

Harnessing the Power of Community-Based Participatory Research to Promote Survivor Safety: The Domestic Violence Program Evaluation Research Collaborative (DVPERC)

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Presentation Overview

- About DVPERC
- Impetus for DVPERC
- DVPERC Projects
- Lessons Learned



What is DVPERC?

- DVPERC was established in 2011 in an effort to remedy the gap between research and practice in the field of domestic violence (DV).
- We are an *ongoing* and *regional* collaboration comprised of DV researchers and of DV organizations located in the state of Massachusetts (USA) and surrounding areas.
- Our main purpose is to conduct and disseminate rigorous and relevant DV research.



Who is DVPERC?

Massachusetts Programs:

- **The Second Step (founder)**
- **Transition House (founder)**
- **REACH beyond DV (founder)**
- Renewal House
- DOVE
- Casa Myrna
- Passageway
- Journey to Safety
- New Hope
- Family Justice Center
- Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center
- Health Imperatives
- Family and Community Resources
- Respond
- The YWCA of Central MA
- Elizabeth Stone House
- Violence Recovery Program

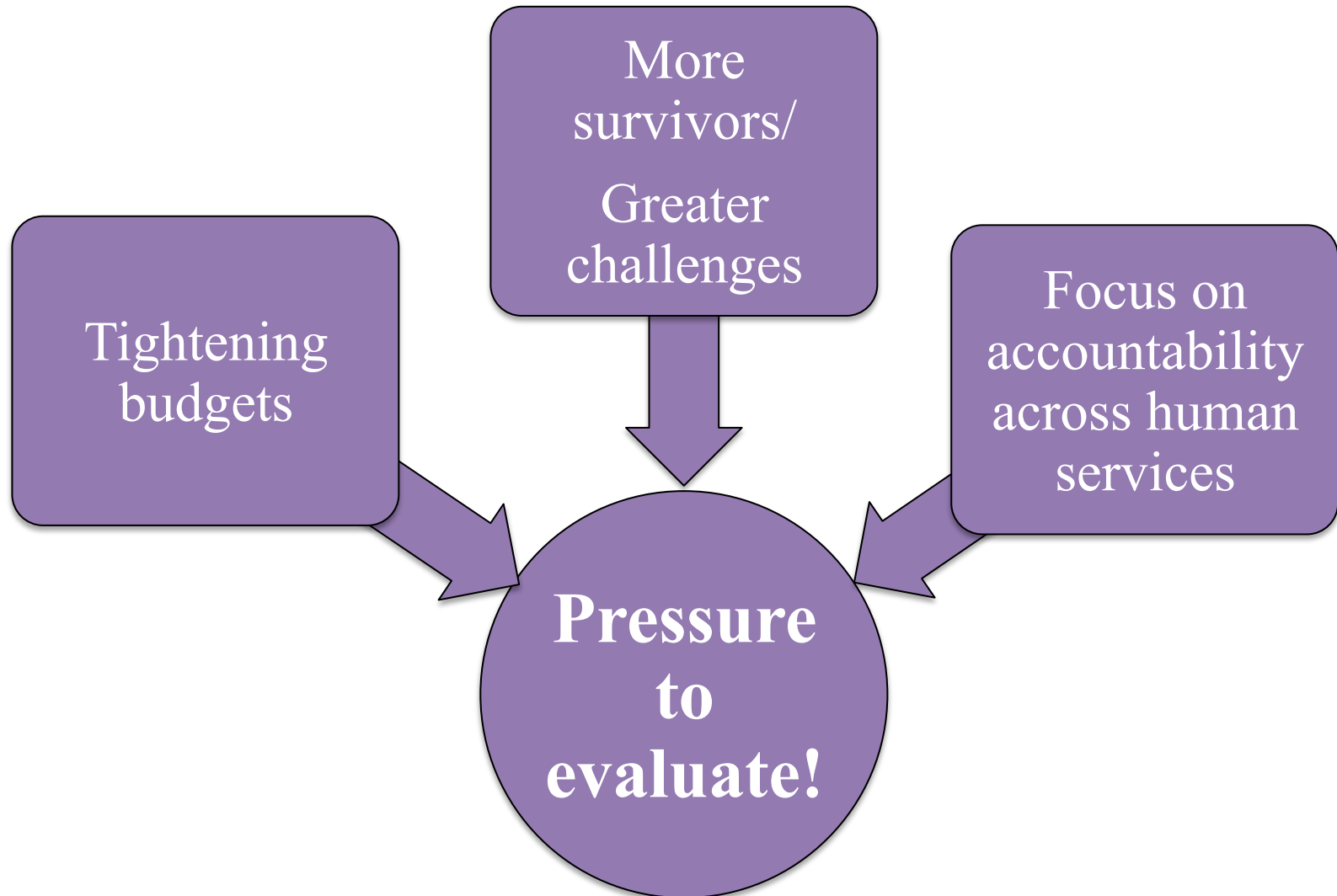
Programs beyond Massachusetts:

- Safe Futures (Connecticut)
- Sojourner House (Rhode Island)
- The Women's Center of Rhode Island
- Women Against Abuse (Pennsylvania)

Researchers:

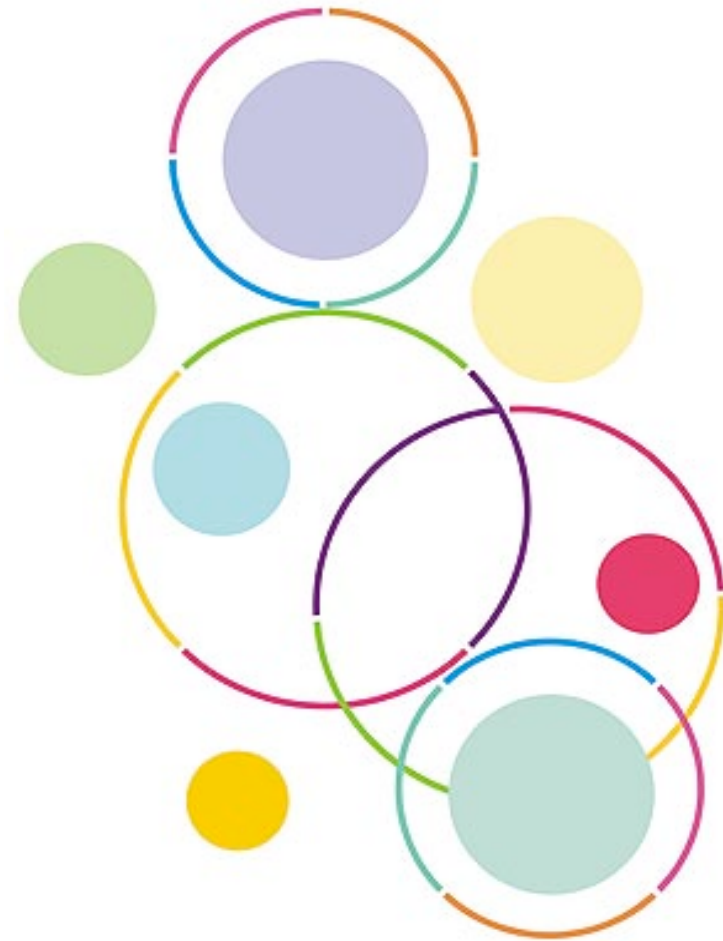
- **Lisa A. Goodman, Ph.D. (founder)**
- **Kristie A. Thomas, Ph.D. (founder)**
- Lauren Bennett Cattaneo, Ph.D.
- Megan Bair-Merritt, M.D.
- Many amazing doctoral students!
 - Julie Woulfe, Jenny Fauci, Joshua Wilson, Julie Medzhitova
- Many amazing masters students!

Impetus for DVPERC



DVPERC: Evolution

- Original 3 programs → 20 or so
 - Membership is fluid
 - Committed to face-to-face contact
 - Meet every 2 months
 - Cycles of research and action
- Guided by core principles of community-based participatory research
 - Careful attention to power sharing
 - Questions, topics, and projects emerge from the group



DVPERC: What we do

- Conduct community-based participatory research (CBPR) projects
- Build bridges between empirical evidence and practice wisdom
- Foster supportive relationships and networks

