

Welcome!

The webinar will begin shortly.

# HARNESSING THE CLOUDS:

How to Spot, Respond to & Manage  
Employee Mental Health Issues

July 11, 2025




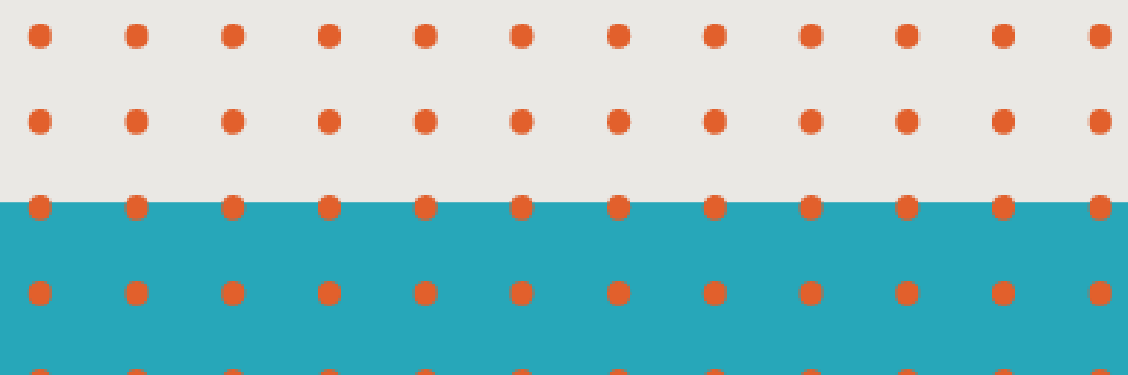
# ABOUT VIGILANT

We help employers navigate complex workplace issues including HR, safety, employment law, workers' compensation and affirmative action.



# Time for a poll!



- 
- 
01. Mental Health in the U.S.
  02. Signs of Mental Illness at Work
  03. Asking the Right Questions
  04. Avoid Interactive Process Mistakes
  05. Resources for Accommodation Ideas

**AGENDA**

01.

# Mental Health in the U.S.

VIGILANT | VIGILANT LAW GROUP



# You are NOT ALONE

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Across the country, many people just like you work, perform, create, compete, laugh, love and inspire every day.



1 in 5 U.S. adults  
experience  
mental illness

**1 in 20**

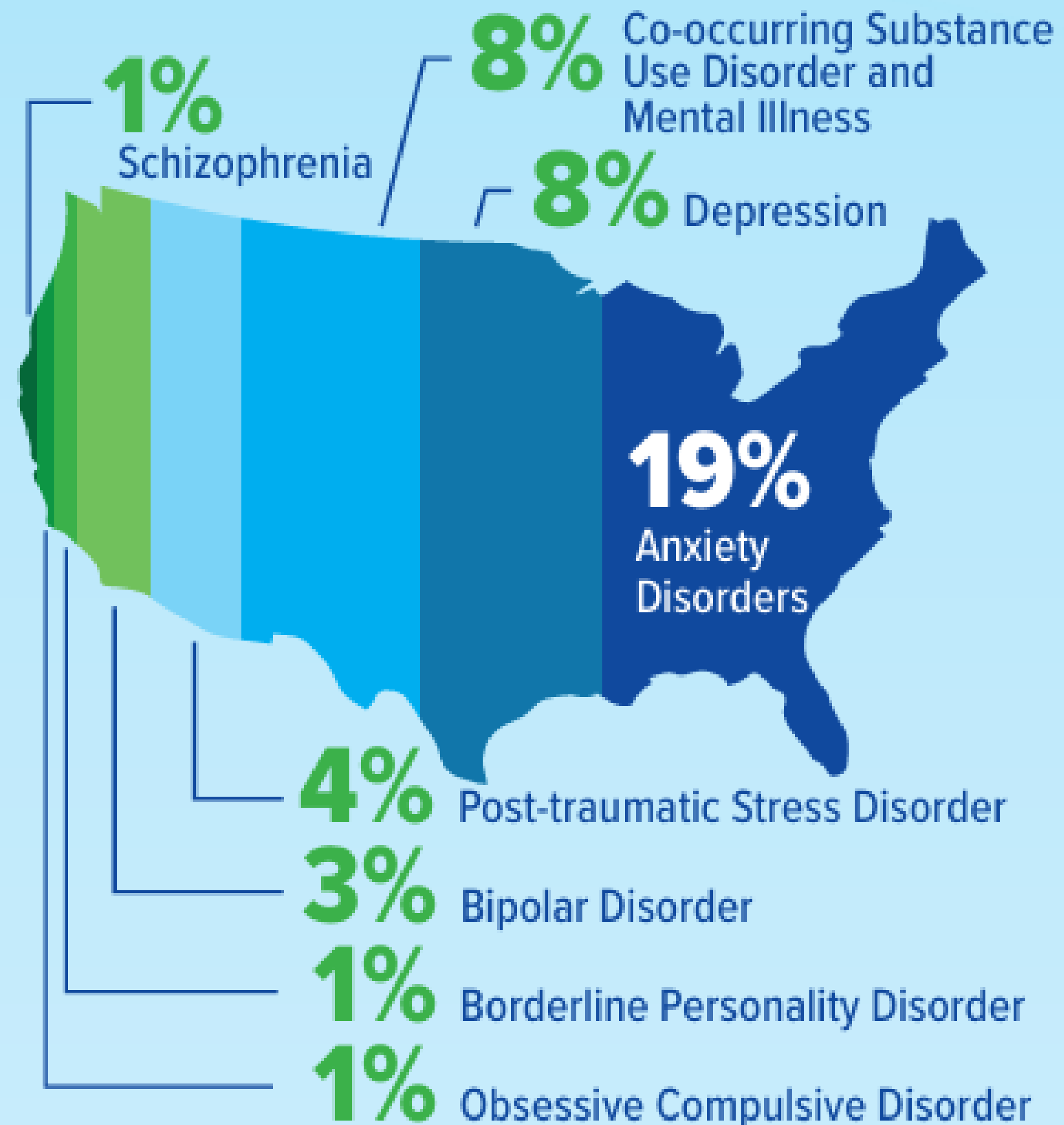
1 in 20 U.S. adults  
experience serious  
mental illness

**17%**

of youth (6-17 years)  
experience a mental  
health disorder

Source: [nami.org](http://nami.org)

## 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



Over half of US adults with mental illness ***do not receive treatment.***

Source: [nami.org](https://nami.org)

