

# Minding your mind in tough times

Protecting your mental  
Health in tough times

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3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011



# MINDING YOUR MIND

A. Background

B. Stress Management

C. The nature of (di)stress

D. The model of (di)stress

E. Achieving A Balance

F. The prevention of (di)stress - Resilience

# A. BACKGROUND

Concerns – Reported Increase in

- Suicides
- Self-harm
- Absenteeism
- Referrals for counselling
- Etc

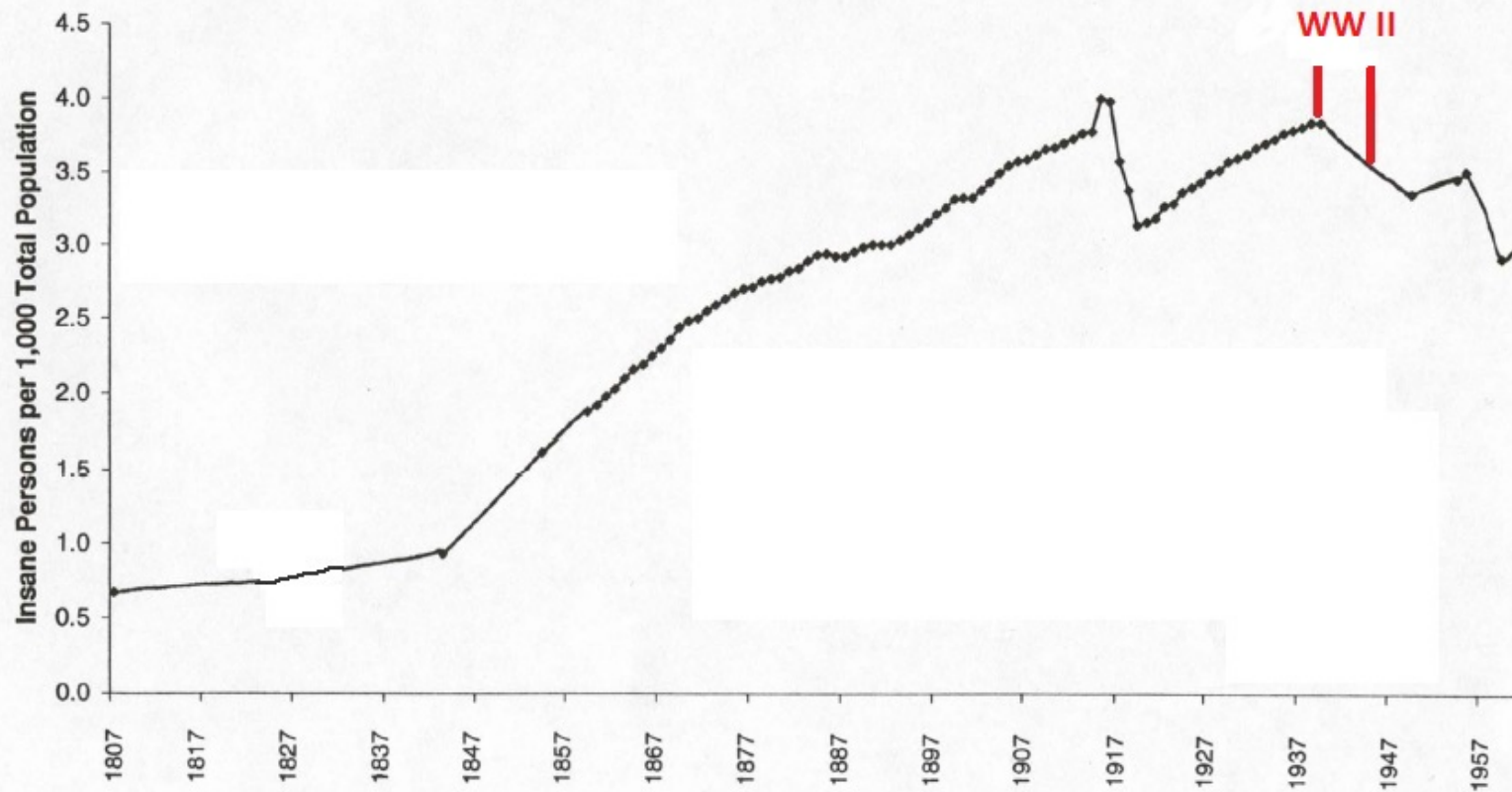
# A. BACKGROUND

But:

- Doesn't have to be ALL negative
- Especially if recognise and plan for it
- Learn its nature, causes & results
- Inoculate against it



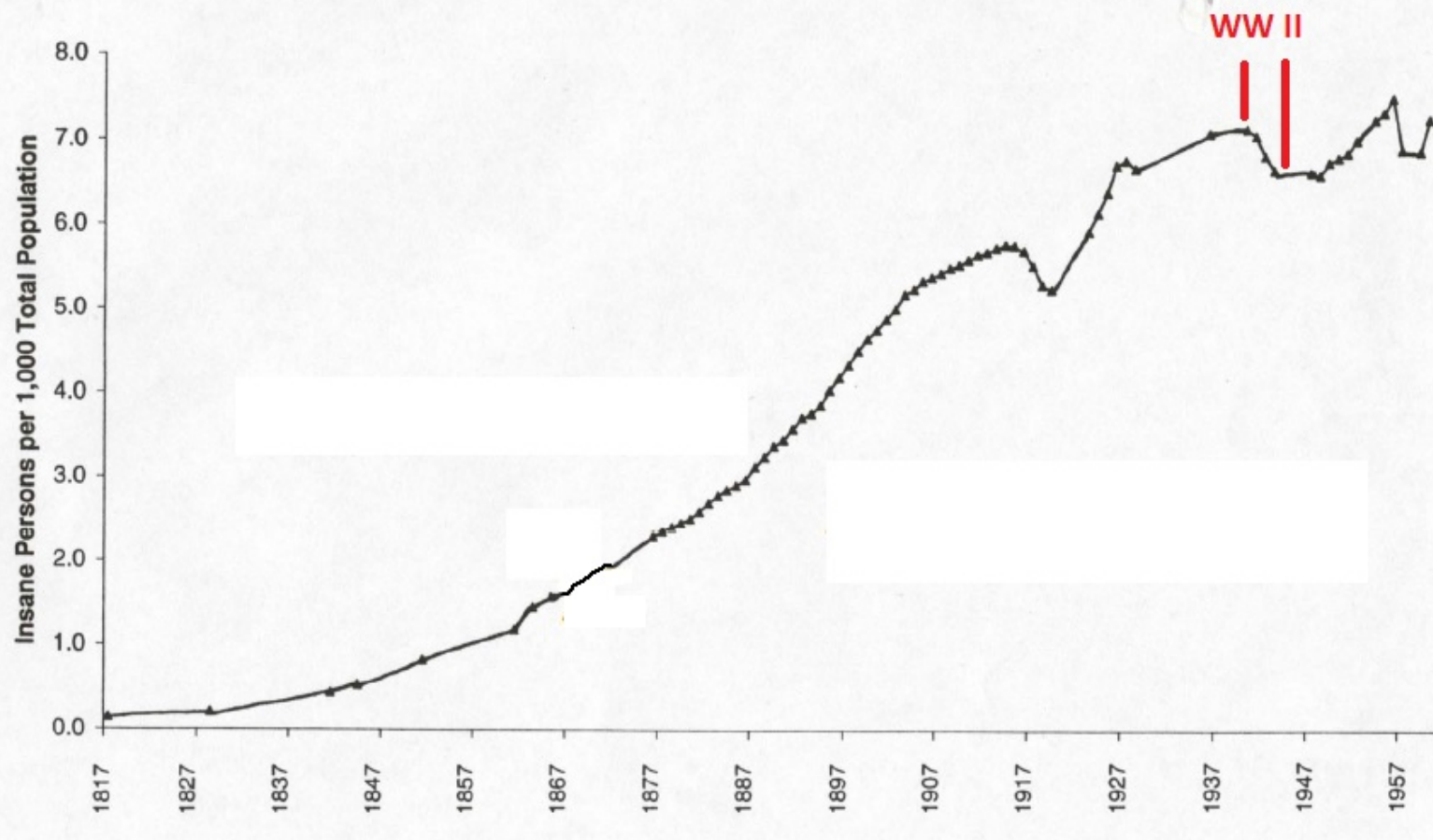
**Figure 1: England and Wales: Insane Persons in Psychiatric Hospitals, Workhouses, and Under Care per 1,000 Population, 1807-1961**



Source: Fuller Torrey (2007)



**Figure 2 : Ireland: Insane Persons in Psychiatric Hospitals, Workhouses, and Jails per 1,000 Population, 1817-1961**



Source: Fuller Torrey (2007)

# FURTHER

- **(Di)stress can be caused by what might appear as positive change**
- **Life Events Inventory**
- **Too much too soon - celebrities**
- **The ‘unlucky’ Lotto winners**
  
- **Problem of Adjustment**

## **B. STRESS MANAGEMENT**

### **Working Definition:**

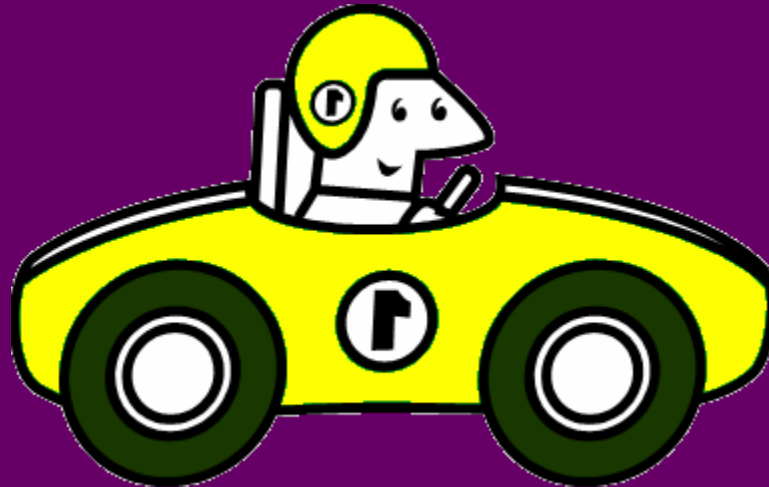
“ A process of (perceived) demands

straining or exceeding an individual's

(perceived) abilities / resources to cope”

