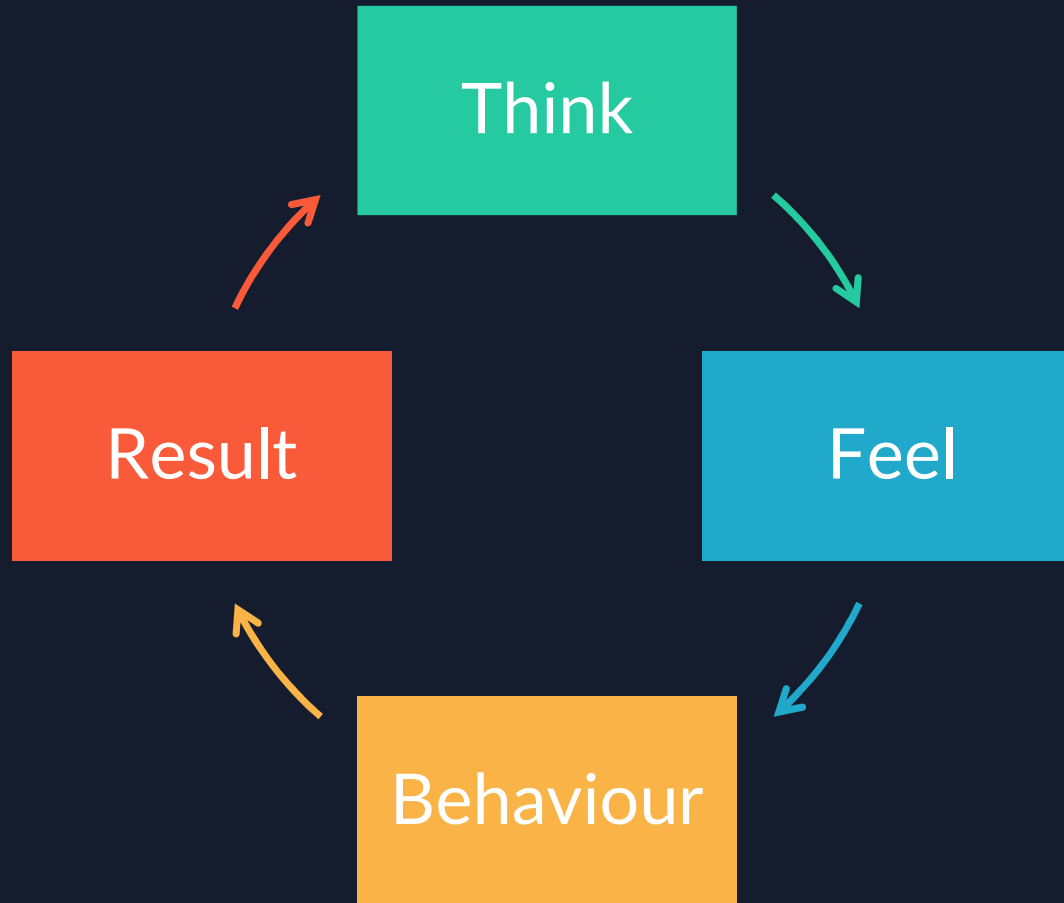
6. The Consequences

7. Alternative Actions

Internal Statements



Thinking Affects Results



Unhelpful Internal Statements



“This is going to be awful”

“They are expecting something from me”

“They know more about this than me”

“They’ve already made their mind up that it won’t work”

