

Advances in Healthy Aging with Spinal Cord Injury

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Conflict of Interest

- I have no conflicts of interest to declare

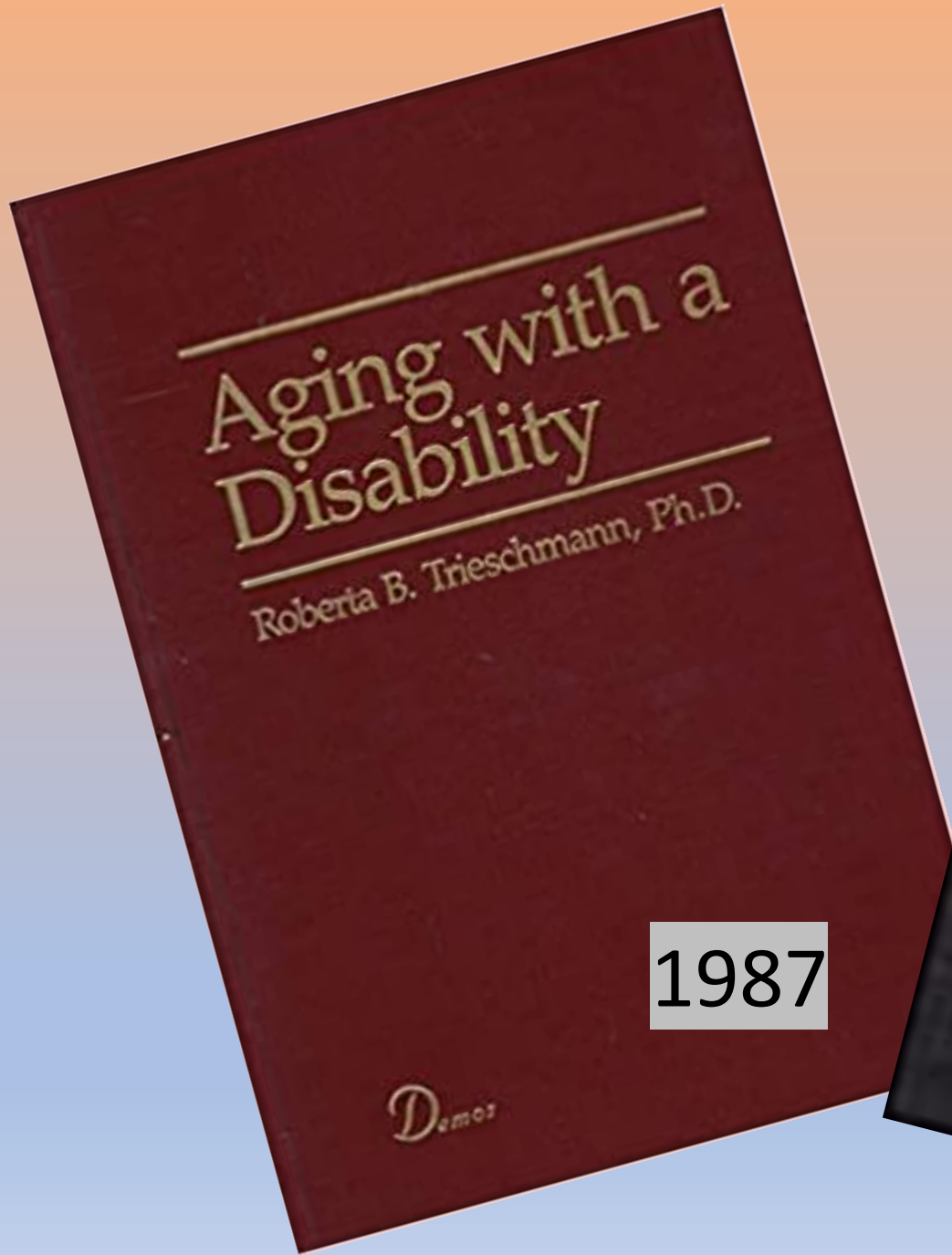


Objectives

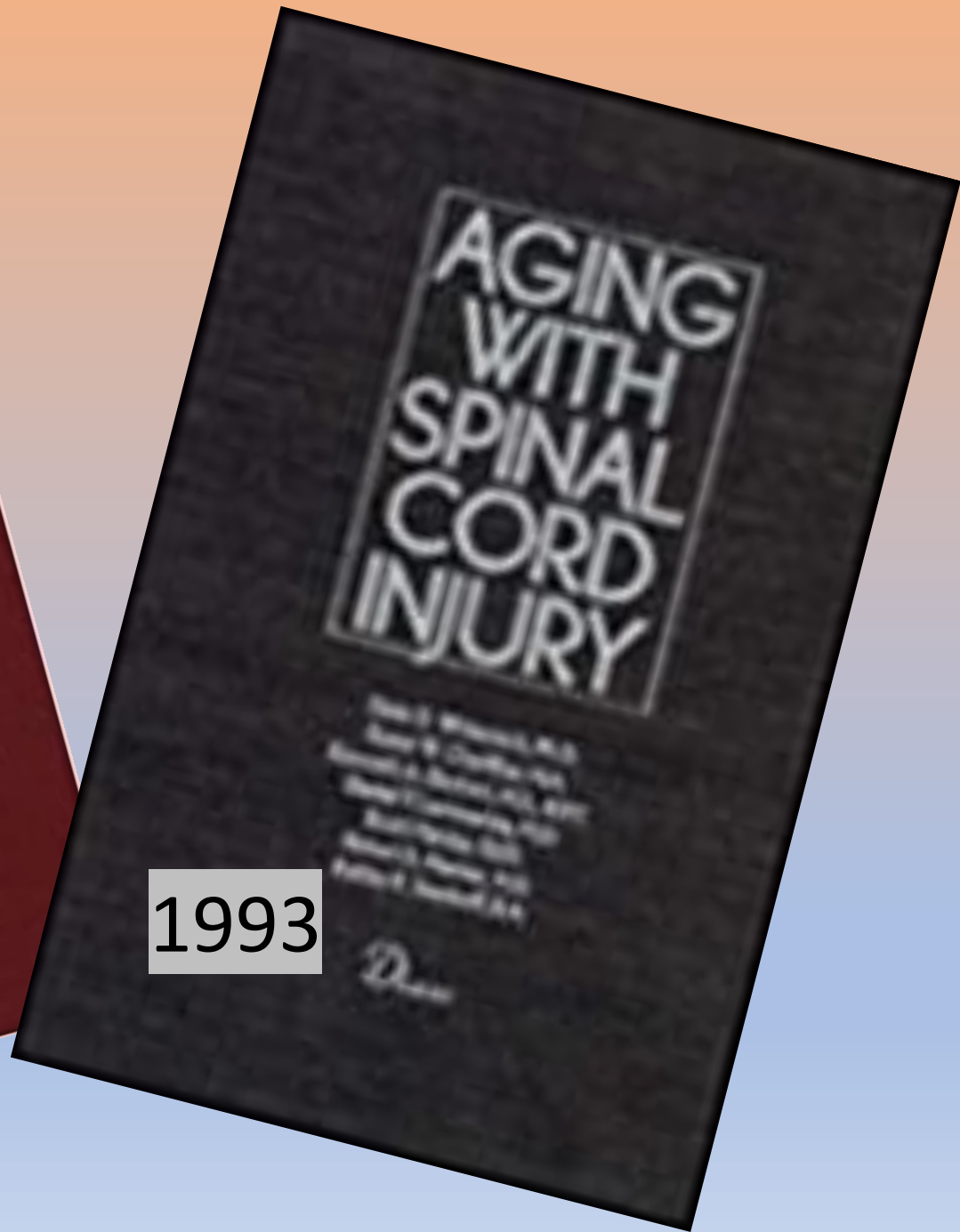
To describe complications that come with aging with a SCI

Illustrate the Bio-Psycho-Social model of wellness and healthy aging


Propose a strategy to enable people with SCI to live healthy lives



1987



1993



Medical
Complications
increase with
Aging

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Musculoskeletal Changes
- Bone Health
- Neurogenic Bladder
- Pressure Injuries
- Pain
- Mental Health

Cardiovascular Diseases

Smoking

Decreased Activity

Cardiometabolic Syndrome

- Obesity
- Insulin Resistance/Diabetes
- Circulatory problems
- Hypertension

Heart Health Matters

Musculoskeletal Changes

Decreased muscle mass and strength

Shoulder pain occurs in both paraplegia and quadriplegia

- Increased degenerative changes
- Imbalance of muscle strength
- Shoulders are key for transfers and mobility