# HARMFUL STRESS = (DI)STRESS

We do need some stress – but the right amount



- Too much gives over-stimulation
- Too little gives under-stimulation

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

**PERFORMANCE**



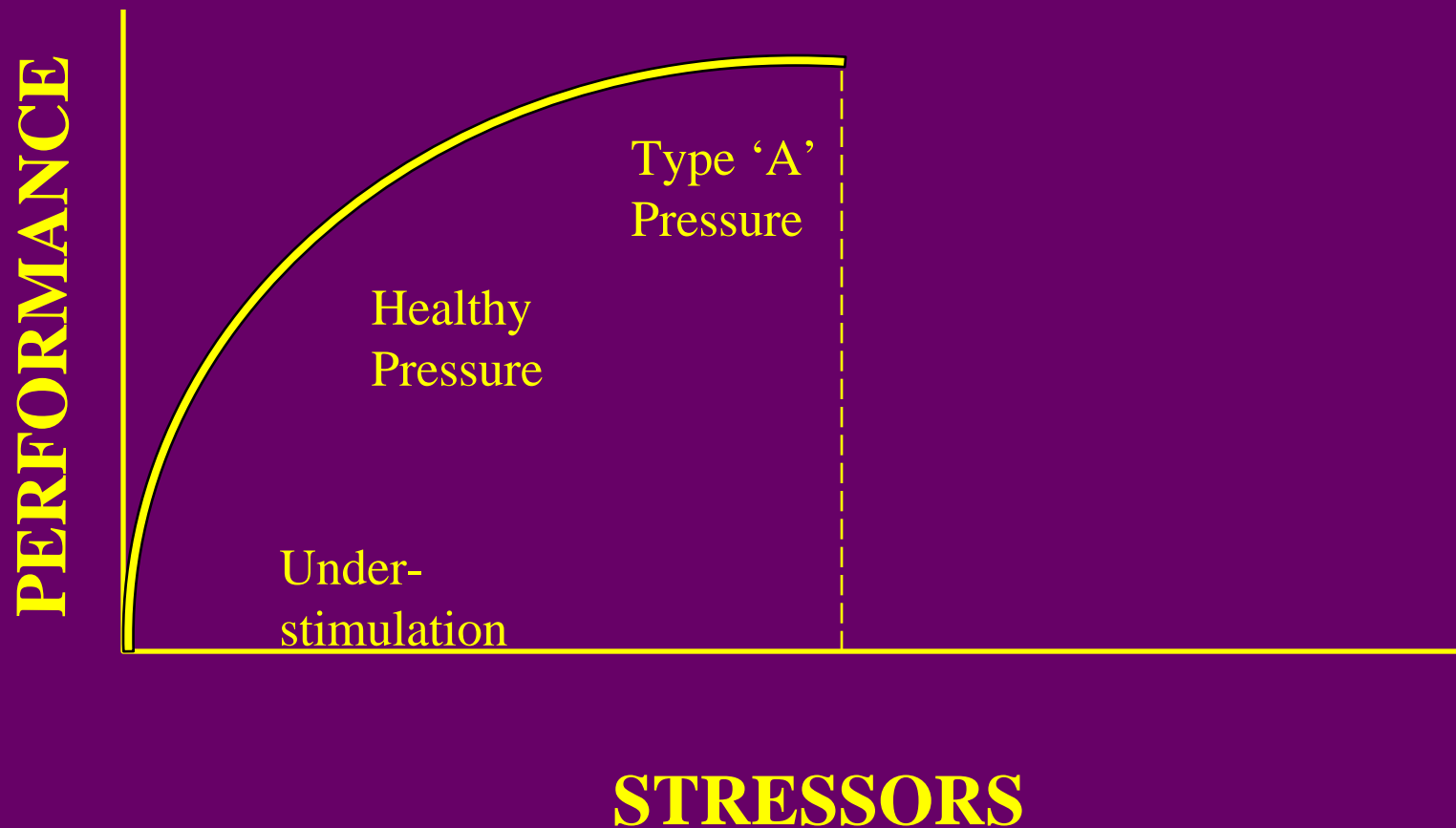
**STRESSORS**

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

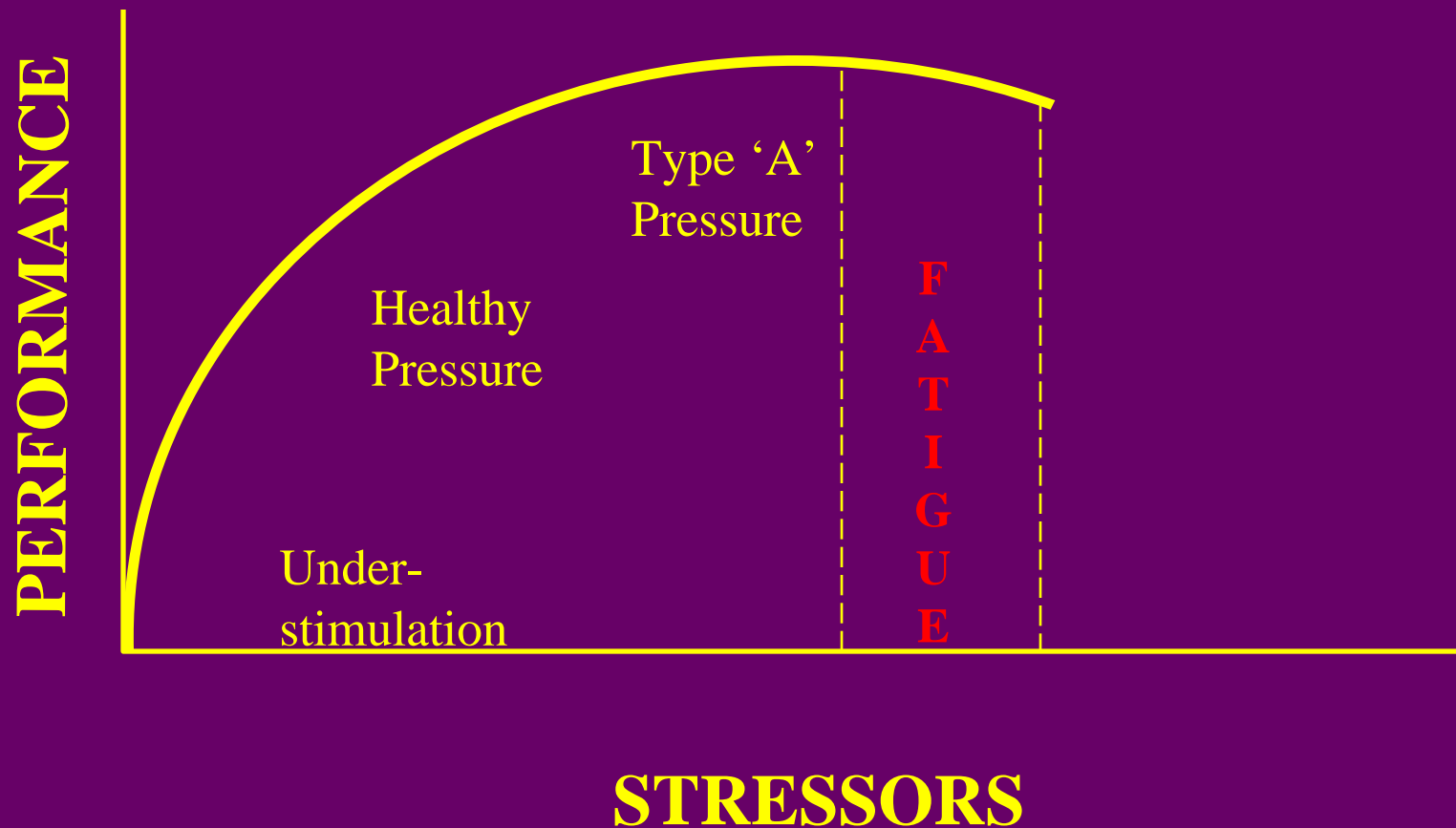


**STRESSORS**

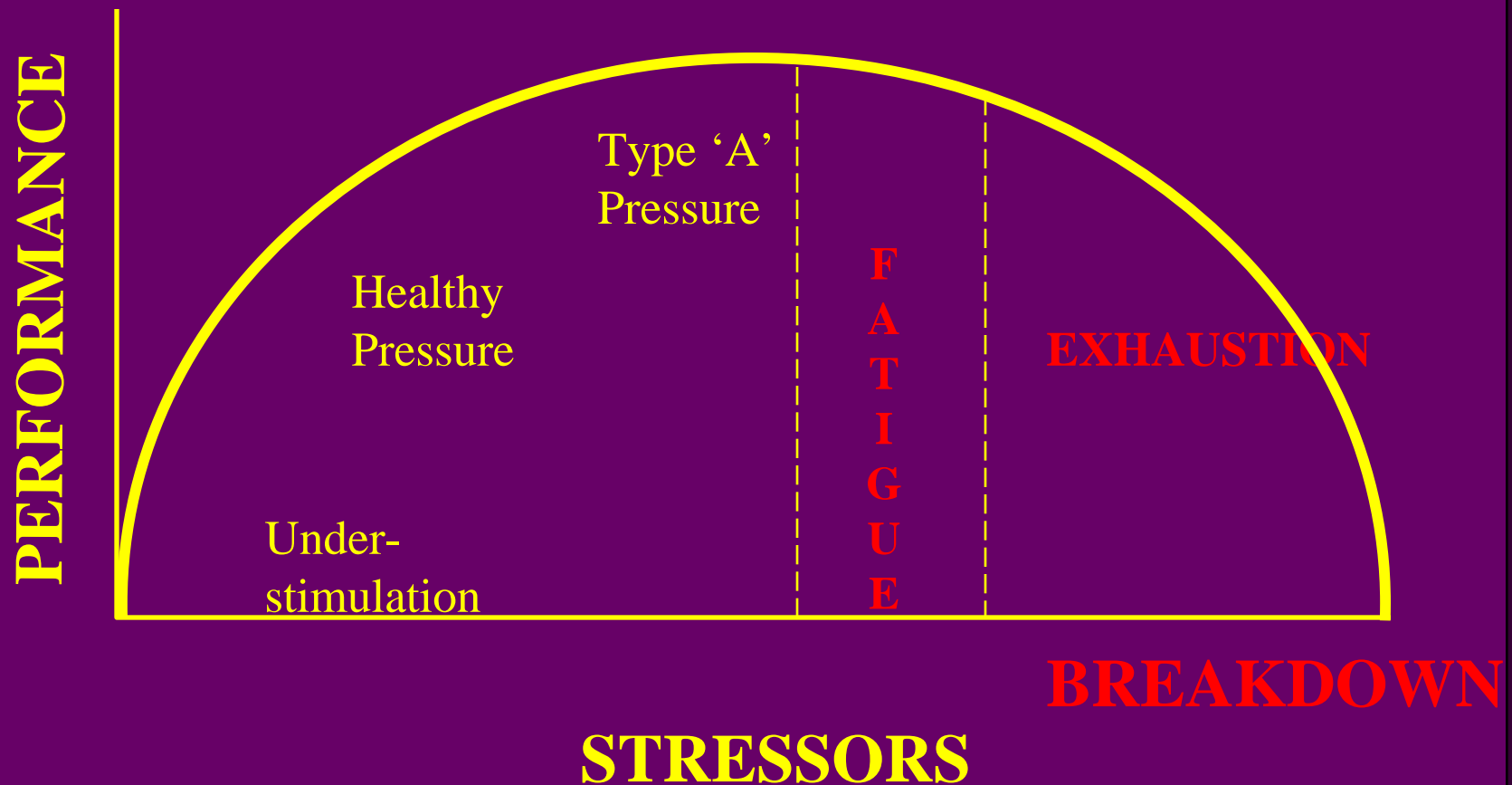
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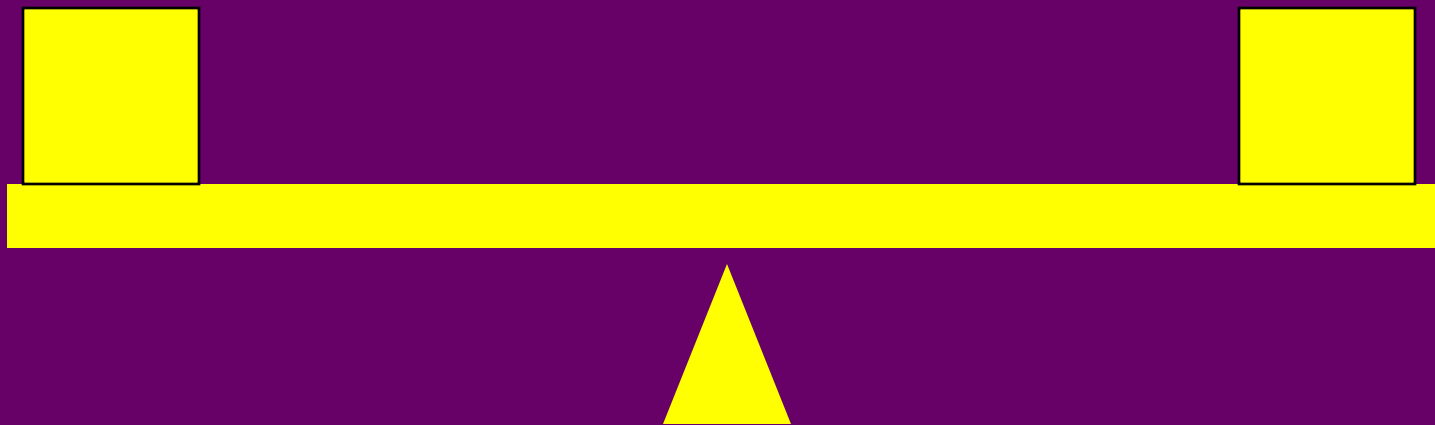


# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

## ENVIRONMENT-PERSON FIT

Perceived  
Demands

Perceived  
Resources



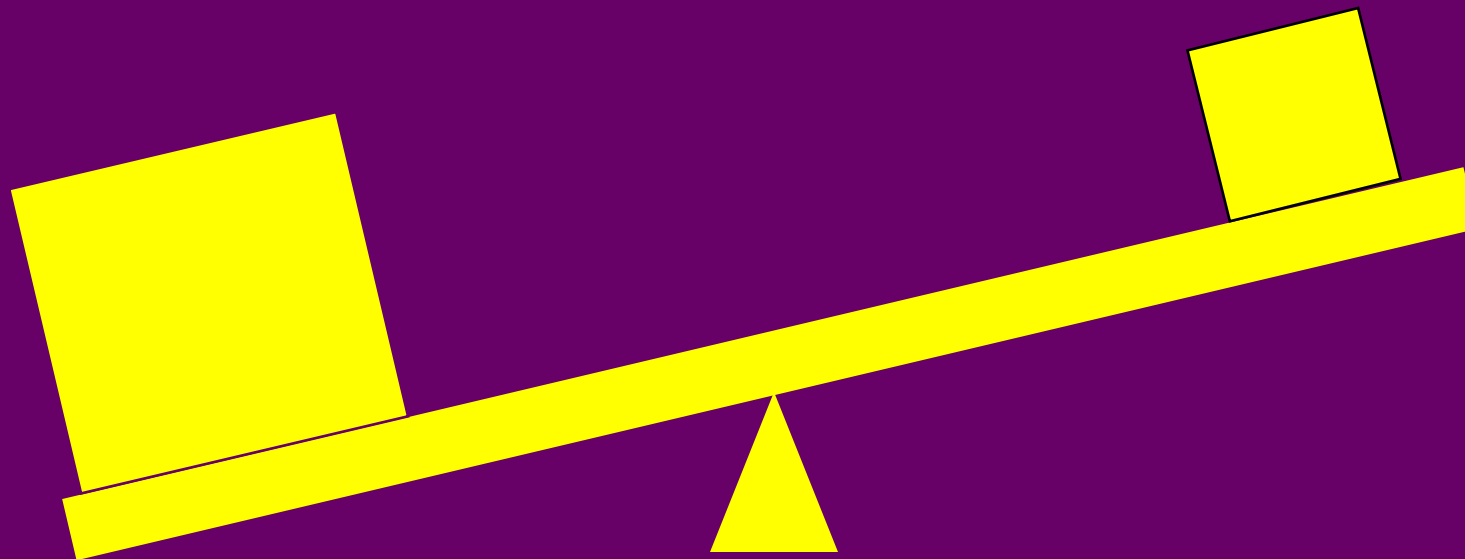
Fit - Mediators

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

## USUAL (DI)STRESS LACK OF ENVIRONMENT-PERSON FIT

Perceived  
Demands

Perceived  
Resources



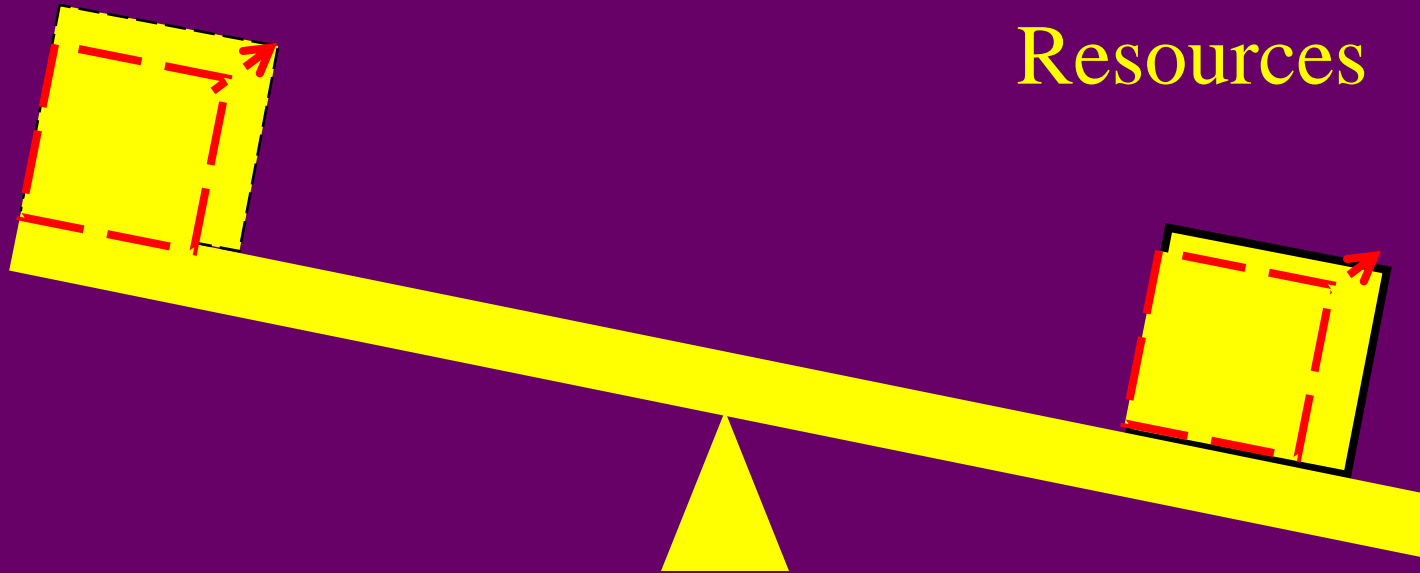
Fit - Mediators

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

## In a 'Bubble'

Demands  
Increase

Increased  
Perceived  
Resources



Fit - Mediators

# FROM BOOM TO ZOOM TO BUST

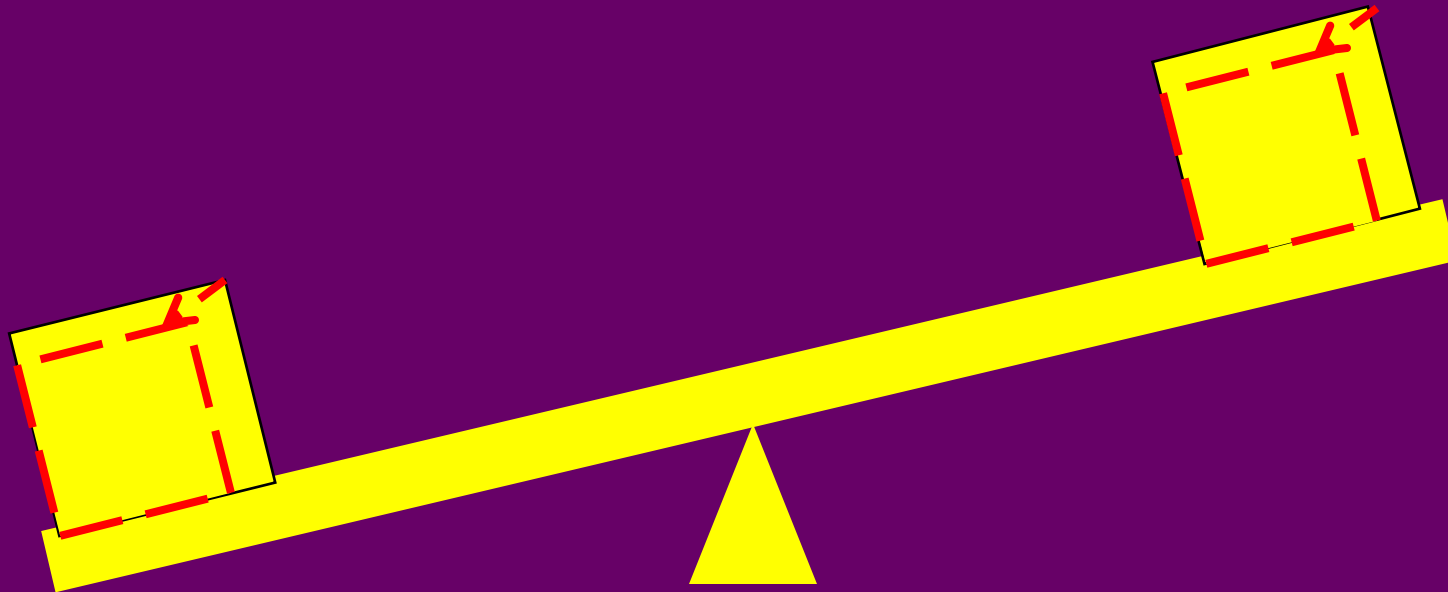
- Economist 1988 – Ireland “Poorest of Rich”
- Economist 1977 – “as prosperous as European average, and getting richer all the time”
- Moneyweek 2006 – “The Irish Economic Miracle” – 4<sup>th</sup> highest effective GDP
- November 2010 – IMF - Bailout

