

# EDUCATION SESSION # 2: ANTI-RACISM 101

**The Stratford City Centre Business Improvement Area  
October 5th, 2023**

**Facilitator: Leena Sharma Seth**



# Acknowledging the Land

“We acknowledge that Stratford is positioned on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. As we gather, we are reminded that the City of Stratford is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on land that was shared between the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.”

- City of Stratford

# Embodiment Practice



# Setting the Container



# Community Assumptions

The purpose of naming community assumptions in our work together is to make transparent what is often invisible and to ground ourselves in postures that will help us to embody a more equitable, inclusive, and accountable learning, reflection and transformational space.

- Oppression [racism] is systemic and structural, first and foremost, and interpersonal and personal in expression.
- It's all of us versus whatever the problem/oppression is.
- There is no neutral. Every decision and every choice has the potential to include or exclude, or to create deeper connection/disconnection.
- Our roles and responsibilities are different based on our social location.
- Racism, white supremacy and oppression cause trauma.
- Our mutual liberation and well-being are bound together.
- Binaries are bullshit. We recognize that there are a spectrum of responses and solutions, and oftentimes it's an AND, not OR conversation.
- We honour the full complexity and messiness of this work. We accept and expect non-closure.

# Community Agreements

- Ask for what you need, offer what you can.
- Listen with curiosity and compassion.
- Our impact is more important than our intent; we move with good intentions and remain committed to repairing any harm we may unintentionally cause.
- We avoid making assumptions about other people, including assumptions about their history, race, or lived experience.
- We are committed to progress over perfection.
- We center lived experience in equity, inclusion and anti-racism work because we recognize it as valuable insight and wisdom.
- We expect conflict and value it as an opportunity to deepen understanding, prioritize relationships, and to build common ground.
- We each work to decenter ourselves and make space for others. Especially if we identify as someone who holds dominant privilege because of our social location. Our roles, our accountability, and our work is informed by our social location.
- This is a no shame no blame space. Our focus is on accountability and how we will intentionally use our power, privilege and platform to build a more equitable and inclusive culture in our community.

# Agenda

- Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- Setting the Container
- Checking In
- Resourcing & Accountability
- Key Definitions in Equity & Anti-Racism
- What is Structural Racism?
- White Supremacy Culture
- Personal Reflection and Small Group Discussion
- Checking out

# Checking in

## **PERSONAL REFLECTION (5 minutes)**

Reflect on the video "What systemic racism in Canada looks like" that was offered as part of your preparation for this session. What is one phrase, idea, or insight that continues to sit with you today? Write it in the Jam Board via the link provided in the chat.

## **BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS (10 minutes)**

In your triad, have a brief discussion about either one share on the Jam Board that resonated with you, or the phrase, idea or insight you shared. Hold space for each other's voices, engage with what comes up, and sit with what you hear. We'll debrief together as a large group and invite one share from each breakout discussion group.

