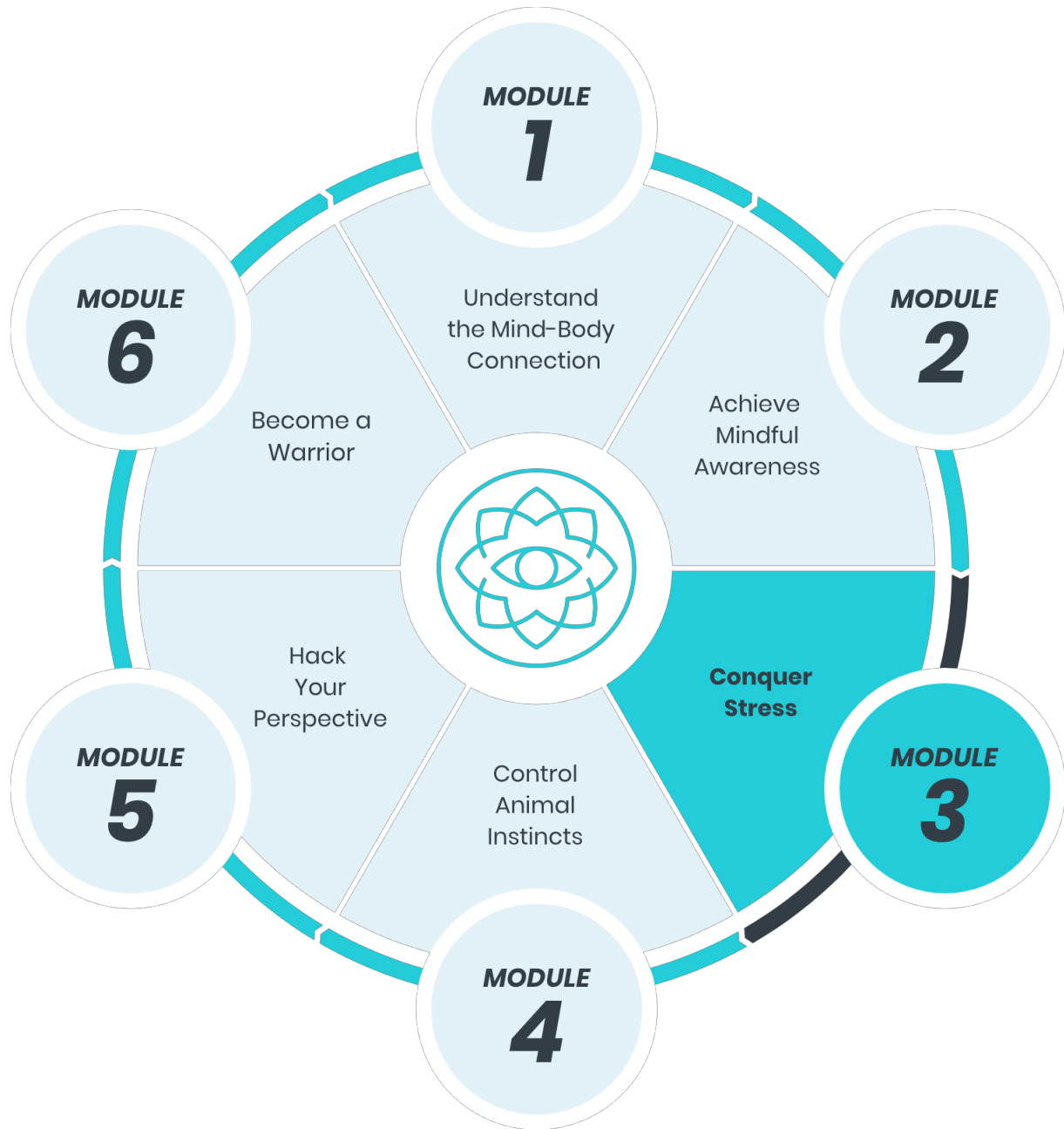


# MAP CYCLE



# MODULE 3:

# CONQUER STRESS

# (Disrupt the Patterns of Reactivity)

## Learning to Conquer Stress

We are **learning** to stop the patterns of reactivity, to respond and to disrupt automatic reactions to stressful moments.

The key is exploring our perceptions and relationship to the challenges and stressors in our lives. How we see things or don't see them will determine in large measure how we will react or respond to them. **“It's not the stressors, but how you handle them,”** which influences the effects they have on the health of your mind, body, and overall sense of wellbeing.

In many stressful situations we run on **Automatic Pilot**. We have evolved over thousands of years to deal with threats to our survival, so when we are faced with a threat, the Automatic Pilot kicks in. It either helps us to run away, prepare to fight, or freeze to make ourselves seem small and uninteresting. It's a good thing that our automatic reactions are quick and reflective.

Research shows that our minds wander for about 46.9% of the time and most of the time to the unpleasant or difficult. We then often react in ways that, if we stopped for even a breath, we would see are not helpful or healthy. It's not our fault, it's how we were made and it's just what minds do.

Wellbeing seems then to come as much from the approach we bring to experience - from how we choose to see it and practice with it - as from what's actually happening and what we decide to do. If we can cultivate healthy approaches to experience, we will probably feel better and more grounded, no matter what is going on.

We don't have to struggle, force, or badger ourselves to become aware, or judge ourselves for turning away or getting lost in thought. We practice learning how to just notice, to come back to what's happening in the present moment, or re-grounding with our anchors. This process of noticing, and choosing to come back again and again, is the heart of mindfulness practice.