

Aiming for Safety:

Harm Reduction & Safety Planning



Aiming for Safety:

Harm Reduction & Safety Planning

This tool is to be used while helping a client reduce harm and/or make a plan for safety. Many crimes against persons are inherently dangerous and may often be life threatening, if and, when the victim attempts to leave that situation.

We recommend that this tool is used in collaboration with a professional advocate who understands the principles and practices of trauma informed and healing centered harm reduction strategies, lethality assessment and safety planning. **For advocate assistance, call or reach out for additional guidance.**

Additional Guidance:

24/7 DV support:

www.thehotline.org

800-799-7233

24/7 human trafficking support:

888-373-7888

Exit planning resources:

www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/domestic-violence/leaving-abusive-relationship

The path from "Trauma to Transcendence" is a holistic journey.

Many of our services are rooted within the field of criminal justice with an emphasis of helping victims through the justice process to include the journey from investigation to prosecution to final judgement. This emphasis can cause re-victimization or a sense of institutional betrayal because the path of justice is very difficult.

Whereas:

The National Domestic Violence Hotline conducted a survey of 637 women who experienced domestic abuse:

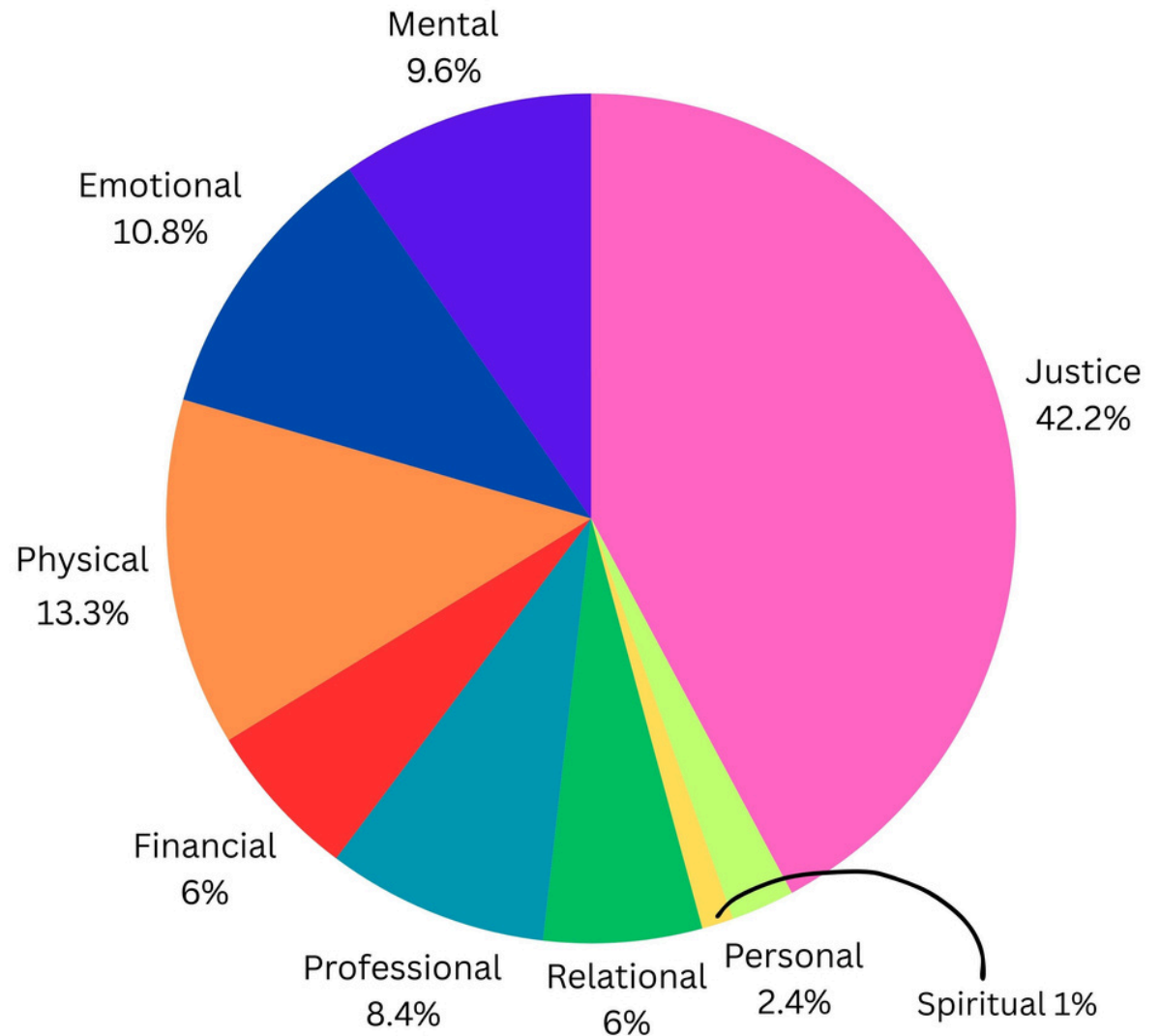
- ☞ More than 2/3 of said that they thought that the police would “not believe them and would do nothing.”**
- ☞ Of all the women who did call the police, only 20% reported that police presence on created a sense of safety.**
- ☞ 25% reported that they where told that they could be arrested while making a report of domestic abuse.**
- ☞ According to the Justice Department's the 2016 National Criminal Victimization Survey, only 23% of rape or sexual assault victims reported the crime to police.**
- ☞ Of those who do report, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting database shows that only about 20% of reports lead to arrest.**
- ☞ According to the nonprofit Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, which analyzes national data regarding sexual assault and rape, only about half of arrests lead to trial.**
- ☞ The most reliable data on conviction rates comes from a Justice Department study that analyzed convictions between 1990 and 2009. That study concluded that rape trials end in conviction around 35% of the time.**

Lets reduce the emphasis on justice right from the start.

The path from trauma to transcendence is a holistic journey. Justice only a small part of that process- and justice is hard to come by.

Be honest about that.
Informed consent is important.

We suggest that upon the first working meeting with a client, help them "to see" holistic healing and talk to them about each aspect of the human experience. We want to encourage them to determine how they want to place their energy and what they want to emphasize in their journey.



What a traditional plan looks like

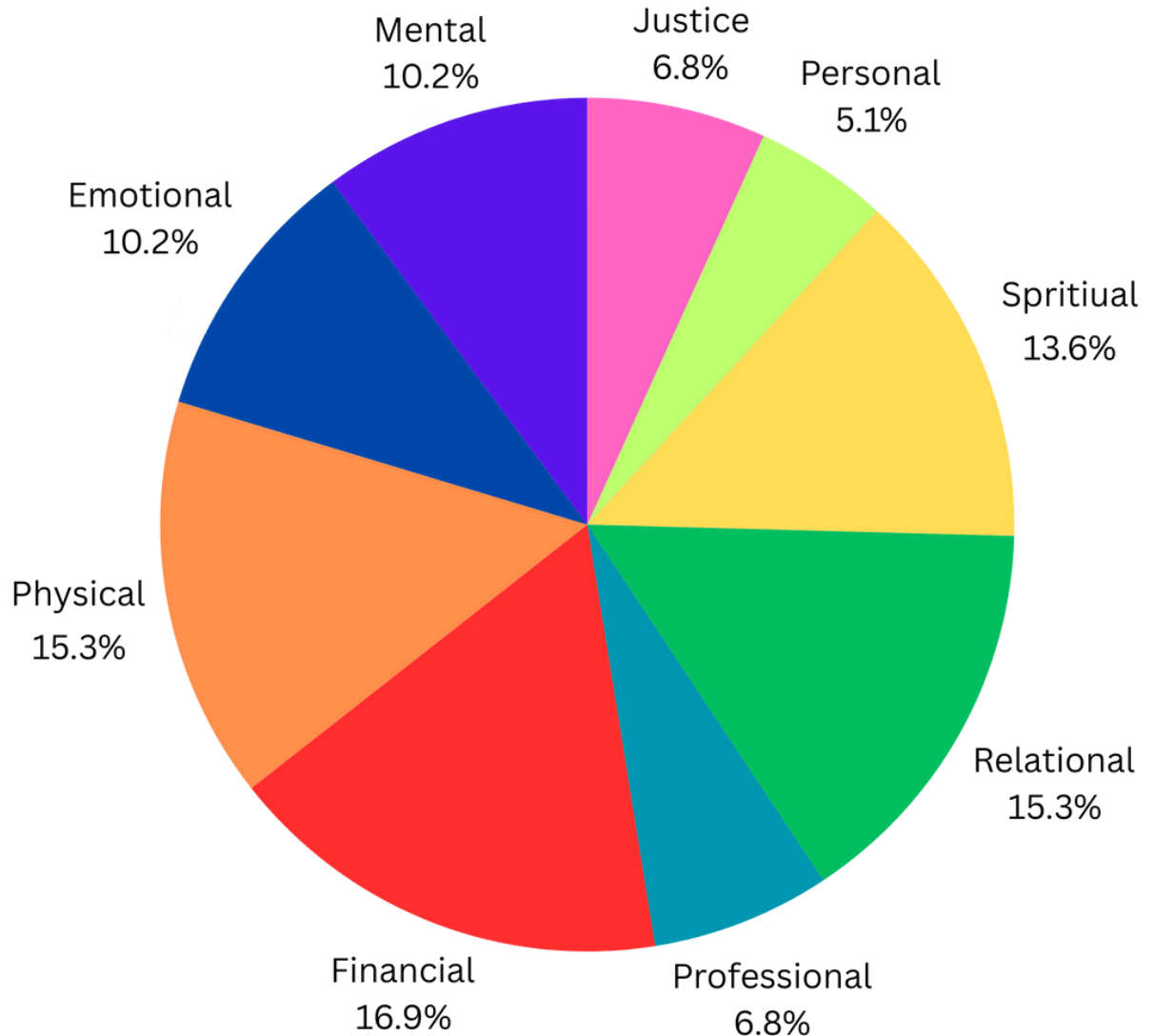
Lets reduce the emphasis on justice right from the start.

