



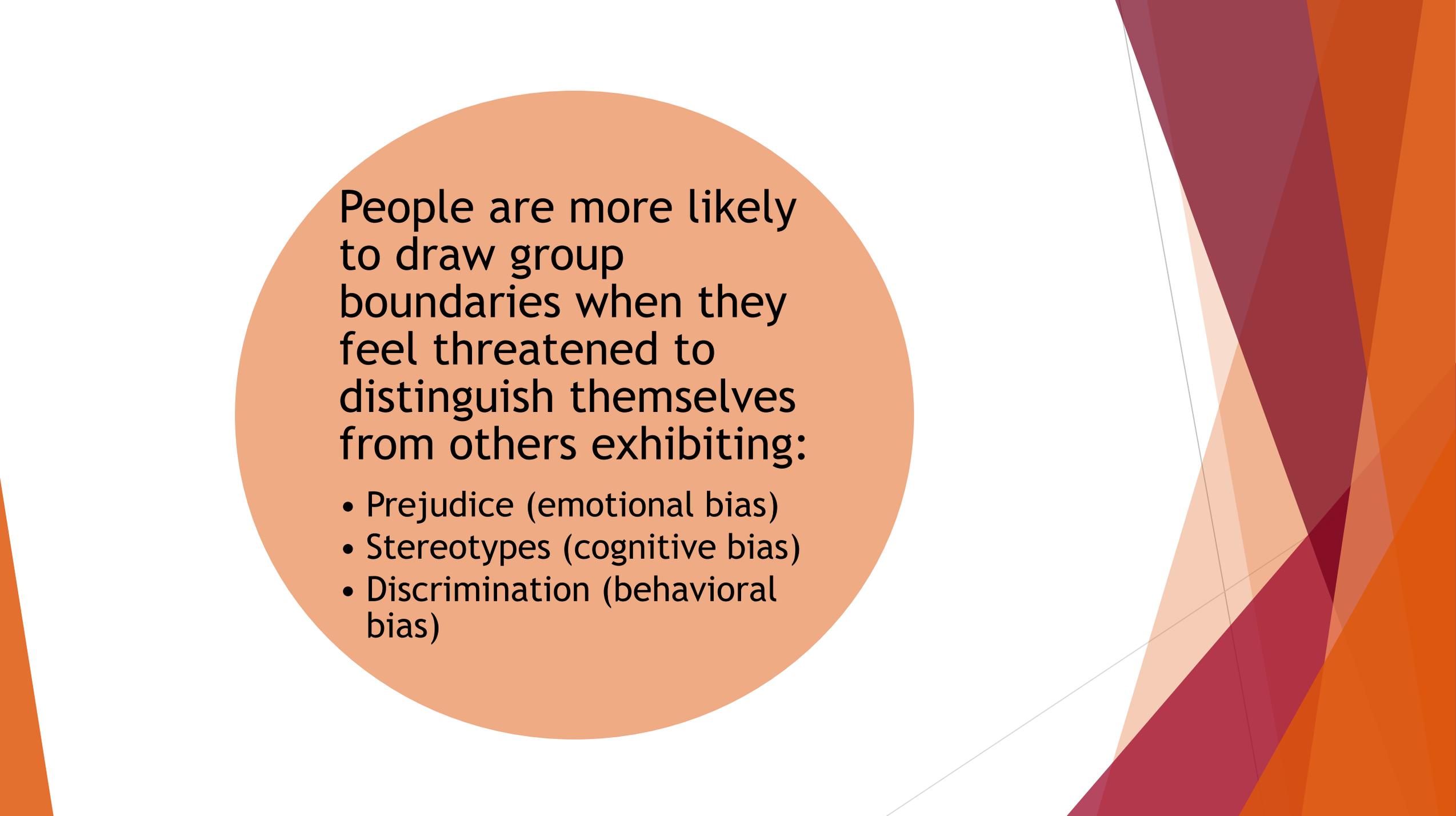
OFFICE FOR INCLUSION  
AND DIVERSITY  
VIRGINIA TECH.

