



# MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING WITH A TWIST:

**Facilitating Communication & Change  
with Policymakers**

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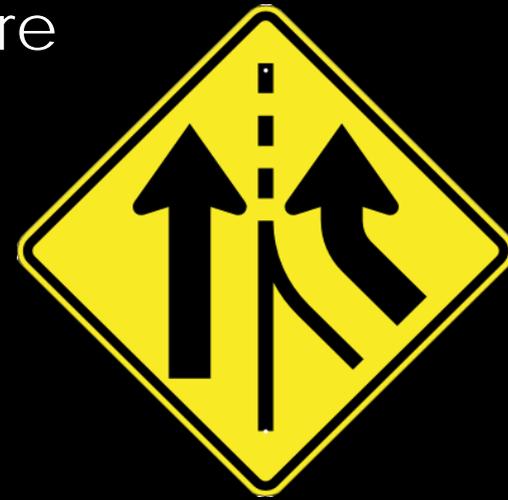
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# MERGING MI & ADVOCACY

- Upstream thinking: need to address systemic issues
- Ask ourselves: What causes the problems we see at the individual level?
- Overlap of mission and skills: clinicians are fundamentally problem-solvers



# FIRST, A DISTINCTION...

## A FOCUS ON...

- Identifying mutual values & goals
- Raising awareness
- Defusing tension
- Developing relationships
- Sharing concerns & ideas
- Facilitating change

## NOT A FOCUS ON...

- Engaging in clinical work with policymakers



# WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

- The act of requesting, supporting, or recommending
- Raising awareness
- Educating
- Facilitating