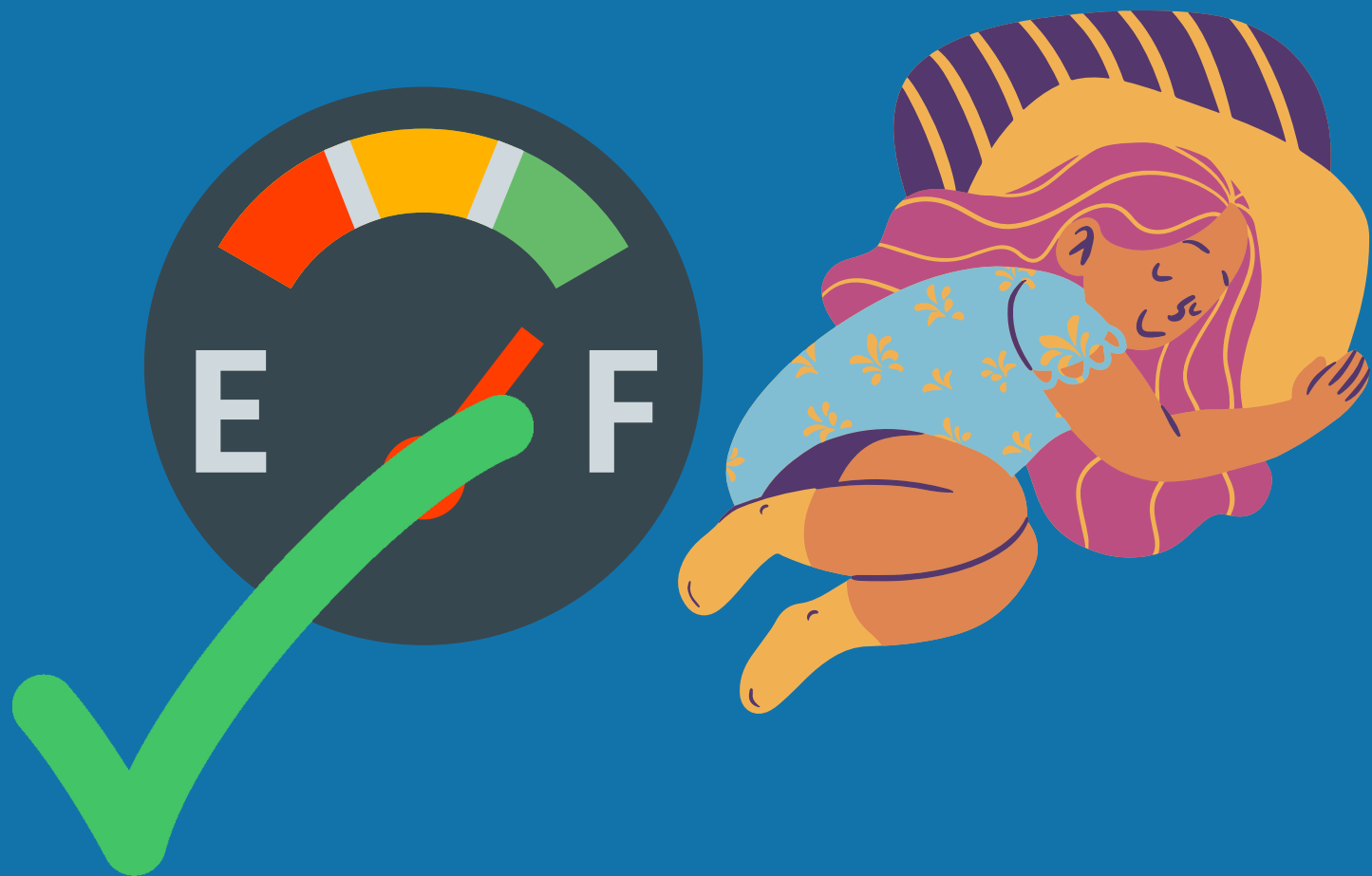


# Resourcing and Accountability

**Resources** are 'tools' that we can call on when things are tough.

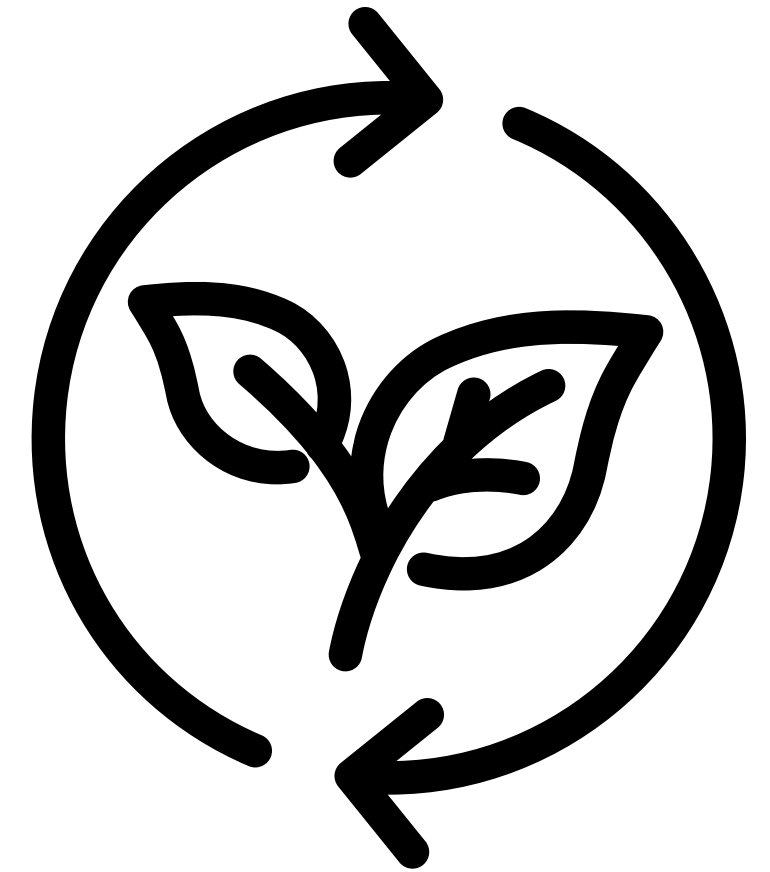
**Self-care** is the choice to take care of ourselves.

Source: [Counselling Directory](#)



# What does Resilience really Mean?

Resilience is our way of bouncing back after difficult, oppressive and/or traumatic experiences. It's part of how we live through very hard moments or times, and what can fuel happiness, connection and well-being.

