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Designing Research with Intention: Culturally Responsive, Trauma-Informed, and Humanizing Strategies to Engage Youth
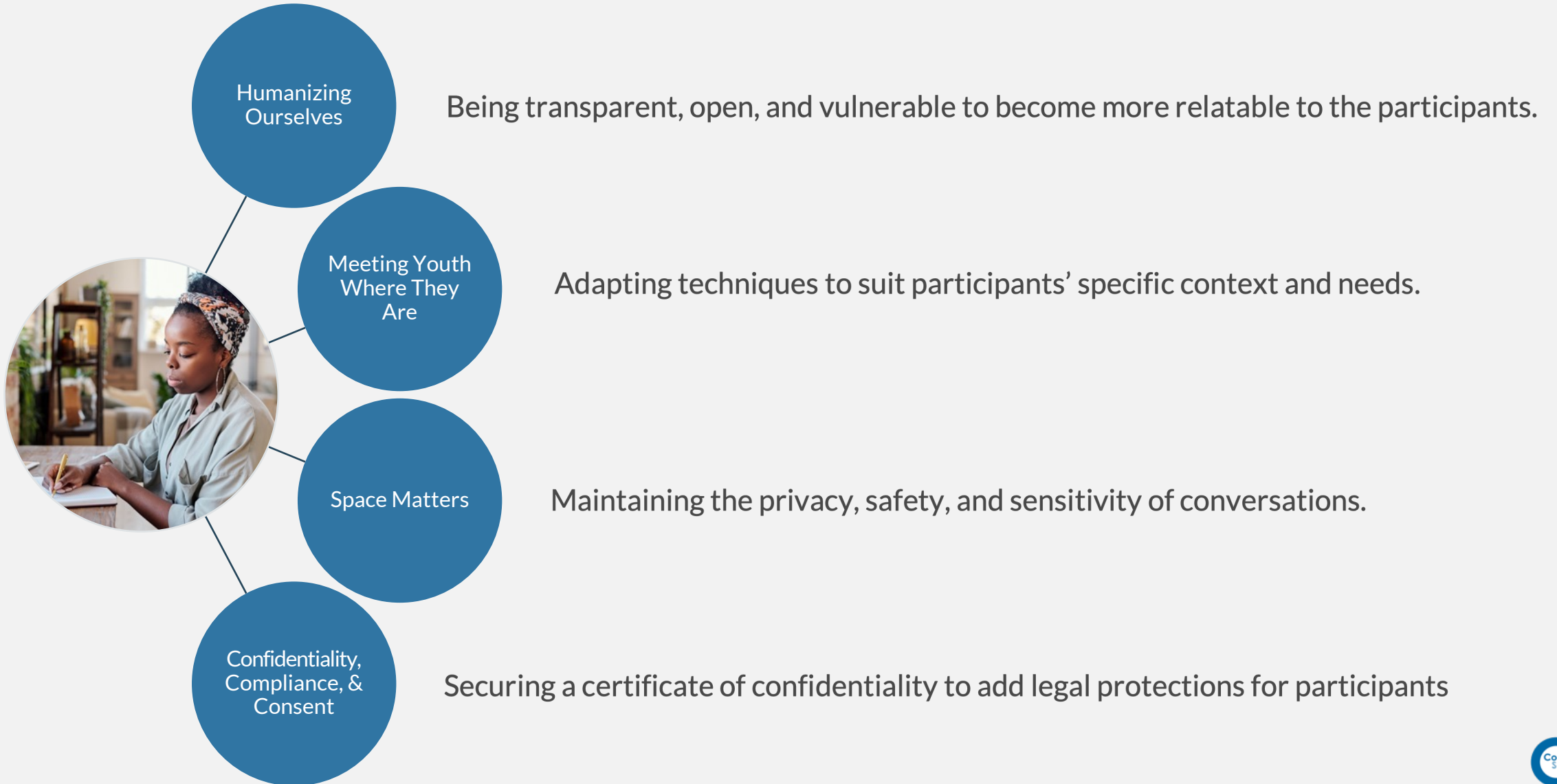
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Today's Takeaways

Humanizing Ourselves

Being transparent, open, and vulnerable to become more relatable to the participants.

