



Takeaways from the M-Enabling Summit 2025

Agenda

Conference recap

Part 1

About M-Enabling

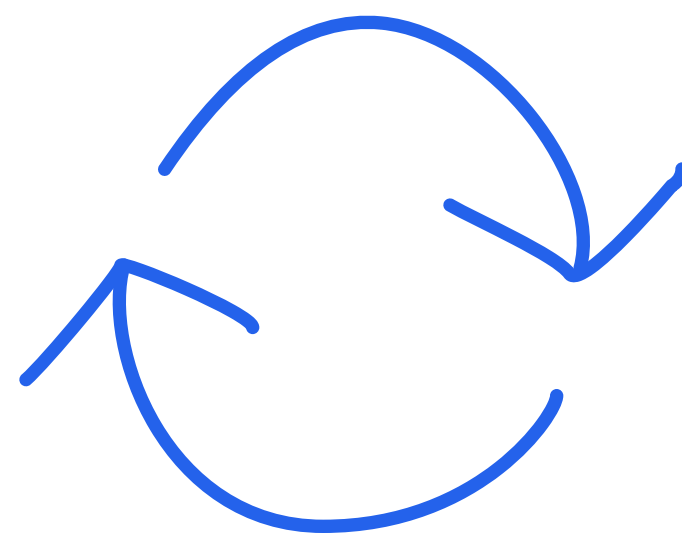
Panel highlights

Approaching accessibility as designers

Part 2

4 ideas for expanding our accessibility practices

Part 1: Conference recap



About the M-Enabling Summit

What?

an annual conference in Washington, D.C., promoting accessible technologies

Who?

It's for tech companies (leaders, developers, designers, researchers) + policymakers

Why?

Foster dialogue and collaboration through networking opportunities, panels, and an exhibit hall

Some panels I attended...

Agentic AI for Natural Interfaces and Hyper Personalization

Accessible and Ethical Use of AI in Disability Contexts

Humanizing Digital Accessibility Through Lived Experiences

The Current and Future State of Indoor Navigation

How the EAA and U.S. Policies Are Transforming Accessibility

Accessibility, AI, and the Next Generation of Wearables

Accessible customer experiences for deaf & hard of hearing users

Promising Practices for UX Testing with the Disability Community

Marketing Accessibility to Stakeholders

Accessible and Ethical Use of AI in Disability Contexts



Generative AI usually doesn't write accessible code

Even when explicitly prompted to create accessible components, AI-generated code is only successful ~20-50% of the time

