CONFLICT TRAINING

Understanding and Resolving Conflict

with Interpersonal Communication

Enhancing Relationships
Building Collaboration

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1 **One:**
Key Concepts in Understanding the Origin of Conflict

2 **Two:**

Communication Theories and Applications to Conflict

3 **Three:**

Developing Skills to Prevent and Resolve Interpersonal Conflict

4 **Four:**

Practicing Tools to Resolve Active Interpersonal Conflict

Icebreaker
 - **Your name**
 - **One thing about you that you are most proud of**
 - **One thing that you hope to gain from this course**

Icebreakers are *optional*.

It is never 'share or die'. You will be invited to share in pairs, small groups, and in the large group. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate in discussions and activities.

~ Parker Palmer, Trust Circle Touchstones

Ground Rules

Community Agreements

Psychological Safety

Communication works for those who work at it.
~ John Powell

The level of collective courage in an organization is the absolute best predictor of that organization's ability to be successful.
~ Brene Brown

Establishing Ground Rules

Show hospitality and a welcoming spirit to one another.

Be as present as possible.

Maintain deep confidentiality for one another.

Practice self-awareness and cultural sensitivity in community with one another.

Be open to new information, information presented in a new way, and other perspectives.

Any other ground rules? Any clarifications?

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.
~ Mother Theresa

When we learn to speak, we learn to translate.

~ Octavio Paz

What is conflict?

How do you respond to conflict?

~ What is Conflict? Leap Confronting Conflict. YouTube.

Defining Conflict, from the individual perspective

As a set of perceptions, conflict is a belief or understanding that one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's…

Conflict also involves an emotional reaction to a situation or interaction that signals a disagreement of some kind…

Conflict also consists of the actions that we take to express our feelings, articulate our perceptions, and get our needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else's ability to get his or her needs met.

Bernard Mayer, The Dynamics of Conflict, 2012

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Shape and Scope of Conflict

Intrapersonal

Interpersonal

Groups, Teams

Organizations

Civic Communities

States

Nations

Global

Simple

Complex

Historical Depth

Current, Ongoing

Situational

Instant, Fleeting

GALTUNG'S VIOLENCE TRIANGLE

Direct Violence

Structural Violence

Cultural Violence

Table 17.1 Direct, structural and cultural violence

Violence	Direct violence Intended harming, hurting	Structural violence Unintended harming, hurting	Cultural violence Intended or unintended justifying violence
Negative peace	[1] absence of ceasefire	[2] absence of no exploitation; or no structure = *atomie*	[3] absence of no justification; or no culture = *anomie*
Positive peace	[4] presence of cooperation	[5] presence of equity, equality	[6] presence of culture of peace, and dialogue
Peace	Negative + positive	Negative + positive	Negative + positive

Source The author

Activity!

Discuss in a small group a current conflict in your community. Identify how direct, structural, and cultural violence shows up in this conflict. Discuss how each of the forms interact and/or reinforce each other. Brainstorm an intervention that targets all forms of violence evident in the conflict. Identify whether the interventions may bring the conflict to negative peace, positive peace, or peace. Fill in a template violence triangle and peace diagram. Share with the rest of the class any insights this activity brought.

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The Conflict Practice:

Conflict practice requires empathy, non-violence, and a creative approach: understanding conflict partners from the inside, feeling their logic, identifying valid goals and non-violent approaches to attain them, and eliciting creativity from all parties to find ways of transcending incompatibilities.

Negation – Repression – Prevention

Management - Resolution- Transformation

Separating the deed from the doer.

Reintegrative shaming.
~ John Braithwaite, Crime, Shame and Reintegration

"Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. "Hate the sin and not the sinner" is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practiced, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world."
~ *Mahatma Gandhi, An Autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

Activity!

Remember a conflict you were in where you felt wronged or punished for something you did but didn't intend. How did this affect your life, your relationship with that person, your attitude, your behavior. Imagine if the person who you felt hurt by practiced the axiom of separating the deed from the doer or approached the conflict with characteristics of openness, creativity, empathy, or peacebuilding. How would this alternate outcome of have affected you? How can this awareness help you when dealing with potential conflicts in the future?