**Encourage the client
to determine how much:**

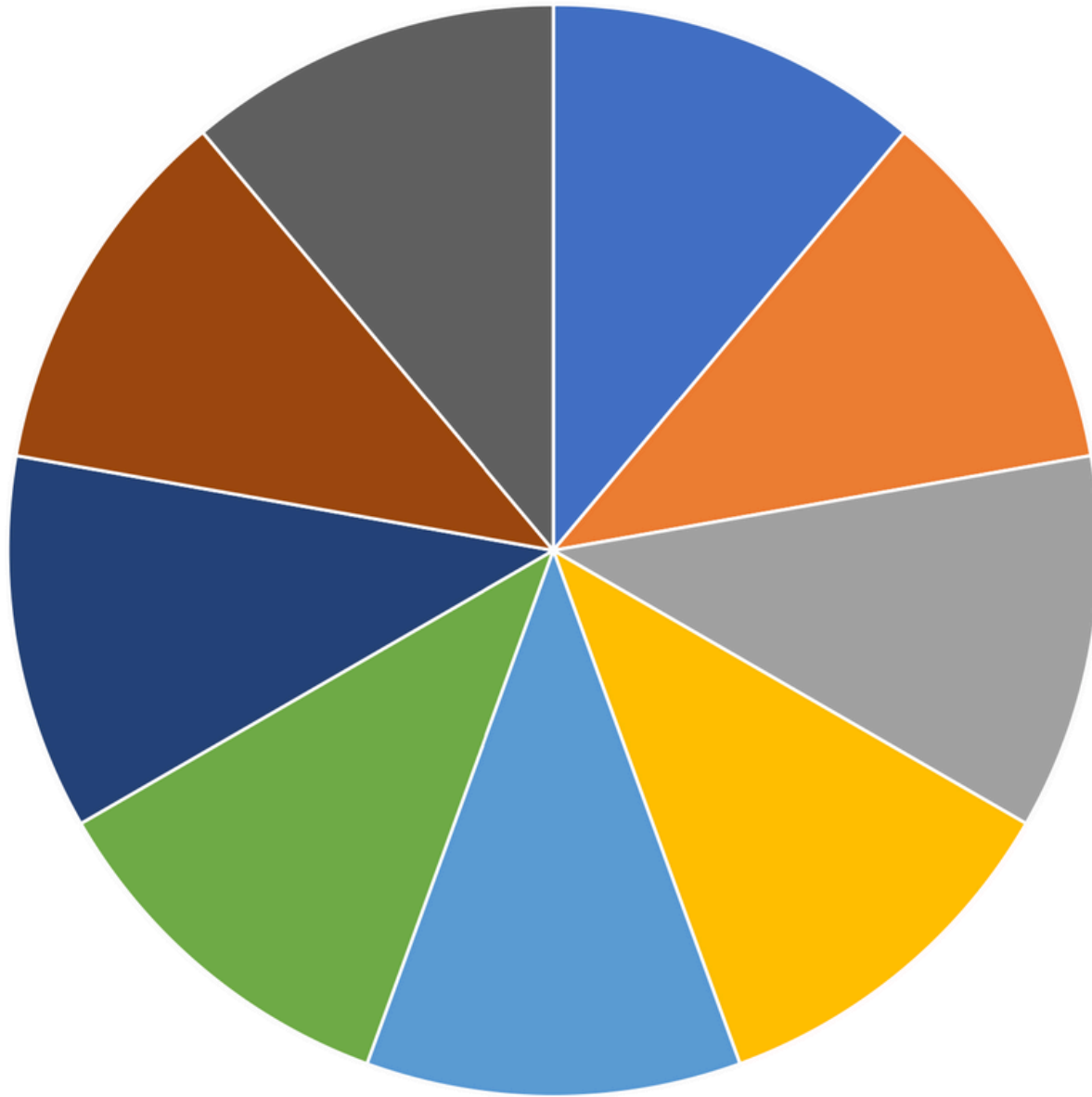
**-time
-effort
-resources
&
-hope**

**that they would like to
be placed in each aspect.**

Each client's "pie" will look different because each client is different. They may even have pieces of the pie that are not represented here- so remain flexible.



What a clients plan may look like



Note: you can make a pie chart using word, powerpoint, google sheets, adobe and/or canva.

Case Management is inherently hope building



creating hope

- 1** The ability to set realistic goals
(I know where I want to go).
- 2** Is able to figure out how to achieve those goals, including the ability to stay flexible and develop alternative pathways
(I know how to get there, I'm persistent, and I can tolerate disappointment and try new paths again and again).
- 3** Has agency- the belief in oneself
(I can do this!)
- 4** Has enough ability, oomph and get-up-and-go to get up and go (I am able to take the steps to act).

adapted from "Atlas of the Heart" by Brene Brown

Macro planning:

Macro safety planning is way to map out all of the facets in the clients life. It is useful to sit with the client and ask them to describe their lives. **Listen** and document areas that need special attention for harm reduction and safety planning.

Environment: Make a list of all physical places the client routinely visits

Facets: Make a list of aspects or facets of the clients life that needs special consideration. Does the client have children? Do they want to leave or stay or stay while making a exit plan? Do they go to church? Do they have pets... listen to unique nature of their lives and help them stay safe or to reduce harm.

The people: Make a list of the people that are in their lives. Help them identify their informal network (friends, family, co-workers....) and their formal network (advocates, crisis workers, case managers, detectives, prosecutors, therapists, medical.....)

Side note: Sometimes It's useful to designate a specific friend or family member as a "bestie advocate" to serve as a conduit during navigation through the criminal justice system.

Lethality Assessment:* Lethality assessment is a skill set that requires training and specialized skill building

For minimum training: www.dangerassessment.org

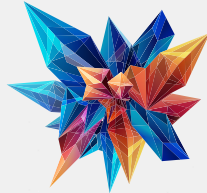
Example of Macro Planning



- Home
- School
- Gym
- Church
- Store (s)
- The Vet
- Club
- Social Spots
- Park
- Trail
- Path

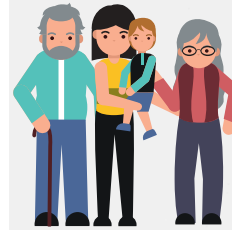
Ask them to describe their routines.

The Facets



- Safety while staying
 - A path to leave
- Workplace safety
- Safety at church
- Safety at Gym
- Child planning
- School planning
 - Pet safety
- Physical stalking
 - Tech stalking
- Back up planning
 - Stalking

Ask the client which facets or aspects of life that need special consideration



The people

- Primary Client
- Children
- Pets

Informal Network:

- Family Members
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Co-workers
- Supervisor

Formal Network:

- Spiritual Support
- Mental health
- Medical Team
- Advocate
- Crisis Worker
- Caseworker
- Teacher

Are there people who are not safe?



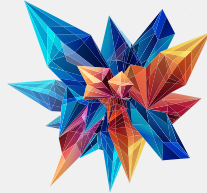
- Perception of infidelity
- Strangulation
- Asphyxiation
- Water breath threat
- Available Gun
- Have left relationship
- History of violence
- Increase in violence
 - Rape
- Depression
- Threats of homicide
- Threats of suicide
- Threats of lethal weapon
 - Drugs & Alcohol
 - Level of Control
 - Step child
- Threats to children
 - Pregnancy
- Pregnancy Violence
- Level of power over
- Level of controlling
 - Level of jealousy
- Stalking

Does client believe that life is under threat?

Macro planning work sheet



The Facets



**The
people**



Micro Planning

- Micro planning is way to problem solve facets - client Identified problems by using decision trees.

- With the client, look at the macro planning chart and discuss every point.

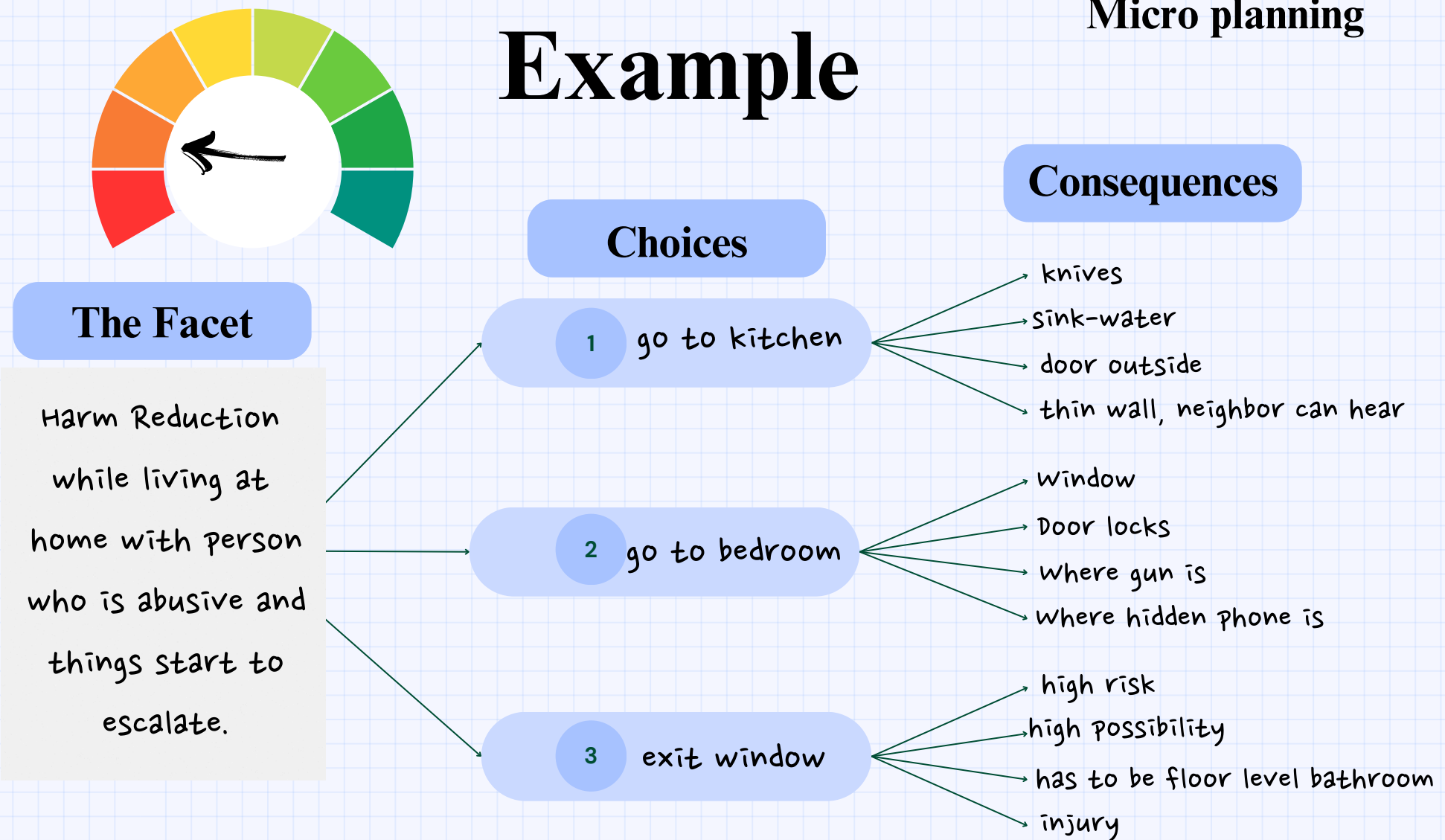
- Notice and **Listen**: When the client feels sure and certain about their safety in some of the points, offer education when needed- but move on. Practice self determination and let client know that they are the experts in their own lives and you will support this process to be done in the way they choose.