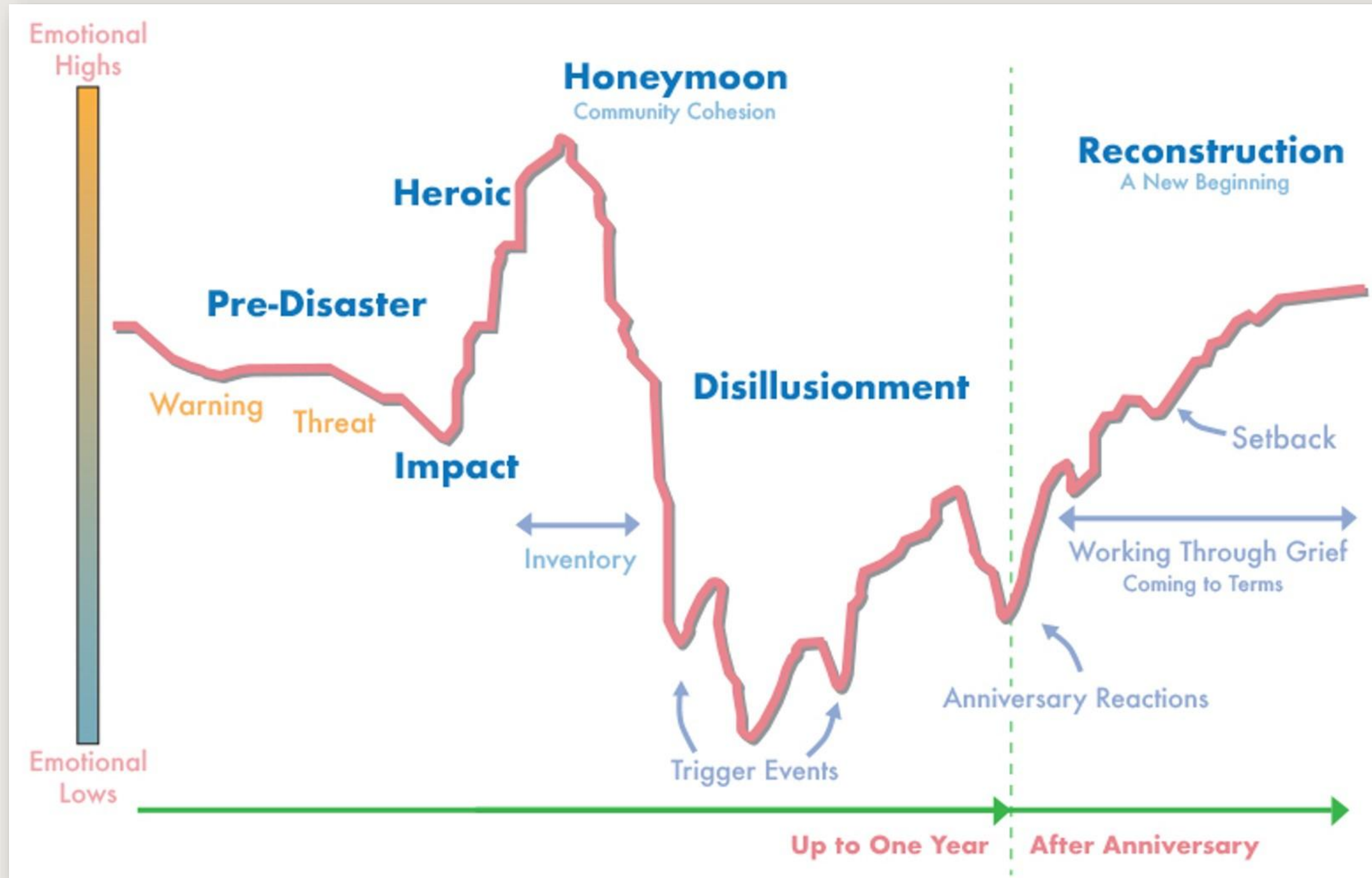
Mental illness does **NOT** mean crazy.

Mental illness just means  
a person's brain isn't  
operating at peak  
performance.





# How Disasters Affect Mental Health

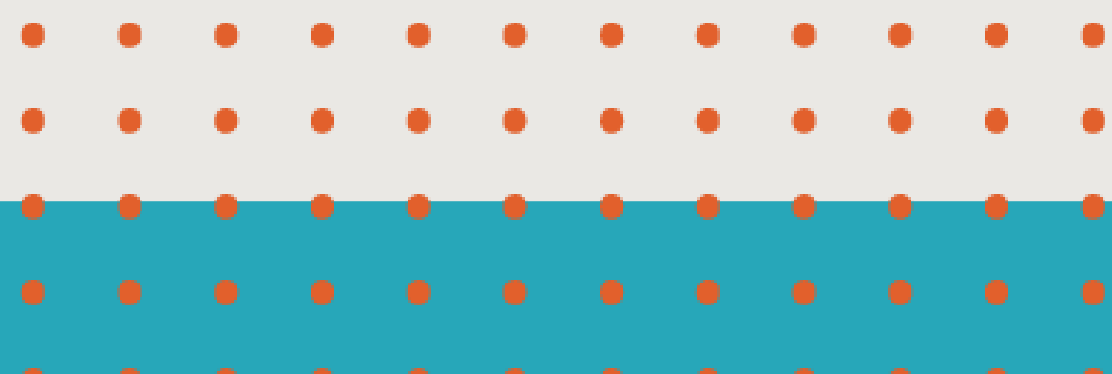


# A few more statistics

Mental health related leaves of absence increased **300%** since the pandemic.

In the first quarter of 2024, more employees in the U.S. took leave for mental health reasons than for accidents, cancer, COVID-19, heart disease, or heart attacks combined.

Source: ComPsych.com, Aug. 1, 2024





The *most requested* accommodations in 2024 were for *mental health*.

- AbsenceSoft 2025 *Leave of Absence and Workplace Accommodations Report*





02.

# Signs of Mental Illness at Work

VIGILANT | VIGILANT LAW GROUP

# SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

- ✓ Sleep or appetite changes
- ✓ Mood changes
- ✓ Withdrawal or avoiding others
- ✓ Performance decline
- ✓ Problems concentrating/learning
- ✓ Increased sensitivity
- ✓ Multiple aches, pains, fatigue
- ✓ Feeling sad or low
- ✓ Apathy
- ✓ Excessive worry or fear
- ✓ Prolonged irritability/anger
- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed



# Signs of mental illness can come from others.





**WHEN THE SIGN BECOMES NOTICE, YOU HAVE TO ACT.**

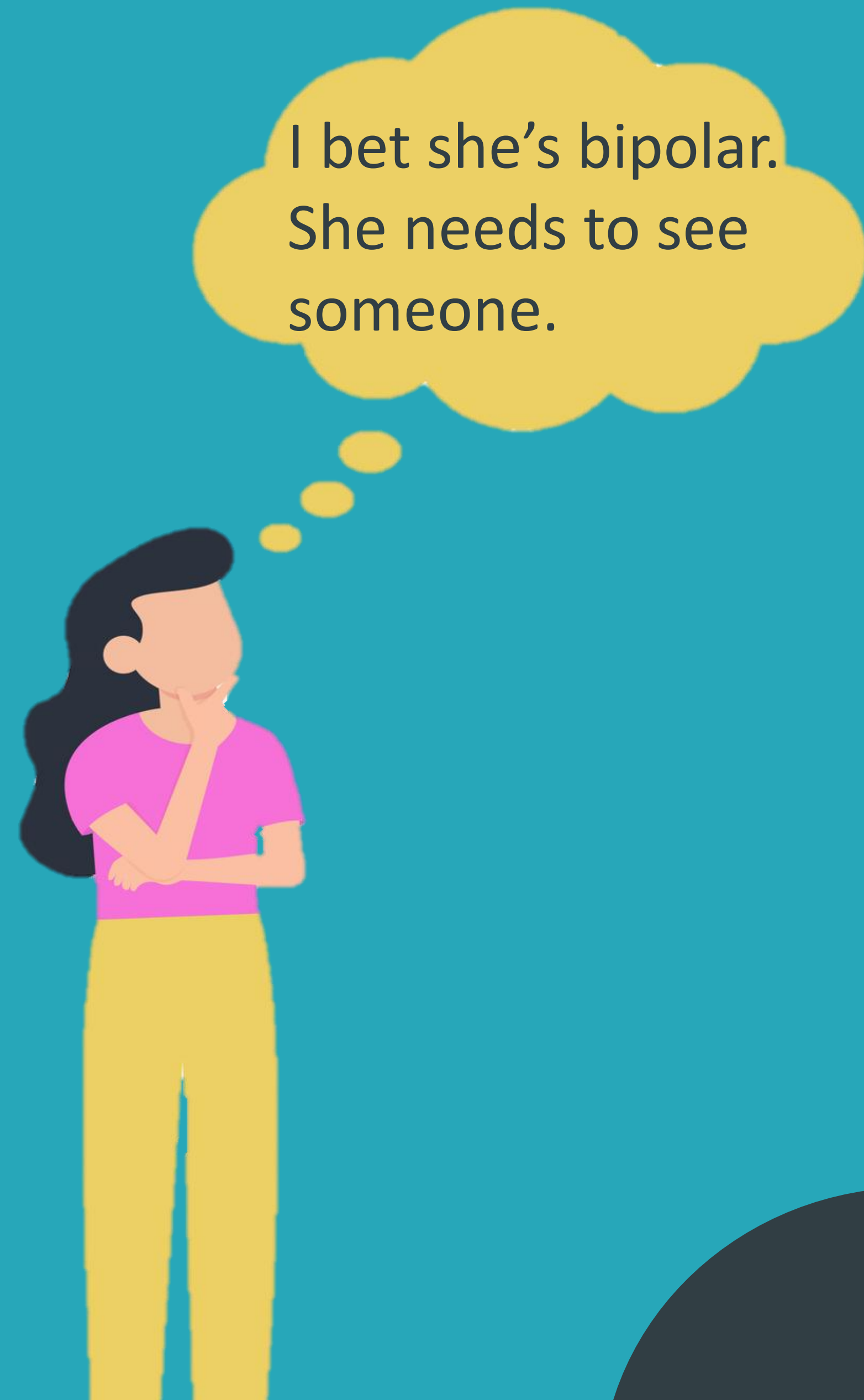


# Notice is when a sign **affects work**

- ✓ Natalie asks if she can come in 1 hour late this week because she started new anxiety meds that are making her groggy.
- ✓ Hugo mentioned his PTSD diagnosis a few months ago, but didn't say he needed anything. In today's meeting, he was unusually distracted, agitated, and he snapped at a co-worker.
- ✓ Tatiana's co-worker says to you, "I'm having to finish most of Tatiana's assignments. She told me she's depressed and can't concentrate."
- ✓ Rick, who usually dresses nice, has stopped showering and shaving and seemed disoriented this morning.



A sign or notice doesn't mean  
there's a mental health issue.



03.

# Asking the Right Questions

VIGILANT | VIGILANT LAW GROUP



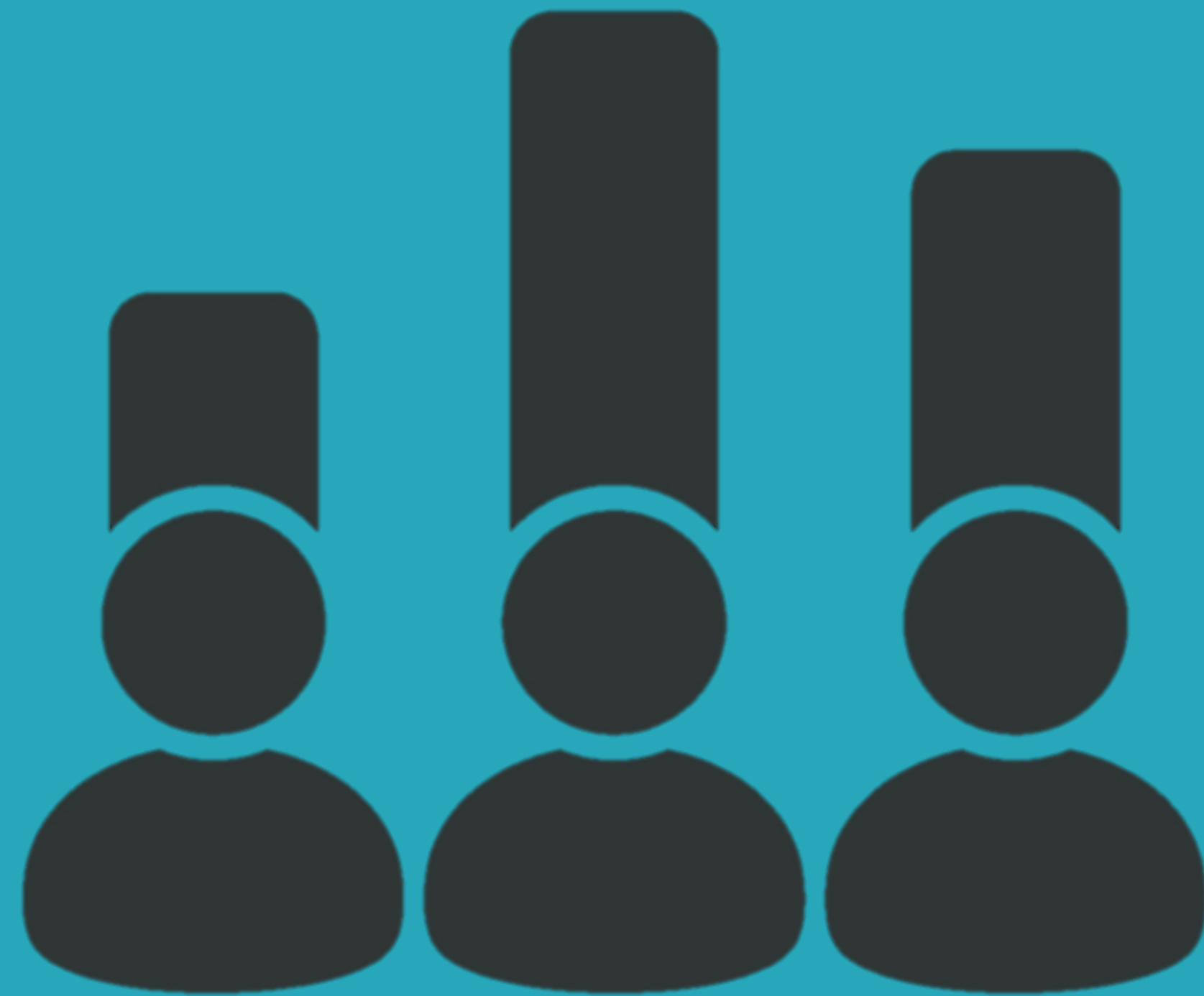
# ALWAYS START WITH EMPATHY

*Trying to understand the feelings of others by imagining yourself in their position.*





Think of a time someone showed you  
empathy...what did they do?  
(Be specific!)





## Safe questions:

- ✓ About job duties, behavior, or performance
- ✓ Related to the job
- ✓ Rely on observable facts

“I noticed that you seemed agitated and nervous in today’s meeting. Are you aware of this?”

## Not safe/offensive:

- X Asking directly about a health problem or disability
- X Using hearsay or assumption
- X Not related to the job

“Are you having a problem with your PTSD?”

## RESPOND WITH THREE

1. How are you feeling today?
2. How is this affecting your job?
3. What do you need from me right now?



# TRY IT OUT...

Ayesha rushes into your office. She says, “I can’t sleep because I know that everyone’s watching me and waiting for me to screw up. I heard that Clarissa wants my job. I’m so freaked out I can’t focus. My doctor told me to avoid situations that cause panic attacks.”

How are you feeling today?

How is this affecting your job?

What do you need from me right now?

