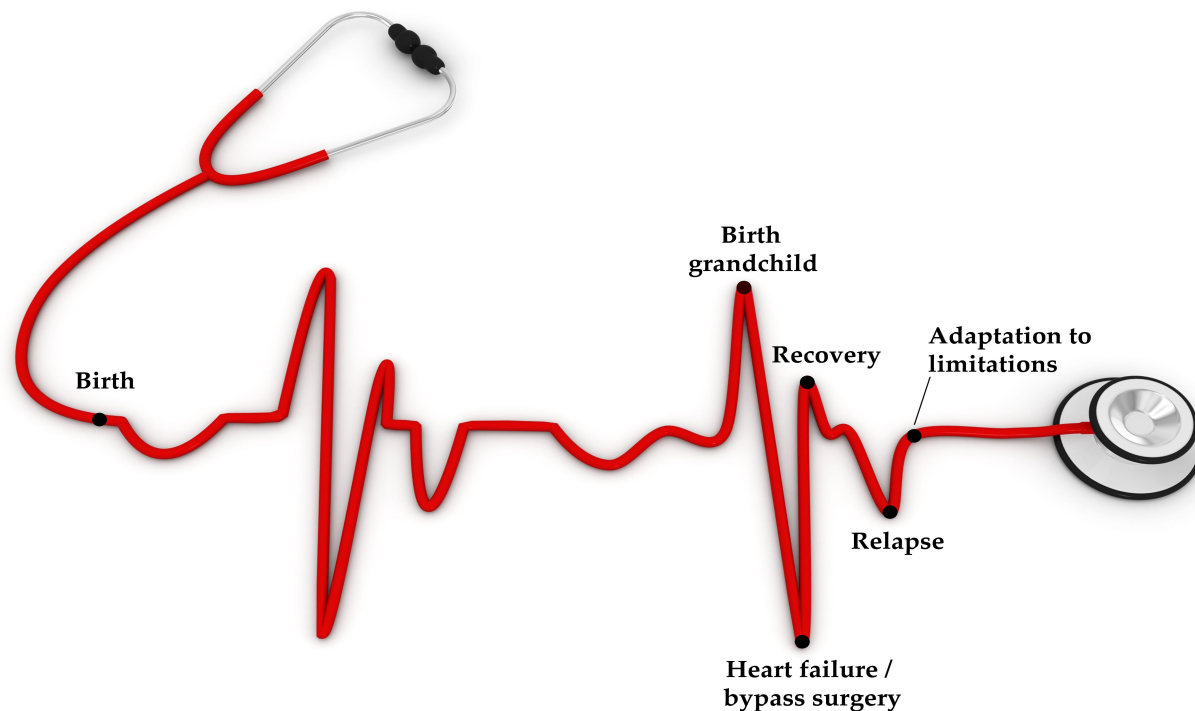


Towards a Narrative Understanding of Quality of Life: Making Meaning of Contingent Life Events



Background

- Falling ill: - impact on quality of life (QoL)
- 'contingent life event'
- Meaning making of life events → QoL
- Telling stories

