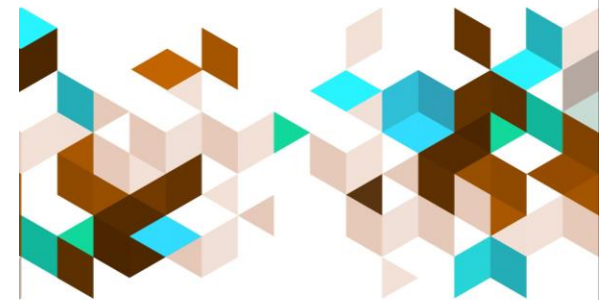
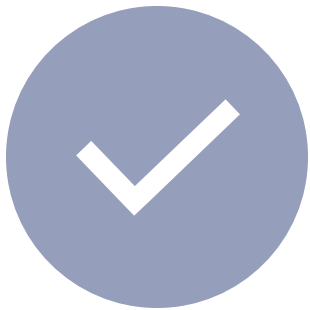

Creating safer, healthier communities

Prof Lisa Oakley

Division of Psychology, University of Chester



WE WANT TO BE SAFER AND HEALTHIER BUT HOW?



RECOGNISE WHAT
WE ARE ALREADY
DOING WELL



RAISE AWARENESS



RESPOND WELL



THINK ABOUT
CULTURE

WHAT IS BEING DONE WELL?

Online survey – in partnership with Thirtyone:eight - 199 participants – all held safeguarding role in Christian faith organisation

Examples of good practice and challenges to safeguarding identified

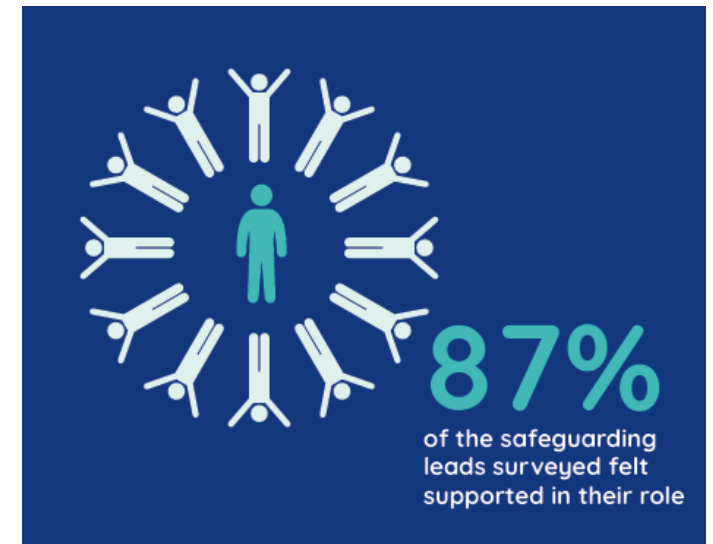
Many in safeguarding roles brought wealth of experience to these roles and had held roles for a long time – representing their commitment

Safeguarding in the Christian faith context before, during and post COVID-19

A research study commissioned by thirtyone:eight and undertaken by the University of Chester

- [21-19916 Research Report v4 \(1\).pdf](#)

