

A systems approach to Public Safety Wellness

Presented by: Erin Holznagel





Public Safety Wellness Coordinator

Supporting public safety through education, resources, and workshops for PTSD, mental health, and peer support programs.



Erin Holznagel, MA., LAMFT

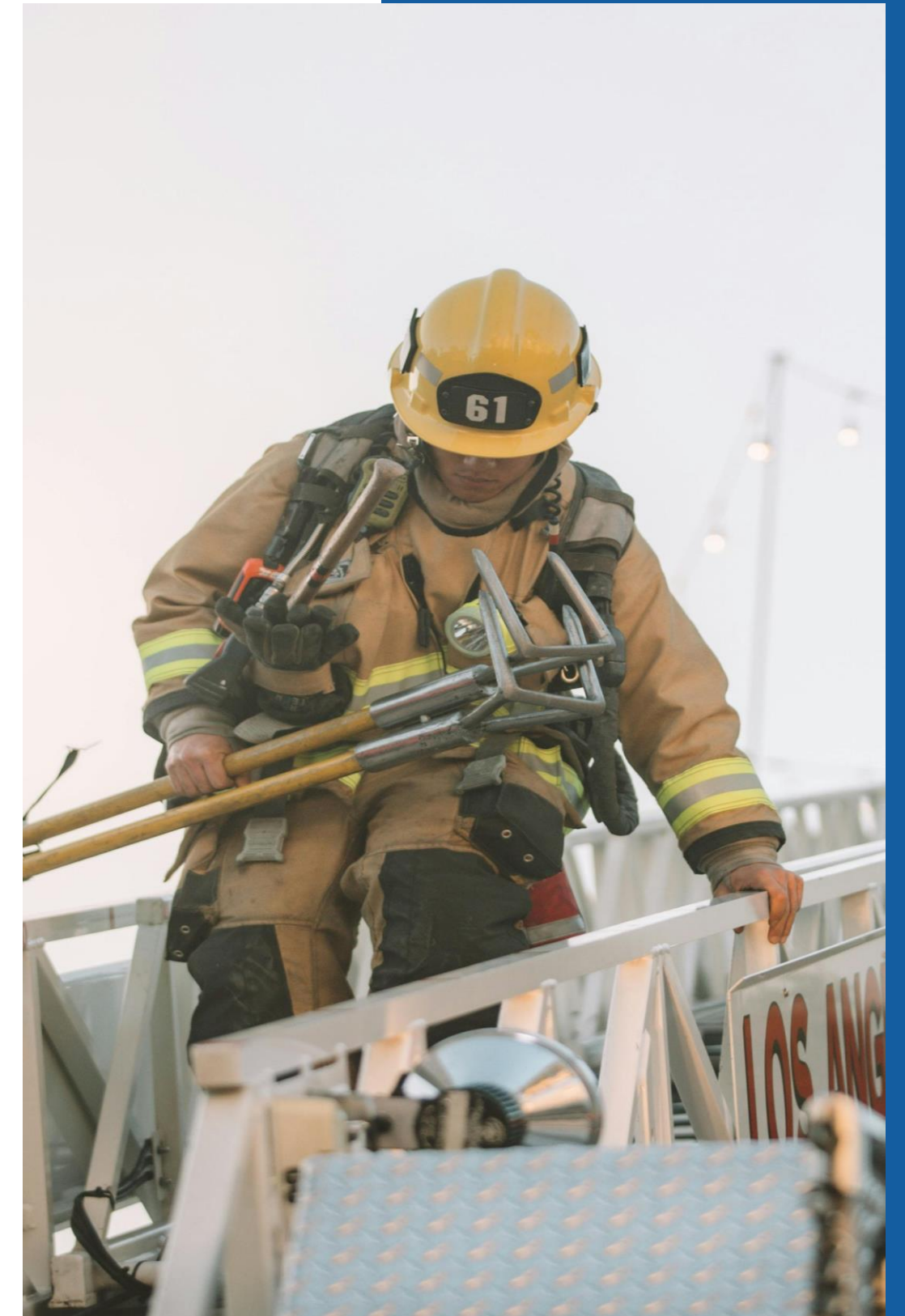
Former Police Officer for the City of Burnsville and current mental health provider.

What is your Why?



Overview

- ▶ Reactive Wellness Programs aren't Working
- ▶ From Individual Responsibility to Systems Thinking
- ▶ How it's all Connected
- ▶ Bio-Psycho-Social Health Model
- ▶ Building Better Systems
- ▶ The Roadmap to Change
- ▶ Changing the Culture



How did we Get Here?

★ StarTribune

Minneapolis police staffing levels reach historic lows amid struggle for recruitment, retention

★ StarTribune

Police organization opposes bill to resolve surging statewide PTSD claims

★ StarTribune

In effort to rebrand policing, Minneapolis unveils 'Imagine Yourself' recruitment campaign

★ StarTribune

As police claims of PTSD soar in Minneapolis, public officials scramble to find solutions

★ StarTribune

Twin Cities suburbs seek to hire more police, but they may have to compete for officers

AP

Small Minnesota town will be without police after chief and officers resign, citing low pay

MPRnews

New report highlights payouts for Minnesota police misconduct

KARE 11

Officer misconduct payouts add up in Minnesota

Minnesota Reformer

Study finds \$60 million paid out from 2010 to 2020 for police misconduct in Minnesota

Statistics

PTSD among public safety became the largest projected loss cost on workers' compensation, with more than **\$45 million** in incurred costs since 2013.

