

# Mapping Your Priorities: Stepping Stones to Success

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The purpose of this activity is to help your organization design its workplan for the Agency Mentorship Program. It will help answer the questions: Where are we going? How will we get there? The map will help your organization recognize the steps required and the actions necessary to progress towards your final destination.

**Outcome:** This is your organization's long-term goal for this priority. It is the place where you would like to be three years from now. Please ensure that this captures what was described in your application workplan.

**Precondition:** This is a condition or situation that must exist or be established before something can occur. Preconditions are steps or short, medium and long term goals/objectives that must be achieved before you can achieve your outcome.

**Intervention:** This is the activity your organization will engage in so you can move from achieve the next precondition in your theory of change.

**Indicator:** An indicator demonstrates the condition of something; it lets your organization know it has achieved (or not achieved) its preconditions and outcome. Each precondition should have a number of indicators.

**Target:** This refers to the targets that your organization set for each indicator.

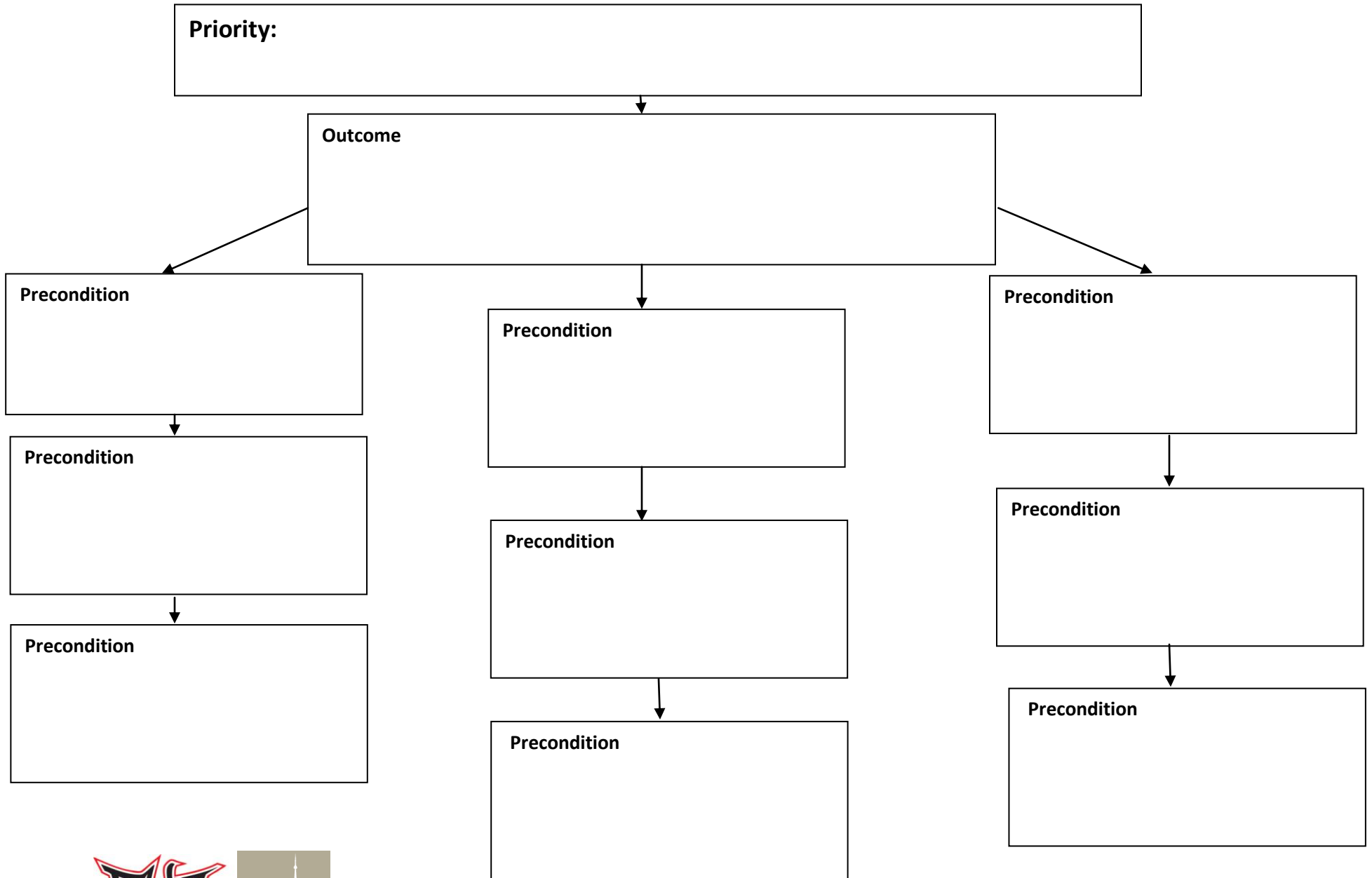
## **Exercise A:**

1. Please select one priority or program to complete the following activity and enter it in the priority box found at the top of the **model**
2. Decide upon your desired long-term outcome, for the priority.
3. Now start working backwards, planning the preconditions that need to be achieved before you can achieve your outcome. Work backwards until you are at a logical starting point, ie. to something that your organization has already achieved or will achieve in the near future.



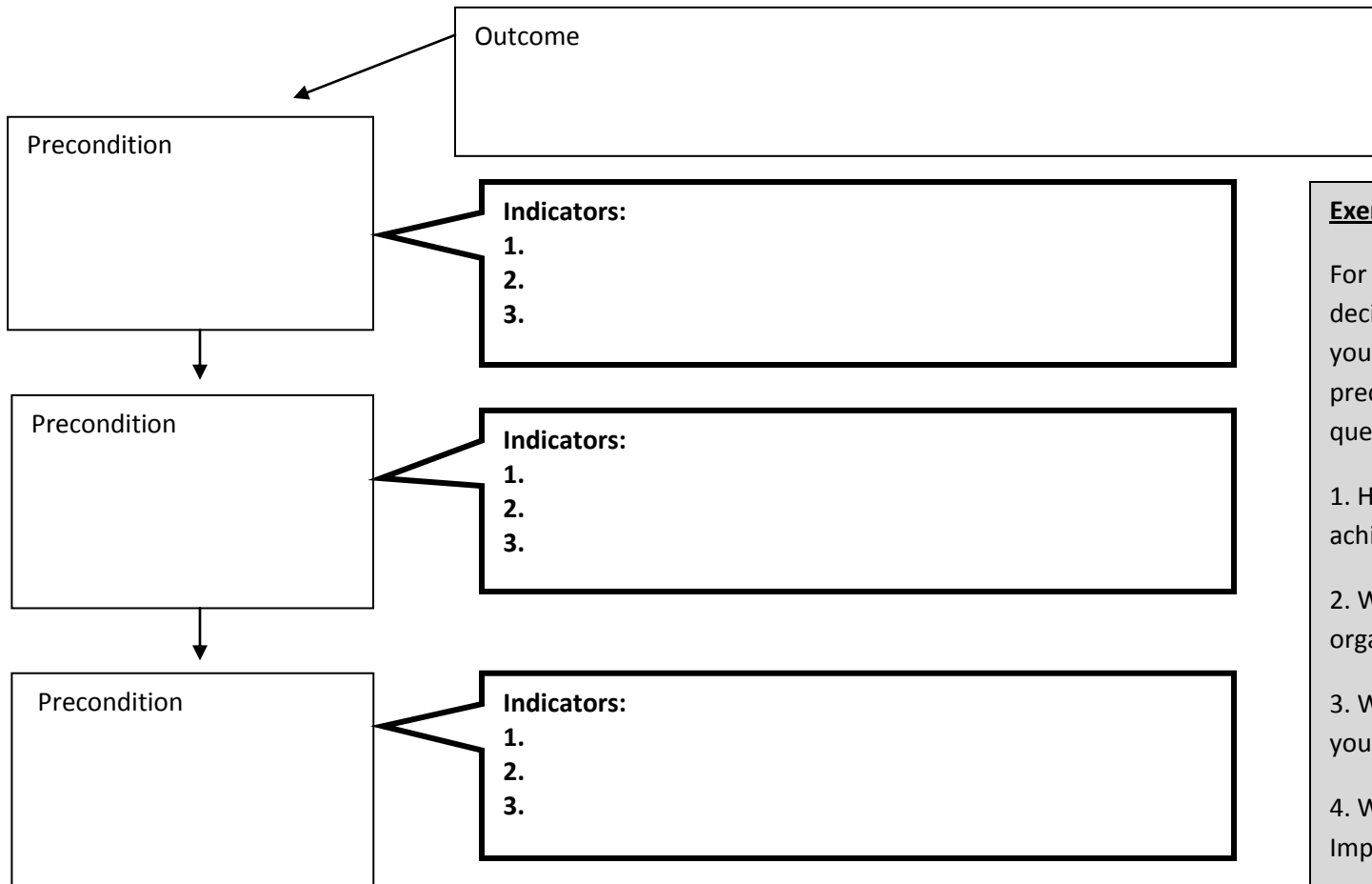
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You've mapped out your progression towards your outcome, but how do you know your organization is on the right path?



