Moral Injury in the helping professions

June 10, 2022

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Training Objectives

01

Define moral injury: who, what, why, when, how.

02

Identify moral injury's impact on systems and services.

03

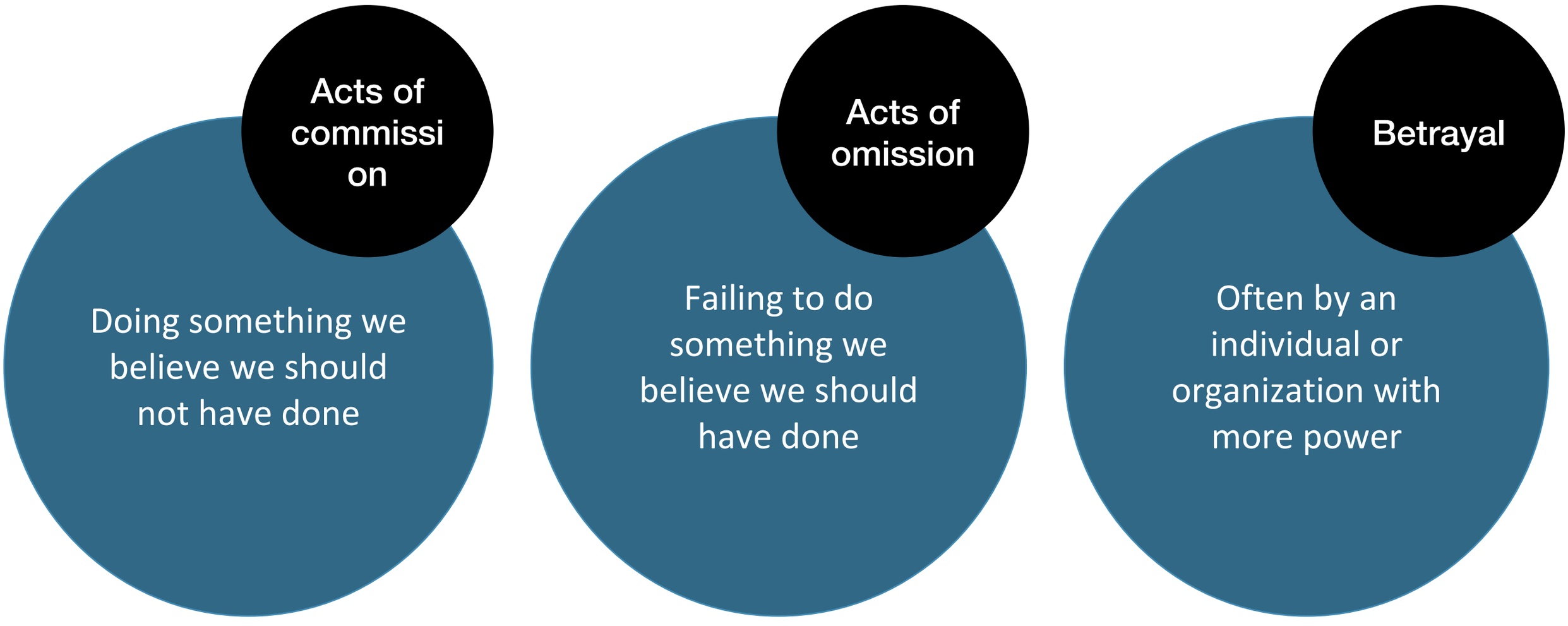
Strategies to reduce moral injury in social services fields.

Moral Injury

- A profound change in or betrayal of **sense of right and wrong**; injury to one's moral conscience resulting from an act of perceived moral transgression.
- A deep psychological, spiritual, and social impact that occurs when a person perpetrates, fails to prevent, witnesses, or is the victim of acts that transgress deeply held **moral beliefs and expectation**.
- An injury to an individual's **moral conscience and values** resulting from an act of perceived moral transgression.
- When people feel they have violated their **conscience or moral compass** when they take part in, witness, or fail to prevent an act that disobeys their own moral values or personal principles.

