



Stress Injury Awareness for the Individual:

Tools for early recognition of acute and chronic stress in yourself and your colleagues



WILDERNESS RISK
MANAGEMENT
CONFERENCE





Yosemite National Park, April 2016

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



+ A common language around stress impact & injury



+ Proactive tools to mitigate stress injury



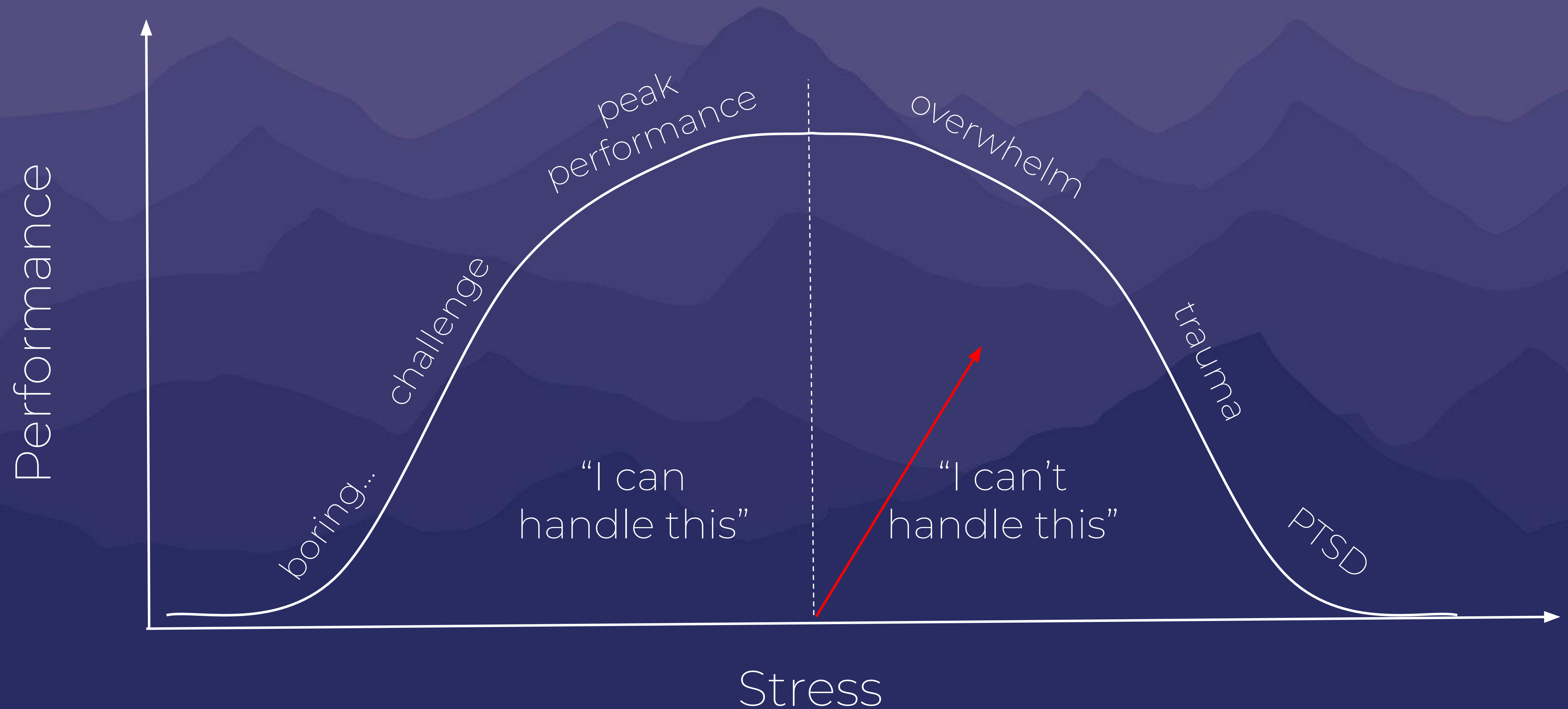
+ An increased sense of resilience

Intention Setting



- + Talking about Stress & Potentially Traumatic Events
- + Intentionally staying out of 'Survival Brain'
 - Avoid details of stories
 - Step away if needed

When does stress become **stress injury**?



STRESS INJURIES

↑ risk when stressed



STRESS INJURIES

are physical injuries



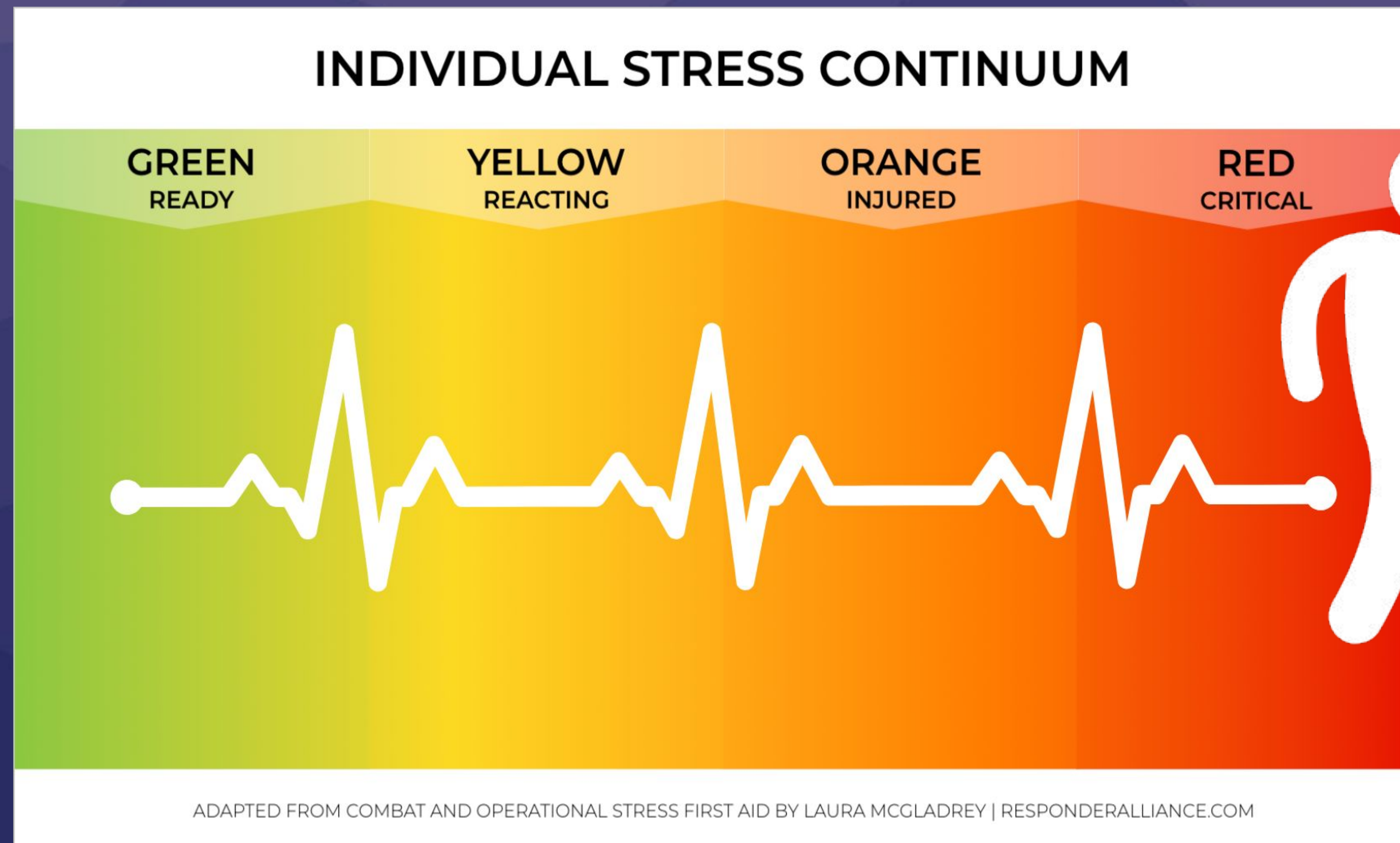
STRESS INJURIES

impact relationships



STRESS INJURIES

have early & late changing indicators...



and can be supported
when recognized.



