Developing a Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

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InSites
2014 President of the
American Evaluation Association

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A Support Network for Learning and Change

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Basic Definition of a System

A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something.

Meadows, D. (2008). *Thinking in systems*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.

Key Message

Systems-Oriented Evaluation:

From Afterthought to Forethought

Why?

Our Changing World

Social Systems

Then:
Stable, limited connections

Now:
Complex, connected, dynamic

Why?

Our Changing World

System Interventions

Then:
Individual programs, policies

Now:
Multi-faceted, overlapping, dynamic

Why?

Our Changing World

Evaluation Approach

Then:
Formative and Summative

Now:
Developmental with Nested Formative and Summative

Formative Evaluation

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Summative Evaluation

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Developmental Evaluation

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Traditional Strategy Approach

Establish goals

Develop action plan

Implement plan

Evaluate results

Evaluation and Strategy Repositioned and Redesigned

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Developing an Evaluation Framework

Step 1. Articulate Fundamental System Change Using Existing Evidence

Step 2. Identify Points of Systemic Influence

Step 3. Weave Strategy and Evaluation with System Change

Step 4. Identify Indicators of System Benefit

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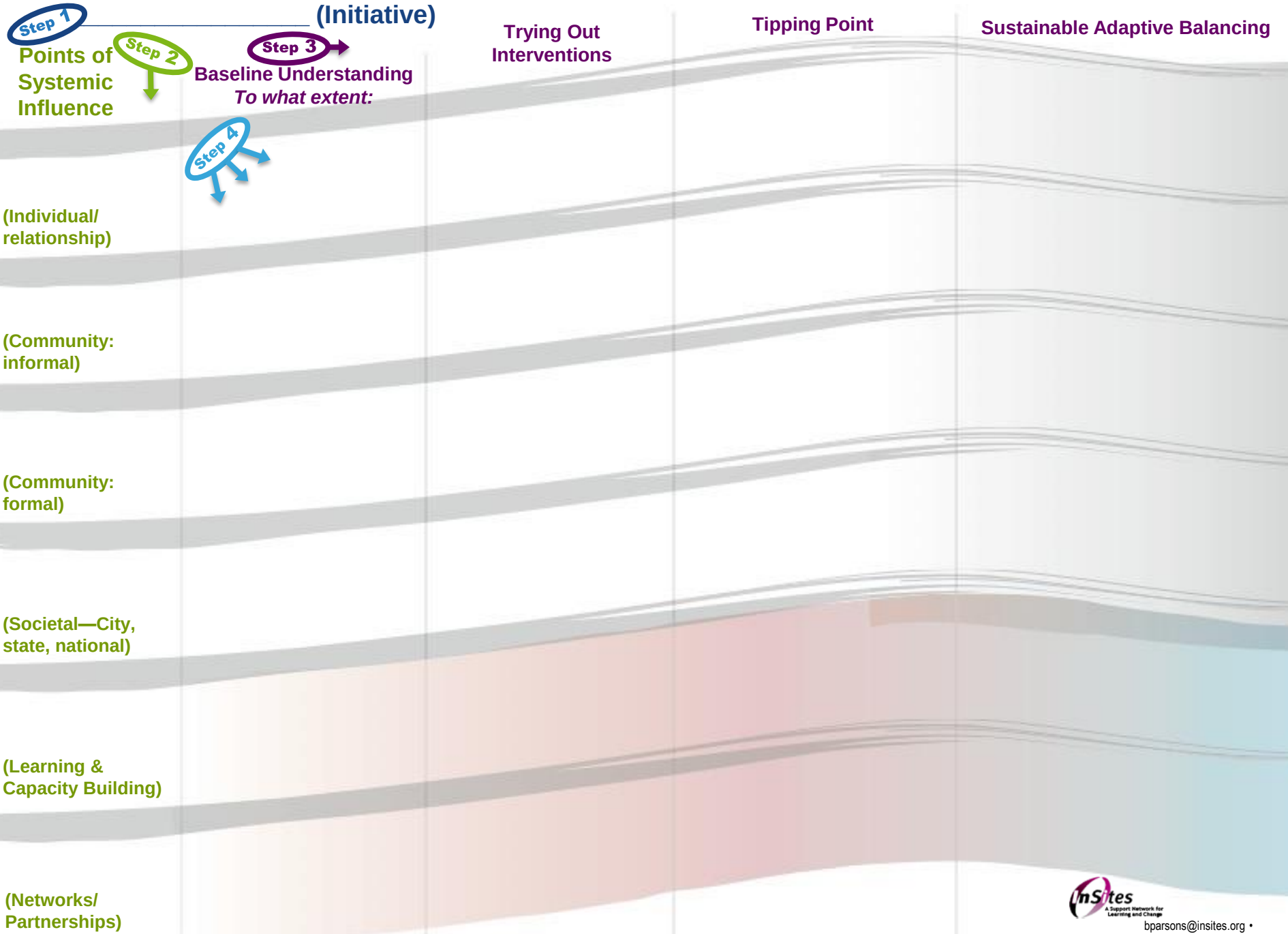
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation



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Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture

Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture

Map actions among partners

Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture

Map actions among partners

Be transparent

Value of the Evaluation Framework

Link strategy and evaluation

See the big picture

Map actions among partners

Be transparent

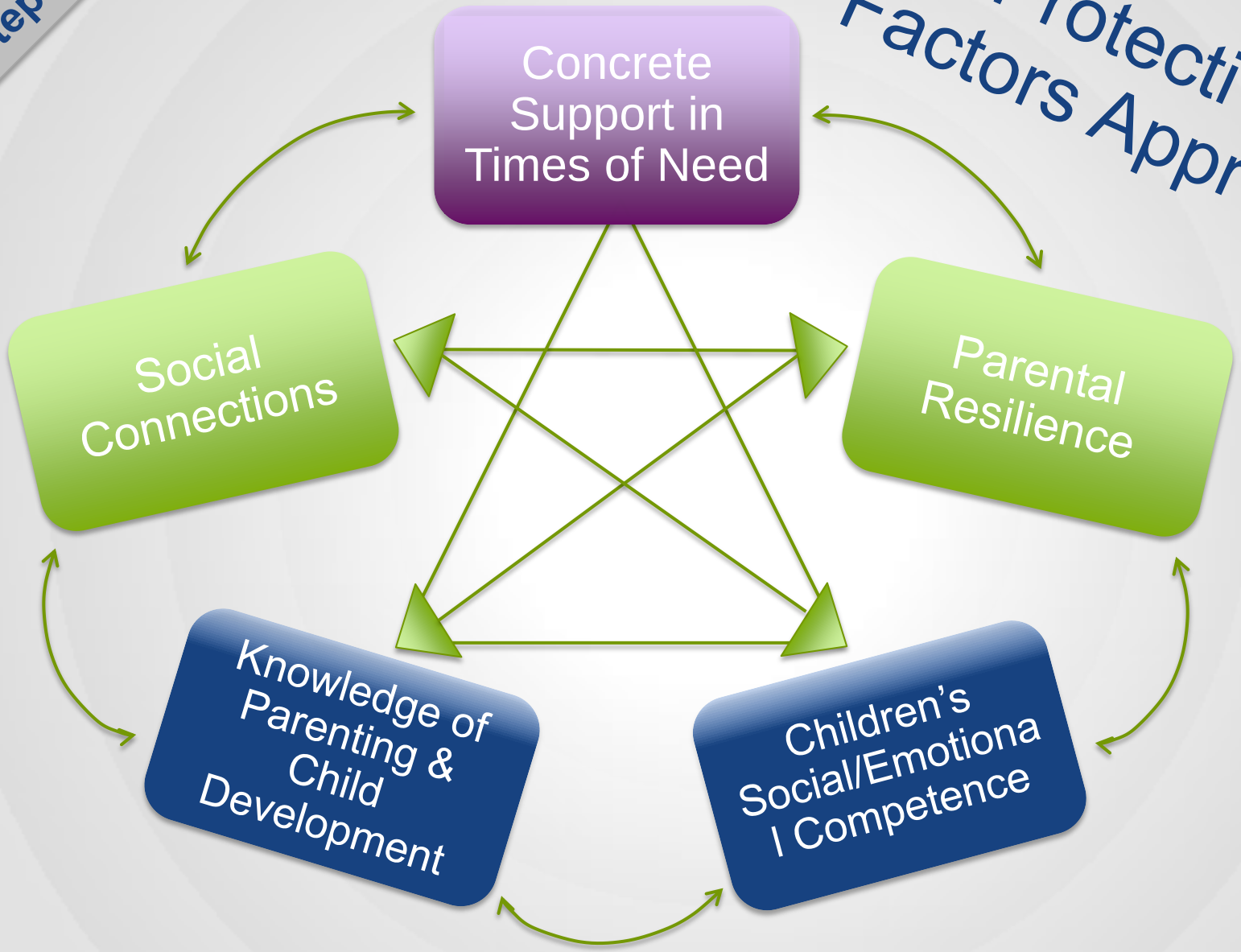
Map progress over time

Step One

Articulate Desired System Change

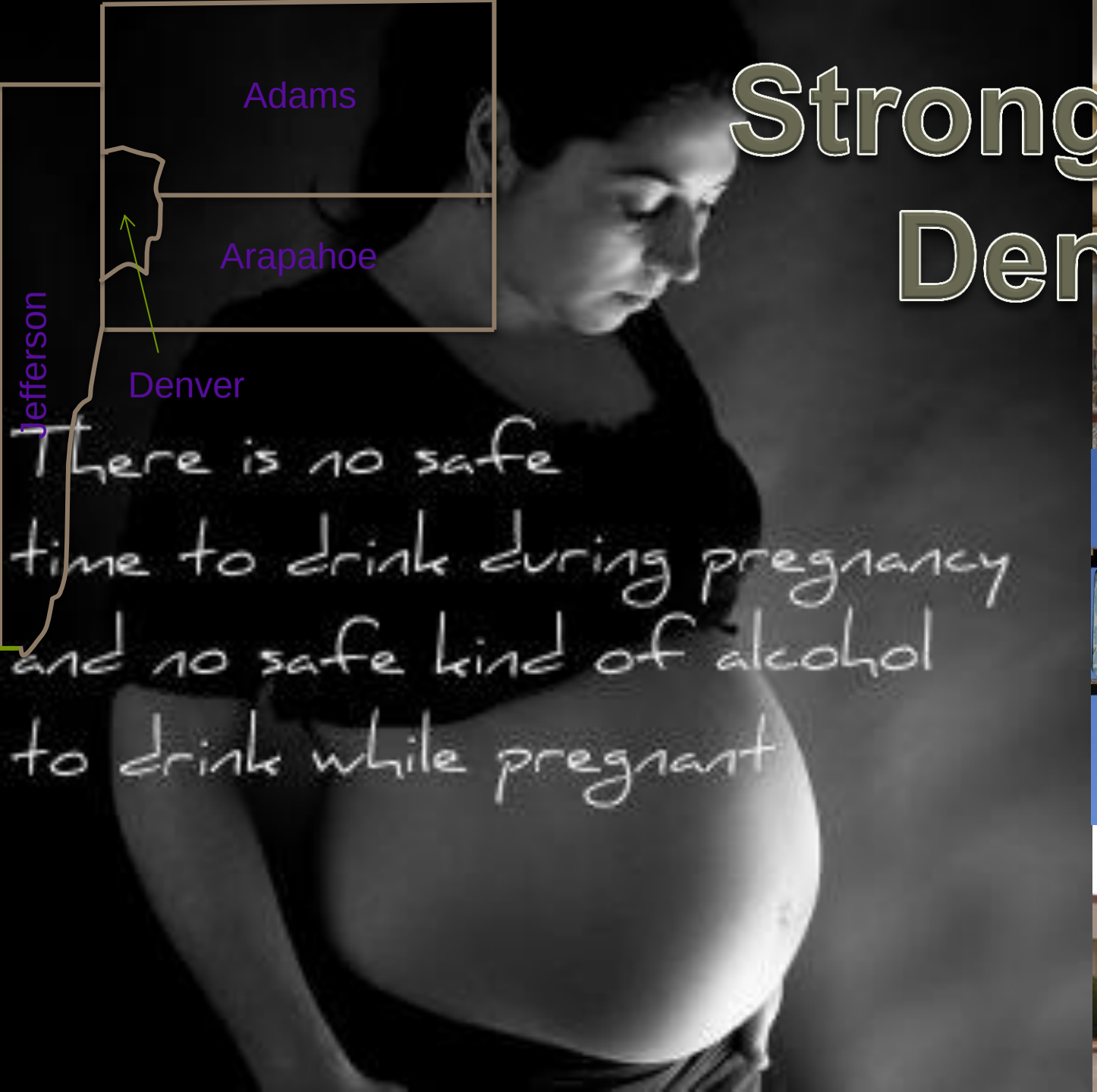
Step One

Protective Factors Approach



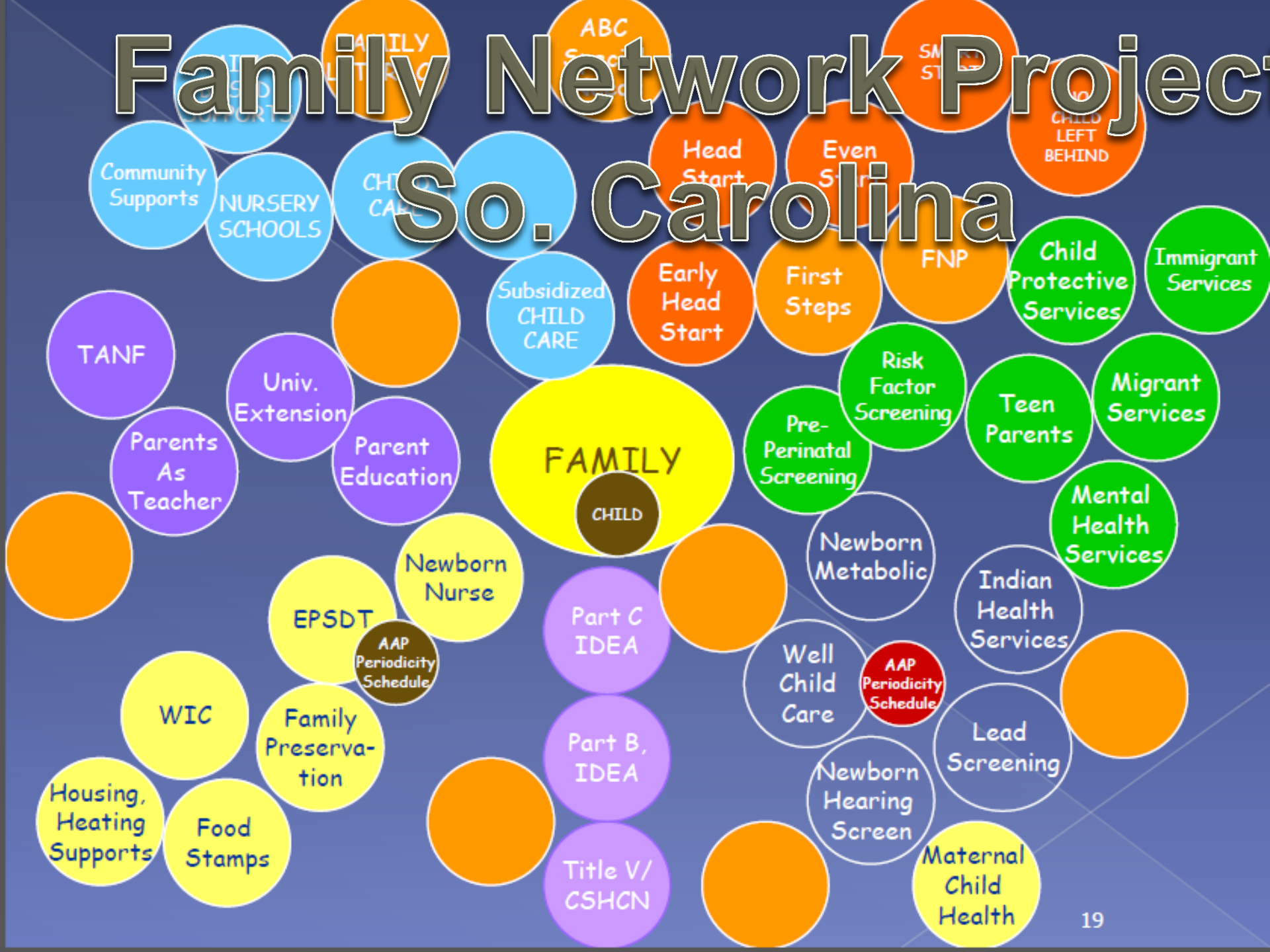
Center for the Study of Social Policy
(www.cssp.org)

Strong Start Denver



Fostering Hope
Salem

Project Dulce
Boston


Family Network Project
So. Carolina
Community Supports
NURSERY SCHOOLS
ABC
Head Start
Even Start
CHILD LEFT BEHIND
Early Head Start
First Steps
FNP
Child Protective Services
Immigrant Services
Subsidized CHILD CARE
TANF
Univ. Extension
Parents As Teacher
Parent Education
FAMILY
CHILD
Risk Factor Screening
Pre-Perinatal Screening
Teen Parents
Migrant Services
Mental Health Services
Newborn Metabolic
Indian Health Services
Newborn Nurse
EPSDT
AAP Periodicity Schedule
Part C IDEA
Well Child Care
AAP Periodicity Schedule
Lead Screening
WIC
Family Preserva-tion
Part B, IDEA
Newborn Hearing Screen
Housing, Heating Supports
Food Stamps
Title V/ CSHCN
Maternal Child Health