Moral Injury

Definitions

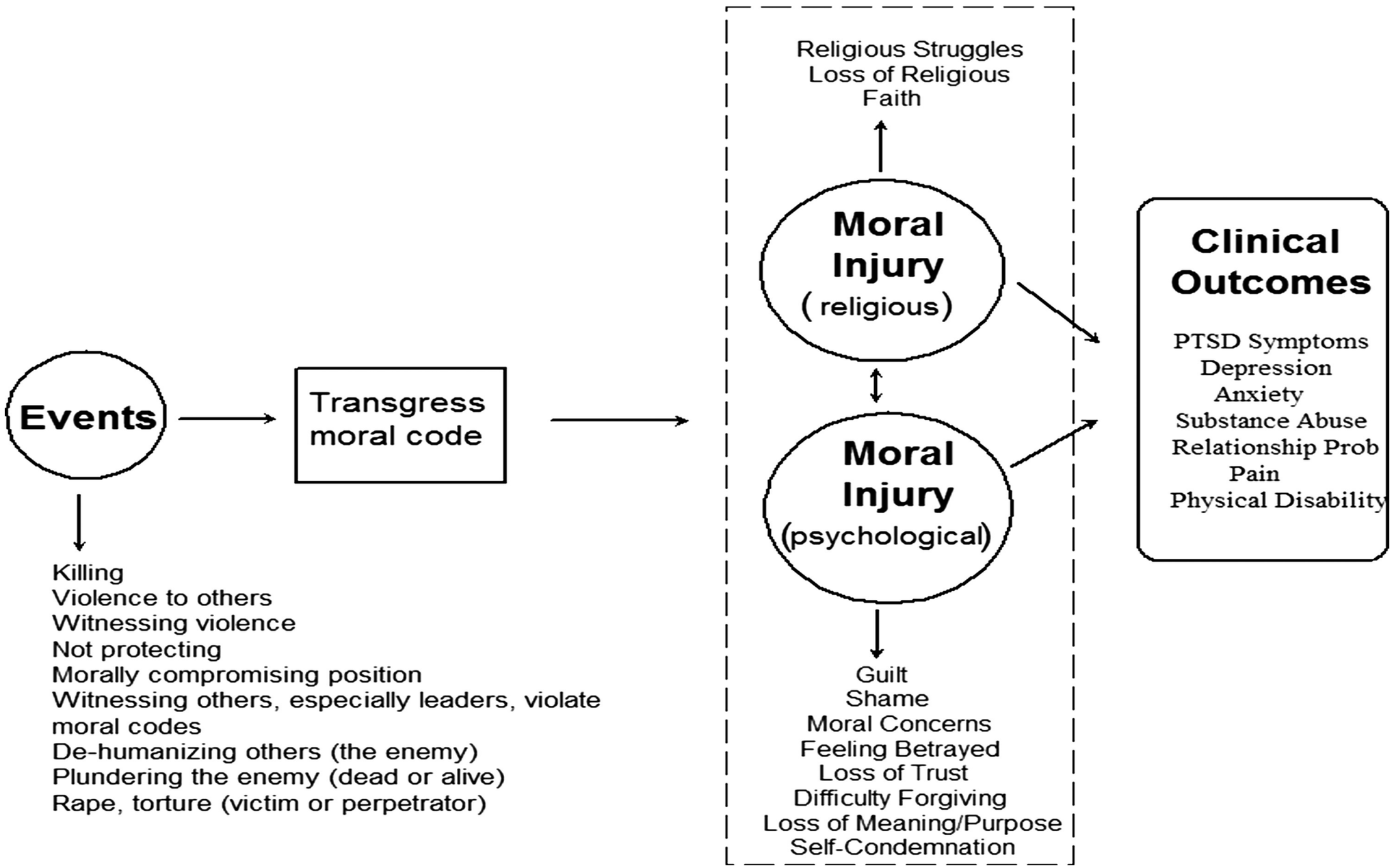


Moral Distress

Moral Anguish

Moral Conflict

MORAL INJURY



Association of Military Surgeons of the United States 2018. the Oxford University Press, Standard Journals Publication Model

Moral Injury is Not

Post-Traumatic stress disorder is the result of a threat to one's own or a loved one's physical safety causing symptoms of anxiety.

