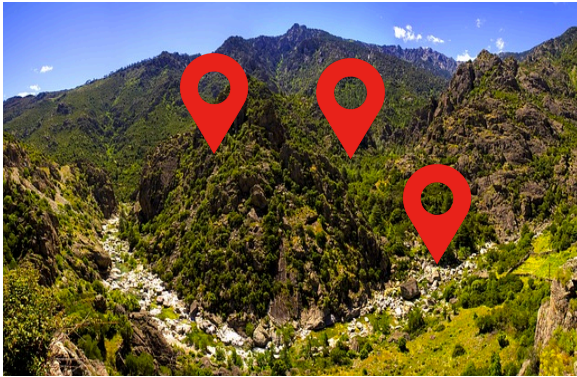# Improving context sensitivity and promoting functional coherence
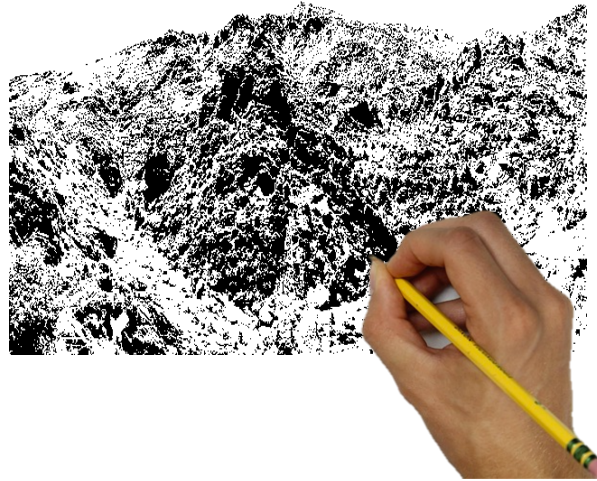
Improve context sensitivity by targeting AWARENESS processes

3 AWARENESS processes
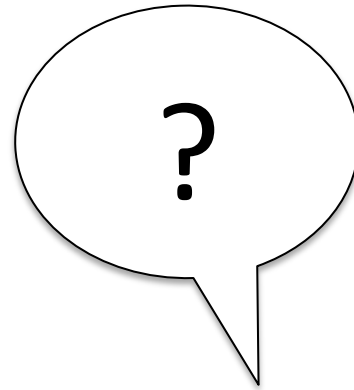

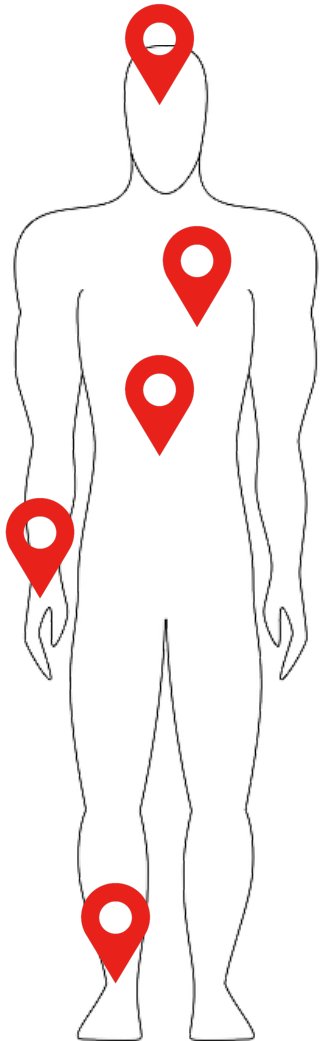**OBSERVING**　　　**DESCRIBING**　　　**TRACKING**

AWARENESS:

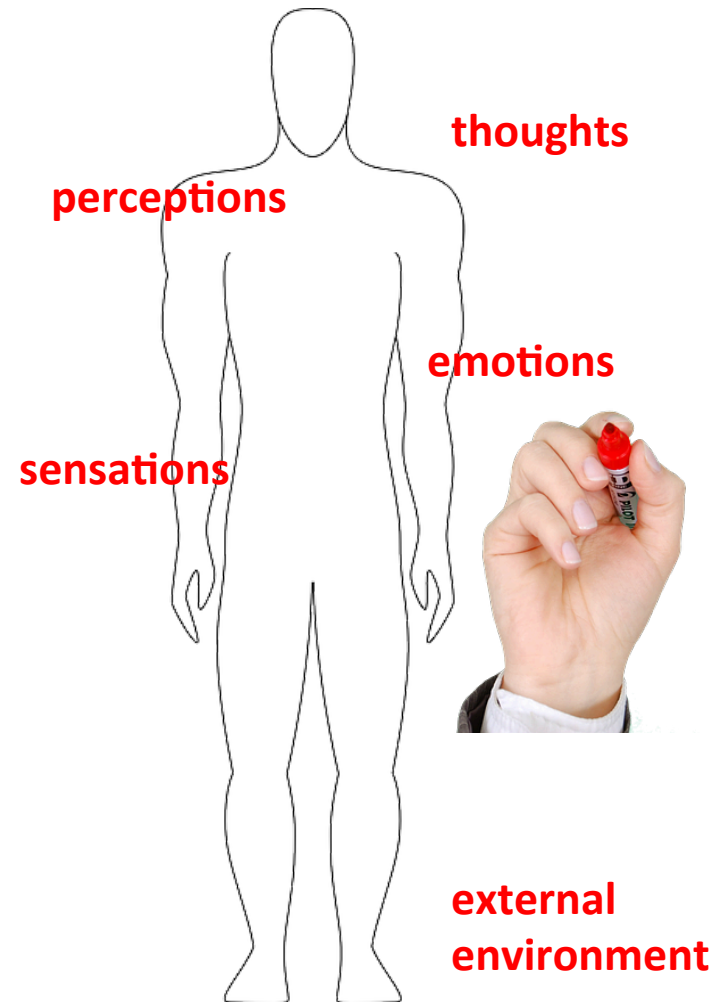**evoke observation of experience**

Nonverbal orienting

- Tactile cues
- Visual cues
- Auditory cues

Verbal orienting

- Spatial and temporal framing
- Metaphor
- Perspective taking (deictic)

AWARENESS:

evoke description of experience

thoughts

perceptions

emotions

sensations

external environment

Shift from judging to describing

– Naming (coordination)

– Neutral labeling (hierarchy)

More precision and nuance

– Distinction

– Comparison

When client struggles

– Metaphor

– Perspective Taking (deictic)

AWARENESS:
evoke tracking

A   **B**   **C**

Specify complete contingency (A-B-C)

- Temporal framing
- Conditional framing

Over time and domains

- Temporal and spatial
- Comparison, distinction

When client struggles

- Metaphor
- Perspective Taking (deictic)

DEMONSTRATION

Notice what the therapist does to evoke:

– Observation

– Description

– Tracking

Advanced noticing...

– Coordination/distinction/comparison (detailed description of experience)

– Conditional/temporal framing (A-B-C contingency)

– Deictic framing (temporal, spatial, interpersonal perspective taking)

– Analogical framing (metaphors, gestures)

Stephanie needs approval

– 36 year old woman

– Generalized anxiety and dependent personality

– Practiced mindfulness exercises during the past week

– Shows signs of pliance and weak tracking

"I thought you would be happy to hear I did the exercises!"

practice: awareness processes

Client:

– Focus on reporting that you did the exercise

– You are happy because you did what you were supposed to do and because you think the therapist will be happy

– You struggle to notice natural consequences of practicing mindfulness

Therapist:

– Evoke observation, description, tracking

Observer:

– Note when therapist does any of the above

feedback: **awareness processes**

5 minutes

Observer {
Specific instances of target behaviors

ONE thing to practice for improvement
}

Client {
Responses others couldn't see?