WHAT IS BEING DONE WELL? -

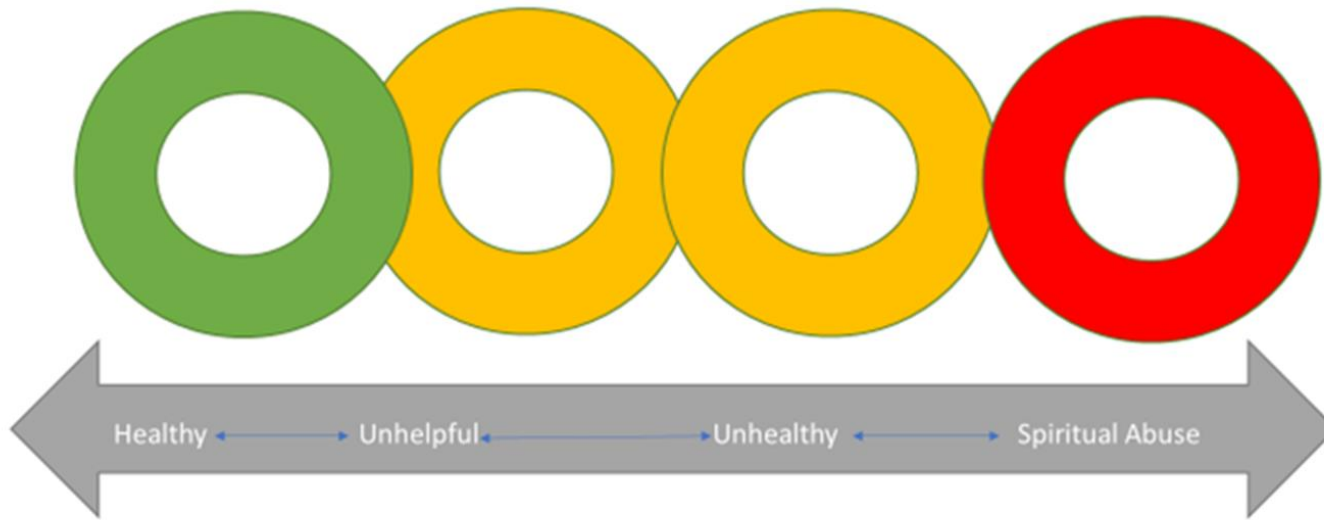


WHAT IS BEING DONE WELL

- The promotion of safeguarding as everyone's responsibility
- Collaboration and networking
- Evidence of the promotion of safeguarding leading to positive attitudes towards it
- Individuals were aware of the role of safeguarding leads
- Training as an integral element of their safeguarding practice
- Reviewing and editing of safeguarding policy to ensure it was relevant and current
- • Safer recruitment including DBS check

RAISING AWARENESS OF SPIRITUAL ABUSE

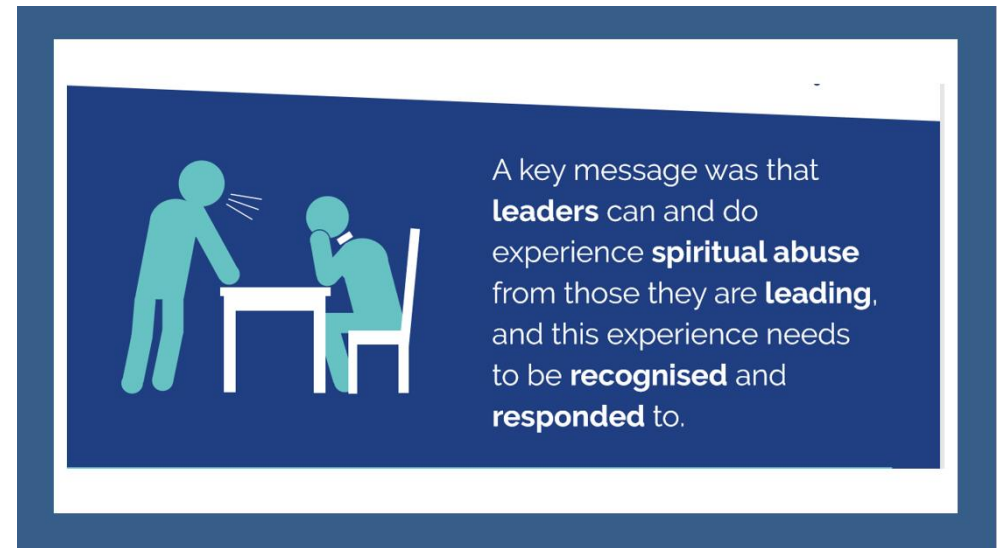
A spectrum of behaviour



(Oakley, 2021)

Defining spiritual abuse

- Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context or with a religious rationale. This context includes religious or spiritual institutions, places of education and homes in which there is a religious, spiritual or faith belief. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it and can be experienced in a variety of different relationships.
- (Oakley, 2023)



Spiritual abuse and other forms of abuse



Turn The Tide

**Developing understanding
and effective responses
to domestic abuse in the
Christian faith community**

Key findings

Spiritual abuse (Oakley, 2009; Oakley & Kinmond, 2013; Oakley & Humphreys 2019)

Coercion and
Control

Coercing behaviour
through
manipulation and
exploitation

Enforced
accountability

Coercion through
censorship

Coercion to conform

Publicly shaming and
humiliating
individuals to control
their behaviour

Spiritual abuse (Oakley, 2009; Oakley & Kinmond, 2013; Oakley & Humphreys 2019)