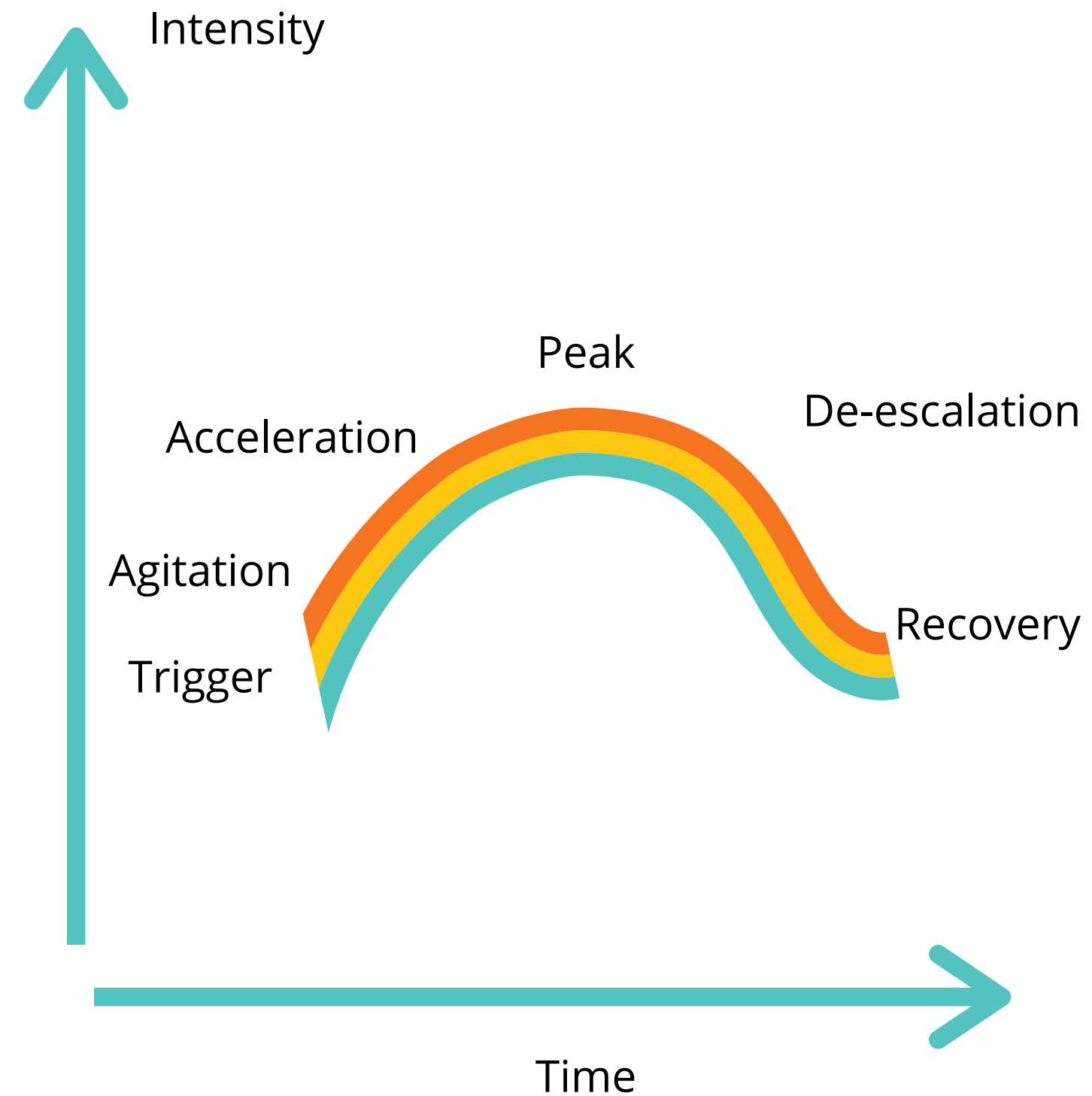


*Source: Generative Somatics*

Understand that you **will** be triggered in this work.

How can you support yourself to settle when you feel unsettled?

What strategies help you to stay engaged in emotionally charged situations or conversations?



**Accountability feels  
like an attack when  
you're not ready to  
acknowledge how  
your behaviour  
harms others.**

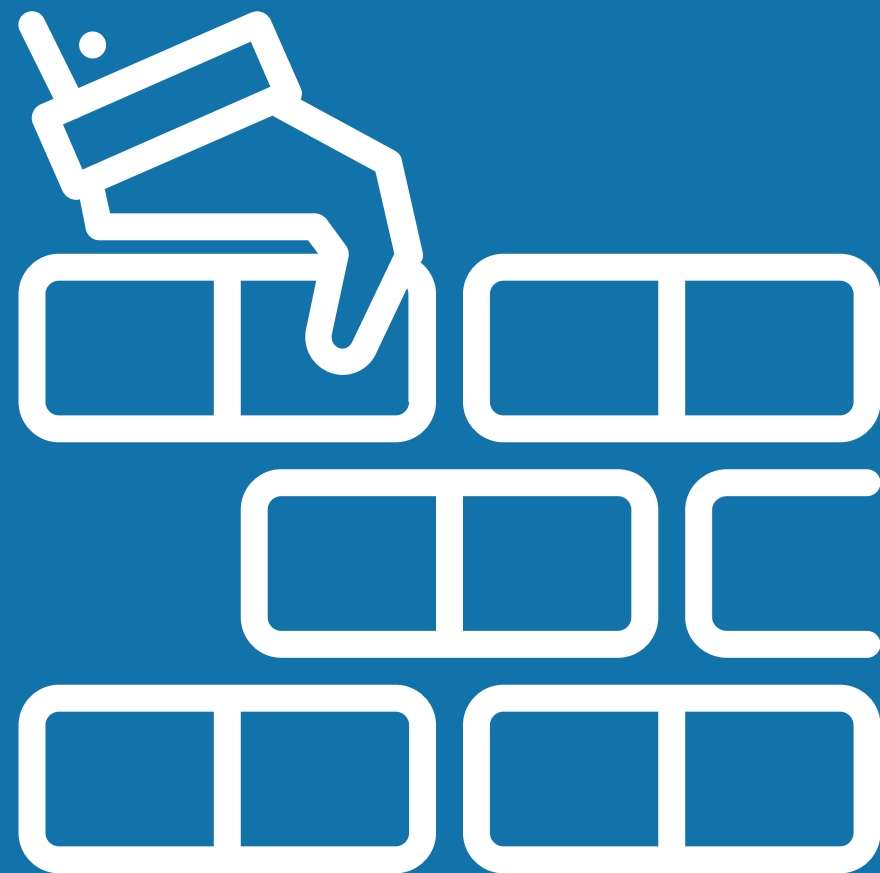
# Accountability:

"True accountability is not only apologizing, understanding the impact your actions have caused on yourself and others, making amends or reparations to the harmed parties; but most importantly, true accountability is changing your behaviour so that the harm, violence, abuse does not happen again." - Mia Mingus

# Harm

The definition of harm is to [intentionally or unintentionally] hurt or damage something or someone. (From: your dictionary). Harm can be physical, psychological, verbal, legal, social, economic, or emotional. Degrees of harm can vary from mild to extreme.

