

# *Transitioning to the Next Normal:* **Decision Making**

May 2020

- Introduce a tool to help teachers, principals and superintendents make decisions related to a 2020–21 return to school
- Learn how this tool can be applied to many other decisions

Please feel free to introduce yourselves in the Chat box



Introduction

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Executive Director of TregoED

## TregoED:

Is a non-profit, educational consulting company headquartered in Princeton, NJ. We have been in business for 25+ years and have worked with over 850 school districts in the United States and Canada. We work with school boards, school district leadership and teachers using collaborative decision making, problem solving, risk management and project management tools and strategies.

**A quick poll to give us some context...**

Did you participate in one of the other

**“Transition to the Next Normal”**

SCAN Webinar

that were facilitated by TregoED?

**As we look ahead:**

***so many important decisions...***

***so much conflicting information...***

***so little time!***

**What are some of the factors that make high-stakes decision making difficult?**

- High visibility
- Strong feelings
- Polarized positions
- Need for high-quality solution
- Some stakeholders have too much influence—others not enough
- Vulnerable to accusations of lack of transparency

Too often decision making looks like this



Instead of this





Effective Choices	Ineffective Choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clear goals and purpose</li> <li>➤ Alignment with district/school goals</li> <li>➤ Effective use of relevant data</li> <li>➤ Consideration of a range of options</li> <li>➤ Manageable risks</li> <li>➤ Support of key stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Plan for implementation and communication</li> <li>➤ Lasting, enduring solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Suboptimal solutions</li> <li>➤ Resistance and/or need to repeatedly defend decision</li> <li>➤ Unmet needs</li> <li>➤ Unintended consequences</li> <li>➤ Angry, disenfranchised stakeholders</li> <li>➤ Widespread mistrust or frustration</li> </ul>

## What's going on?

*Need to better understand complex situations*

## What's gone wrong?

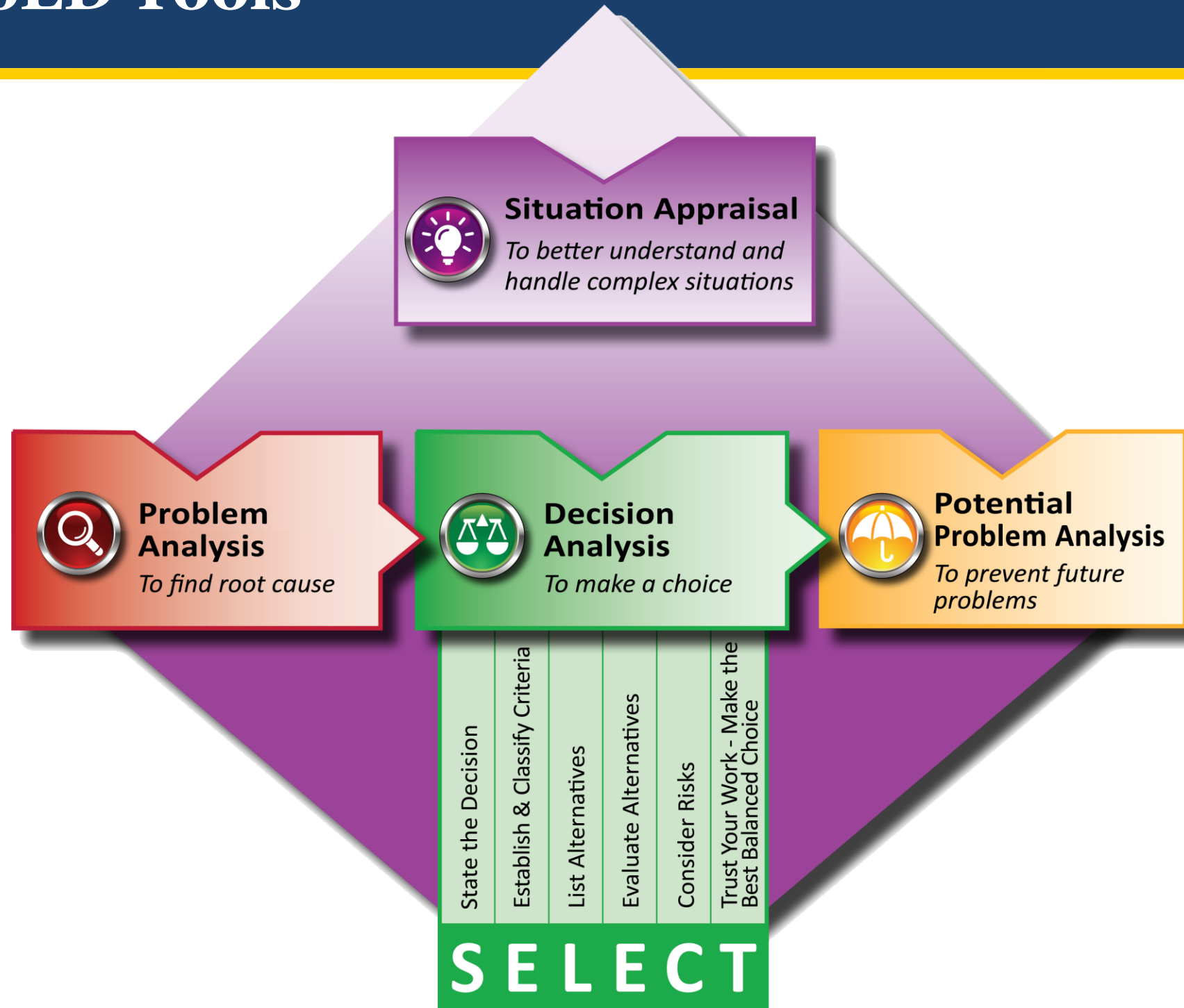
*Need to find root cause when things go off course*