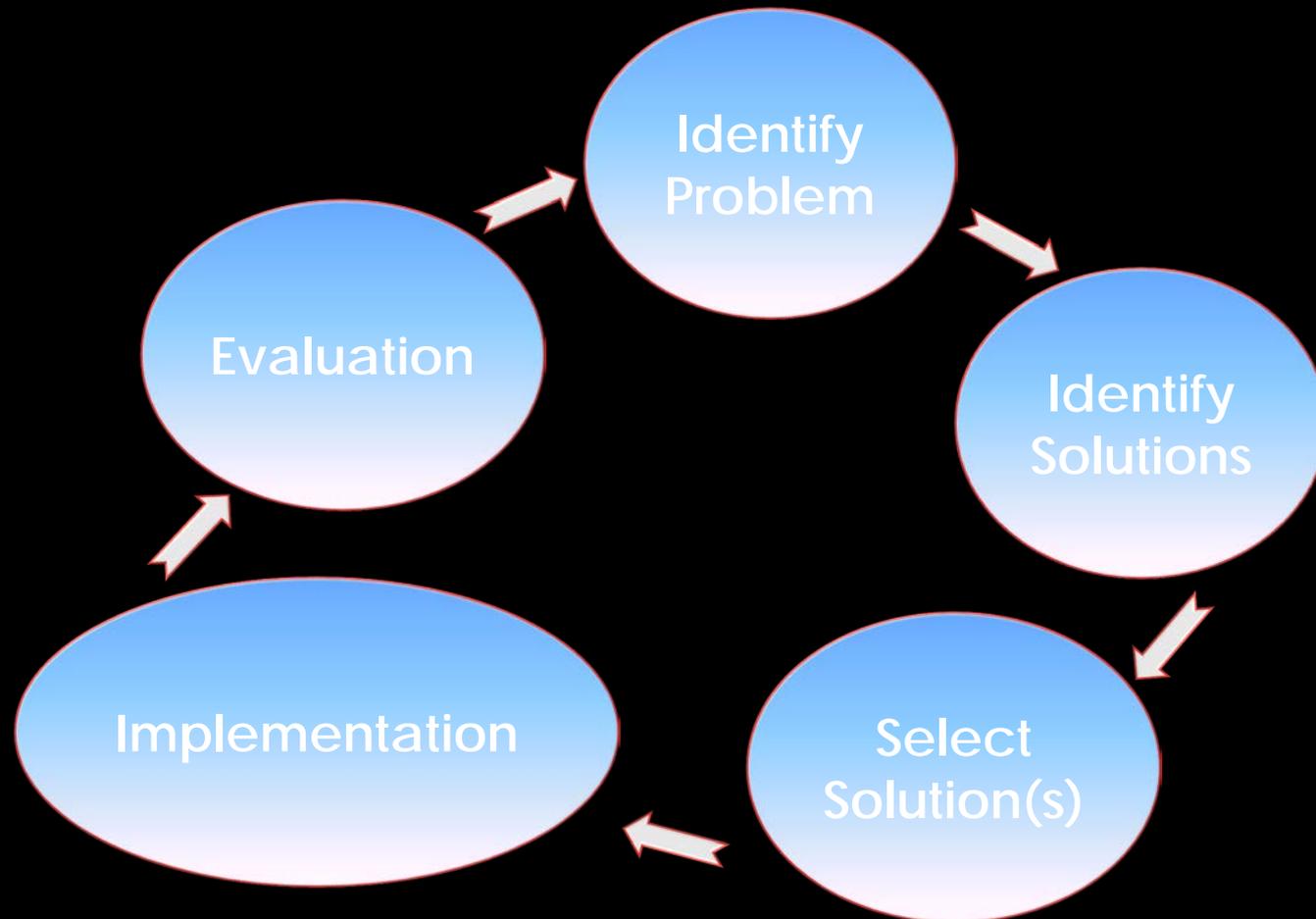


# HARM REDUCTION IN ADVOCACY

- Sometimes you can't make it better, but you can keep it from getting worse
- Relapse is part of recovery
- Human behavior & resistance to change is largely the same at the macro level
- Find agreement on some issues & set others aside
- Change is nearly always incremental



# THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

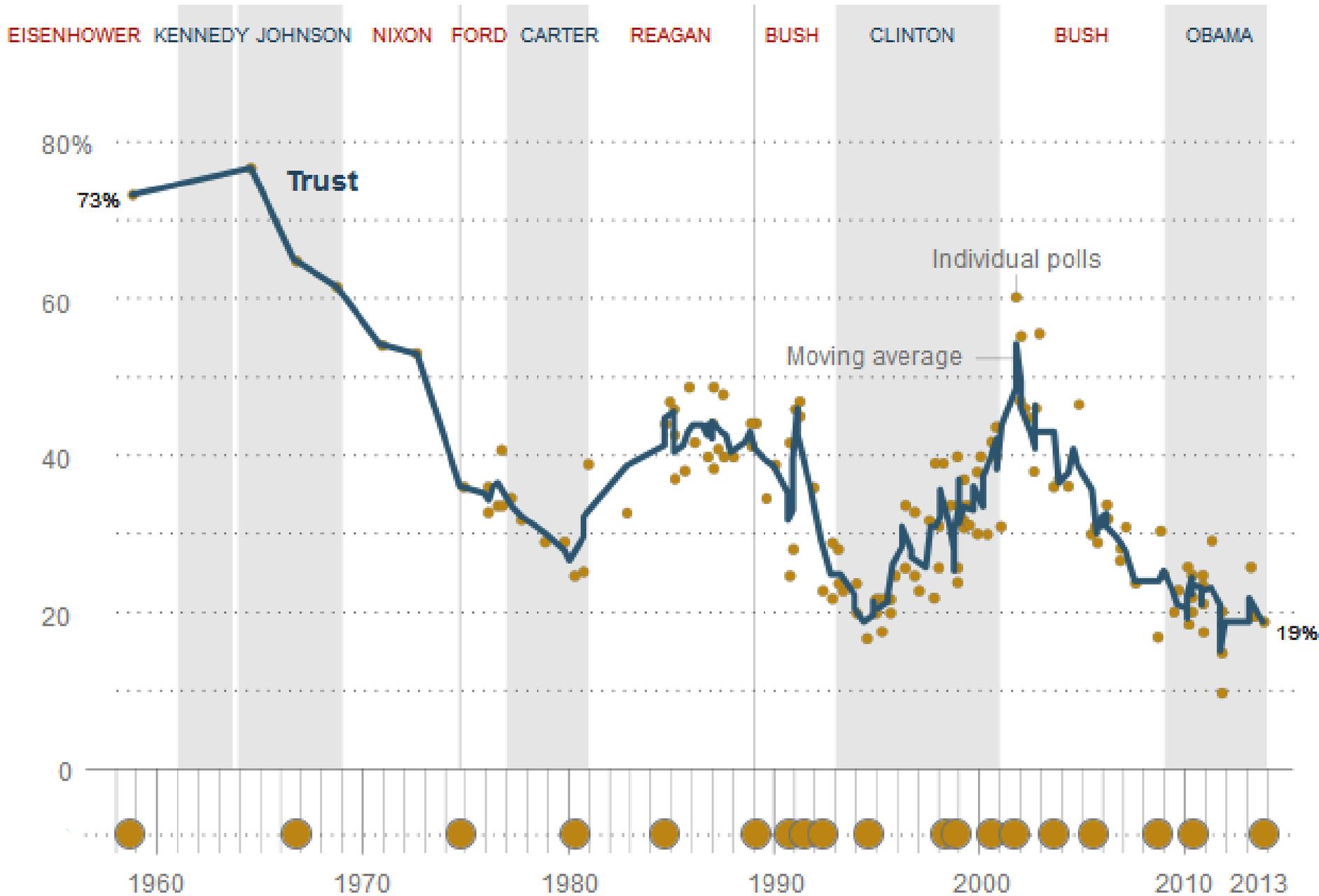


# WHAT POLICYMAKERS WANT

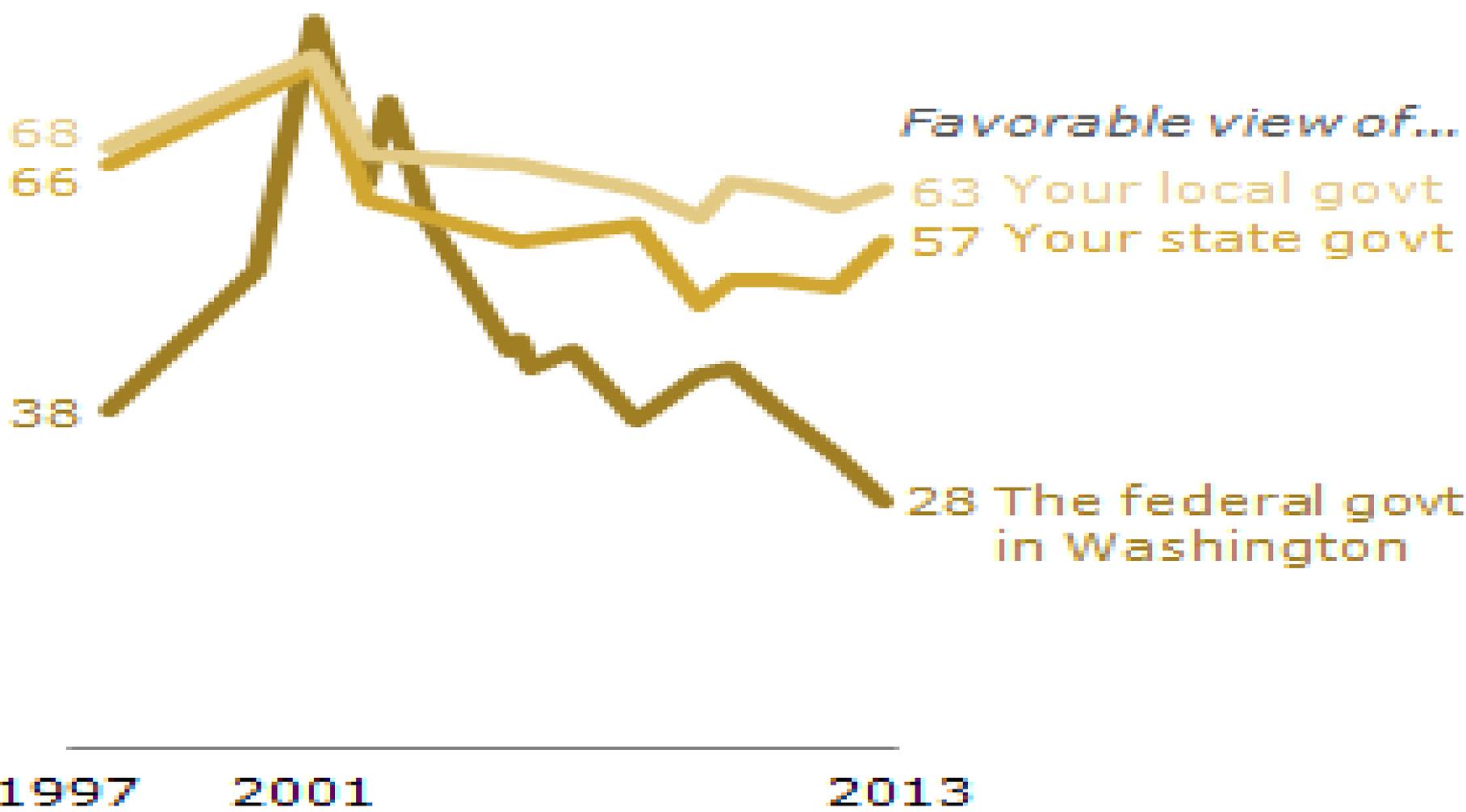
- To be re-elected (or re-appointed) & to make changes
- Legislators most likely to represent constituent interests when:
  - They know precisely who their constituents are
  - They interact with them frequently
  - Their political futures depend on gaining and keeping constituent support

# How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington?

Source: Pew Research Center, October 22, 2013.