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Systems Thinking

"So, what is a system? A system is a set of things—people, cells, molecules, or whatever—interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern of behavior over time."

"You can't navigate well in an interconnected, feedback-dominated world unless you take your eyes off short-term events and look for long term behavior and structure; unless you are aware of false boundaries and bounded rationality; unless you take into account limiting factors, nonlinearities and delays."
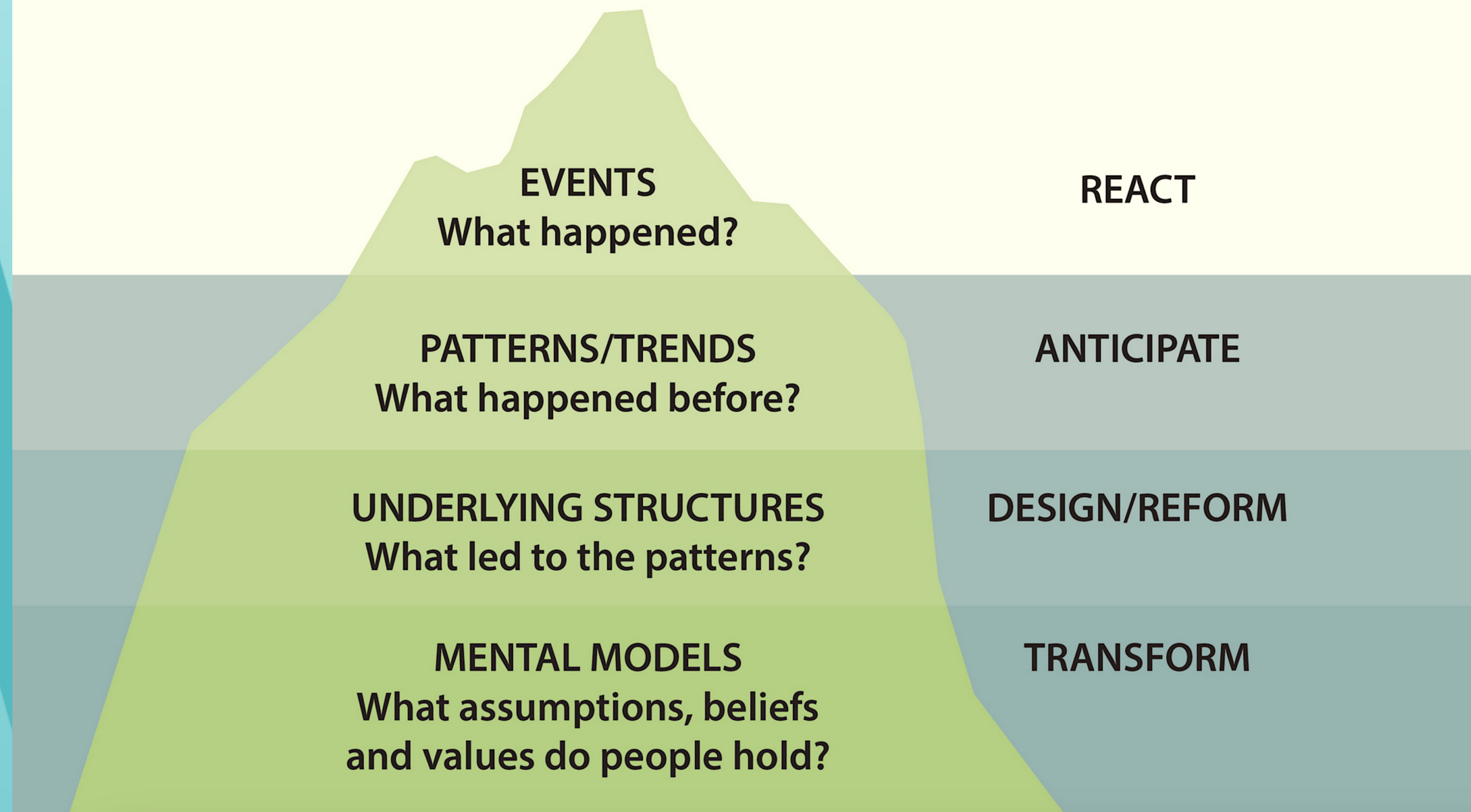
"A system* is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something."

