

A Life Course Systems Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations

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About Forward Change

Forward Change is a mission-driven social change strategy consulting firm that seeks to improve the life outcomes and opportunities for children, young adults and families living in low-income disadvantaged communities.

We do this by helping foundations, governments and community organizations adopt social change strategies that match the best that research has to offer with the on-the-ground leadership in communities.



Overview

- Introduce **The Life Course Systems Framework for Improving the Lives of Disadvantaged Populations**
- **Major U.S. Social Structural Changes since the 1970s**



The Life Course Framework: A Heuristic



What does it mean to take a life course approach?



Taking the **long view**

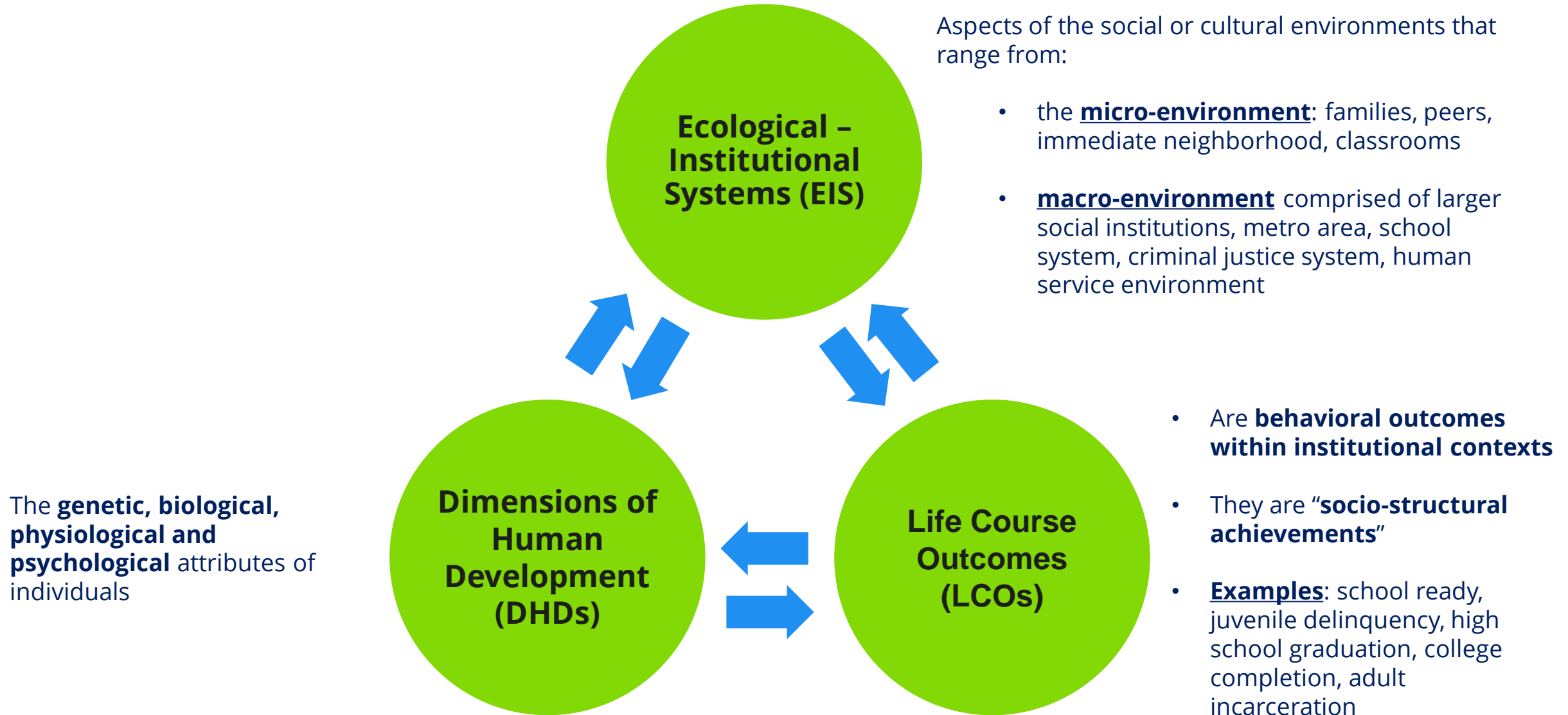


Thinking about how all of the outcomes of a person's life relate to each other, specifically **how things that happen earlier in a person's life shapes what happens later** in their lives



