



Mental Health Report 2023

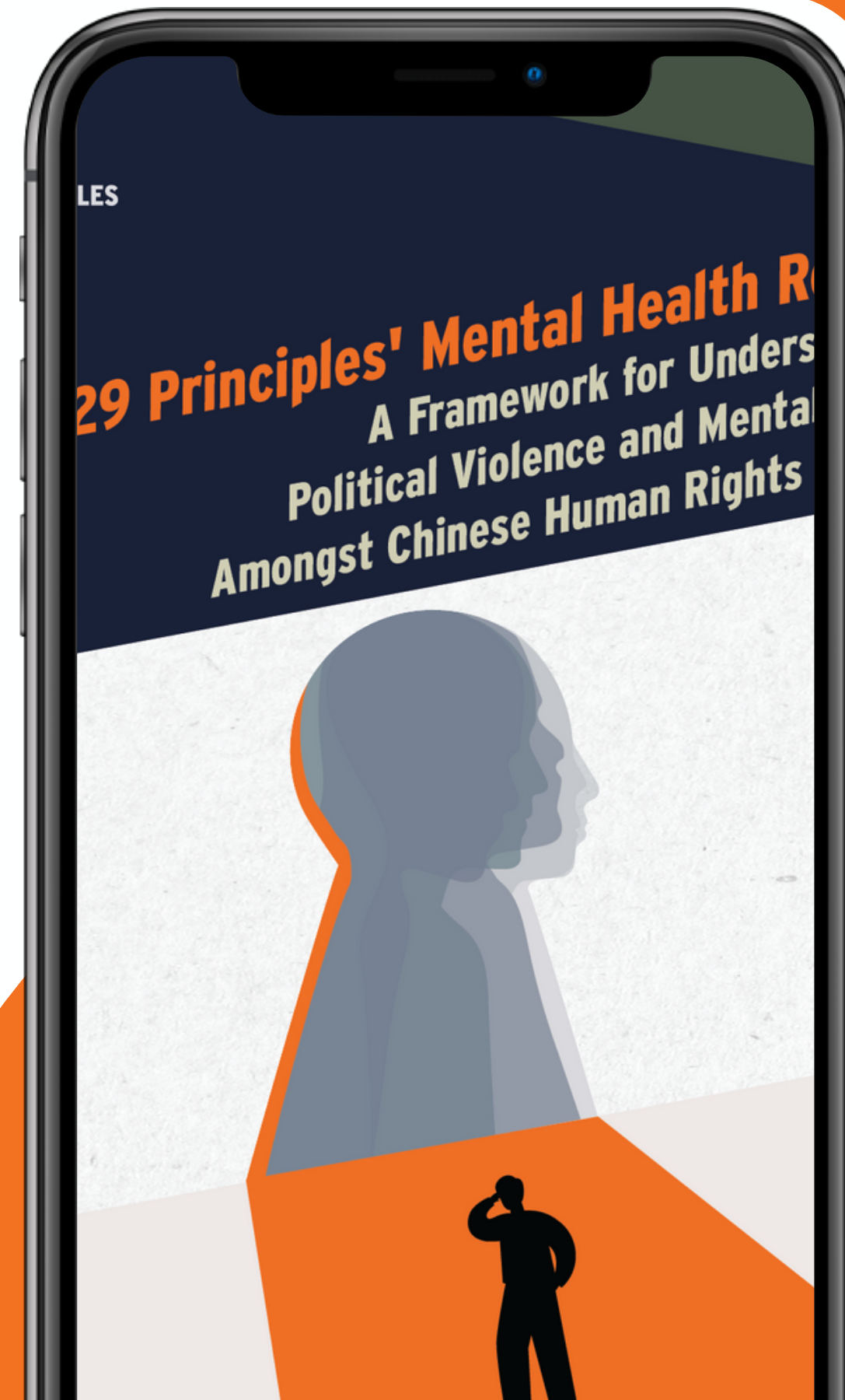
**A Framework for
Understanding Political
Violence and Mental Health
Amongst Chinese Human
Rights Lawyers**



