

WHEN YOU *HAVE* TO BE THE BEST

# *Navigating Career Transitions*

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ABRCMS Grad Student Symposium 2022

# About Me

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Scientific (bench) training,  
project management, blogging

Graduate  
School



Scientific writing, defining  
career interests

Science  
Writer



Pharma benchwork, scientific  
writing, cross-functional/matrixed  
work environment

Biologist



**Assistant  
Director of  
Research  
Operations**



Regulatory documents, multi-  
functional teams, tight deadlines

Nonclinical  
Reviewer



Different benchwork, admin  
(IACUC, IRB, IBC, grants),  
independent environment

Postdoc



# Scope of this workshop

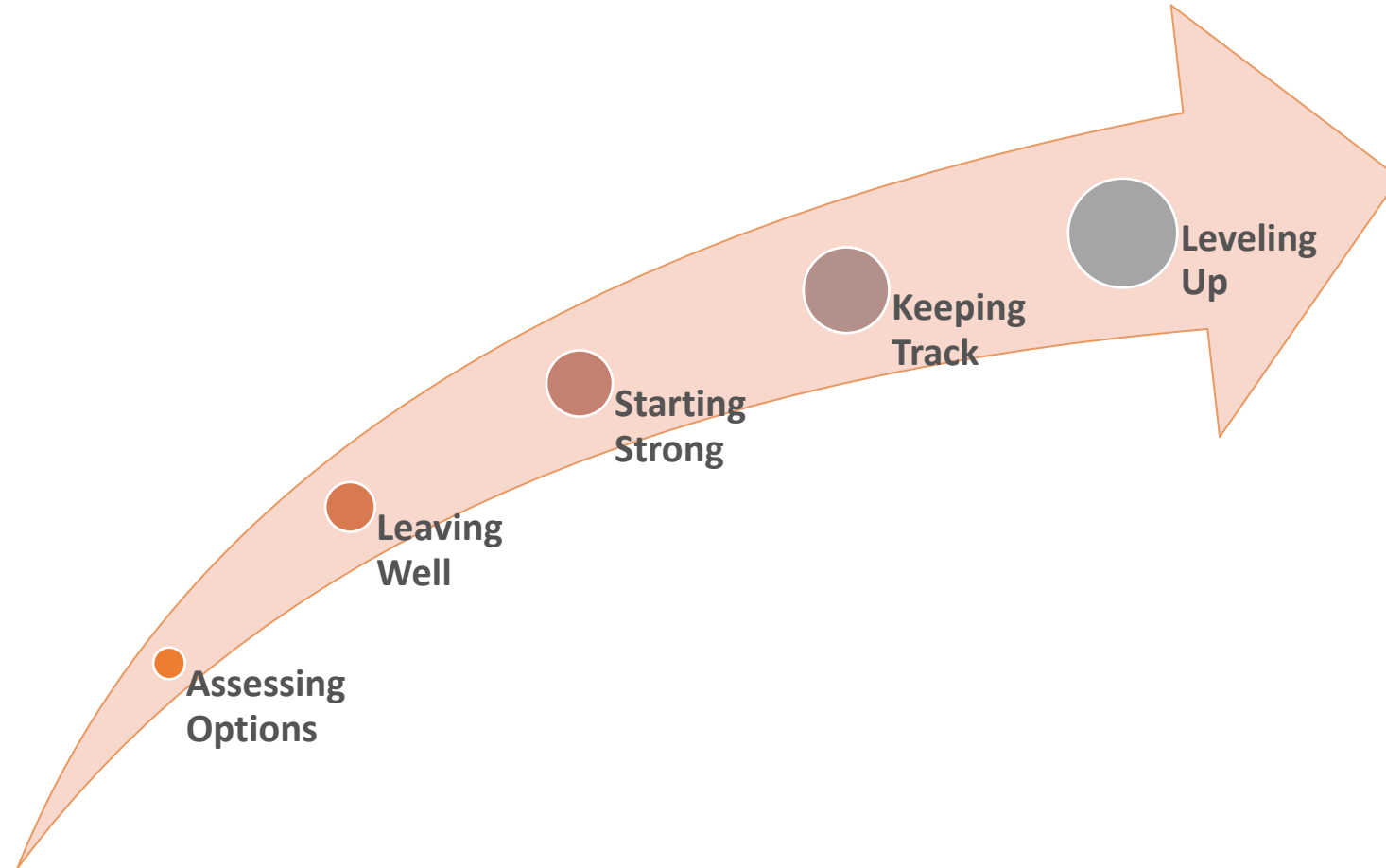
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- Who is this session for?
  - Someone charting a new path in their career
  - Someone facing their first big transition
  - Someone with a previous experience of a bad transition, looking for a new perspective
- What this is not
  - A session about interviewing or resumes, or the components of applying for a new position
  - A session about how to find a job
- What is this about?
  - Creating a strategy to reduce the stress of transitioning in your career