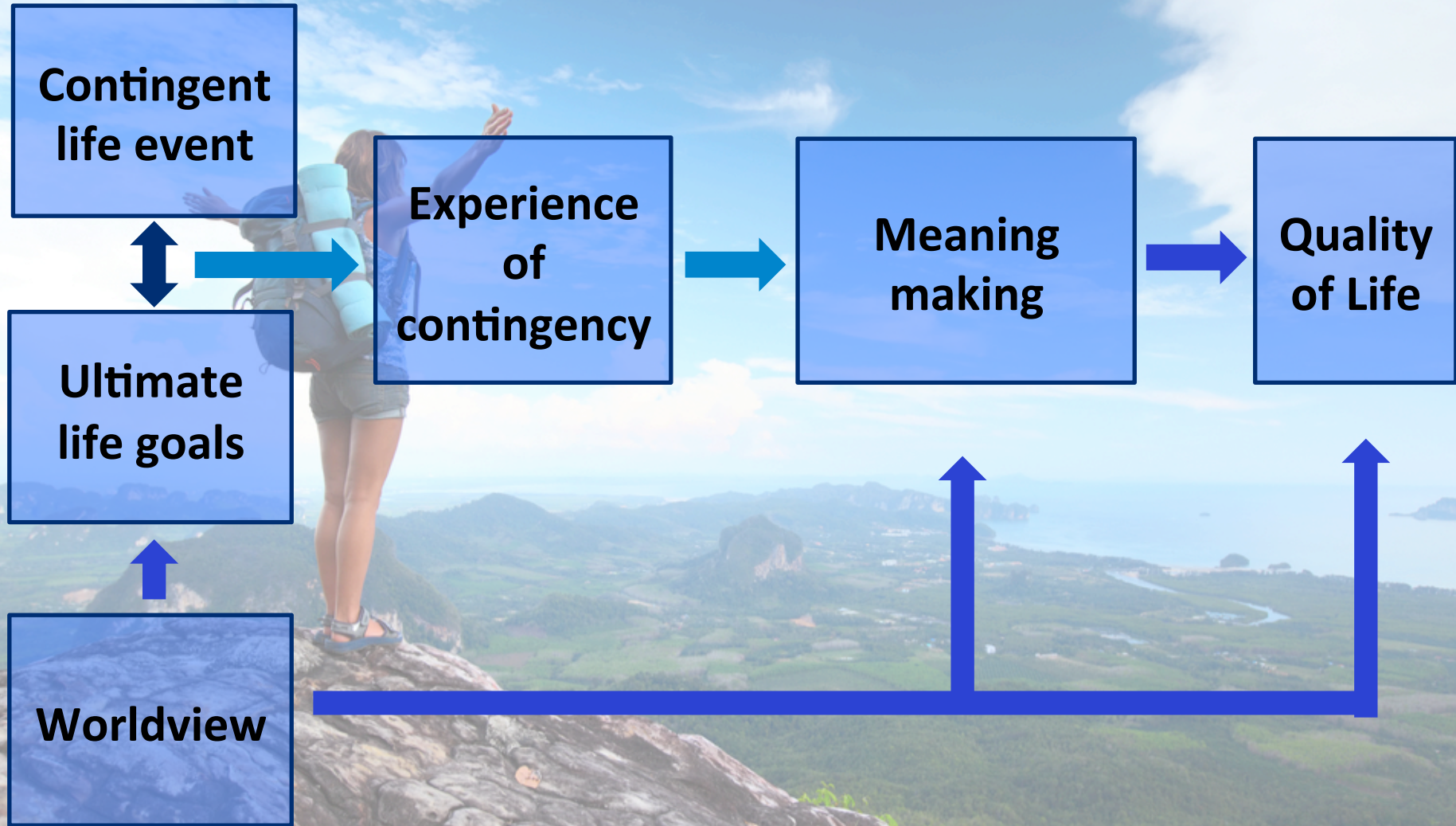


Aim

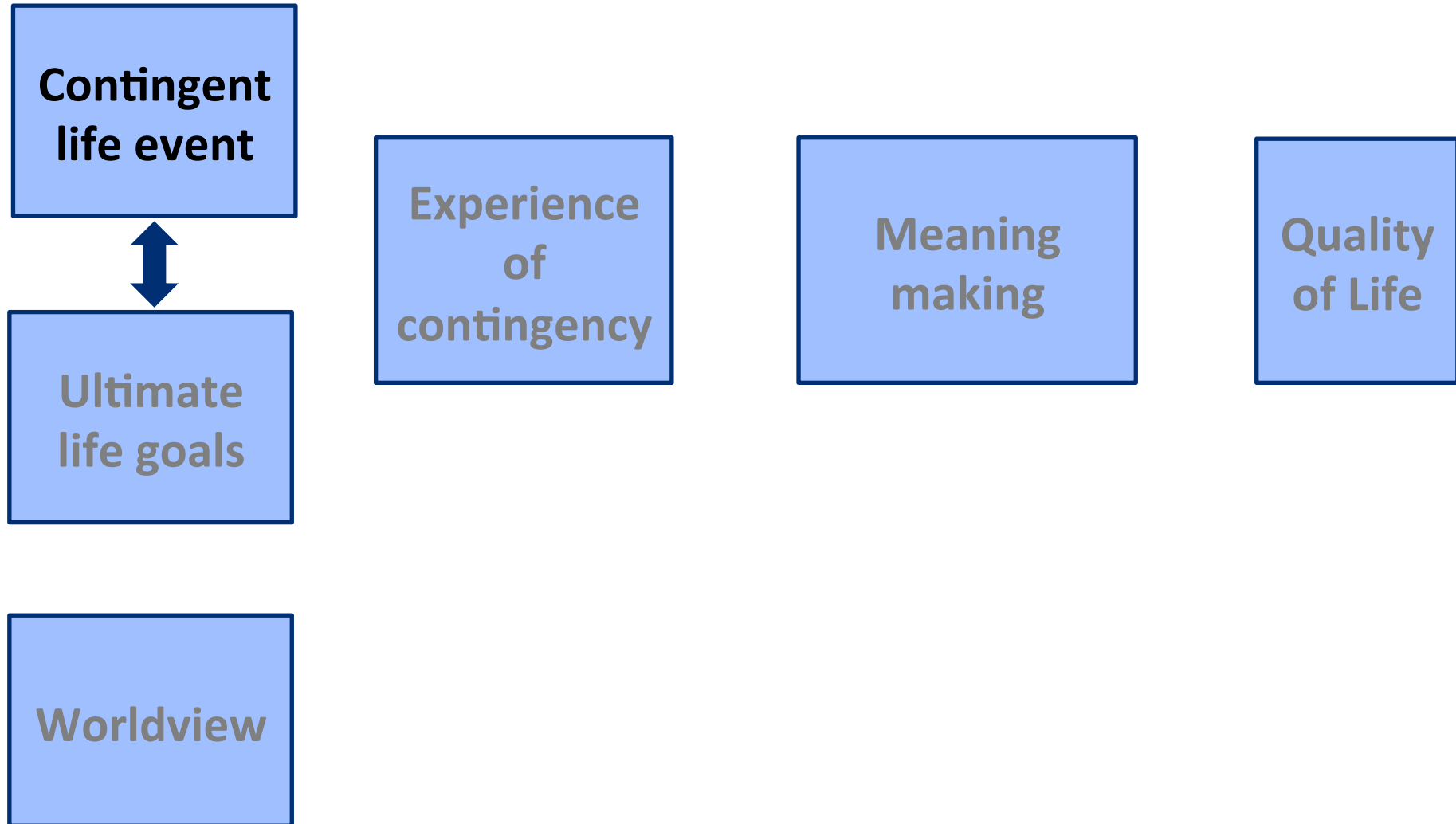
To develop a new, narrative approach to **meaning making of contingent life events** and its influence on QoL.