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

## In a Recession

Demands  
Decrease

Decrease of  
Resources



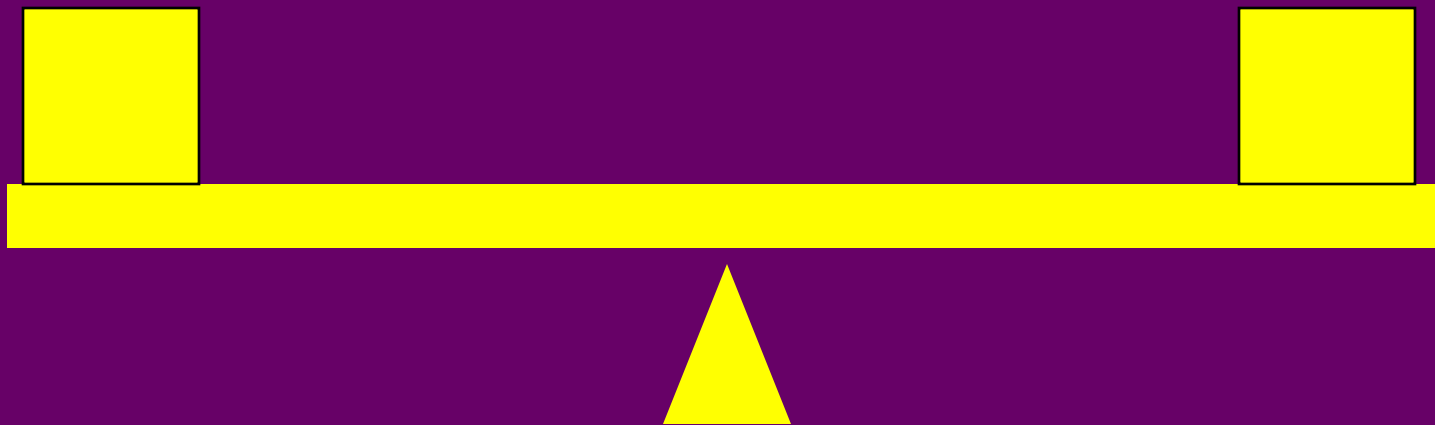
Fit - Mediators

# C. THE NATURE OF (DI) STRESS

**Back to pre-Celtic Tiger Balance?**

Perceived  
Demands

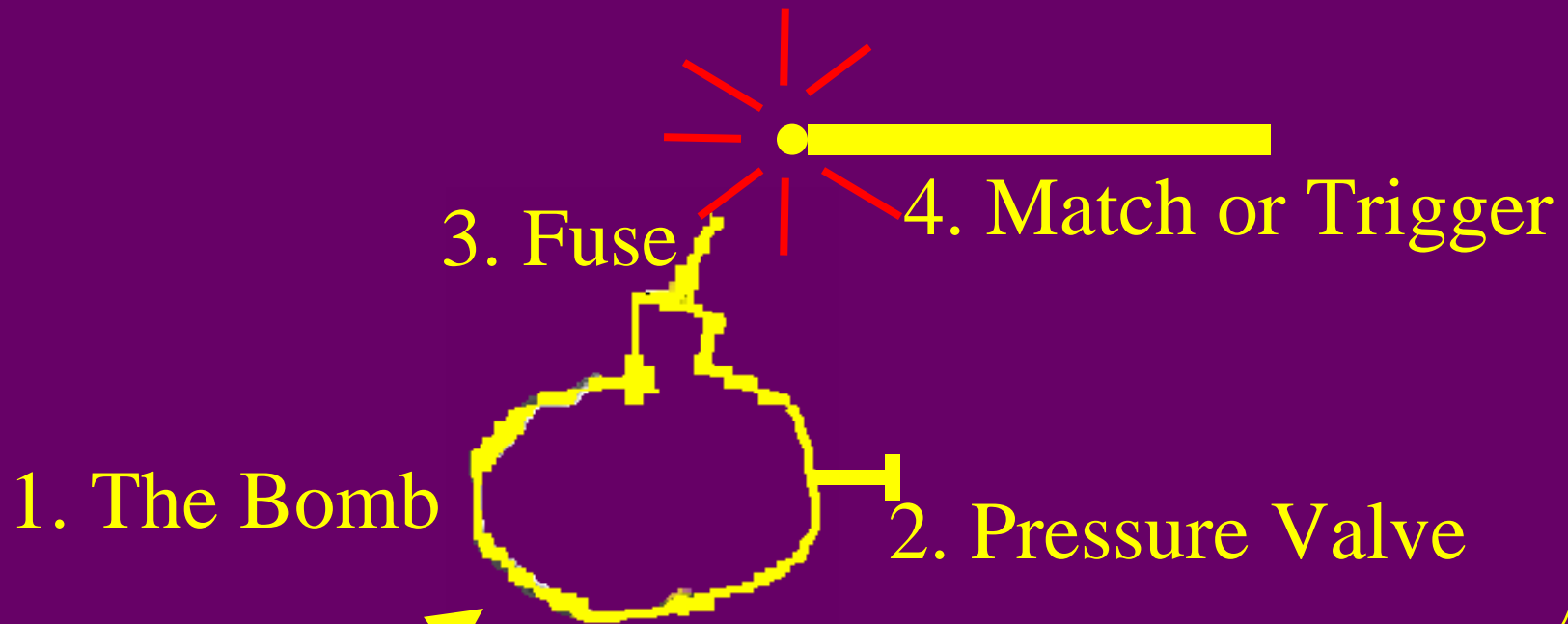
Perceived  
Resources



Fit - Mediators

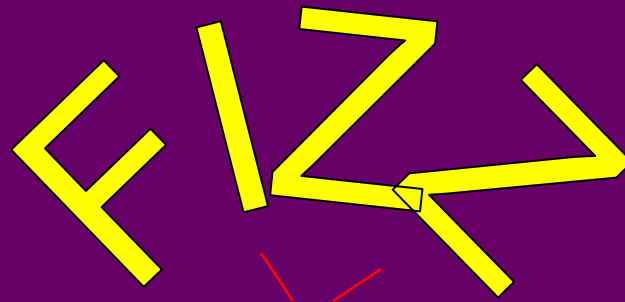
# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

5. Work Environment

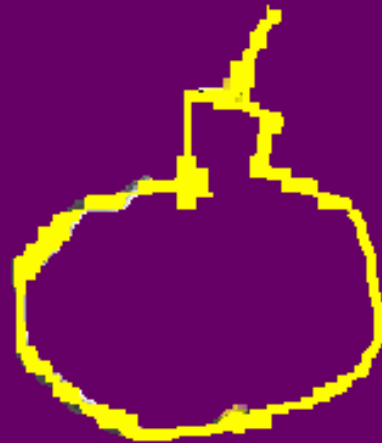


6. External Environment

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



7. Indicators



# **D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL**

## **7. INDICATORS**

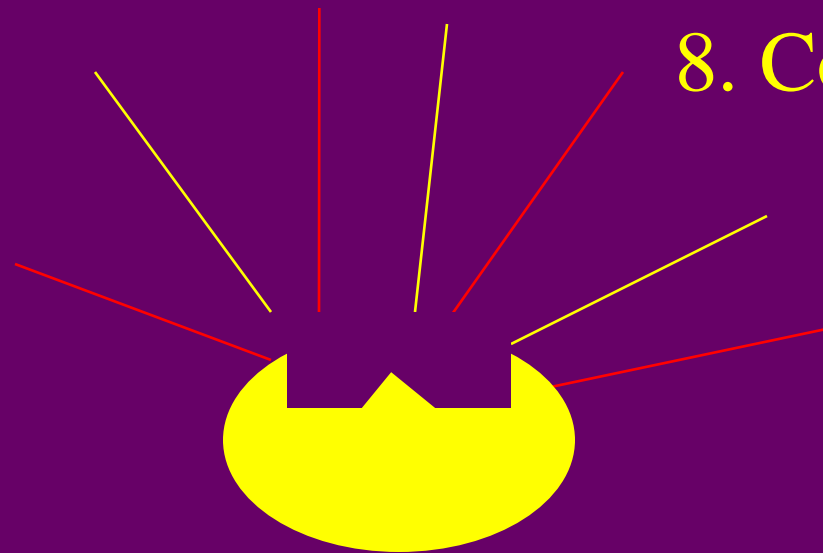
### **Medium-Term Indicators**

#### **Behavioural**

- Frequent absences from work
- Inefficiency or incompetence at work
- Addictions (alcohol/drugs/medication)
- Marital & family breakdown
- Social isolation

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

BOOM



8. Consequences

# **D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL**

## **8. CONSEQUENCES**

### **Long-Term Consequences**

#### **Physical & Mental**

- A variety of illnesses
- Both mental & physical
- Suicide



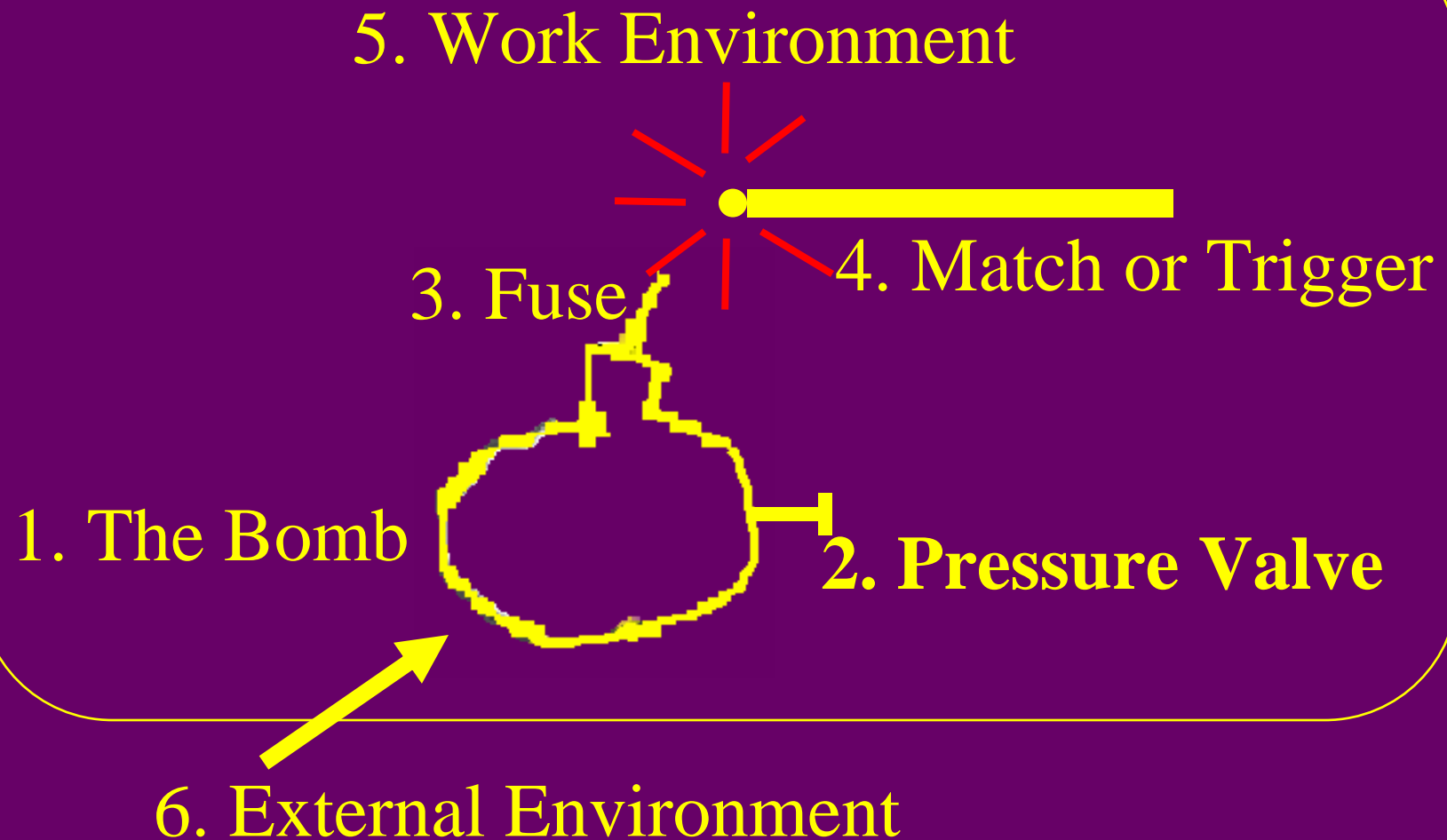
# **D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS**

