

# Microaggressions

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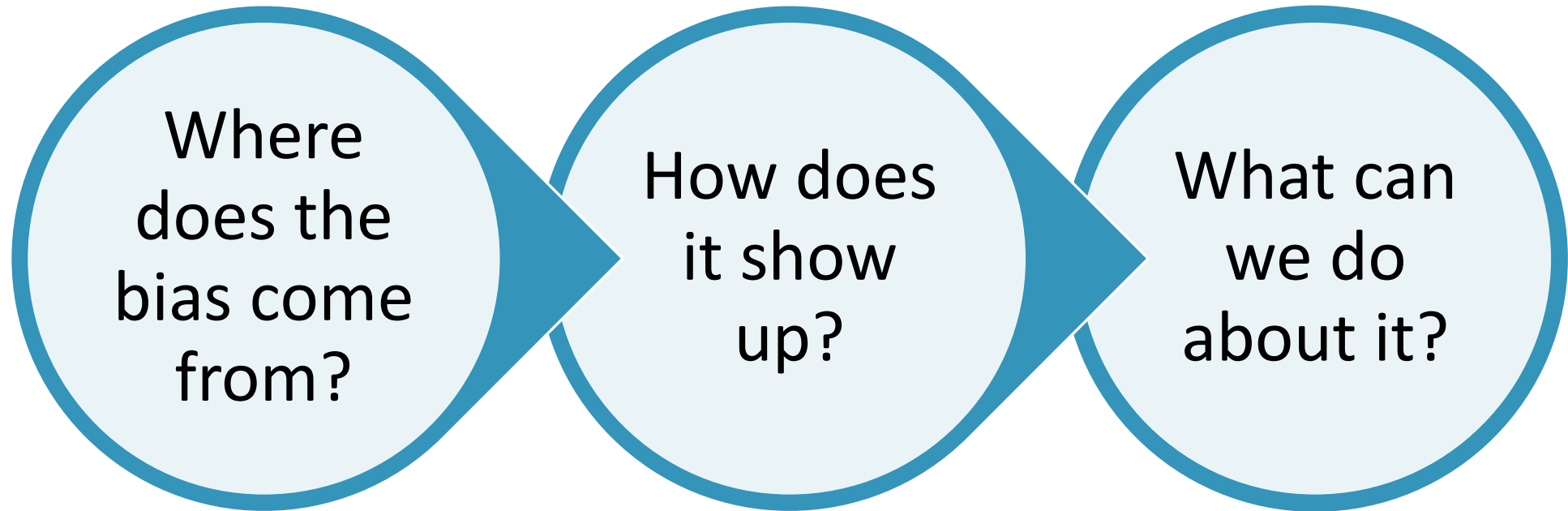
WI FACETS

REGION C NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT WEBINAR

SEPTEMBER 22, 2022

# Today's Session

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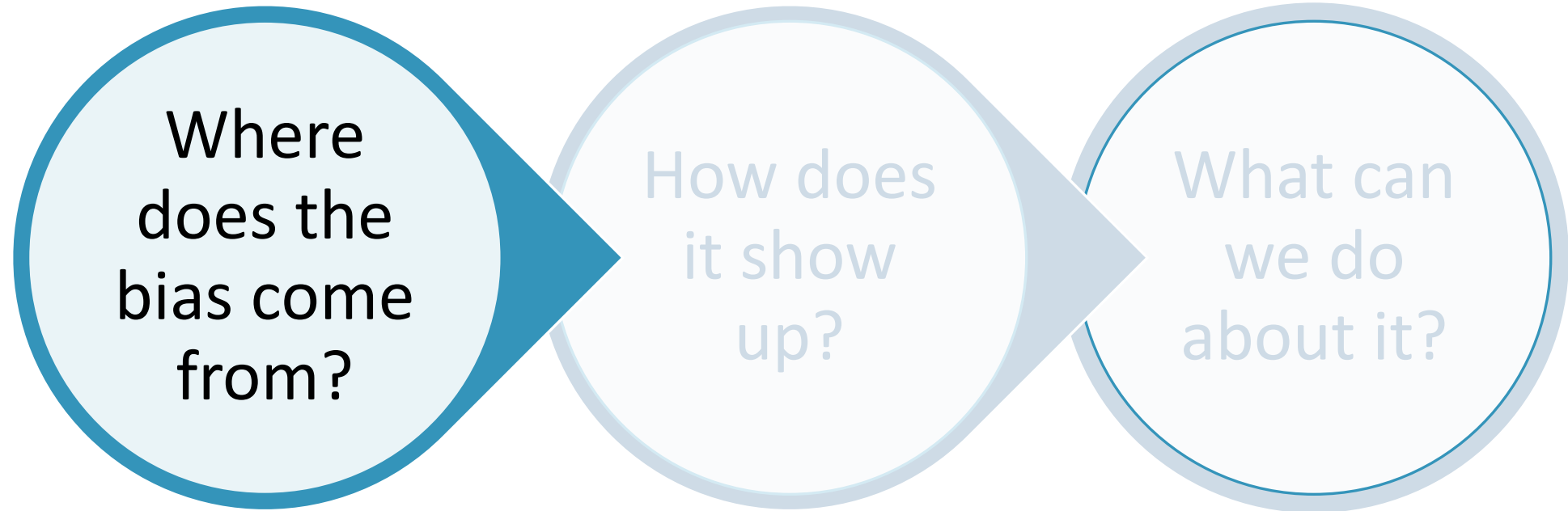


