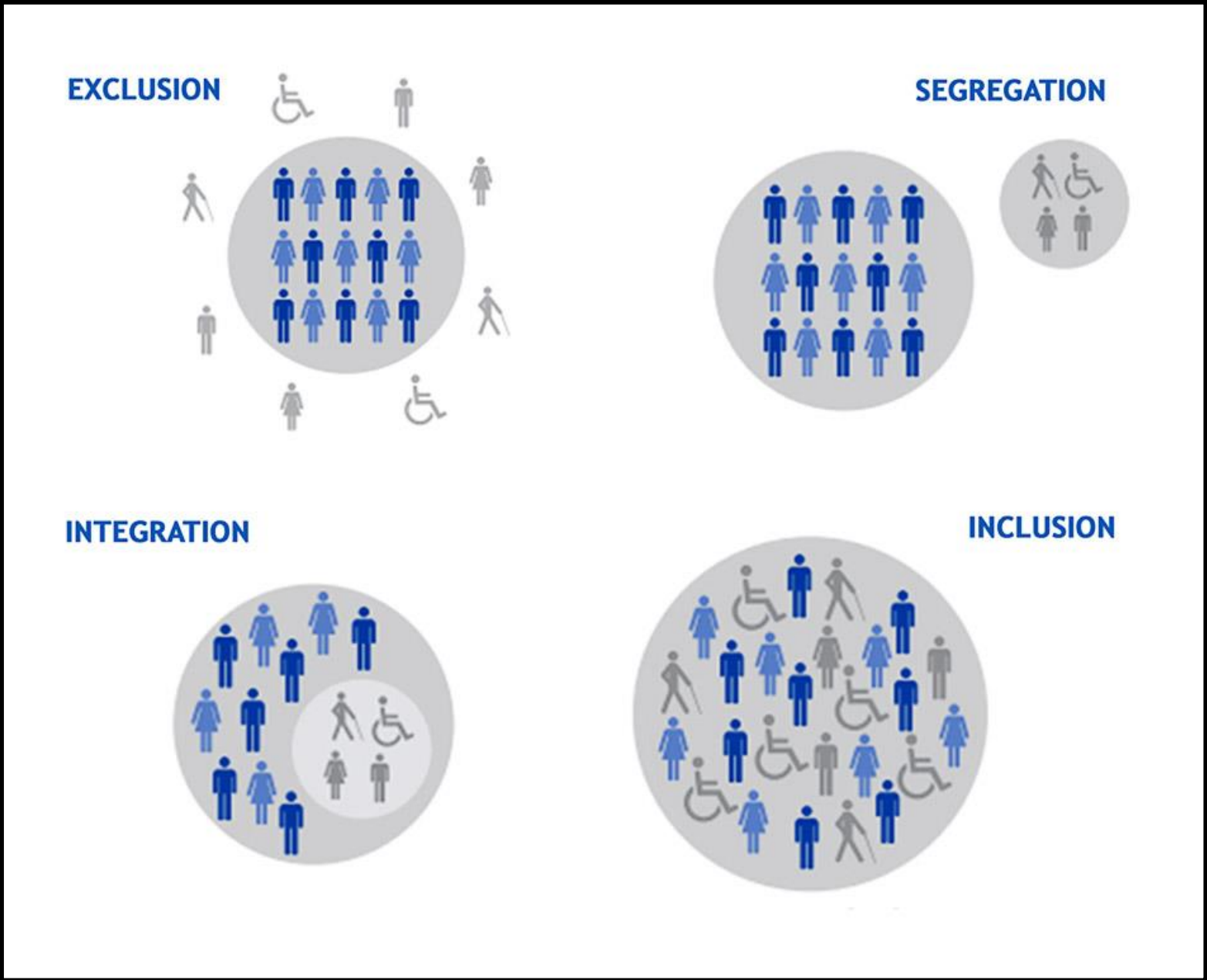




Sticks and Stones and Words All Hurt


***The Language of Respect and
Inclusion for Working with Older Adults***

Tyler Corson, MSG, PhD





SESSION OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness of how our language impacts all people and our ability to work effectively with others
 - Recognize the process of how language can be connected to stigma, prejudice and discrimination
 - Begin to develop toolkit of inclusive and respectful language
- 



YOUR PERSONAL WORDS

Write down 5 words that you feel contribute to stigma and discrimination. The words can be from your personal experience: you may have used them uncomfortably or they were used by others and you felt uncomfortable.



