

# What is Disability?



**REAL**  
REAL Passenger REAL Person

  
Department  
for Transport

**What do you think ‘disability’ is?**  
Who do you first think of when you hear  
**‘disabled person’?**

# Thinking about Disabling Barriers

A useful way to consider disability from a professional perspective is to ask:

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‘What barriers do environments, policies or attitudes present to people that relate to common human experiences of ill health or impairment?’

Continued

‘What can be done to make services inclusive?’



## Continued

‘What additional support could help people facing the biggest barriers to use transport services in the most dignified, safe and easy way possible?’

# Equality Act 2010 - Definition of Disability

Anyone with ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities’ has rights not to experience discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

## Continued

‘Substantial’ means more than minor or trivial.

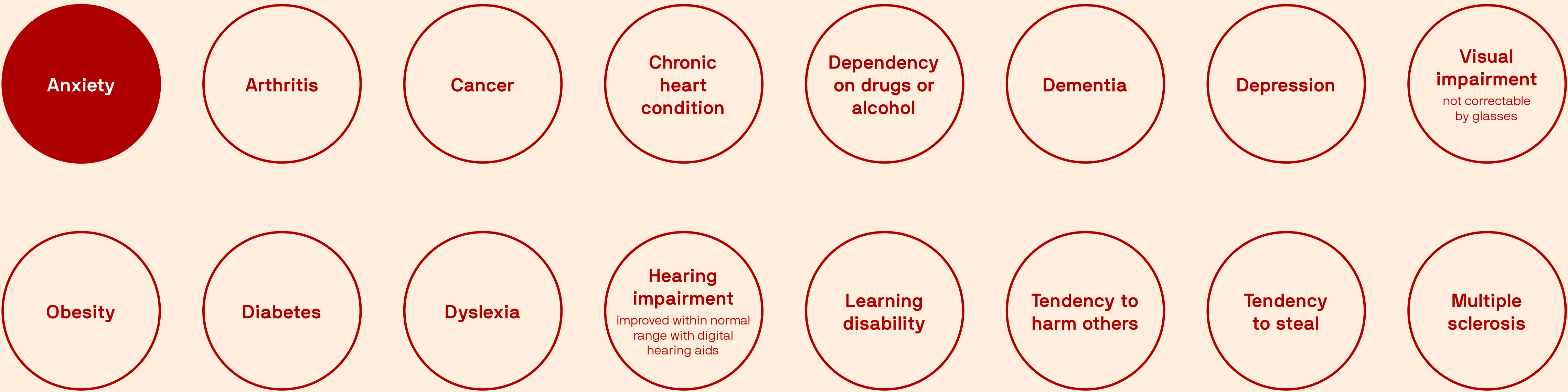
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‘Long-term’ means it has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months. Terminal conditions are automatically covered, as are many fluctuating conditions, where symptoms may vary but are likely to recur.

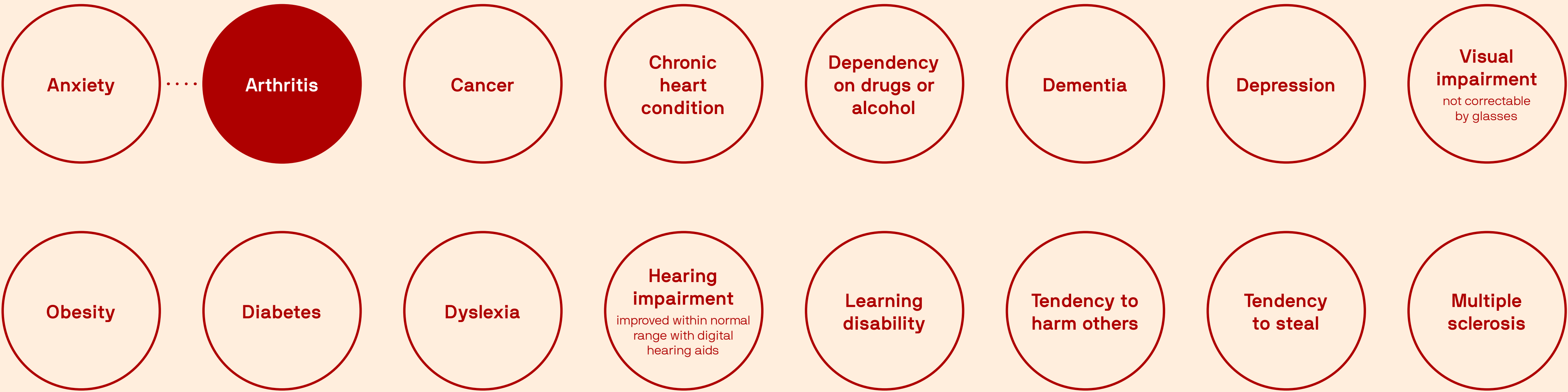
**What kinds of experiences might be covered  
by the Equality Act 2010 definition?**



