

# Zicht op huiselijk geweld

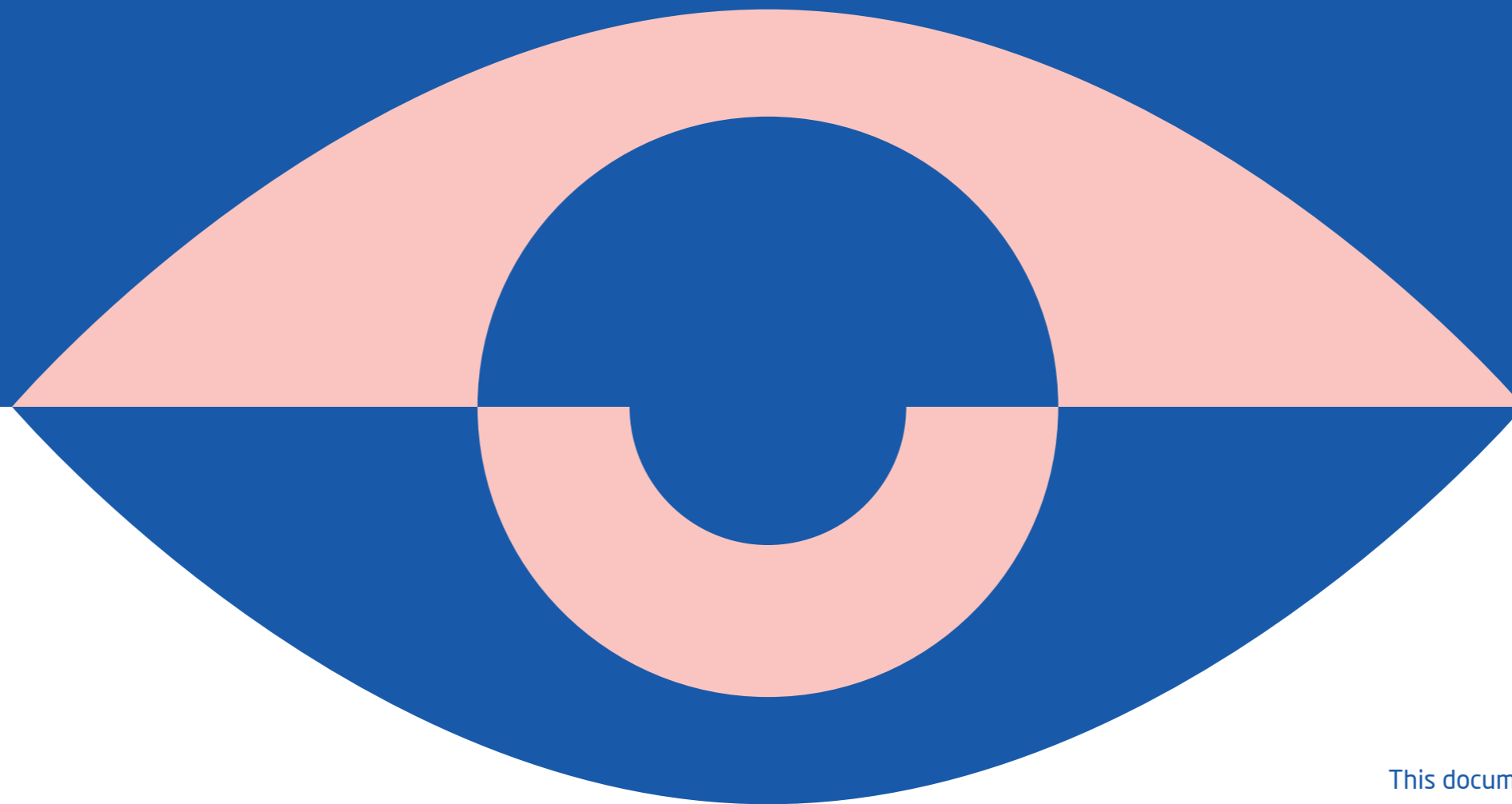
Exploring an understanding for the person committing domestic violence.

The context

Preparation for the counseling process

During the counseling process

After the counseling process



Imme van Klingereren

2 February 2023

Design for Interaction

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In collaboration with Blijf Groep

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# Zicht op huiselijk geweld

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## The context

Domestic violence can be defined as any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm. It takes place between two people in which both involved contribute to the occurrence and continuation of violence. However, when one of the people involved reaches out for counseling, the social workers mainly focus on them. They do not consider the needs of the person who committed domestic violence since they have little understanding.

There are several reasons which contribute to this lack of understanding among residential social workers:

- They have little knowledge about (the background of) people who commit domestic violence.
- They do not possess the tools to (maintain) contact with people who commit domestic violence.

As a result, they are not included in the counseling process.

However, this is essential for a lasting solution to domestic violence.

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## Preparation for the counseling process

The social workers receive a workbook in preparation for the counseling process. The workbook allows social workers to reflect on themselves and their work. This method permits them to become aware of the origins of incomprehension for the person who committed domestic violence and how these affect their involvement in the counseling process. For support during the counseling process, the back of the workbook includes theme cards.



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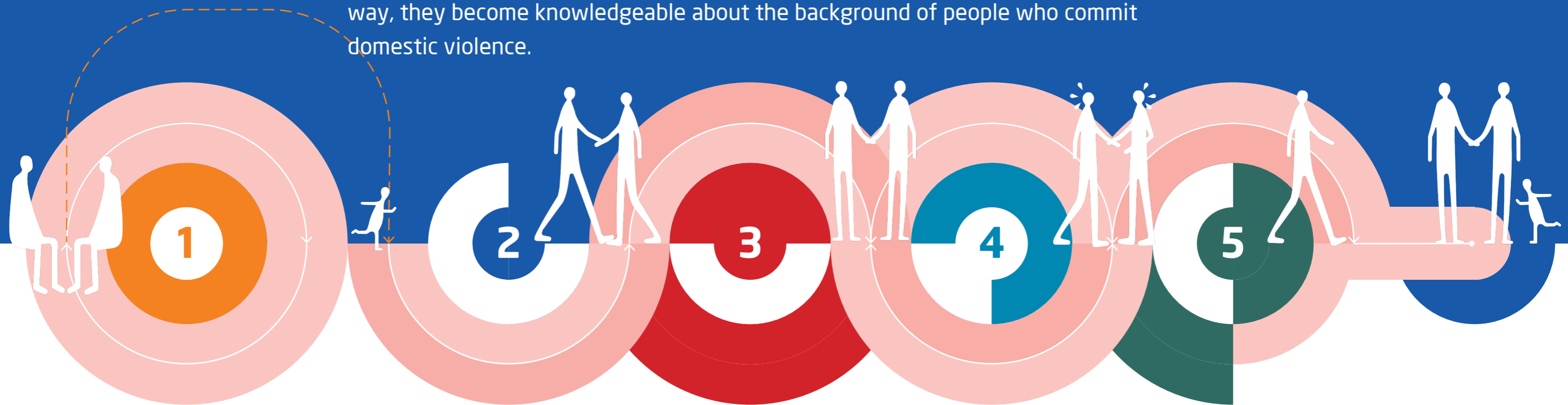
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## During the counseling process

The theme cards contain questions that can create an entry point for conversations and help social workers to map the origins and continuation of the violence. This way, they become knowledgeable about the background of people who commit domestic violence.



The figures of the people, numbers 1 to 5, and the **bold text** are interactive elements. These explain the use of the theme cards in context.

