

**They don't, they won't and they can't:
student career difficulties in HE**

Julia Yates and Wendy Hirsh

In the next half hour...

- Why we did the study
- How we designed the study
- What we found
- What next?



Why this study?

- I needed the information for my work
- It felt like an obvious gap in knowledge
- Possible REF-able publication
- Possible Impact Case Study



Study Design

Mixed-methods (robust but hard to publish)

Quantitative survey data on 600 career conversations
(good sample size but issues with self-report surveys and cross-sectional data)

Qualitative data from interviews with 22 career practitioners (methodologically decent sample size, although too small for some journals)

Started with ethics application

Focus group and pilot



Theoretical basis for the survey

Cognitive Career Difficulties

Gati et al.,
1996

Lack of
readiness

Lack of
information

Inconsistent
information

Pessimism

Anxiety

Identity

Emotional Career Difficulties

Saka et al.,
2008

Survey items and groups

They are not ready to make a decision

They are not showing much motivation

They seem really indecisive

They don't know how to go about making a choice

They have an unrealistic idea of how to make a choice (eg they expect you to give them the answer)

They don't have enough information

They seem to be lacking in self-awareness

They don't know enough about different options

They don't know how to go about researching options

They need help with the application process (CVs, i/vs etc)

There is some conflict holding them back

Internal conflicts, eg between two different sets of values

External conflicts, eg between them and their parents

Conflicting information about options or other aspects of the world of work

They seem to have a pessimistic attitude

About the world

About the process of choosing or getting a job

About their ability to control the process

They are showing some anxiety

About the process of choosing and getting a job

About the uncertainty of the process

About choosing: what if they can't work out what to do?

About the outcome: what happens if it doesn't work out?

When comparing themselves with their peers

Their sense of identity is holding them back

Their self-confidence is low

They are unclear about their own identity – who they are and what they want

They are struggling with breaking away from the past

Which do you most often see?

They are not ready to make a decision

They are not showing much motivation

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Which do you find hardest to deal with?

They are not ready to make a decision

They are not showing much motivation

They seem really indecisive

They don't know how to go about making a choice

They have an unrealistic idea of how to make a choice (eg they expect you to give them the answer)

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When comparing themselves with their peers