Meeting Youth Where They Are

Adapting techniques to suit participants' specific context and needs.

Space Matters

Maintaining the privacy, safety, and sensitivity of conversations.

Confidentiality, Compliance, & Consent

Securing a certificate of confidentiality to add legal protections for participants

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Agenda

About Our Work

Humanizing Ourselves

Meeting Young People Where They Are

Space Matters!

Planning and Logistics

Confidentiality, Comfortability, & Consent

Questions & Wrap-Up

Meet Community Science

Effective Strategies. Equitable Systems. Strong Communities.

Community Science is an award-winning research and development organization that works with governments, foundations, and non-profit organizations on solutions to social problems through community and other systems changes fostering learning and improved capacity for social change.

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A BCT Partners Company

Welcome

Your Panel:

Brandi Gilbert, PhD
Senior Associate
Community Science
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Danielle Gilmore, PhD, MPP, CHES
Senior Analysts
Community Science
[She/Her]

DaVonti' Haynes, PhD, MSW
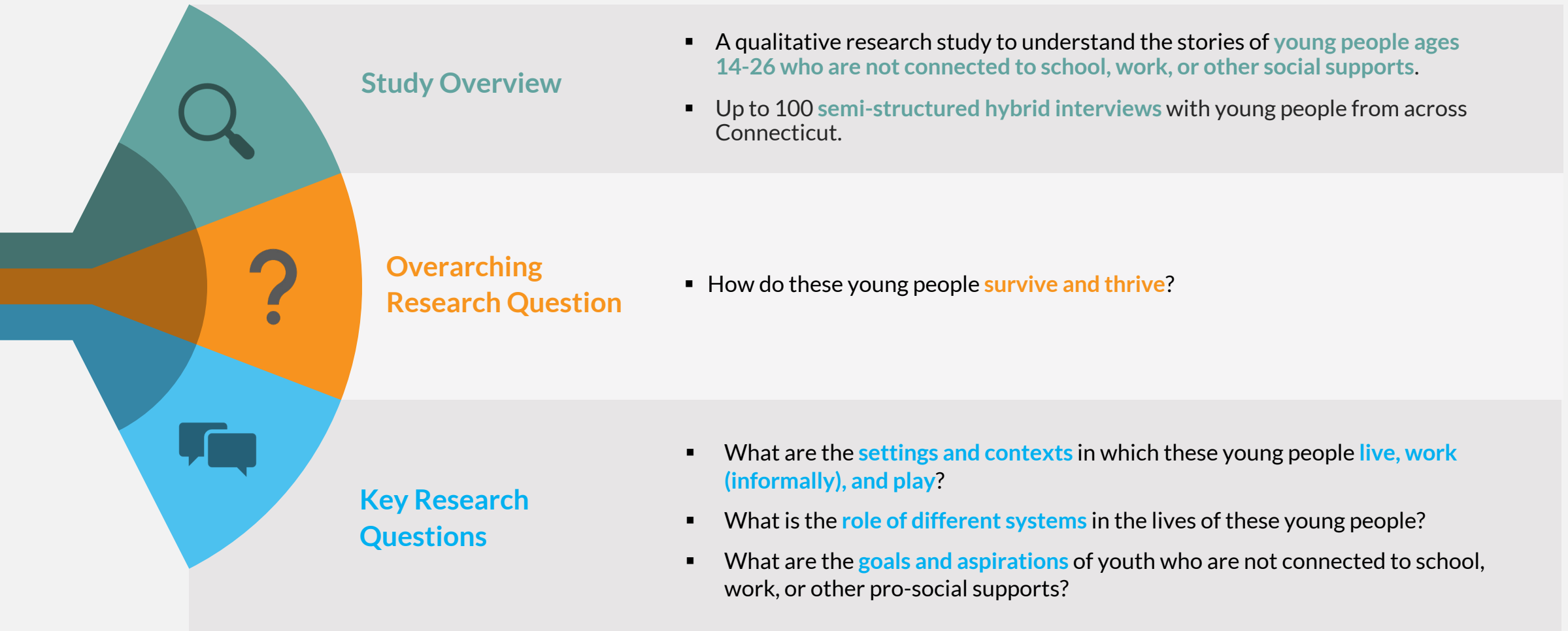Managing Associate
Community Science
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Dontae Cowans, MA
Analysts
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About Our Work

Understanding Young Peoples' Lived Experiences

Study Overview

- A qualitative research study to understand the stories of **young people ages 14-26 who are not connected to school, work, or other social supports**.