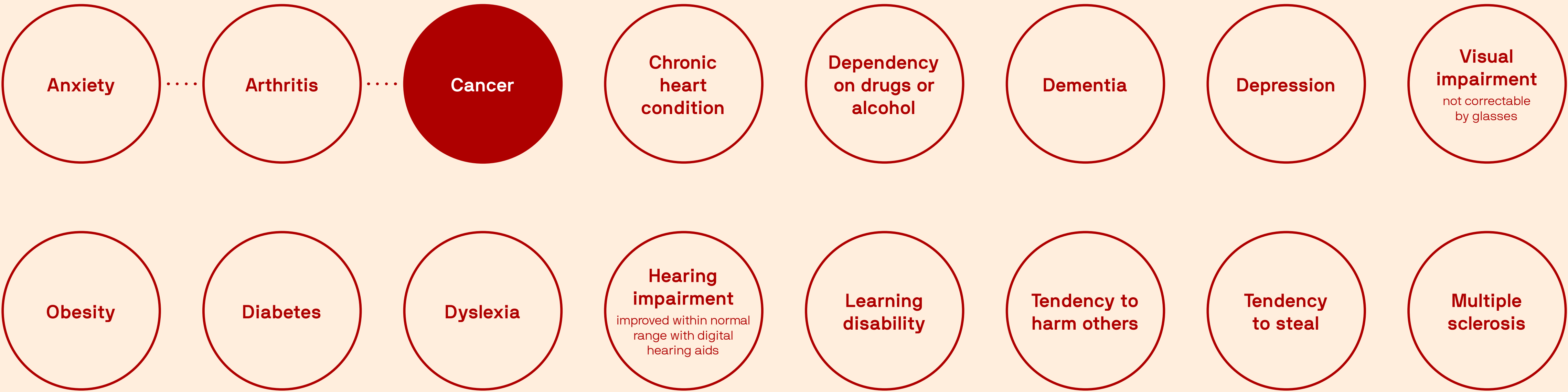
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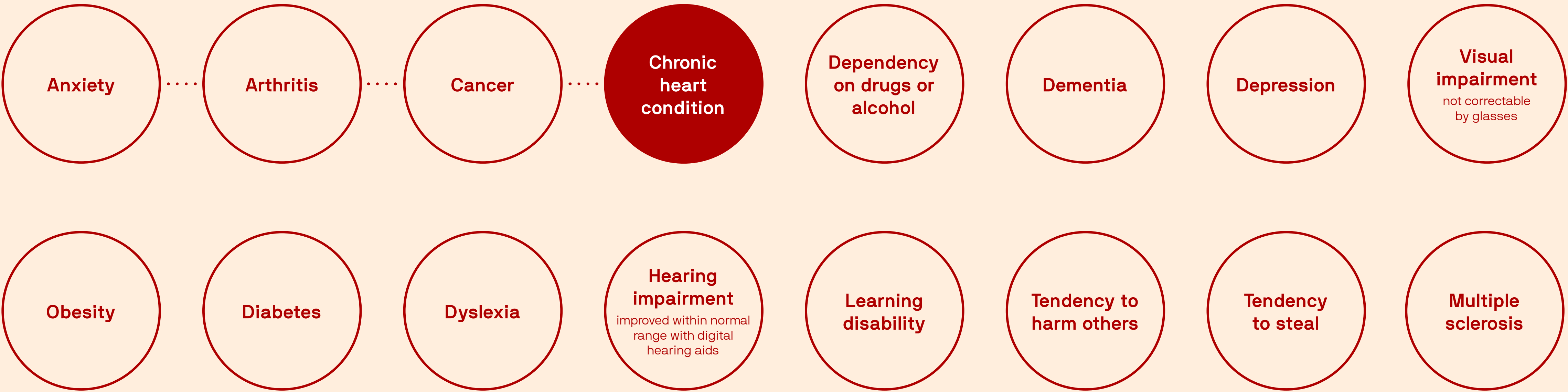
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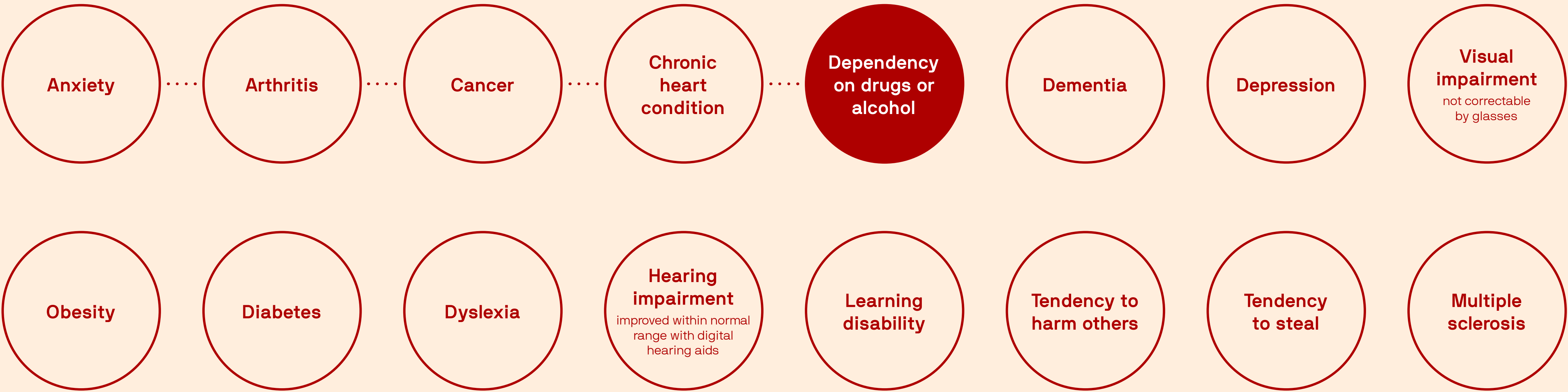