"The systems-thinking lens allows us to reclaim our intuition about whole systems and hone our abilities to understand parts, see interconnections, ask "what-if " questions about possible future behaviors, and be creative and courageous about system redesign."
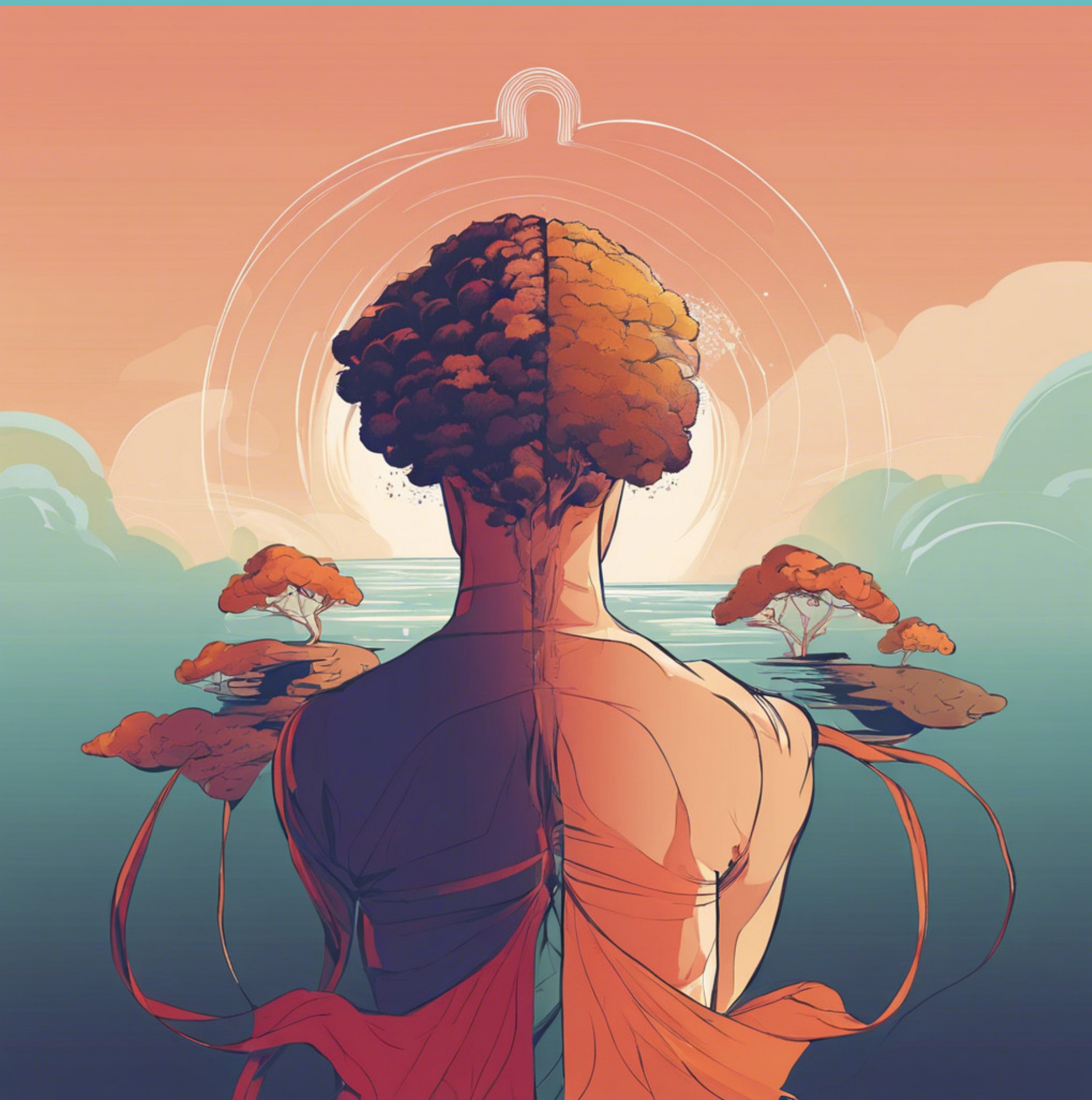
Systems Thinking in Action

SYSTEMS THINKING MODEL
(GOODMAN, 2002)

EVENTS
What happened?