# Take care of yourself...

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Please feel free to use the chat to call out any ideas that resonate with you or share any questions you have.

The topic of racism may generate a stress response for you. Feel free to take moments to reflect on ideas. If you feel overwhelmed, anxious or experience other strong emotions, please contact a mental health professional.





# Reflections on the Video

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**What questions emerged for you?**

# Racism is Waste.

# Racism is harmful to everyone.

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- ❖ Racism structures opportunity and assigns value based on how a person looks.
- ❖ It is a socially organized set of attitudes, ideas and practices that deny people dignity, opportunities, freedom, and rewards that are offered to others.
- ❖ It was developed and is maintained by a group with power for their own gain.

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- ❖ Racism results in conditions that **unfairly advantage some** and **unfairly disadvantage others**.
  - ❖ Racism hurts the health of our nation by preventing some people the opportunity to attain their highest level of health.
  - ❖ Racism can be **intentional** or **unintentional**. It operates at various levels in society and is a driving force of social determinants of health-- housing, education and employment. It's also a significant barrier to health equity.



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Racism is the **leading factor** which determines the health of people and communities.

# Institutionalized racism

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- ❑ Differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society, by “race”
  
- ❑ Examples
  - Housing, education, employment, income
  - Medical facilities
  - Clean environment
  - Information, resources, voice
  
- ❑ Explains the association between social class and “race”

# Personally-mediated racism

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- ❑ Differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others, by “race”
- ❑ Differential actions based on those assumptions
  
- ❑ Prejudice and discrimination
  
- ❑ Examples
  - Police brutality
  - Physician disrespect
  - Shopkeeper vigilance
  - Waiter indifference
  - Teacher devaluation

# Internalized racism

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❑ **Acceptance by members of the stigmatized “races” of negative messages about our own abilities and intrinsic worth**

❑ **Examples**

- Self-devaluation
- “White man’s ice is colder” syndrome
- Resignation, helplessness, hopelessness
- May lead to lowered expectations of self or other people of color

❑ **Accepting limitations to our full humanity**

# Internalized Superiority

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- ❑ **Assumed superiority and “normalness” of white people or those who hold a dominant position in society**
  - Acceptance of messages sent by society that positively portray whiteness personally and as a community
  - Belief that one’s worldview, standards and norms are universal; this is reinforced by positive messages, values, credibility, policies that benefit some
  - Myth of meritocracy (my success is of my own making and privilege has not impacted me)

