



Hidden Truths: Unconscious Bias & Pain Management

ECHO Education Event for Managing Pain in Children & Youth

How might I think about this?
What does it have to do with me?

The
AHA!
Moment



A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered on a green lawn, holding the edges of a large, multi-colored parachute. The parachute is spread out on the grass, showing segments of red, yellow, blue, and green. Numerous small, colorful balloons are scattered on the grass around the parachute. The scene is captured from a high angle, looking down at the group.

***Real growth
happens in a place
of discomfort.***

- Les Brown

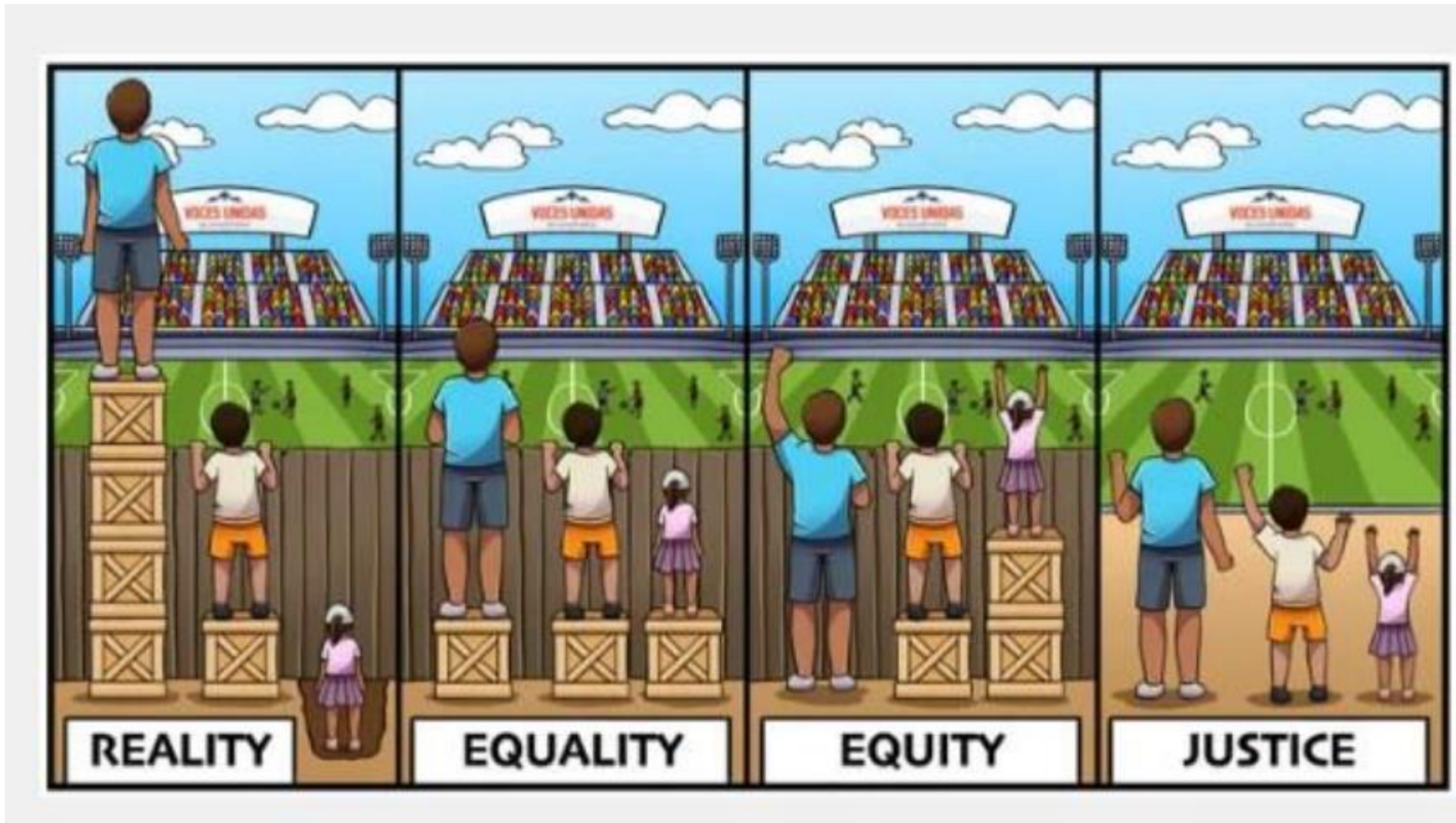
Creating an Inclusive Learning Experience

- Engage in honest dialogue
- Listen with compassion & empathy
- Value stories & perspectives
- Own our mistakes
- Move beyond guilt or shame, and focus on growth



Learning Objectives

1. Review the connection between health equity and unconscious bias
2. Describe how our social positionality influences our biases
3. Describe the impact of unconscious bias on clinical care
4. Apply learnings to case studies in small groups



What does this photo represent?

