



Self-advocating with confidence and authenticity

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By the end of this workshop we will:



Understand the 3
basic psychological
needs

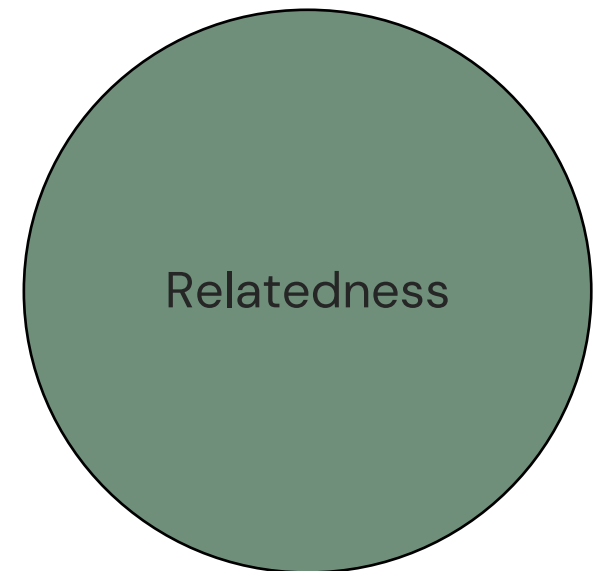
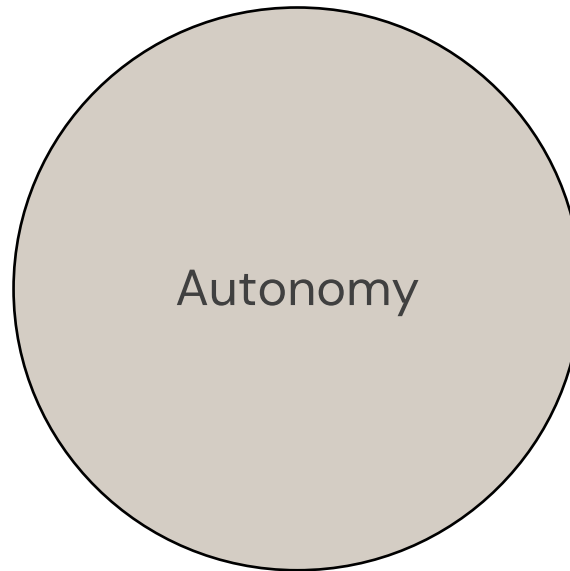
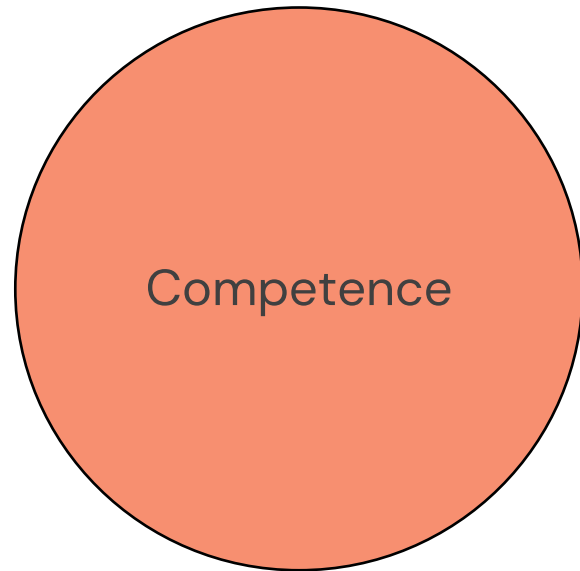