Did you experience a shift at any point?
}

Therapist {
Questions for client and observer

Stuck points- ideas for further practice
}

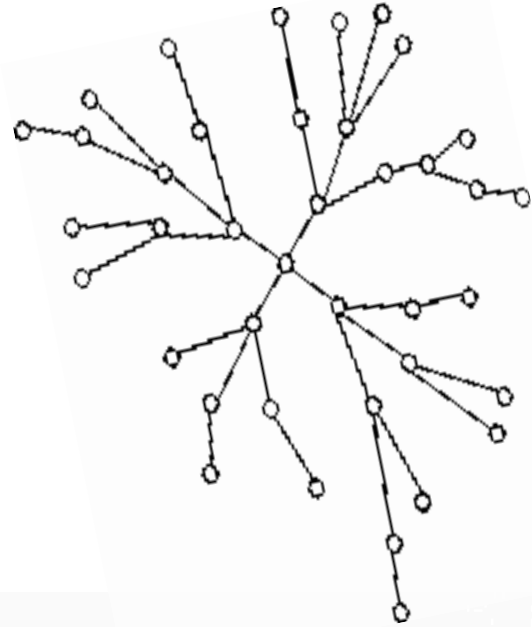# Improve functional coherence by targeting SENSE MAKING processes
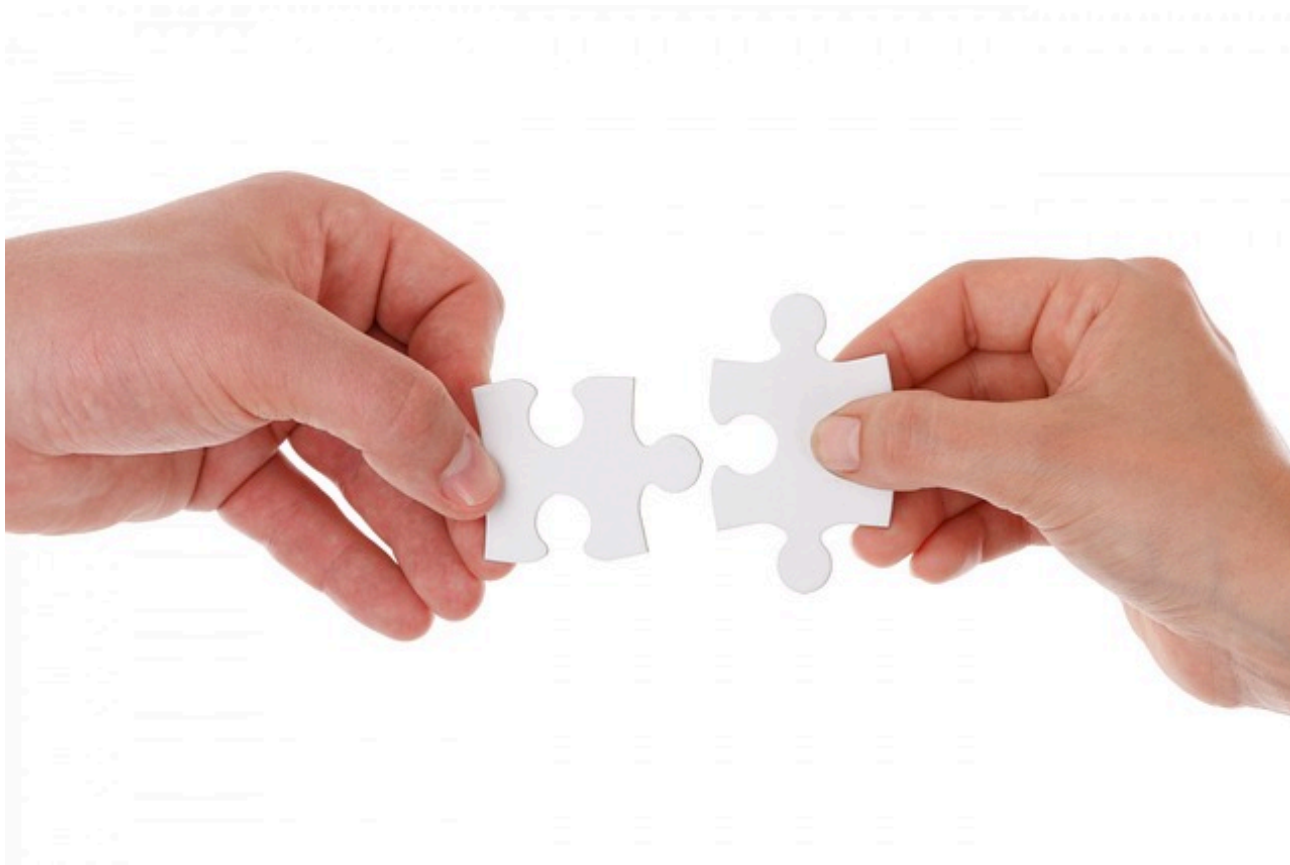
Different ways of building coherent networks
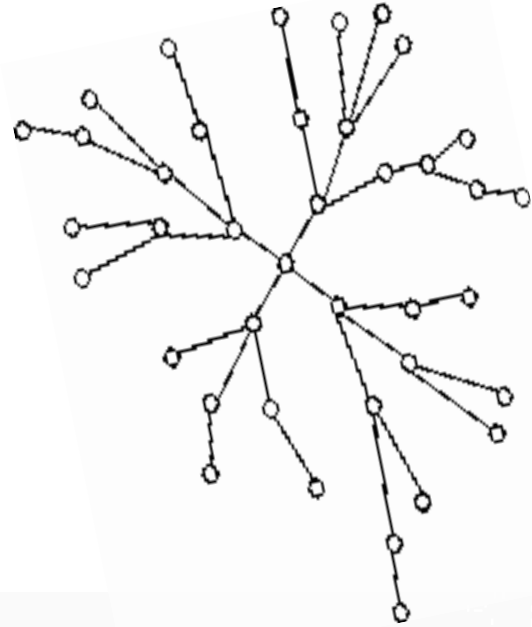
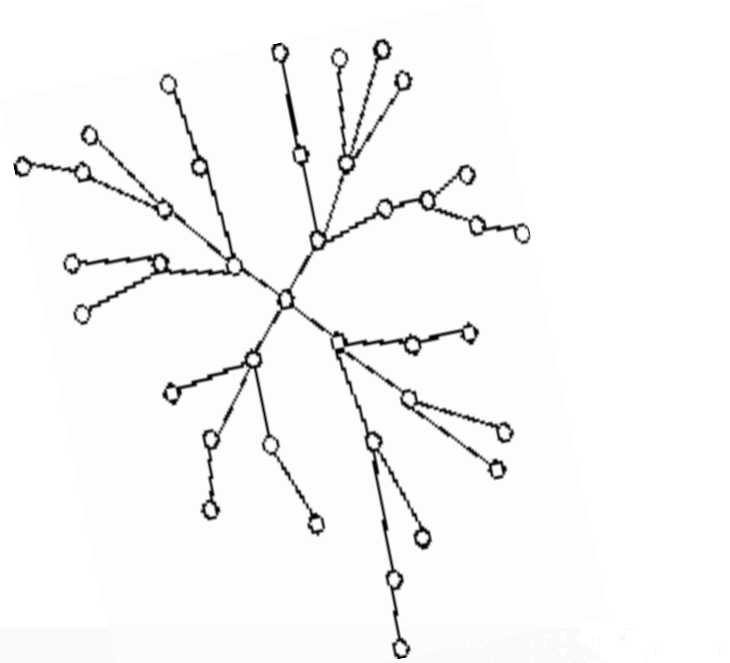Social coherence

