



**SRAETTA**

Sexual Risk Avoidance Education  
Training and Technical Assistance

# *Understanding the Psychology of Self- Sufficiency*

**Day 1: Keynote**

Presenter: Philip Hong, Ph.D.

Moderator: Jerry Regier, Ph.D.



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES** **FYSB** Family & Youth  
Services Bureau

# Session Description

This session will discuss the research behind the psychology of self-sufficiency as understanding the force inside an individual that drives the cognitive change needed to transform challenges into progress action steps.

The discussion will be applied to the SRAE A-F topics in general, and topics A and B specifically, with a focus on self-regulation, goal setting, and a vision for the future.

It will also consider the impact that refraining from nonmarital sexual activity can have to improve the physical and emotional health of youth.



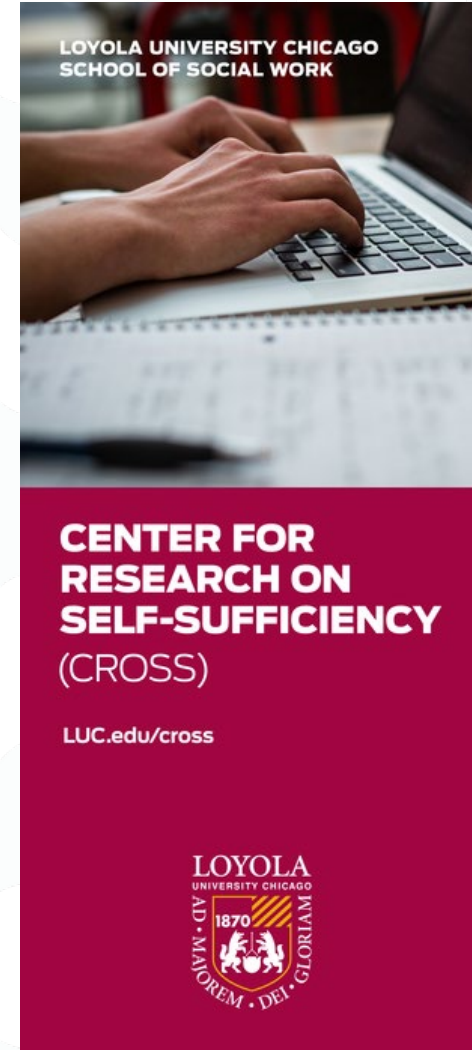
# Introduction

- Philip Hong, Ph.D. | Loyola University Chicago
- Professor & Associate Dean for Research | School of Social Work
- Director | Center for Research on Self-Sufficiency (CROSS)
  - Psychological self-sufficiency (PSS)