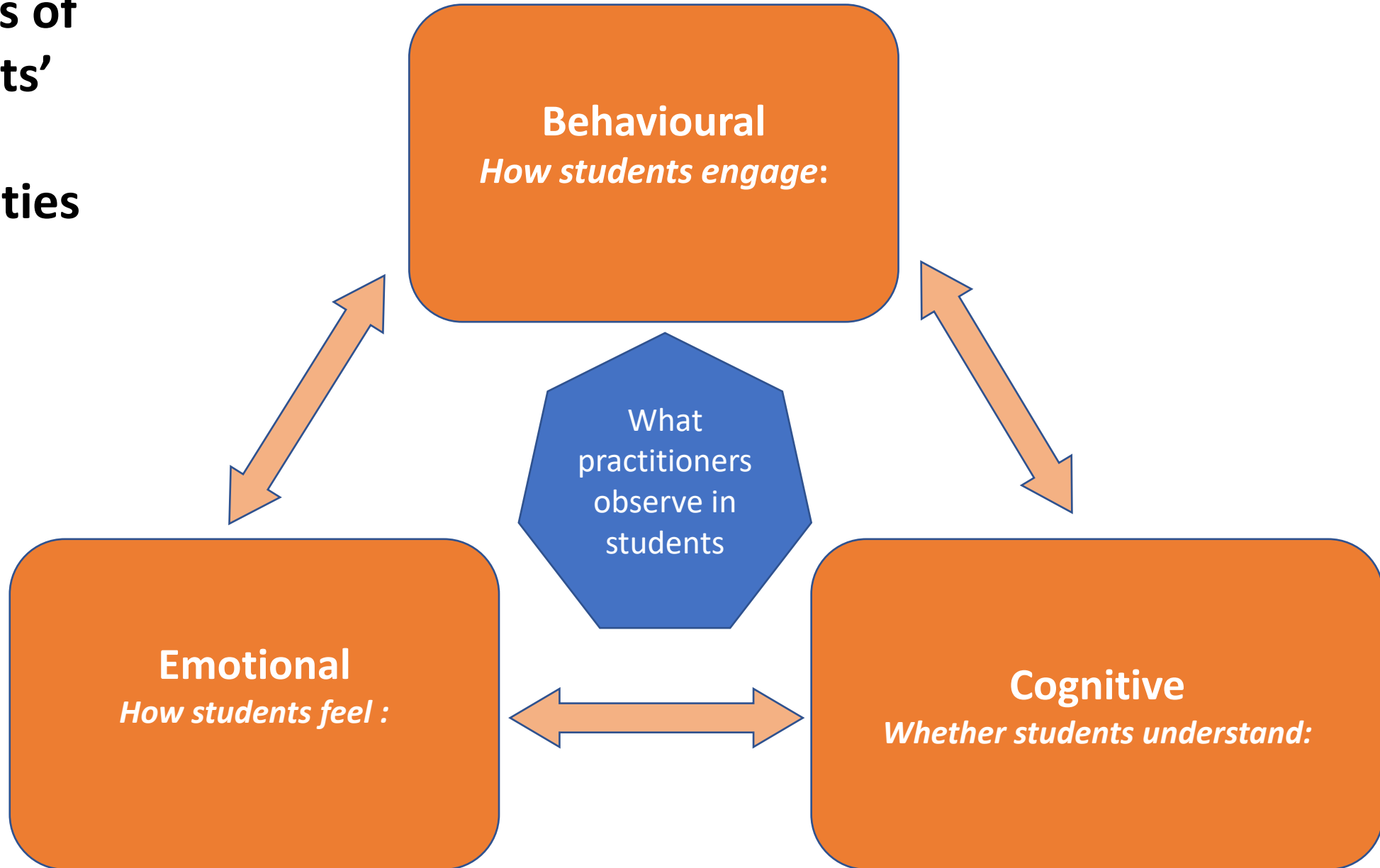
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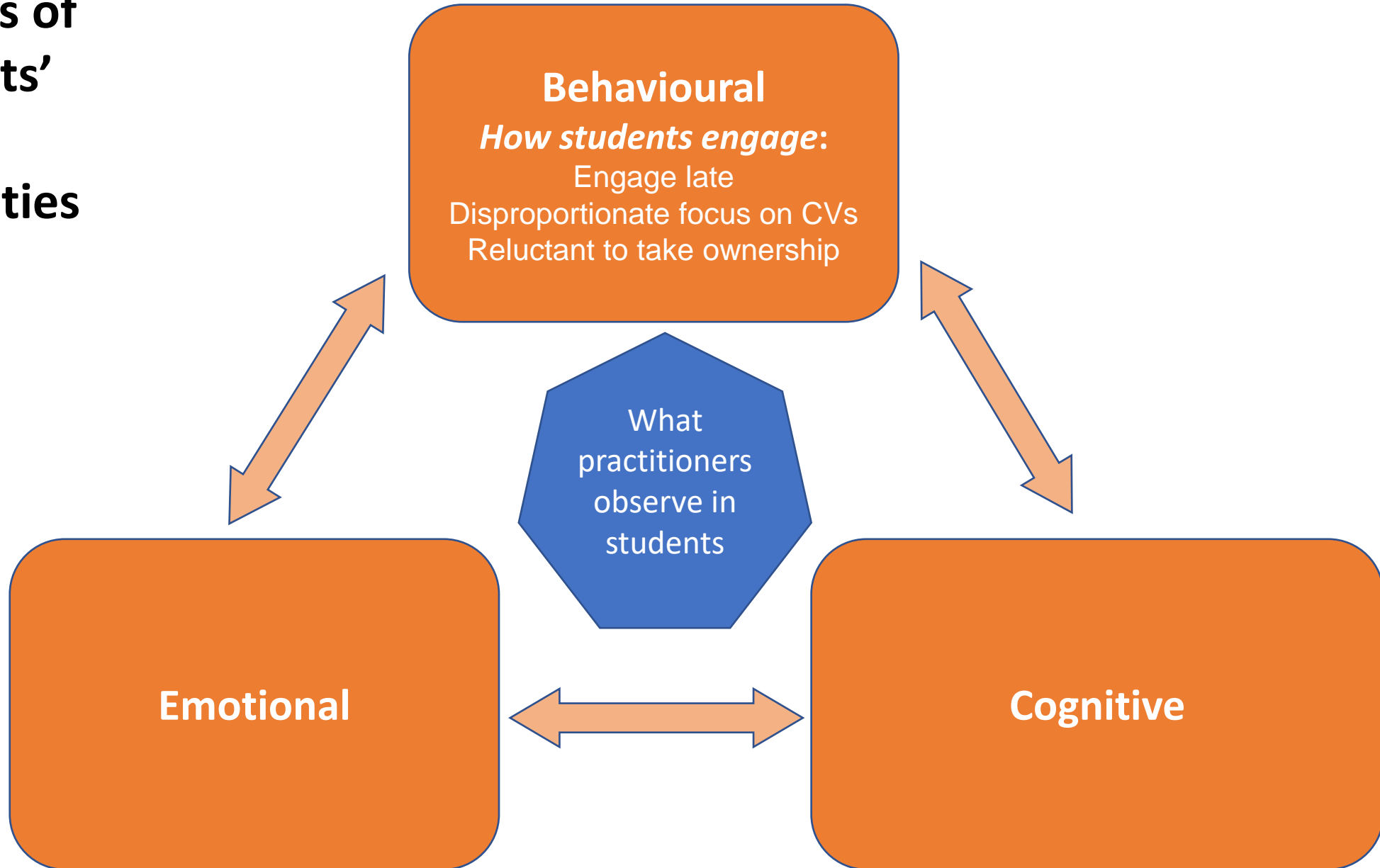