Presented By:
Fiona

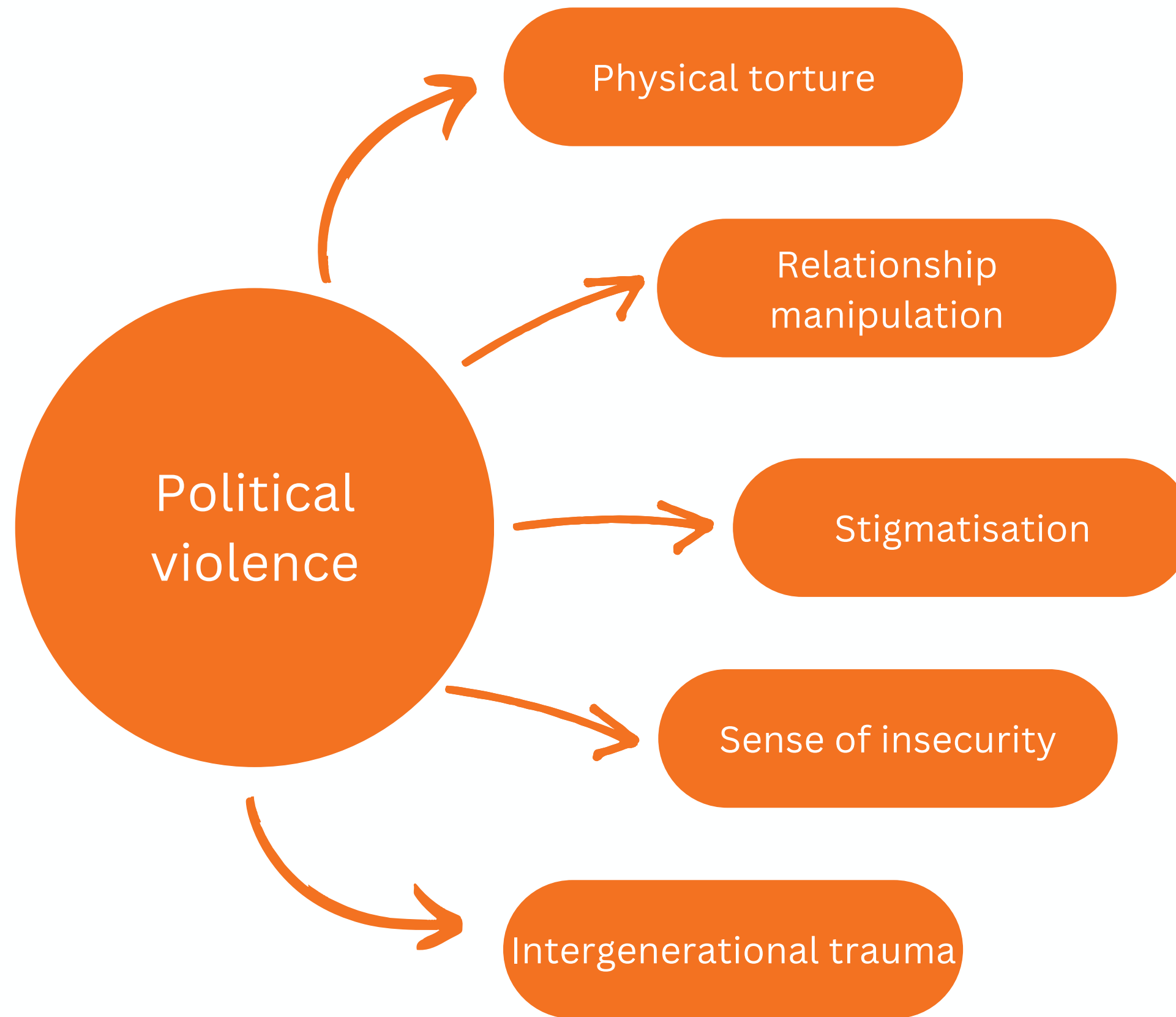
Overview

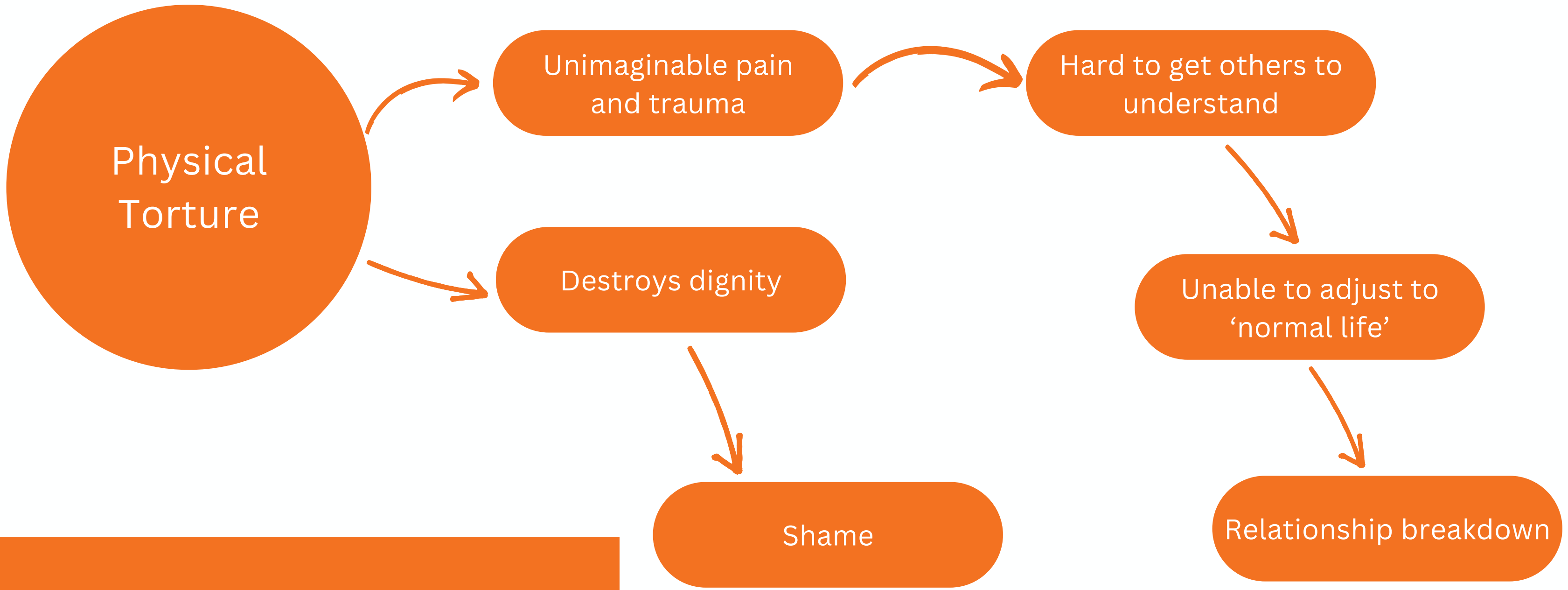
1. Political violence
2. Barriers to support
3. Summary of instances of political violence against lawyers
4. Analysis
5. Our mental health services
6. Recommendations



Political violence

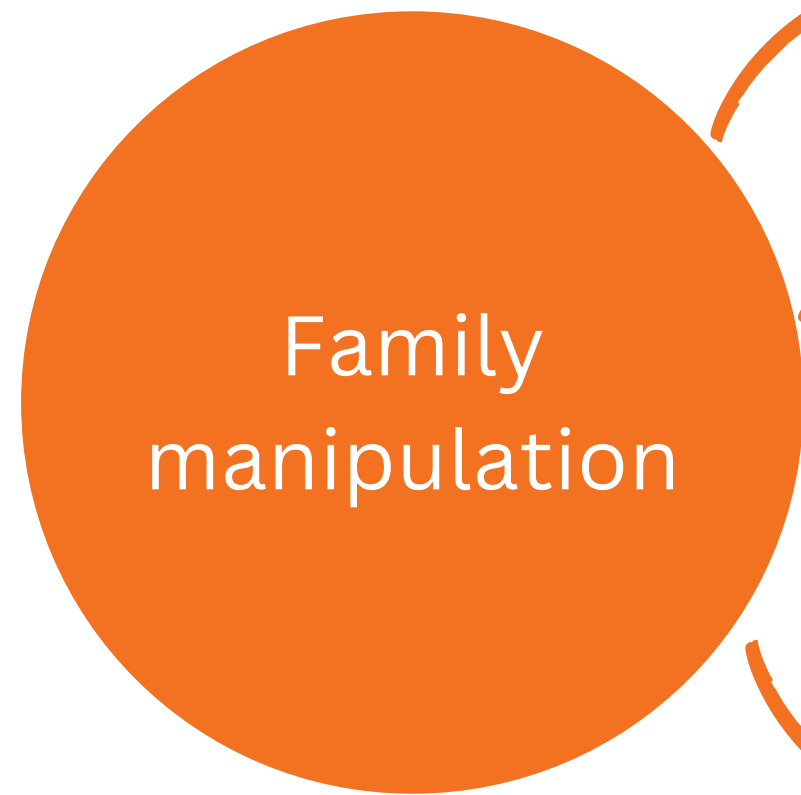
“A group or individual who has actual political power and resource, with the purpose of consolidating the regime and maintaining its structural advantages, carries out different levels of suppression and even extermination towards vulnerable groups or individuals who are under its control, systematically and on a large scale, such as physical, psychological, economic, environmental, cultural/symbolic”