**Focus on the Process to  
Success Goals**

**Barriers** → **Hope**



# Philip Hong, Ph.D.

Professor & Associate Dean for  
Research  
Loyola University



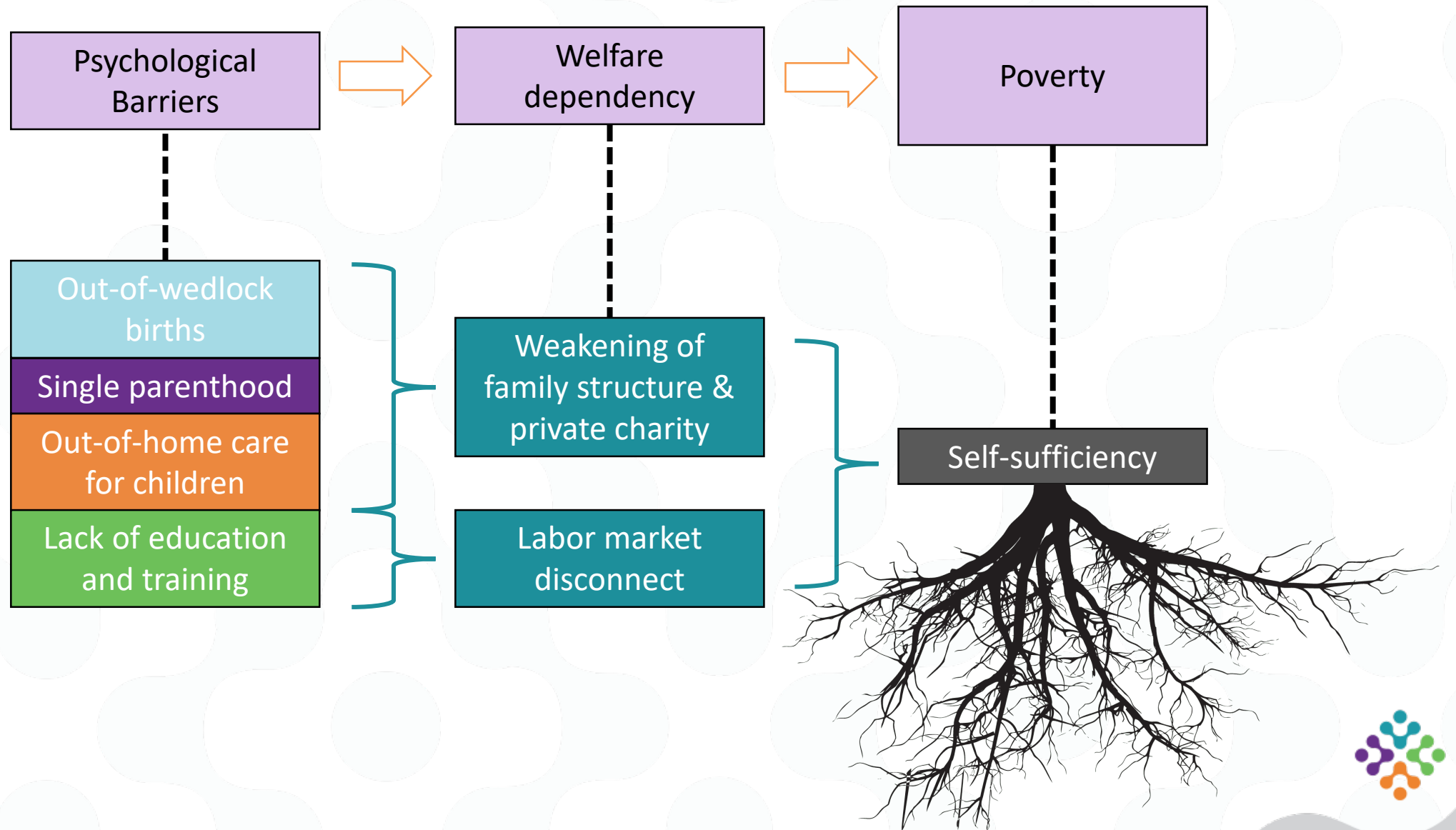
# 4 Goals of PRWORA of 1996

**Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act** (PRWORA) sets forth four principal goals (U.S. House of Representatives):

- (1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes,
- (2) End the dependency of needy parents on government support by promoting job preparation, employment, and marriage,
- (3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock and teen pregnancies and births and to establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies, and
- (4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



# Problem Definition of Self-Sufficiency



# Self-Sufficiency Questions

	Let us take a few minutes to think about these questions:
1	In your own words, what does self-sufficiency mean to you?
2	What makes up self sufficiency? In other words, what are its components?
3	Please list what factors can help you achieve self sufficiency.





# Self-Sufficiency in the Youth World

Let us take a few minutes to think about these questions:

- 1 What does self-sufficiency mean in the youth world?
- 2 What are synonyms or components in the youth world?
- 3 Please list what factors can help youth achieve self sufficiency as you defined it?