## What course of action should we take?

*Need to choose best among several options*

## What lies ahead?

*Need to protect good decisions by preventing problems*





# Decision Analysis

- **What:** A systematic process for making a choice
  - **Why:** Help us assess benefits and risks and arrive at the best balanced choice
  - **Typical pitfall:** Jumping to Alternatives
  - **Key Steps:**
    - S**tate the Decision
    - E**stablish and Classify Criteria
    - L**ist Alternatives
    - E**valuate Alternatives
    - C**onsider Risks
    - T**rust Your Work—  
Make the Best Balanced Choice
- Clarify Purpose*
- Explore Options*



## **S – State the Decision**

- **Why:** To clarify the choice we face  
To provide focus
- **How:**
  - *Ask:* What are we trying to decide?
  - Decision Statement =
    - **“Choice”** word (select, pick, choose) +
    - End Result/Purpose +
    - 1–2 Key Modifiers



## State the Decision—*Example*

### **Decision Statement:**

*Determine how best to serve students in school closed by fire*



## **E – Establish and Classify Criteria**

- **Why:** To identify what we want and need in a final choice  
To determine the relative importance or priority of criteria
- **How:**
  - 1) Establish criteria
    - Ask:*
      - What's important for us to consider in choosing an alternative?
      - What do stakeholders say is important?
      - What **results** do we want or need?
      - What **resources** are available?
      - What **restrictions** exist?



# Establish Criteria—*Example*

Establish Criteria
Sufficient space for instruction and delivery of services (minimum 130,000 sq. ft.)
Meets state requirements for ALL student instructional hours (990 total seat hours, 140 per course high school credit)
Maximizes safety and security
Maximizes flexibility of infrastructure and space to meet instructional and other needs
Allows for feasibility of transportation
Minimizes negative impact (on students, staff, families, community)
Provides equitable access to instructional technology
Minimizes complexity of arrival/dismissal for staff and students
Maximizes potential for continued extracurricular participation





**S – State the Decision**

**Decision statement:** xxxxxxxxxxxx

*What are we trying to decide?  
Does the statement reflect the type and range of alternatives we should be considering?*

