

APRIL 22, 2020



Family Planning through a Racial Justice Lens

Weyu Hodge, MPH
Maritza Franqui, MPH, CD, CLC

Black Maternal Health Week

April 13-17, 2020





What Will We Cover?

Relevant Terms & Concepts

The Nasty Truth

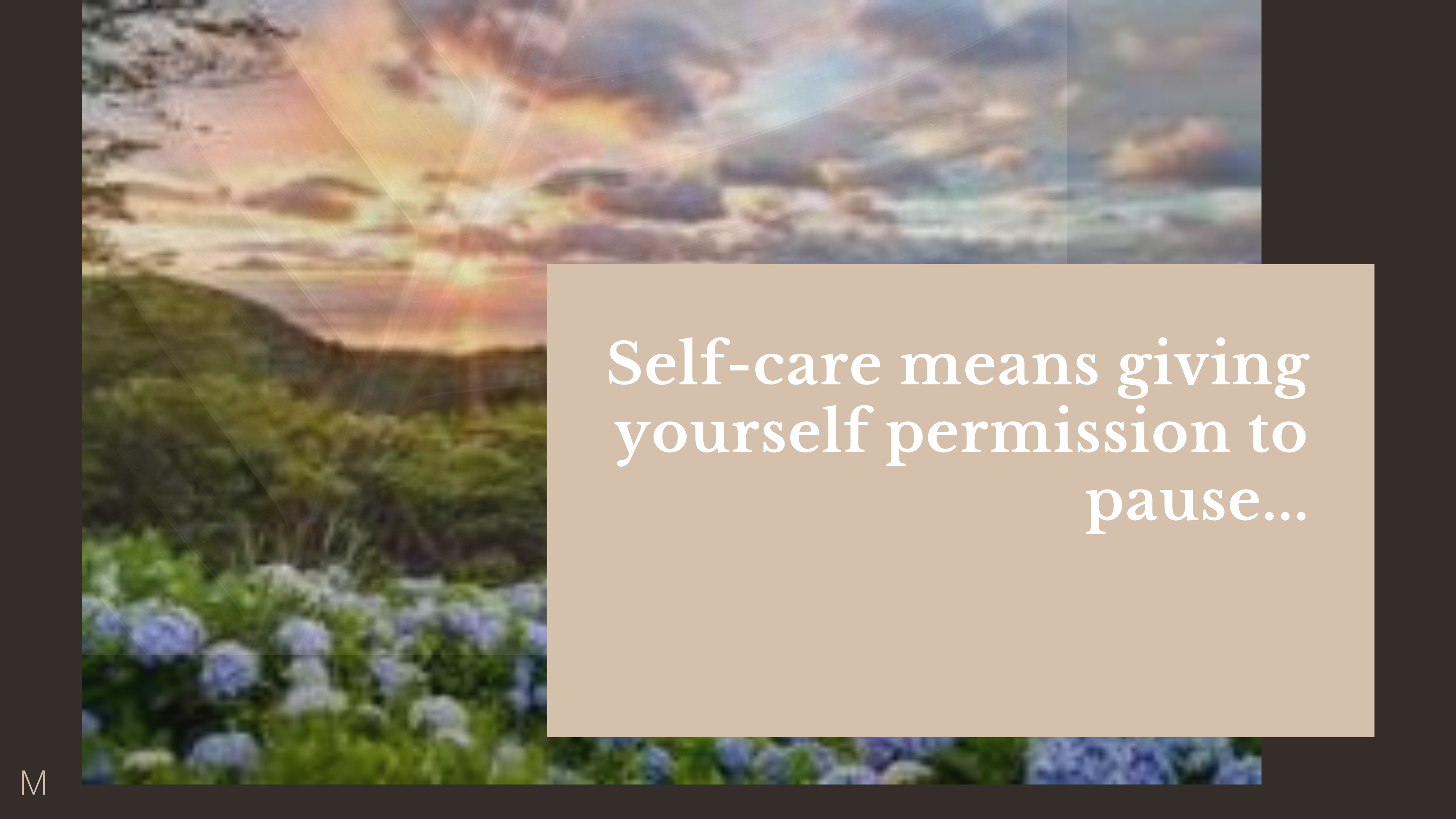
- What do you know?
- When?
- How has this manifested over time?