So, what are Health Disparities in Pain?

Canadians are more likely to have a chronic pain condition if they are from equity seeking groups. (Health Standards Organization, 2023)

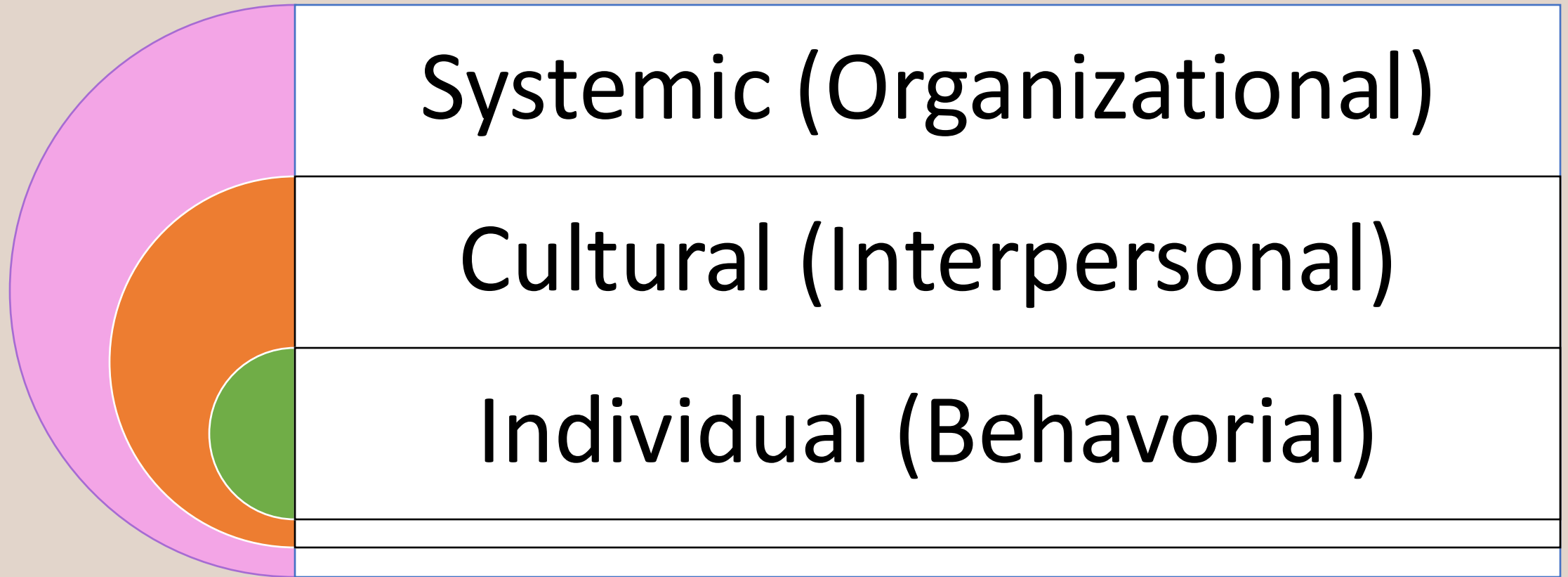
The most significant stigma that patients with sickle cell disease experience in the health care system is racism. (Ontario Health, King's Printer for Ontario, 2023)

In the same region of Canada, First Nations children were less likely to receive a referral to a pain specialist than non-First Nations children, even though they had higher levels of pain conditions (Latimer et al., 2018)

