TMAF 2024

Theresan Military-Academic Forum

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How To Dismantle a Mental (Atomic) Bomb

WHO is WHO?

What did you think first?

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How To Dismantle a Mental (Atomic) Bomb

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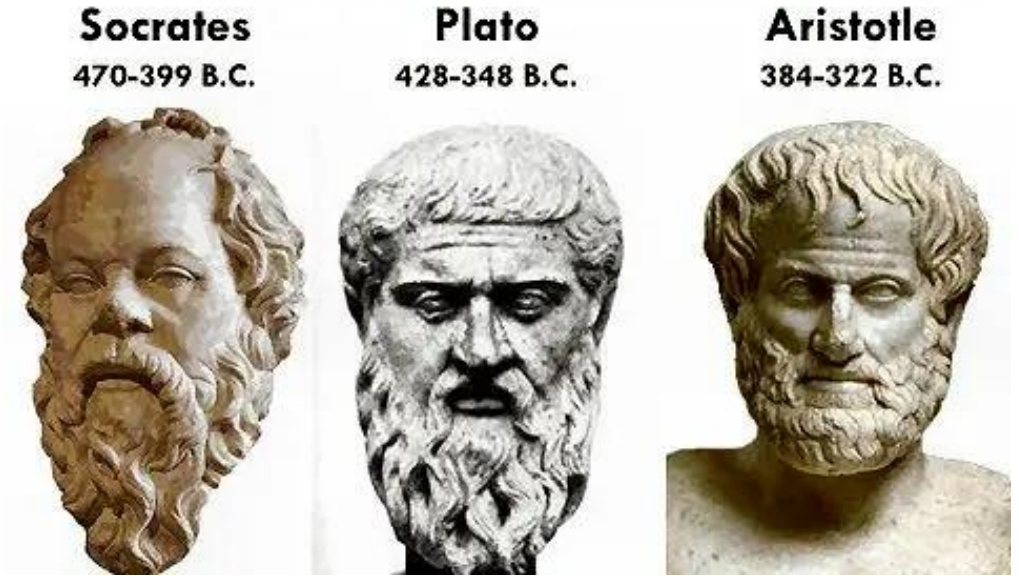
Agenda

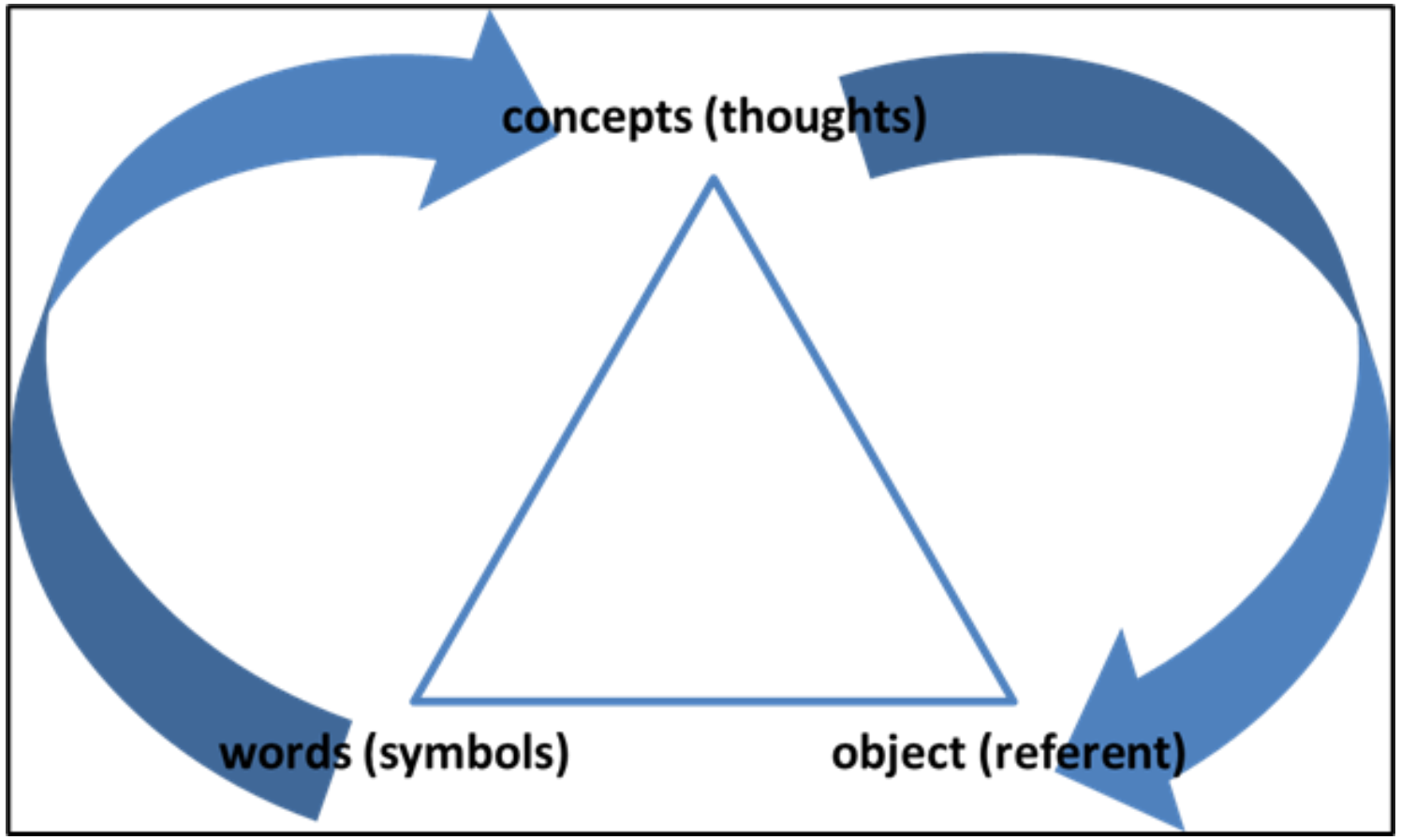
- The Power of Words - Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle
- Military Metaphors/Verbal Warfare
- Emotional and Psychological Effects
- Instinctive and Reflective – Fog of War
- Instinctive Behaviour and Cognitive Strategies
- "Heimlich Manoeuvre“
- Cognitive Biases
- Cognition and Manoeuvre Warfare
- Metaphor “Tumour“ (Cancer)
- Building Cognitive Resilience: A Holistic Defense Against Cognitive Warfare

