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POWER SKILLS IN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENTS

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Land Acknowledgment

The Portland Metro area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River. Indigenous people have created communities and summer encampments to harvest and enjoy the plentiful natural resources of the area for the last 11,000 years.

I want to recognize that Portland today is a community of many diverse Native peoples who continue to live and work here. I respectfully acknowledge and honor all Indigenous communities—past, present, future—and are grateful for their ongoing and vibrant presence.

I also acknowledge the systemic policies of genocide, relocation, and assimilation that still impact many Indigenous/Native American families today. As settlers and guests on these lands, I respect the work of Indigenous leaders and families, and pledge to make ongoing efforts recognize their knowledge, creativity, and resilience.

Special Acknowledgment

- I would like to thank my dear colleague **Pierre-Jean Alarco**. We worked together to develop a Power Skills model for research administrators. It was my pleasure to co-present with him on the topic of Power Skills for Research Administrators at the CARA General Conference in St. John's, N.L. on May 15th, 2023.
- His ideas, opinions, thoughts, feedback, and suggestions on how to develop this PowerPoint presentation have been invaluable.



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= POWER Skills

The logo for "POWER Skills" features a green fist holding a magnifying glass over the letter 'O' in the word "POWER". The word "Skills" is written in a smaller font below "POWER".



OUTLINE

- What Are Power Skills?
- Power Skills for Research Administrators
- Putting Your Power Skills Into Practice



WHAT ARE POWER SKILLS?

Power is a tool, influence is a skill; one is a fist, the other a fingertip. – Nancy Gibbs

Concept of Soft Skills (Power Skills)



Soft Skills in Academia Curricula – Study 1

2009 European University College Association - ModEs (Modernizing Higher Education Through Soft Skills Accreditation) project^{1,2}

- Involved 15 partners from 10 countries for three years
- Aimed at integrating a common European program on soft skills in the academic curricula
- Experts from the different partner organization involved in the ModEs developed a list of skills and their definitions from a literature review and their professional experience. They also engaged people working in the area of human resources and staff professional development for their input
- 35 experts from different European countries with academic or consultancy backgrounds determined the relative importance of the skills required and their groups

3 Groups	21 Skills
Personal Skills	Learning skills, Tolerance to stress, Professional Ethics, Self-awareness, Commitment, Life Balance, Creativity/Innovation
Social Skills	Communication, Teamwork, Contact network, Negotiation, Conflict Management, Leadership, Culture Adaptability
Content-reliant/Methodological Skills	Customer/User orientation, Continuous improvement, Adaptability to change, Results orientation, Analytical skills, Decision making, Management skills, Research and info management

Soft Skills in Students Entering the Labour Market – Study 2

2015 European University College Association - eLene4work (e-Learning for work)^{1,3}

- This ongoing project aims at helping students develop the soft skills mostly required by companies and to fill the gaps between the university and the labour market
- Wrote a report “Which soft skills do students have and which should they have? To describe and compare qualitative data about soft skills gathered through focus groups carried out in 9 partner countries: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, UK
- Organized 2 focus groups: 1. Students & young workers; 2. Employers, HR managers, HE teachers

4 Groups	17 Skills
Social Skills	Teamwork, Communication (online but also face-to-face “traditional” communication; all levels: speaking, listening, formal and informal writing), Flexibility, Openness for constructive feedback and humility (in social contacts students are too self-confident and convinced they know everything)
Personal Skills	Empathy (and other competences appropriate for emotional intelligence), Honesty, Commitment and motivation, Openness for new things to learn, Curiosity, Patience, Perseverance, Capacity to learn from one’s failure
Self-Skills	Like self-evaluation, self-regulation of the learning process and, as a consequence, capacity to make a conscious career choice
Learning Skills	Synthesis, Skills of numeracy, Ability to absorb in and deeply familiarize the topic, Presentation skills

Random Selection of Websites & Topic of Power Skills/Soft Skills

Website	Core Power Skills (aka Soft Skills)
7 Critical Skills Every Business Needs to Develop Today ⁴	Problem Solving, Decision-Making, Judgment, Communication, Self-Management, Collaboration, Values Clarification
What are Soft Skills and Why Should We Call Them 'Power Skills' Instead? ⁵	Understanding personal bias, Decision-Making, Empathy, Resilience, Communication, Giving and receiving feedback, Mindfulness
Let's Stop Talking About Soft Skills: They're Power Skills ⁶	Optimism, Curiosity, Tenacity, Flexibility, Integrity, Learning, Generosity, Joy, Teamwork, Communication, Drive, Ethics, Empathy, Followership, Time Management, Happiness, Generosity, Kindness, Forgiveness, Awe
Own Your Future. Power Skills ⁷	Intercultural and Social Fluency, Career Engagement, Communication and Relationship Building, Leadership, Thriving, Teaching and Learning, Discipline Knowledge and Skills
The New Power Skills ⁸	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Communication, Leadership, Adaptability, Emotional Intelligence
Have Power Skills Replaced Soft Skills ⁹	Presentation Skills, Personality, Persistence, Growth Mindset, Flexibility, Self-Promotion, Team Spirit, Coaching, Creativity, Selling Skills
5G Career Development Skills ¹⁰	Diversity & Collaboration, Interpersonal Communication, Adaptive Thinking, Principles of Professionalism, Leadership & Management
Moving from soft skills to power skills ¹¹	Analytical Thinking & Innovation, Active Learning and Learning Strategies, Creativity, Originality and Initiative, Technology Design & Programming, Critical Thinking & Analysis, Complex Problem Solving, Leadership & Social Influence, Emotional Intelligence, Reasoning, Problem-Solving & Ideation, Systems Analysis & Evaluation
Five 'power skills' for becoming a team leader ¹²	Teamwork, Communication, Commitment & Reliability, Adaptability, Open-Mindedness and Empathy
Power Skills Boot Camp ¹³	Problem-Solving, Judging, Decision-Making, Communication, Self-Management, Collaboration, Values Clarification

Why should we rebrand “Soft Skills” to “Power Skills”?