# Widening Gap in Views of Federal, State and Local Governments



# ALL POLICY IS LOCAL

- Prohibition
- Slavery
- Voting laws
- Single payer
- Minimum wage
- Marriage (race/gender)
- Equal pay
- Gun laws
- Nuisance crimes
- Abortion
- Capital punishment
- Labor laws
- Immigration
- Housing eligibility
- Covered health services
- Drug laws
- Criminal sentencing
- Tax law

# TEACHING ELEPHANTS TO DANCE



- Rider = Logical Brain
  - Hope – Change is Possible
  - Self-confidence – I can make it happen
  - Needs a destination and the small steps needed to get there
- Elephant = Emotional Brain
  - Empathy through personal connections motivates the elephant
  - Sympathetic paralysis
  - Will charge if it think it is in the “them vs. us” dynamic



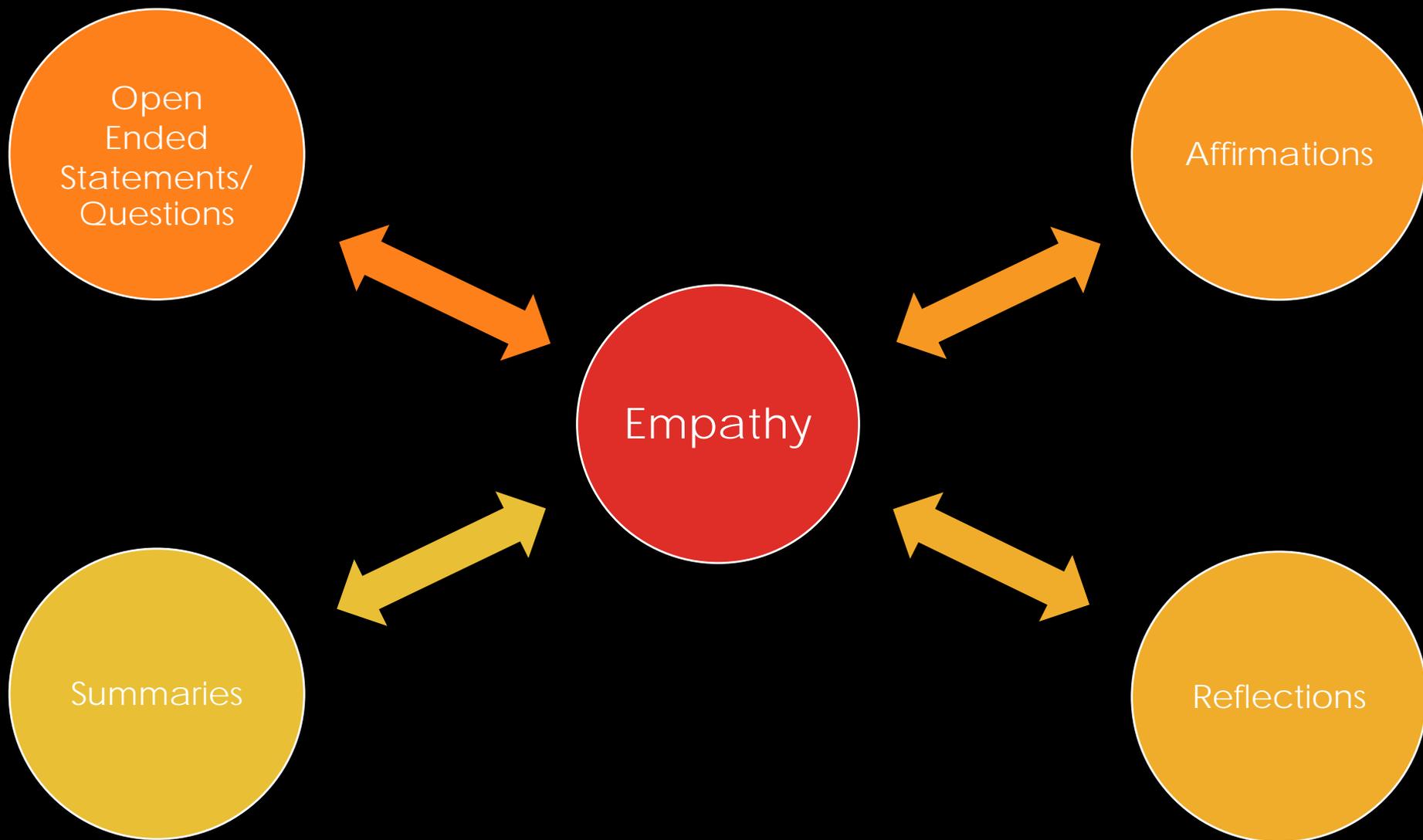
# MANAGING THE ELEPHANT

Spirit of MI

# SPIRIT OF MI (MI VS. MANIPULATION!!)

- Compassion
  - Support verse confrontation
  - Empathy for another's point of view and journey to get that view
- Acceptance
  - The person and their view has some inherent worth
  - Autonomy: The person has the right to their own decision
- Partnership
  - Guiding (avoiding directing or following)
  - You do less than half the talking
  - Help the person voice the change
- Evocation
  - Person is the expert on the their position and point of view
  - Person holds the wisdoms on how change works in their world

# OARS



# OARS

- Reflections
  - Stay in the back seat
  - Simple vs. Complex
- Affirmations
  - Keep it positive
  - Elicit past successes with difficult changes
  - Keep the problem separate from the person
- Open Ended Questions and Statements
  - Open vs. Closed
  - 1:2 Ratio
  - Do not use to direct
- Summaries
  - Reflections that bring together several things the person stated
  - Opportunity to state ambivalence
  - Tool to build cognitive dissonance