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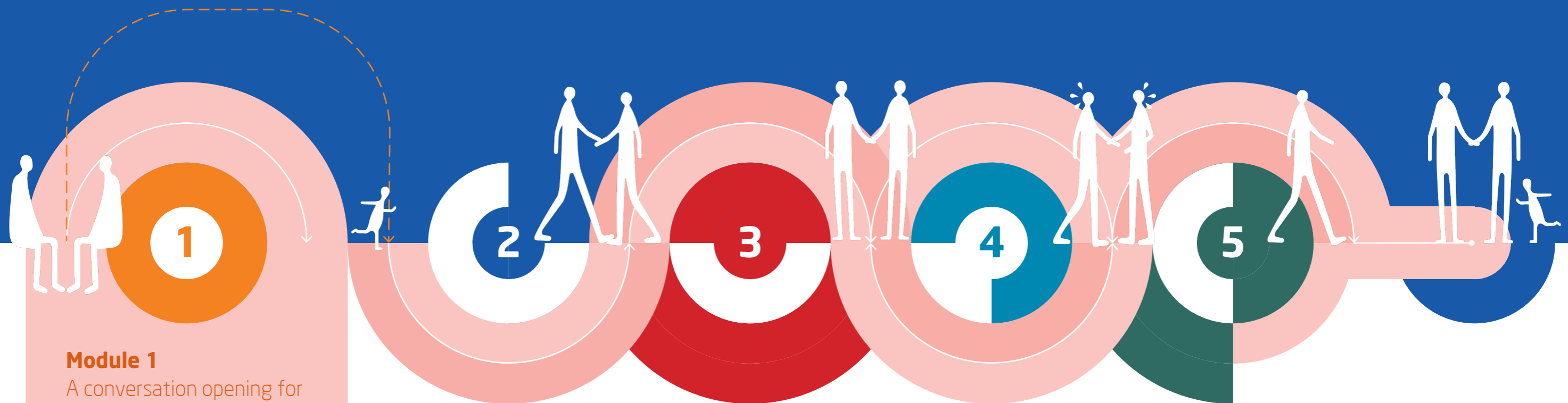
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## Module 1

A conversation opening for the first phone call.

- > **The motivation** of the person who committed domestic violence to participate in the counseling process.
- > Charting the **involvement** of (any) **children**.

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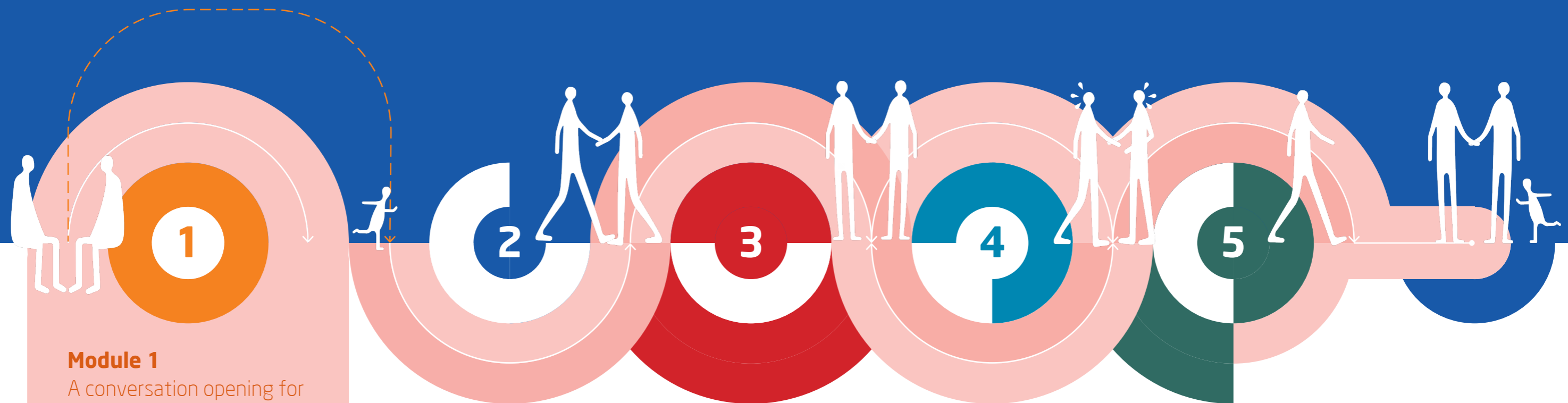
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## Module 1

A conversation opening for the first phone call.

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When the person who committed domestic violence is involved in the counseling process, the social worker should know:

- Their motivation to participate in the counseling process.
- What the expectations are of them.
- What the prospects are of the outcome of the counseling process.

The person who committed domestic violence may not think that treatment is necessary because they are doing well. One may be disappointed or hurt, so there is no confidence that things will work out. Besides, expectations toward the (ex-) partner may not be realistic.

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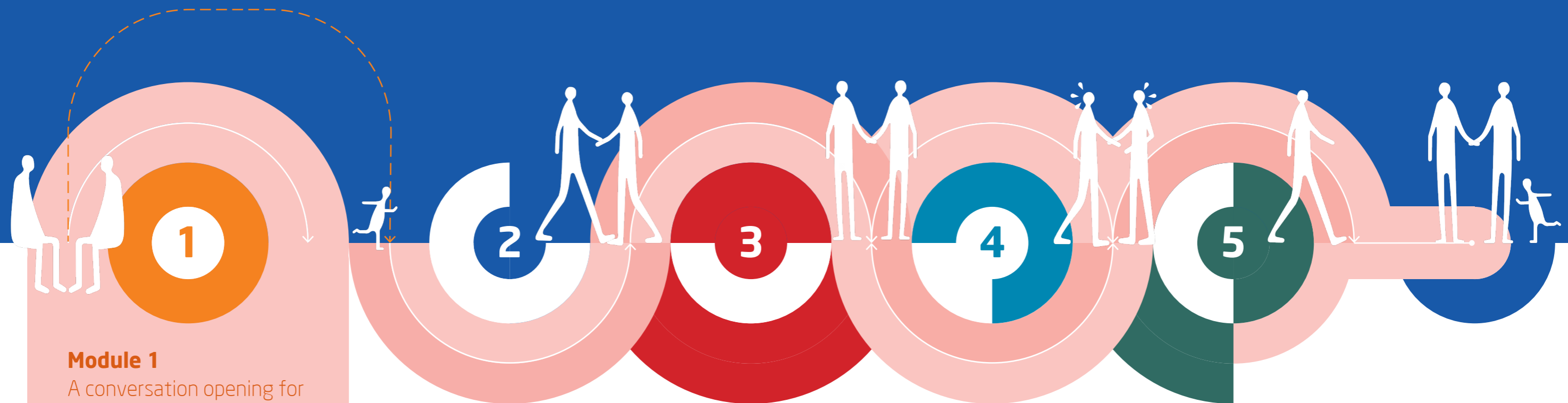
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## Module 1

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It should be discussed whether those involved in domestic violence have minor children (jointly) living in the home. This involves identifying:

- What the views are of the person who committed domestic violence about paternity, maternity, parenting, and separation and whether these influence the (continuation of) the violence.
- Whether the children have been present during intimidation and psychological violence between those involved as this can be harmful.

Having children can be a motivation for the person who committed domestic violence to accept help and actively participate in the counseling process.

