Working with Clients in Poverty:
A Scarcity of Resources

Yvonne Jones, MSOD

Certified Bridges Out of Poverty Presenter

Sr. Cour Analyst, AOC

OBJCECTIVES

Understanding Generational Poverty:
Participants will gain insight into the impact of generational poverty on individuals born into environments with limited resources, with a specific focus on its effects on rural, low-income, and people of color communities.

Cultural Competence and Trust Building:
Attendees will learn strategies for building trust and effective communication with individuals living in poverty, recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and empathy in creating meaningful relationships.

Implementing Procedural Justice:
Participants will explore the concept of procedural justice and its application in social service agencies, focusing on integrating the pillars of voice, neutrality, respect, and trust into policies and processes to ensure equitable treatment and accountability. Explain how economic realities affect patterns of living

Defining Poverty:

- The state of being poor
- A lack of something
- The official poverty definition uses income before taxes. The poverty threshold for two adults and two children is $22, 283. (As defined by the OMB)

    "The extent to which one does without resources"

For our purposes, we will define poverty as the extent to which a person, institution or community, does without resources.

 For our purpose, we are only looking at one piece of who we are- your economic class.

For one minute, ask yourself, what do people generally think or say about people living in poverty? What mental image comes to mind?

The extent to which one does without resources:

- ❏ Financial
- ❏ Emotional
- ❏ Mental
- ❏ Spiritual
- ❏ Physical
- ❏ Support Systems
- ❏ Relationships/Role Models
- ❏ Knowledge of Hidden Rules
- ❏ Coping Strategies

Situational Poverty: When a family experiences poverty for a short time due to a crisis, like a job loss, divorce, or death.

Generational Poverty:

A social justice issue that occurs when a family has lived in poverty for at least two generations. It's a systemic and lasting pattern that prevents people from escaping poverty and changing their situation for themselves or their children.

Situational Poverty
vs.
Generational Poverty

Isolation & hopelessness

Feeling separated from God

Hunger

Lack of access to health care

Lack of education

Risk of violence & human trafficking

Homelessness & displacement

Poverty can look like ...

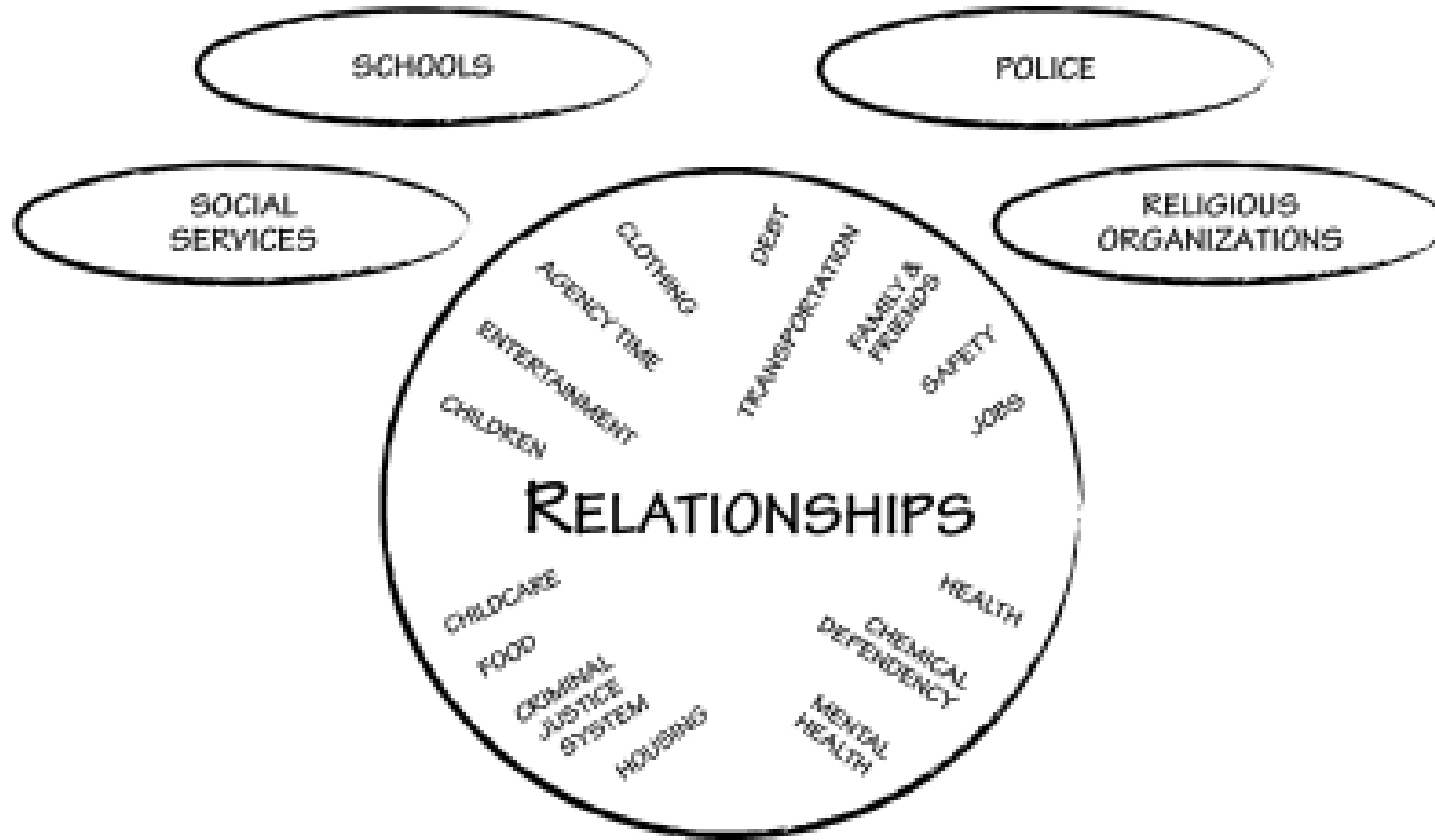Poverty makes everyday life a challenge.