Recognise how
these needs relate
to self-advocacy



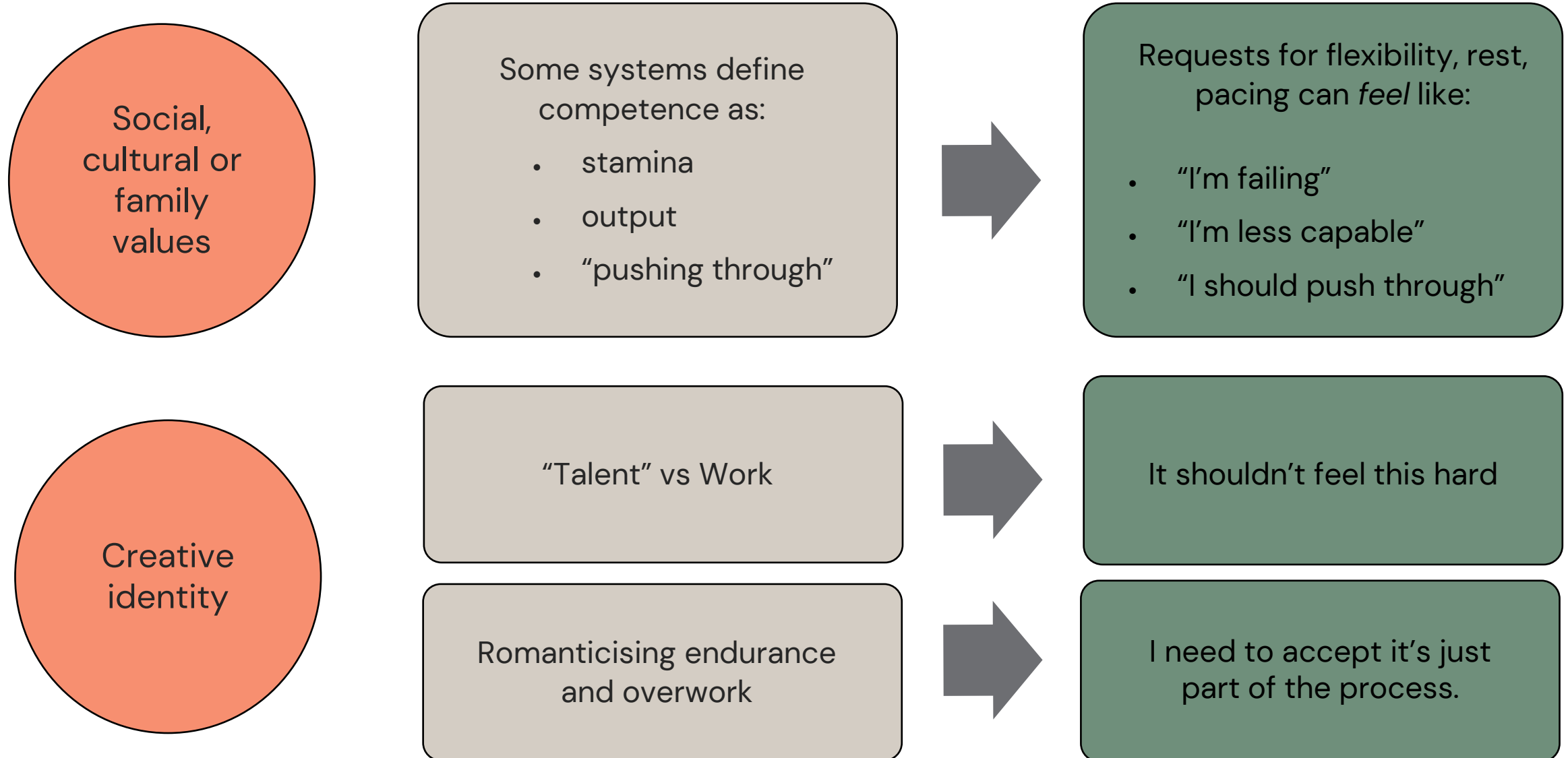
Have practical
strategies for self-
advocating in an
affirming and
authentic way

What are our 3 basic psychological needs?



Competence

Why requiring adjustments can make us feel less Competent



Fixed and growth mindsets in creative work

Fixed mindset

Born with set skills

Naturally gifted or talented

"I am a writer"

Growth mindset

Learned skills and experience

Hard work and practice

I write

Fixed and growth mindsets: Coming across challenges

Fixed mindset

I shouldn't need adjustments to do this

Maybe I'm not so talented?