Focusing on changing life **trajectories** for years down the road

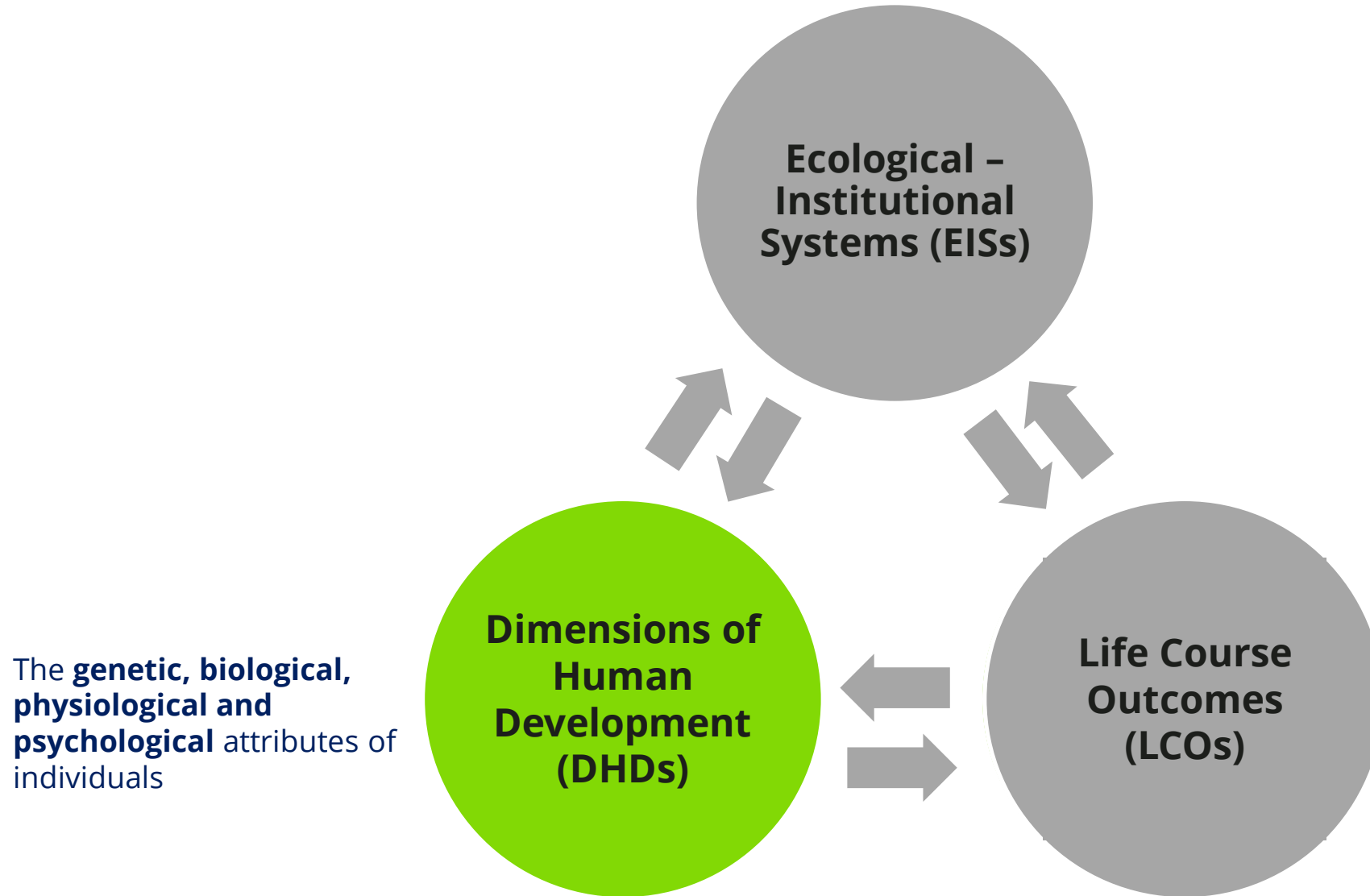
Life Course System Framework Concepts





Dimensions of Human Development

Dimensions of Human Development



Dimensions of Human Development

Dimensions of Human Development are **Genetic, Biological, Physiological** and **Psychological** Attributes

Physical Health:

genetic predisposition; motor-visual-auditory dev, morbidity, physical frailty, brain development, **biological embedding of social adversity and toxic substance exposures**: chronic adversity, allostatic load/toxic stress, environmental toxin exposure (e.g. air pollution, lead poisoning, etc.), epigenetics, basal cortisol levels, addiction



Cognitive Development:

fluid and crystallized intelligence, information processing, language, numeracy, literacy, **executive functions (e.g. memory, attention, reasoning, problem solving)**, mathematical reasoning, scientific thinking, verbal and written communication skills



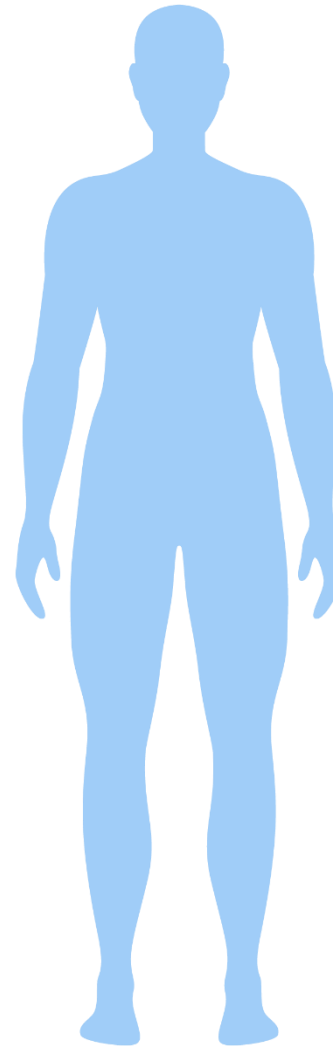
Mental Health and Sense of Well-Being:

secure attachment, trauma, happiness/contentment, hope, self-esteem/mastery, stigma stress, mood disorders (e.g. depression, anxiety), schizophrenia, PTSD, psychosis, addiction



Socioemotional Development:

Emotion and behavior regulation; autonomy; determination; motivation; self-monitoring/meta-cognition



Identity Development:

Self-concept, Self-Awareness, **Mindsets**, self-efficacy, locus of control, racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual identity, cultural orientation/attachment; Sense of Belonging



Beliefs, Content and Cultural Knowledge:

personal beliefs, **expectations for the future**, Declarative, procedural and evaluative content and cultural knowledge.