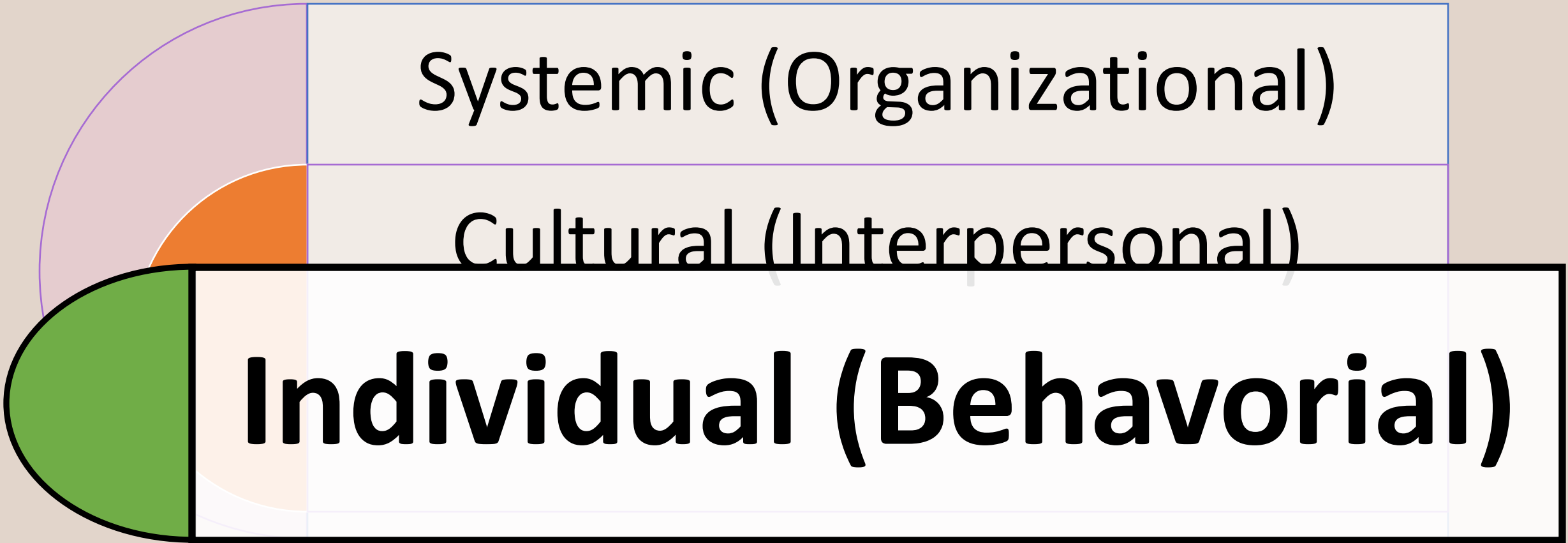
Racial and ethnic minorities tend to under report pain levels secondary to feelings of intimidation in the health care setting (Raphael and Oyeku, 2020)



An approach towards meaningful change



An approach towards meaningful change



Systemic (Organizational)

Cultural (Interpersonal)

Individual (Behavioral)



Sam cuts himself with a sheet of paper.

