

CONVEYING EMPATHY & AUTHENTICITY  
VERBAL FOLLOWING, EXPLORING, & FOCUSING SKILLS

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LABORATORY DAY



# AGENDA

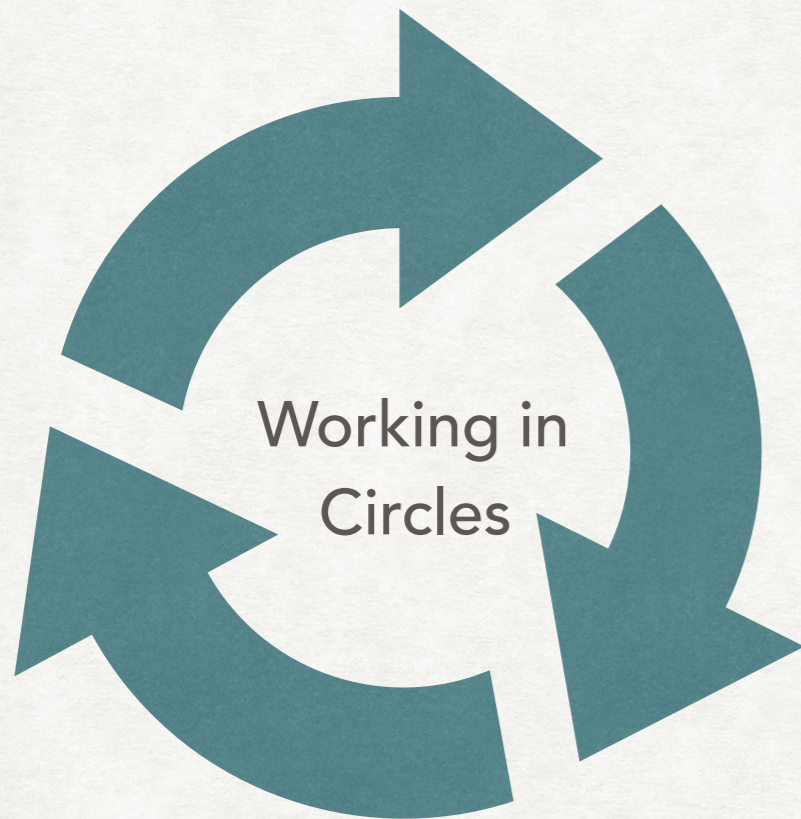
## TENTATIVE PLAN

- What's you've learned so far
- Practice with following skills
- Empathetic communication scale
- Practice with labeling empathetic levels
- Teaching empathy



# WHAT WE HAVE BEEN LEARNING

## CHECKING IN



Respect the talking piece

Speak from the heart

Listen from the heart

Trust that you know what to say

Say just enough

*(Clifford, n.d.)*

- What are some things that you feel like you can take away from this class so far?
- What are ways that you are implementing or incorporating things you have been learning in any of your classes into your life?
- What do you need to be a better social worker as you progress through your education?



# TEACHING EMPATHY

## HOW TO SHARE WITH CLIENTS

- Teach clients the paradigm for empathic responding.
- Introduce clients to the list of affective words and phrases and to the Leads for Empathic Responses list.
- Intervene in sessions when clients ignore or fail to validate messages.
- Give positive feedback when clients listen to each other.



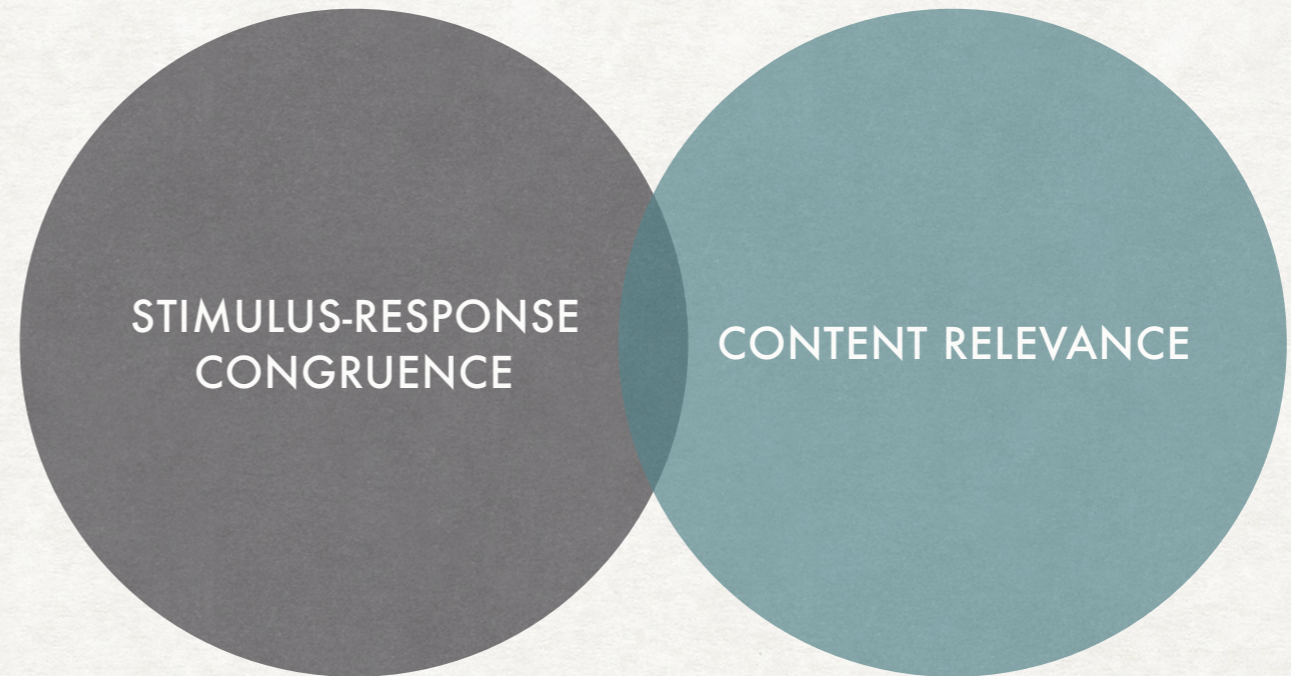
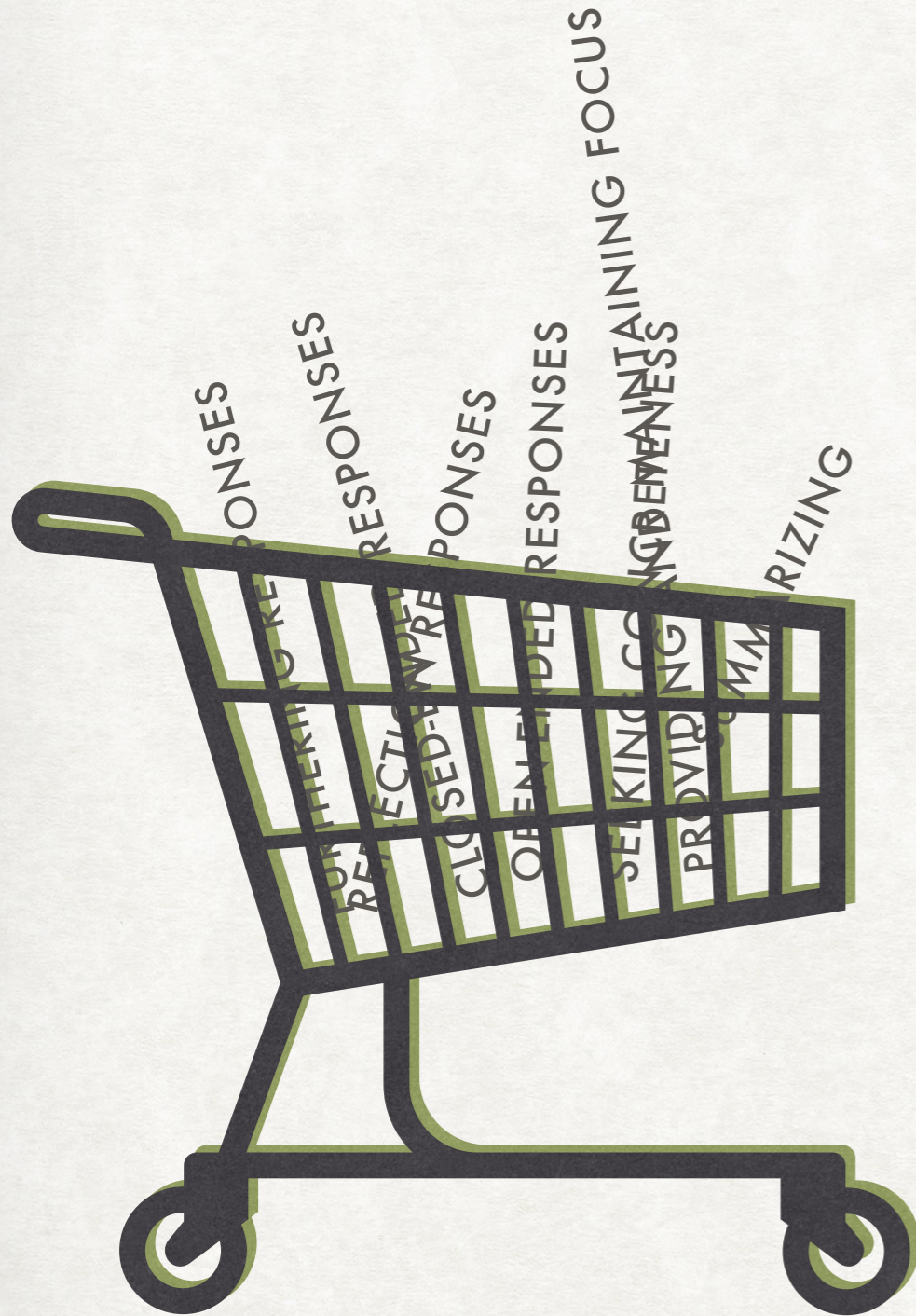
Work in teams of 3 or 4 to design a planned intervention for teaching empathy