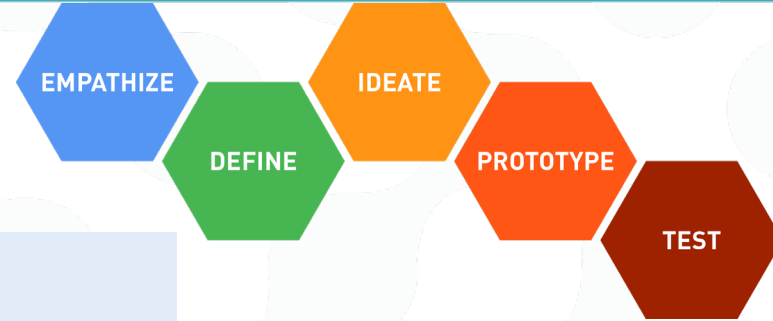


# Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

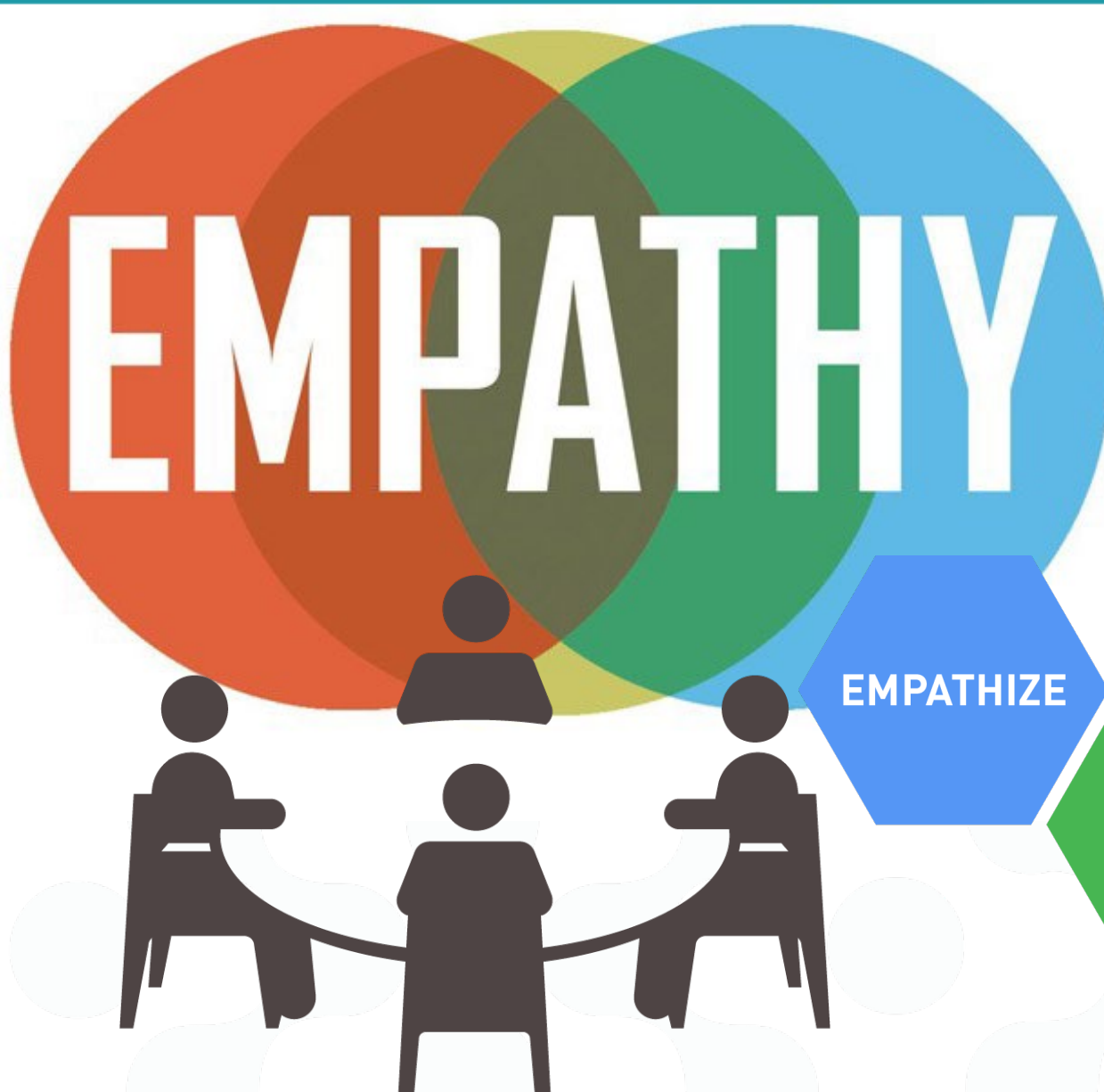
A-F	SRAE statutory purpose is to educate youth on how to avoid non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors by addressing the following:
A	The holistic individual and societal benefits associated with personal responsibility, self-regulation, goal setting, healthy decision-making, and a focus on the future.
B	The advantage of refraining from non-marital sexual activity in order to improve the future prospects and physical and emotional health of youth.
C	The increased likelihood of avoiding poverty when youth attain self-sufficiency and emotional maturity before engaging in sexual activity.
D	The foundational components of healthy relationships and their impact on the formation of healthy marriages and safe and stable families.
E	How other youth risk behaviors, such as drug and alcohol usage, increase the risk for teen sex.
F	How to resist and avoid, and receive help regarding, sexual coercion and dating violence, recognizing that even with consent teen sex remains a youth risk behavior.