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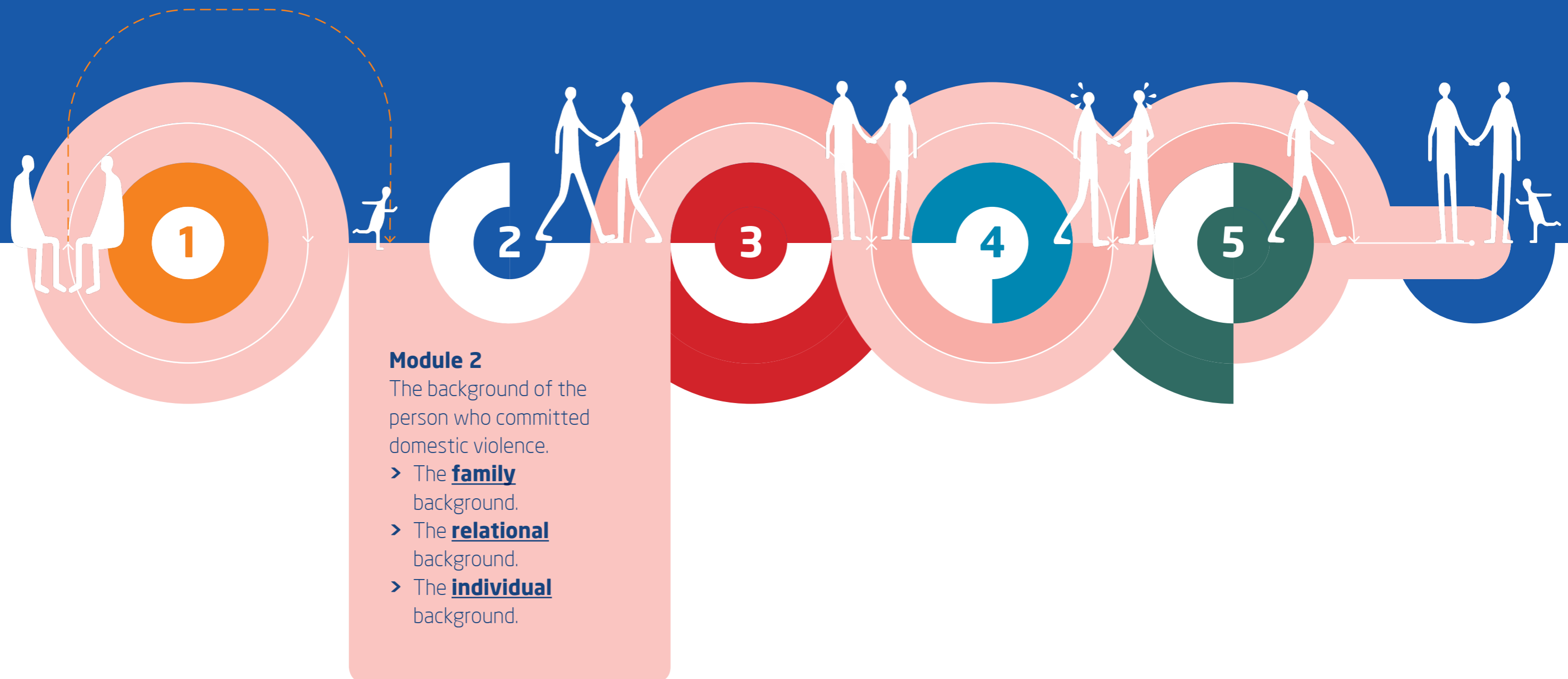
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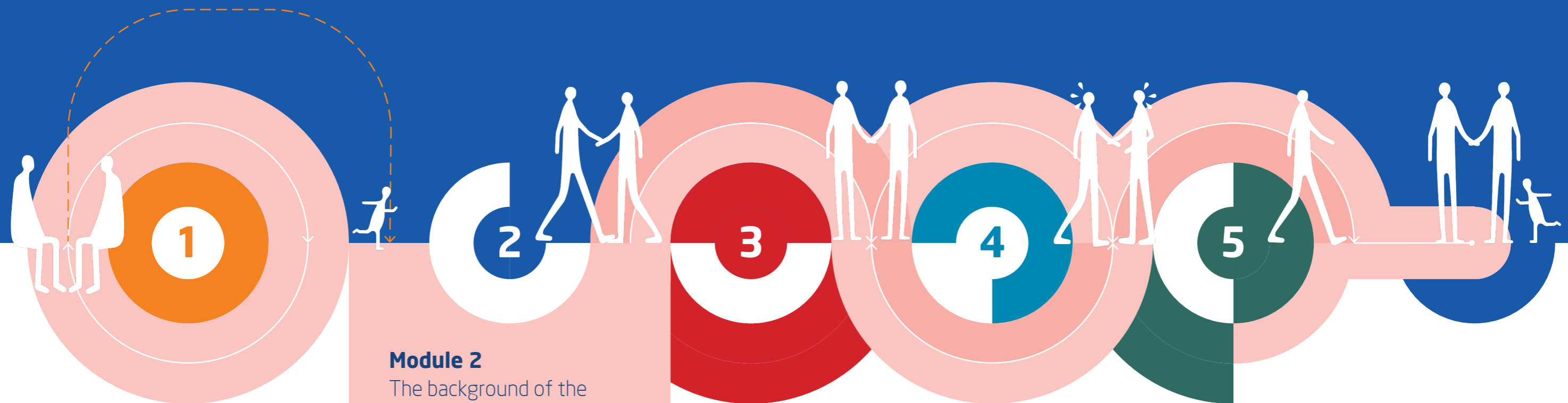
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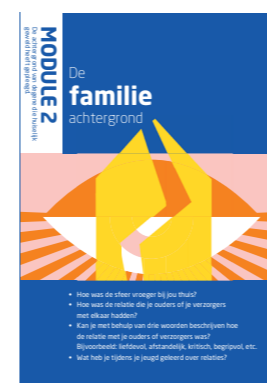
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## Module 2

The background of the person who committed domestic violence.

- > The **family** background.
- > The **relational** background.
- > The **individual** background.



The fears and needs in a relationship of the person who committed domestic violence depend on past experiences. The person who committed domestic violence may:

- Have been abused in the past.
  - Previously have witnessed violence within ones family.
- Furthermore, learned communication and interaction patterns, quarrels, and tensions may cause the current family situation. Therefore, the past family situation needs to be identified.

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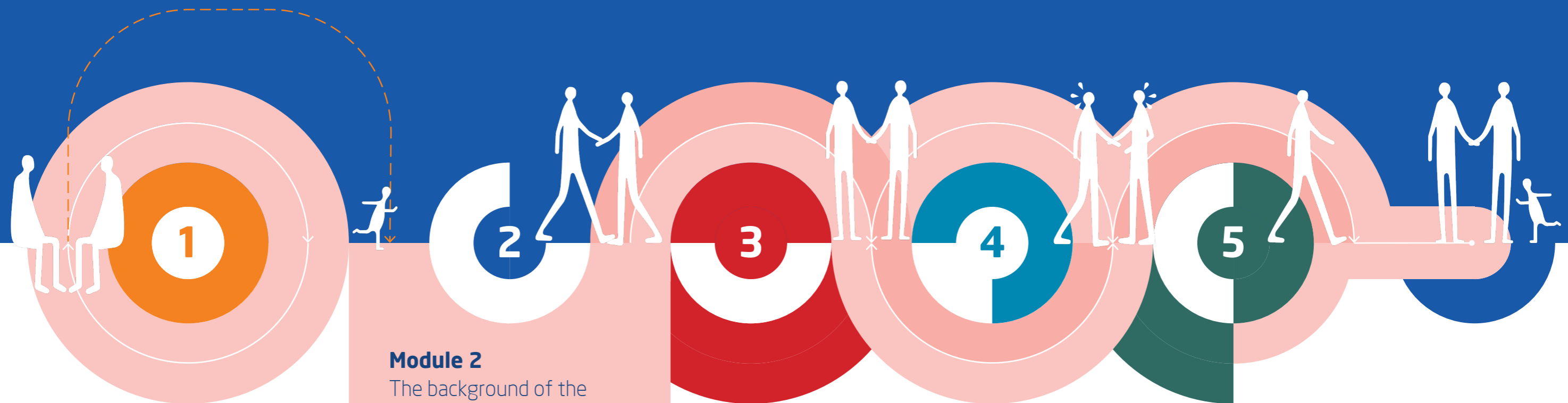
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Previous relationships with others affect how the person who committed domestic violence looks at the current relationship. The person who committed domestic violence may:

- Have traditional beliefs about gender roles. Stereotypical role patterns and expectations may lead to differences in power and independence.
- Find it hard to build a strong relationship with the partner and lacks trust.

Those involved may stick to the role patterns of an old relationship with a new partner. When the new partner does not pursue this, violence can occur.

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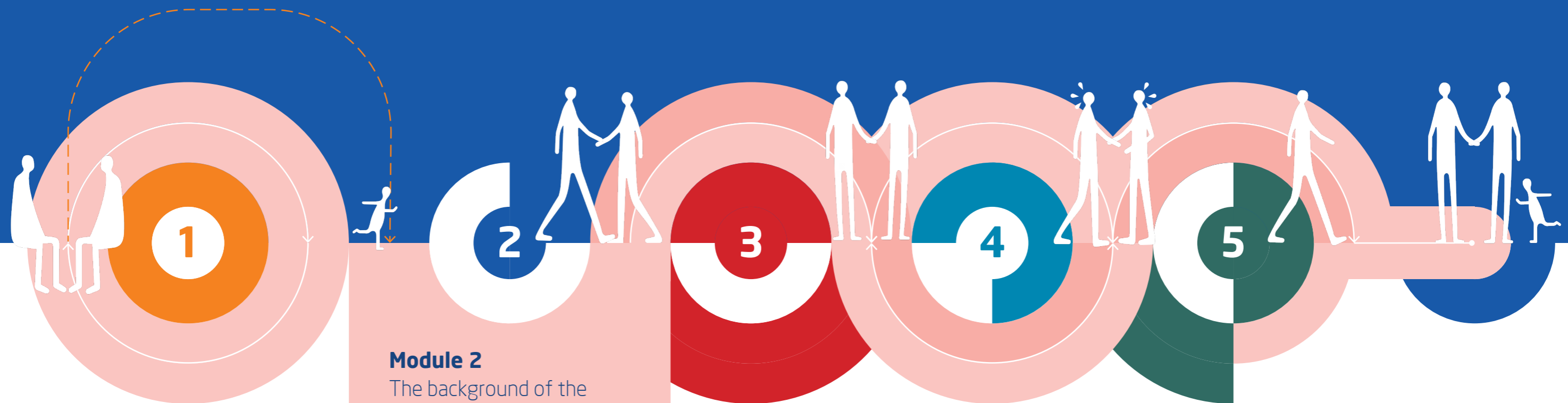
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The person who committed domestic violence may use aggression or feels threatened when the (ex-)partner touches on:

- The low self-esteem of the person who committed domestic violence.
- Psychological complaints that may stem from depression.