Meaning-Making/Spiritual Development:

Global and Situational Meaning (e.g. "The Meaning-Making Model") including beliefs, goals, subjective sense of meaning; **sense of "life's purpose"**; spiritual development and practice and/or religious affiliation and practice



Moral Development:

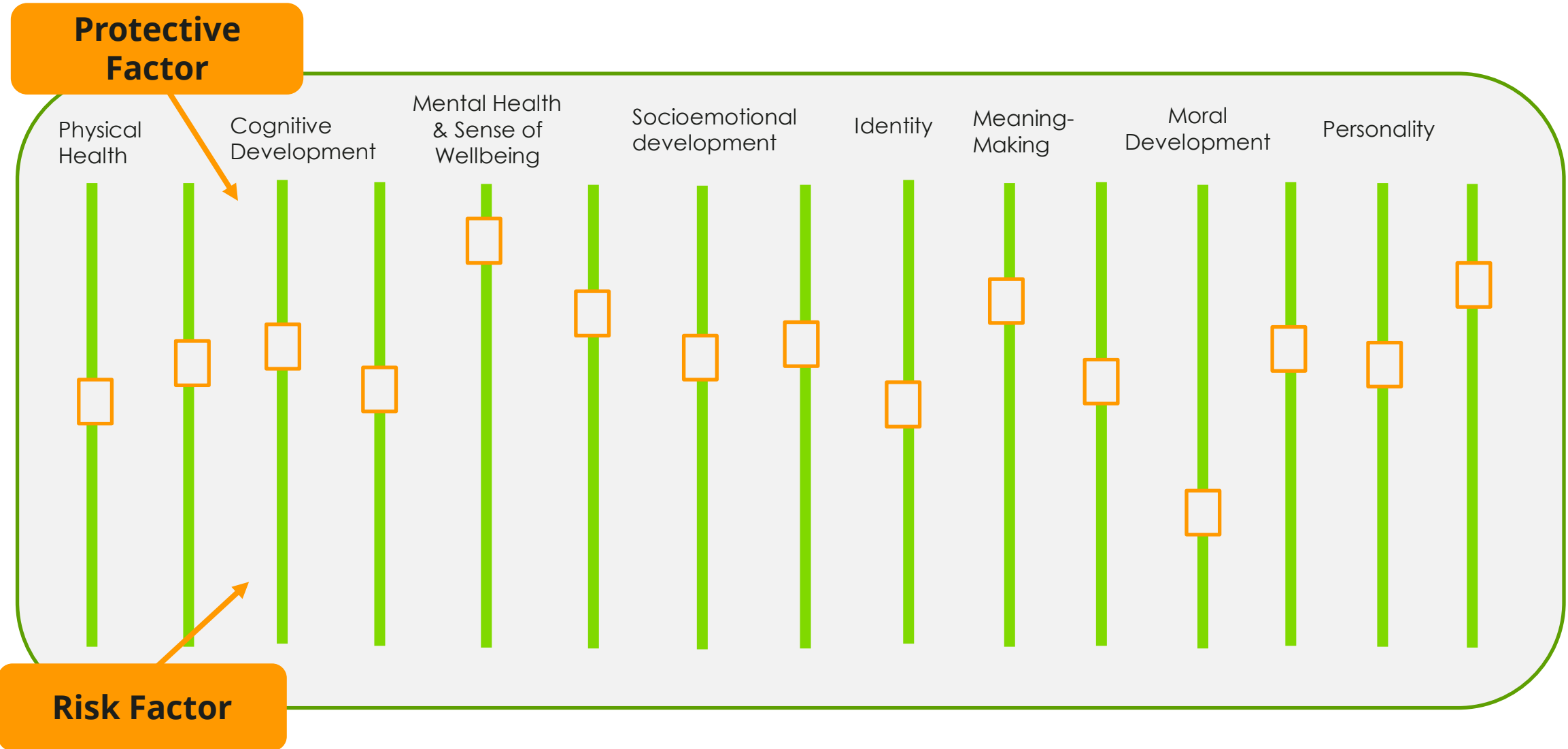
conscience and moral agency, moral judgment, **moral reasoning, altruism, empathy, moral action/behavior** (Prosocial behavior), moral emotion, moral character (i.e. virtue, ethics)