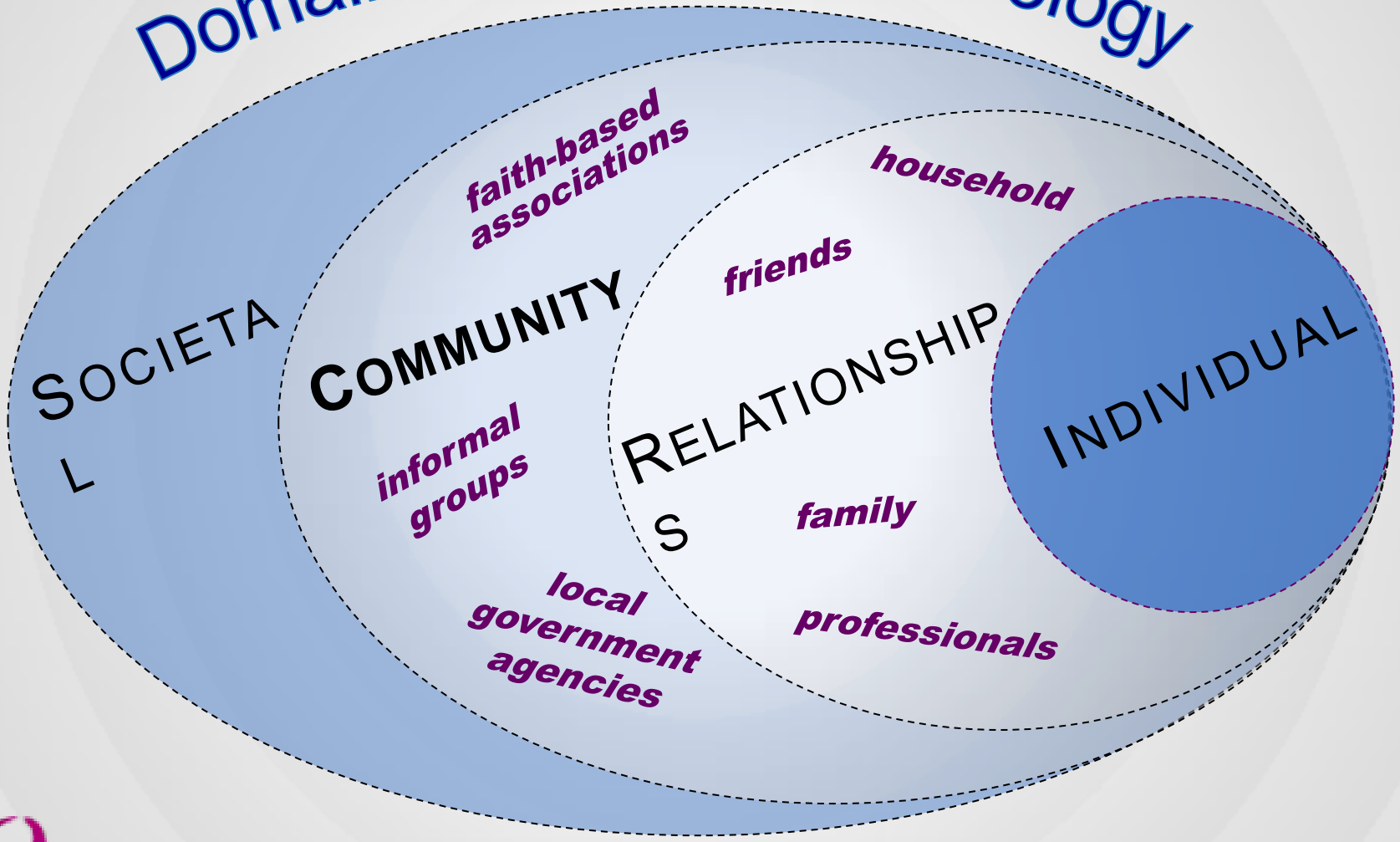
Step Two

Identify Points of Systemic Influence

First: Identify Relevant Domains of the Social Ecology

Step Two

Domains of the Social Ecology



Step Two

Social Ecology for Strengthening Families

Step Two

Identify Points of Systemic Influence

First: Identify Relevant Domains of the Social Ecology

Second: Identify Potential Levers for Change

Step Two

Levers for System Change

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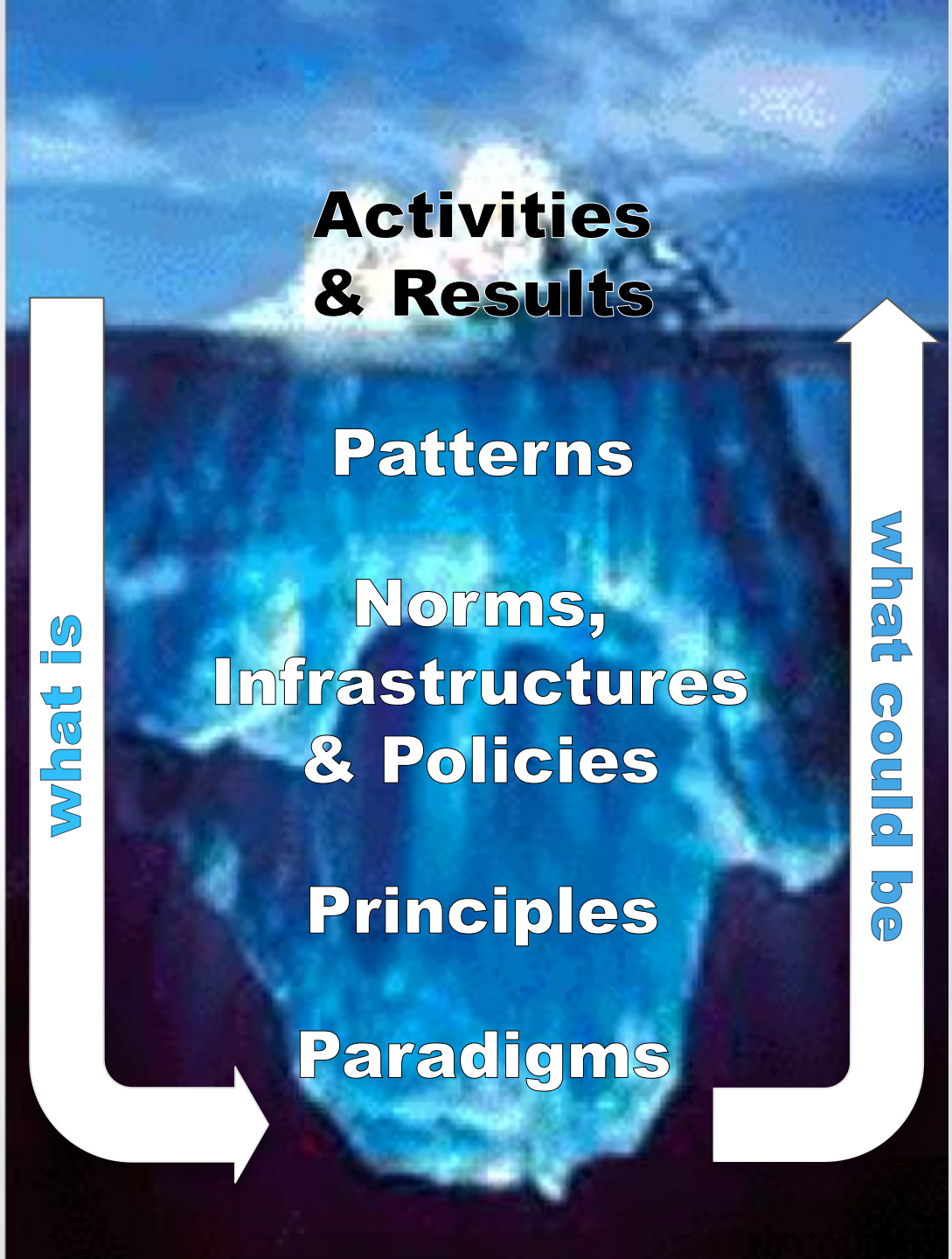
Step Two

Levers for System Change



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Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation

Strengthening Families Initiative

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Points of Systemic Influence	Baseline Understanding *To what extent:*	Trying Out Interventions	Tipping Point	Sustainable Adaptive Balancing
Caregiver-Child-Family	Are families aware of and practicing protective factors? Do parents use both organized and adaptive dynamics?	Families test use of protective factors and determine changes in relationships and boundaries in daily life. Families learn to self-assess use of protective factors.	Enough families are habitually using and building protective factors that family norms are shifting in support of protective factors framework for living. Benefits being realized.	Caregivers are connected with other caregivers and family members who are skilled at using and building protective factors. Family norms support protective factors. (Evidence of well-being of families and levels of child maltreatment regularly monitored.)
Neighborhood/ Community	Are neighborhoods and their leaders building social cohesion around protective factors? Do they encourage adaptive and organized dynamics?	Neighborhoods/communities pilot new ways of functioning that are grounded in protective factors and social cohesion.	Neighborhoods & leaders commit to use and support protective factors. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired social cohesion being achieved/supported.	Neighborhoods & leaders adjust to social conditions in community and emphasis on supporting protective factors. They consider and reflect on their ways of functioning. (Evidence monitored.)
Organizations, Providers (Norms, infrastructures, policy)	Are organizations/services designed to support protective factors framework? Do providers encourage adaptive & organized dynamics to support building protective factors?	Organizations/providers pilot new ways of operating that emphasize protective factors framework. They determine cost implications.	Organizations/providers commit to redesigned norms/structures/policies that support protective factors framework & principles. They leverage organized and adaptive dynamics. Desired benefits being realized/supported.	Organizations/providers use caregiver, child, family outcome and other data to adjust to social conditions in community with emphasis on presence of protective factors. Organizations/providers leverage both adaptive and organized dynamics.
Societal Actors (State & national) (Norms, policies, infrastructures)	Are norms, infrastructures, policies based on protective factors/framework principles? Are policies attentive to both organized and adaptive dynamics?	Norms, infrastructures, policies targeted for change with engagement of multiple voices, perspectives, and valuing of protective factors.	Norms, infrastructures, policies overall encourage presence of protective factors. Leverage both organized and adoptive dynamics. Caregiver, child, family outcomes supported.	Societal leaders balance attention to risk and protective factors tailored to micro-contexts. They address norms, infrastructures, policies and dynamics over time based on monitoring data and related new knowledge.
Stakeholder Learning & Capacity Building	Do learning activities address protective factors and model both adaptive and organized dynamics?	Learning activities redesigned and tested with attention to protective factors and use of interactive, peer-to-peer learning and learning from families.	Communities of practice grounded in peer-to-peer learning and application are common; include reflection on use of protective and risk factor attention in different contexts.	New knowledge development, dissemination, and integration woven into practice with learning activities and communities of practice used to shore up challenging areas. (Stakeholder knowledge and practice regularly assessed.)
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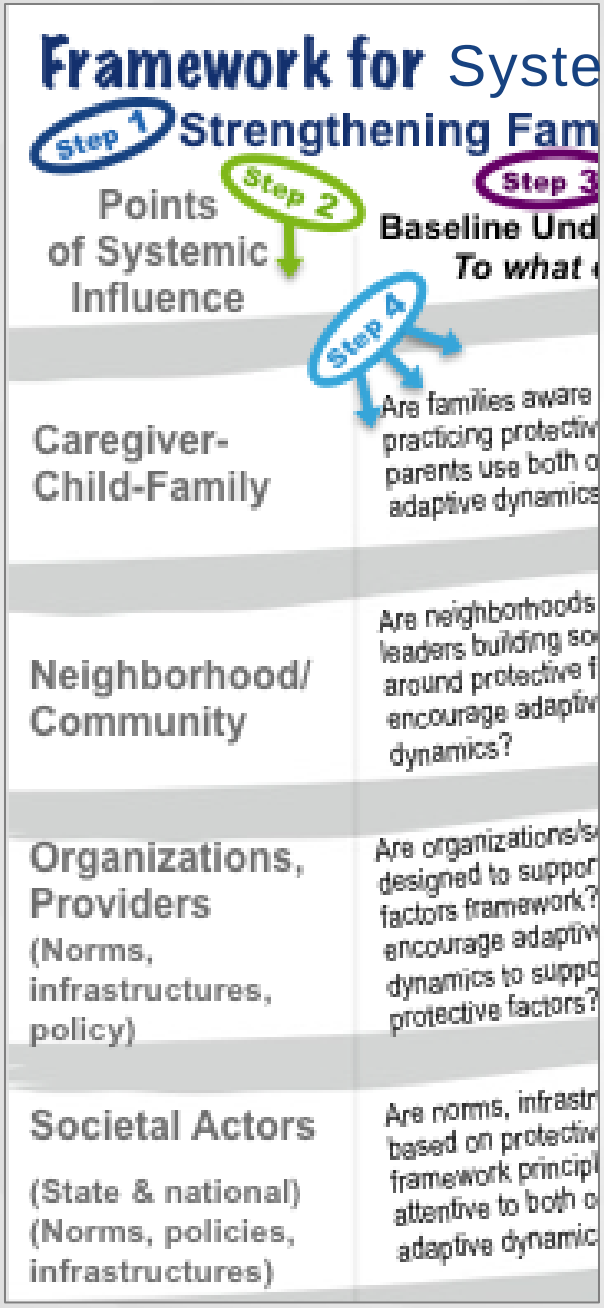
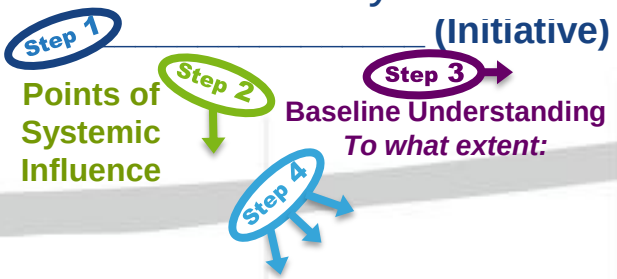


Identify Actors within the Domains of Social Ecology

Identify Actors within the Domains of Social Ecology

Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation



Trying Out Interventions

Tipping Point

Sustainable Adaptive Balancing

(Individual/ relationship)

(Community: informal)

(Community: formal)

(Societal—City, state, national)

(Learning & Capacity Building)

(Networks/ Partnerships)

