



Vanquish the Energy Vampire

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Objectives

- Define and identify characteristics of a healthy professional relationship.
- Identify key characteristics and behavioral traits of the four types of emotional vampires (EV).
- Discuss the individual, group, and organizational impact of emotional vampires.
- Provide actionable tips and concepts to assist in dealing with difficult team members and offset the negative impact of their actions.
- Learn a framework to assist in addressing and correcting counter-productive work behaviors.

Energy Vampire – What we do in the Shadows



How do you know when a personal or professional relationship is unhealthy?

Relationships

- Difference in personal and professional
- Transactional
- Exchange of energy
- Characteristics of healthy relationships
 - Trust and safety
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Respect
 - Empathy and compassion



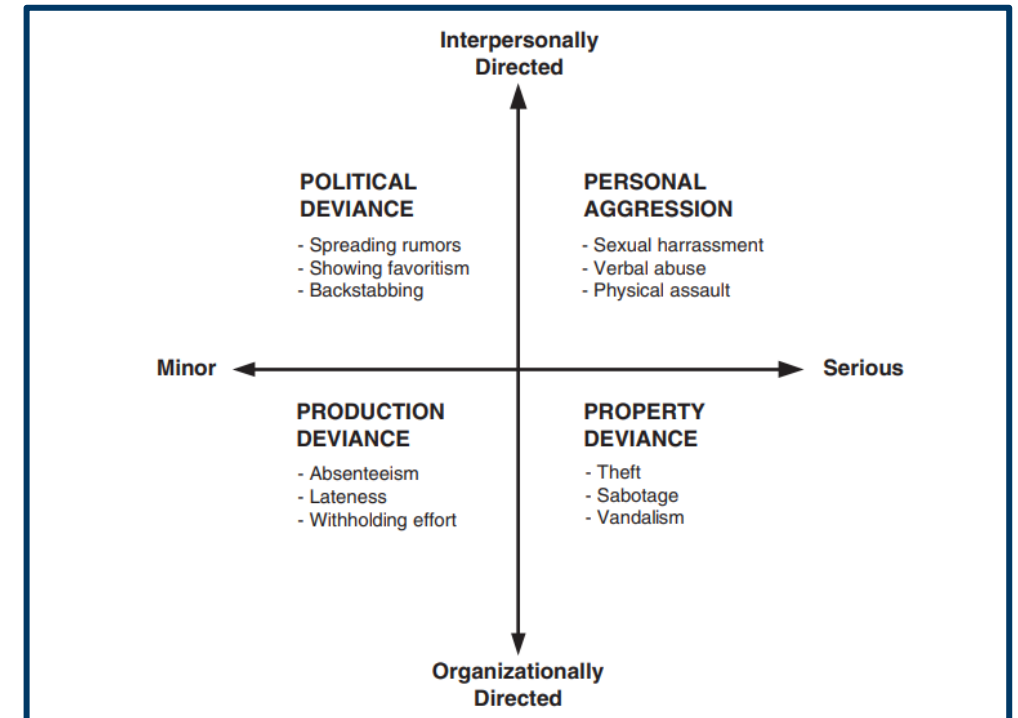
What is an Energy Vampire?

- “An energy vampire is someone who repeatedly takes — and lacks insight and awareness of how this contributes to interpersonal problems.” (Gillette, 2022)
- The EV’s Behavior is (consciously or unconsciously) fueled by unmet needs.
- The EV inhabits all walks of life.
- AKA: Bad Apples, Emotional Marauder, Mental Extortioner, Energy Depleter, Energy Sucker, etc.
- Triggers intuition in the “victim”... interactions feel off
- No medical or scientific research
 - Anecdotal Social Phenomenon (mostly)
- Person-Centered Language