5



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

The extent to which social workers' responses provide feedback to clients that their messages are accurately received.

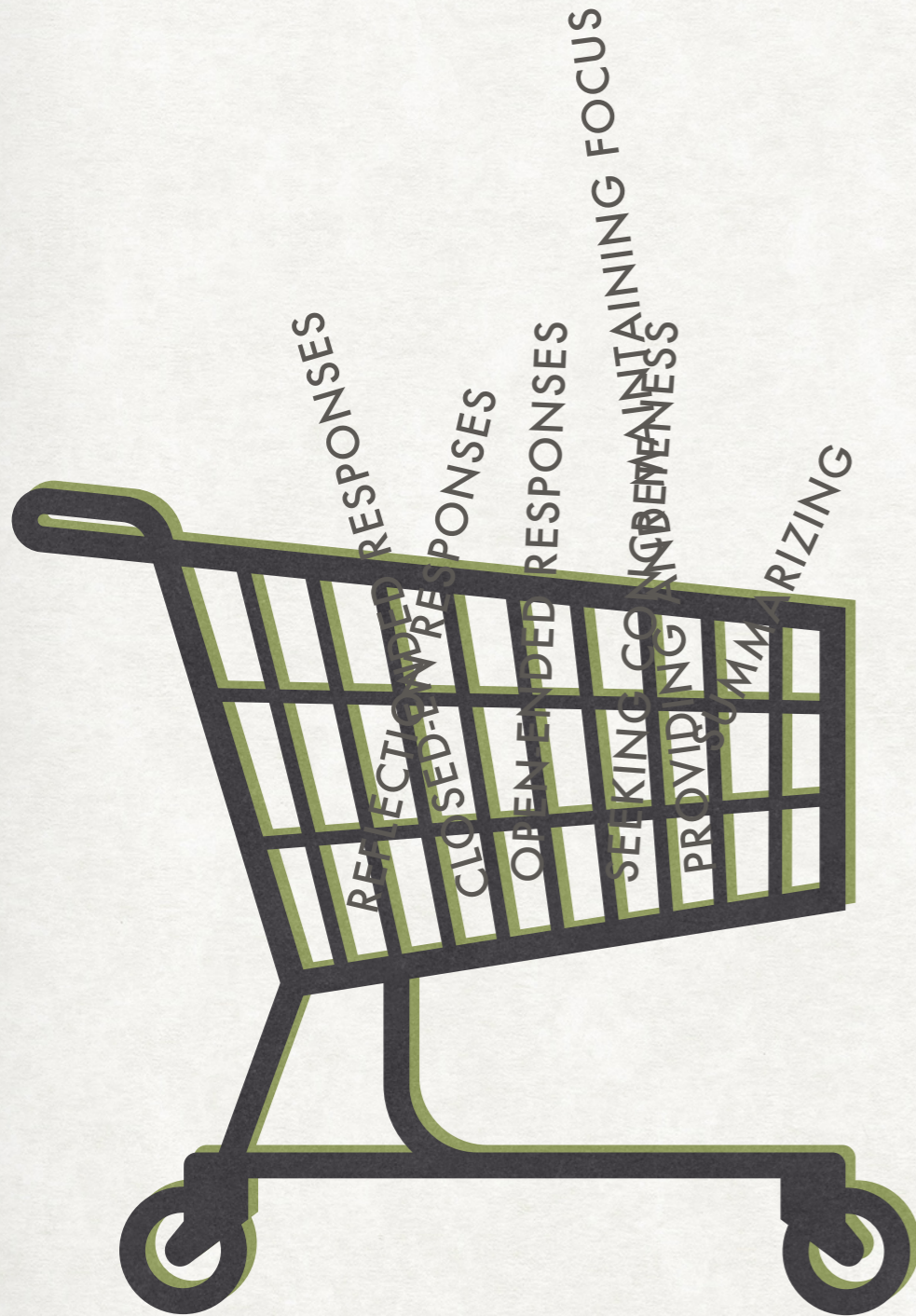


The extent to which the content of social workers' responses is perceived by clients as relevant to their substantive concerns.