# Dialogue on Race

**Cultural Humility: Becoming a  
Culturally Humble Professional**

# Cultural Competency v. Cultural Humility

Both concepts grew out of increasing recognition of the need for public health and social work to **reflect on and address our own biases** and actively seek to understand and address the cultural or social realities of the diverse individuals, groups, and communities with whom we interact.

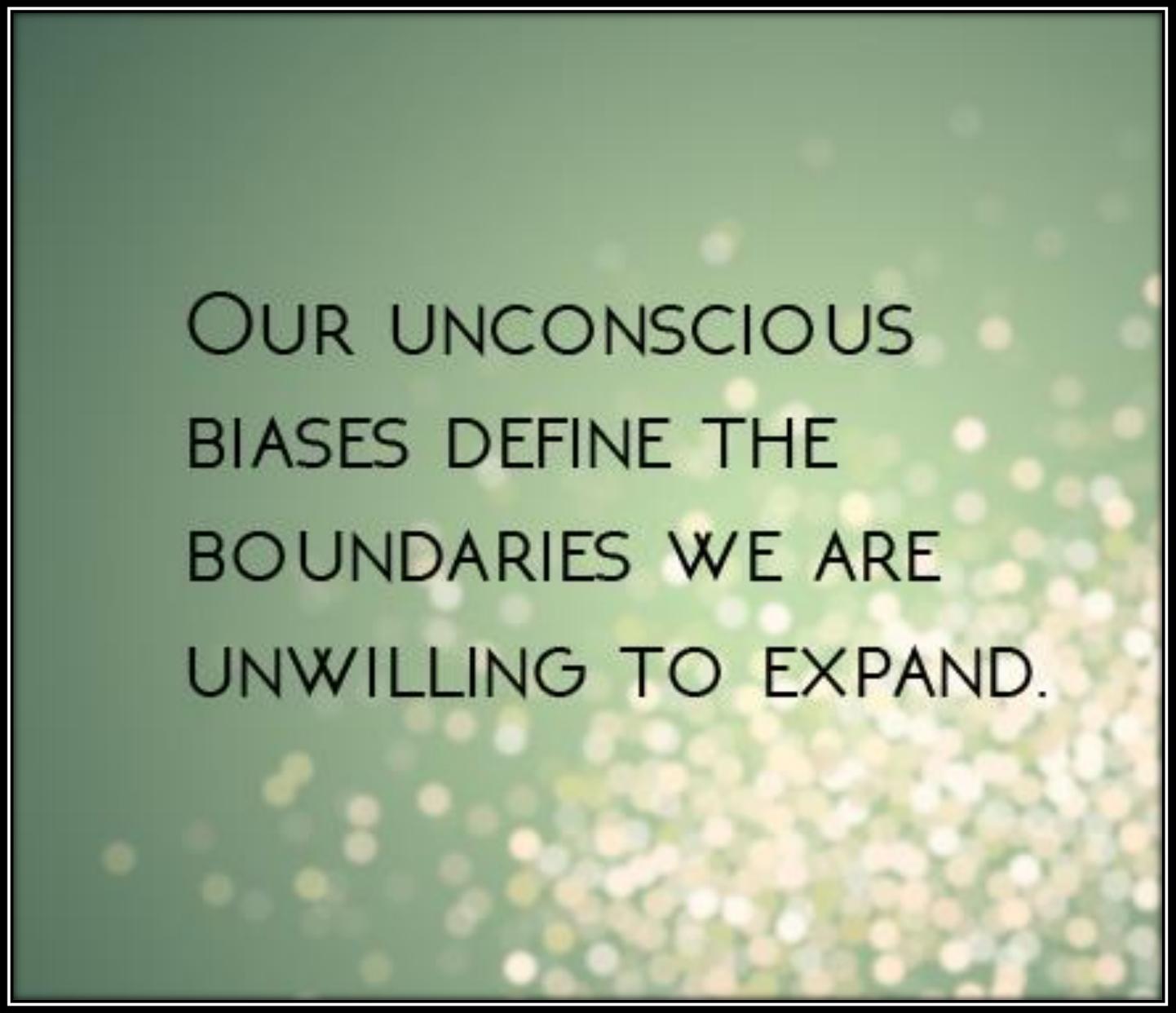


People are more likely to draw group boundaries when they feel threatened to distinguish themselves from others exhibiting:

- Prejudice (emotional bias)
- Stereotypes (cognitive bias)
- Discrimination (behavioral bias)

**“The key isn’t to feel guilty about our [implicit] biases—guilt tends toward inaction. It’s to become consciously aware of them, minimize them to the greatest extent possible, and constantly check in with ourselves to ensure we are acting based on a rational assessment of the situation rather than on stereotypes and prejudice.”**

“It is probably not possible for us to get rid of all our biases, nor is it desirable. Our brain’s way of sorting through lots of stimuli quickly is what allows us to move through the world and survive. What we need to learn is how to slow down the biases that betray our values long enough for us to act in a way that is more aligned with what we believe.”



OUR UNCONSCIOUS  
BIASES DEFINE THE  
BOUNDARIES WE ARE  
UNWILLING TO EXPAND.



Implicit bias ≠ deliberate hiding of prejudices.

More than 85 percent of all Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced

- Yet researchers have concluded that the majority of people in the United States hold some degree of implicit racial bias.
- Consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts **but** also holds negative associations in his/her mind unconsciously.

## Culture

- People share a common social understanding of the stereotypes that are pervasive in our culture.
- This knowledge can foster implicit bias even if a person does not necessarily endorse the cultural stereotype.
- Influenced by background, cultural environment and personal experiences

## The Self

- People tend to possess consistent and strongly positive attitudes toward themselves.
- Positive attitudes about the self can transfer very easily to other things, people, and groups that share attributes with the self.

**Cultural competence refers to the knowledge, skills and awareness of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups.**

**It is important to translate this ‘competence’ into professional practice, so that all social groups are treated with respect and in recognition of their diversity.**

The word “competence” has been described as problematic by some individuals and communities for whom it implies a top-down approach, with one entity (often including some highly educated and privileged members of a given racial or other group) deciding what content should be included and which benchmarks or criteria should be used to assess competence for their group(s).

***Cultural competence*** is not something we achieve or fail to achieve but rather a reminder to continue to strive to know more about communities of all types with which we work or interact. Together with the concept and embodied practice of ***deep cultural humility***, it provides professionals with some of our most important tools in working with diverse individuals, groups, and communities in today's complex world.

## Cultural Effectiveness

*“To be culturally effective doesn’t mean you are an authority in the values and beliefs of every culture. What it means is that you hold a deep respect for cultural differences and are eager to learn, and willing to accept, that there are many ways of viewing the world”*

Okokon O. Udo

**Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, ability, physical appearance, height, etc.) might combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege.**

- ❖ Non-awareness: of difference refers to individuals that have no or limited experience with diversity. It is not that they do not recognize difference but they place no value on difference and approach each person as an individual regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, and so forth.
- ❖ Awareness of difference: indicates that you not only recognize difference but realize that it actually holds some value to the individual and your relationship with them. However, you may lack the training, expertise, and ability to apply the knowledge you have.
- ❖ Acceptance/acknowledgement: of difference indicates that during this stage you have accepted that different does not mean deviant and you have a responsibility to become more culturally competent.
- ❖ Understanding cultural difference: indicates you have taken the necessary steps to increase your cultural knowledge through diversity training, workshops, discussions with others, and self education to better understand and relate to a wide range of diverse individuals.
- ❖ Cultural adaptation: indicates you now have the ability to apply what you have learned and adapt your approach to the needs and communication styles of those around you.
- ❖ Intercultural skillfulness: indicates you have expanded your comfort zone and have become a culturally competent. You now have the tools, knowledge, and skills to relate to a wide range of individuals and feel comfortable in doing so. These skills have been gained but keep in mind that they need to be maintained and this is an on-going process in which we continue to learn and expand our knowledge.

Ransford Danso argues that cultural competence already incorporates the concept of cultural humility, stressing as it does “the need to question one’s assumptions, beliefs and biases,” and other tenets at the heart of cultural humility and anti-oppressive practice such as “respect for difference, reducing power differentials, building partnerships, and learning from clients”

# A few words about cultural humility

Cultural humility--Term coined by Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia in 1998.

