

# Recognizing Mental Health Concerns Co-occurring With DVSA

Presentation by: MeLisa D. Dennis

Program Director for BRIDGES (Atlanta, GA)



# Objectives:

- ✓ Recognize common co-occurring mental health concerns with DVSA
- ✓ Common mental health concerns among those committing DVSA
- ✓ Common mental health concerns among survivors
- ✓ De-escalation strategies
- ✓ Recognize and de-stigmatize

# Mental Health Concerns Co-occurring with DVSA

Anxiety

Depression

Sleep & eating concerns

Post-traumatic stress (PTSD)

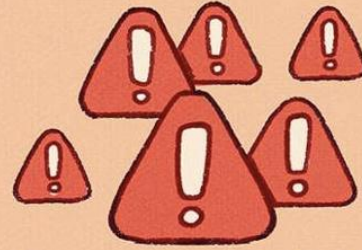
Alcohol & drug abuse

Prescription misuse

Suicidal behavior/attempts

# Anxiety

- Excessive and persistent worry and fear
  - Interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control
- Panic attacks
- Generalized anxiety



Frequent worry that interferes with daily life



Withdrawal from social life



Irrational fear and avoidance of a harmless object, place, or situation



Out-of-the-blue panic attacks



Fixation on fear of next panic attack



Recurring nightmares, flashbacks, or numbing of past trauma

# Depression

Persistent sadness or feeling of despair



Difficulty falling asleep or sleeping excessively



Weight and appetite changes



Difficulty concentration or having trouble thinking



Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed



Feeling tired



Frequent thoughts of death and suicide



Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt



# Sleep Issues

- Abnormal sleep patterns
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Fatigue and difficulty concentrating
- Often confused with the times of the day



# Eating Issues

- Lack of appetite or interest in food
- Eating only small amounts followed by excessive exercise
- Overeating
- Overeating followed by guilt then eliminating
- Digestive system issues



# Post-Traumatic Stress

→ Mental health issue triggered by a terrifying event either experiencing it or witnessing it.



## **Intrusion**

Can include intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, distressing dreams



## **Avoidance**

Avoiding reminders of the traumatic event



## **Alterations in cognition and mood**

Can include issues with remembering, negative thoughts, intense emotions, distorted thoughts and beliefs, etc.



## **Changes in arousal and reactivity**

Potential irritability, recklessness, being overly watchful/vigilant, easily startled, problems concentrating and sleeping