# DIRECTING THE RIDER

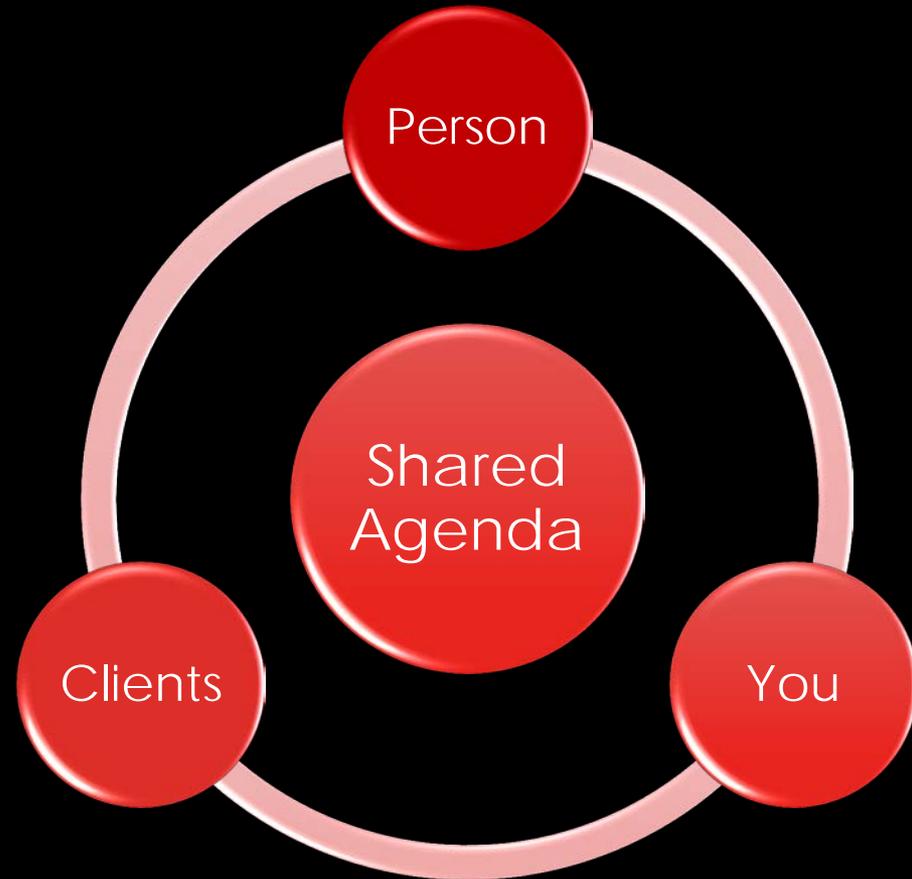
Partnering to create a path  
forward

# SHARED AGENDAS



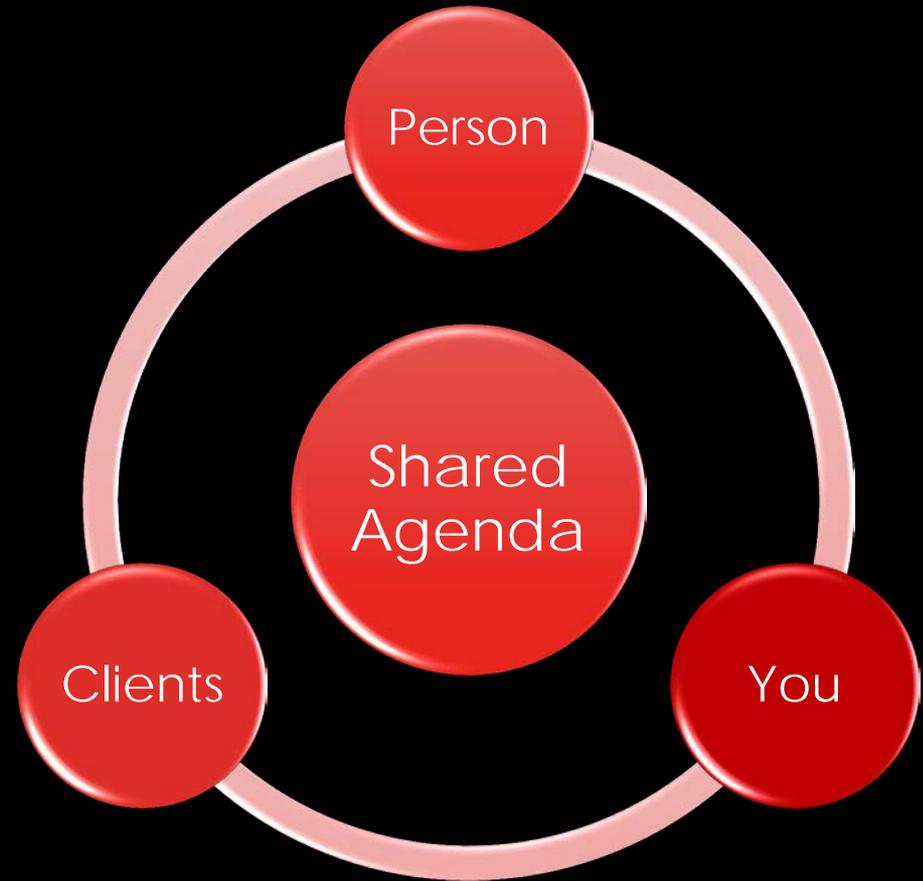
# PERSON'S AGENDA

- Always start with what the person wants to accomplish around the issue
- Understand barriers to action
- If you want the person to care about your agenda we must care about theirs