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## FURTHERING RESPONSES



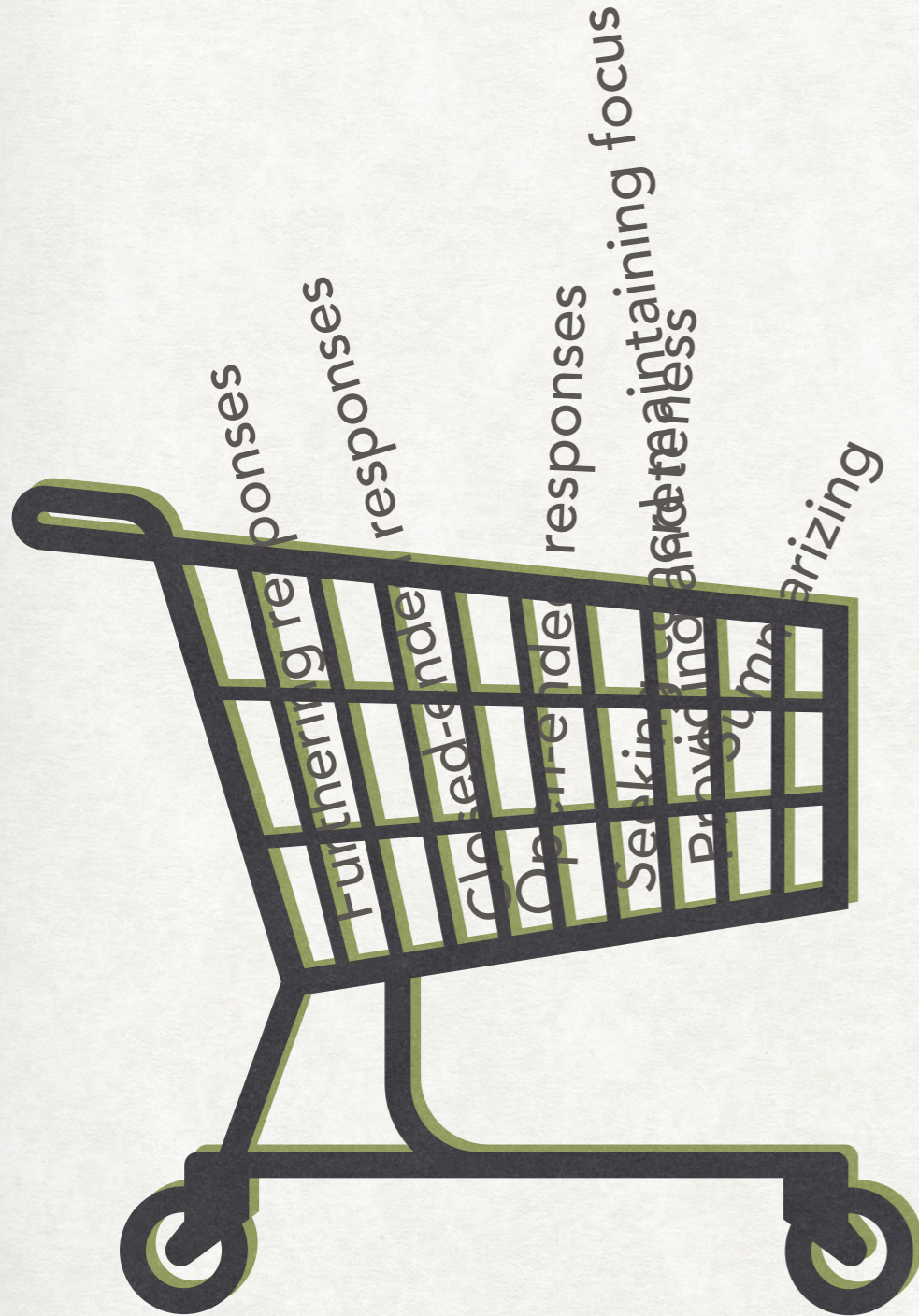
- Nonverbal minimal prompts
- Verbal minimal prompts
- Accent responses



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## REFLECTION

## RESPONSES



REFLECTION OF CONTENT

REFLECTION OF AFFECT

- Simple reflections
- Complex reflections
- Double-sided reflection
- Reflections with a twist