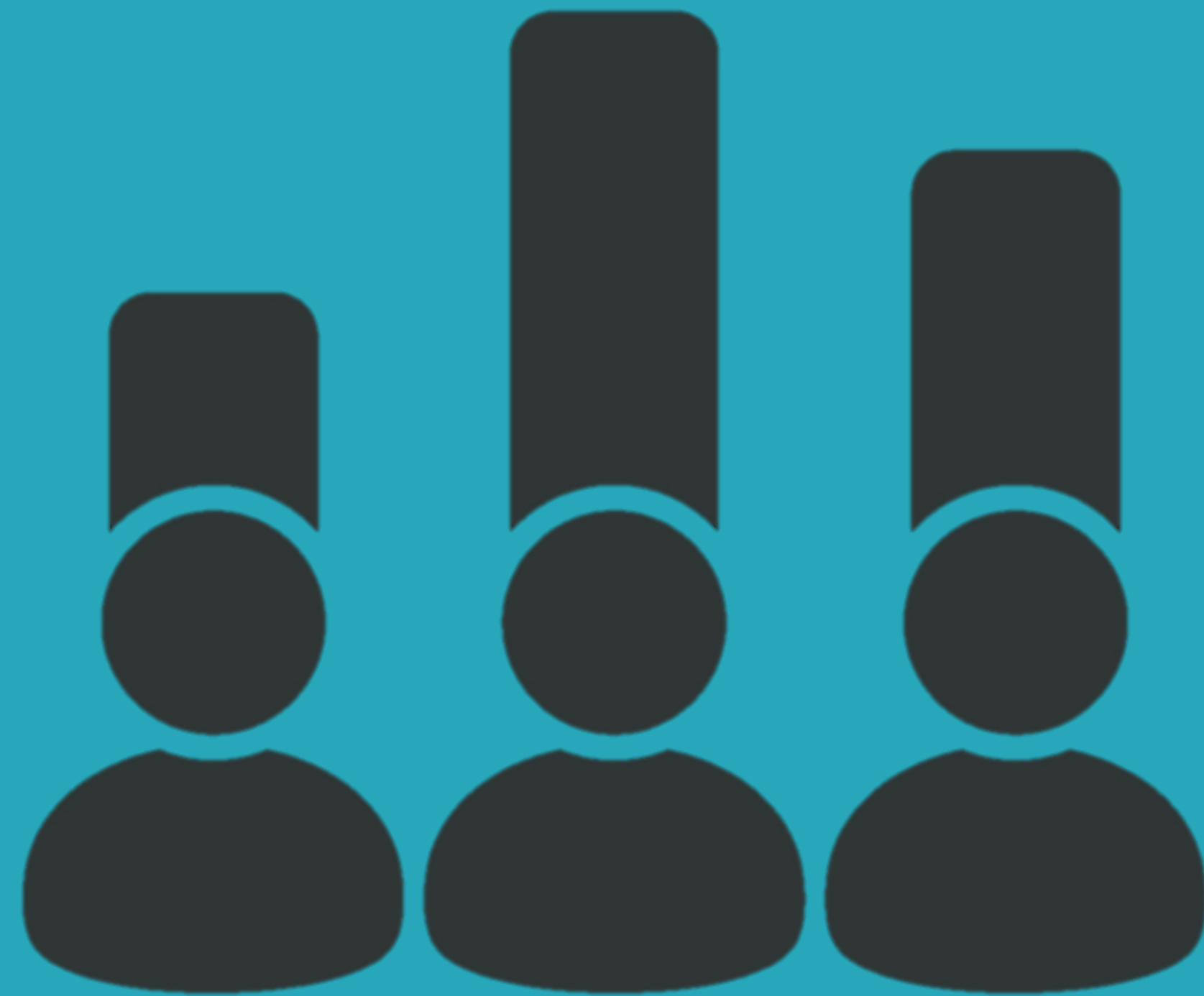


Where does  
my EAP fit  
into this?





What are some of your favorite mental health resources offered through work?



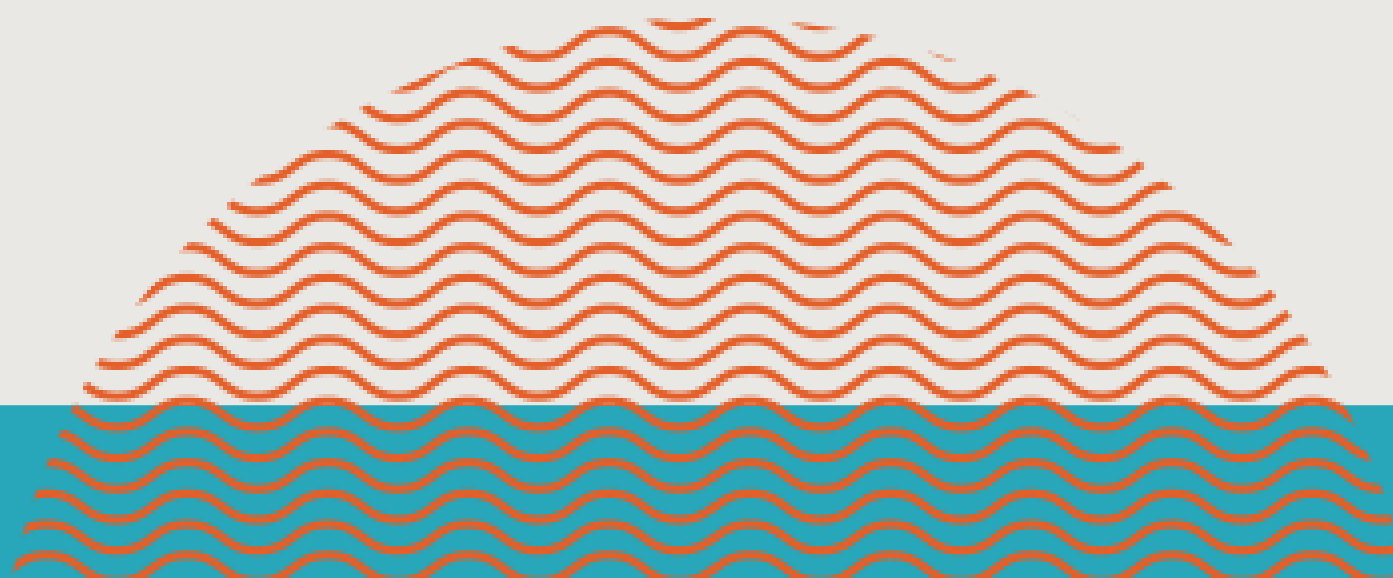
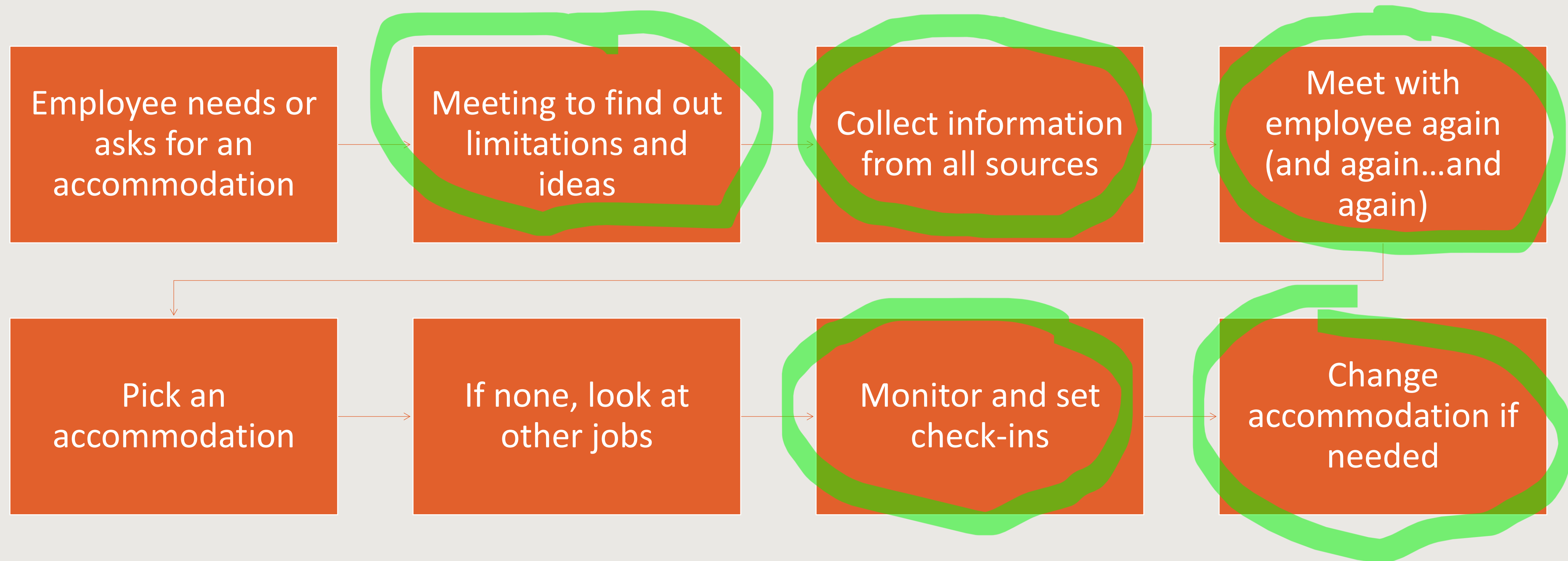
04.