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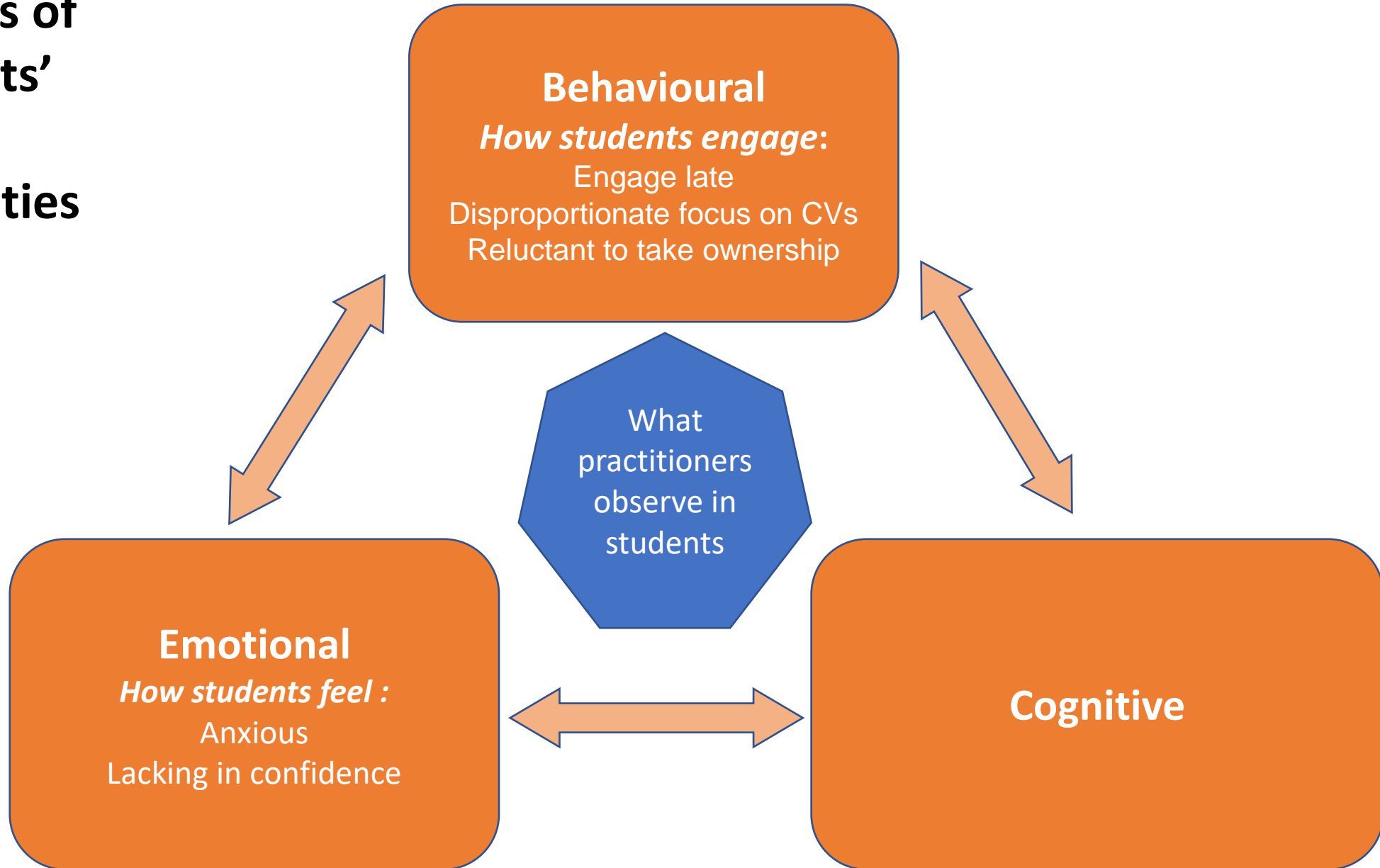
Aspects of students' career difficulties