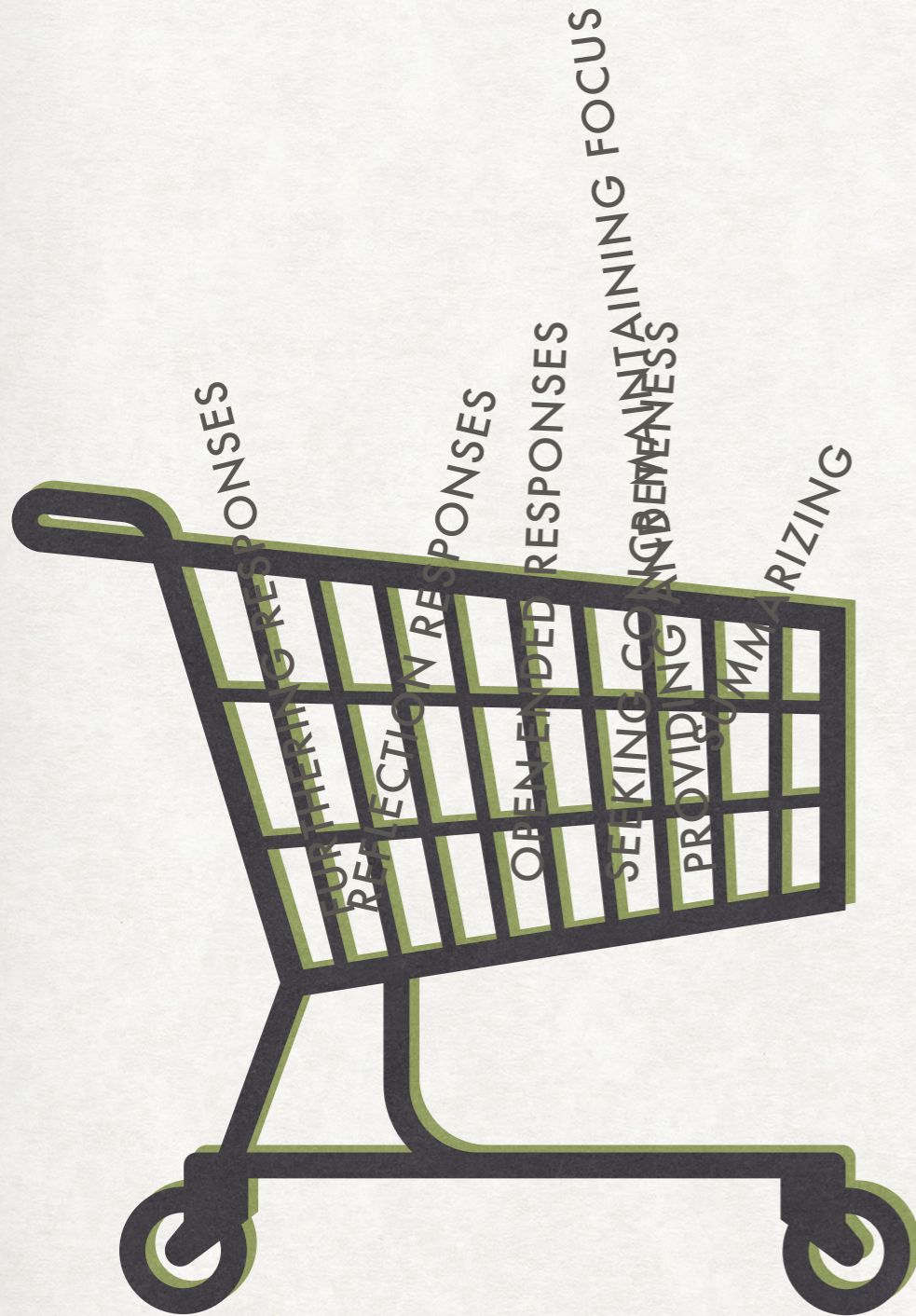
Reframing





# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## CLOSED-ENDED RESPONSES

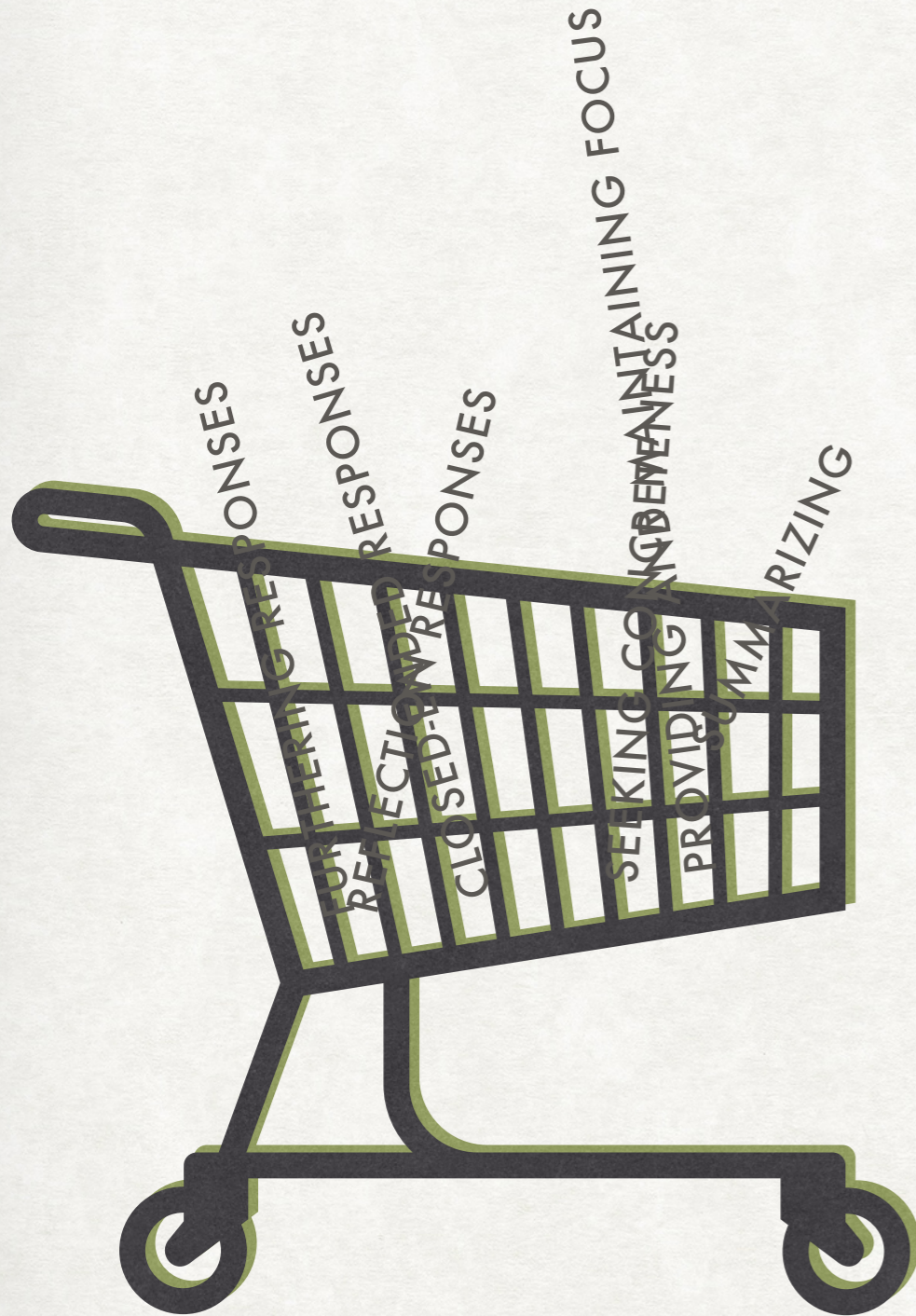


Define a topic and restrict the client's response to a few words or a simple yes or no answer.