# The Beginning: 2004 in St. Louis, MO



No Longer Me vs. You (Them) → “It’s about Us”



EMPATHIZE

IDEATE

DEFINE

PROTOTYPE

TEST



## Psychological Empowerment

- Feelings and the mental state of mind
- Feeling valuable and worthy
- Positive attitude
- Have faith in yourself
- Power and energy that you get from the inside
- Feeling comfortable about being in charge
- Determination
- Knowing you can take care of yourself and your family without fear that they might turn to the streets
- Being self-confident you are moving forward or that you will one day achieve financial security

“I think everybody has it; it just needs to be brought out. Bringing people out, you have to love yourself before you can go out anywhere else and do what you need to do. You have to be positive in yourself and know what you need to do.”





## Goal-Oriented Process

- Self-sufficiency is about the level of confidence that a person can achieve his/her goals by conquering the obstacles in life.
- This group of people share the thoughts that they cannot be 100% self-sufficient at a given time point.
- Self-sufficiency has to do with the process of getting to the next level.
- There are different levels of self-sufficiency, and these levels are reached as individuals moves toward their goals and makes future progression.

Self-Sufficiency to me ... is more about being able to accomplish a goal you set in life and follow a profession or career ... and not settle in life and think I made it.



## Psychological Barriers

- All persons have some psychological barriers.
- Youth have psychological barriers and challenges. They are going through physical and emotional changes while also dealing with relationships, the pandemic, being accepted, etc. This affects their choices and their resiliency.
- Self-sufficiency starts with the mind in being able to understand your own human development and taking responsibility for your choices in that development.
- Self-sufficiency (or for youth perhaps emotional and relational stability) is always a progression, it's never a spot to which you arrive.



## Self-Worth & Perceived Capability

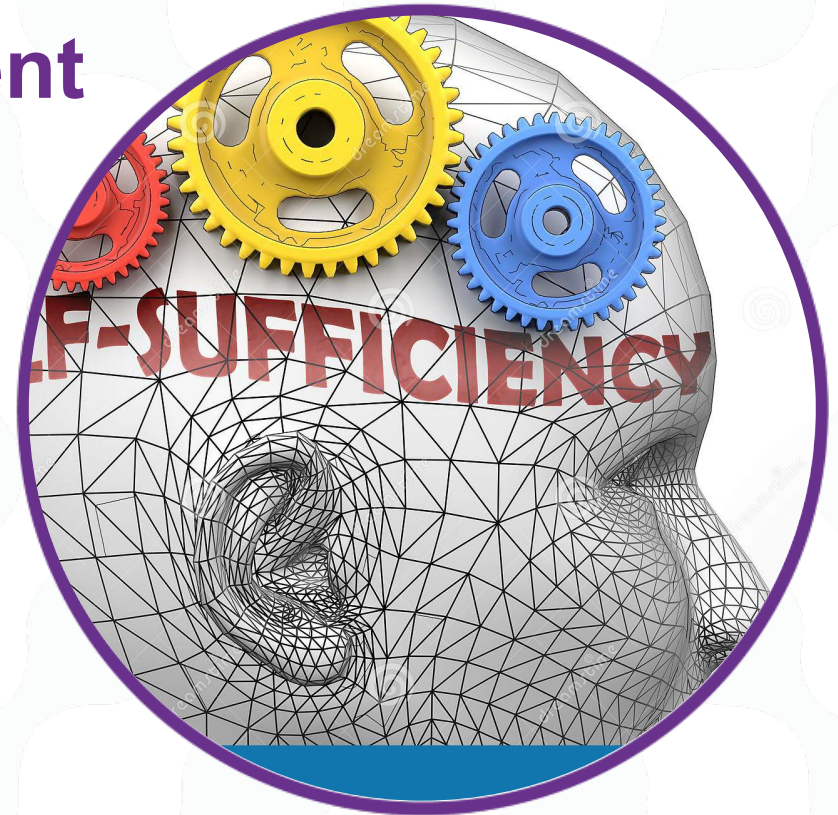
- The first thing in self-sufficiency is liking yourself.
- Many people are not taught to like themselves.
- If you do like yourself, you build confidence and are willing to strive to struggle to reach your goals (self-sufficiency or stability).
- You need to believe that you have value; you have worth; you are important.
- Then you are willing to extend yourself and invest in yourself because it is something you are doing for yourself, and for the future.





