



FAST: An Innovative Way to Scale

PRESENTED BY
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Agile New England
14 July 2022 (via Zoom)

What is Scaling?

Increasing the number of people working on a set of related products or codebases, resulting in multiple interdependent teams.

How to Deliver Faster

- 1. Reduce scope**
- 2. Eliminate waste**
- 3. Improve technical capability**
- ⋮**
- ⋮**
- n. Add people**



Scaling: The Last Thing You Want to Do

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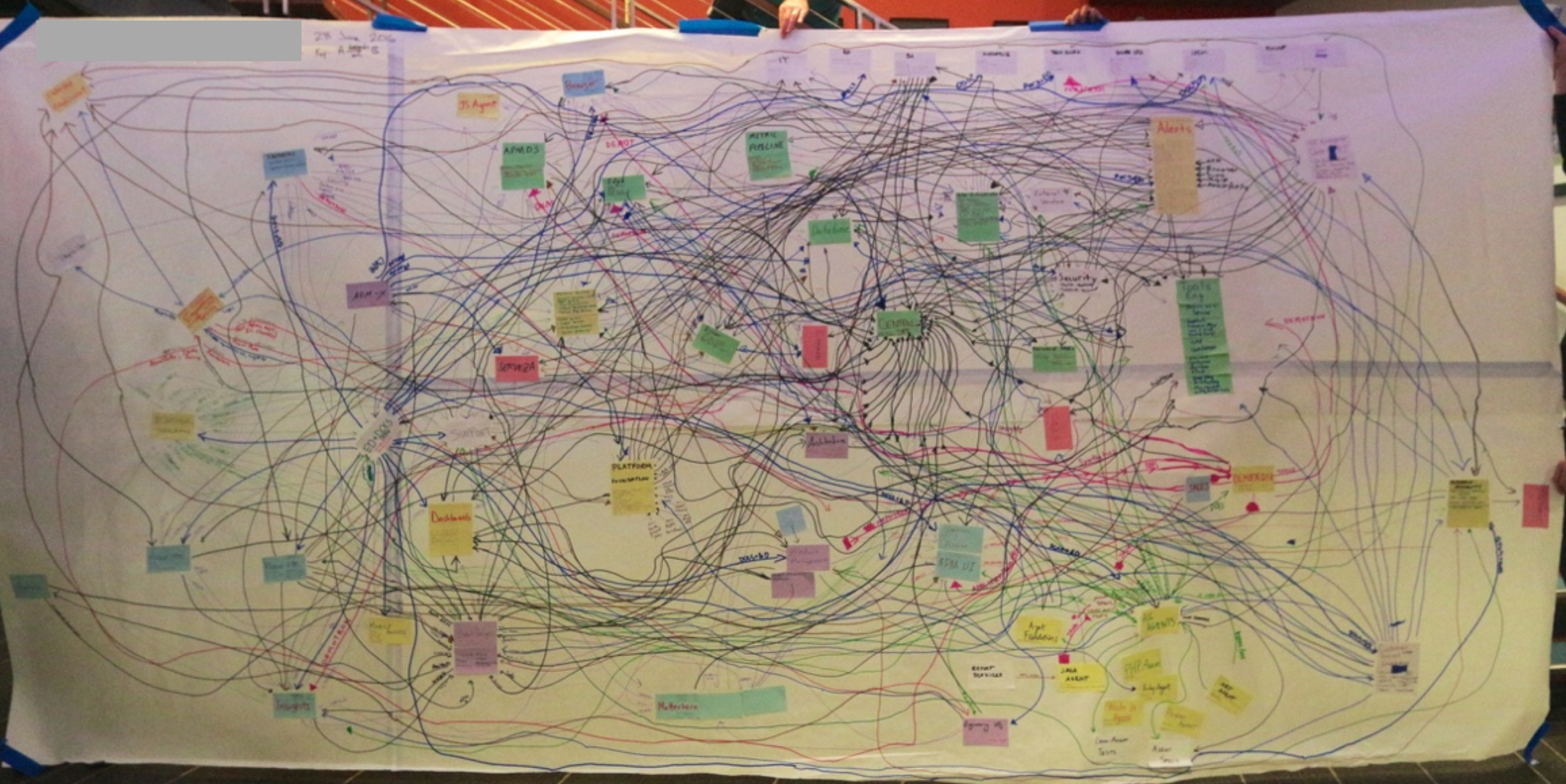
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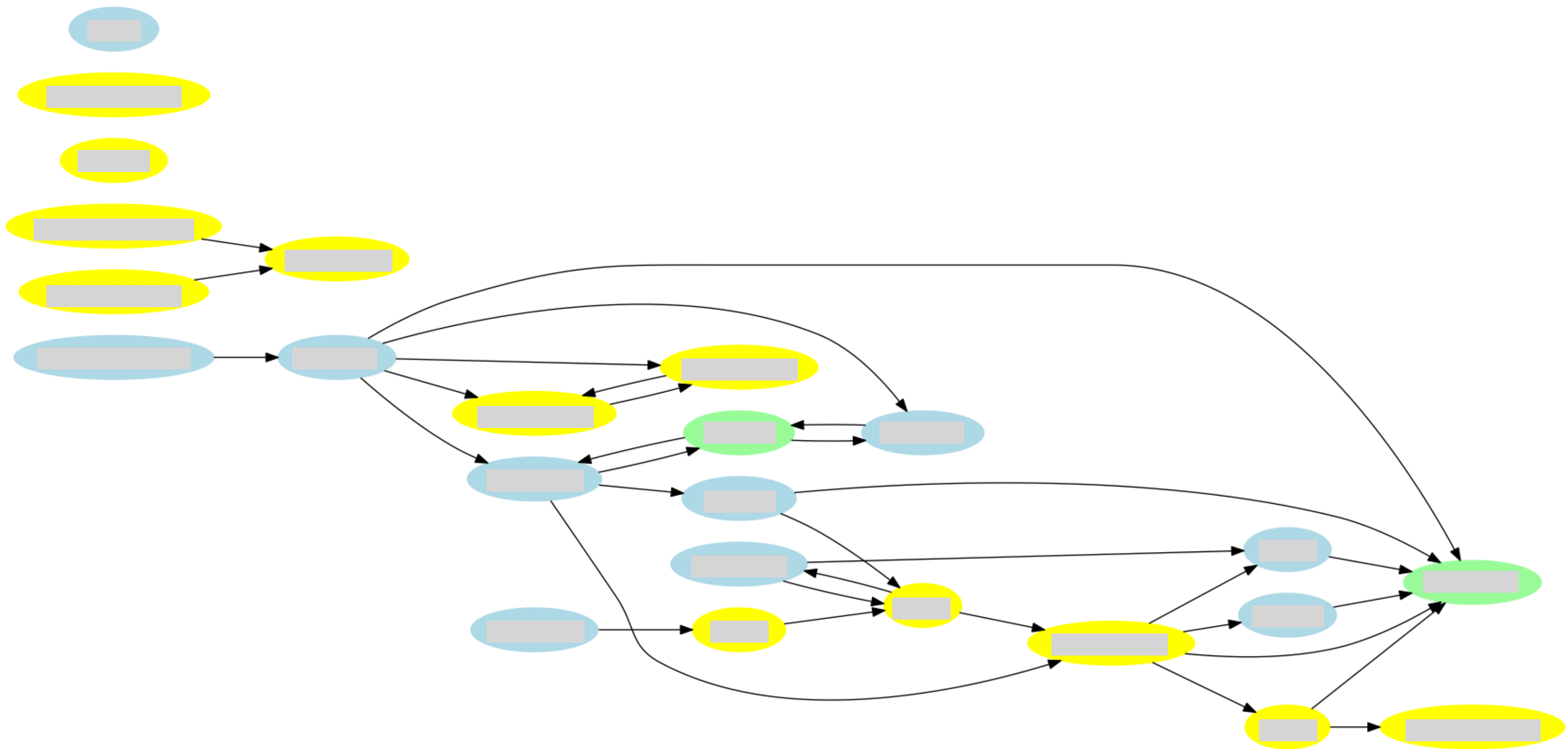
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Component Teams

Each team focuses on one or more technical components in a larger system.

- Finishing work requires the coordination of many teams.
- Cross-team bottlenecks and errors are common.



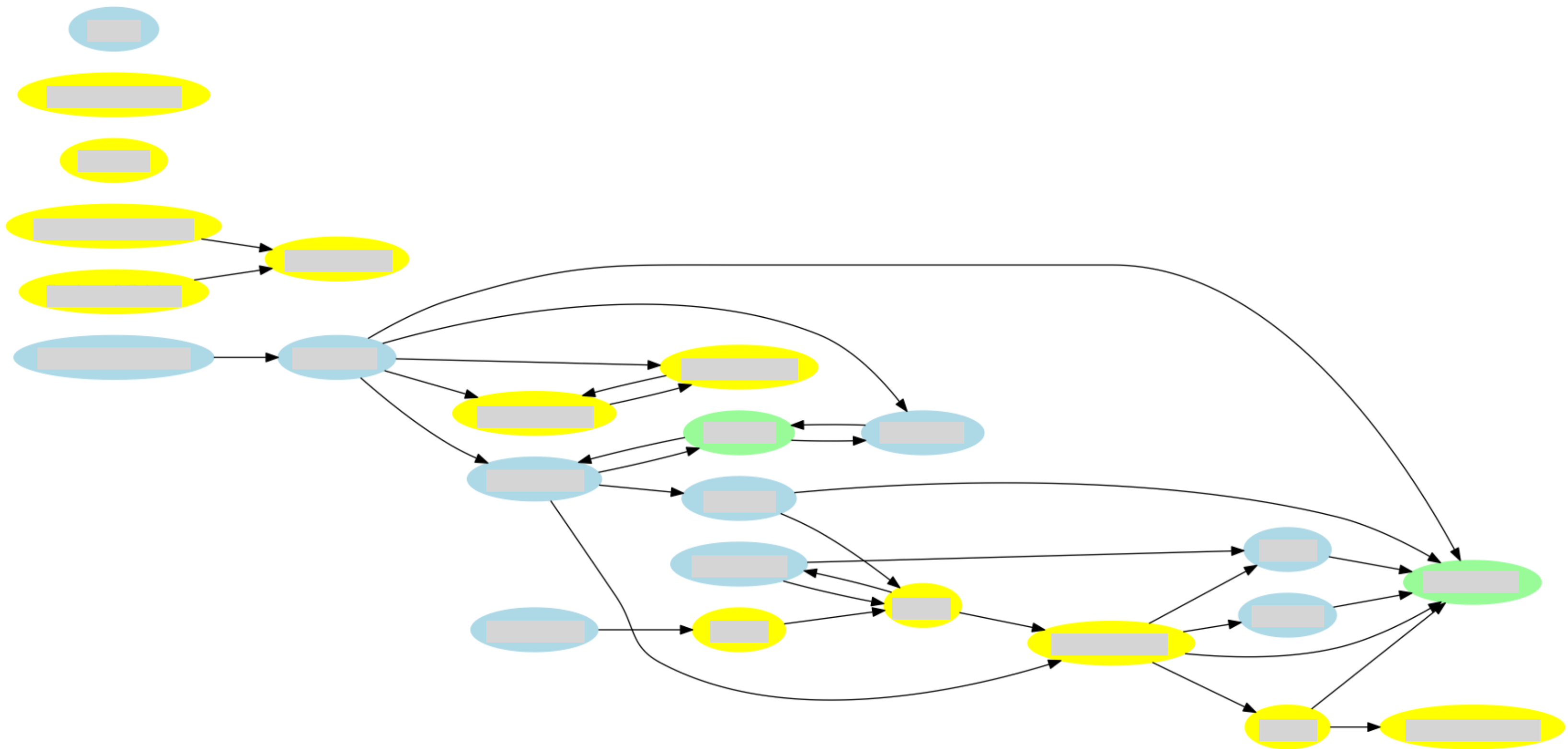


Stream-Aligned Teams

Each team focuses on a continuous flow of work aligned to a business domain or organizational capability.

—Team Topologies (Skelton & Pais)

- Hard to incorporate specialties (UX, security, ops)
- Brittle to changing business strategy
- Leads to silos
- Cross-team dependencies still a challenge



Fluid Scaling Technology (FAST)

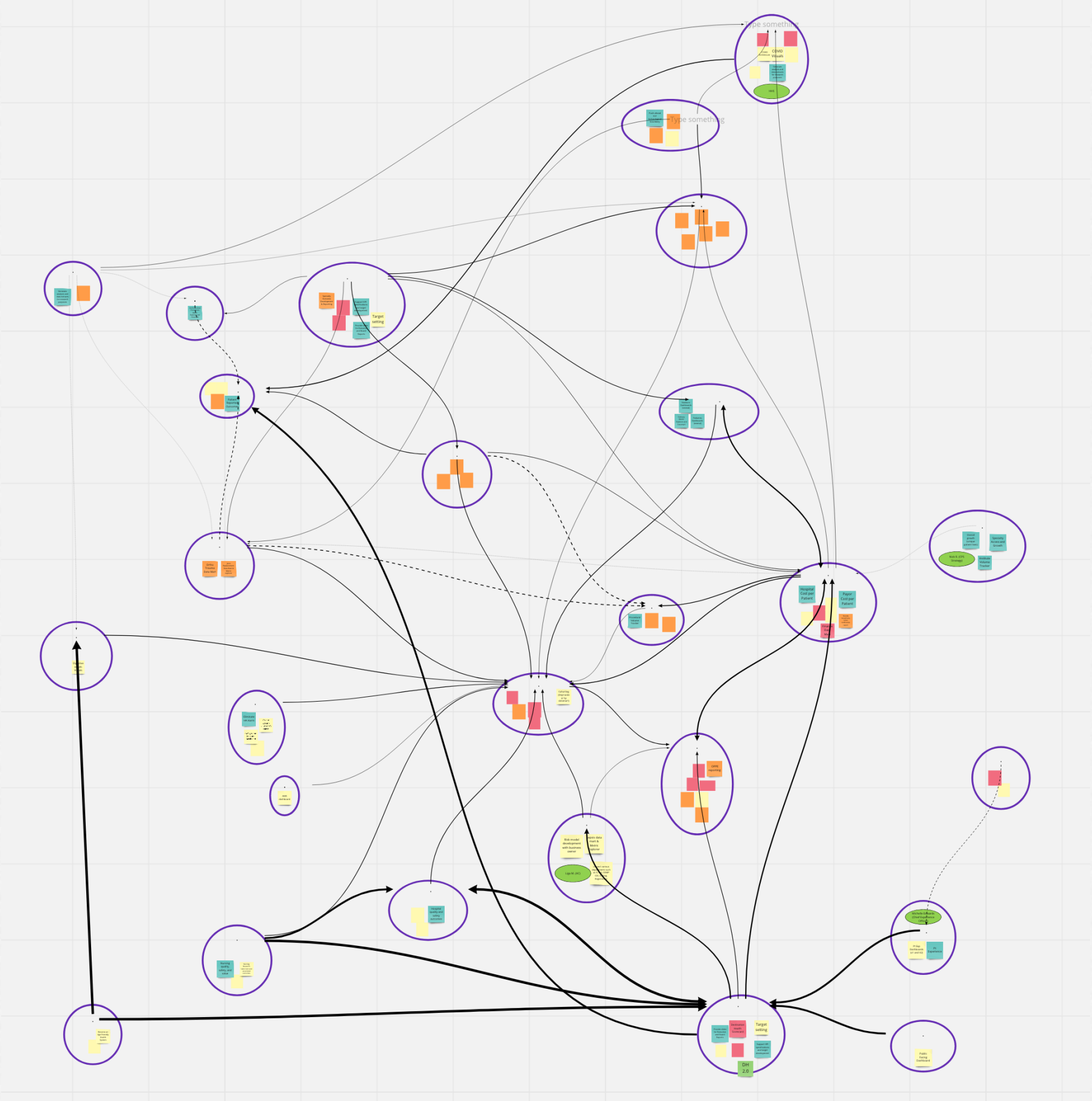
A “tribe” of people who self-organize into teams on a frequent cadence.