Personality

Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism

Dimensions of Human Development



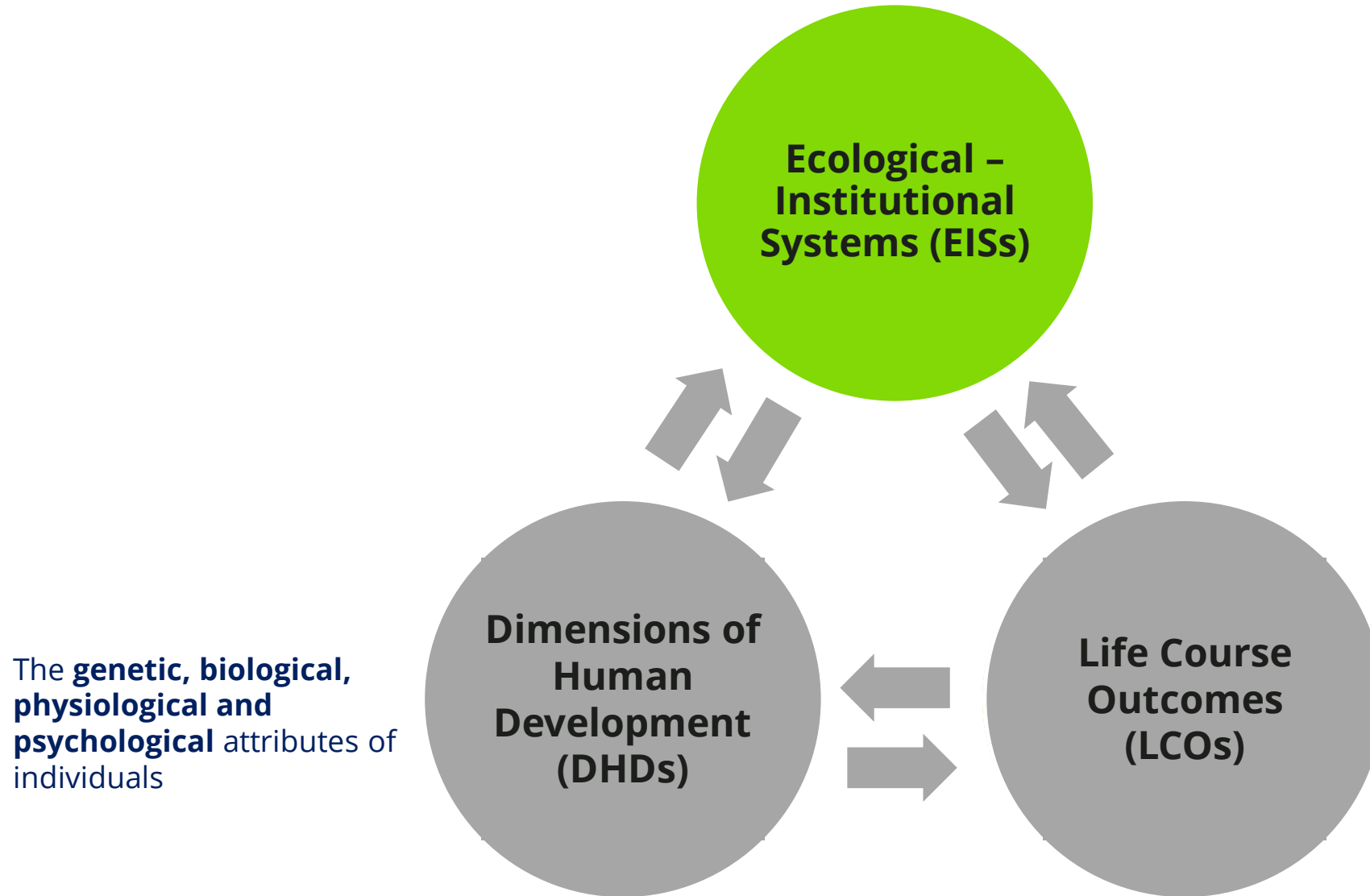
Life Course Canvas





Ecological-Institutional Systems

Dimensions of Human Development



Ecological-Institutional Factors

Ecological-Institutional factors are the **micro- and macro-environments** structured and **shaped by institutions**