The Power of Words - Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle



- The power of language and its influence on human thoughts and actions.
- Still using ***manoeuvre*** in negotiations and debates

The Power of Words - The semiotic triangle



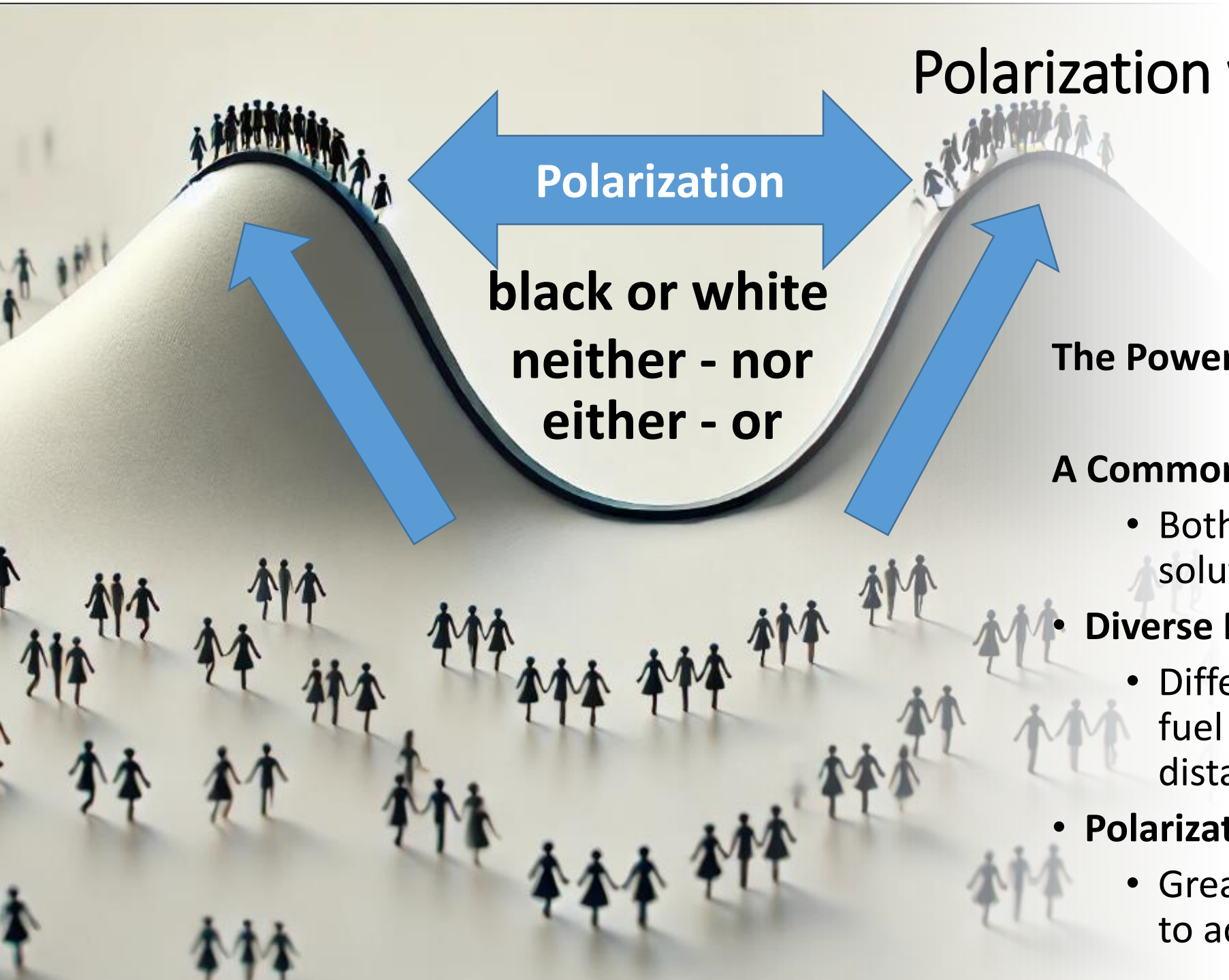
The semiotic triangle model of Ogden and Richards

Words (symbols) influence human thinking, emotions, and perception of reality.