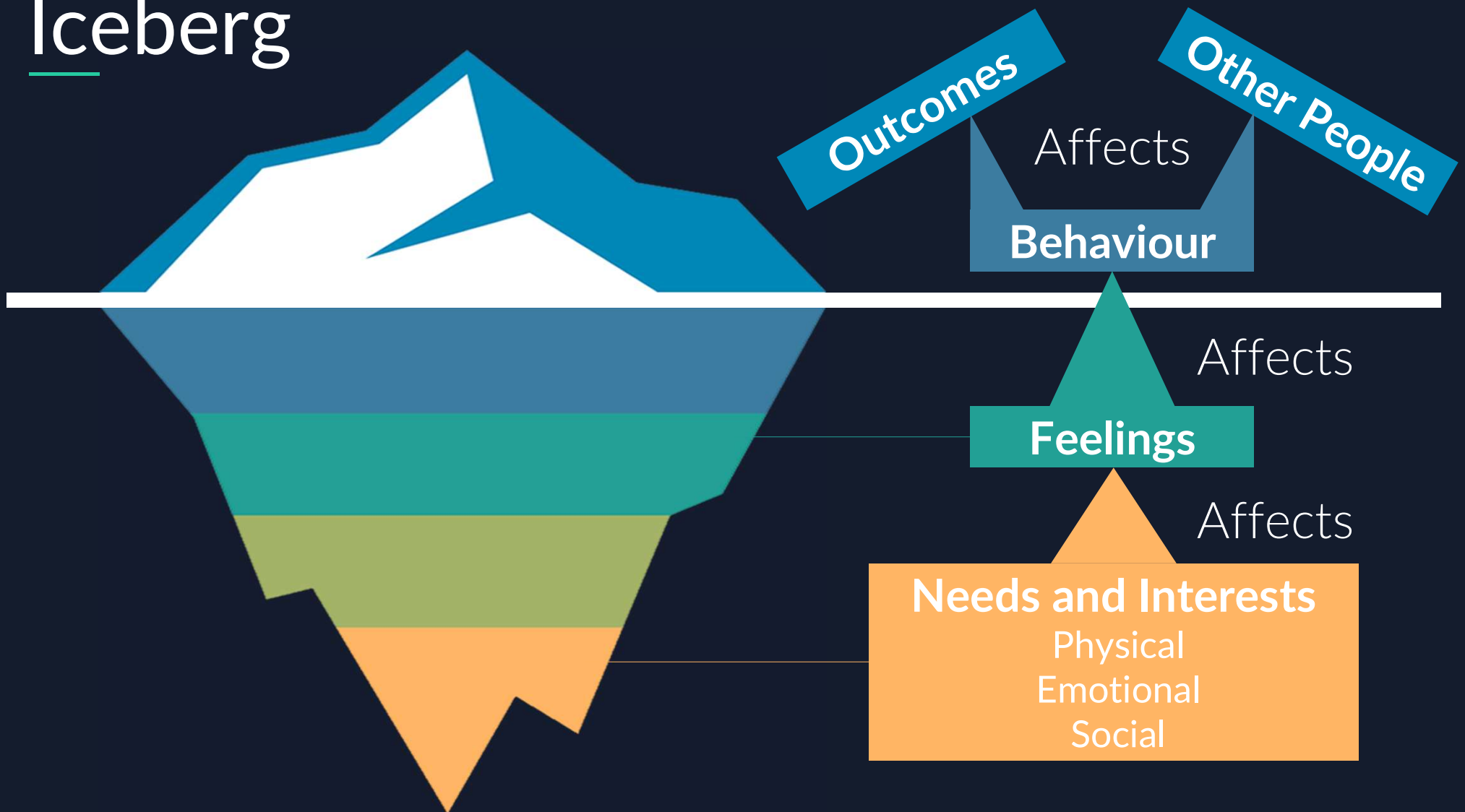
"I've learned that
people will forget what
you said, people will
forget what you did, but
people will never forget
how you made them feel."

- Maya Angelou

Definition of Conflict...

... a disagreement through which the people involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.

Iceberg



Dialogic Practice? Garavan (2013)

Pg 19-20 Research in
Practice - Difficult
Conversations in
Social Care



‘Strategy to enter into conversation with curiosity and uncertainty’

‘Gain full participation in defining and solving their own challenges’

‘Mutual interactive process of listening and responding’

Five Steps

‘Purpose, underlying principles, goals, core assumptions and working methodology’

The Wheelie Bin Debate!

Locals

"We oppose being forced to purchase wheelie bins for recycling."

"Recycling is important."

"We want to save money in the long term."

"We want recycling collections to continue."