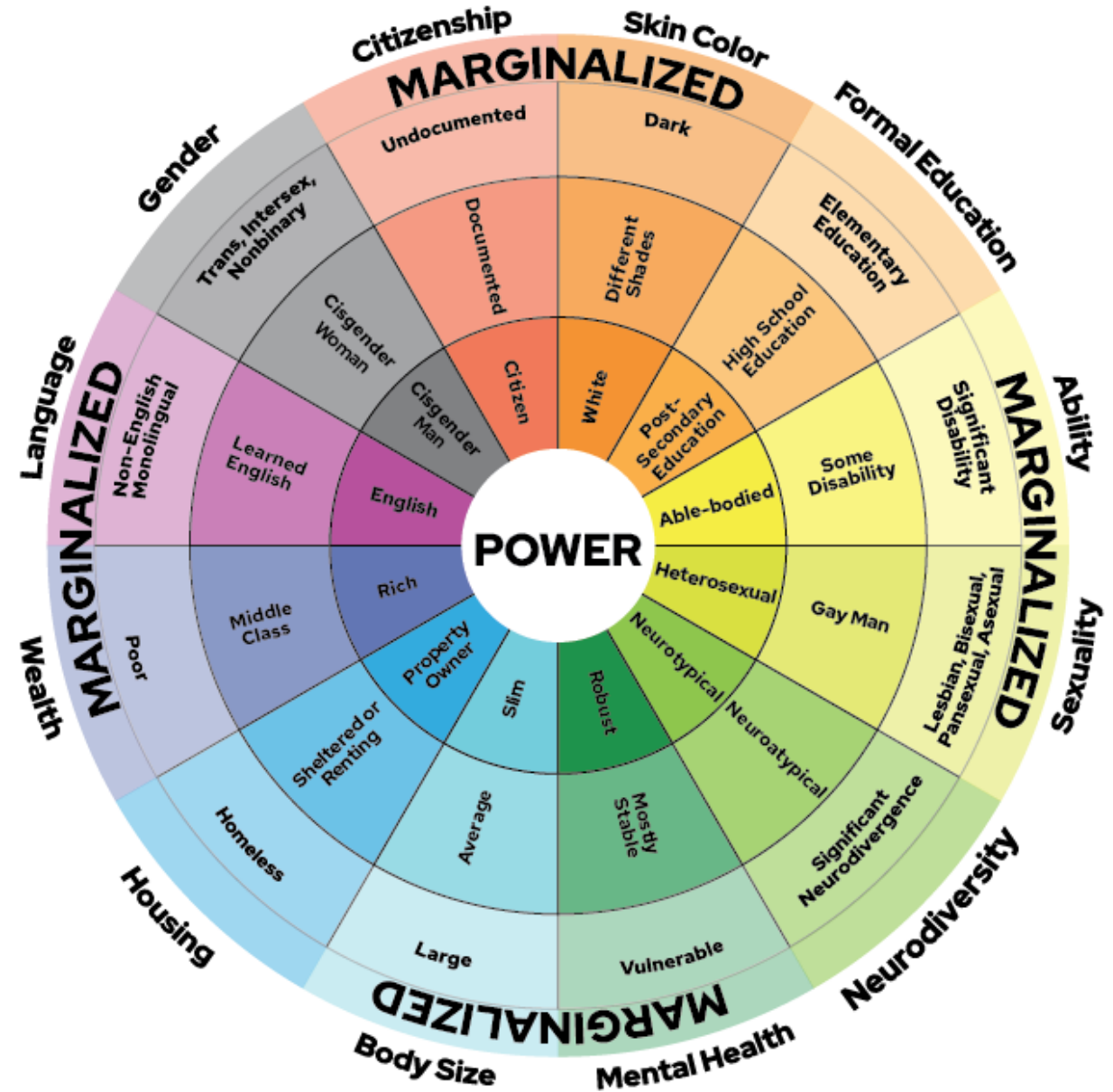
NOT
PAINFUL



EXTREMELY
PAINFUL

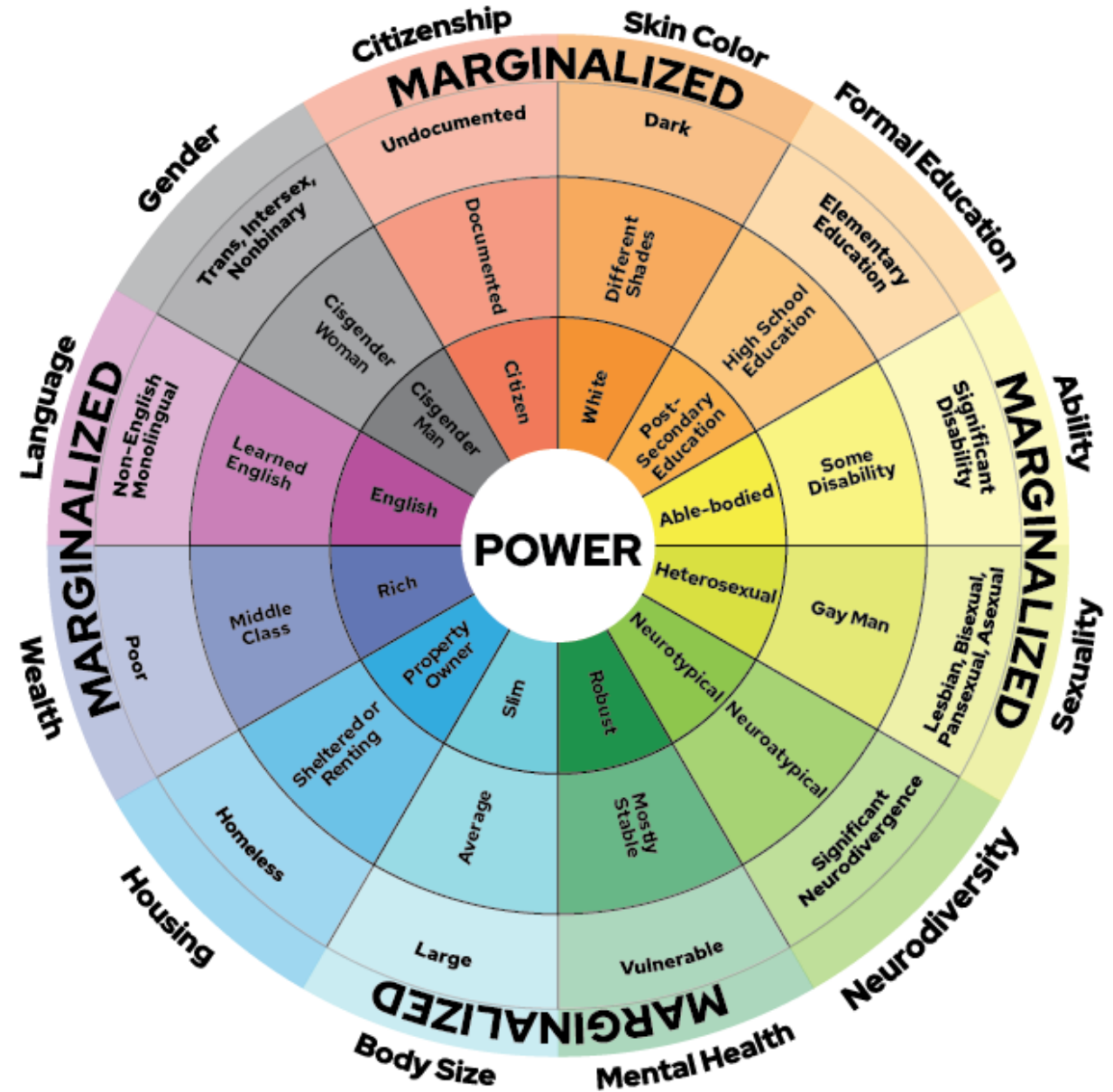
Why does our Positionality matter?