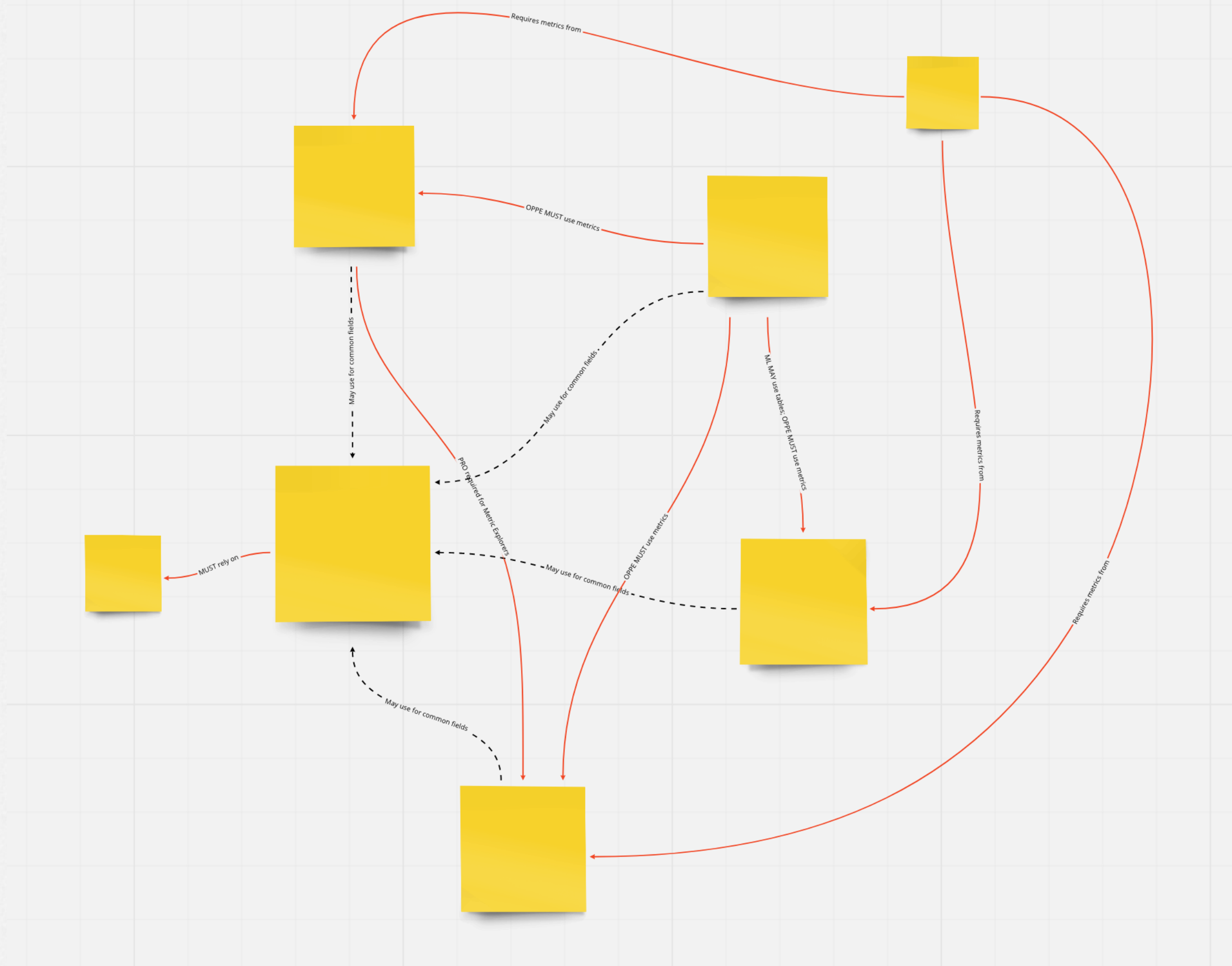
- But does it work?



Time Passes...







Team B



Team D



Team A



Team C



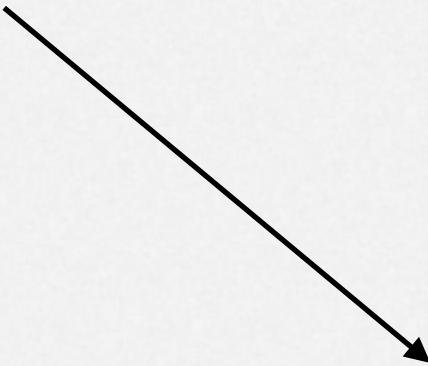
Team B



Team D



Team A



Team C



Team B



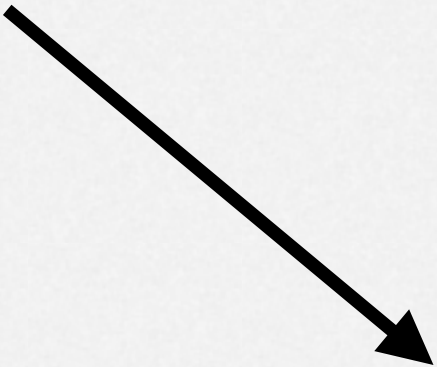
Team D



Team A



Team C



Team B



Team A



Team D



Team C



Fluid Scaling Technology

A “tribe” of people who self-organize into teams on a frequent cadence.

FAST: Fluid Scaling Technology

“a lightweight, simple to understand, and simple to master method for organizing people around work—that scales.”

—FAST Guide 2.11
fastagile.io/fast-guide

High-Level Overview

1. Bring everyone to work together as one Tribe.
2. Visually represent business goals on a wall.
3. Let the Tribe self-organize into teams to break down and do the work.
4. On a short cadence, synch and repeat the above step.

—FAST Guide 2.1



In Progress

Lorem Ipsum

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Lorem Ipsum

Ready to Start

1

Lorem Ipsum

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Lorem Ipsum



In Progress

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Ready to Start

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Reticulate the
splines

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Hunt for
grues

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Reverse
entropy

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Transect
encabulator

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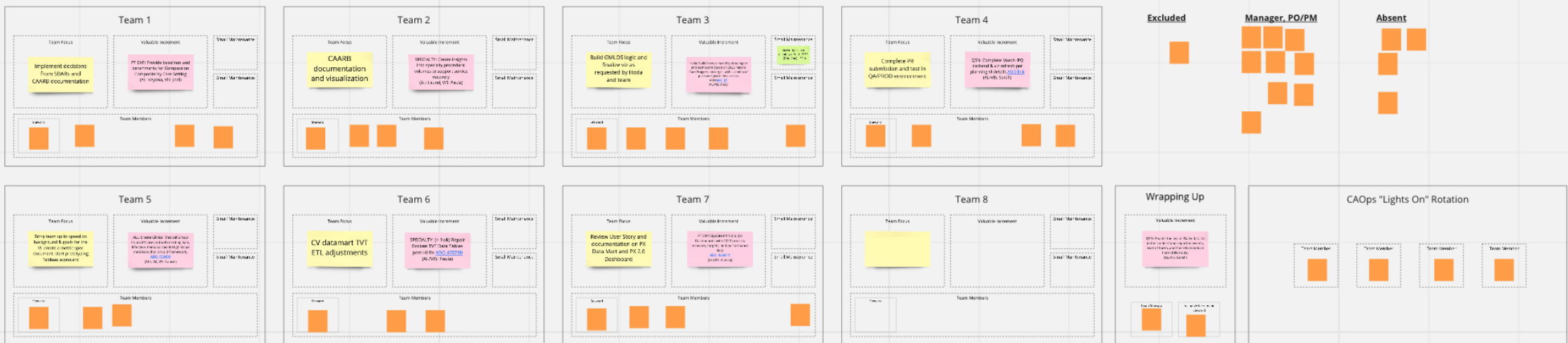


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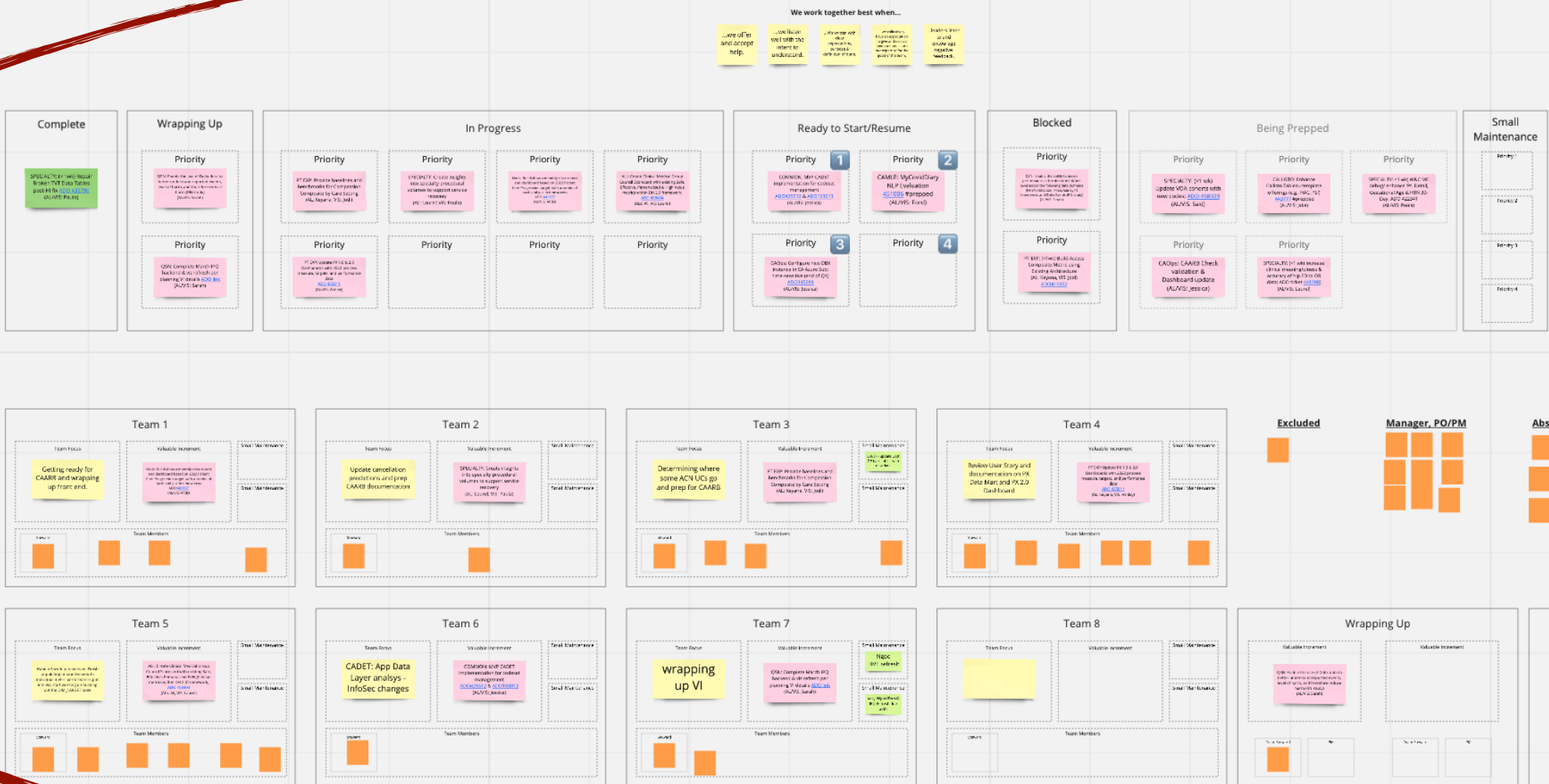


Do What's Best for XXX

Previous Iteration



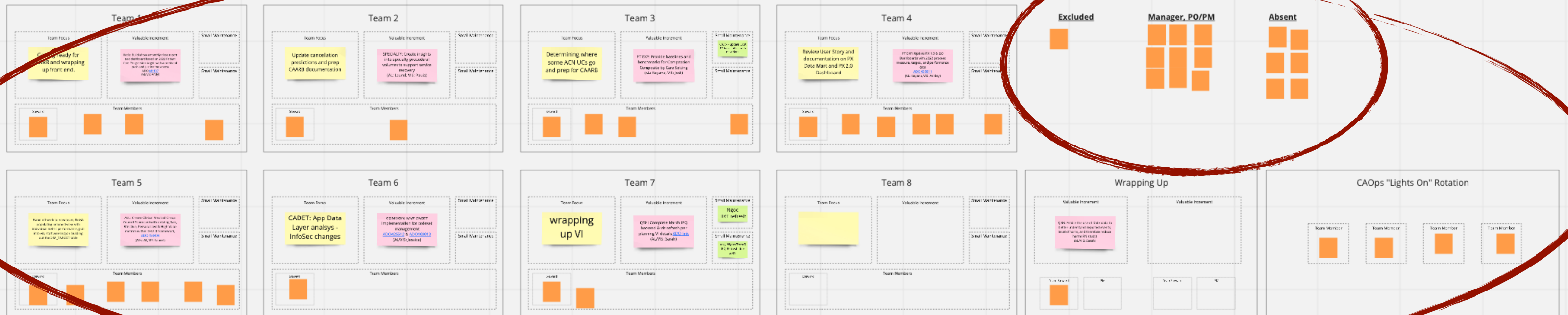
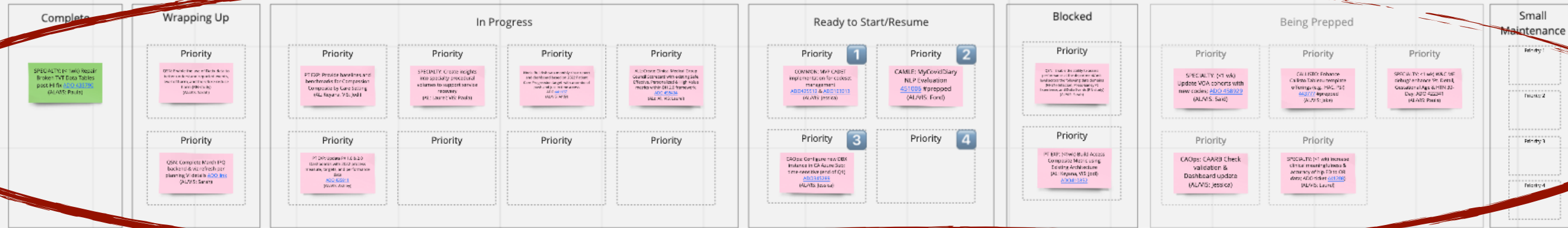
Current Iteration



Current Iteration

We work together best when...