POSITIONS



INTERESTS

"Wheelie bins are a good idea."

"We don't want raised taxes."

"We would prefer no conflict."

"We want a cheap resolution."

Council

"If you don't pay for wheelie bins we'll tax you more for collection of recycling materials."

Uncovering Interests



What's important to you about..?

You seem concerned about...tell me more...

How would that improve the situation?

What would that do for you?

What will be different when..?

.....?

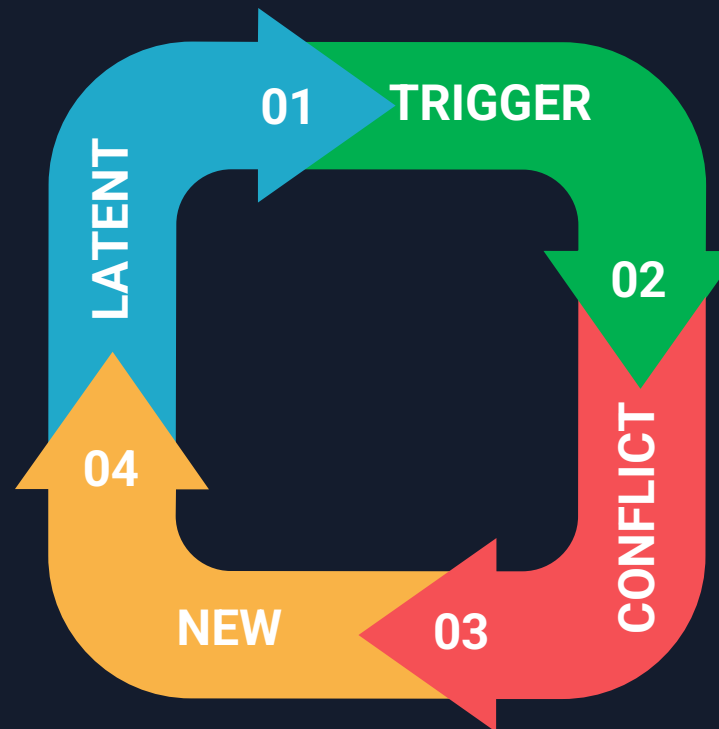
Conflict Stages

● Latent Conflict

Under the surface
Not yet happened
Not expressed
openly

● New Equilibrium

New understanding
Terms reached
Conflict resolved?