# Key Definitions in Equity & Anti-Racism



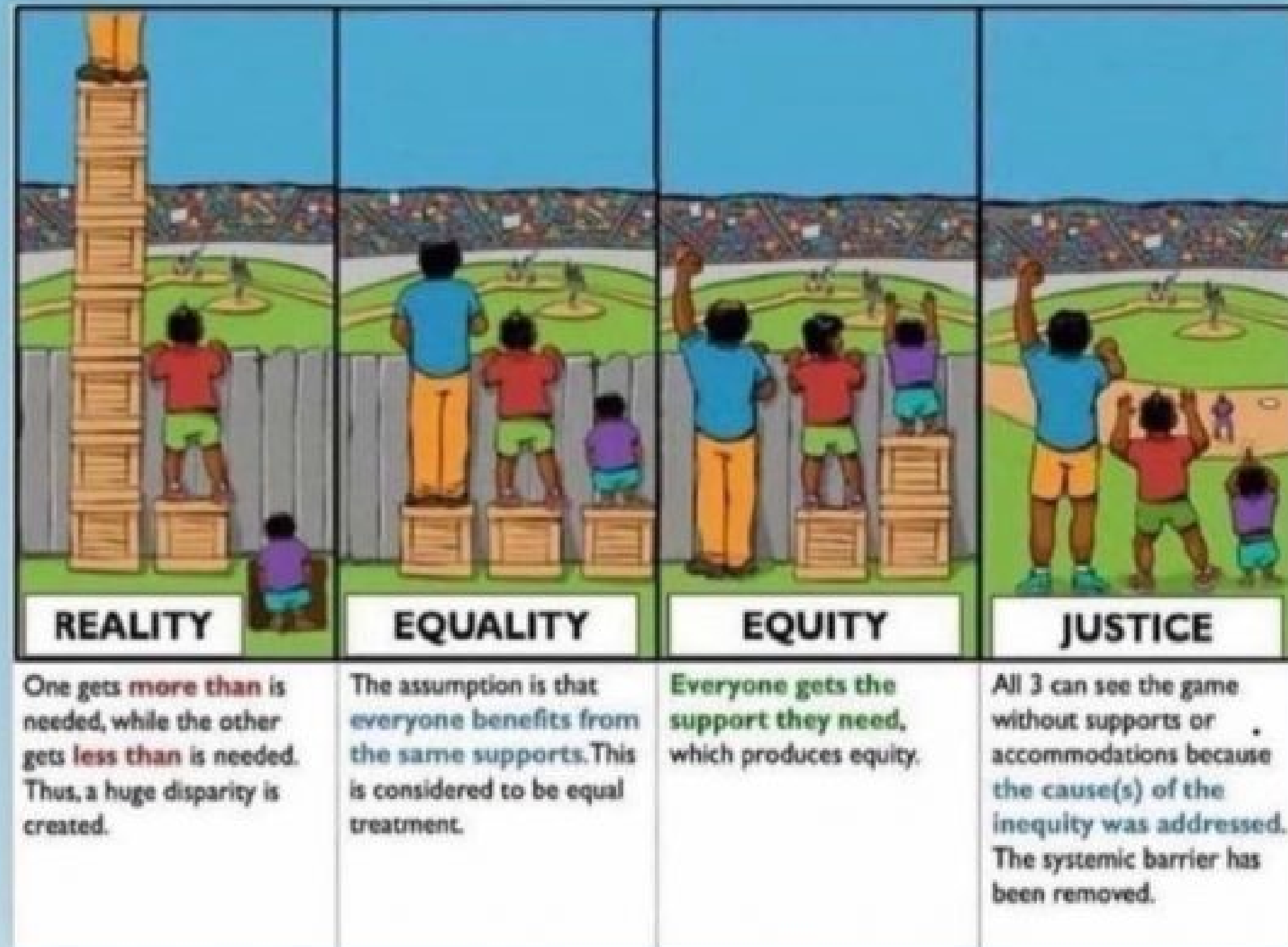
# EQUITY

A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.



*Source: Canadian Race Relations Foundation*





@restoringracialjustice

Source: Craig Froehle

# INCLUSION

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

*SOURCE: OpenSource Leadership Strategies*

# BELONGING

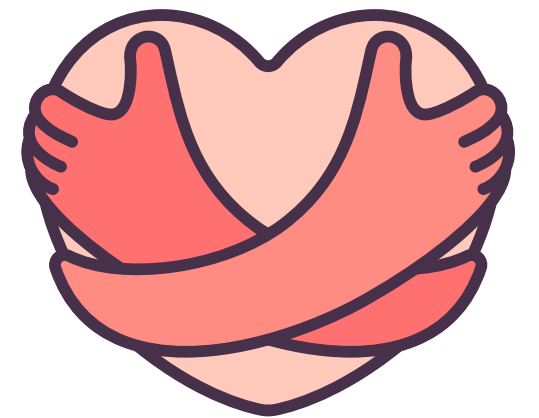
"Belonging doesn't begin with other people accepting us. It begins with our acceptance of ourselves. Of the particular life and skin each of us was born into, and the work that that particular birth entails.

[Further]

Where we are born into privilege, we are charged with dismantling any myth of supremacy. Where we are born into struggle, we are charged with claiming our dignity, joy and liberation."