- Notice the points that are sticky and/or emotional, and carry uncertainty- explicitly ask the client which points they want to discuss and create safety plans for. For each facet, create a branch of the tree to make sure you are mapping it out well. Feel free to add additional branches when needed. Encourage the client to critical think about their choices and the possible consequences of each choice.

- Talk about risk (please attend training on lethality assessment) and encourage the client to assign risk to each facet.

- Conduct this exercise in a non- judgmental and supportive way. Remember that they are the masters of their universe and may not make the same choices that you would make. That is ok. They are in charge of their own lives- we are there to support the path that they pick.

Example



The plan for this facet:

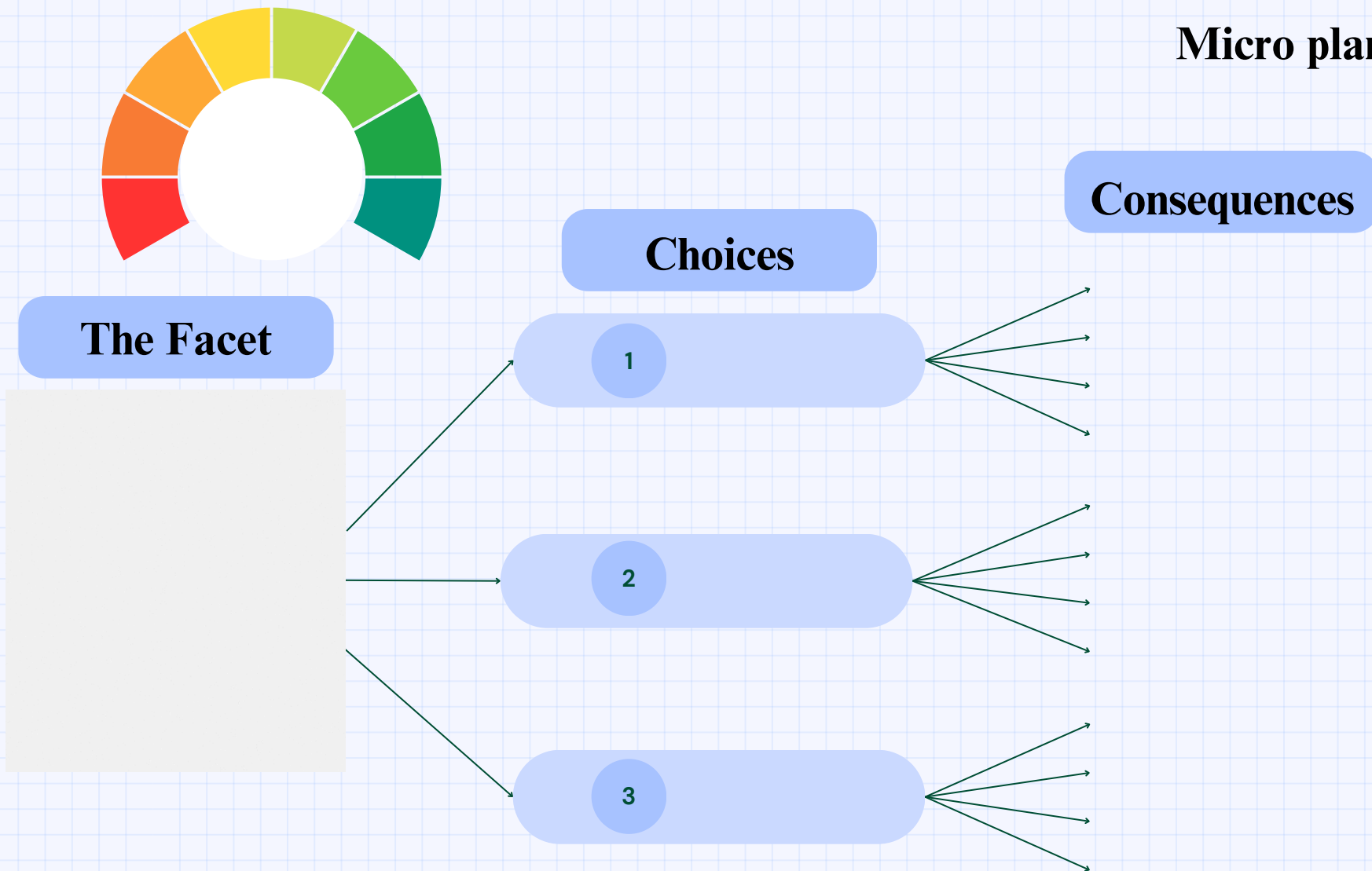
If things start to escalate:

plan a: get to lower level bathroom (have to pee), climb out window, grab hidden keys, run to car, leave to safety location

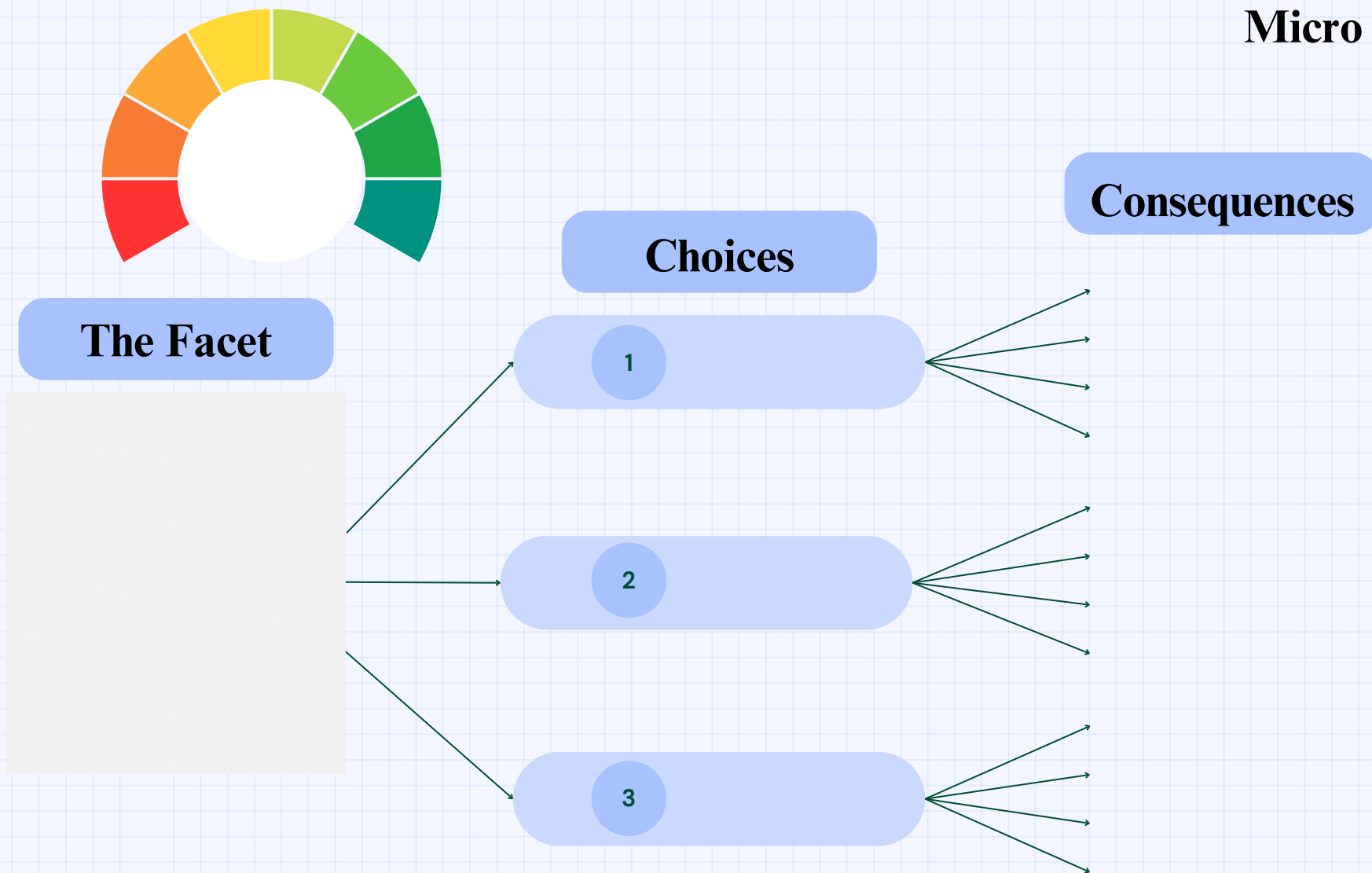
plan b: go to living room, pacify and placate

plan c: go to bedroom, lock door, call 911, unload gun

Micro planning



The plan for this facet:



The plan for this facet:

Multi-Incident Log (See QR code on next page):

Document each incident (no matter how seemingly small) to the best of your ability

This can be used for stalking, domestic abuse, human trafficking, child abuse, harassment, bullying, sexual assault and/or any other multi-incident experiences.

Goal #1: is to capture the pattern of abuse and violence.