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

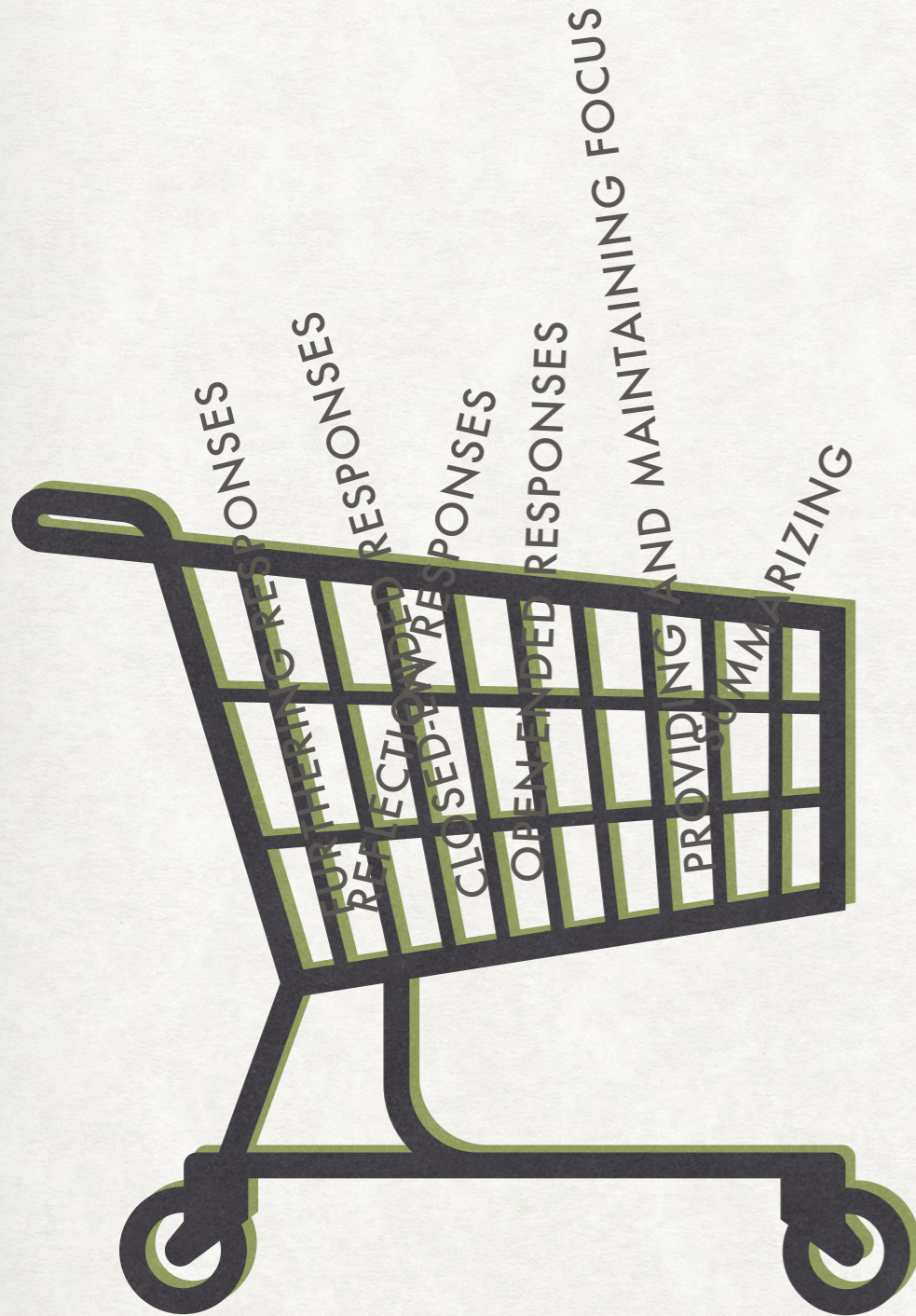


Invite expanded expression and leave the client free to express what seems most relevant and important.



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## SEEKING CONCRETENESS

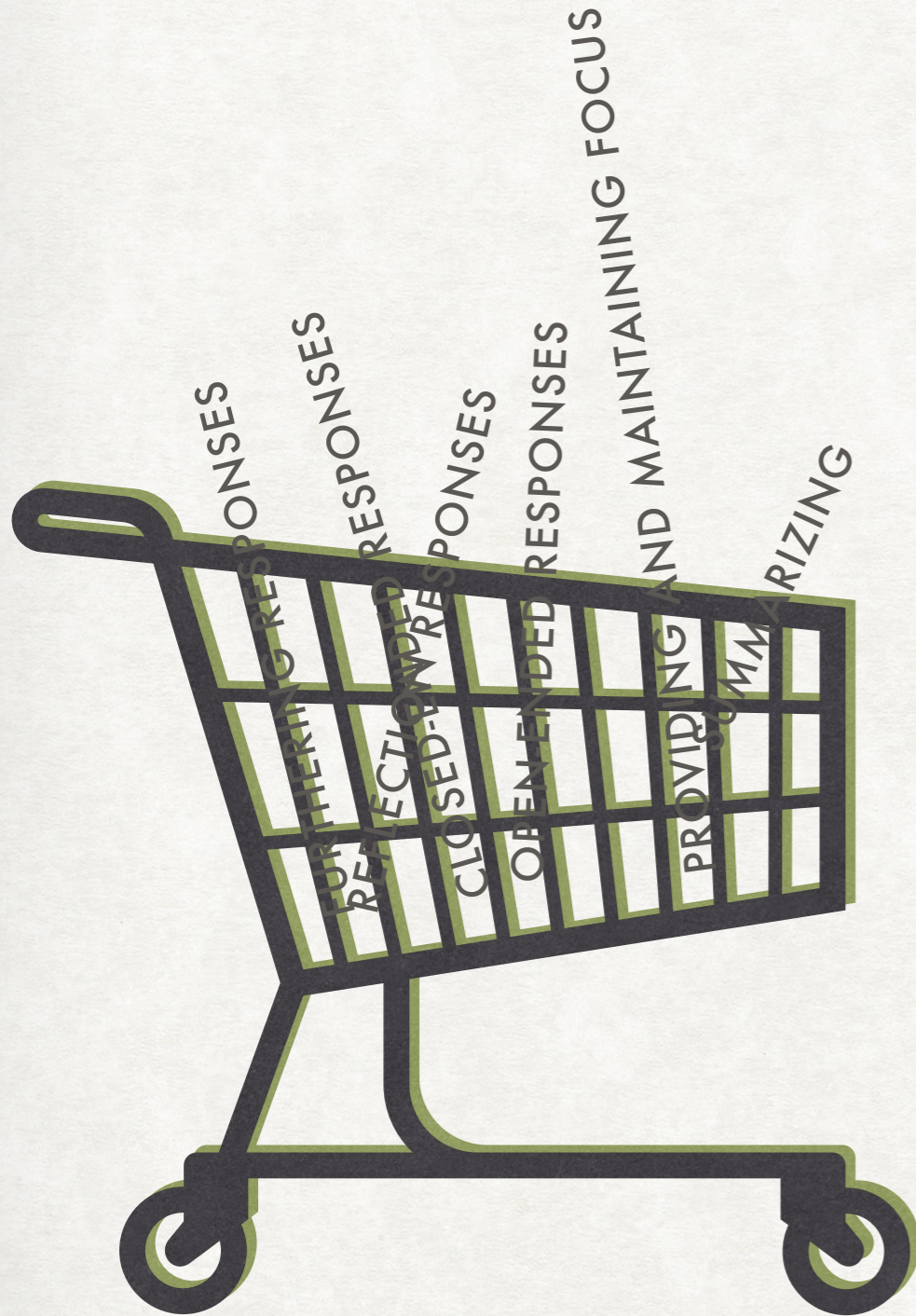


- Checking out Perceptions
- Clarifying the Meaning of Vague or Unfamiliar Terms
- Exploring the Basis of Conclusions Drawn by Clients
- Assisting Clients in Personalizing Their Statements



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

## SEEKING CONCRETENESS



- Eliciting Specific Feelings
- Focusing on the Here and Now
- Eliciting Details Related to Clients' Experiences
- Eliciting Details Related to Interactional Behavior