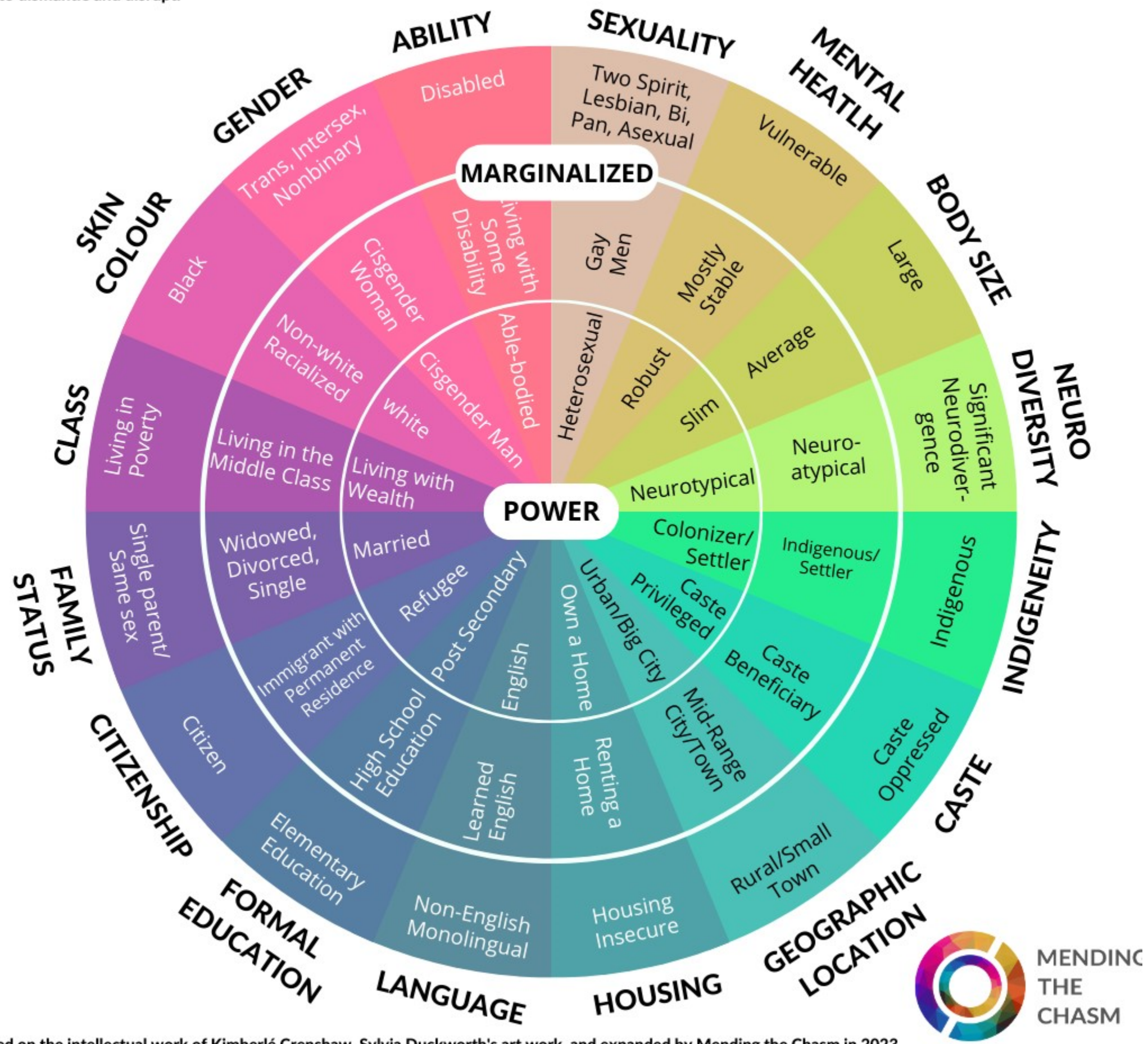
- *adrienne maree brown, author, podcast host, leader and scholar of belonging*

"The opposite of fitting in...being part of something bigger but also having the courage to stand alone, and to belong to yourself above all else." - *Brené Brown, author, vulnerability researcher*



# Intersectionality Wheel

We are grateful to the work and leadership of Lawyer and Activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term intersectionality in 1989. Please note that the categories within this wheel are not exhaustive and intended as a learning tool. This tool is only a beginning point to understanding intersectionality, power, and privilege, as well as the way harmful systems of oppression value certain identities and bodies. This is not a standard to achieve but a system to dismantle and disrupt.



## Oxford Dictionary Definition:

Intersectionality is “the interconnected nature of social identities such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination, [oppression], or disadvantage”.

Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 and it was added to the Oxford Dictionary in 2015.

# Personal Reflection: What is your Social Location?

Social location is defined as the social position an individual holds within their society and is based upon social characteristics deemed to be important by any given society. Some of the social characteristics deemed to be important by U.S. society include social class position, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion and so on.- *Brianne Benness, Medium, 2017*

Take 10 minutes to reflect on your social location.

Which of your identities are privileged?