Protection and Preservation of shoulder strength and flexibility is essential to prevent loss of mobility

Bone Health

Bone mineral density decreases dramatically

Continues to progress over time and worsened with:

- Low Testosterone in men / Menopause in women
- Low Calcium intake
- Low Vitamin D intake or limited sun exposure

Fractures are common even with low impact

Medication management - new Recommendations published in 2019 support osteoporosis treatment

Neurogenic Bladder

Urinary Tract Infections

- If more than two UTIs in 6 months further evaluation is needed
- Urodynamics; Renal Ultrasound; Cystoscopy

Incontinence

Bladder and Kidney Stones

Risk of Bladder Cancer

- Increased with use of indwelling catheter

Pressure Injuries

Many report having a pressure sore early after injury, but nothing for many years. Then something happens and a pressure sore develops and comes back after it heals--or it never heals.

Changes in skin, circulation, muscle strength, mobility and general health all contribute to higher risk of Pressure Injury with age.

Loss or change of caregivers, depression, alcohol and substance abuse also contribute to risk.

Solution: Keep your equipment in good working order; don't smoke; maintain good health (diabetes, obesity); be fastidious about your skin!

Pain

- Neuropathic Pain vs. Musculoskeletal Pain
- Stable Pain is common, but Progressive Pain requires evaluation
- Evaluation should be wholistic
 - Type of Pain
 - Change in Spasticity, Strength or Function
 - Changes in Sensation or Sweating
- Pain Medication use
 - A dangerous and slippery slope
 - Medical Practice has changed over time and no longer encourages aggressive medication treatment
 - Focus is on non-pharmacological options

Mental Health

Depression and Anxiety

Alcohol Abuse

Substance Abuse

Social Isolation

Stay connected with people!

The Bad News:

“Old Age Ain’t No Place for Sissies”

We are all getting old and there is no “Fountain of Youth.”

With SCI, complications add up and life gets harder with old age

The Negative Spiral will kill you.

The Negative Spiral

- Medical problems add up over time
- Things are harder to handle with more medical problems
- Little things start to slip—forget to take meds or do pressure relief
- You develop a pressure injury
- The healing takes longer, and strength and flexibility are lost
- More likely to or fall and break your leg; you are less able to care for yourself.
- A serious UTI or pneumonia results in hospitalization and you are weaker ... and the spiral continues.

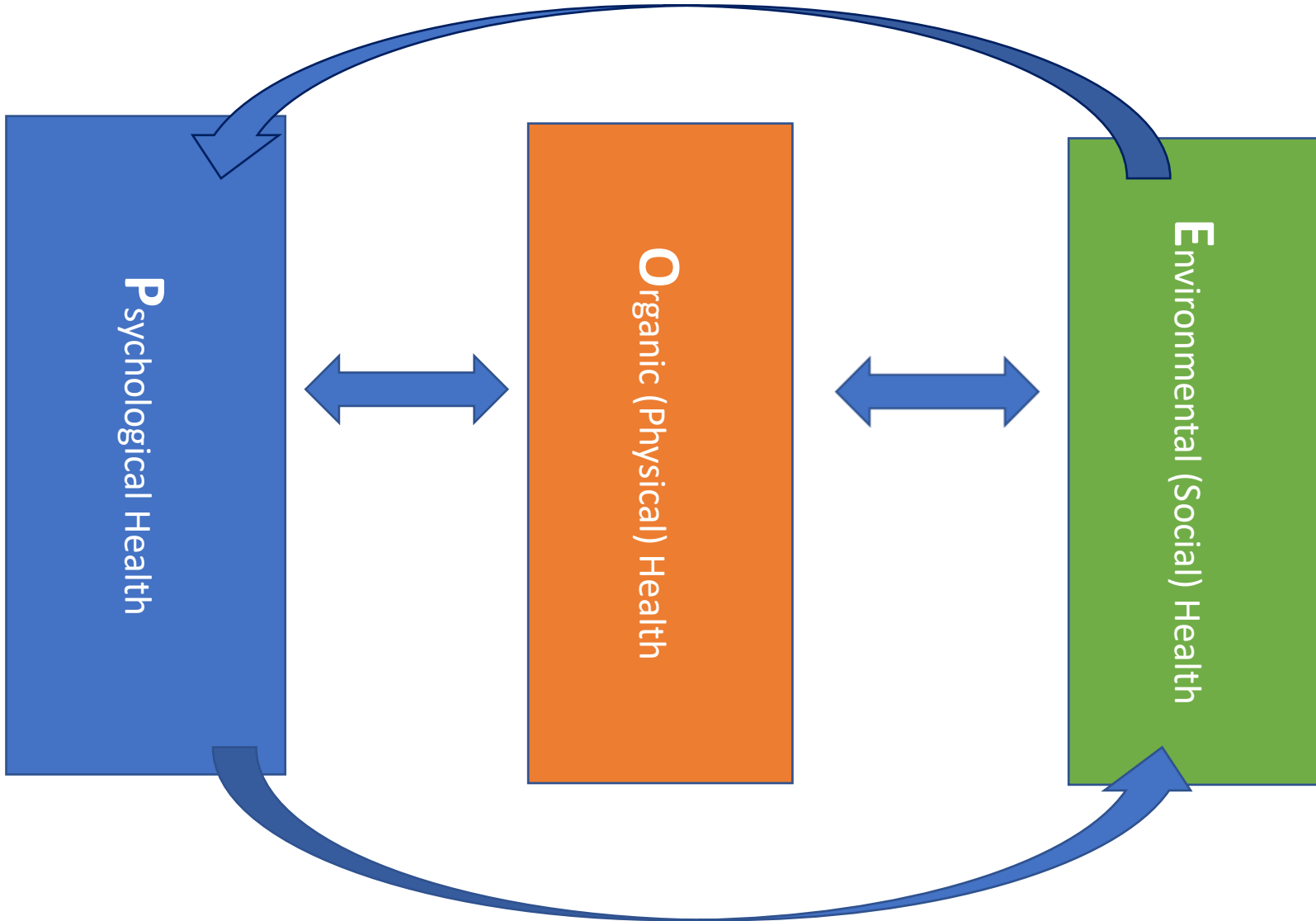
The Good News:

People can be very Resilient

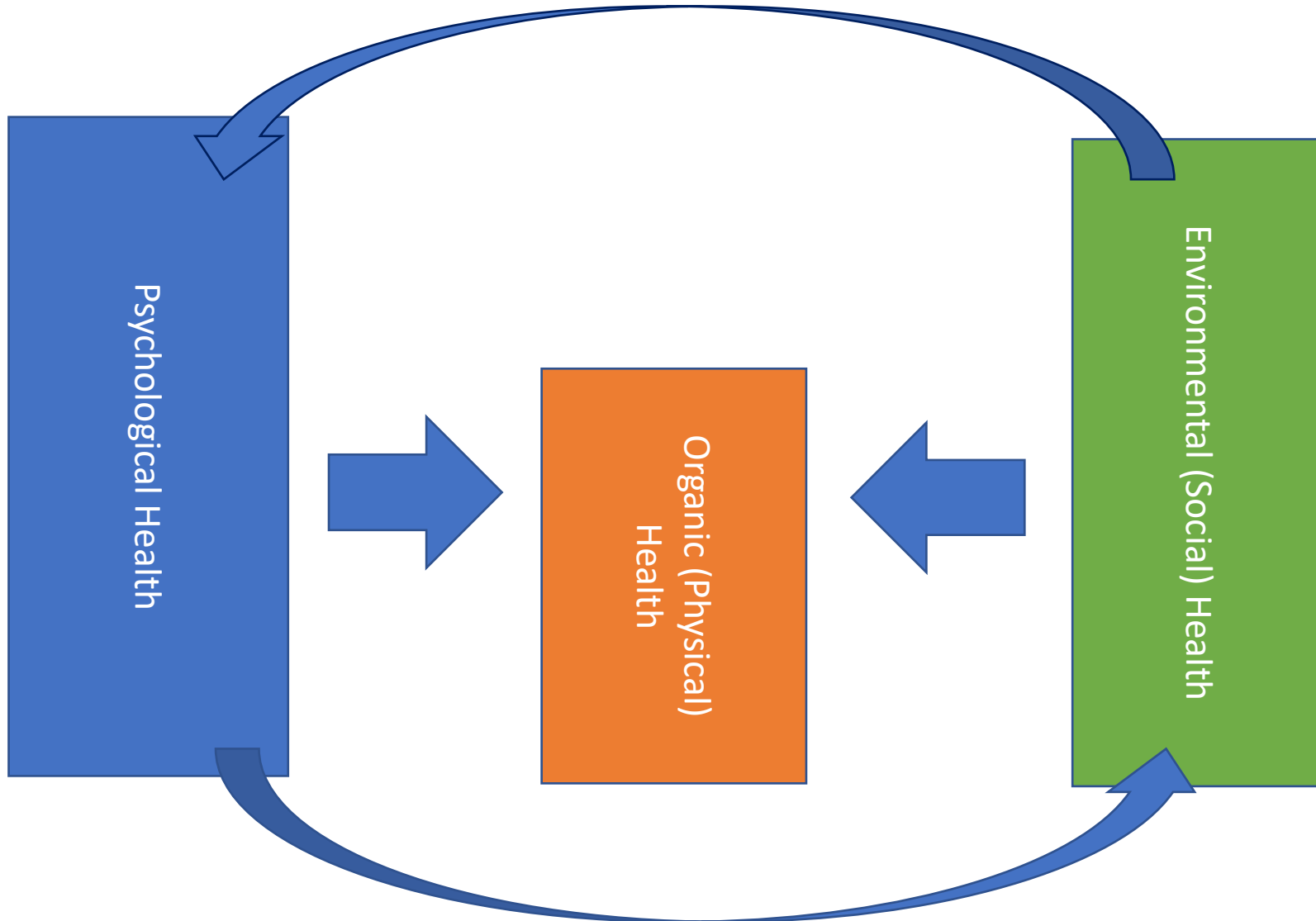
Emotional strength and Social support make a difference—and these have nothing to do with your Spinal Cord Injury