Counter-Productive Work Behaviors

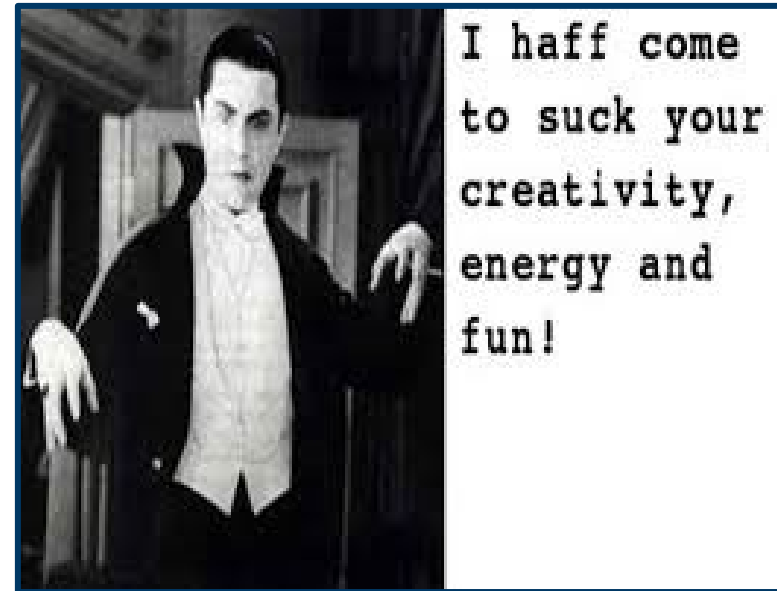
- Behavior that is contrary to organizational interests and values.
- Behavior that serves as a coping mechanism.
- Events may impact cognitive and emotional abilities.
- Limited functioning reduces ability to assess and anticipate consequences of behavior.



Thomas B. Lawrence and Sandra L. Robinson

Traits and Behaviors

- Discussions are dominated by them
- Whiny
- Blaming and bullying
- Insecure and “gossipy”
- Employs guilt trips
- Pessimistic
- Highly critical of others
- Needy
- May lack social and emotional awareness



Possible Contributing Factors

- Mental health diagnoses
- Chronic illness, pain, or challenging health conditions
- Learned behaviors
- Stress
- Past exposure to a traumatic event
- Ineffective interpersonal communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of effective coping strategies
- Deficient self-awareness or emotional intelligence



The Energy “Depleter”: Four Types

The Melodramatic (Histrionic)

- Seeks to be the center of attention
- Has a flare for drama
- Lacks awareness of boundaries (shares too much, excessive talking)
- May consider relationships “closer” than they are
- Are highly attuned to rejection
- Often plays the victim
- May exhibit passive-aggressive behaviors

The Egomaniac (Narcissistic)

- Has a sense of entitlement
- Can be braggadocious and highly competitive
- Lacks empathy and is ambivalent toward other people’s feelings
- Is critical of others and defensive when confronted
- Lacks awareness of their behaviors and the impact
- Weaponizes information or vulnerabilities of others
- Preys upon individuals deemed weak or lesser

The Energy “Depleter”: Four Types (cont.)