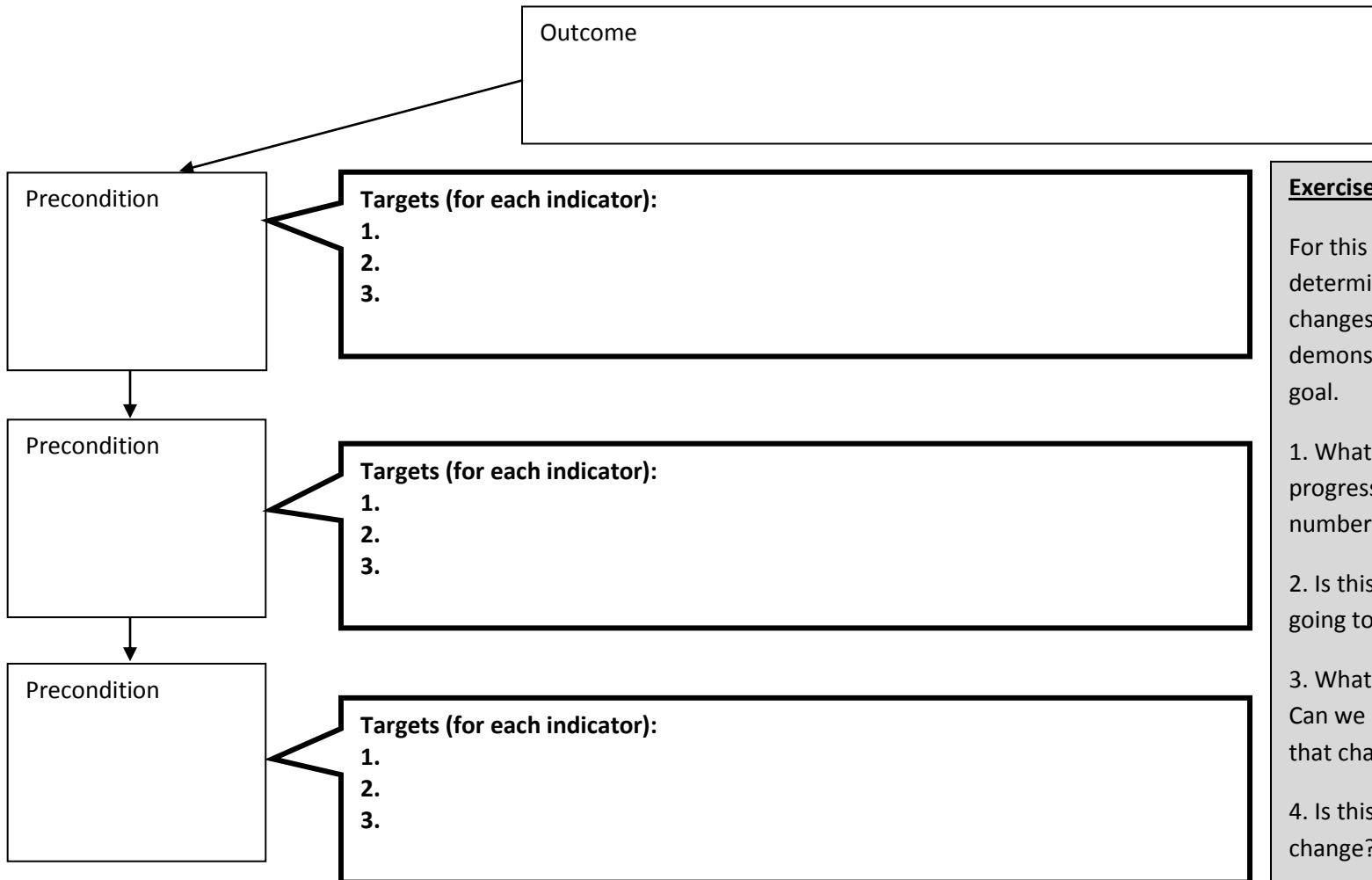
## **Exercise B:**

For this exercise, your organization has to decide what items are going indicate that your organization has achieved a precondition. Try answering the following questions:

1. How will you know that you have achieved a particular goal?
2. What changes will you see in your organization/target population?