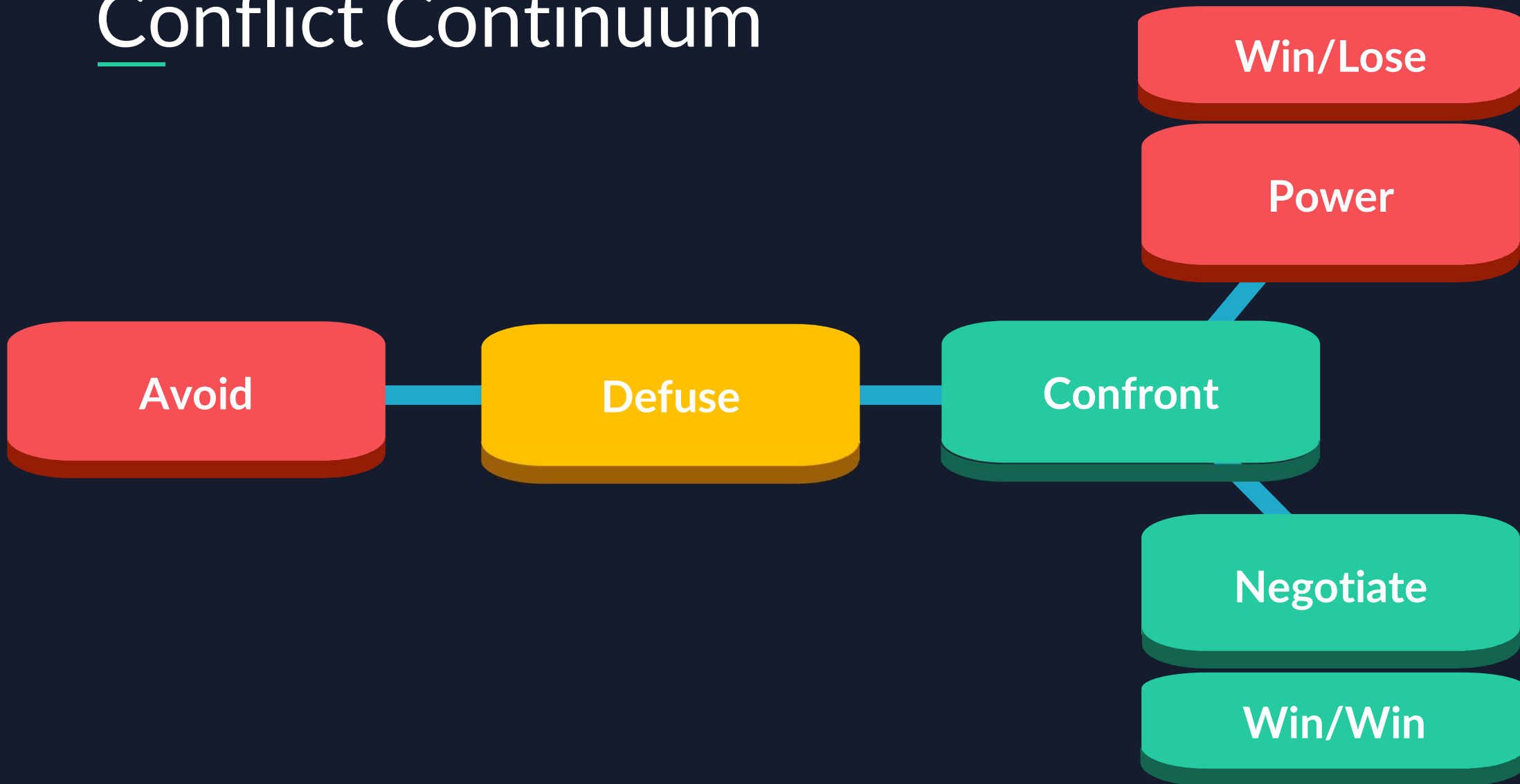
● Triggering Incident

Spur of the moment
Specific incident
Moment of truth

● Conflict

Assumptions/Labels
Attack and Blame
Alliance built
Entrenched

Conflict Continuum



Five Methods of Managing Conflict



Conflict Resolution Model

INTRODUCE

Explain the issue

Be specific and
simple

Describe
observations
not beliefs

Avoid
accusations

IMPACT

The effect

Explain how
you felt/feel

Be specific

Remain calm

INFORM

The changes

Be clear and
direct

Remain fair and
realistic

Acknowledge
other persons
feelings

INCENTIVISE

The gain

Identify the
benefit of
resolution to the
other person

Agree steps
going forward

Resolving Conflict Between Others

Understand the source of the problem



Supervise dialogue between parties



Take appropriate action



Challenging Personalities– How to Deal?



Acknowledge the person and the way they are feeling

Acknowledge your position

Make it clear you understand their position by listening to their views with empathy

Where possible move the situation forward by putting the incident in the past tense if possible