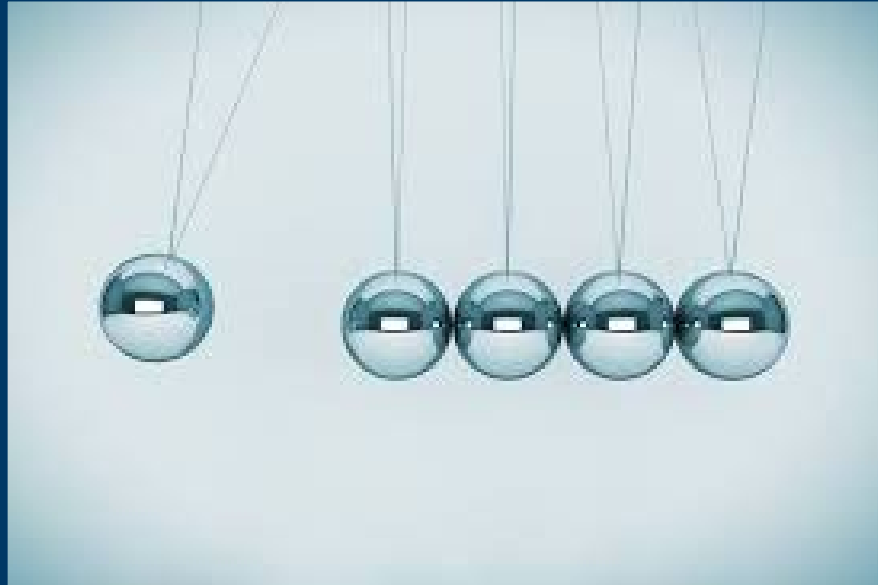
The Dependent

- Requires detailed instruction and regular reassurance
- Fears letting others down... especially leaders
- Is highly reliable
- Holds perfectionism with rigid thought patterns
- May be more controlling than they appear
- Carries a sense of learned helplessness
- Are well intentioned
- May view routine obstacles as “emergencies”

The Paranoid

- Frequently questions and does not accept others at face value
- Are intolerant of ambiguity
- Views the world as an “extension” of themselves
- Is a chronic “ventor”
- Is untrusting of others
- Has a “Me vs. You” attitude
- Lacks transparency

Questions to Consider



- 1) Is there an energy vampire in your life (personally or professionally)?
- 2) Has their behavior had a negative impact on you?
- 3) How has their behavior proven detrimental to the team/organization?

Individual Impact

- Emotional and physical fatigue
- Overstimulation
- Apathy
- Chronic stress
- Burnout
- Increased use of maladaptive coping mechanisms
- Withdrawal
- Anger and frustration



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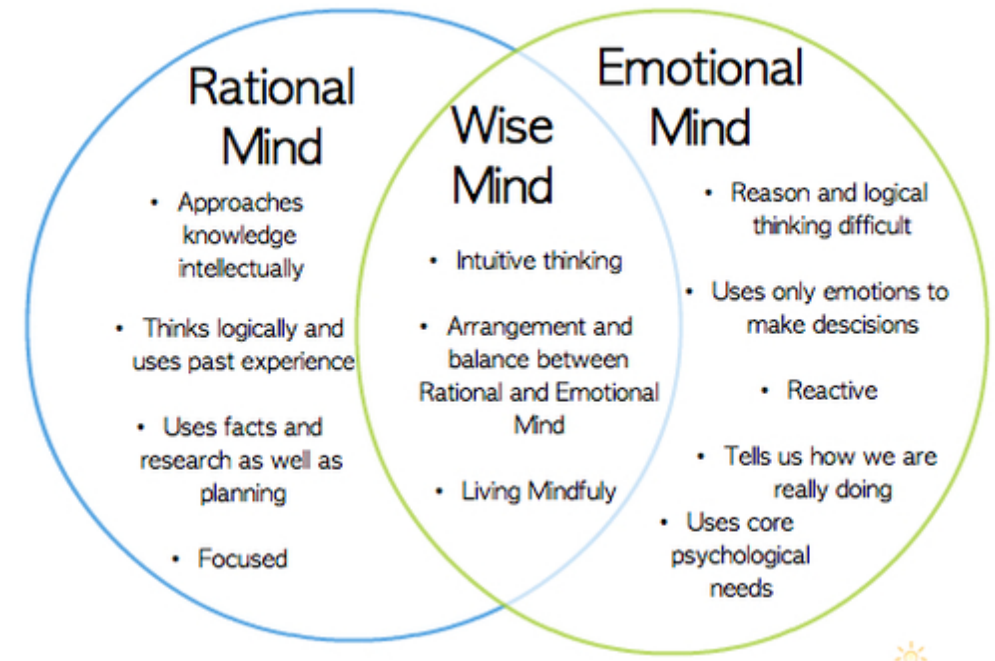
Group and Organizational Impact

- Deterioration of trust and respect
- Break-down in communication
- Increased stress, tension, and conflict
- Impeded vulnerability, compromise, and team cohesion
- Undermined organizational interests, values, and goals
- Increased employee turnover
- Inhibited creativity and innovation
- Degraded organizational reputation