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

Society, Culture

26-35

Public Systems

Place, Peers,
Schools

Family



Ecological-Institutional Factors: **Family**

0-5

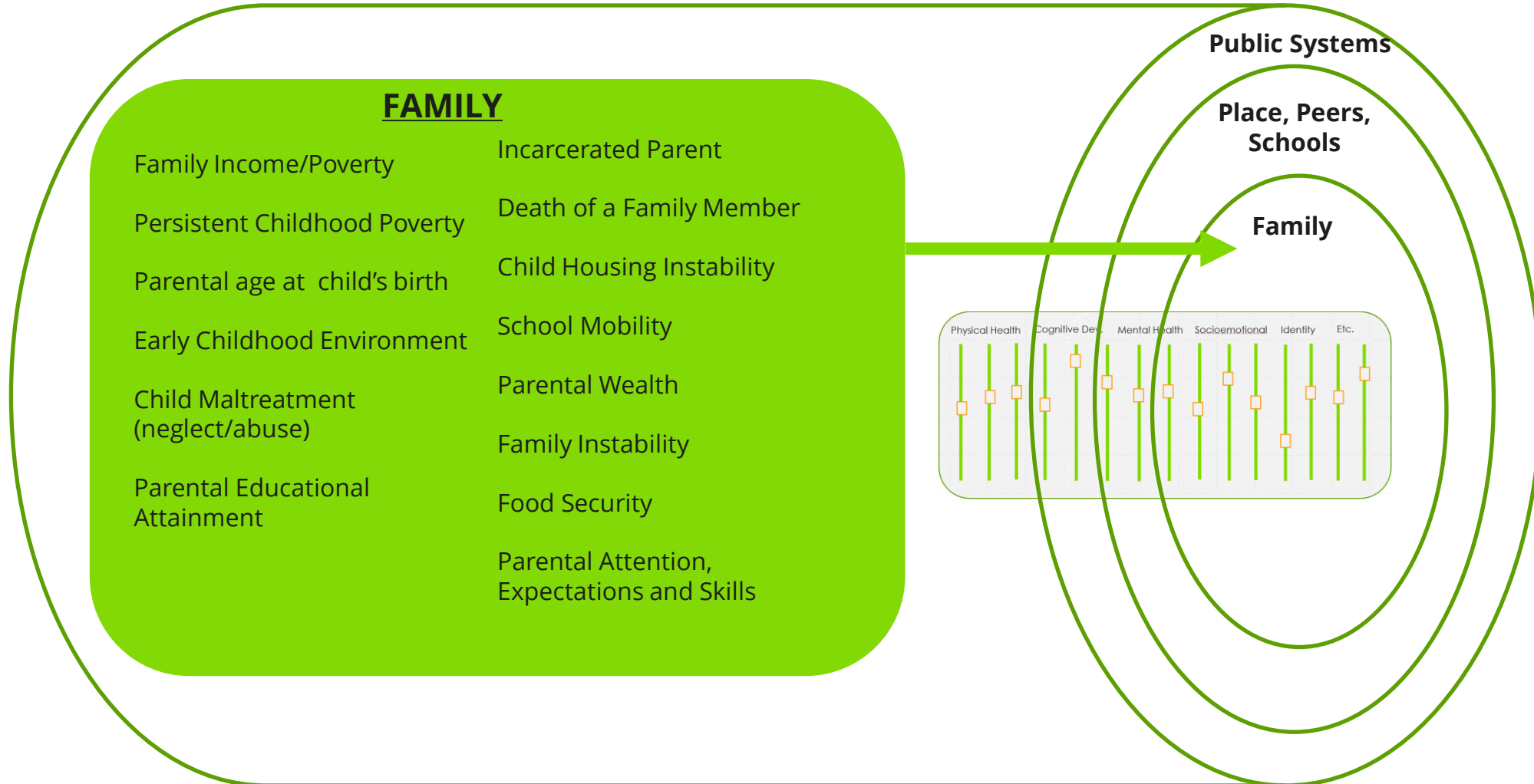
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19-25

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26-35



Ecological-Institutional Factors: **School**

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

Society, Culture

26-35

SCHOOL

School funding

School poverty

Teacher quality

Class size

Teacher/Student racial matching

Developmental relationships

School climate

Instructional/Pedagogical practices

Curricula content and approach

School disciplinary practices

Public Systems

Place, Peers, Schools

Family



Ecological-Institutional Factors: Peers & Mentors

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

26-35

Society, Culture

PEERS & MENTORS

School peer groups

Neighborhood peer groups

Mentors: formal and informal

Employment networks

Social capital (bridging and bonding)

Social and emotional support relationships

Public Systems

Place, Peers, Schools

Family



Ecological-Institutional Factors: **Place**

0-5

6-11

12-18

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Society, Culture

26-35

PLACE

Concentrated disadvantage/affluence

Residential instability

Collective efficacy

Violence & Crime

Aggressive policing practices

Street culture/
Underground economy

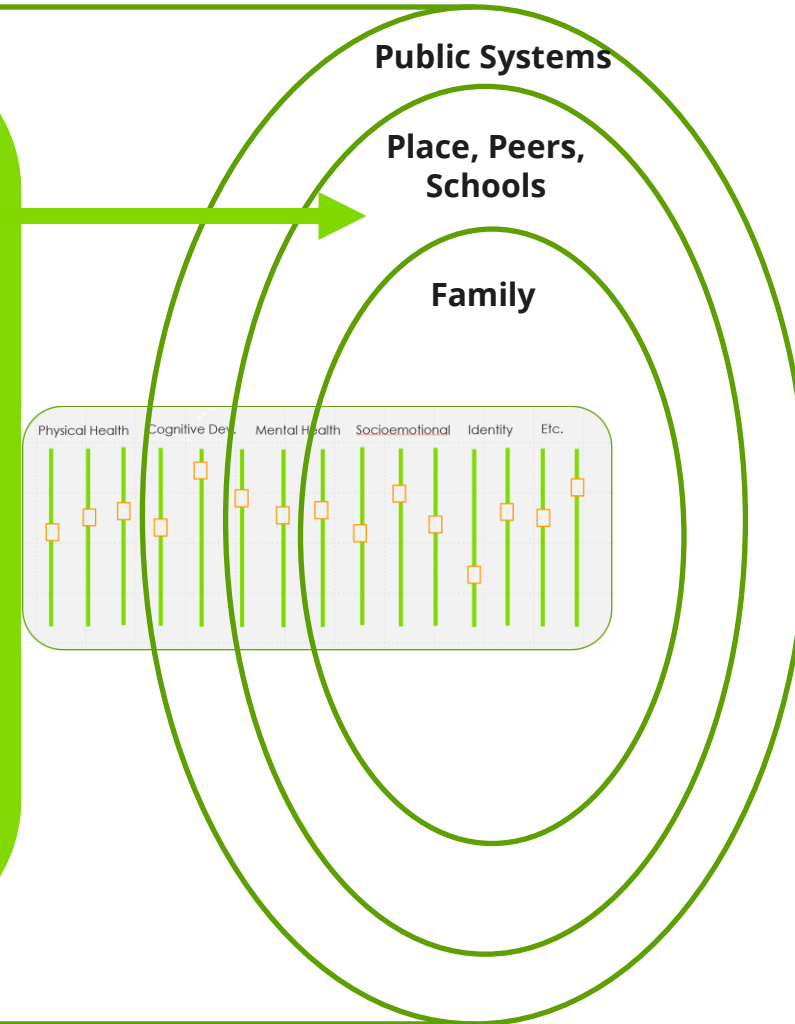
Concentrated imprisonment

Environmental pollutants
(e.g. lead poisoning)