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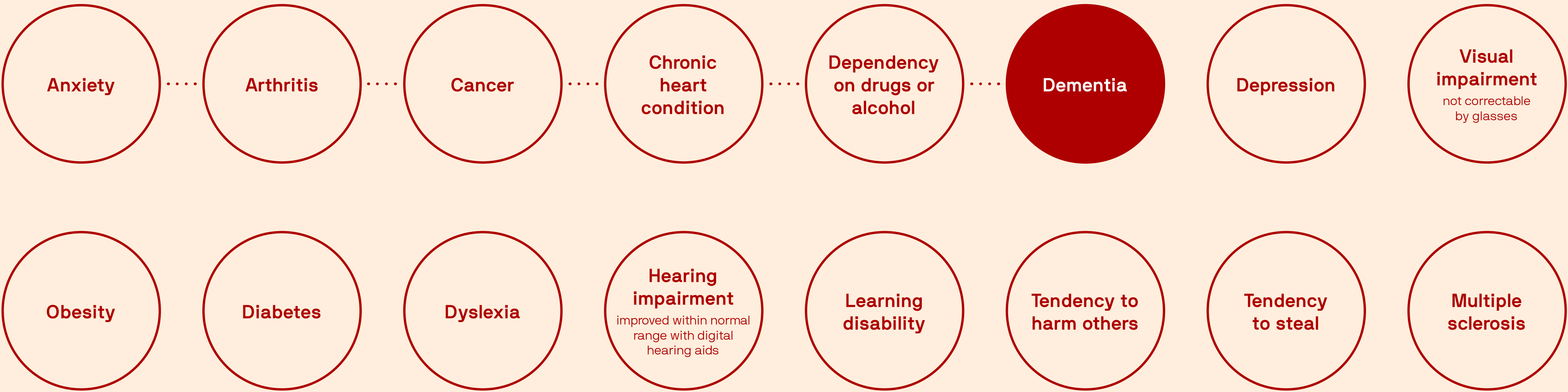
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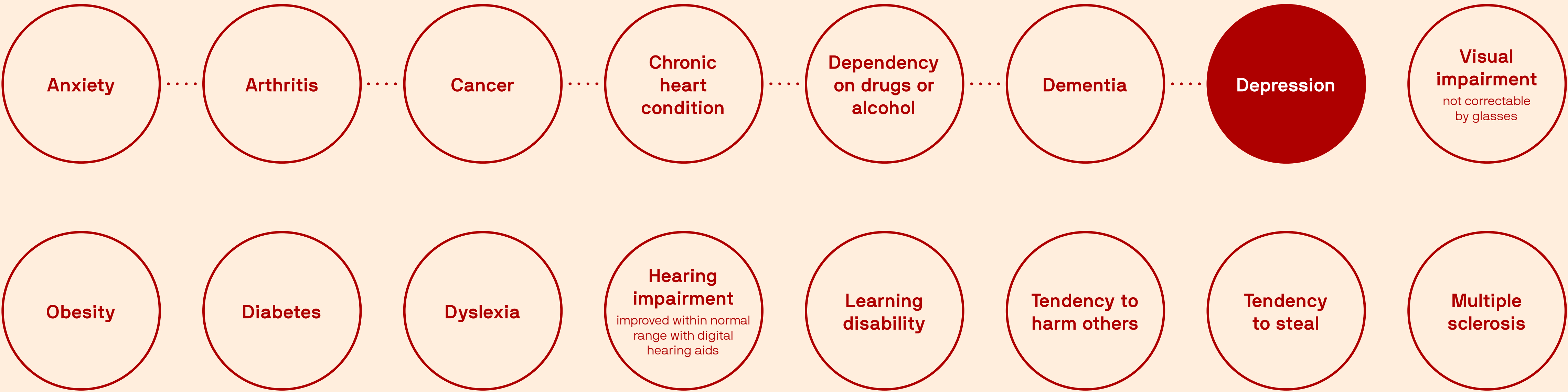
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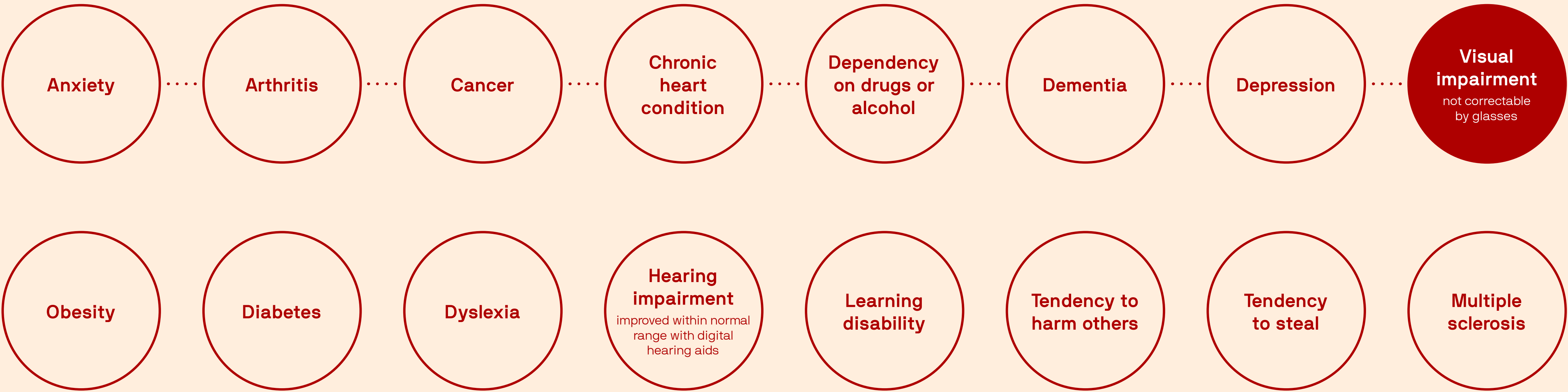