Different ways of building coherent networks

Essential coherence

Different ways of building coherent networks

Functional coherence

3 SENSE MAKING processes

- **NORMALIZATION**

- **EFFECTIVENESS**

- **WHOLENESS**

Normalization in practice?

- **Coordination framing**
  - *That's perfectly normal*
  - *It's understandable. It's a human experience.*
- **Conditional framing**
  - *It makes sense given the circumstances / your history*
  - *What benefits does this bring to you?*
- **Deictic framing**
  - *If I were in your situation I would feel the same way...*
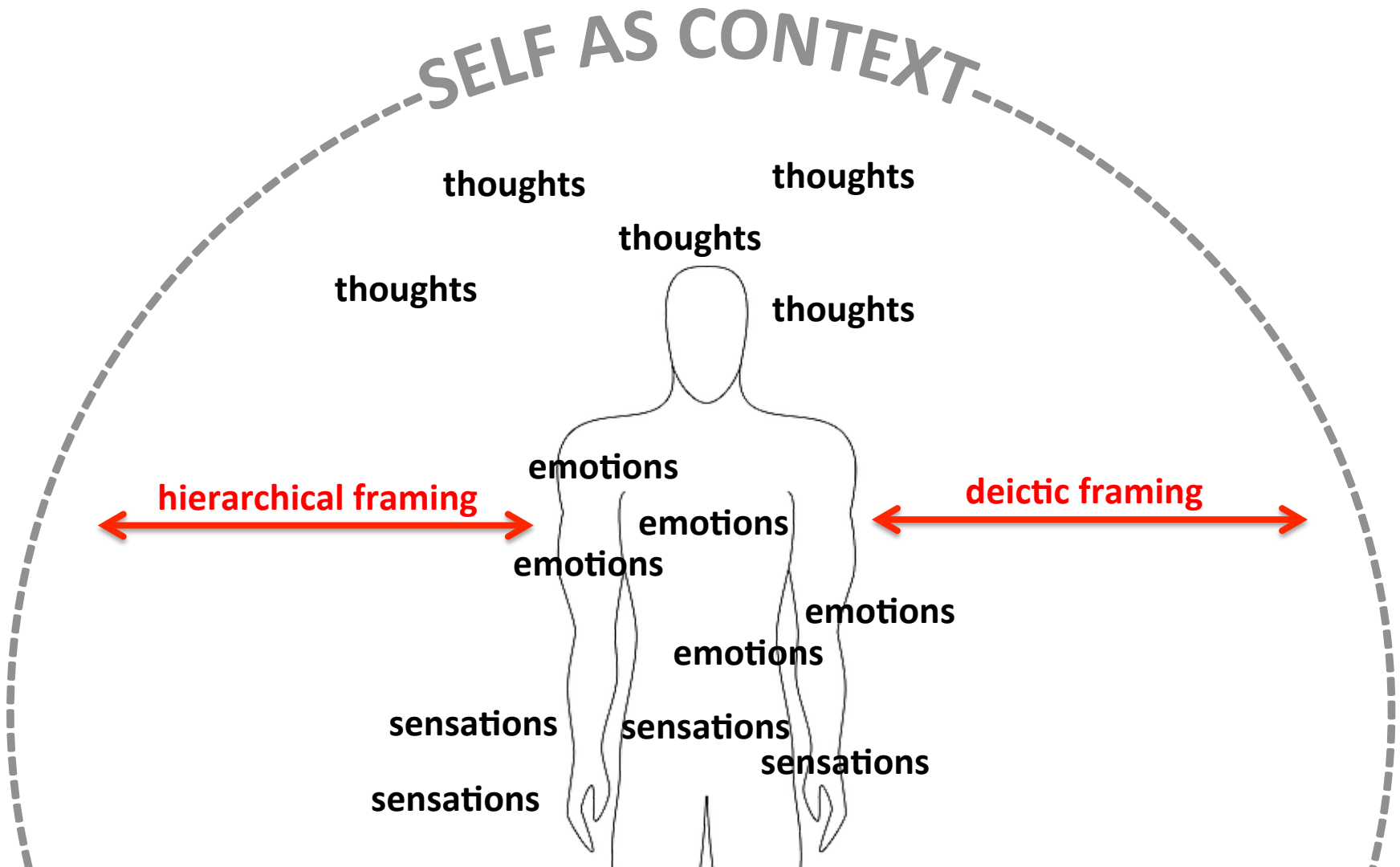 - *Anyone who would have been through the same events would probably struggle too.*

Effectiveness in practice?