Unemployment, problems at work, low income, debt, and dependent residence status or housing may affect this.

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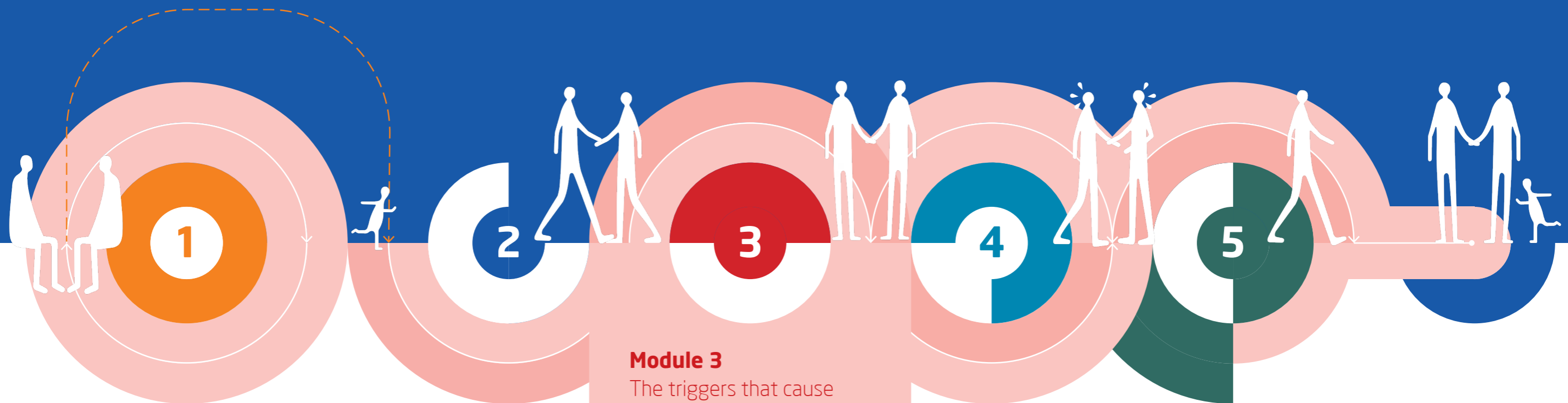
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## Module 3

The triggers that cause the violence.

- > The influence of **vulnerability** on the occurrence of violence.
- > The influence of **stress** on the occurrence of violence.

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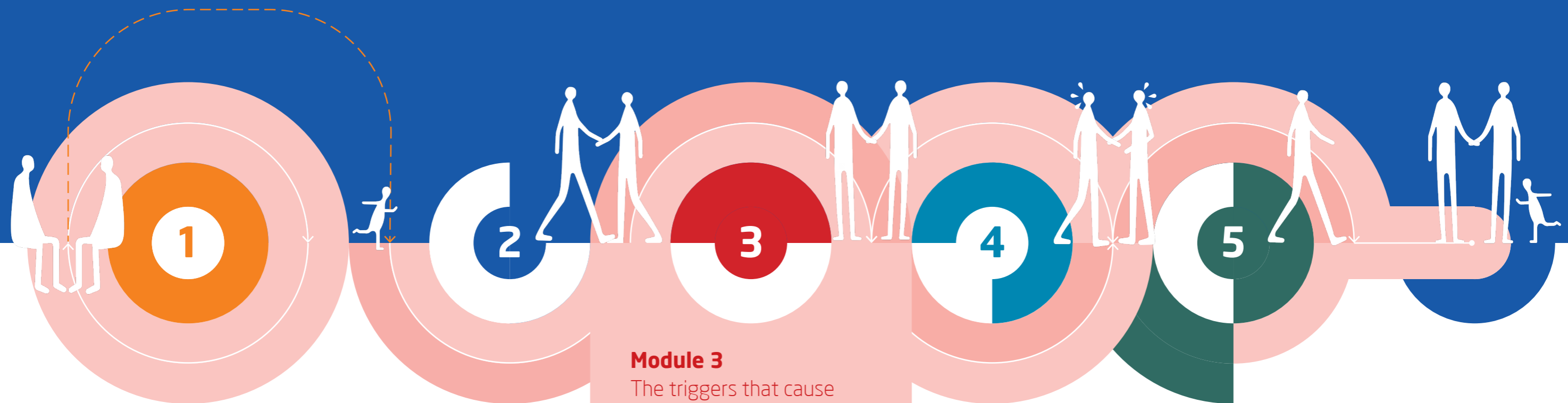
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Experiences from childhood, previous relationships, and current relationships can cause the person who committed domestic violence to be vulnerable:

- Arguments may arise from feeling hurt.
- One of the people involved reacts more violently to something that happens or is said, while the other does not understand where the reaction is coming from. That reaction can lead to another argument.

A coping mechanism emerges in which the partners challenge each other out of fear or because they are scared to be hurt again.



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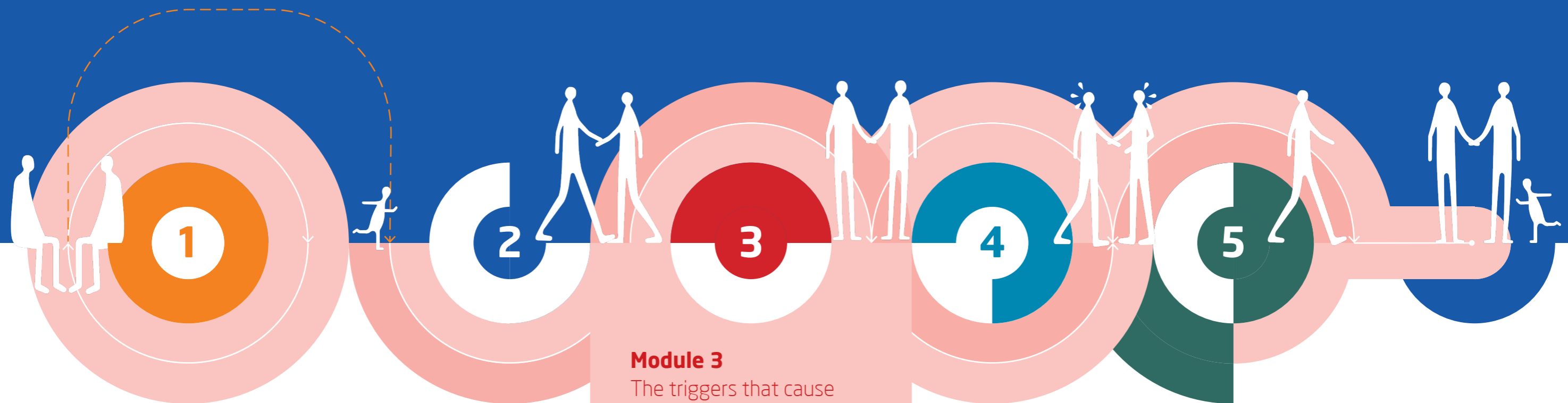
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When the brain of the person who committed domestic violence is in the “tolerance mode”, they remain calm enough during a conflict to empathize with the other person and come up with a solution. When someone experiences too much stress, they can become unbalanced:

- The reptilian brain can take over and react with a survival strategy that consists of fight or flight (overstimulation). This overstimulation can lead to unnecessary aggressive behavior.
- If fight or flight does not work, the brain can switch to freezing (understimulation).

It is necessary to examine stress to determine the causes of the violence.