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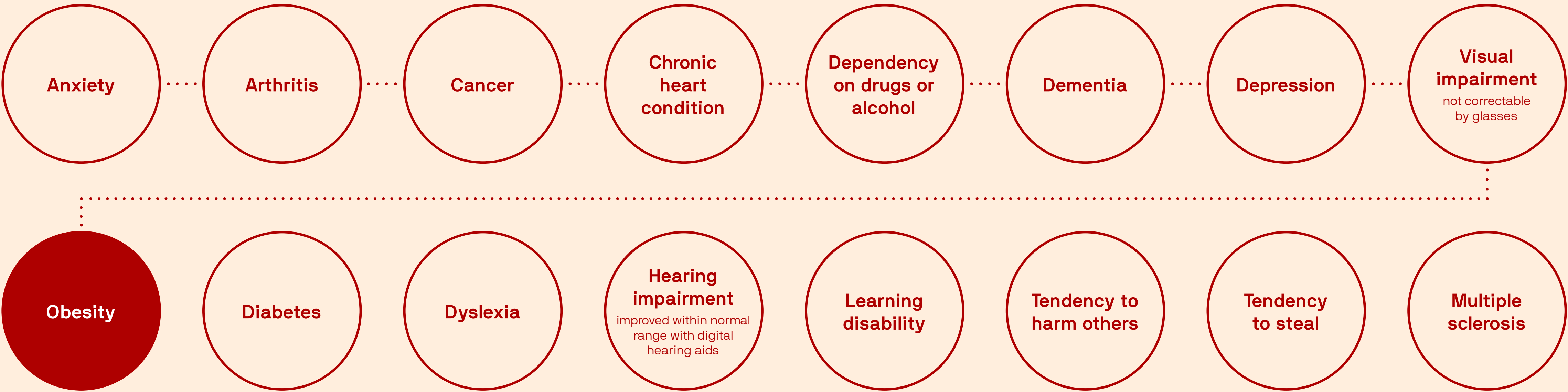