## Standard of Acceptability

White

Male

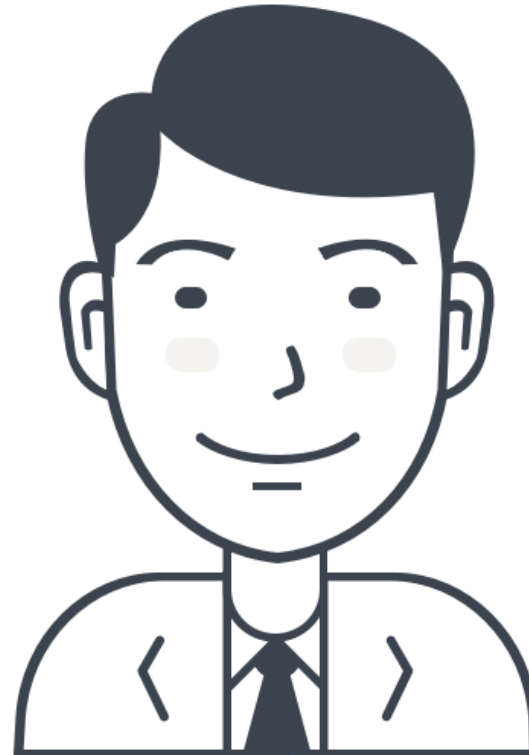
Heterosexual

Protestant

Landowner

Able- Bodied

Mature (35- 40 years old)



# Example of the “Standard” applied to a group of people: Ethnocide and Genocide of Native/ Indigenous people

## **Indian Civilization Fund Act (1819)**

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs (established 1824)**

- allocated federal funds to churches to run schools

## **Board of Indian Commissioners (1869)**

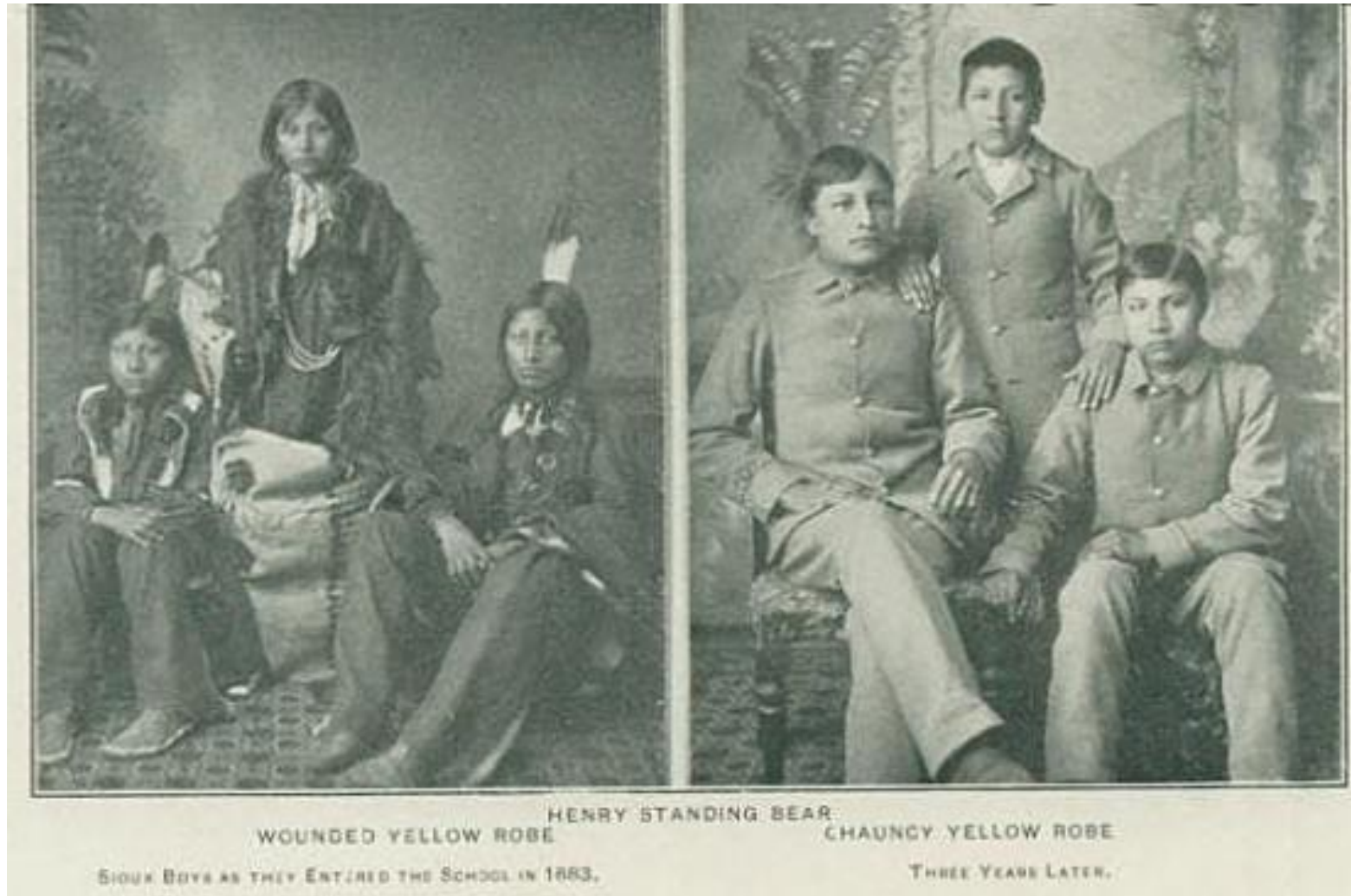
- Some appointments to the Board were made by the US President
- Used to clean up fraud and ensure religious Christian men were leading the Indian agencies