Exercising control through using sacred texts or teaching to coerce behaviour

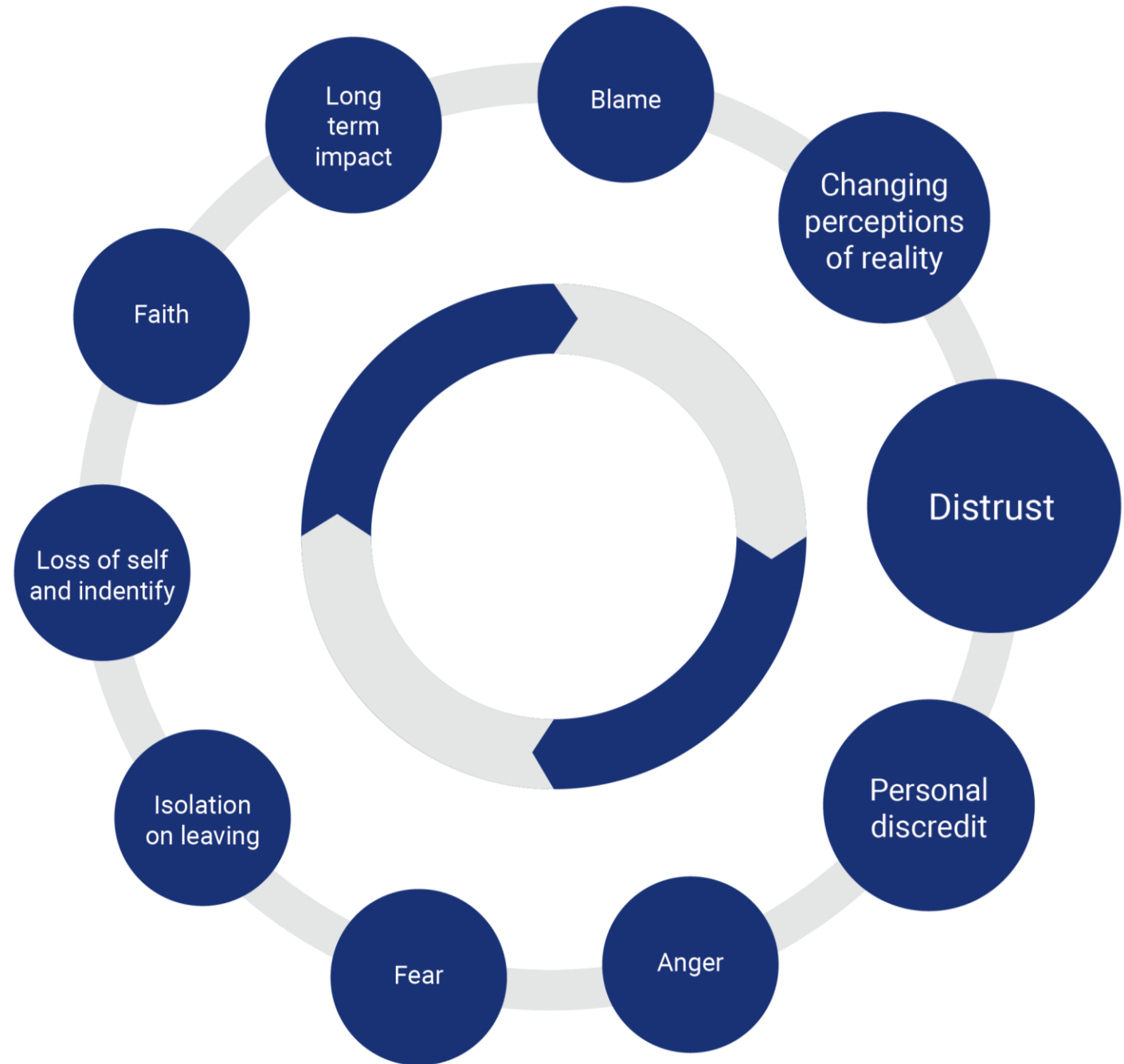
Requiring unquestioning obedience/ obedience to the abuser

Using a sense of divine position to exert pressure to conform and suggesting this position is unchallengeable

Exercising control through threats of spiritual consequences

Superiority and elitism.