## **1. WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL**

### **Individual characteristics**

- attitude to living
- style of behaviour
- ambition
- personality type

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

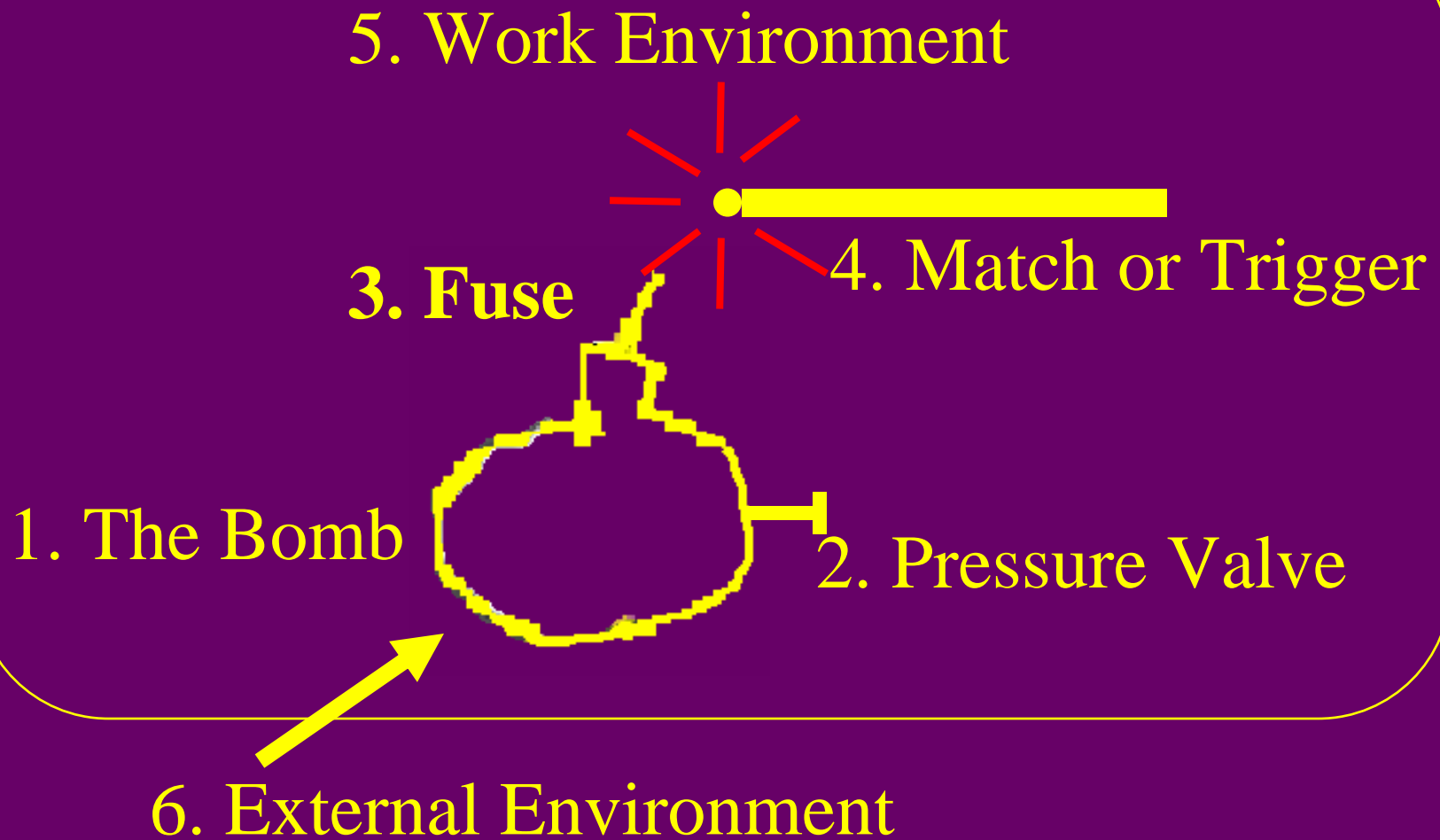


# **D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS**

## **2. MEDIATORS - COPING STYLES**

relaxation techniques  
general coping styles  
perceptions / thoughts

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



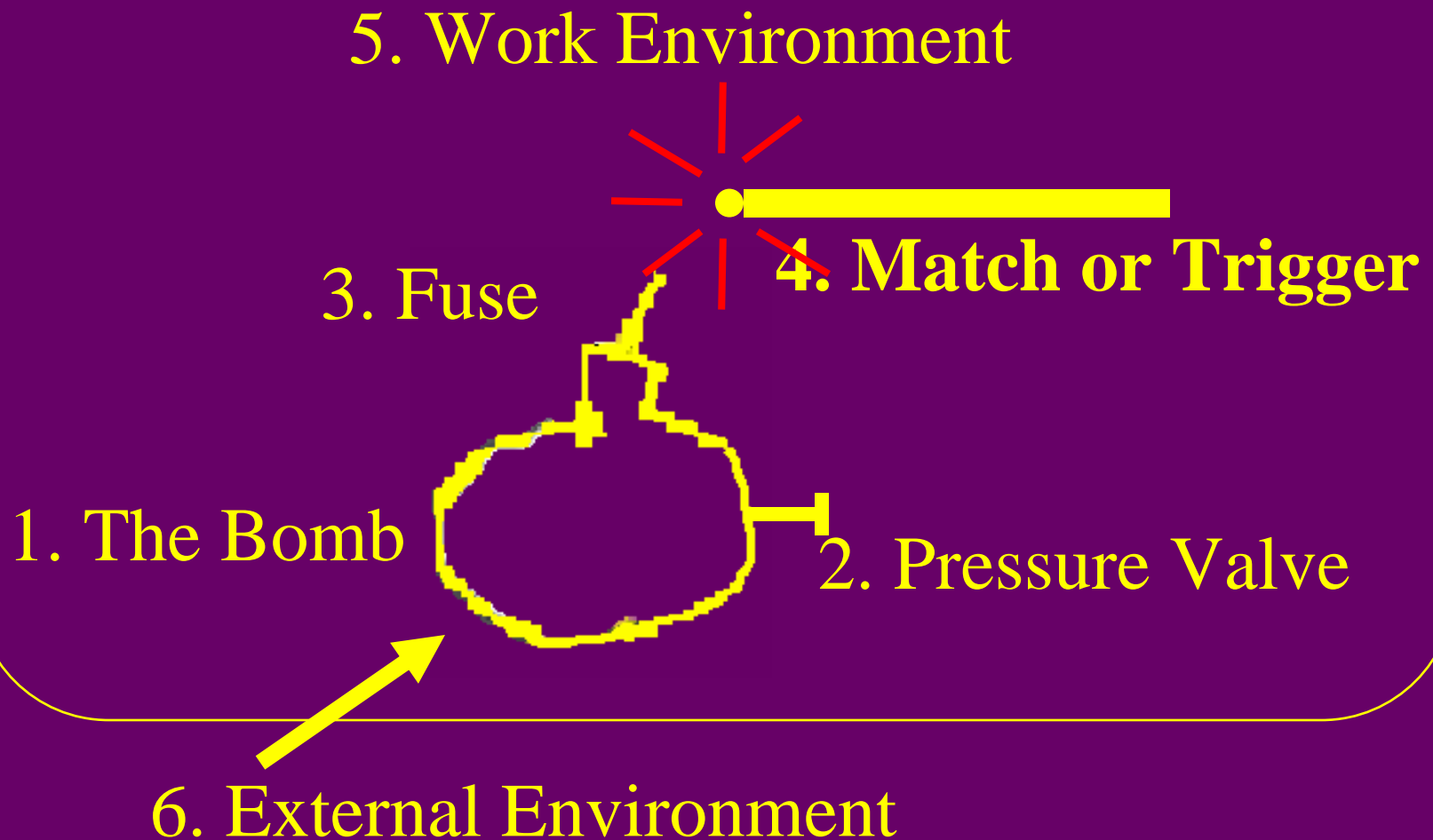
# **D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS**

## **MEDIATORS**

### **3. SPECIFIC COPING BEHAVIOURS**

- problem solving skills
- social and inter-personal skills
- anger management
- conflict management
- assertiveness skills