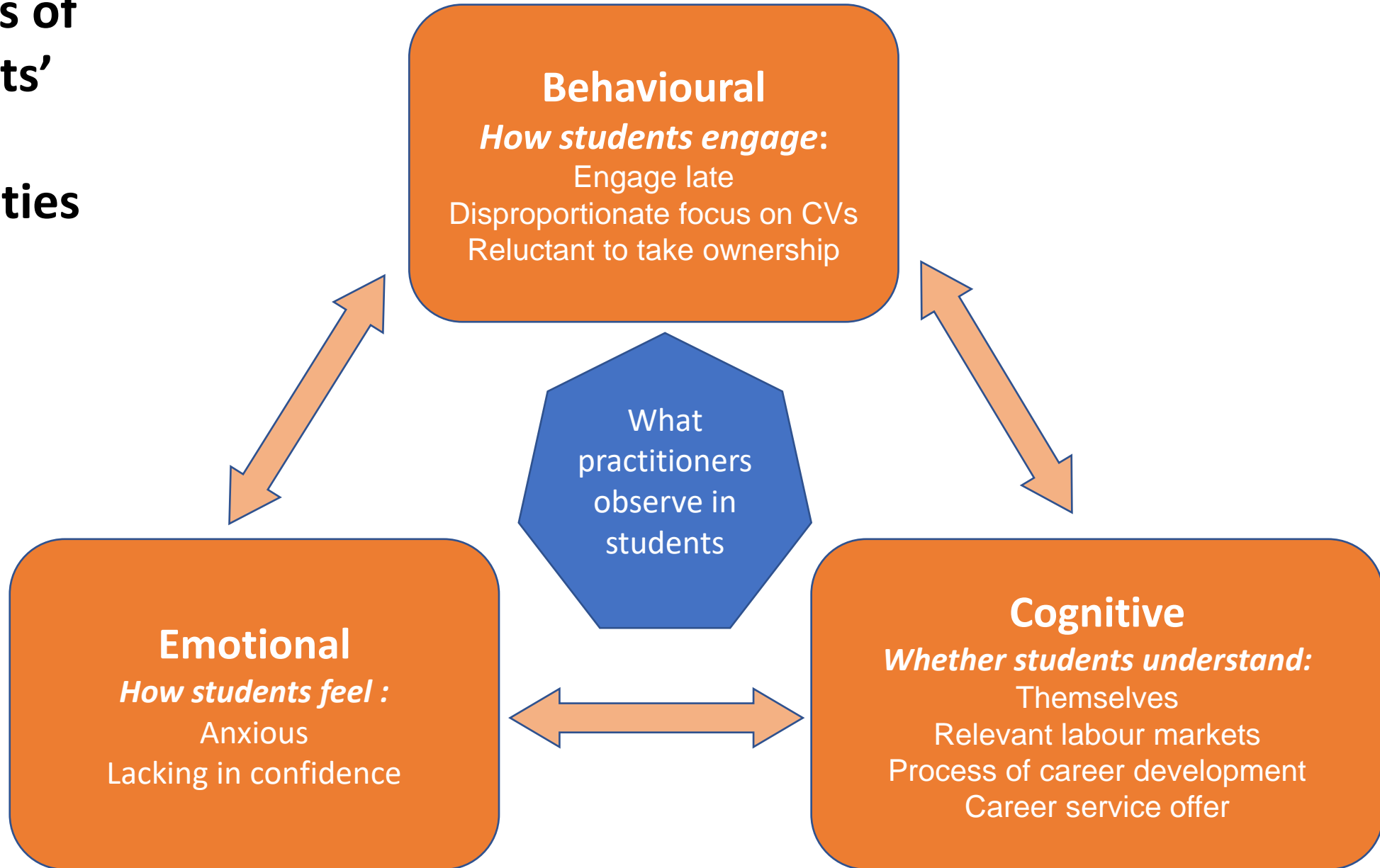
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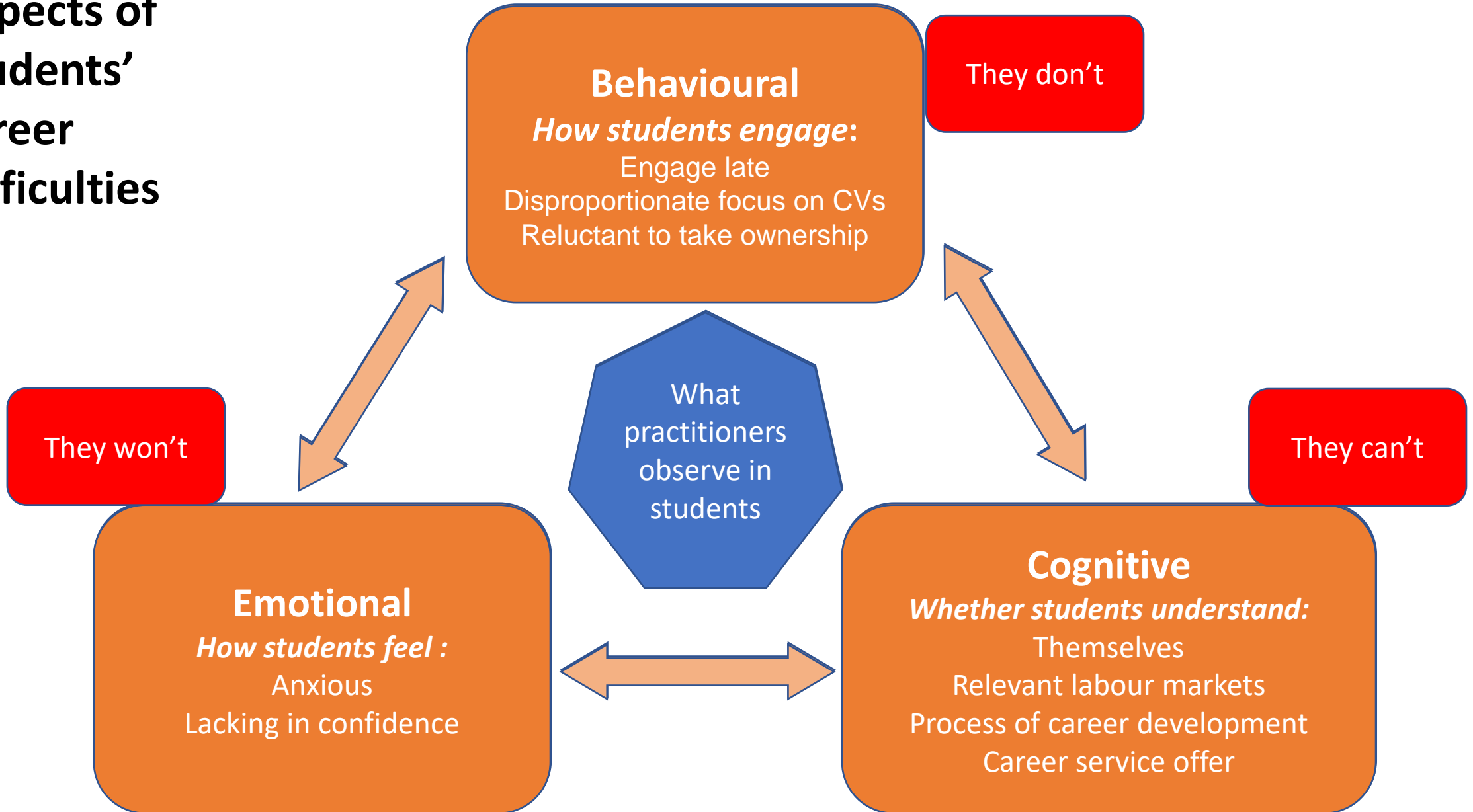
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Aspects of students' career difficulties