## **US Boarding School Policy:**

Federal policy that enacted cultural genocide on indigenous people until the 1950s

- Children were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in, Christian, government-run schools
- Children were severely abused and punished for practicing their religion, language, cultural practices, clothing, etc.
- Taught that their traditions were sinful - shamed for being indigenous

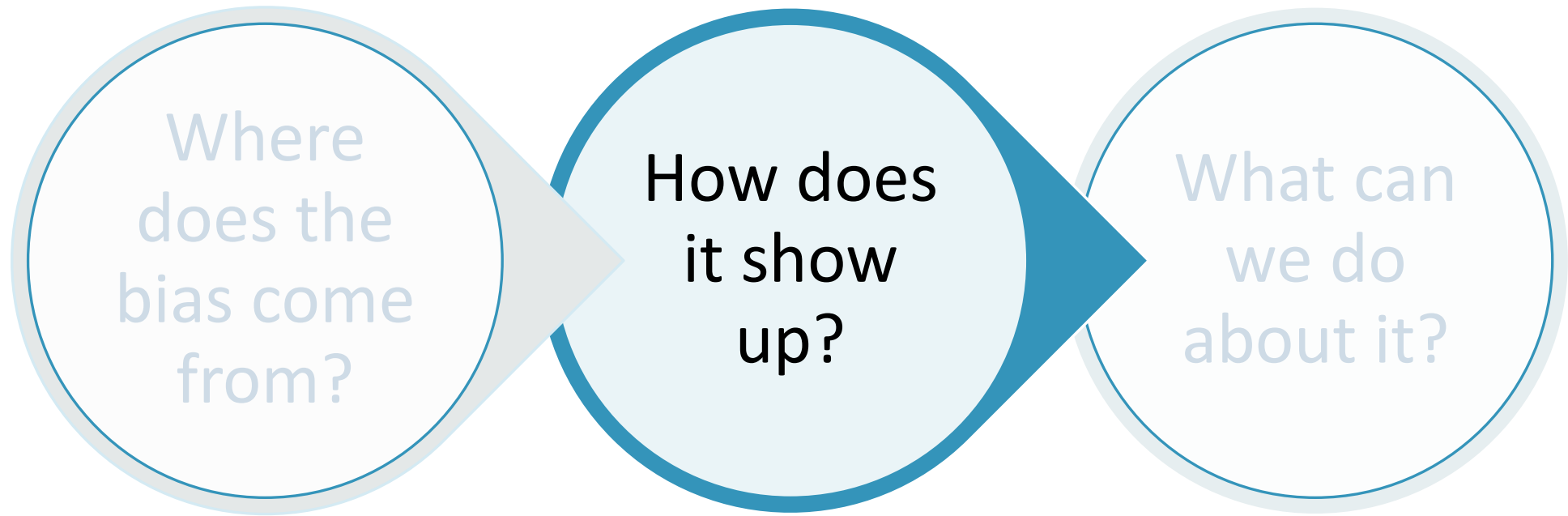
# Carlisle Indian Industrial School



The photos were taken of the same youth, just 3 years apart.



How do the historical beliefs that led to these policies impact Native/Indigenous children and families getting access to services?



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**Have any of you ever experienced someone saying or doing something to you and/ or your child that excluded, negated, or dismissed your thoughts, feelings or experiences?**

# Microaggression

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Commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults.