Better medical care, equipment, therapy and understanding about SCI means there are professionals out there who are knowledgeable about SCI and the complications that arise with aging.

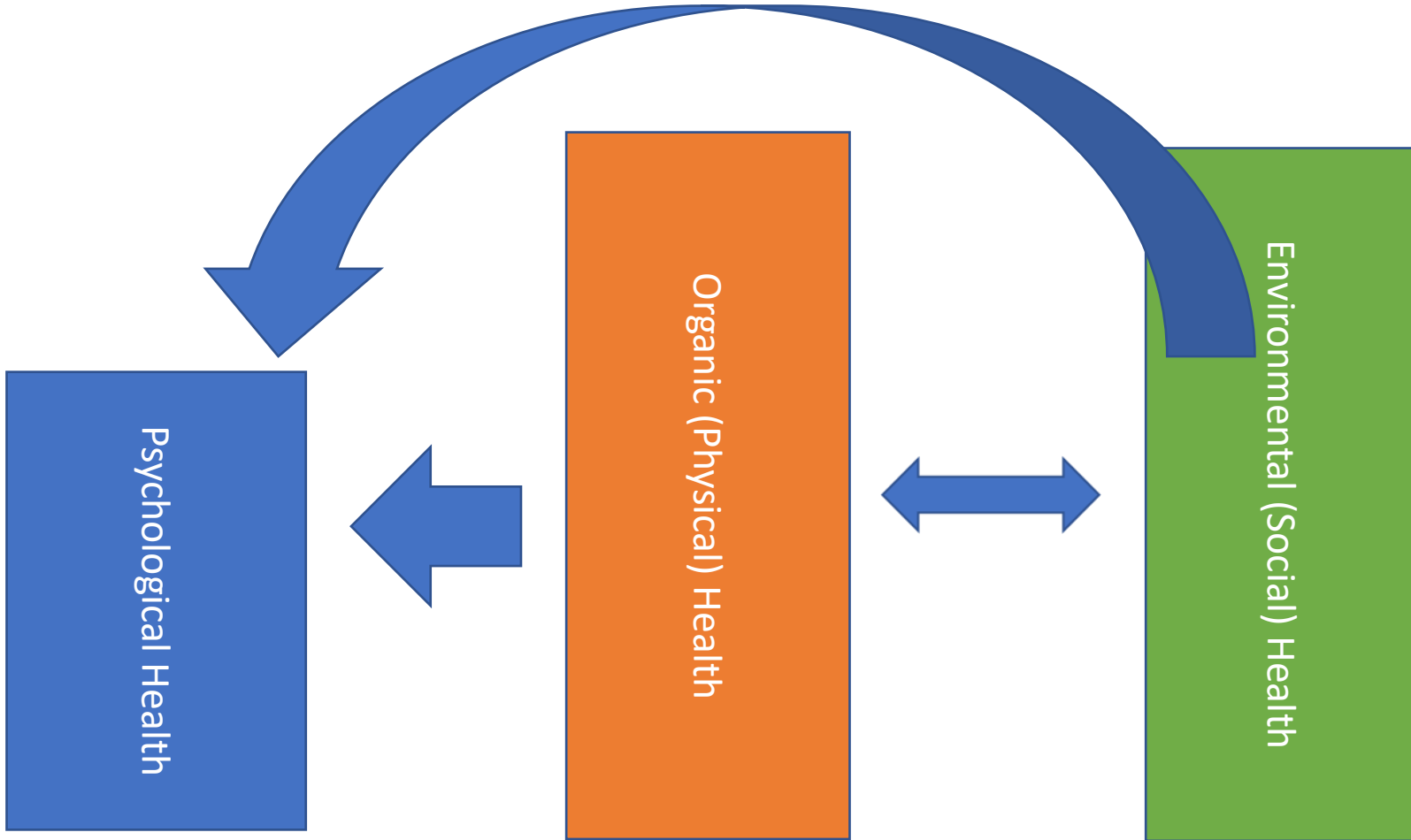