- The skills of the future are not technical but behavioral. These so-called skills are identified as “Soft Skills”. They give us the real “power” at work, so they should be renamed “Power Skills”⁶
- The term “power skills” was coined by Dartmouth University president Philip Hanlon⁸
- By renaming soft skills to power skills, we remove the false assumption that soft skills are only “nice to have” skills⁵ when actually they are behaviors skills⁹ or “human skills”¹¹ that are a “must-have” for top-performing employees⁵
- The importance of each power skill may vary depending on what stage of career the individual is in¹⁴

Priorities	Stage of Career	Core Power Skill(s)
Interoffice Relationships, Communication Strategies, Developing a Work Plan, Time Management	New Employees	Communication (e.g., Interoffice Relationships, Interpersonal Communication); Professionalism & Integrity (e.g., Accountability, Reliability, Work Ethic)
Work-Life Balance, Stress Management, Rebranding Failure, Developing Relationships with Faculty, Job Advancement	Mid-Career Employees	Resiliency & Adaptability (e.g., Growth Mindset, Stress Management Techniques, Work-Life Balance); Collaboration & Promotion (e.g., Relationship Building, Creativity & Initiative)
Be a Leader, Spread Some Kindness	Late-Career Employees	Leadership (e.g., Empathy, Judgment, Management Skills, Mentorship, Societal Influence)



POWER SKILLS FOR RESEARCH ADMINISTRATORS

“The future belongs to those who learn more skills and combine them in creative ways.” – Robert Greene

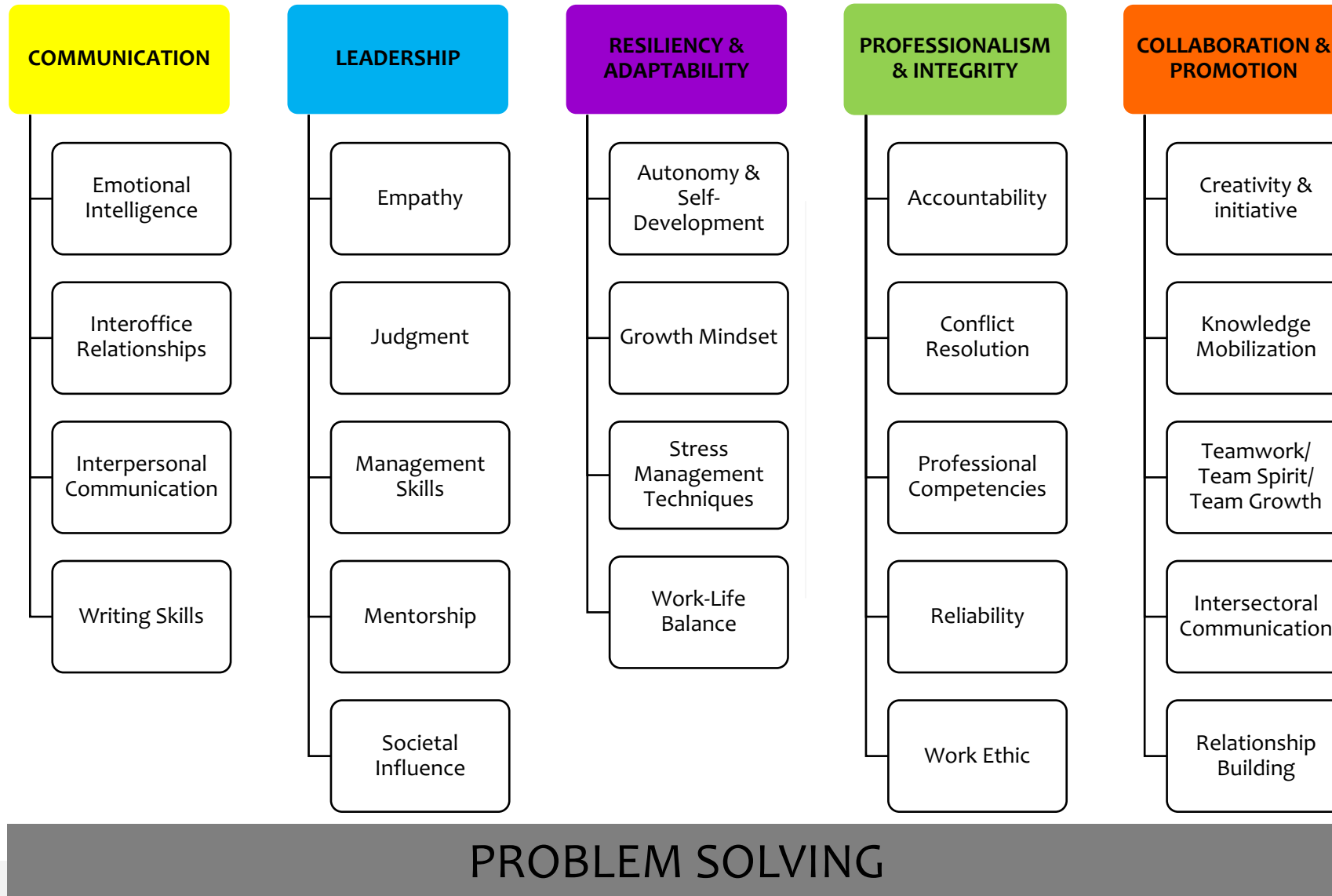
5 Power Skills for Research Administrators



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PROBLEM SOLVING

Power Skills Model for Research Administrators



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A photograph of a modern, minimalist desk setup. In the foreground, a silver laptop is open, with a smartphone lying to its left. In the background, a stack of books, a pair of black headphones, and a small potted plant are visible. The scene is brightly lit, creating a clean and professional atmosphere.