“the process in which the event is re-interpreted in the context of one’s own life narrative”

Theoretical model



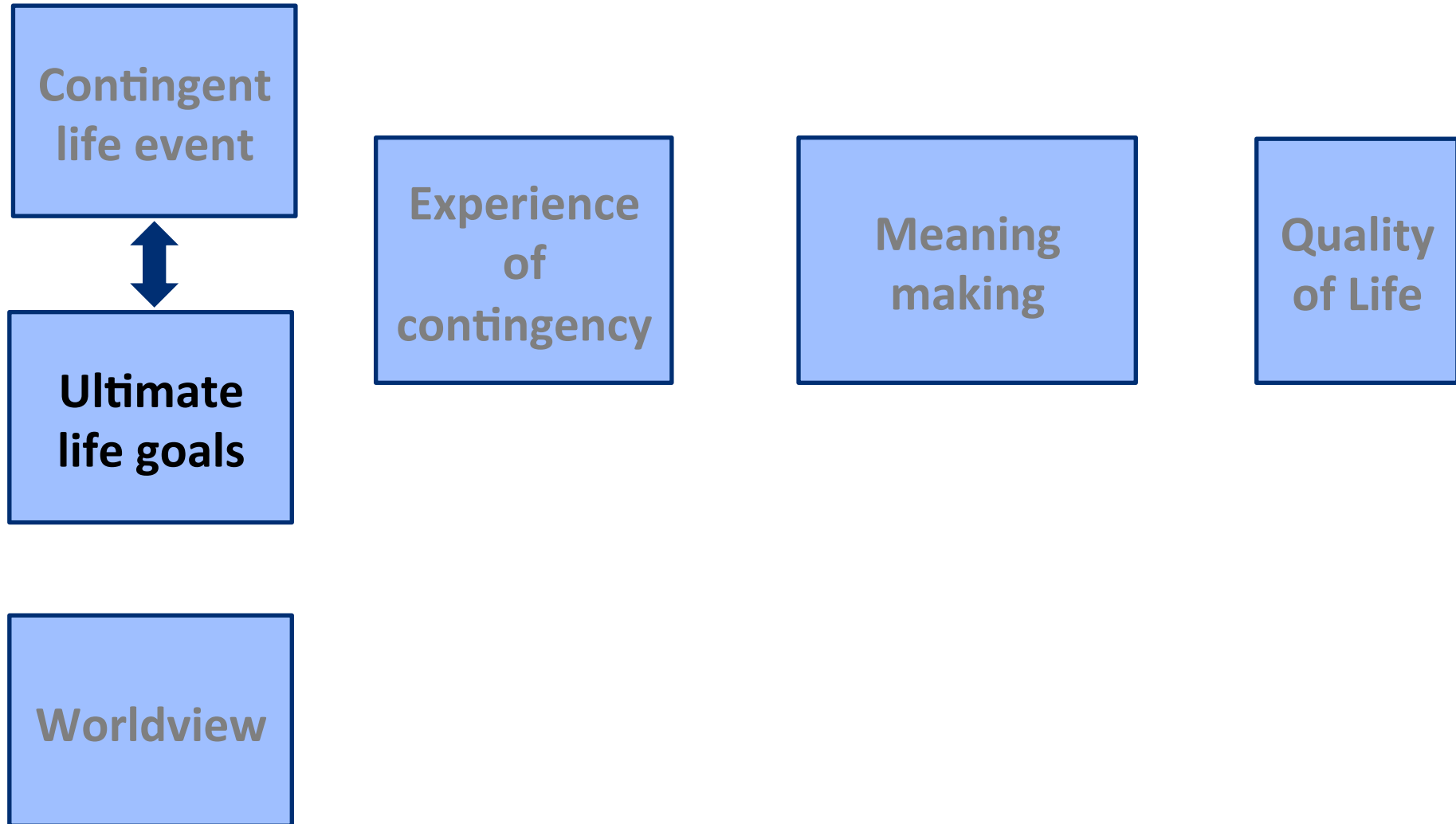
Theoretical model



Contingent life event