**L – List Alternatives**

*What options do we have?*

**E – Establish & Classify Criteria**

- 1) *Establish criteria*  
*What do we want or need in a final choice?*  
*What do stakeholders say is important?*
- 2) *Classify criteria*  
*Which criteria are mandatory? How will we measure these? Are they realistic?*

- 3) *Weigh the WANTS*  
*Which WANT is most important? (Give it a '10')*  
*Compared to our '10', how important is each other WANT? (10–1)*

**E – Evaluate Alternatives**

- Gather and record information*
- 1) *Evaluate alternatives against MUSTs*  
*Does this alternative meet this MUST? (Yes or No)*
- 2) *Evaluate alternatives against WANTS*  
*Which alternative best meets this WANT? (Give it a '10')*  
*Compared to the '10' alternative, how well does each other alternative meet this WANT? (10–1)*  
*Multiply weight x score = Weighted scores*  
*Add these = Total weighted score*

Establish Criteria	Classify Criteria— MUSTs/ WANTS	Alternative 1	Score	Alternative 2	Score	Alternative 3	Score	Alternative 4	Score

**C – Consider Risks**

- 1) *Identify risks*  
*If we choose this alternative, what could go wrong?*
- 2) *Assess threat*  
*What is the probability or likelihood of this problem occurring? (H, M, L)*  
*What is the seriousness or negative impact if the problem does occur? (H, M, L)*

Risks	Assess Threat	
	Probability	Seriousness
<i>If we choose top-scoring alternative, what could go wrong?</i>		
<i>If we choose next highest scoring alternative, what could go wrong?</i>		
<i>If we choose another alternative, what could go wrong?</i>		

**T – Trust Your Work—Make the Best Balanced Choice**

*Which alternative should we choose? Which provides the best balance of benefit and risk?*

Best Balanced Choice
----------------------



## **E – Establish and Classify Criteria**

### 2) Classify criteria

*Ask:*

- Which criteria are mandatory?
- Of these, how will we measure them?
- Are these realistic?

**MUSTs = mandatory, measurable, and realistic**

**WANTS = all others**



## Classify Criteria —*Example*

Establish Criteria	Classify Criteria MUSTs/WANTS
Sufficient space for instruction and delivery of services (minimum 130,000 sq. ft.)	M
Meets state requirements for ALL student instructional hours (990 total seat hours, 140 per course high school credit)	M
Maximizes safety and security	
Maximizes flexibility of infrastructure and space to meet instructional and other needs	
Allows for feasibility of transportation	
Minimizes negative impact (on students, staff, families, community)	
Provides equitable access to instructional technology	
Minimizes complexity of arrival/dismissal for staff and students	
Maximizes potential for continued extracurricular participation	



## **E – Establish and Classify Criteria**

### 3) Weigh the WANTS

*Ask:*

- Which WANT is most important?
  - Give it a '10'
- Compared to our '10', how important is each other WANT?
  - Assign weights of 10 – 1



## Weigh the WANTS—*Example*

Establish Criteria	Classify Criteria MUSTs/WANTS
Sufficient space for instruction and delivery of services (minimum 130,000 sq. ft.)	M
Meets state requirements for ALL student instructional hours (990 total seat hours, 140 per course high school credit)	M
Maximizes safety and security	10
Maximizes flexibility of infrastructure and space to meet instructional and other needs	10
Allows for feasibility of transportation	
Minimizes negative impact (on students, staff, families, community)	
Provides equitable access to instructional technology	
Minimizes complexity of arrival/dismissal for staff and students	
Maximizes potential for continued extracurricular participation	



## Weigh the WANTS—*Example*

Establish Criteria	Classify Criteria MUSTs/WANTS
Sufficient space for instruction and delivery of services (minimum 130,000 sq. ft.)	M
Meets state requirements for ALL student instructional hours (990 total seat hours, 140 per course high school credit)	M
Maximizes safety and security	10
Maximizes flexibility of infrastructure and space to meet instructional and other needs	10
Allows for feasibility of transportation	9
Minimizes negative impact (on students, staff, families, community)	8
Provides equitable access to instructional technology	7
Minimizes complexity of arrival/dismissal for staff and students	3
Maximizes potential for continued extracurricular participation	5