Secondary traumatic Stress Syndrome: is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another.

Occupational burnout is a syndrome: resulting from chronic work-related stress, with symptoms characterized by "feeling of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job.

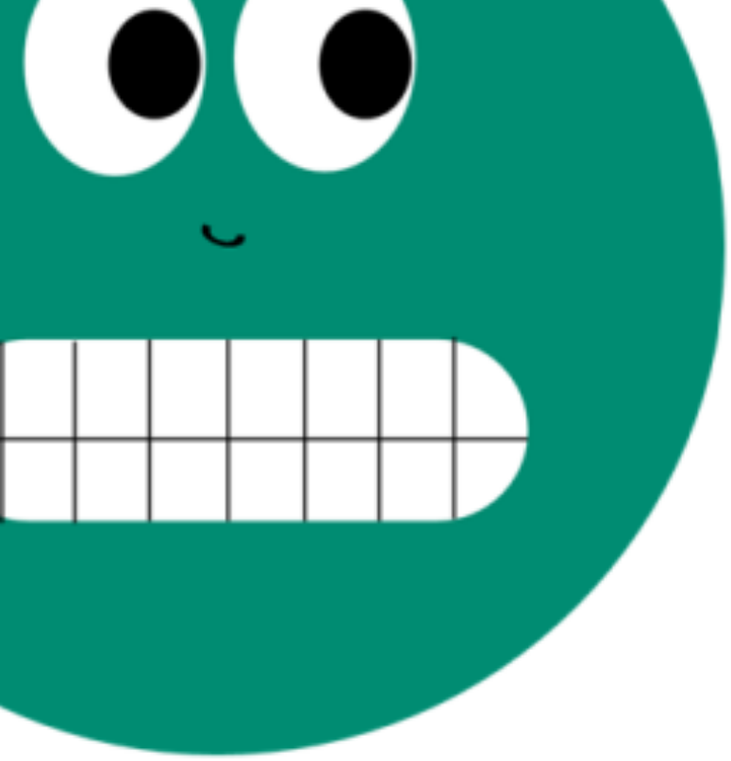
PTSD

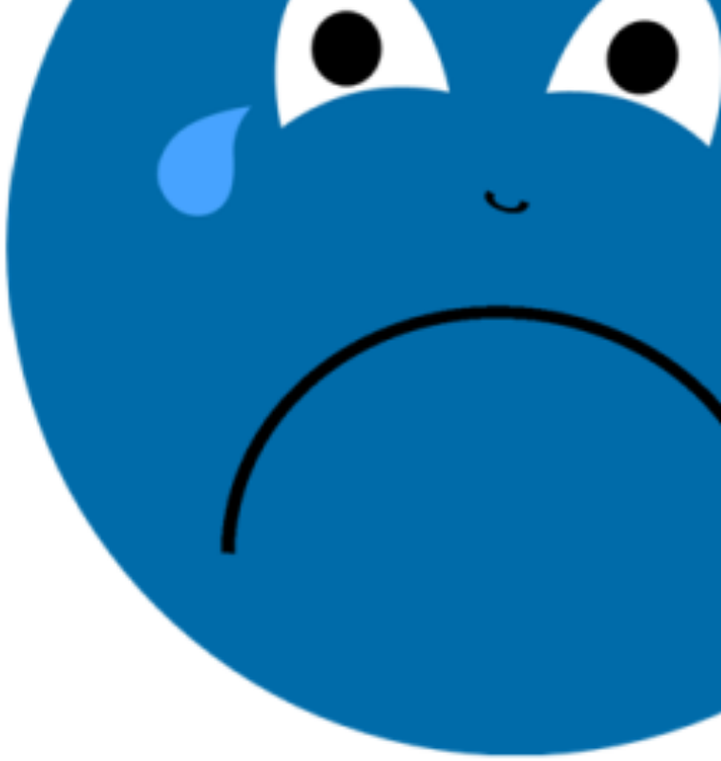
Startle reflex
Memory loss
Fear
Flashbacks