Microaggressions occur so often because racism is woven within systems and include rituals, discrimination and ideological constructs that are not challenged.

- Brief and everyday exchanges
- People are socialized to accept them
- Reinforce racism and systemic oppression
- Verbal
- Actions, Behaviors
- Unintentional or intentional

# How does it show up? (1 of 4)

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**Ascription of Intelligence:** Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person based on their race.

*“She is Asian, I’m sure she gets straight As.”*

*“Only 10% of kids in the district actually meet the criteria to skip a grade. I’ve only seen it once in my career, and never from kids who live in this neighborhood.”*

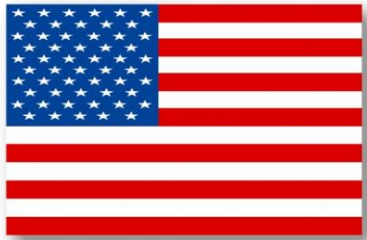
**Pathologizing Cultural Values/ Communication Styles:** Notions that the values and communication styles of people of color are abnormal.

*“His mom is always so angry.”*



# How does it show up? (2 of 4)

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**Alien in Own Land:** Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

*“You speak Spanish? How long has your family been here in the US?”*

*“Do you understand what I am saying?” [stated in a loud, slow voice to a person with an accent that is assumed to be from a different county.]*

**Color Blindness:** Denial or pretense that a white person does not see color or race.

*“I don’t see color. Can’t we just get along together and focus on love.”*

*“All lives matter!”*

**Myth of Meritocracy:** Statements which assert that race plays a minor role in life success for some.

*“Michael Jordan and Oprah pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, why can’t they?”*

*“I worked hard for what I have, there is no such thing as white privilege.”*

*“Why didn’t they just educate themselves and advocate for their child? I did.”*

# How does it show up? (3 of 4)

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**Assumption of Criminal Status:** Presumed to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant based on race.

- *Holding on to purse when a Latinx person gets on the elevator.*
- *Following a young person who is walking in neighborhood and carrying Skittles and iced tea.*
- *Those parents just want to get over on the system and American taxpayers.”*

**Denial of Individual Racism:** Unwillingness to acknowledge personal racism or one’s role in its perpetuation.

*“But I have friends/ family of other races.”*

# How does it show up? (4 of 4)

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**Second Class Citizen:** Treated as a lesser person or group; systematically discriminating against a person or group

*“We’ll send the books no one wants to those teens, they don’t care or read anyways.”*

*“I feel unsafe when he is in the room.”*

**Consequences of Poor Choices:** Assumption that difficulties people are experiencing are due to their own choices, not environmental or social conditions

*“Why didn’t they just choose a home that has a ramp or is accessible.”*

*“If people choose to live like that, why should I go into their neighborhood and risk my own safety.”*