Tips to Guide Engagement

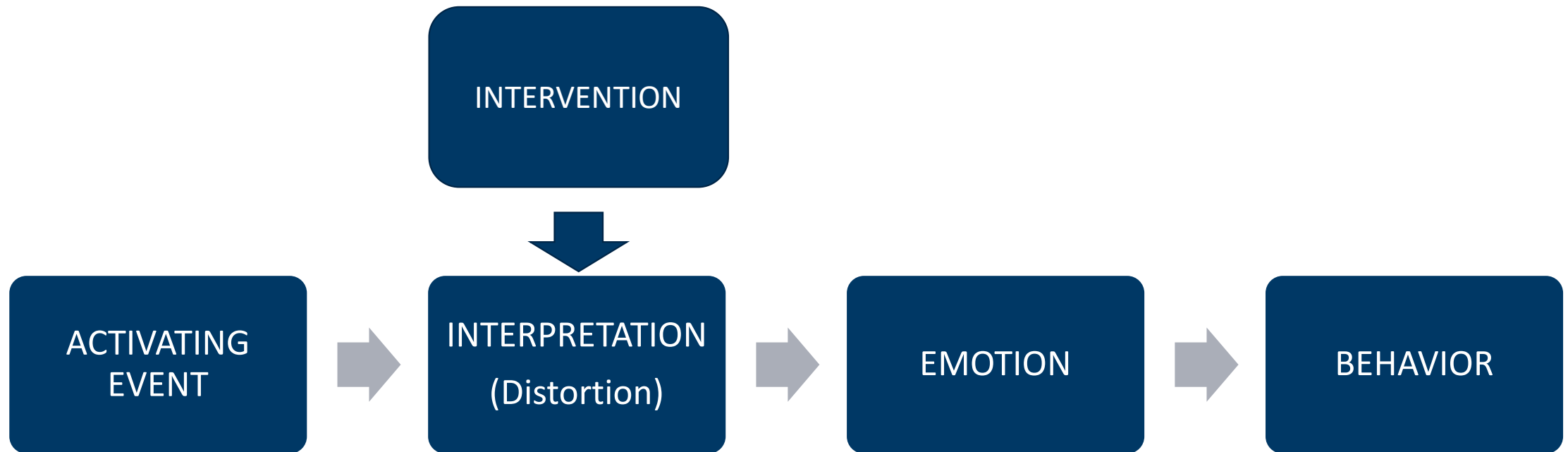
- “Wise mind”
- Unconditional positive regard
- Adjust expectations
- Assertive communication
- Boundaries
- Differentiation
- Empathy through perspective
- Externalize the problem (behavior is the problem, not the person)













- Helpful vs. Unhelpful Thinking (reframing)
- Focus on professional values and goals to guide effort

Shift Cognition to Modify Behavior

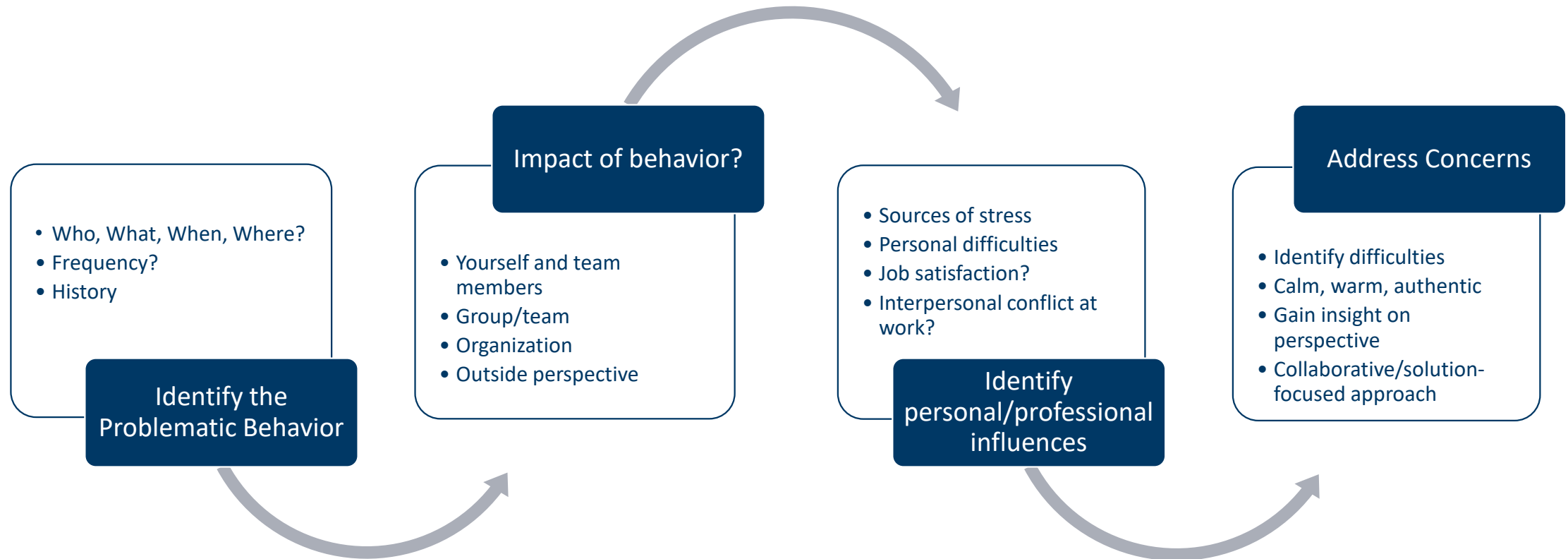
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (ABCDE)