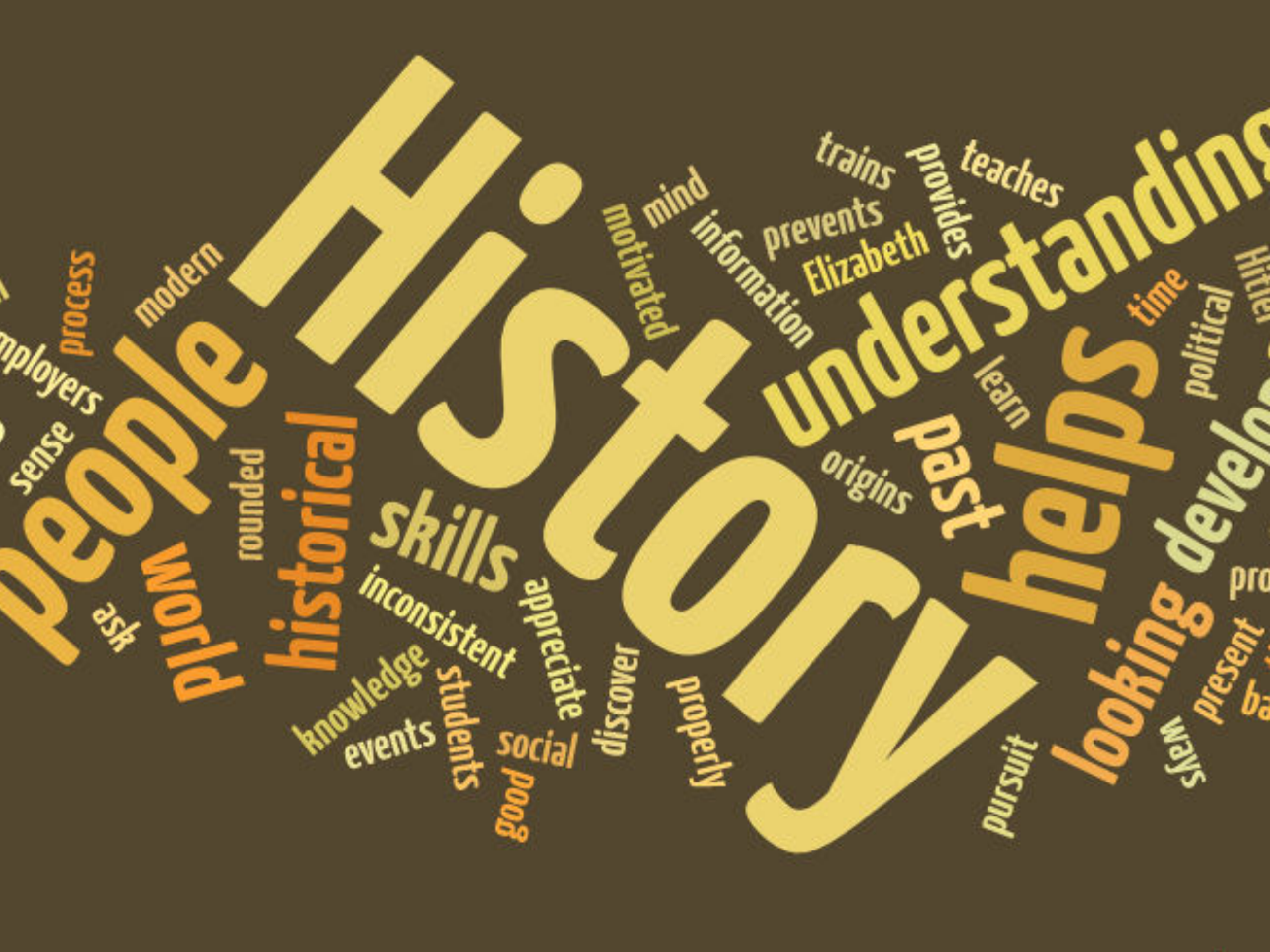
Anger
Depression
Anxiety
Substance use
Insomnia
Nightmares