Communication

“Communication – the human connection – is the key to personal and career success.” – Paul J Meyer

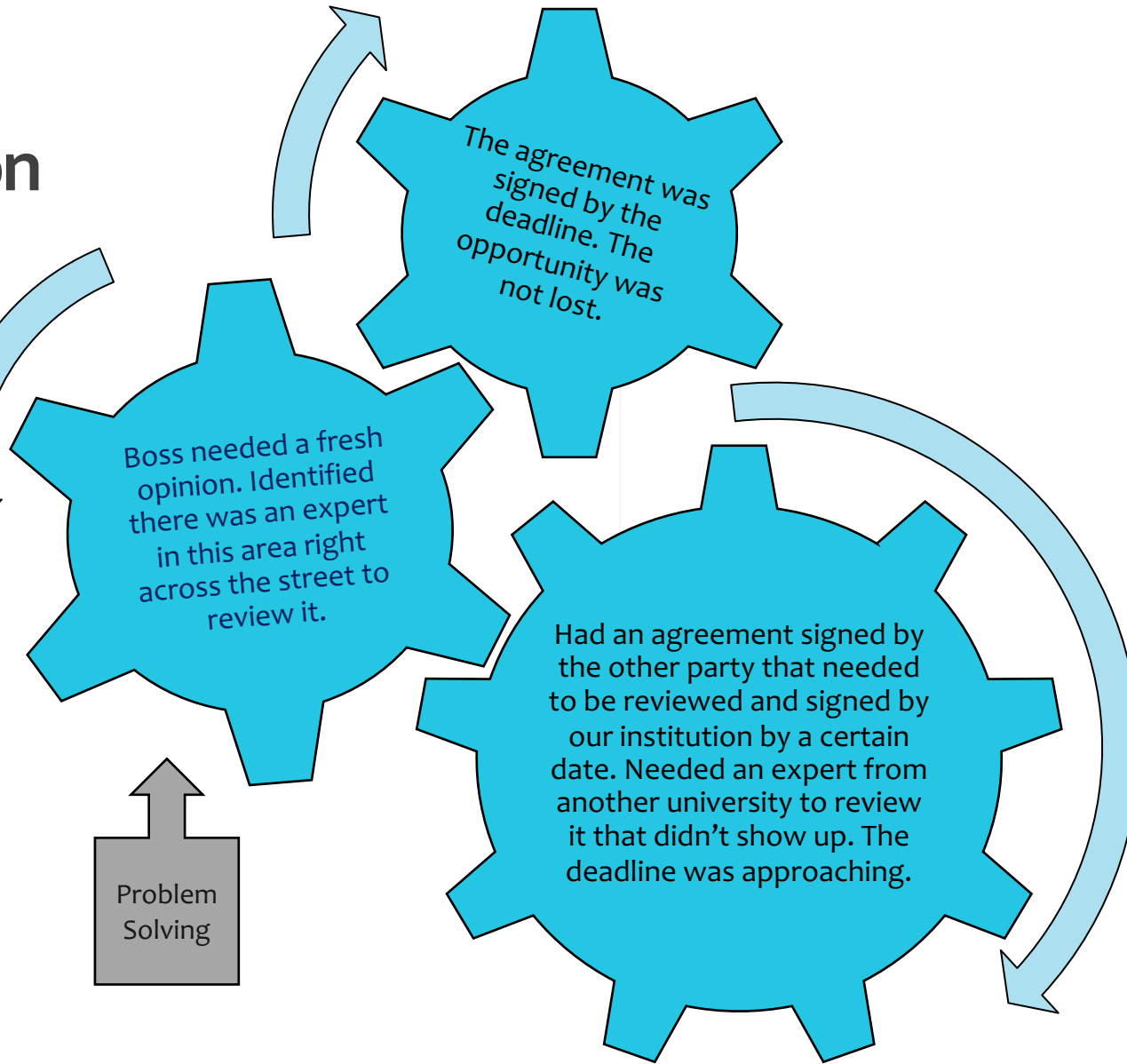
Communication



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Power Skill - Communication

COMMUNICATION
(e.g., Emotional
Intelligence,
Interoffice
Relationships,
Interpersonal
Communication)



Team Goals

Signed agreement.

Opportunity achieved.

Personal Career Goals

Recognition from boss.

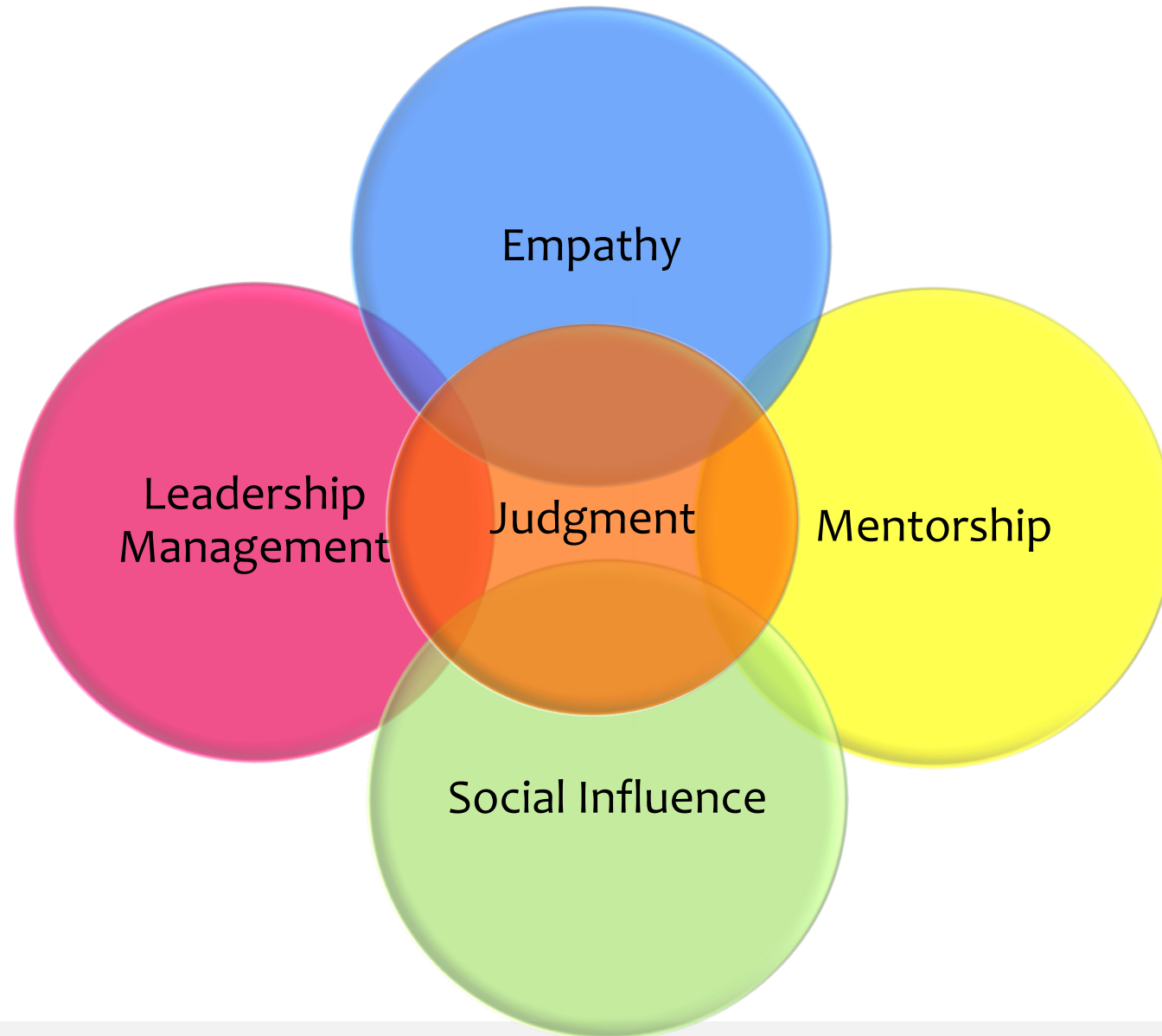
Credible reputation.