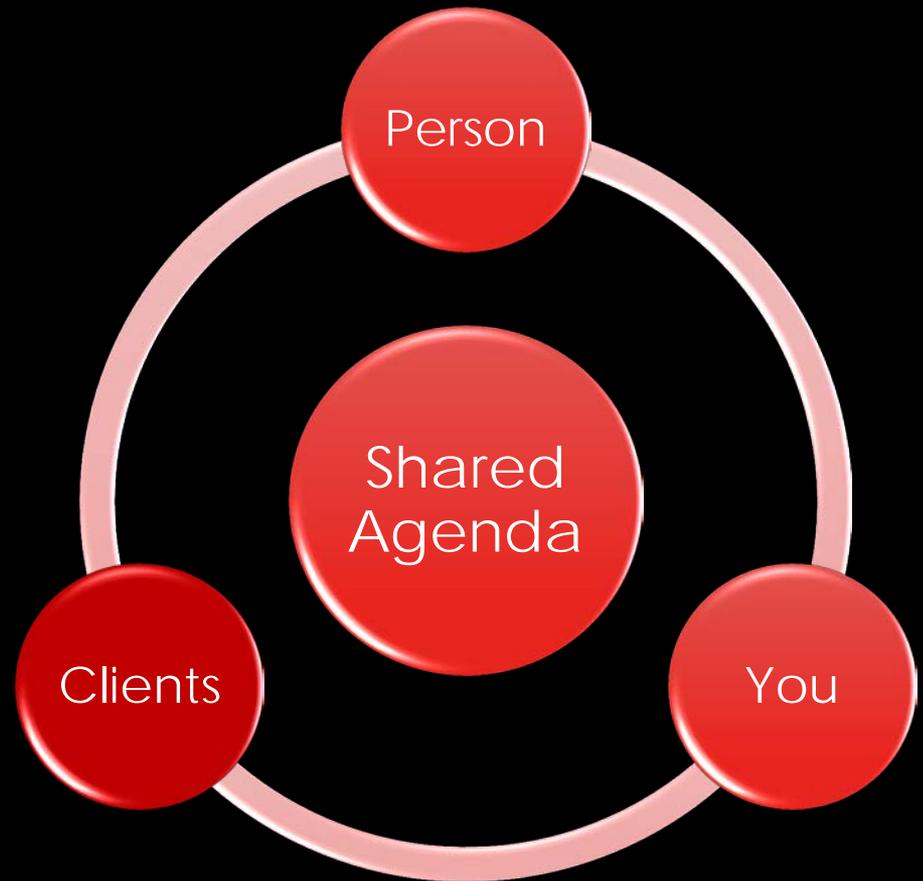
# YOUR AGENDA

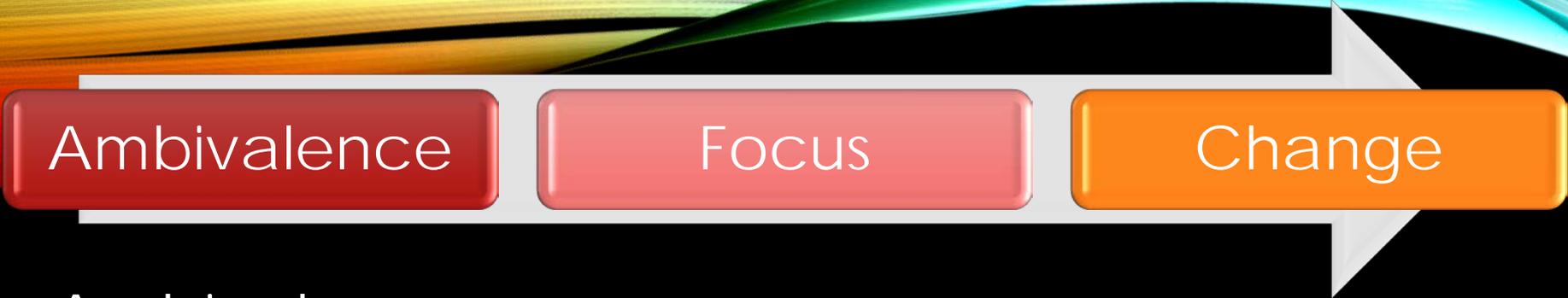
- Connect your aspirations with the person's aspirations
- Make your goals personal
  - Stories
  - Pictures
  - Your experiences
  - Bring controlled passion to the table



# CLIENTS' NEED

- Find the "Us" and avoid the "Them"
- Connect the person's aspirations for the future with meeting needs of your clients





Ambivalence

Focus

Change

- Ambivalence

- Wanting more than one thing at the same time
- The desired things are incompatible with each other

- The committee inside the mind

- Which side has the majority?
- What needs to happen to change votes?
- Voting for the status quo = Sustain talk
  - Sustain talk is natural
  - Resistance is a result of the relationship
- Voting for new behaviors = Change talk
  - Talk about the new behavior
  - Research: Increase in change talk predicts actual change
  - Your goal: Increase change talk