Military Metaphors/Verbal Warfare

- to “outmanoeuvre“ someone
- "talk down"
- "Take a stance"
- "Under fire"
- "Defend your position"
- "Launching an attack"
- "Target your opponent"
- "Arm yourself with facts“
- “Procrastination is the enemy of success”

Polarization weakens a society

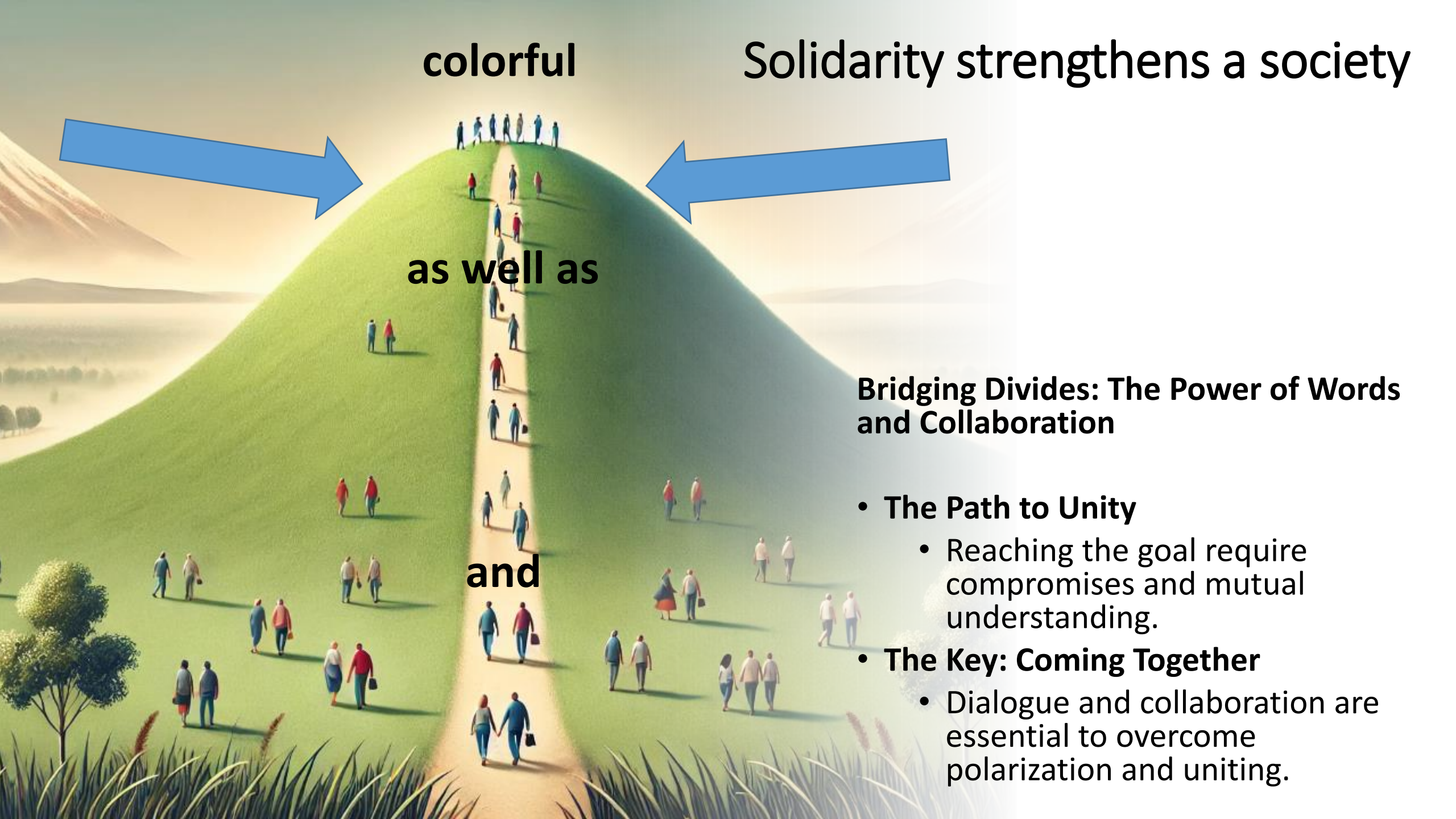


The Power of Words

A Common Goal?

- Both sides seek a shared solution, symbolized by the hill.

- **Diverse Perspectives**
  - Differing opinions and ideologies fuel polarization and create distance.
- **Polarization as a Barrier**
  - Greater division makes it harder to achieve the shared objective.



Solidarity strengthens a society

Bridging Divides: The Power of Words and Collaboration

- **The Path to Unity**
  - Reaching the goal require compromises and mutual understanding.
- **The Key: Coming Together**
  - Dialogue and collaboration are essential to overcome polarization and uniting.