Leadership

“Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives.” – Oprah Winfrey

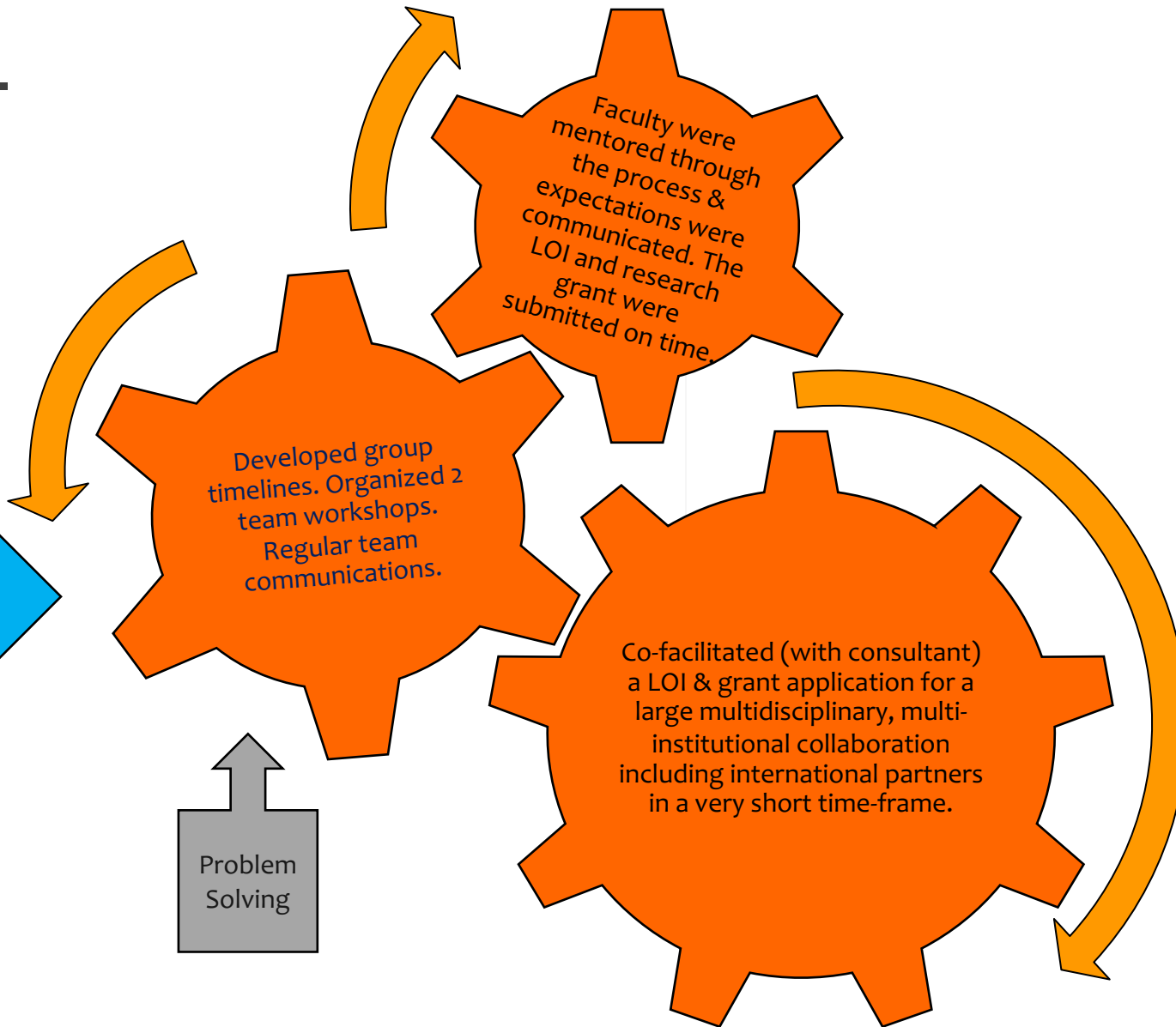
Leadership



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Power Skill - Leadership

LEADERSHIP
(e.g., Empathy,
Judgment,
Management
Skills,
Mentorship)



Problem Solving

Team Goals

Engage each team member. Collect needed information.

Submit LOI/grant.

Personal Career Goals

Gain experience in facilitating team grants.

