



Strategic Planning for FQHC CEOs

From Vision to Results



Learning Objectives

1

Understand the purpose of strategic planning & CEO's role

2

Learn ways to engage stakeholders and identify priorities

3

Review frameworks to lead a relevant and repeatable planning process

Agenda



- Today's goals and the “why” of strategic planning (10 min)
- A strategic dinner party (15 min)
- The strategic planning cycle (15 min)
- Scenario planning (20 min)
- Keys to effective planning (10 min)
- Overcoming obstacles (20 min)

Future Topics



Board engagement

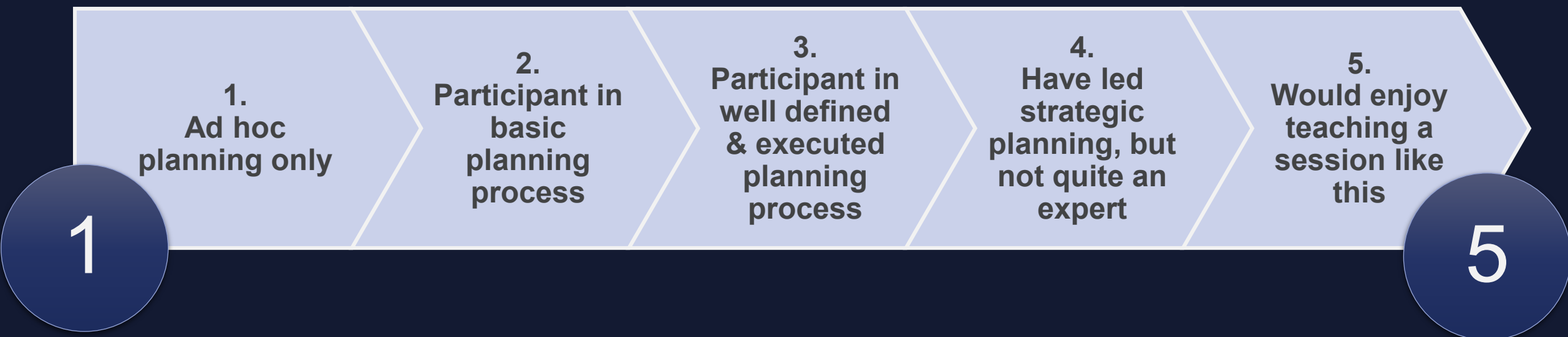


Creating plans with goals,
tactics, and metrics

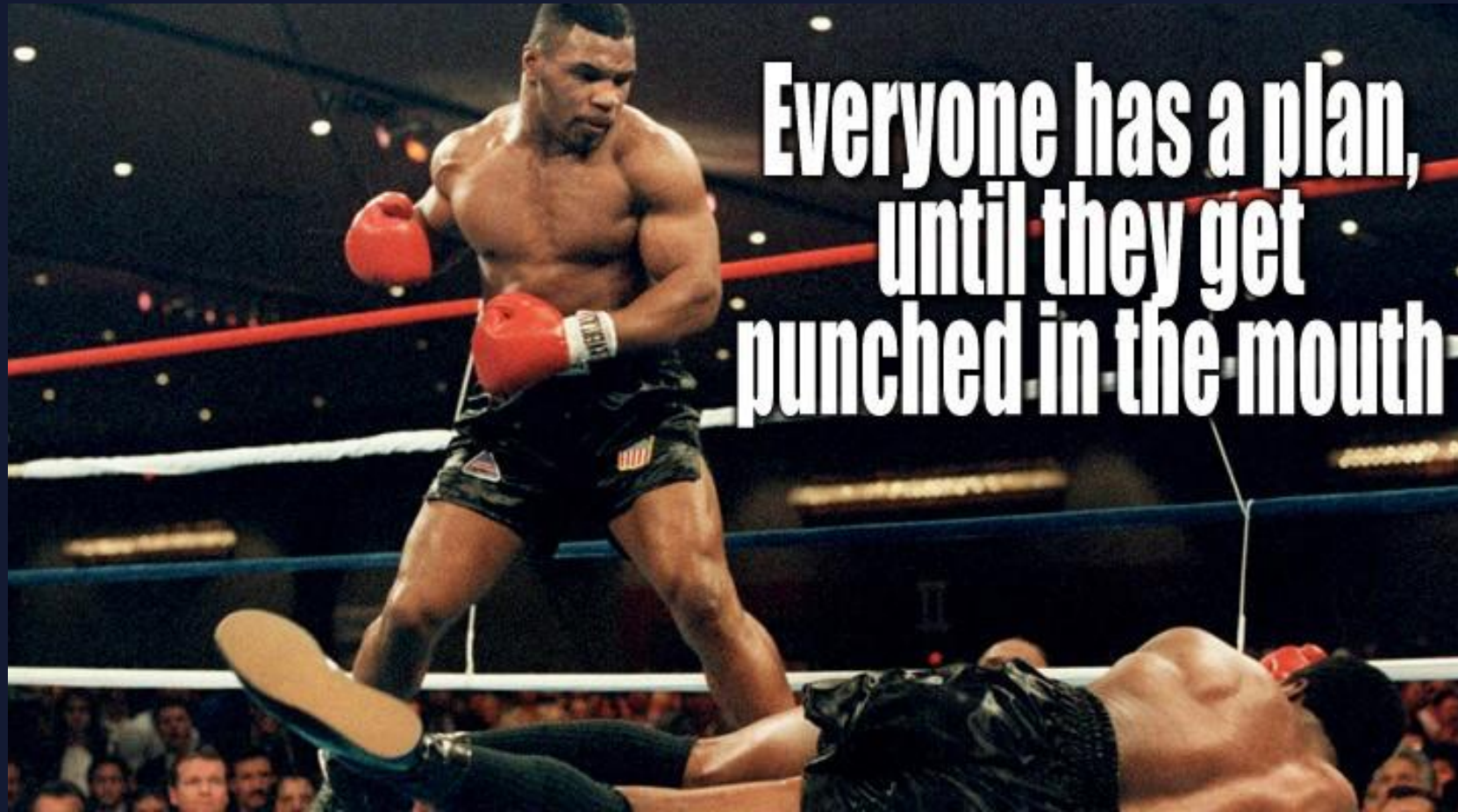


Executing and monitoring
strategic plans

What is your experience in strategic planning?



Why not plan?



