Can the labels we use for certain populations create exclusion?

Dr. Debbie Hager

Social and Community Health

School of Population Health

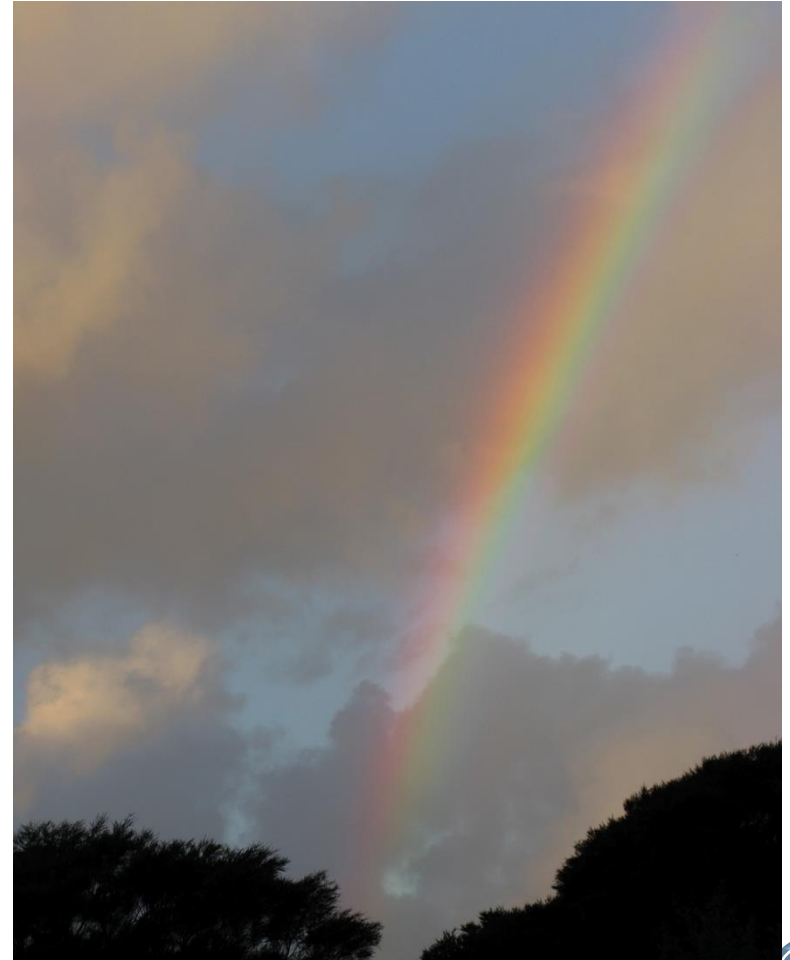University of Auckland

d.hager@auckland.ac.nz

Paradigms and hegemony

- Flat earth??