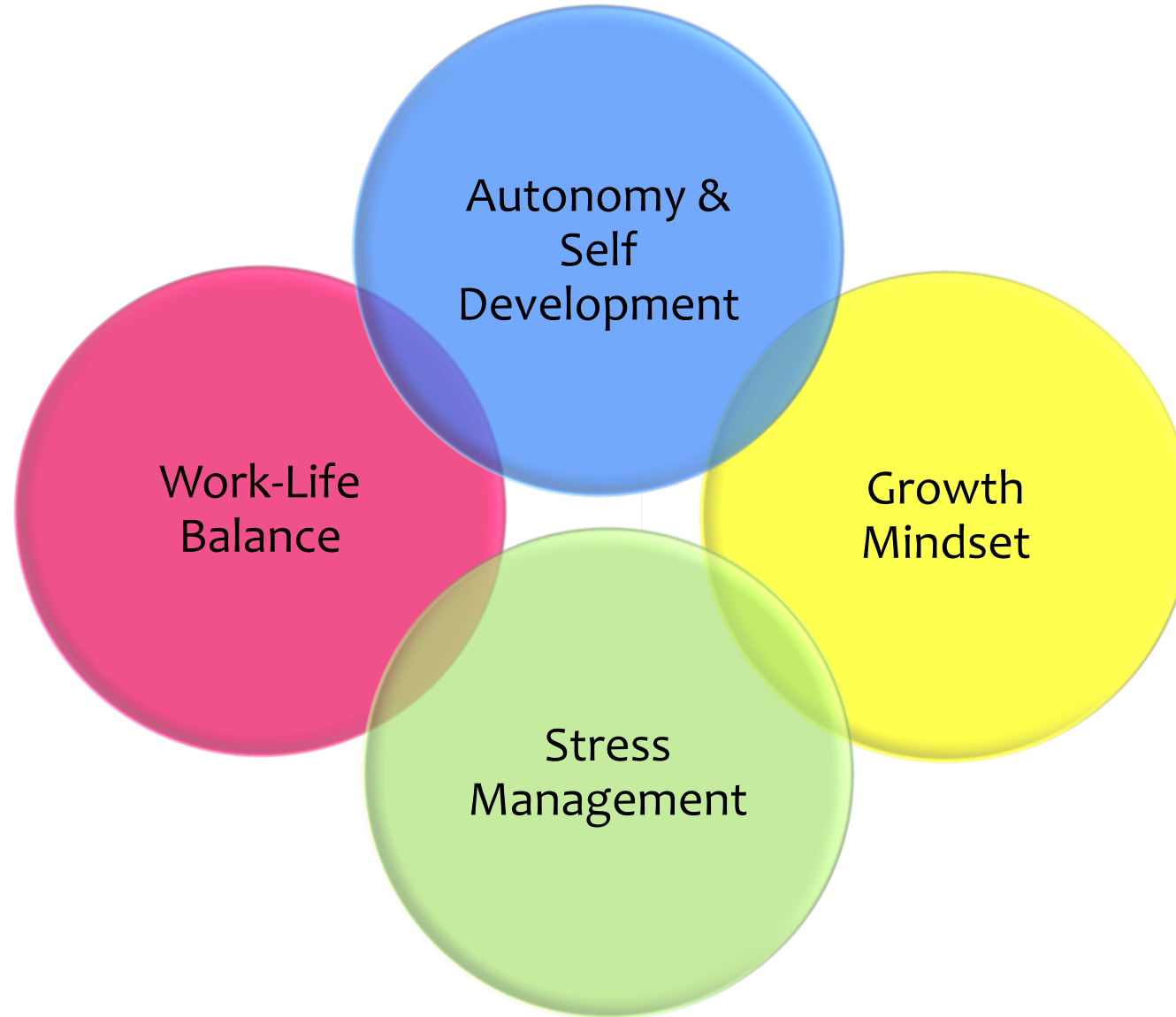
Improve mentoring skills.