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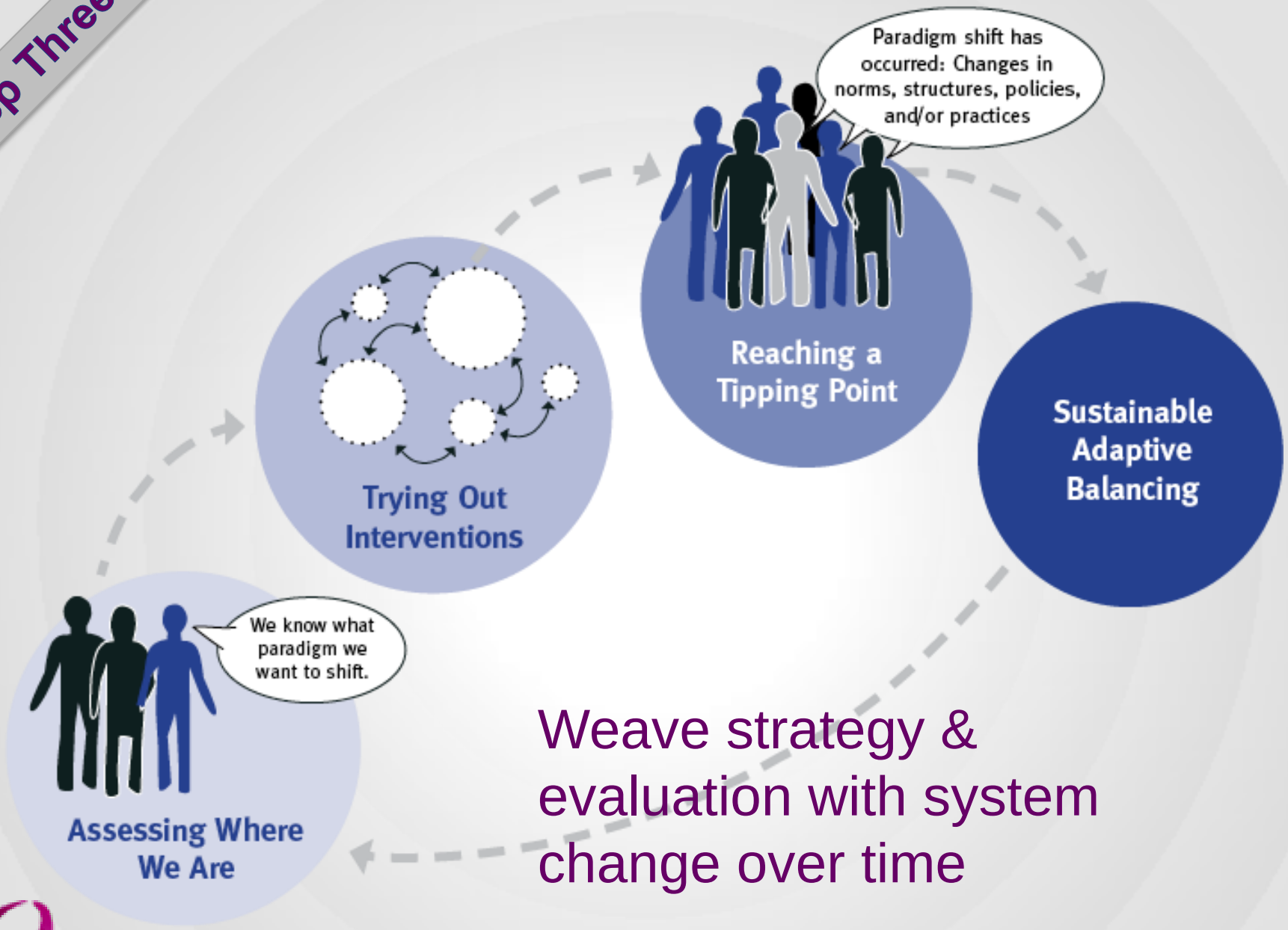
Step Three



Weave strategy & evaluation with system change over time

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Step Three

Assessing Where We Are in relation to our vision

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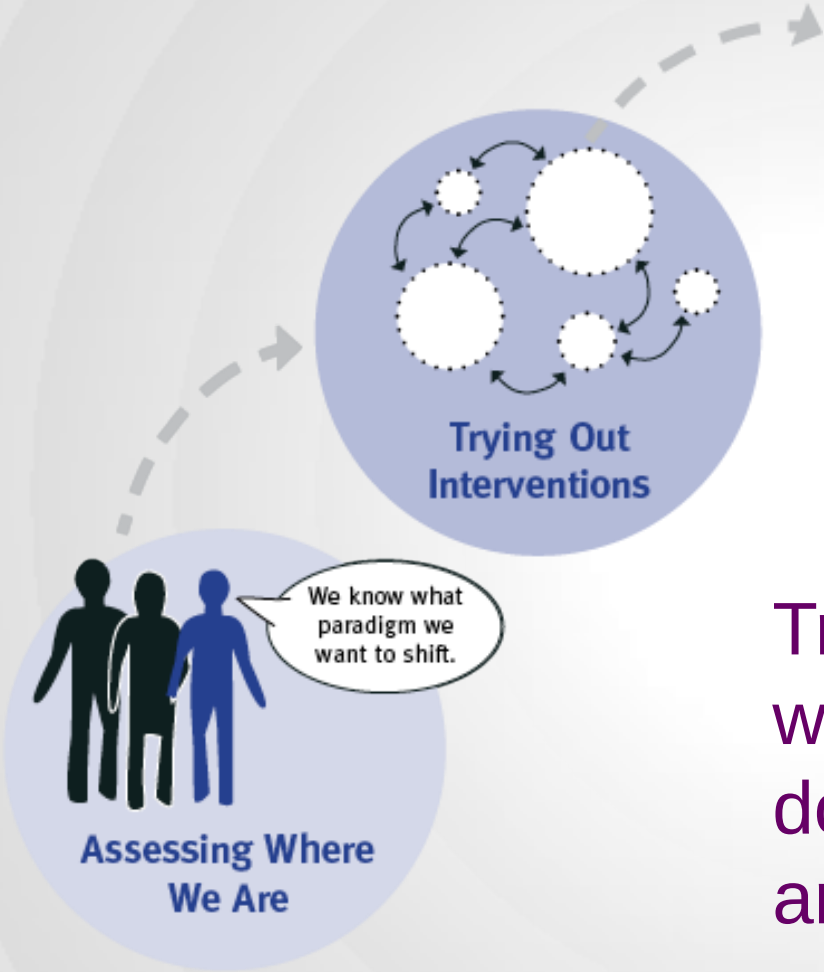
Step Three



Trying Out Interventions within & across system domains, dimensions, and across time

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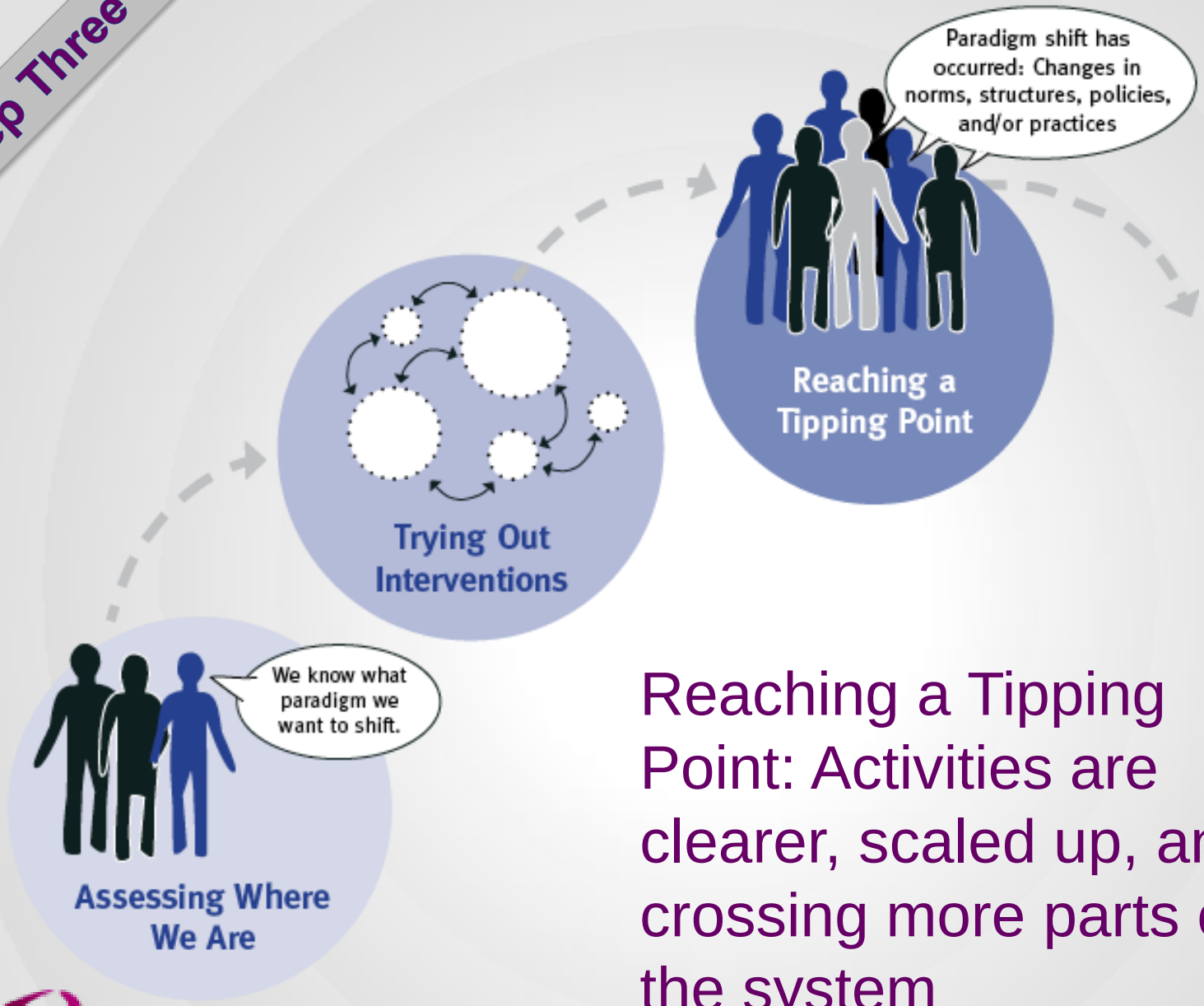

Reaching a Tipping Point: Activities are clearer, scaled up, and crossing more parts of the system