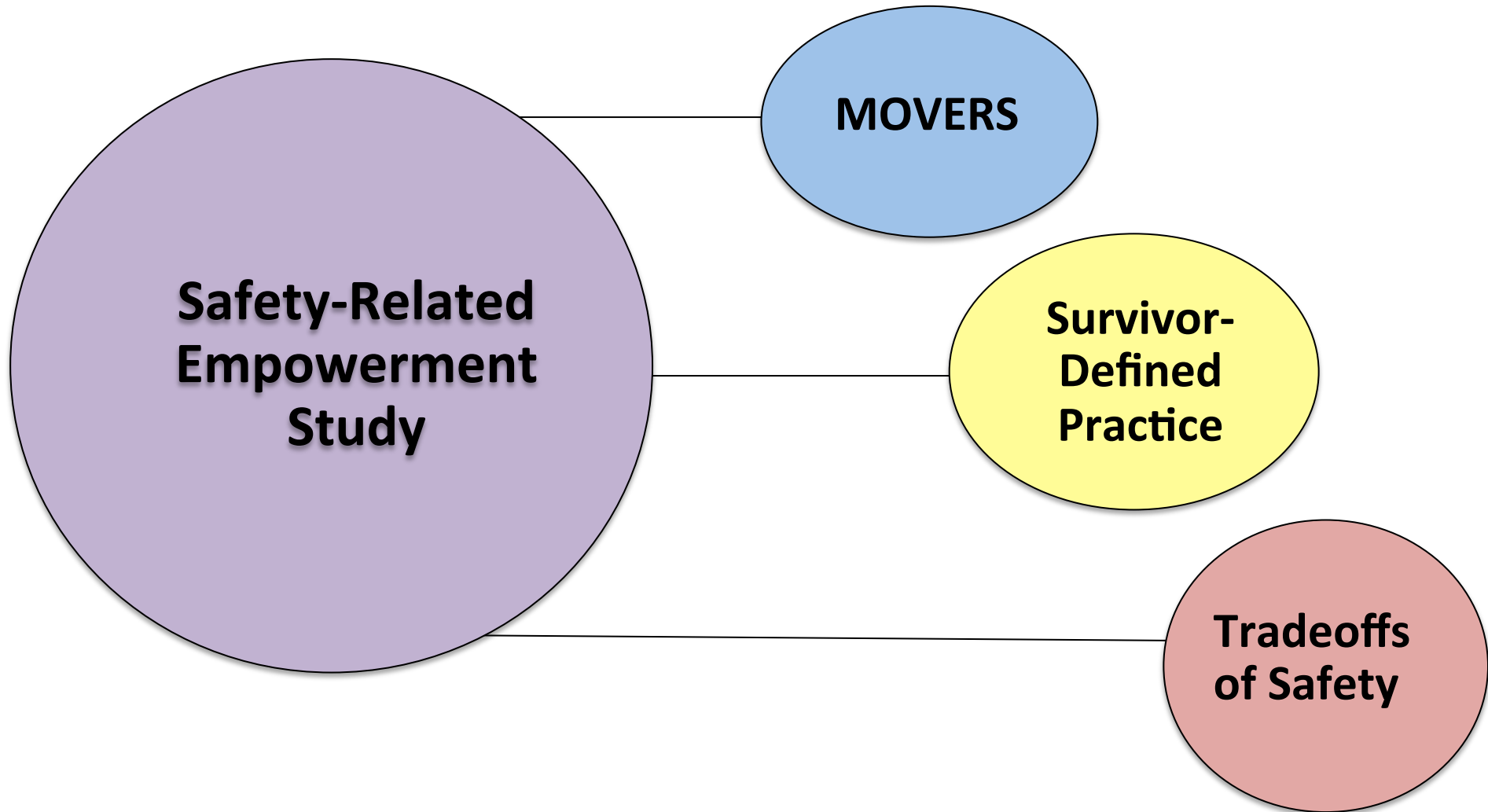


A Sample of DVPERC Projects

- **Safety-Related Empowerment Study**
- Trauma-Informed Practice Study
- Phone app to support survivors as parents
- Online toolkit on CBPR for emerging DV researchers