# Avoid Interactive Process Mistakes

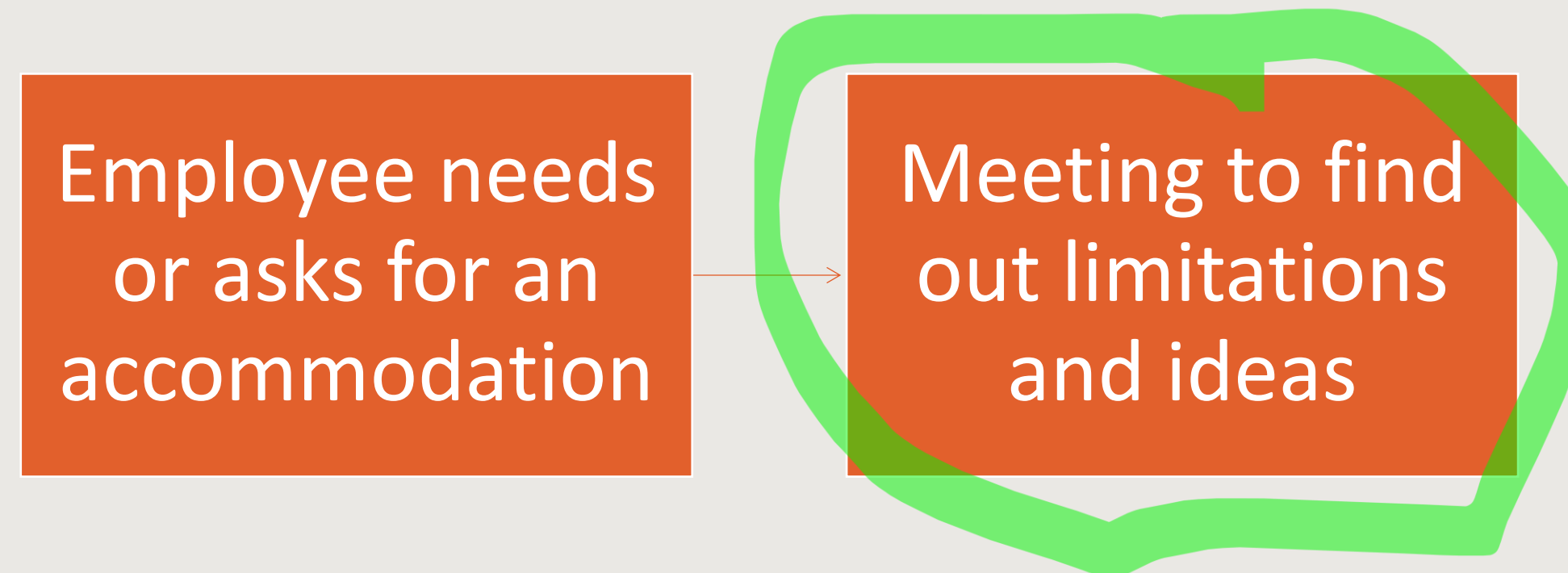
VIGILANT | VIGILANT LAW GROUP



# SNAPSHOT OF INTERACTIVE PROCESS



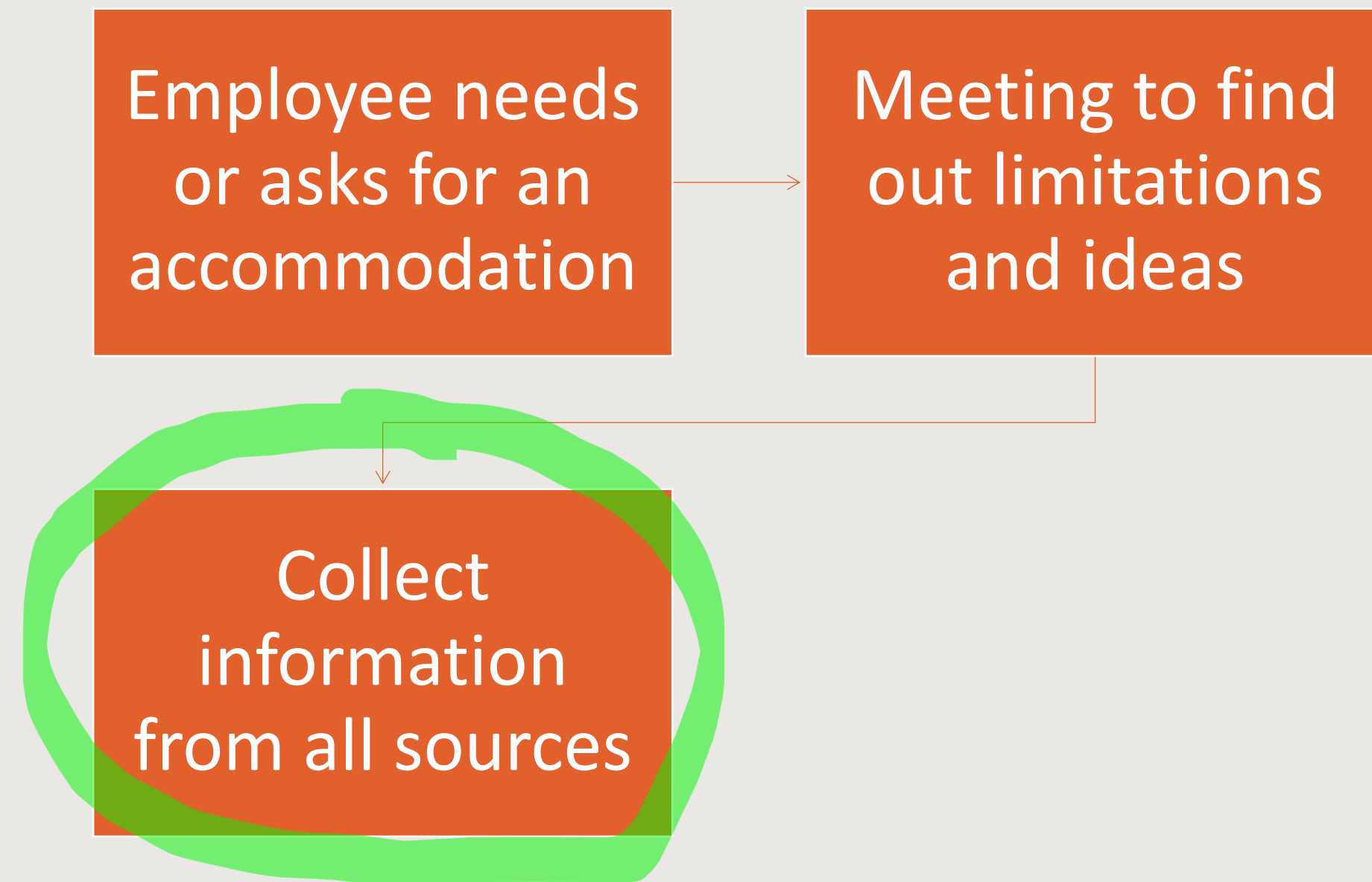
# Mistakes at the first meeting



1. There is no meeting.
2. The employee is not asked:
  - “What parts of your job are you having difficulty with?”
  - **“What do you need?” or “What are you asking for?”** “When do you need this?” “For how long?” “How often?”
  - “Are you seeing a doctor?”
  - “Is there anything else that might help?”