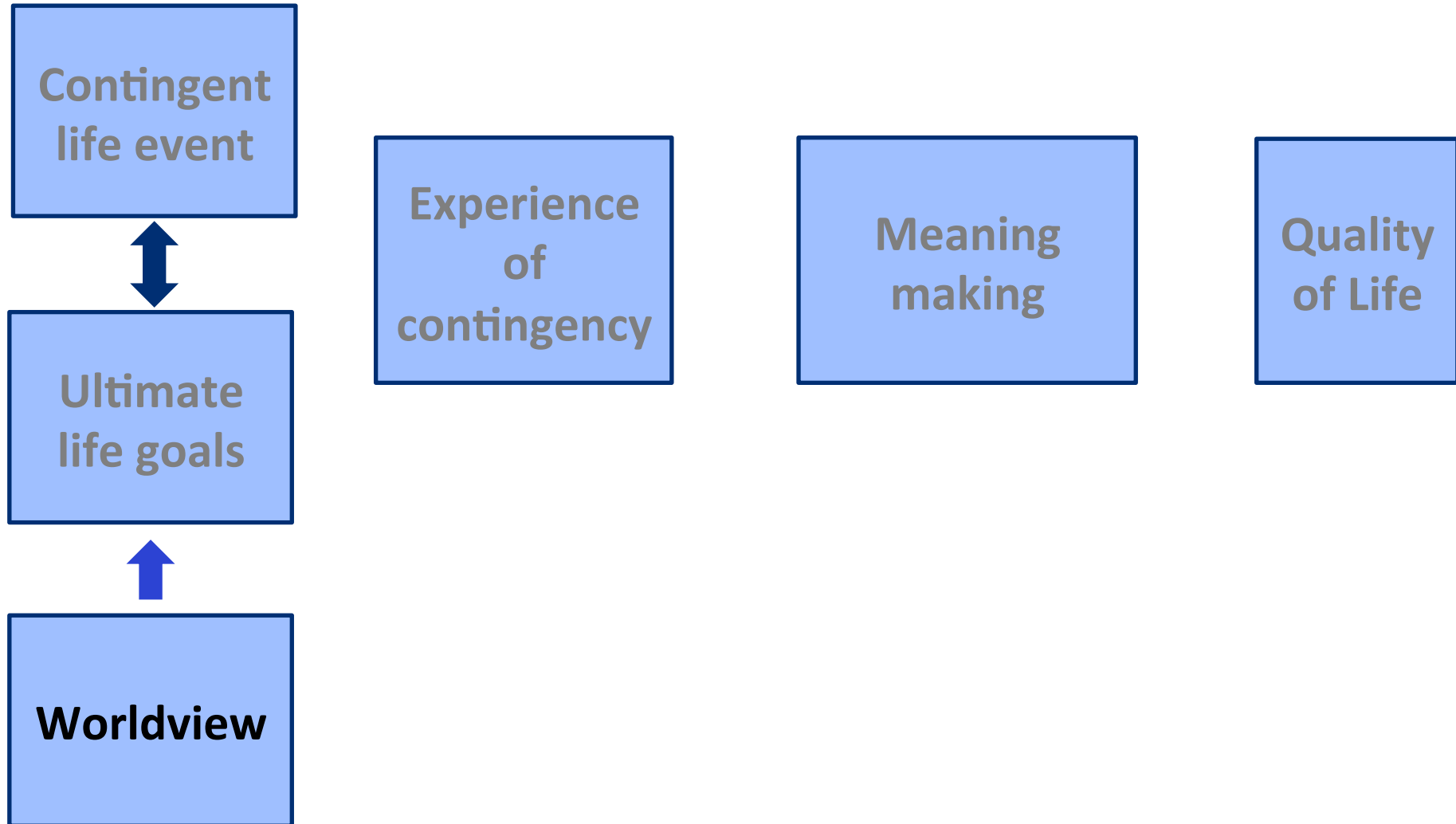
Theoretical model



Ultimate life goals



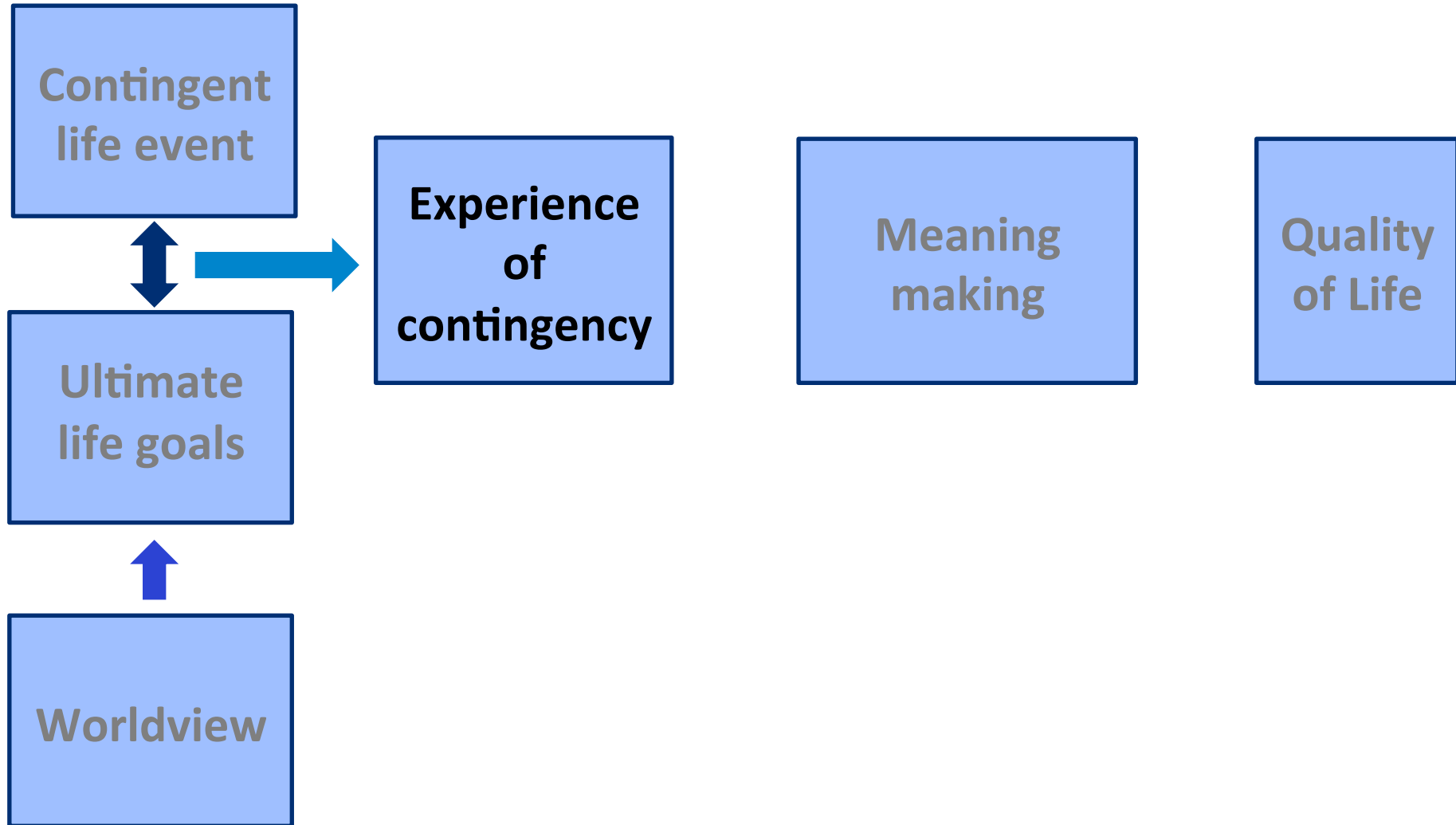
Theoretical model



Worldview



Theoretical model