I'm not cut out for this

Growth mindset

I can experiment with different ways of working

My experience is valid and tells me I would work better under different conditions.

Writing is a process, it doesn't define me as a person.

Competence-based strategies for self-advocating

Reframe adjustments as performance enablers

"These are the conditions under which I can do my best work."

For events: "This adjustment enables me to contribute effectively"

Define your own value system

If you value creativity:

"This adjustment gives me the conditions to create original ideas"

If you value progress:

"Having a break enables me to make sustainable progress"

Use Competence-based language

Rather than
"I struggle with..."

"I produce my best work when..."

"My strength is creating engaging characters – and I do this best when..."

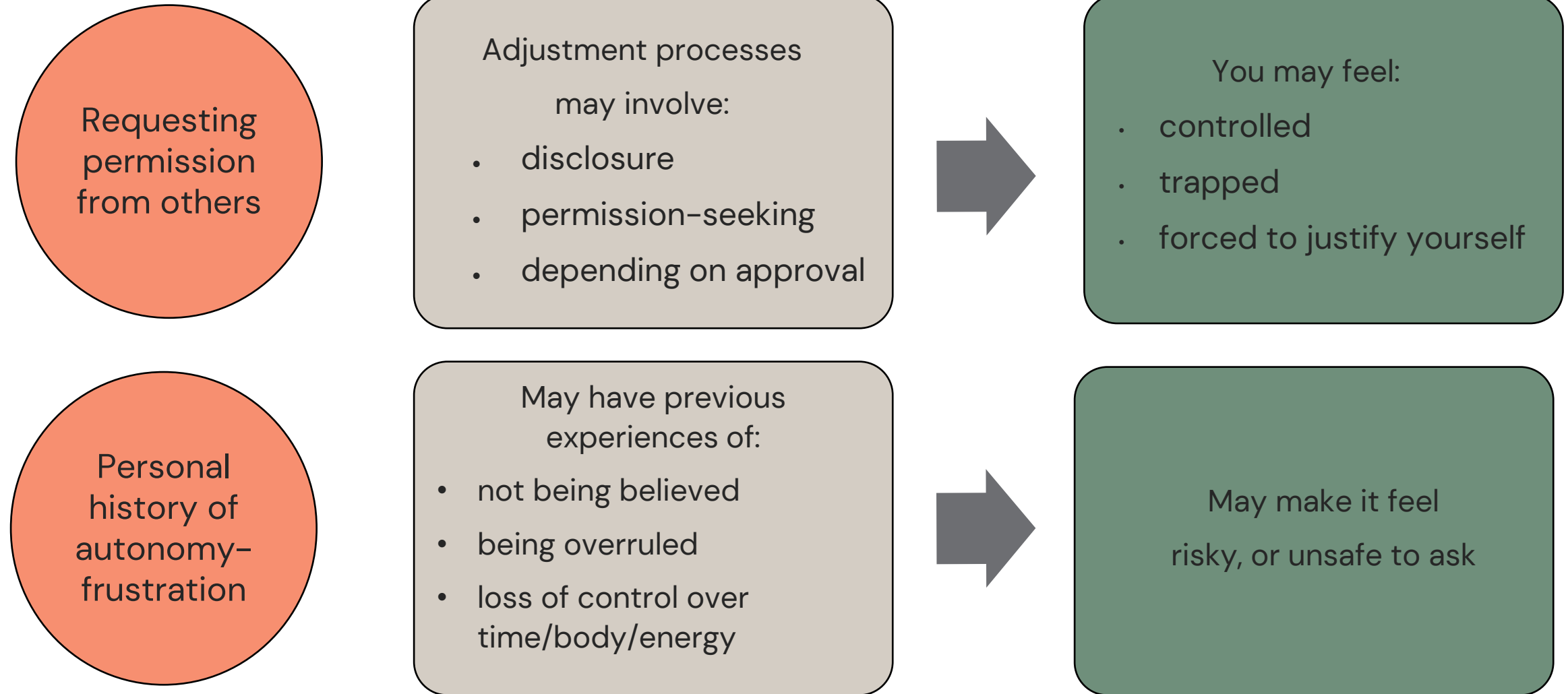
How the act of self-advocating can help meet Competence

"I can communicate my needs
calmly and objectively.