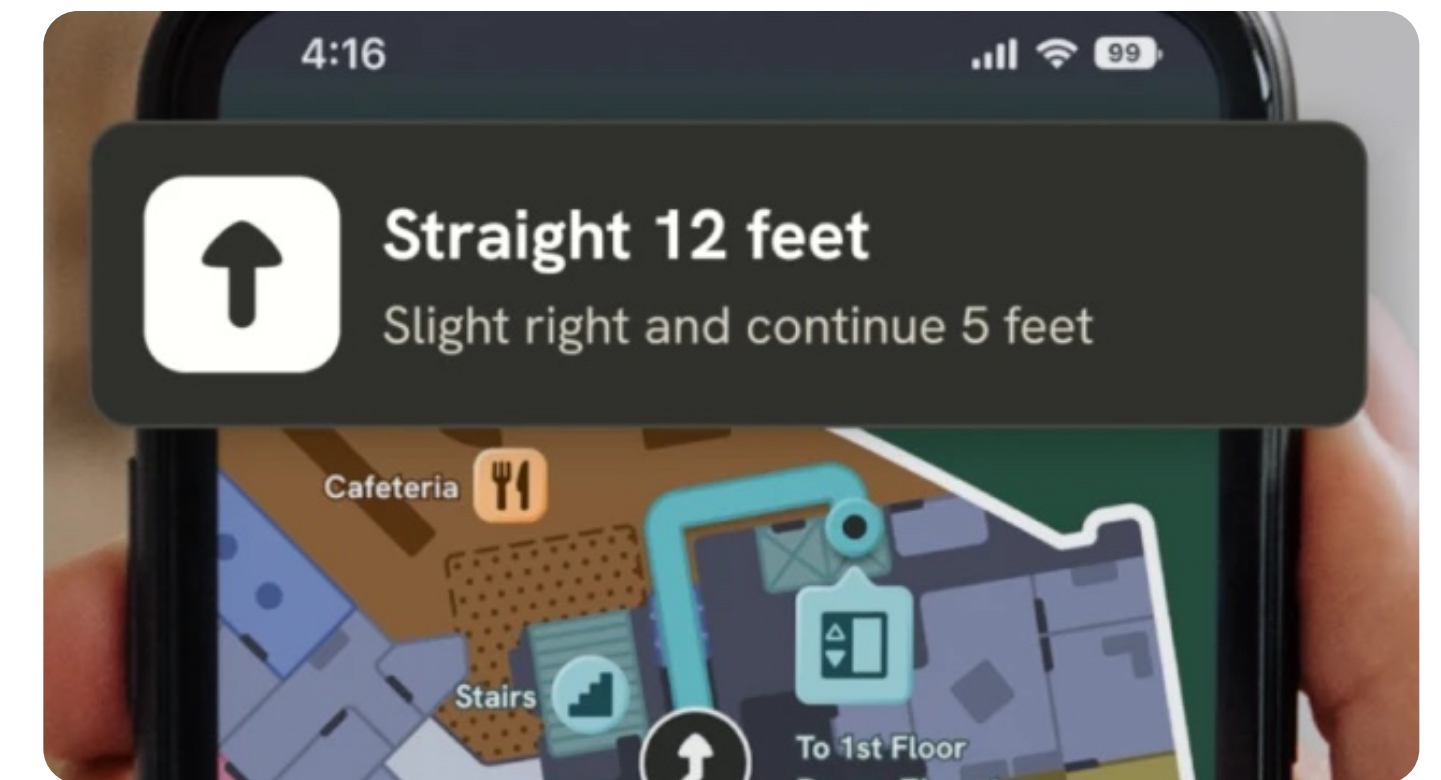
Transparency is especially important when designing inclusive experiences

Showing an LLM's chain of thought reasoning behind responses can help users catch and report bias in realtime, which helps improve models

Current and Future State of Indoor Navigation

Indoor navigation is a growing field where we can stand out as early adopters

- Indoor navigation is often used for airports and hotels
- Other travel-related use cases:
 - Transit centers
 - Museums
 - Event venues
 - National parks



Business cases for accessibility

*disclaimer: you don't need a business case for accessibility because equal access is a civil right!

Companies that excel in accessibility outperform competitors

On average:

- 28% higher revenue, 2x the net income, & 30% higher profit margins than competitors
- conversion rates ↑ 50%

Accessible products = increased customer loyalty

When someone with a disability finds a product that works well for them, they're likely to keep using it for as long as it serves them

Spending time and money upfront → save both in the long run

If we don't put in the effort early, we have to go back and retroactively make up for it (time consuming AND lower quality)

Part 2: Approaching accessibility as designers





Center people with
disabilities



Inclusive design
benefits ALL users



Accessibility isn't just a
checklist



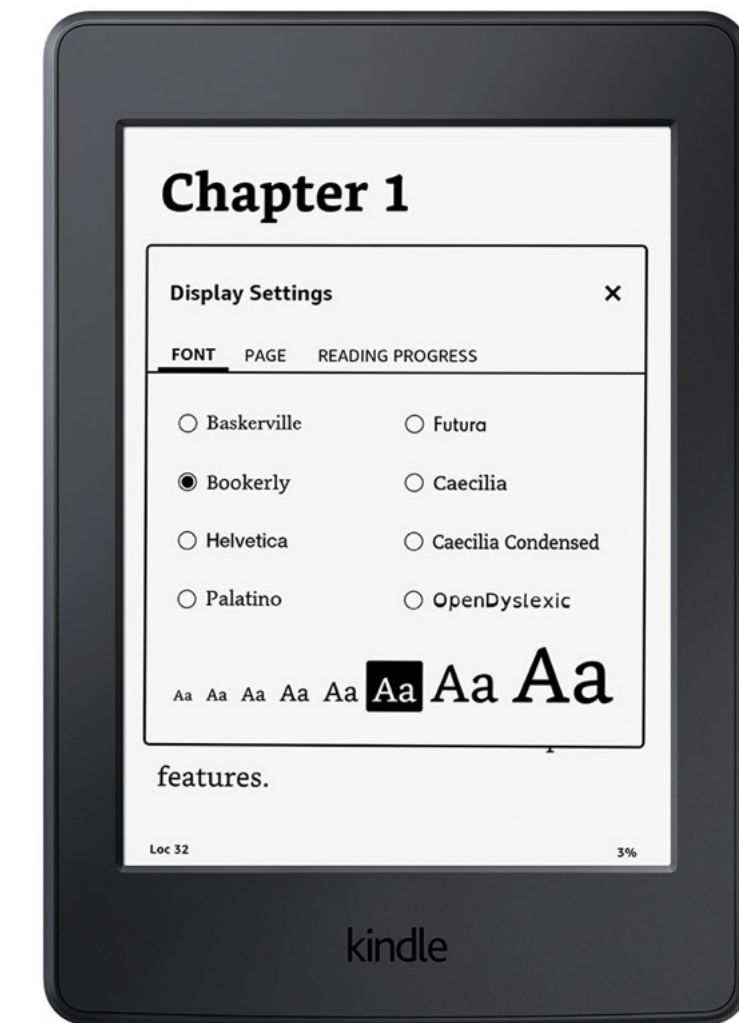
Don't let uncertainty
hold you back!