Yosemite National Park, May 2015

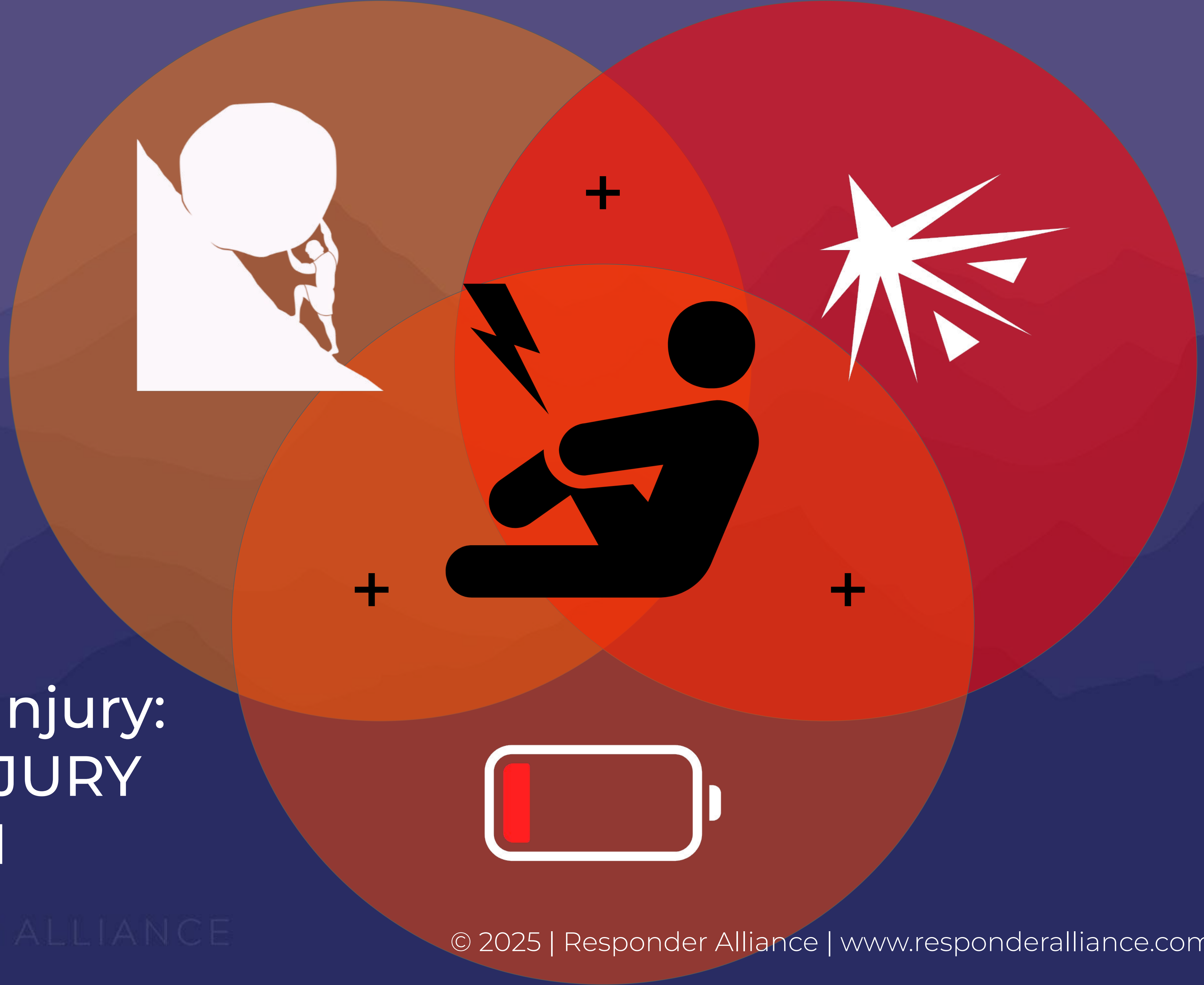
REFLECTION - groups of 2 or 3

- + How do you experience stress?
- + How do you talk about or express your stress?