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING FOCUS

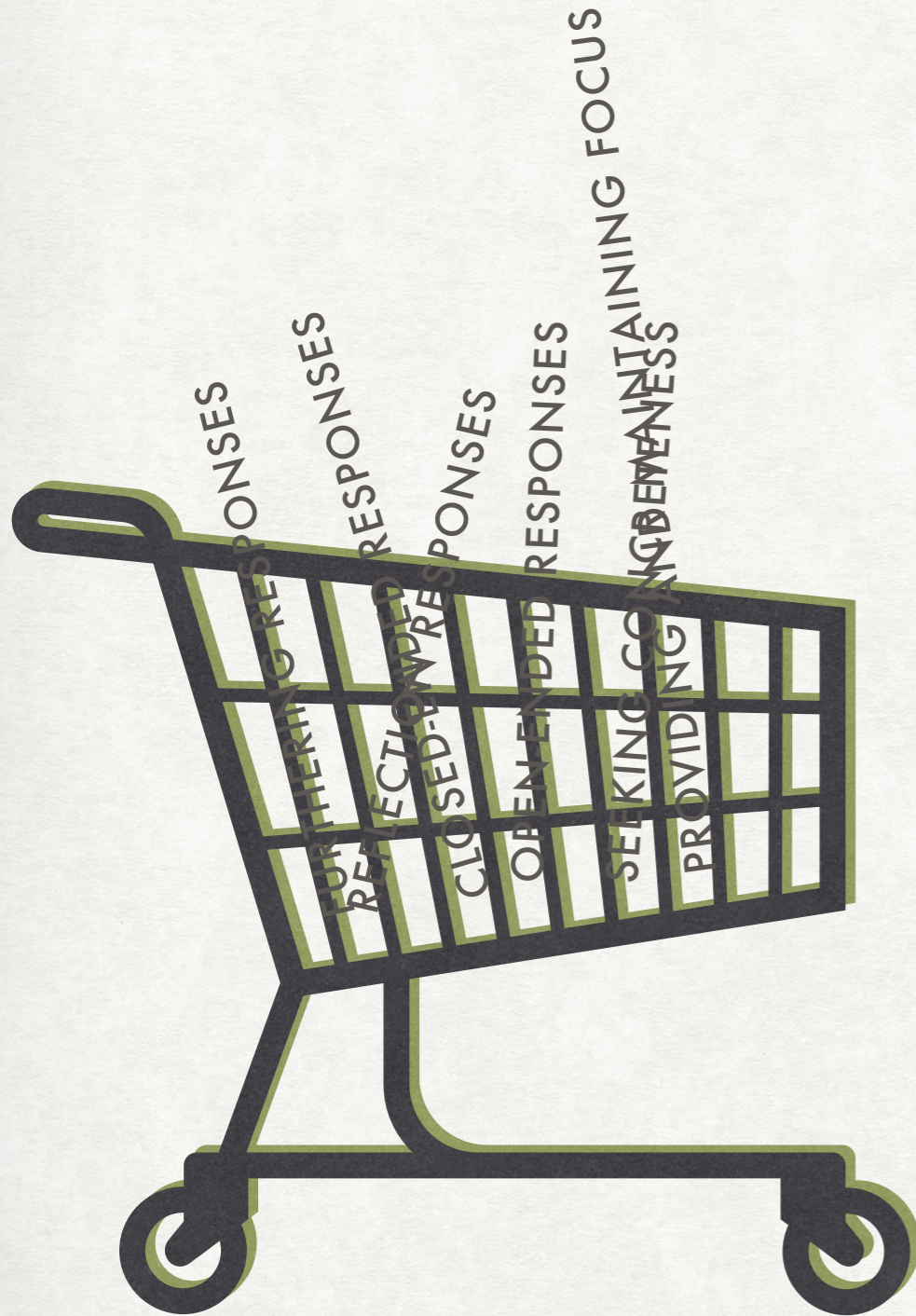


1. Selecting topics for exploration
2. Exploring topics in depth
3. Managing obstacles to focusing



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS

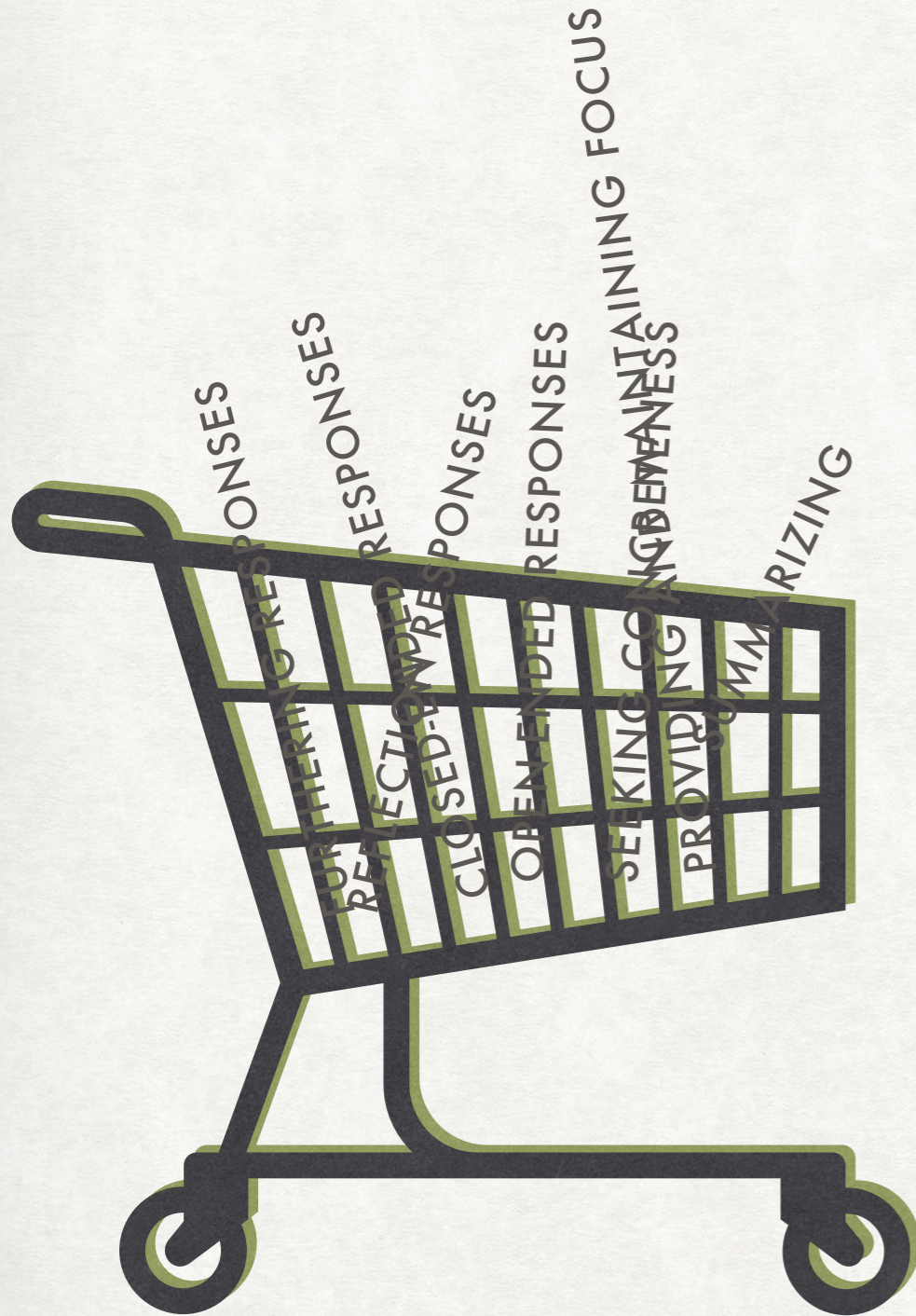
## SUMMARIZING



1. Highlighting key aspects
2. Making connections
3. Reviewing major focal points
4. Recapitulating highlights and progress