OUR LANGUAGE REFLECTS:

- Who we are
- What we feel
- What we've been taught
- Our life course
- Our cultural exposure




OUR LANGUAGE MATTERS

With inclusive language, we can:

- Break down stereotypes
- Make people feel comfortable
 - Willing to talk freely
 - More likely to seek help
- Be more relatable
- Better reach your audience



INTENT VS. IMPACT

- “Perception is reality”
 - Intent: what you thought you were communicating
 - Impact: what you actually communicated
 - Be aware of both
 - Create safe spaces for dialogue
- 

GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS*

- “Try on”
- It’s OK to disagree
- It’s NOT OK to blame, shame, or attack self or others
- Practice self-focus
- Notice both content and the process
- Be aware of intent and impact
- Confidentiality

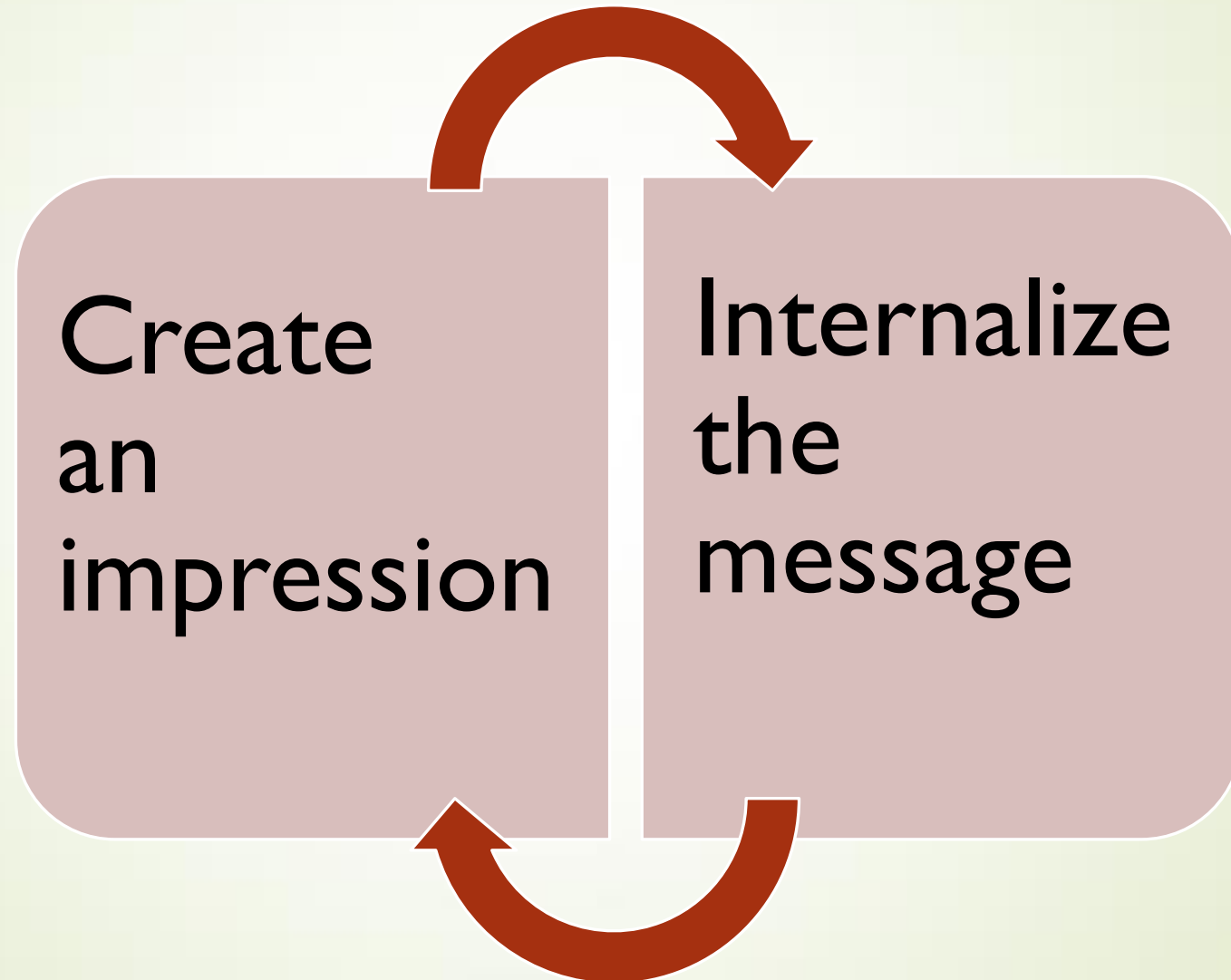


Just Say **OUCH!**
That Stereotype Hurts.



Just say **OOPS!**
That came out wrong....