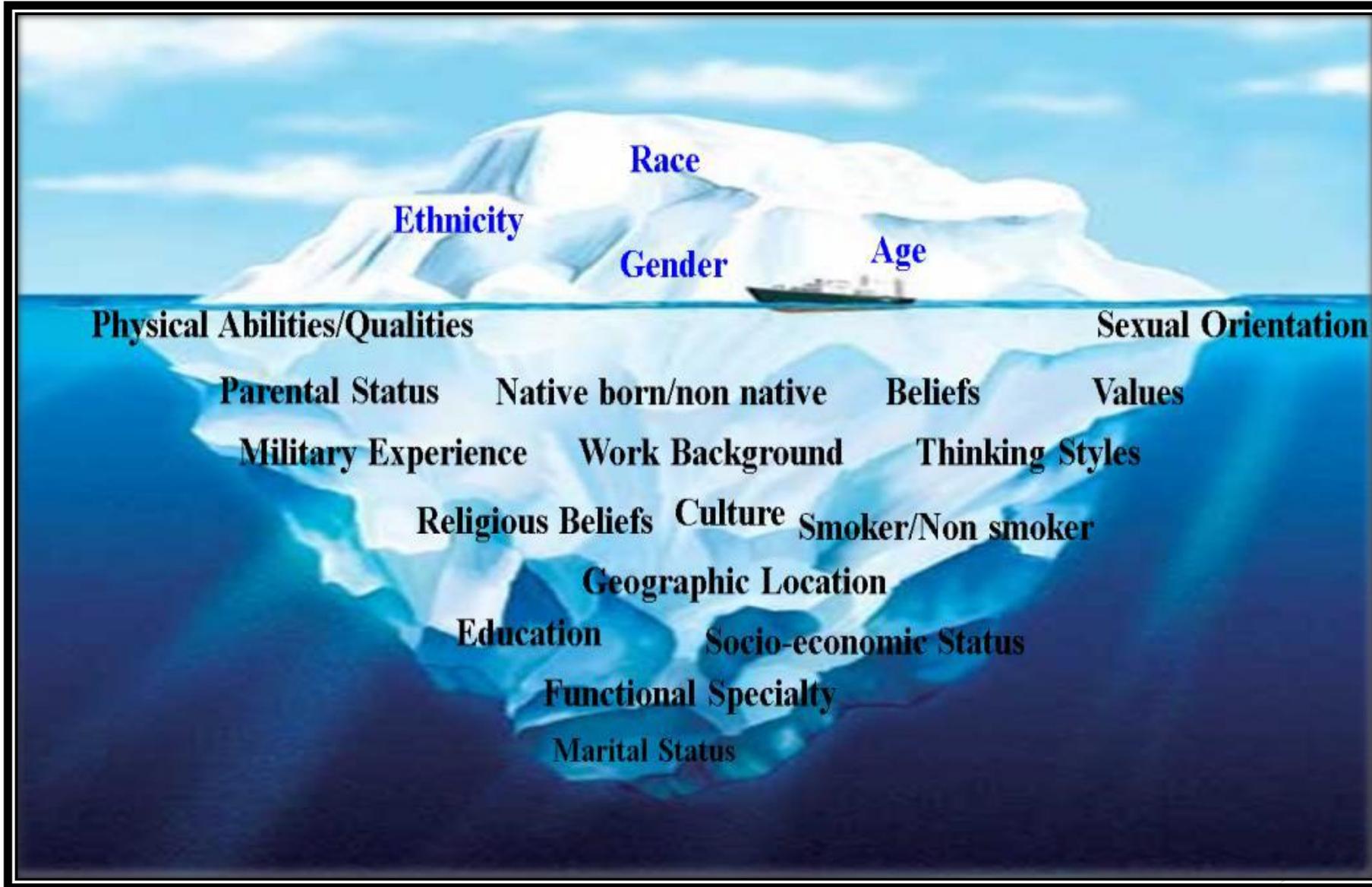
- Introduced as an alternative to cultural competence, which has many negative connotations.
- Competence assumes that one can learn or know enough, that cultures are monolithic, and that one can actually reach a full understanding of a culture to which they do not belong.
- Based on the idea of focusing on **self-reflection** and **lifelong learning**.