1. Centering lived experiences



[View board ↗](#)

2. Designing for people with disabilities = better experiences for everyone



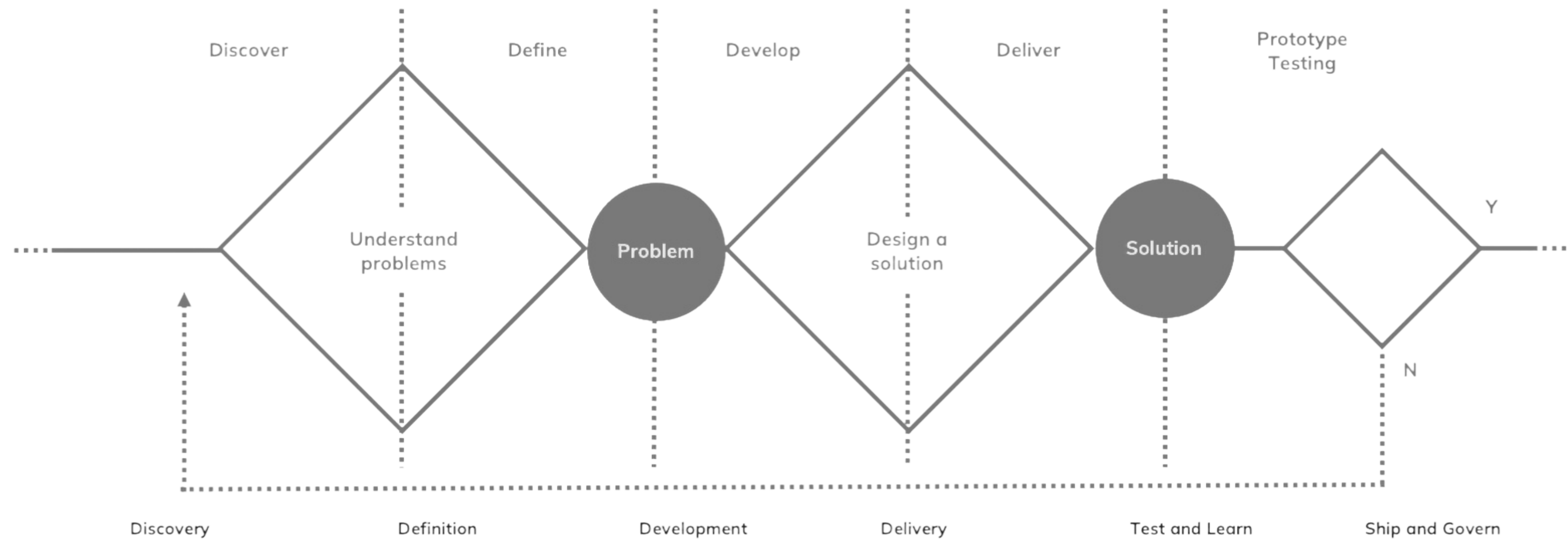
3. Accessibility isn't just a checklist



You don't have to start here!