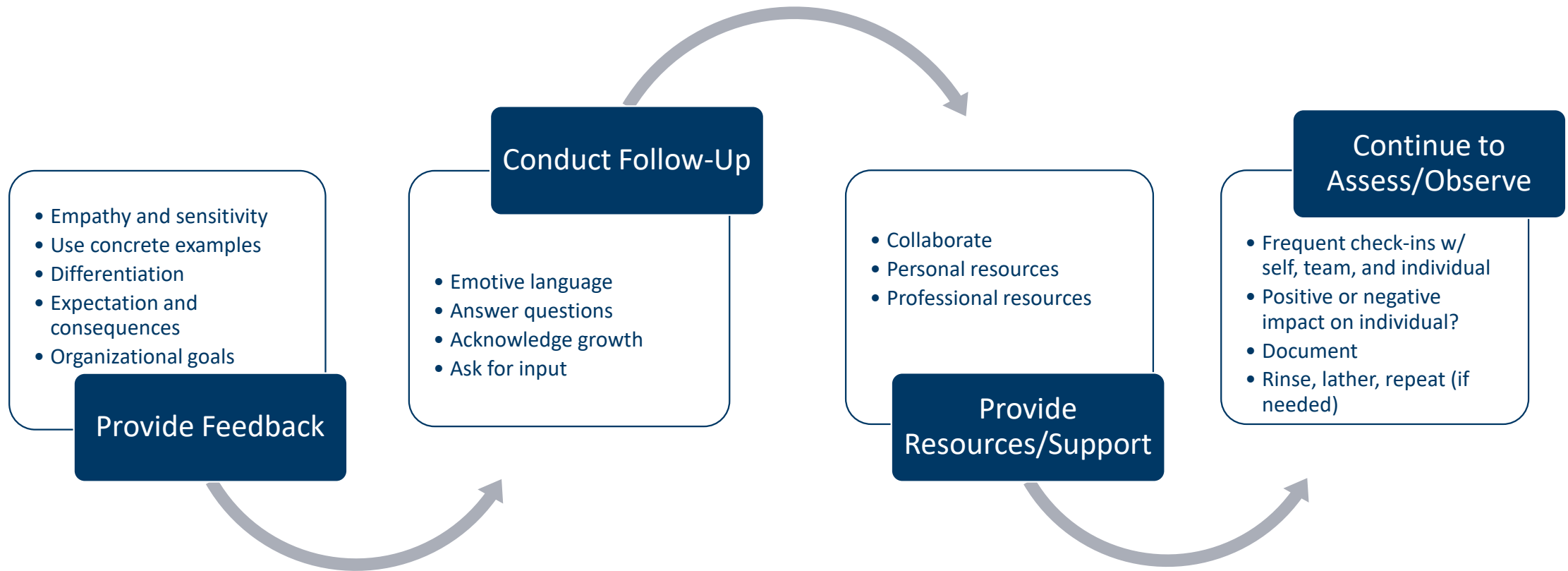
Cognitive Distortions

	All-or-nothing thinking	Thinking in extremes. For example, something is either 100% good or 100% bad		Low frustration tolerance	Saying things like <i>"this is too difficult", "this is unbearable" or "I can't stand it"</i>
	Catastrophizing	Jumping to the worst possible conclusion		Minimization	Discounting the importance of something
	Over-generalizing	Seeing a pattern based upon a single event		Emotional reasoning	Assuming that because we feel a certain way our hunch must be true
	Mental filter	Only paying attention to certain types of evidence (<i>"That doesn't count"</i>)	SHOULD MUST	Demands	Using words like 'should', 'must', and 'ought'