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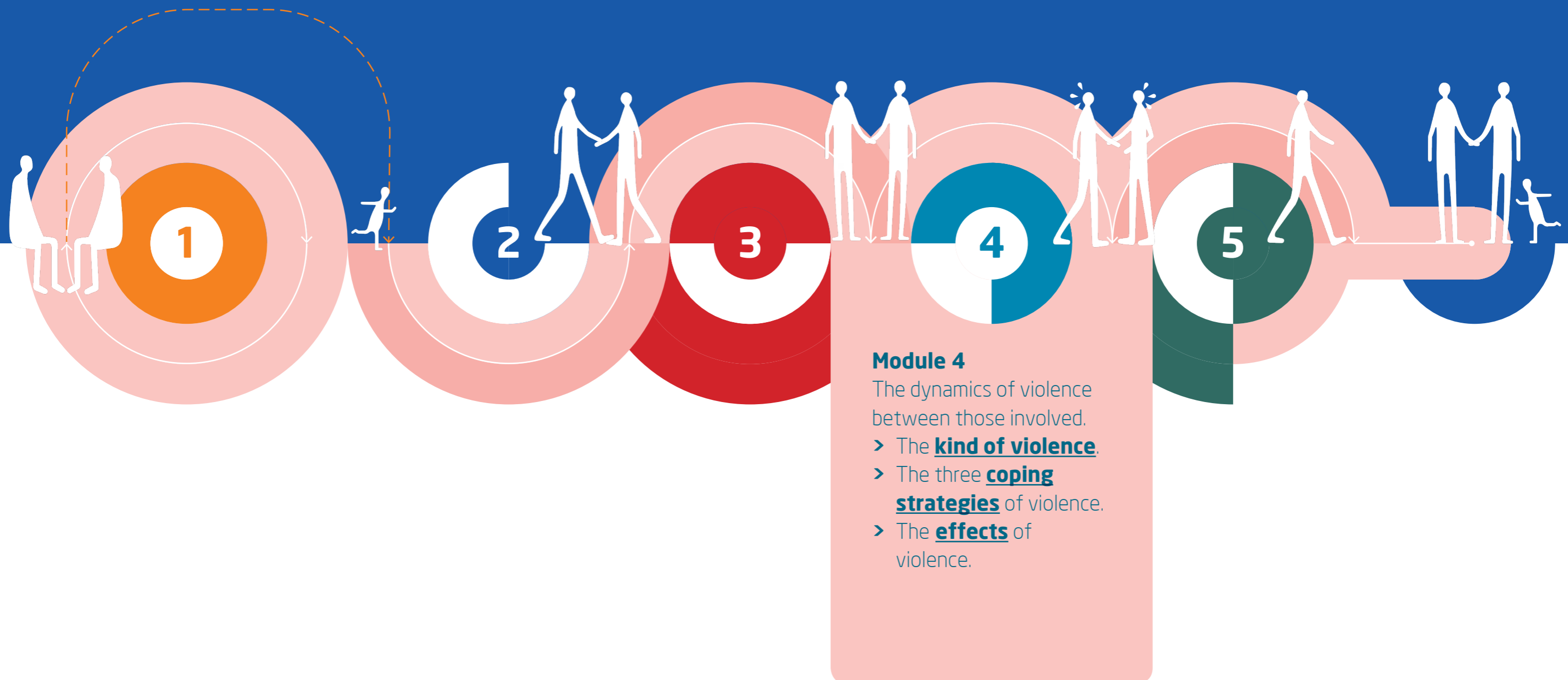
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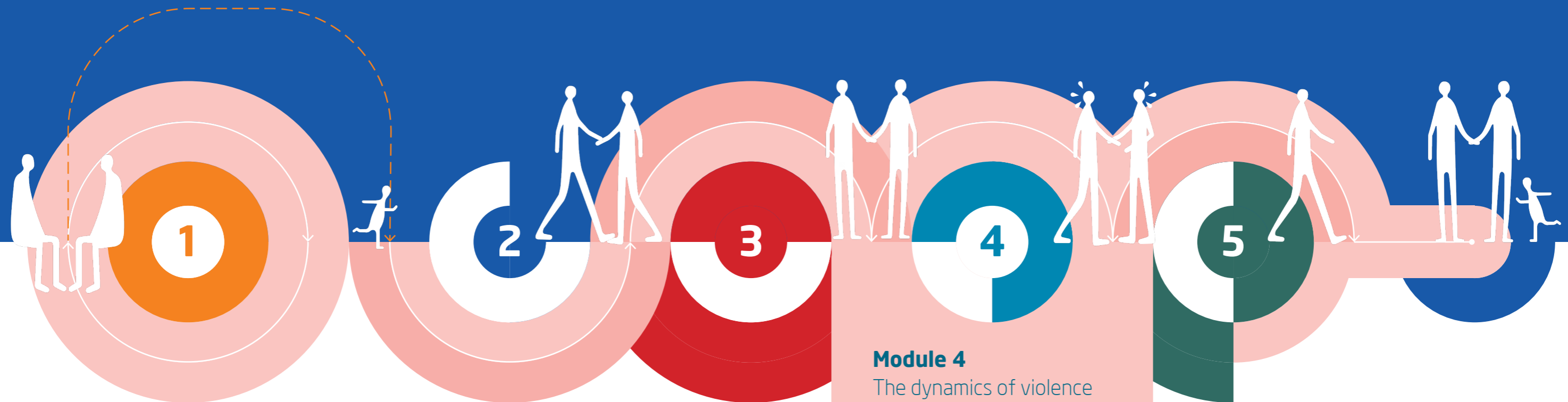
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Violence is a dynamic of abuse between two individuals to gain power and control unfairly. The violence is structured in three phases:

- A tension building between the partners.
- The eruption of violence.
- The reconciliation, with the appearance of an end to the violence.

The expression of aggression can be in the form of psychological, physical, financial, cultural, or sexual abuse. Further, the roles of perpetrator and victim may alternate during a relationship or argument. By making the person who committed domestic violence name what type of violence occurred, this is taken out of the private sphere and can give them insight into the need for the counseling process.



## Module 4

The dynamics of violence between those involved.

- > The **kind of violence**.
- > The three **coping strategies** of violence.
- > The **effects** of violence.



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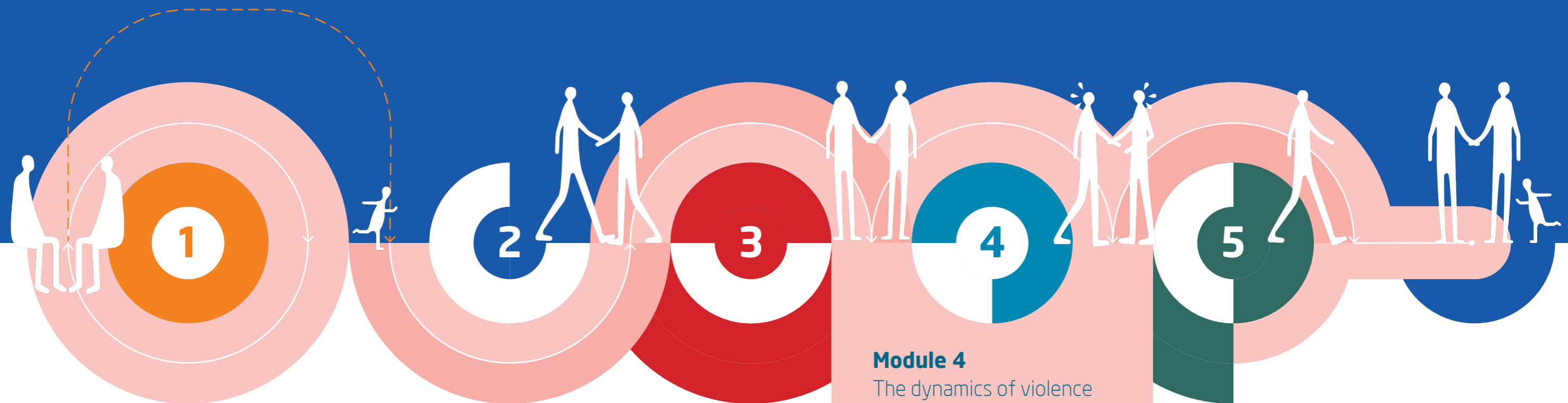
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Three coping strategies can make the violent situation more unsafe. These patterns become active during disagreements and vary from case to case:

- Looking up and fending off: Getting angry and backing down can provoke the person who committed domestic violence, causing the behavior to escalate.
- Looking up and repelling: Both parties involved seek confrontation and an attack leads to a counterattack.
- Repel and repel: The involved parties have given up communicating and deflecting tension.

By understanding the coping pattern between those involved, the counseling process can be adjusted accordingly.



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The dynamics of violence between those involved.

- > The **kind of violence**.
- > The three **coping strategies** of violence.
- > The **effects** of violence.