147%

12/31/19 – 12/31/24

\$29M

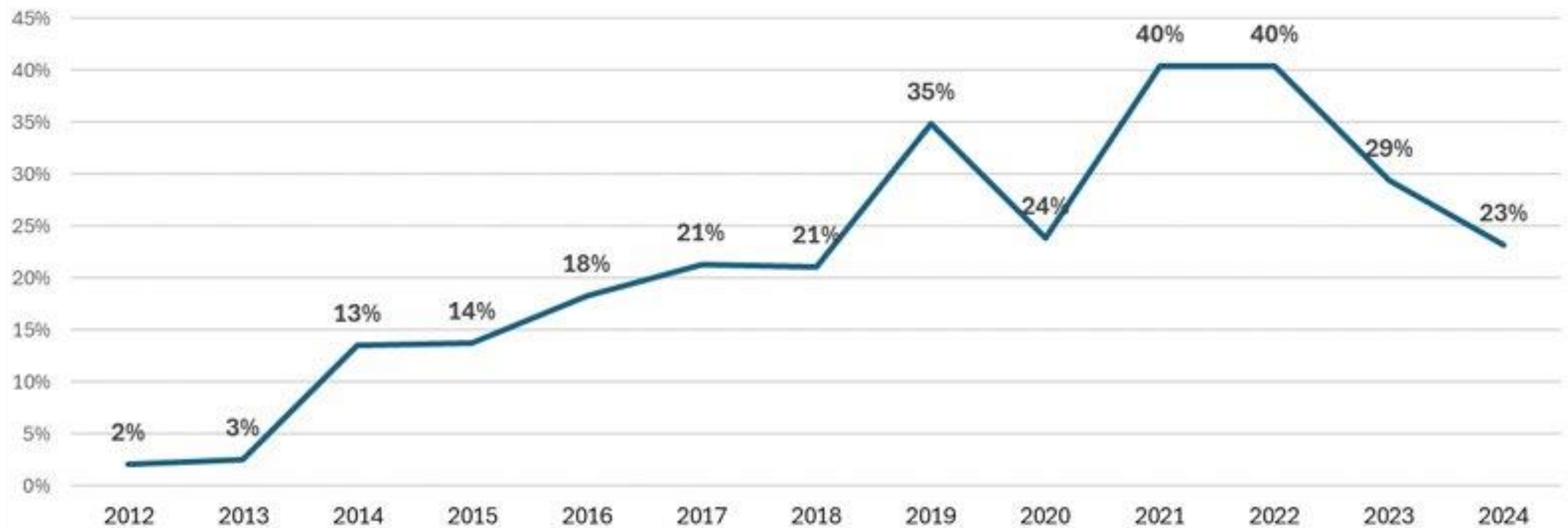
12/31/19 – 12/31/24



SAFETY AND LOSS CONTROL WORKSHOPS

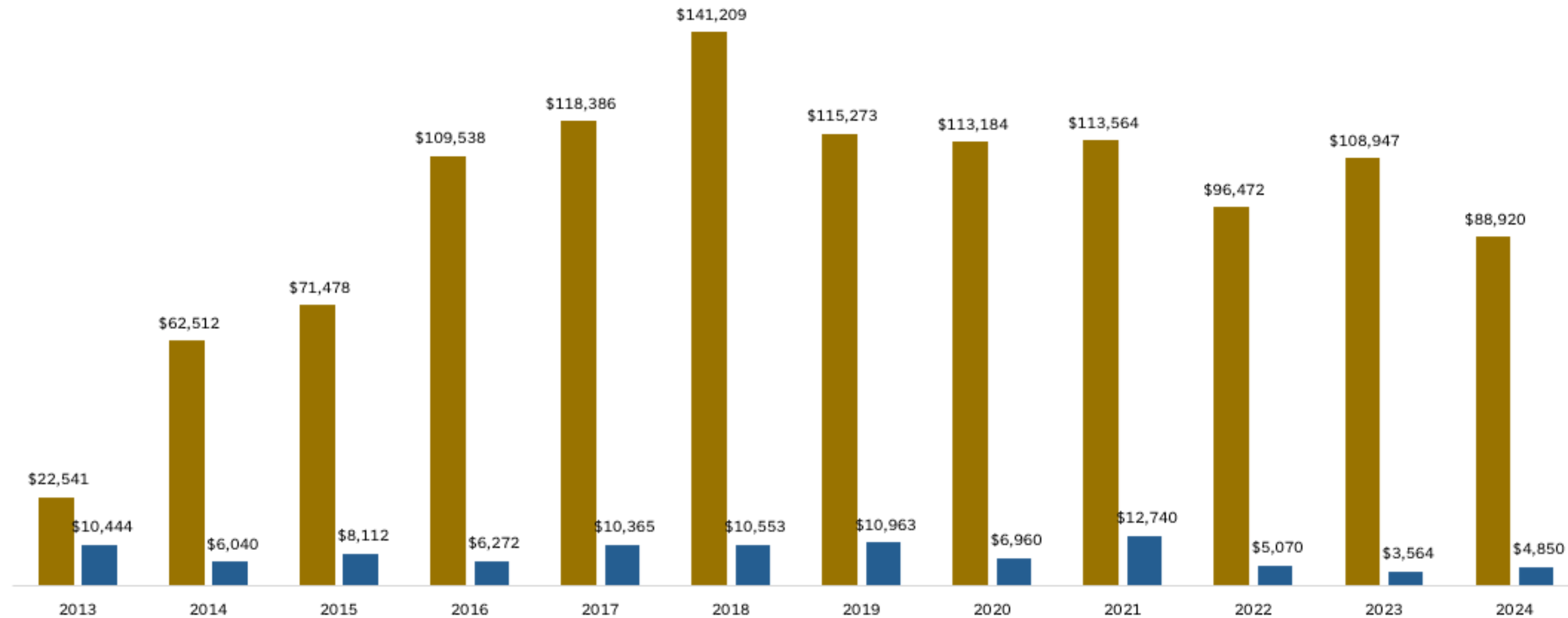


Police PTSD Incurred Costs as a Share of All Police WC Incurred Costs, 2012-2024



Average Net Incurred, Public Safety Job Clases, Select Injury Types

■ PTSD ■ Non-PTSD



Reactive Wellness Solutions



What else is contributing to these outcomes?

What kind of system would produce the outcomes we do want?