Why Common Language Matters

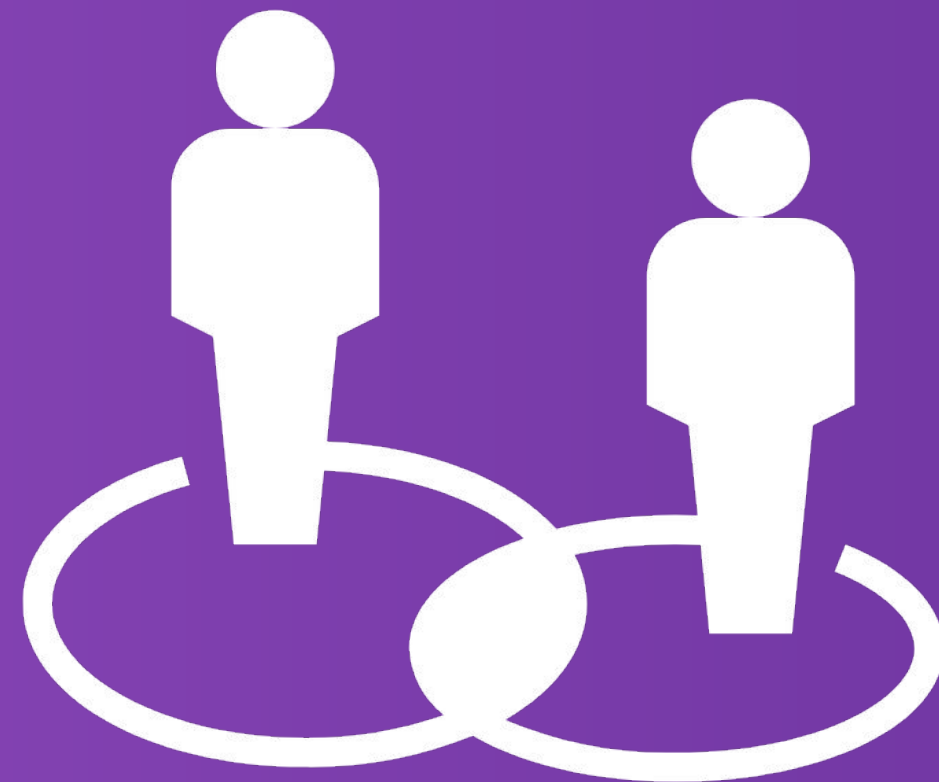


Mechanisms of Injury: THE STRESS INJURY EQUATION

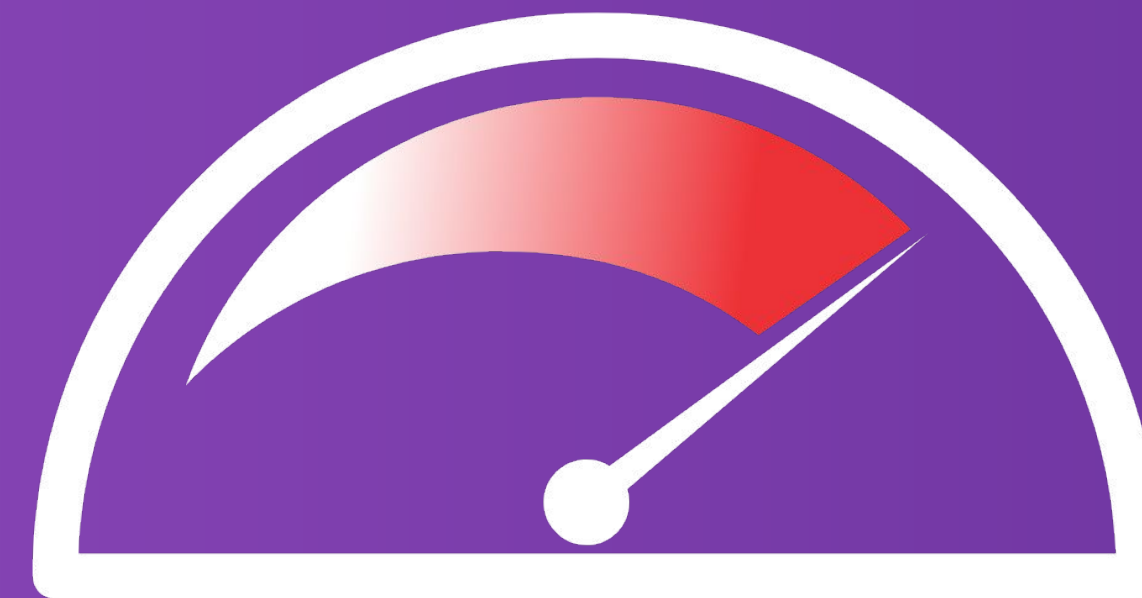


Potentially Traumatizing Events (PTEs)

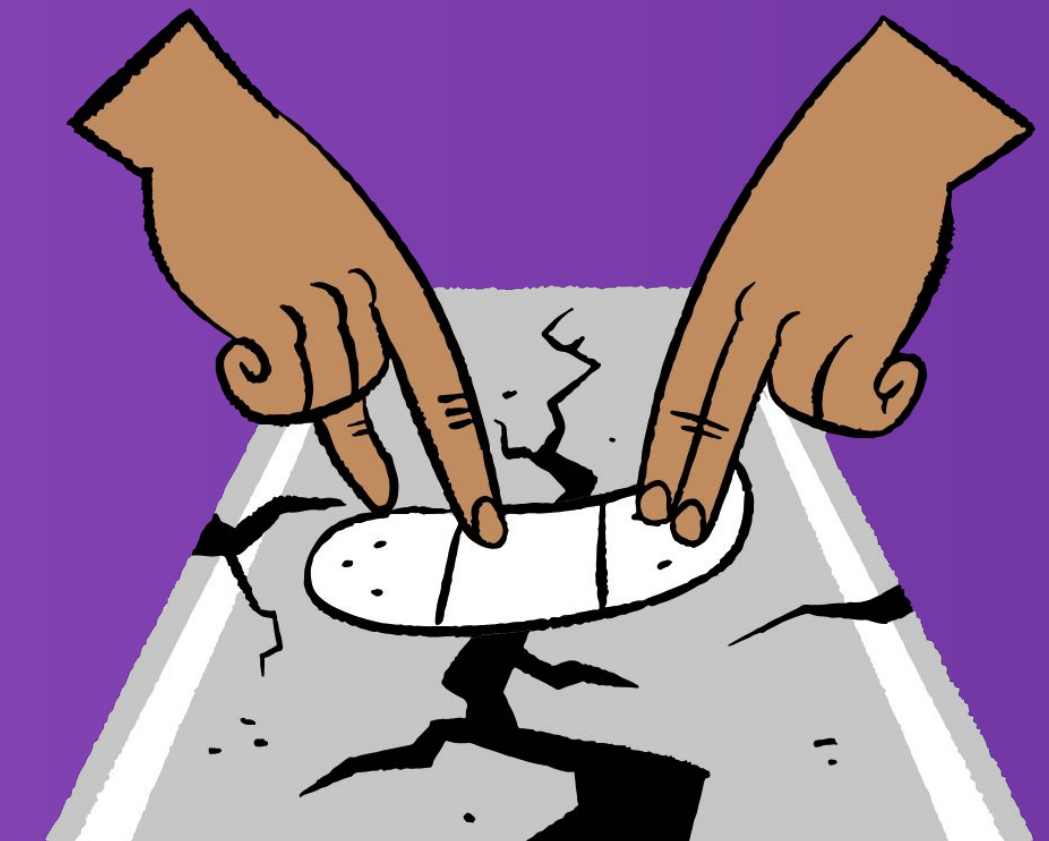
PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION



OVERWHELM

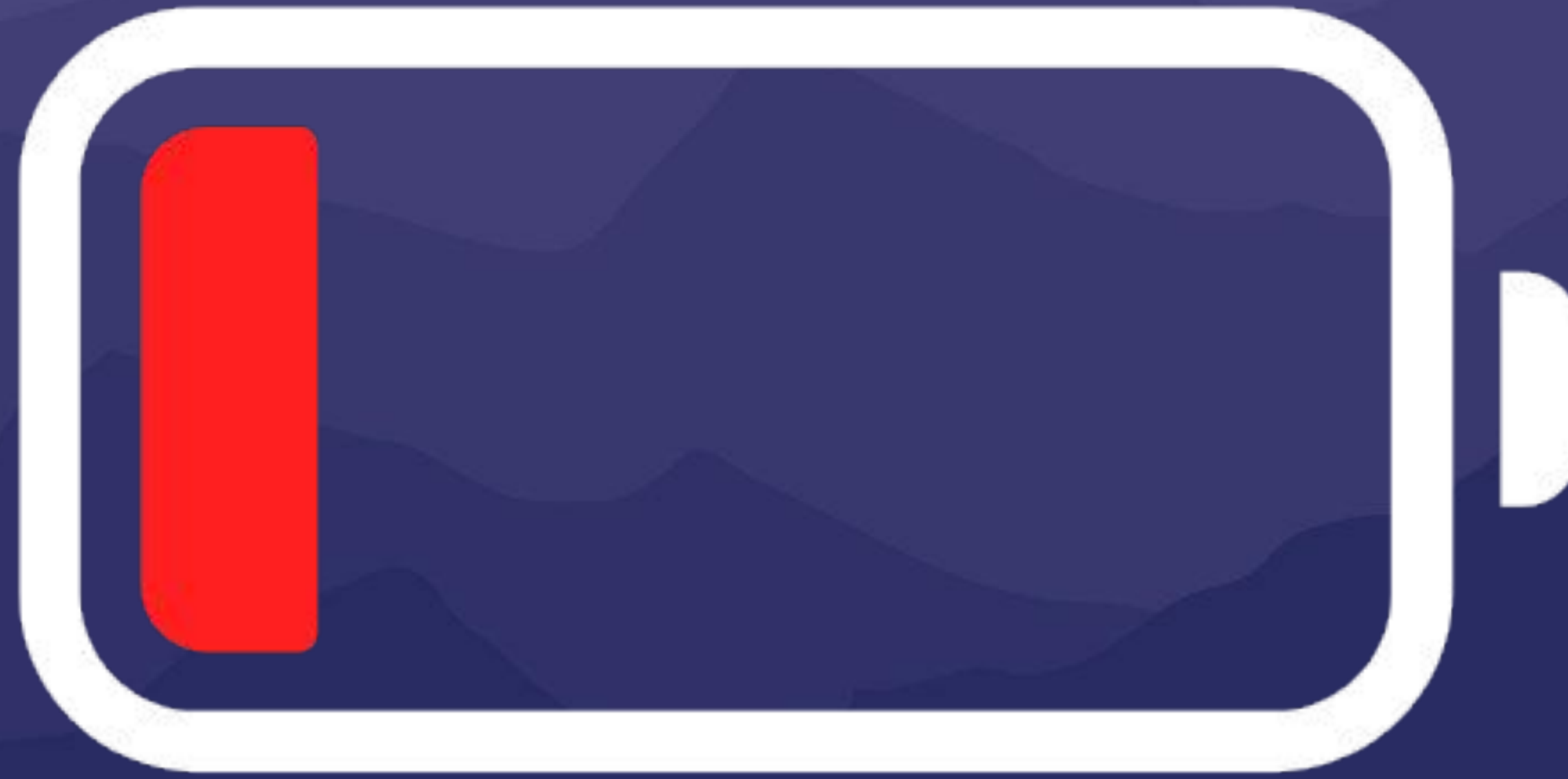


HELPLESSNESS & ISOLATION



Depletion

What's draining your battery?



INDIVIDUAL STRESS CONTINUUM

GREEN READY	YELLOW REACTING	ORANGE INJURED	RED CRITICAL
Healthy Sleep	Sleep Loss	Sleep Issues/ Nightmares	Insomnia
Healthy Personal Relationships	Distance From Others	Disengaged Relationships	Broken Relationships
Spiritual & Emotional Health	Change In Attitude	Feeling Trapped	Intrusive Thoughts
Physical Health	Fatigue	Exhausted	Anxiety & Panic
Emotionally Available	Avoidance	Physical Symptoms	Depression
Gratitude	Short Fuse	Emotional Numbness	Feeling Lost or Out of Control
Vitality	Criticism	Suffering	Thoughts Of Suicide
Room For Complexity	Lack of Motivation	Isolation	Blame
Sense of Mission	Cutting Corners	Burnout	Hopelessness
	Loss of Creativity		
	Loss of Interest		

OUTDOOR EDUCATOR STRESS CONTINUUM

READY

- Follows a self care routine
- Able to focus on complex issues
- Inquisitive with participants
- Challenges are met with laughter and a smile
- Excited to come back next season
- Models positive attitude when dealing with adversity
- Interested to hear constructive feedback
- Picks up additional tasks

REACTING

- Low self-care
- Needs to be redirected
- Loss of patience with participants
- Frequently complains to other staff
- Easily frustrated with fellow staff
- Frustrated with leadership
- Handles constructive feedback poorly
- No one can do this other than me attitude

INJURED

- No self care and poor personal hygiene
- Not helpful to rest of staff team
- Disregards program protocols
- Disinterested in participants
- Openly complains in front of anyone
- Going through the motions during pre/post trip work
- Open about not returning next season
- Excited to finish a trip to begin self-medicating

CRITICAL

- Unable to take care of themselves
- Debilitating Anxiety
- Unable to Focus
- Isolates themselves
- Emotionless at and outside of work
- Doing nothing outside of work
- Scared to climb, kayak, etc.
- Excessive use of substances/alcohol on and off trips

INDIVIDUAL STRESS CONTINUUM

GREEN
READY

YELLOW
REACTING

ORANGE
INJURED

RED
CRITICAL

What can we do about it?



Manage Stressors

“Green Choices” – What charges your battery?



Manage Stressors

“Green Choices” – What charges your battery?

INDIVIDUALIZED RESILIENCE PLAN

-YOU, GREENER: DO MORE OF WHAT WORKS-

RECHARGE	CONNECTION	HEALTH	SPACE	MISSION

NUMBING TOOLS:

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Creating an Individualized Resilience Plan

- + Plan “Green Choices”
- + Build into existing operations
- + Reduce friction + build in accountability
- + Revisit plan – adjustments?

REFLECTION - groups of 2

It's October 1, 2026....

+ What support is now in place for yourself and your team?

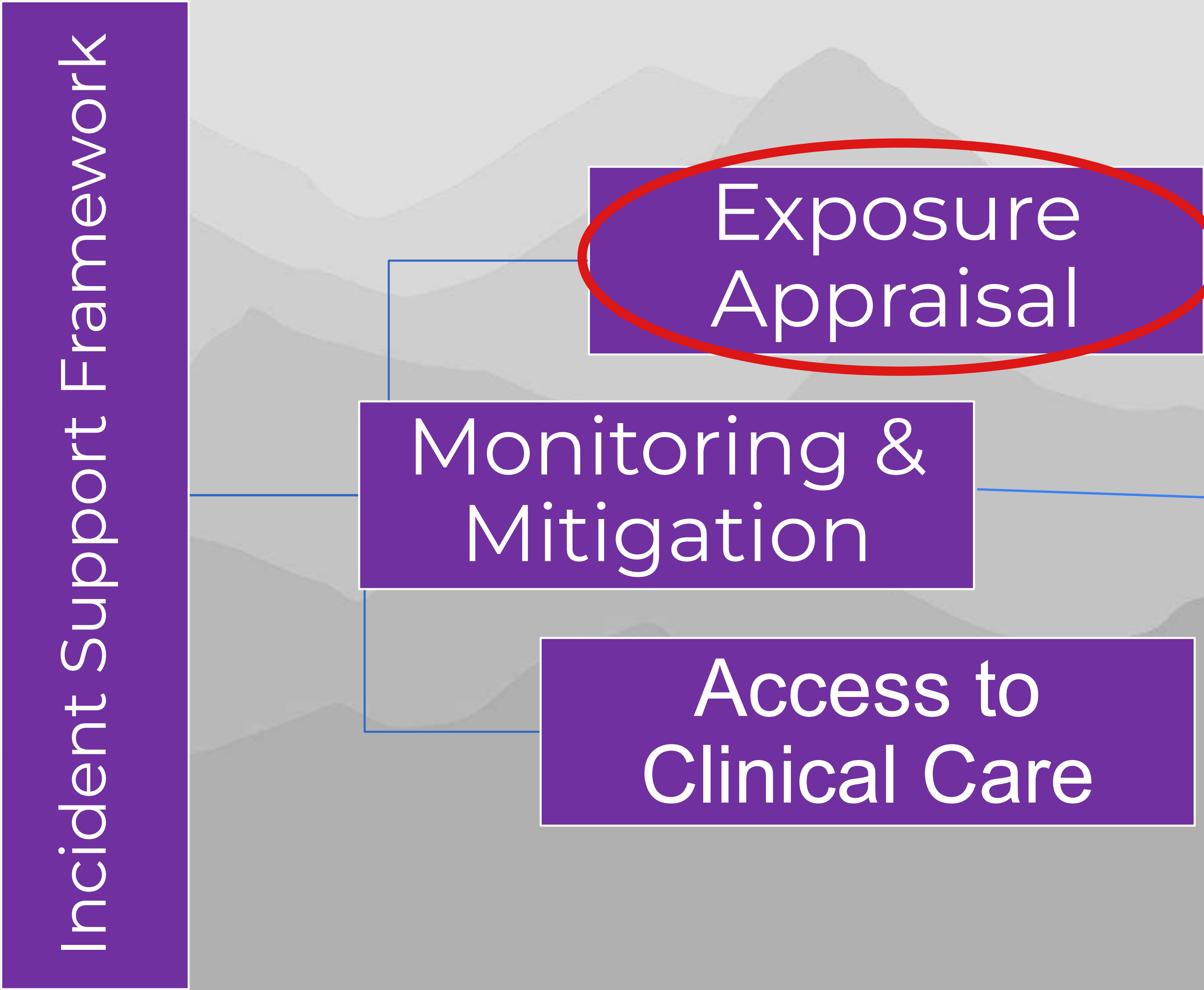
With your Accountability Buddy:

- **Share a bit about your intentions.**
- **Share your contact information.**
- **Schedule a date/time to check-in.**

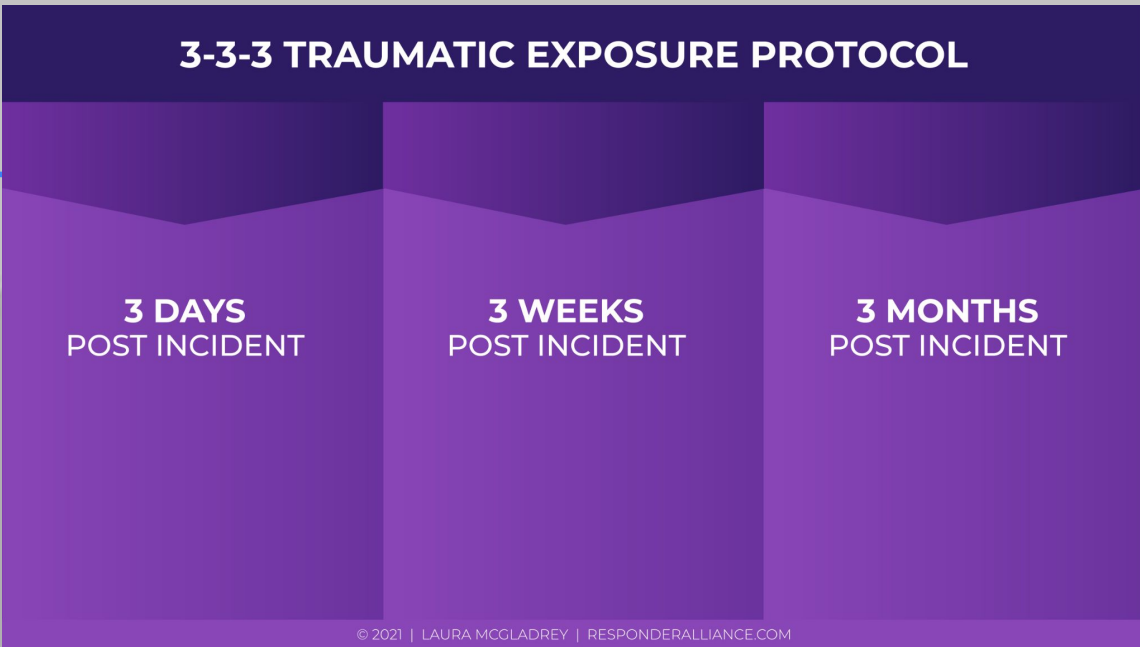
Support for Others

A-B-C-D-E PRACTICAL SUPPORT
Psychological First Response for Rescue

Organizational Structure



INCIDENT SUPPORT TOOL (IST)				
Incident Appraisal		Responder Appraisal		
Extremes of exposure		Personal Identification		< 40 Consider After Action Review Review PTE's Revisit Resources Consider 3-3-3 protocol
Mission Injury		Overwhelm/Depletion		
Incident involving children		Family Contact		
Complexity of the mission		Novel Exposure		40-70 After Action Review Offer 3-3-3 protocol Consider Follow Up gathering
Conflict during mission		Personal Responsibility		
Team Score:		Individual Score:		
TEAM + INDIVIDUAL = TOTAL SCORE				
0	5	10		> 70 After Action Review & PTE Review 3-3-3 for Individuals Consider 3-3-3 for team (social or operational)
Little Or No Exposure	Moderate Exposure	Significant Exposure		



INCIDENT SUPPORT TOOL (IST)

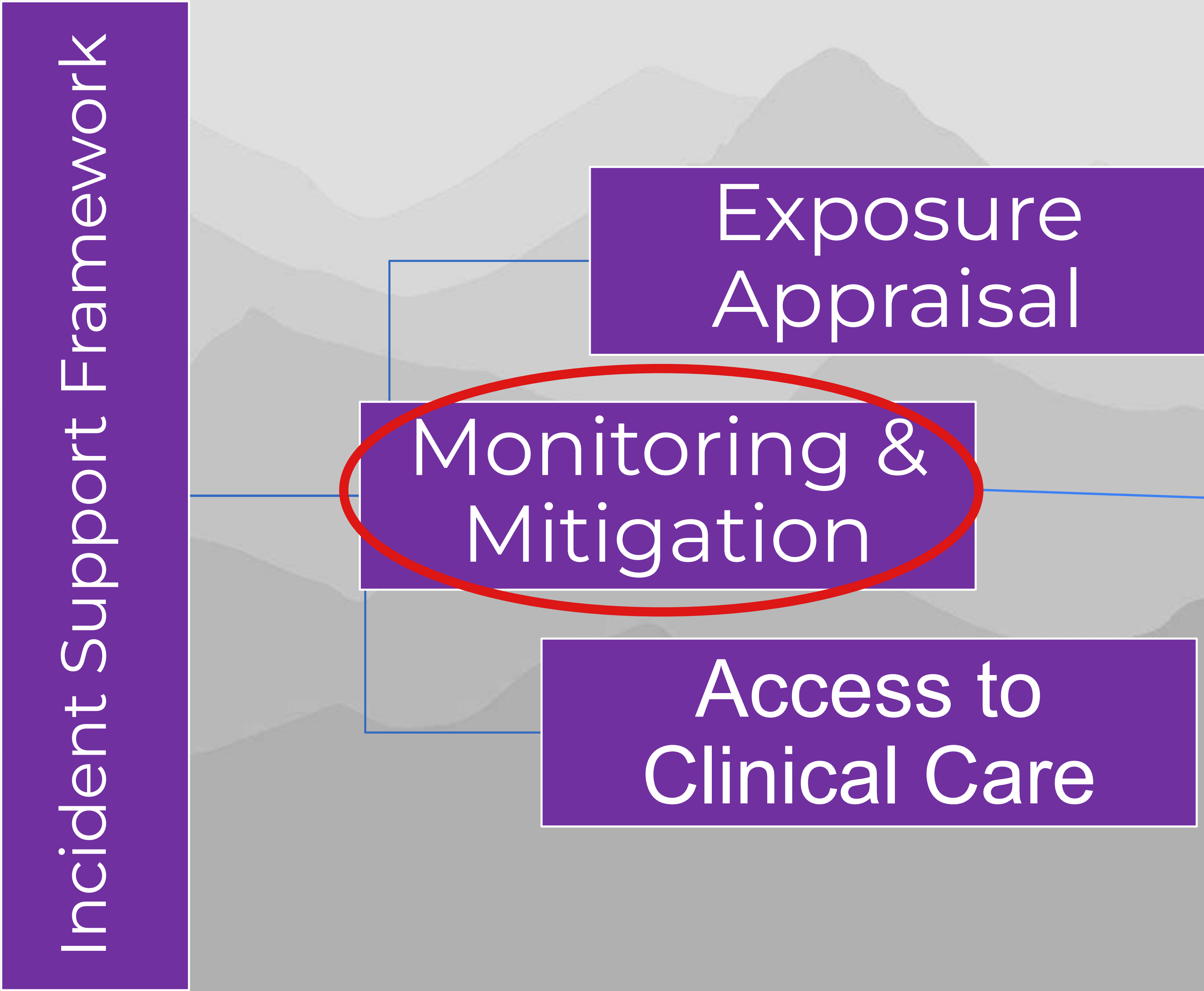
Responder Appraisal		Incident Appraisal	
Personal Identification		Extremes of Exposure	
Depletion / Overwhelm		Mission Injury / Helplessness	
Family Contact		Incident Involving Children/ Animals	
Novel Exposure		Complexity of the Mission	
Personal Responsibility / Duty to Act		Conflict During Mission	
Responder Score:		Incident Score:	