WORDS CAN CREATE A REALITY



THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY



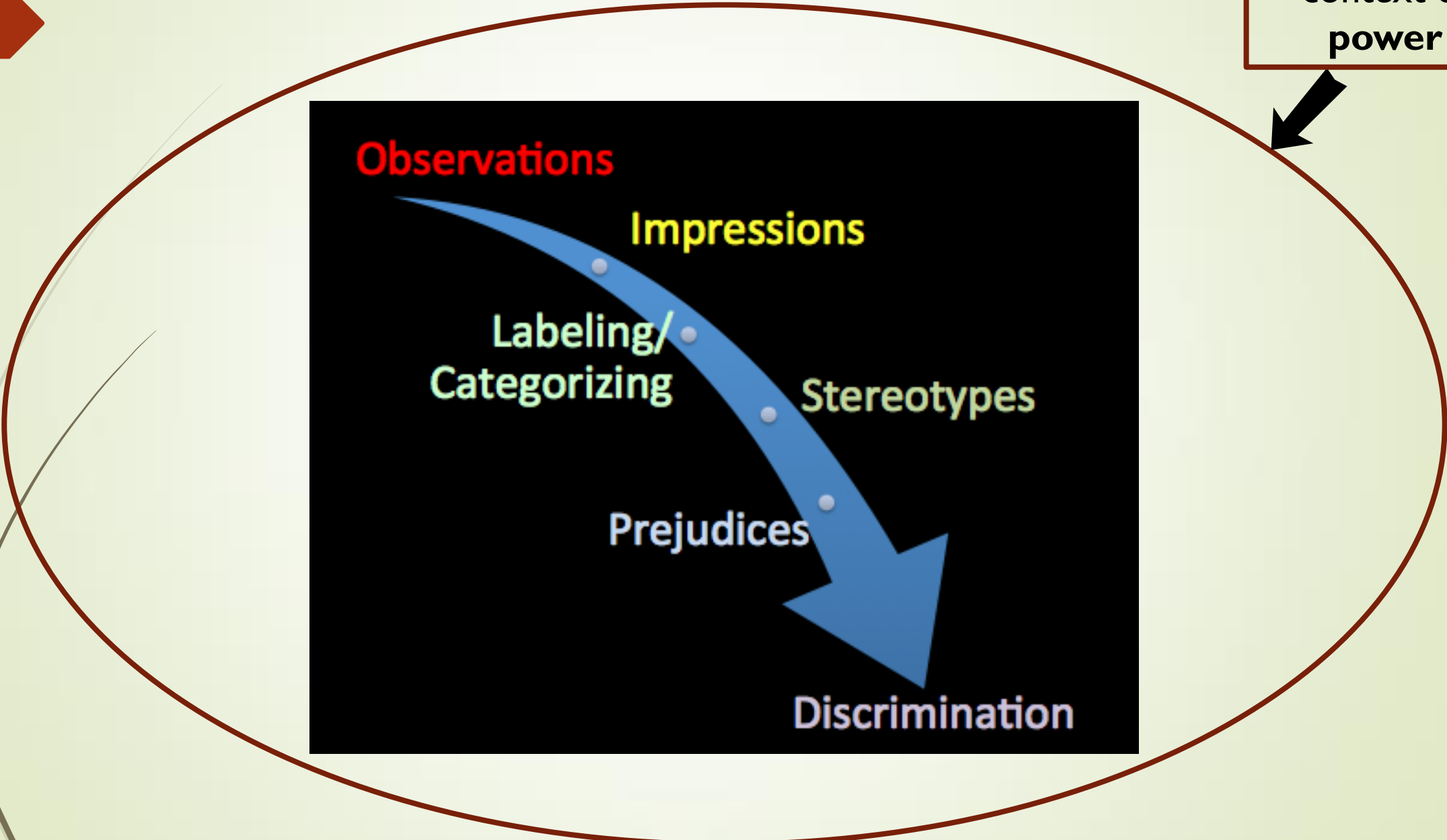


ACTIVITY: YOUR SINGLE STORY

- Think of an example of a single story. This may be a time that you felt others viewed you through a single lens or a time that you perceived another person as a single story.
- What impact has this 'single story' had on you?

THE PROCESS OF DISCRIMINATION

Occurs in context of power



Observations

Impressions

Labeling/
Categorizing

Stereotypes

Prejudices

Discrimination

A single story can be a **STEREOTYPE**

- A **widely held, but oversimplified** image or idea about a particular type of person
- **Untrue and unfair** belief that many people hold about a person/thing with a particular characteristic
- Fallible argument: “But a lot of ‘them’ are that way....”



LANGUAGE IS CONNECTED TO STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Words are important. If you want to care for something, you call it a “flower;” if you want to kill something, you call it a “weed.”

~Dan Coyhis, Mohican Nation

The Language of Stereotyping

1. Many people think (insert group name here) are (characteristic).
2. Some words that reinforce this stereotype are _____.

- Example: Many people think **girls** are **not athletic**.
- Words that reinforce that stereotype are: girly-girl, dainty, feminine (as in dainty), prim, prissy, young ladies, run like a girl, 'girl pushups' (on knees), lady-like, etc.

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Ageism	<i>Based on</i> →	Age
Adultism		Younger Age
Classism		Socio Economic Status
Racism		Race, Color, or Ethnicity
Sexism		Biological sex: male or female
Cissexism		Gender Identity or Gender Expression

Note: Cisgender person identifies with the gender with which they were identified at birth.

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Ableism <i>Based on</i> →	Biopsychosocial differences; weight
Religious Discrimination	Religion, denomination
Elitism	Education, status, or title
Xenophobia	Citizenship; immigration status
Cultural discrimination	Language, dress, customs
Militarism	Branch of military; service area/war



PUSH PAUSE

➡ Reactions?

➡ Questions?





Part 2: Working Toward Inclusive Language:

How we can disrupt the stigma process



Language Has The Power To Disrupt The Process

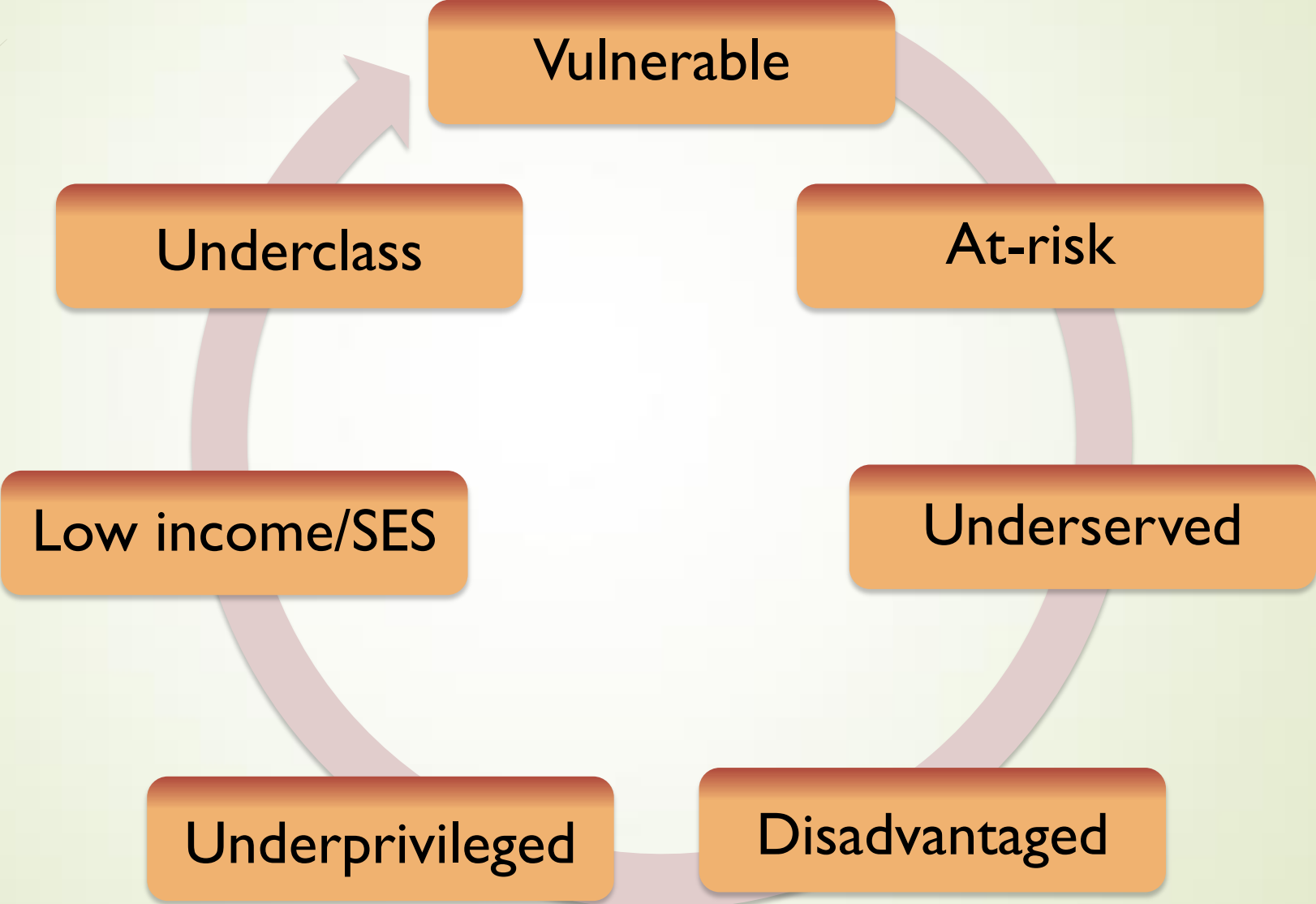
“Our program helps at-risk youth in high-crime neighborhoods stay on track, graduate high school and avoid becoming a negative statistic.”