Trying to get published

Submitted Manuscripts

STATUS	ID	TITLE
ADM: Rajaram, Devi ● Under Review	CBJG-2021-0123	Aspects of career difficulties in their 1-1 conversations: a qualitative study View Submission
✉ Contact Journal		Cover Letter

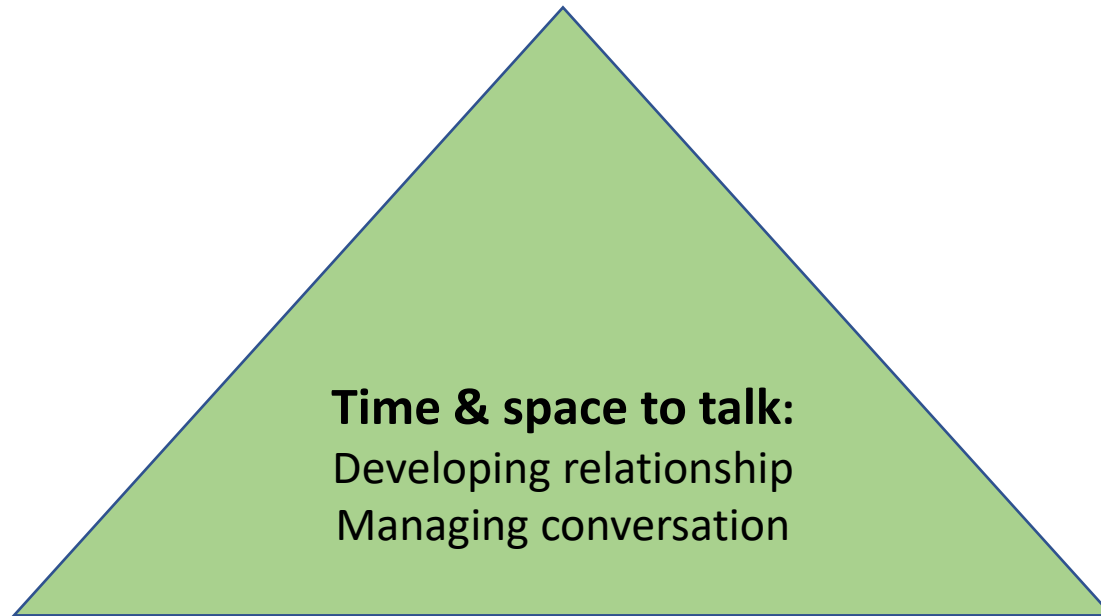