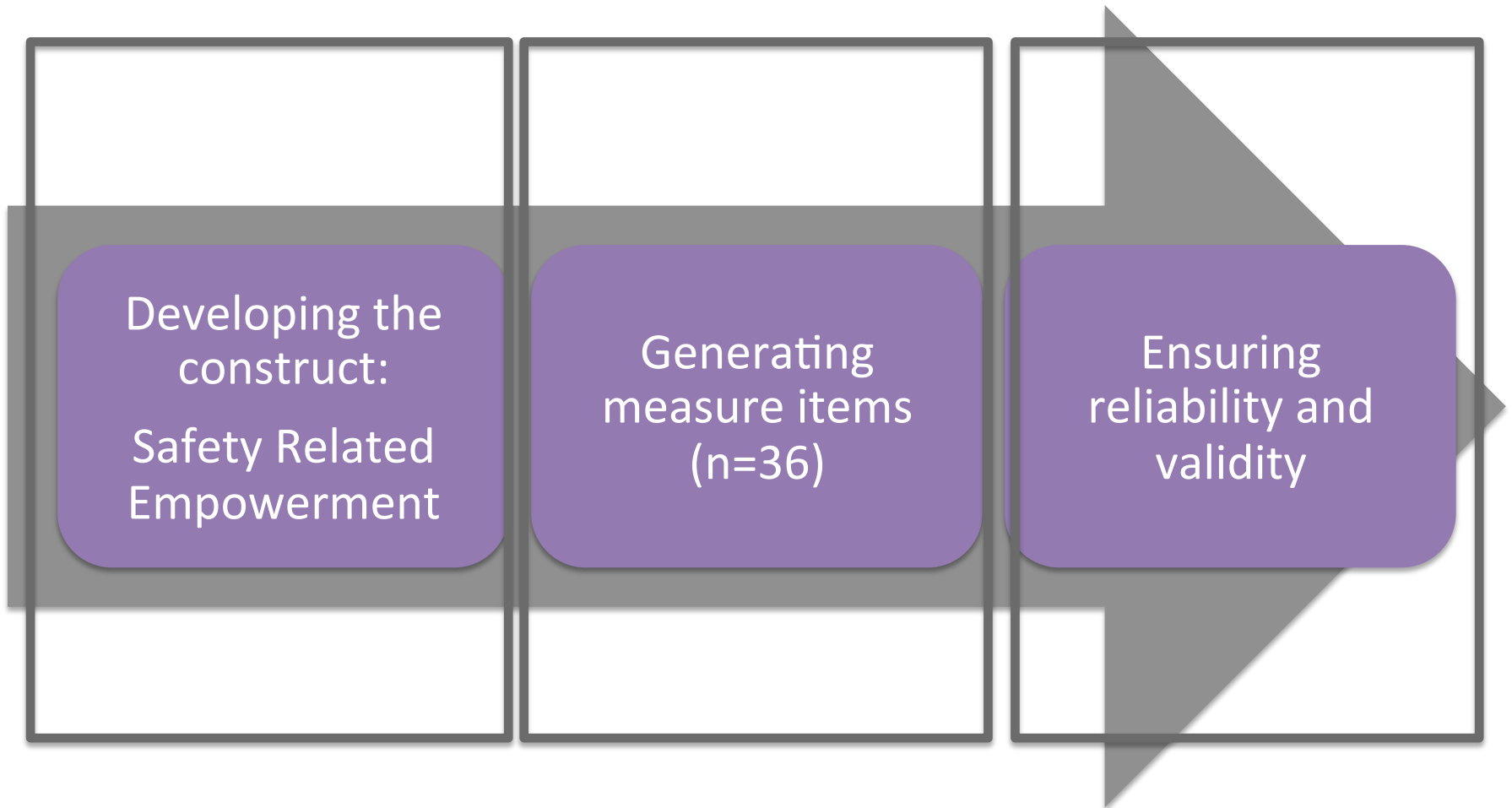
Safety-Related Empowerment Study



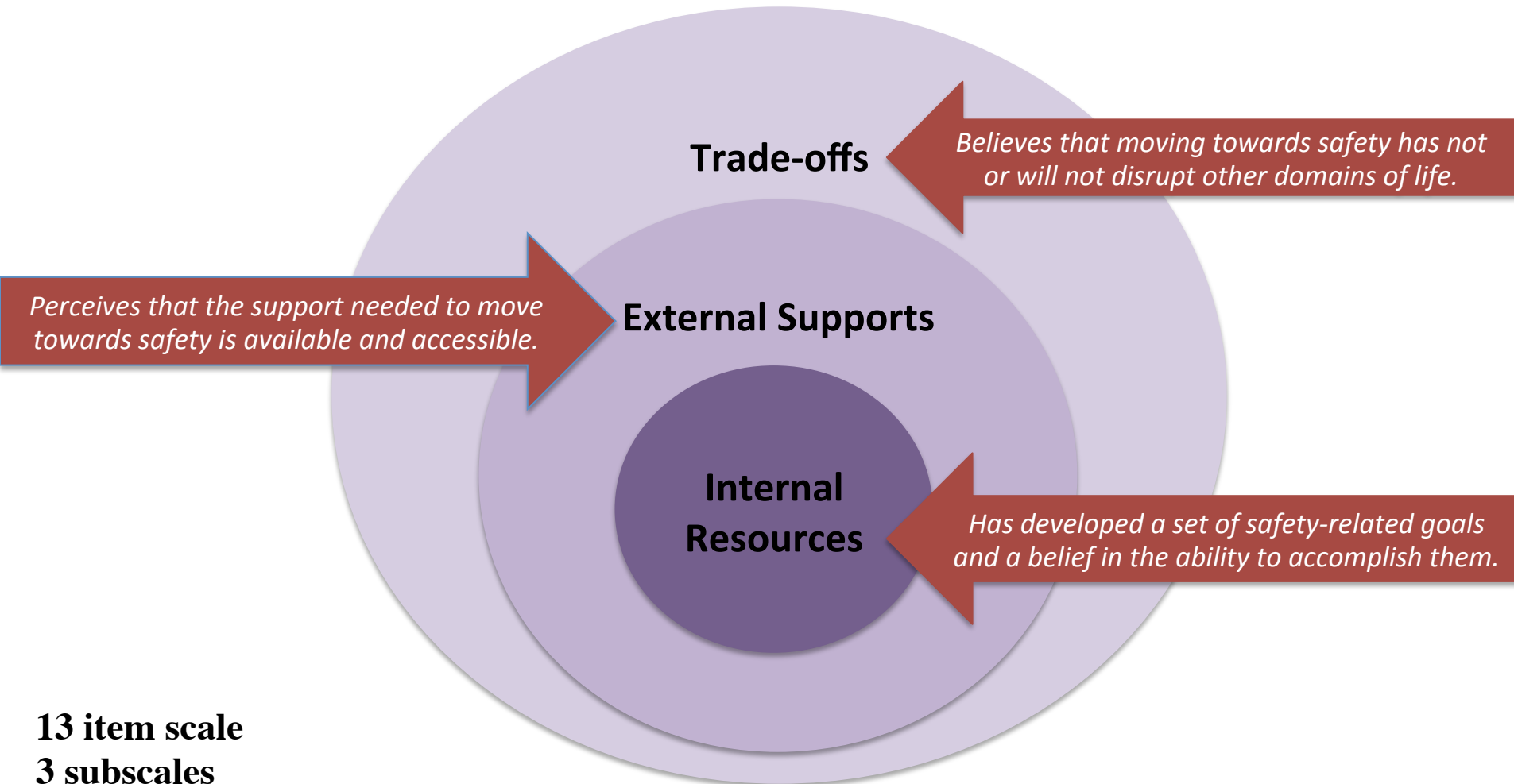
Developing MOVERS: Key criteria

- *Reflect DV programs' mission*
- *Reflect survivors' goals*
- Apply across residential and community programs
- Apply across timeframes
- Respond to incremental change
- Fall within the control of programs and survivors
- Pass scientific scrutiny
- Respond to the need to be trauma-informed (short/
accessible/translated)