Break

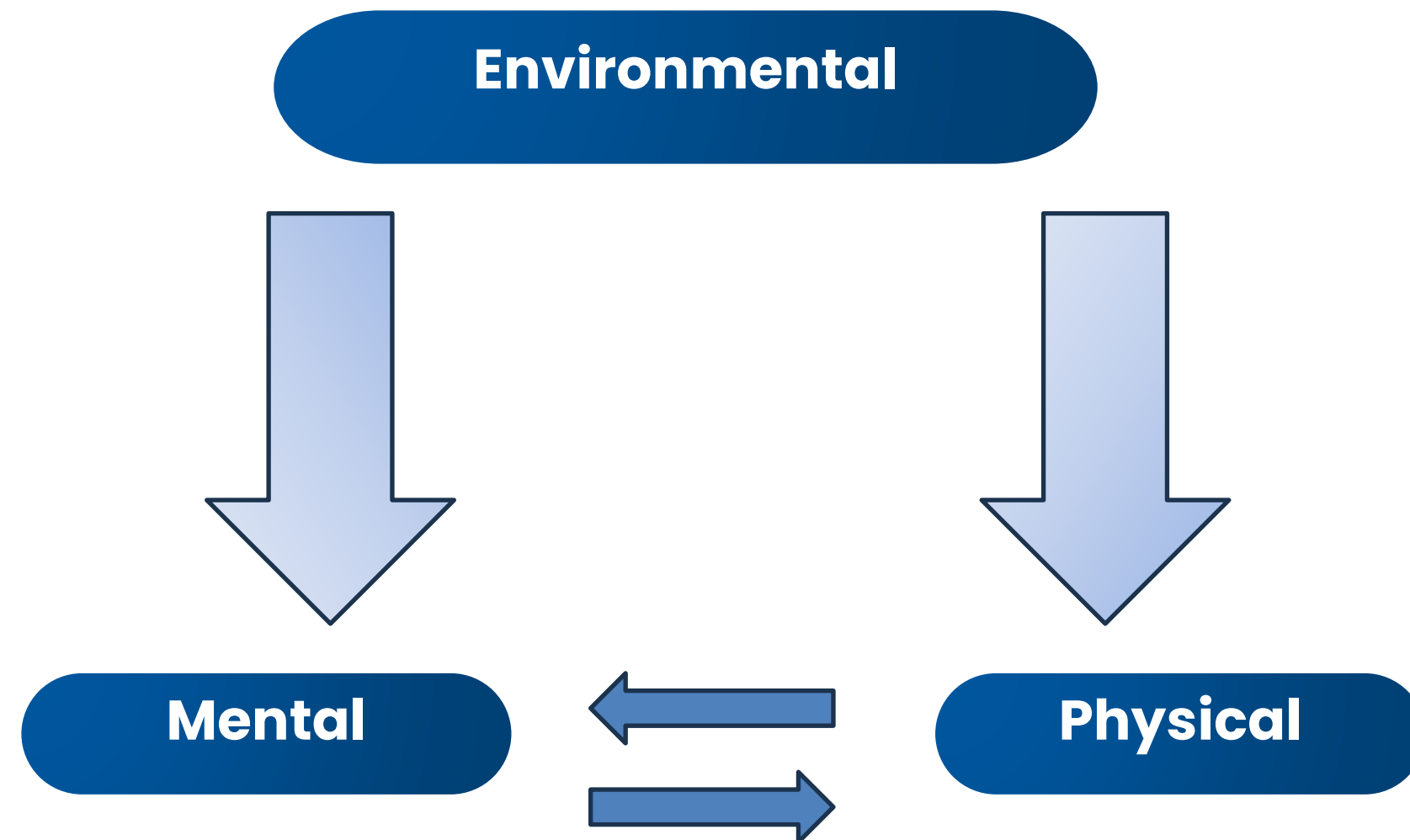
15 Min

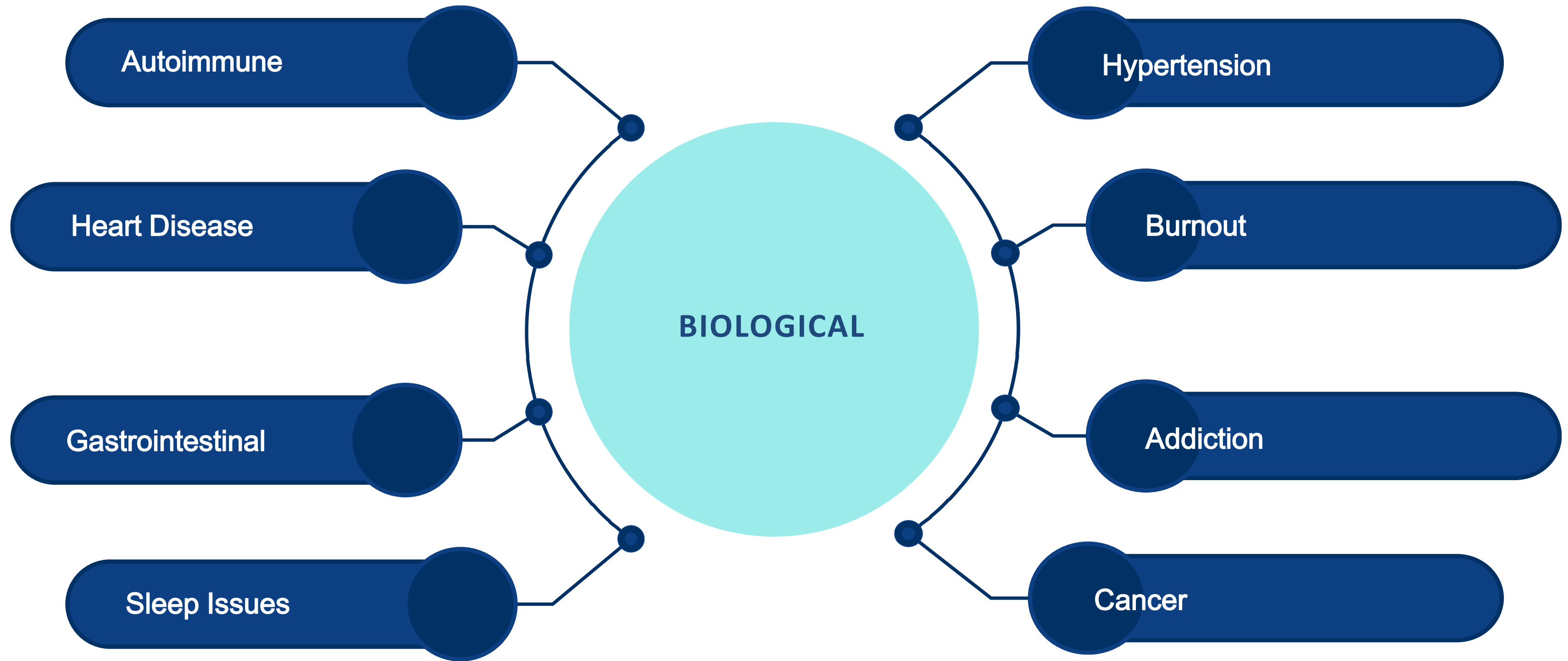
**“Information abundance
requires pattern recognition.
It's not enough to collect
facts. The future belongs to
those who connect dots.”**