- ...we offer and accept help.
- ...we listen well with the intent to understand.
- ...we value our own responsibility, process & delivery of work.
- ...we embrace the uncertainty, change, ambiguity, and complexity of the work.
- ...we bring our best and choose good, positive feedback.



Team 1

Team Focus

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet

Valuable Increment

~~Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet~~

~~Small Maintenance~~

~~Small Maintenance~~

Team Members

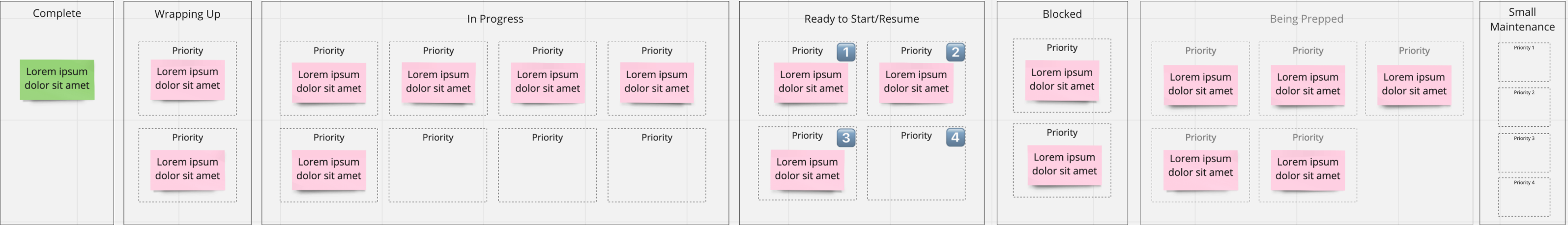
Steward

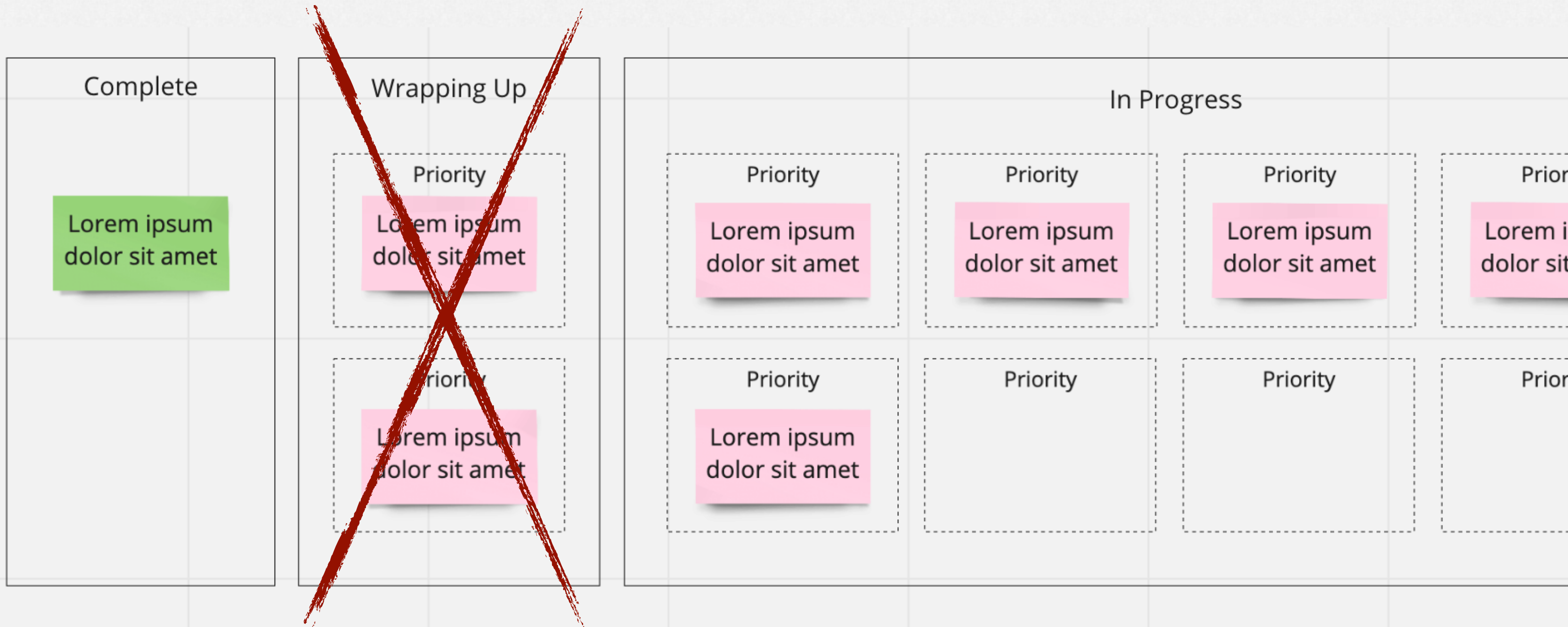
Evelyn

Courtney

Cleo

Veronica





Wrapping Up

Priority

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dolor sit amet

Priority

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In Progress

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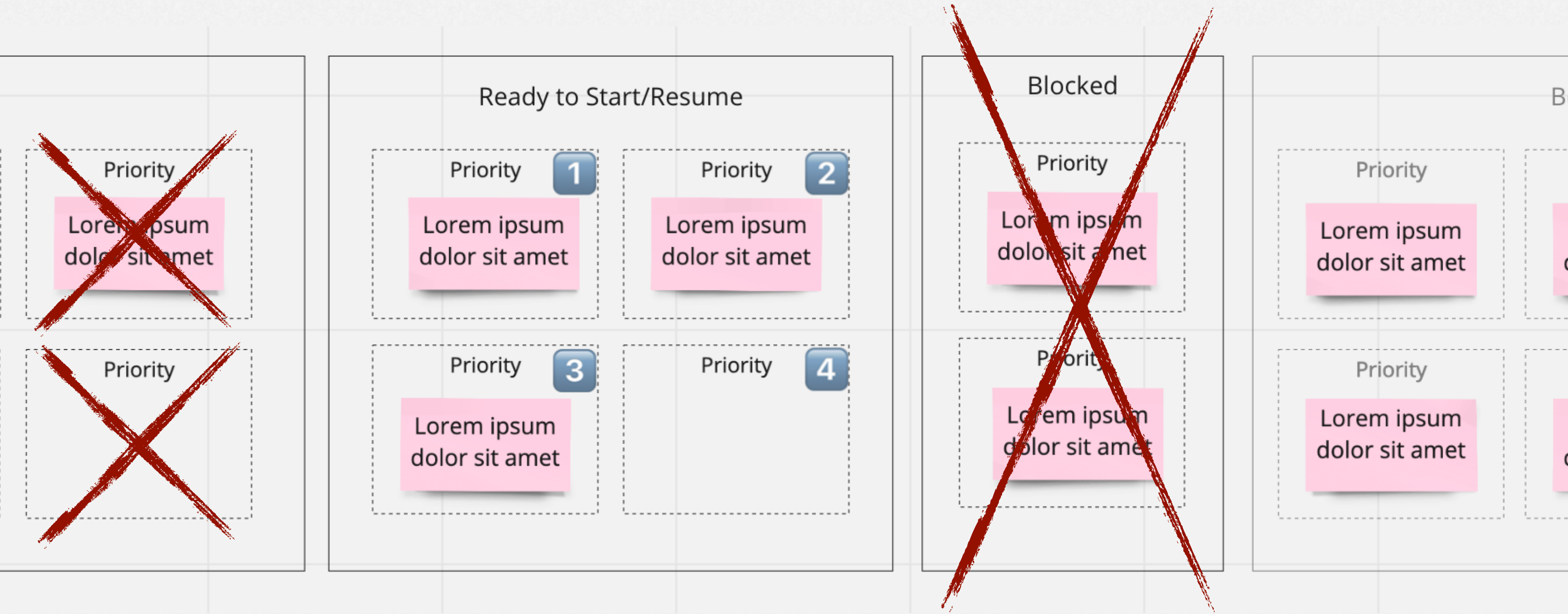
Ready

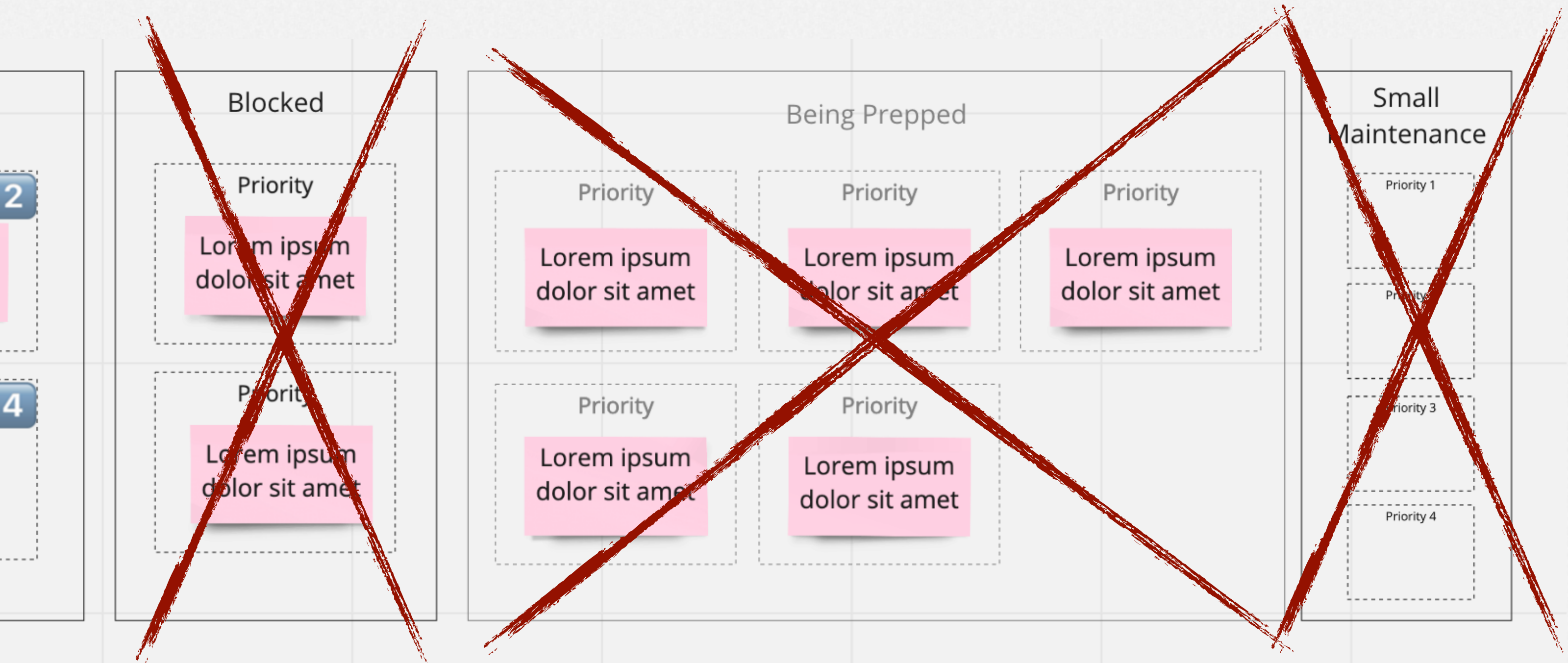
Priority

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Priority

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dolor sit amet





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dolor sit amet

In Progress

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dolor sit amet

Priority

Next Up

Priority

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet

1

Priority

2

Team 1

Team Focus

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet

Steward

Evelyn

Team Members

Courtney

Cleo

Veronica

Team 2

Team Focus

Lorem ipsum
dolor sit amet

Steward

Sal

Team Members

Harriet

Zac

Gertrude

Andrea

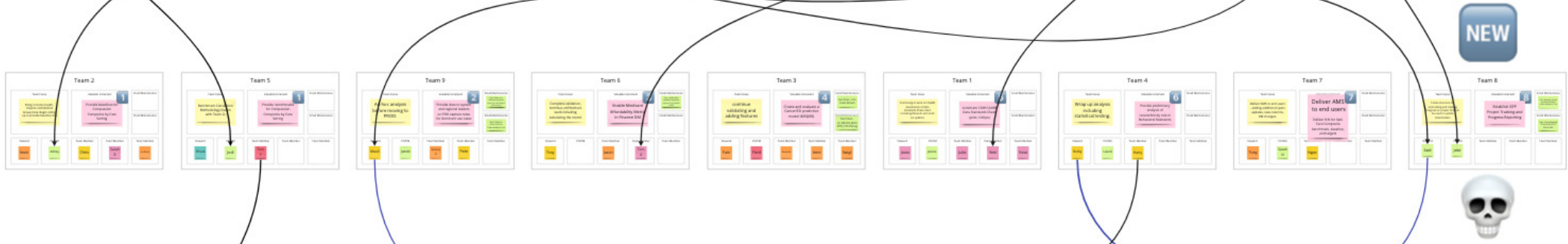
Oct 27



Oct 29



Nov 2



Nov 4



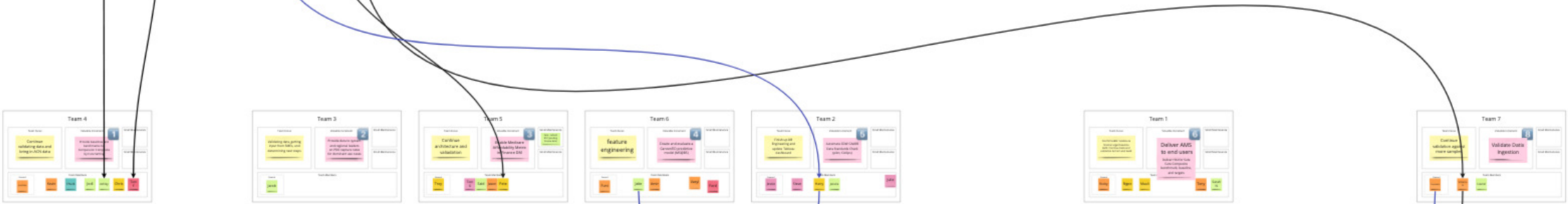
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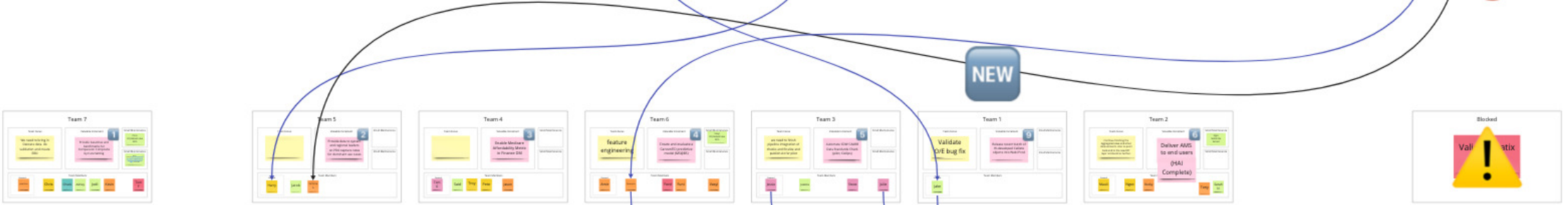
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Nov 10