- Round earth??
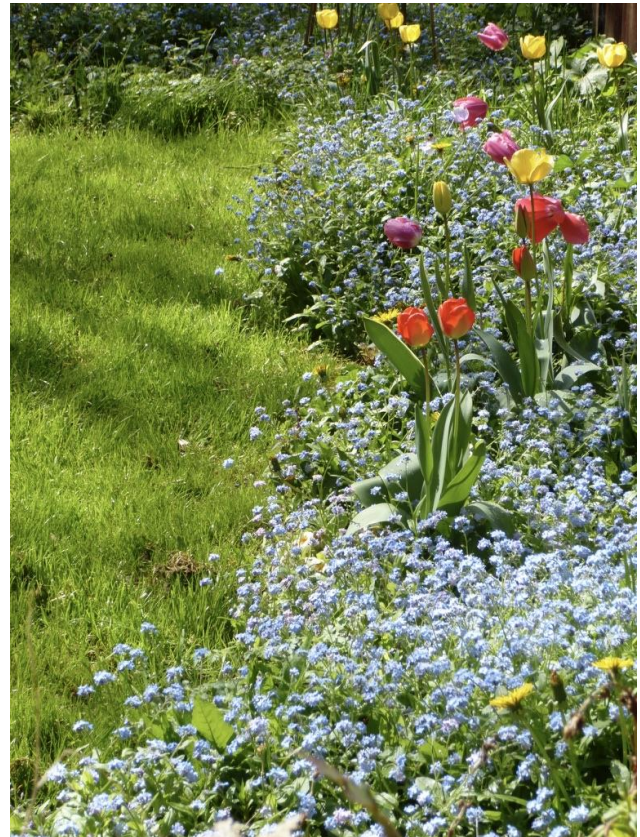

- How the world was created??
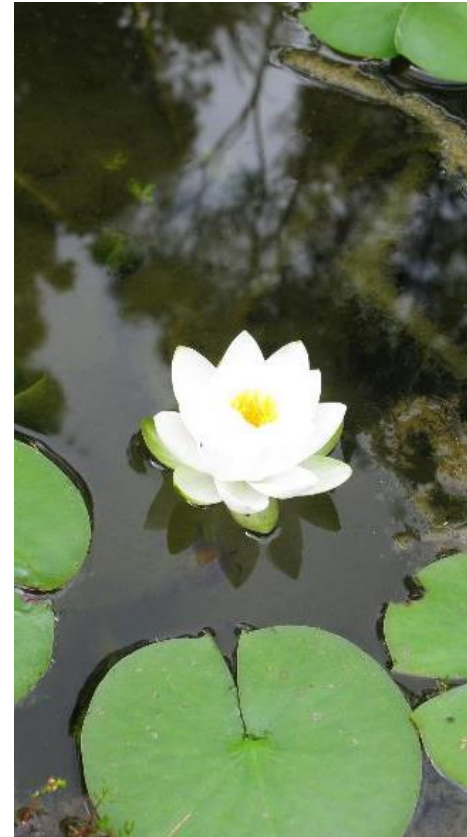
Paradigm

- A world view

Ideology
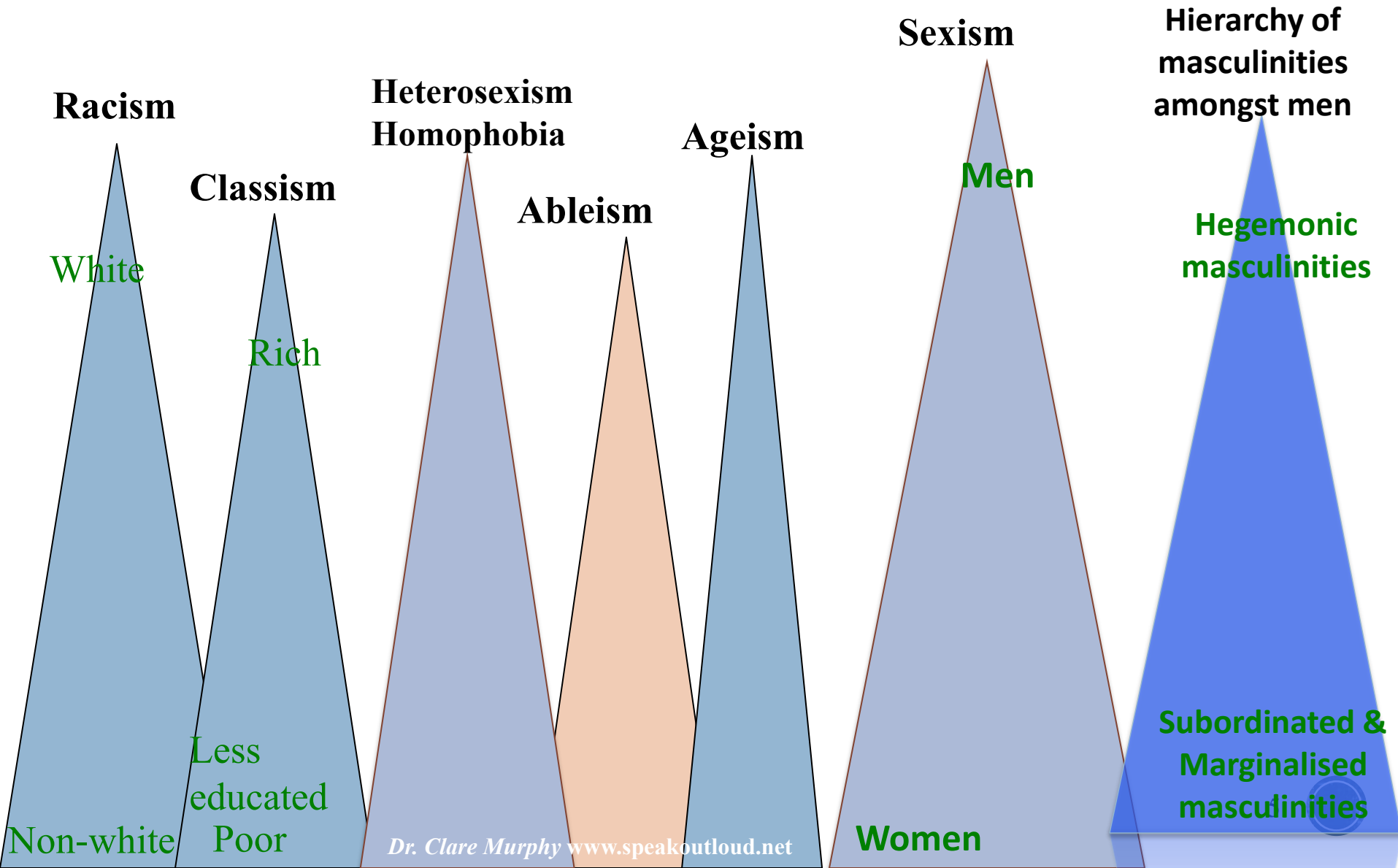
- Beliefs about that world view