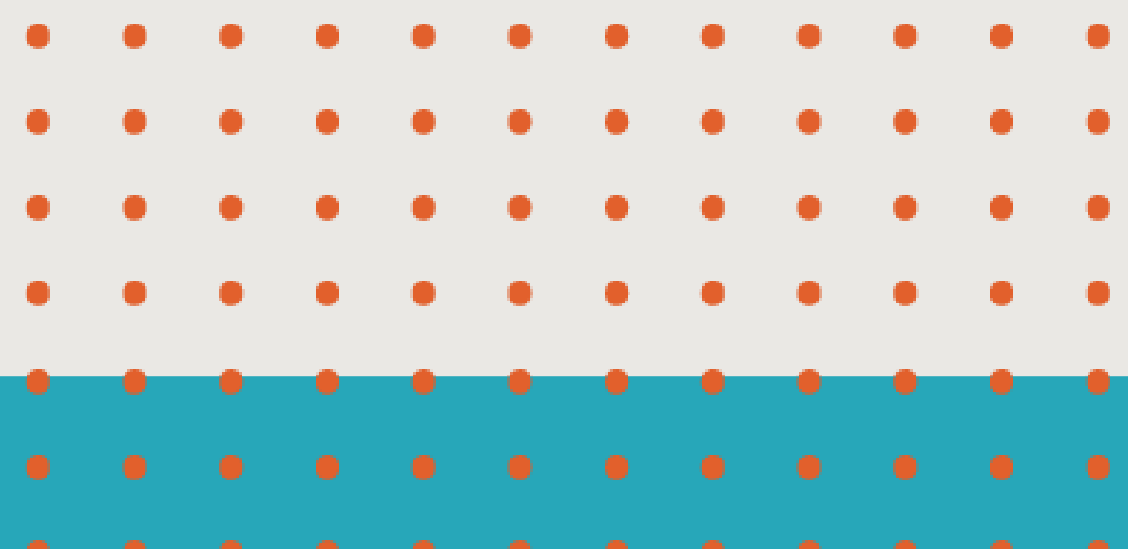
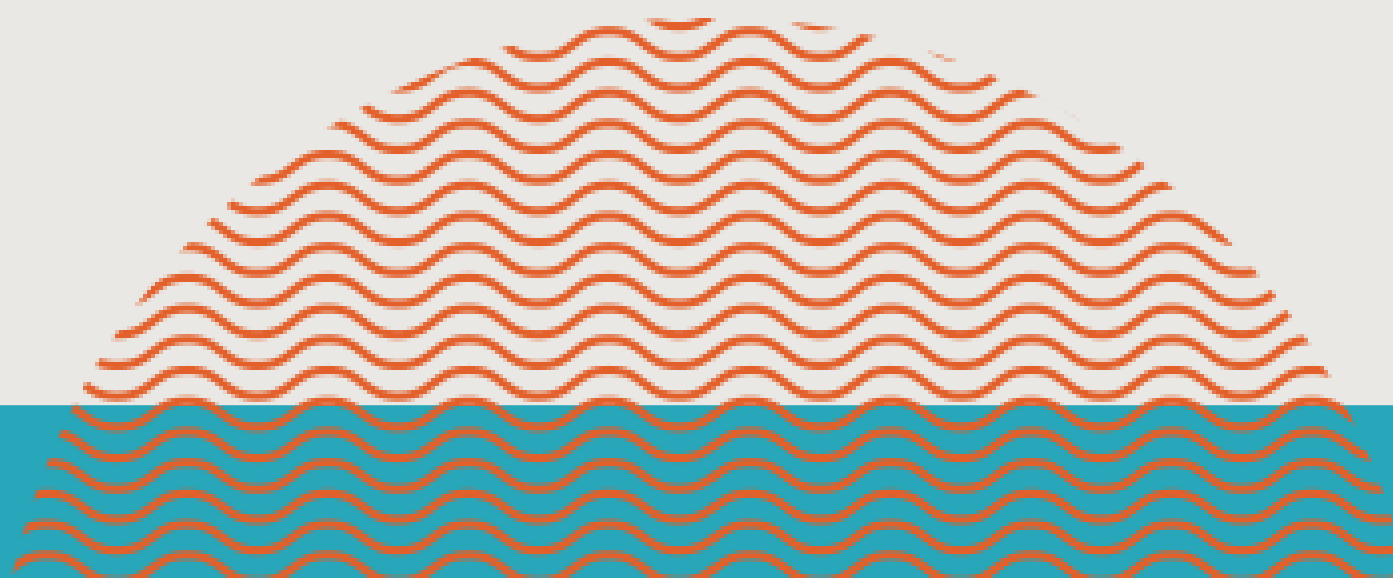
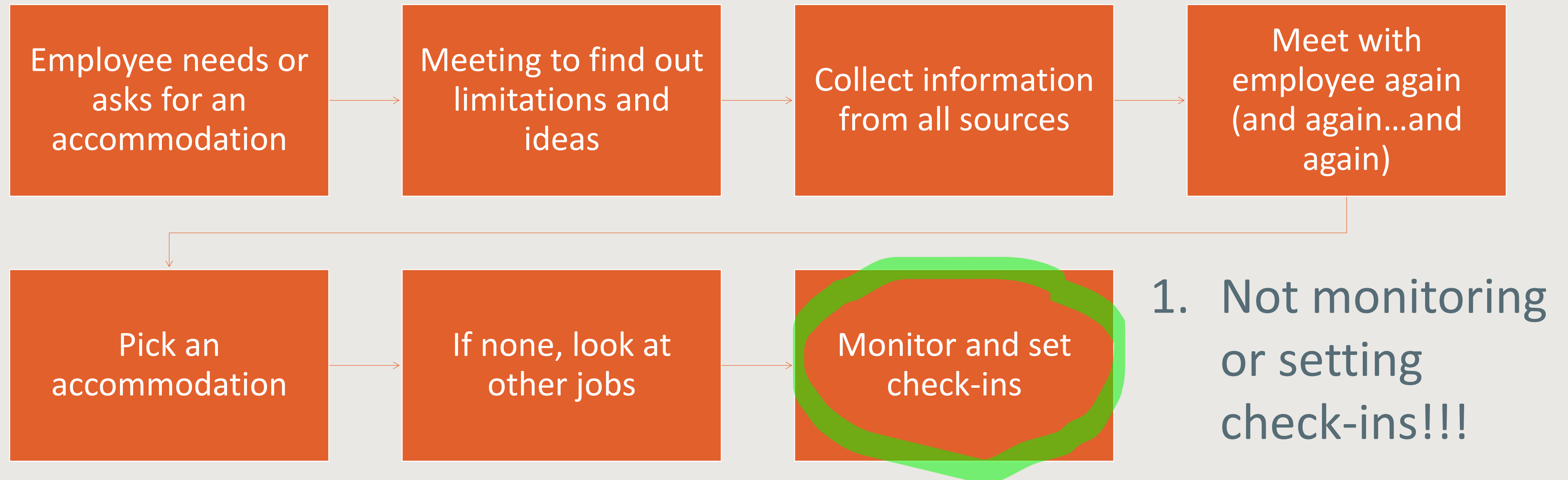