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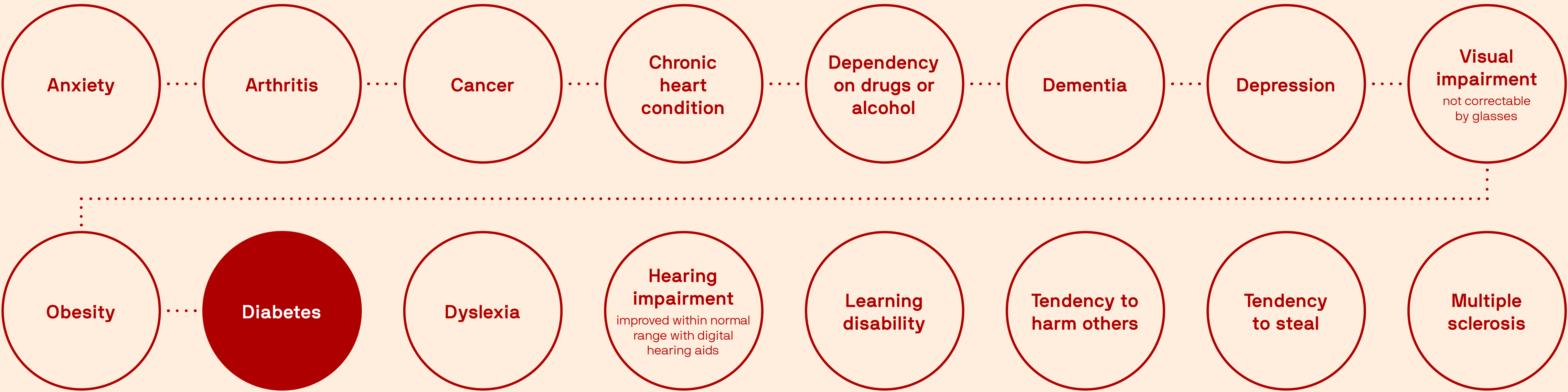