Consider the most suitable method of communicating

Challenging Personality Types



Time Hog



Tangent



Blocker



Withdrawer



Recognition
Seeker



Topic
Jumper



Aggressor



Manipulator

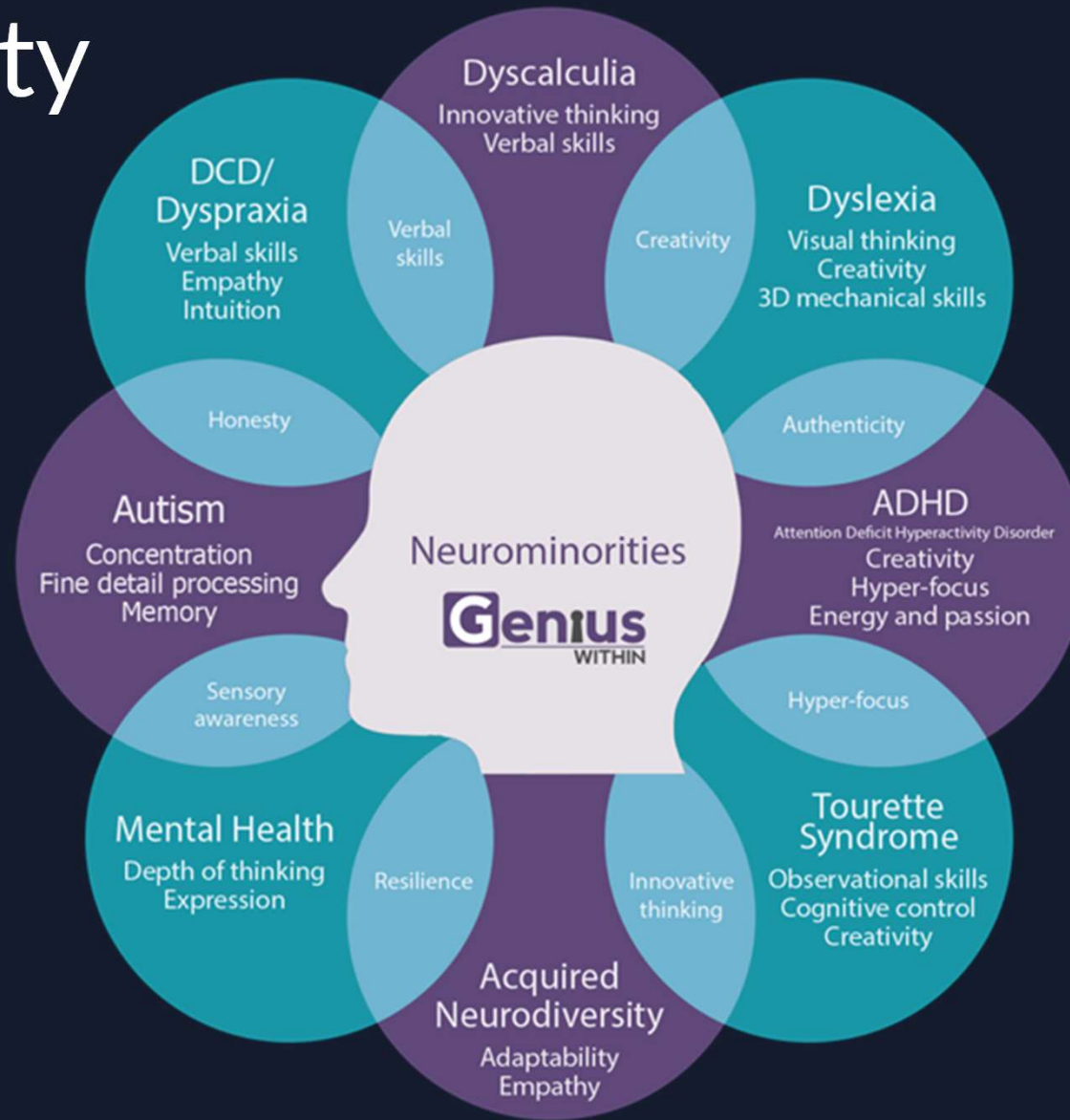


Devil's
Advocate



'Groups'