**S – State the Decision**

**Decision statement:** xxxxxxxxxxxx

*What are we trying to decide?  
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**L – List Alternatives**

*What options do we have?*

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*Which WANT is most important? (Give it a '10')  
Compared to our '10', how important is each other WANT? (10–1)*

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*Which alternative best meets this WANT? (Give it a '10')  
Compared to the '10' alternative, how well does each other alternative meet this WANT? (10–1)  
Multiply weight x score = Weighted scores  
Add these = Total weighted score*

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Best Balanced Choice
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# Decision Analysis

- **What:** A systematic process for making a choice
- **Why:** Help us assess benefits and risks and arrive at the best balanced choice
- **Typical pitfall:** Jumping to Alternatives

- **Key Steps:** **S**tate the Decision  
**E**stablish and Classify Criteria  
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**C**onsider Risks  
**T**rust Your Work—  
Make the Best Balanced Choice

*Clarify Purpose*

*Evaluate  
Options*





# Decision Analysis—*Example (part of process)*

Establish Criteria	M / W	SPLIT DAY	Score	ALTERNATING DAYS	Score	ALTERNATING WEEKS	ALTERNATE SITE
Sufficient space for instruction and delivery of services (minimum 130,000 sq. ft.)	M	y		y		y	N (no available site big enough)
Meets state requirements for ALL student instructional hours (990 total seat hours, 140 per course high school credit)	M	y		y		N (does not meet 990)	
Maximizes safety and security	10	10	100	10	100		
Maximizes flexibility of infrastructure and space to meet instructional and other needs	10	8	80	10	100		
Allows for feasibility of transportation	9	2 SPED buses not available	18	8 SPED buses available 75%	72		
Minimizes negative impact (on students, staff, families, community)	8	9	72	10	80		
Provides equitable access to instructional technology	7	10	70	10	70		
Minimizes complexity of arrival/dismissal for staff and students	3	5	15	10	40		
Maximizes potential for continued extracurricular participation	5	5 Harder to facilitate with transportation and evening conflicts	25	4 Students not at school for extracurricular	20		
			380		482	25	

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# CHAT

**Why do you think it helps to start decision making by identifying criteria first instead of your Alternatives?**



**S – State the Decision**

**Decision statement:** xxxxxxxxxxxx

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## Consider Risks—*Example*

- Split Day
  - Having two populations sharing a school building (albeit in split schedules) creates bottlenecks and limitations at certain times/areas (e.g., overlap, parking, administration, etc.)
  - Would require timing change for athletic practices and competitions
  
- Alternative Days
  - Changing school schedule and Saturdays may make it challenging for students to have jobs and/or provide Saturday childcare
  - Saturday school will require change of some athletic competitions



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## State the Decision

### Decision Statement:

*Select the best plan for going back to school*





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# Establish Criteria—*Select the Best Plan to go Back to School*

Establish Criteria
Meets CDC guidelines
Meets state requirements



# Establish Criteria and Weigh the WANTS-

Establish Criteria	Classify Criteria MUSTs/WANTS
Meets state requirements	MUST
Meets CDC Guidelines	MUST
Maximizes safety for students and school personnel	10
Maximizes state requirements for ALL students	8



# Decision Analysis—*Example - Back to School Plan*

Establish Criteria	M / W	PLAN A (Cohorts)	Score	HYBRID PLAN (50/50)	Score	PLAN B (Normal Start)	PLAN C (100% Distance)
Meets state requirements	M	y		y		y	N
Meets CDC guidelines	M	y		y		N	
Maximizes safety for students and school personnel	10						
Maximizes state requirements for ALL students	8						
	1						
	8						
	7						
	3						
	5						
						25	