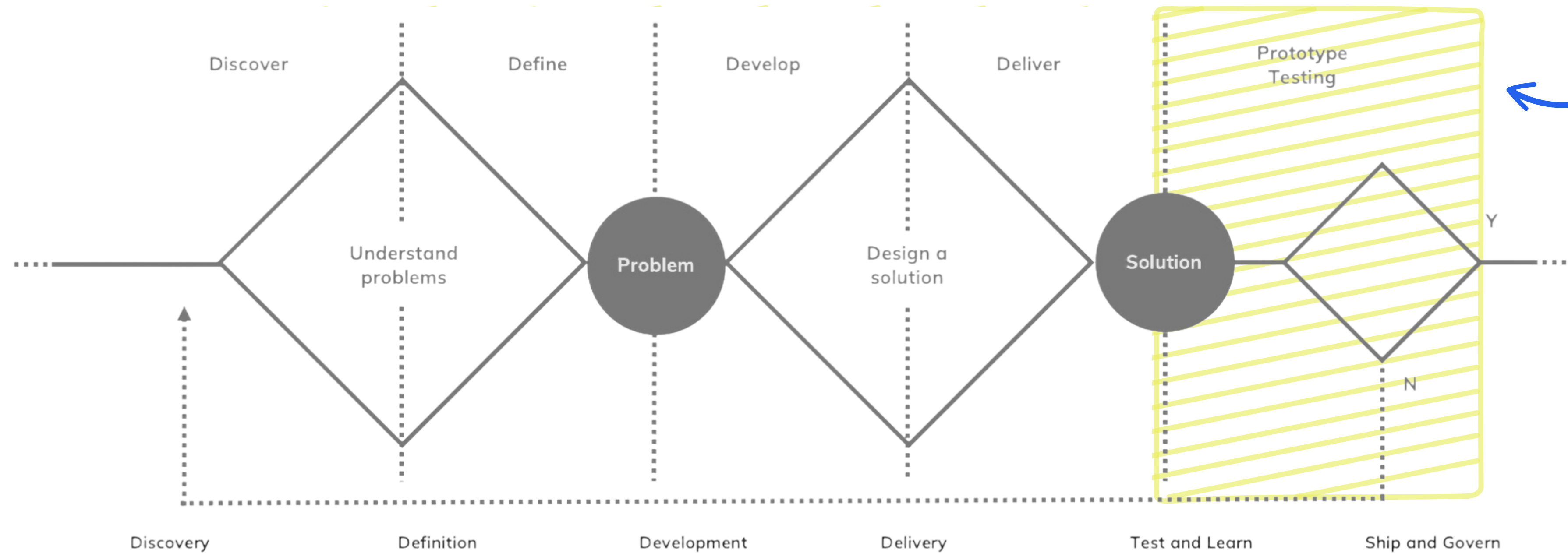
Jumping right into the documentation can be tedious and isn't actually the first step in creating high-quality accessible designs

Let's zoom out and look at the process...