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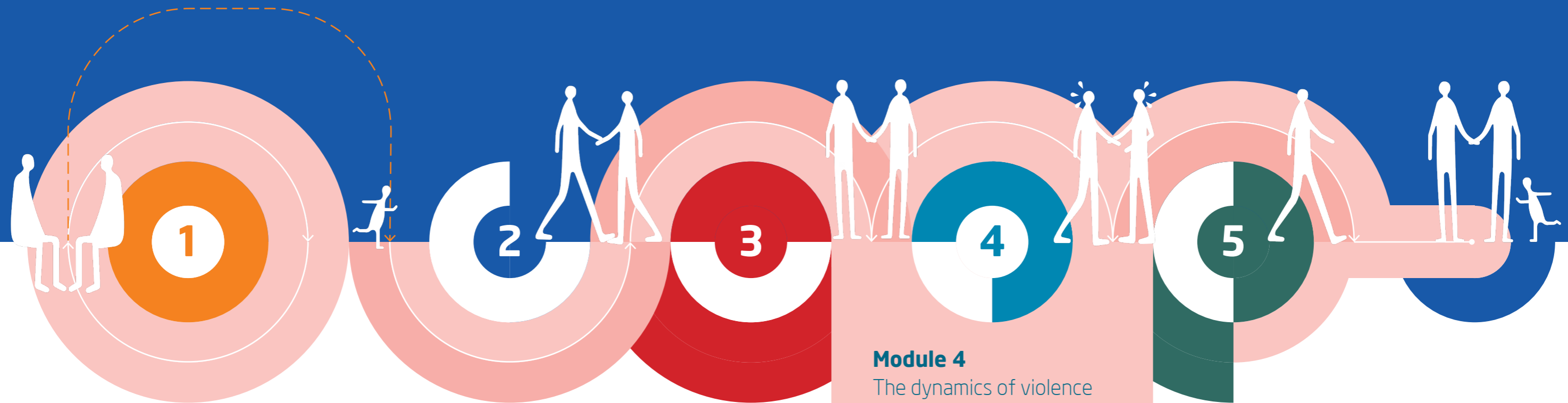
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Violence has physical and emotional consequences for those involved, for example:

- Physical consequences can be: sleeping problems, headaches, high blood pressure, breathing problems, etc.
- Emotional effects may include: low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, etc.

Furthermore, there is a chance that those involved in domestic violence may relapse into old patterns of violence after the counseling process or pass on the dynamics of violence to the children (intergenerational transmission).



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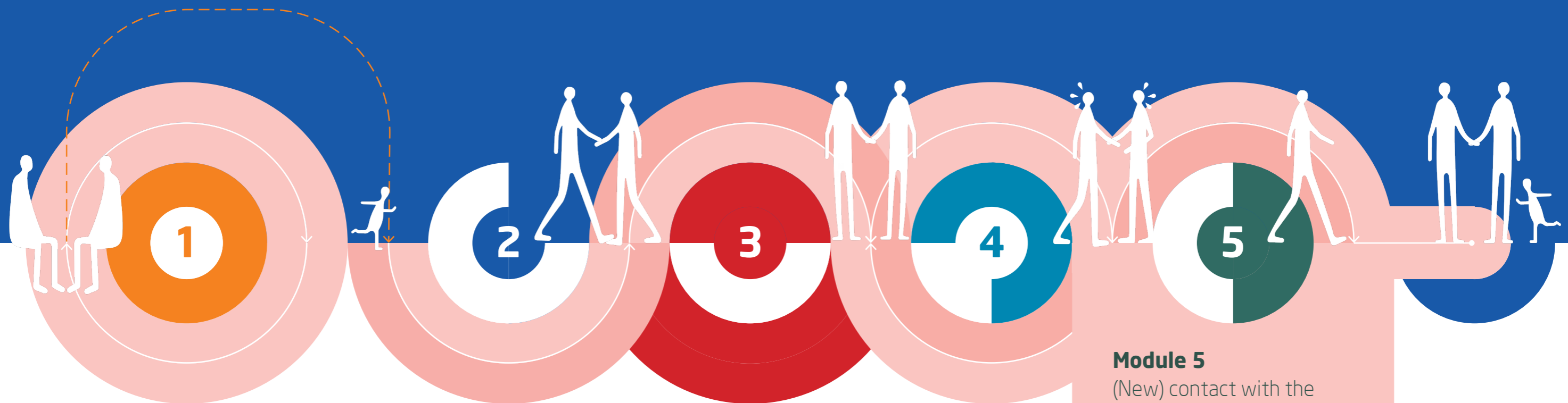
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## Module 5

(New) contact with the (ex-)partner.

- > The **relationship** with the **(ex-)partner**.
- > **Repairing** old **damage** with the (ex-)partner.

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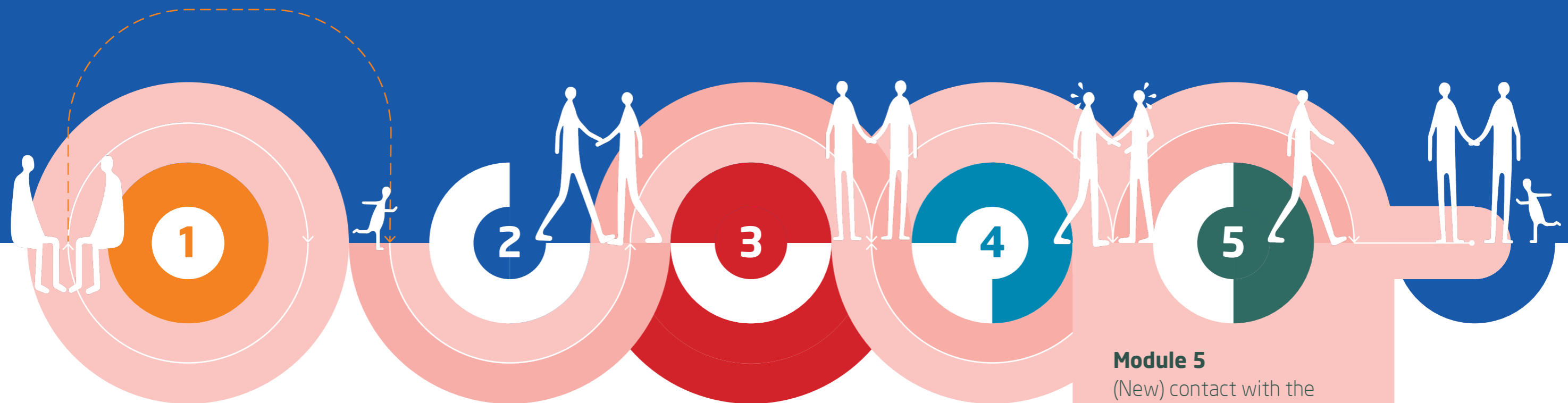
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60 percent of partners involved in domestic violence still want to remain together after counseling. They want the violence to stop, not the relationship. Social workers should:

- Assess how the person who committed domestic violence views their (ex-)partner.
- Find out if the person who committed domestic violence wants to continue with the (ex-)partner after counseling.

By mapping this it becomes clear with what purpose those involved go through the counseling process.



## Module 5

(New) contact with the (ex-)partner.

- > The **relationship** with the **(ex-)partner**.
- > **Repairing** old **damage** with the (ex-) partner.

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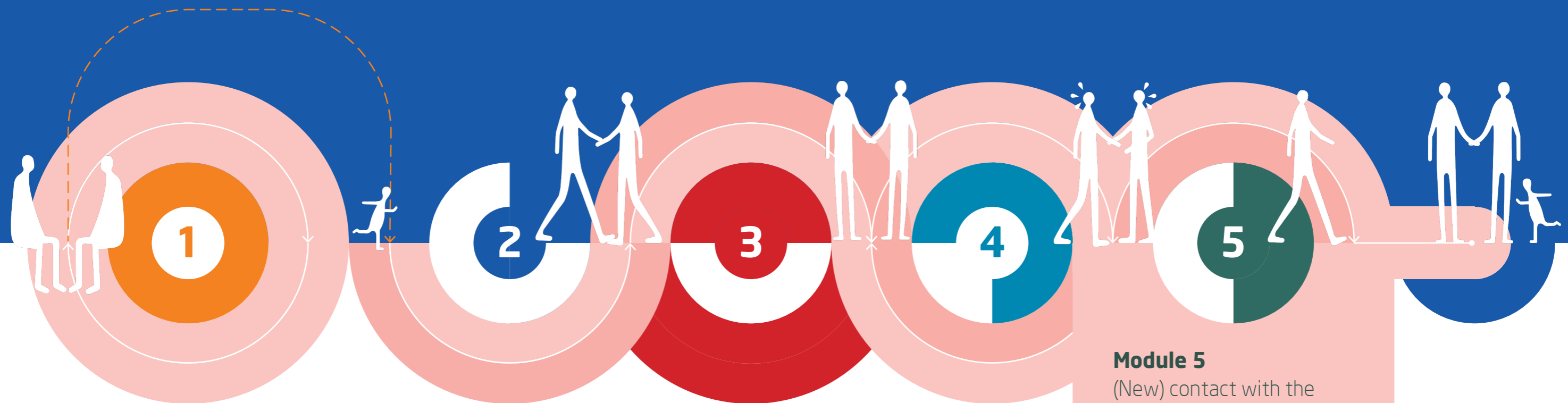
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Several situations may occur during a relationship that can be perceived as hurtful to one of those involved. These situations may be brought up in arguments, which can create annoyance. These situations can:

- Make those involved increasingly angry with each other.
- Ensure that those involved help each other, which does not increase and can even decrease the other's irritation.