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



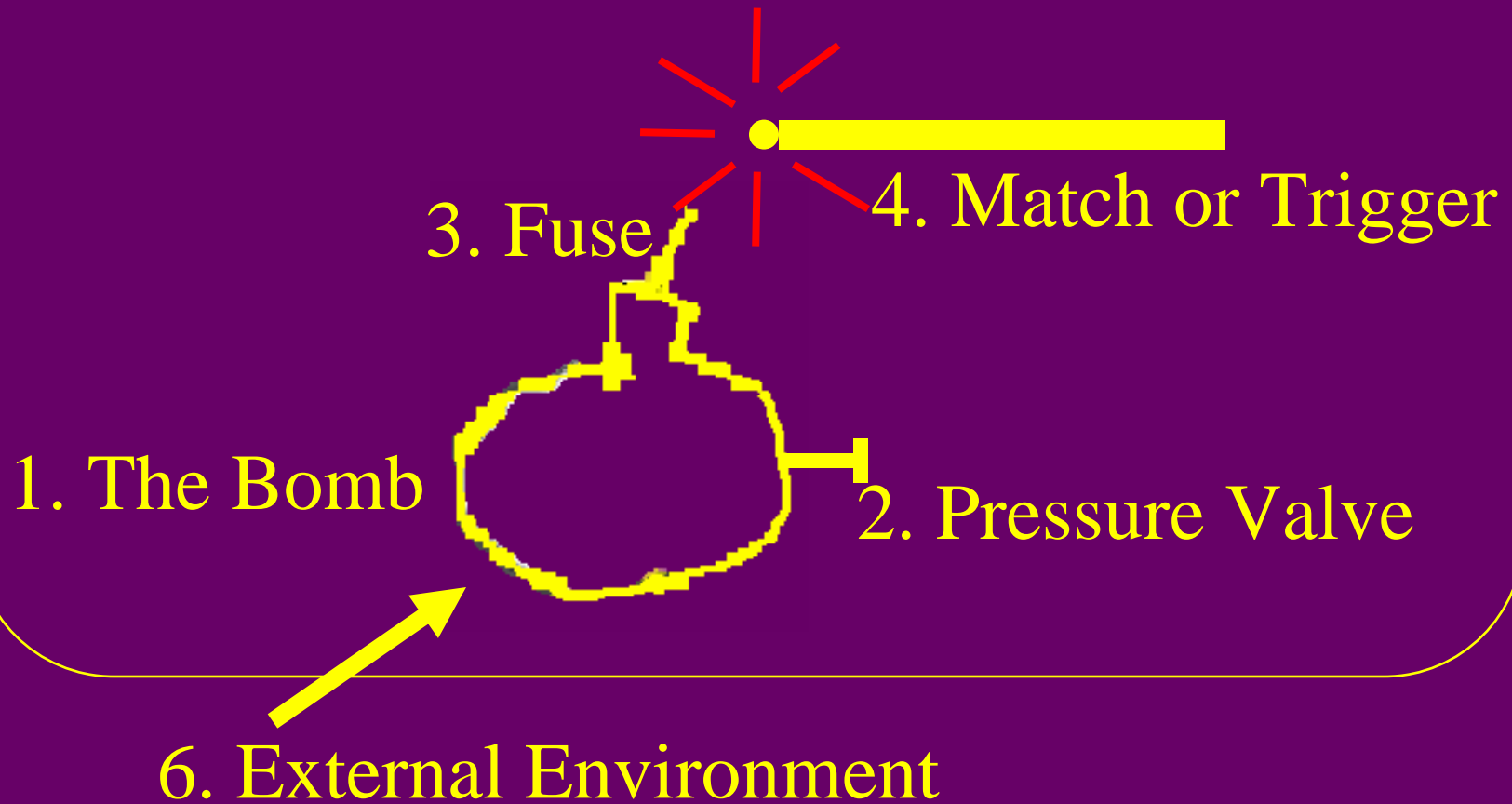
# D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS

## 4. MATCH OR TRIGGERS

- requests to doing things
- demands by others
- meeting with specific deadlines
- (perceived) threats / intimidation / bullying
- physical or verbal aggression

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

## 5. Work Environment



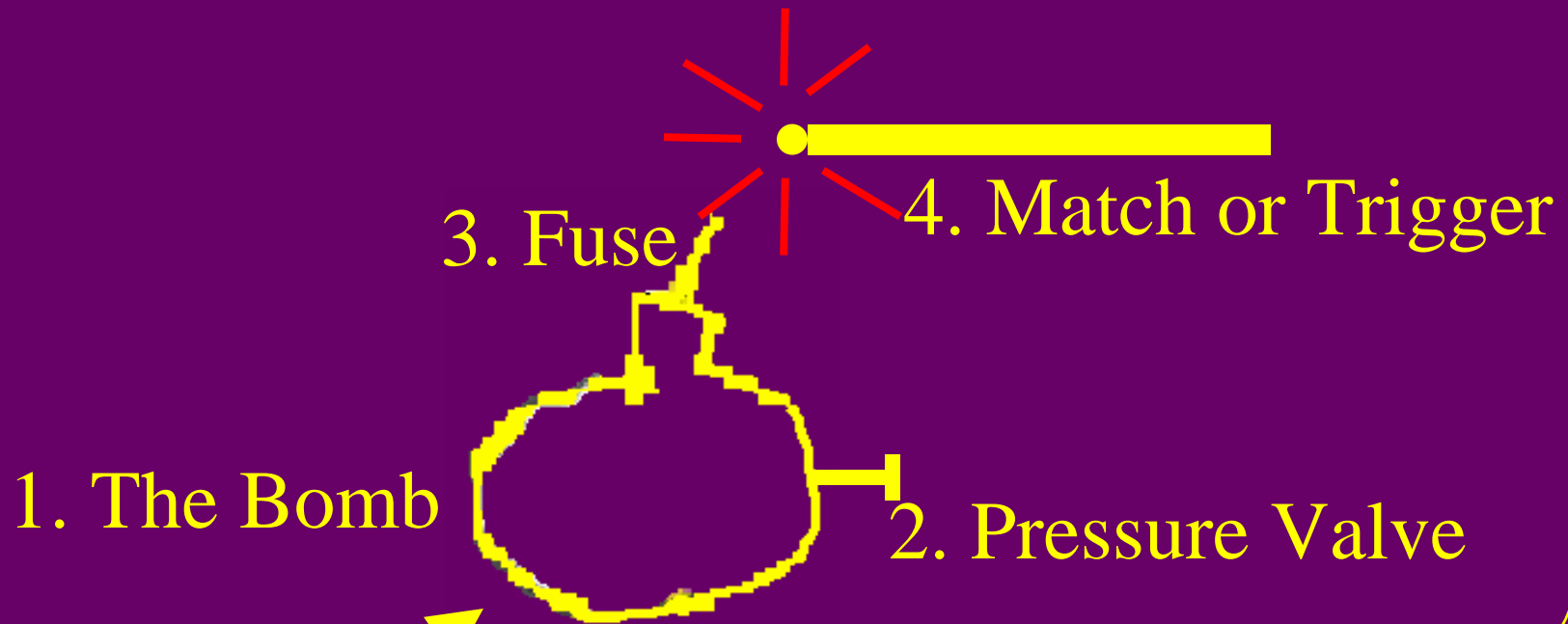
# **D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS**

## **5. WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- factors intrinsic to the job
- role in the organisation
- relationships within the organisation
- career development – or lack of
- Organisational structure and climate
- Home/work interface

# D. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

5. Work Environment



6. External Environment

# **D. MODEL OF (DI)STRESS**

## **SOURCES**

### **6. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT**

- Life Events
- change
- home-work overspill
- social and emotional support
- financial pressures
- conflicts with family demands

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **AWARENESS OF IMBALANCE**

1. Recognise that there is an imbalance
2. Recognise that almost everyone is similar
3. Get the family involved - work together
4. Change attitude – ALL make adjustment

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **TAKE ACTION**

1. Do an inventory of the balance
2. If necessary seek advice about options
3. Make a plan
4. Seek to regain control where you can

## **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

### **SERENITY PRAYER**

*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

**Rheinhold Niebuhr**

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES**

1. Don't just focus on (and 'blame') individual
2. Treat the cause and not the symptom
3. Don't aim to get complete relaxation
4. Don't just go for 'quick fix' solutions if long-term ones are needed

# E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE

## INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES

**Therefore:**

- Accept that imbalance will exist with change
- Be aware of sources of help available
- Be willing to listen, advise/counsel
- Be realistic as to what is achievable
- Know Thyself - and thine own (di)stress
- Don't kick the dog!

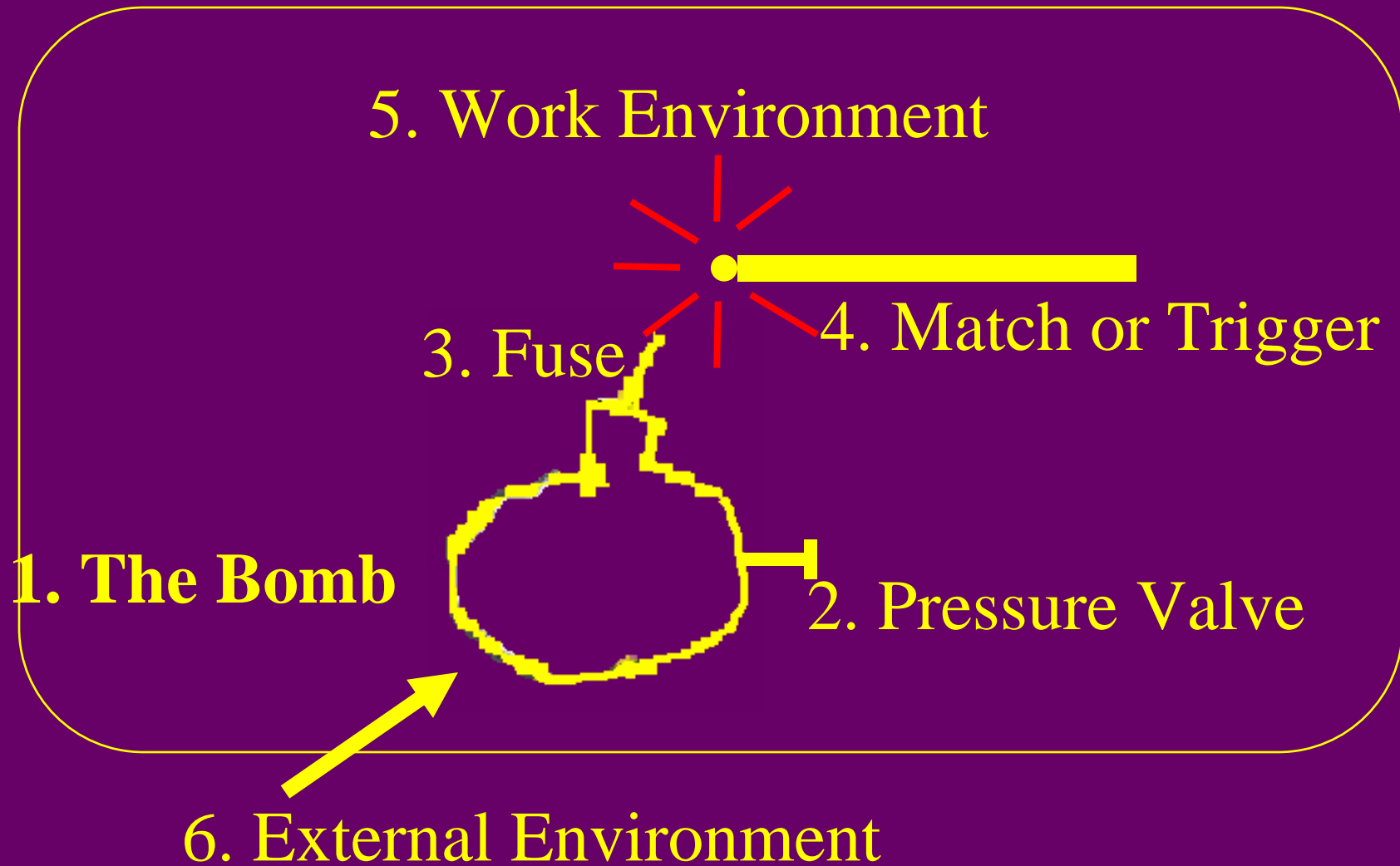
## **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

