

# Preventing and Responding to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

*Facilitator: Becky York and Kerrie Best*



# About LimeCulture




## “ LimeCulture’s Vision...

*Our vision is to create safer cultures by enabling organisations and individuals to effectively safeguard, prevent and respond appropriately to victims and survivors of, sexual violence, harm and abuse.*

”

## Who we work with...

- 
- A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue lanyard and a dark top, is shown in profile from the chest up, holding a black microphone and speaking.
- 1 Employers
  - 2 Criminal Justice
  - 3 Health
  - 4 Sexual Violence Support Services
  - 5 Sport
  - 6 Education
  - 7 Commissioners
  - 8 Voluntary and Community Organisations

# Discussion Points

- Why safer cultures matter
- How safer cultures act as deterrents
- How to build safer cultures



# Why safer cultures matter

*'We need to stop just pulling people out  
of the river.*

*We need to go upstream and find out  
why they're falling in'.*

Desmond Tutu



# Prevalence

## In Society

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 18 men have been **raped or sexually assaulted** since the age of 16 (Rape Crisis England and Wales, 2025)
- 3% women and 0.7% men **sexually assaulted in the past year** (CSEW 2024)
- 1.8% of men and 4% have been **stalked in the past year** (CSEW 2024)
- 64% of **women experienced unwanted sexual harassment** including 45% **unwanted sexual touching** (YouGov Poll 2024)

## At work

- **40% of women and 18% of men** have experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviours in the workplace (ComRes, 2017)
- 14% of **employers and 6% of employees** have witnessed sexual harassment in the workplace (ACAS, 2024)

## In Healthcare

- **3.8%** of NHS staff (including **6% of trainees**) reported experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour from colleagues in the past year. (NHS Surveys, 2023)
- **In the surgical workforce:**
- **63.3% of women & 23.7% of men** experienced sexual harassment.
- Over **80%** witnessed (Begeny et al 2023)
- Nearly **one-third** of female surgeons have been sexually assaulted at work. (WPSMS, 2023)
- **Among female doctors 56%** experienced unwanted verbal comments. **31%** experienced unwanted physical contact. (BMA, 2021)

# The tip of the iceberg

In 2024/5 Sexual Misconduct is an issue in approximately **20%** of advice cases (NHS Resolutions)

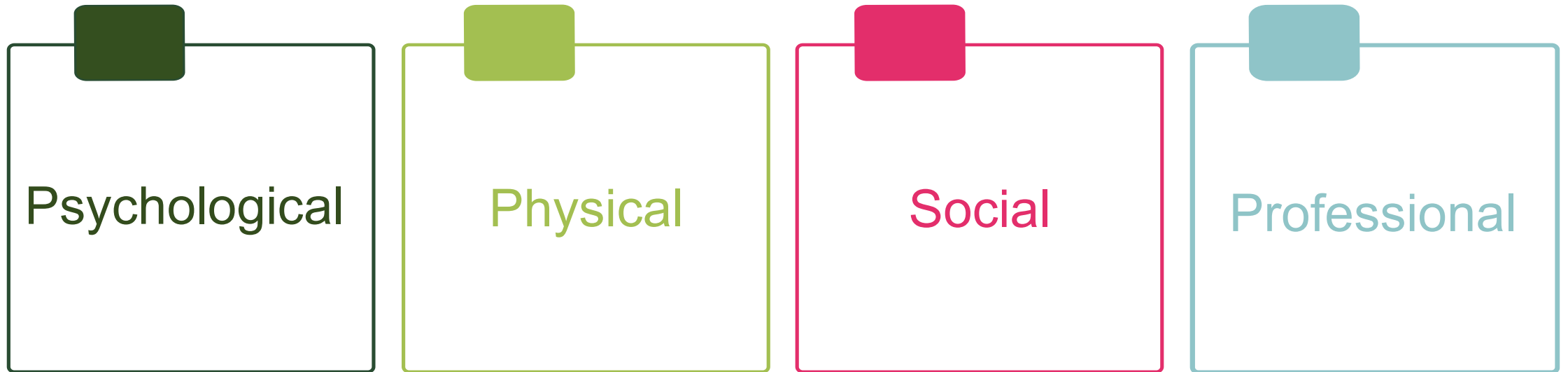
Unison Survey of Healthcare staff (It's Never OK 2019) found