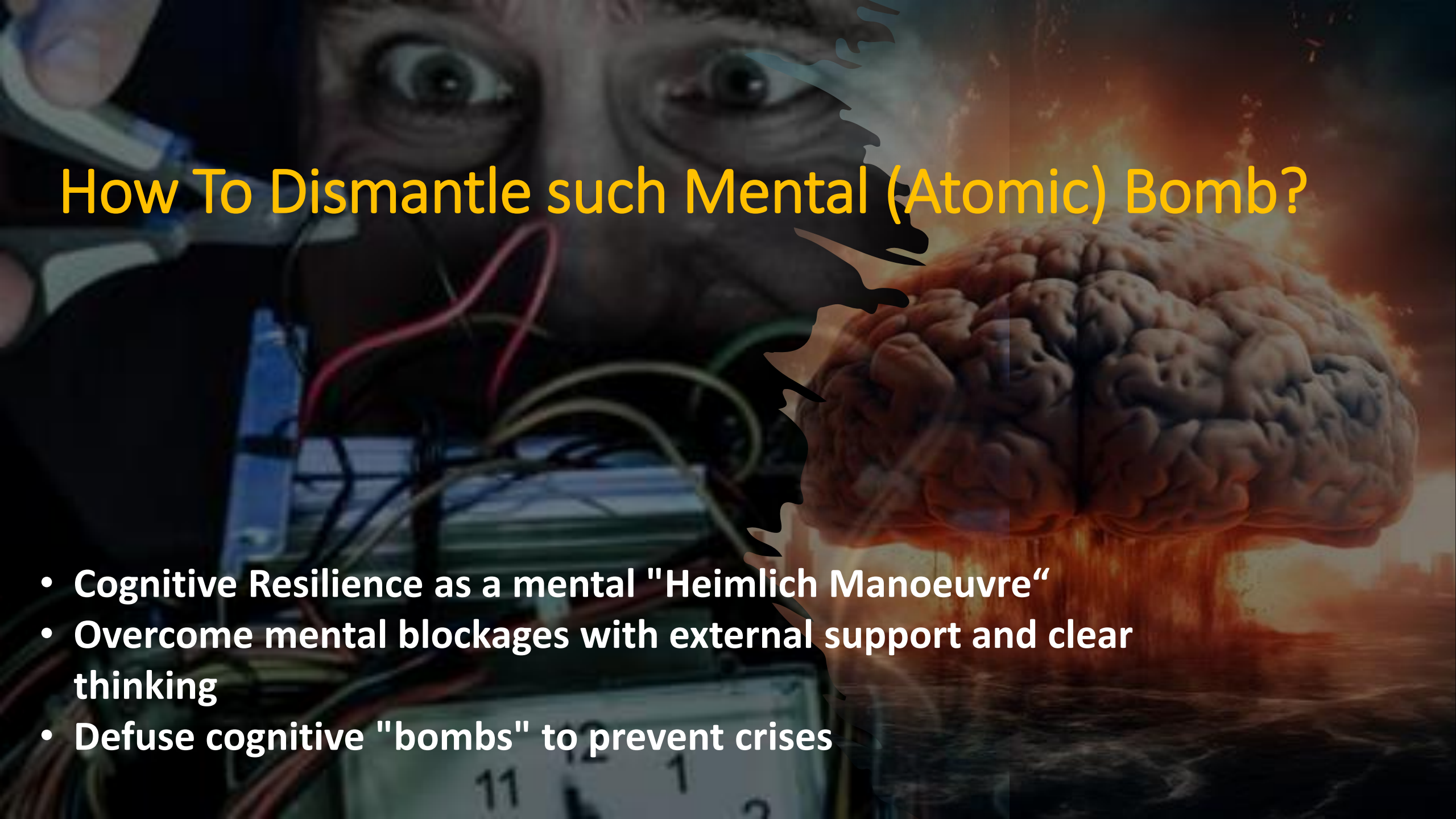

Emotional and Psychological Effects

“Emotional Fog ”
(Birkenbihl)

“Fog of War”
(Clausewitz)

Instinctive and Reflective

How To Dismantle such Mental (Atomic) Bomb?



- Cognitive Resilience as a mental "Heimlich Manoeuvre“
- Overcome mental blockages with external support and clear thinking
- Defuse cognitive "bombs" to prevent crises

Instinctive Behaviour and Cognitive Strategies: "Heimlich Manoeuvre“

Immediate Action:

- Take swift measures to break through emotional confusion (e.g., recognize and name feelings).

Focus on Breathing:

- Utilize conscious breathing to reduce stress and promote mental clarity.

Clarity of Intent:

- Formulate a clear objective to organize thoughts and facilitate rational decision-making.

Activation of Rational Thinking:

- Clear the emotional fog to activate rational thought processes and find solutions.

Utilization of Resources:

- Seek support from friends, family, or professionals to help clarify emotional confusion.

Cognitive Biases

Cognitive biases can manipulate our judgment and decision-making. Therefore, it is crucial to be aware of these biases and to reduce judgment errors to improve the quality and speed of our decisions.

6-9 Example:
Shows how perspective shapes interpretation (valid views of 6 and 9).