Language Has The Power To Disrupt The Process

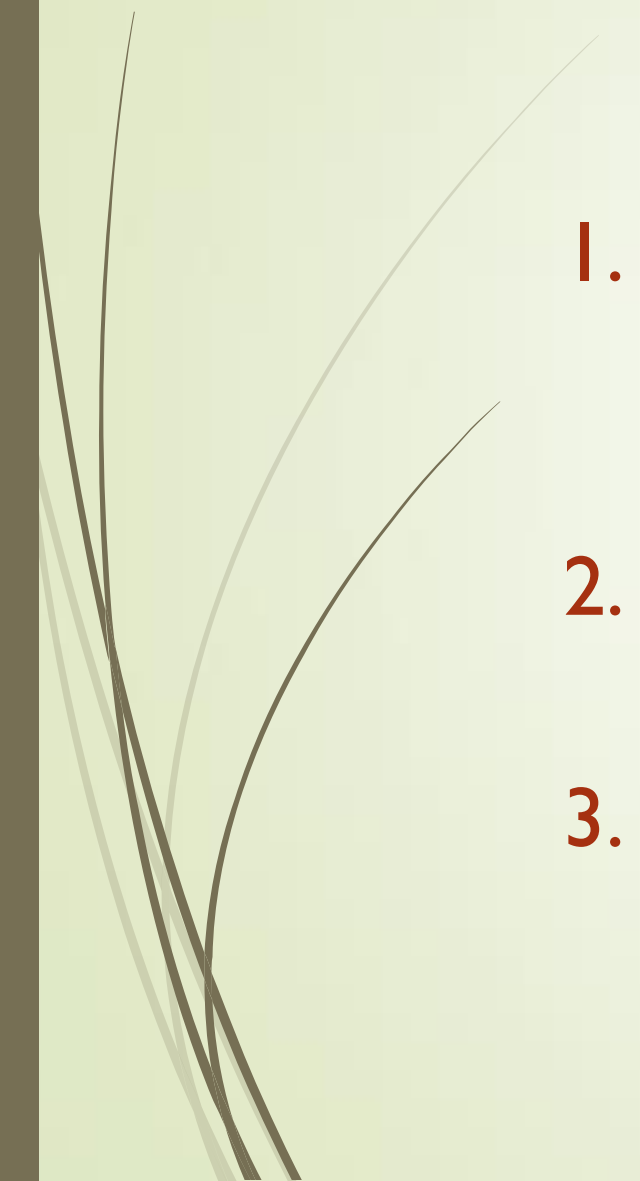
“Our mission is to equip young people who are hungry for an education to overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams for themselves and society.”