- Refers to where one is located in society, in relation to their various social identities (gender, race, class, ethnicity, ability, geographical location etc.)
- Intersection of these identities shape how we understand and engage with the world
- Awareness of our positionality enables us to recognize our bias



What is your positionality statement?

- Take 5 minutes to think about your positionality statement. Consider:
 - Where do you come from? Where does your family come from? What do you identify as in society? What do you identify as within your family or social circle?
 - Jot down your thoughts in your workbook



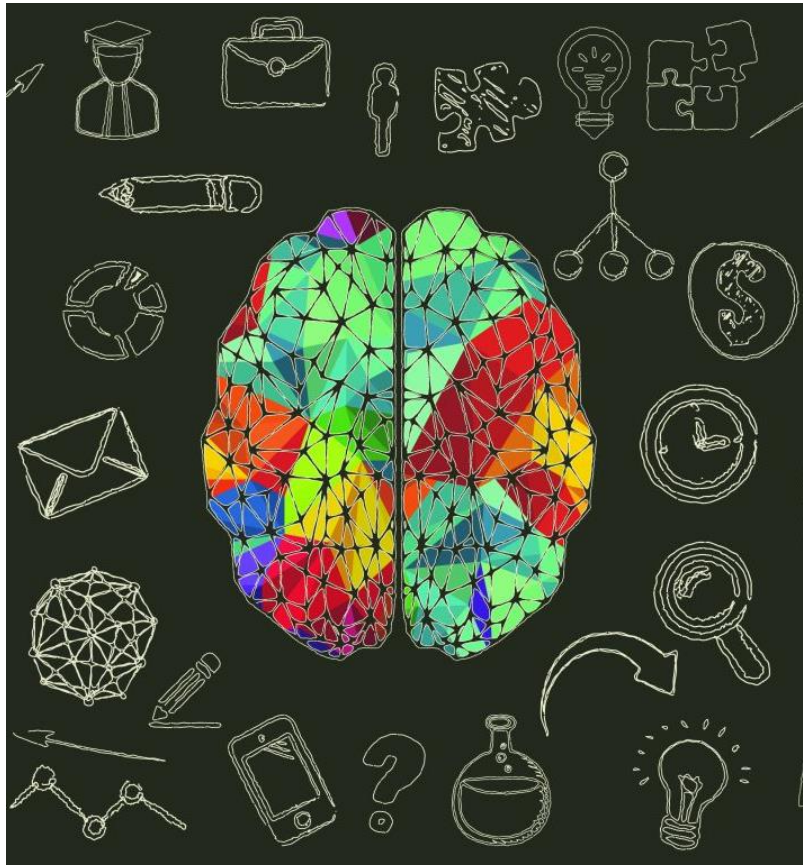
A top-down view of a large circle of hands of various skin tones (ranging from light brown to dark brown) joined together at the fingers, resting on a sandy or dusty ground. The hands are arranged in a ring, with palms facing inward. The text "Circle of Trust" is centered in the middle of the circle in a white, sans-serif font.