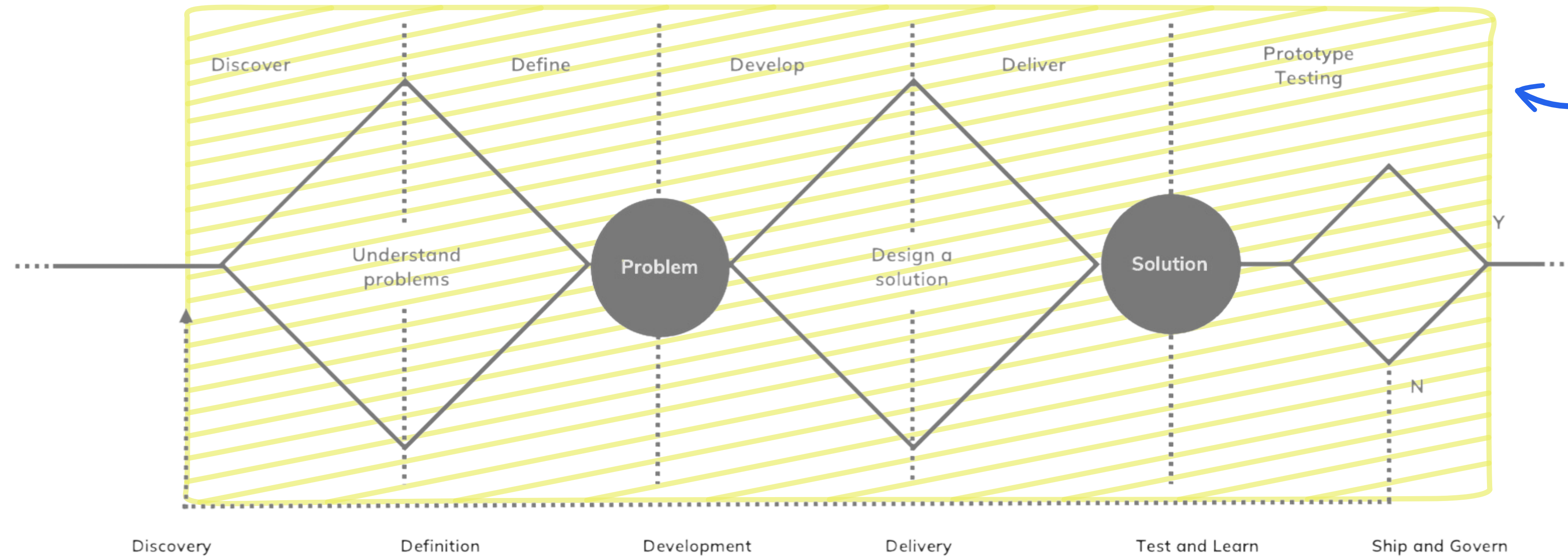
Let's zoom out and look at the process...

this is when most of us start
thinking about accessibility
(if at all)



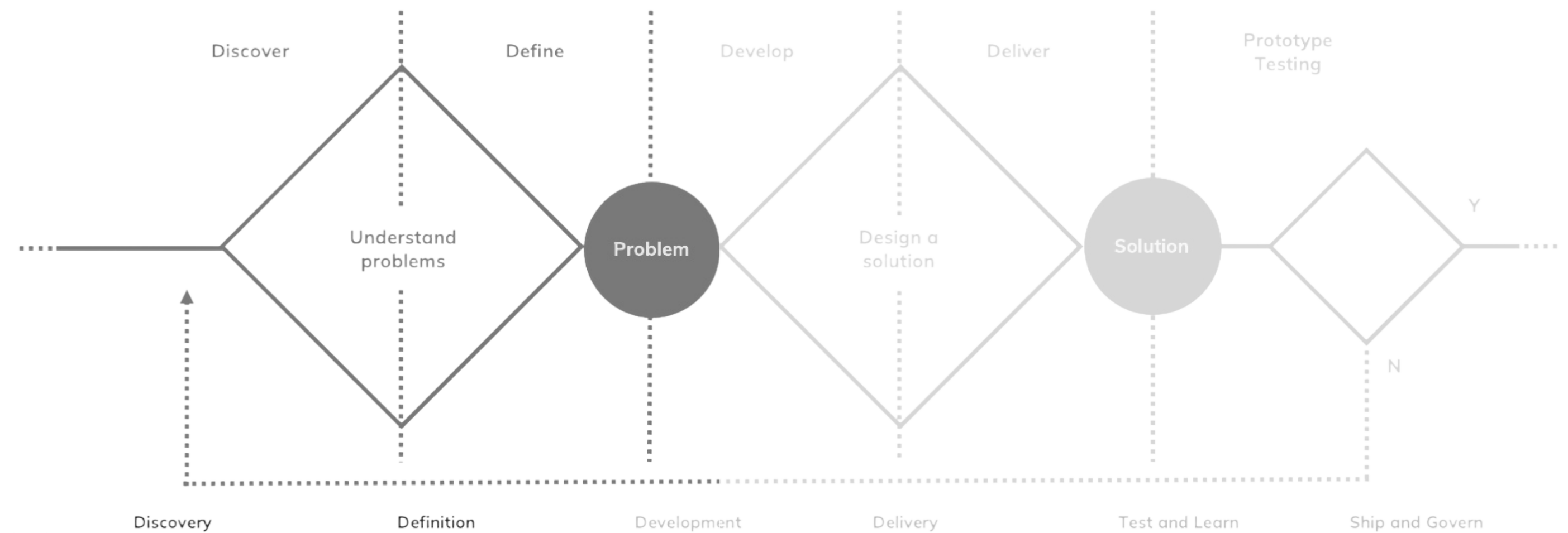
Let's zoom out and look at the process...