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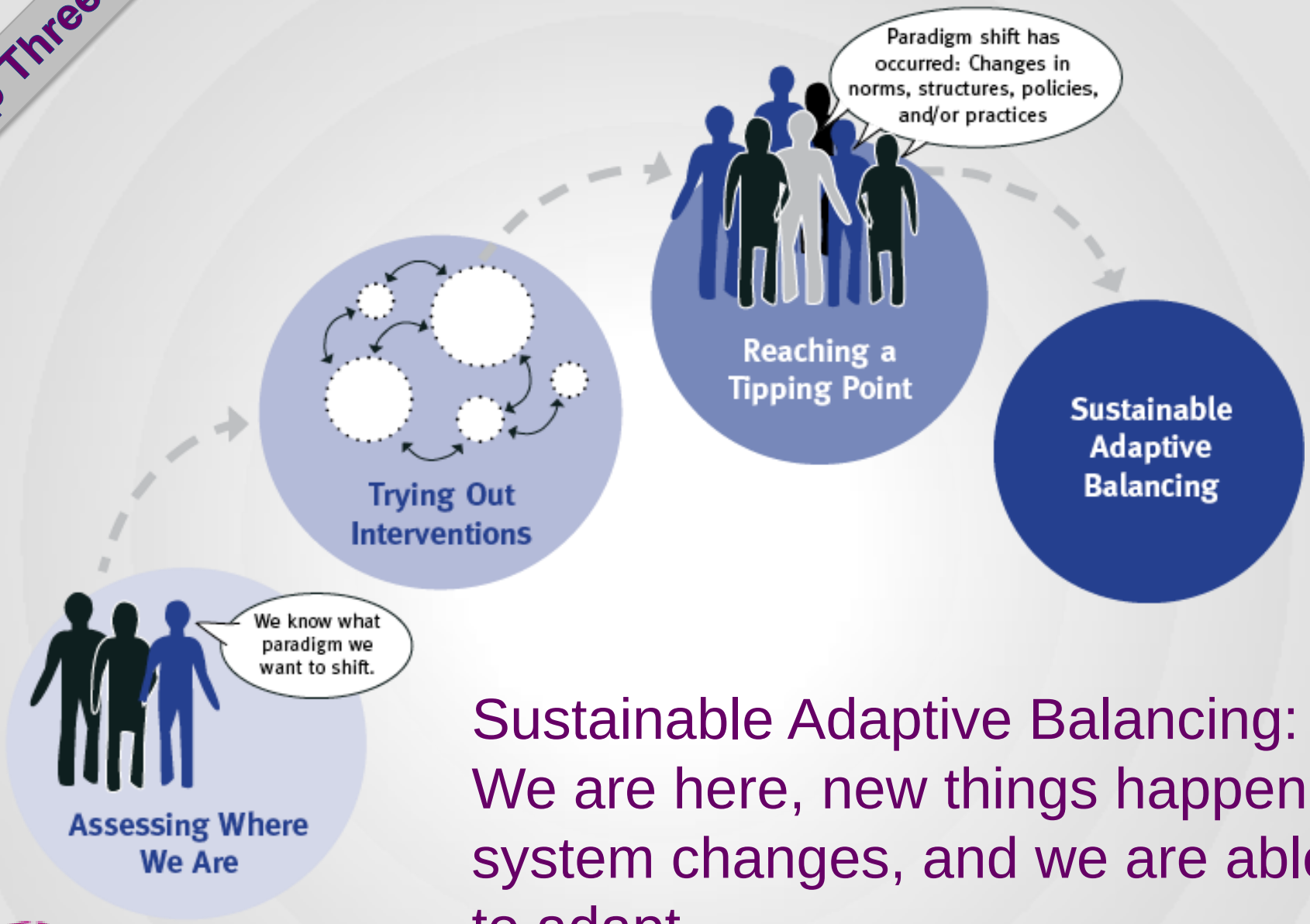

Sustainable Adaptive Balancing: We are here, new things happen, system changes, and we are able to adapt

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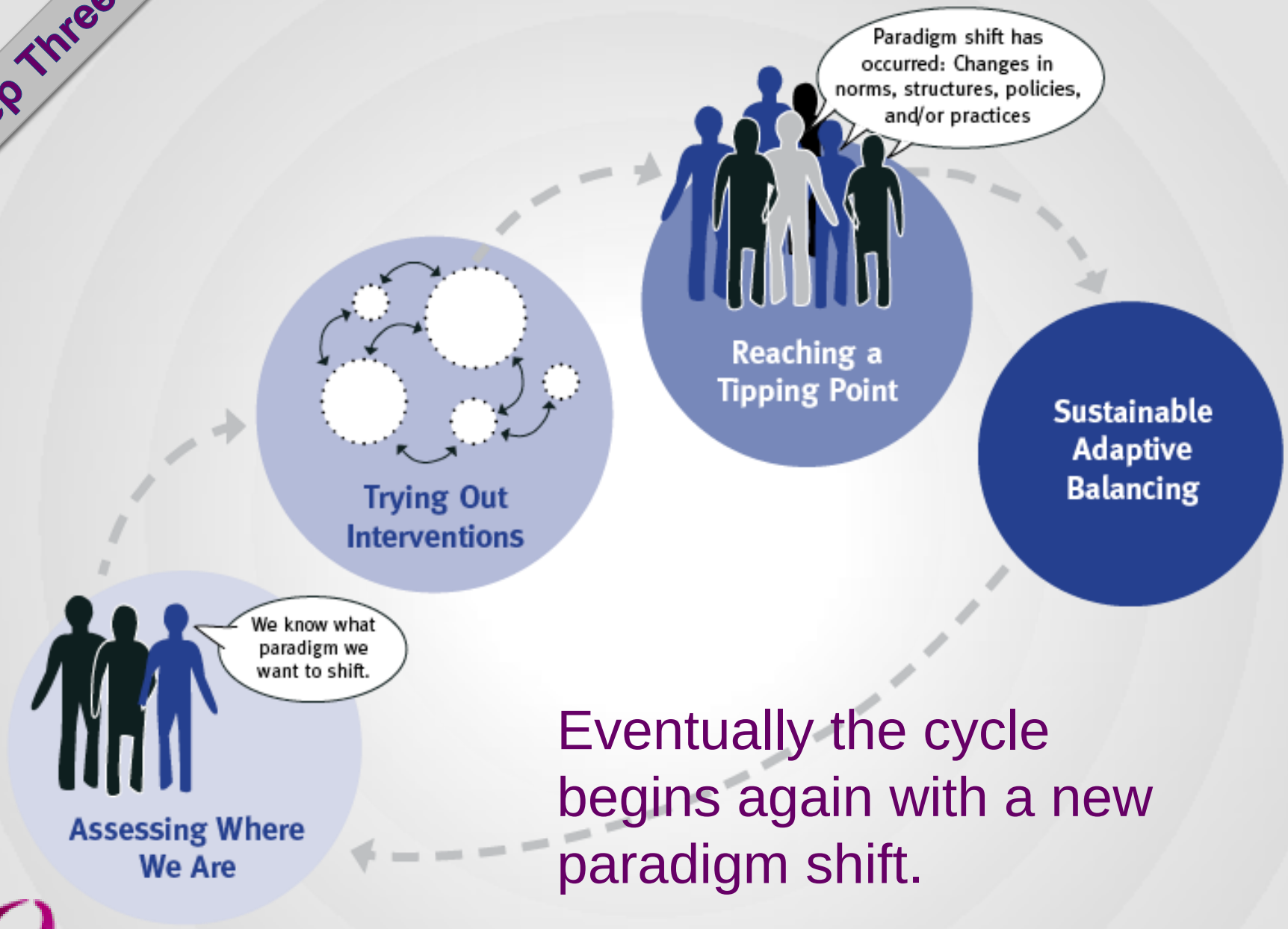

Eventually the cycle begins again with a new paradigm shift.

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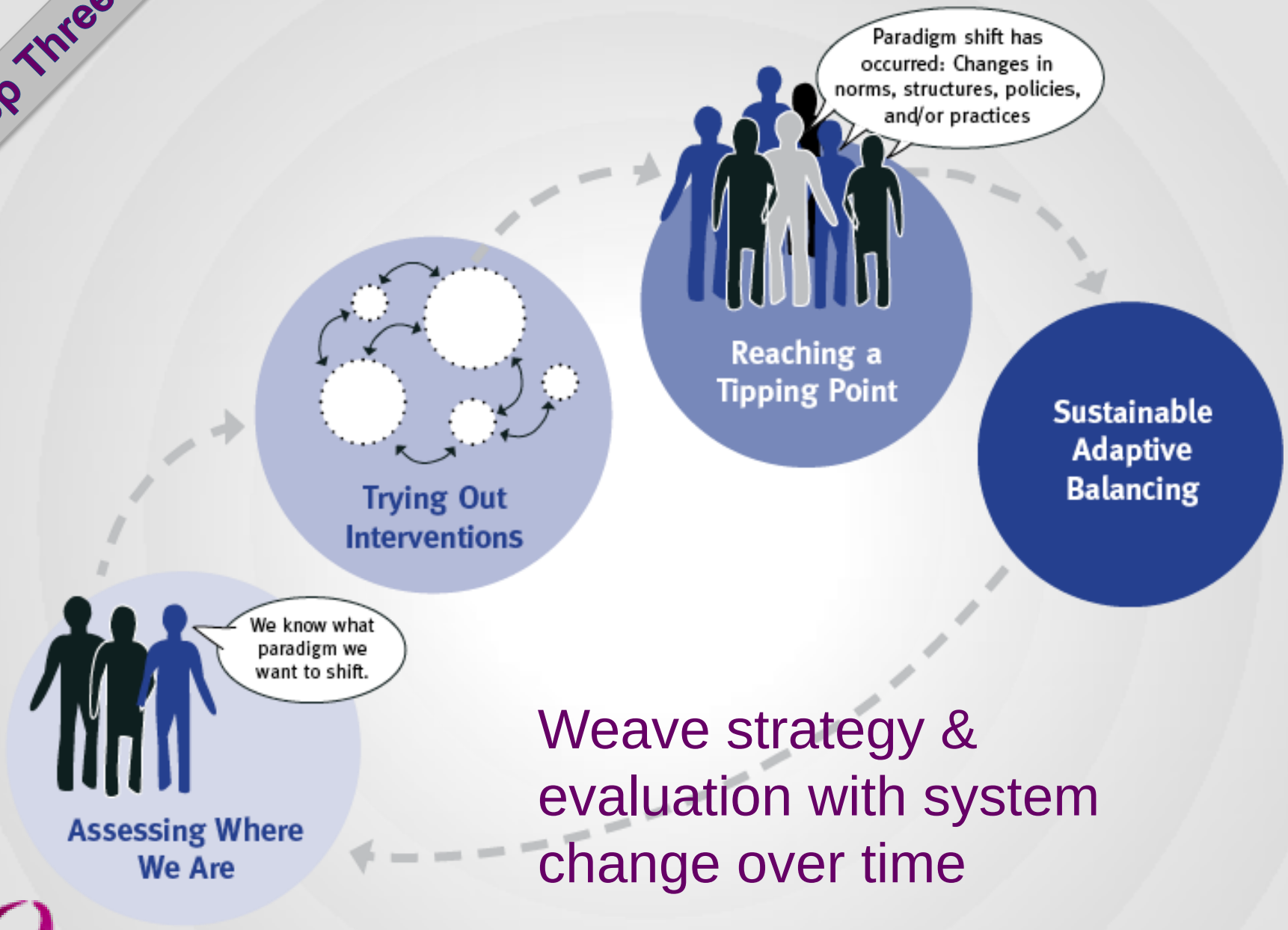
Step Three