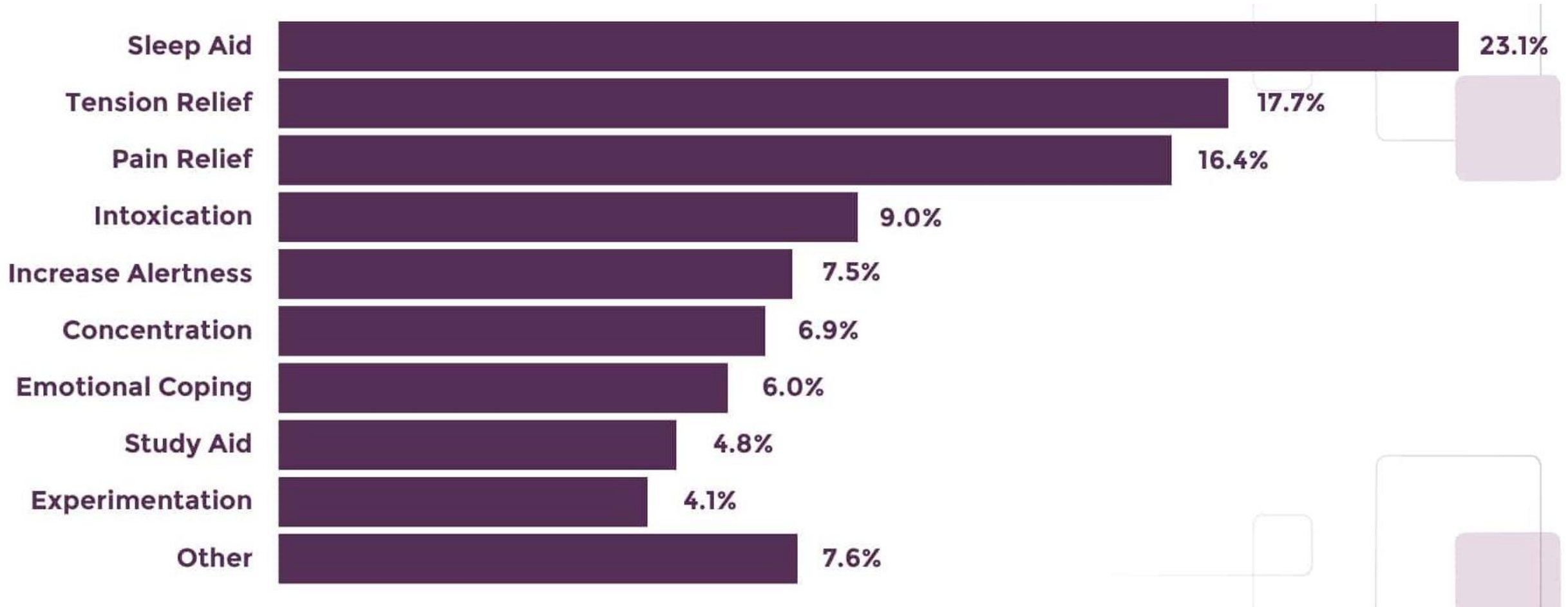
# Substance Abuse

- Cravings to use the substance
- Wanting to cut down or stop but not managing to
- Taking the substance in larger amounts or for longer than you're meant to
- Neglecting other parts of your life because of substance use
- Continuing to use, even when it causes problems in relationships
- Using substances even when it puts you in danger

## COMMON FORMS OF SUBSTANCE USE COERCION

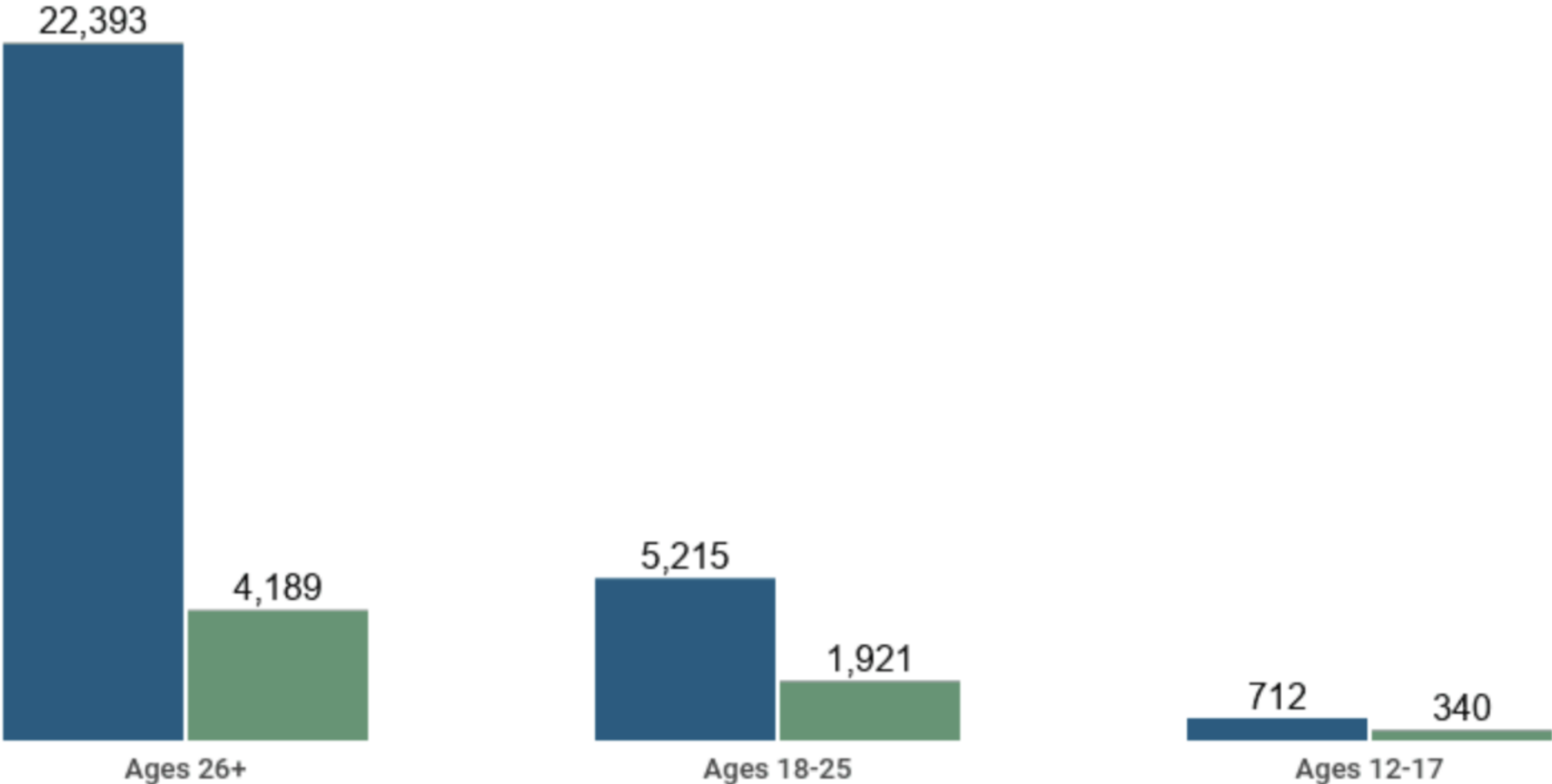
- **Deliberately introducing a partner to substances**
- **Forcing or coercing them to use**
- **Interfering with their access to treatment**
- **Sabotaging their recovery efforts**
- **Leveraging the stigma associated with substance use to discredit them with sources of safety and support**

# Reasons for Prescription Drug Misuse



The use of a prescription medicine in a way not intended by the prescriber is drug misuse.