Cultural humility can also be associated with cultural sensitivity, which encourages individuals to be thoughtful when considering culture.

- However, sensitivity does not touch on the necessity of learning, reflection, or growth.

**Tervalon and Murray-Garcia defined cultural humility as “a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances . . . and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.”**

**Tervalon and Murray-Garcia stressed that “culture” should not be limited to dimensions like racial or ethnic identity, but should include, for example, sexual orientation, class, gender identity, religion and so forth.**



**Race**

**Ethnicity**

**Gender**

**Age**

**Physical Abilities/Qualities**

**Sexual Orientation**

**Parental Status**

**Native born/non native**

**Beliefs**

**Values**

**Military Experience**

**Work Background**

**Thinking Styles**

**Religious Beliefs**

**Culture**

**Smoker/Non smoker**

**Geographic Location**

**Education**

**Socio-economic Status**

**Functional Specialty**

**Marital Status**

	Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
Goals	To build an understanding of minority cultures to better and more appropriately provide services	To encourage personal reflection and growth around culture in order to increase awareness of service providers
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Knowledge</li> <li>•Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Introspection</li> <li>•Co-learning</li> </ul>
Shortcomings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enforces the idea that there can be 'competence' in a culture other than one's own.</li> <li>•Supports the myth that cultures are monolithic.</li> <li>•Based upon academic knowledge rather than lived experience.</li> <li>•Believes professionals can be "certified" in culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Challenging for professionals to grasp the idea of learning with and from clients.</li> <li>•No end result, which those in academia and medical fields can struggle with.</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Allows for people to strive to obtain a goal.</li> <li>•Promotes skill building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Encourages lifelong learning with no end goal but rather an appreciation of the journey of growth and understanding.</li> <li>•Puts professionals and clients in a mutually beneficial relationship and attempts to diminish damaging power dynamics.</li> </ul>

# 3 Things to Know: Cultural Humility

1. We move between several different cultures - often without even thinking about it.
2. Cultural humility is distinct from cultural competency and reflexivity.
3. Cultural humility requires historical awareness.

**We move between several different cultures - often without even thinking about it.**

**Because the overall purpose of practicing cultural humility is to be aware of one's own values and beliefs, it is important to understand that those notions come from the combination of cultures that people experience in their everyday lives. A person cannot begin to understand the makeup and context of another person's life without being aware and reflective of their own background and situation first.**

# Cultural humility is distinct from cultural competency and reflexivity

The goal of cultural competency is to learn about the other person's culture rather than reflect on one's own background. Reflexivity, calls on individuals to explore their own personal beliefs in order to be more aware of potential judgements that can occur. It is the practice of placing oneself within the experience of the others and then examining that relationship. But even reflexivity falls short of the lifelong process of self-reflection that is synonymous with cultural humility.

# **Cultural humility requires historical awareness**

**It is not enough to think about one's own values, beliefs, and social position within the context of the present moment. In order to practice true cultural humility, a person must also be aware of and sensitive to historic realities and the lived experiences of others.**

# Challenge Each Other...

- ❖ Role model a willingness to be challenged. If someone says they were offended or hurt by something you did or said, be open to that.
- ❖ Challenge others when they say or do offensive things.
- ❖ Ask questions. If you are challenged and you don't fully understand, ask more questions until you do.