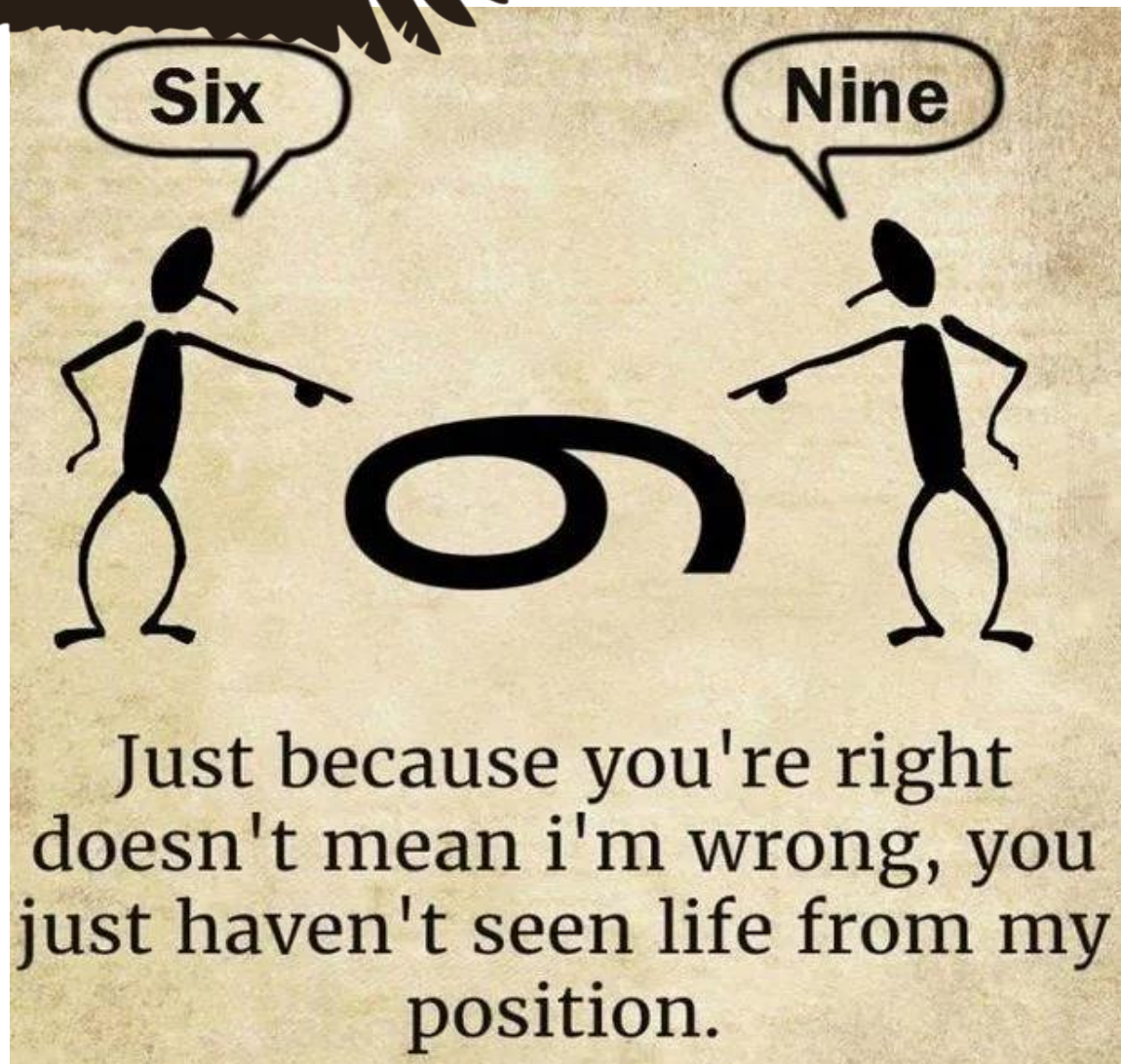
Cognitive Biases:
Personal beliefs influence information processing (e.g., confirmation bias).

Meta-Perspective:
Recognizes how context affects perception and understanding.

Top-Down Influence:
Personal experiences filter interpretations, leading to misunderstandings.

Awareness and Empathy:
Recognizing biases fosters better communication.
Embracing multiple perspectives enhances understanding and relationships.

Conclusion:
Acknowledging perspective is vital for effective dialogue and conflict resolution.