Reproductive Justice Framework

Incorporating a racial/reproductive justice lens in
Centering

Tools & Resources



A scenic landscape featuring a vibrant rainbow arching over a valley. The foreground is filled with lush green grass and numerous small, light blue flowers. The middle ground shows rolling green hills, and the background consists of a bright, hazy sky with soft, colorful clouds. A semi-transparent beige rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

Self-care means giving
yourself permission to
pause...

Relevant Terms & Concepts

Eugenics

The practice or advocacy of improving the human species by selectively mating people with specific desirable hereditary traits. It aims to reduce human suffering by "breeding out" disease, disability, and so-called undesirable characteristics from the human population.

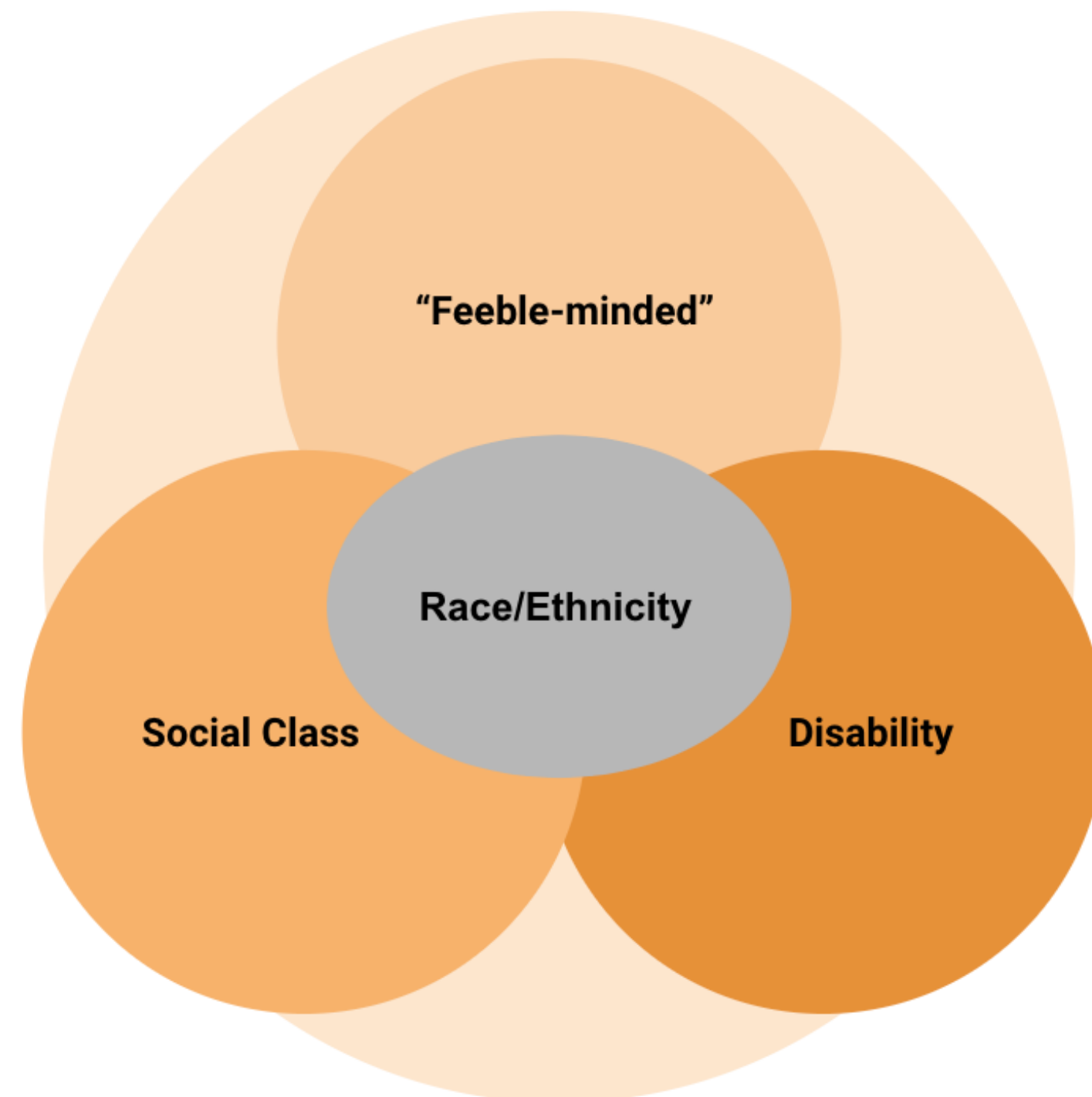
Racism

Institutional (systemic): differential access to goods, services, and opportunities of society by race; normative (sometimes legalized), and often manifests as inherited disadvantage

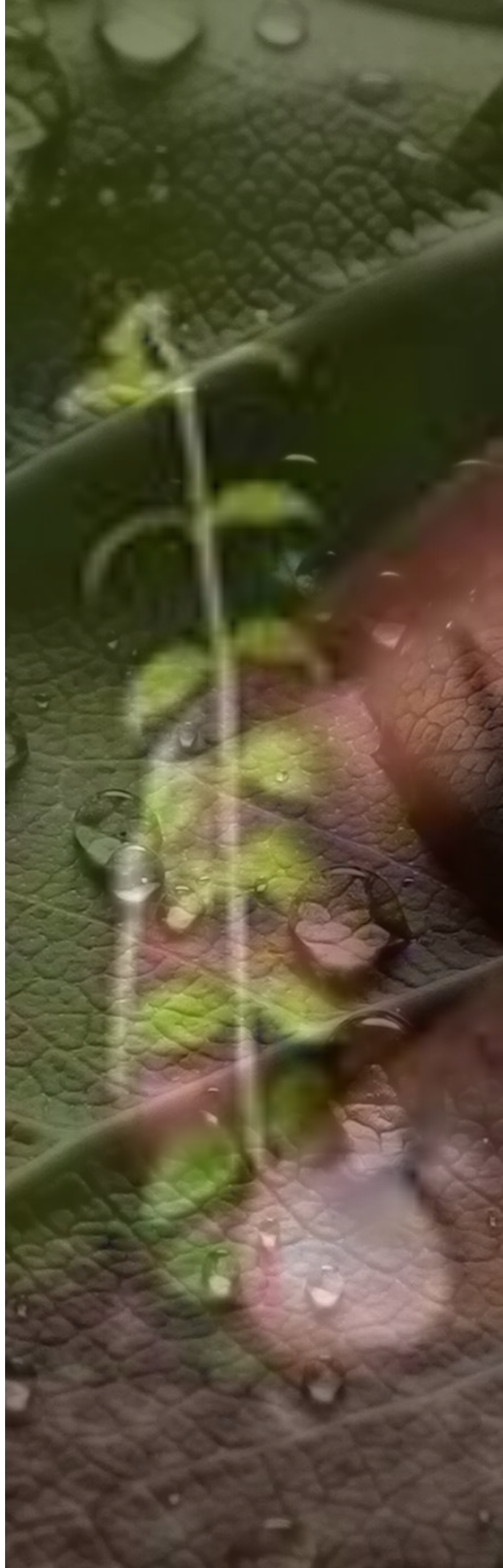
Personally Mediated (prejudice or discrimination): differential actions and assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intentions of others according to their race

Internalized: acceptance by members of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth; involves accepting limitations to one's own humanity.

Eugenics Movement: Who was Undesirable?