Physical torture

Causing pain both in the moment and for years afterwards from long lasting injuries



Persuade them to plead guilty/stop defending their rights

Separation creates confusion & mistrust

Closely monitored/resitrcited mobility/forcibly taken away

Livelihoods of family members are threatened

Isolated from family members

Guilt

Forced to choose between their families and their ideals

Forced to agree to the authorities' requests

Family relationships
Spaces needed for healing from trauma but often the most frequently used spaces for emotional manipulation



Stigmatisation

CCP has such a strong influence over outlets and strong censorship that people can be effectively living in parallel worlds, unable to communicate or understand each other

Smear
campaigns

Pervasive environment in which lawyers are routinely smeared

Alienation, fear and hostility from strangers

Hard to establish social relationships

Reduced their capacity for resilience and the ease with
which they can heal

Context of
political
violence

Government creates arbitrary rules
around behaviour

Previously considered normal actions
become grounds for arrest / repression

Live under state of mental precarity

Live with an awareness
that at any time their
ordinary actions may be
used to justify violence

Sense of insecurity

Unable to judge or
understand situations
well

Self-doubt &
suspicion



Separation from their parents

Children become a focus (directly/indirectly) of the suppression of their parents

Grow up with an absent parent and must rebuild these relationships after released

Grow up with instability

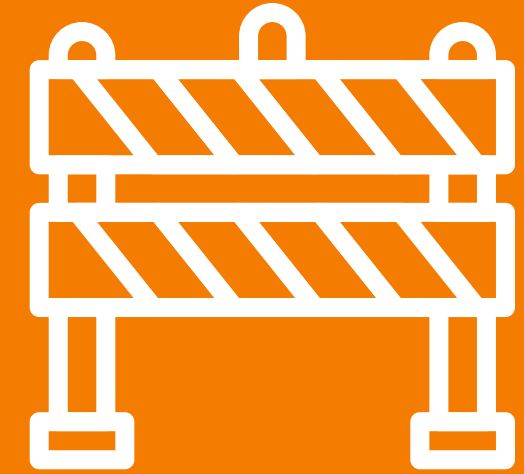
Unable to establish a normal parent-child relationship

Anxiety and fear

Intergenerational trauma
The affect on second or third generation family members of the victim

Difficult to form trusting relationships with others

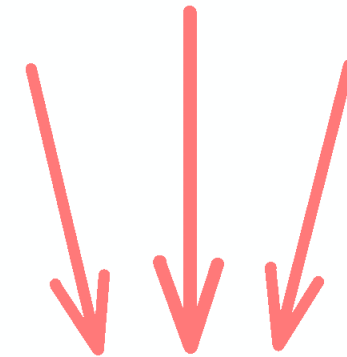
Barriers to support



Ongoing difficulties to processing trauma

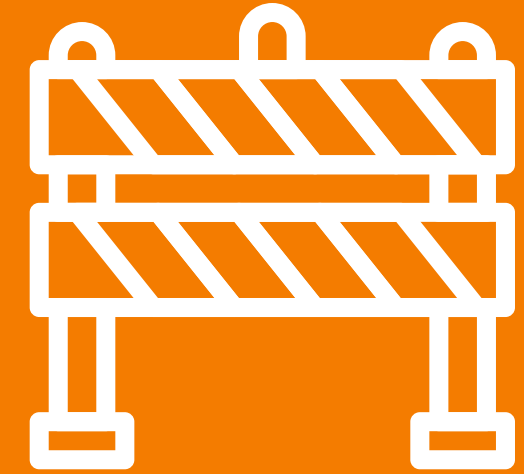
China is still under authoritarian rule

CCP prevents the outside world from knowing the true situation of victims



Victims cannot review their own trauma or those of their loved ones, further perpetuating the harm & preventing communities from recovering