*“She chose to wear that. What did she expect?”*





# Microaggressions: perception

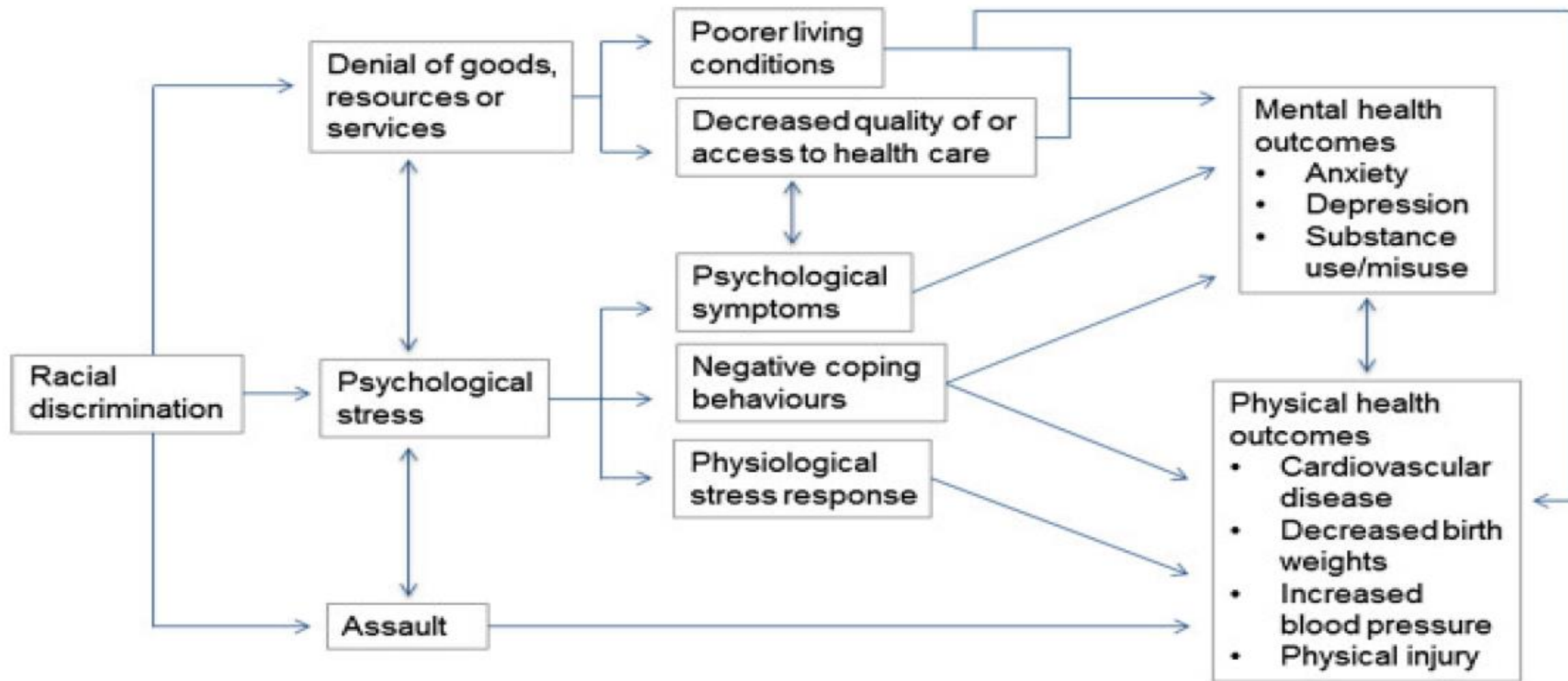
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Reality: “Death by a thousand needles”

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# What are the impacts?

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African American youth are 19% less likely to receive an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis than white youth

Latinx youth are 65% less likely to receive an ASD diagnosis than white youth

Black and Brown youth are more likely to be diagnosed with Behavioral/conduct disorders than intellectual or developmental disabilities

# Involvement with Child Welfare

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**Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities are also more likely to become involved in the child welfare system.**

- Higher risk of abuse and maltreatment by parents or guardians
- In addition, a recent report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed that the rate of *violent victimization against persons with disabilities was at least **double** that of the rate for those without disabilities.*

# Involvement with Youth Justice

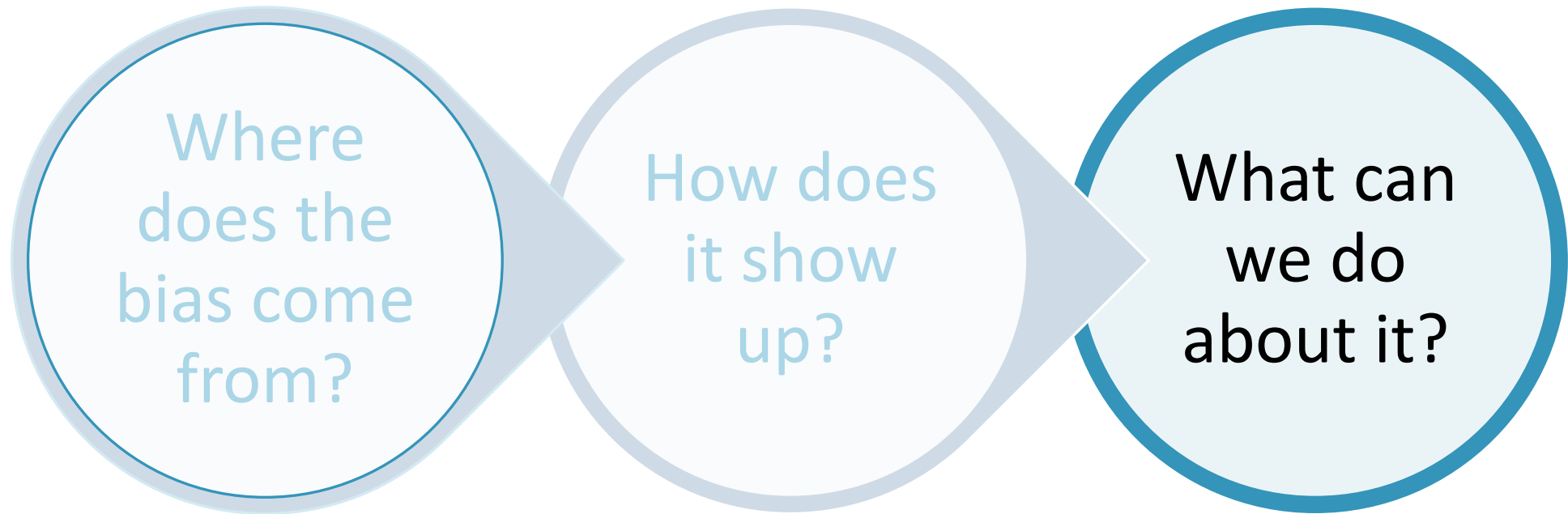
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The majority of youth committed to juvenile correctional facilities in Wisconsin are Black.