$$\text{Wellness} = P * O * E$$



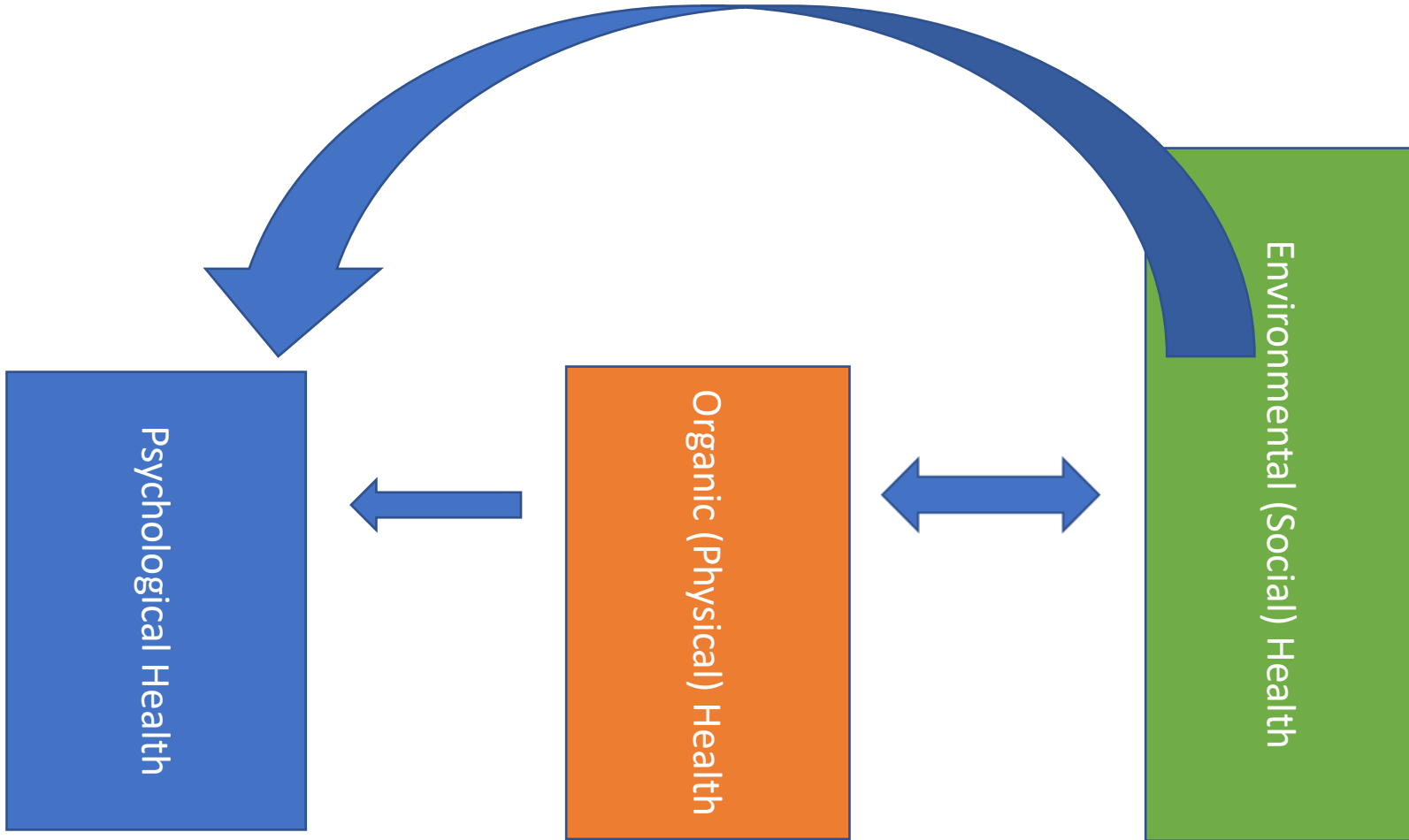
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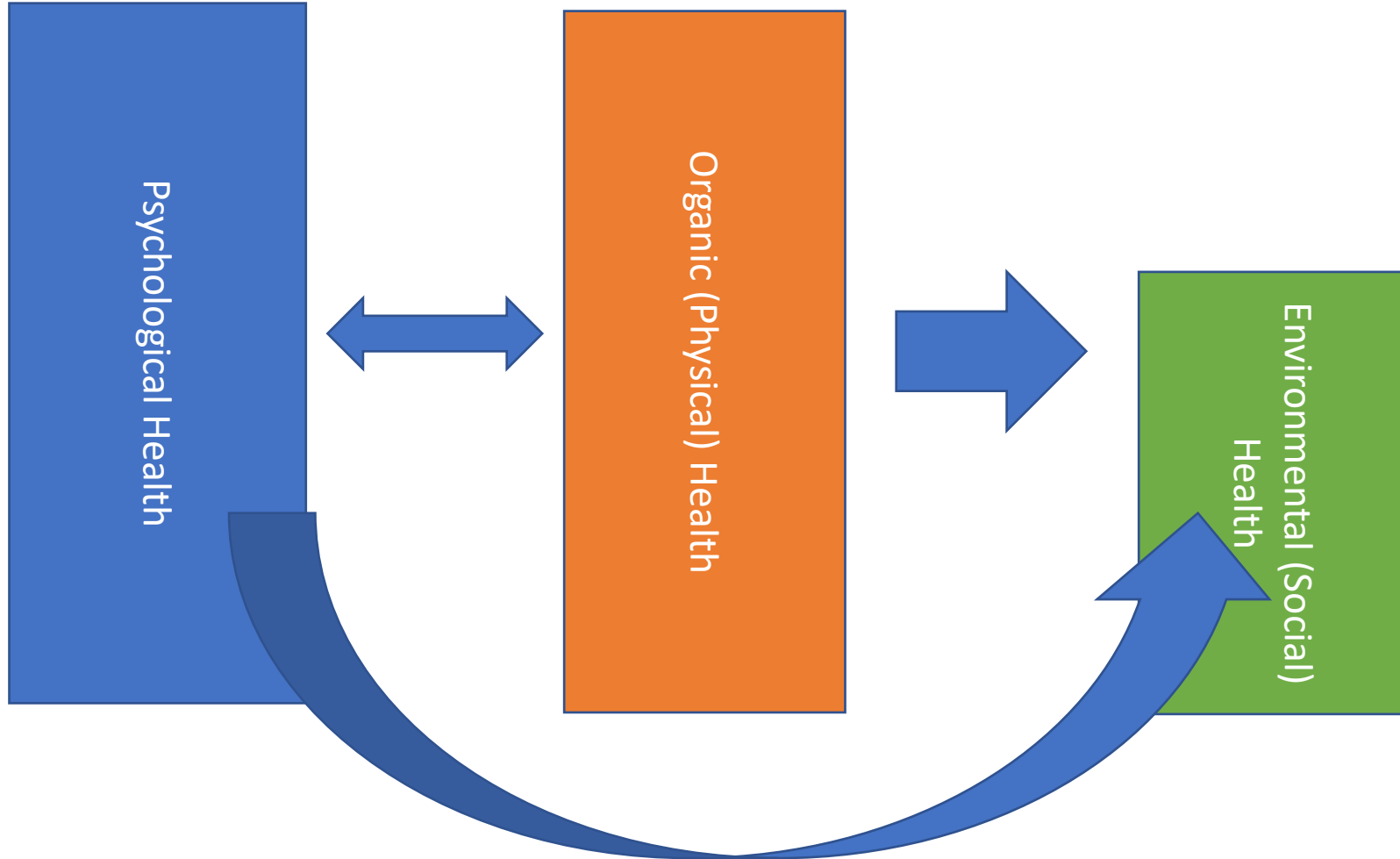
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