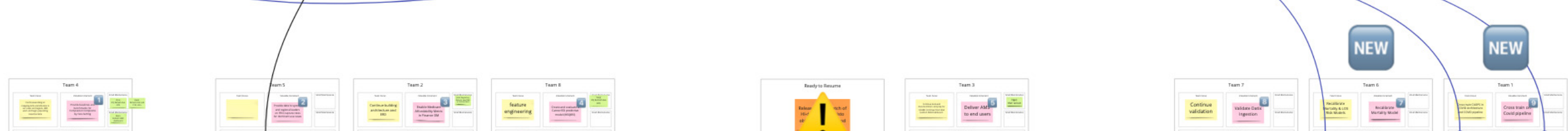
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Nov 16



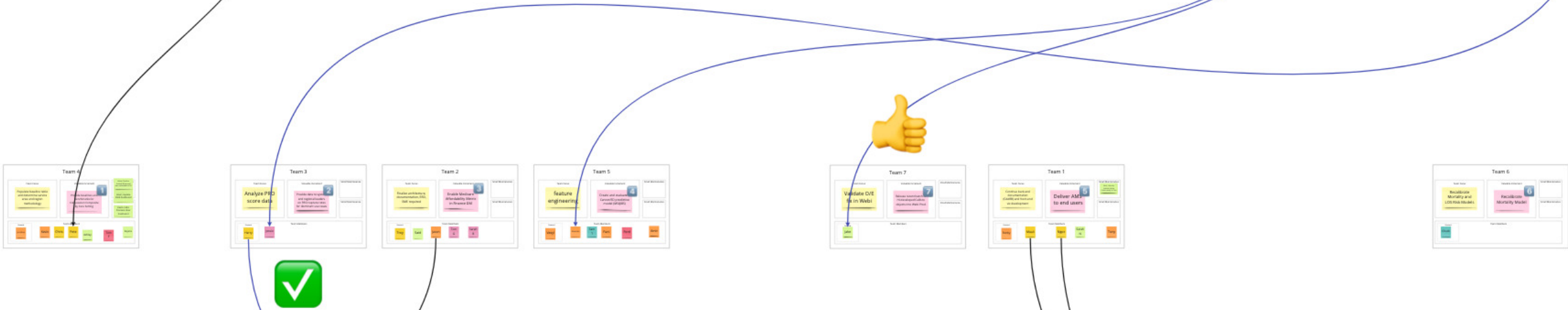
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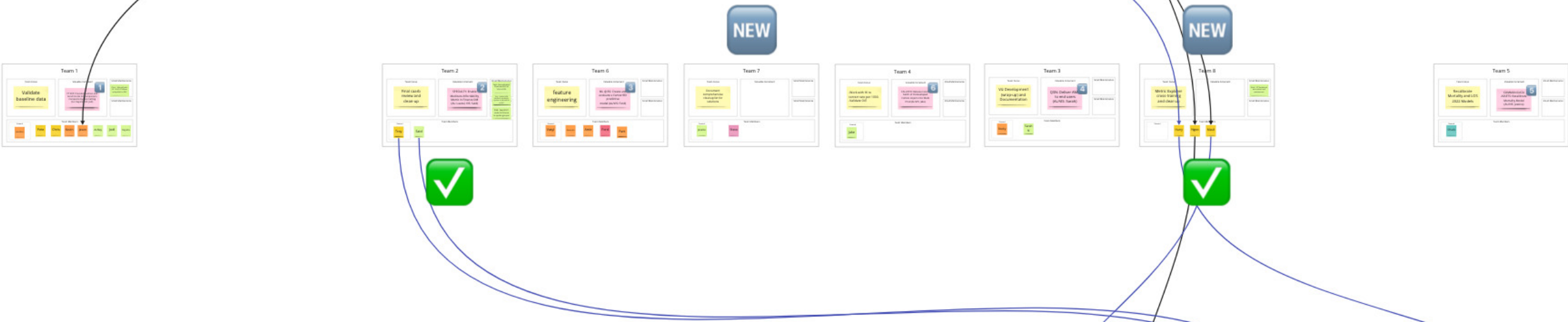
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Nov 22



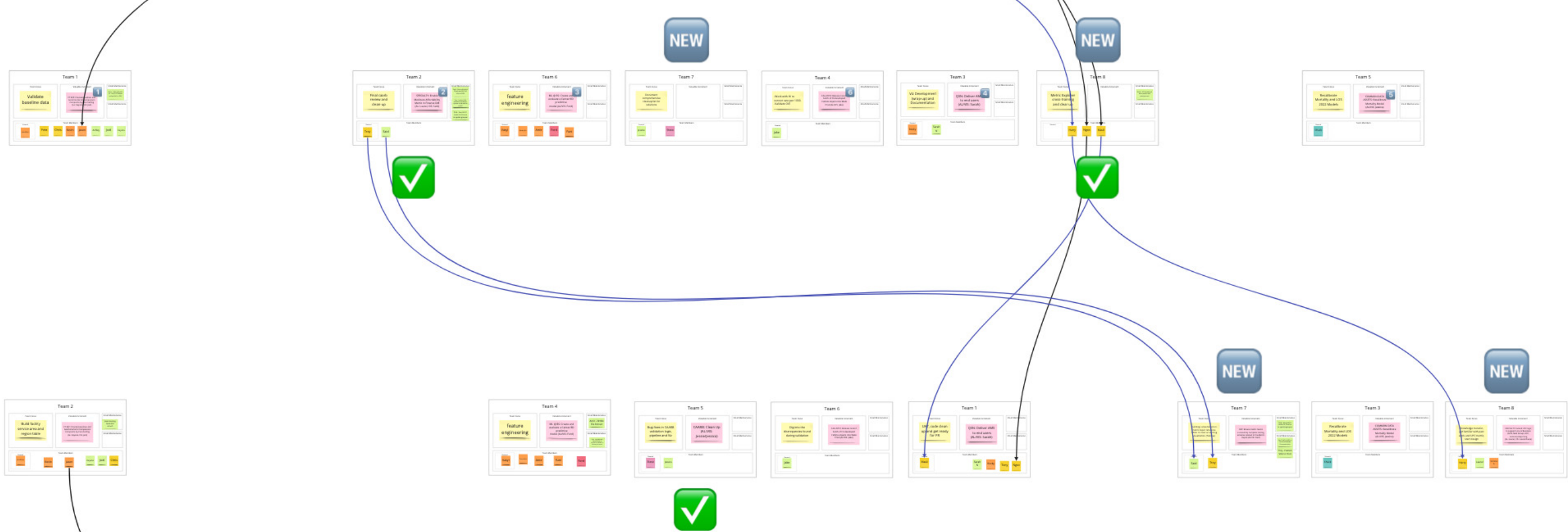
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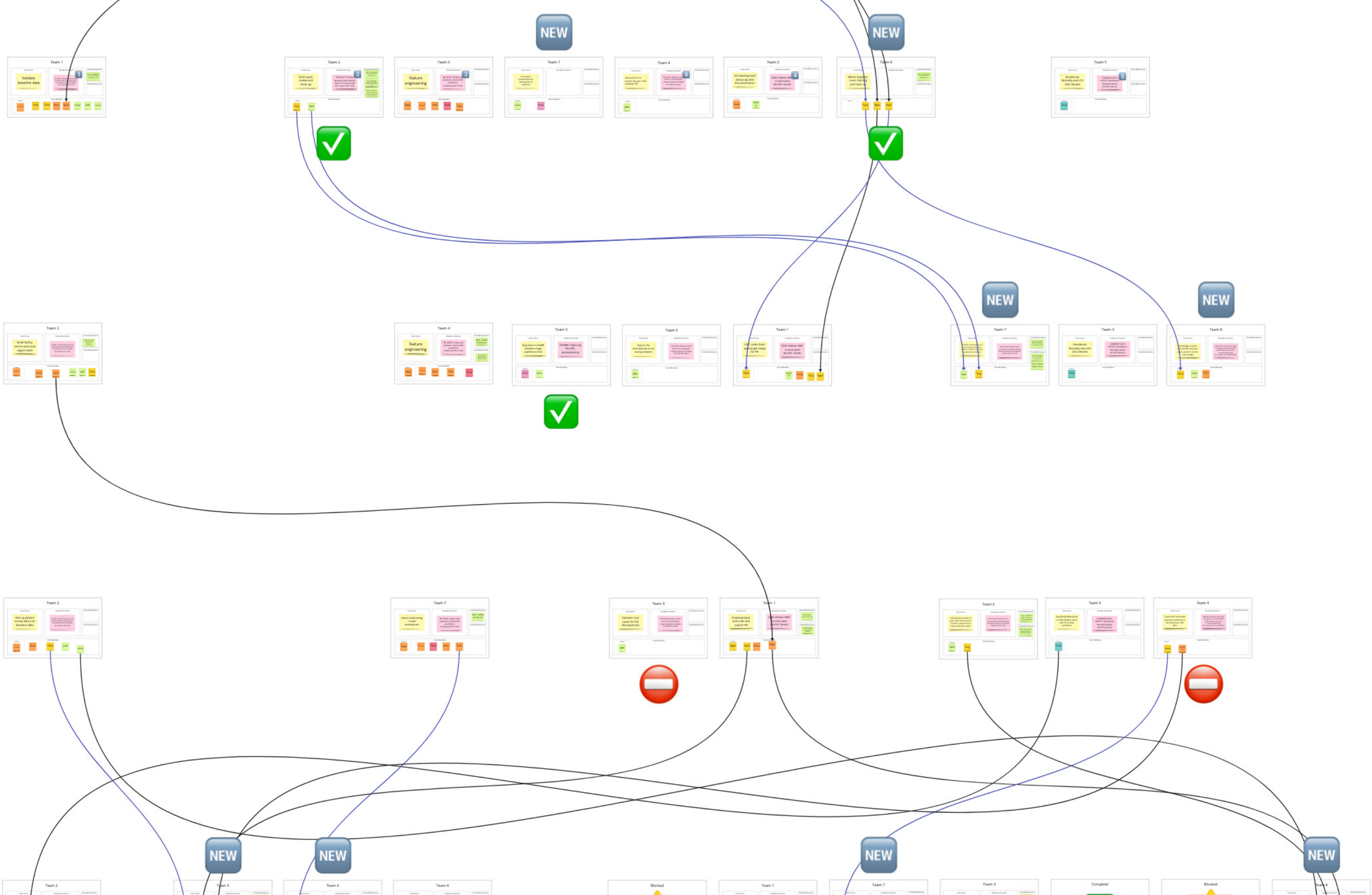
Nov 29



Dec 2



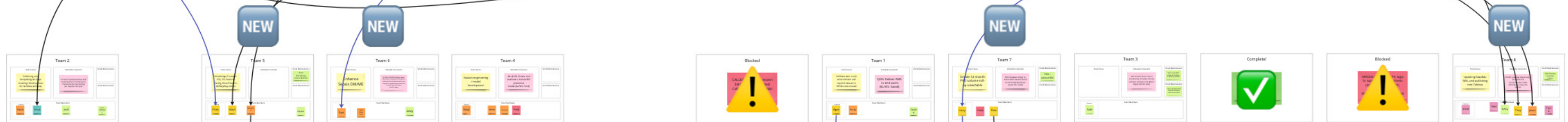
Dec 6



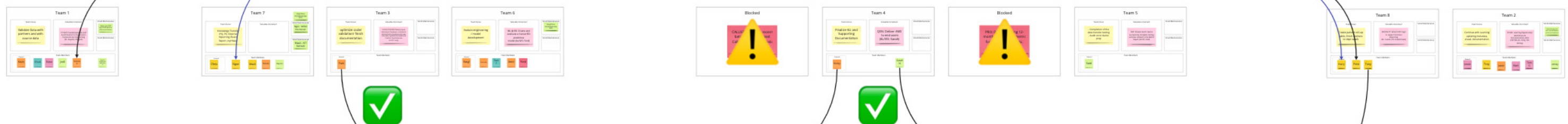
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Dec 9



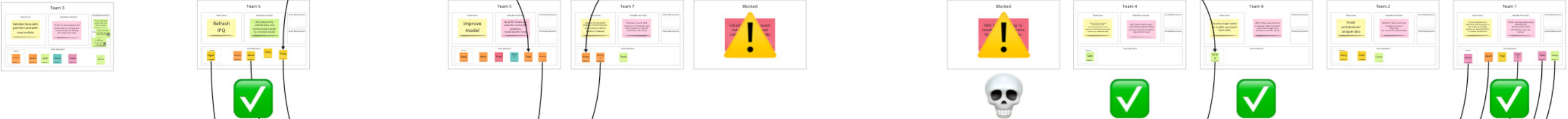
Dec 13



Dec 16



Dec 16



Dec 21



FAST Self-Selection Outcomes

- 👍 Worked well, despite being “worst-case scenario” for FAST. (Siloed developers, many unrelated products, no team-level coaching)
- 👍 Easy to adopt (but 6 months of prior change mgmt)
- 👍 Low overhead (~20 min, 2/week)
- 👍 Worked as intended: people fluidly allocated to work as needed

- 👎 People felt pressured to deliver every two days
- 👎 Difficulty ramping up on unfamiliar work
- 👎 Difficulty working as collaborative teams

Discovery Trees

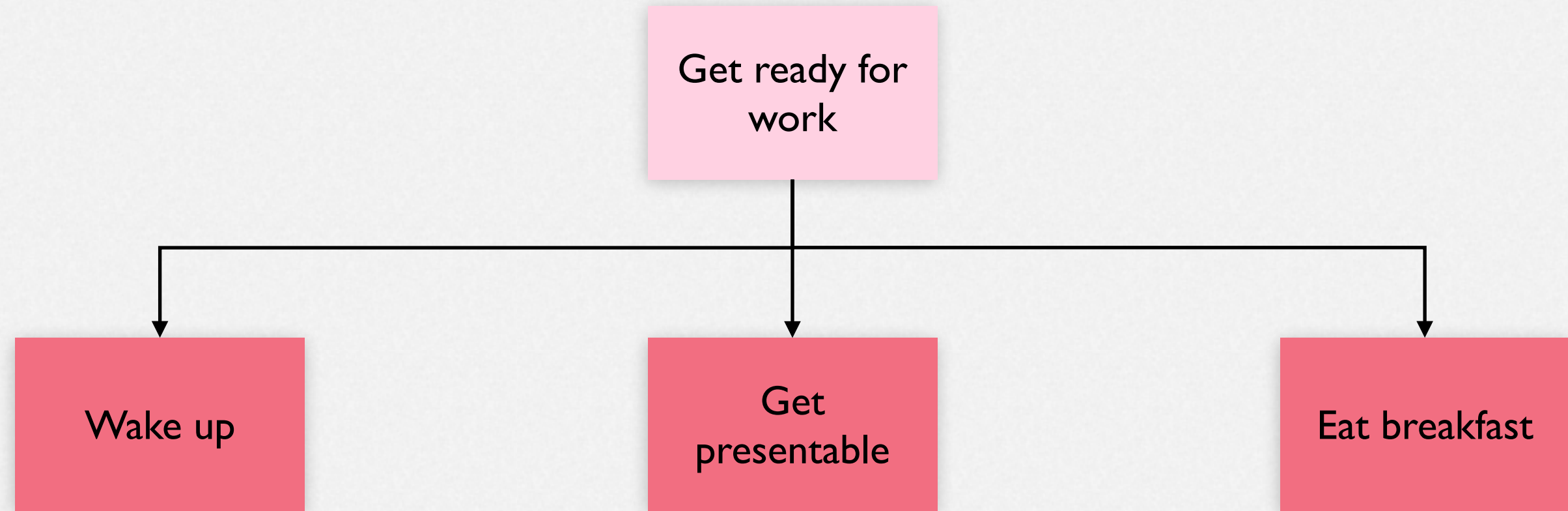
A just-in-time hierarchical breakdown of the work that needs to be done for any given feature/increment.