- Up to 100 **semi-structured hybrid interviews** with young people from across Connecticut.

Overarching Research Question

- How do these young people **survive and thrive**?

Key Research Questions

- What are the **settings and contexts** in which these young people **live, work (informally), and play**?

- What is the **role of different systems** in the lives of these young people?

- What are the **goals and aspirations** of youth who are not connected to school, work, or other pro-social supports?

Designing Research with Intention: Culturally Responsive, Trauma-Informed, and Humanizing Strategies to Engage Youth

Designing Research with Intention: Humanizing Ourselves

Humanizing Ourselves

Building Authentic Connections

- Research Team Dress Code
- Initial Engagement
- Reciprocal Disclosure

Navigating Emotional Dynamics

- Contextual Sensitivity
- Emotional Equilibrium
- Data Integrity

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How You Show Up And Present Matters!
- Acknowledging Perceived Power Dynamics
- How You Greet The Participants
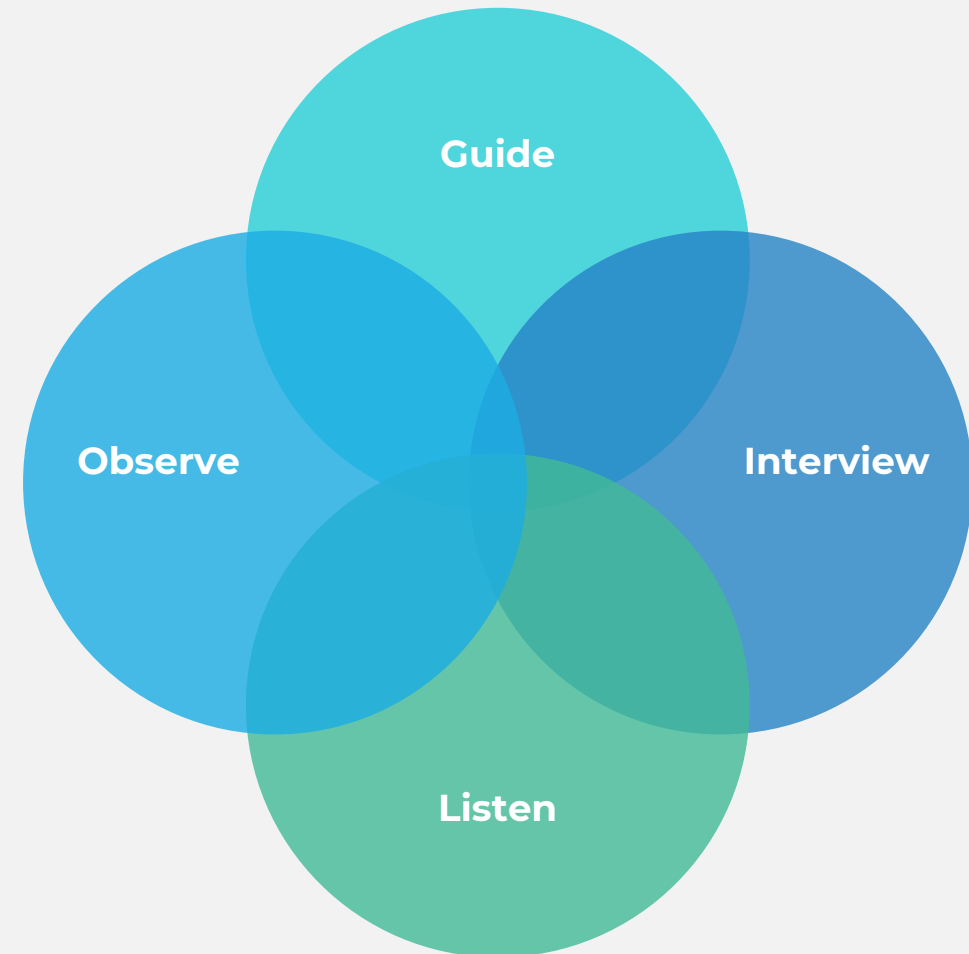- What You Share About Yourself