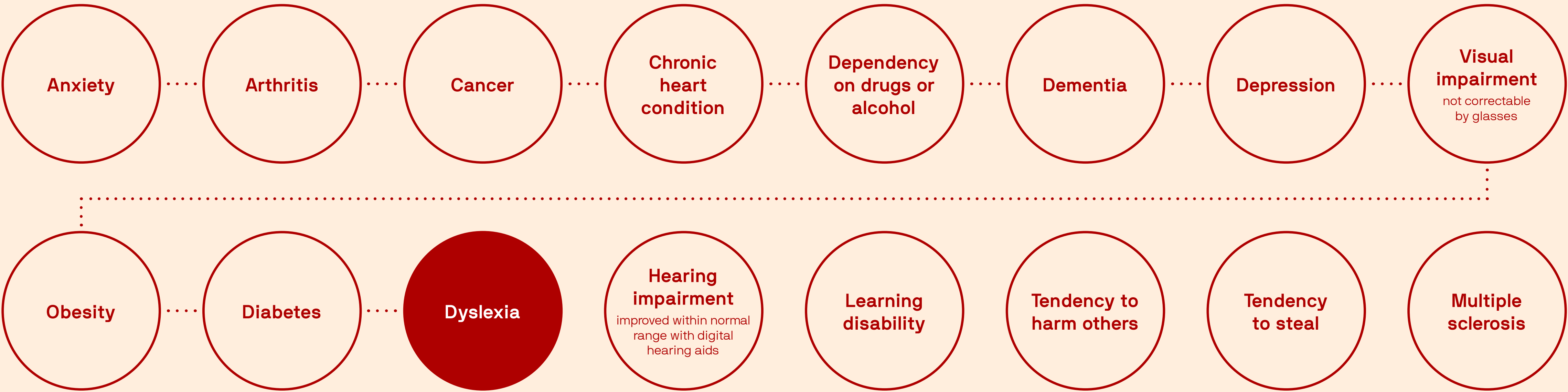
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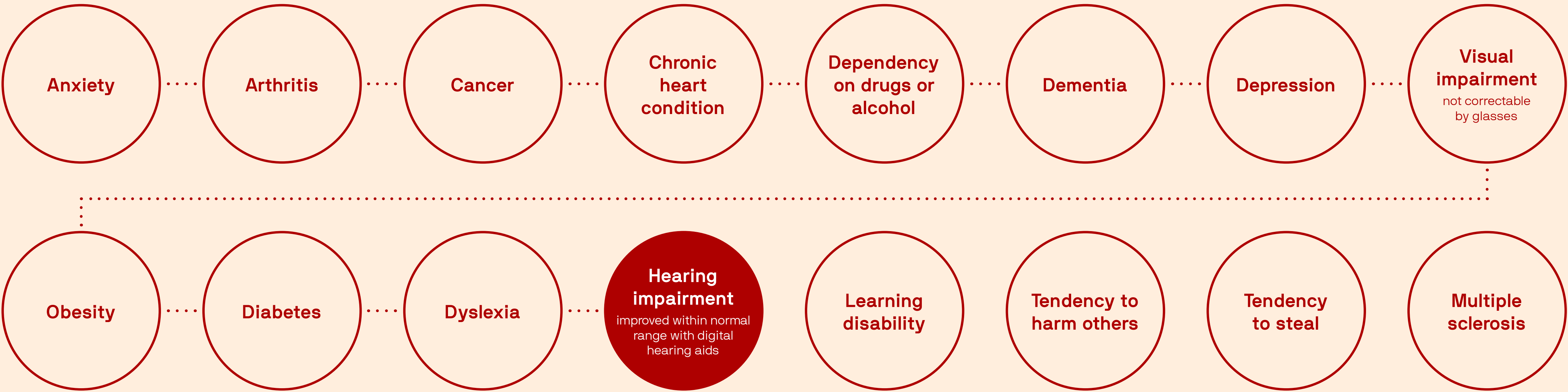
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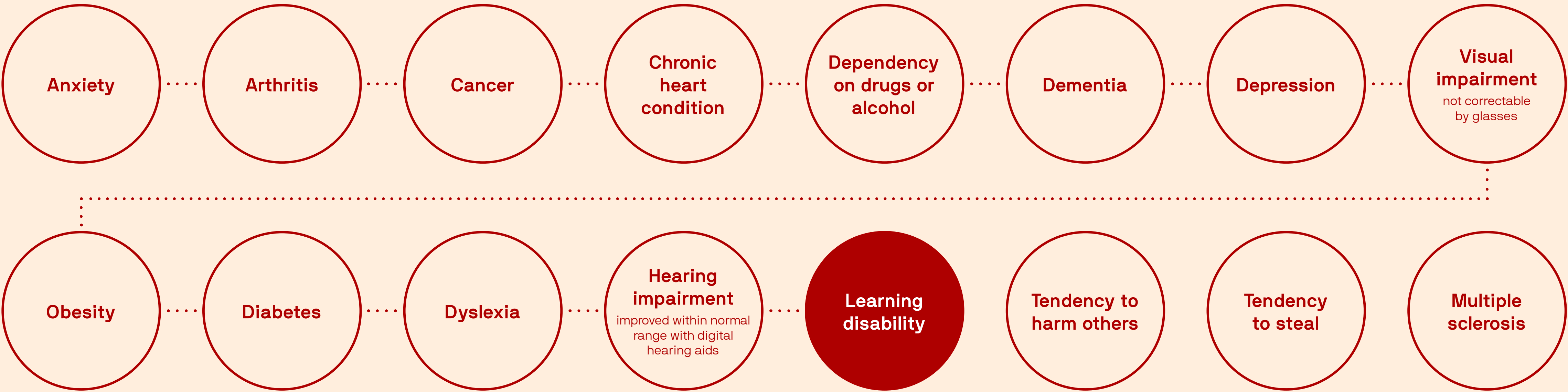
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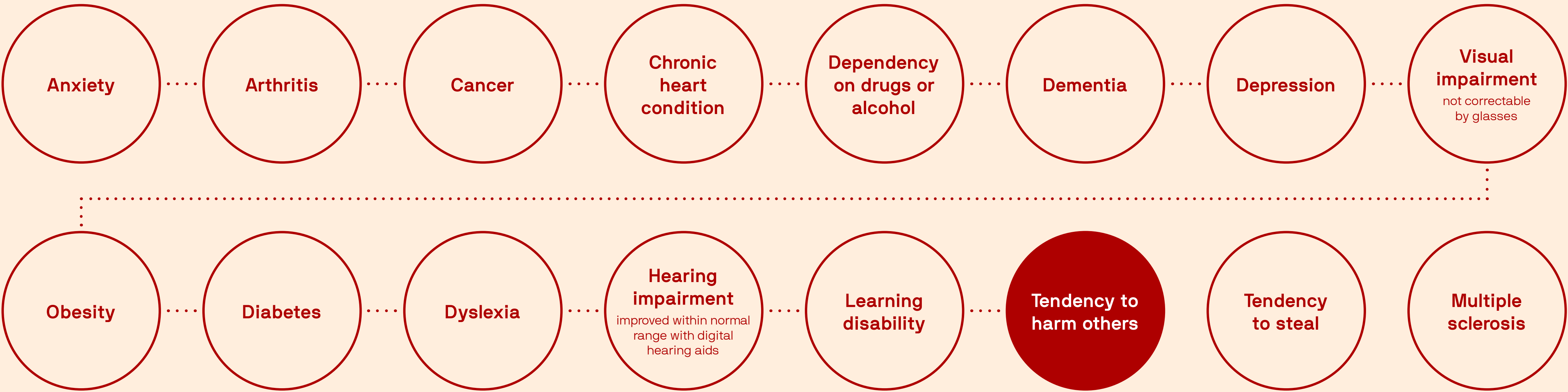
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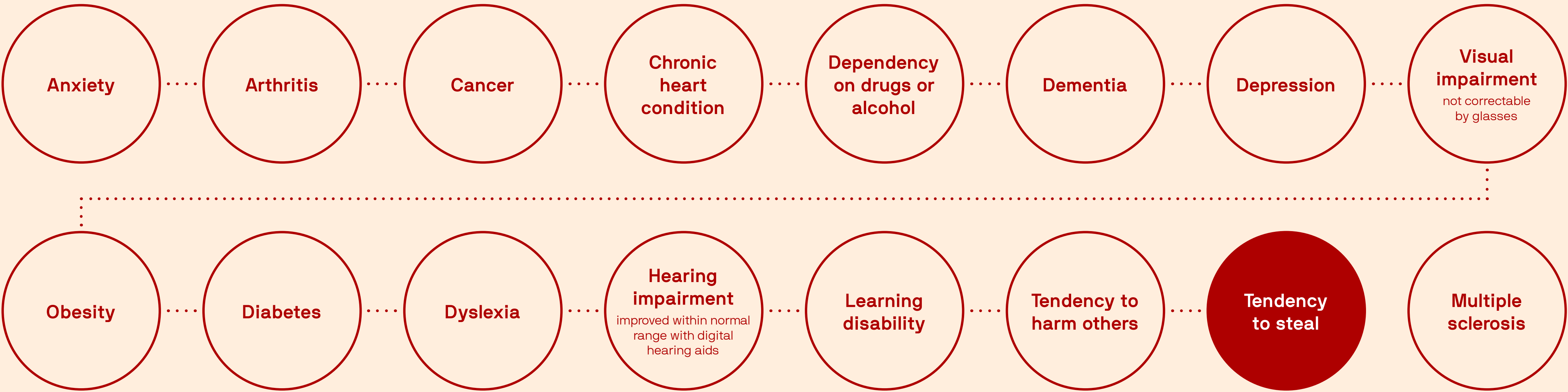