RESPONDER + INCIDENT = TOTAL SCORE:	
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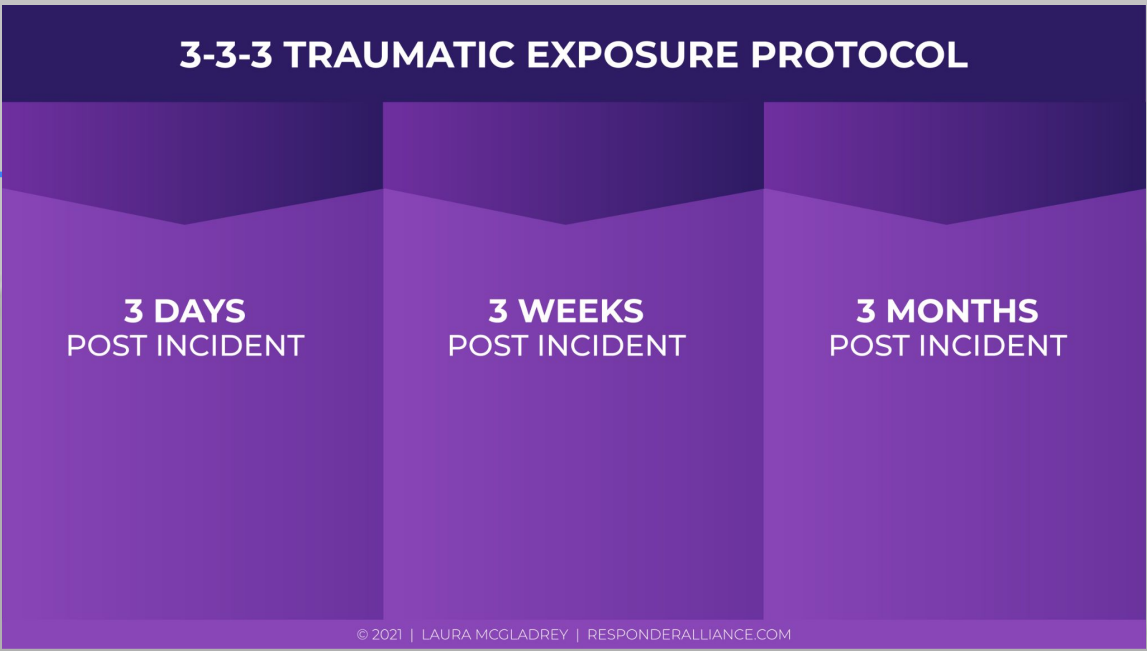
0	5	10
Little or No Exposure	Moderate Exposure	Significant Exposure

< 40	Connect: - Revisit Resources & Stress Mitigation Tools - Monitor Stress Levels
40- 70	Consider: - Implement Mitigation Tools 3-3-3 Protocol - Follow Up Gathering
> 70	Recommend: - After Action Review 3-3-3 Protocol for Individuals & the Team - Follow Up Social Gathering

Organizational Structure



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Incident Appraisal		Responder Appraisal		
Extremes of exposure		Personal Identification		< 40 • Consider After Action Review • Review PTE's • Revisit Resources • Consider 3-3-3 protocol
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Protect, Connect, Engage