The Language of Vulnerability






YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL WORDS

1. Write down examples of words that you feel contribute to stigma and discrimination in your organization or in your line of work.
 2. What impact do you think these words have on your work?
 3. What terms would you suggest as substitutes?
- 



RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCES IS KEY

- We can all be part of recognizing problems and finding solutions
- Introspection and self-awareness
 - Again, no blame, no shame
- Inclusive interactions
- Being aware of and respecting differences
- Recognizing the significance of differences



Steps to Inclusive Language

1. Unlearn problematic vocabulary
2. Speak up respectfully about hurtful comments
3. Work within your tribe
4. Think about responses **BEFORE** you have to respond

TALKING ABOUT AGING

Instead of:	What could we say?
Senior citizens, grandmas, fogies, dinosaurs, etc.	
Aging crisis, silver tsunami	
“I feel so old” or “I’m too old for that.”	
“Young spirit” or “Old soul”	
Hello young lady! (to an 85 yr. old)	
You look great for your age!	
Happy 29 th birthday...again!	

TALKING ABOUT DEMENTIA

Instead of:	What could we say?
Dementing illness, senility, “going on a journey”	
Victim, sufferer, demented person, shell of a person	
Stuck taking care of someone with dementia; trapped	
Burden of caregiving	
Sad, hopeless, tragic, devastating	
”Symptoms of dementia,” BPSD	

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Instead of:	What could we say?
Schizophrenic	
The mentally ill	
Suffering from; afflicted by	
Committed to a mental hospital	
Psycho, crazy person, lunatic, demented	
She is bipolar	
“I have OCD”	

TALKING ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL PREFERENCE

Instead of:	What could we say?
Dyke, butch, faggot, homo, poof, lezza, bi-bi	
Tranny, trans	
“That’s so gay.”	Precise language
Sir/Ma’am/Mr./Mrs./Ms.	Mx.
What is your “real” name?	
The woman in the front row	
Have you had ‘the surgery?’	⊘

Pronouns

He/She	Him/Her	His/Her	His/Hers	Himself/ Herself
(f)ae	(f)aer	(f)aer	(f)aers	(f)aerself
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
per	per	pers	pers	perself
they	them	their	theirs	themself
ve	ver	vis	vis	verself
xe	xem	xyr	xyrs	xemself
Ze/zie	hir	hir	hirs	hirself

Note: the first line is meant to indicate two separate – but similarly spelled – sets of pronouns. They are ae/aer/aers and fae/faer/faers.



LISTEN, THINK, DISRUPT¹


- Set the tone and reduce stigmatizing language
- Perform a “language audit” of your materials
- Use an inclusive team approach to problem-solving
- Use opportunities to disrupt offensive language and convey respect
- Train staff on the negative outcomes of perpetuating stigma

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). Words matter: How language choice can reduce stigma. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/sites/default/files/resources/sud-stigma-tool.pdf>