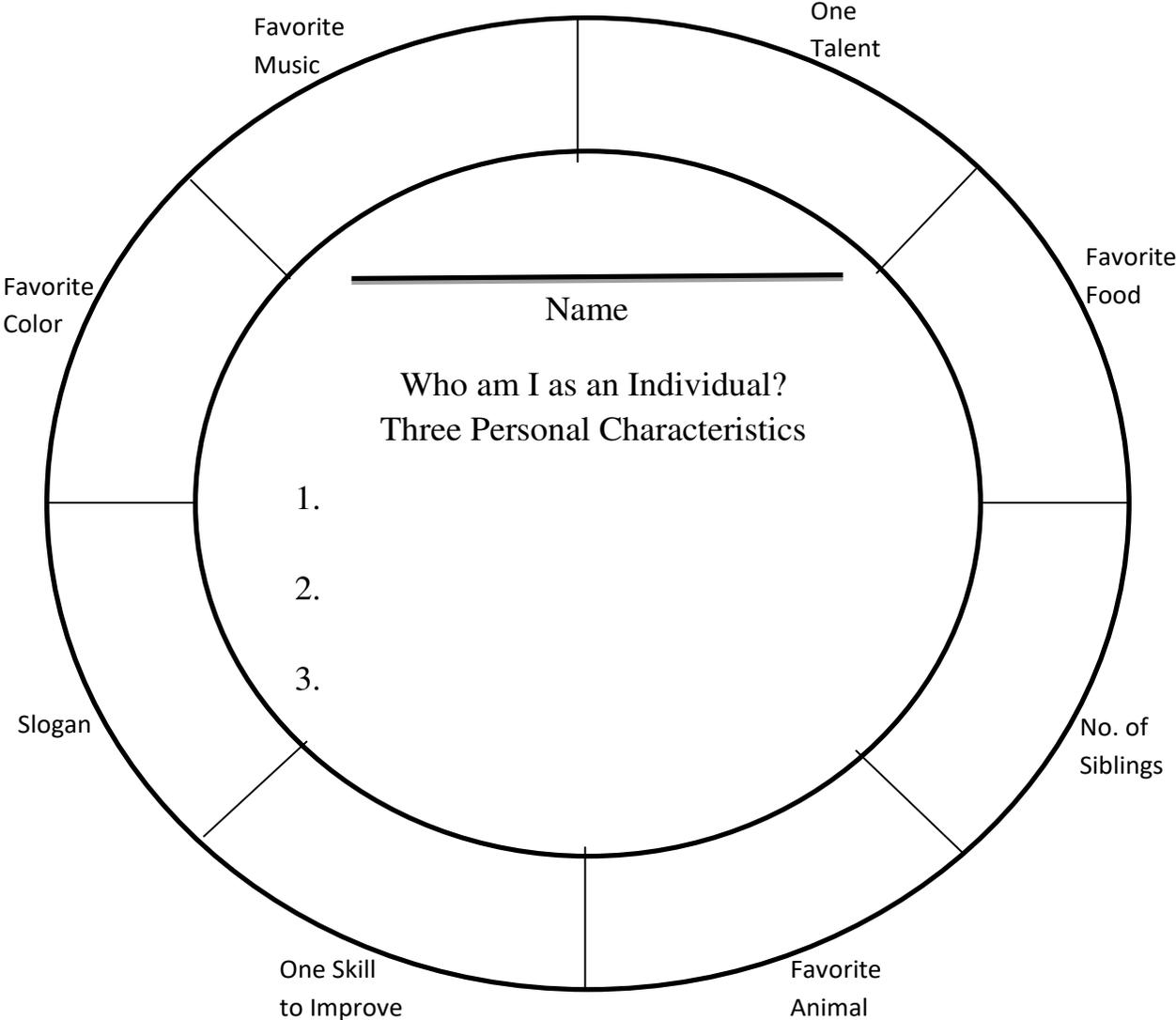
# Be An Expert Of Your Experience...

- ❖ You have a unique set of experiences that have shaped who you are and how you walk through the world, and you are the only expert on that experience.
- ❖ You get to say how an experience impacted you, how something made you feel, and how you perceived an experience. No one else gets to tell you that.