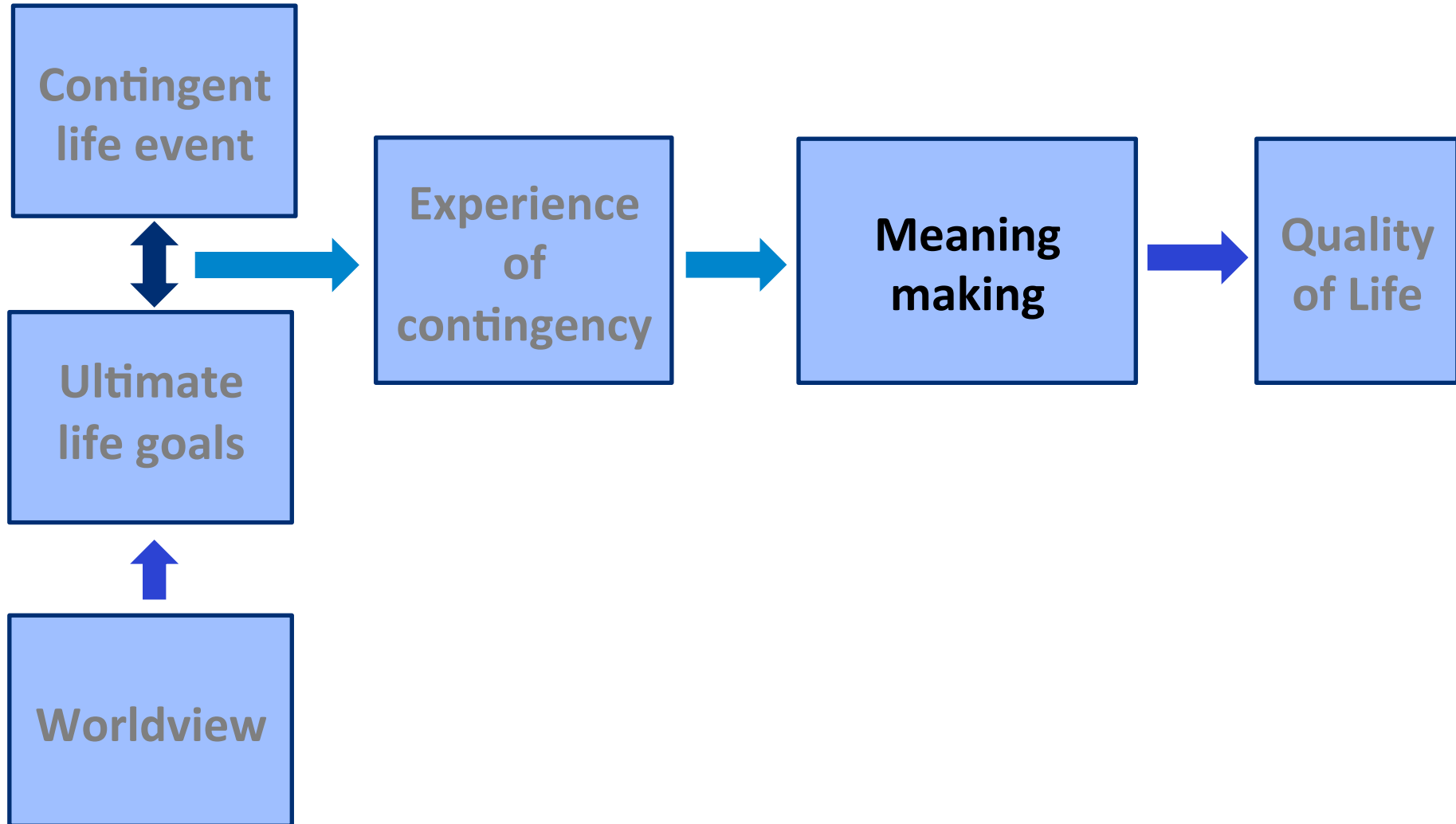
Experience of contingency

- Crisis of meaning
- Rupture in the life story

“When I got my diagnosis.. You know, your world just comes crashing down.”