but accessibility should
be considered during every
step of the design process



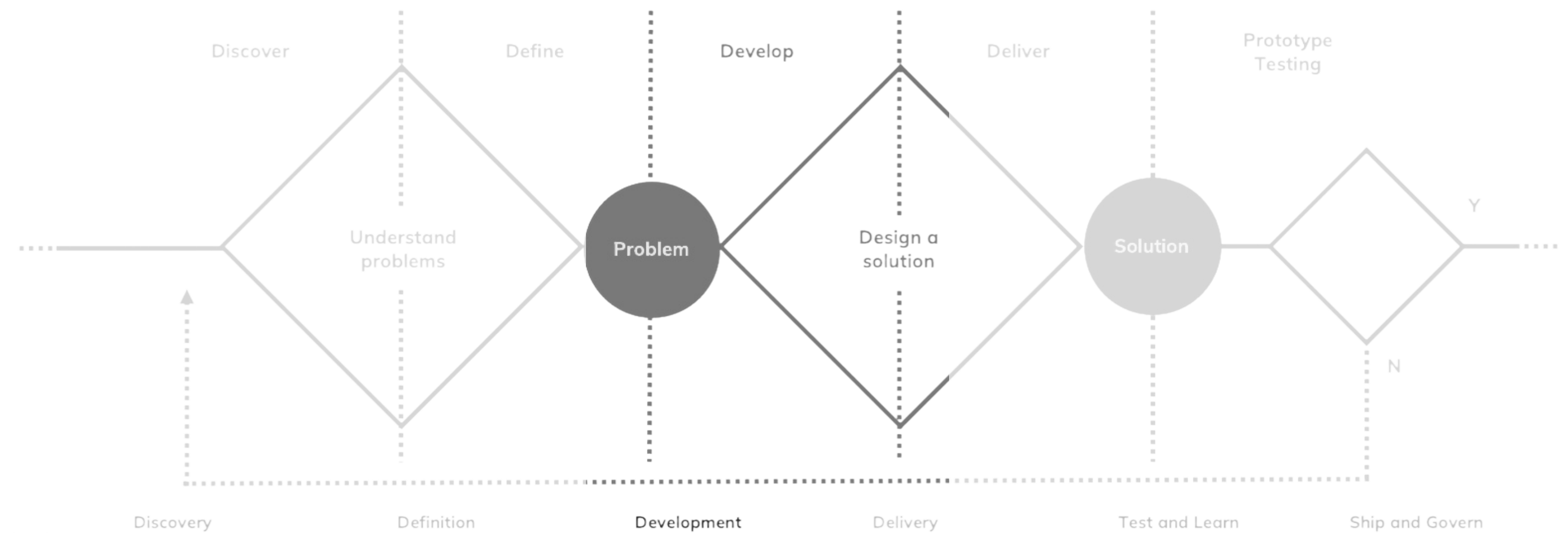
Discovery and Definition

- Include PWD in early research
- Consider PWD when doing journey and empathy mapping
- Test accessibility features (like screen readers, text size, contrast, etc.) as part of competitive audits
- Incorporate these learnings into hard requirements during the definition phase