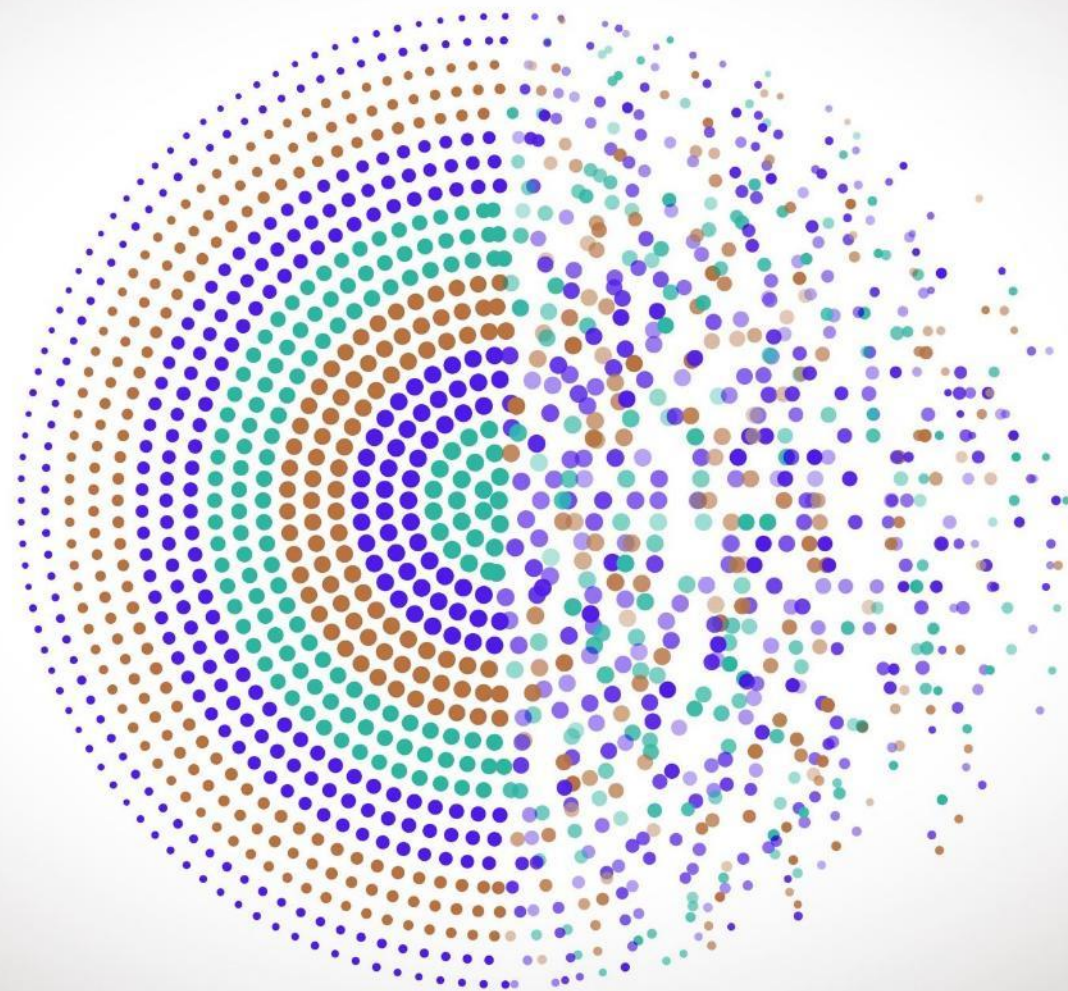


In preparing for battle I
have always found that
plans are useless...

...but planning is indispensable.”

- Eisenhower

THE “WHY” OF STRATEGIC PLANNING



CLC's "Why" for Strategic Planning

- *Provide the context and a setting for leaders to identify, discuss and decide what is truly important*
- *The world changes; your priorities must change with it to enable long-term success*
- *Enable stakeholders to use their voice to affect and support future plans*
- *Dedicate resources needed to achieve shared goals*
- *Institute ongoing, regular follow-up to ensure accountability for results*

Also, HRSA requires it!

- It's a Health Center requirement to “Conduct long-range/strategic planning at least once every three years, which at a minimum addresses financial management and capital expenditure needs”
- And part of the compliance review of board authority:

No.	Title	Program Requirement Compliance Review
17	Board Authority	Health center governing board maintains appropriate authority to oversee the operations of the center, including: • holding monthly meetings; • approval of the health center grant application and budget; • selection/dismissal and performance evaluation of the health center CEO; • selection of services to be provided and the health center hours of operations; • measuring and evaluating the organization's progress in meeting its annual and long-term programmatic and financial goals and developing plans for the long-range viability of the organization by engaging in strategic planning, ongoing review of the organization's mission and bylaws, evaluating patient satisfaction, and monitoring organizational assets and performance,* and • establishment of general policies for the health center. Note: In the case of public centers (also referred to as public entities or agencies) with co-applicant governing boards, the public center is permitted to retain authority for establishing general policies (fiscal and personnel policies) for the health center.

- The requirement is flexible: “The board determines the format of its long-range/strategic planning” (HRSA Compliance Manual)

A Strategic Dinner



What makes a great dinner party?

A Dinner	A Strategic Planning Exercise
Great food	Food!
The right atmosphere	Same. Setting apart from the usual place
Good company	Right people – different voices
Entertainment	Guest speakers / expertise – something to engage people – interactive exercises
The right location	Accessible location – comfortable setting, able to have break-out discussions
Good conversation – thought provoking questions ready	Structure for conversations
Utensils	Tools to help with group notes, whiteboards, dots, large format post-it note
Date and time that works	same
Menu	Agenda – clear goals

Consider your role before starting

Cook

Use a proven approach for speed & consistency

- Closely following an existing approach should lead to a clear plan
- May get repetitive if done every time

Cater

Leave the basics to others. Quality result, higher cost

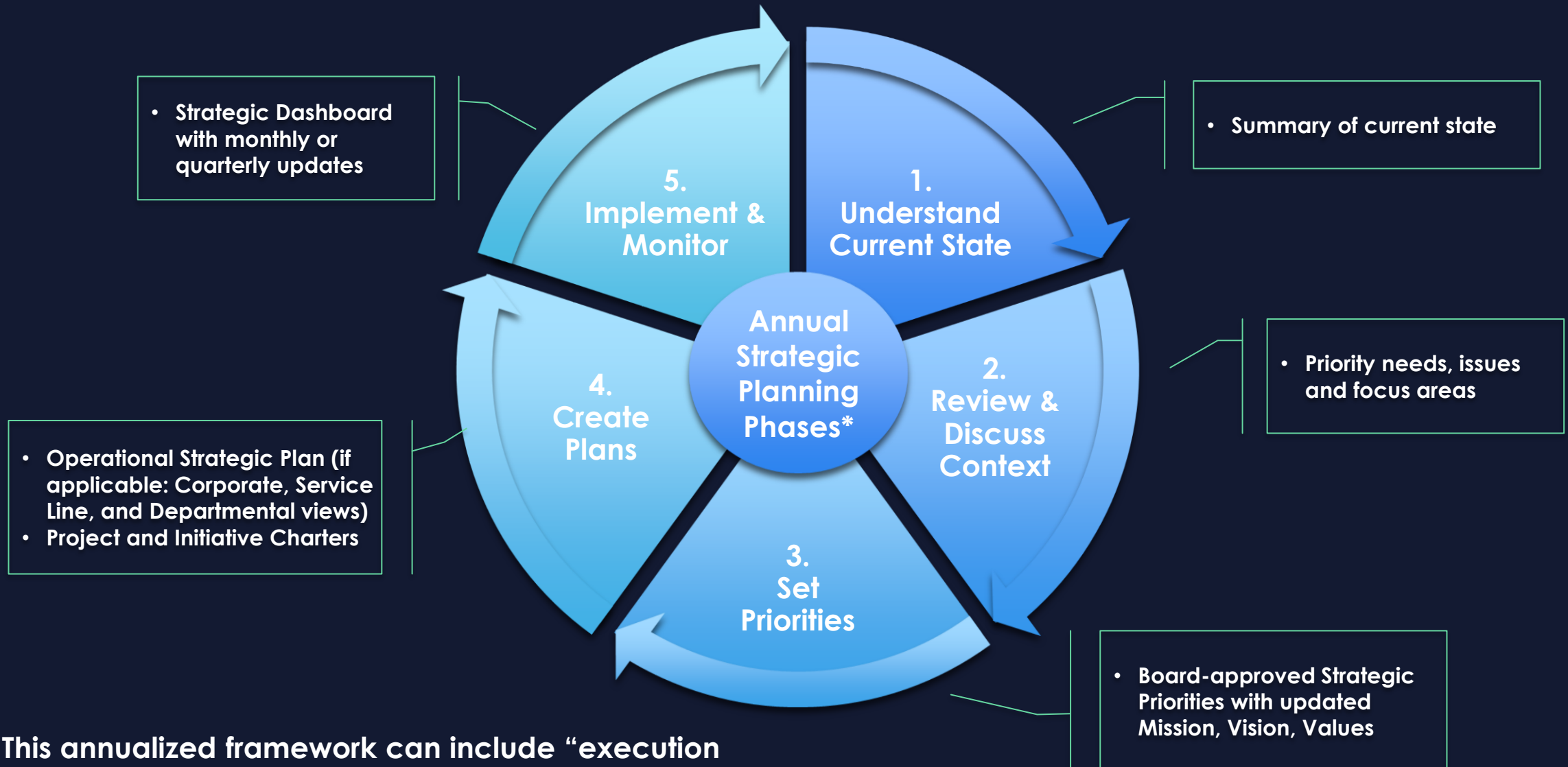
- Can save a lot of time (offsetting the cost), and be a source of new ideas
- People may feel freer to share feedback but also critiques

Chef

Add your own take for an impactful result that takes time

- Requires the most of the CEO and may take training and support to achieve excellence, but may be worthwhile to match the planning process with your organization's needs
- Being the chef, at least for a part of the process, can lead to a more memorable experience

Strategic Planning Cycle with Deliverables



* This annualized framework can include “execution years” and “planning years” every 2-5 years.