## Goal-Directed Forward Movement

- Moves people to the spot where they say, “I can do this; I have to know the path to take; I am physically and mentally well, so now I can set my priorities to be self sufficient.”
- Balance perceived barriers with hope for the future. It helps people understand the different challenges stopping them from doing what they need to do or want to do with their life.
- Conquering the obstacles in your path takes strong self-efficacy and confidence.



# Psychological Self-Sufficiency (PSS)

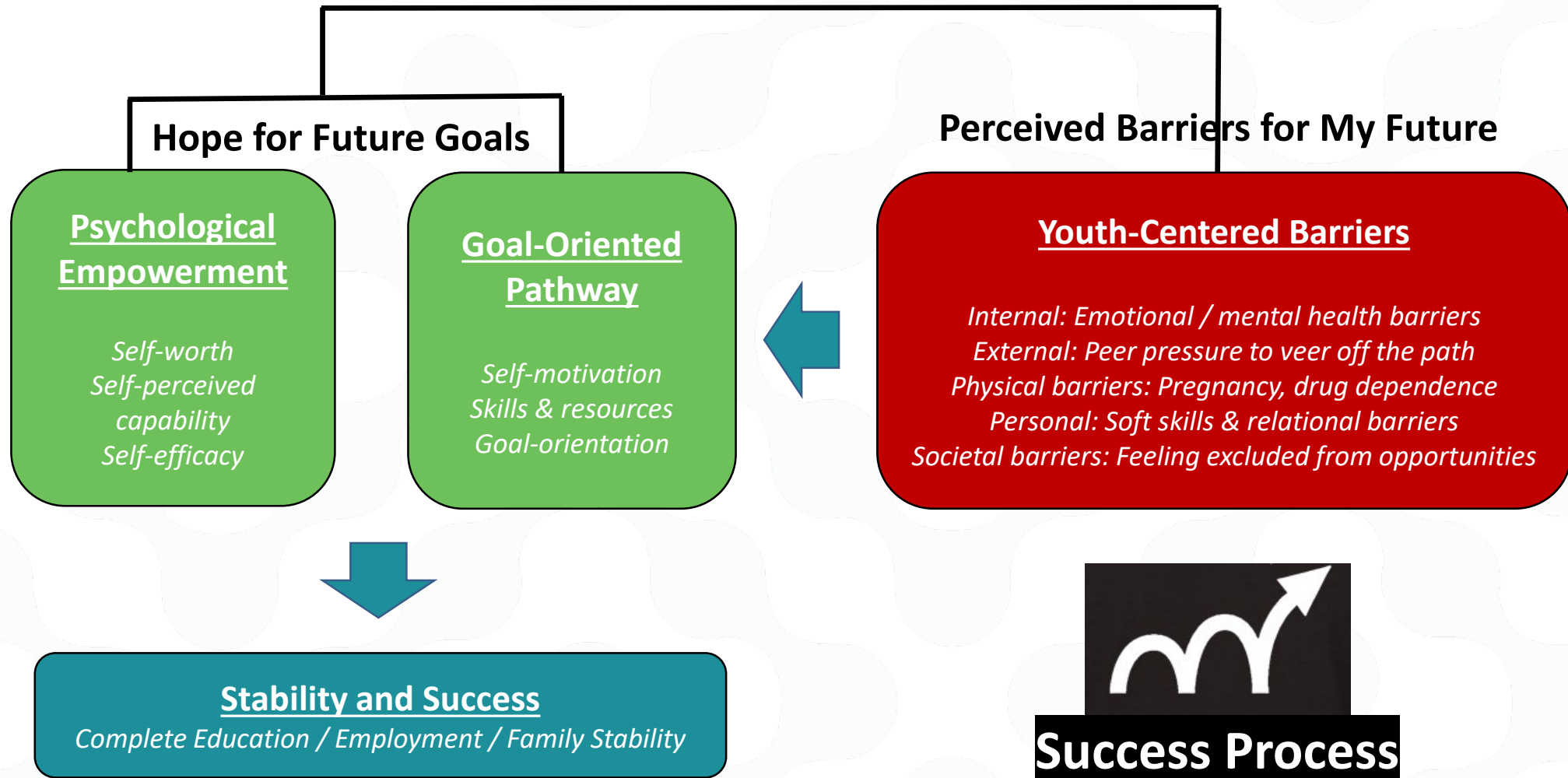
**Psychological self-sufficiency (PSS) is the ability to transform seemingly impossible barriers into the hope of the possible.**