Housing quality/blight

Neighborhood institutional infrastructure (e.g. CBOs, nonprofit, church)

Grocery stores/liquor stores



Ecological-Institutional Factors: **Public Systems**

0-5

6-11

12-18

19-25

Society, Culture

26-35

PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Early childhood/Childcare	Public health
Affordable housing	Social services
Juvenile Justice	Child protection
Criminal justice	Child support enforcement
Healthcare	Workforce development



Public Systems

Place, Peers,
Schools

Family

Ecological-Institutional Factors: **Society & Culture**

0-5

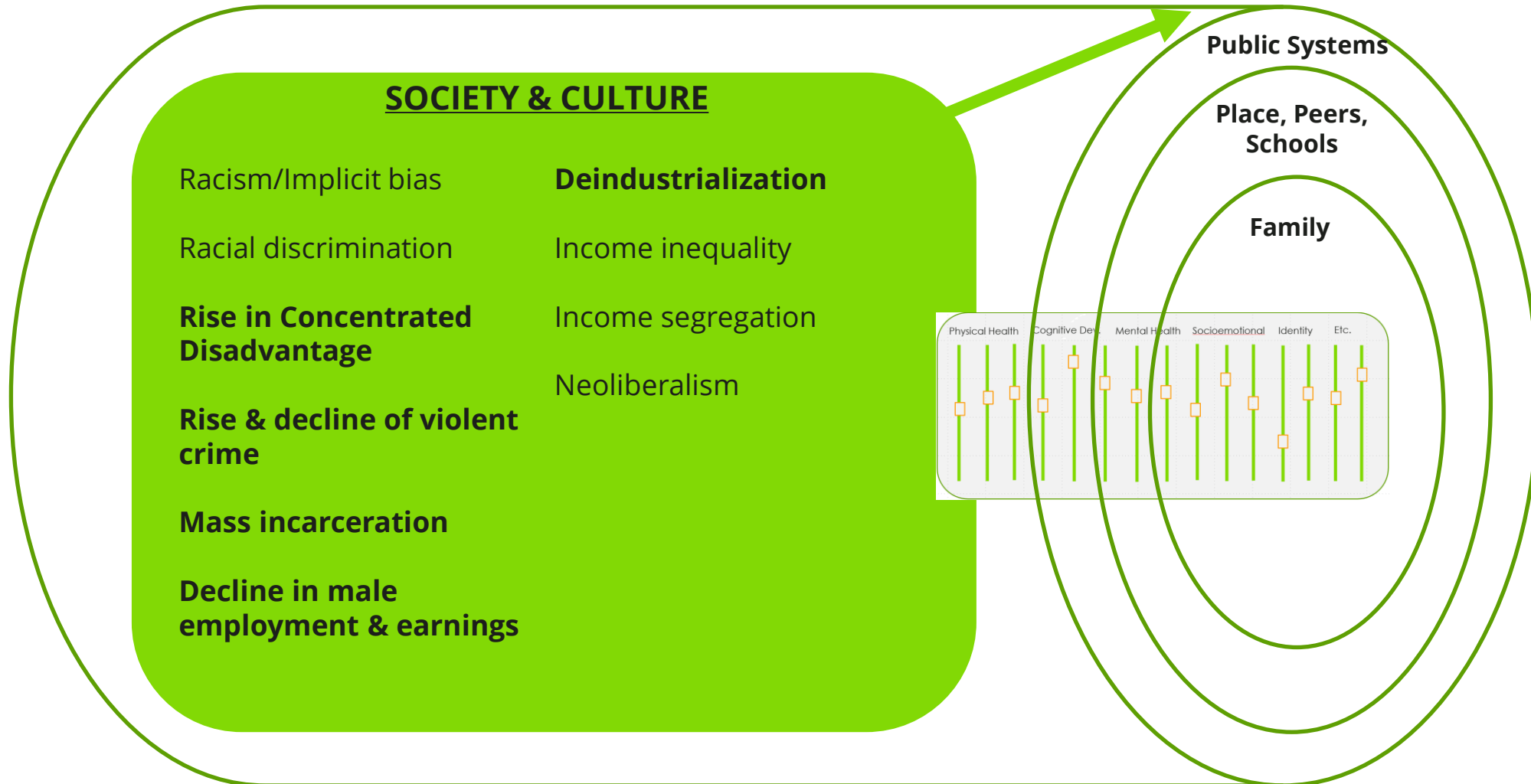
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Society & Culture