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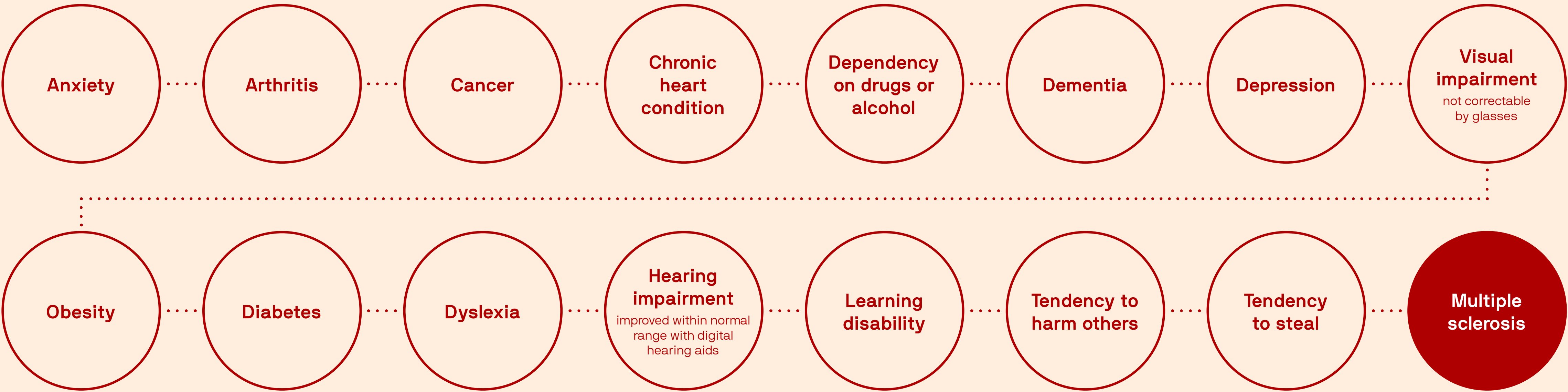