3-3-3 TRAUMATIC EXPOSURE PROTOCOL

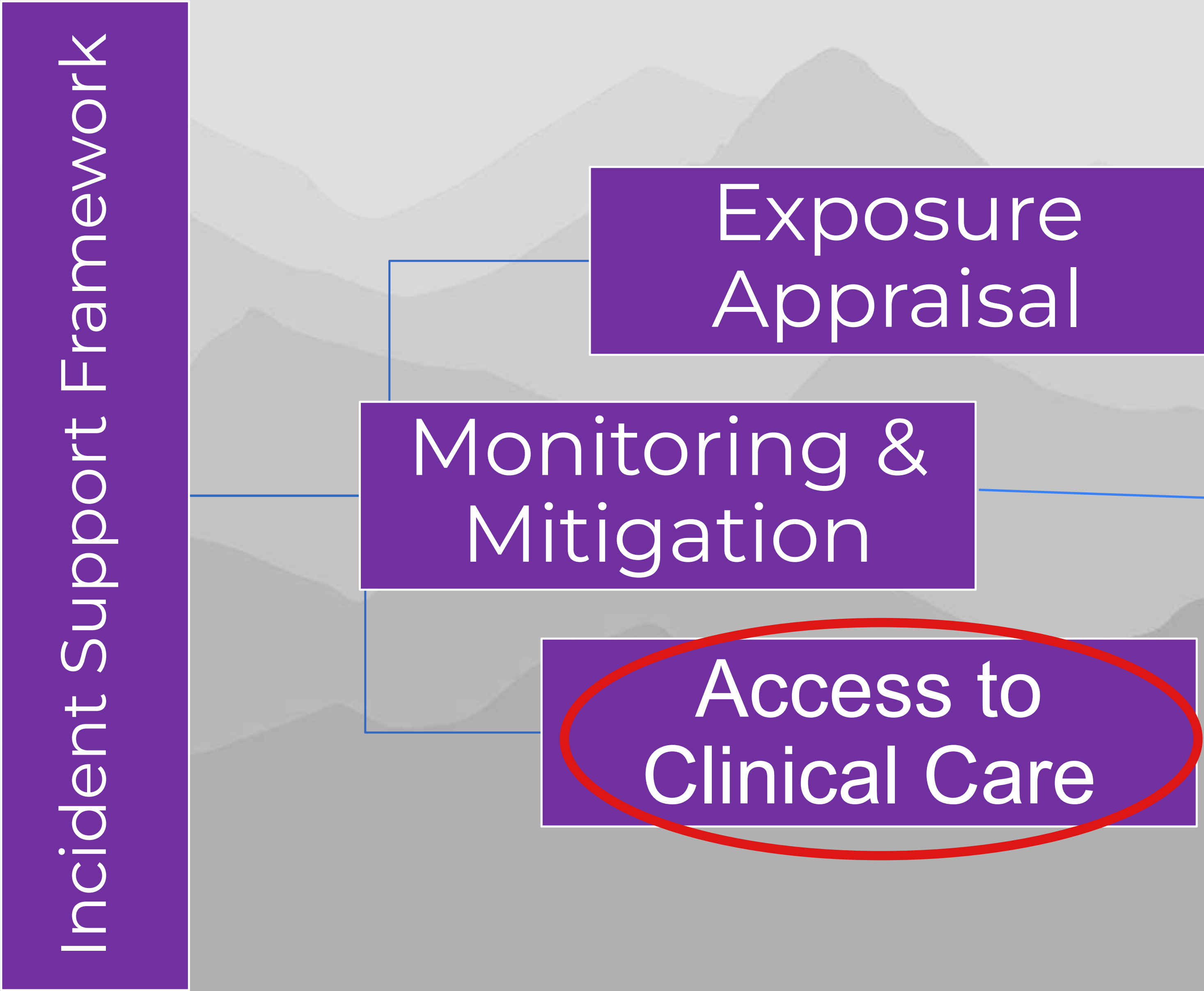
3 DAYS
POST INCIDENT

3 WEEKS
POST INCIDENT

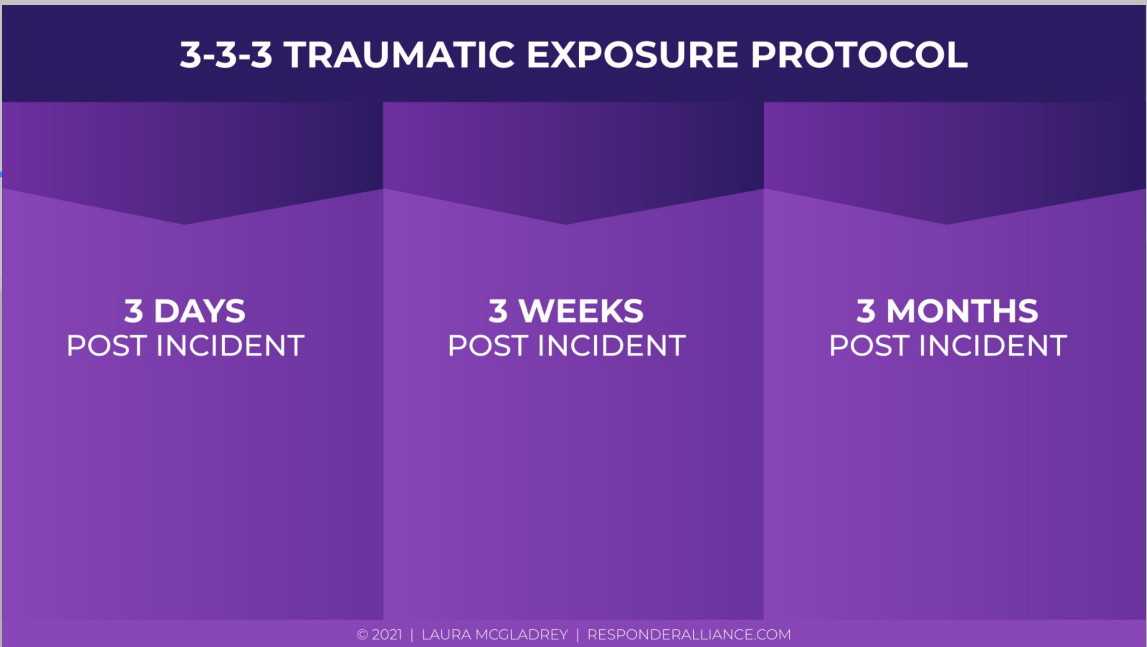
3 MONTHS
POST INCIDENT

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Organizational Structure

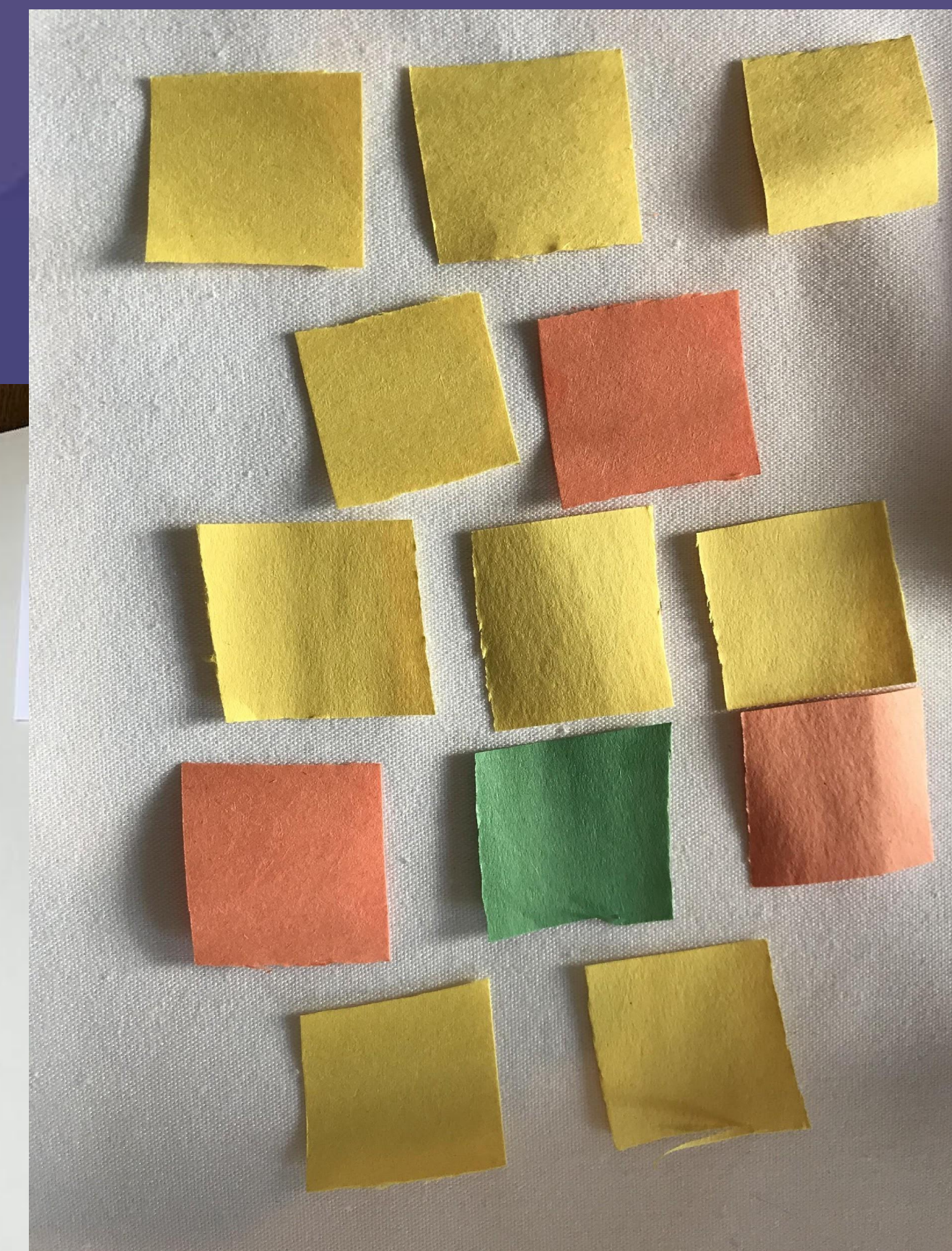
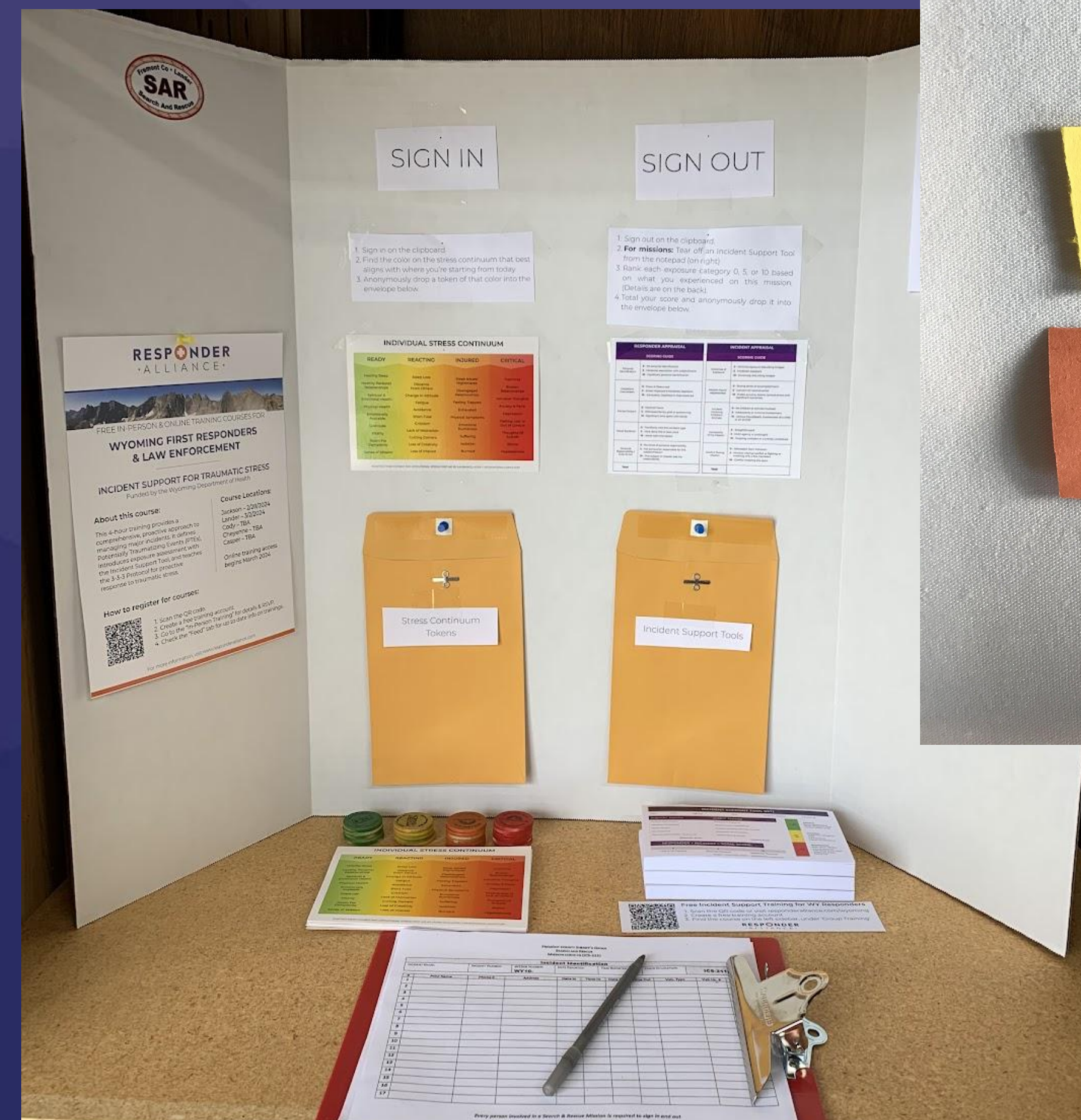