A Gardener's Tale



Levels of Racism

Institutionalized Racism

- historical insult
- structural barriers
- inaction in face of need
- societal norms
- biological determinism/unearned privilege

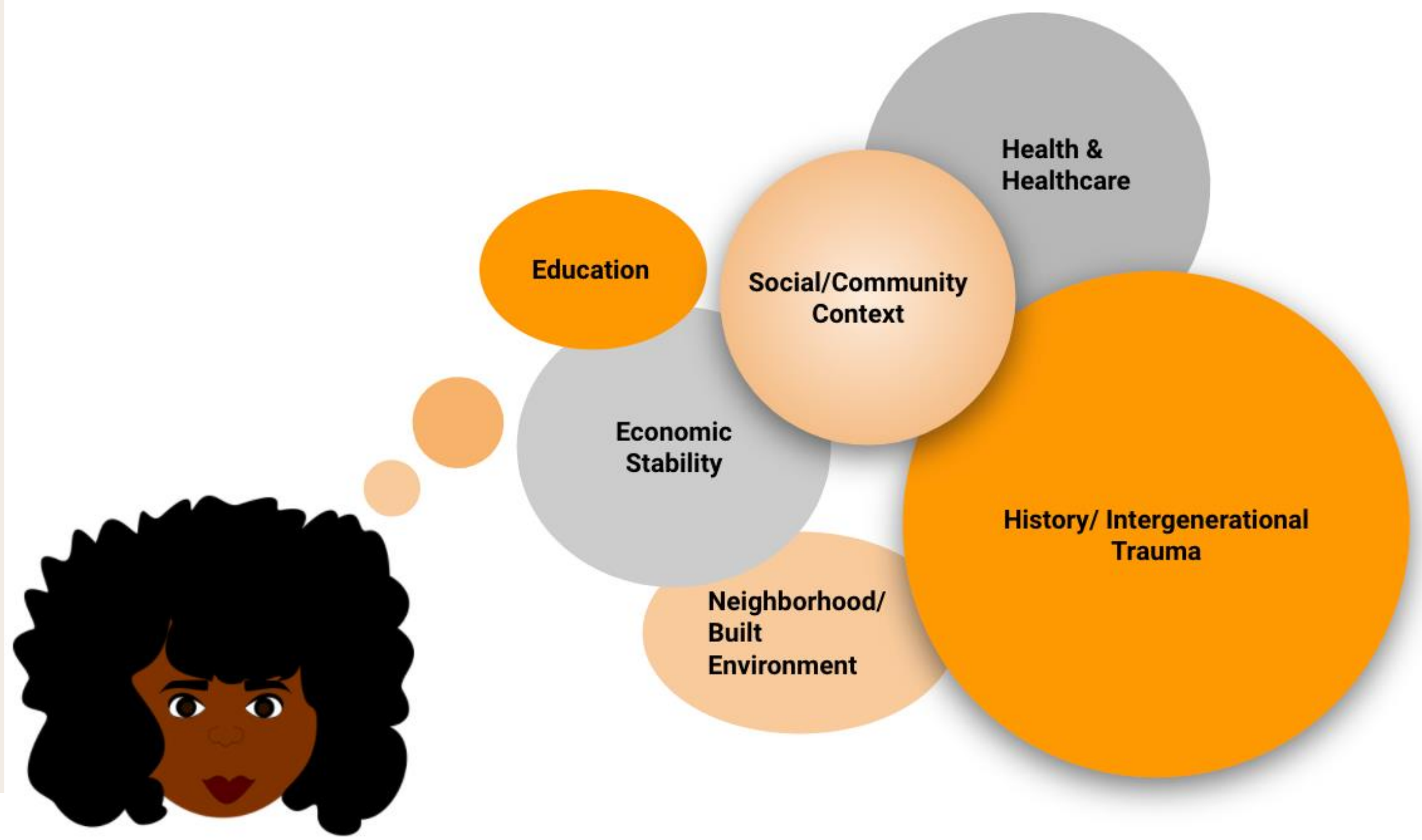
Personally Mediated Racism

- condoned by norms
- intentional
- unintentional
- maintain structural barriers
- acts of commission
- acts of omission

Internalized Racism

- undermines collective action
- reflects systems of privilege
- reflects on societal norms
- erodes individuals sense of value

Social Determinants of Health & Family Planning





"Discourse regarding health equity is ultimately a discourse about bodies; a discourse that necessitates critical and intersectional analyses of relational power dynamics that have historically patterned and continue to shape our health experiences, exposures and opportunities"

- Dr. Camara Jones



The Nasty Truth

Fact or Fiction?