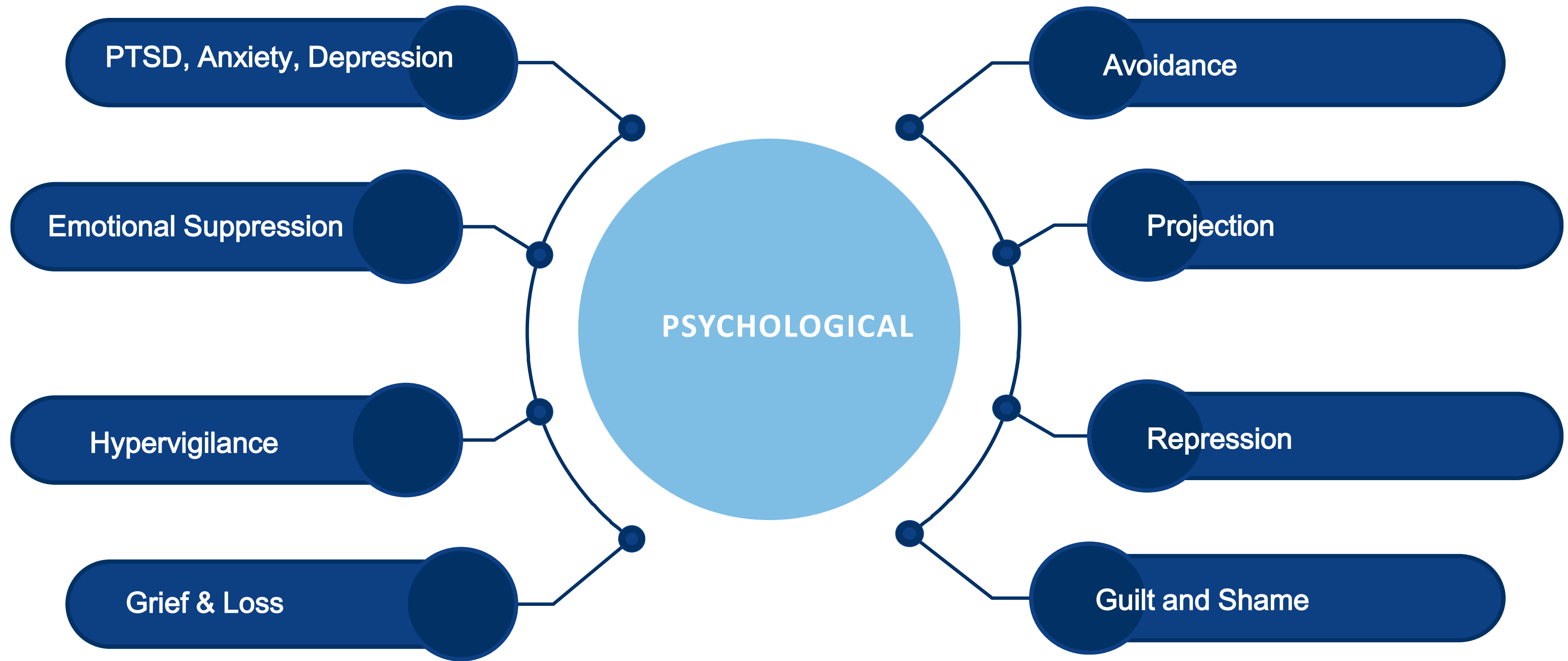
Adam Grant, Organizational Psychologist

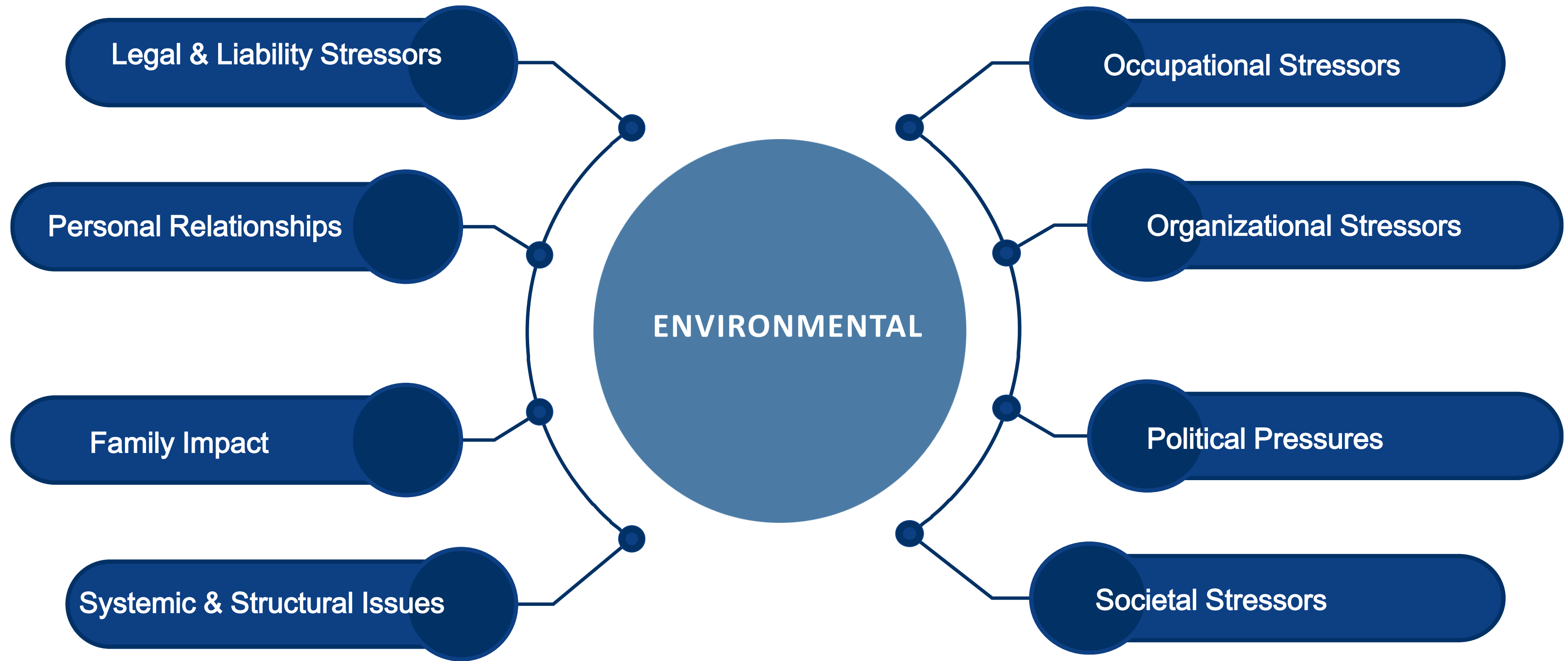


Structures of Health

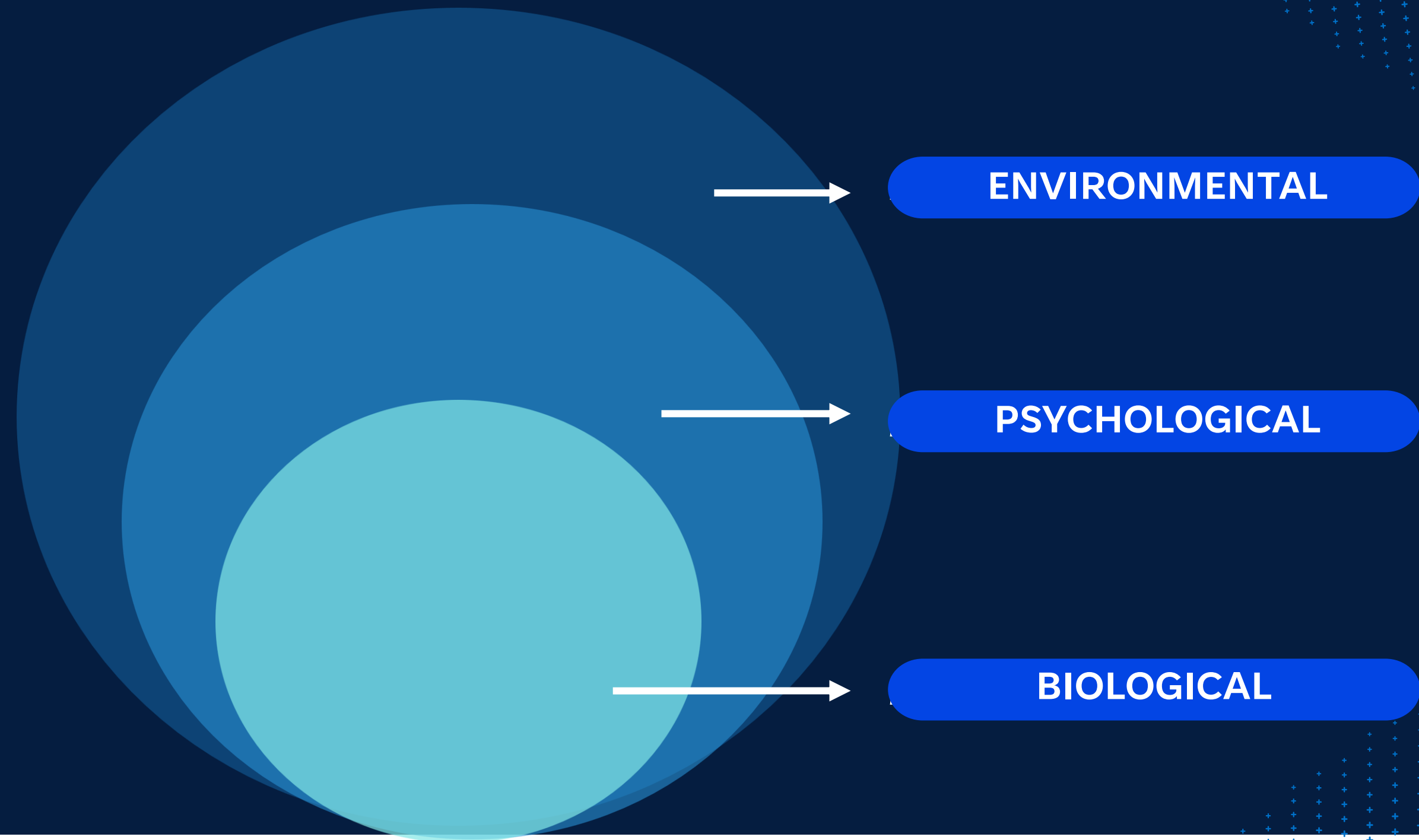








Holistic Framework



The Evidence Base

- A large proportion of diseases and disorders is preventable.
- Modifiable health risks are precursors to a large number of diseases and disorders and to premature death.
- Modifiable health risks can be improved through workplace sponsored health promotion and disease prevention programs.
- Improvements in the health risk profile of a population can lead to reductions in health costs.
- Workplace health promotion and disease prevention programs save companies money in health care expenditures and may produce a positive ROI.

Healthy People 2000, 2010, Amler & Dull, 1987, Brestow, 1993, McGinnis & Foege, 1993, Mokdad et al., 2004, Milliman & Robinson, 1987, Yen et al., 1992, Goetzel, et al., 1998, Anderson et al., 2000, Bertera, 1991, Pronk, 1999, Goetzel 2012, Witson et al., 1996, Heaney & Goetzel, 1997, Pelletier, 1991-2011, Soler et al. 2010, Edington et al., 2001, Goetzel et al., 1999, Carts et al., 2011, Citibank 1999-2000, Procter and Gamble 1998, Highmark, 2008, Johnson & Johnson, 2011, Dell 2015, Duke University 2015, Baicker, Cutler & Song, 2010

"80% of your problems are not people problems; they are systems problems, because systems create behaviors."

Andy Stanley, Speaker, Author, Pastor





It's a Systems Problem

- Burnout, high injury rates, and rising PTSD claims are often seen as individual issues.
- The reality: It's the environment creating the strain, not just personal resilience or stress management.
- Cultural and social dynamics within departments have a greater impact than isolated wellness initiatives.