- **71% did not formally report** what happened
- **49% felt nothing would be done**
- **37% felt they would be dismissed** as 'oversensitive'
- **24% feared retaliation** from perpetrator
- **22%** said they were scared it would **harm their career.**

**Just 15% believed if they did formally report it their case would be dealt with properly**



# Impacts



*'I looked into quitting, my mental health plummeted, and I had very very dark moments alone. Nearly 5 years later, I am still in therapy, to deal with what happened, in the job I had dreamed of doing'. (Breaking the Silence Report , 2023)*

# Drivers for regulators to support safer cultures

Commit to a zero-tolerance approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours towards our workforce. Commit to 10 principles and actions to achieve this.

**NHS Sexual Safety Charter**



Worker Protection Act (the preventative duty) is finally on the statute books and came into effect on 26 October 2024. The new duty is an anticipatory duty, meaning that employers will need to take a proactive and preventative approach to protecting their employees from workplace sexual harassment.

**Worker Protection Act**



Regulators professional code and/or Standards defining professional behavioral expectations including duty to prevent and speak up in relation to patients, colleagues and the public.

**Professional Standards Codes of Conduct**



OFS (England ), MEDR (Wales) , Scottish Funding Council (Scotland) Quality Assurance Agency (Northern Ireland) set expectations on HEI providers

**HEI Regulation**



# Culture as Prevention



Four conditions for sexual harassment to take place:

- 1) The perpetrator is motivated to harass
- 2) The perpetrator can overcome internal moral restraints
- 3) **The perpetrator can overcome external organisational restraints**
- 4) **The resistances of the victim can be overcome**

*Sexual harassment: Identifying risk factors. O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998)*

---

**Safer Cultures build organisational restraints and resistance**

---

# Primary Secondary and Tertiary Prevention and Culture



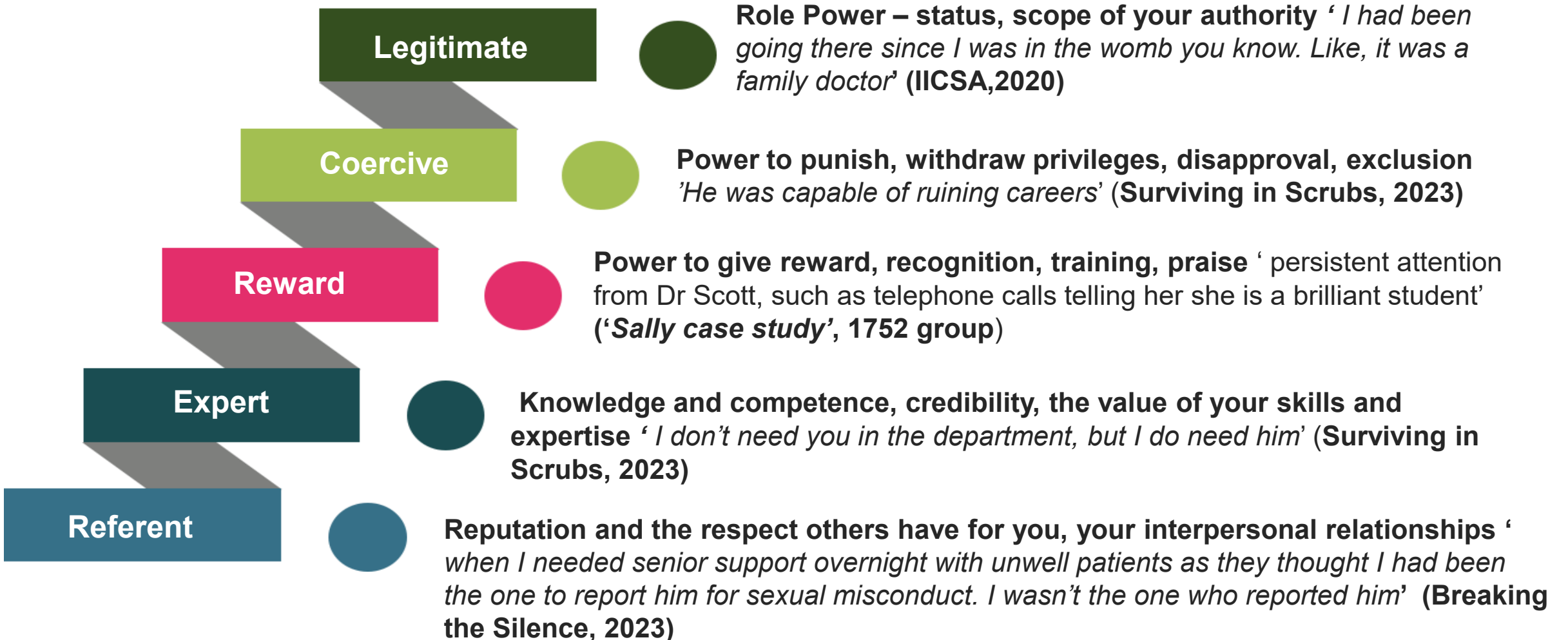
**Primary Prevention – Stop it before it starts**