# Statistics of Alcohol Abuse



● Diagnosed with AUD in 2020 ● Diagnosed with AUD and an Illicit Drug Addiction

National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2020 National Survey of Drug Use and Health

# Suicidal Behaviors

The act of harming oneself intended to end one's life.

**Suicidal ideation:** Thoughts about and plans and preparatory acts for suicide.

**Attempted suicide:** An act of self-harm that is intended to result in death but does not. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injury.

**Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI):** An act of self-harm that is not intended to result in death. For example, inflicting scratches or cuts on the arms or burning oneself with a cigarette.

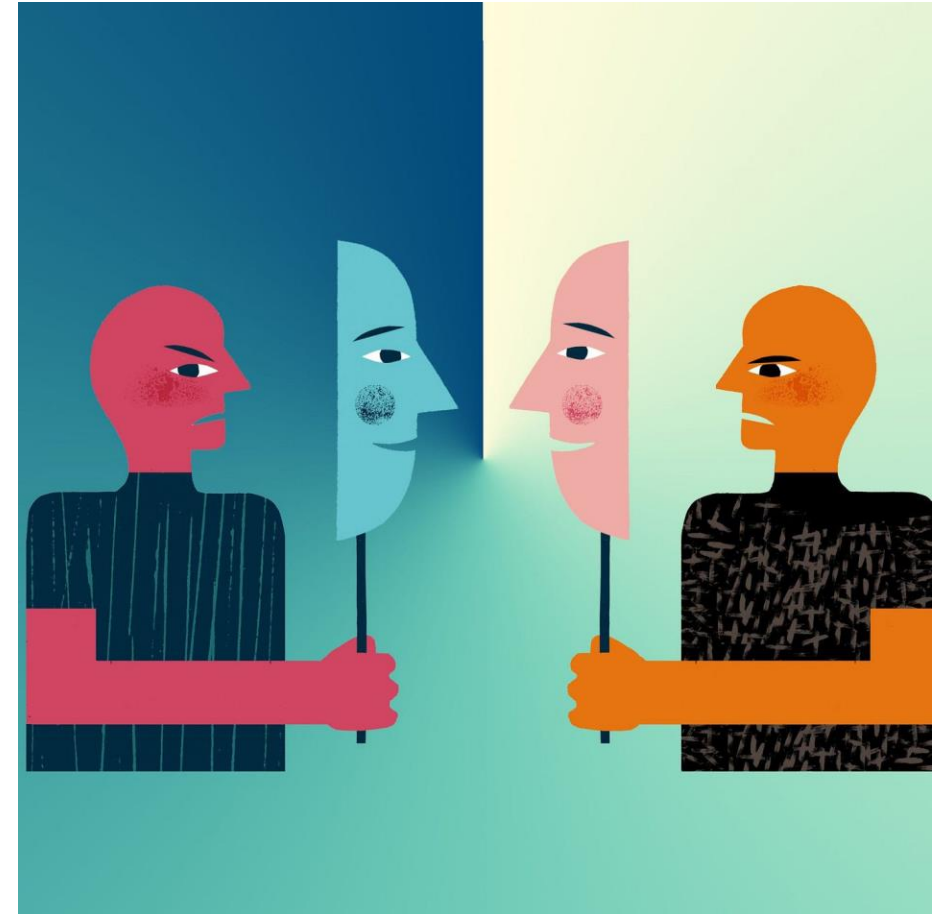
**Completed suicide:** An intentional act of self-harm that results in death.



Common Mental Health Concerns Among Those Who  
Commit Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault

# Antisocial Behaviors

- Pattern of disregard for others
- Deceitfulness
- Lack of empathy
- Aggressive behaviors
- Violate boundaries
- Little or no remorse
- Manipulate others



# Borderline Behaviors



FEAR OF  
ABANDONMENT



UNSTABLE  
RELATIONSHIPS



UNSTABLE SENSE  
OF IDENTITY



IMPULSIVITY



SELF DESTRUCTIVE  
BEHAVIOR



SELF HARM



EXTREME MOOD  
SWINGS



FEELINGS OF  
EMPTINESS



EXPLOSIVE ANGER



PARANOIA OR  
PSYCHOSIS

# Schizophrenia Behaviors

→ Affects a person's ability to think, feel, and behave clearly.