Circle of Trust

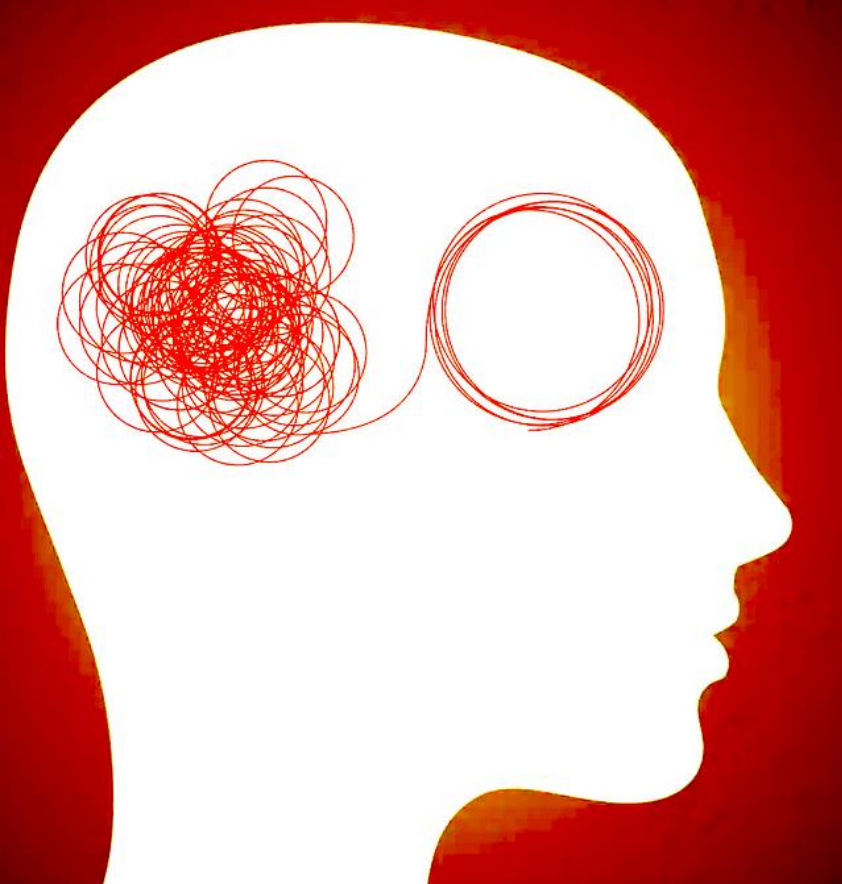


Unconscious (Implicit) Bias

Refers to attitudes or stereotypes that affect and/or impact our understanding, actions and decision in an unconscious manner



Sources of Bias



BIAS



STEREOTYPING



The Bias in Us: Implications

Stereotypes

A false or generalized conception of a group of people that results in the (unconscious or conscious) categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences

Are maintained and reinforced by powerful cognitive biases

Creates physical and emotional distance between social groups



Overcoming the Bias in Us

- Examine your beliefs, attitudes and behaviour
- Counter stereotype
- Expand inner circles to include people from different groups
- Track your progress
- Move beyond “gut reactions”



Case Study #1

Maria, a 9-year-old girl from a low-income, single parent family, arrives to the pediatric pain clinic with severe joint pain. She is 10 minutes late for her appointment. Maria has missed several previous appointments, and her mother will email last minute when they are unable to make it. Maria's mother is very responsive to email however often does not answer the phone. When you are interacting Maria, you find you are rushing to finish.



Case Study #1

Discussion Questions:

- What initial biases are present for Maria's situation?
- After providing care for this family over the last year, how would you feel in this scenario?
- How would you approach supporting this family from a strength-based perspective?