# MI MOUNTAIN

Preparatory Change Talk:  
Desire; Ability; Reasons; Need

Mobilizing Change Talk:  
Commitment; Activation; Taking Steps



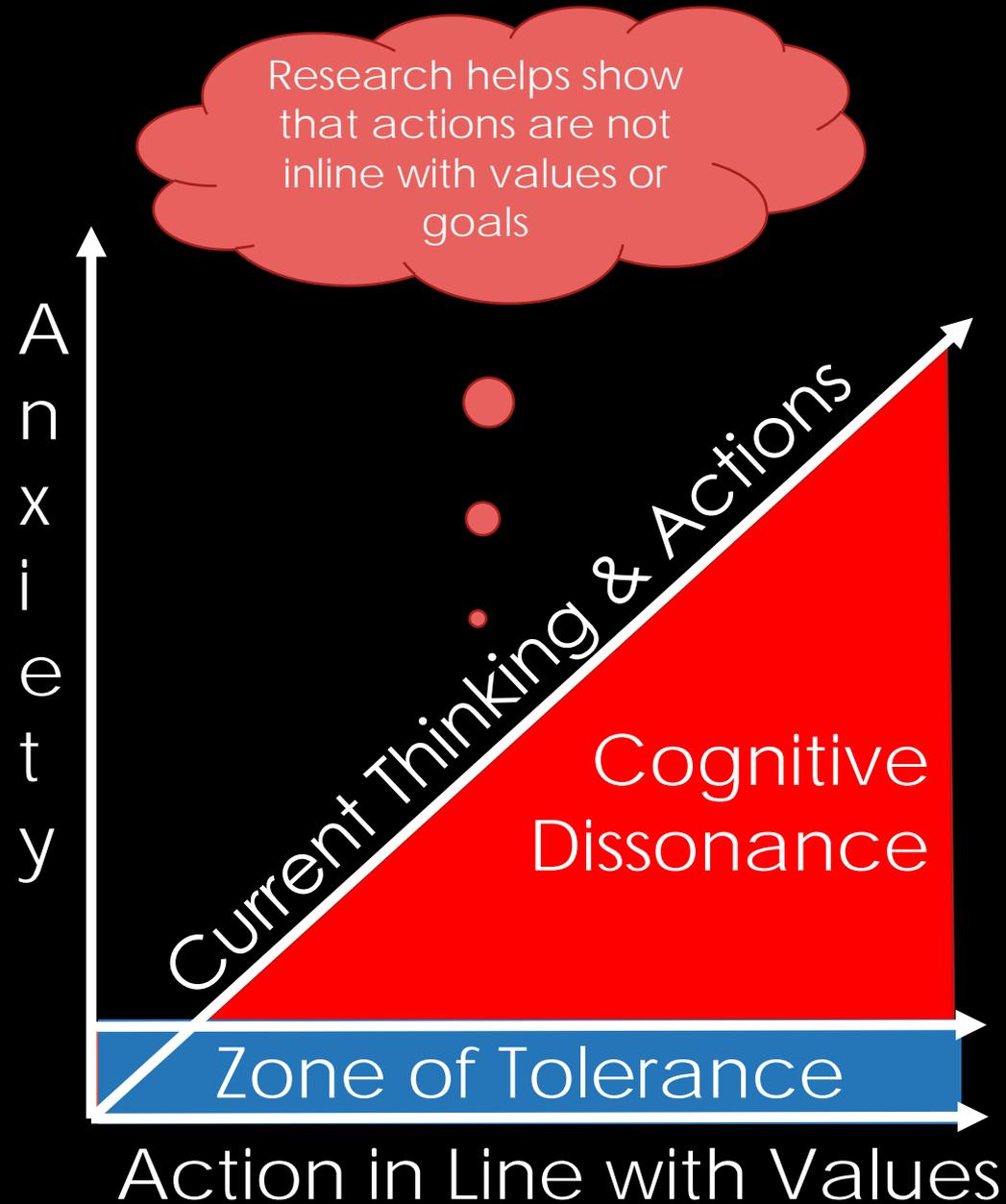
(Pre-) Contemplation

Preparation

Action

# ZONE OF TOLERANCE

- We can tolerate some discrepancies, but the larger the gap the more stress it causes
- When stress becomes too great, we look for paths forward that bring us back into the zone
- This is one of most fundamental drivers of change



# RESEARCH: ELICIT-PROVIDE- ELICIT

- Elicit
  - Measure interest in the information you can provide
  - Explore person's knowledge
- Provide
  - Get permission – REALLY important with expertise!
  - Provide information building on what the person already knows
  - Present information without interpreting its meaning for the person
- Elicit
  - Discuss person's reaction (thinking/feeling) to the information
  - Ask the person if they see anyway you can help them reach THEIR goals

# VALUES: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

- Your objective: Find values that the person has voiced that support the change
- If you know something about the person's background (religion, family, history) utilize that to connect them personally to change
- GENTALLY reflect back any discrepancies between values, research and past thinking/actions if the person doesn't see it on their own
  - Do not make it personal
  - Use shared agenda to find a way forward

# DISSONANCE AMONG POLICYMAKERS

- Political objectives & policy objectives often at odds
- Inconsistent viewpoints between subjects
- Seemingly irrational decision-making or sudden changes in positions
- Full understanding of impact of decisions may not be seen or understood

# TRANSITION TO PLANNING

- Transitional summary
  - State that you would like to summarize what you have heard from the person
  - Give a gentle recitation of the person's own change talk
- Planning Question
  - What can I do to help you tackle this difficult problem?
  - Do you see a way we can work together to improve the quality of lives for those in our community?
- Avoid commitment questions during transition
  - What are you going to do?
  - So are you going to do anything about this or not?

# ADVOCACY AS SELF-CARE

- Engagement helps take back control & empower
- Greater awareness builds confidence & knowledge
- Change is possible and happens every day



# TAKE-AWAY POINTS

- Changes in people and systems have cycles that depend on engagement
- MI & HR clinical skills easily transfer to policy environment for macro-level change
- Facilitating needed change depends on relationships & effective communication
- Many issues & venues are available and policymakers are eager for your input.

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