	Disqualifying the positive	Discounting positive information or twisting a positive into a negative		Labelling	Assigning labels to ourselves or others (<i>"I'm rubbish"</i>)
	Jumping to conclusions	Mind reading or predicting the future	<i>"This is my fault"</i>	Personalization	Taking too much or too little responsibility

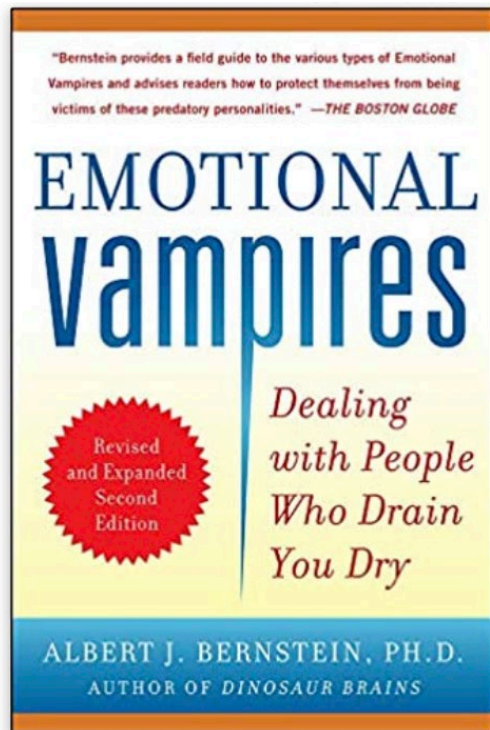
Create a Framework to Guide You



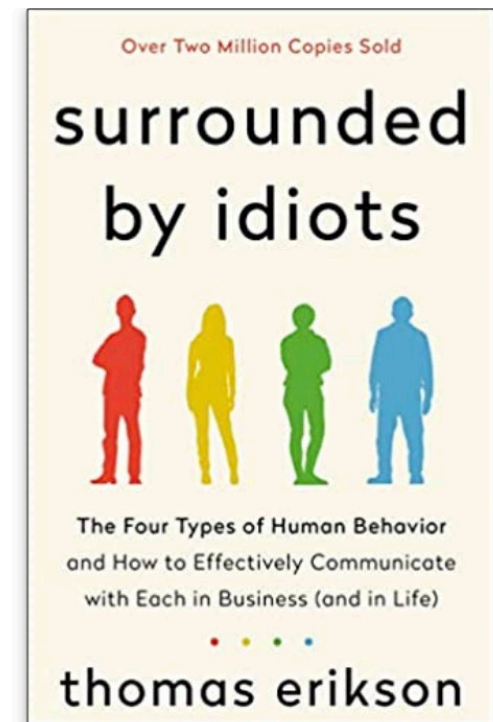
Create a Framework to Guide You (cont.)



Additional Tools and Resources



- Social Styles Assessment
- Employee Assistance Program
- Mental Health Professional
- Regional Behavioral Health Coordinators



(Gardner, 2007)

Lastly...



“An energy vampire can never ‘steal’ energy from us unless we consciously or unconsciously permit them to.”

- Mateo Sol

Thank You!



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