	CREATED	SUBMITTED
Professionals in the UK: a	23-Jul-2021	26-Jul-2021

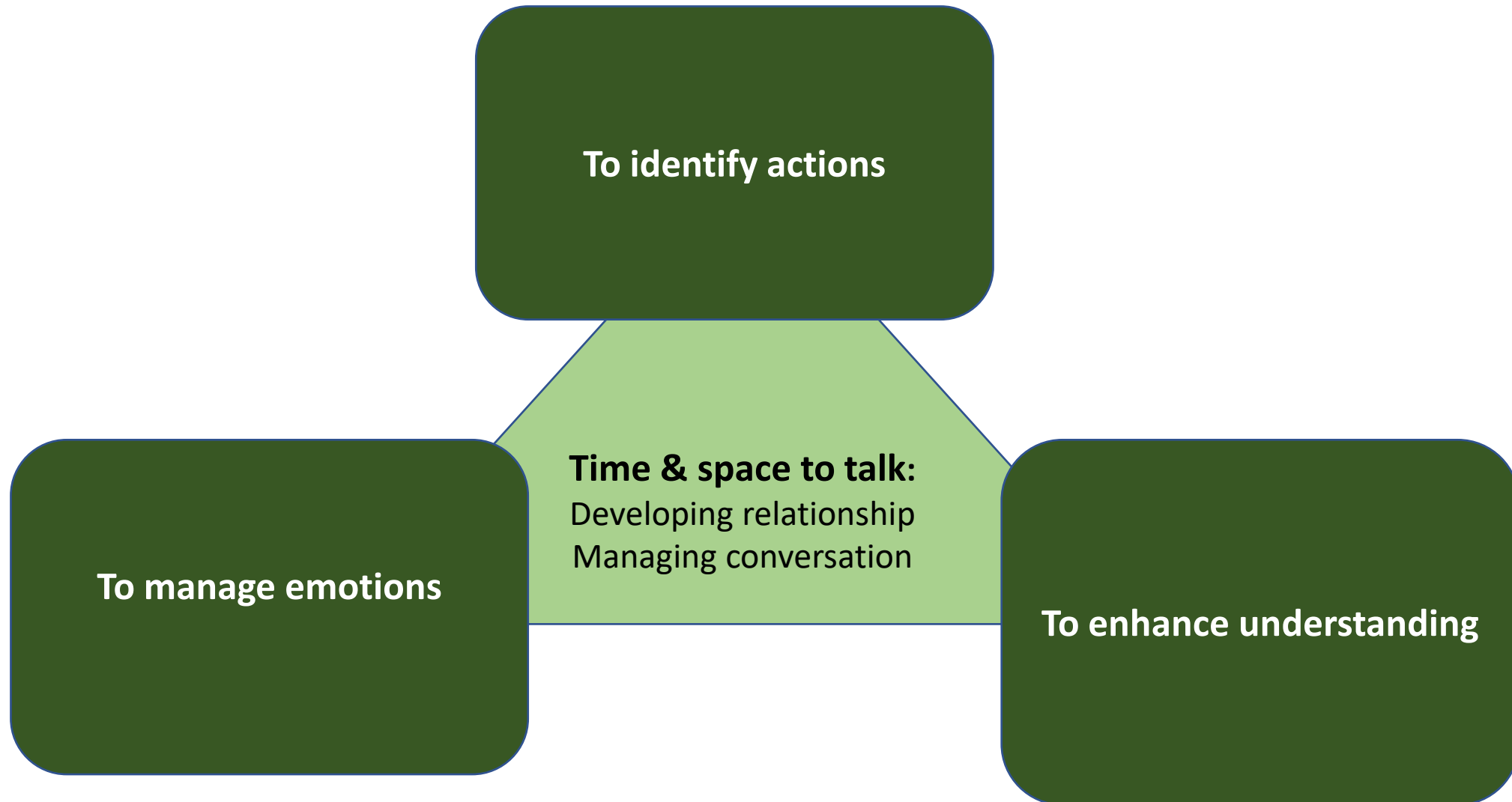


What CPs actually do in their
one-to-ones

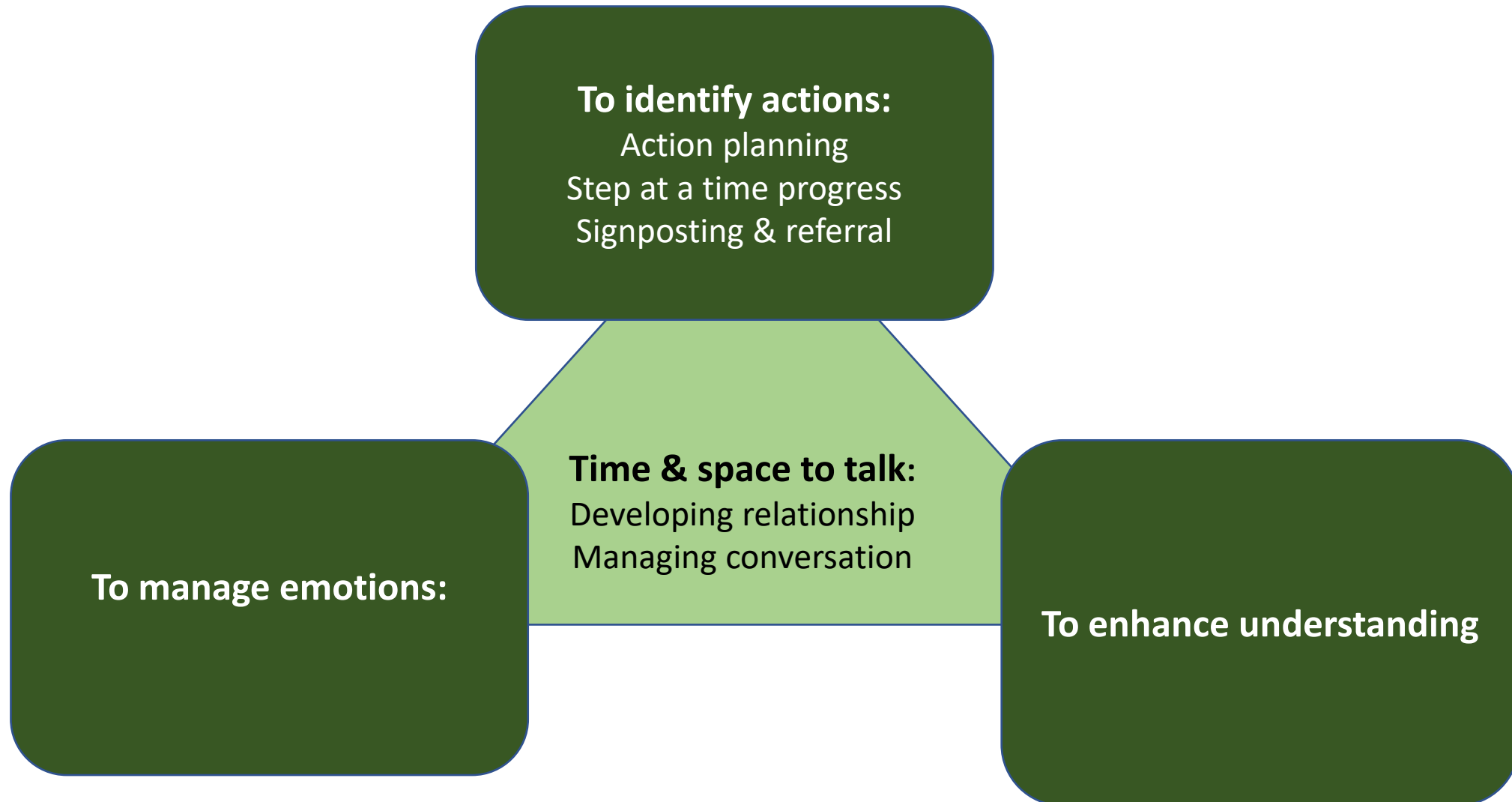
How practitioners support students in career conversations