Theoretical model



Meaning making

- Reinterpretation of the contingent life event in the context of one's own life narrative
- Four aspects:
 - Appreciation
 - Agency
 - Scope
 - Relating to contingency



Meaning making: relating to contingency

- acknowledging
- accepting
- receiving
- denying



Relating to contingency

Acknowledging

*“All my plans, all my ideas
for the future.. All gone.”*

*“It’s tough, but I have to
accept it”*



Relating to contingency

Accepting

*“I am still struggling sometimes, but I feel like I am learning to live with it. Do something with it. It is still hard but it is not **all** bad”*



Relating to contingency

Receiving

“I really learned a lot. I feel like I live a more conscious life now, I really know what is important in my life.”



Relating to contingency

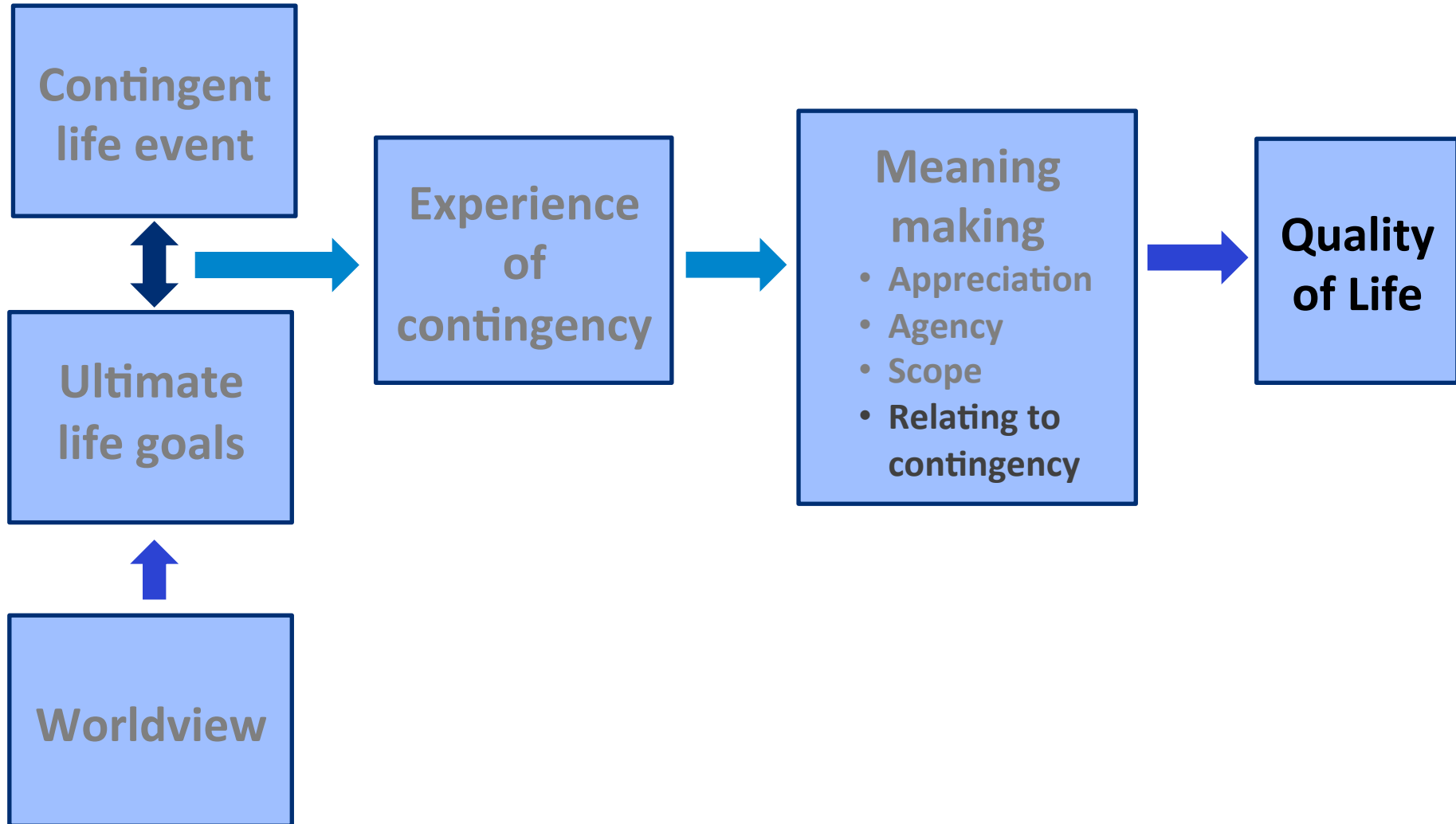
Denying

"It really doesn't bother me at all"