Hegemony

- The dominant group, idea, paradigm, way of thinking, political ideology, other ideologies, the most powerful

- The hegemonic norm is generally invisible to not only those who are hegemonic, but to those who are oppressed by it.

Multiple social hierarchies, diversity and difference (Dr. Clare Murphy)

Racism

White

Non-white

Classism

Rich

Less educated Poor

Heterosexism Homophobia

Ableism

Ageism

Sexism

Men

Women

Hierarchy of masculinities amongst men

Hegemonic masculinities

Subordinated & Marginalised masculinities

Dr. Clare Murphy www.speakoutloud.net

What I'm going to talk about is not about blame

- It's about unexpected or unconsidered consequences of certain language and how this can harm people we work with/make it difficult to make positive change
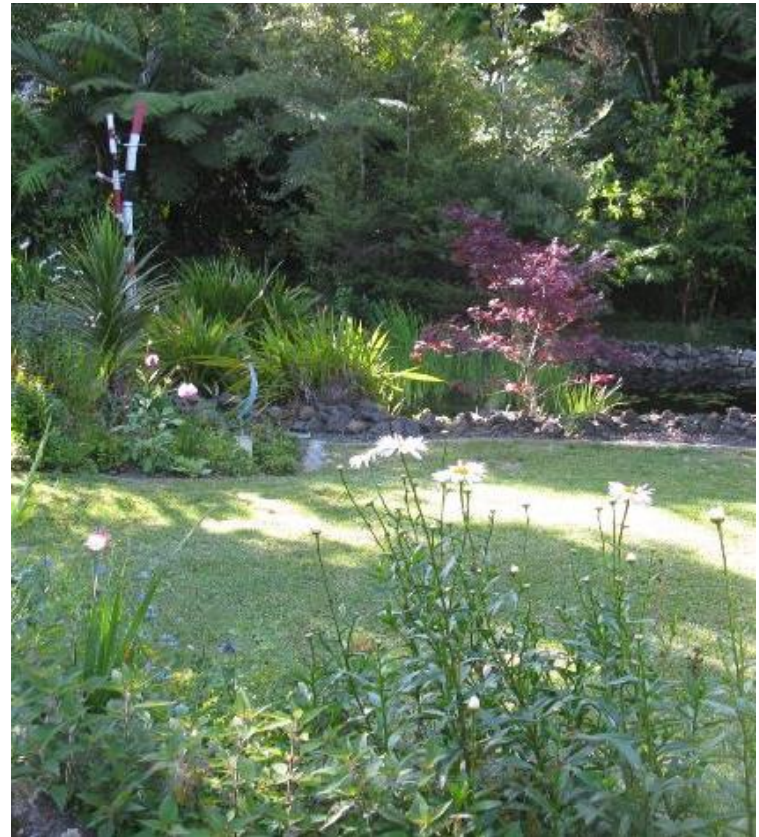
Words used to describe some individual women, or populations of women

- Marginalised

- Excluded

- Powerless

- Difficult

- Disabled

- Ethnic

- Intractable

- Vulnerable

Effects of domestic violence that impact on women's functioning

- Fear

- Physical illness

- Head injury

- Self harming behaviours

- Mental health problems

Intractable

- hard to control or deal with.
- (Of a person) difficult or stubborn.