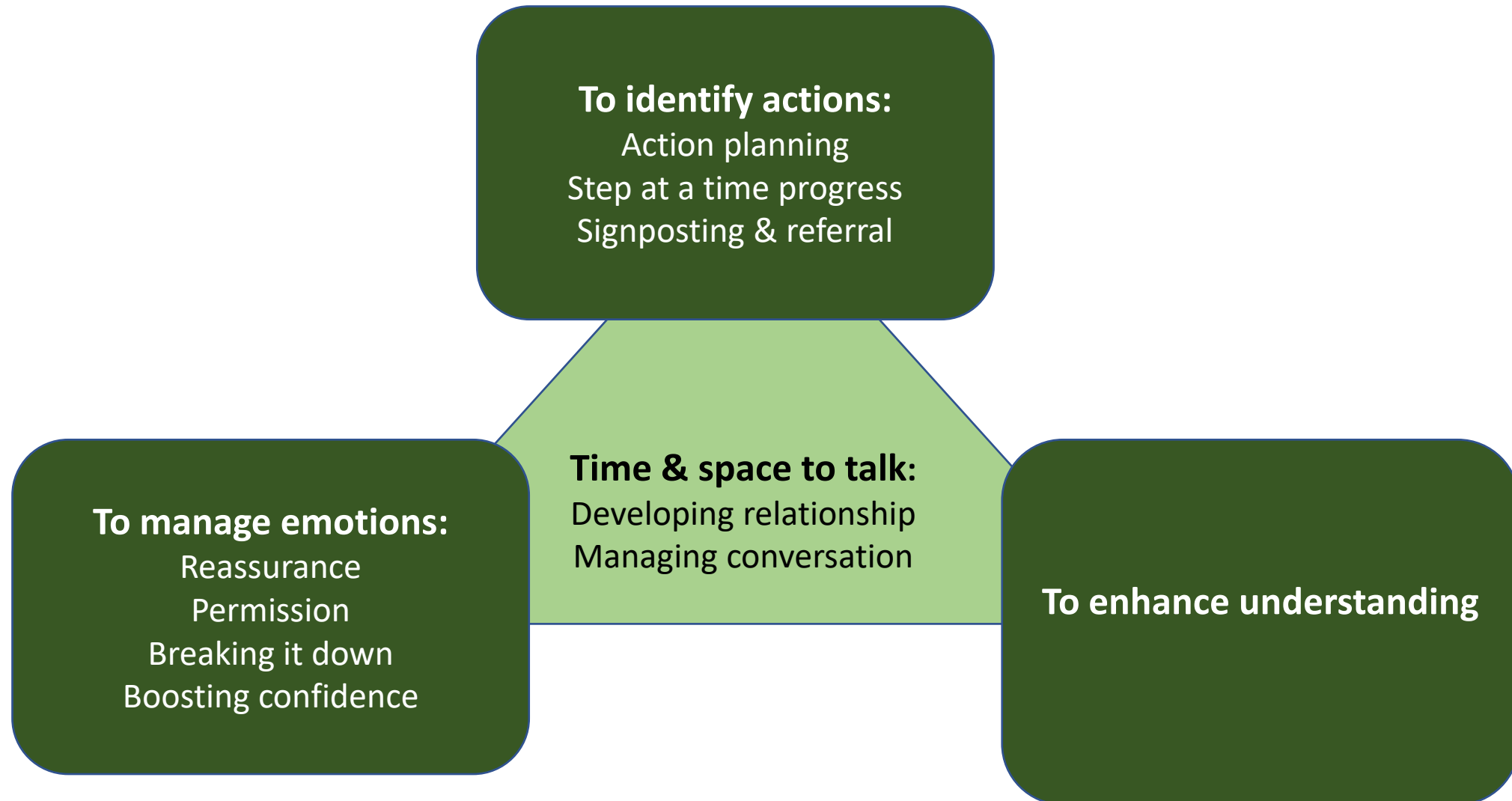
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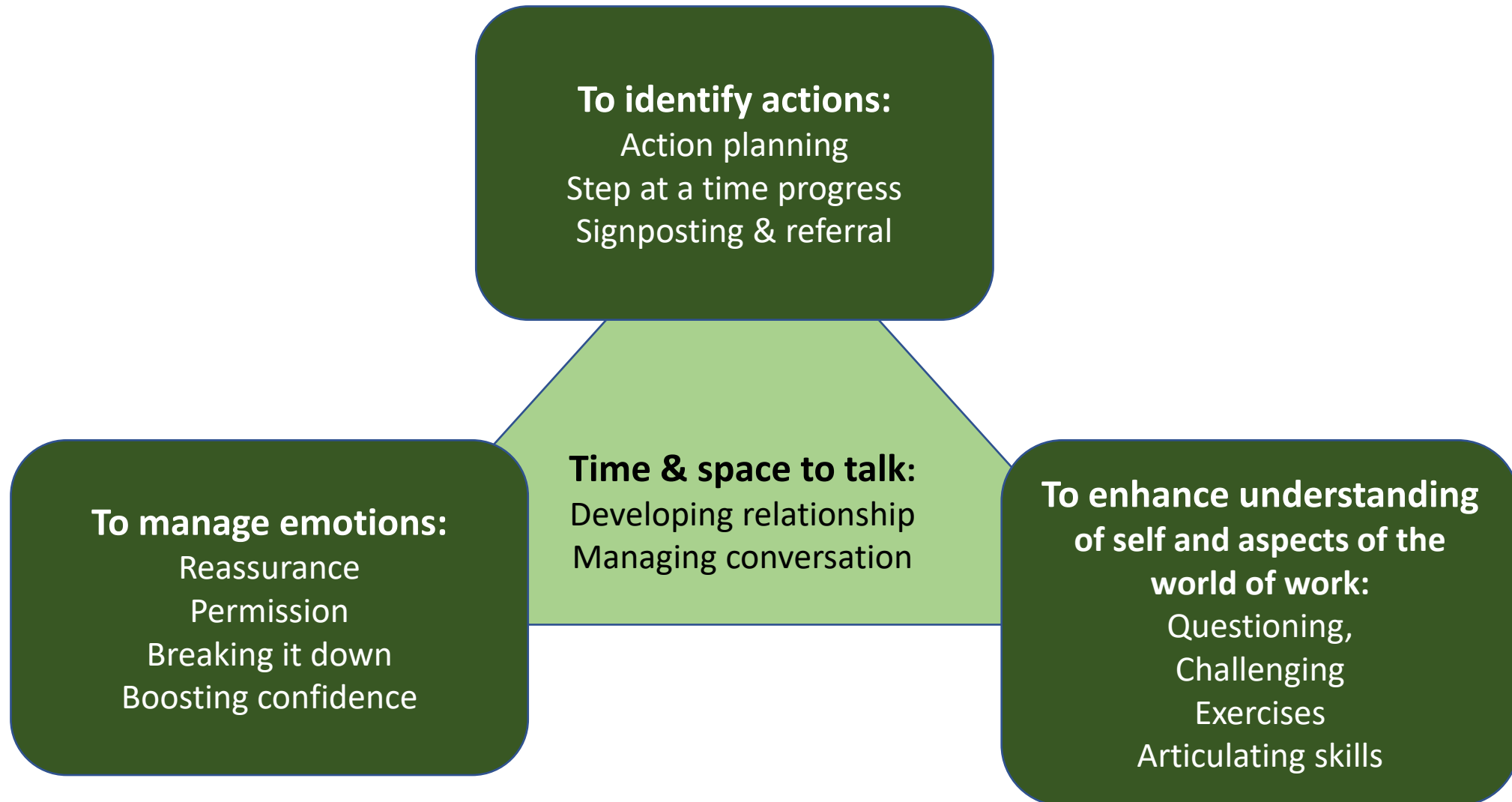
How practitioners support students in career conversations