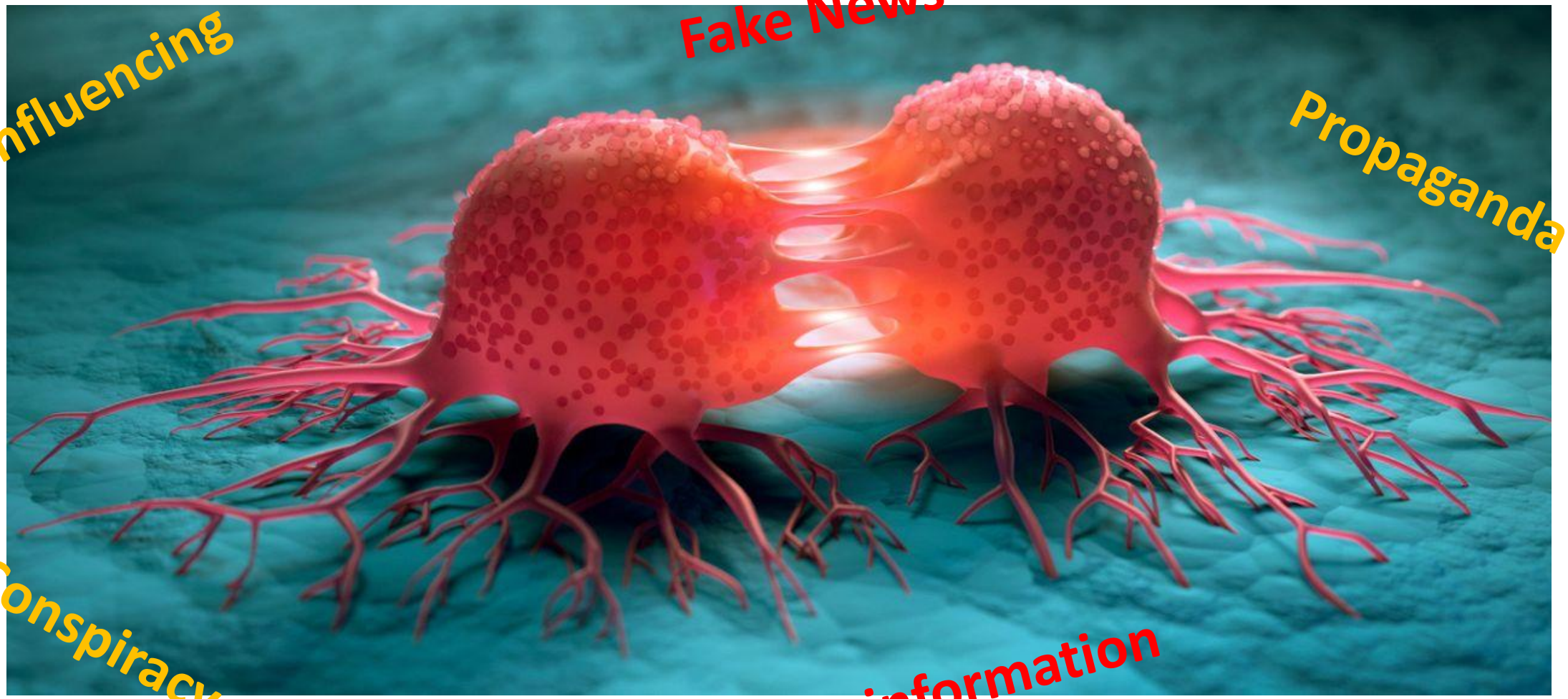


Cognition and Manoeuvre Warfare

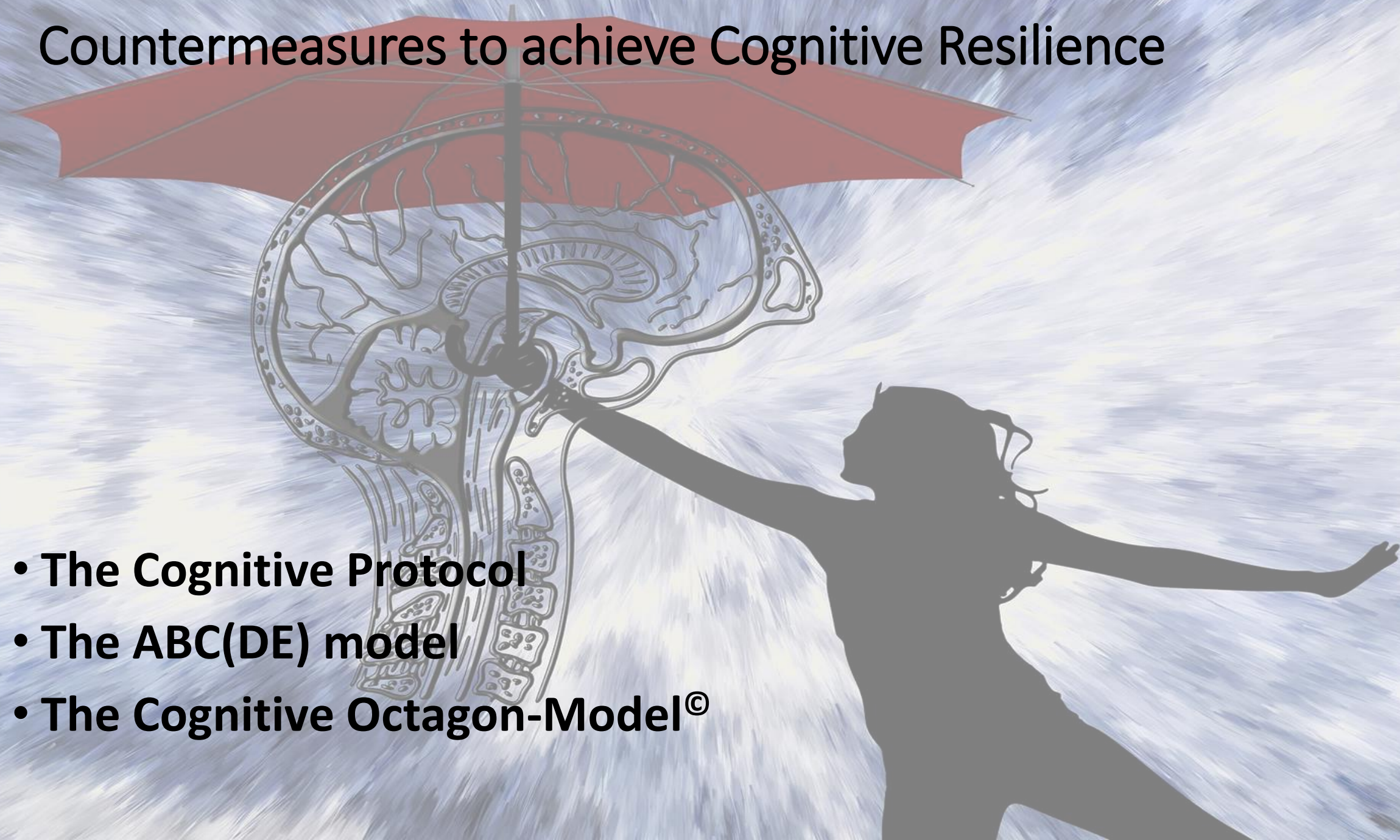
"Manoeuvre Warfare is a mental approach to conflict in which we seek to create and exploit advantage by creating a rapidly and continuously changing situation in which our enemy cannot effectively cope.
We aim to do this by focusing our strengths against the critical enemy through ambiguity or deception."