Measure Development, Administration, & Validation of MOVERS



Measure of Victim Empowerment Related to Safety (MOVERS)



13 item scale

3 subscales

Never true...Always true

MOVERS (Spanish version also available)

Factor 1: Internal tools

- I can cope with whatever challenges come at me as I work to keep safe.
- I know what to do in response to threats to my safety.
- I know what my next steps are on the path to keeping safe
- When something doesn't work to keep safe, I can try something else.
- When I think about keeping safe, I have a clear sense of my goals for the next few years
- I feel confident in the decisions I make to keep safe

Factor 2: External support

- I have a good idea about what kinds of support for safety that I can get from people in my community (friends, family, neighbors, people in my faith community, etc.).
- I feel comfortable asking for help to keep safe.
- I have a good idea about what kinds of support for safety I can get from community programs and services
- Community programs and services are able to provide the support and resources I need to keep safe.

Factor 3: Trade-offs

- I have to give up too much to keep safe
- Working to keep safe creates (or will create) new problems for people I care about
- Working to keep safe creates (or will create) new problems for me.

Where are we now with MOVERS?



- DVPERC programs have adopted it and begun to implement it
 - Used as an outcome measure and clinical tool
- Interest is growing!
 - Programs beyond DVPERC
 - Researchers
- Need for validation in other languages and with male survivors

http://www.dvevidenceproject.org/wp-content/uploads/MOVERS_v6-Goodman-20153.pdf

Honing in on Trade-offs

MOVERS

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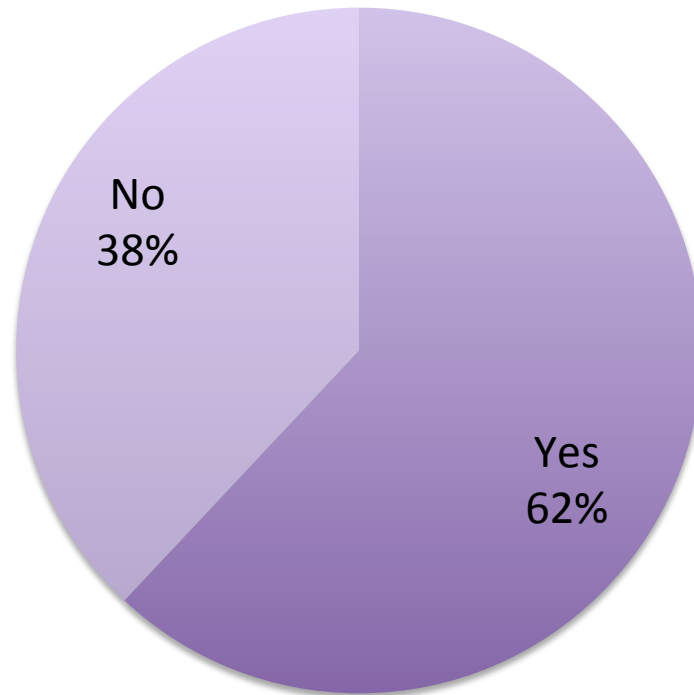
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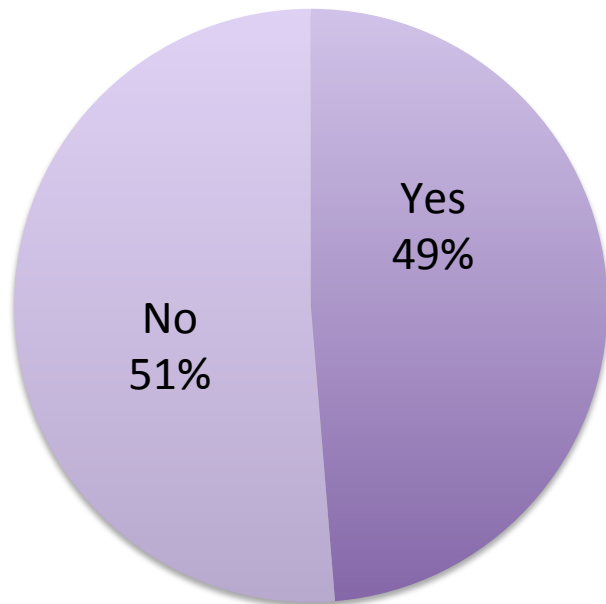
Q1: Extent of Trade-offs

"I have to give up too much to keep safe" (n = 301)