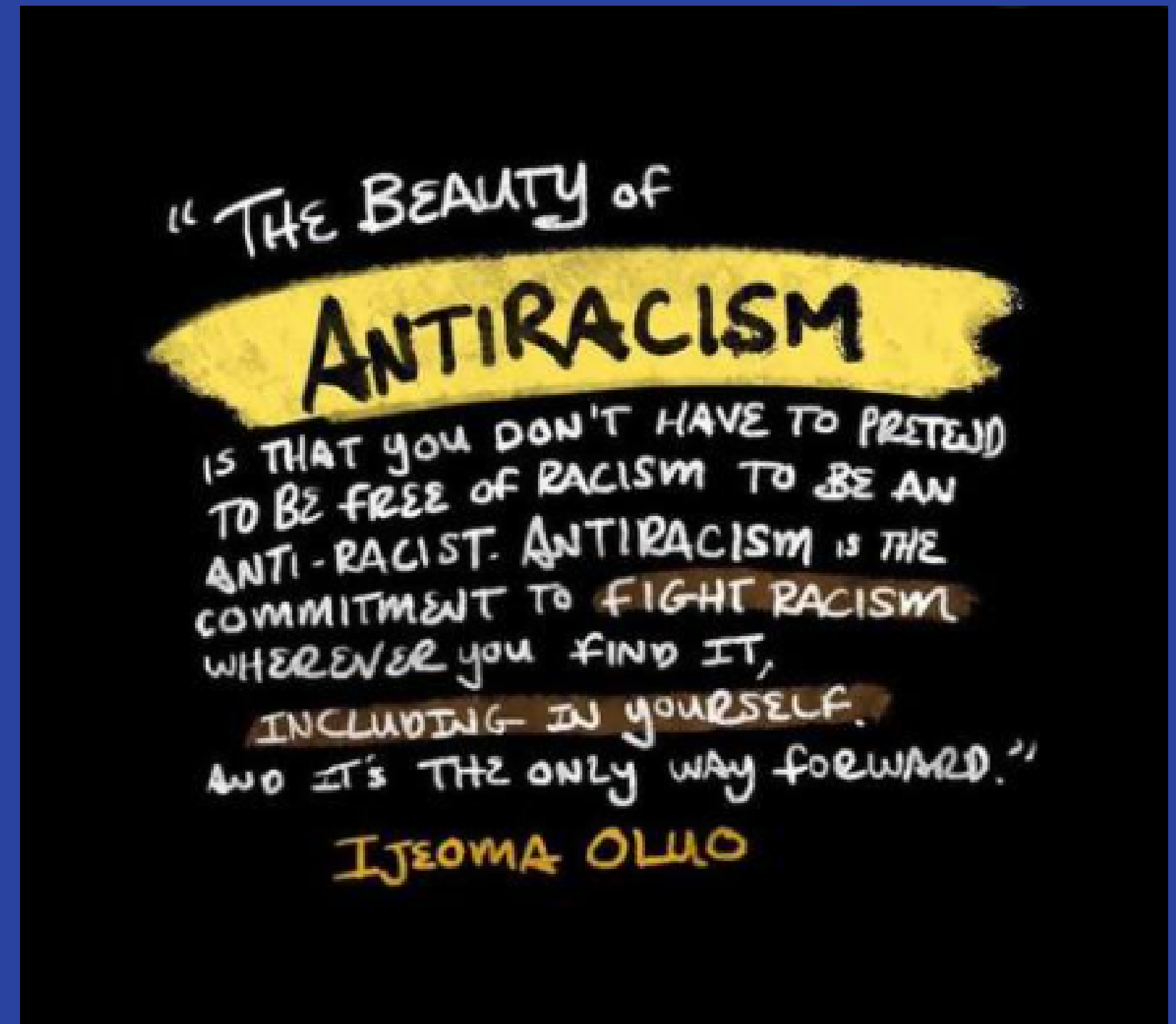
Which of your identities are not privileged?

In what ways has your social location helped/hindered your progress in life?

In your small groups, share any thoughts , feelings, memories, or sensations that you're aware of, and that feel accessible, as you completed this reflection.

**Anti-Racism** is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

*SOURCE: Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide" (2015).*



An **anti-racist** is someone who is supporting an anti-racist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

*SOURCE: Ibram X. Kendi, How To Be An Antiracist, Random House, 2019.*

“

The opposite of racist  
isn't "not racist".  
*It is "anti-racist".*

—

IBRAM X. KENDI

HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST

# ANTI-BLACK RACISM

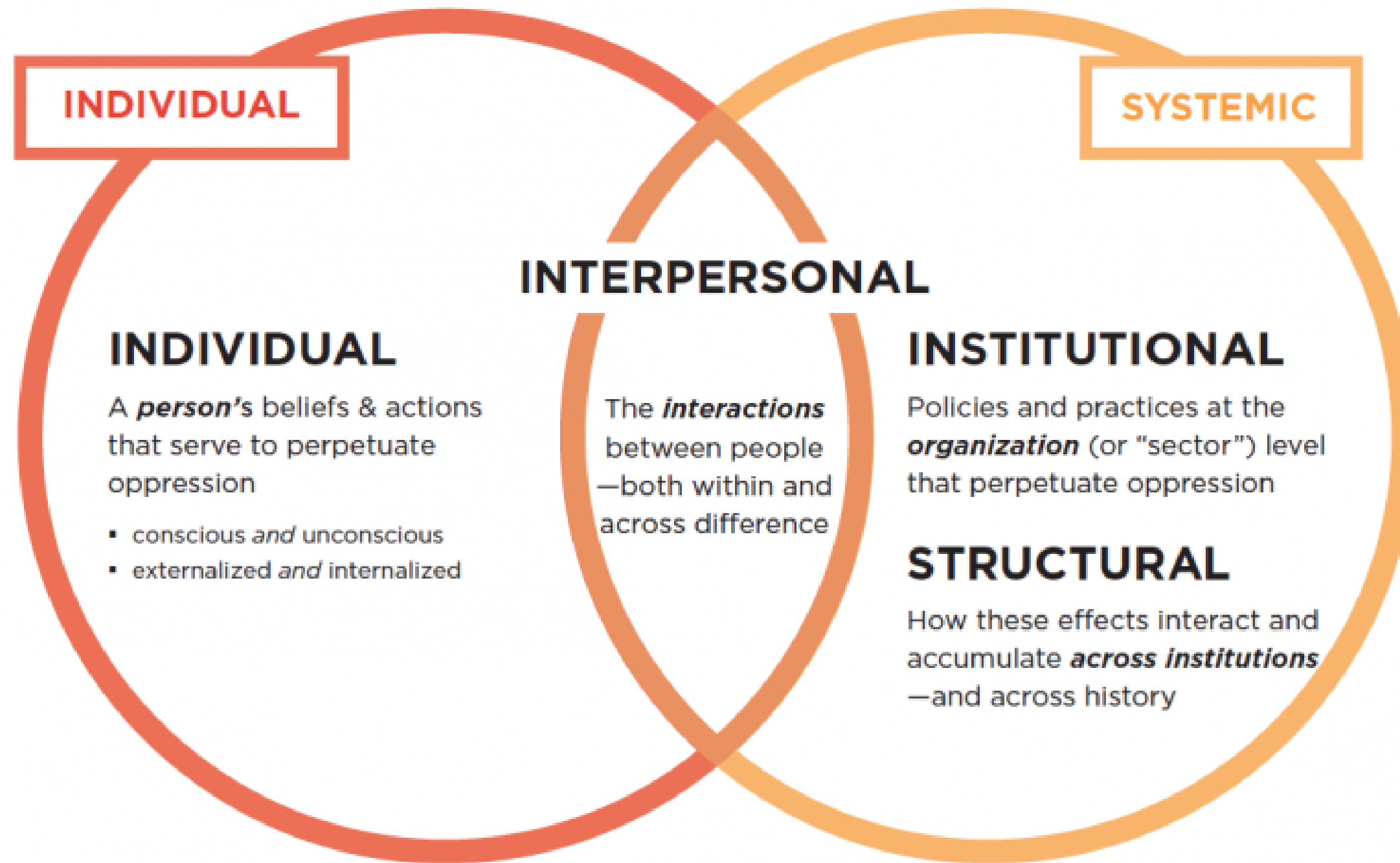
Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping, and discrimination [both conscious and unconscious] that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy.