# Mistakes when collecting information

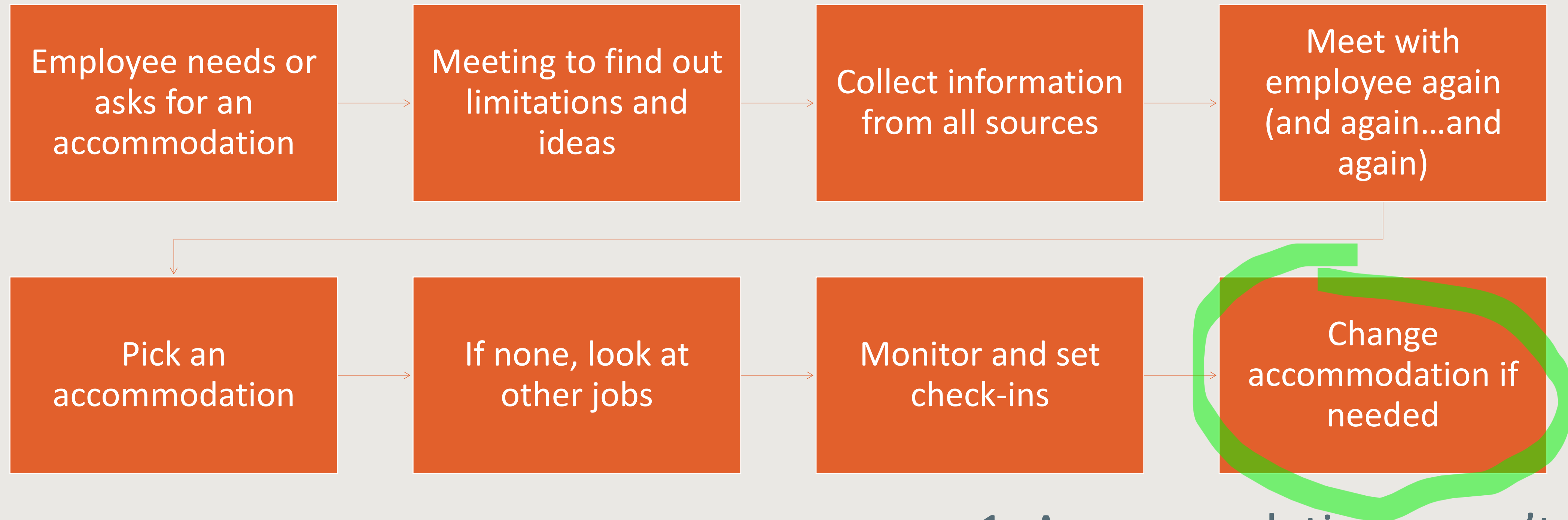


1. Focusing on “prove it.”
2. Not giving the doctor job duties, an explanatory cover letter, and/or accommodation questionnaire.
3. Forgetting to consult ALL resources:
  - Supervisor/manager
  - Occupational or rehab therapist
  - Accommodation expert
  - Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

# Mistakes when monitoring & checking in



# Mistakes about changing accommodations



1. Accommodations aren't modified or removed when appropriate.

05.

# Resources for Accommodation Ideas

VIGILANT | VIGILANT LAW GROUP



# When considering accommodations, ask:

Is there any other way this job can be done?







# JAN: Depression/Stress Intolerance

## ✓ Products

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Fitness Trackers
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun Boxes and Lights
- Sun Simulating Desk Lamps

## ✓ Services

- Counseling/Therapy
- Employee Assistance Program

## ✓ Strategies

- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Communicate Another Way
- Complying with Behavior and Conduct Rules
- Flexible Schedule
- Instant Messaging and Texting Solutions for Businesses
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- On-site Mentoring
- One-on-One Communication

- Policy Modification
- Positive Feedback
- Supervisory Feedback
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telepresence
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely



## Websites that help generate ideas:

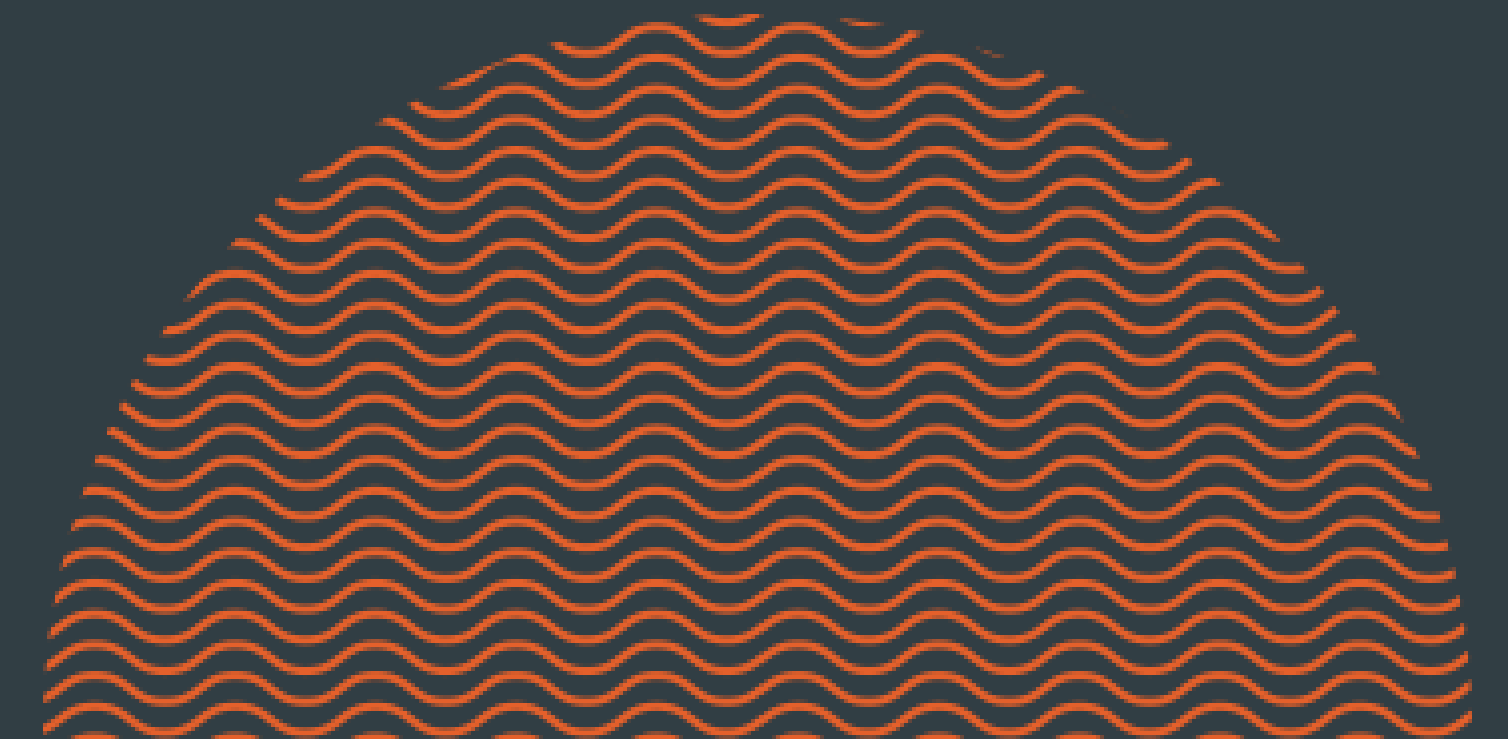
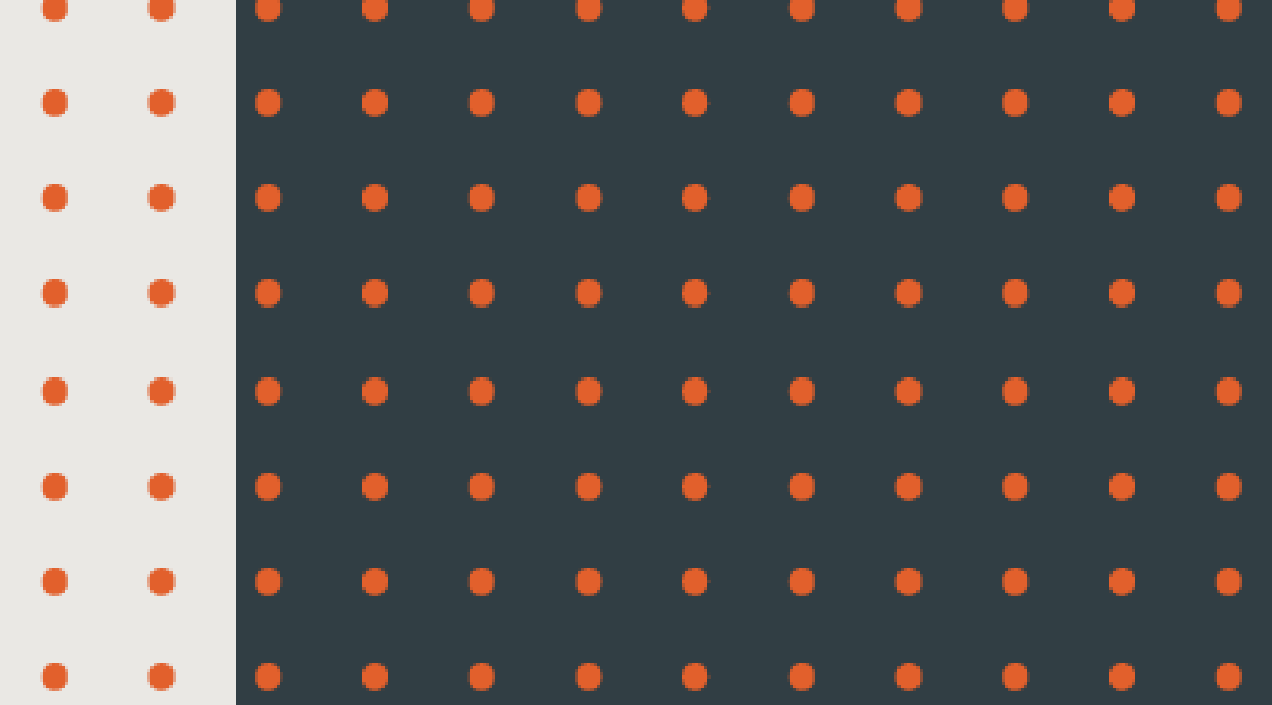
- ✓ Job Accommodation Network ([askjan.org](http://askjan.org))
- ✓ Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability ([askearn.org](http://askearn.org))
- ✓ Dep't of Labor Accommodations for Employees with Mental Health Conditions ([dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/psychiatric](http://dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/psychiatric))
- ✓ ADA National Network ([adata.org](http://adata.org))
- ✓ Workplace Strategies for Mental Health ([workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/accommodation-strategies](http://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/accommodation-strategies))