Many types of crime victimization happen in clusters. The entire picture is made up of a series of incidents aka “patterns”.

☞ For example, in a domestic abusive relationship, a person might experience several years of various physical and/or sexual assaults, incidents of stalking, moments of being controlled, isolation and more. The goal is capturing each incident- all the big and small- so that you can successfully articulate and communicate the entirety of the experience.

Goal #2: is to capture increase in, both, number of abusive incidents and in severity.

Often, abusive behaviors creep into a relationship like mold. The abusive incidents start out small and often have large windows of time in-between the incidents. This tool is useful in capturing two very important patterns:

1.) Number and types of abusive incidents:

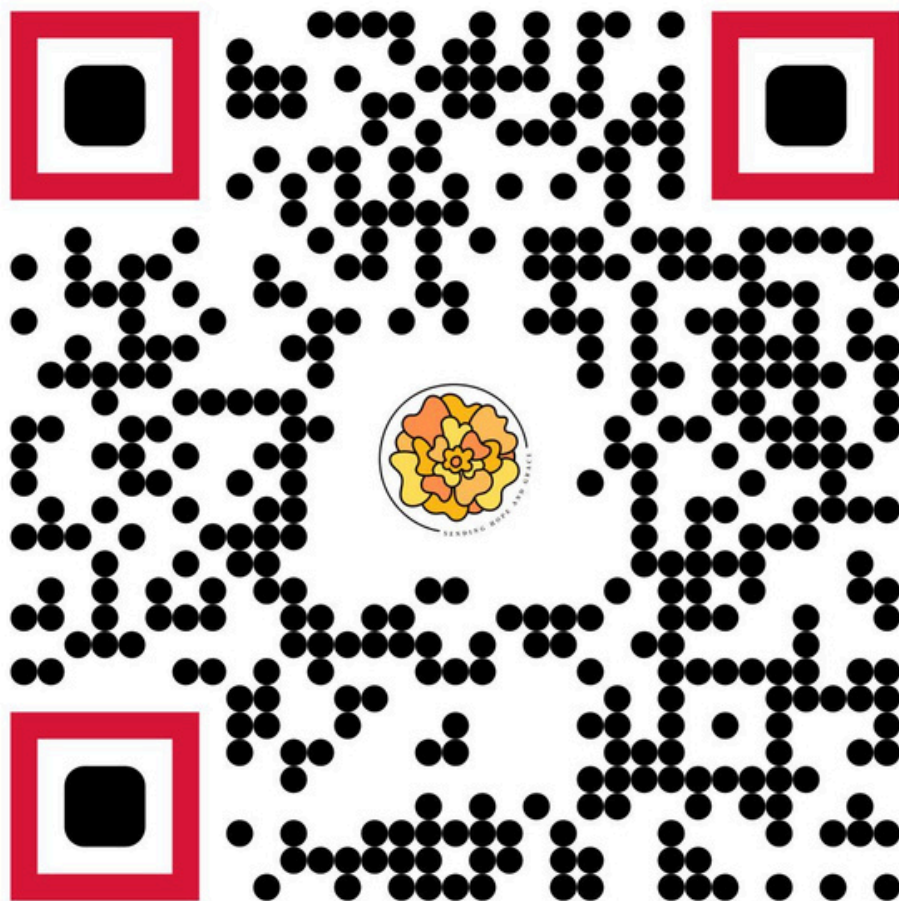
It is useful to see if the number and types of abusive incidents is growing or if the amount of time between each incident is getting smaller.

For example, did the person experience more incidents of abusive behavior this week than they did two weeks ago? Is the trajectory regularly going higher?

2.) Severity of the abuse:

It is very important to take notice if the severity of abusive behavior is increasing.

For example, are the physical injuries greater than before? Is the level of fear higher? Are things escalating or becoming more intense?



use phone camera to scan

Sample incident plan:

-Feel free to recreate as
pdfs may not be the easiest
way to do things

Email for a word copy:
myrastrand@strandsquared.com

Planning to leave an abusive relationship is serious business

Leaving an abuser is often extremely dangerous. The person who practices abuse is losing control and it is very common and predictable for the violence to escalate during the leaving process. This is a very high-risk time period.

Make a “before you leave plan” (if possible- emphasize safety and pivoting if things escalate):

- Keep all documentation and evidence about the abusive behavior
- Know where to find help
- Locate and Assemble Important Documents, irreplaceable items and medical needs
- Organize Important Phone Numbers
- Set money aside (if possible- if not possible can funds be raised?)
- Make a next chapter of life plan (where to go, where to work, where to live....etc.)
- Document everything

Preplan the actual moment of exit (if possible):

- Know where to go- or have possible locations identified (like hotel, DV shelter, someones home)
- Plan transportation
- If possible, plan when the person who abuses is away (out of town, at work, with friends....)
- If possible have an exit team to help (law enforcement, advocate, friends or family)
- If possible plan to have a few days to decompress and regroup
- Have "plan a, plan b, plan c"; unpredictable moments happen, be ready to pivot and adjust
- Document everything

After leaving:

- Safety plan for stalking and personal safety
- Consider getting a new phone (start with new Gmail and do not sync with old phone)
- If needed, take all devices to a computer specialist and ask them to look for spyware.
- Alter all routines (shopping, working out, church, socializing)
- Discuss situation with friends, family and co-workers
- Alert school and/or work of the situation
- Consider getting a dog
- Consider address confidentiality program
- Document everything
- Make new home safer (steel doors, extra locks for doors and windows, outdoor motion lighting, security system)

Additional Guidance:

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24/7 human trafficking support:

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Exit planning resources:

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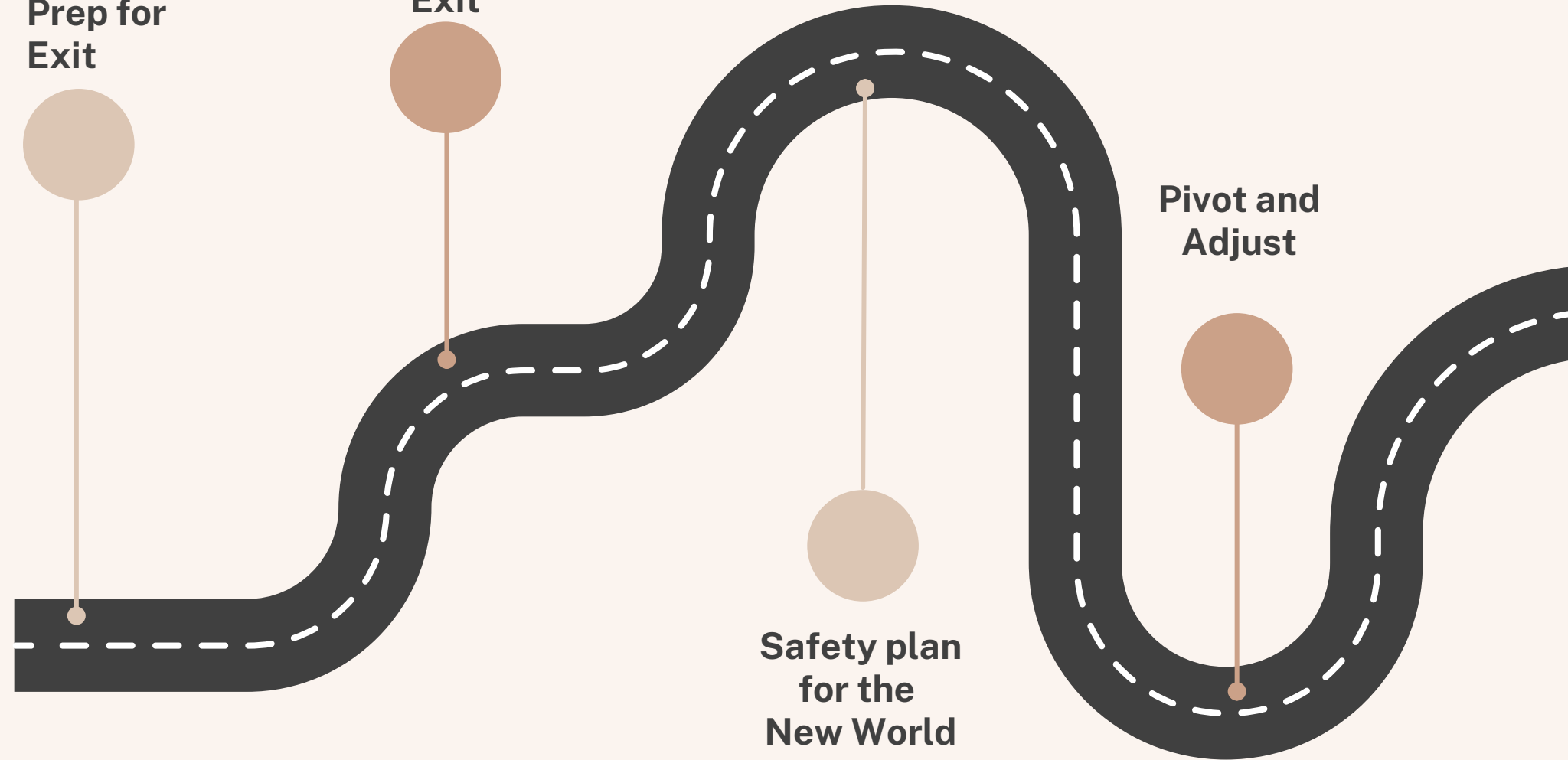
**Prep for
Exit**