Eugenicists and racists attempted to use birth control for social engineering.

Eugenics was used again as a tool in a new era of social planning after WWII when it metamorphosed into "family planning"



Fact or Fiction?

Clinical trials on birth control pills
- with levels of estrogen and progesterone 20x that of today's known acceptable hormone levels
- were performed on women living in housing projects in Puerto Rico without their consent



Fact or Fiction?

Most hospitals followed the "120 rule" prescribed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. "If a woman's age multiplied by the number of children she had totaled 120", she was a candidate for sterilization



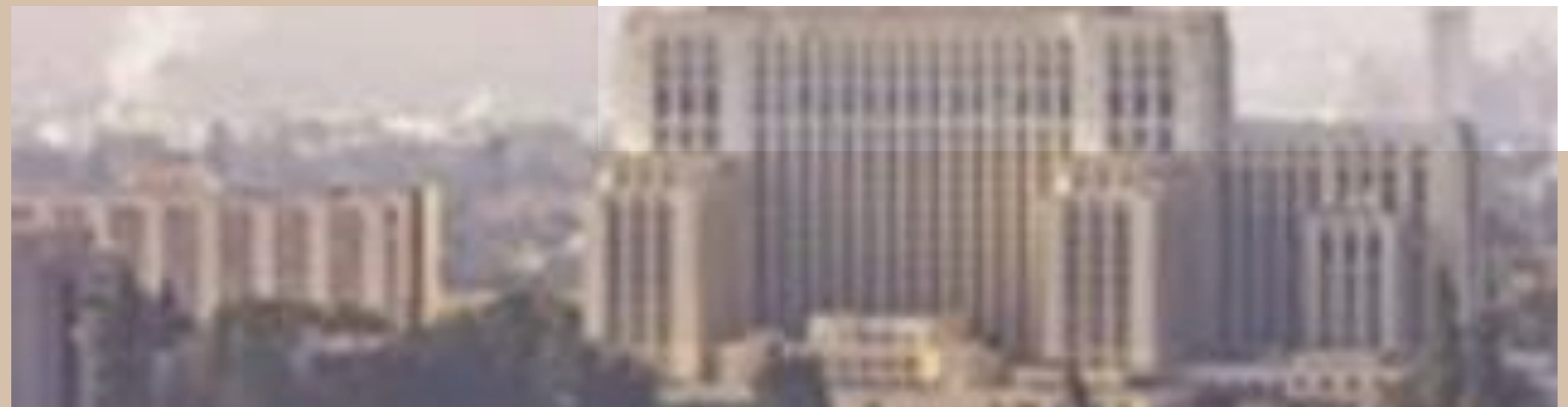
Fact or Fiction?

In the 1900s, sterilization procedures were a rare occurrence on Indian Reservations



Fact or Fiction?

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, working-class women of Mexican origin - who were not proficient in English - were systematically sterilized at Los Angeles County - USC Medical Center without informed consent



Historical Timeline

1907

● States start to enact sterilization laws on the ground of eugenics mandating the sterilization of people deemed "inferior & unfit"

1927

● In the case of Buck v. Bell, the court ruled that a "deficient mother, daughter, and granddaughter justified the need for sterilization"

1936

● A Law was enacted under U.S. territorial jurisdiction, making the sterilization of women in PR legal and free while offering no alternative methods of birth control

1968

● Campaign to sterilize 1/3 of PR women of childbearing age

1970s

● Mass sterilization of Indigenous women living on reservations; in 1975 alone, 25,000 women were sterilized by the Indian Health Services