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# Q and A How common is living with an impairment?

There are nearly 67 million people in the UK

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1. **How many** are estimated by the Government to have rights under the Equality Act 2010 as 'disabled people'?

**Q and A** How common is living  
with an impairment?

There are nearly 67 million people in the UK

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**2. How many** use a wheelchair?

# Q and A How common is living with an impairment?

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**3.** What **percentage** over the age of 50 and over the age of 70 experience significant hearing loss?

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## 4. How many have arthritis?

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**5. How many** live with sight loss and how many are registered as blind or partially sighted?

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**6. How many** live with heart and  
circulatory diseases?

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**7. How many** have autism spectrum conditions?

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**8. How many** have learning disabilities?



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**9. How many** have dementia?

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**10.** Responding to a regular Department of Health survey (England only), **what proportion** ('one in . . .') say that they have experienced at least one of a list of common mental health symptoms in the past week?

# Key Messages about Disability

There are 14 million people in the UK who can be defined as ‘disabled’, and who are likely to encounter transport barriers unless their rights and needs are respected.

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Their reasons for being considered ‘disabled’ in the terms of the Equality Act 2010 are varied.

# Key Messages about Disability

Many disabilities are invisible, and the impact (for example of pain, fatigue, anxiety, confusion) can vary from day to day depending on the environment, the way services are provided and the attitudes of staff and other passengers.

# Key Messages about Disability

We might expect to 'see' that someone is disabled. But that isn't always the case. We might not spot that someone has limited sight or hearing. We might not know that someone experiences anxiety as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder.

# Key Messages about Disability

People legally defined as ‘disabled’ have a right to **reasonable adjustments** to how services are provided where they would otherwise face a substantial barrier to accessing the service.

# Key Messages about Disability

Any of us can become disabled. We all need to be able to travel – to work, to see friends and family or for leisure. We need services that work for everyone. ‘Many of us experience pain, anxiety, confusion some or all of the time. It may not always be obvious, but these life experiences can be made worse by access barriers or if staff don’t know how to respond to and support people.’

# Key Messages about Disability

A strategic approach to compliance offers legal, business and reputational benefits. Companies and their staff need to anticipate needs, and to be proactive and ready to support disabled passengers, so that they feel comfortable, safe and supported whenever they travel with you. **Remember, real passenger, real person.**



# Disability and Inclusion

Some 'disabled people' see the barriers – stairs, poor lighting, poor communications, negative attitudes – **as the disability** and reject the idea that they are different from anyone else.

# Disability and Inclusion

This emphasis on human diversity and normal human experiences, including in relation to ageing, highlights **the importance of ensuring that services, employment and society work for everyone** – rather than seeing ‘disabled people’ as ‘abnormal’ and a separate group that is difficult or expensive to accommodate.

# Groups and Individuals

Whatever a particular person's view of what 'disability' is, and whether or not they are 'disabled' themselves or 'disabled by society', it's important to **respect** their perspective, **understand** that travel can bring particular barriers and frustrations, and **focus** on what you can do to provide an **inclusive and supported journey**.

# Groups and Individuals

Remember that **every traveller is different.**  
The more you know about how to provide an  
inclusive service the better.

After that, remember . . .

REAL

Respect

REAL

Empathise

REAL

Ask

REAL

Listen

REAL Passenger REAL Person



Department  
for Transport