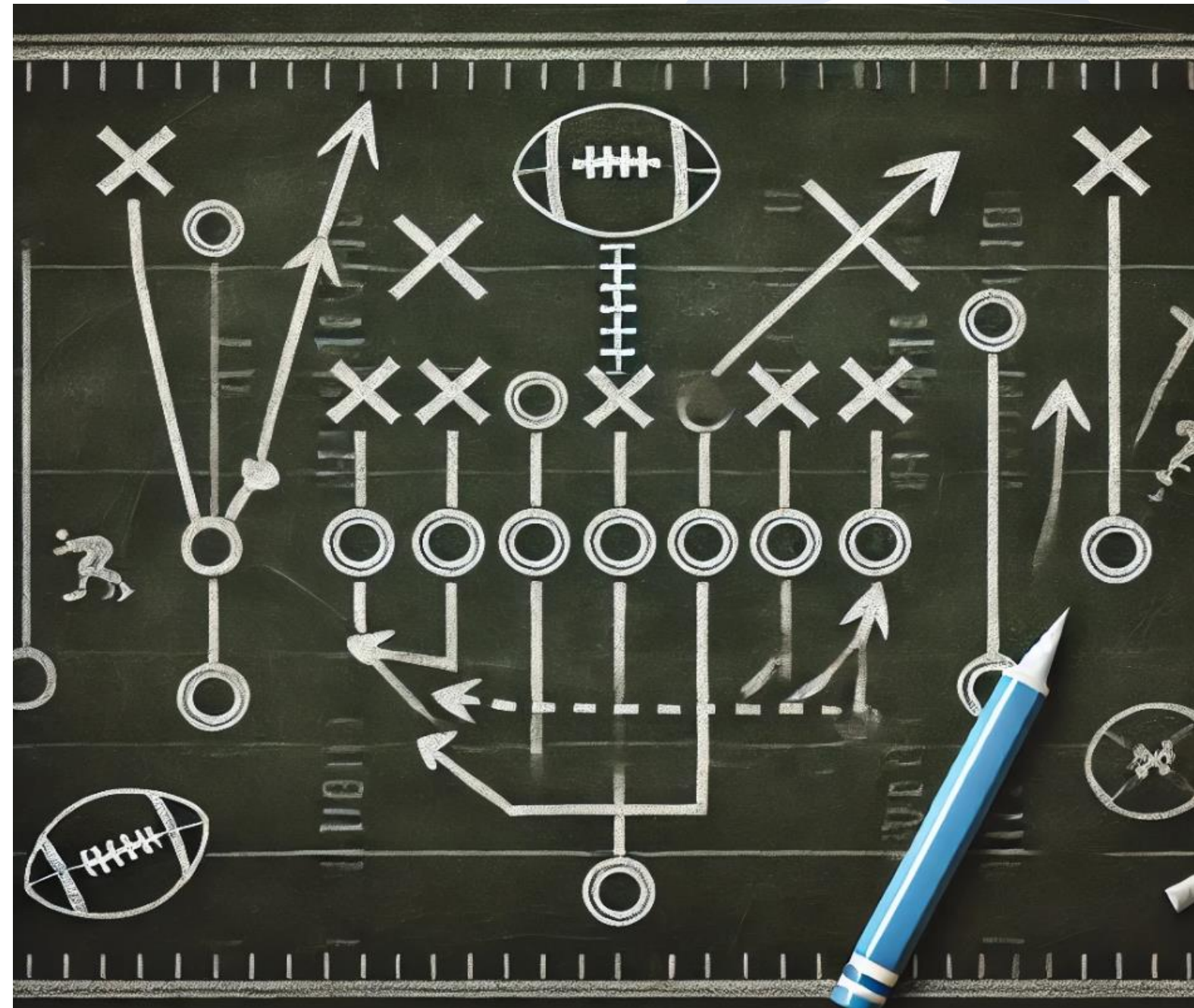


*Are we creating an environment where
wellness is possible?”*

The Power of Systems Approach

Systems are about **processes, routines, or structures** that lead to desired results over time

The more clearly defined system, the more likely you will achieve your intended results.





***You do not rise to the level of
your goals. You fall to the level
of your systems."***

— James Clear



Aggregation of Marginal Gains



SAFETY AND LOSS CONTROL WORKSHOPS

Tailor the Model

1. What specific challenges are you trying to address?
2. What behaviors do you want to see?
3. What contributes to failure?

Step 1: Analyze the System

Start by Asking Questions

1. Are we consistently getting the best team players, or just the best individual performers?
2. Are our selection and training processes reinforcing collaboration or competition?
3. What patterns emerge among the most effective teams under pressure?

Steph 2: Designing the Right System

- ✓ High performers were often mistaken for the best teammates—but some of them were actually damaging team cohesion.
- ✓ Trust and reliability were just as important as raw performance in mission success.
- ✓ Toxic, high-performing individuals were frequently undermining team effectiveness - but they were still being selected and retained because the system prioritized performance over trust.

Step 3: Implementing Actions to Reinforce the System

- ✓ Prioritizing teammates who others could count on over those who were just physically dominant.
- ✓ Shifting training and leadership development to reinforce team trust and cohesion.
- ✓ Actively removing toxic high-performers who damaged trust, even if they excelled in their physical capabilities.