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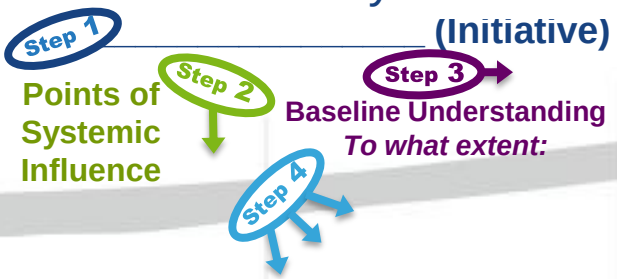
Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation



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Process for Developing an Evaluation Framework

Who:

Leadership Team

Evaluator

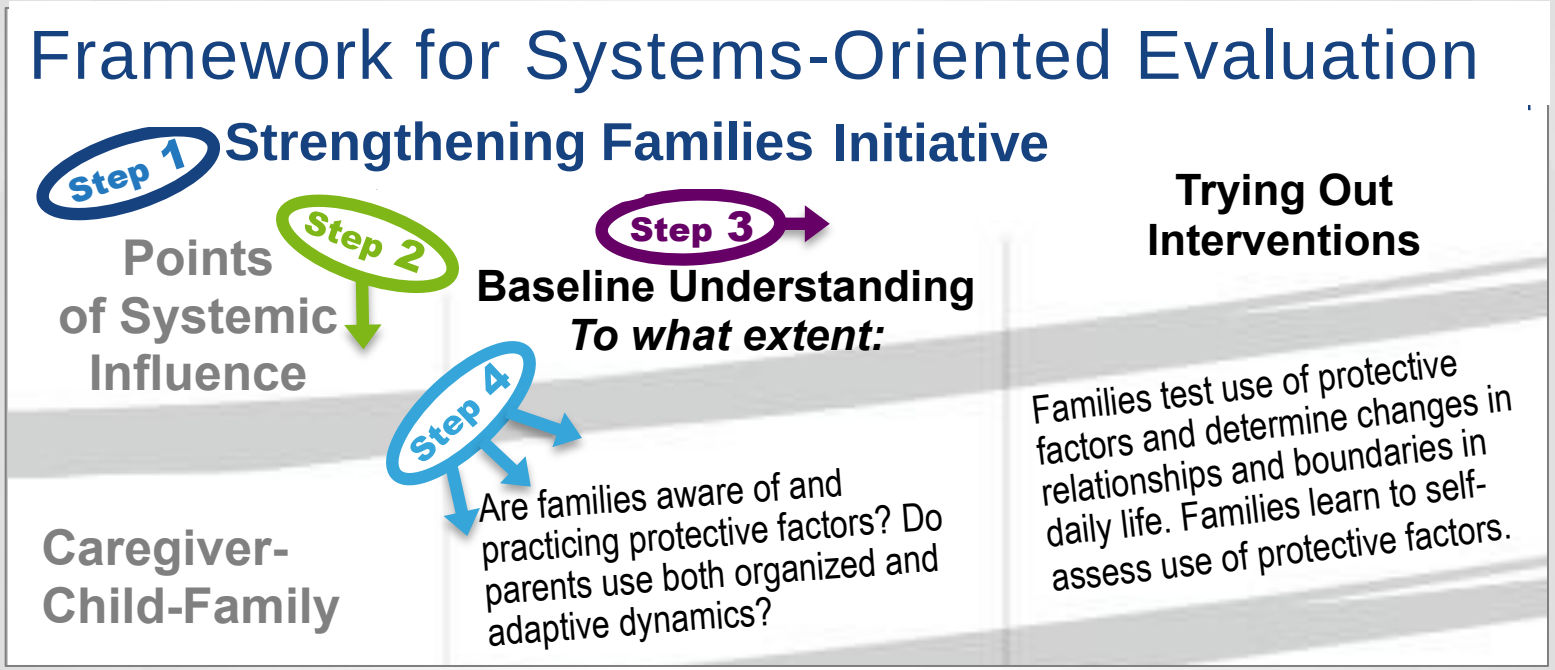
Stakeholders

When:

Near beginning

Review, revise, adapt

Framework for Systems-Oriented Evaluation



Evaluation

Tipping Point	Sustainable Adaptive Balancing
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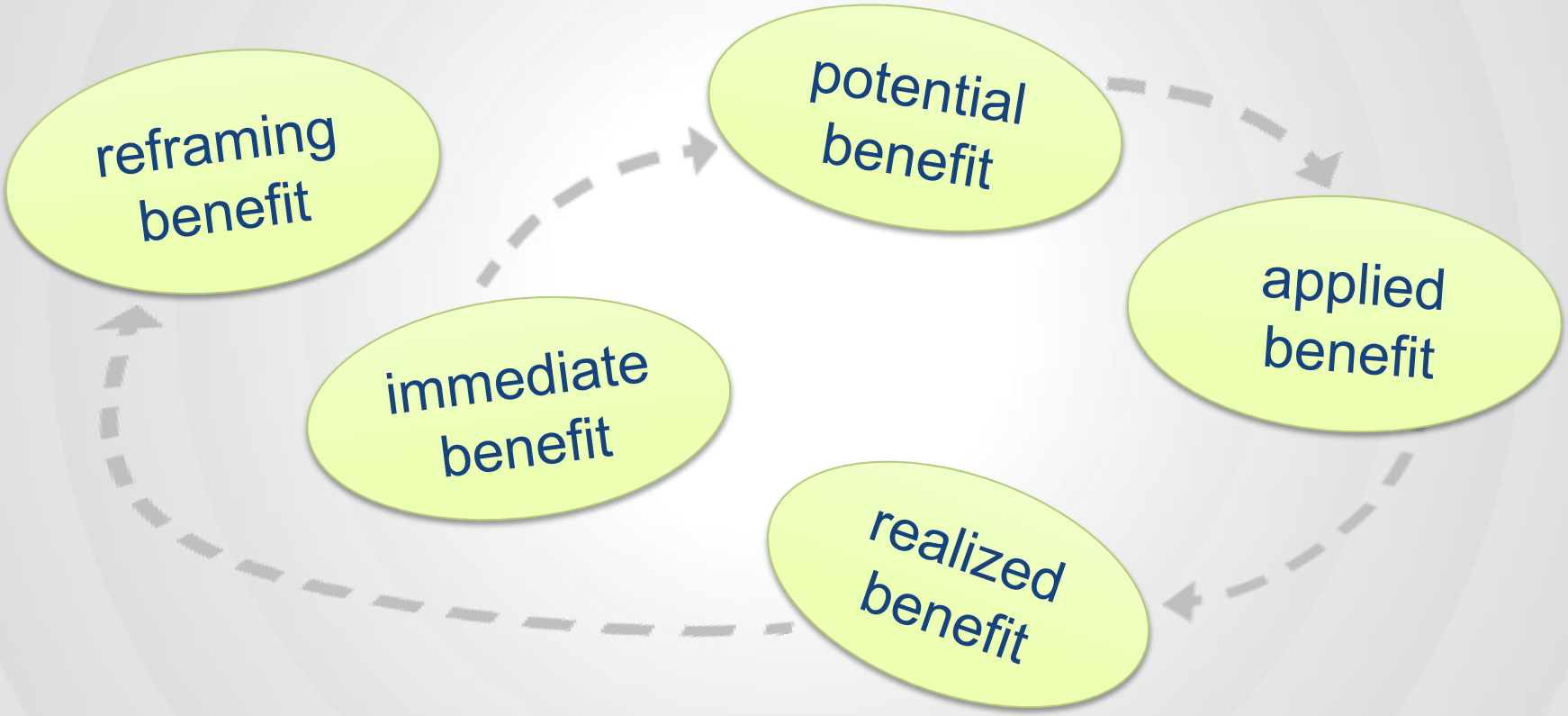
Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit



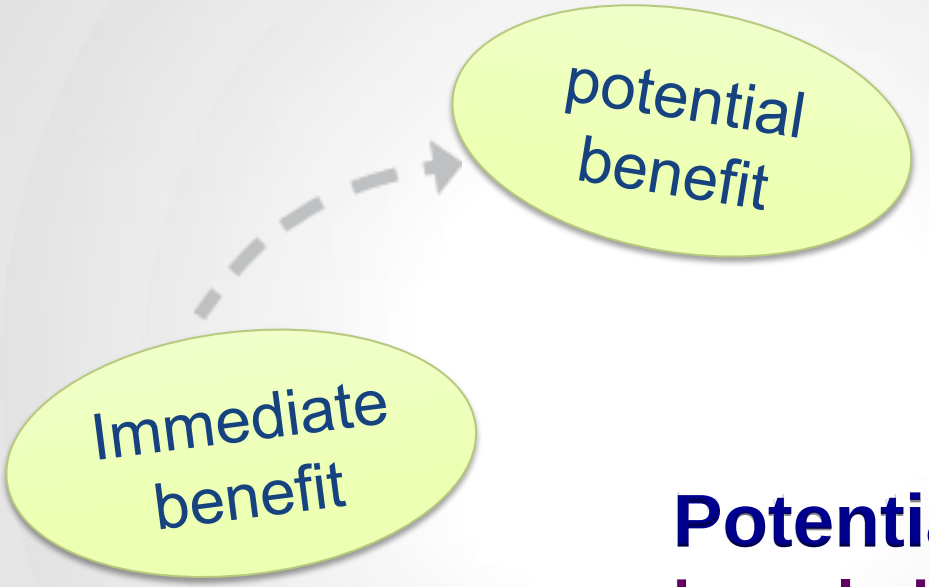
Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Immediate:
the benefit of the activities and interactions in the community of practice