The Royal Australian Armoured Corps Manoeuvre Warfare Handbook, 1994

Metaphor “Tumour”



Countermeasures to achieve Cognitive Resilience

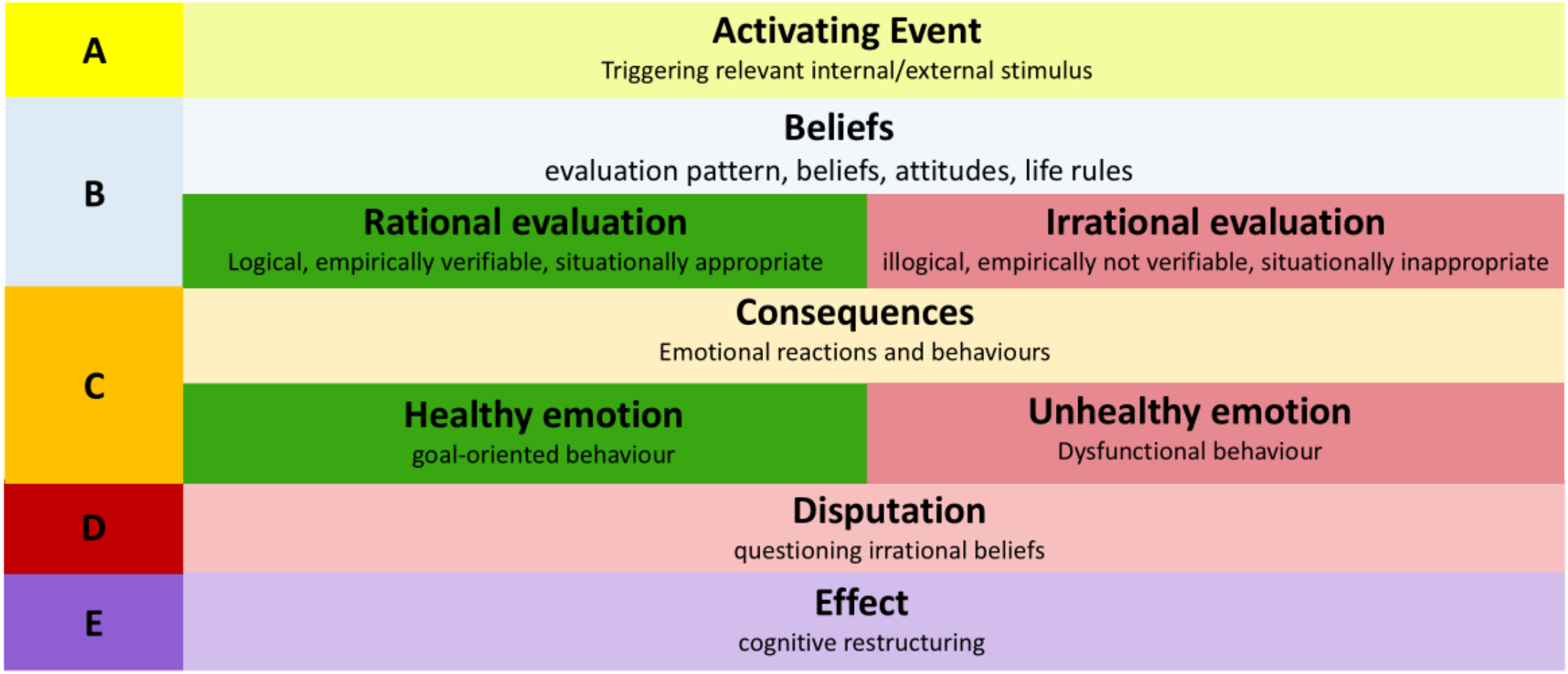


- **The Cognitive Protocol**
- **The ABC(DE) model**
- **The Cognitive Octagon-Model©**