1974

● During Relf v. Weinberger, the court found an estimated 100-150,000 poor people were sterilized annually under federally-funded programs. The case led to the requirement that doctors obtain "informed consent"

1979

● The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was created. The U.S. has still not ratified this convention

1990s

● DepoProvera is given to teen girls and women of color in public health clinics often without adequate medical information or consent; Norplant becomes commercially available

Historical Timeline

Early 1990s

● Legislators in more than a dozen states introduced measures that, had they passed, would have coerced women to use Norplant. Some offered financial incentives to women on welfare to induce them to use Norplant. Others required women receiving public assistance either to use Norplant or lose their benefits. Some bills would have forced women convicted of child abuse or drug use during pregnancy to have Norplant implanted

1994

● African American women in Chicago (later known as Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice) first introduce the term "reproductive justice"

1997

● SisterSong formed to educate women of color and policy makers on reproductive and sexual health and rights, and to increase access of health services, information and resources that are culturally and linguistically appropriate

???

● Other events important to highlight?



A Snapshot: Women of Color's Usage of Family Planning Methods



72%

of women who practice
contraception currently
use non permanent
methods - primarily
hormonal methods -
and 22% rely on
sterilization



83%

of Black women at risk of
unintended pregnancy are
currently using a
contraceptive method,
compared with 91% of
Hispanic and White
women, and 90% Asian
women



Sterilization

is most common among
Black and Hispanic women,
women living below 150% of
the federal poverty level,
women with less than a
college education, women
living outside of a metro
area, and those with public
or no insurance



Socio-economic Disadvantage

while family planning can have a positive impact on women's education and workforce participation, evidence suggests that the most disadvantaged U.S. women do not fully share in these benefits

Research on LARC

has shown that although ACOG declared LARC as the most effective and safe for all women of reproductive age, Black and Latina women are less likely to use these types of contraception compared to their white counterparts