Barriers to support



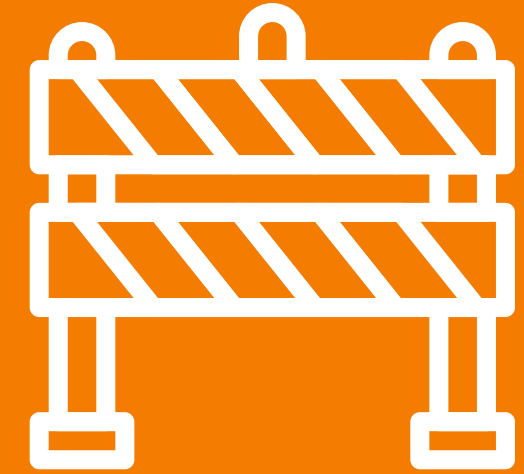
Using “mental health” to maintain stability (Weiwen)

Treatment used to surveil & harrass political dissidents

Detained lawyers forced into psychiatric treatment & counselling

Victims show more resistant to mental health services / diagnoses & are afraid to share their mental situation with others

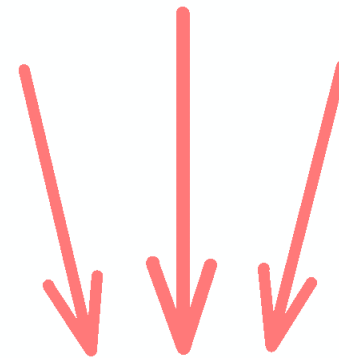
Barriers to support



Mental health stigma

Are used to "helping others to solve problems" as lawyers

Fuelled by ideals of helping the disadvantaged gain justice in human rights cases



Think they have the ability & responsibility to continue, not show vulnerability / "give up"

Summary of instances of political violence against lawyers

Category	Details	Total
Physical & mental torture	Torture, physical suffering, violent attack, mental suffering, delaying medical examination & surgery, delaying treatment	23
Pressure on others	Pressure on others, threats to others, intergenerational trauma	14
Loss of freedom (outside detention)	Surveillance, controlled movement, being followed, forced travel, threatened, restricted phone functions, disconnected from the internet, summoned by the police	35
Loss of freedom (detention)	Detained, illegally detained, extended pre-trial detention, secret interrogation, secret trial, long sentences, house arrest, disappeared	26
Prevention from conducting or access to legal rights	Denied access to lawyers, case materials were taken away, prohibited from exercising the rights of lawyers, disqualified from defending, fired	23
Others	Removal of property (including mobile phone), illegally searched, deliberately made late, insulted, cut off financial resources, prevented from seeing family	11

Analysis



46.8%

Encounter 2 or more kinds of political violence

Multi-layered & complex nature of political violence

2%

Loss of freedom outside of detention led subsequent prolonged detention

Lack of linearity in the escalation of political violence

Unable to predict which of their actions will lead to certain forms of political violence