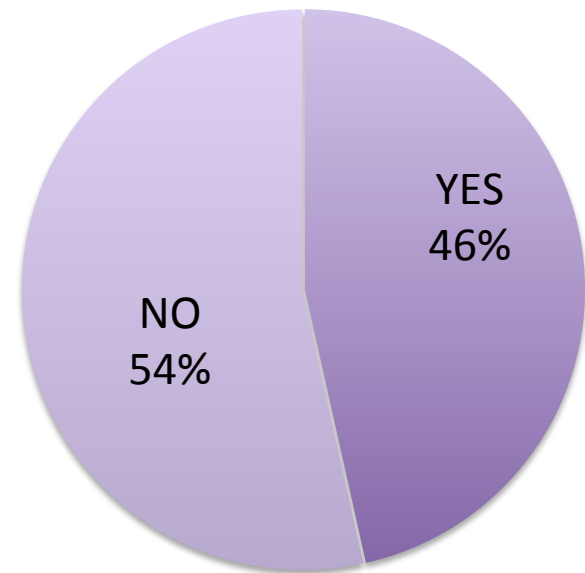


Seeking Safety and New Problems

"Working to keep safe created, or would create, new problems for me" (n = 301)



"Working to keep safe created, or would create, new problems for people I care about" (n = 301)



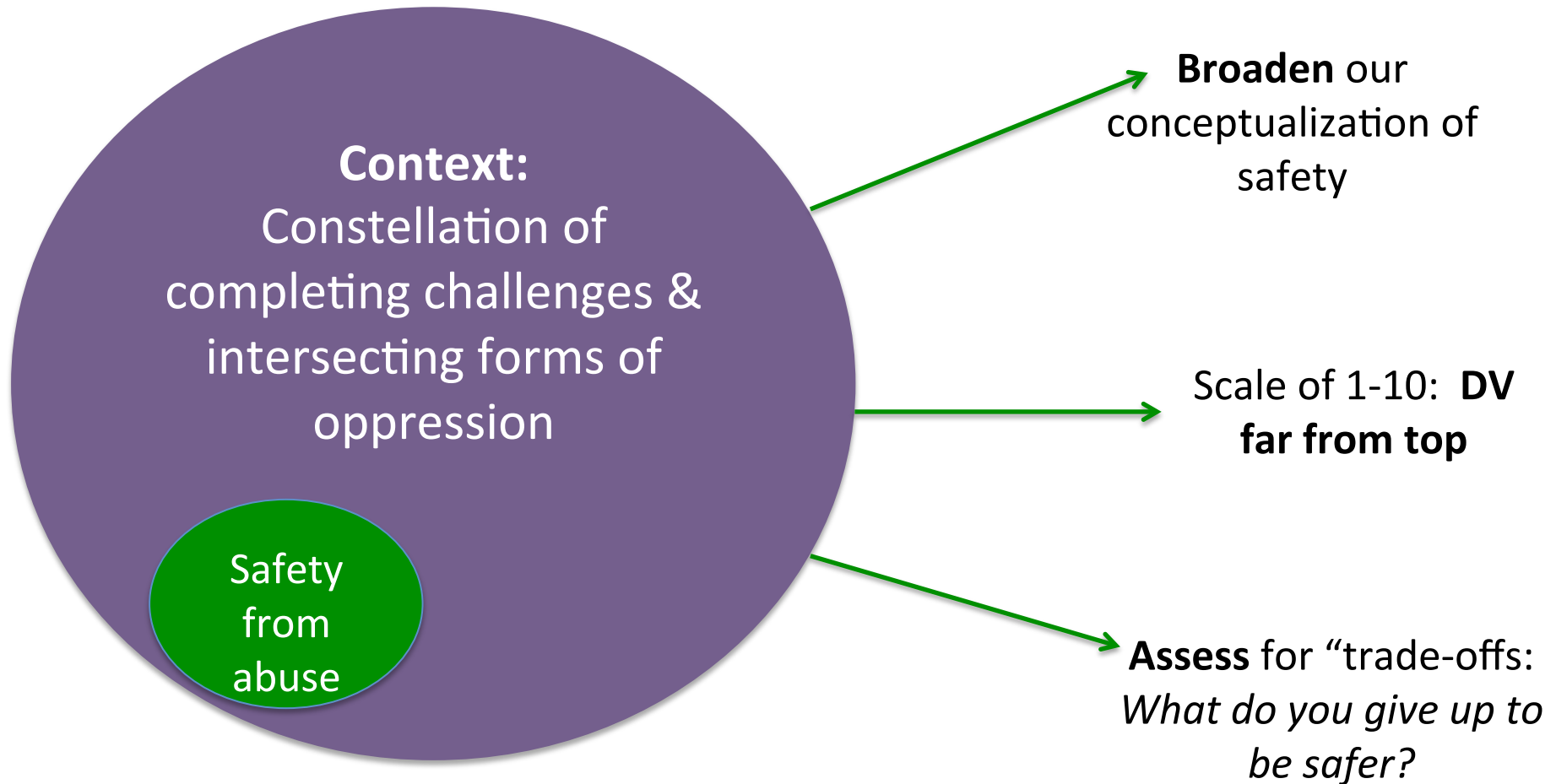
Extent of trade-offs:

What did you have to give up?