Step Four

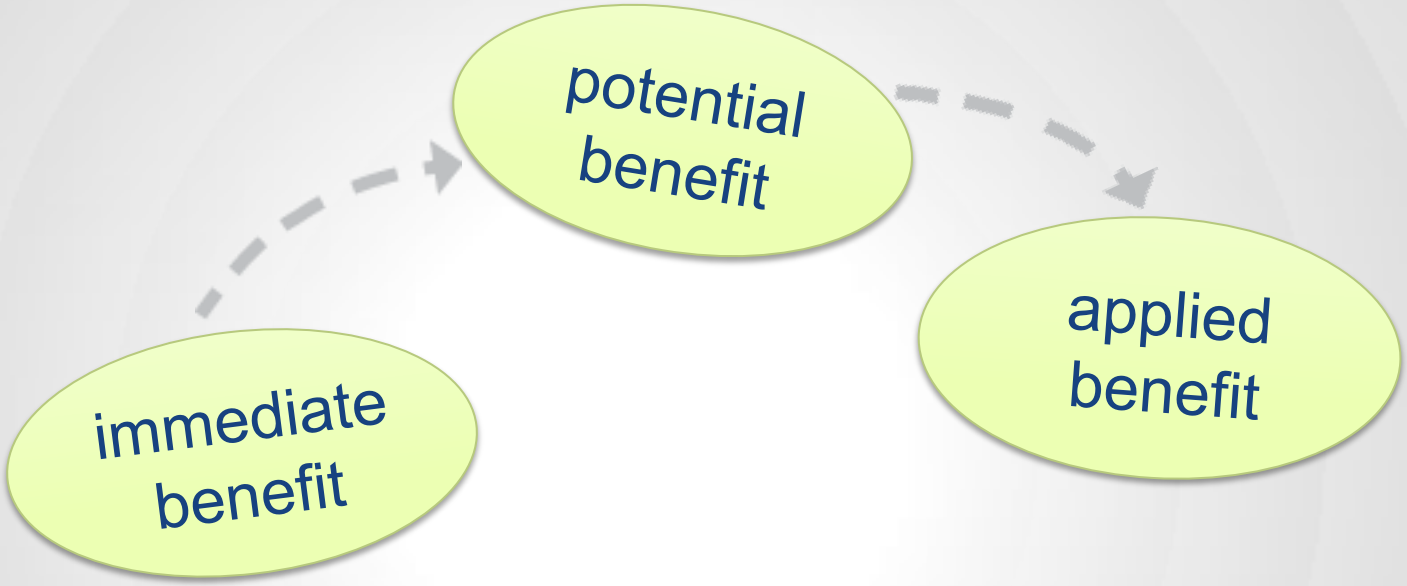
Identify Indicators of System Benefit



Potential:
knowledge capital that is produced but not necessarily used in the immediate situation

Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit

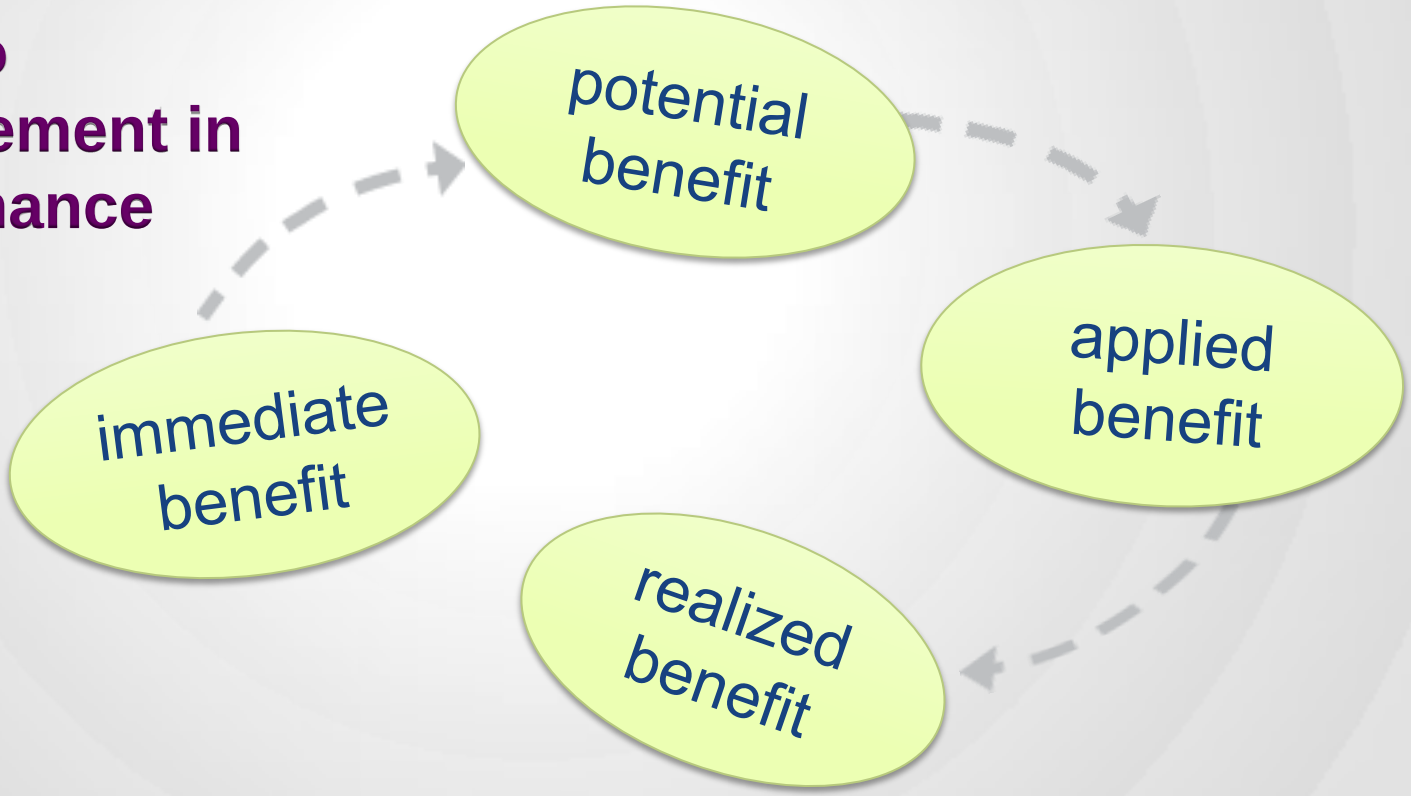


Applied:
adapting and applying knowledge in different contexts

Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit

Realized:
application that leads to improvement in performance



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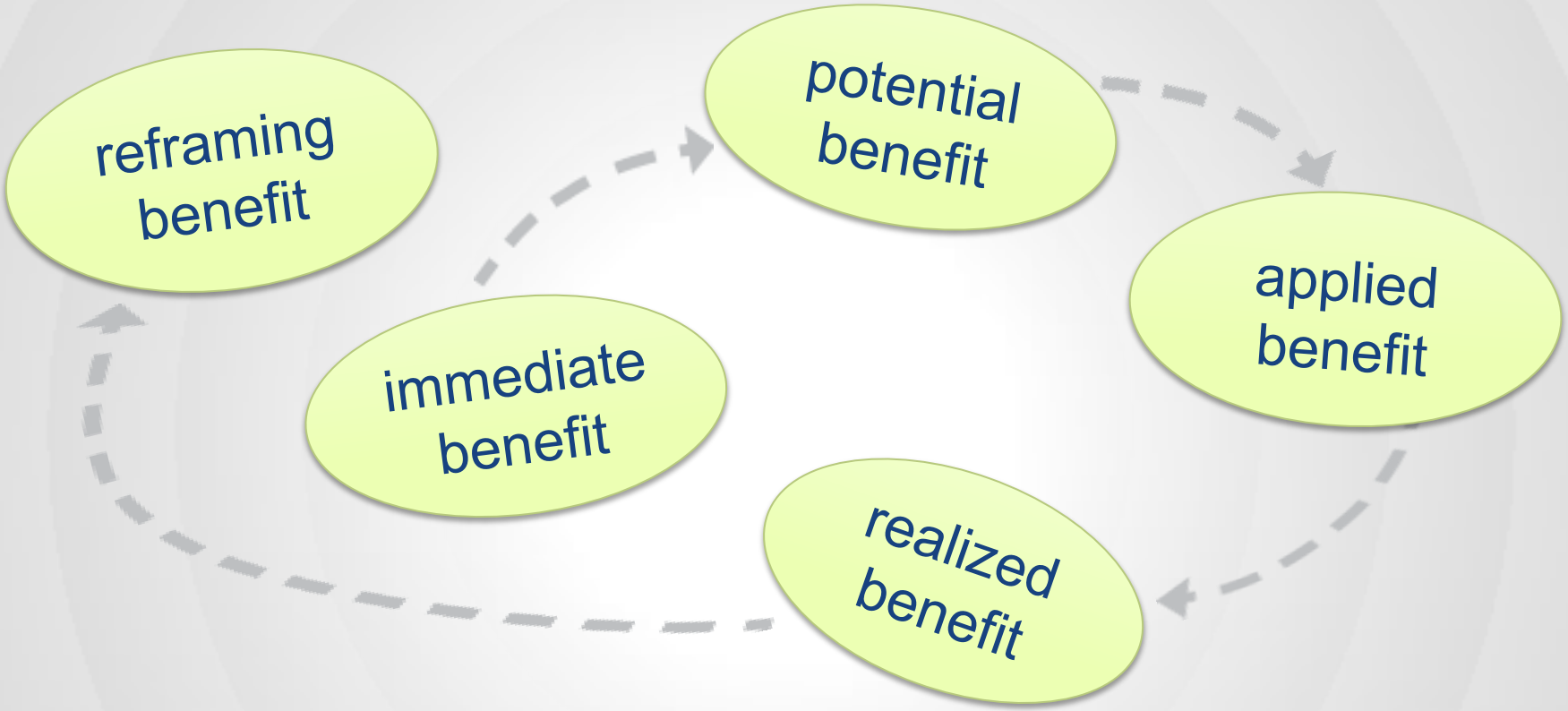
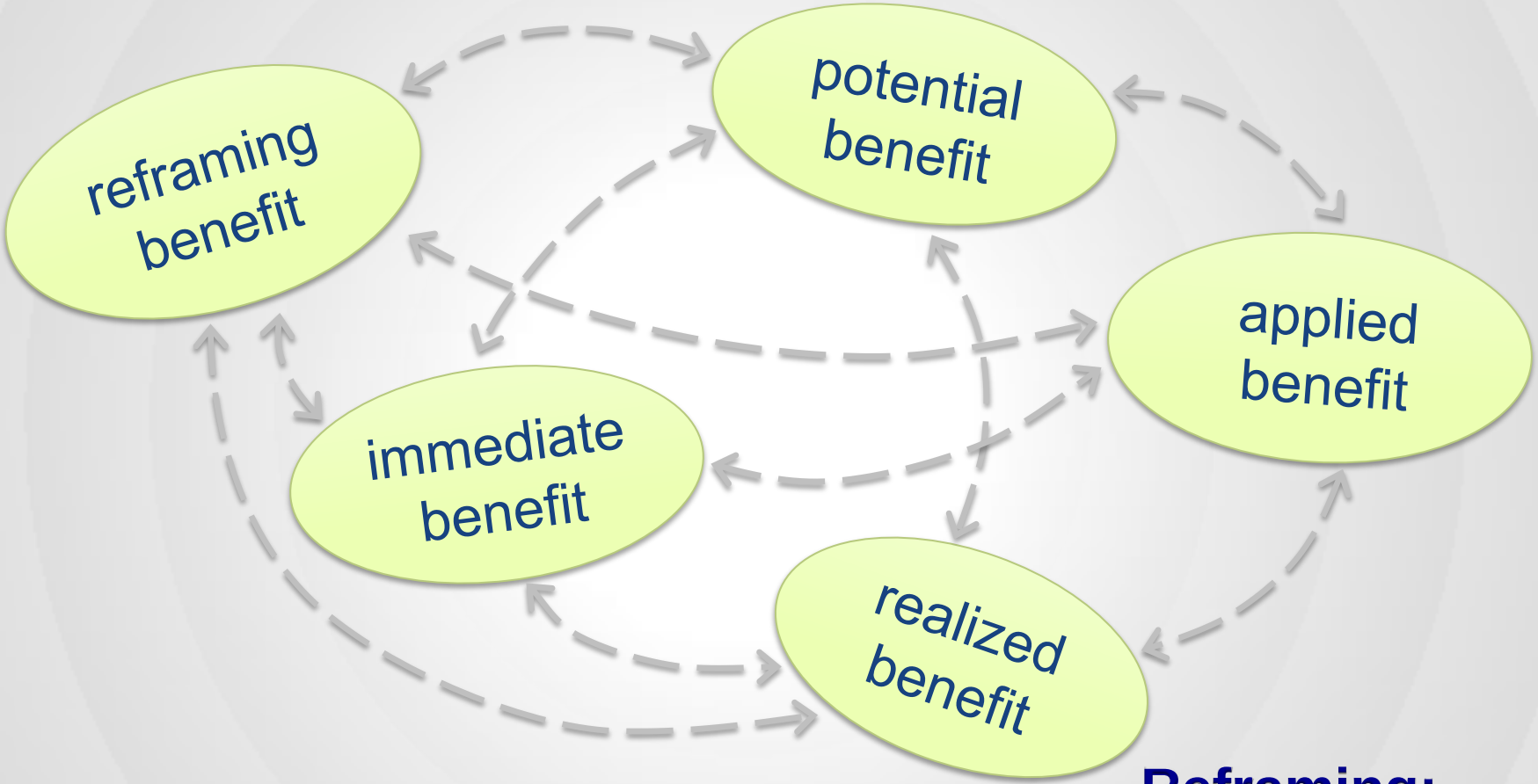