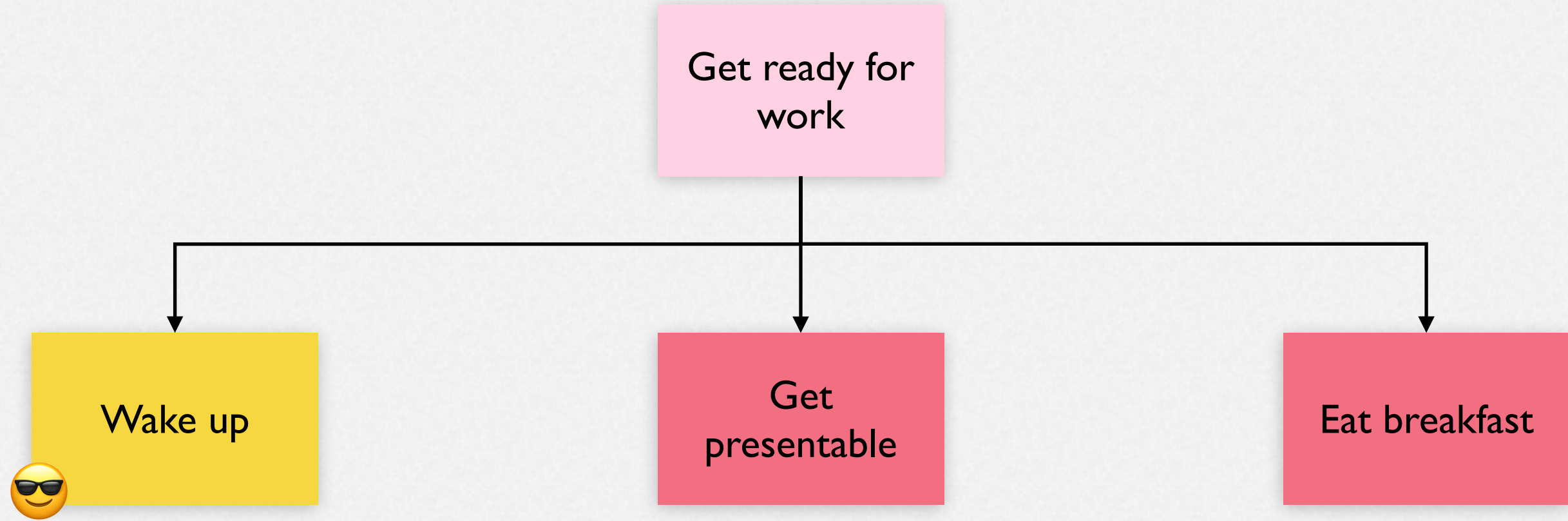
Get Ready for Work

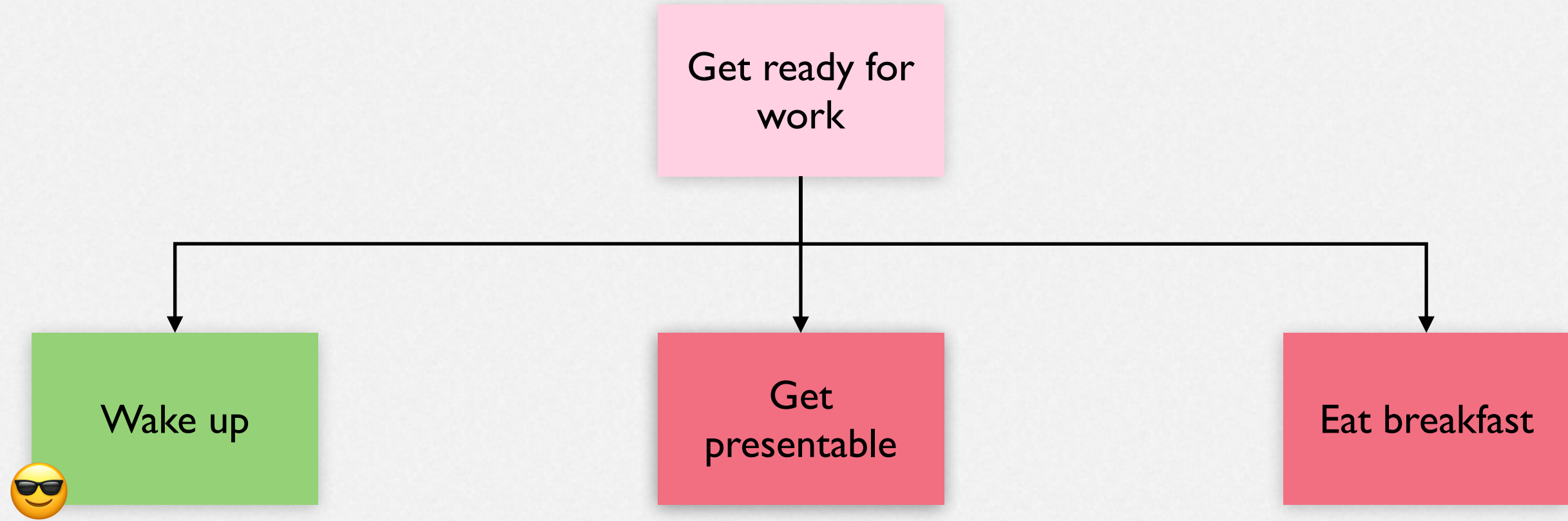
Get ready for
work

1. Wake up
2. Get presentable
 - 2.1. Brush teeth
 - 2.2. Take shower
 - 2.3. Get dressed
3. Eat breakfast
 - 3.1.1. Measure beans
 - 3.1.2. Grind beans

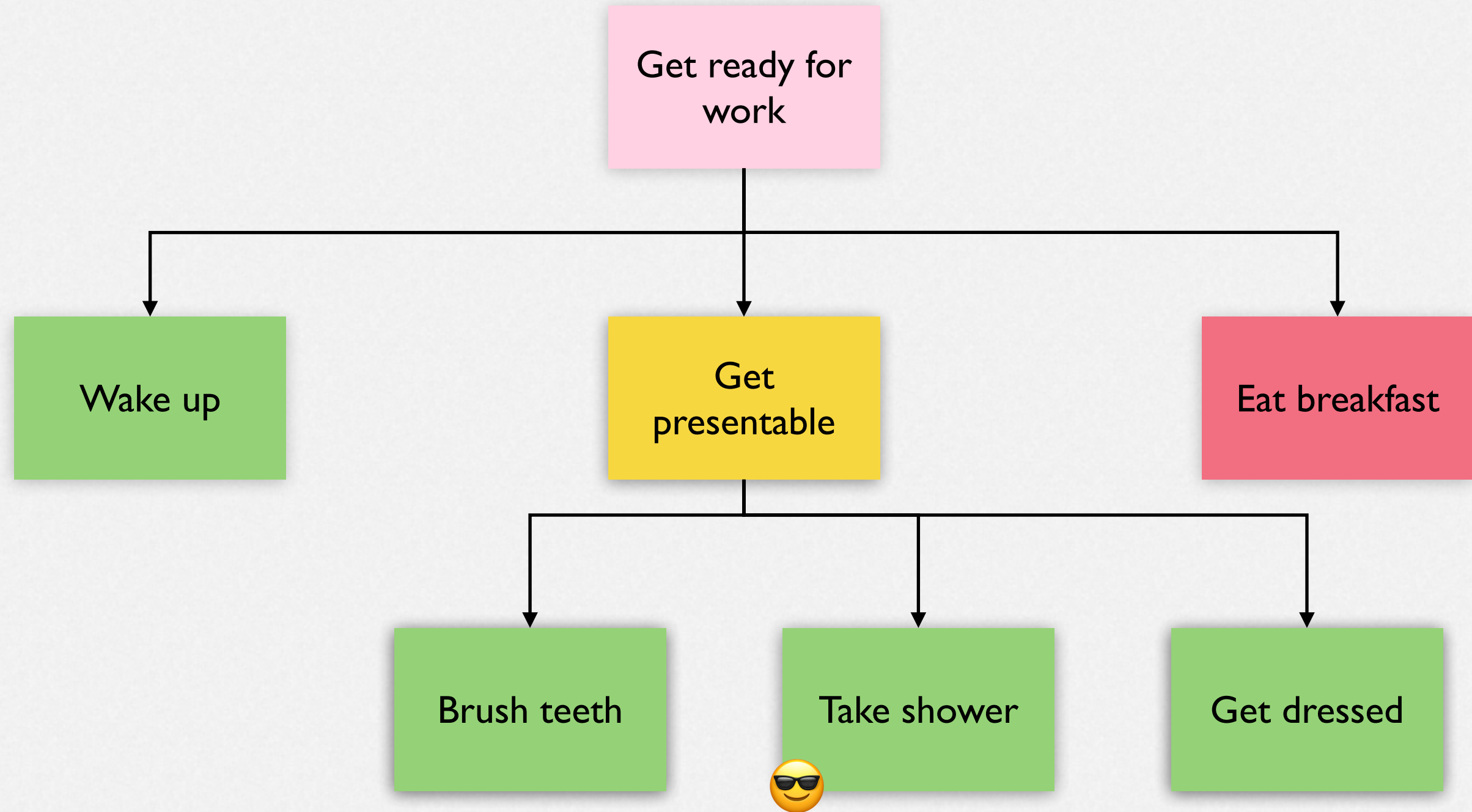
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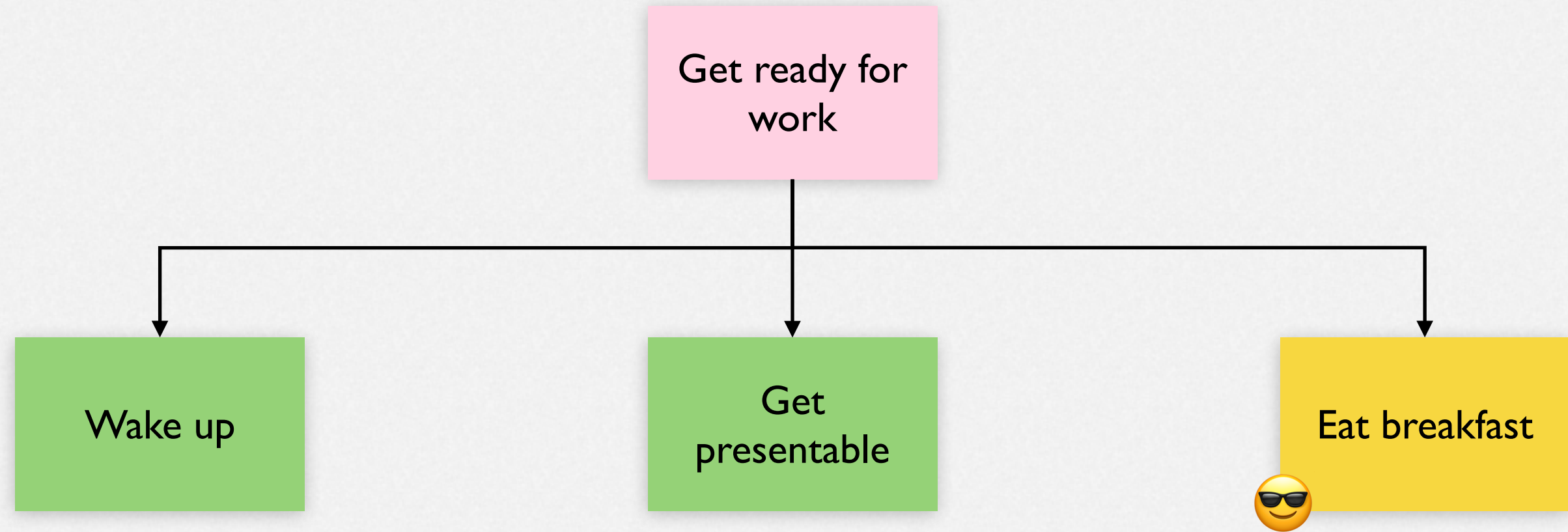