Categories of Loss (n=165)

- Emotional and physical safety for self/loved ones (30.3%)
- Social support (20.6%)
- Home and sense of rootedness (19.4%)
- Financial stability (19.4%)
- Control over parenting (15.8%)
- Freedom (12.7%)

Practice Implications: How we talk to survivors

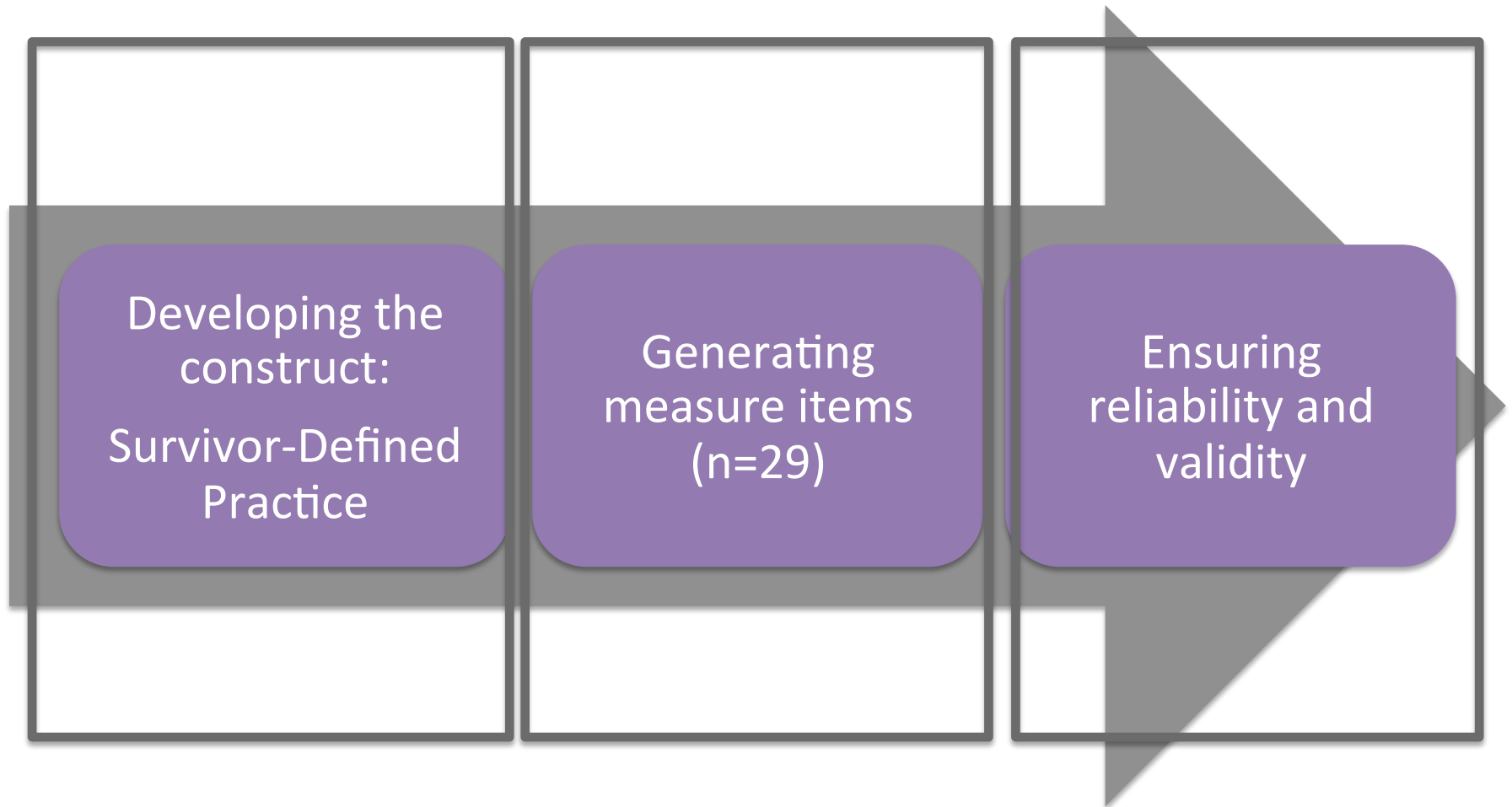


Survivor-Defined Practice (SDP)

- SDP is the heart of DV work
- Researchers and advocates have defined SDP as
 - Sensitivity to survivors' individual **needs, strengths, and coping strategies**
 - Emphasis on **client choice**
 - Building **partnerships**
- Prompted by our community partners, we set out to out to:
 - Develop a way to measure it
 - Understand how it relates to safety-related empowerment
 - Provider-driven project