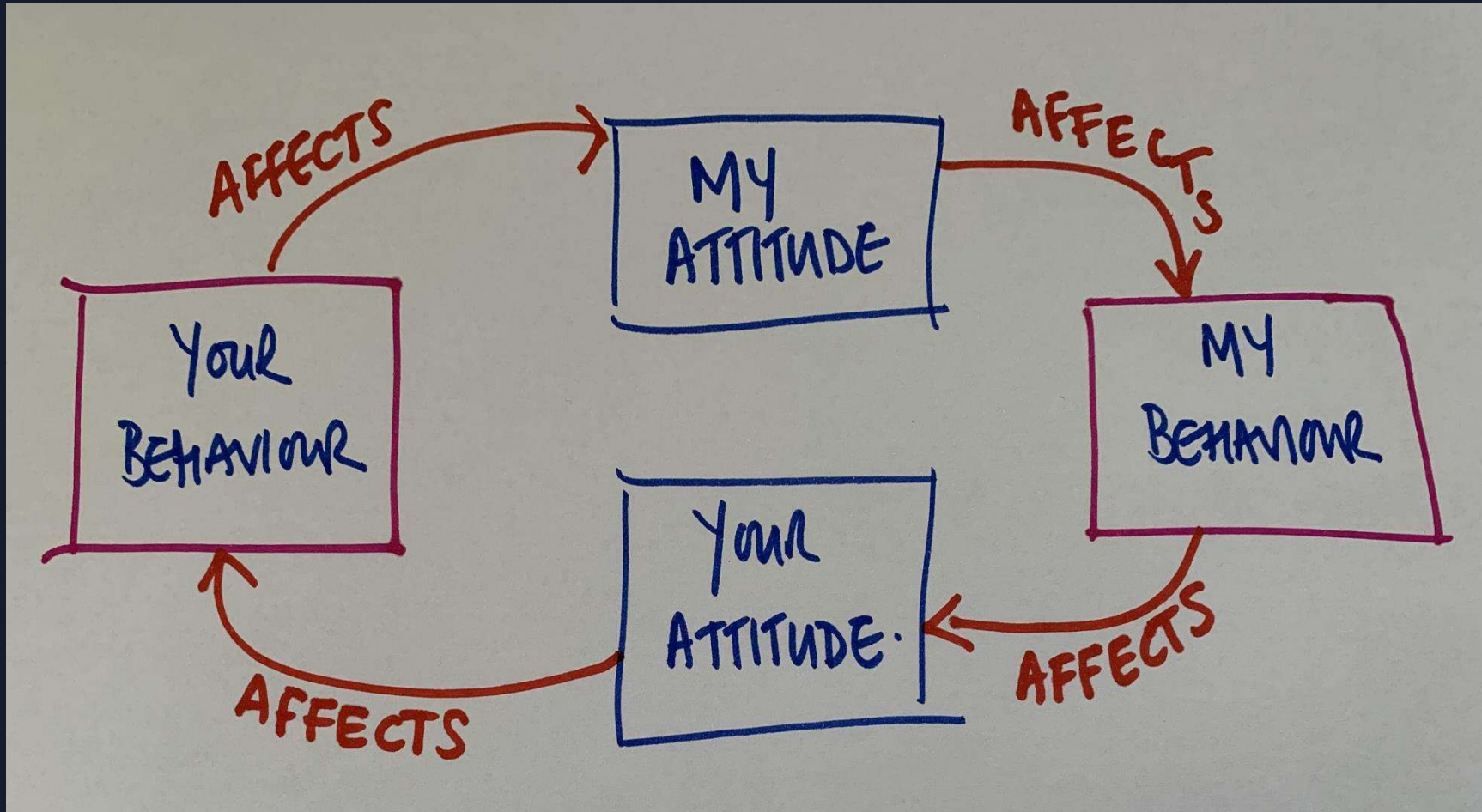
Neurodiversity



Cross Cultural Variations



Betaris Box



Behaviour Continuum



Self Awareness is the Key

How to DEAL with Disruptive Behaviour?



D - Describe

E - Explain

A - Action Required

L - Likely Consequences

Challenging – As Simple as ABC

A

‘Earlier you told us that you never leave your children alone at home at night’

B







‘The police inform me that last Wednesday they were called to your house at 01.30 a.m. and that the only people in the house were your two children’

C

‘Help me understand what happened?’

Objectives

Now you can.....

-  Identify and use techniques to overcome communication barriers
-  Prepare and structure effectively in order to communicate difficult messages and manage challenging conversations
-  Define and describe how to identify conflict
-  Explain positions and interests and why conflict is so hard to resolve
-  Identify the stages of and use the five methods of dealing with conflict
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Learning and Development Training Evaluation Form 2025