REACT

PATTERNS/TRENDS
What happened before?

ANTICIPATE

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES
What led to the patterns?

DESIGN/REFORM

MENTAL MODELS
What assumptions, beliefs
and values do people hold?

TRANSFORM

I Identify: What Forces Determine Your Identity? Little White Lie, Indenpendent Lens. YouTube

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Identity, like any theory, is both a structure, containing the organized contents of experience, and an active process that guides and regulates one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. It influences how information is perceived, processed, and recalled. It acts as a script to guide behavior. It contains the standards against one's behavior that can be compared and evaluated. (Schlenker, 1986, p. 24).
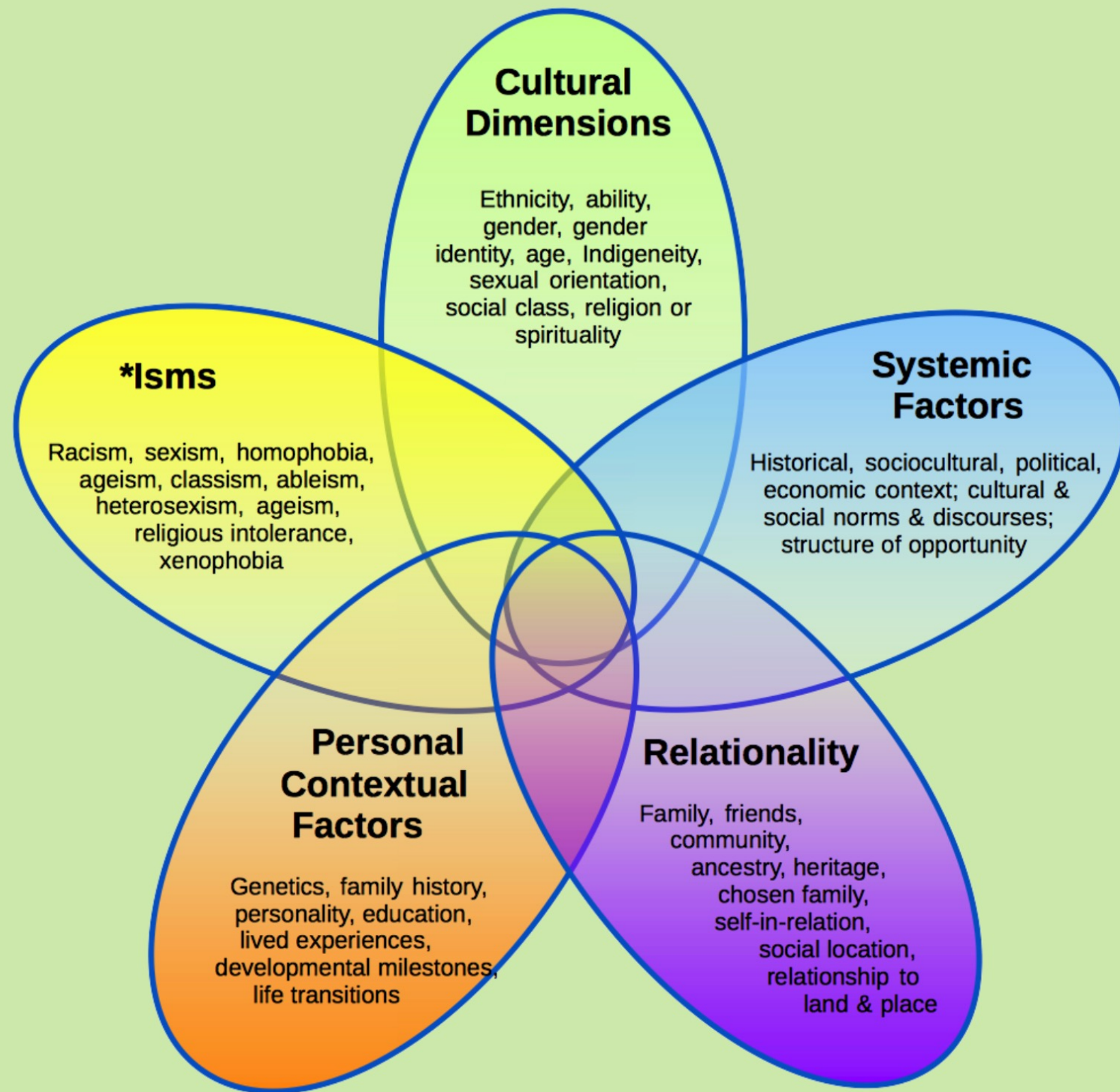
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Views of ourselves that we share with all humans.