A typical partnership between the board and leadership to create and implement a strategic plan

CHC Leaders

Compile community needs & improvement opportunities



Draft strategic priorities



Document Strategic Plan. Create Operational Plan (tactics, KPIs/measures of success, milestones, etc.)



Implement Strategic Plan



CHC Board



Incorporate board perspective. Identify focus areas



Refine and adopt priorities. Review mission/vision/values.



Adopt overall Strategic Plan. Update mission/vision/values as appropriate.



Monitor implementation

Next, you have choices to make

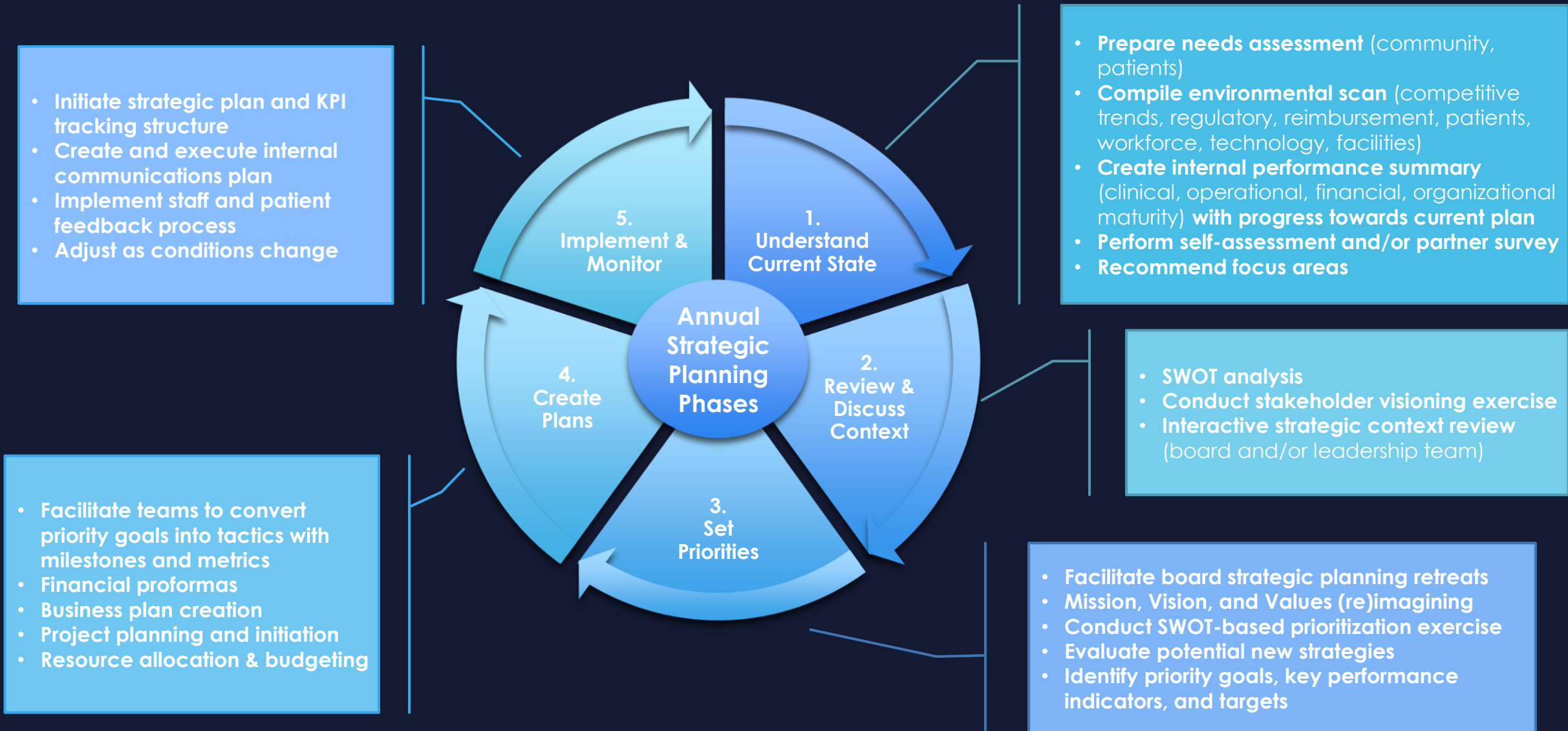
Dinner Party Choices	Strategic Planning Choices	Typical decisions
Timing		
Duration		
Guest List		
Guest Contribution / Potluck		
Budget		
What to Serve		
Ingredients		
Recipes		
Cooking and Hosting		
Entertainment		

Participant Worksheet



Choice		Typical decisions	My Health Center Today	Hopes for Next Time
Timing	Dates for planning work, deliverables, and communications	Annual planning, usually set time each year. More in depth every 3 to 5 years		
Duration	Duration of resulting strategic plan	Often 3-5 years. Recently more of a focus on 1-2 years out		
Stakeholders	Stakeholder engagement list	Board, leadership team engaged by default. Staff and patients through surveys, focus groups, etc. Key partners can be included.		
Stakeholder Involvement	Ways to engage stakeholders for input	What level of interactive participation (rubber stamp vs. group ideation)?		
Budget	How much to budget	Shoestring (existing staff and facilities) vs. significant investment (external facilitation, offsite retreat)		
Scope	What to include in the strategic plan	Is it time to consider a new mission and vision? Are there clear areas for deep dives (e.g., value-based care)? Comprehensive implementation plan?		
Information Inputs	What information sources should inform the work?	Needs assessments (internally and externally created), surveys, internal performance results (clinical, financial, operational), environmental scan		
Frameworks	What specific frameworks to use?	SWOT exercise, visioning, scenario planning, OKR, Environmental Scan/PESTLE, strategic posture		
Roles	Role assigned to lead and manage the planning process	Use of external facilitation? Who is on core team? Project manager? Community group/committee? Dedicated board meetings and retreats?		
Philosophy & Culture	Book study, videos, and articles to frame the work	Should we level set the key stakeholders with a shared book, articles, TED talk, etc.?		