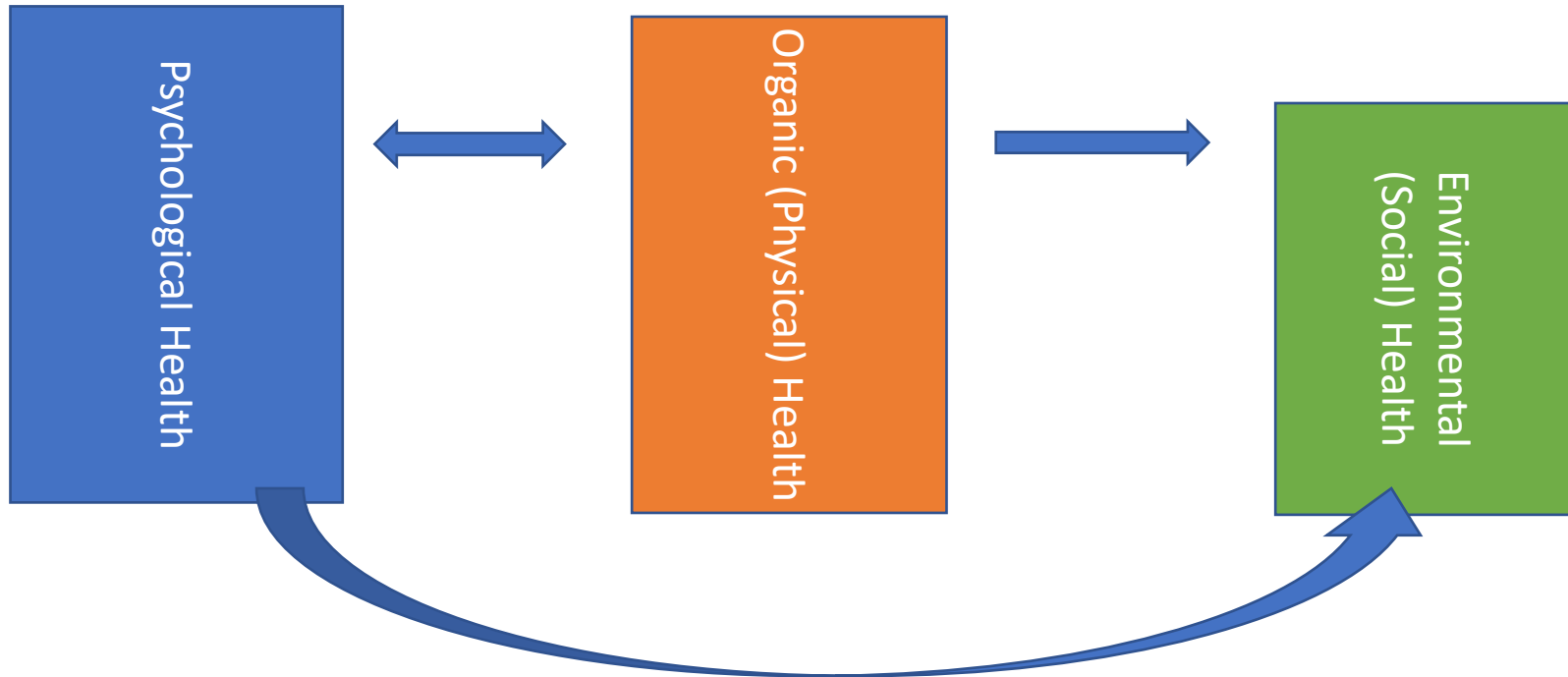
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How to Live a Health Life While Aging with SCI and Avoid the Negative Spiral

1

Take care of yourself...

2

Work with your health care team...

3

Don't take unnecessary risks...

4


Be fastidious about everything...

5

Keep a positive attitude...

6

Don't burn your social bridges...



Thank you for
your attention!

Questions??