Case Study #2

You are a pediatric pain specialist and you are in a consultation about a current treatment plan for Devon. Devon and their family highlight the medication they are on, as well as the use of sweetgrass smudging that is used in a healing circle to support Devon and bring them calmness during a pain crisis.

You are not too familiar with Indigenous health or healing practices. What would you do next?



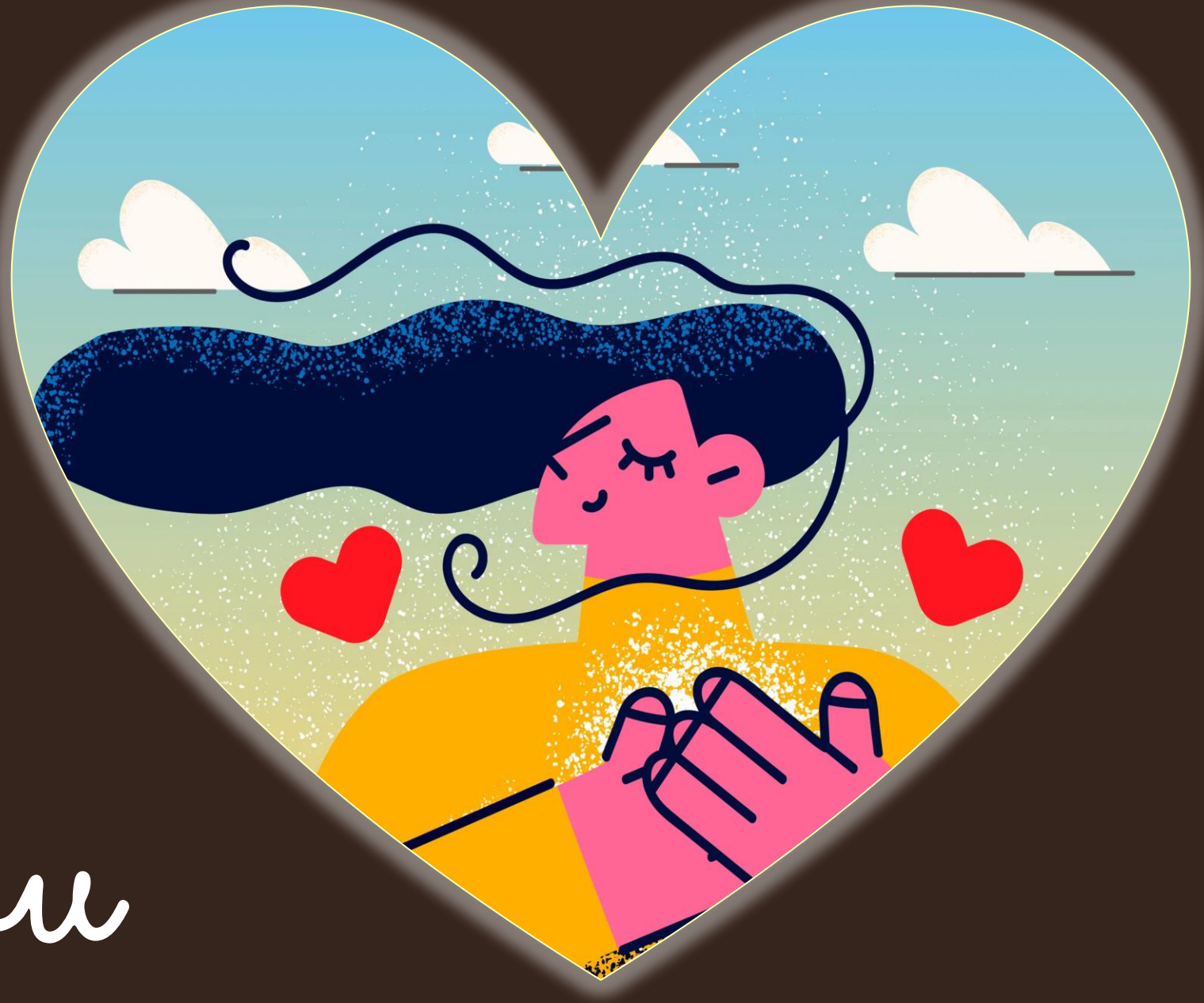
Case Study #2

Discussion Questions:

- How would you approach this situation?
- How would you support Devon and their family to balance both treatment options in the plan of care?
- What self-reflection questions could you ask yourself?



Thank you



References

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