Step 4: Monitor, Adapt and Reinforce the System

1. Prioritizing Trust Over Performance

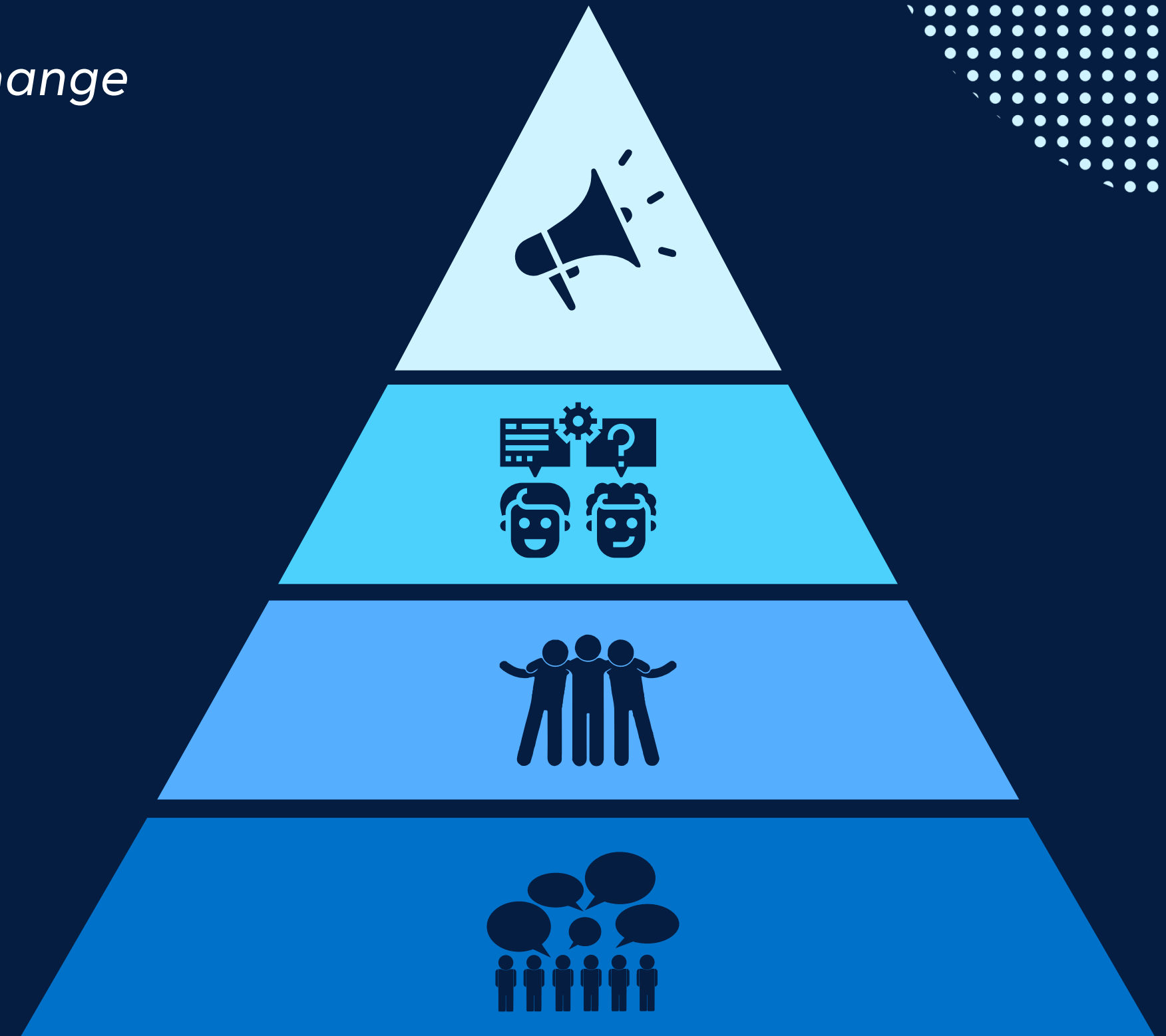
2. Redesigning Leadership Development

3. Eliminating Systemic Sabotage

Building Systems for Better Outcomes

Start with systems when you want to change your outcomes

- 01** **Analyze the Current System:** Is the current system supporting or sabotaging success?
- 02** **Design & Align the Right Systems:** What processes will produce the right behaviors?
- 03** **Implement and Reinforce the System:** How do we ensure these changes become embedded into department culture?
- 04** **Monitor, Adapt, and Reinforce the System:** Is the system still working, or does it need adjustments?



SYSTEMS BREAKDOWN

01 Analyze the current System. Is the current system supporting or sabotaging success?



SYSTEMS BREAKDOWN

Design and Align the Right System.

02 Is the current system supporting or sabotaging success?



SYSTEMS BREAKDOWN

Implement and Reinforce the

03 **System.** How do we ensure these changes become embedded into department culture??



SYSTEMS BREAKDOWN

04 Monitor, Adapt, and Reinforce the System. Is the system still working, or does it need adjustments?



Systems Strategy

01

Make it Obvious

02

Make it Attractive

03

Make it Easy

04

Make it Satisfying



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Wellness Isn't Just an Individual Issue—
It's a Systemic One



You don't need another wellness program. You need a system where wellness is automatic.



Small, Consistent Changes Lead to Long-Term Impact



Compounding small changes is more effective than large, one-time efforts.

Proactive Wellness Strategies

System

Proactive

Reactive



Thanks For Caring

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Agencies with **20%+ less** turnover than their peers have:

- **A Mission that is Clear and Concise**
 - Incorporated into everyday decision making, recognition & reward
 - And guides strategic direction.
- **Core Values are Clear and Concise,**
 - And incorporated into everyday work, recognition & reward.
- **Focus on normalizing officer mental health & wellness with**
 - Strategic objective(s) such as “erasing the stigma” of mental health,
 - Multiple programs established with measured participation,
 - Officer-directed input / command staff advocacy,
 - And focus “On the journey”.