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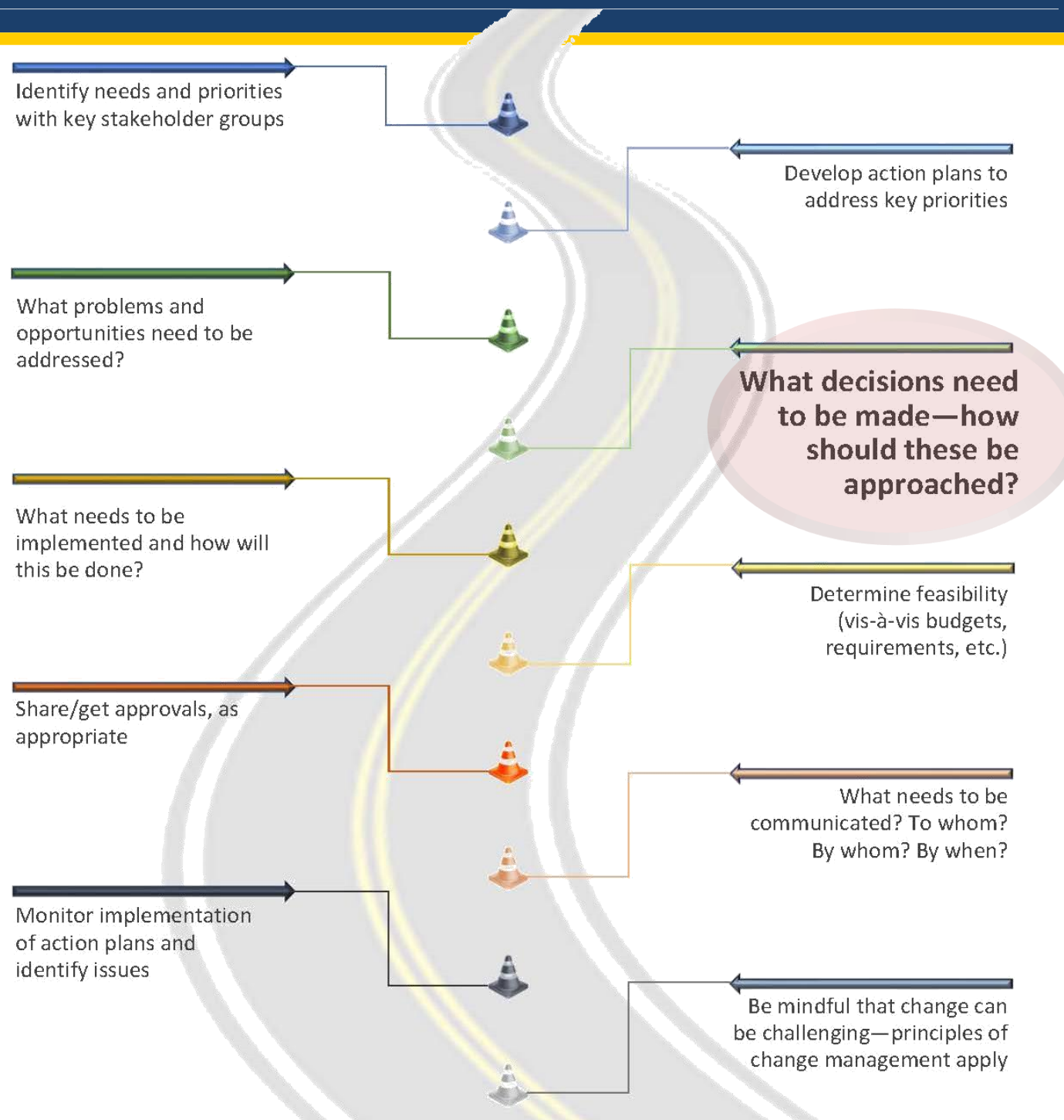
## Good decision making requires:

- Clarity of purpose
- Understanding of what is needed and wanted in a final choice
- Consideration of a range of options
- Evaluation of how well options meet criteria
- Assessment of possible risks
- Effective use of data
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Effective implementation and communications