How practitioners support students in career conversations



How practitioners support students in career conversations



How practitioners support students in career conversations

Practitioners have similar views on:
Student-centred values
Techniques to manage emotions

To identify actions:

Action planning
Step at a time progress
Signposting & referral

To manage emotions:

Reassurance
Permission
Breaking it down
Boosting confidence

Time & space to talk:

Developing relationship
Managing conversation

To enhance understanding of self and aspects of the world of work:

Questioning,
Challenging
Exercises
Articulating skills

How practitioners support students in career conversations

Practitioners have similar views on:
Student-centred values
Techniques to manage emotions

Practitioners have less commonality on:
Sharing labour market knowledge
Directivity
Follow-up

To identify actions:
Action planning
Step at a time progress
Signposting & referral

To manage emotions:
Reassurance
Permission
Breaking it down
Boosting confidence

Time & space to talk:
Developing relationship
Managing conversation

**To enhance understanding
of self and aspects of the
world of work:**
Questioning,
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Trying to get published

You have only gathered qualitative information

Submitted Manuscripts

STATUS	ID	TITLE
EO: rowley, shula	CJFH-2021-0374.R1	One-to-one career conversation practical approaches and profe View Submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awaiting Admin Processing		



	CREATED	SUBMITTED
on:	26-Jan-2022	26-Jan-2022

[✉ Contact Journal](#)

The way you gathered that qualitative information (semi-structured interviews) and the way you carried out its analysis (template analysis), to me, without any other quantitative information is far from being highly rigorous

The sample is somewhat low

More research...

- Using career development theories in practice: interviewing self-identified theory geeks (looking for more participants...)
- The career development process: going from 'not a clue' to 'ready to start work'
- Generating career ideas: using Prolific to find out how people came across the idea for their current career



Thank you very much!

- Do please let me know if you want:
 - The slides
 - Short report
 - The academic papers
- I'm happy to come and talk to services or trainee career practitioners about the findings
- If you are a **theory-geek-practitioner** and wouldn't mind being interviewed (or if you know any...)
- julia.yates.1@city.ac.uk