A range of strategies may be important

### **1. Individual:**

Reduce Pressure within Yourself

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **1. INDIVIDUAL**

### **1. a. Modify Type 'A' Behaviour**

- Accept Type - A behaviour can be dangerous
- Accept that you can change this pattern
- Avoid wasting your life on inessential
- Pay attention to your general health
- Learn a relaxation technique
- Monitor your behaviour under stress

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **1. INDIVIDUAL**

### **1. b. Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle**

- Diet
- Exercise
- Leisure
- Relaxation & Sleep
- Alcohol and other drugs

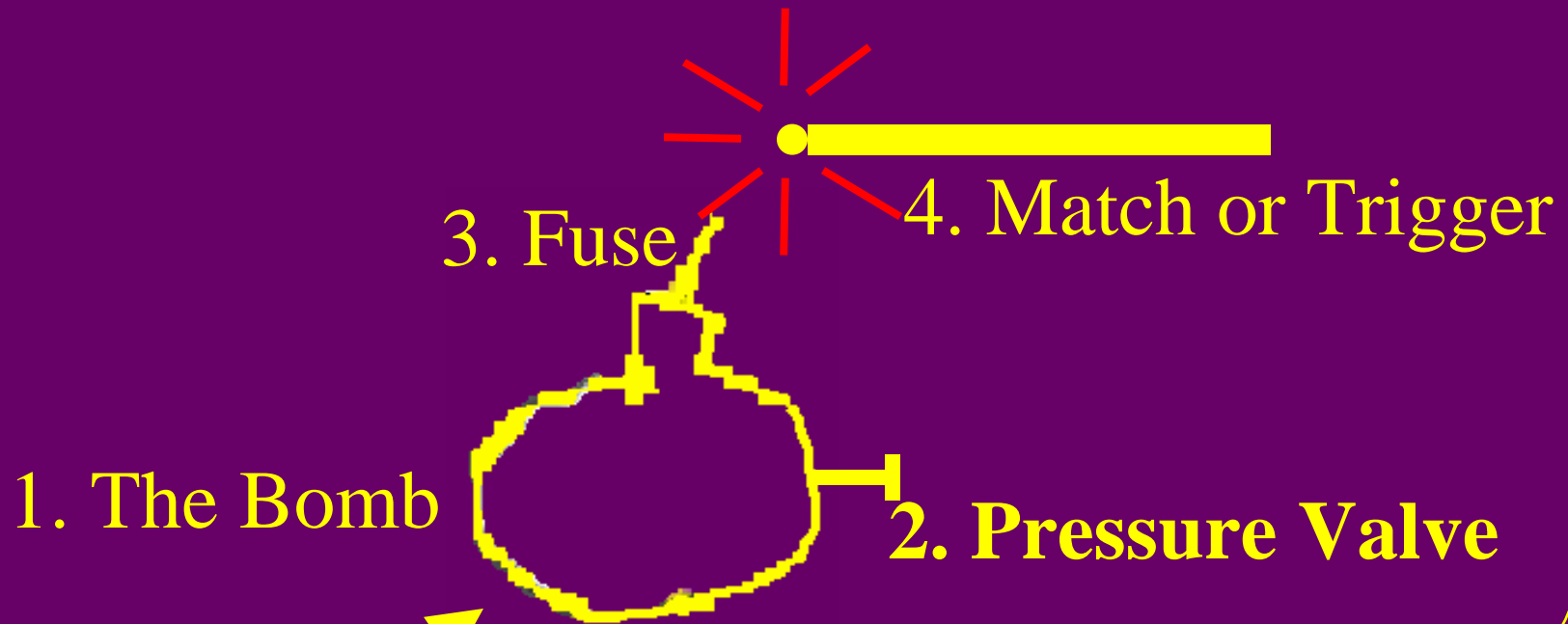
# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **1. c. Developing Appropriate Skills**

- Managing time
- Goal Planning
- Learn what can be changed & what can't
- Changing what can be changed
- Learning to live with what cannot
- Trying to value people

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

5. Work Environment



6. External Environment

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **2. General Coping Styles**

### **a. Develop relaxation techniques**

- Practice short relaxation exercises  
(example: Progressive Muscular Relaxation)**

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **2. General Coping Styles**

### **b. Other ways of relieving pressure**

- Leisure - develop hobbies & interests
- Exercise

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **2.c. Alter Perceptions**

- **Stress is a process**

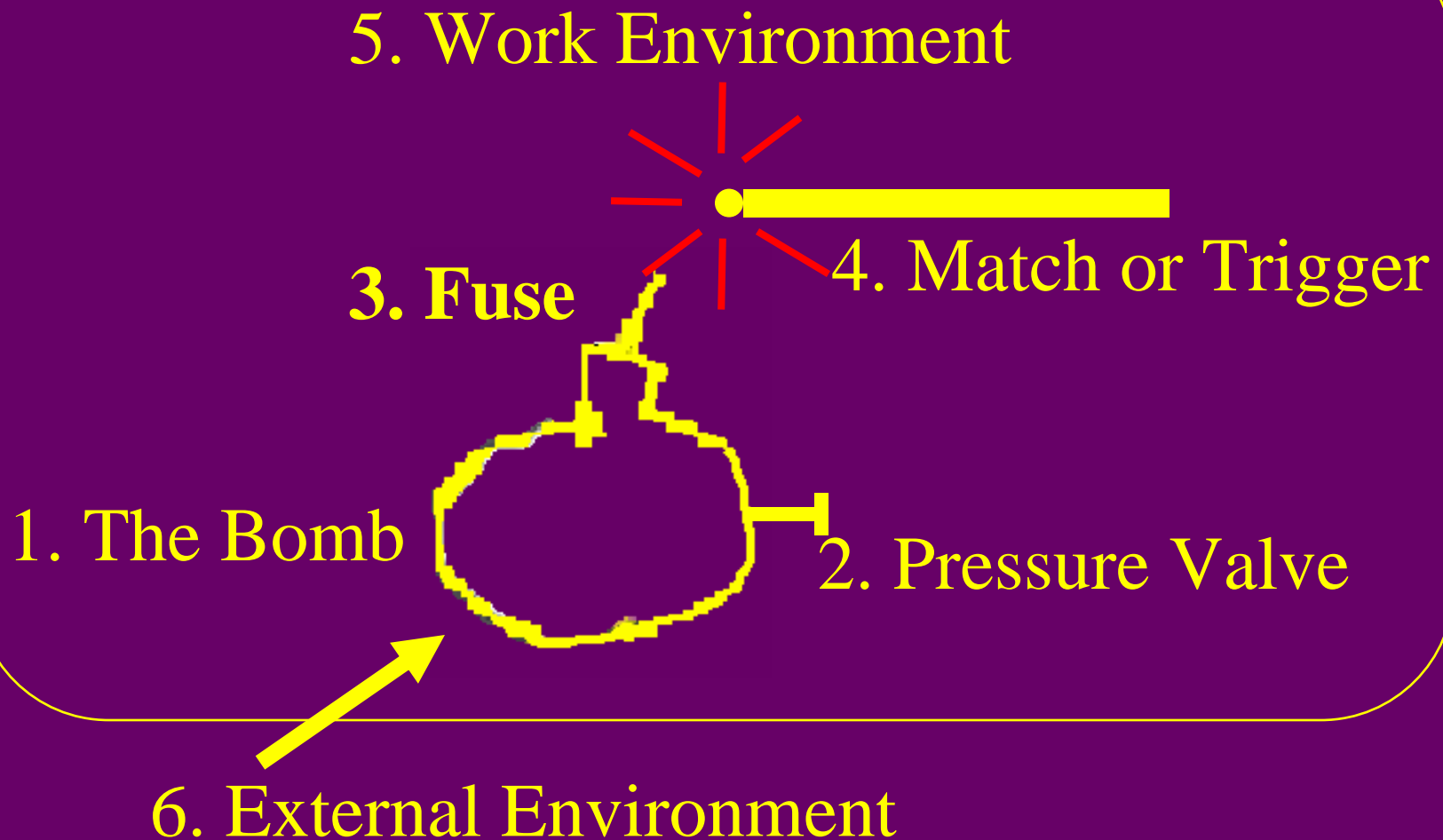
You can break the chain & stop the process

- **of (perceived) demands**

You could change your perception.

cont...

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



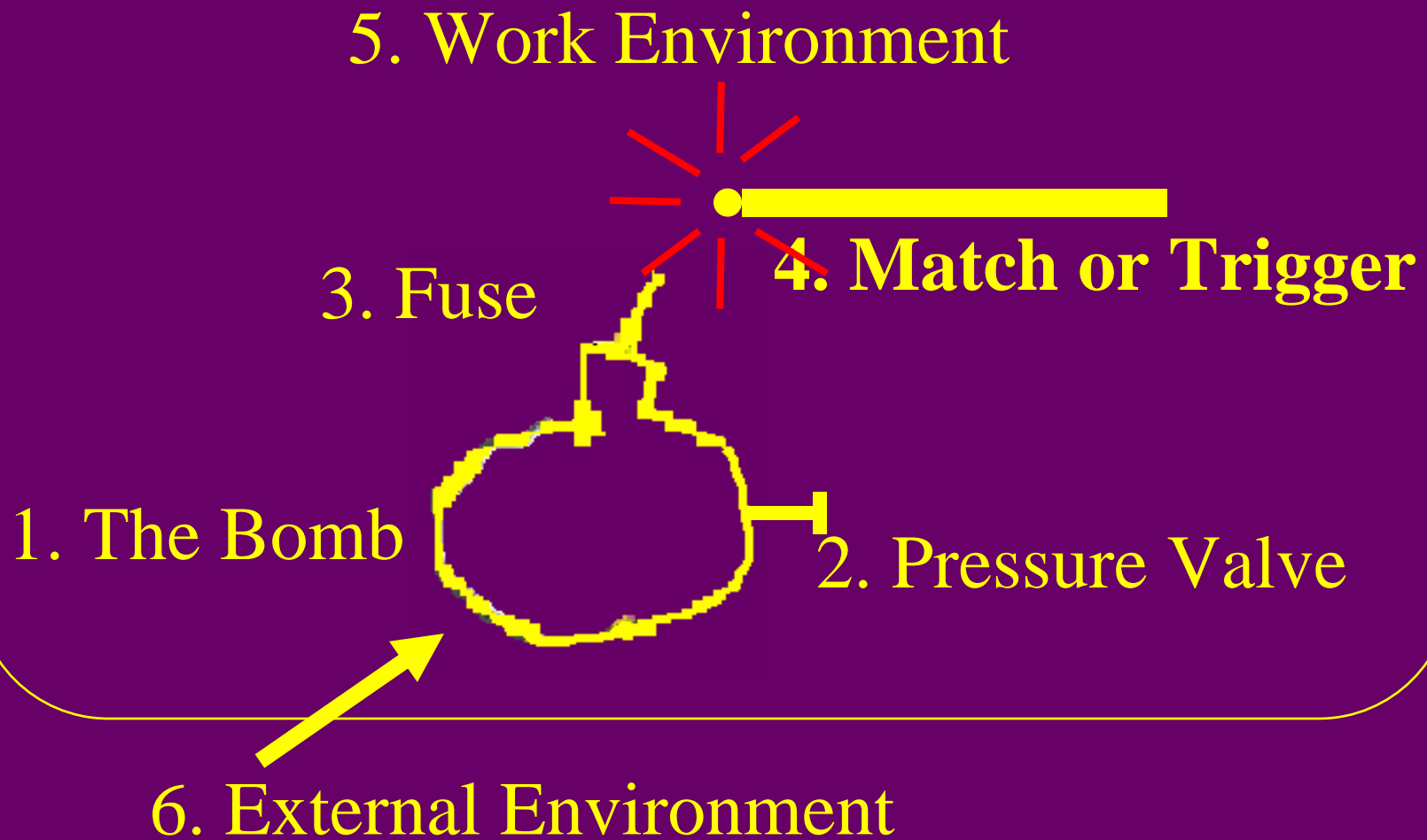
# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **3. Develop Appropriate Skills**