By doing this, I am creating the conditions
I need to do my best work."

Autonomy

Why requiring adjustments can make us feel less Autonomous



Autonomy-based strategies for self-advocacy

Decide your own boundaries

Decide in advance:

- What you are happy to disclose
- Your non-negotiables
- Any options

Communicate firmly
but authentically

- “I work best when...”
- “I’d like to discuss how we can work together to both XYZ and allow me to participate effectively.”

Recognise how discussing
needs might be safe

- Difference to previous situations or people
- Ways in which adjustments are provided to others

How the act of self-advocating can help meet Autonomy

"I can't control how the other person reacts.

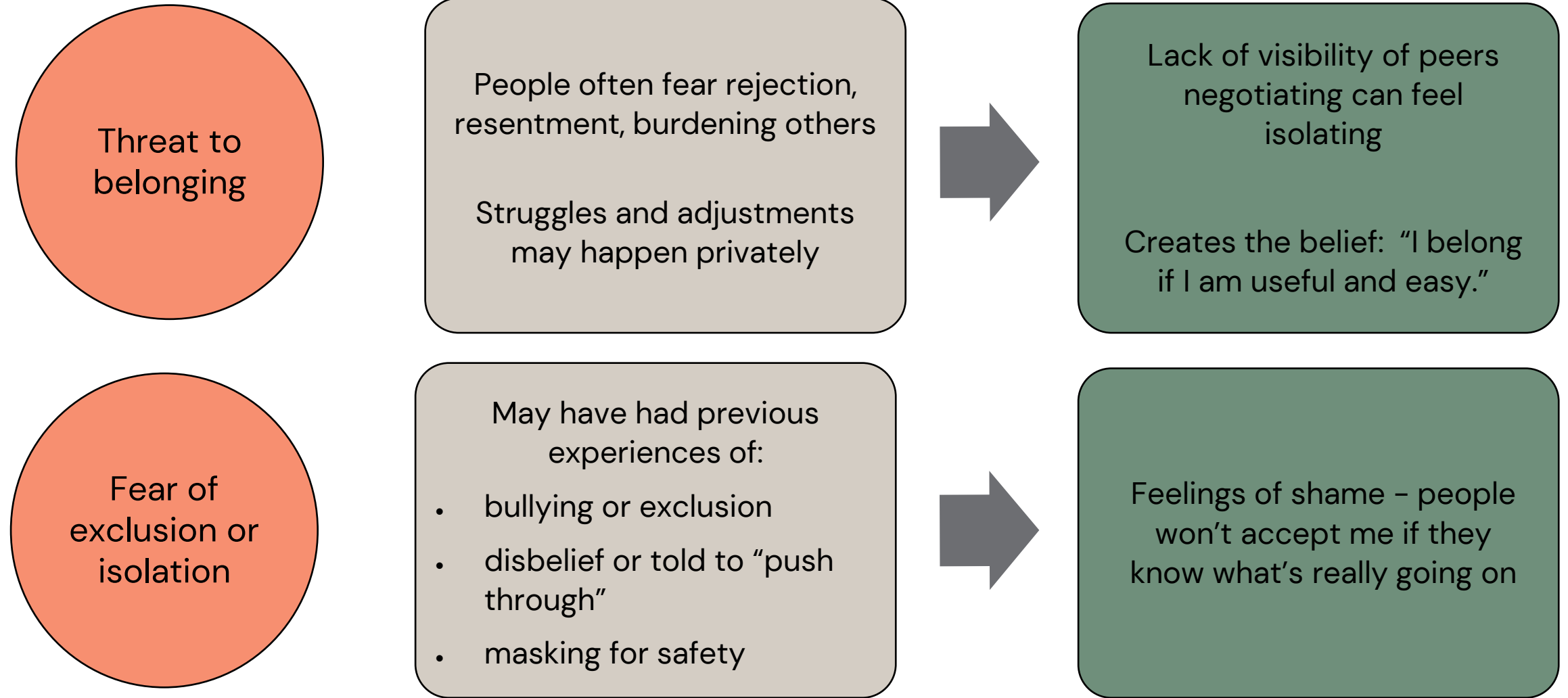
I **can** take control of how I express what I need to do my best work.