**the Physical
Exit**

**Pivot and
Adjust**

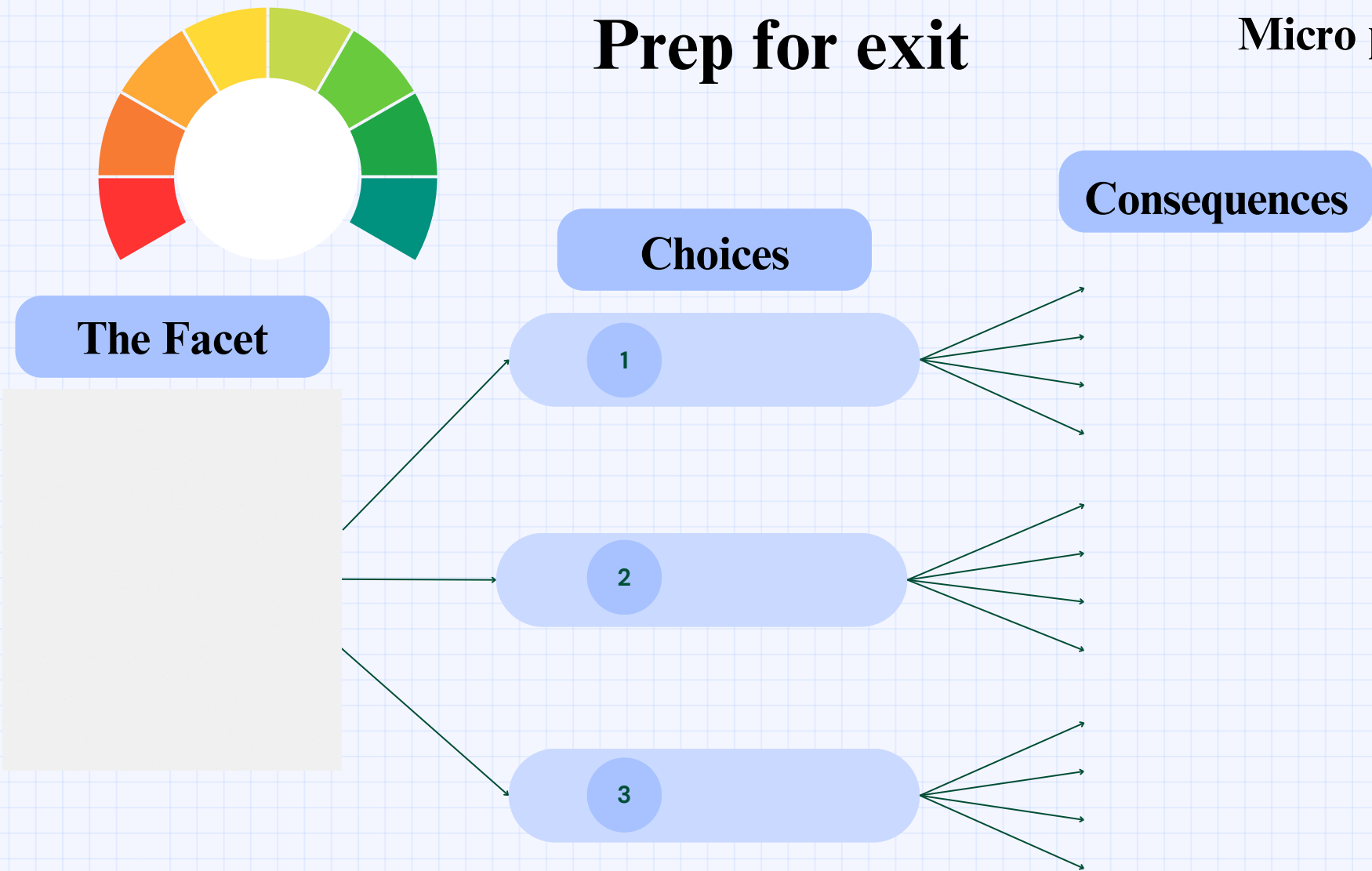
**Safety plan
for the
New World**

exit plan



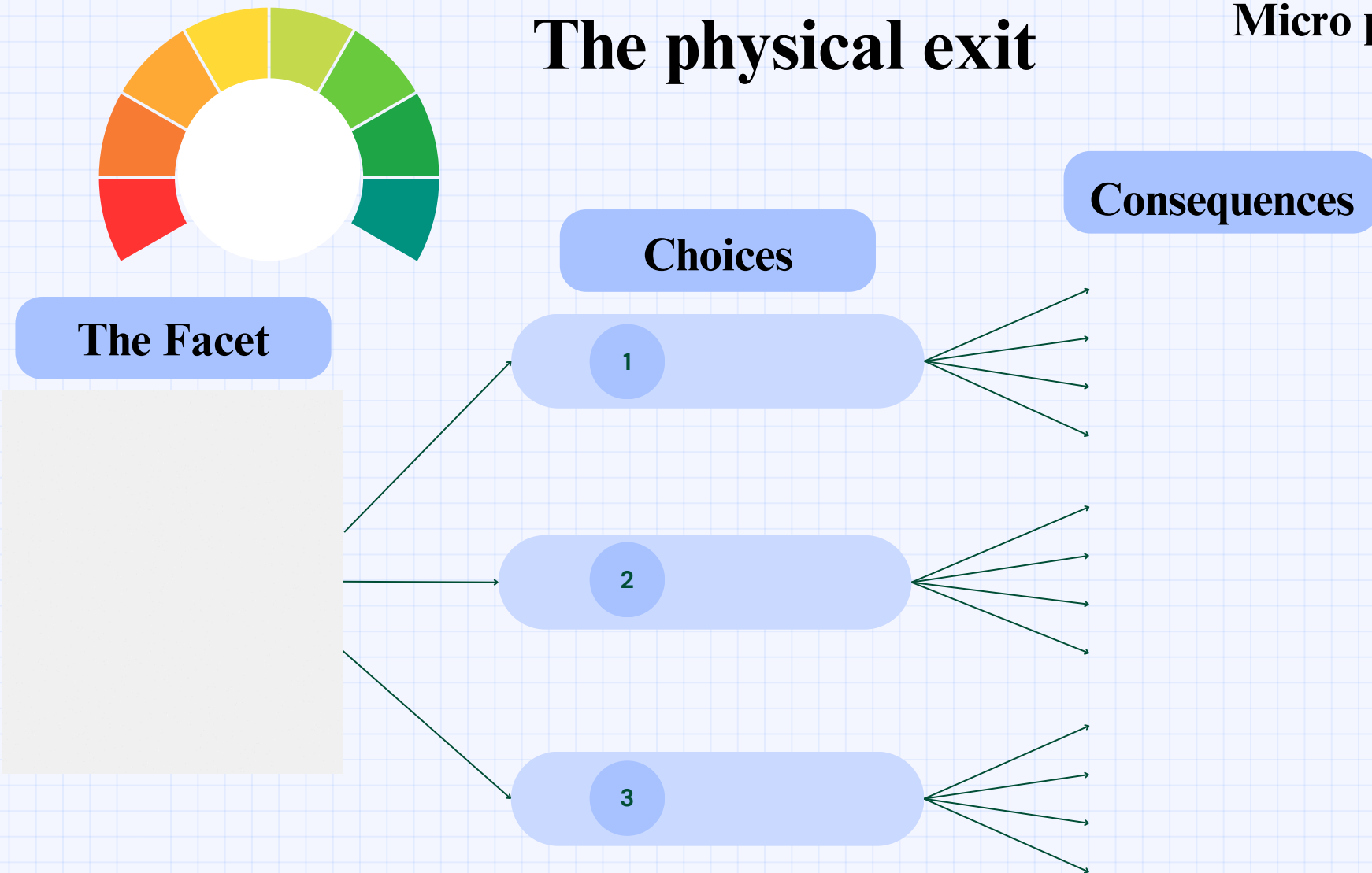
Prep for exit

Micro planning



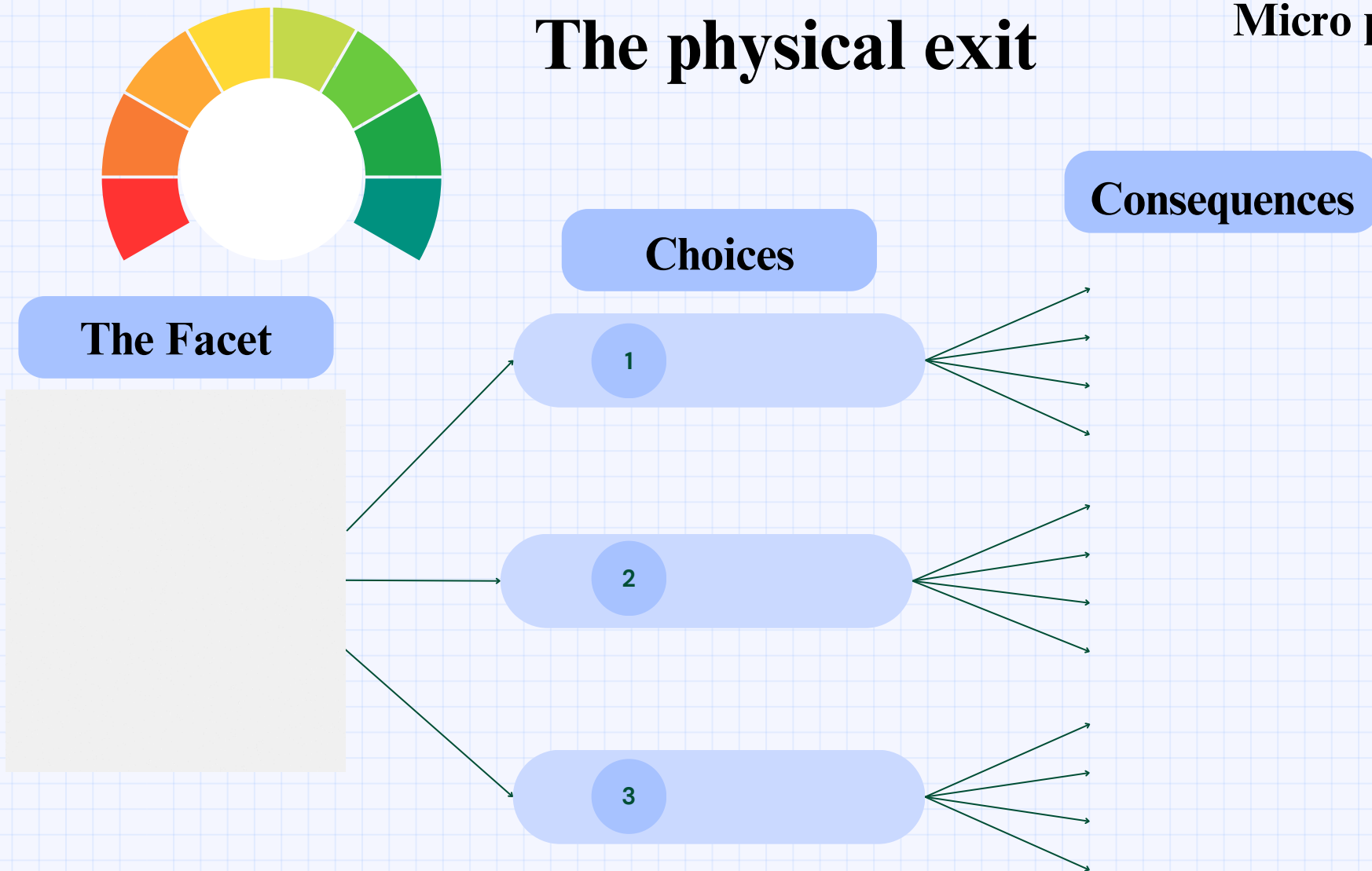
The plan for this facet:

The physical exit



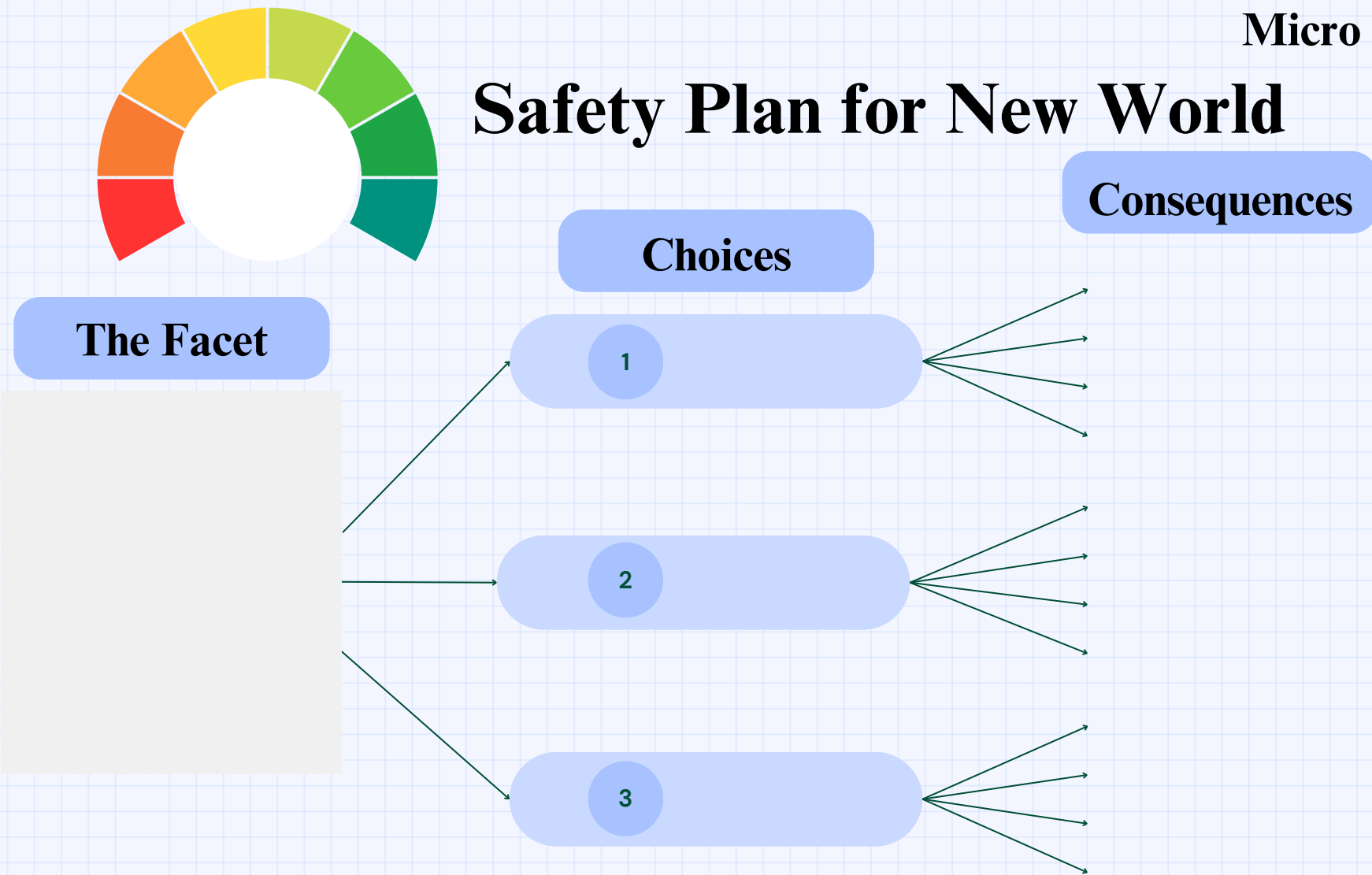
The plan for this facet:

The physical exit



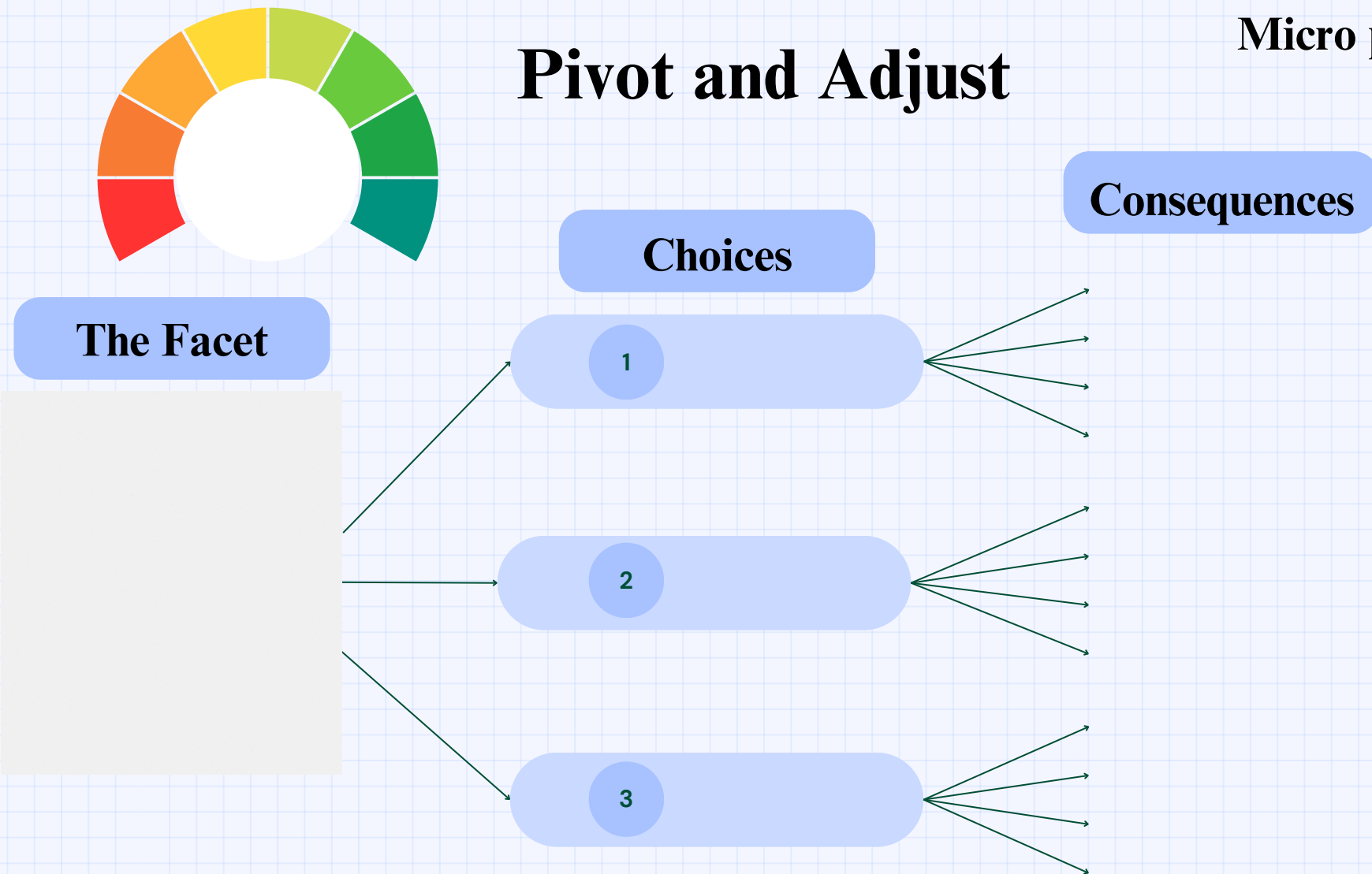
The plan for this facet:

Safety Plan for New World



The plan for this facet:

Pivot and Adjust



The plan for this facet:

cheat sheet for safety planning with children

- Teach children when, how, and who to contact during an emergency (make sure to let the emergency contact know the plan).
- Come up with a code word or phrase for when to leave the house in an emergency and make sure they know not to tell others what the secret word means.
- Come up with a code word or phrase for when to hide and Identify a safe place to meet If the children must flee the house
- Identify a room in the house that they can go to when they're afraid, and something calming they can focus on for comfort.
- Instruct them to stay out of areas containing items that could be used to harm them, including rooms with weapons, kitchens, bathrooms or near pool and/or hot tube.
- Make sure that there is a plan for the pets, so the children do not feel responsible for them (unless the client and child feel like this would be very easy for them).
- Teach them that they shouldn't try to intervene in moments of violence, even though they may want to protect their parents.
- Create a separate safety plan for situations in which your children may spend unsupervised time with the person who practices abuse.
- If possible, give your children a cell phone to be used in emergency situations.
- Emotional safety plan for yourself and your children. Figure out something to do to calm any nerves you might be feeling.
- Plan for what you will do if your children tell the person who practices abuse the plan, and remember never to blame them for their responses to the abuse that they witness.