Moral Injury

Anhedonia
Grief
Guilt
Shape
Alientation
Lack of Trust
Struggle with forgiveness



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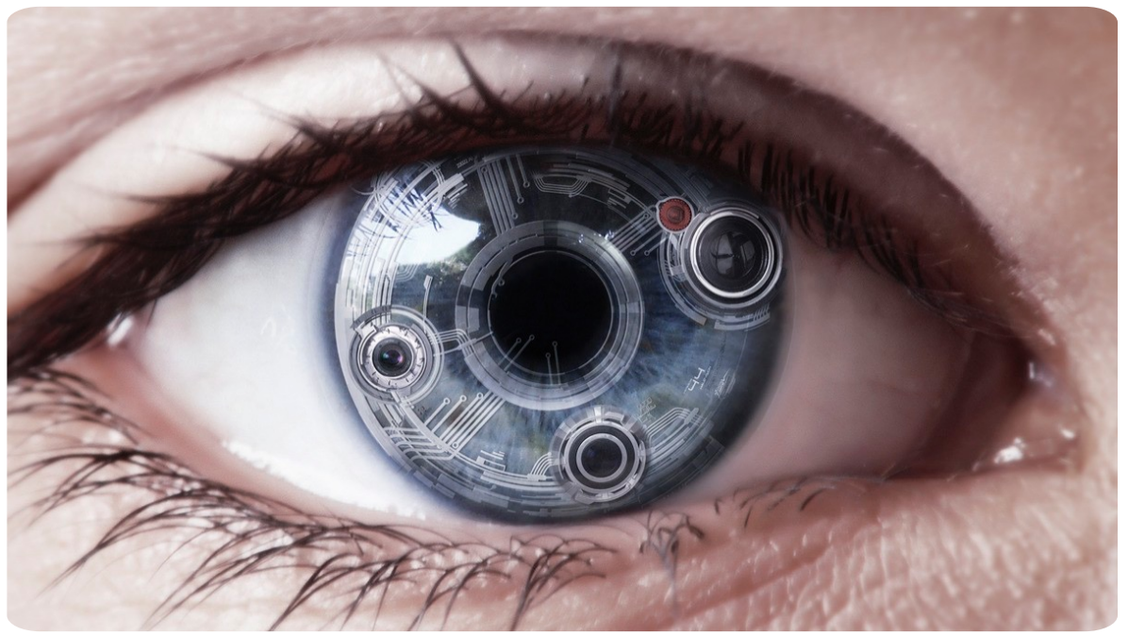
How has culture influenced your attitudes toward providing services, your attitudes toward a certain population/group, or your attitudes toward those receiving services?



Influences

- Race, ethnicity, country of origin
- Gender, sex, sexual orientation
- Religious beliefs, spiritual practices, foundation of beliefs
- Education (formal vs. informal), cognitive ability
- Governmental knowledge, experience, understanding, relationship
- Socioeconomic status, relationship with money, family money, resources access

For the purpose of this presentation

- **White supremacy** the belief that white people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society.
- **Systemic racism** is a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization and interchangeable with **institutional racism**.
- **White privilege** is the societal privilege that benefits white people over non-white people.

“Whatabout”

White Fragility

discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

ALL
LIVES
MATTER.

HUMAN BEINGS
RACISM IS A
IRUS !
TOP IT!
WE ARE NOT
-YOUR MODEL MINORITY
-THE FOX EYE TREND
-THE CHINESE VIRUS/KUNG FLU
-YELLOW-SKINNED
- CH*NKS/LING LING
RISE UP AGAINST ASIAN HATE #HATE IS A VIRUS!!!!!!!
STOP ASIAN HATE !
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
ANGELO QUINTO
STOPASIANHATE
HEALTHAWARENESS
WE WILL NOT

GEORGE FLOYD

Victor Duffy Jr.