# DISCRETE VERBAL FOLLOWING SKILLS



# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## DEMONSTRATING SKILLS

INTERVIEW

DEBRIEF

Member 1

5

5

DEBRIEF AFTER

- How did it feel as the interviewer to use the techniques
- How did it feel as the interviewee
- What did the observer notice

OBSERVER

INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWEE





# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## DEMONSTRATING SKILLS

INTERVIEW

DEBRIEF

Member 2

5

5

DEBRIEF AFTER

- How did it feel as the interviewer to use the techniques
- How did it feel as the interviewee
- What did the observer notice

OBSERVER

INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWEE



# FOLLOWING SKILLS

## DEMONSTRATING SKILLS

INTERVIEW

DEBRIEF

Member 3

5

5

DEBRIEF AFTER

- How did it feel as the interviewer to use the techniques
- How did it feel as the interviewee
- What did the observer notice

OBSERVER

INTERVIEWER

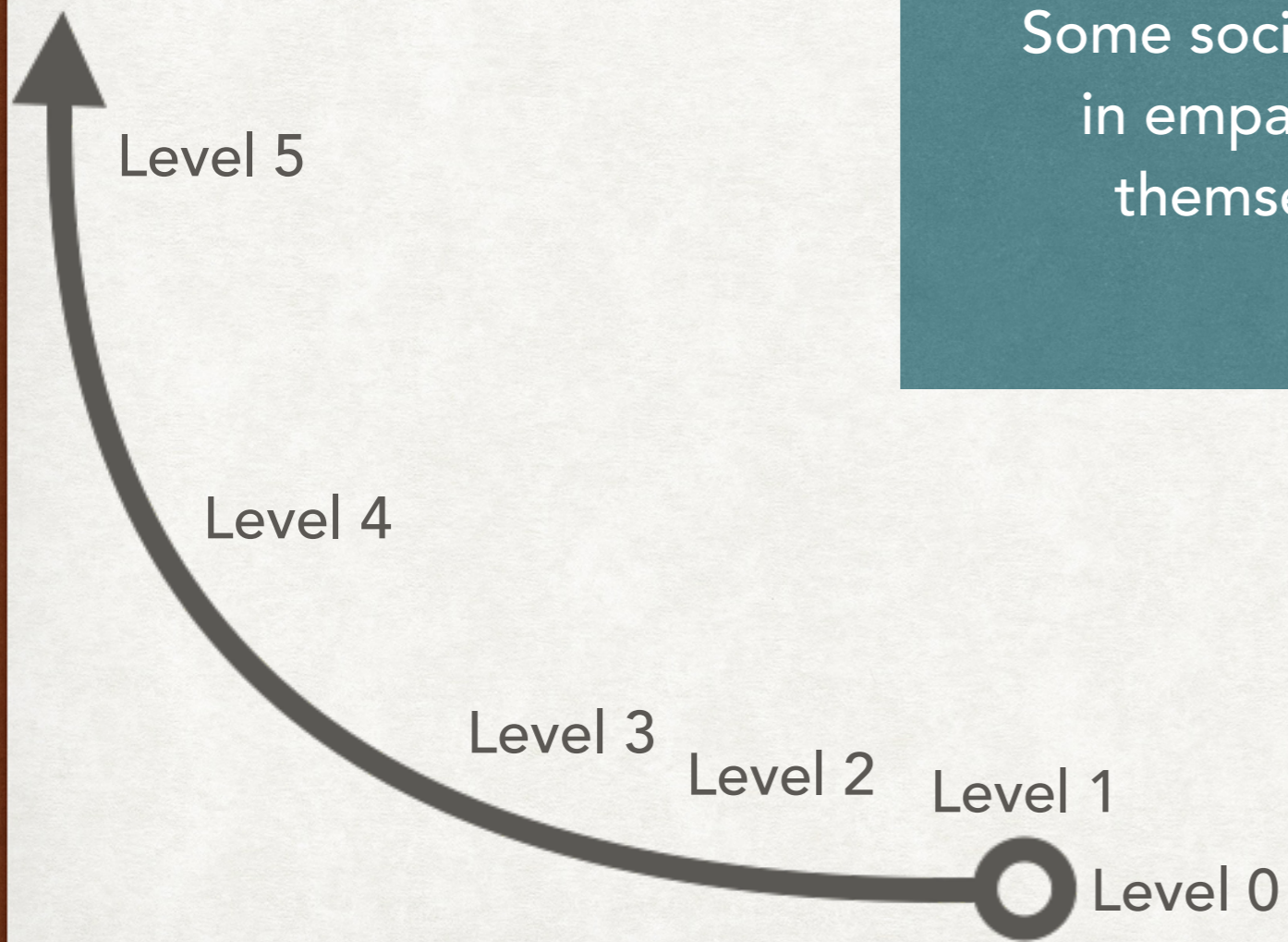
INTERVIEWEE



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

## HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

Some social workers dismiss the need for training in empathic responding, mistakenly believing themselves to already be empathic in their contacts with clients.