Impact (Oakley & Kinmond, 2014)



**RESPONDING
WELL**

Features of a
good response
(Oakley &
Humphreys,
2018;
thirtyone:eight,
2018)

Safe

Serious

Active listening

Validation

No minimisation or blame

Features of a
good response
(Oakley &
Humphreys,
2018;
thirtyone:eight,
2018)

Bible and prayer

Matthew 18

Confidentiality

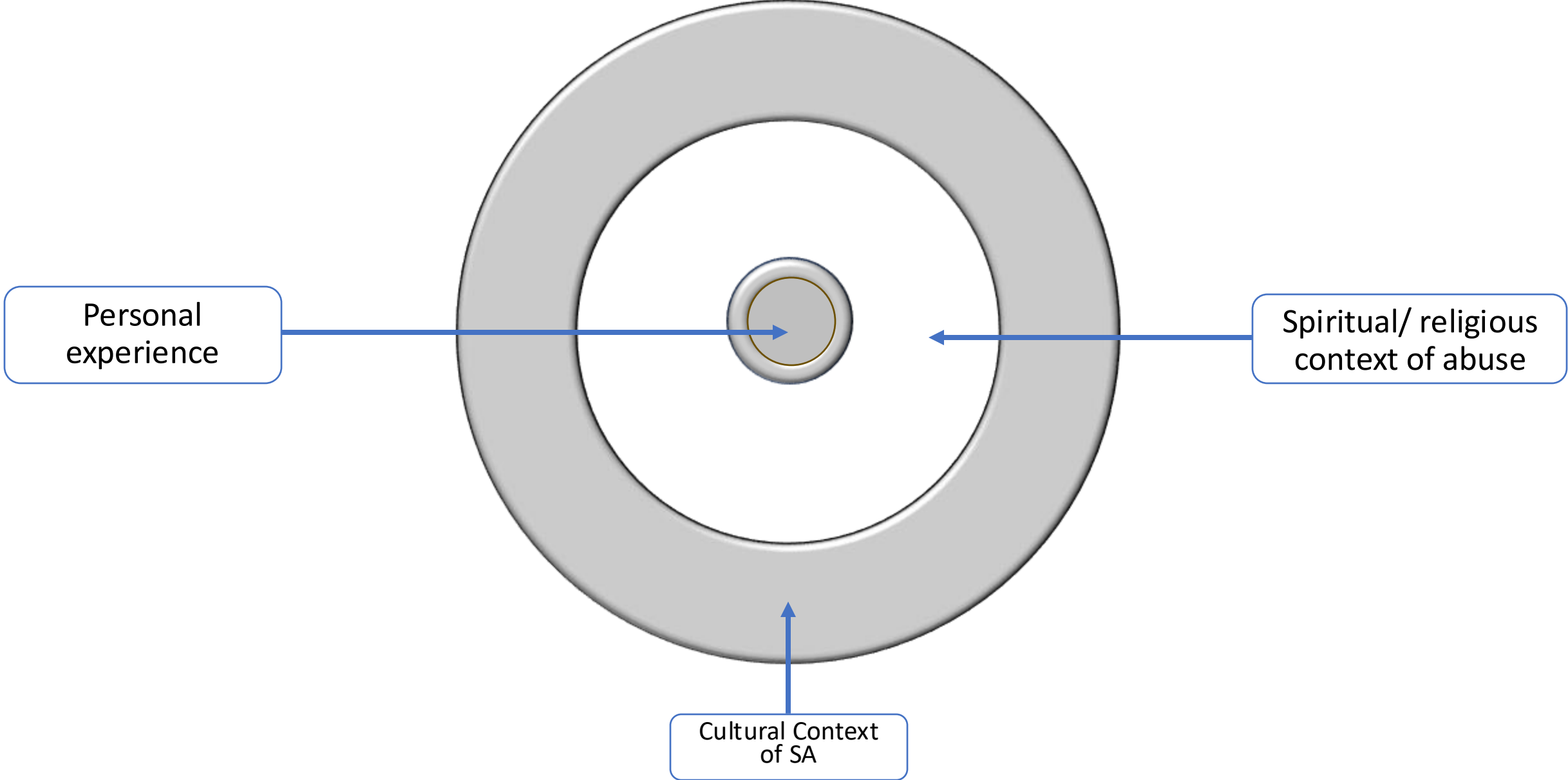
Support

Referral

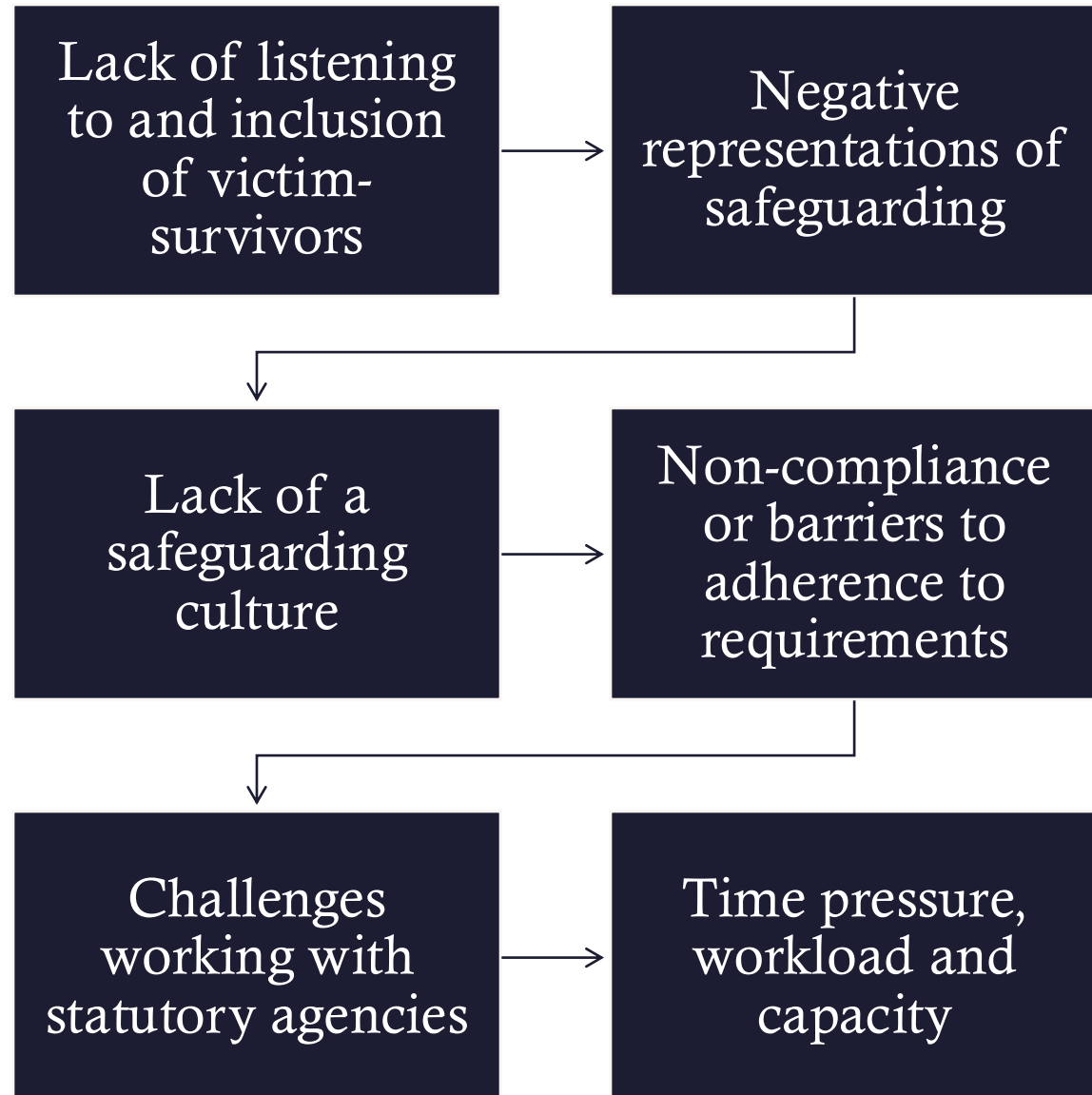


Healthy Cultures

We need to examine our cultures



BARRIERS

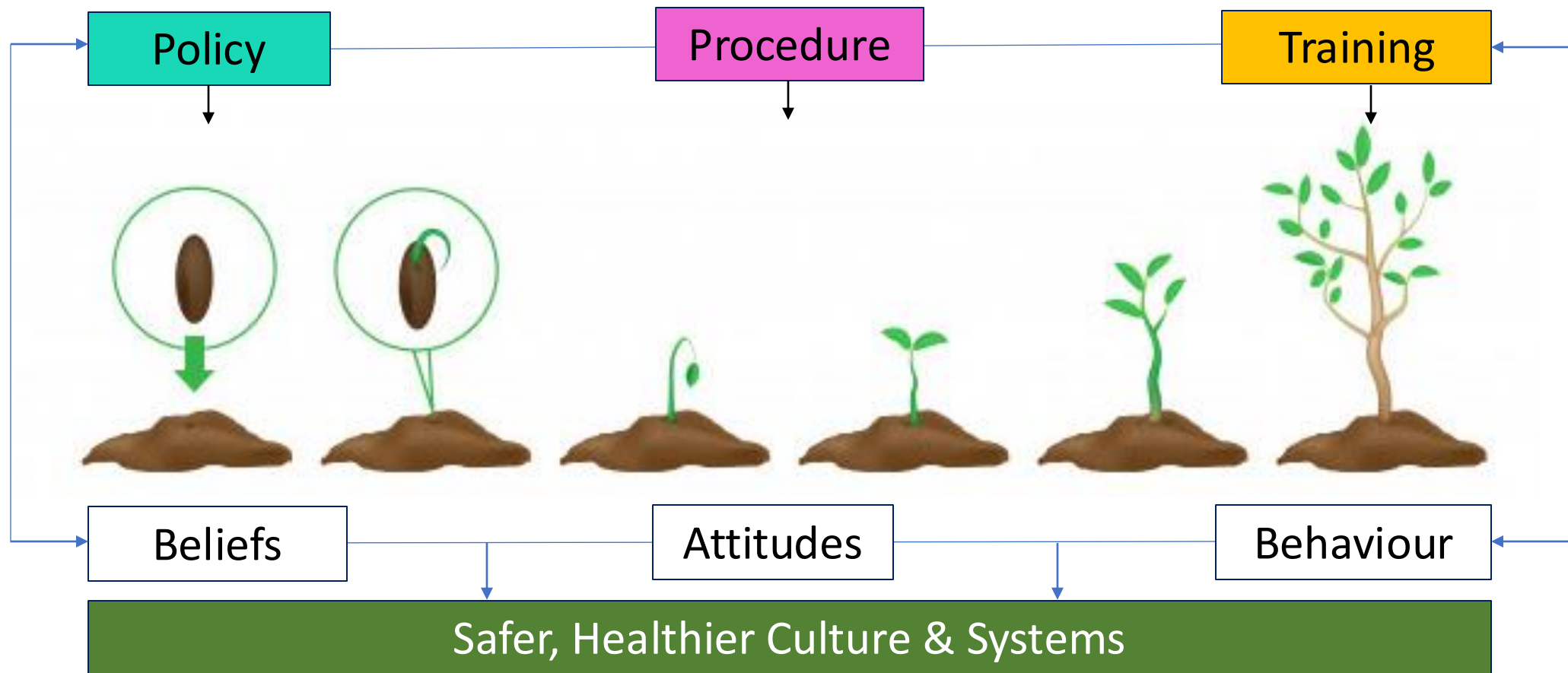


Creating healthy cultures – supporting those in safeguarding roles



- *“Who is safeguarding the safeguarding leads as they come back to what may well be an ever-increasing workload?.”*

Planting in fertile ground



Safer, Healthier Culture & Systems

Modelling Safe Behaviours

The everyday activities and behaviours that are accepted within the setting or organisation. Do those behaviours model safer practice and the importance of healthy attitudes and beliefs for all?