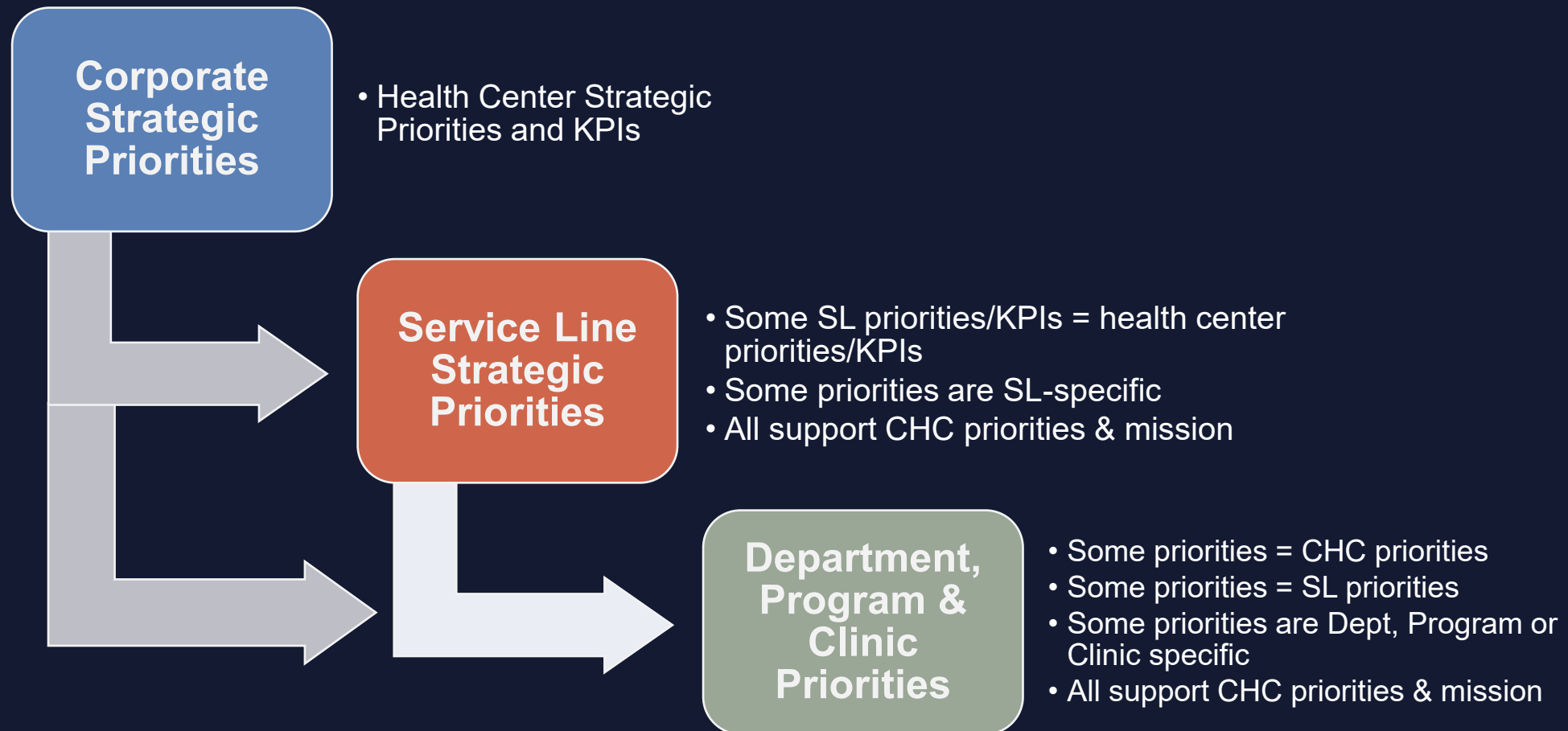
The goal is to have a fully developed, repeatable process for your health center



Typical Timing



Complexity is added for larger CHCs with service lines or business units

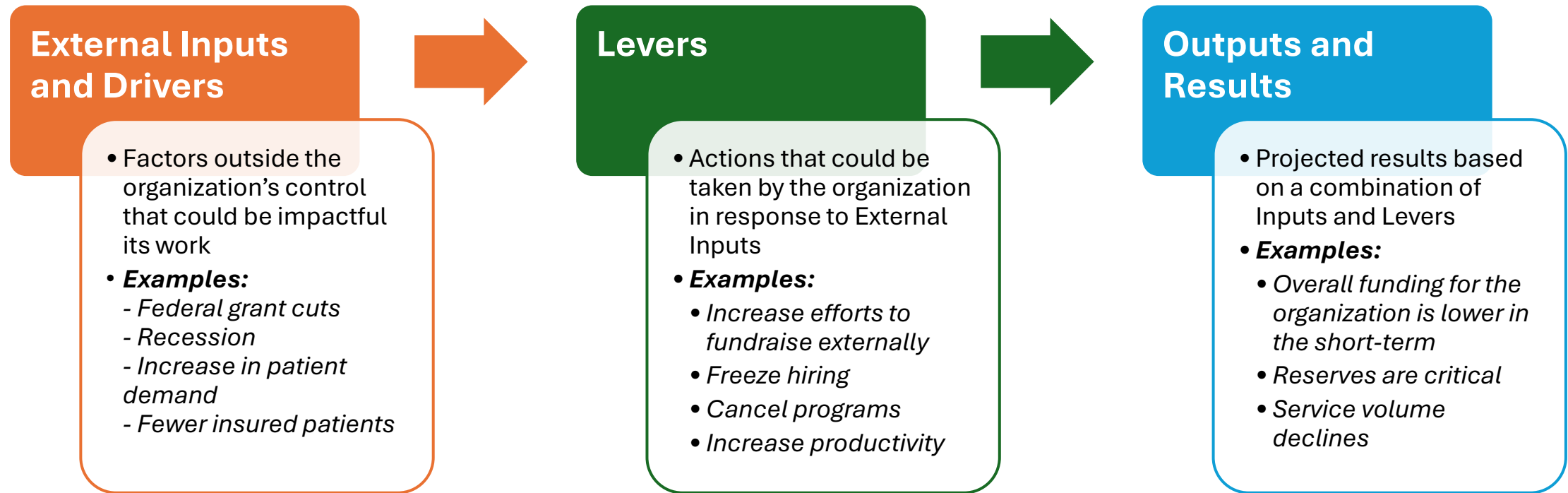


Scenario Planning is often needed in between full-scale strategic planning efforts



Scenario: A sequence of events, especially when imagined as a possible course of events or actions

Scenarios describe a potential future state with a combination of inputs, levers, and outputs



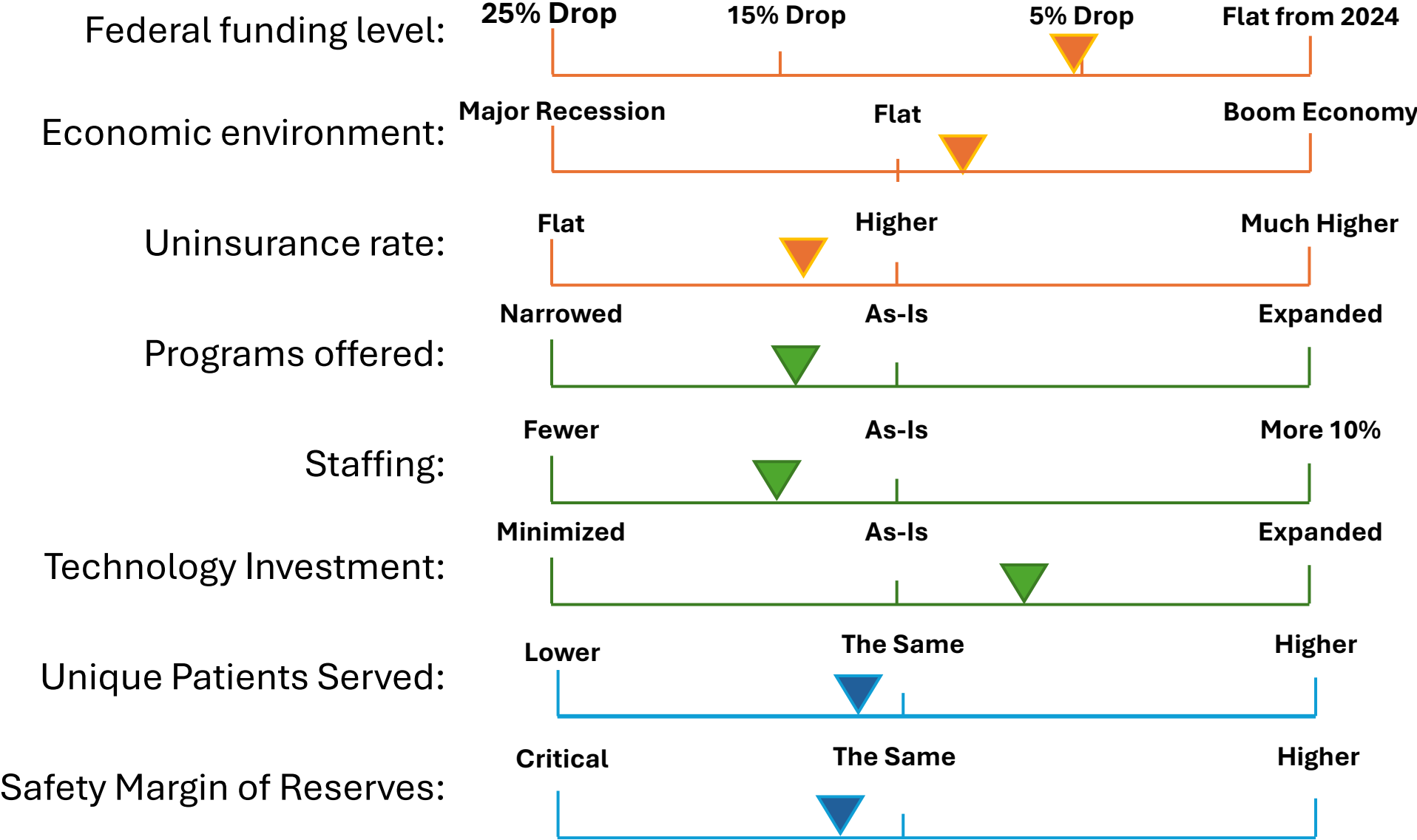
A scenario is a combination of specific inputs, levers, and outputs