Ramarley Graham

TAMIR RICE

Oscar Grant

NTHONY ASHFORD

DERRICK AMBROSE

Brandon MICHAEL BROWN

JUNI

tin Glenn BRIAN KEITH DAY

PRO

Torrey Robinson

natasha Mckenna

INIC

HINSON

ASSHAMS PHAROAH MANLEY

KEITH

Do I go to work?

Do I go to the streets?

Do I put my life on the line?

Do I keep my head down and pass?

What groups do you belong to: professional, personal, social?

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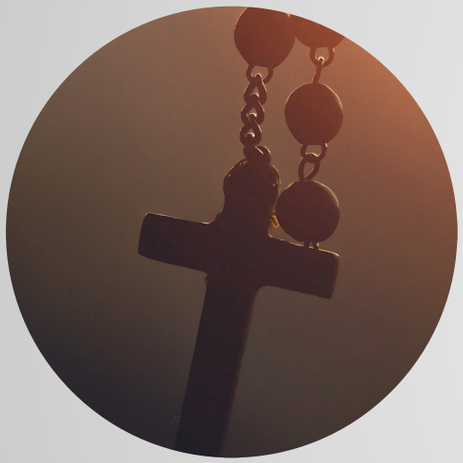

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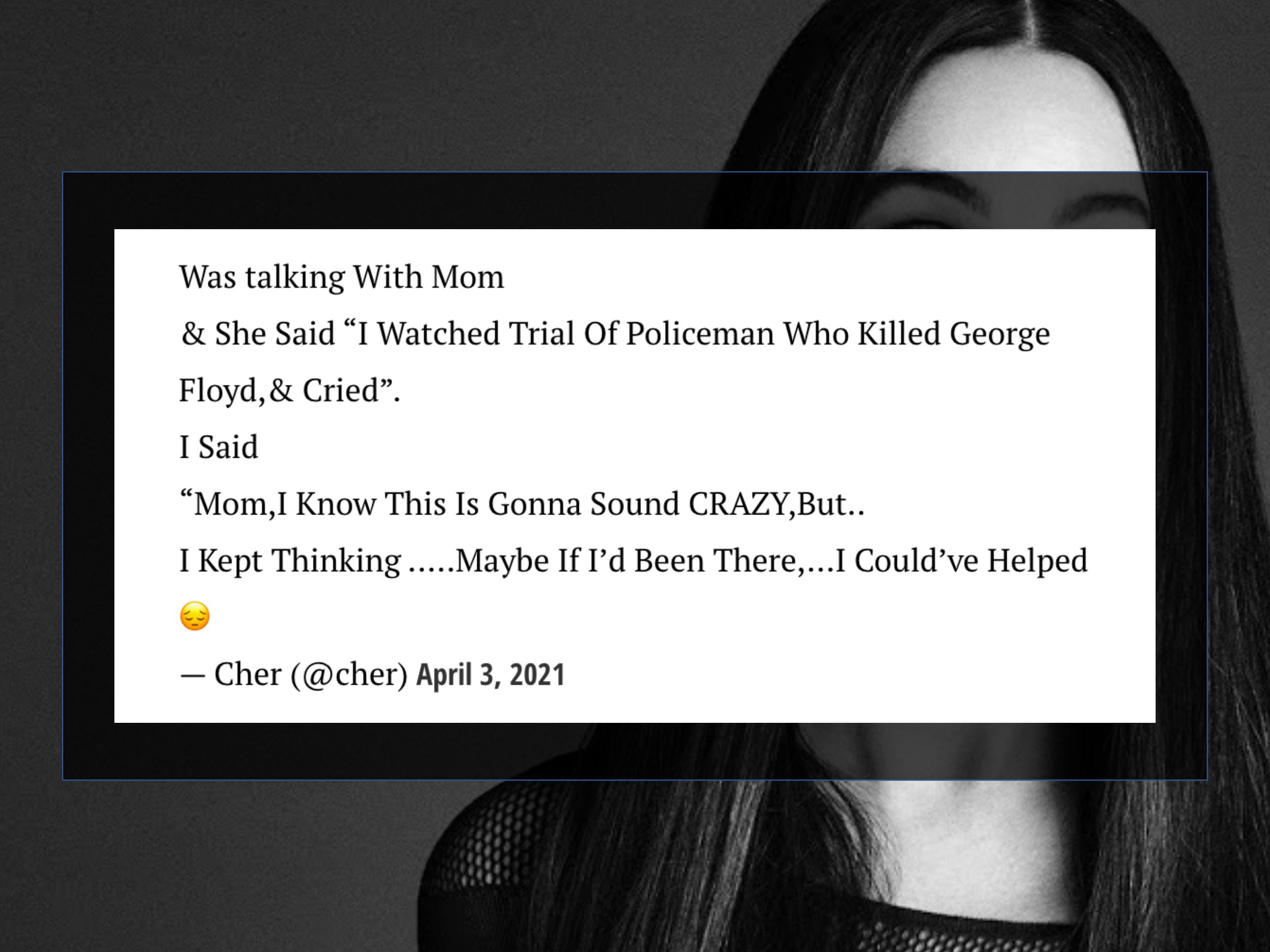
VOICE OF:

DARNELLA

WITNESS



Was talking With Mom

& She Said “I Watched Trial Of Policeman Who Killed George Floyd,& Cried”.

I Said

“Mom,I Know This Is Gonna Sound CRAZY,But..

I Kept Thinking …..Maybe If I’d Been There,…I Could’ve Helped 😔

— Cher (@cher) **April 3, 2021**

It’s been nights I’ve stayed up apologizing to George Floyd for not doing more, not physically interacting and not saving his life.

-Darnella Frazier

a Georgetown Law study found that, compared to white girls of the same age, adults perceive that…

- Black girls need less nurturing
- Black girls need less protection
- Black girls need to be supported less
- Black girls need to be comforted less
- Black girls are more independent
- Black girls know more about adult topics
- Black girls know more about sex

When was a time you saw a situation totally different than someone else? Anyone else? Everyone else?

What influences the different perspectives?

ROBERT THOM

CHARLES JOHNSON

Sickle cell disease is 3 times more prevalent than cystic fibrosis...

...yet receives the same level of research funding as CF.

er-person funding for sickle cell dis

$842

l per-person funding for cystic fibro

$2807

The birth rate of sickle cell disease is

1 in 365

black individuals

The birth rate of cystic fibrosis is

1 in 2500

white individuals

Black women are 3-4 times more likely to experience a pregnancy related death than white women

The mortality rate of black newborns in hospital shrunk by between 39% and 58% when black physicians took charge of the birth.

The mortality rate for white babies was unaffected by the doctor's race.

How do we confront moral injury?

Educate workforce on Moral Injury and systemic factors

- Name what is being experienced by the workforce.
- Remove the blame from the workforce.
- Bring attention to the policies, practices, statutes, and laws that contribute.

Ethical Decision-Making framework

"In order to perform **effectively,** the social worker uses a combination of **art and science**. It is recognized that a worker brings certain **intangibles** to the practice situation that affect process and outcome - the **art** encompassed in building relationships, creative thinking, courage, energy, using sound judgment, and committing to appropriate values. At the same time, the social worker must combine his or her artistic abilities with the **profession's knowledge and scientific base**. Without art, the knowledge base is of little value. But without the knowledge, the art is of limited effectiveness. The social worker merges his or her art and science into a practice framework" (p.45).

Anti-oppressive work

&

Actively confronting and mitigating dominant culture biases

How might the discoveries from these reflections and the discussion today influence your work in communities other than your own?

Thank you!

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