**Secondary Prevention – Detect and Respond Early**

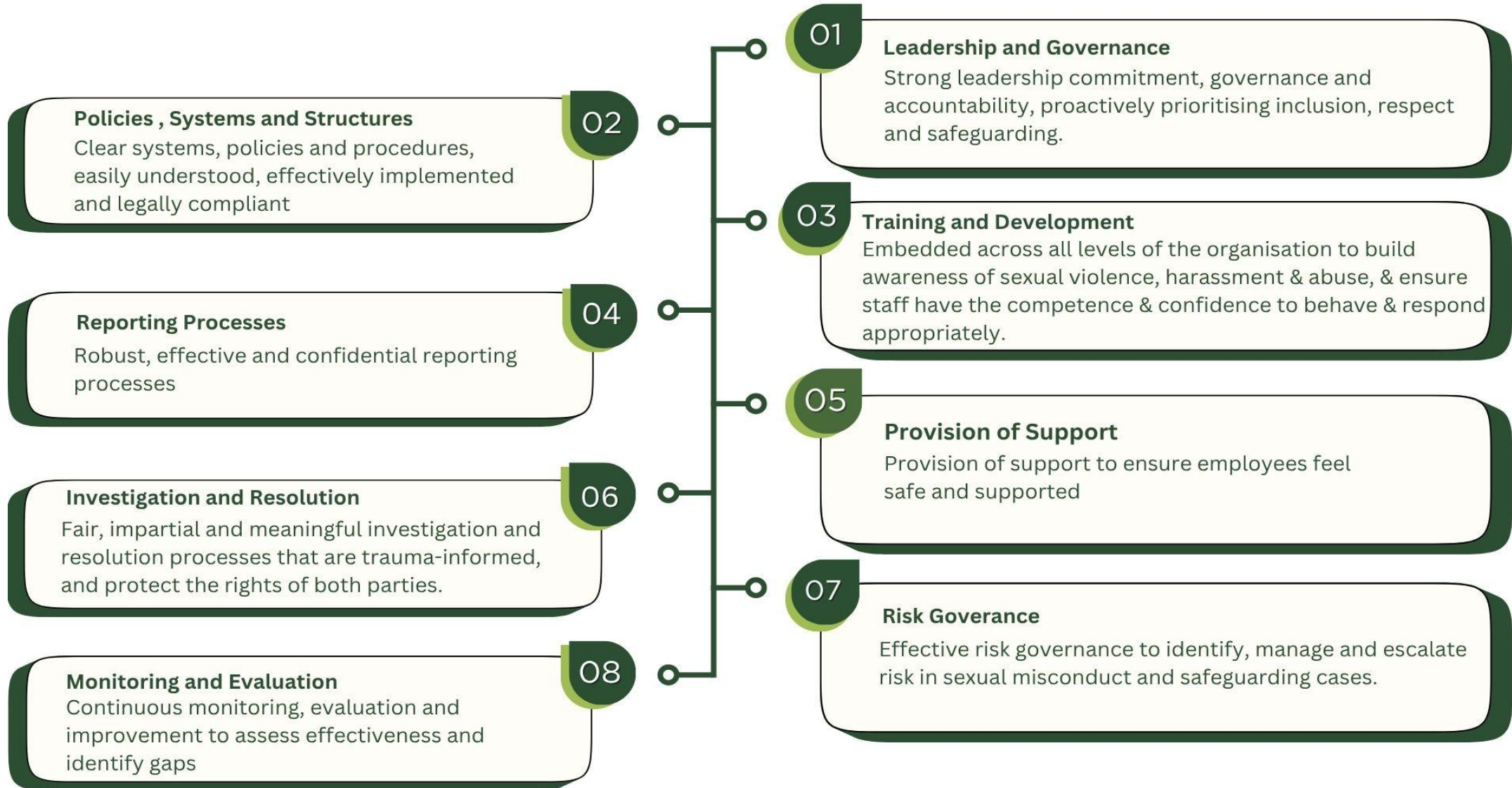
**Tertiary Prevention- Repair Harm and Prevent Recurrence**

