

Brief overview of challenging behaviors in children and adolescents

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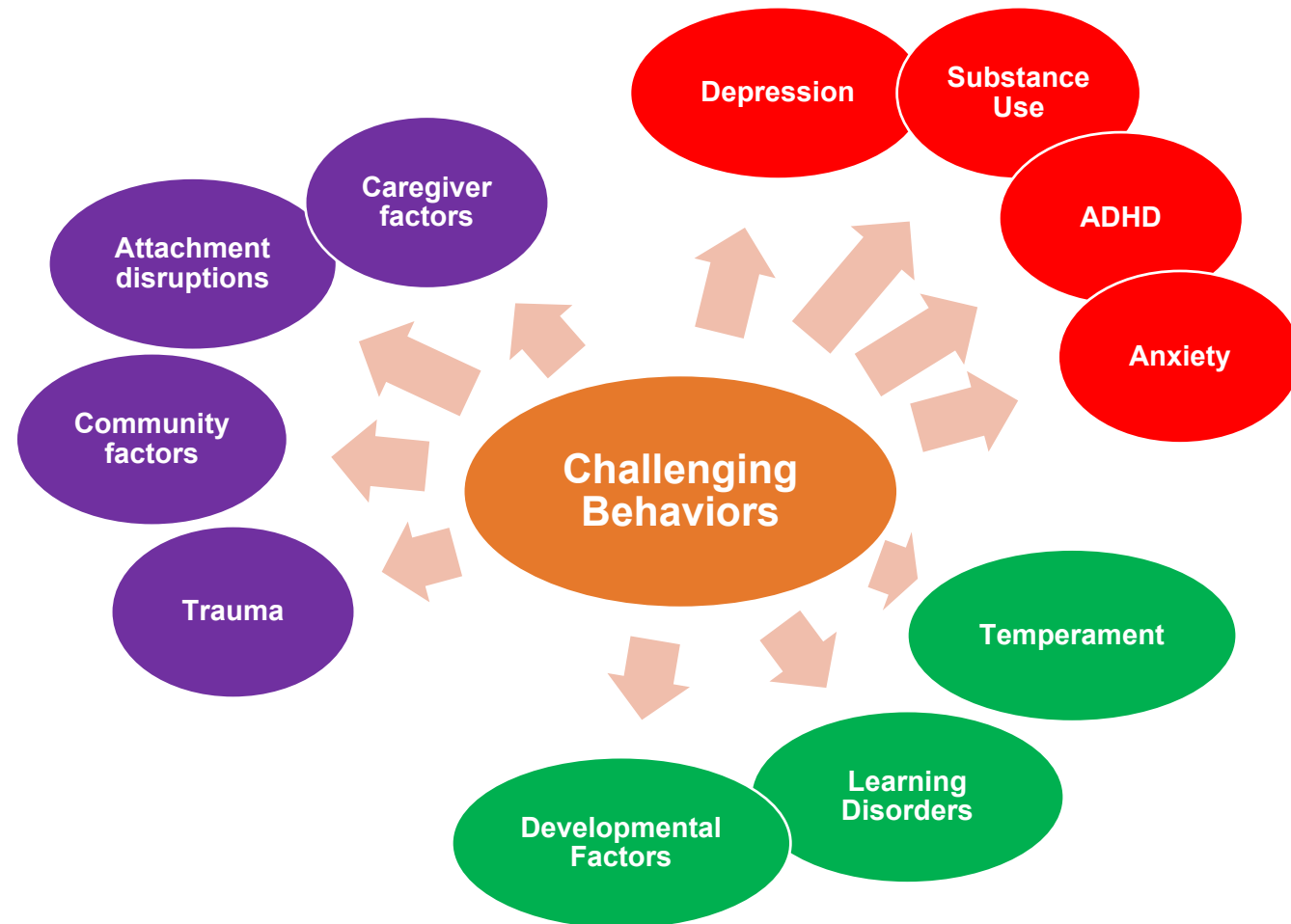
What are challenging behaviors?