For a more resources that offer more guidance:

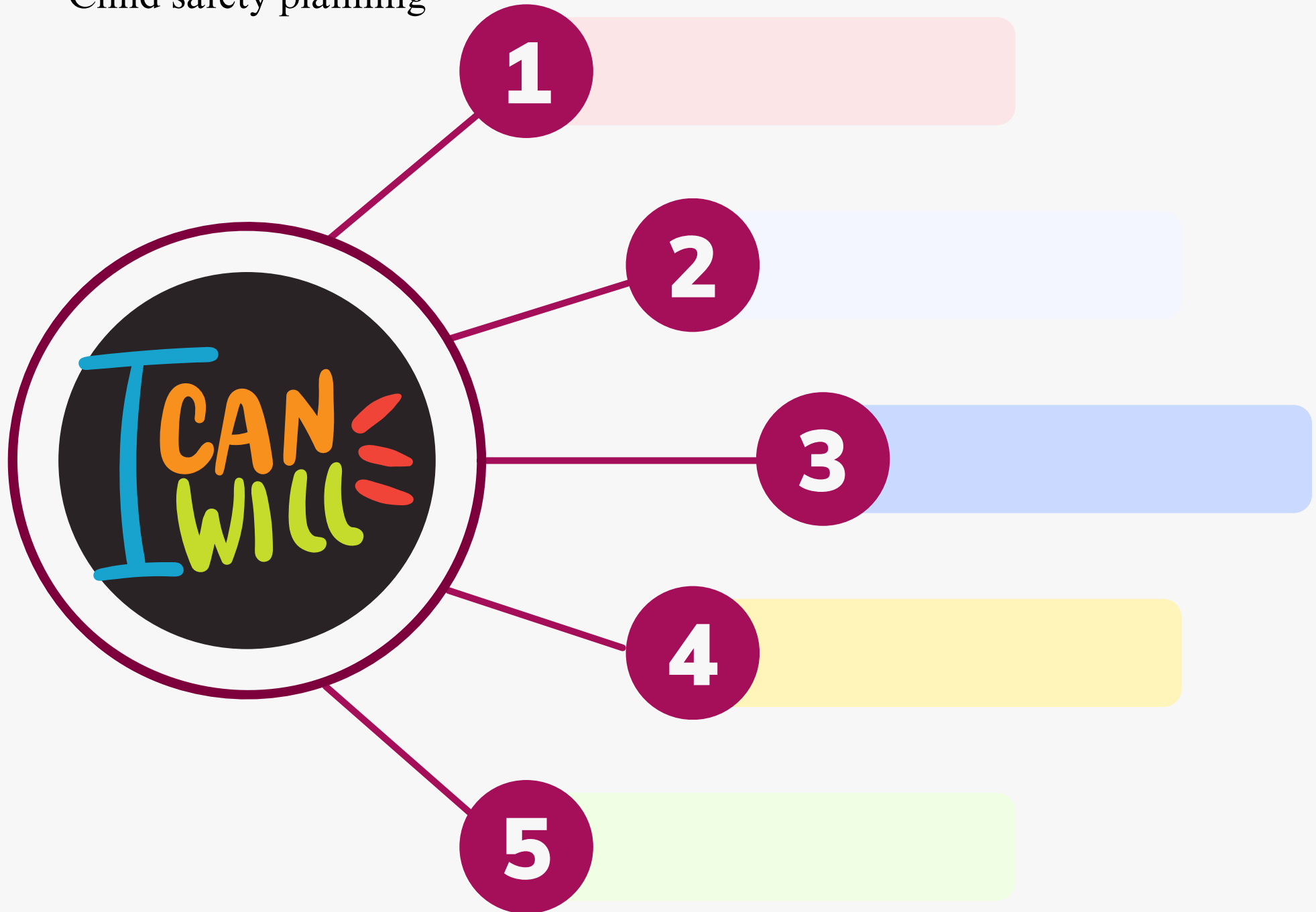
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/victims-of-crime/vs-info-for-professionals/training/child-youth-safety-toolkit.pdf>

<https://www.womenslaw.org/about-abuse/safety-tips/safety-planning-children>

<https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/create-a-family-safety-plan.htm>



Child safety planning



"Blue Print Planning"

A blue print plan is for when a client is staying in the same home as the person who is abusing them. The goal of this plan is to help them analyze the home and reduce harm when things start to escalate. This type of critical thinking and problem solving is a useful exercise.

- Ask the client to sketch out the blue print of their home.
- Spend time analyzing each room for risk and for possible protection.
 - where are the weapons
 - which rooms have possible escape windows (or painted shut windows)
 - are there rooms where one could get trapped
 - if there is a pool or hot tub, remember that they could be weaponized
 - are there possible hiding places for spare car keys outside
 - are there possible hiding places for a secret emergency phone (and keep charged)
 - is there a place for the children to hide or to escape?
- Is there a way to communicate danger with neighbors? (a hidden walky talky, secret intercom, or app, a bold outdoor light)
- Is there a place for pets to be safe? How will that work? Is it possible to train dog to go to escape room? Do the pets need a temp home?

This is a great chance to discuss:

- Is there a place to hide a hidden bag of clothes?
 - the neighbors
 - the car trunk (make that look like a goodwill donation)
 - a friends house
- Put irreplaceable items somewhere safe:
 - legal documents (birth certificates, social security cards, picture ids, passports, financial documents, passwords)
 - photos, heirlooms, valuable jewelry

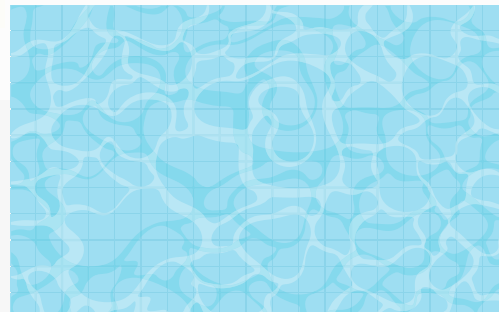
Sample blue print plan

hide spare keys here



High risk areas:

- gun is in bedroom
- knives are in kitchen
- pool out back



Strengths Based Approach

Strengths-based approach is a collaborative process between client and case manager. Together, they work together to determine an outcome that draws on the client's strengths and assets:

- Strengths-based approaches value the hope, capacity, skills, experience, education, knowledge, connections and potential in individuals and communities.
- Focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring challenges, or spinning struggle into strength. It is about supporting a client in creating a well thought out plan that can help them pursuit their goals.
- Case managers working in this way have to work in collaboration - helping people to do things for themselves. In this way, people can become co-producers of support, not passive consumers of support. It sits on a foundation of self-determination and self-efficacy.
- The strengths approach to practice has broad applicability across a number of practice settings and a wide range of populations.
- There is also evidence that use of a strengths-based approach can improve social networks and enhance well-being

What are your strengths?

Who are the people you can count on?
Family? Friends? Church or Yoga Community?

What services do you regularly use?

Where do you receive services?
Counseling? Medical? Advocacy? Benefits?

What is your resume like? What is your professional history?

How do you take care of your mind? How is the state of your emotions?
How do you navigate emotional charges and feelings?

Do you have a spiritual practice? How is it going?

How would you describe your finances? Your bills?

Where do you want to go from here? How do you want to do that?

Look for External Assets:

Note: Search Institute has assets identified from ages 0-18. We believe that identifying assets in adults will help with identifying strengths.



40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets

Support

1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations

11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.

Look for Internal Assets:

Note: Search Institute has assets identified from ages 0-18. We believe that identifying assets in adults will help with identifying strengths.