# Power

'The bases of power' French and Raven, 1959



# Creating Safer Cultures



# Safer Cultures Principles Disrupting Perpetrator Tactics



<b>Principle</b>	<b>How it disrupts perpetrators</b>	<b>Regulatory Lever</b>
Strong Leadership commitment, governance and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signals zero tolerance</li><li>• Sets the tone and role models</li><li>• Deters minimisation</li></ul>	Standards Risk Oversight
Clear systems, policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds a common understanding</li><li>• Provides transparency of expectations and consequence</li></ul>	Reporting Processes
Training and development across all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boosts confidence to report or intervene</li><li>• Prevents bystander silence</li><li>• Identifies early-stage abuse</li></ul>	Education and Training

# Safer Cultures Principles Disrupting Perpetrator Tactics



<b>Principle</b>	<b>How it disrupts perpetrators</b>	<b>Regulatory Lever</b>
Robust, effective and confidential reporting processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourages reporting through trust</li><li>• Detects and escalates patterns</li></ul>	Reporting Processes
Provision of support for staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds victim resilience</li><li>• Counters manipulation</li><li>• Enables collective support</li></ul>	Internal Support
Fair, impartial and trauma informed investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevents manipulation of investigations</li><li>• Trauma sensitive approaches</li></ul>	Fitness to Practice Process

# Safer Cultures Principles Disrupting Perpetrator Tactics



<b>Principle</b>	<b>How it disrupts perpetrators</b>	<b>Regulatory Lever</b>
Effective risk governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifies patterns and enablers</li><li>• Ensures escalation to right level</li></ul>	Risk Oversight
Continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevents complacency</li><li>• Detects system weakness</li><li>• Demonstrates commitment</li></ul>	Pattern Analysis Education and Training Communication

# Three tier approach

Recognise, Respond and Report Unacceptable behaviour

1

## Awareness

Ensure an understanding of sexual misconduct and appropriate behaviours across the organisation to drive a safer culture