The Cognitive Protocol

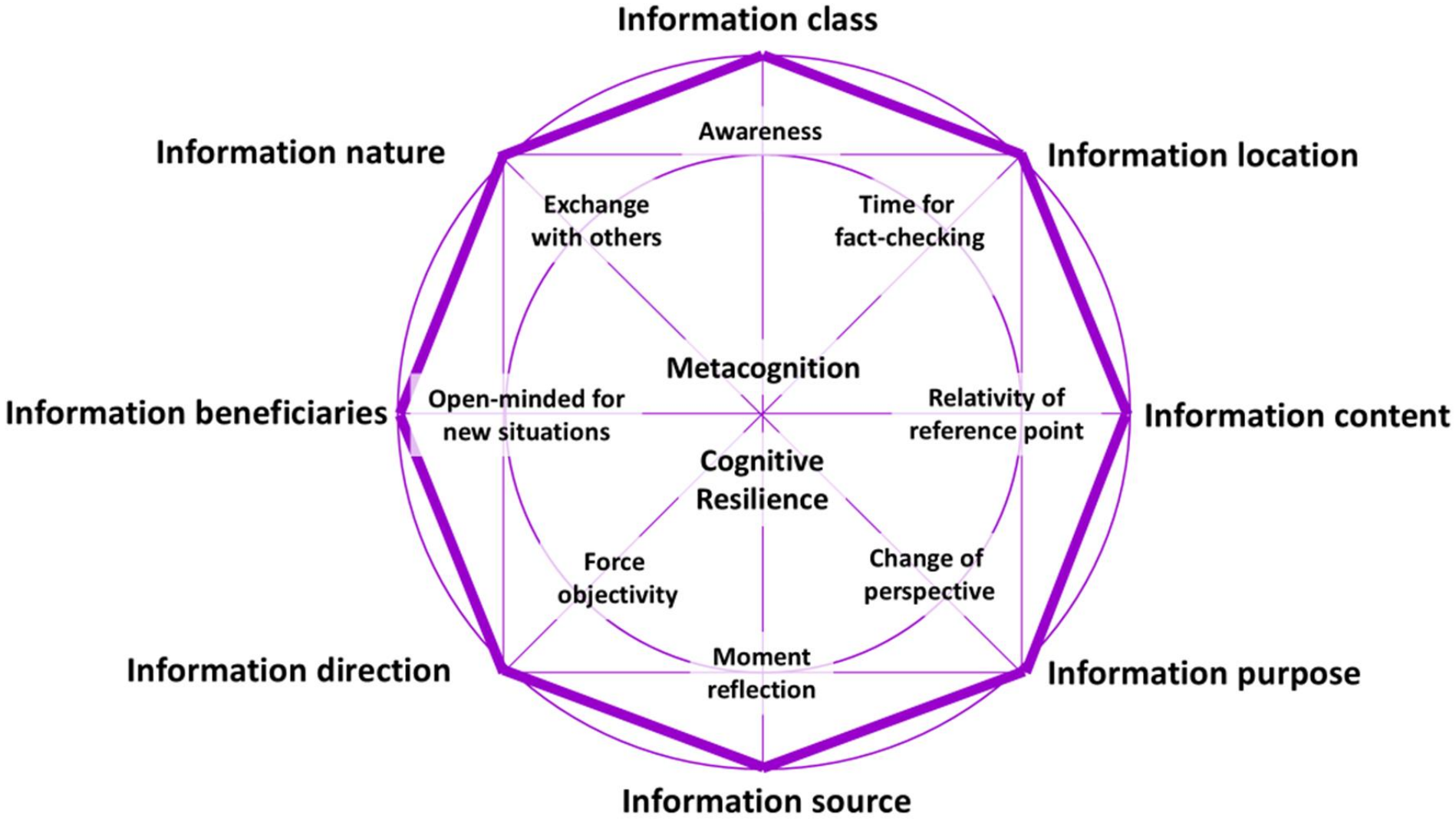
- Structured approach to manage cognitive biases
- Describe the situation
- Identify emotions and automatic thoughts
- Recognize cognitive biases
- Reframe thoughts and evaluate emotional responses
- Engage in self-reflection for long-term resilience
- Building cognitive clarity under stress through structured thinking

The ABC(DE) model



The ABCDE Model in Rational Emotive Therapy by Albert Ellis

The Cognitive Octagon-Model©



Manoeuvre to Achieve Cognitive Resilience

Identify Mental Barriers

- Recognize cognitive distortions, the "mental bombs" that hinder clear thinking

Analyse Causes and Develop a Plan

- Reflect, seek feedback, and use resources to defuse these mental bombs, e.g. the ABCDE-Model

Engage in Regular Training

- Practice mindfulness, cognitive behavioural therapy, and stress management techniques

Apply Strategies in Stressful Situations

- Execute strategic mental manoeuvres using both the ABCDE and Cognitive Octagon models

Reflect and Adjust

- Continuously evaluate outcomes and adapt for better future manoeuvres

Leverage Diverse Insights

- Collaborate with experts and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge for more refined strategies

Sustain Growth

- Build long-term resilience to confidently and effectively handle personal and professional "mental bombs."