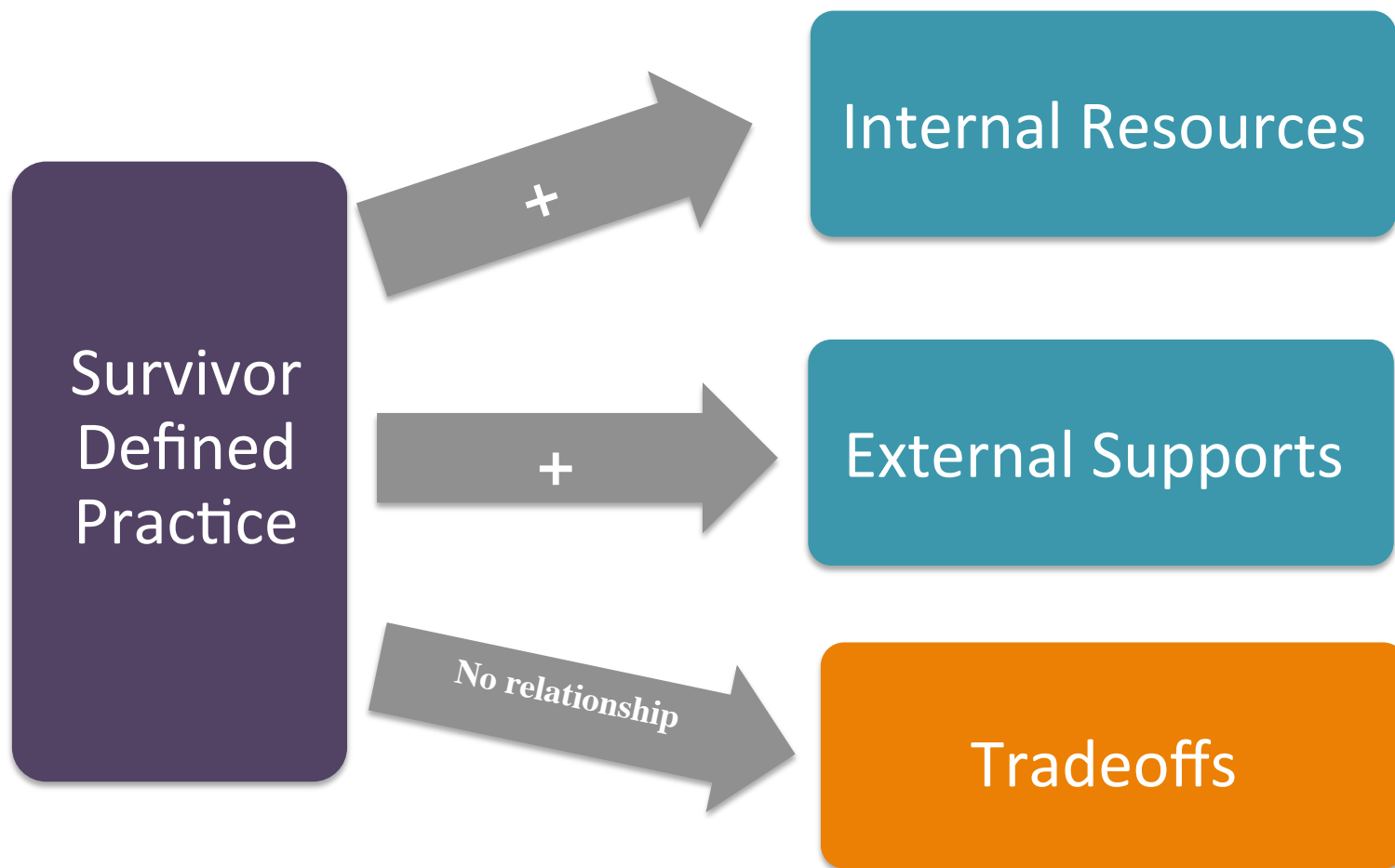
Measure Development, Administration, & Validation of SDPS



SDP: Final 9 Items

- I feel respected by staff in this program.
- Staff help me to shape goals that work for me.
- Staff here support my decisions.
- Staff here don't expect me to be perfect.
- Staff here support me even when things aren't going well.
- Staff here make sure that services are right for what I need.
- Staff here offer choices.
- Staff here believe that decisions about my life are mine to make.
- Staff here respect the way I deal with things, whether or not they agree with it.

Survivor-Defined Practice & Safety Related Empowerment



See also: Cattaneo, L. B., Stylianou, A. M., Goodman, L.A., Gebhard, K., Hargrove, S., & Ebright, E. (2017) Enhancing Client Centered Practice to Serve Survivors of Abuse and Violence: Preliminary Findings.

Lessons Learned from DVPERC

- CBPR with DV programs is ...
 - Possible
 - Time-intensive
 - Labor-intensive
 - Worthwhile
 - Essential
- Regional collaborations have unique benefits & challenges
- Power sharing can vary according to situation and project
- Transparency and reciprocity are key to sustaining ongoing collaborations
- **HAVE FUN!**



Acknowledgement of Funders

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****Volunteer labor: PRICELESS!****

Thank You and Questions