If those involved in domestic violence want to remain their relationship after counseling, it is relevant to explore how they influence each other, and how they interact and respond to each other.



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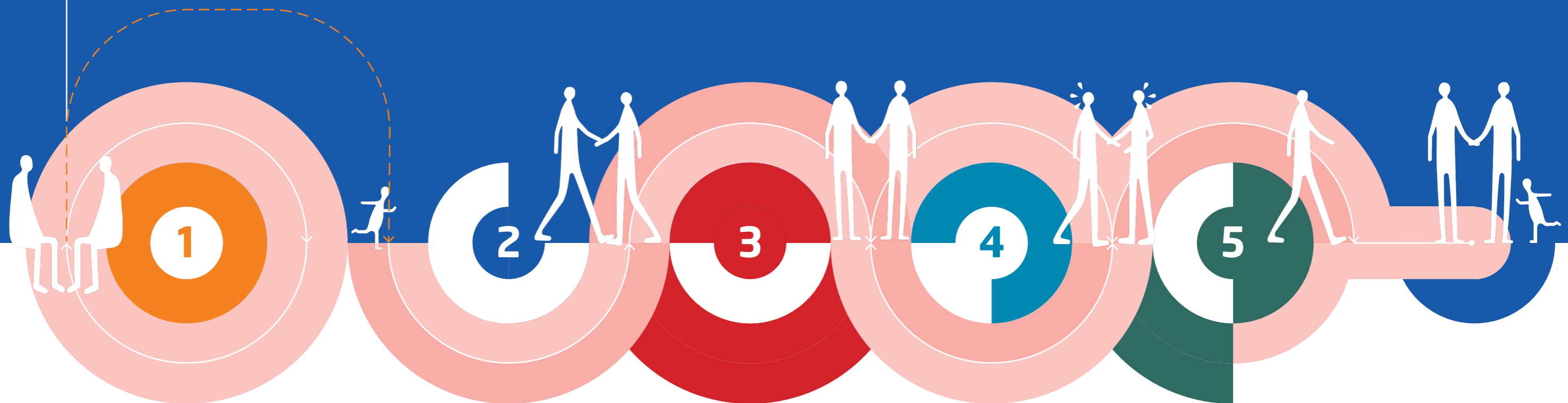
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Social workers use the theme cards in conversations with those involved during the counseling process to reflect on their past.



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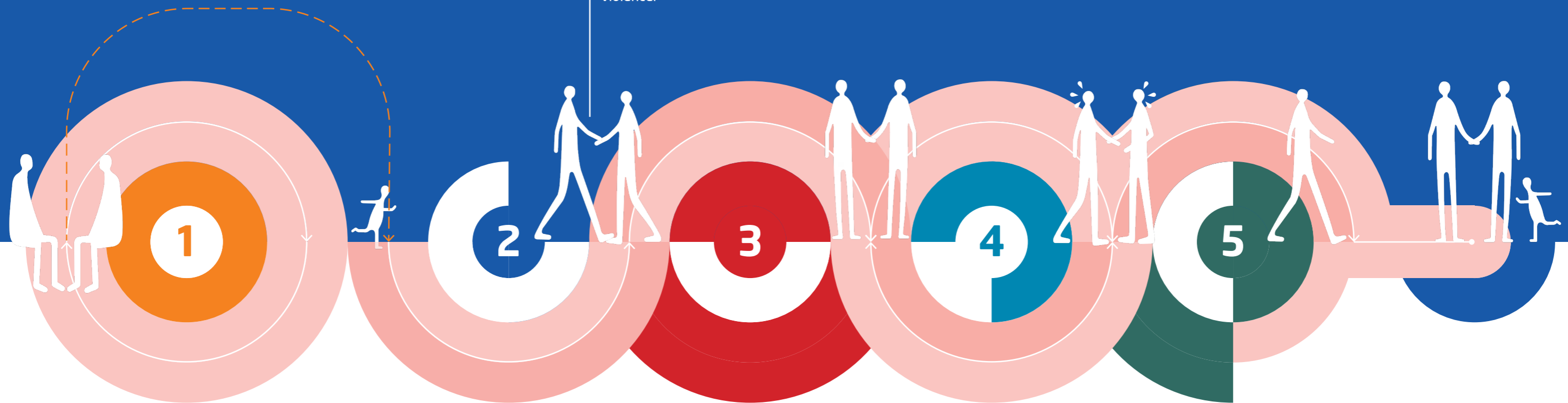
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Family, relational and individual influences play a role in the origination of unintentional partner violence.



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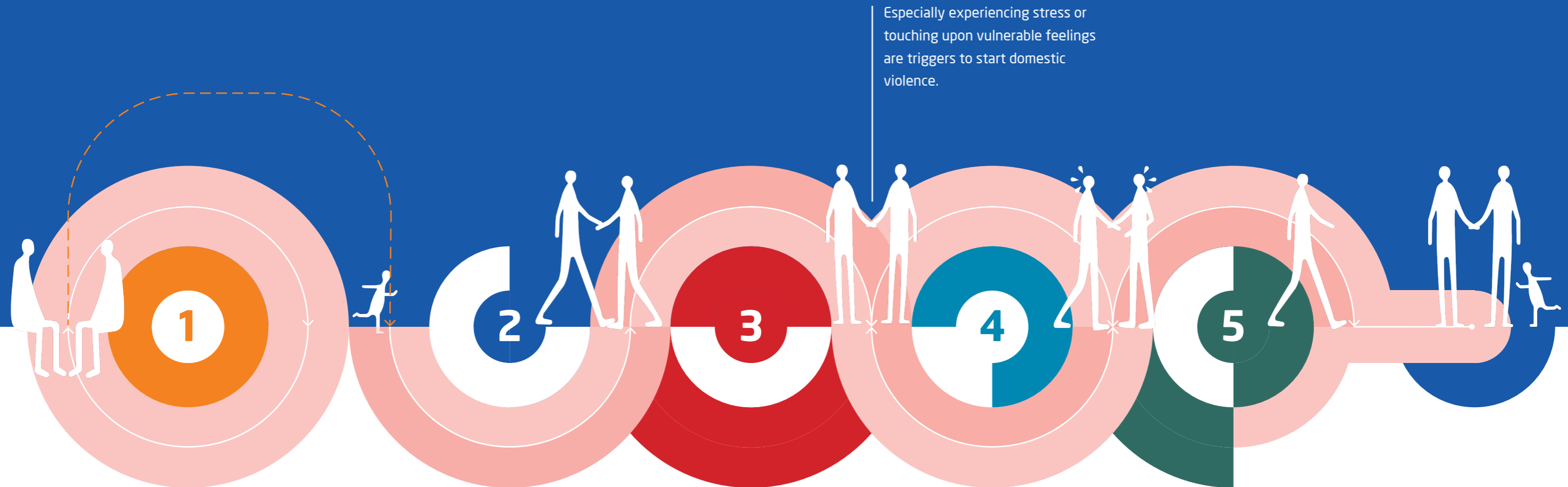
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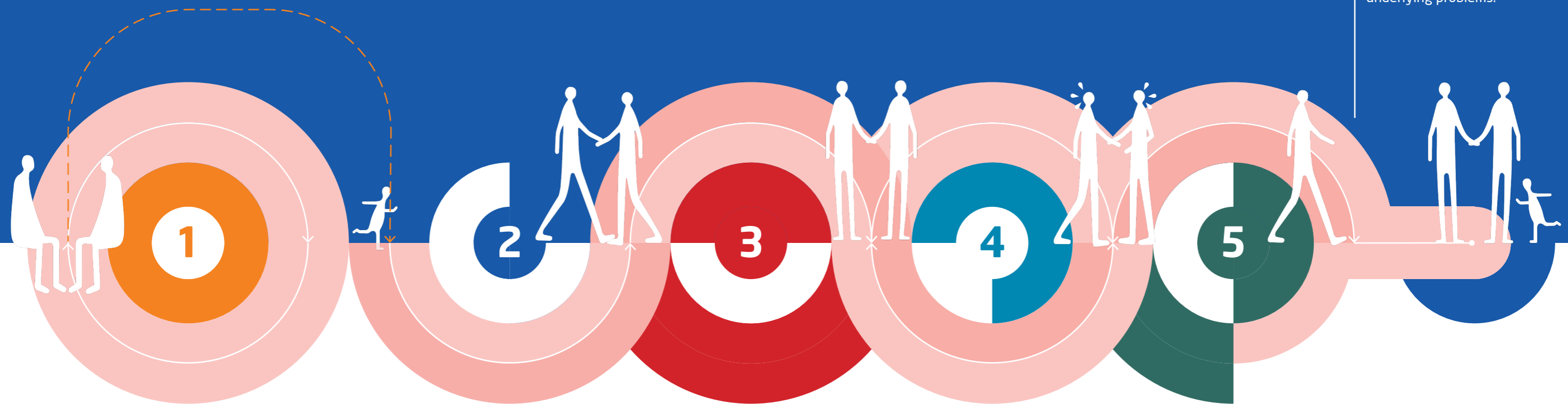
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By repairing the relationship with both involved, they can effectively work on their underlying problems.