On average, Black youth make up over 70 percent of youth committed to juvenile correctional facilities in WI.

In Milwaukee County, approximately 60% of those youth have disabilities.

Nationally the number of youth with disabilities who are involved in the youth justice system ranges between 50-80%.



Where  
does the  
bias come  
from?

How does  
it show  
up?

What can  
we do  
about it?

# Power Dynamics

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The ways that power (formal and influential) impacts a setting

- Affects relationships and culture of an environment
- Related to unwritten practices and norms
- Impact is compounded when the person who is acting out the microaggression:
  - Has perceived authority over the recipient OR
  - Controls connection to information or services
  - Can deny or approve benefits, goods, services or resources (e.g., case manager, supervisor, teacher, police, judges)





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**In your current role, what influence do you have in helping families get connected to care, resources, services, etc.?**

**How might your actions be a barrier?**

**Are there any new things that you might start doing differently?**



# What can institutions do?

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## **Sponsor opportunities for employees, board members and stakeholders to participate in guided discussions about racism and other forms of oppression**

Activities that promote normalization of such as trainings on concepts, historical context and self-reflection experiences

Coaching for leaders on how to have critical conversations about race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Information on what not to do is just as important as knowing what to do-- This could include workshops, readings, etc. on topics such as microaggressions or strategies that have been ineffective or could potentially cause more harm.

Opportunities for dialogue with colleagues and subject matter experts--To be effective, this measure must include an option for participants to “tap out” and step away from the discussion to regroup or decompress, with healing- focused services provided.

## Recipient of microaggression

- Stress
- Culmination of experiences
- Desire to thrive
- Avoid perception of over reaction
- Person's existence is the problem



## Perpetrator of microaggression

- Curiosity
- Humor
- Intention
- Fear
- Values, Beliefs, Culture
- Inherently a good person
- "Othering"

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What are some things you can do if you witness someone experience a microaggression?

# What can individuals do?

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You just committed an infraction, now what?

Listen.

Acknowledge.

Don't make it about you (i.e., tears)

Sincerely apologize and consider what you can do to rectify the situation. If you are in a position of authority, you have the responsibility to model good behavior.

If appropriate or feasible, you might follow-up with the person afterwards, but don't over do it.

Learn more on your own time.

# What can individuals do?

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If you are a bystander:

Recognize what has occurred

Check in with the person who experienced the microaggression

Define it

“Call up” the person who has committed the microaggression

Consider reporting it to HR or a leader

# What can individuals do who experience it?

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Take care of yourself first because your wellbeing is priority. Are you in the right “head space” to address the infraction in the moment?

Keep a record of occurrences in a journal, email log, etc.

Reach out for support by connecting with allies, peers, affinity groups, etc.

Define it.

Speak up for yourself.

Ask for clarification.

Try to separate intent of what happened, if appropriate.

“I” statements

Access racial trauma toolkits (Boston College), mindfulness and other healing strategies.

If you find that your efforts are not supported and it is impacting your health or wellbeing, it may be time to remove yourself from the environment.

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**What is a key takeaway that you have from the session?**



# Please reach out

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