Human Identity

Cultural Identity

Views of ourselves that we share with other members of our groups.

Views of ourselves that differentiate ourselves from members of our groups and that define us as unique individuals.

Social Identity

Cultural Dimensions

Ethnicity, ability, gender, gender identity, age, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, social class, religion or spirituality

*Isms

Racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, religious intolerance, xenophobia

Systemic Factors

Historical, sociocultural, political, economic context; cultural & social norms & discourses; structure of opportunity

Personal Contextual Factors

Genetics, family history, personality, education, lived experiences, developmental milestones, life transitions

Relationality

Family, friends, community, ancestry, heritage, chosen family, self-in-relation, social location, relationship to land & place

Activity!

Write down all aspects of your identity. First responses are probably the ones that influence your behavior the most. They might have been influenced by your environment or current situation. Rank your identity aspects based on strong and weak associations. Categorize all aspects into human, social, or personal. Consider how aspects of your identity have been influenced by cultural, systemic, relational, personal, and social stigmatization.

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When we communicate with people from other cultures, we start from the assumption that the members of the other culture are similar, which can be a valuable starting point. To communicate effectively, however, we must also recognize that not all people who share the same cultural identity emphasize the same cultural tendencies or to the same degree.

To communicate effectively, we must understand _real_ differences between our, and strangers', groups. Perceptions of differences are often based on stereotypes, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and bias, but may not be real or accurately applied to the individual's identity.
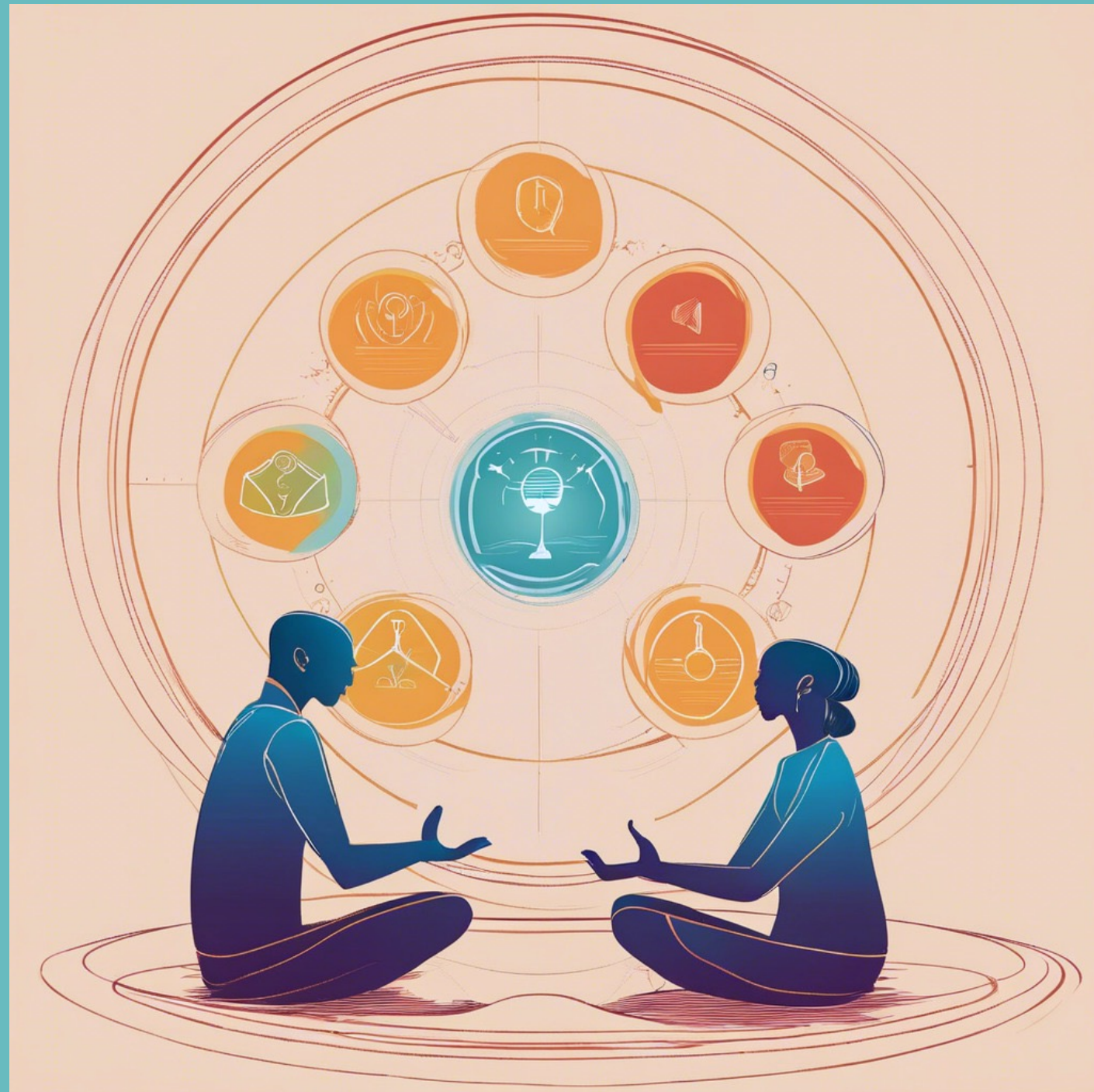
Passive