# Making a career change, beginning to end

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# Assessing Options

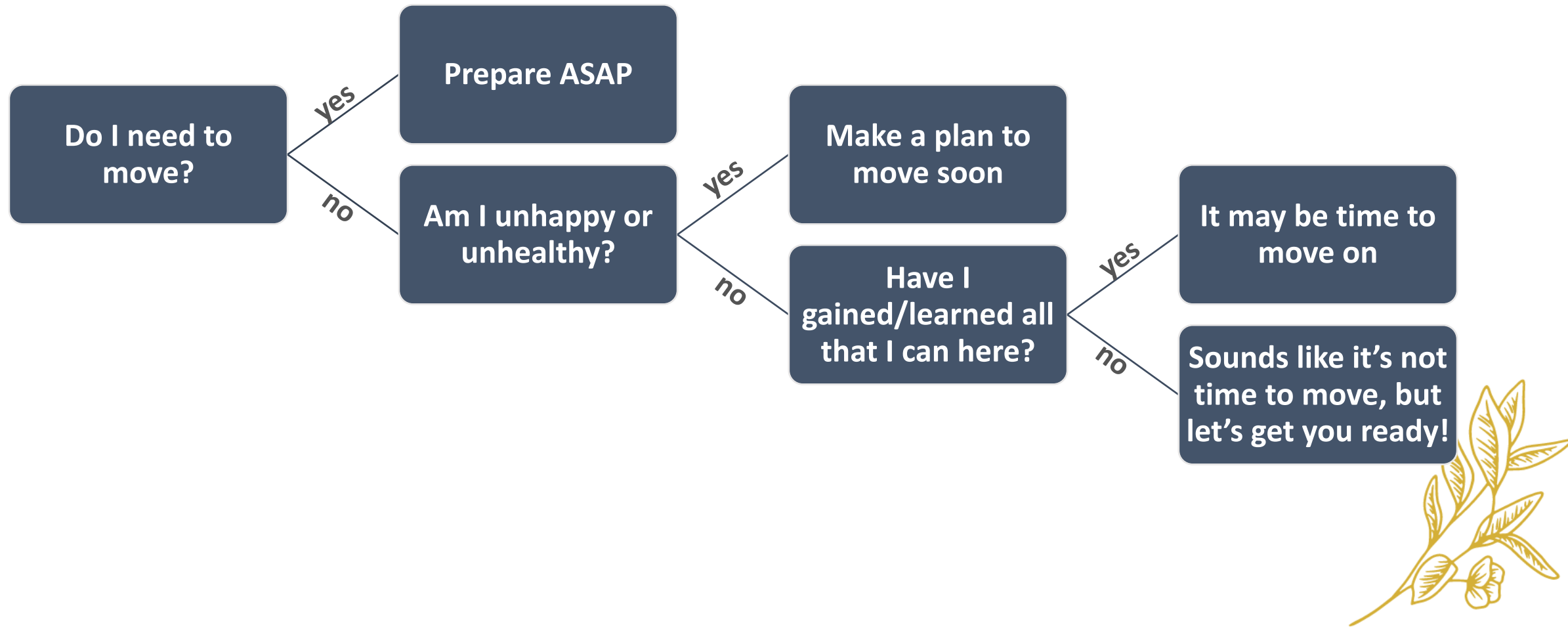
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*Be curious.*  
Myleik Teele



# Assessing Options: When?

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# Assessing Options: Where?