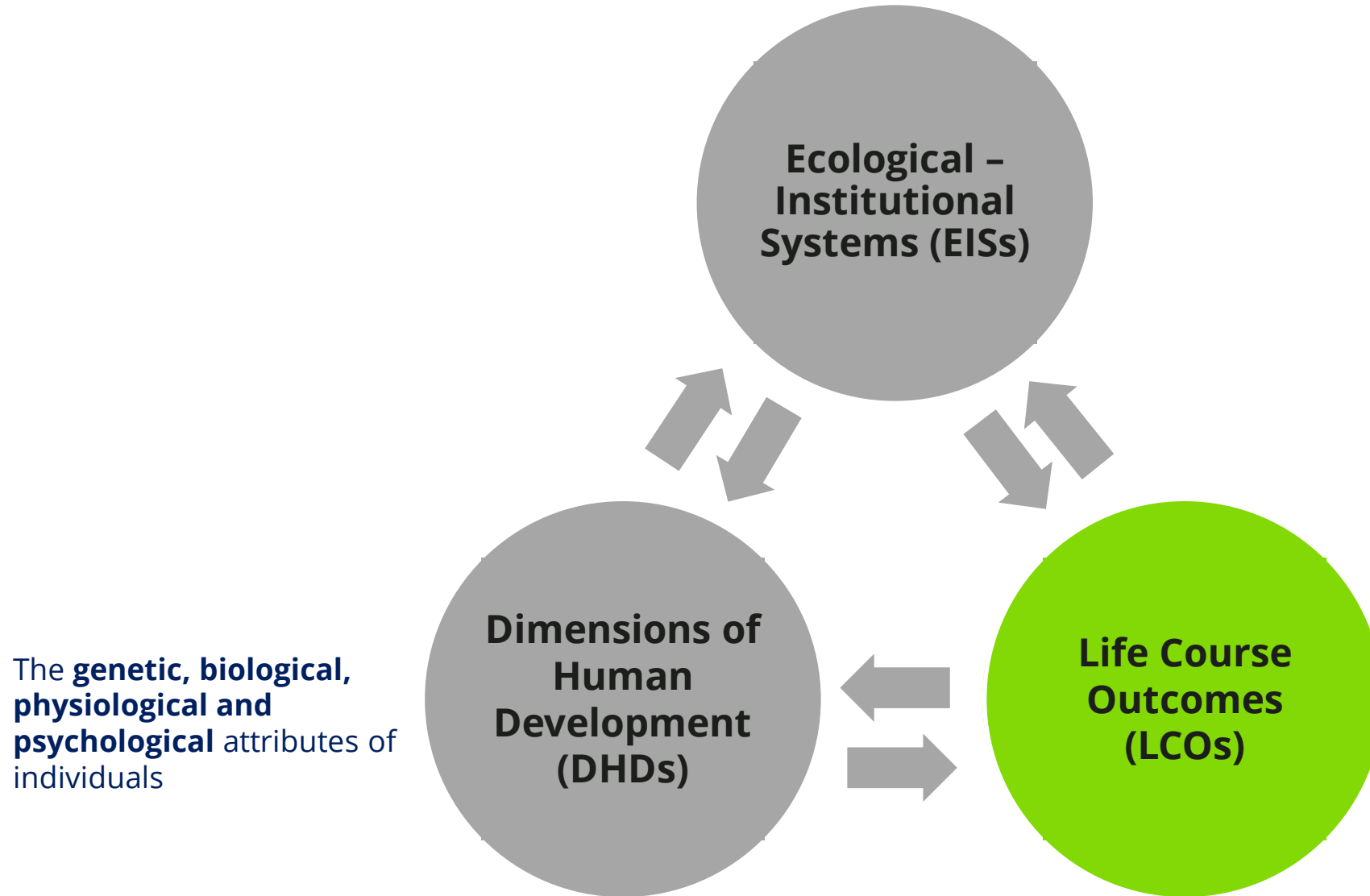
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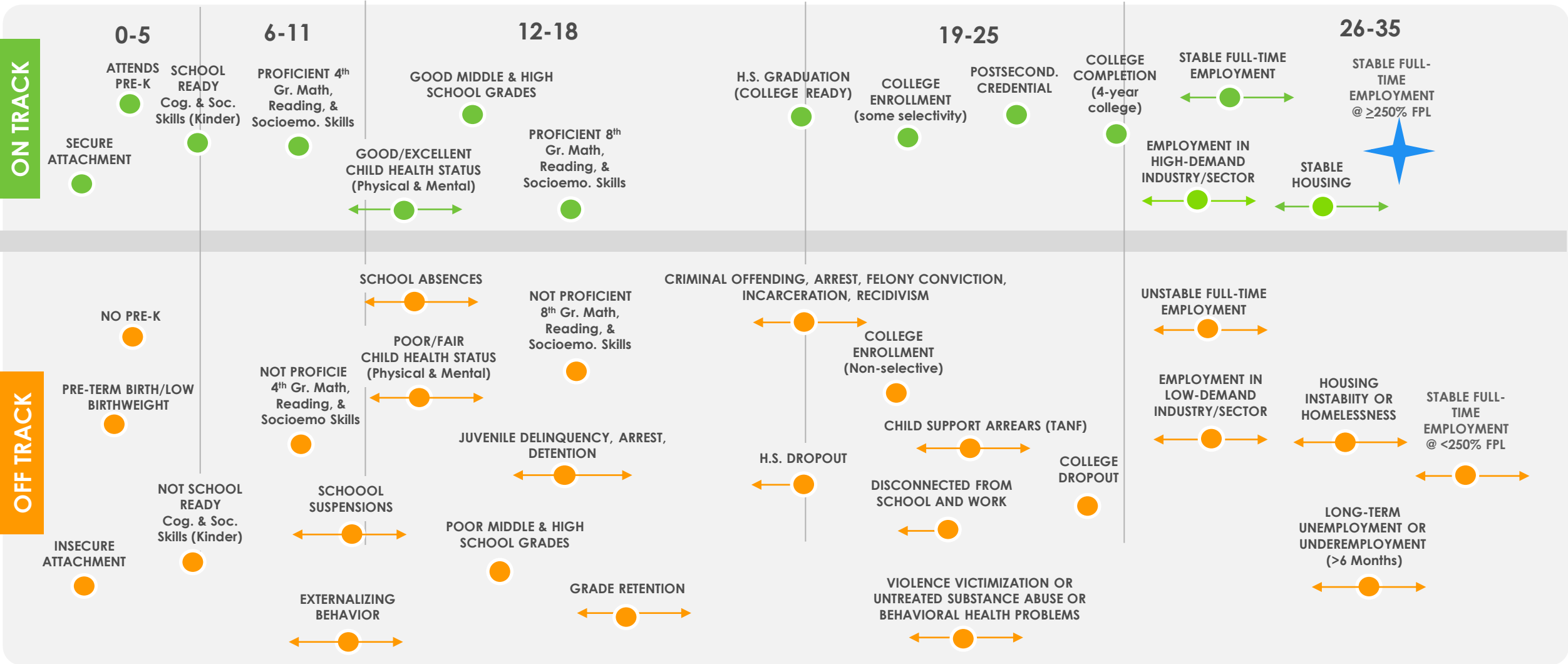
Life Course Outcomes