Grounding and Self-Soothing Activities
- Breathing Techniques
- Focusing on Physical Sensations
- Optional Team Member Debrief Debriefing
- Post-Interview Self-Care

Designing Research with Intention:
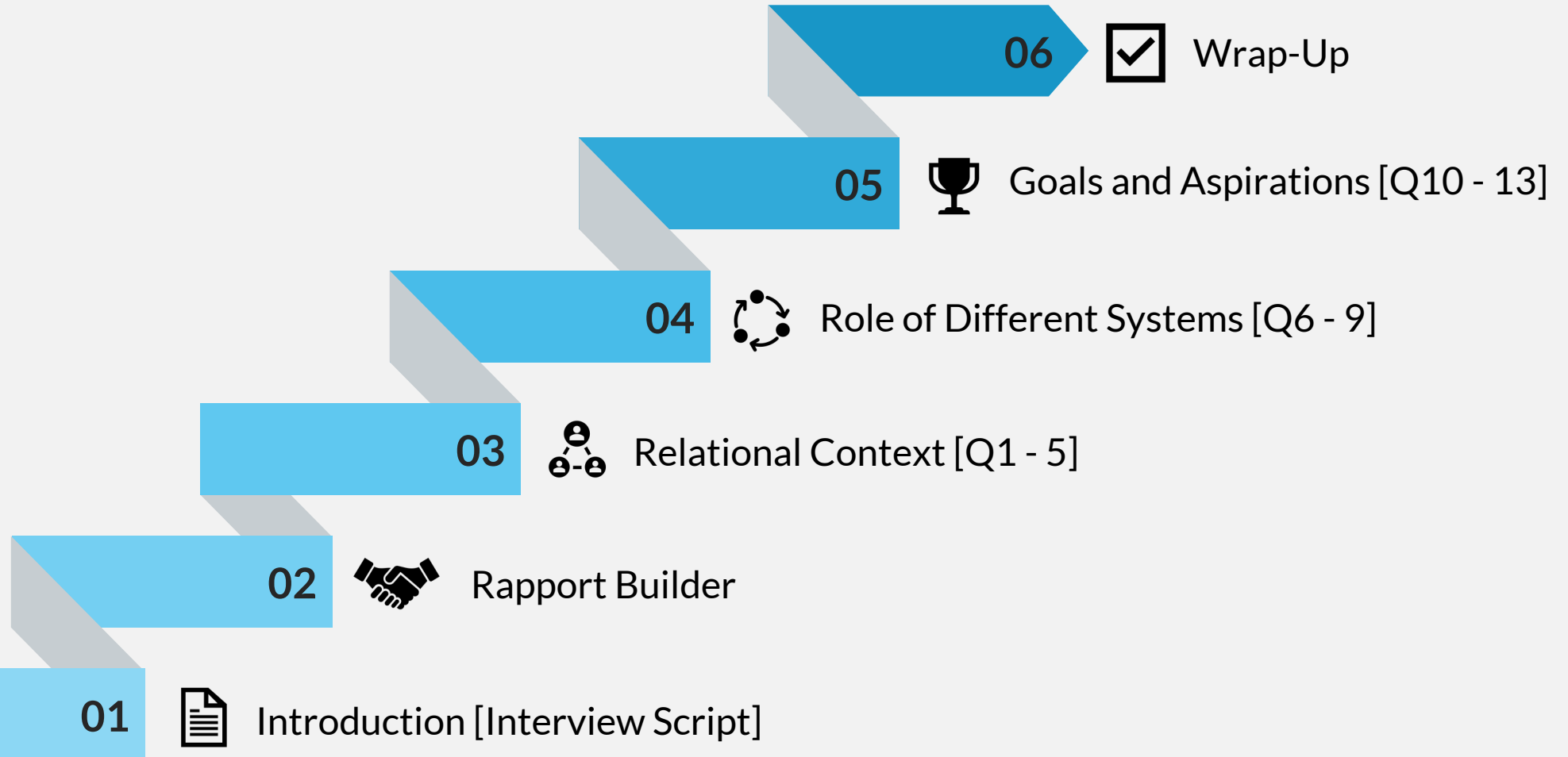## Meeting Young People Where They Are