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

## HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

LACK OF EMPATHIC  
RESPONDING



Level 5

It is actively judgmental and inappropriately confrontational

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

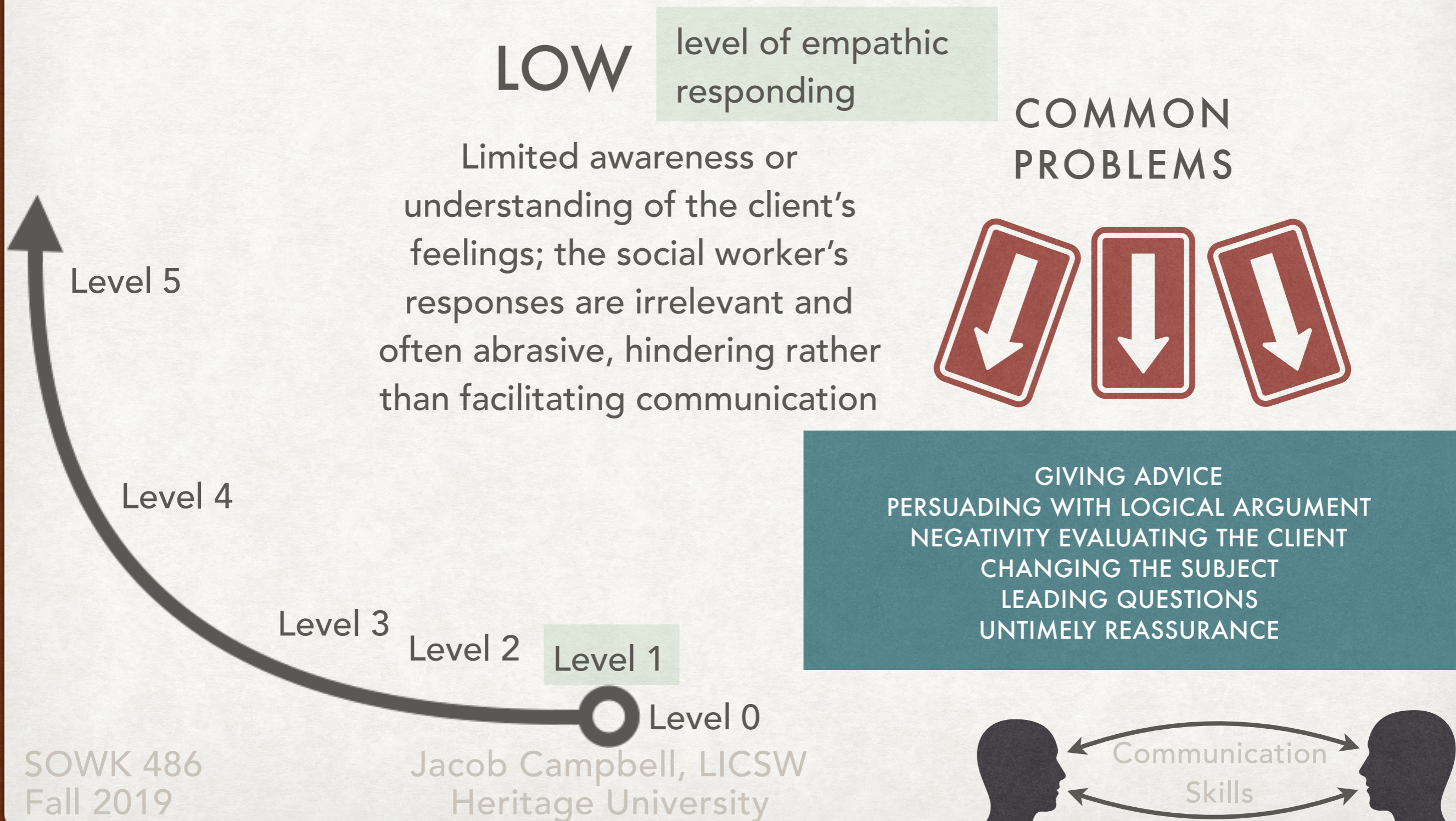


Level 0



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

## HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

**MODERATELY  
LOW** level of empathic  
responding

Responding to client's surface  
message but omitting feelings or  
factual aspects

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

Level 0



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

INTERCHANGEABLE  
OR RECIPROCAL

level of empathic  
responding

Convey understanding and are essentially interchangeable with the client's obvious expressions, accurately reflecting factual aspects of the client's messages and surface feelings or state of being

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

Level 0

EXPLORE PROBLEMS  
IMMEDIATELY APPARENT EMOTIONS



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

**MODERATELY  
HIGH** level of empathic  
responding

Somewhat additive, accurately identifying  
the client's implicit underlying feelings and  
or aspects of the problem

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

Level 0





# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

**HIGH**

level of empathic responding

Reflecting each emotional nuance and using voice and intensity of expressions finely attuned to the client's moment-by-moment experiencing, the social worker accurately responds to the full range and intensity of both surface and underlying feelings and meanings at Level 5.

Level 5

Level 4

Level 3

Level 2

Level 1

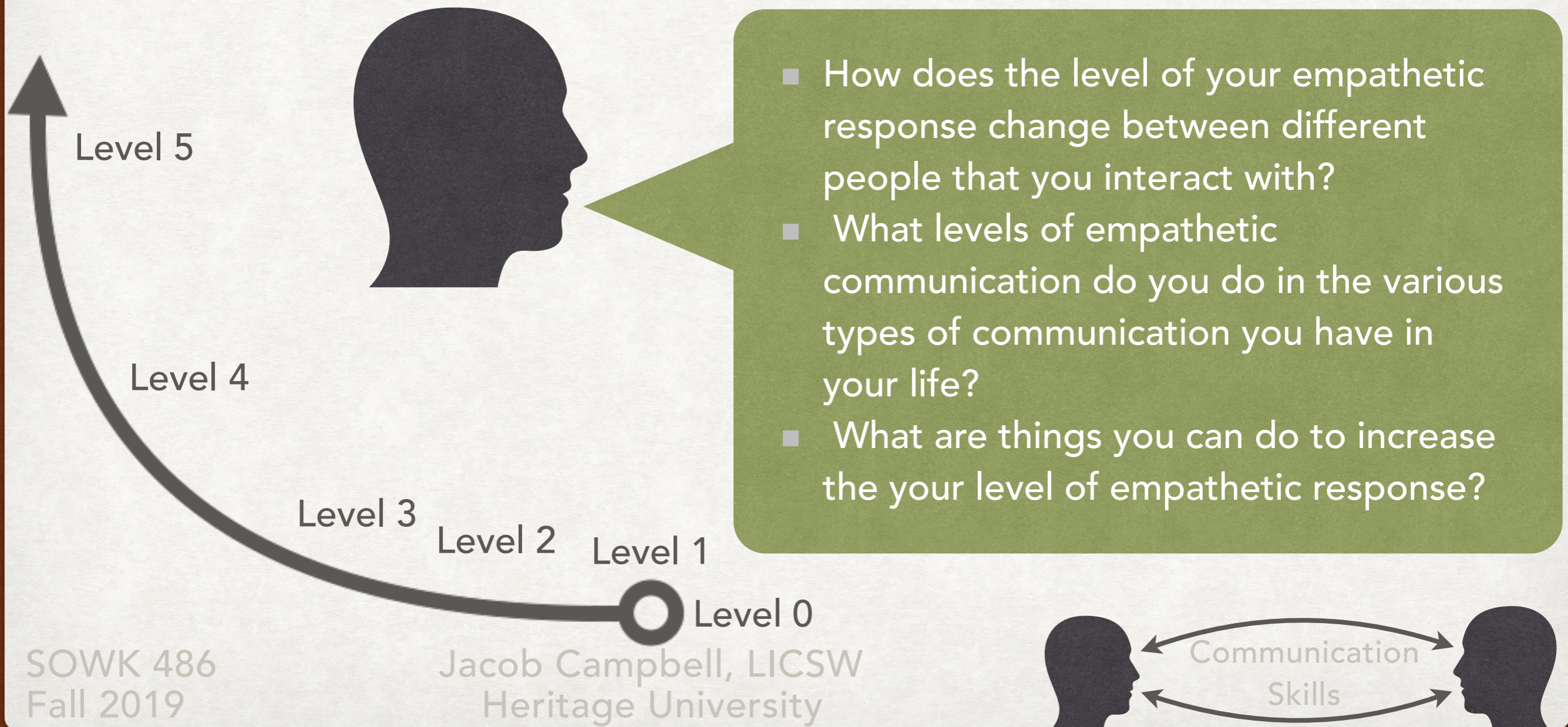
Level 0



# THE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION SCALE

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE?

*WHERE DO YOU FIND YOURSELF*



# PRACTICE WITH EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

**Single woman, age 80** [to social worker concerning her request to move to an independent living complex provided for ambulatory older persons]:

Goodness, the more I think of moving, the more scared I get. I have neighbors here who look after me, and I won't know a soul there. I'm afraid I'll be all alone.



# PRACTICE WITH EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION

Male, age 16 [in weekly visit to social work probation officer]:

I don't see the sense in having to come here every (expletive) week. I haven't been in any trouble now since I went to court a month ago. You should know by now you can trust me."