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- The power of an informational interview
  - Learn about aspects of careers that you can't find via Google
  - Get insight from someone on a different path, or a few steps ahead of you
  - A chance to expand your network
  - Further reading:
    - <https://www.fromyourbigsister.com/blog/the-power-of-an-informational-interview>
    - <https://hbr.org/2016/02/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-an-informational-interview>
    - <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-an-informational-interview-can-help-your-career-2058564>



# Assessing Options: How?

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- Leveraging your network

Don't underestimate the way people from your past can guide you towards your future.

Your network isn't just who you know, it's also what you have access to.

The quality of your connection matters more than the quantity of connections you have.

Genuine connections matter more than influential ones.





# Leaving Well

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*I am deliberate and afraid of nothing*

**Audre Lorde**



# Leaving Well

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- **Disclaimer:** IF YOU ARE LEAVING A TOXIC PLACE, YOU HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO MAKE THIS TRANSITION EASY ON THEM



# Leaving Well

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- Story time!
- Identify gaps that need to be filled by your absence
  - Training someone to do things that you currently do
  - Things that are not in your job description but you are responsible for
- Get into contact with colleagues outside of the workplace
- Make sure that you have transferred files, etc. to your own device
- Do not accept things that are not yours to claim





# Starting Strong

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*You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying to do the best you can every day.*

Marian Wright Edelman



# Starting Strong

- Before you start/around day 1: Goal Setting
  - What do I want to learn in this position?
  - What do I want to accomplish or achieve?
  - How long do I want to be in this role?

*Starting Strong*

Let's start this new position with intention. Here are some questions to consider as you create 3-5 goals for your new position. Then, here are some questions to shape an informal 90-day review with your supervisor.

*Questions for Goal Setting*

- How long do I want to stay in this position?
- What skills do I want to learn here?
- How do I want to grow in this position?
- What would I like to accomplish or achieve here?
- How do I want to give back while in this role?
- What will my resume look like when I'm ready to move on?

*Goals for my New Position*



# Starting Strong

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- Your first few weeks: Ask questions and meet people
  - Ask lots of questions, about everything!
  - Learn who are the influential people in your department
  - Take advantage of opportunities to meet people
  - Prioritize rest



# Starting Strong

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- 90 Day Check-in: Questions for a Guided Discussion

## *90-Day Check-in Guided Discussion*

- What are some things that I'm doing really well in this role so far? How am I meeting or exceeding expectations?
- How can I improve in this role? What are some areas that I could grow in?
- Are there any people that I should develop relationships with now that I'm more settled into this position?
- Is there anything you see that could become a problem in the future?
- Now that I've been here for a while, what (else) should I know about this role?
- What are some goals or benchmarks that I should expect to reach by the end of my first year?





# Keeping Track

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*No one bothers to undermine you unless they recognize your brilliance.*

**Cicely Tyson**  
**Just as I am**





# Keeping Track

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- Story time!
- Check in with yourself along the way
  - Helps you see what you've accomplished
  - Gives you a starting place to articulate your contributions
- There are three sections:
  - Presentations
  - Projects
  - Accomplishments

*Brag Sheet*

An important part of moving forward is acknowledging how far you have come. Here, write down what you've achieved, big and small. You can do this quarterly, annually, or at a transition point, like graduation or promotion. This is also a great tool to use during your review, to show both your progress and your impact.

*Presentations*

*Projects*

*Accomplishments*



# Keeping Track

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- Story time!





# Leveling Up

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*It is only when you risk failure that you discover things.*

Lupita Nyong'o



# Leveling Up: Putting All of the Pieces Together

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- Self-reflection
  - What have I learned so far? What do I want to learn?
  - What gets me excited about this new position? Can I do more of this?
  - What do I hate about it? Can I do anything to change this?
- Self Evaluation
  - What do I do really well in my new role?
  - What are some ways that I could grow?
  - Where are there gaps in my skills?