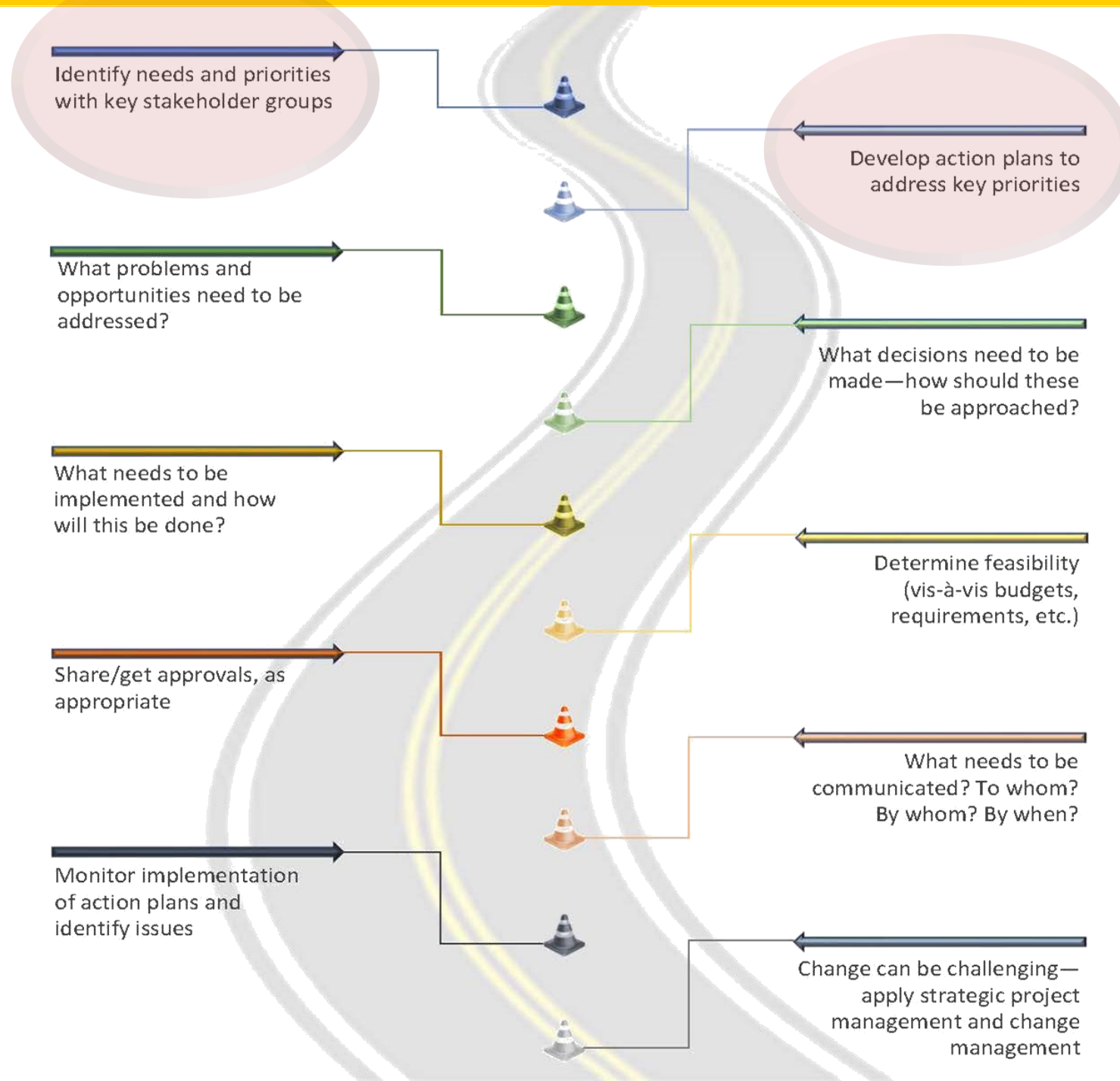


## **Consider how using Decision Analysis might help you plan your back to school:**

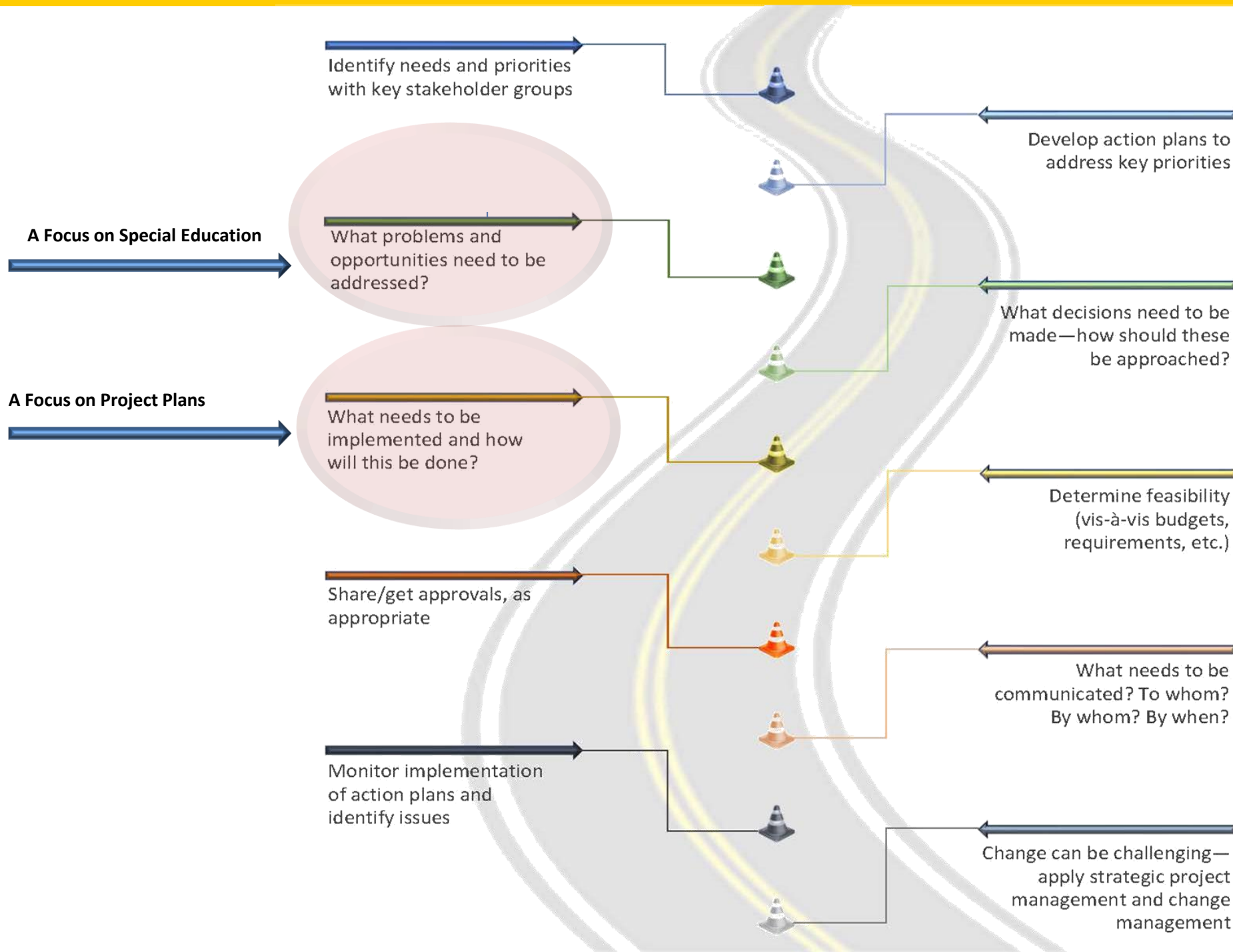
- Key stakeholders see their wants/needs reflected?
- Communicate rationale of choices?
- Raise stakeholder confidence of a thorough, sensible decision?
- Maximize likelihood of a balanced decision that meets a range of wants/needs?
- Minimize likelihood the process is derailed by special interests?
- Cultivate support among decision makers and stakeholders for final choice?