Racial & Reproductive Justice

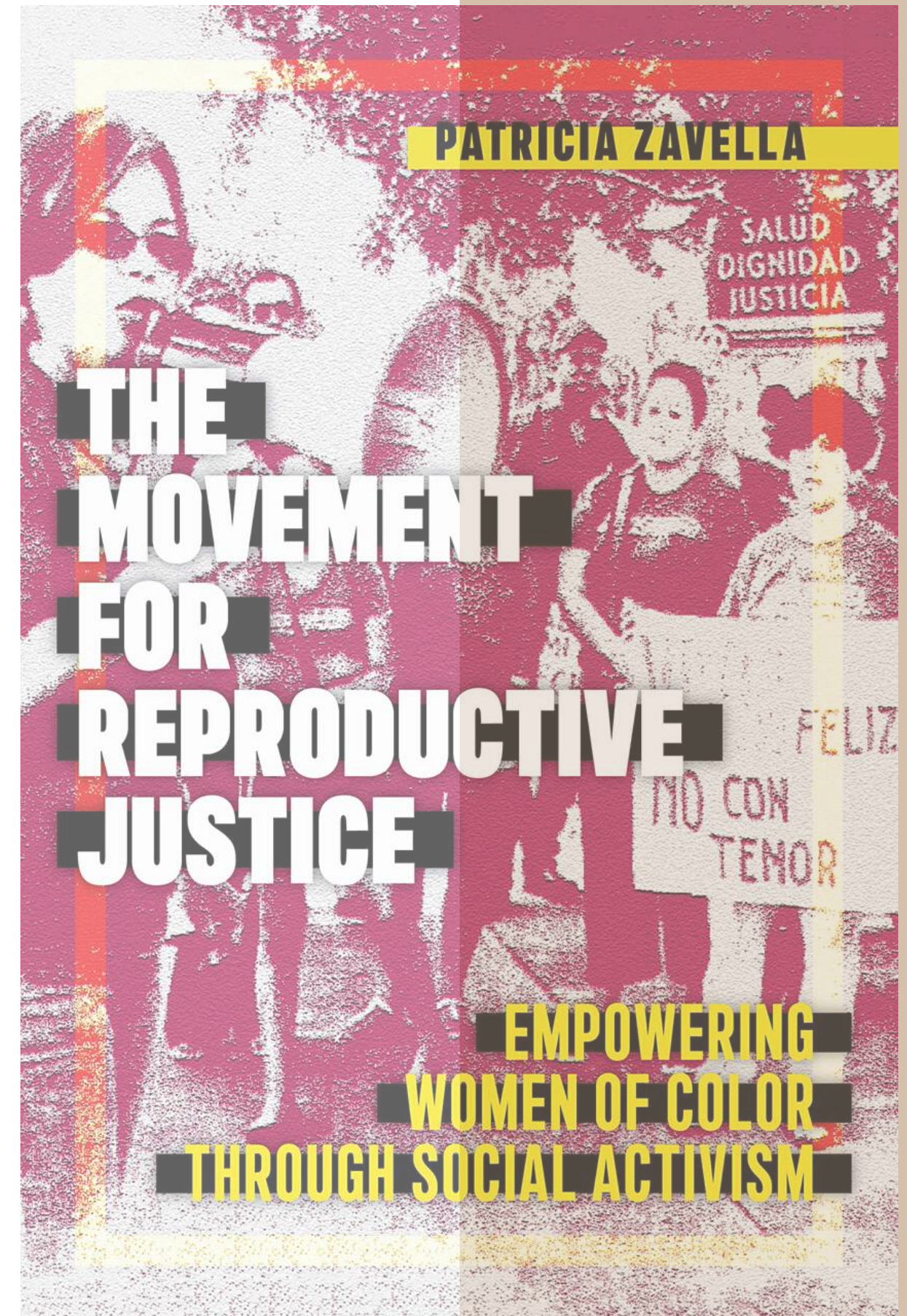
Reproductive Justice Framework



Reproductive Justice Framework

Every person has the right to...

- decide if and when to become pregnant and to determine the conditions under which they will birth
- decide they will not become pregnant or have a baby and options for preventing or ending pregnancy are accessible and available
- parent children they already have with dignity and has the necessary social supports in safe environments and health communities without fear of violence from individuals or the government
- individuals have the right to disassociate sex from reproduction and that health sexuality and pleasure are essential to whole and full human life







Let's Talk...



Who are the gardeners? What is our role in this?