Whatever the outcome, this is valuable because:

- It gives me agency
- Even having the conversation helps to shape a more accessible future for all"

Relatedness

Why requiring adjustments can make us feel less Related



Relatedness-based strategies for self-advocacy

Choose your safe people

Who you're happy to disclose what to

People may need time to process, or more information

Recognise that adjustments improve collaboration

- "When I have the adjustments in place I need, we all meet our goals."
- "When I can be more open, I can connect more authentically"

Connect to the broader community

You are not alone!

Others also need- and are negotiating - adjustments

"Other people understand me and experience the same."

You are part of a community! Feedback from ADCI network

I take confidence in knowing I can ask this of publishers – and it does work

For an overseas speaking event, I asked them to pay for an extra night for a recovery day between travelling and doing the event

The more times you ask, the easier it becomes to ask, but I still find it hard.

"This is a legal right, where I'm not being difficult...this is a requirement for me to do my job/best work."

*I use an access card for literary events...it shows physical requirements and my needs pictorially, which really helps avoid long embarrassing conversations that constantly arise and eliminates the following feeling of vulnerability, and weight of having to be constantly ready to answer.
It's £23 and lasts three years.*

How the act of self-advocating can help meet Relatedness

We may fear that revealing our needs will
make us less connected to others.

But hiding our needs creates distance with others.

And dismissing our needs makes us feel less
connected to ourselves.

Practicalities

Planning for the conversation:

Define a good outcome from the conversation, that is within your control:
"I stated my needs clearly and professionally."

Plan what you are happy to share – people don't need to know your condition, only your needs

Plan your non-negotiables

Decide in advance what you can flex on

Have some phrases in your toolkit

Areas to consider:

Workflow

- Staggered workflow
- Flexible / extended deadlines
- Longer review periods

Communication

- Format of feedback – Notes, audio, in-person meetings transcribed
- Use of screen reader / assistive technology?
- Email / phone / video preference

Logistics

- Travel – distance/duration
- Events – frequency/length
- Buffer time (before/during /after)
- Decompression areas
- Accessibility

Having the conversation:

Language

- Say what you can do, with suggested solutions
- I don't versus I can't – use as you see fit
- Dual outcomes

Nuance

- Explain constant versus variable symptoms
- During a flare up x might intensify. This means...
- Variability is part of the condition which is why adjustments are required

Authenticity

- Structured / collaborative
- Rider is a live document – how will you communicate in the case of changes
- Agree check ins in advance to see how working for both

After the conversation:

Record agreements

- Record agreements in writing
- Update the rider and share

Rumination

- Go back to desired outcome of meeting
- Brains fill in gaps with worst possible scenarios
- Recognise discomfort does not mean it's wrong!

Renegotiating

- Refer back to the rider and summarise what is and isn't happening
- "The agreed adjustment isn't working as we thought"
- Be specific about what needs to change

When things don't go to plan: You arrive and no measures taken

- Give yourself time to consider how to respond
 - Remind yourself that you have the right to ask
 - You cannot control how they respond
 - Be clear on any non-negotiables
- It can be helpful to think about a scale of options
 - Best case scenario, worst case scenario
- Avoid the question “why” – lead with how or what
- After the event follow up – retains empowerment but relieves pressure to respond in the moment

Final thoughts:

Expect discomfort – and recognise it for what it is:

- It's not because your needs are unreasonable
- It's because this may breach one of your psychological needs

Choose a way to advocate for yourself in a way which meets your psychological needs and feels authentic to you

Remember:

Adjustments are not the opposite of excellence.
They may just be the conditions that make excellence possible.



Thank you!

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