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Embedding Resilience into Culture

- + Shared language & Stress Continuum check-ins
- + Resilience team and/or buddy check-ins
- + “You’ll know I’m stressed when…”

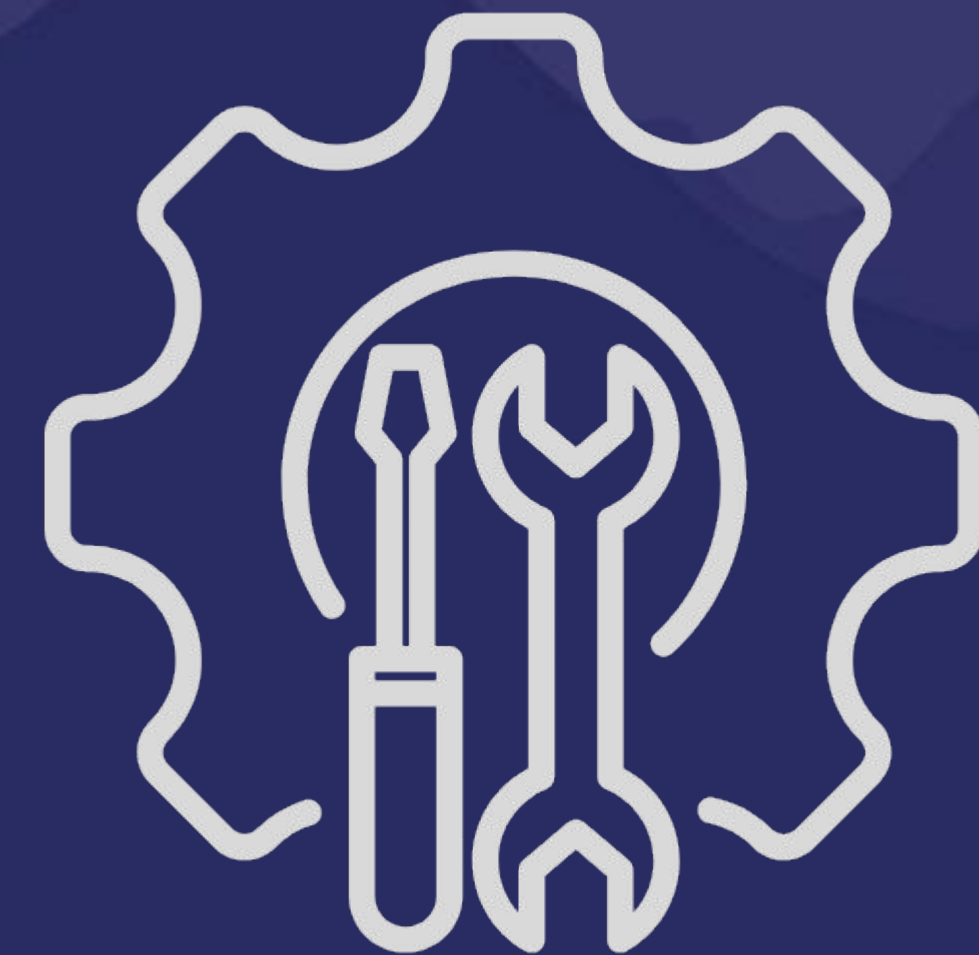


ACTION STEPS

- + Share language with all staff as a *universal precaution*
- + Utilize Stress Continuum check-ins in operations
 - + Plan to support staff in Orange/Red
- + Revisit your Individual Resilience Plan



- + Responder Alliance is the leading resource in stress resilience education for first responders & outdoor professionals



RESOURCES

- + [Responder Alliance Community Meetings](#)
- + [Responder Alliance Foundation](#)
- + Field Responder App – coming soon
- + [Responder Alliance Newsletter](#)
- + Schedule a [free consultation](#) for customized support with your organization's stress injury risk management planning