- It embraces empowerment and is a strength-based approach to building **character and capacity** to sustain skills training, education, and daily choices.
- My research focus group studies defined self-sufficiency as a **'process' of developing psychological strength and making goal-oriented progression toward realistic outcomes**
- ***Mental contrasting*** generates energy toward goals by association of reality and future possibilities.
- Psychological self sufficiency is conceptualized as a dynamic interface of non-cognitive and cognitive forces that help one remain resilient on their path to a future goal.



# Emergence of a Participant-Centered Theory

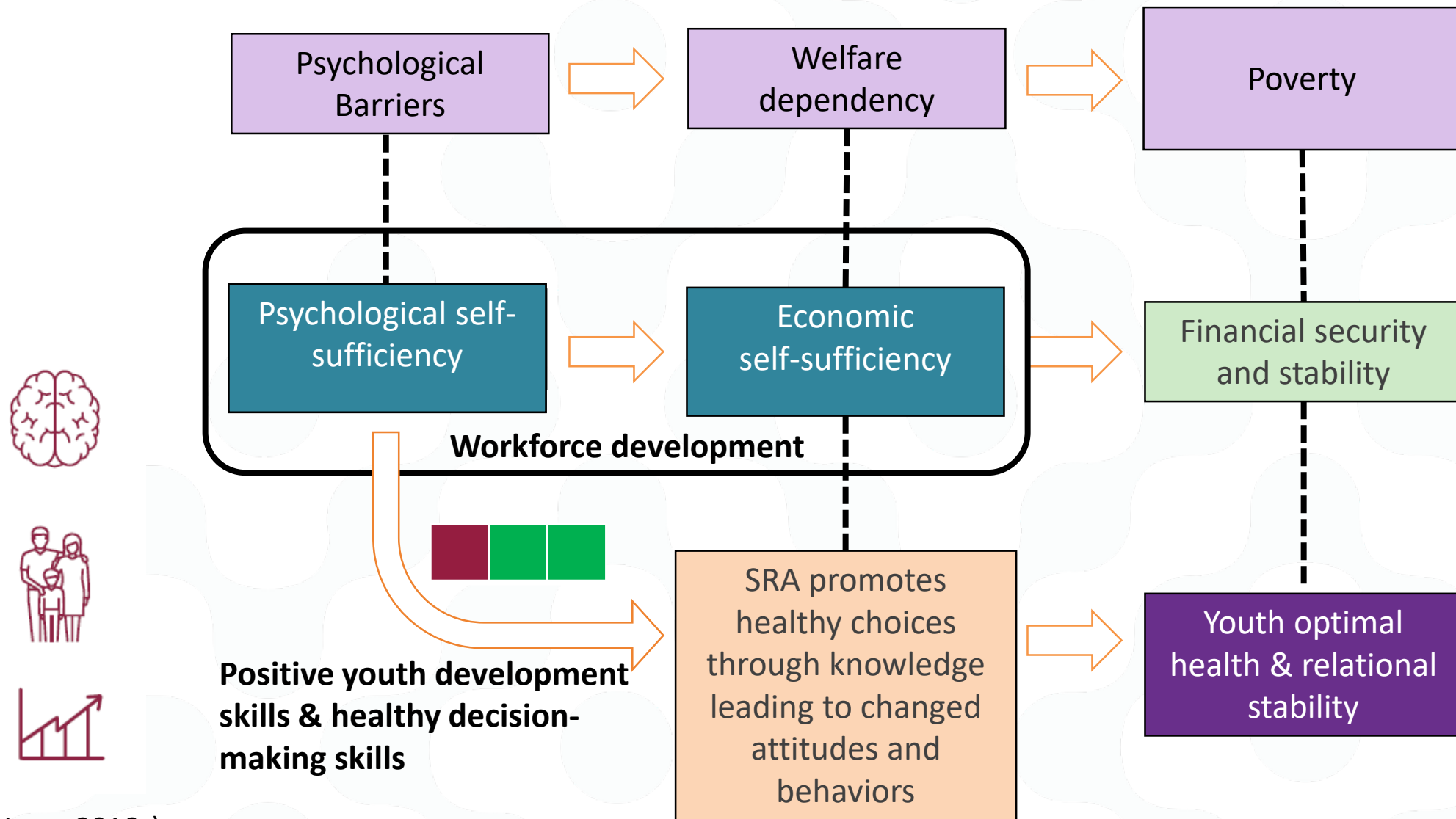
## Psychological Self-Sufficiency (PSS)