Observe how strangers behave.

Seek out information from others about the strangers.

Active

Interactive

Directly interact with the stranger, through questioning directly or through self-disclosure.

Activity

Pair up with a classmate and share aspects of your identity with them. Have an interactive discussion with this partner, using questioning and self-disclosure.
Switch roles.
Reflect on any insights gained about their identity and consider sharing any discoveries or insights with the group.

Values

"*Your values create your internal compass that can navigate how you make decisions in your life.*" – Roy T. Bennett

"*Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.*" — Albert Einstein

"*It is not always the same thing to be a good man and a good citizen.*" - Aristotle

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth."
— Henry David Thoreau

When we think of our values, we think of what is important to us in life. Each of us holds numerous values (e.g., achievement, security, benevolence) with varying degrees of importance. A particular value may be very important to one person but unimportant to another. The value theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2006a) adopts a conception of values that specifies six main features.

Universal Values
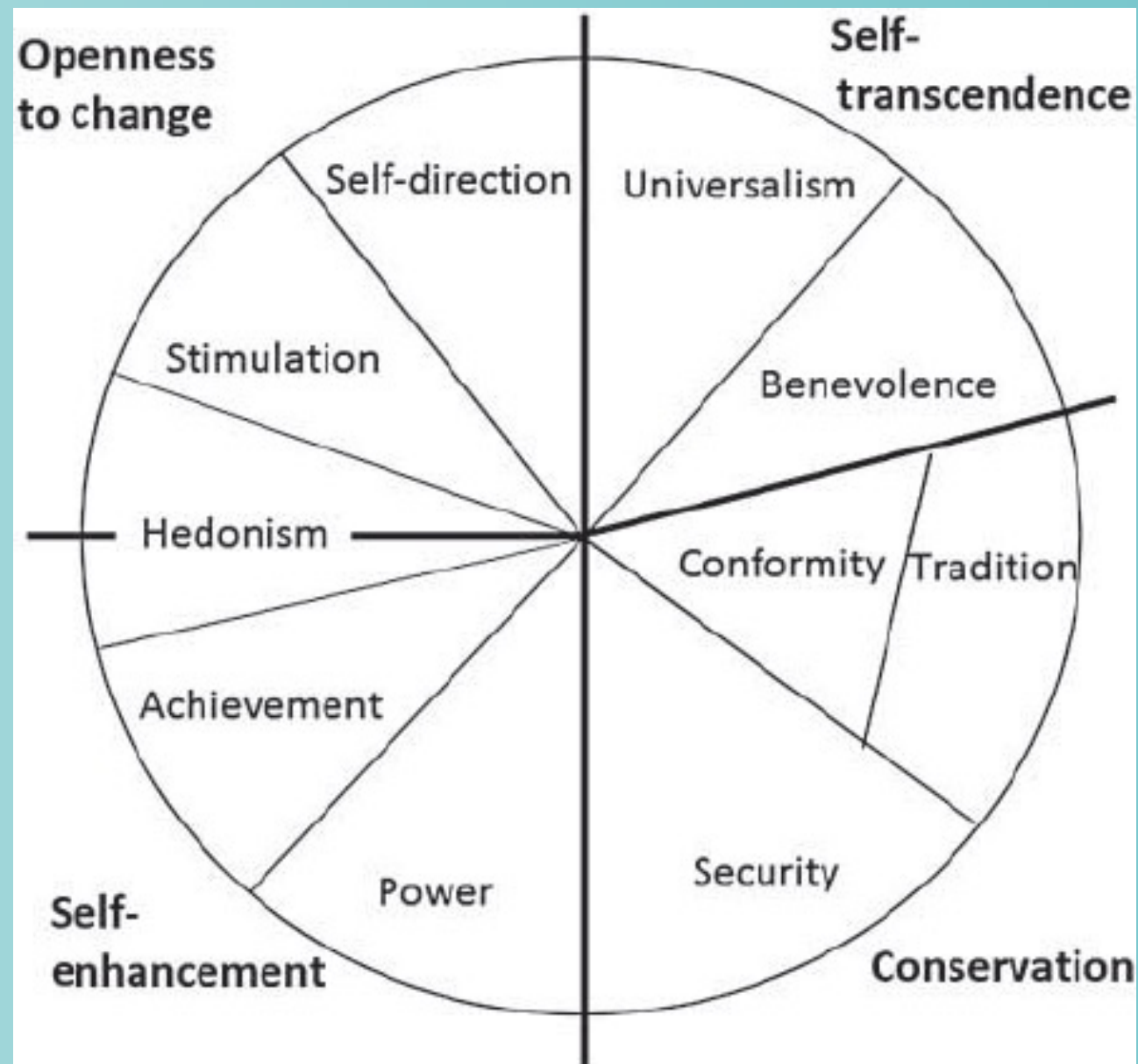
Shared motivations among universal values
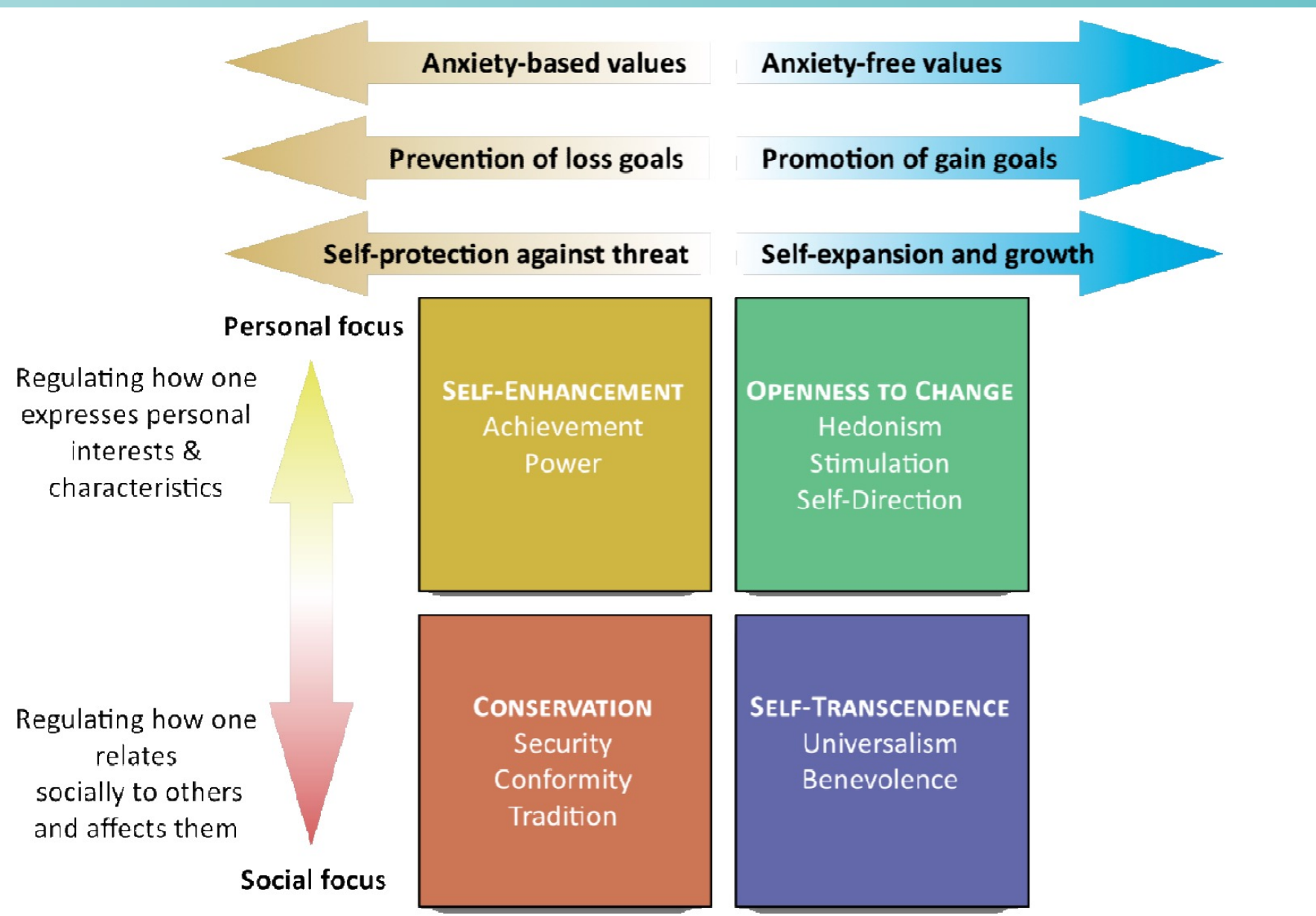
a) power and achievement--social superiority and esteem;