*"that's just the way things go, bad
luck, nothing else to say about it"*



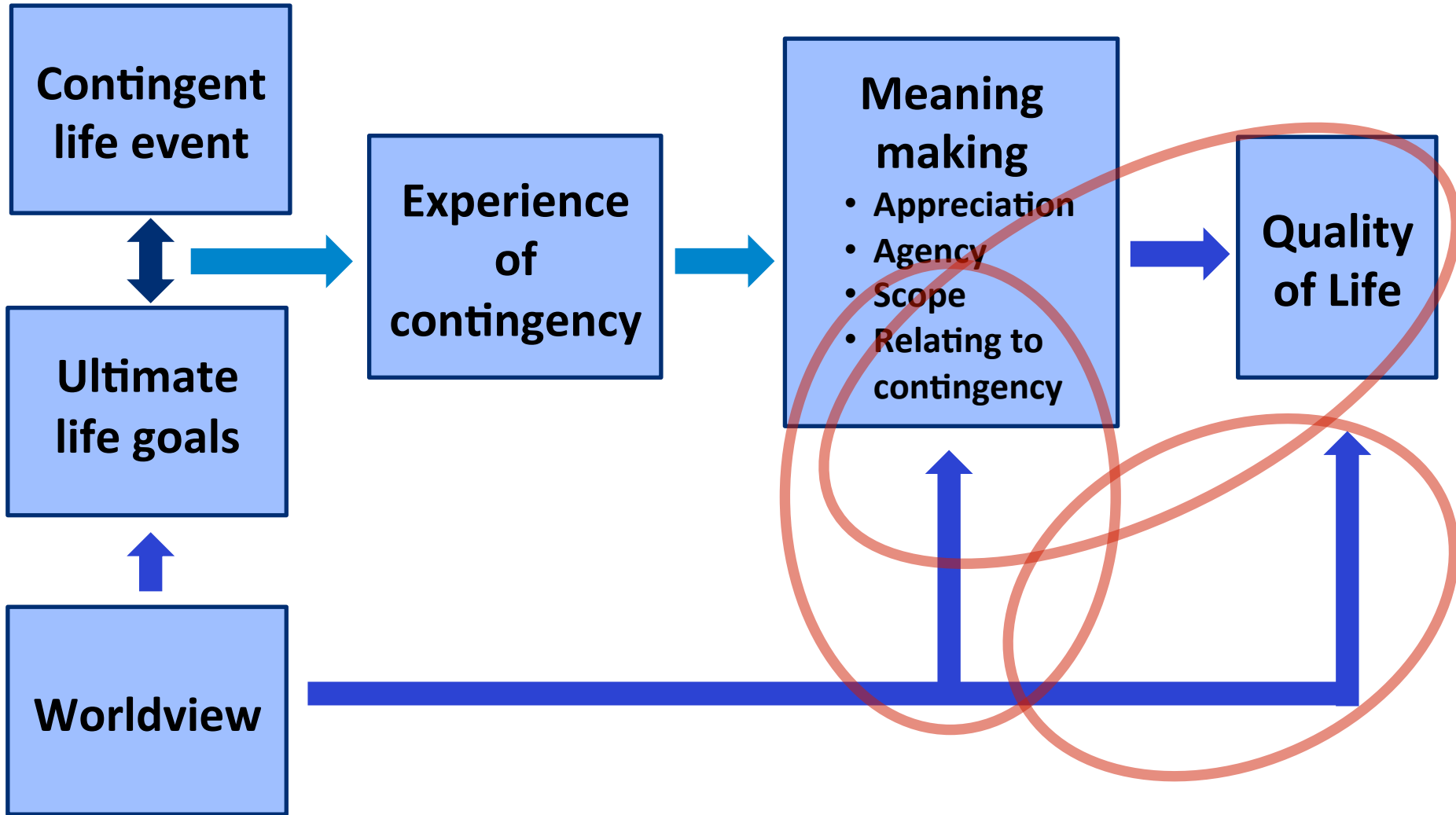
Theoretical model



Quality of Life

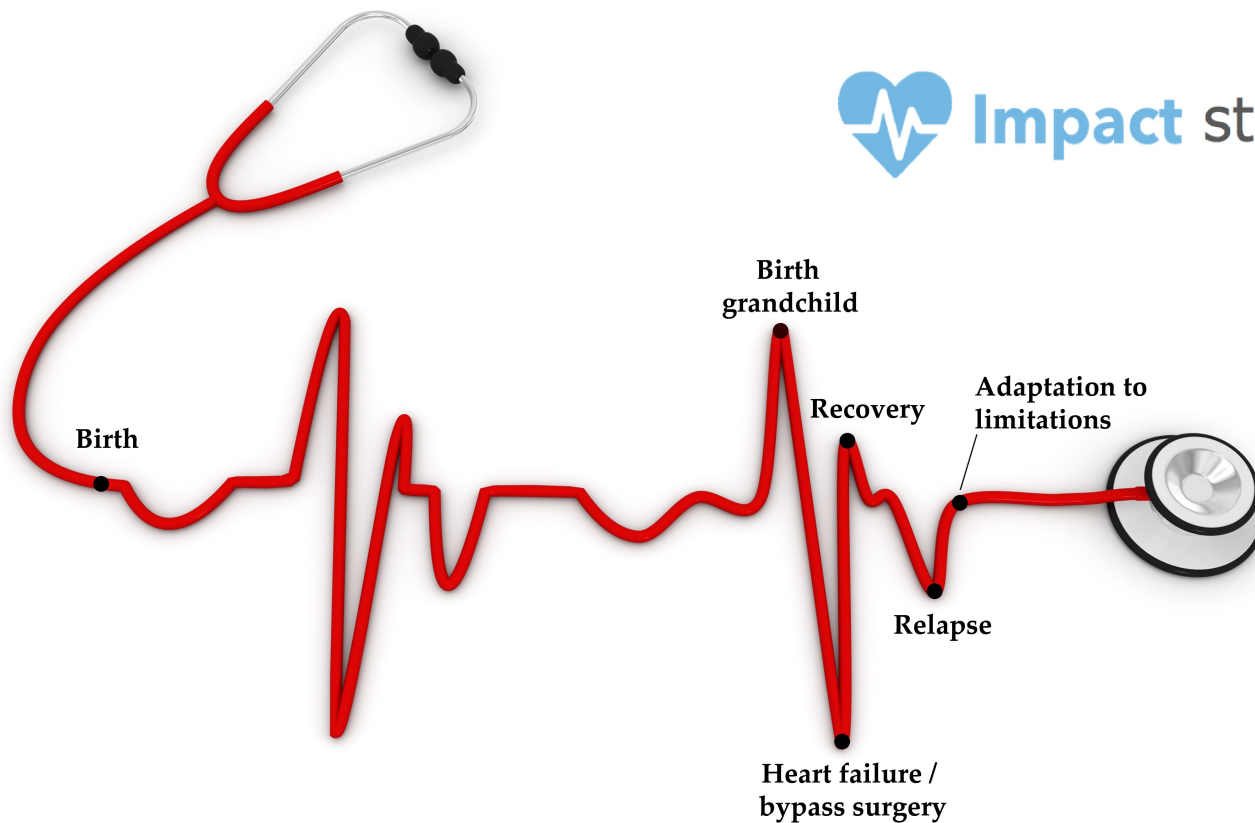


Relationships



RE-LIFE

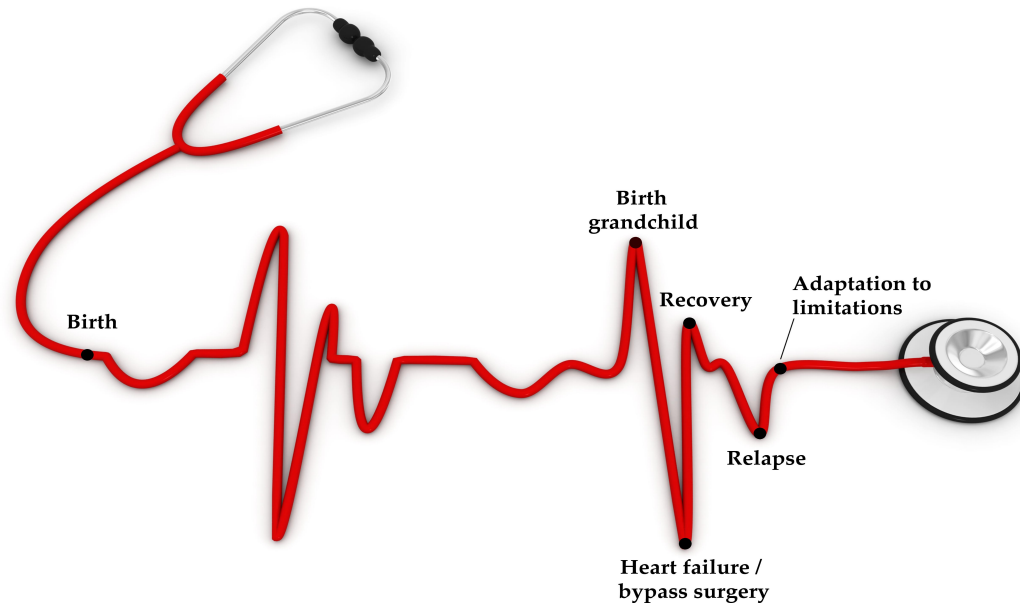
Reconstruction of Life Events Questionnaire



Conclusion

Meaning making of contingent life events → QoL

Towards a Narrative Understanding of Quality of Life: Making Meaning of Contingent Life Events



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Questions & remarks



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http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/15/33

Original article

Women's reflecti
bre:

PLI, P42
October

RESEARCH

ORIGINAL

Scandinavian Journal

High prevalence of sickness absence
and disability pension among
cancer patients

Methods

- Literature search
 - Topics: meaning making, contingency, life goals, narrative identity, worldview, well-being, QoL
 - Fields: psychology, sociology, religious studies, philosophy
- Building on the existing 'Analytical model for reconstructing the interpretation of life stories'¹
- Development of a theoretical model on meaning making of illness and other contingent life events.

¹ Van den Brand, J., Hermans, C., Scherer-Rath, M., & Verschuren, P. (2014). An instrument for reconstructing interpretation in life stories. In R. R. H. Ganzevoort, M. de; Scherer-Rath, M. (Ed.), *Religious Stories We live By. Narrative Approaches in Theology and Religious Studies*. Leiden: Brill.

Meaning making: four aspects

1. Appreciation:
- negative
 - positive

“that was really a low point. I saw everything I had worked for.. Gone.. Or at least, everything became uncertain.”



Meaning making: four aspects

2. Agency:
- passive
 - active

"I didn't expect it at all. You know, if they say 'you had a heart attack because you have smoked all your life' or something, then okay.. But this, it just happened to me"





Meaning making: four aspects

3. Scope:
- situational
 - existential
 - religious

“I do believe that getting this heart condition happened for a reason. I don’t believe in God or divine providence, but I feel that there is something higher that we cannot know.”