(Adapted from Hong, 2013)



# Translating Adult Self-Sufficiency to Youth Stability



(Hong, 2016c)



# Translating a PSS Measure to Youth

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## Validation of the Employment Hope Scale (EHS) among summer youth employment program participants

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

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Workforce development  
Transforming Impossible into Possible (TIP)

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to validate the Employment Hope Scale (EHS) among vulnerable youth who are seeking to enter the workforce through a summer youth employment program (SYEP). Hong, Polanin, and Pigott (2012) developed the EHS as a client-centered measure based on its earlier conceptualization from the client focus group interviews resulting in an original delineation of a 24-item six-factor structure. Considering a dearth of reliable measures of youth employment hope, this study examined the applicability of EHS to the youth population by validating it using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results from a sample of 255 SYEP participants found an 18-item 5-factor EHS under two components: (1) psychological empowerment (self-worth; self-perceived capability) and (2) goal-oriented pathways (self-motivation; utilization of skills and resources; goal-orientation). Convergent, discriminant, and known-groups validity tests also confirmed that the EHS is a valid measure among SYEP participants.

(Hong, et al., 2020)





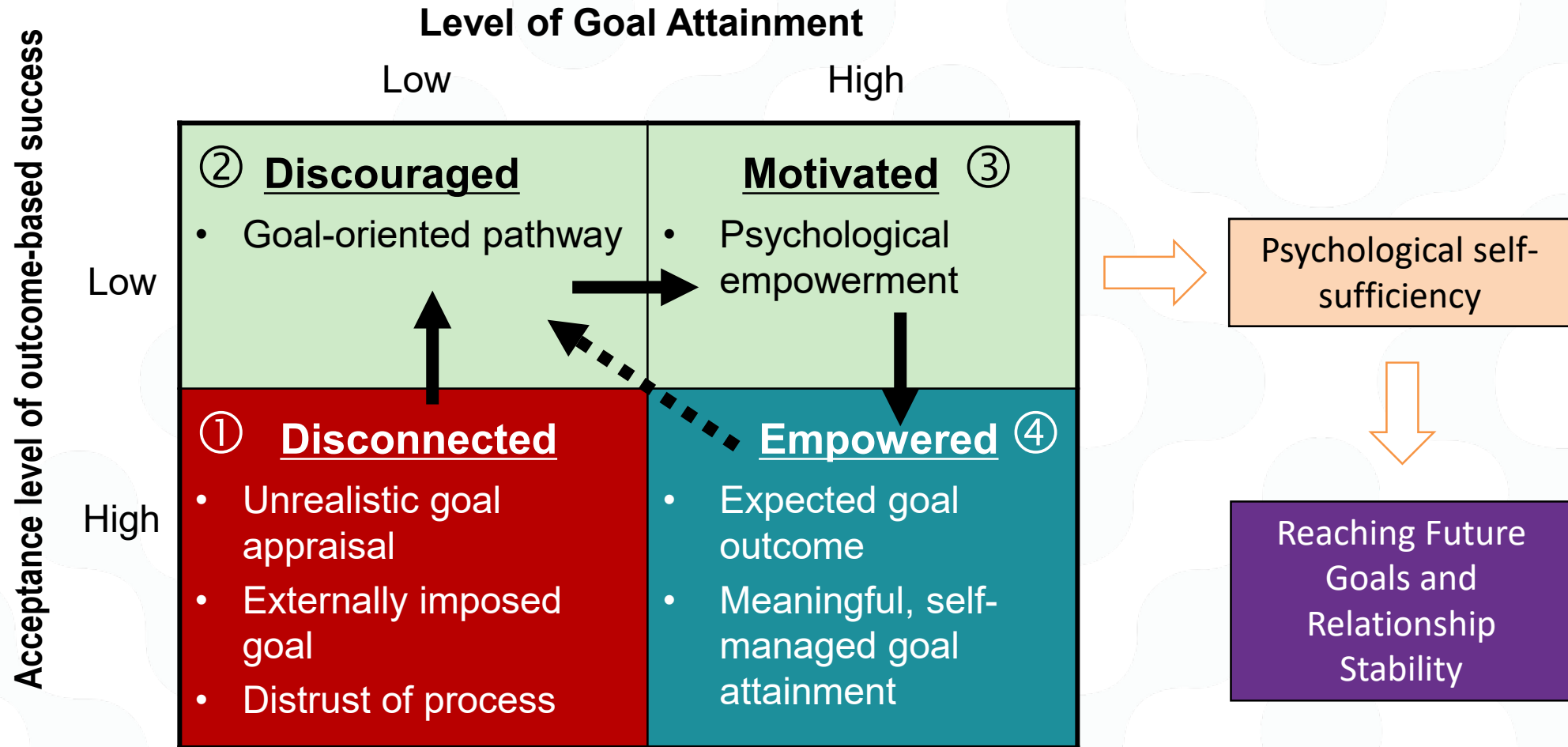
# Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