Source: Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, 2017



# Lens of Systemic Oppression

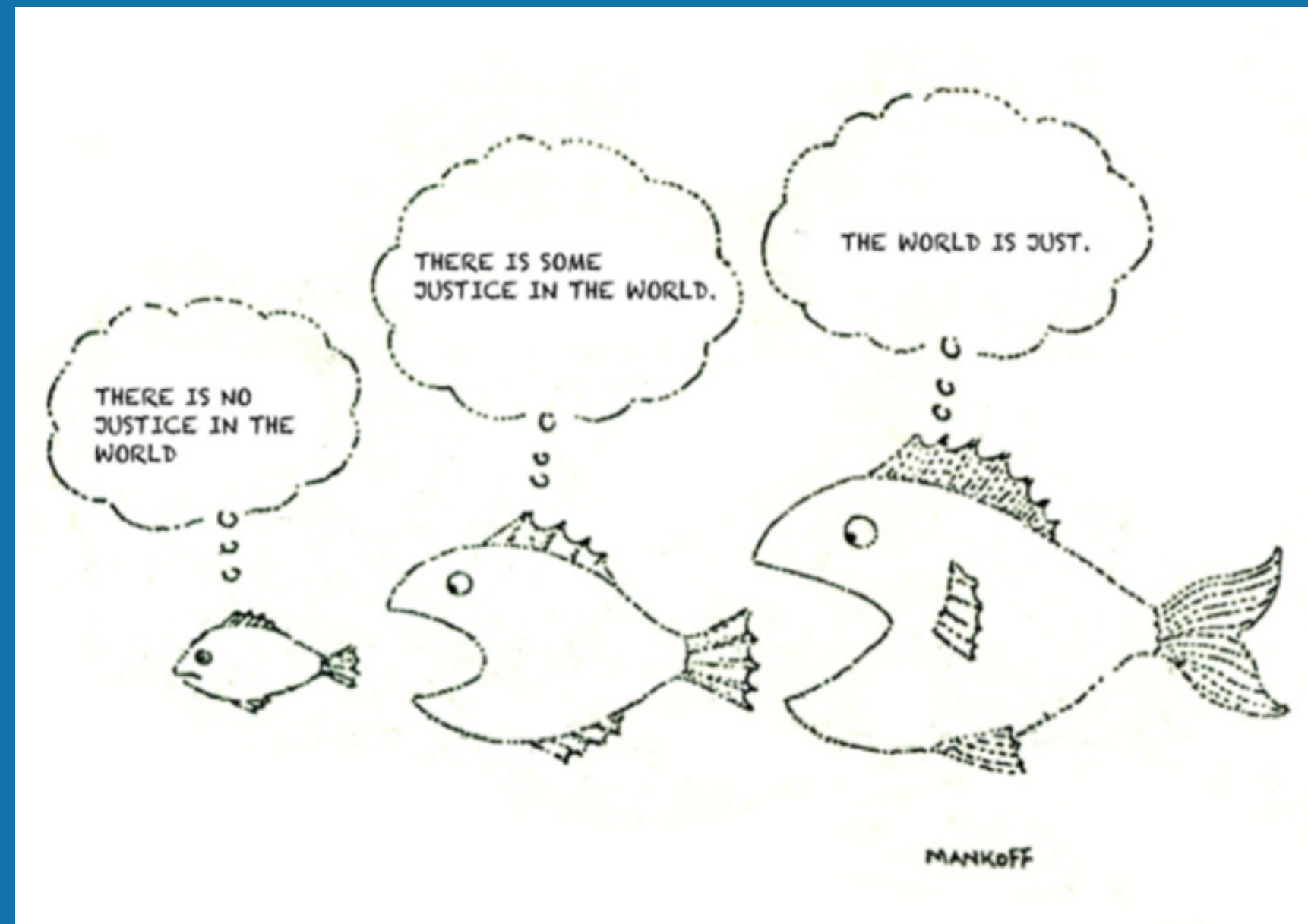


<https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/lens-of-systemic-oppression>

! TIME FOR A !