Resiliency & Adaptability

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.” – Charles Darwin

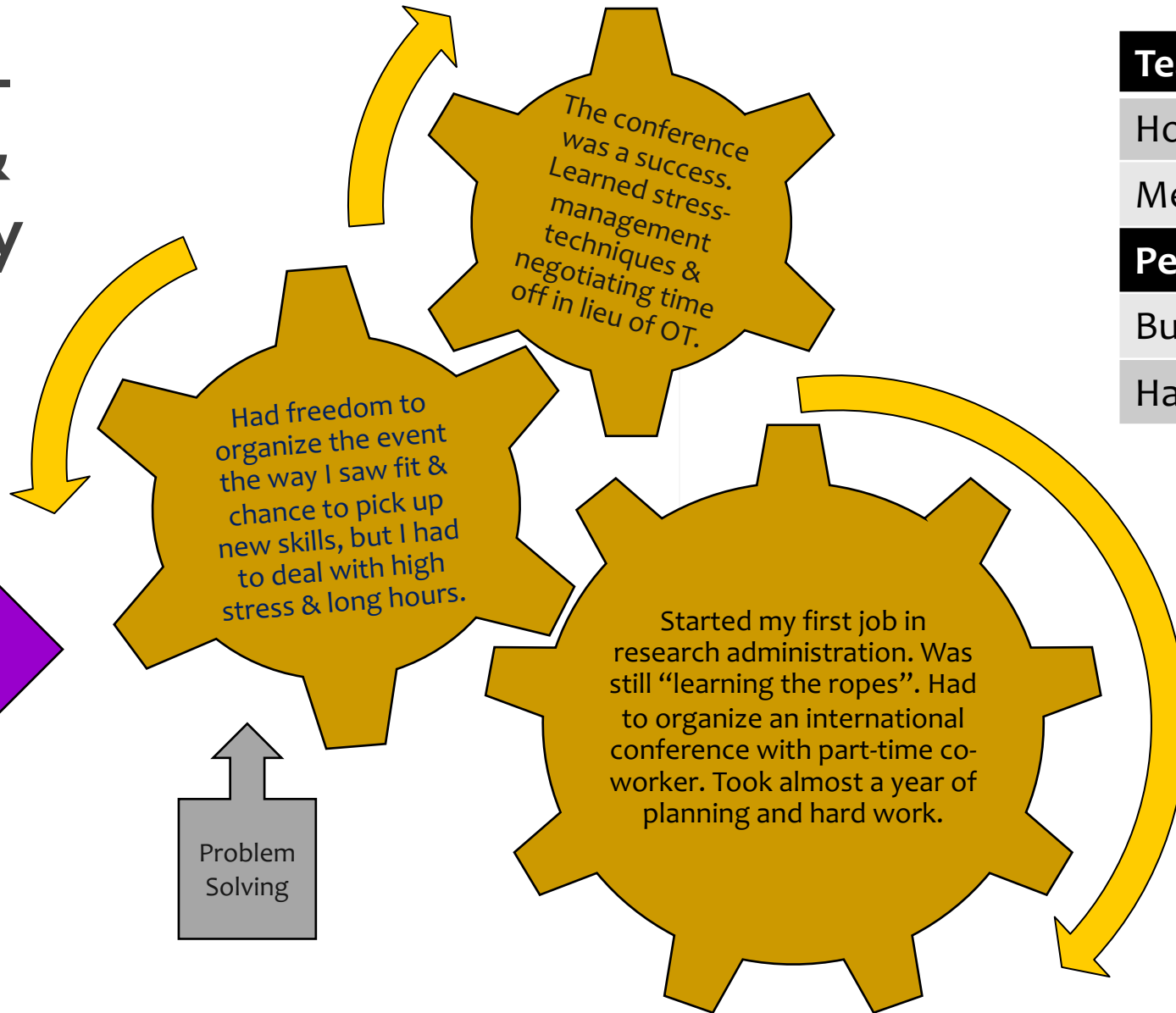
Resiliency & Adaptability



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Power Skill - Resiliency & Adaptability

RESILIENCY &
ADAPTABILITY
(e.g., Autonomy &
Self-Development,
Growth Mindset,
Stress
Management
Techniques, Work-
Life Balance



Team Goals

Hold international conference.

Meet Dept. strategic goal.

Personal Career Goals

Build reputation.

Have work-life balance.



Professionalism & Integrity

“Being accountable is part of personal and professional integrity.” – Francesca Anastasi

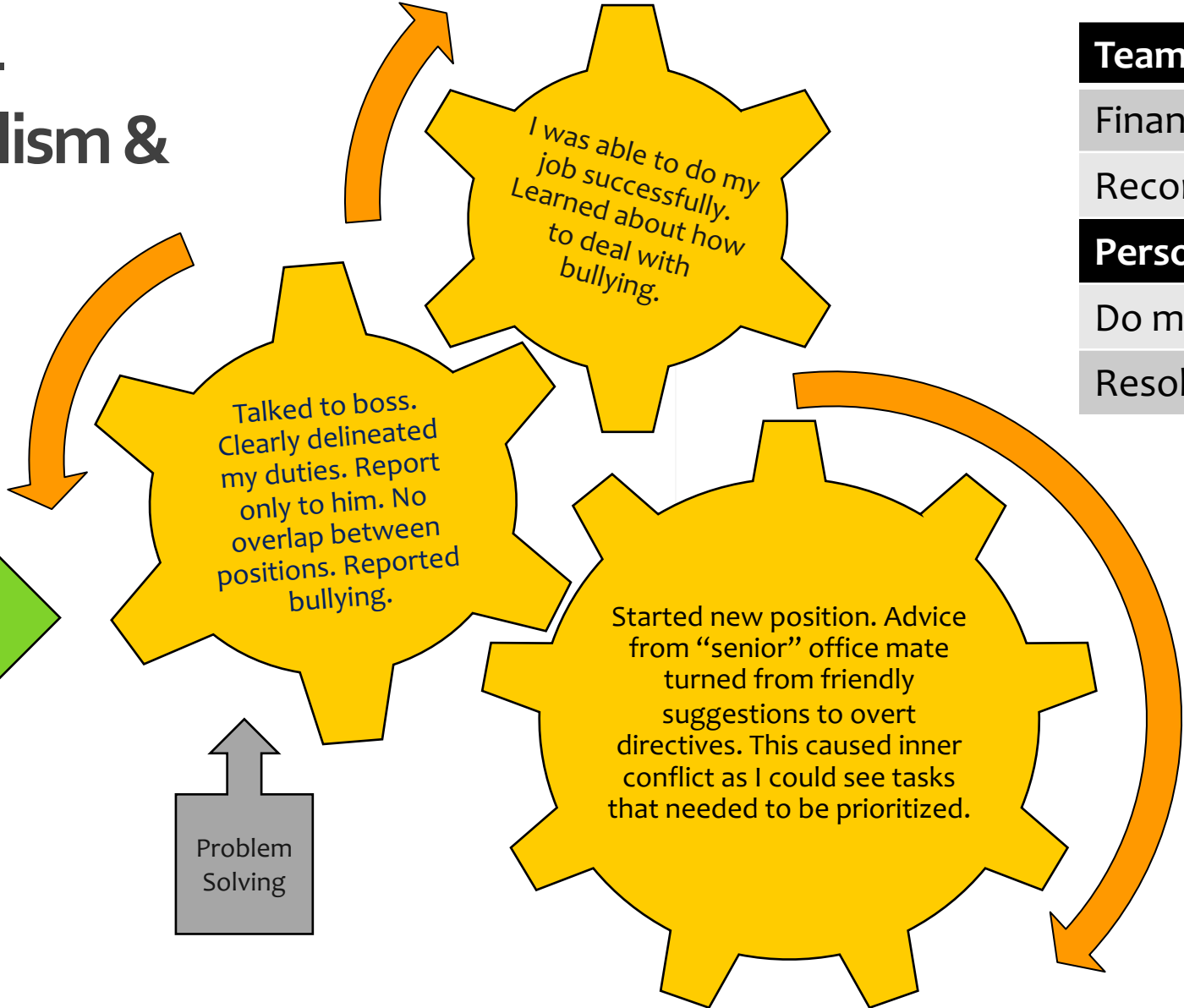
Professionalism & Integrity



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Power Skill - Professionalism & Integrity

PROFESSIONALISM & INTEGRITY (e.g., Accountability, Conflict Resolution, Professional Competencies, Reliability)



Team Goals

- Financial accountability of Dept.
- Reconcile backlog of Dept. funds.