Example Scenario 1: Best Case | Inputs and Levers

Inputs

Levers

Results



Typical Scenario Factors (2025-26)

Inputs

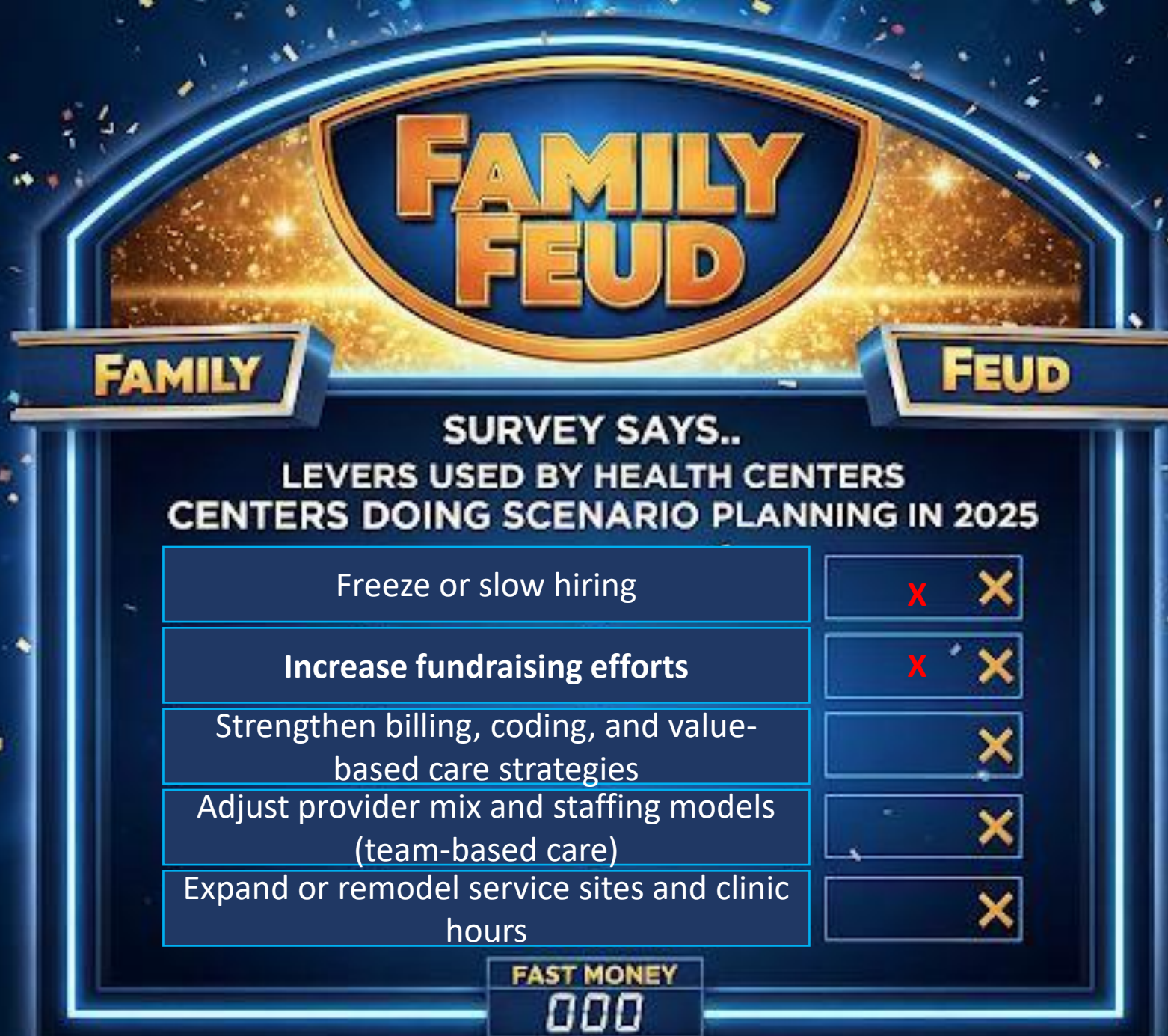
- % of patients insured with Medicaid
- % of patients with private insurance
- Demand for services
- Federal grant opportunities
- Ability to serve immigrant populations
- 340B savings achieved
- State support for FQHCs / PPS rates
- Staffing shortage

Levers

- ?
- ?
- ?
- ?
- ?

Results

- Financial reserves / days cash on hand
- # of Patients Served
- % of Uninsured Patients
- Health Outcomes / Quality Metric
- Equity Measure
- Cost Per Patient
- Net Income



Market to private pay ptgs

Optimize scheduling

Support staff retention & recruitment

Implement technology solutions

Cancel or streamline programs

Advocate for policy support

Add new service offerings

Increase productivity expectations

Support pts w/ Medicaid enrollment / outreach

Preparing





***Key: Strategic
Planning is a
Team Activity***

Team & support considerations

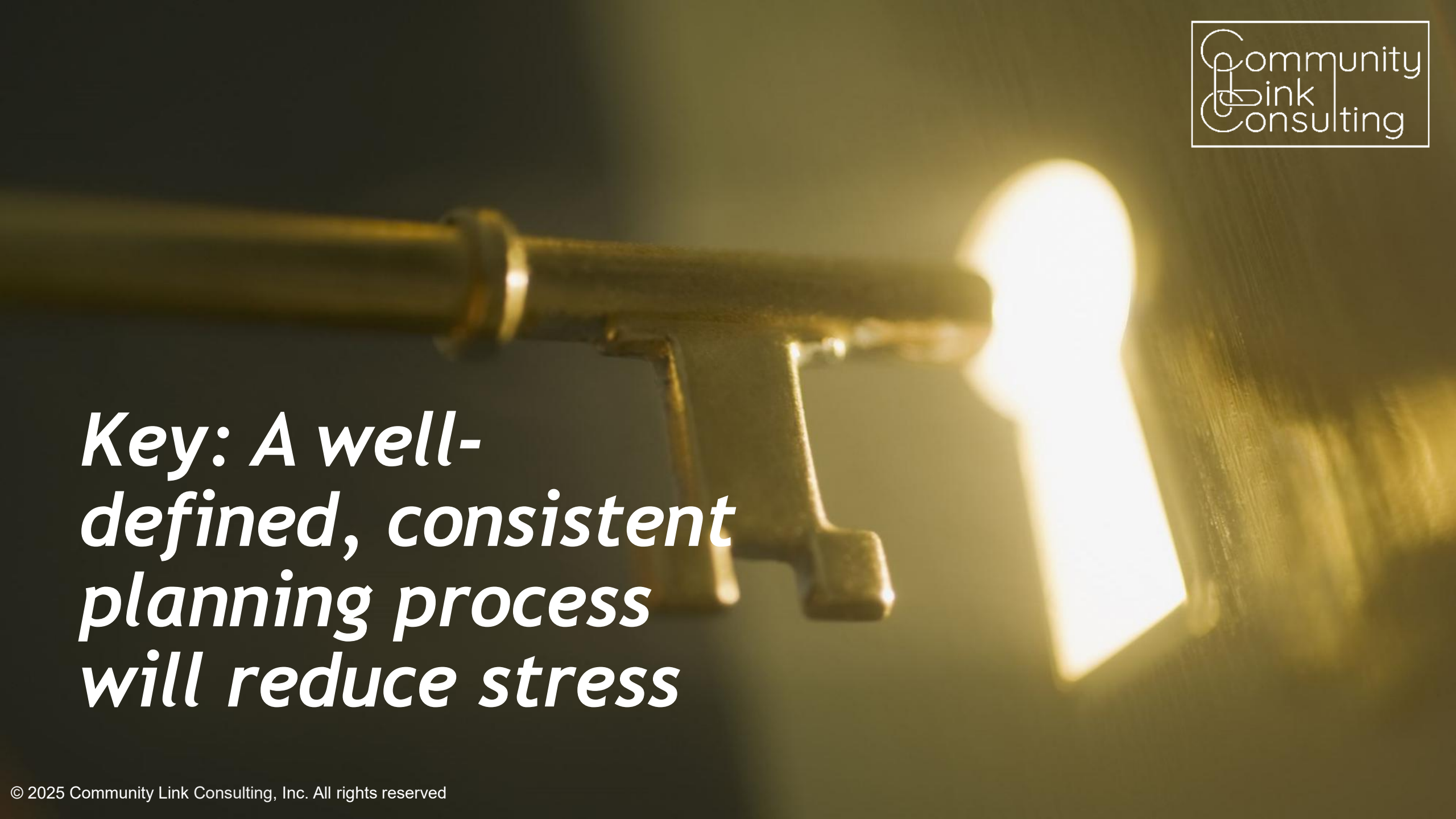
- **CEO and executive leadership team**
 - Oversight to overall planning process and the team responsible for implementation success
 - Key team to review and discuss context, identify potential new paths forward, recommend potential priorities to board
- **Organizing team**
 - Consider assigning a small group to recommend calendar of activities, set agendas, gather (or request) data, conduct surveys, share summaries, plan communications
- **Finance and data support**
 - Allocate staff time to compile baseline performance and model future scenarios
 - Could be team or individual(s)
- **Ad hoc review and input teams**
 - For larger FQs, consider one or more forums with all departments, regions, and service line leaders represented
- **Board**
 - Accountable to review & approve strategic priorities, goals, and plans
 - For discussions, consider mixing board and leadership team
- **External support**
 - 3rd-party facilitation to enable strategic discussion
 - Overcome bandwidth limitations
 - External perspective with knowledge of FQHCs
 - Teaching fishing vs. fishing