b) achievement and hedonism--self-centered satisfaction;

c) hedonism and stimulation--a desire for affectively pleasant arousal;

d) stimulation and self-direction--intrinsic interest in novelty and mastery;

e) self-direction and universalism--reliance upon one's own judgment and comfort with the diversity of existence;

f) universalism and benevolence--enhancement of others and transcendence of selfish interests;

g) benevolence and tradition--devotion to one's in-group;

h) benevolence and conformity--normative behavior that promotes close relationships;

i) conformity and tradition--subordination of self in favor of socially imposed expectations;

J) tradition and security--preserving existing social arrangements

k) conformity and security--protection of order and harmony

l) security and power--avoiding or overcoming threats through control

Activity

Identify your top presenting values using the Schwartz model. Reflect on how these may change based on the situation, event, issue, the role you are assuming, or other parties involved.

Levels of values will adapt and interact with size and scope of conflict.

Competing Values

Reflect upon situations in which competing values show up in your life and you must make a decision that prioritizes one over the other. What guided your decision to choose one value over another?

Reflect upon an interpersonal conflict in which competing values showed up. How would acknowledgment of values help resolve this conflict?

Reflecting upon how competing values show up in an organization or community you interact with. How would acknowledgment of values help resolve this conflict?

Bringing it all together

Select one of the sample conflicts and assess how systems, identity, or values may have influenced the creation of the conflict. Which of the three is most likely the primary origin of the conflict, and why? How does this shift in thinking support the ability to resolve an interpersonal conflict? How does it position you to help prevent conflicts? How may you use this insight to resolve a conflict in your personal or professional life?

Good-Bye, until next time!

Questions?

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