Role During The Interview Process

- Guide participants through interview questions in a **conversation style**

- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, so **focus more on being present** than capturing verbatim notes

- Be a present and **active listener**

- Be **mindful of body language** & eye contact

How We Structure Questions: Interview Overview

06 ☑ Wrap-Up

05 🏆 Goals and Aspirations [Q10 - 13]

04 🔄 Role of Different Systems [Q6 - 9]

03 👥 Relational Context [Q1 - 5]

02 🤝 Rapport Builder

01 📄 Introduction [Interview Script]

Flexibility with Participants and The Interview Process

Participants

- Transportation
- Time of day
- Emotional support
- Snacks and beverages
- Interviewer gender selection

Interview

- Adapting interview based on age, developmental stage, and level of engagement of interviewee
- Breaks (for personal reasons, calls, etc.)
- Concluding interviews early, using an abbreviated guide (can resume another day or virtually, if needed)
- Scheduled time blocks, when possible

Managing Triggers During the Interview

Given the broad nature of the questions, the types of questions, and the experiences of the study population, it is highly likely that **some participants may recount violent or traumatic memories** (e.g., gang activity, sexual assault, addiction).

- Use subtle grounding and self-soothing techniques to manage triggers if they come up

- Allow participants to take breaks if needed, have tissues on-site

- Remind participants they can stop the interview at any time, take a break, or finish another day

In the Presence of Children

- Given the age of the population, the likelihood of children being present during the interview process is high.

  - Based on the types of questions, and the probability that **some participants may recount violent or traumatic memories** (e.g., gang activity, sexual assault, addiction), we choose to refrain from engaging in certain sensitive questions in front of the children.

  - Remember that **questions may be asked in any order**! This is critical if a child is only present for a portion of the interview

  - Having **activities, toys, and snacks on-site**, during interviews, to help keep children busy. If possible, offer childcare option.

Refrain from engaging in traumatic and/or violent questions	Questions may be asked in any order, especially in the presence of children
Activities and toys	Snacks

Designing Research with Intention: Space Matters!

Space Matters: Physically, Mentally, and Emotionally

Physical

Participants may have experienced (or actively experiencing) trauma, such as abuse, homelessness, or mental health challenges. Thus, ensuring you have developed a **safe and welcoming physical space** is essential to **ensure their well-being** during the interview and **minimize instances of causing additional trauma**.

Mental

Participants may already be experiencing high levels of stress, pressure, and anxiety, thus providing **a comfortable and non-threatening space** can help **reduce additional pressures, stressors, and anxieties**.

Emotional

Recognizing participants may have experienced emotional trauma, prior to the interview, researchers must be attuned to the emotional space, ensuring that they **create an environment** where young participants feel **emotionally safe** to **share their experiences and feelings**.

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Space Matters: Physically, Mentally, and Emotionally

Physical

Participants may have experienced (or actively experiencing) trauma, such as abuse, homelessness, or mental health challenges. Thus, ensuring you have developed a **safe and welcoming physical space** is essential to **ensure their well-being** during the interview and **minimize instances of causing additional trauma**.

Examples: Locations and organizations youth are familiar with or frequent regularly, such as community centers, non-profits, schools, libraries, and other local youth-serving organizations.

Mental

Participants may already be experiencing high levels of stress, pressure, and anxiety, thus providing **a comfortable and non-threatening space** can help **reduce additional pressures, stressors, and anxieties**.

Examples: Inclusion of mentally relaxing activities and objects on-site during the interview for participants to use such as fidget spinners, stress balls, and/or coloring materials.