Personal Career Goals

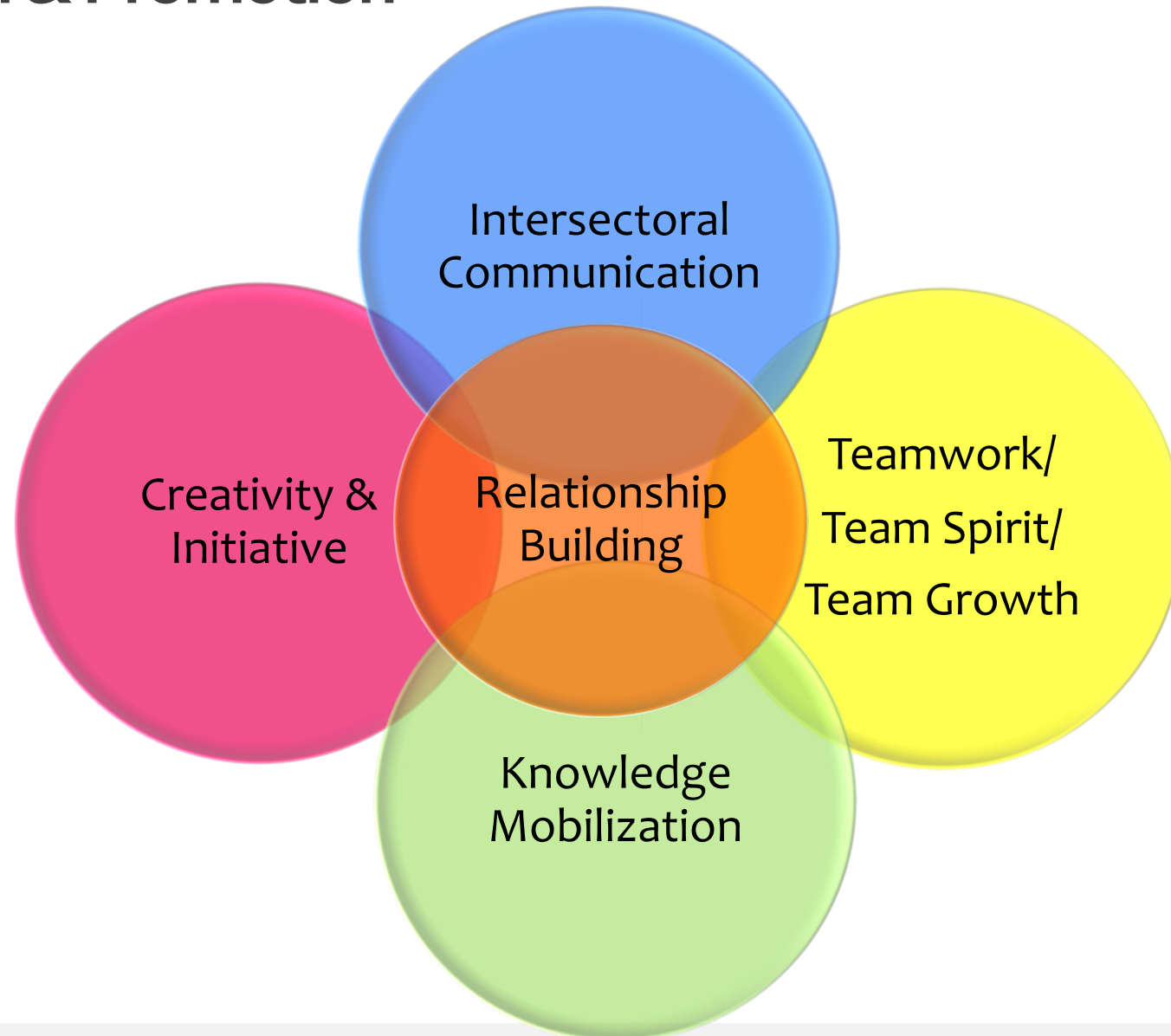
- Do my job well.
- Resolve interoffice conflict.