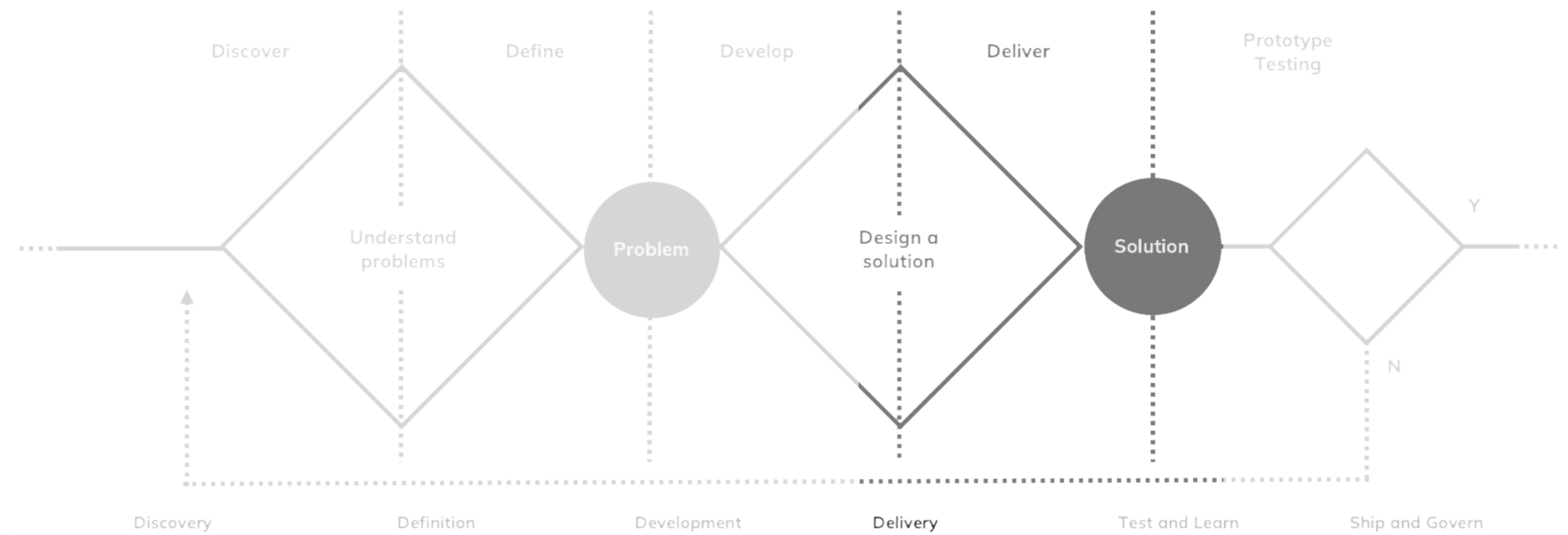
Development

- Use components that already have accessibility functionality and documentation
 - If not, add accessibility specs to your design
- Collaborate with content designers about information hierarchy and how screen readers will navigate/dictate content