Dimensions of Human Development



Life course outcomes are “institutional attainments” or “socio-structural achievements”. A series of LCOs comprise trajectories

Life Course Outcomes



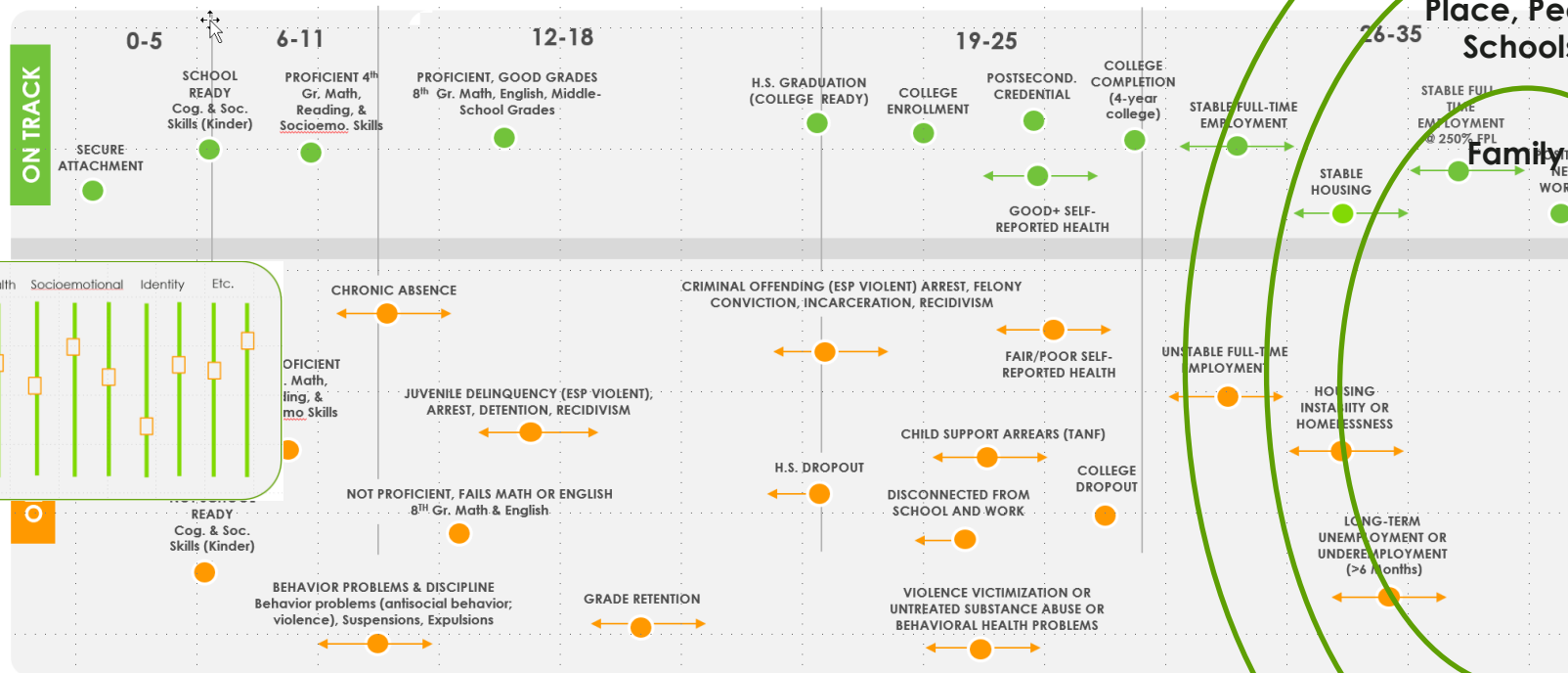
Integrated Life Course Systems Framework

Society, Culture

Public Systems

Place, Peers, Schools

Family





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