- **Conditional framing**
  - *What happens if you do_____?*
- **Comparative framing**
  - *What happens if you do_____ instead?*
- **Hierarchical framing**
  - *Which option is most in line with what you care about?*

Wholeness in practice?

SELF AS CONTEXT

thoughts thoughts

thoughts

thoughts thoughts

hierarchical framing ⟷ emotions

emotions

emotions

deictic framing ⟷

emotions

emotions

sensations sensations

sensations

sensations
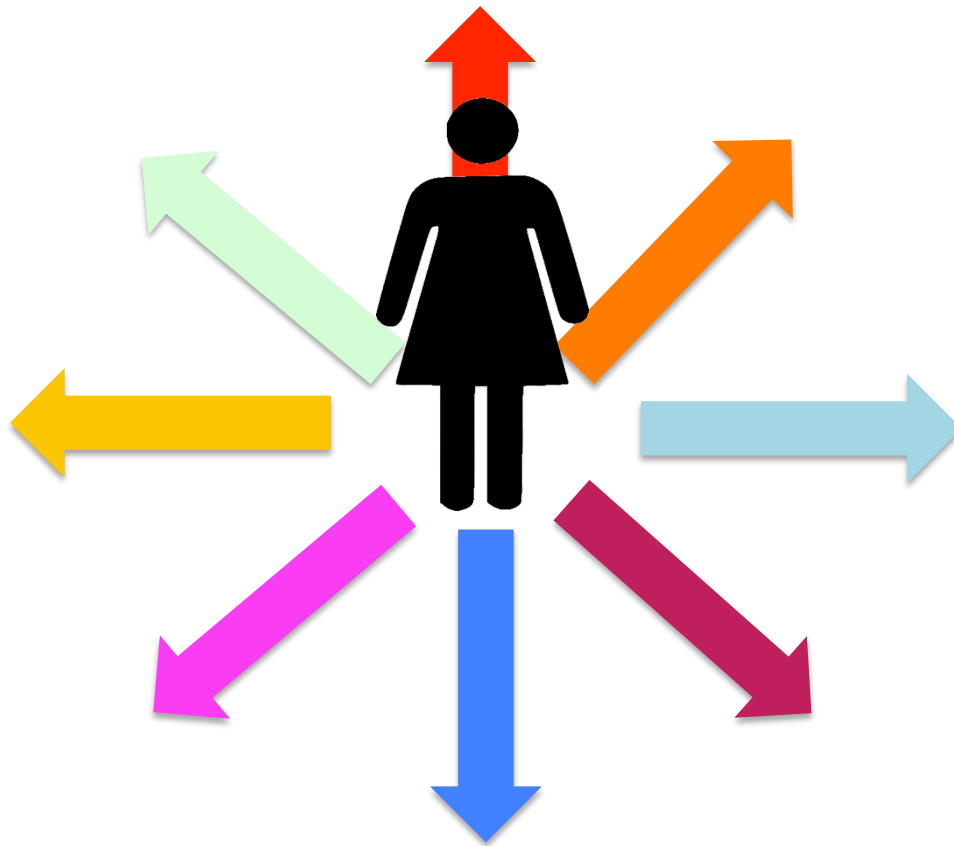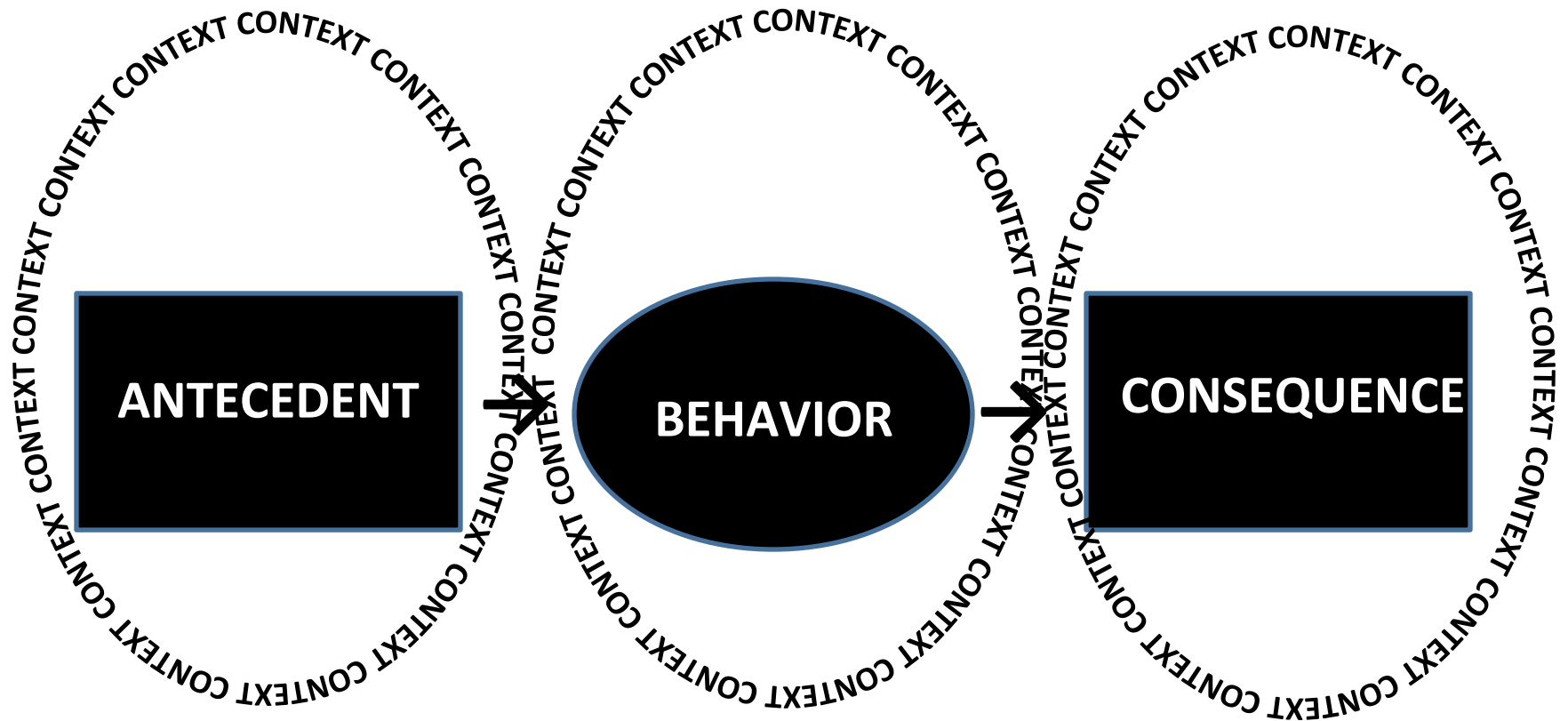
SELF AS CONTEXT EXERCISE

Increasing response flexibility

Changing the symbolic context around the source of influence
or around the behavior

The Problem with Self-Concept

- Language leads to coherence
- In the case of self-concept coherence comes at the cost of response flexibility and context sensitivity
- That is true in both "positive" and "negative" self-concepts
- Increases comparative framing, reduces awareness of events that do not fit the concept, reduces likelihood of tests of the concept

The Flexible Self

- The overall goal: to be able to notice variations in experience, and find a balanced responsibility for our lives as conscious human beings.
- This is fostered in four ways:

The Flexible Self

- Heighten awareness of variability in experience
  - Anchor in the now and notice variations in experience
  - Notice variation in experience as social and other contexts vary
  - Observe experiences from different points of view

The Flexible Self

- Heighten awareness of coherence in perspective taking
    - Notice common perspective across experiences
    - Notice common perspective across different points of view (time, place / context, person)

The Flexible Self

- Heighten awareness of coherence in self as the container of experience
  - Has or contains, not is
  - Redirect evaluation to experience not self

The Flexible Self

- Balanced responsibility
  - Noting the impact of context
  - Noting the impact of action