Government

- power to decide
- power to act
- control of resources

Dangerous When

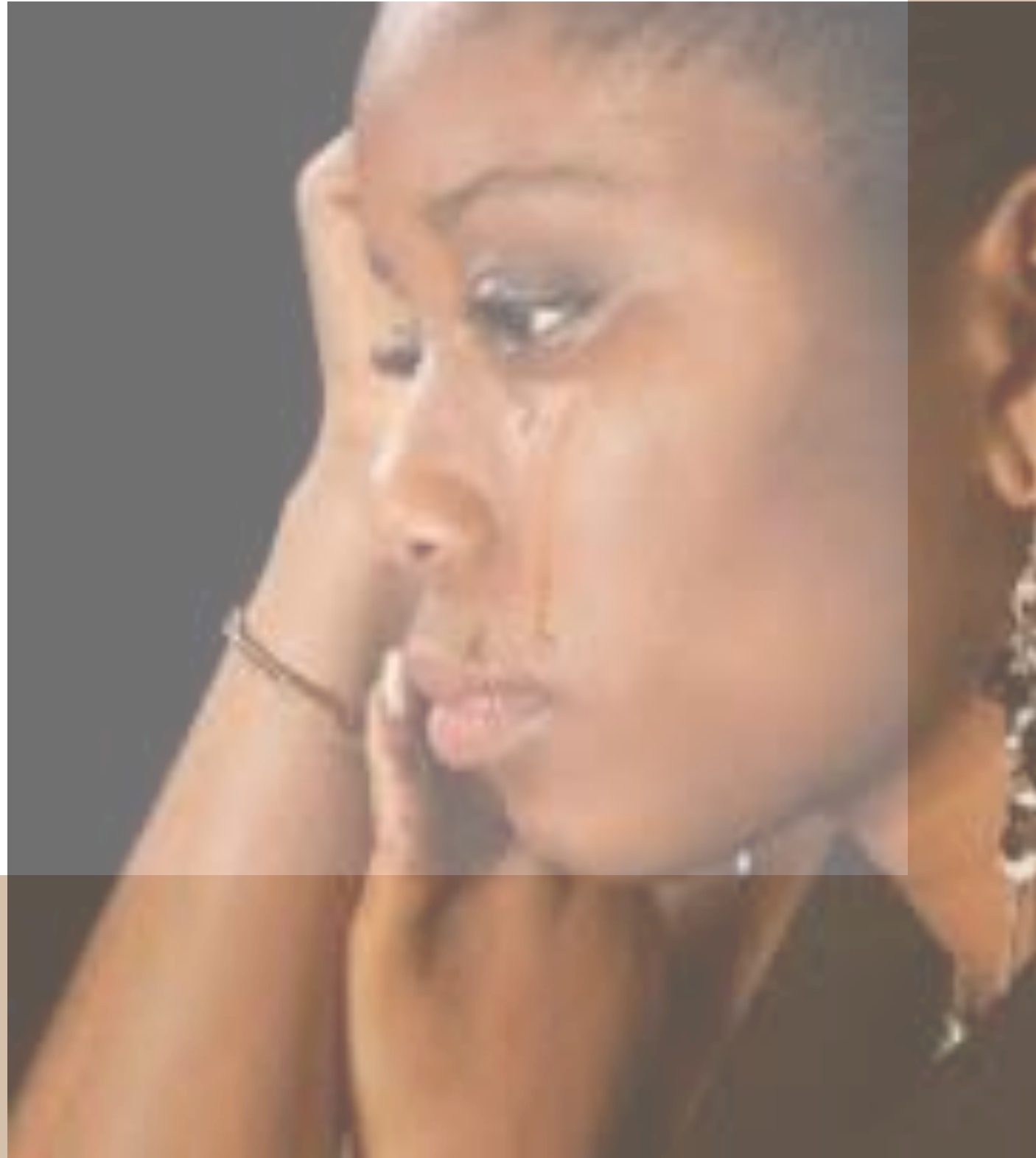
- allied with one group
- not concerned with equity

"When we are trauma-conscious we trust the person in front of us as the authority of their own story and we see them as capable and worthy of making their own decisions. We show respect by asking for and receiving enthusiastic consent before acting. And we invite the person we are supporting to listen to their own needs; we help them when they aren't sure how to do that yet. Above all, we listen with open minds and open hearts to the human in front of us."

-Nityda Gessel



Dear Centering...



"I'm having lots of anxiety thinking about getting a long term birth control. I'm not good with the pill, but I also don't want to risk getting pregnant back to back. I can't afford it. My mother told me that women like us, Black women on Medicaid, were convinced to get the arm implant because it was easy to manage, but the side effects were horrific and when they wanted to get it removed the doctors refused. How can I be so sure that won't happen to me? I'm scared of that."

Dear Centering...



"My aunt had a hard time trying to get pregnant. She has no idea why. After trying for about two years she finally went to the doctor and found out she had an IUD; she didn't know! Another one of my aunts was sterilized when she was 18 without her knowledge. My body tenses up when I think about this. I was thinking about an IUD, but what if something goes wrong and the doctors don't tell me? What if I'm never able to get pregnant again because of something the doctor did?"

Tools & Resources

Webinars & Other Media

- CHI Trauma Informed Care Circle Up
- Equity in Midwifery Education
- Not Your Momma's Podcast

Books & Articles

- Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale by Camara Jones
- Killing the Black Body by Dorothy Roberts

Websites

- Equitymidwifery.org
- Blackmamasmatter.org
- sistersong.net





Thank You

whodge@centeringhealthcare.org
mfranqui@centeringhealthcare.org