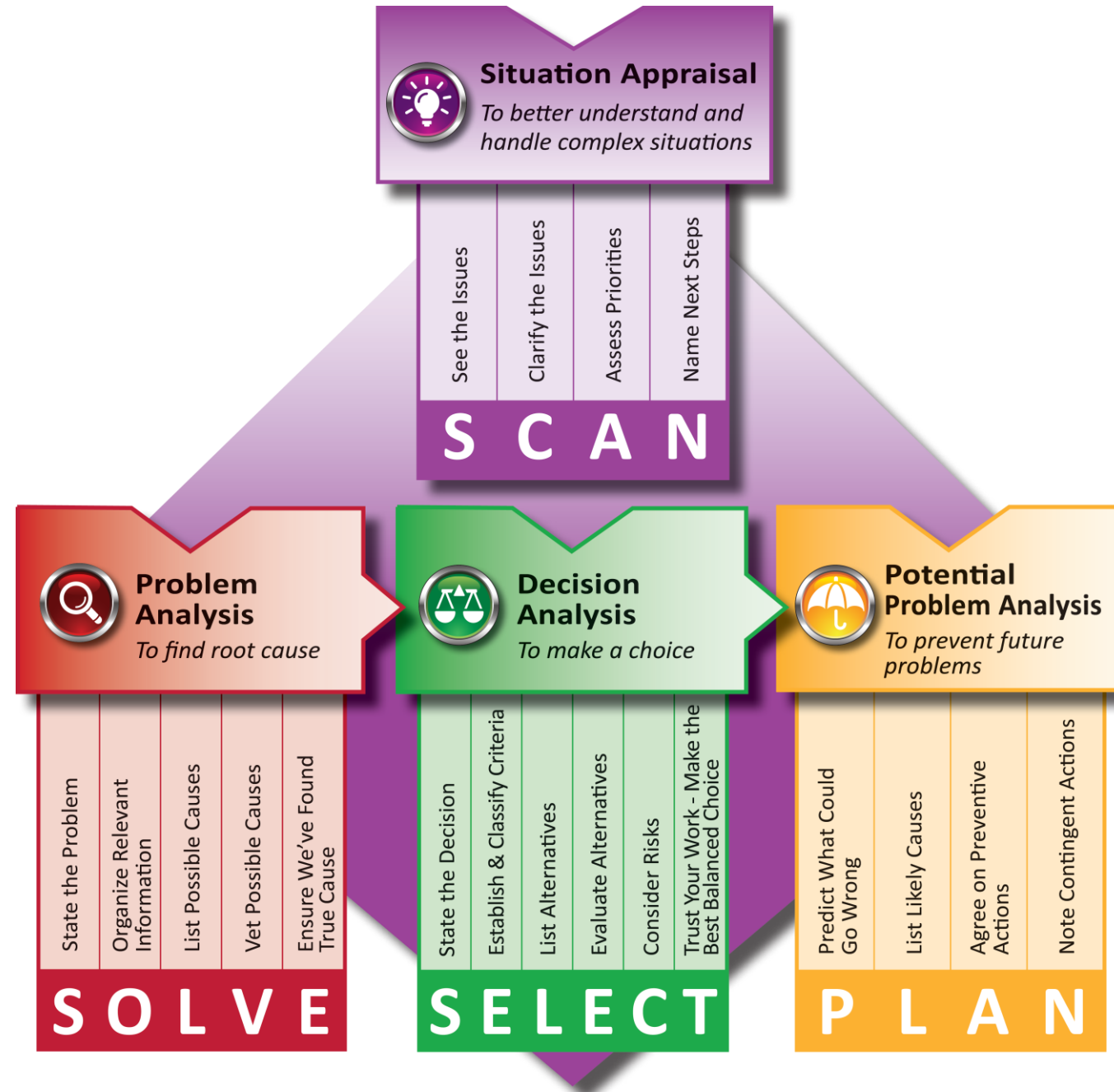












TregoED will provide you:

- PDF of PowerPoint presentation
- PDF of Decision Analysis worksheet template
- Pro Bono support for you and your leadership team using these key decision elements and other TregoED tools

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