2

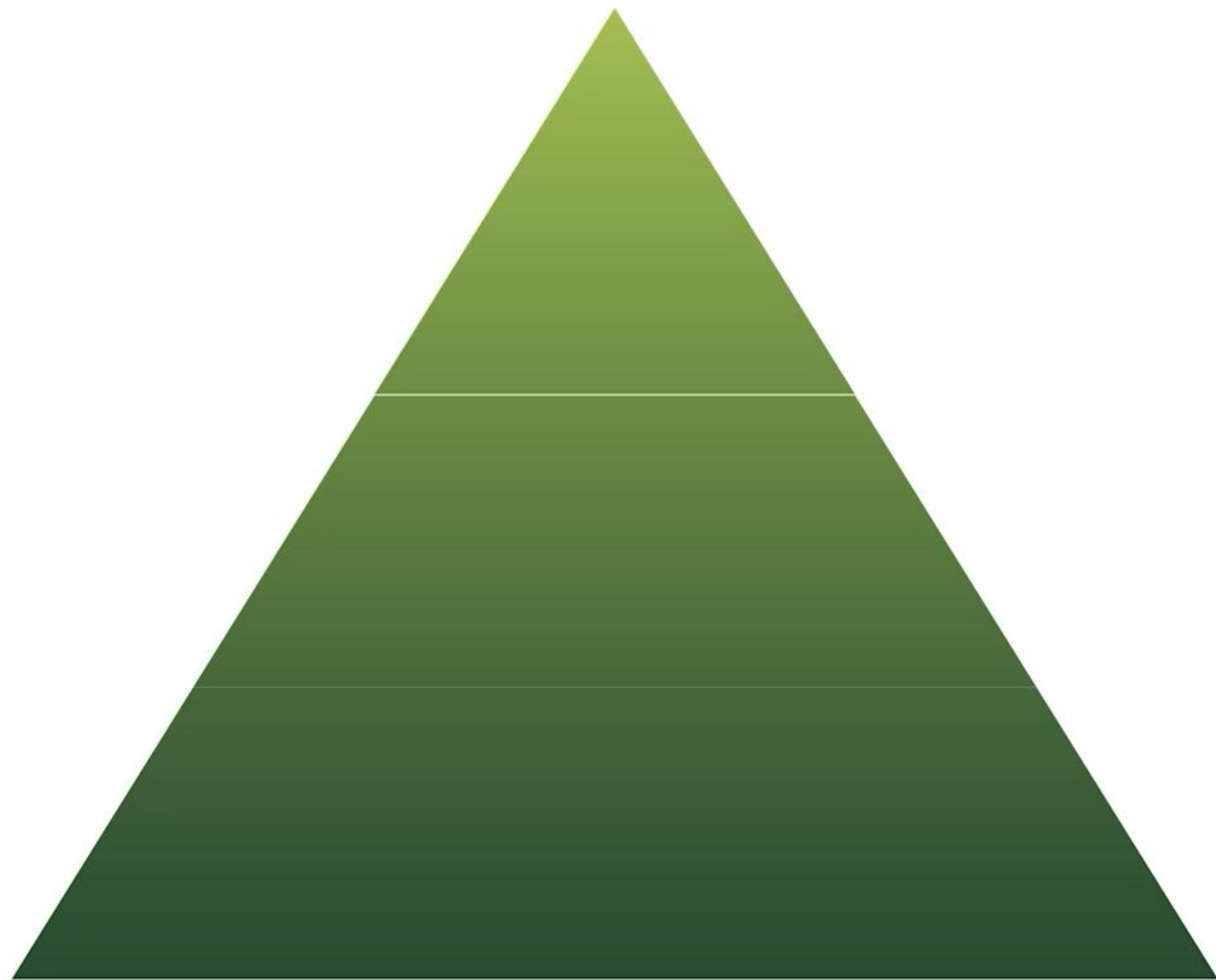
## Responding

Upskill key individuals across your organisation to understand trauma responses and the importance of trauma informed communication, enabling them to respond appropriately and consistently to disclosures

3

## Specialists

Ensure an effective response on behalf of the organisation when sexual misconduct has been disclosed, reported or suspected. Specialist sexual misconduct expertise to HR practitioners, Investigators and Panel Members.



# Why is the response so important?

Responding to trauma

1



Some victims/survivors have discussed the response they received to their disclosure feeling worse than the trauma itself.

2



When someone discloses that they've been subjected to some form of trauma, they need to be supported to allow them to continue with their lives to their fullest potential.