**The following skills may reduce (di)stress:**

- Making decisions
- Expressing feelings
- Being more assertive
- Managing conflict

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL



# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

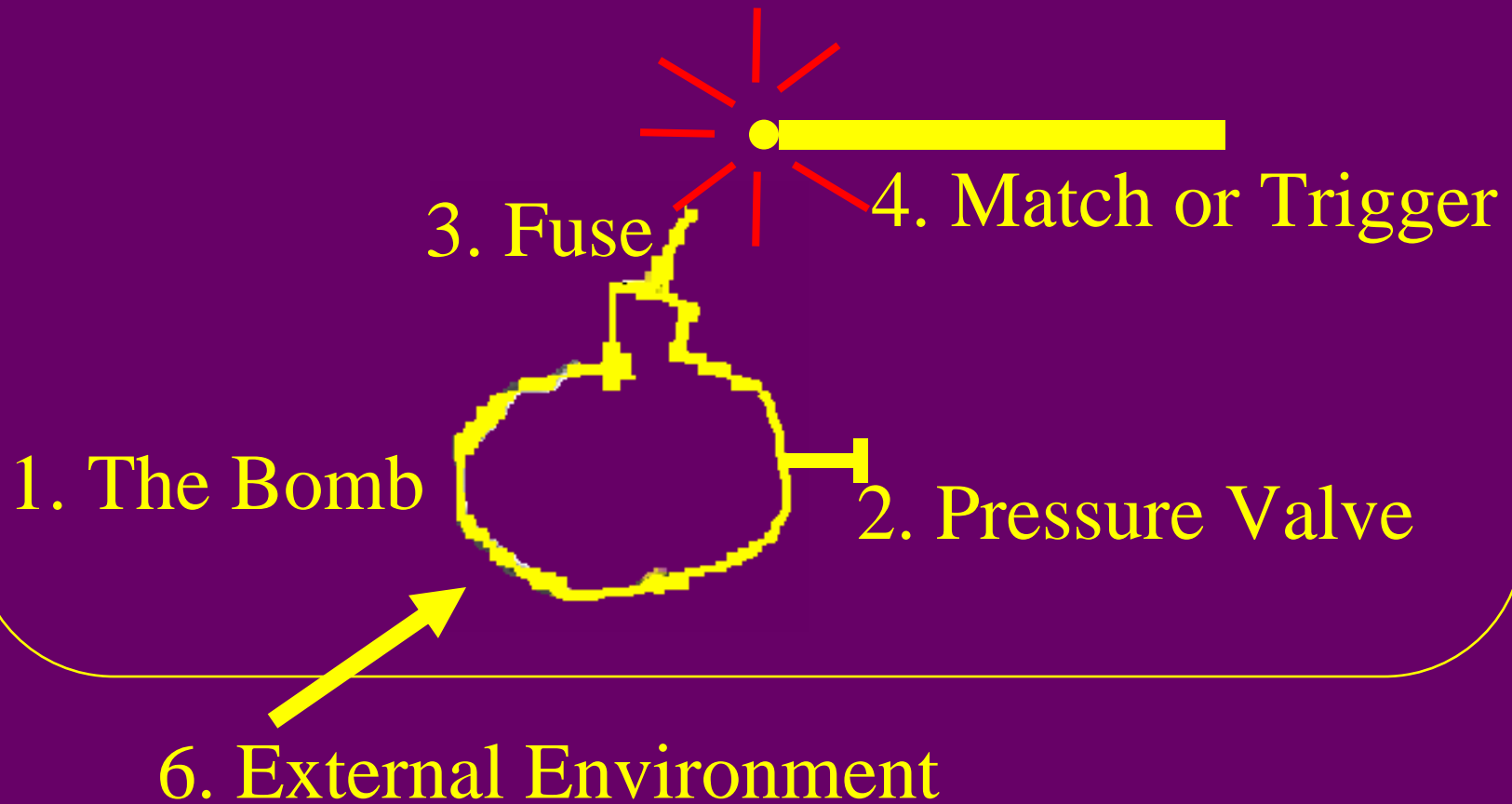
## **4. Develop Specific Coping Behaviours**

### **Critical Incident Analysis**

develop specific coping behaviours in response to particular stressors.

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

## 5. Work Environment



# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **5. The Work Environment**

### **a. Personal support network**

#### **Sources of support at work:**

- Practical support
- Listening support
- Emotional support

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **5. The Work Environment**

### **b. Employment based help**

- The Organisation's Personnel/H.R.Department
- The Company Doctor
- 'In-house' Counsellors

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **5. The Work Environment**

### **b. Out of Work**

- Refocus - re-skill - education
- Volunteer
- CV & Interview training
- Maintain a routine & Style
- Be positive!

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **5. The Work Environment**

### **c. Emigration - yourself**

Job –seeking in a more distant Parish!

Research – job and life

Contacts

Be wary of burning bridges

Keep in touch

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

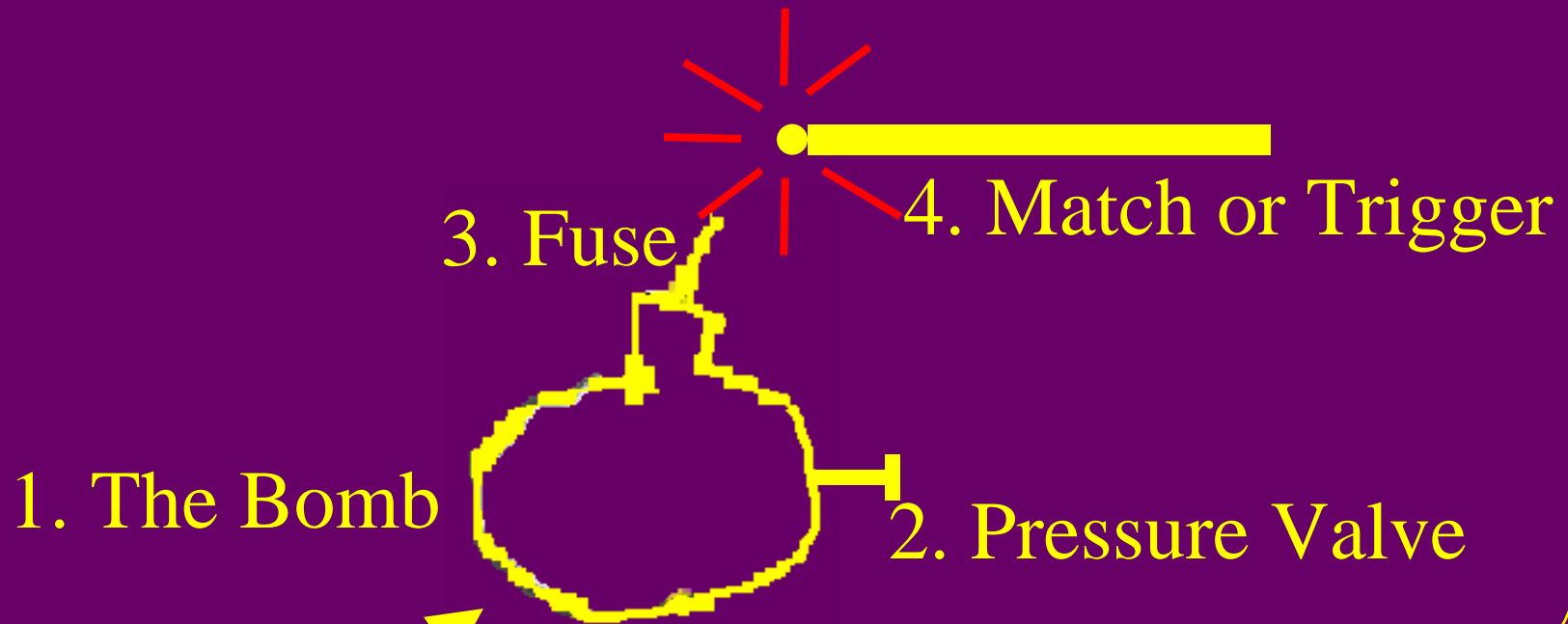
## **5. The Work Environment**

### **c. Emigration – the family**

- Mark the occasion
- Help prepare positively if you can
- Keep in touch
- Mark the anniversaries
- Enjoy those you have with you

# E. SIMPLE (DI)STRESS MODEL

5. Work Environment



6. External Environment

# **E. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **a. Review External Demands**

- Review the inventory of demands
- What is essential
- Priority vs Urgency

# F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE

		PRIORITY	
		Hi	Lo
URGENCY	Immediate		
	Later		

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment Balance Financial Pressures**

- Review income & expenditure
- To achieve a balance & gain control
- Whole family involvement
- Action Plan
- Seek advice
- See creditors before they look for you

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **Balance Financial Pressures (cont.)**

- Research what money can be saved on bills
- What benefits may be entitled to
- What alternatives are there
- Be wary of 'fix-all' short-term loans
- Seek advice!

# F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE

## 6. The External Environment

### b. Increase External Support

#### Family

Avoid the spiral of negative actions

Use “role negotiation strategy” such as:

1. Balance sheet of work and home
2. Have family meeting
3. Re-negotiate family commitments

cont.

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **b. Increase External Support**

#### **Family (cont.)**

4. Create mutual action plans
5. Review success, or otherwise
6. Develop new action plans
7. Take time to enjoy each other

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **Friends/neighbours**

- Create and develop relationships
- **Give AND take**

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **(Semi-)professional help**

If personal support networks are deficient

These sources of help might include:

### **Specific Stress-related Agencies**

- Samaritans
- Voluntary Groups

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

**Suicide/Self harm - How to help**  
**Right person, right place, right time**

- Active listening/observing – end of pain
- Recognise warning signs
- Speak up if you are worried
- Offer help and support – be genuine
- Seek advice
- Get help quickly in a crisis

# **F. ACHIEVING A BALANCE**

## **6. The External Environment**

### **e. Professional help**

#### **Health Care Professionals**

- Family Doctor
- Social Worker
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Other mental health workers
- Etc.

# F. PREVENTION OF (DI)STRESS

## **Developing Resilience**

*Approaches on an individual level:*

1. Stress Inoculation
2. Managing Life Events
3. Managing Change
4. Start at school



That's All Folks!