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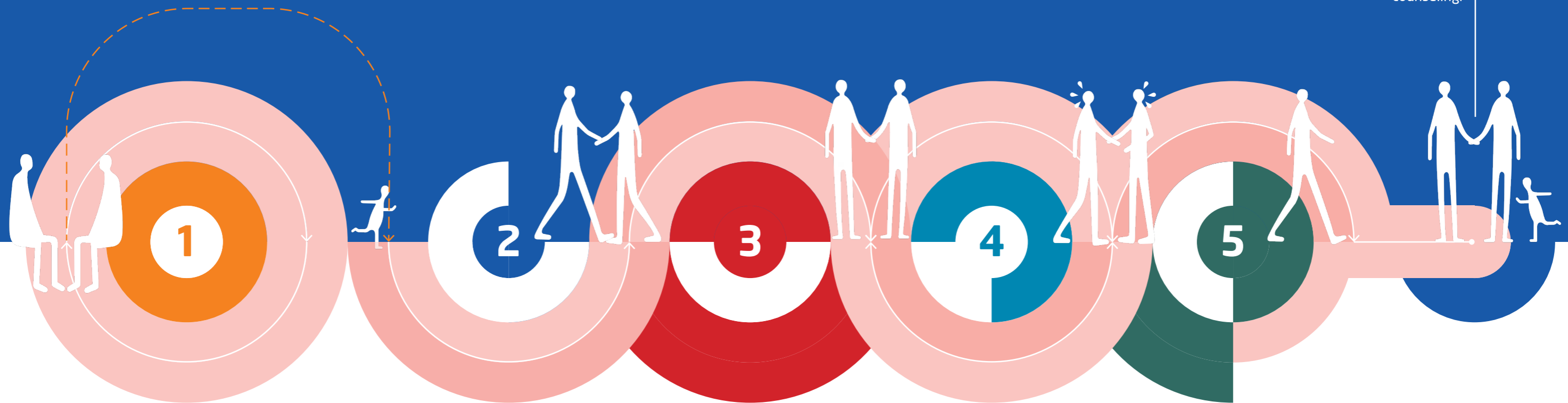
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As a result, they are less likely to relapse into an abusive relationship after counseling.



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## After the counseling process

The workbook and theme cards contribute to creating an understanding of the person committing domestic violence among residential social workers. As a result, they are more likely to be involved in the counseling process so systemic work can be put into practice. By working systemically, the underlying problems of those involved can be worked on more effectively, reducing the amount of assistance needed to stop domestic violence permanently.

It is proposed that the workbook and theme cards should be included in mandatory training at Blijf Groep, so the social workers learn how to involve the person who committed domestic violence in counseling from the start.

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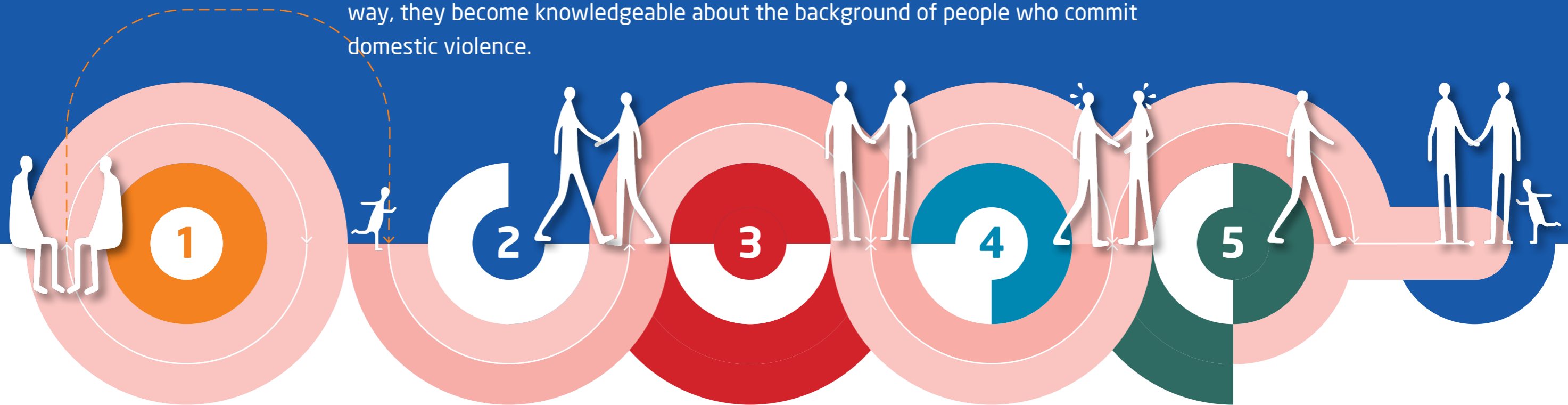
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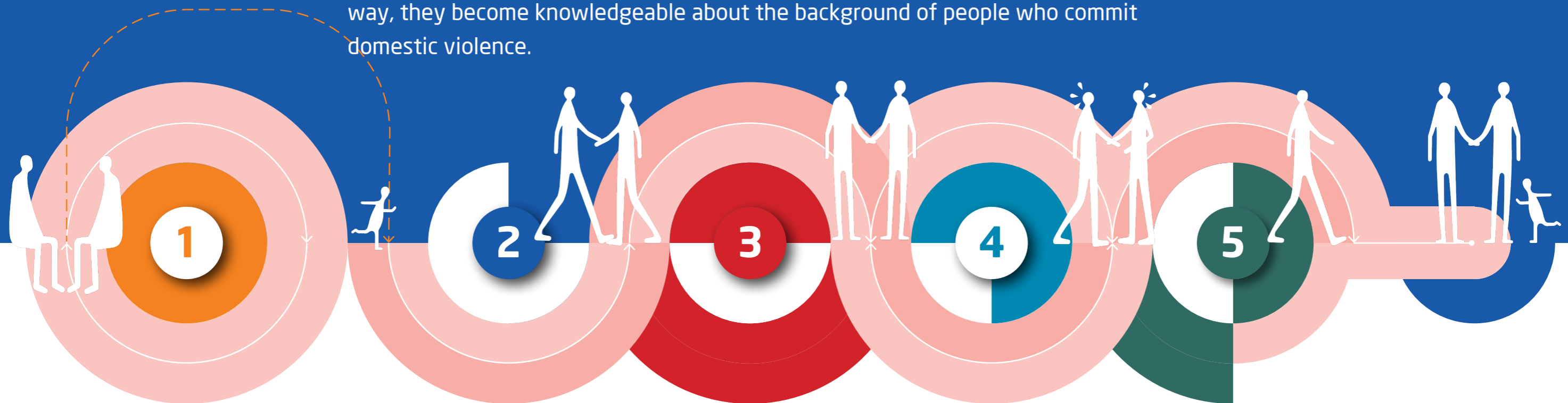
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