3. What changes will you see in relation to your priority/program progress?
4. What (new) structures will be present? Improved? Changed?

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For each indicator, you should have a target—something that you are aiming to achieve within your organization, your program or the intended population.



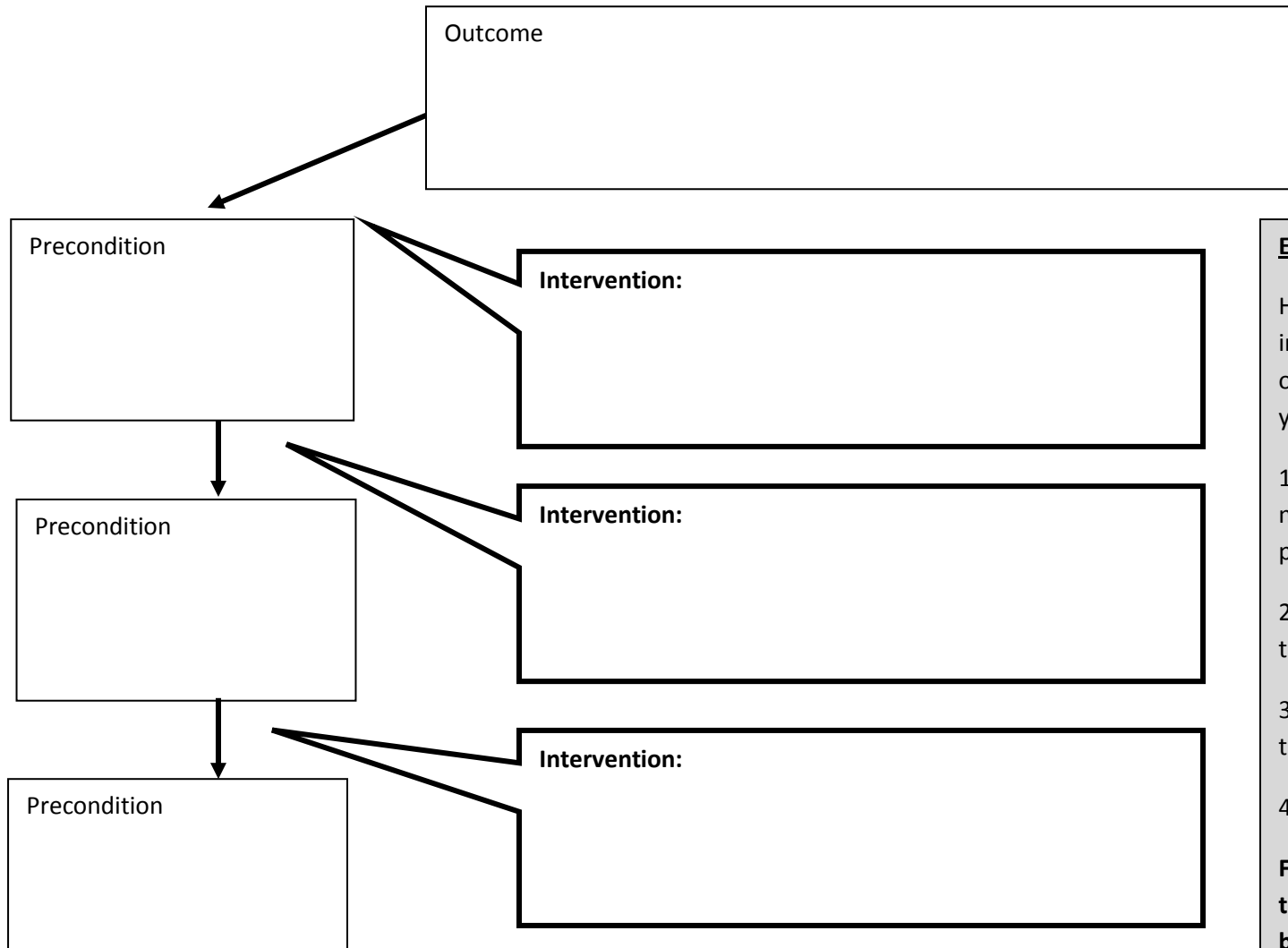
## Exercise C:

For this exercise, your organization has to determine targets—the measurable changes shown by each indicator to demonstrate that you have achieved your goal.

1. What targets will demonstrate change or progress for each indicator? (Usually a number)
2. Is this target measurable? How are we going to measure it?
3. What change do we hope to achieve? Can we set a numerical target to represent that change?
4. Is this a reasonable expectation of change?

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Your organization must also determine the activities that will bring you from one precondition to the next or from a precondition to your outcome.



**Exercise D:**

Here we want to look at the activities, or interventions, that will propel your organization along in its journey. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What activities does our organization need to engage in to move us from one precondition to the next?
2. How often do we have to engage in these activities and for how long?
3. What kind of supports will we need for these activities?
4. Who can we go to for these supports?

**For each arrow, please fill in the activities that your organization plans to use to bring you from one destination to the next.**



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You have planned the details of your model, but there are still a few other things to consider...

Whenever you plan a program, you make certain **assumptions** about how things will happen. **Assumptions** explain how your **activities** will get you to your **outcome**, or how one **precondition** will bring you to another.

**Assumptions** are not necessarily a bad thing. We all make them. But it's good practice to list them as you plan your program to keep track of the **assumptions** you are making. When you finish, take a look at your list. Bring it to your Board or your staff or your steering committee. Analyse your **assumptions** and discuss them to ensure your model still makes sense.

## ASSUMPTIONS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**\*\*There is no limit to the number of assumptions you might made. It could be 1; it could be 15.\*\***

### Exercise E:

When you are developing your list of assumptions, ask the following questions:

1. Why do we think a particular activity will lead us to the following precondition?
2. Why did we order these preconditions the way we did?
3. Are there any research or best practices that prove that what we *think* will happen will *actually* happen?
4. Do any of our assumptions show that our program may not achieve its intended outcome?

**If you have made assumptions along the way that put your program in jeopardy, consider changing your preconditions or your activities!**

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The final step in the theory of change model is to write a narrative about your program or capacity-building activity.

Your story shouldn't be too long, or people won't read the whole thing. It should include your **preconditions**, your **activities**, the **assumptions** you're making about your program, and your **outcome**. It should be detailed enough that people who are not familiar with your work understand where you're going, how you'll get there and why you've chosen this particular path. If you read the **story** and it doesn't make much sense, you'll quickly realize where the weaknesses are in your plan.

## **Exercise E:**

When you are writing your story, consider the following:

1. Where am I going? Does the order of destinations make sense?
2. Did I select the most efficient and effective modes of transportation?
3. Did I forget to take anything important into account?
4. What outside factors could affect my journey?
5. How can I make sure that these outside factors don't stop me from getting to my destinations?
6. Who can I ask or where can I go for help?