## POSITIVE SYMPTOMS

Hallucinations

Delusions

Disorganized thoughts and speech

Changes in behavior

Abnormal patterns of movement

## NEGATIVE SYMPTOMS

Lack of emotion

Social withdrawal

Struggling with personal care

Lack of motivation, ambition, and commitment



# Bipolar Behaviors

Causes unusual shifts in a person's mood, energy, activity levels, and concentration. These shifts can make it difficult to carry out day-to-day tasks.

## SYMPTOMS OF MANIA



poor appetite,  
weight loss



poor concentration,  
easily distracted



sleeping little



racing speech,  
impulsiveness



heightened sense  
of self-importance



jumping from one  
idea to another

## SYMPTOMS DEPRESSION



feelings of sadness  
or hopelessness



loss of interest in  
pleasurable activities



negative thoughts  
about the future



loss of energy



insomnia or sleeping  
too much



talk of suicide  
or death

# Narcissistic Behaviors

- ✓ Have an unreasonably high sense of self-importance and require constant, excessive admiration.
- ✓ Feel that they deserve privileges and special treatment.
- ✓ Expect to be recognized as superior even without achievements.
- ✓ Be preoccupied with fantasies about success, power, brilliance, beauty or the perfect mate.
- ✓ Have difficulty managing their emotions and behavior.
- ✓ Experience major problems dealing with stress and adapting to change.
- ✓ Have secret feelings of insecurity, shame, humiliation and fear of being exposed as a failure.



Common Mental Health Concerns Among  
Survivors



Reframing

# Common Mental Health Concerns of Survivors

→ The same as those who commit domestic violence/sexual assault

**Strategies**

The image features a solid blue background. In the center, the word "Strategies" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the text, there is a thick orange arrow pointing horizontally to the right. From the top right corner of the frame, a thick orange arrow points vertically downwards. The two arrows meet at a right angle, suggesting a flow or relationship between the text and the directions indicated.

# De-Escalation Strategies

- Distance
- Display calmness
- Relaxed Body/ Posture
- Active Listening
- Setting Boundaries/Limits
- Respectful Communication
- Paraphrasing/Summarizing
- Asking Clarifying Questions
- Validate/Accept Emotions
- Using Positive Statements
- Explain Actions
- Explain Intentions

# Trauma Informed Care Principles

01

Safe



02

Trust & Transparency



03

Peer Support



04

Collaborative



05

Empowering



06

Humble & Responsive





# Destigmatizing Mental Health

Educate yourself and  
your children about  
mental health

Share real-life  
examples of people  
with mental health  
disorders

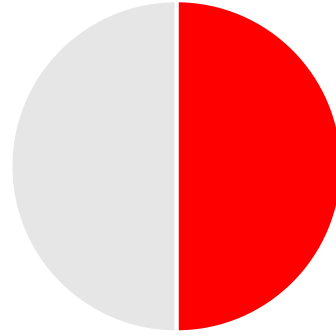
Explain mental health struggles have a range of  
symptoms

Listen to and support  
others with mental  
health concerns

Share stories of  
overcoming mental  
health struggles

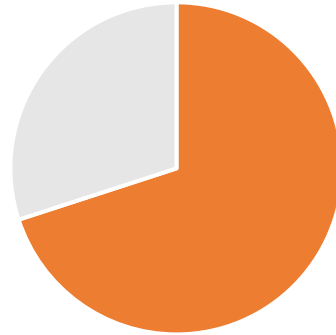
# Destigmatizing Suicide

→ Normalizing mental health treatment and combating myths about suicide are arguably the most important actions we can take to destigmatize suicide.



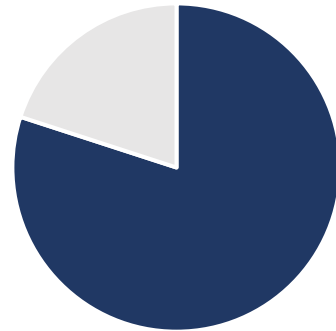
## Depression

50% of those who commit suicide have experienced depression



## Anxiety

70% of those with a former suicide attempt have some type of anxiety disorder



## Borderline Personality Disorder

80% of those diagnosed have at least one suicide attempt

# Destigmatizing Substance Use

Instead of:

- Addict/Junkie
- Alcoholic/Drunk
- Drug Habit
- Abuse
- Clean
- Former Addict

Say:

- Person with substance use disorder
- Person with alcohol use disorder
- Substance use disorder or addiction
- Use, Misuse, or Use other than prescribed
- Testing Negative, in Recovery
- Person in Recovery

**Questions?**

The image features a solid blue background. In the center, the word "Questions?" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Surrounding the text is a thick orange L-shaped line that starts as a horizontal line pointing to the right, then turns 90 degrees downward to end in a vertical line pointing down. The ends of these lines are shaped like arrowheads.