Synonyms: unmanageable, uncontrollable, ungovernable, out of control, out of hand, impossible to cope with; More difficult, awkward, complex, troublesome, demanding, burdensome

Language that 'others' in relation to the hegemony

- Marginalised
- Excluded
- Powerless
- Difficult

- Disabled
- Ethnic
- Intractable
- Vulnerable

Vulnerable

- Exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.

- 1.1 (of a person) in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

- https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/vulnerable

- Able to be harmed

  - Inherent

  - External
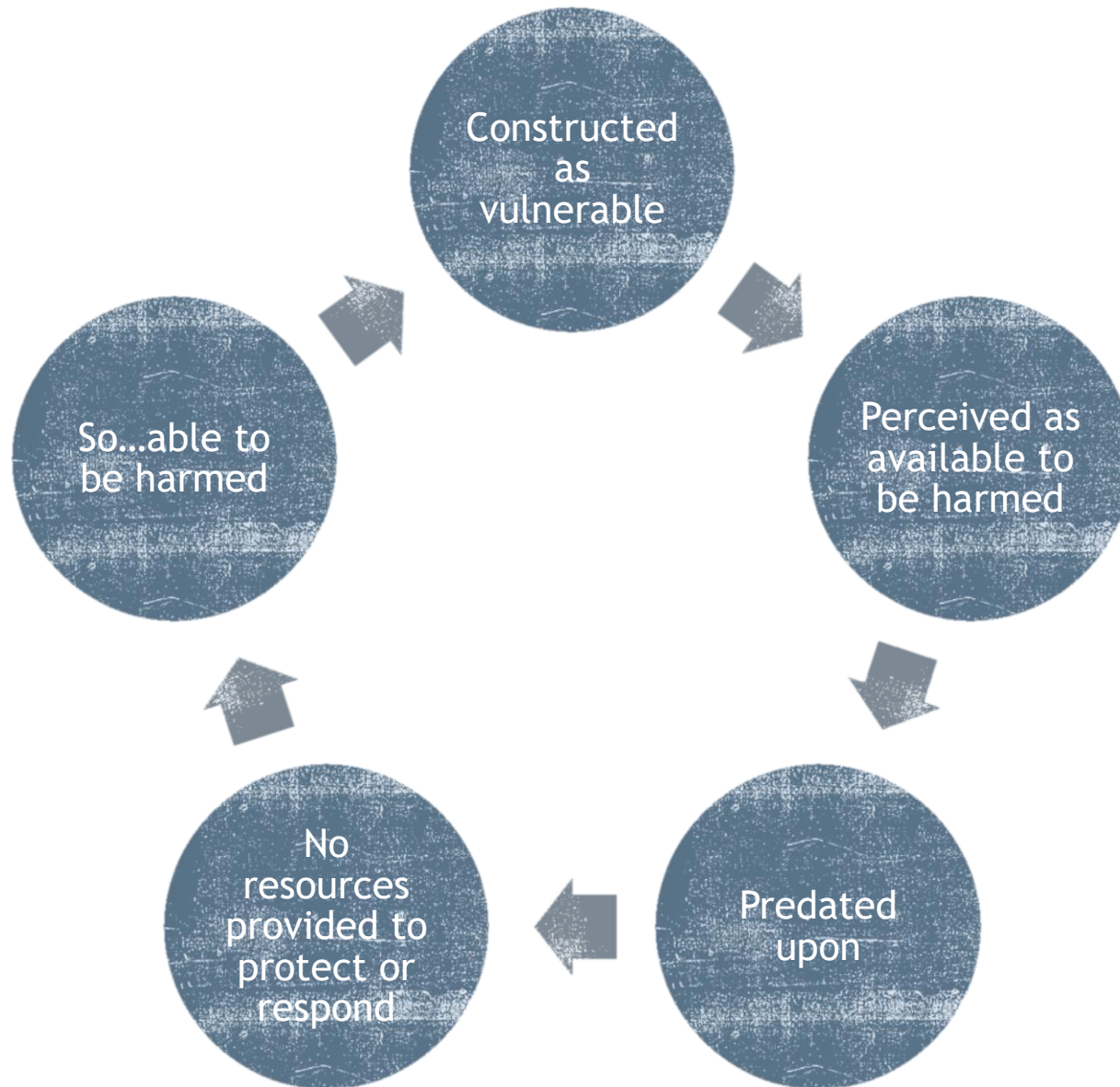
  - Universal

  - Constructed

Vulnerable - findings

- Constructed

- Contrasted with hegemonic norms

- Expectation of harm

- Predated upon

- Violence not prevented or constructively responded to
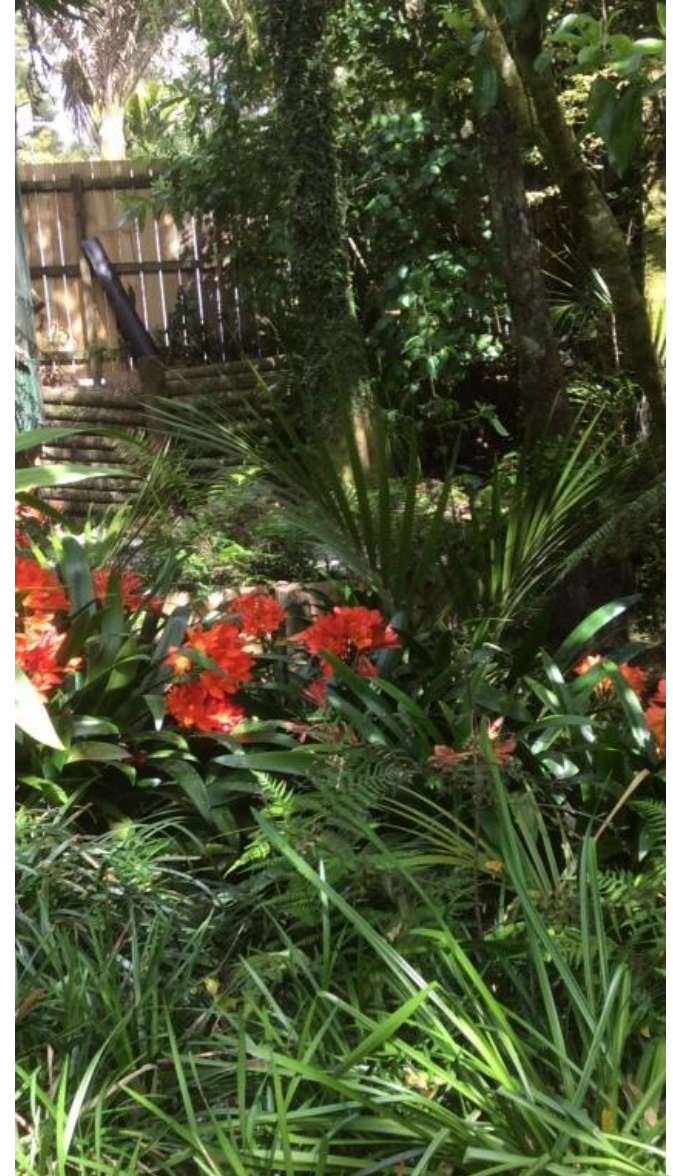
Vicious cycle of harm caused by constructing women as vulnerable

What can we do?

Reframe the paradigm

- Inadequate systems and social attitudes that enable violence.

- Women who are endangered by inadequate systems, structures and social attitudes

Look at where the language sites the problem

- Be very clear about why we are using certain language and where the fault/problem is being placed by the language

- Reframe the language to site the problem with the (lack of) resources, the structure of the service/system, the exclusion caused by racism, ableism, sexism, classism, homophobia – of comparing women negatively to existing hegemonic norms….

- Point out what makes the problem, not who suffers because of the problem.

We can ensure that the language we use:

- Does not create stigma and/or discrimination

- Doesn't blame or stereotype

- Clearly and concisely reflects true risk/people's circumstances

- Sites the problem clearly within the service/processes/individuals that are creating harm

- (When there is violence and abuse), names/identifies the perpetrator as the problem – not the victim. This could be interpersonal or systemic violence