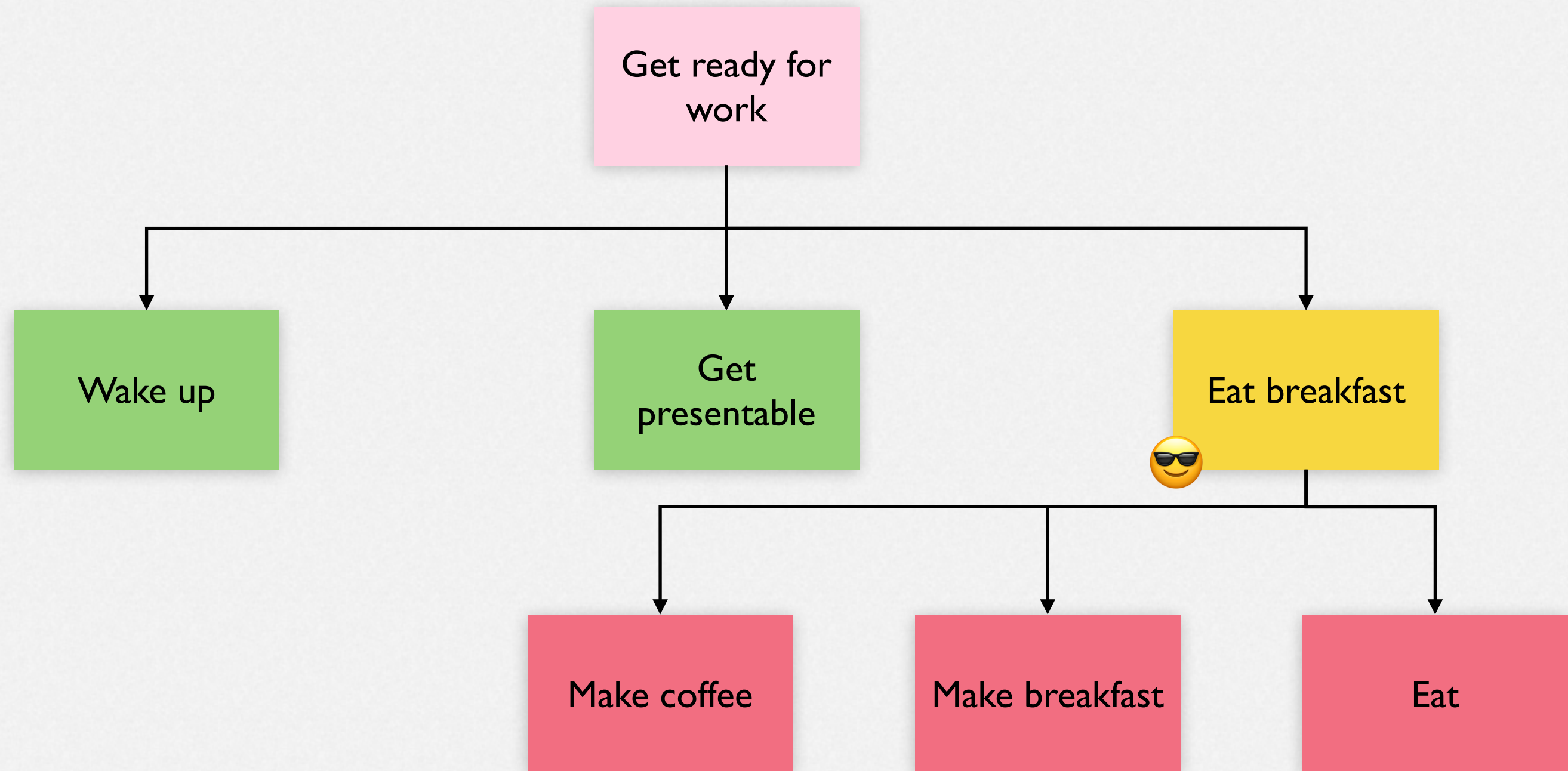


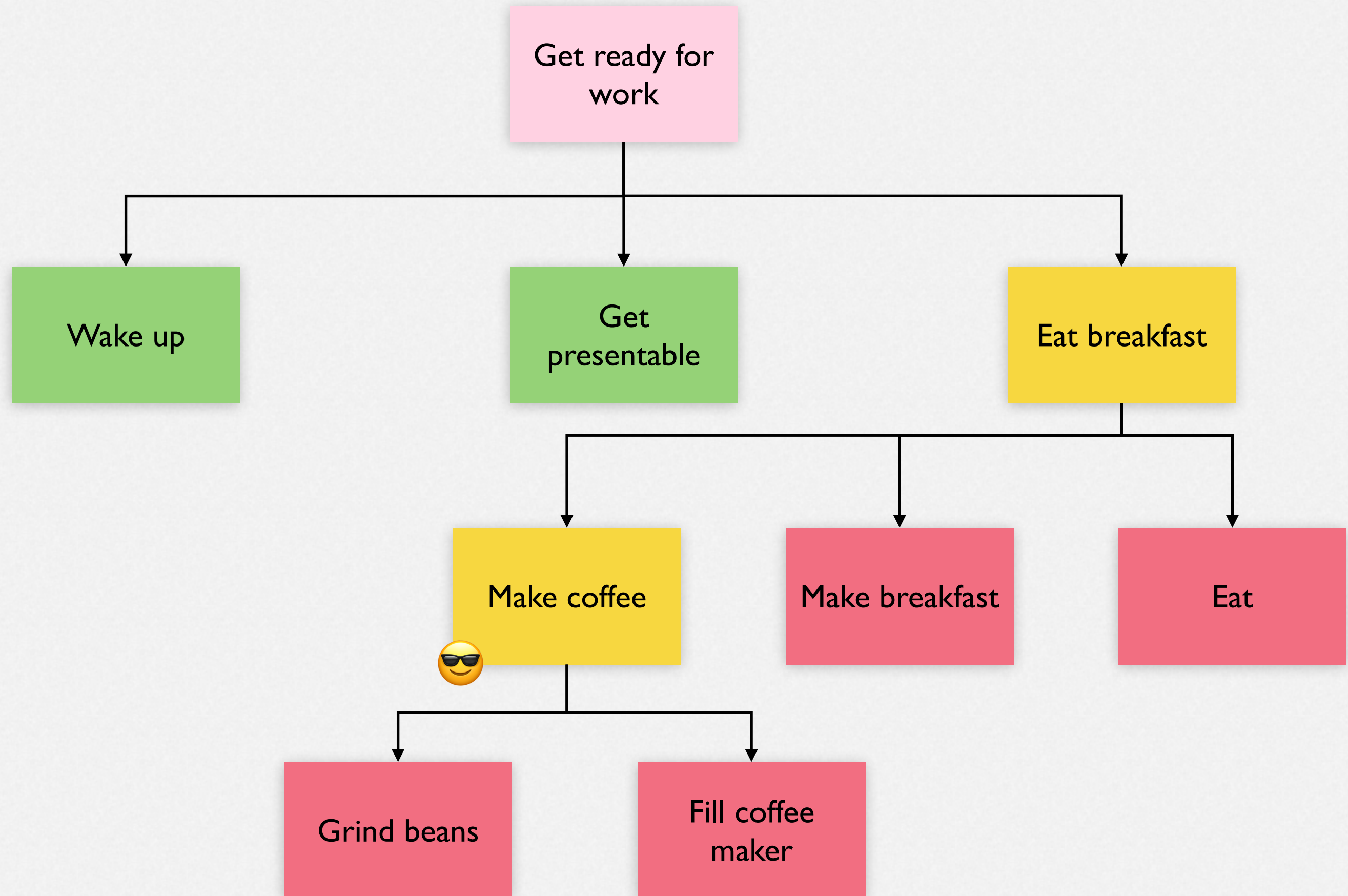


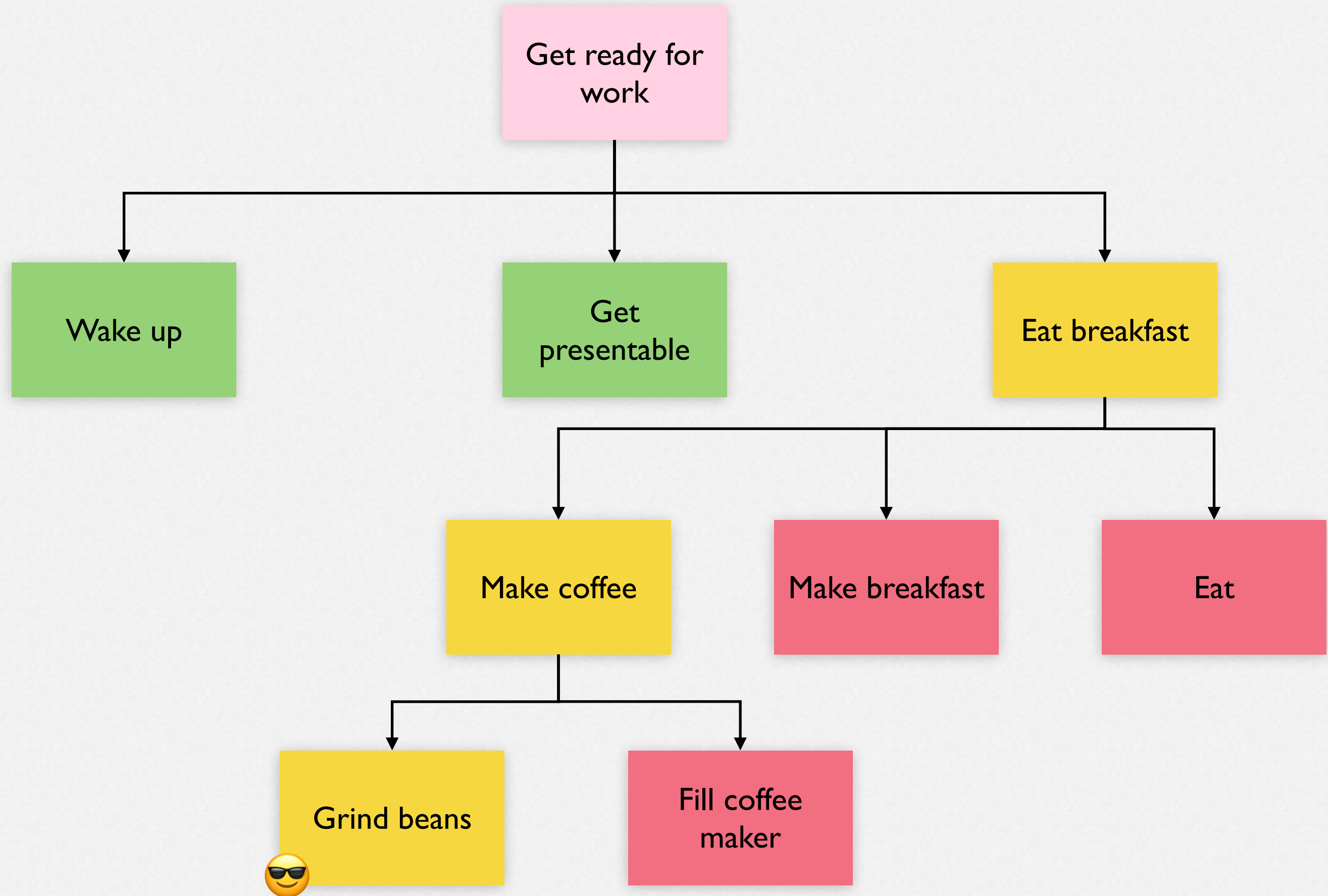


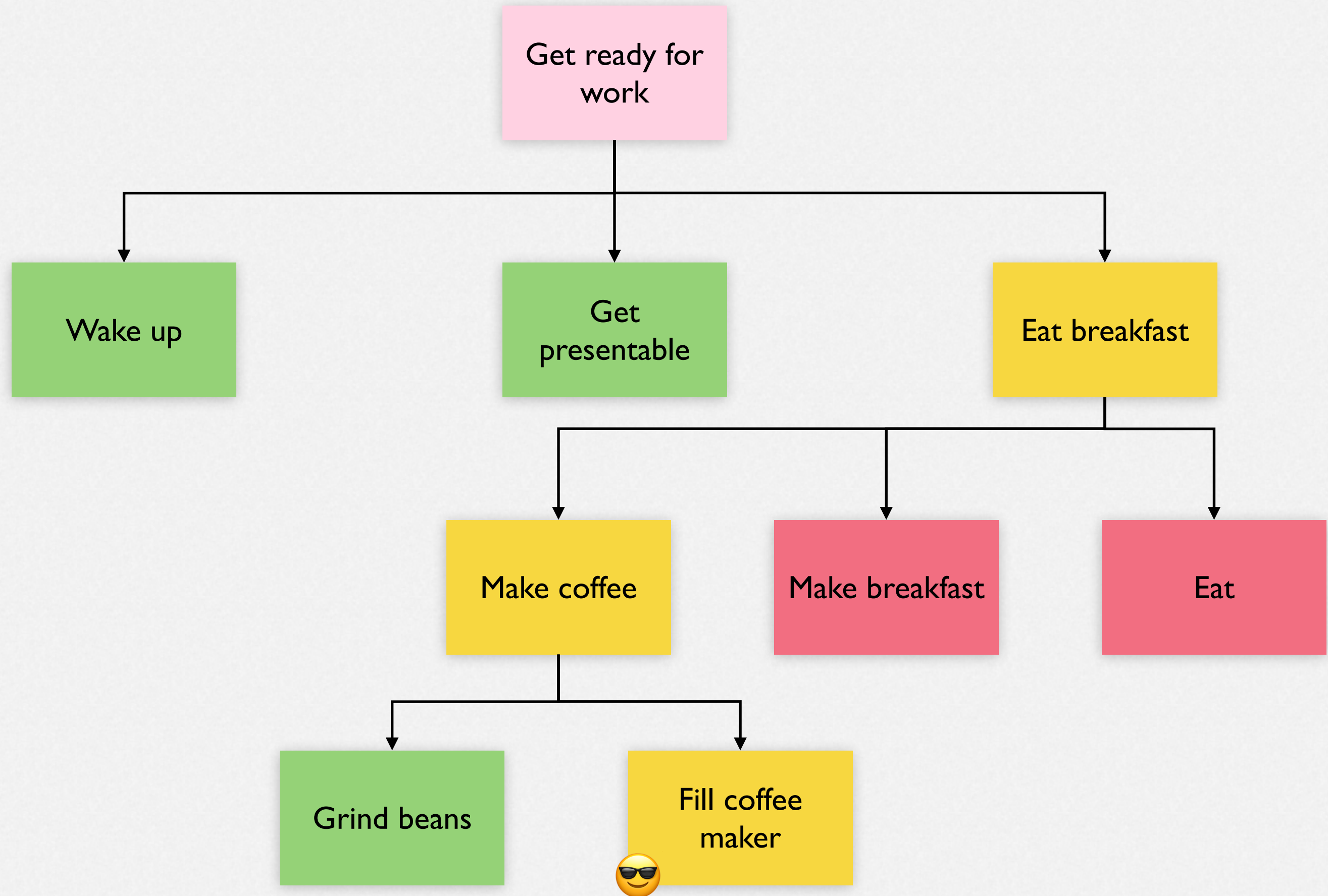


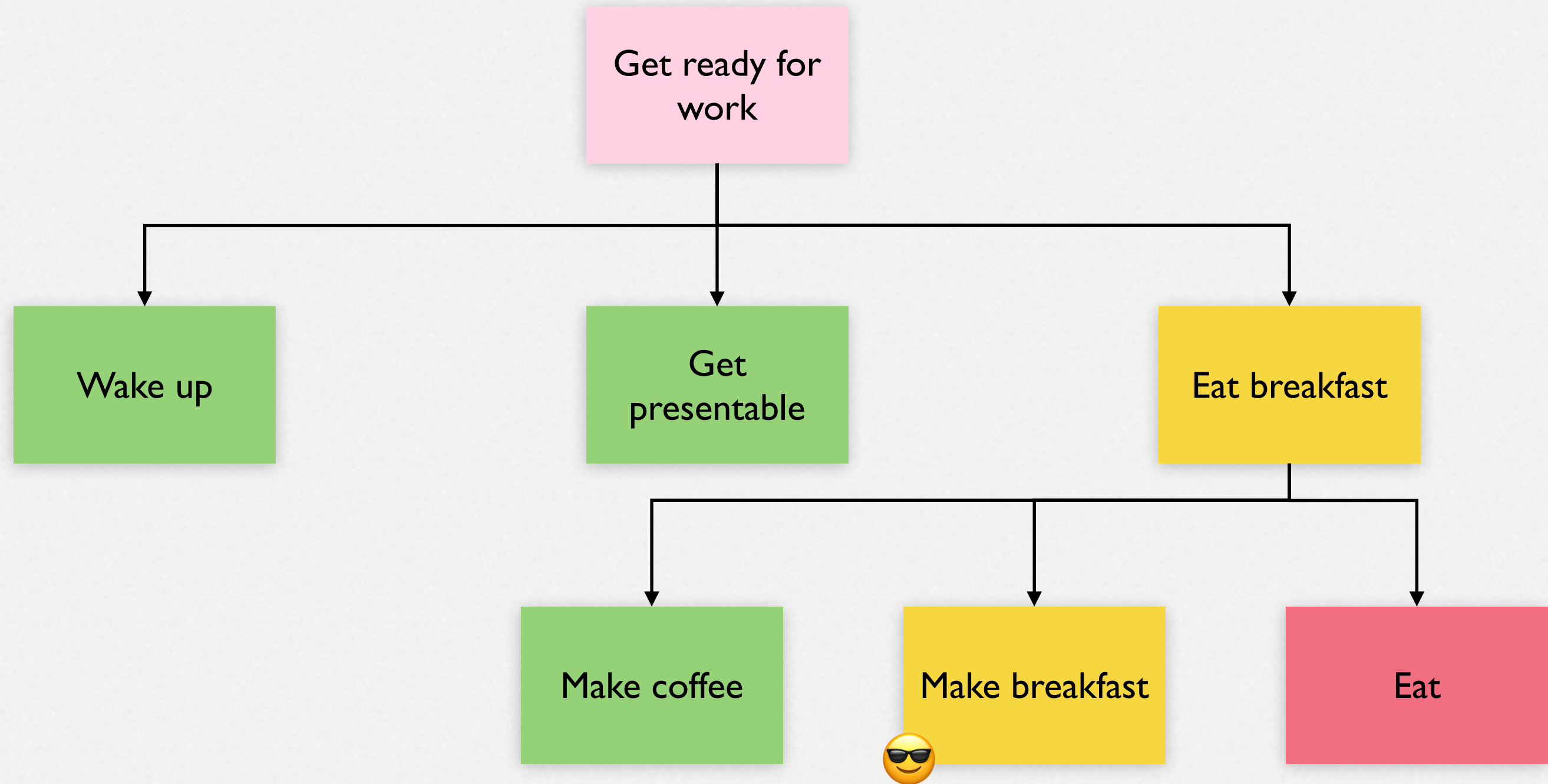


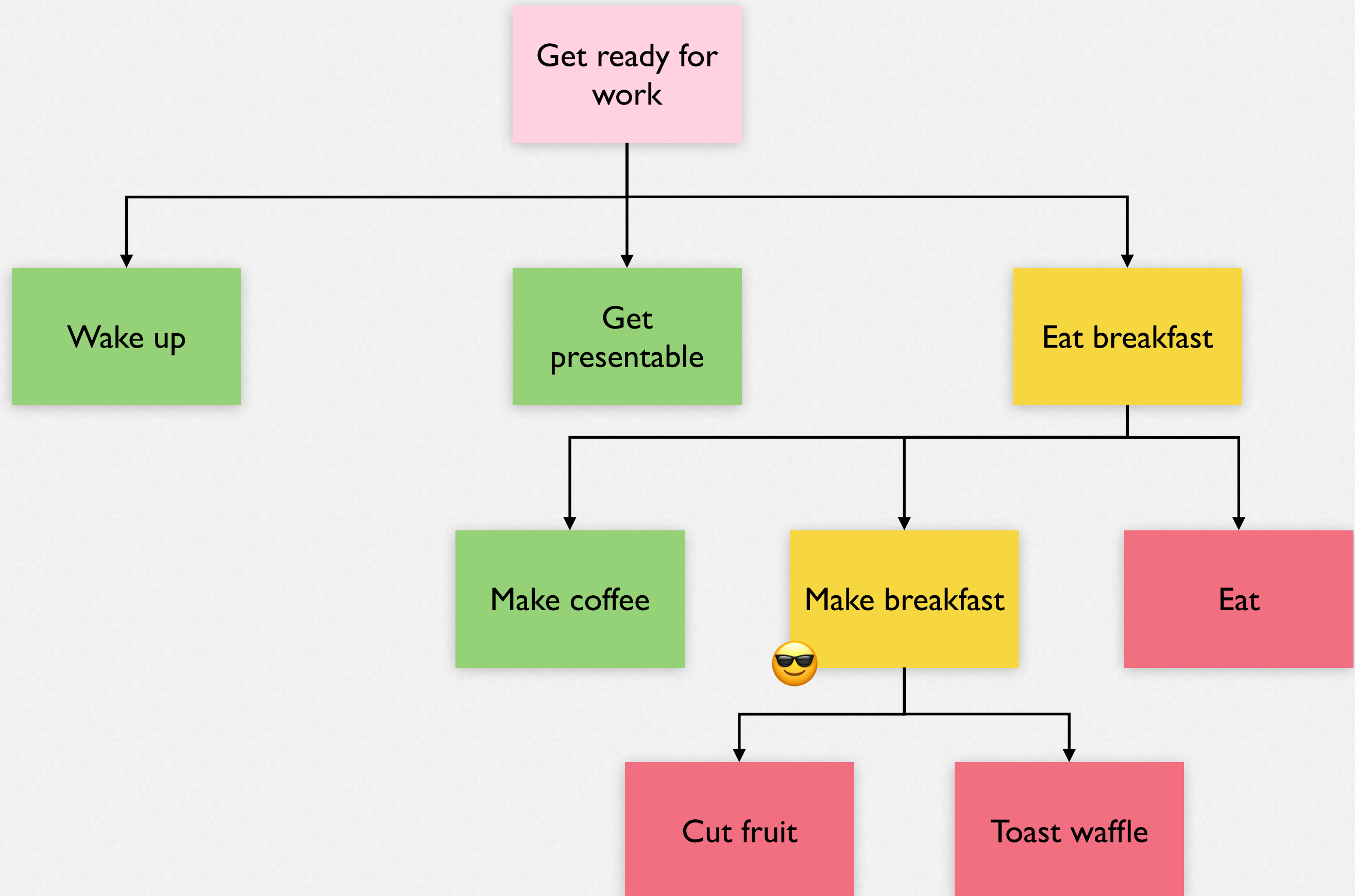


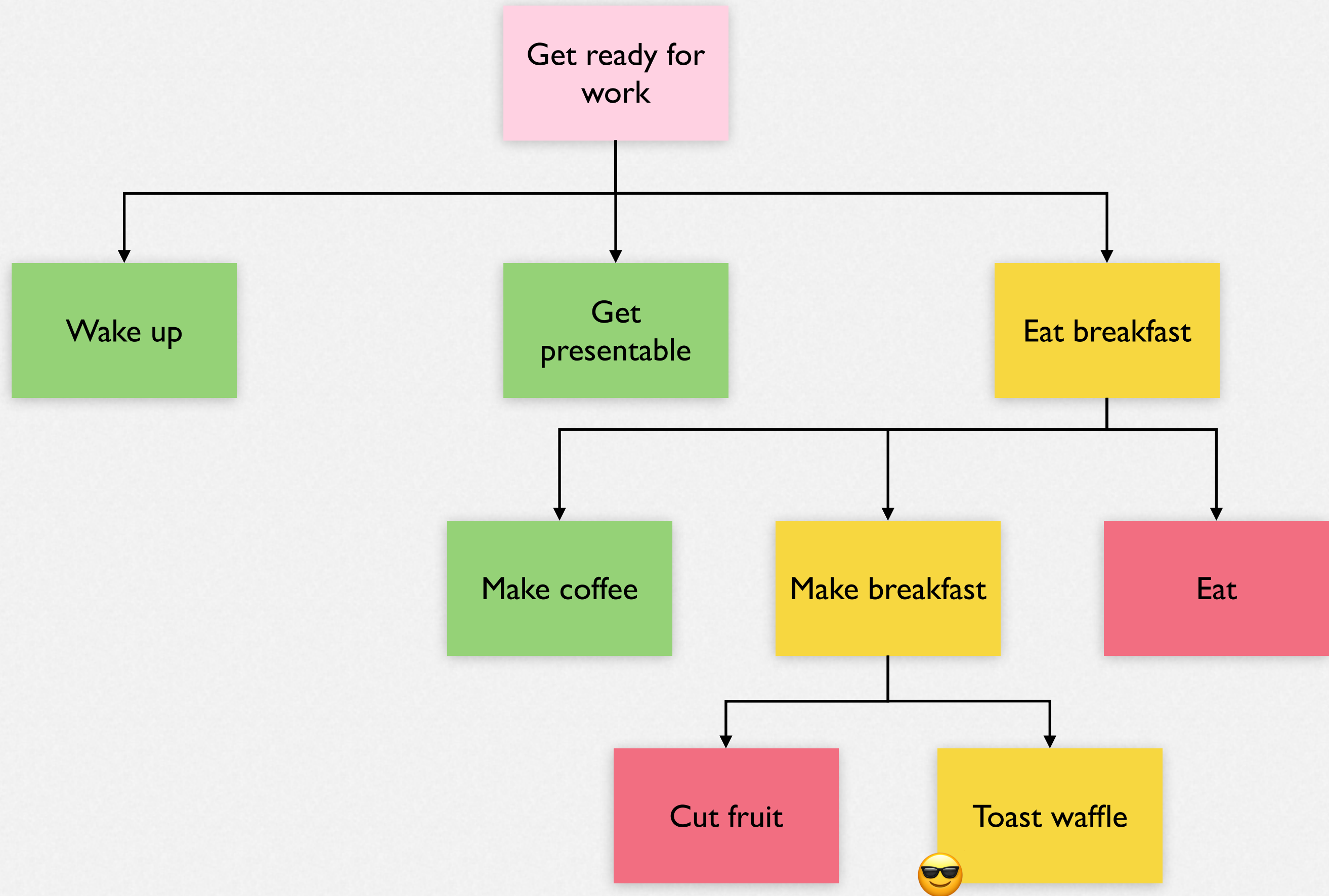


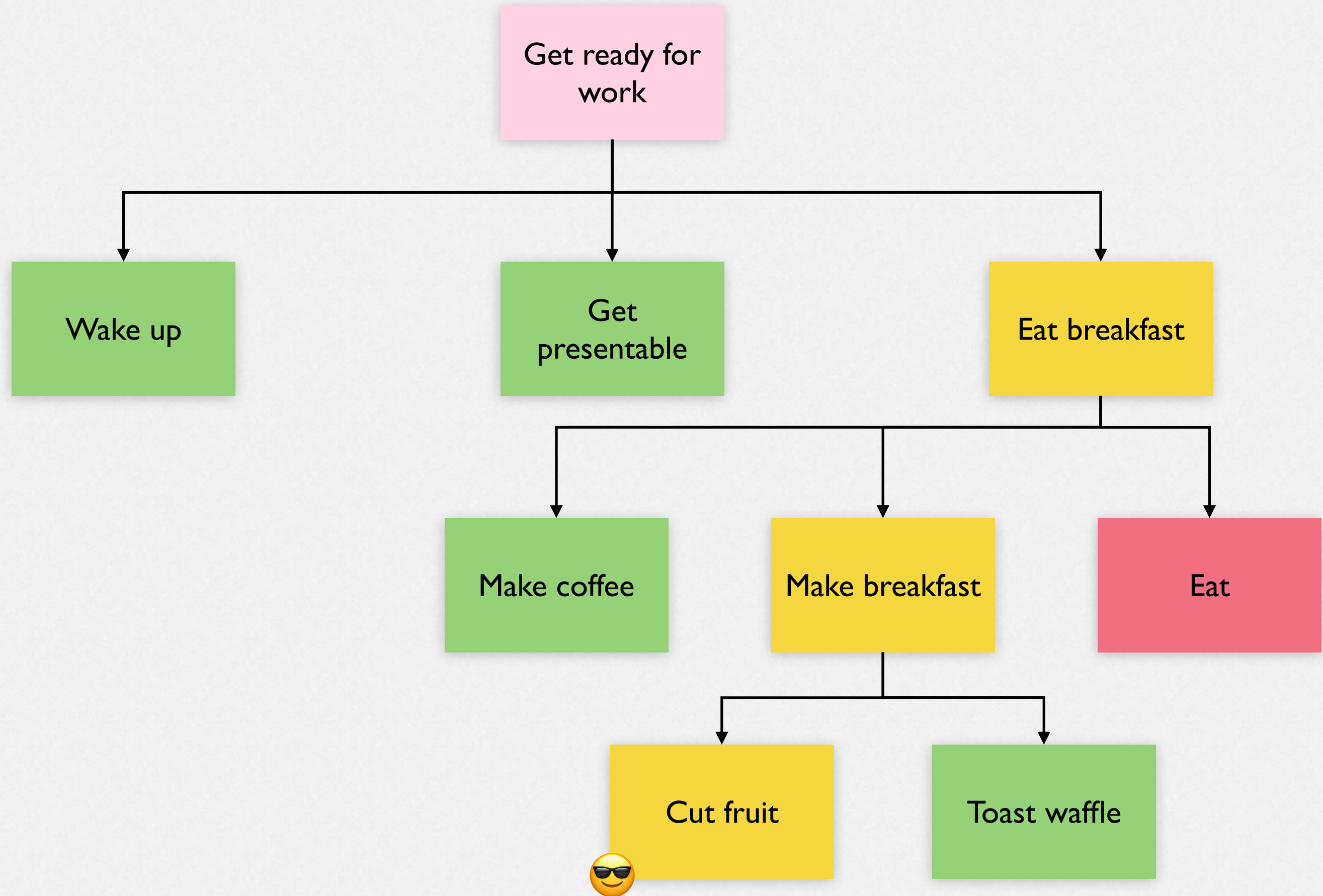


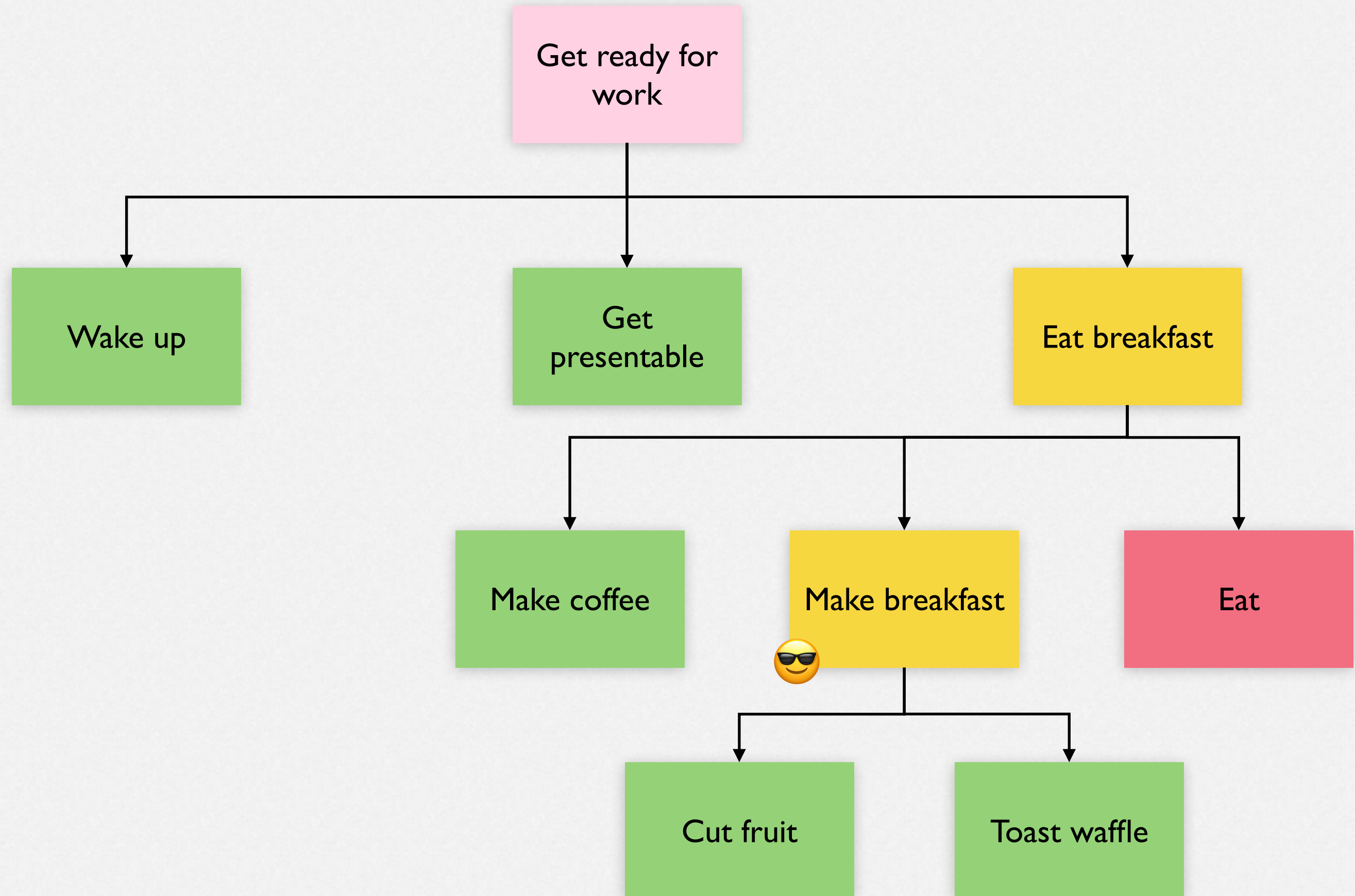


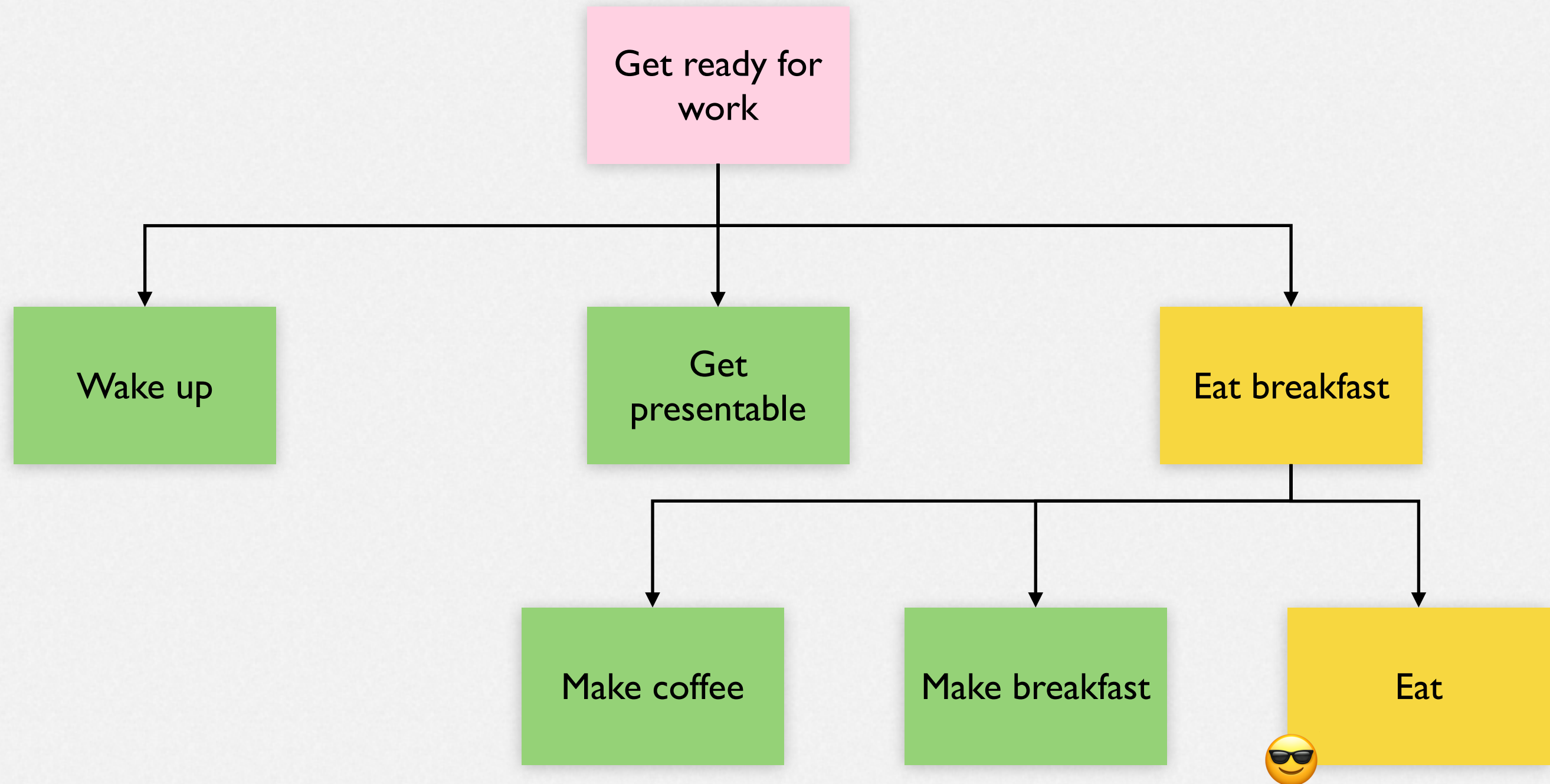


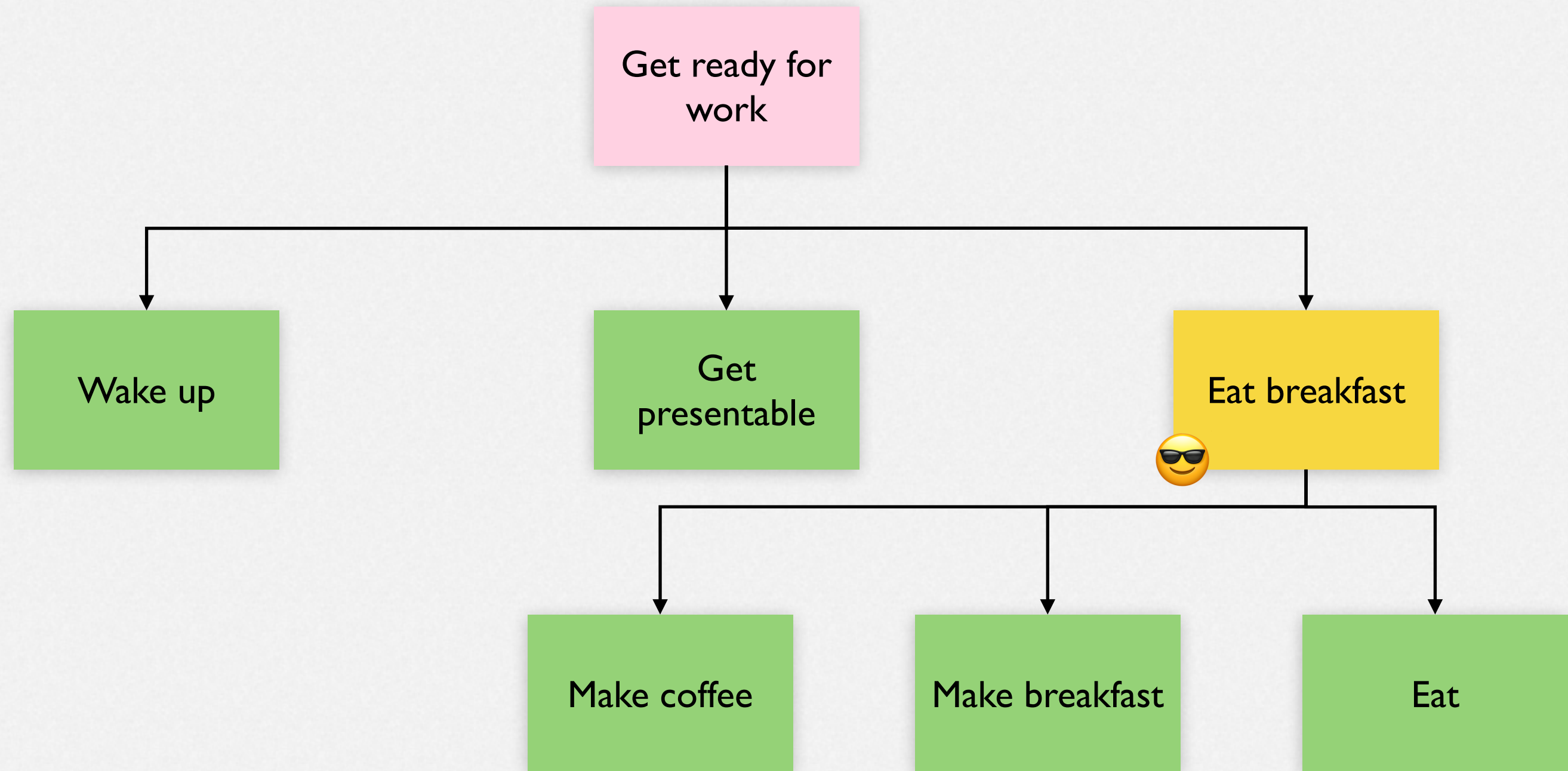


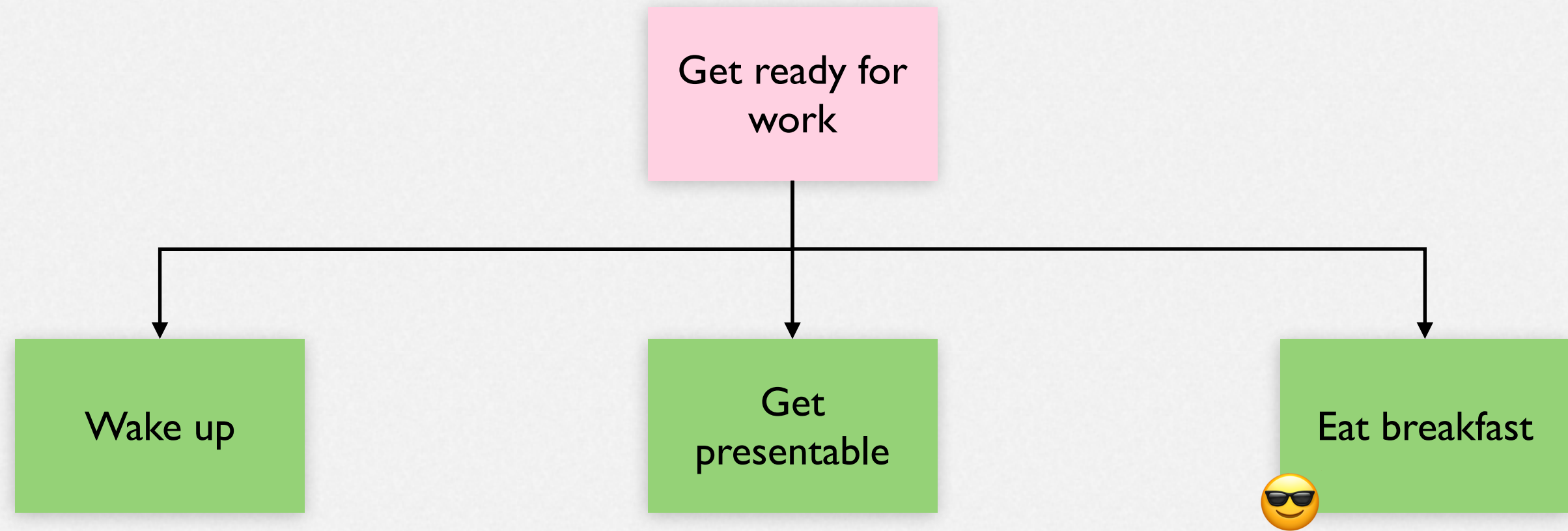












Discovery Tree Outcomes

- 👍 Lightweight view into current work
 - 👍 Ability to see what each person was working on
-
- 👎 Lots of confusion about how to use discovery trees
 - 👎 Trouble breaking down work into small (1-2 hour) tasks
 - 👎 Desire to use as record of individual accomplishments
 - 👎 Tendency for people to assign themselves to many tasks at once
 - 👎 Tendency to build out entire discovery tree from beginning
 - 👎 Confusion about what to put in discovery tree vs. issue tracker

FAST Conclusions

A “tribe” of people who self-organize into teams on a frequent cadence.

- Easy to incorporate specialties such as UX
- Incredibly responsive to changing business needs
- Collective ownership may be a challenge
- Team dynamics may be an issue

My Next FAST Experiment

1. Start by teaching a team Extreme Programming
2. When team's XP skills are solid, merge with a closely-related team to create a FAST Tribe
3. Wait for new members' XP skills to develop
4. Assimilate more teams, 3-5 people at a time, like the Borg
5. Stop when FAST Tribe is feeling strain from size
6. Repeat to form multiple stream-aligned FAST Tribes

(This could be sped up with more XP coaches or existing XP teams.)



In Progress

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Ready to Start

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2
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In Progress

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