Establishing Good Governance

The way the setting or organisation is controlled and governed. What is most important and what attention does safer, healthier culture receive alongside monitoring performance, strategy, mission and vision?

Building Effective Structures

The written and unwritten structures, reporting lines and accountabilities that exist within the setting or organisation. How are people valued and how are unofficial or unspoken rules challenged and deconstructed to avoid the development of shadow/ghost cultures.



Listening Well

The ability of the organisation to listen to accounts of past events and lived experiences when considering the setting or organisation and how it operates (e.g. how a previous disclosure of abuse was handled).

Communicating Well

The visual identity of the setting or organisation and what messages it conveys in relation to its values, mission and daily practices (e.g. how the setting as a 'safe place' is communicated to individuals and publicly).

Managing Power

The formal and informal power within the setting or organisation. What is the role of leadership in decision-making? How empowering and inclusive is the environment (e.g. how does it encourage involvement and challenge through people's individual and collective voice)?

Characteristics of a healthy Christian culture (Oakley & Humphreys, 2019)



SAFEGUARDING AS A
FOUNDATION



RESPECTS, VALUES AND
NURTURES



GUIDING AND
EMPOWERING THROUGH
BIBLICAL TEACHING



NURTURING AND
NURTURED LEADERSHIP

Characteristics of a healthy Christian culture (Oakley & Humphreys, 2019)



VALUES 'WHOLE LIFE'
SERVICE




HEALTHY
ACCOUNTABILITY



MODELS INCLUSION



GUIDES BEHAVIOUR
BUT RESPECTS
CHOICES



When we know better,
we do better!