Reframing:
reconsideration/redefining of perspectives, processes and/or structures

Step Four

Identify Indicators of System Benefit



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Developing an Evaluation Framework

Step 1. Articulate Fundamental System Change Using Existing Evidence

Step 2. Identify Points of Systemic Influence

Step 3. Weave Strategy and Evaluation with System Change

Step 4. Identify Indicators of System Benefit

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Value of the Evaluation Framework

- Link strategy and evaluation
- See the big picture
- Map actions among partners
- Be transparent
- Map progress over time

Questions & Answers

Let's Connect!

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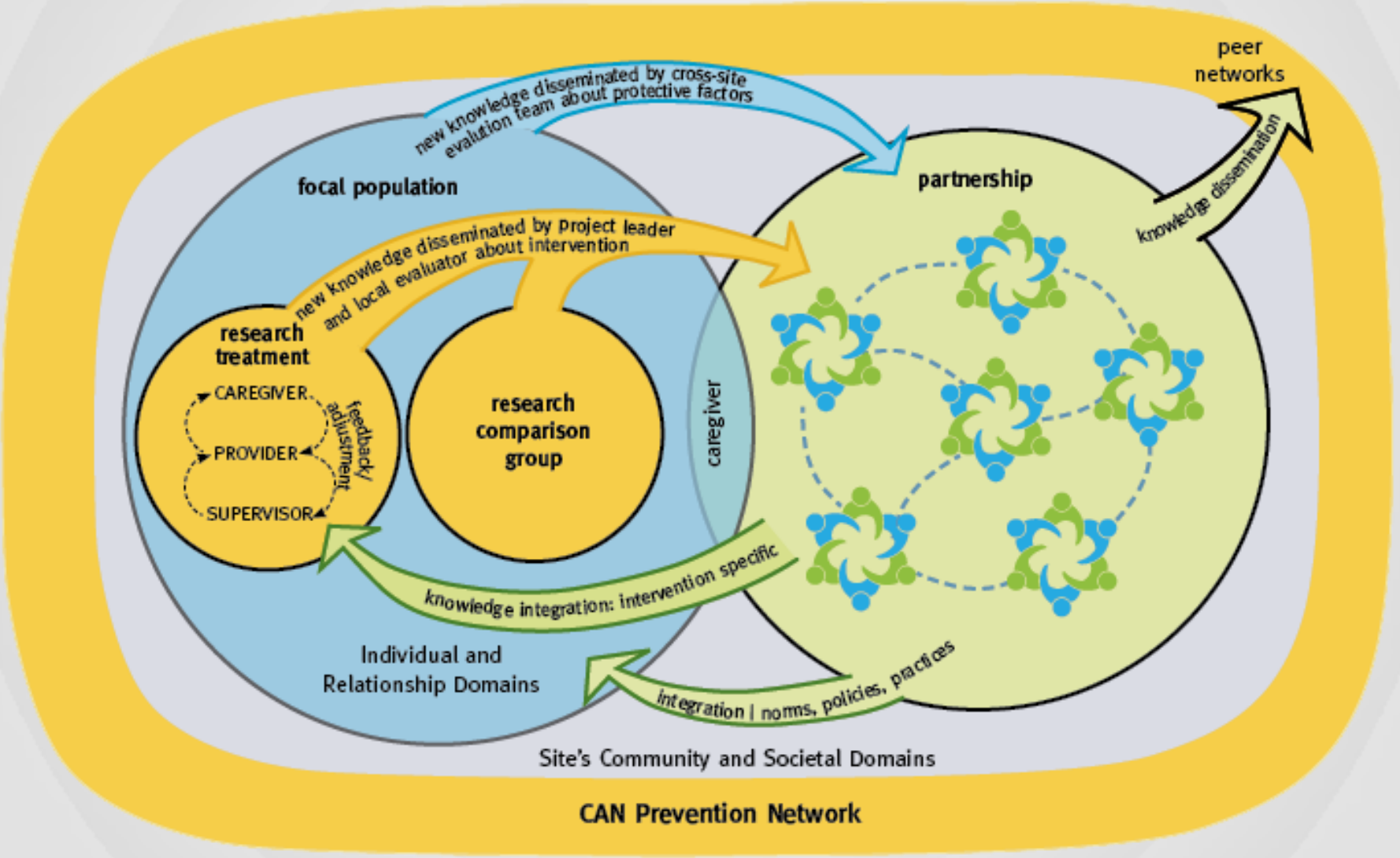
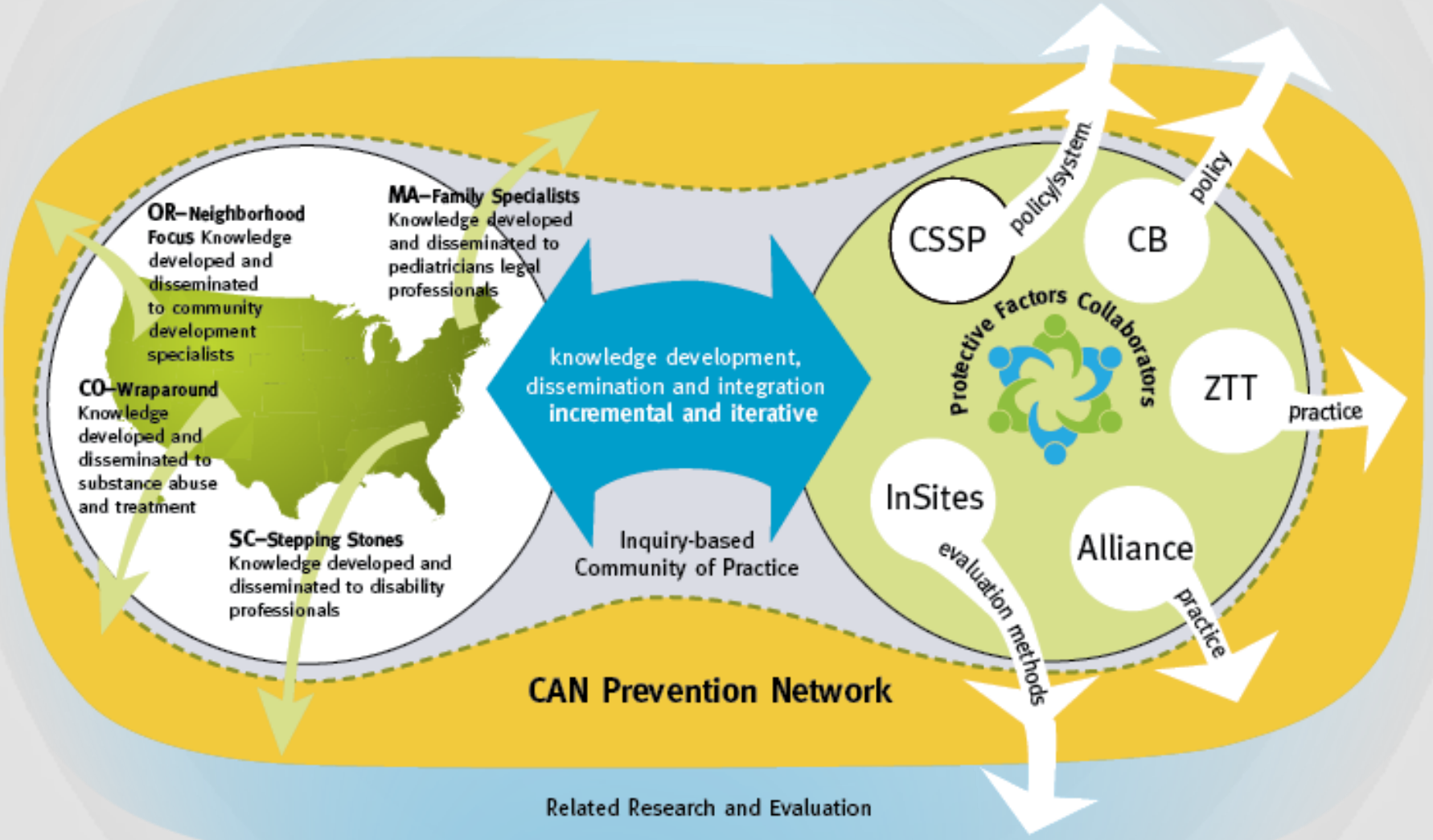
Site Level

Patterns of knowledge development, dissemination, and integration



QIC-EC Level

Patterns of knowledge development, dissemination and integration