***Key: Speak the
Same Language***

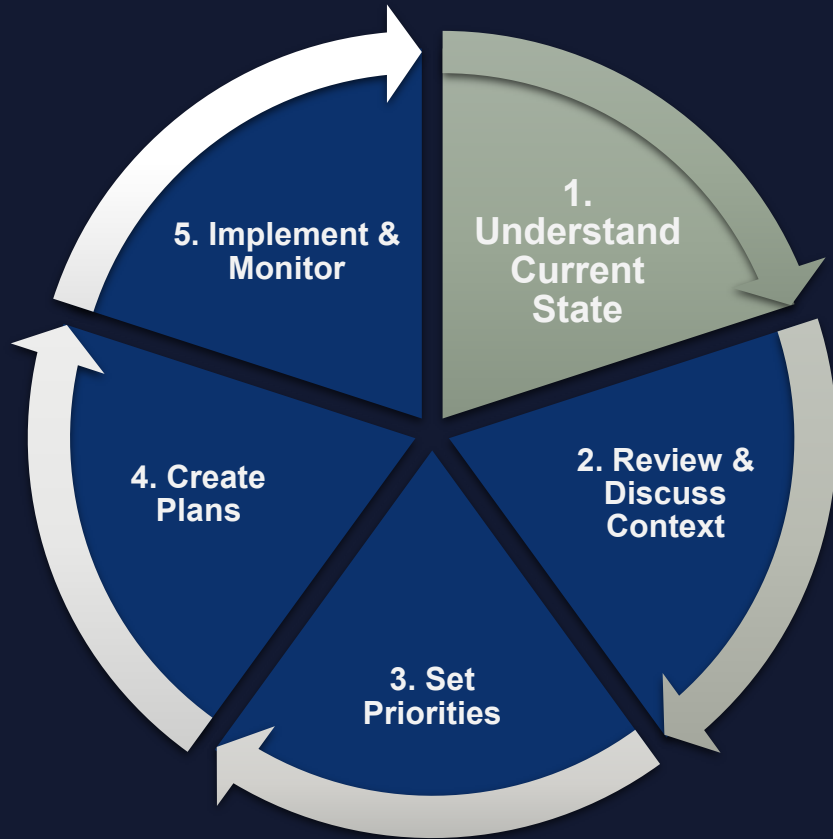
Your end goal is that staff talk about the same priorities in the same way

- Using terms of strategic planning the same way will be very helpful
- There isn't a universal language. Choose what works for your CHC

How to categorize the strategic plan (optional)	The business goal to accomplish via the strategic plan	The measurable outcomes to achieve	Things you do to accomplish your goals	How your strategic plan is documented
• Pillars • Strategic Goals • Service Lines • Timeframe • Quad Aim • Foundational or Transformational	• Goal • Objective • Strategic Priority • Strategic Goal • Strategy • Priority Goal • Aim • Imperative	• Goal • Objective • Metric • Key Performance Indicator (KPI) • Target • Measurable Result • Performance Measure	• Tactics • Initiatives • Activities • Strategies • Actions • Tasks • Methodologies	• Strategic Plan • Operational Plan • Plan of Action • Management Action Plan • Vision/Traction Organizer™ • Projects • Dashboard



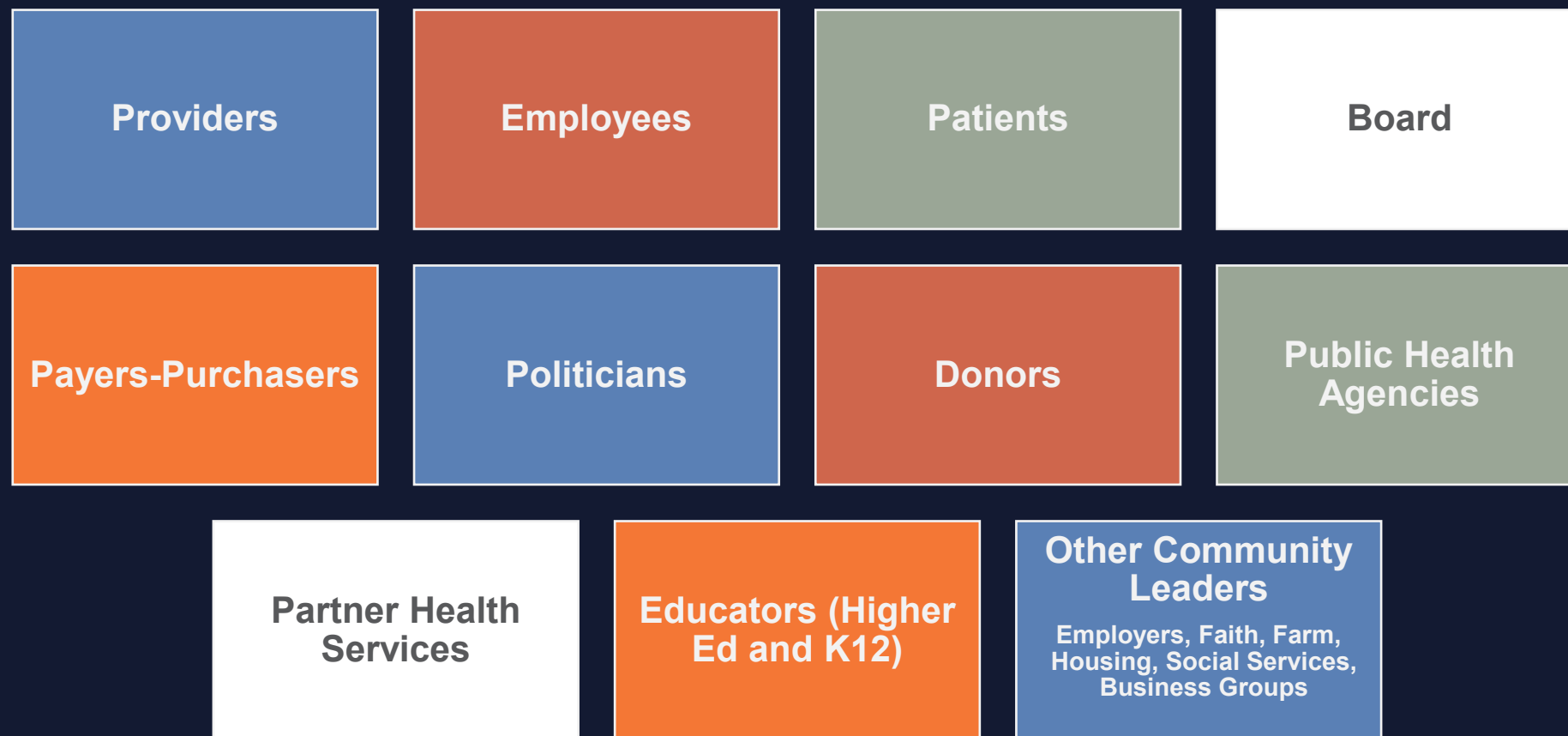
***Key: A well-
defined, consistent
planning process
will reduce stress***



Current State

Where are you today?