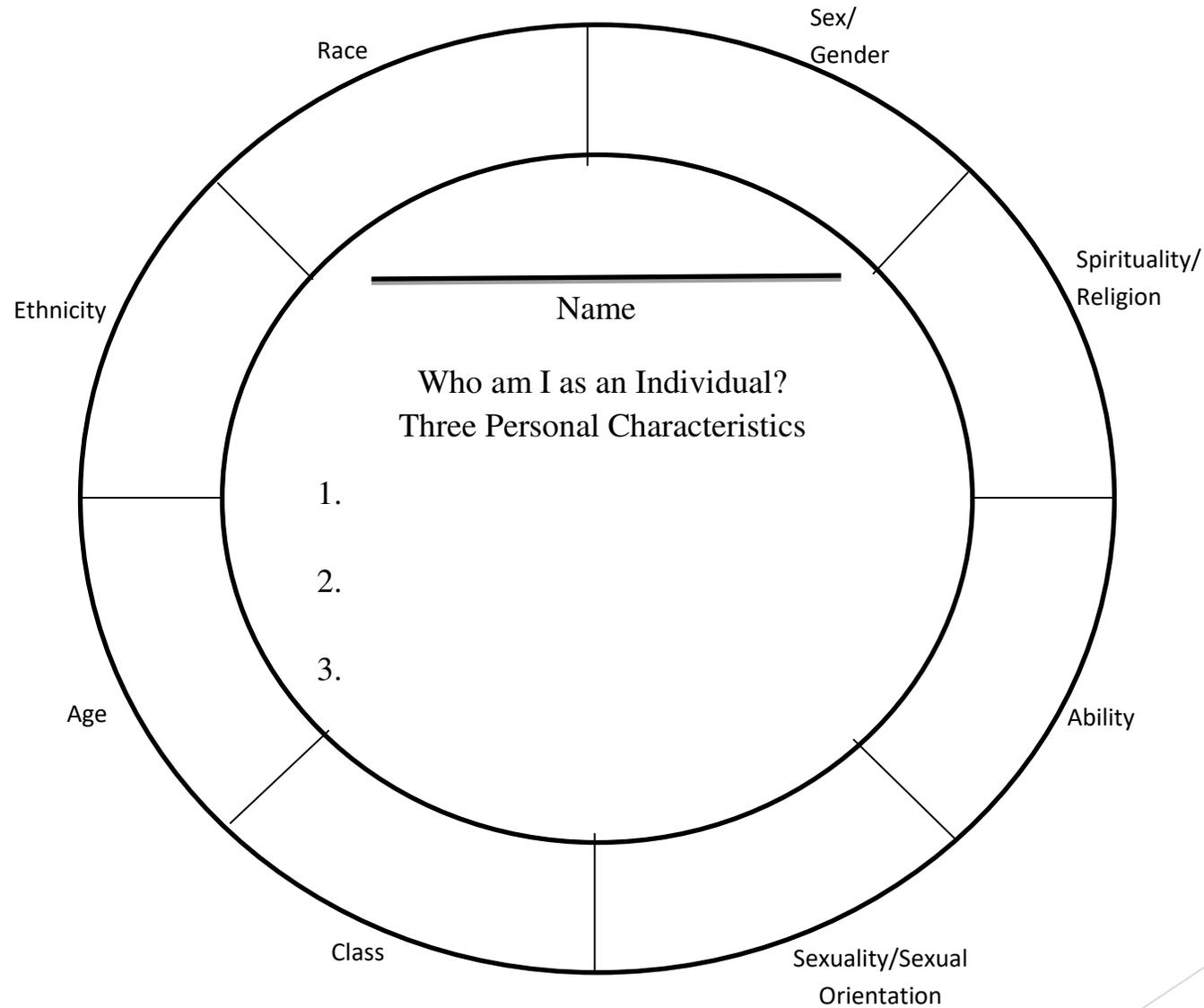
# ...But Not of Others' Experiences

- ❖ Just as no one else can tell you how you perceived an experience, how you should feel, or how you should react, you don't get to tell anyone else those things either.
- ❖ Telling a person how they should feel or that they are perceiving their own experiences in the wrong way minimizes their humanness and de-legitimizes their very real feelings.

# Personal Identity Wheel



# Social Identity Wheel



Now more than ever, we need to be able to offer each other grace.

Grace for having different opinions.

Grace for not always knowing the answer.

Grace for making mistakes.

Grace as we learn to do better.

Grace for doing the best we can.

That's how we get through tough times like these—by lifting each other up, forgiving each other's humanness, and loving each other even when it's hard.

HER VIEW FROM HOME

[tinybuddha.com](http://tinybuddha.com)