Emotional

Recognizing participants may have experienced emotional trauma, prior to the interview, researchers must be attuned to the emotional space, ensuring that they **create an environment** where young participants feel **emotionally safe to share their experiences and feelings**.
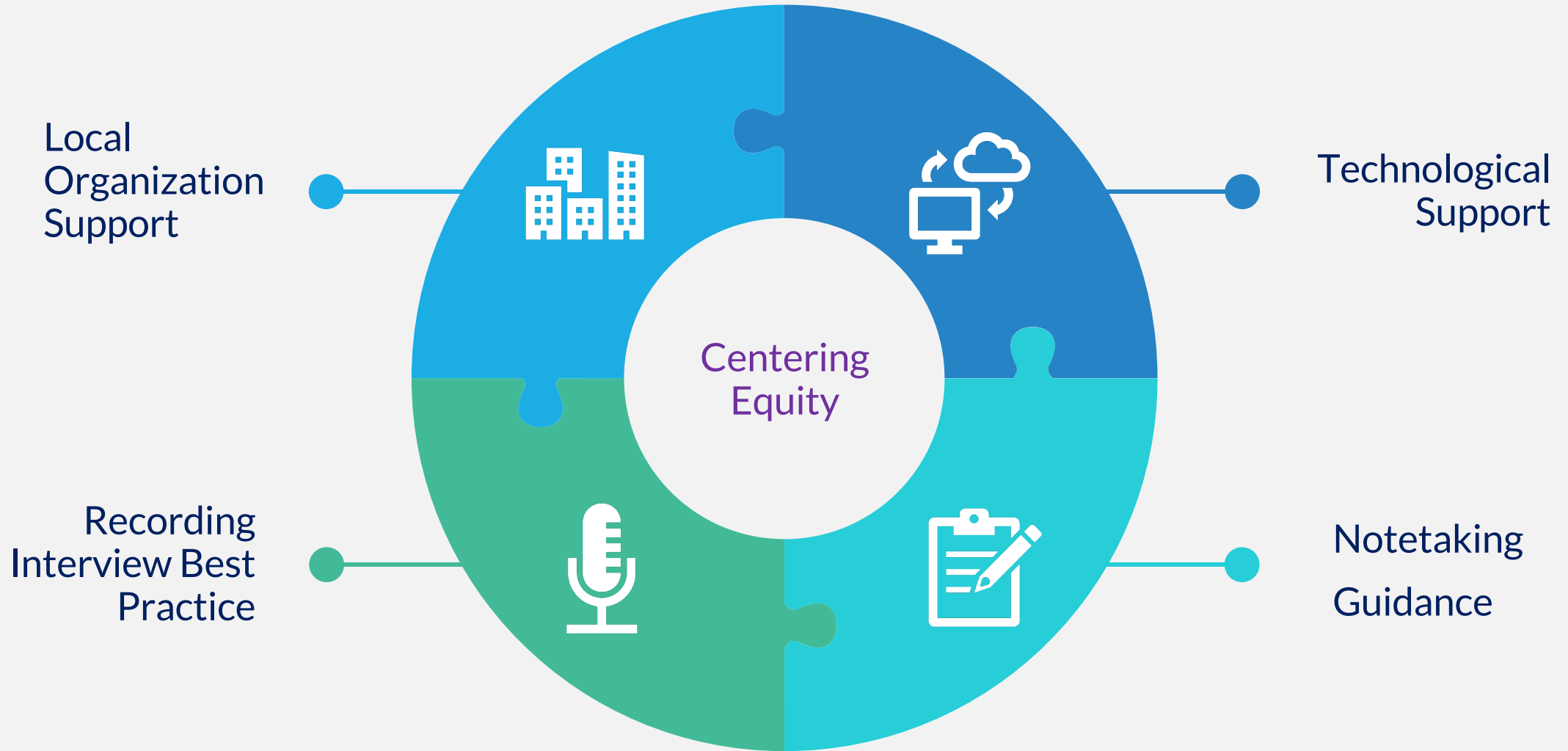
Examples: Process of directly connecting participants to social support resources and services, shall they request it.

Designing Research with Intention:
Planning and Logistics

Planning and Logistics

Local Organization Support

Technological Support

Recording Interview Best Practice

Notetaking Guidance

Centering Equity

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Designing Research with Intention:
The 3 C's

The 3 C's: Confidentiality, Comfortability, and Consent

Confidentiality

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application Process
- Certificate of Confidentiality from government agencies to add an additional layer of protection for participants
- Youth demographic exit survey

Comfortability

- Be a present active listener and refrain from active notetaking
- Be mindful of participants' (and your) body language and eye contact
- When possible, allow participants to select the interviewer on gender

Consent

- Obtain informed consent or youth assent (and provide copies)
- Request permission to record
- Participant repeat back understanding of consent agreement

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Q & A

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Effective Strategies
Equitable Systems
Strong Communities

THANK YOU