Consider stakeholder engagement early on



Are there specific topics of focus for research and context setting?

Trending CHC Topics

- Cash flow challenges due to:
 - Medicaid eligibility changes
 - Reliance on 340b
 - Health insurance exchange support
 - Federal funding uncertainty
- Value-based care
- Employee Retention
 - Burnout
 - Uncertainty
 - Wage growth
- AI / Technology
- Alignment with new federal mandates

Goals / Metrics

- Payor mix
- Encounter goals
- Hiring goals
- Training plans
- Documented workflows
- Benefit improvements
- Implementation or utilization of tech options

Three main elements of setting the context for the current state



Community Health Needs Assessment

Service area & patient
characteristics and changes
Social determinants
Health status and factors
Availability of health services



Environmental Scan

Competitive trends
Regulatory changes
Reimbursement outlook
Technology trends
Stakeholder input
Economic environment
Physical plant considerations



Internal Performance

Clinical
Operational
Financial
Staff satisfaction
Patient satisfaction
Management capabilities



Community Health Needs Assessment



- Consider annual update timing of HRSA-required Needs Assessment that aligns with your strategic planning calendar
 - However, this is only required once every 3 years “for the purposes of informing and improving the delivery of health center services”
- Common content includes:
 - Service area & patient characteristics and changes
 - The degree to which various social determinants or influencers of health are affecting patients
 - How the overall population health status has been trending, including specific disease states
 - Whether the availability of health services has changed and where it is lacking
- Needs assessments should include:
 - Data with trends, not just current state
 - Comparisons to other regions and the country
 - Comparison amongst population groups (identifying health disparities)
 - Many information sources, qualitative and quantitative, including other Needs Assessments



Environmental Scan

- A summary of the external factors that should be considered while discussing future plans
- For health centers, factors can be categorized as:
 - Competitive trends
 - Regulatory changes
 - Reimbursement outlook
 - Technology trends
 - Stakeholder input
 - Economic environment
 - Physical plant considerations
 - Population trends (overlaps with Needs Assessment)
- Each category should have 1-7 issues, each with potential implications for the health center

Environmental Scan Example

Technology

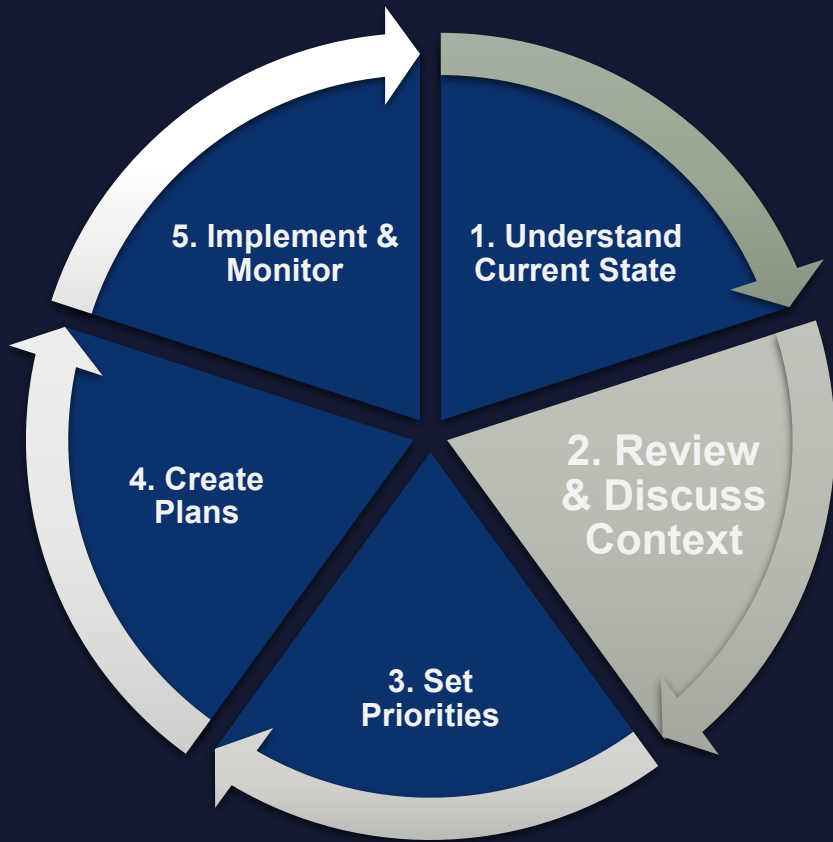
Issue or Opportunity	Implications	Timeframe	Priority to Address?
Hospital system offered our health center use of their EHR platform for minimal charge	• Potential shift to new health record platform would be a major investment • Sharing EHR would enable improved transitions of care and supply value-based performance improvement	Hospital wants decision in next 9 months	
AI-enabled virtual scribing	• Would reduce need for in-person scribes • Could increase provider efficiency and reduce burnout • Significant IT dept resources and expenses to pilot, implement, and support	Now, but services improving significantly in next 1-2 years	





Internal Performance

- Summarizing current internal performance is generally done with existing reports for:
 - Monthly financials
 - Operations
 - Quality outcomes
 - Patient and staff satisfaction surveys
- Consider sharing summaries that look back 3-5 years to show trends and aid in prediction and goal setting



Review Context

What areas, issues, and ideas are most important?

Context review is about taking the time to understand the past in order to plan for the future

- Context can be shared “offline,” but consider dedicated meeting(s) to review and interactively interpret context
 - Leaders need to have a shared understanding of the facts
 - E.g., was the increase in patients with depression because of a growing mental health crisis or because an outreach team is screening a lot more?
- A full review and discussion of context will:
 - Identify the most critical issues to address through strategic planning
 - E.g., improve a lagging quality measure, address days cash on hand
 - Generate potential new ideas to explore further
 - E.g., could adding a service to scope address a patient access issue?

Sample Context Review Meeting

- **Who:** Leadership Team
 - As appropriate: Additional Service Line or Department leaders
- **When:** After summary of current state is available
- **Why:** Enable leaders to understand current state context and identify focus areas
- **Pre-read:** Review current state materials
- **Sample Agenda (2-4 hours):**
 - **5-15 min:** Team building or creative ice breaker (*CEO or facilitator leads*)
 - **15-30 min:** Review summary of current performance (*CFO, COO*)
 - Discuss only clarifying questions, missing implications, factual errors
 - **15-30 min:** Review summary of needs assessment (*CMO, CEO*)
 - **15-30 min:** Review summary of environmental scan (*CEO*)
 - **30-90 min:** Discuss potential focus areas (*CEO or facilitator*)



For Larger Groups, Consider:

- Sincere Invitations
- Diverse Players
- Comfortable Venue
- Briefing Materials
- Worksheets
- Built-in Interactivity

Sincere Invitations

- Go to them
- Appreciative Listening
http://changingminds.org/techniques/listening/types_listening.htm
- The Q Factor: Art of Asking Great Questions
 - Not yes or no, but how, why, what, how much
- Individual and group invitations
- Why you want/need/value their insights and experiences
- Personalize
- Commit to cultivate, orient, onboard respectfully

SWOT Analysis:

A classic tool that still works!