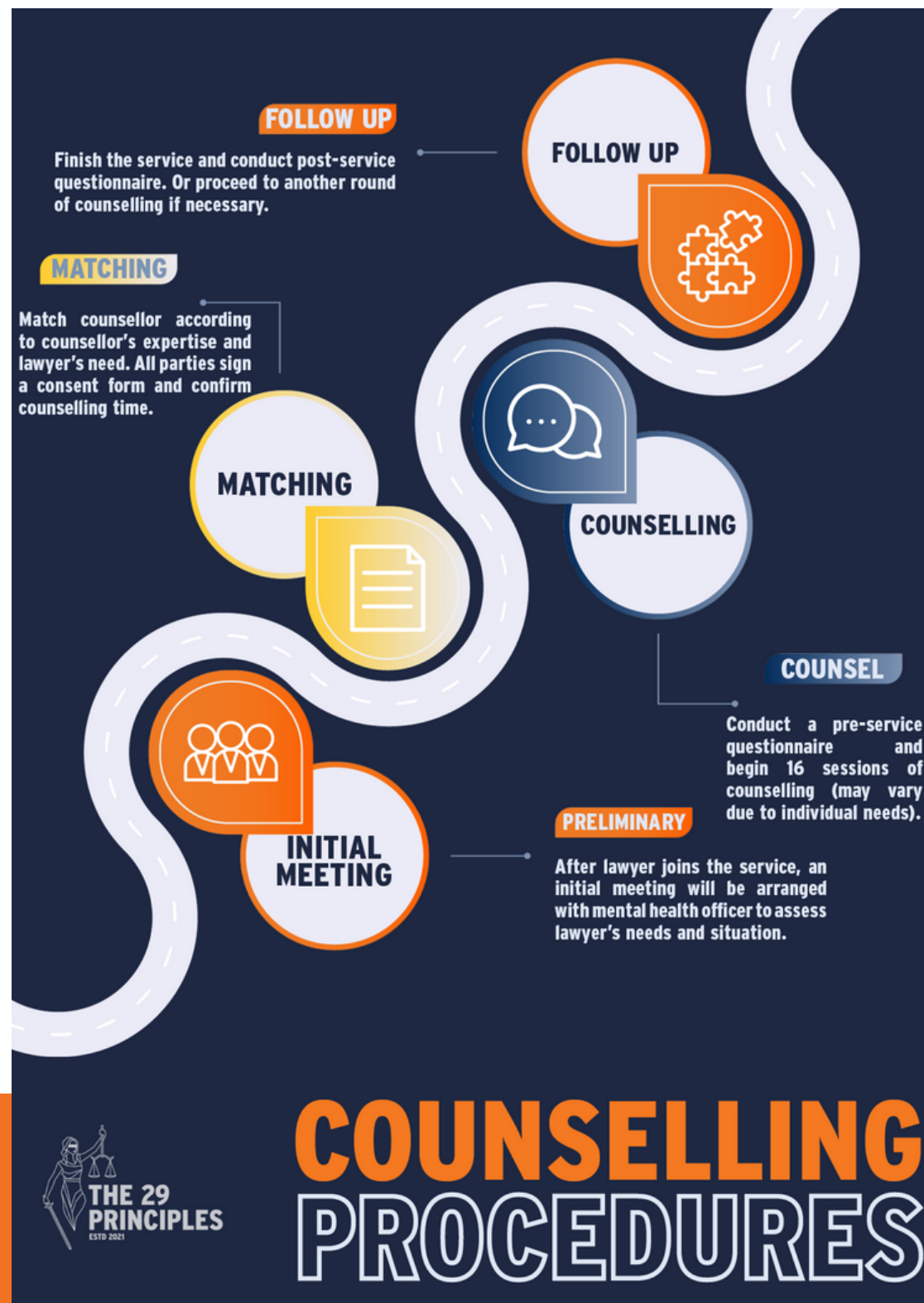
80%

Detention combined with other forms of political violence

Severity of violence faced once detained

Intense feeling of insecurity and fear

Our mental health services



01
Psychological counselling services (Individual, group, family)

03
Articles and seminars

02
Peer support groups for family members and lawyers

講座系列 SEMINAR

THE 29 PRINCIPLES

政治暴力在中國及香港

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN CHINA & HONG KONG

台北飛地

4月8日 上午11時
台北市萬華區
中華路一段170-2號

講座內容:

1. 律師方面，中國如何打壓中國和香港的律師？
2. 案件審理方面，中國/香港的政治案件有何趨勢？
3. 對中國司法人權侵害和香港國安法的觀察
4. 為什麼不在中國/香港的人需要了解這些？
5. 律師心理健康方面的分享

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給人權律師的一封信： 負面情緒就是壞情緒？

憤怒、悲傷、焦慮、沮喪、恐懼常常被視為需要被消滅的負面情緒，是阻礙我們繼續人權工作的情感。作為人權工作者，特別面對著極權的打壓，好像必須要保持正面、樂觀、有希望。然而，事實並非如此，負面情緒並不是「壞」情緒，而過分強調正向思考反而對心理健康造成壞的影響。

更多詳情
29principles.uk/mentalhealthservice

「29原則」為維權律師及家屬提供保密安全的心理健康支援服務，有需要人士歡迎聯絡我們。

Recommendations



Trauma-Informed Care

Prevent human rights lawyers or family members from being re-traumatised when receiving services



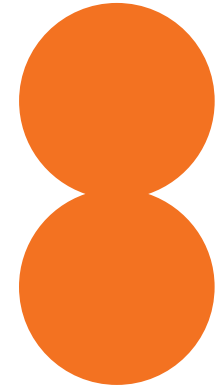
Whole Community Approach

Rebuild supporting communities, help those suffering from secondary / intergenerational trauma, build community resilience & understanding



Battling Stigma

Reach consensus on the importance of mental health & the acceptability of seeking help



**THANK
YOU**



**THE 29
PRINCIPLES**
ESTD 2021