## Optimal Health

“Optimal health is a dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health...Lifestyle change can be facilitated through a combination of learning experiences that enhance awareness, increase motivation, and build skills and, most important, through the creation of opportunities that open access to environments that make positive health practices the easiest choice” (O’Donnell, 2009).



# A Bottom-Up Empowerment Pathway to Goals



(Adapted from Hong, 2013)






# Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

A-F	SRAE statutory purpose is to educate youth on how to avoid non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors by addressing the following:
A	The holistic individual and societal benefits associated with personal responsibility, self-regulation, goal setting, healthy decision-making, and a focus on the future.
B	The advantage of refraining from non-marital sexual activity in order to improve the future prospects and physical and emotional health of youth.
C	The increased likelihood of avoiding poverty when youth attain self-sufficiency and emotional maturity before engaging in sexual activity.
D	The foundational components of healthy relationships and their impact on the formation of healthy marriages and safe and stable families.
E	How other youth risk behaviors, such as drug and alcohol usage, increase the risk for teen sex.
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# Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

A-F	SRAE statutory purpose is to educate youth on how to avoid non-marital sexual activity and other risky behaviors by addressing the following:		Psychological self-sufficiency
A	The <b>holistic individual and societal benefits</b> associated with personal responsibility, self-regulation, goal setting, healthy decision-making, and a focus on the future.	• Personal responsibility	• PSS as an individualized process
		• Self-regulation	• Switching of barriers to hope (B to H) toward goal
		• Goal setting	• Purposeful and meaningful goal
		• Healthy decision-making	• Mental contrasting of B-H
		• Focus on the future	• Targeting a desired future state
B	The <b>advantage</b> of refraining from non-marital sexual activity in order to improve the future prospects and physical and emotional health of youth.	• Improve future prospects	 B-H cost (risk)-benefit analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimacy—Physical health</li> <li>• Partnership—Emotional health</li> </ul>
		• Improve physical health	
		• Improve emotional health	

# Practice Implications for SRAE

Use of PSS as a non-tangible process:

- Psychological self-sufficiency (health hope and perceived health barriers)
- Captures the staff effort in teaching, coaching, and building hope and resilience in youth
- Theory based on empowerment perspective

Use of PSS as an intermediate benchmark:

- Of success in positive youth development
- Theory based on empowerment perspective



# Practice Implications for SRAE

- PSS provides added research basis to the comprehensive and holistic approach of SRAE.
- Bringing the concept of hope as critical to the success pathway requires developing relationships and respect for the youth being served.
- Strategies to build and maintain hope for youth:
  - Individualized goal attainment plan
  - Support services to remove barriers that block the pathway
  - Reassessing and revising goals
  - Assessment based on the short-term achievement of the process



# Practice Implications for SRAE

- PSS is strength-based as it can be benchmarked to look at the extent to which changes in individual youth contribute to SRAE goal attainment.
- Collaborative setting of youth optimal health goals needs to be encouraged as it is a joint investment with the facilitator in the change process.
- PSS process planning to tailor the individual needs and efforts of youth needs to be considered:
  - Identifying barriers both at the structural and individual levels
  - Assessing the degree to which youth experience identified barriers
  - Creating hope actions that can be taken to move beyond the identified barriers and challenges
  - Assessing of the PSS process in terms of behavioral change moving the youth toward optimal health



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# QUESTIONS?





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**THANK YOU!**  
**PRESENTED BY**



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