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	Strengths • What your organization does well already • Things that make you unique • Strengths that others see	Weaknesses • Internal improvement opportunities • Weaknesses that others see • Resource or expertise limitations
External	Opportunities • Opportunities arising from current or upcoming trends (e.g., industry trends, population changes, innovations) • Opportunities open to your org based on its strengths or position	Threats • Threats coming from outside your org that could be harmful (e.g., competitive, economic, regulatory) • Threats created based on a weakness or market position

Everyone engages and contributes, then group can prioritize

Visioning exercises

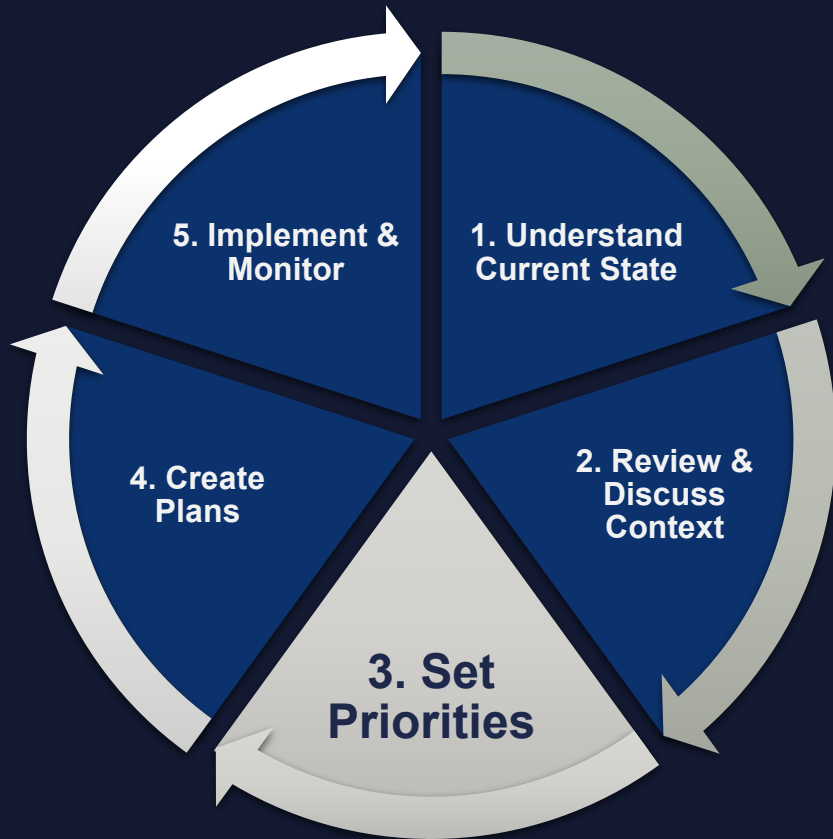
*A 10-year goal stated in
one sentence*

A newspaper blurb
written in 2030 that
celebrates how well the
vision was achieved and
how you did it.



Let's Eat!





Set Priorities

What will we do next to achieve our vision?

You'll probably need a board retreat

Why retreat?

- Change the venue to take people out of day-to-day distractions
- Demonstrate commitment to the process
- Share appreciation for volunteer board members
- Enable relationship building

During the retreat, especially keep in mind the role of the board...

- Evaluating but not supervising
- Oversight but not micromanaging
- Fulfilling fiduciary responsibility
- Governance, not management

Set overall
direction of
strategic plan.
Approves overall
goals.

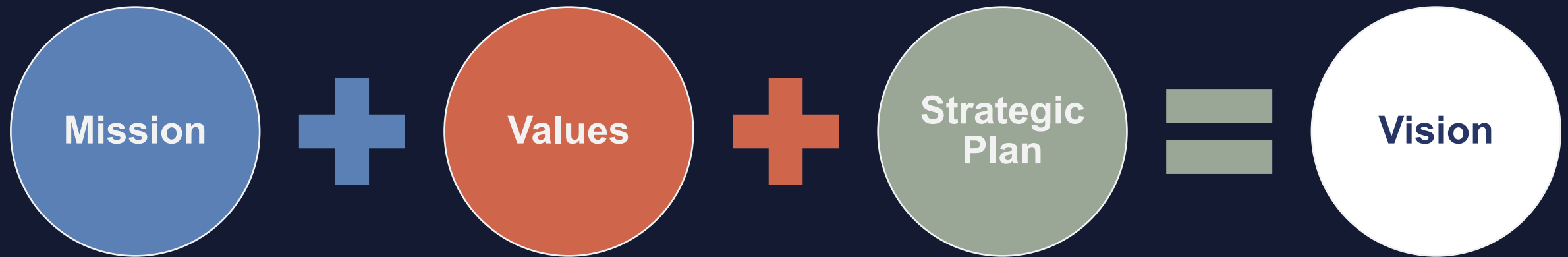
Identifies goals
and objectives.
Develops a plan.
Executes.

...and a potential change in power dynamics

- An unstructured approach to strategic planning maximizes the personal influence of the CEO and assertive board members and executives
- A team-based approach surfaces new ideas, from other stakeholders, that may be hard to implement
- Effective CEOs balance a tightrope of respecting new ideas but committing to realistic next steps



**Strategy always
starts with the
mission**



Enable interactivity

Setup small group discussions

- “World Café” rotating conversations
- Team-based friendly competition

Have someone ready to intervene to hear from all

- Great discussions are often organic, but make sure a facilitator helps ensure that all have a voice

Consider a clear theme

- E.g, Our CHC v2.0, emerging from the pandemic, Better Together

Set ground rules

- Take the time to explicitly set ground rules
- Can be done in 3-4 min even in large groups

Have a starting point for strategic priorities

- CEO and leadership team should bring recommended priorities
- Frame key decisions that especially need board input



Example ground rules

- Assume good intent
- No or minimal use of devices
- Feel free to move around the room
- Everyone has a voice & everyone participates
- One person holds the floor at a time
- Keep notes on any unresolved issues
- No tangents
- No politicking
- Are decisions binding?
- Any other issues?

The output of a prioritization retreat



Board-approved Strategic Priorities with updated Mission, Vision, Values



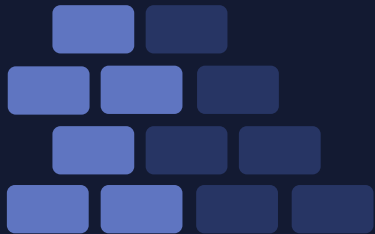
Before concluding a retreat, confirm the agreed priorities, clearly identify the open questions



At this point, you probably won't have specific targets for metrics or all the tactics that you'll need to move the priorities forward (That can be follow-up at a regular board meeting)

Q: How “strategic” should priorities be?

A: Yes!



Foundational:
Maintain core
infrastructure to support
day-to-day execution



Incremental:
Continuously improve in
core functions and
processes



Transformational:
Reimagine a business
process, add a new service,
create a new partnership

Example of output from a retreat

Team-Based Care Excellence

- Create fully defined care models that supports our mission and the quadruple aim

Accessible Connections for Patients

- Reduce barriers for new patients to establish care via many pathways meeting diverse needs (e.g., by phone, text, in person, walk-in & scheduled, multi-lingual) plus ease of use for existing patients to schedule, access records, billing, referrals, etc.

Leading Healthcare Technologies

- Leverage and optimize technology to support patient care, including telehealth but going beyond (patient support applications, remote monitoring, etc.)

Discussion

Obstacles to
good planning?

First brainstorm,
then discuss
overcoming

- ▶ The urgent needs supersede the long-term planning, and the world is changing quickly
- ▶ Hard to get boards and other leaders focus on the future
- ▶ Staying on top of all the pieces of the strategic plan and track it while other issues feel more pressing
- ▶ Differences of opinion between board and CEO
- ▶ Process is slow
- ▶ Board resistant to spending extra time on planning

What are some examples of strategic priorities that are active at your health center?





Questions?