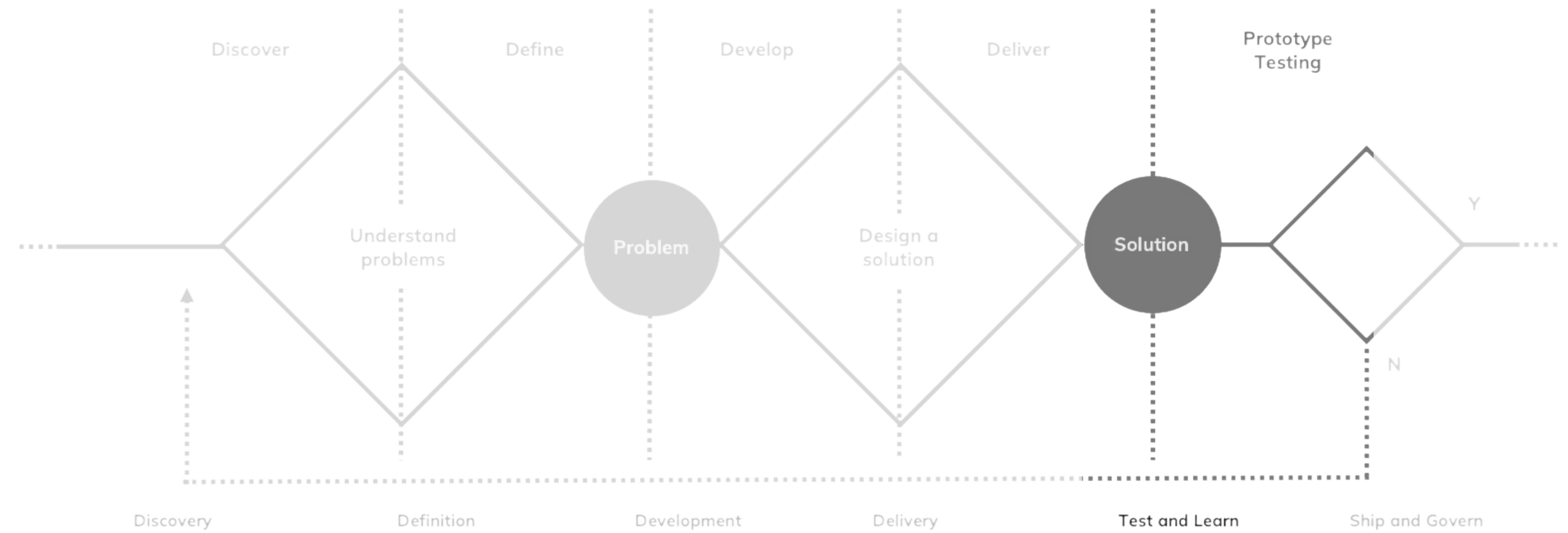
Delivery

- Check your work against accessibility guidelines
- Champion accessibility when sharing designs with stakeholders
- Use design crits as an opportunity for knowledge sharing and championing accessibility (even if you don't know the answers!)



Test and Learn

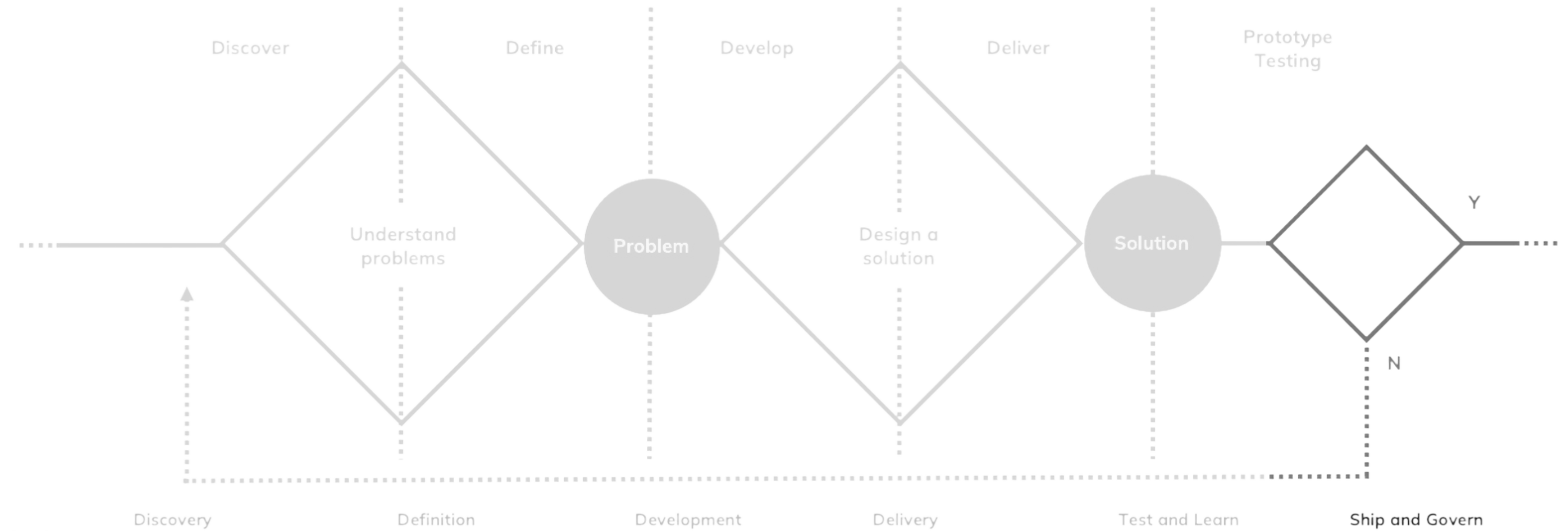
- Test how assistive technologies work with your design
- Include PWD in usability studies *



* “Nothing about us, without us, is for us”
(phrase coined as part of the protests
that resulted in the passage of the
Americans with Disabilities Act)

Ship and Govern

- Accessibility is never done, plan to revisit and test your designs periodically, especially if it gets a lot of traffic
- The best accessibility is done in a continuous improvement loop, being visited and revisited



4. Don't let uncertainty hold you back!



Lead with curiosity

- Learning about accessibility starts with knowing what you don't know
- The BEST skill you can have in this space is willingness to listen and learn!

Opening yourself up to criticism = opening yourself up to improvement

Constructive feedback, especially from PWD, is essential to improving the accessibility of our products

“Your first attempt at making anything accessible will be awful.

Don’t use this as an excuse.

Even awful is better than 98% of what other people are doing.”

Sheri Byrne-Haber · [Giving a Damn About Accessibility](#)