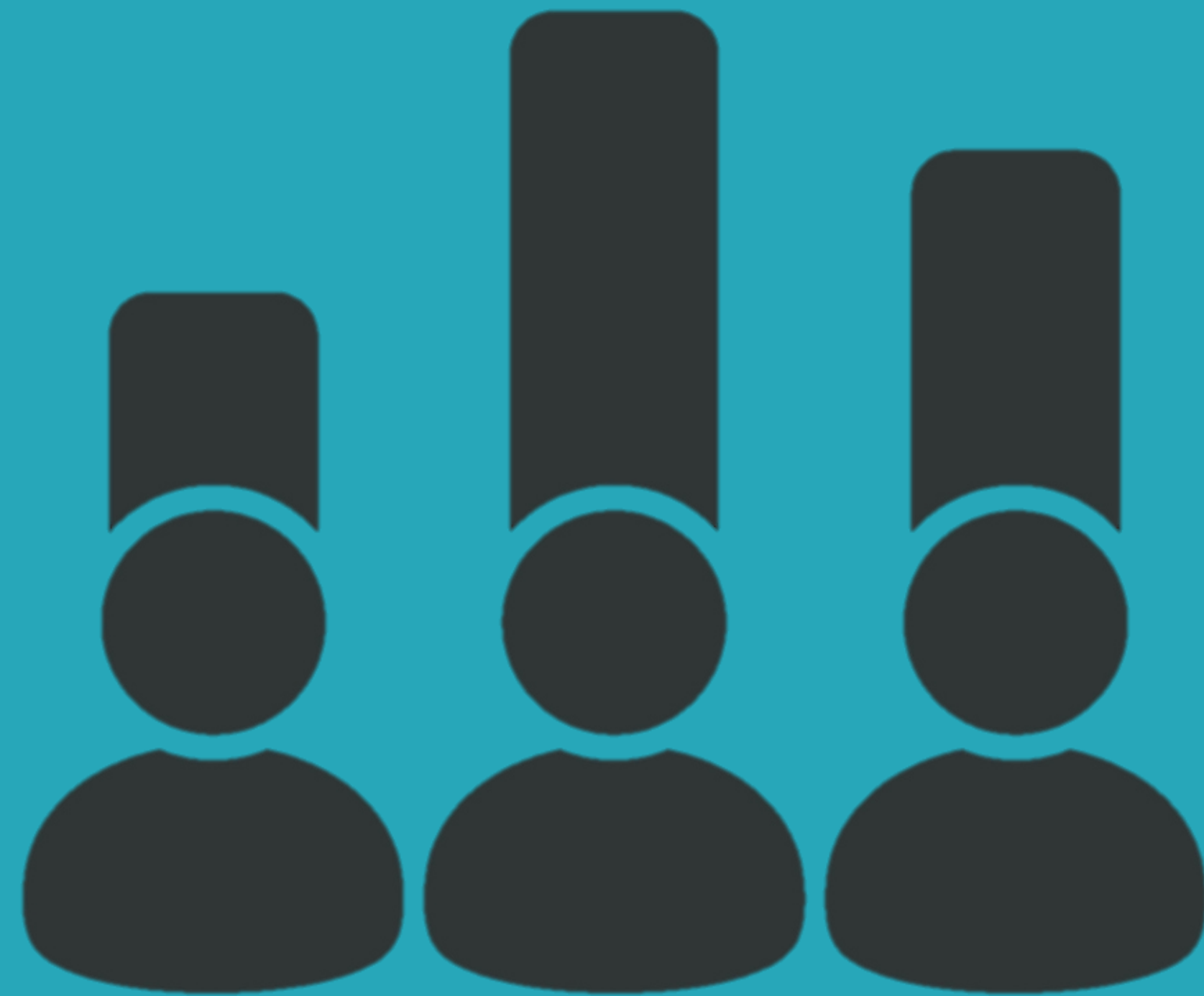


1. Mental health issues are increasingly affecting all workplaces.
2. You must be prepared to **spot the signs** of mental health issues and **respond when they affect work.**
3. Lead with empathy.
4. Always ask what the employee needs...AND WRITE IT DOWN!
5. Keep the employee engaged throughout the interactive process.
6. Be creative and open to new ways of getting the job done.

# QUESTIONS?



Name one thing you learned today that  
you're going to try in the next week.







Verstela is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP® recertification activities.

# SHRM Recertification Credit

**Activity:** 25-99T5F

**Title:** How to Spot, Respond, and Manage Employee Mental Health Issues

**Date:** July 11, 2025

**Professional Development Credits:** 1.0

**RECERTIFICATION  
PROVIDER**



**2025**  
HRCI.ORG

# HRCI Recertification Credit

This Program, ID No. **711293**, has been approved for 1.00 HR (General) recertification credit hours toward aPHR™, aPHRi™, PHR®, PHRca®, SPHR®, GPHR®, PHRi™ and SPHRi™ recertification through HR Certification Institute® (HRCI®).

# HR HOTSPOT

Presented by Verstela

Explore more of our  
HR webinar content!