Meltdowns/Tantrums

Verbal Aggression

Physical Aggression

Challenging behaviors are a flag for underlying issues



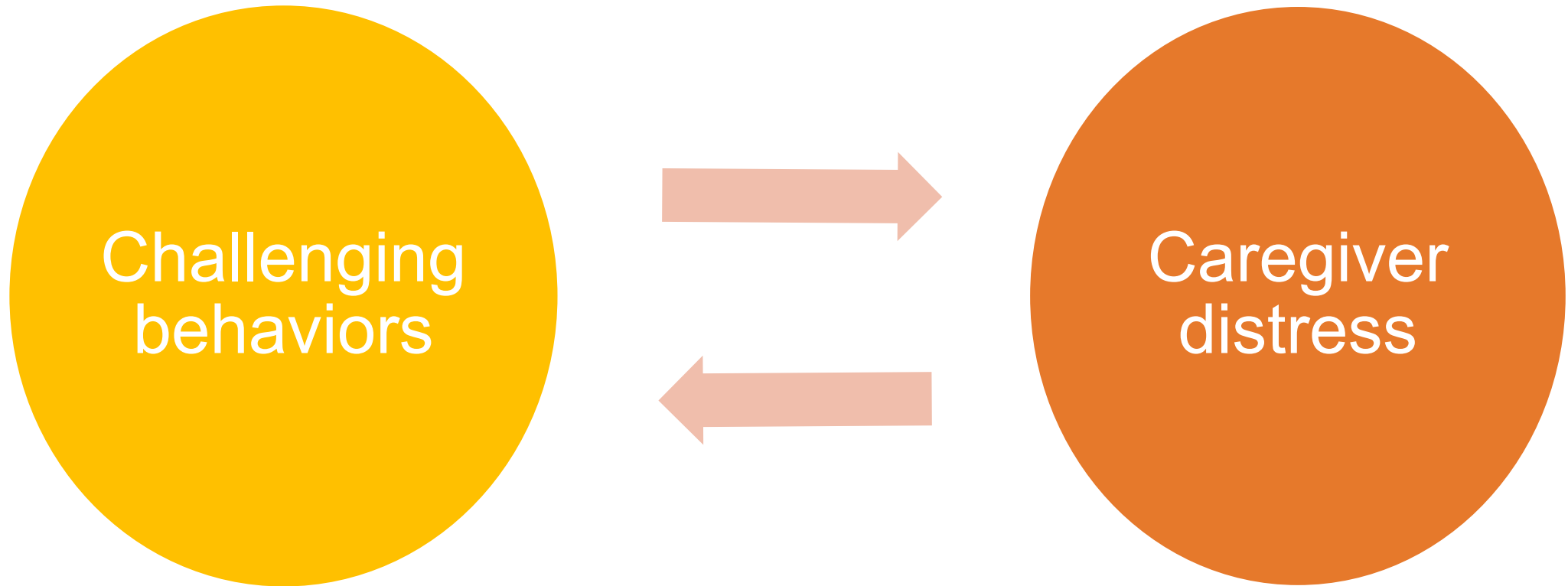
Approach to Assessment

- Take a thorough history
 - May take a few appointments
 - Interview caregiver and child/youth separately
 - Include developmental screen and temperamental factors
 - Consider whether behavior is within normal range
- Assess safety issues
 - Siblings in the home
 - Safety planning
 - Need for MCFD involvement?
- Rating scales are your friend!
 - SNAP-IV (ADHD)
 - SCARED (anxiety)
 - PHQ-9 (depression)
 - CRAFFT (substance use)

Consider environmental factors

- Attachment disruptions
 - Frequent moves, changes in caregivers, parental separation, domestic violence,
 - Parenting mental health issues/ history of trauma
 - Intergenerational/community trauma
- Home
 - Social determinants of health: housing, food security, ...
 - Parenting:
 - What is your parenting approach?
 - How do you respond to [challenging behavior]? How is that working? (get + and – examples)
 - Do you and [co-parent] have similar approaches?
- School
 - Bullying
 - Peer/staff relationships
- Community
 - Sports, church, cultural connections

Amplification cycle



Multifactorial approach to management

Education for family/school

- Goal is to promote understanding of factors contributing to difficult behaviors and problem-solve ways to address them

Strength-based approach: build connection, community, and feelings of competence

- Cultural connections

Treat comorbid disorders (pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic)

Supports for child/youth

- Younger kids: play therapy/Zones of Regulation/How does my engine run?
- Older kids: DBT, CBT

Supports for family system

- Attachment-based programs
- Behavioral-based programs