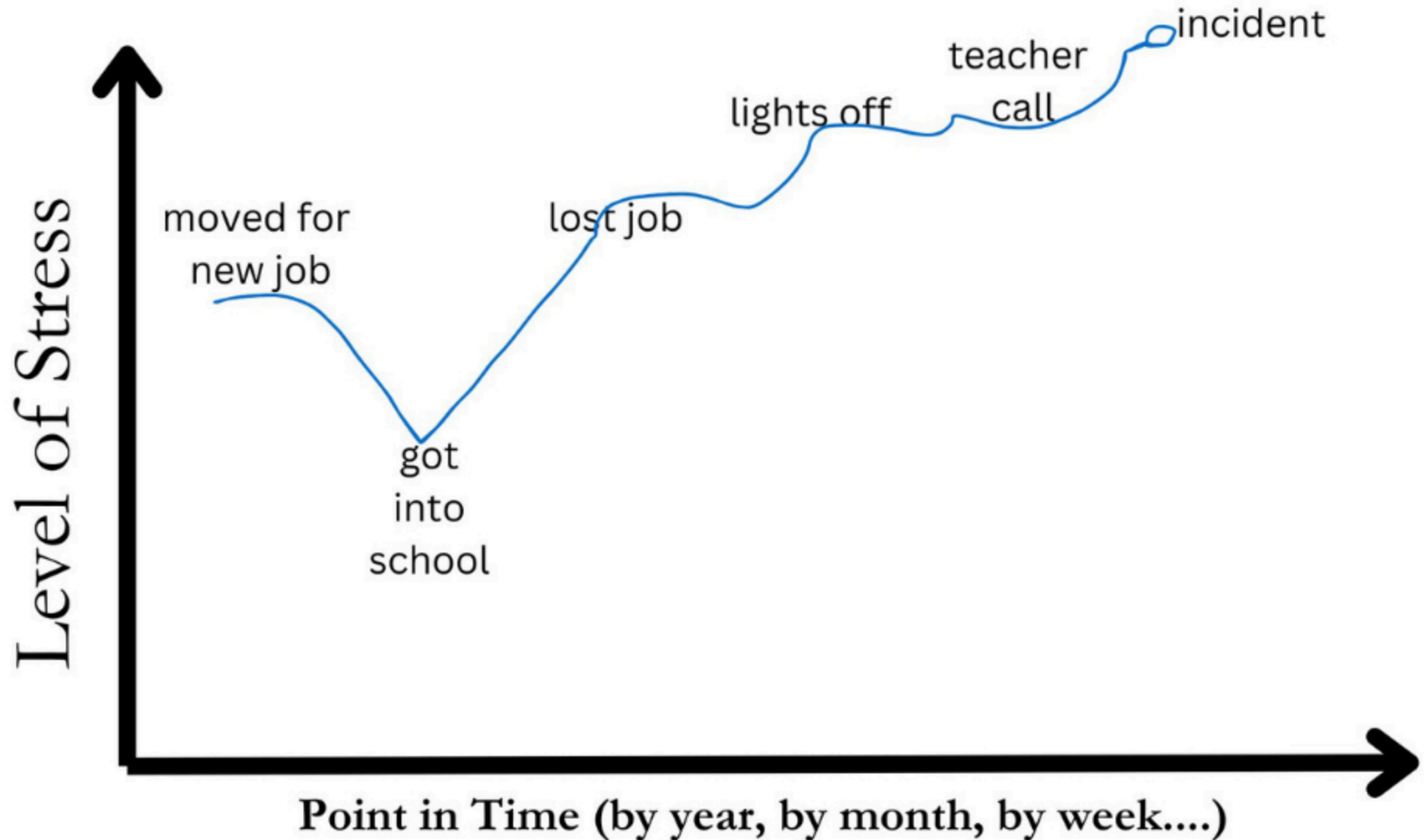
Internal Assets

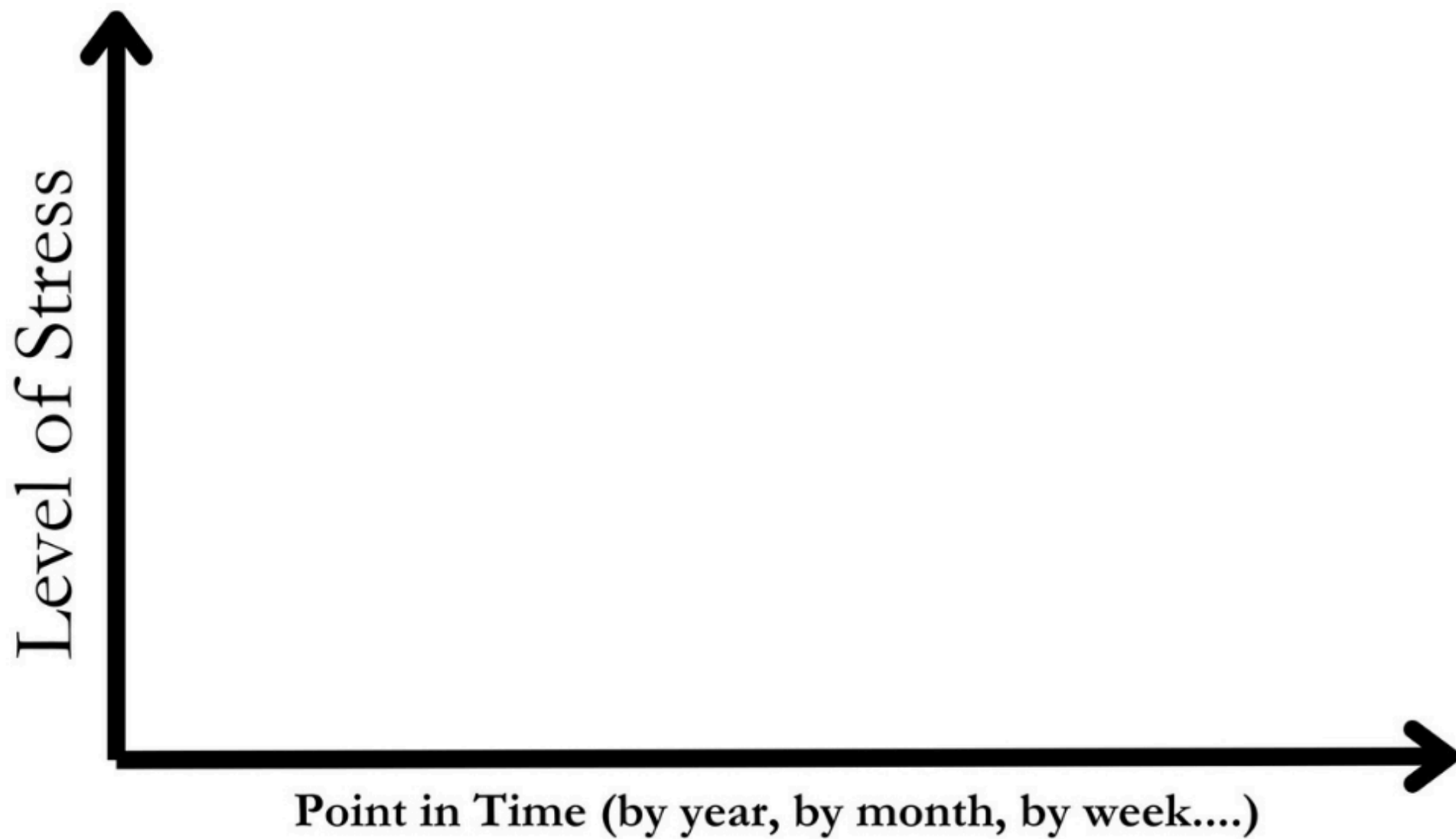
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Commitment to Learning | 21. Achievement Motivation —Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement —Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework —Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to school —Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure —Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week. |
| Positive Values | 26. Caring —Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and social justice —Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity —Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty —Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
30. Responsibility —Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint —Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs. |
| Social Competencies | 32. Planning and decision making —Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence —Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence —Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance skills —Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution —Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently. |
| Positive Identity | 37. Personal power —Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
38. Self-esteem —Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of purpose —Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
40. Positive view of personal future —Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future. |



www.searchinstitute.org

Make a timeline of important and/or significant events that caused stress (or joy, change, growth....). This is a flexible tool.





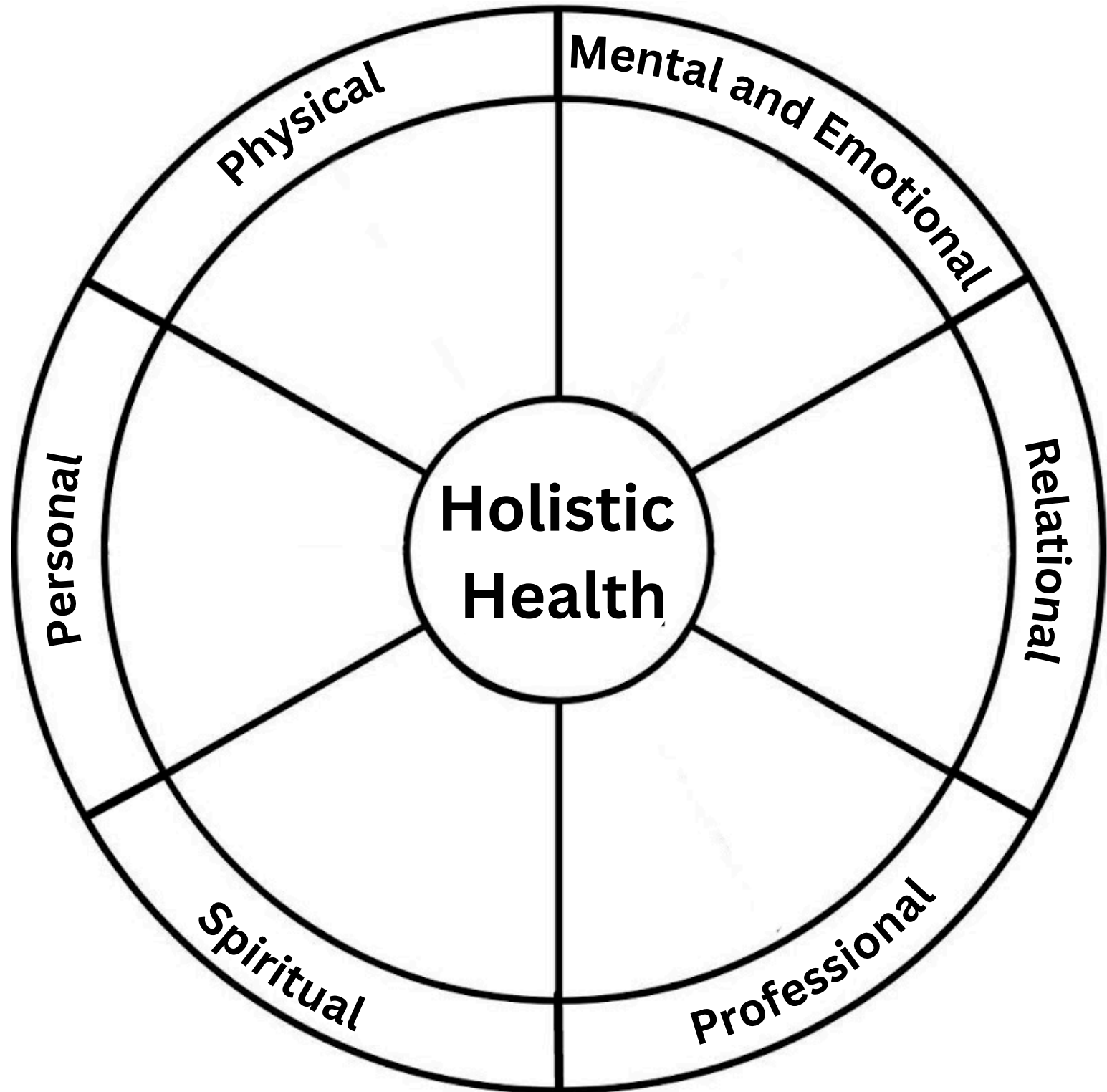
Holistic safety planning and harm reduction takes the whole person into consideration.

This is no easy task.

Holistic safety looks different for different people, but planning holistically is ultimately about developing a personalized plan that helps the client to feel, accept and cope with emotions, make thoughtful decisions when dealing with abuse and to begin the difficult journey towards self regulation, healing and post traumatic growth. Holistic safety planning can also build resilience and building coping mechanisms that will be useful when navigating the impacts of abuse.

Here are some tools that can be used to help create and maintain a plan.





Holistic Self Care Plan



Use phone camera to scan





This tool is the product of a collaboration led by Strand Squared Solutions.

About Strand Squared Solutions:

Strand Squared Solutions provides training and technical assistance for individuals or organizations that serve people who have experienced a crisis incident, something traumatic, and/or crime victimization.

- ☞ Mission: To pave a path from trauma to transcendence[1] through training, education, and technical assistance.
- ☞ Vision: A global response to crisis and trauma that is hopeful, human, trauma informed, and centered on transcendence.
- ☞ Link to guiding principles: <https://strandsquared.com/values-and-guiding-principles1/>

The purpose of this tool is to help with harm reduction and safety planning with victims who are living with abusive behaviors. Please reach out to us if you need assistance or want to connect at myrastrand@strandsquared.com.

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-We love our community ❤️



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