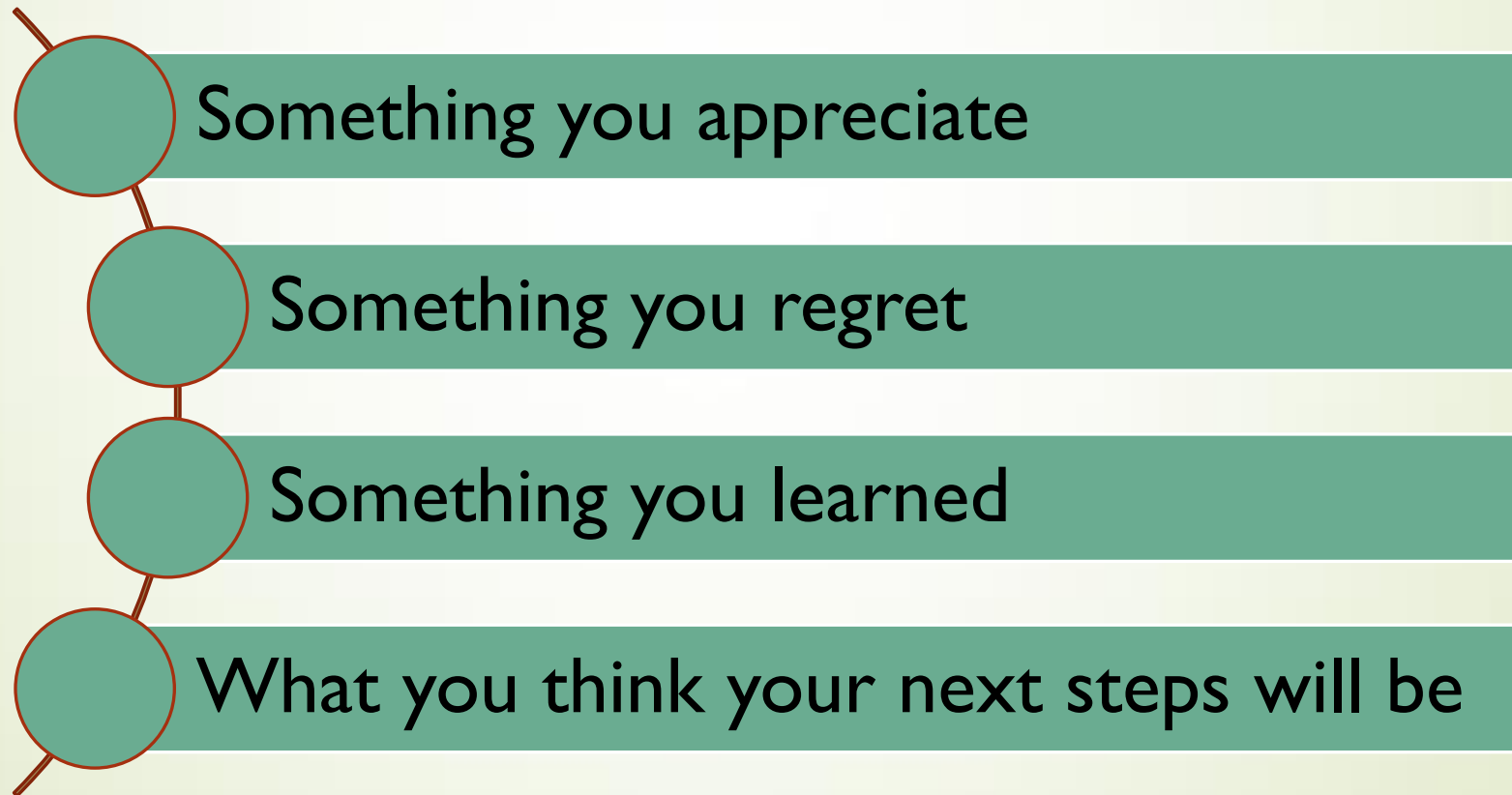
ACTIVITY: YOUR TURN TO DISRUPT

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

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Sexism		Biological sex: male or female
Cissexism		Gender Identity or Gender Expression
Religious Discrimination		Religion, denomination
Ableism		Biopsychosocial differences; weight
Elitism		Education, status, or title
Xenophobia		Citizenship
Cultural discrimination		Language, dress, customs



Please reflect on today's training
and tell us (choose 1):

- 
- Something you appreciate
 - Something you regret
 - Something you learned
 - What you think your next steps will be



What are your questions?

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