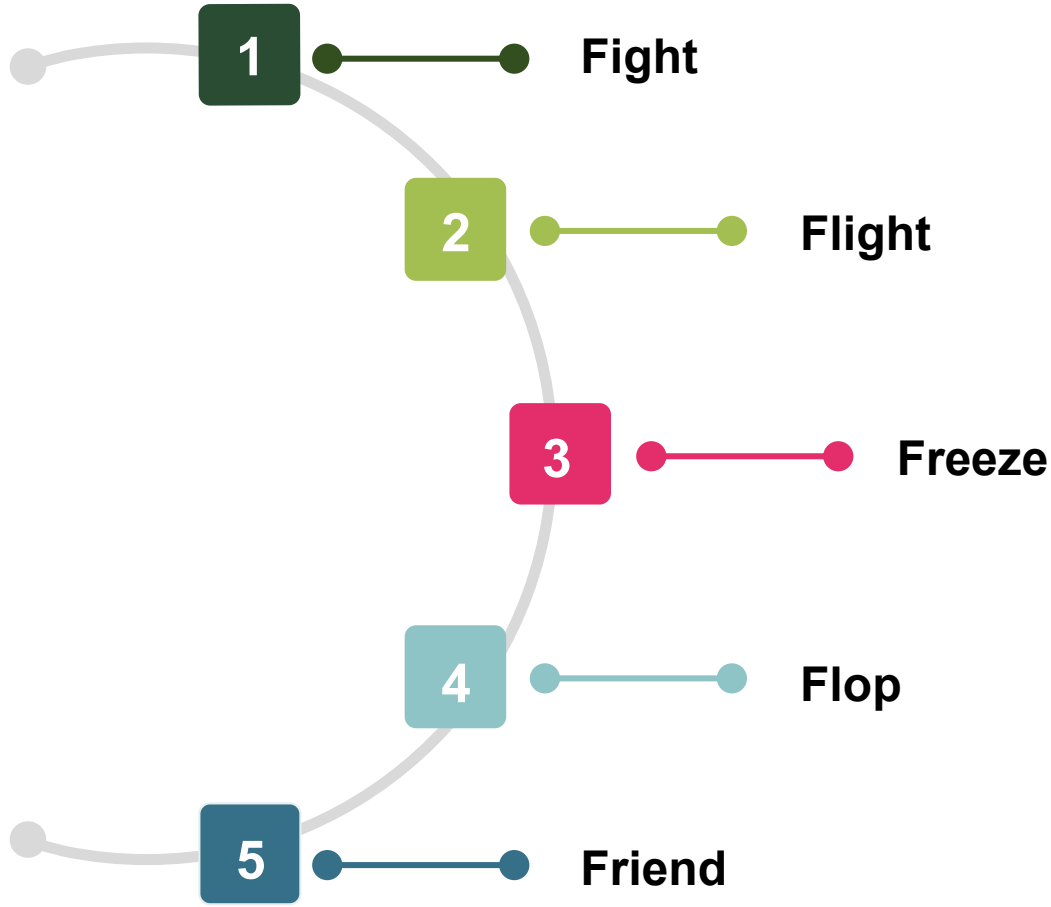
3



Active support starts from the point of report/disclosure

# Trauma responses

The Five F's



# Specialist Support and Training



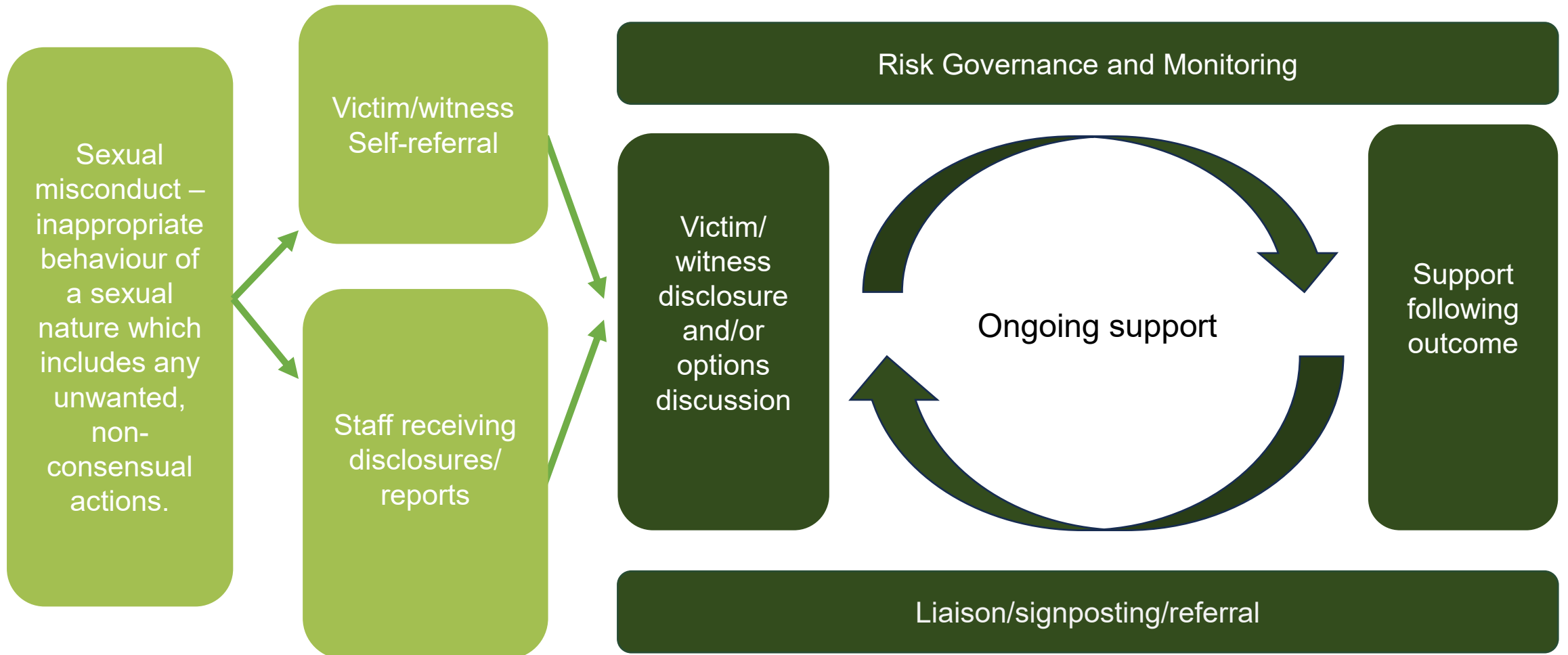
Ensuring an effective response

Trauma informed Training  
for Investigators Handling  
Sexual Misconduct Cases

Trauma informed Training  
for Panel members handling  
sexual Misconduct cases

Trauma informed training for  
HR Advisors Handling  
Sexual Misconduct Cases  
and Specialist Liaison Roles

# Internal Support Model

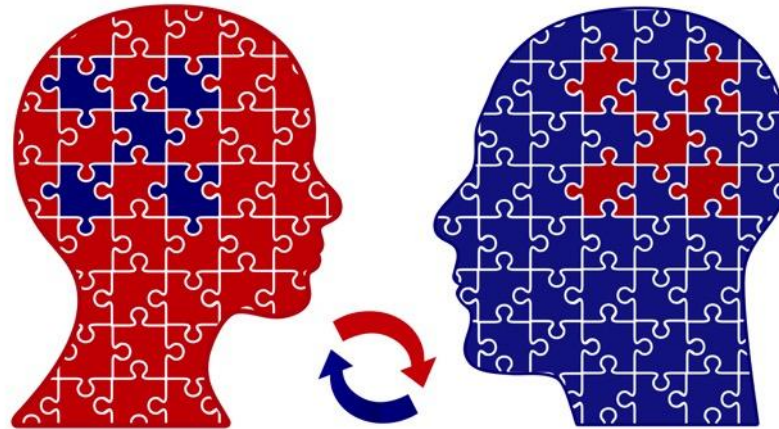


# Internal Cultures

The importance of looking after your teams

*“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”*

*(Dr Rachel Remen)*



# Creating Safer Cultures

The fundamental influencers for change



1

**Modelling  
behaviours**

‘Set the Standards’

2

**Fostering  
understanding  
and conviction**

‘Communication,  
Reporting and  
Accountability’

3

**Reinforcing with  
formal  
mechanisms**

‘Fitness to  
Practice’

4

**Developing  
talent and skills**

‘Education and  
Training’

# Survivor quote

“

“What pains me most now is just how normal I believed it all to be. It was so widely acknowledged and accepted.

It was this culture that meant when a male doctor assaulted me in a much more invasive way, I simply avoided him until he rotated away. It didn't even occur to me to report it”

Surviving in Scrubs

”

# Questions?

Time for reflections and questions



# Thank you

## Contact

Telephone: 0203 633 0018

Email: [info@limeculture.co.uk](mailto:info@limeculture.co.uk)

Website: [www.limeculture.co.uk](http://www.limeculture.co.uk)

Social: [@limeculture](#)