Collaboration & Promotion

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”
– Helen Keller

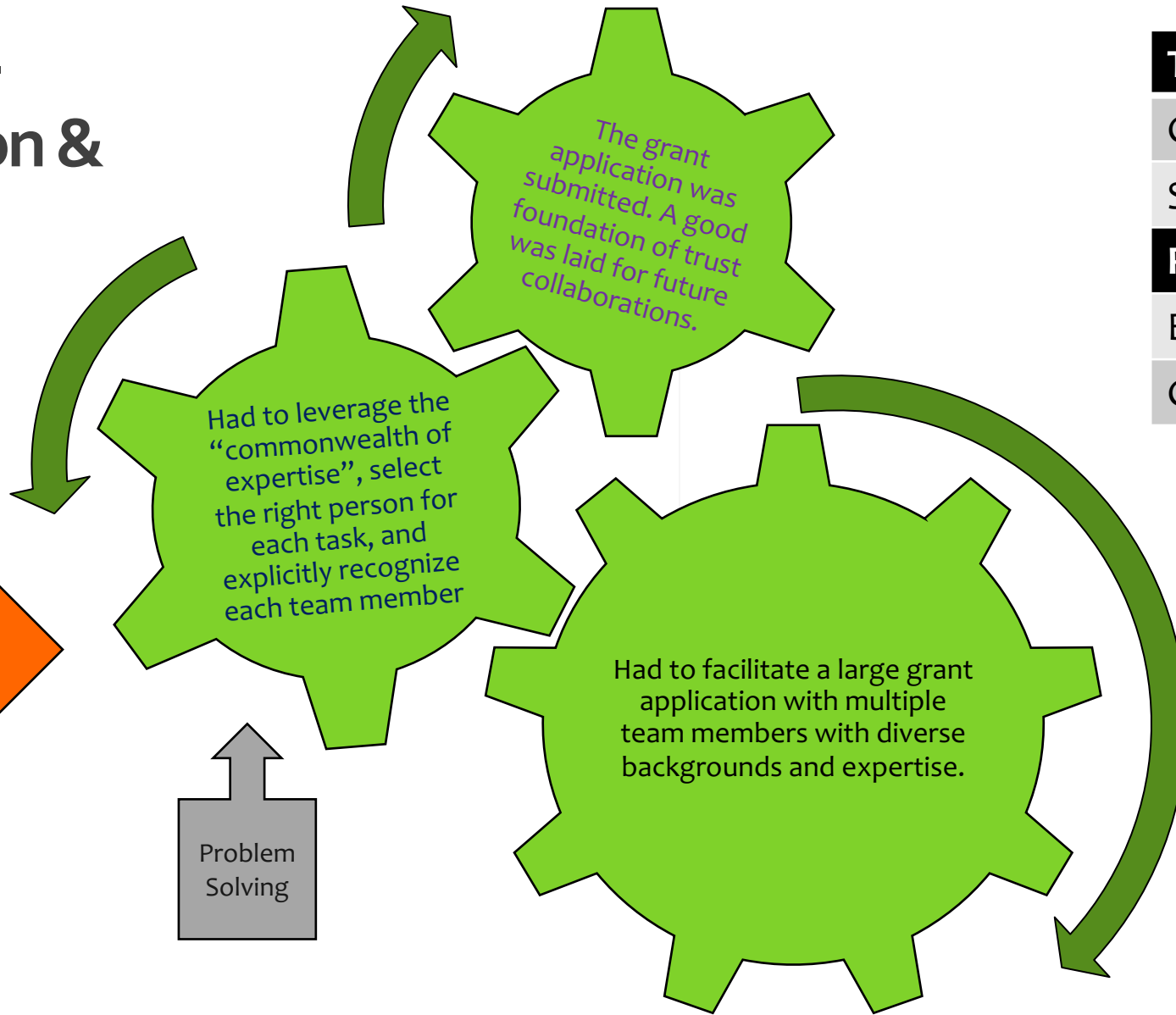
Collaboration & Promotion



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Power Skill - Collaboration & Promotion

COLLABORATION
& PROMOTION
(e.g., Creativity &
Initiative, Team
Work/Team Spirit/
Team Growth,
Intersectoral
Communication,
Relationship
Building)



Team Goals

Get buy-in from the group.

Submit grant application.

Personal Career Goals

Build networks.

Gain credibility.



PUTTING YOUR POWER SKILLS INTO PRACTICE

“Soft skills get little respect but
will make or break your career.”
– Peggy Klaus

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lens



What is an EDI Lens?
Intentional incorporation of EDI principles into daily practice

Using an EDI lens can look like:

- Learning about community demographics
- Checking our assumptions
- Identifying unconscious bias
- Examining the role of power & privilege in one's life
- Thinking about the experience of a marginalized group differently
- Asking questions about inclusion and;
- Exploring intersectionalities

Social Identity Wheel



Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgment that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw

Social Identity Wheel



Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how a person’s different social and political identities can combine and overlap to create different and increased levels of discrimination (e.g., a Black woman faces both racism and sexism while a white woman faces sexism only). The application of an intersectional lens to EDI work is a key component of understanding the complex systems, barriers and power structures that impede the development of an equitable, diverse and inclusive research ecosystem (e.g., breaking down population data to understand the differing levels of impact of policies and practices on individuals with intersecting identities).
- Kimberlé Crenshaw

Finding The "Power" in Power Skills

Power
Skills



How to Be Successful In
Your Job & Have More
Meaningful Relationships
With Your Colleagues



Scenario #1 Tasks Aren't Not Getting Completed

Jill is a pleasant employee. She has worked 6 months in her current position. Prior to this job she had worked in a similar position but in a different department for 4 years. Her boss gave her a glowing review about her job performance. Jill doesn't have any children but her mother with dementia recently moved into a nursing home. This is the second time in the last month that Jill hasn't completed a task by the required deadline.

If you were Jill's manager, how would you handle this situation? What power skills would you use to find a solution?



PROBLEM: Tasks aren't getting completed by the deadline. This is the second time in the last month that Jill hasn't completed her work by the deadline.

What do you know?	Has this happened before?	Was the work completed?	Any other incidents?	Lack of training?	Known external stressors	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Pleasant personality; hard working employee	No	Yes. Each time it was one day late.	No	Unlikely. She did a similar position for 4 years	Mother has dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation with Jill • Ask her if she has any external stressors in her life that might be affecting her work • Discuss any aids/ supports/modified work plan • Suggest that Jill might want to seek counselling • Does she need to take a personal leave to handle the stress?
Worked here for 6 months					Moved her mother to a nursing home	
Did similar position for 4 years prior to this job						
Has no children						

Scenario #2 Missing Weekly Virtual Meetings

Bev is the manager for the department of medical imaging. She is a Research Facilitator, and she supervises 5 full-time and part-time research assistants. Bev has a work from home arrangement with her department head. To promote better communication and to keep updated on who is doing what and how the research projects are progressing, Bev meets once a week virtually with her 5 colleagues. Cora started working as a full-time research assistant for the department 2 months ago. She is friendly and enthusiastic employee, but she had no previous experience working as a research assistant. She has four months left in her probationary period. Cora has missed 3 out of 4 of the weekly virtual meetings in the last month.

How would you handle this situation? What power skills would you use to find a solution?

Cora



PROBLEM: Cora has missed 3 out of 4 of the weekly virtual meetings in the last month.

What do you know?	Has this happened before?	Is her work still getting done?	Any other incidents?	Is this a communication issue?	Known external stressors	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Friendly and enthusiastic employee	Yes. 3 times in the last month	Yes	No	Verified that she was sent the email about weekly virtual meetings.	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a conversation with Cora • Ask her if there is a reason that she is missing these meetings e.g., in the middle of a patient interview • Discuss if a different day/time would suit her to meet • Give Cora the option to have the meeting in person or explore other options • Set Cora up with a mentor as a new employee
No previous experience prior to work as a part-time research assistant				Communicated the expectations of this position verbally to her.		
2 months into 6 month probationary period						
Mandatory to meet with Bev once a week via virtual format						

Questions?





Thank You

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