• BREAK •

# White Supremacy Culture



# White Supremacy Culture Defined:

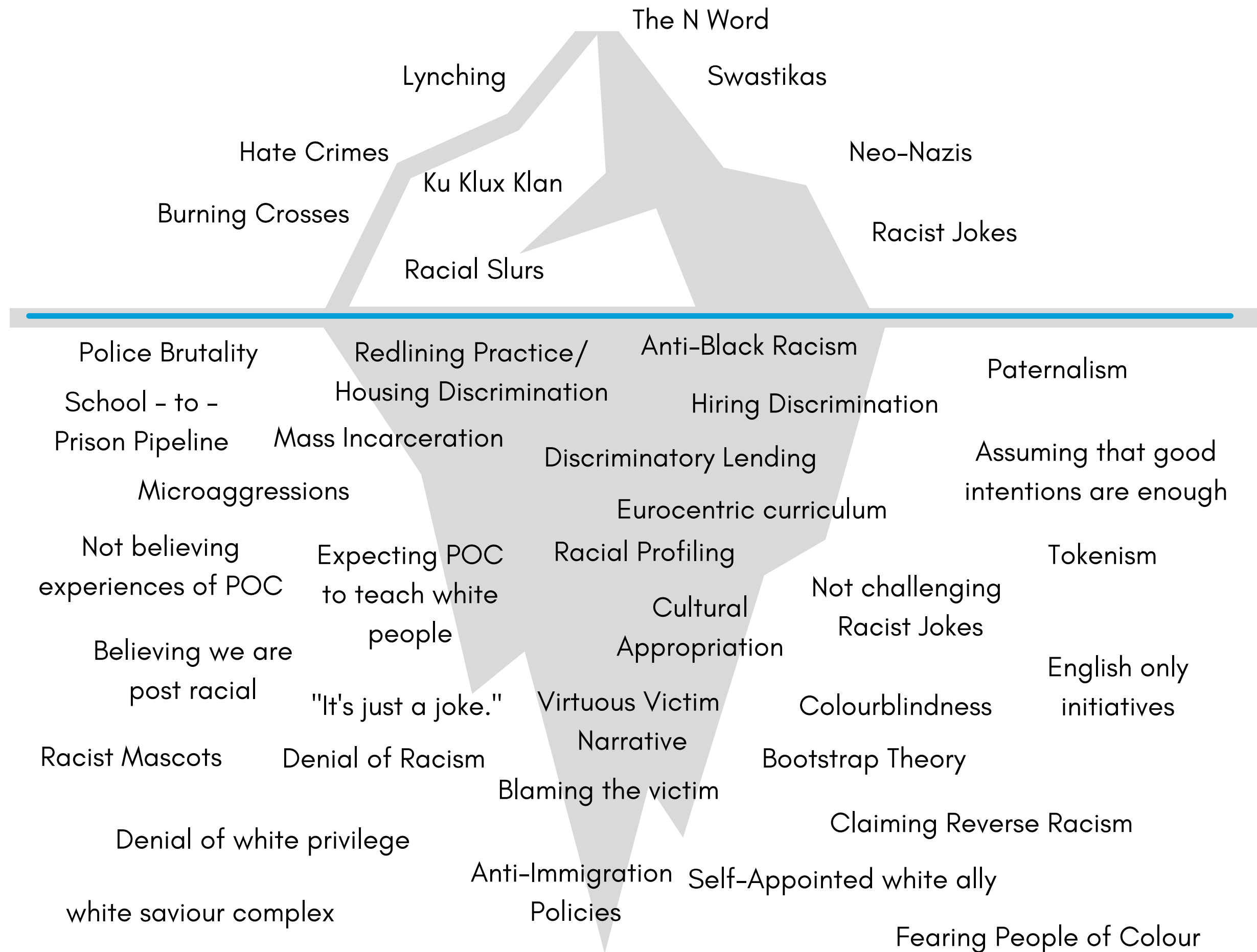
“White supremacy culture is the idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Colour and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.

— COCO (Centre for Community Organizations), 2019



THE LONGER YOU SWIM  
IN A CULTURE, THE MORE  
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES

# Overt White Supremacy Iceberg



**Source: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, (2005)  
 Recreated by Ellen Tuzzolo, 2016**

# CHARACTERISTICS OF WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE

A CULTURE IS A WAY OF LIFE OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE

The behaviors, beliefs, values & symbols that they accept.

generally without thinking about them

&

that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.



POISON

SYMPTOMS & ANTIDOTES

[dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture](http://dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture)

DON'T  
BREATHE  
IT IN

From *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups*, by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, ChangeWork, 2001

## ONE RIGHT WAY

The belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it.

### Antidotes

Create a culture of inquiry about what constitutes the "right way" and what defines a "mistake".

Work on developing the ability to notice when you become defensive and/or insistent about doing something your way and do everything you can to take a breath; allow yourself room to consider how a different path or paths might improve your approach and/or offer you something you really need.

Artwork by Melanie Walby

# Group Discussion

**In what ways have white supremacy characteristics caused harm in your organization? Your community? Is there one characteristic you've noticed in particular?**

**What antidotes or ways to disrupt white supremacy culture feel accessible to you?**





## **Checkout Question:**

**What insights, feelings or thoughts are you leaving our session with?**

# RESOURCES

[The Black Lives Canadian Syllabus/ #BlackLivesCDNSyllabus](#)

[Massey Dialogues: History of Anti-Black Racism in Canada, Feb 2021](#)

[White Bodies and the Energies of Race, Resmaa Menakem, 2022](#)

# Thank you!

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## Connect with us:

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