# Leveling Up

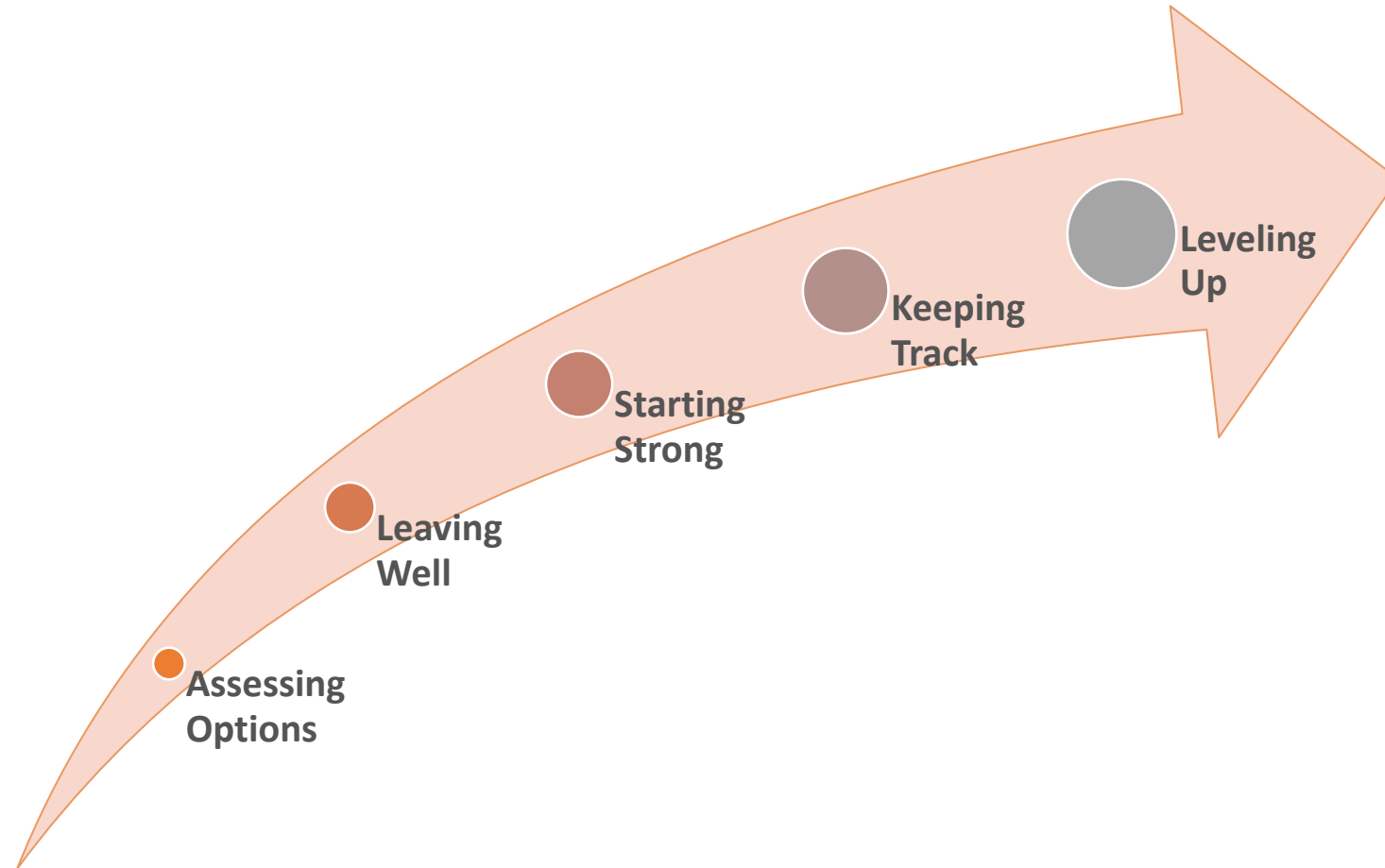
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- Expanding your network
  - In your new role at your institution
  - Professional societies and conferences
  - People doing similar work in other contexts
- Pushing your limits
  - Learning a new skill or technique
  - Taking the lead on a project or team
  - Building new collaborations/networks



# Making a career change, beginning to end

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# A career transition reading list



# Questions?

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**Contact info, Handouts, Links!**