Think of an adult in generational poverty, a client for example.

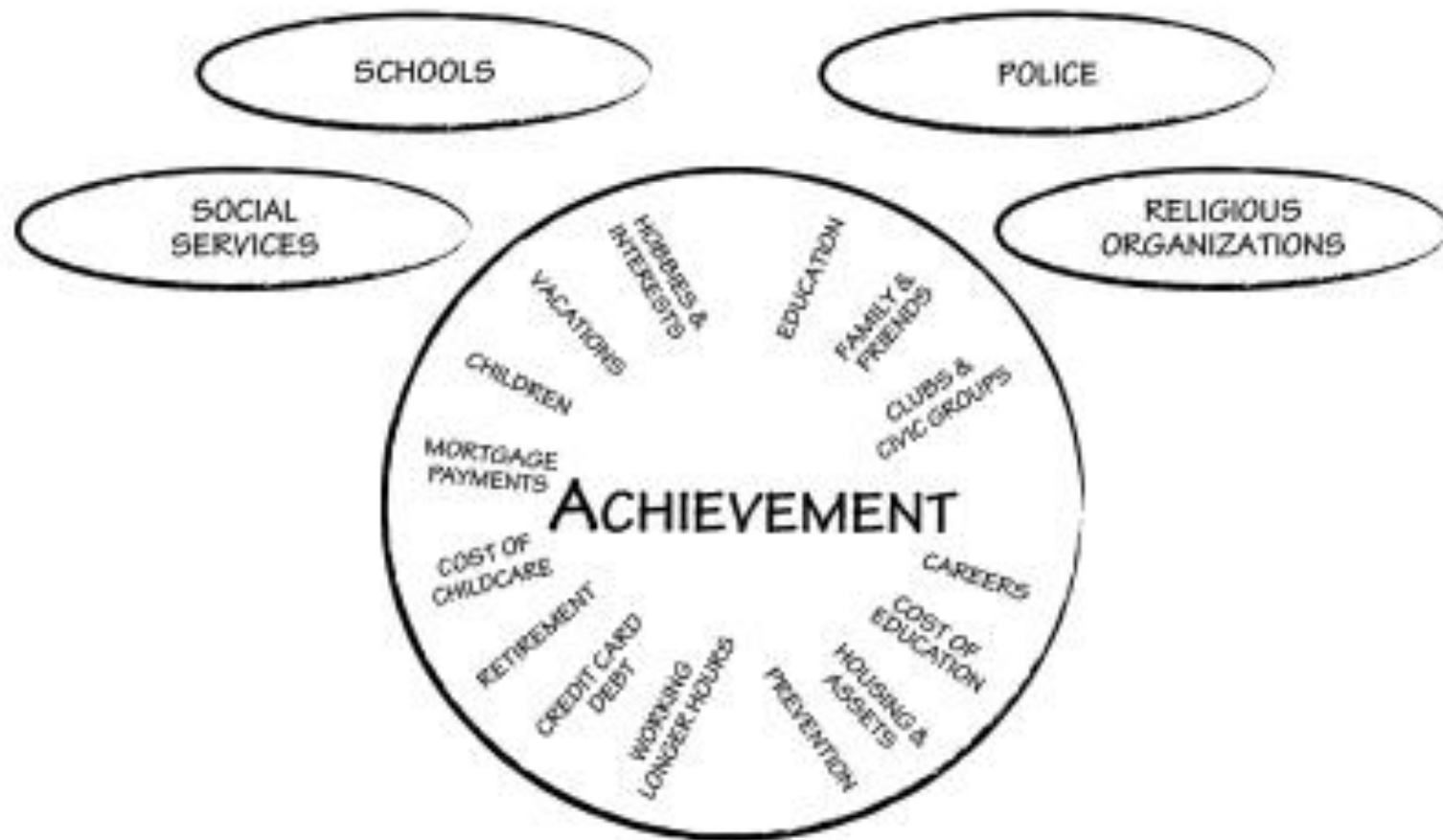Imagine you followed him around for a year, observing what happened and how he/she spent their time.

- Brainstorm your observations:

Poverty

RELATIONSHIPS

CLOTHING · DEBT · TRANSPORTATION · FAMILY & FRIENDS · SAFETY · JOBS · AGENCY TIME · ENTERTAINMENT · CHILDREN · CHILDCARE · FOOD · CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM · HOUSING · MENTAL HEALTH · CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY · HEALTH

SCHOOLS POLICE SOCIAL SERVICES RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Businesses

- Pawn shop
- Liquor store
- Corner store
- Rent-to-own
- Laundromat
- Fast food
- Check cashing
- Temp services
- Used car lots
- Dollar store

Middle Class

SCHOOLS

POLICE

SOCIAL SERVICES

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

ACHIEVEMENT

HOBBIES & INTERESTS
EDUCATION
FAMILY & FRIENDS
VACATIONS
CLUBS & CIVIC GROUPS
CHILDREN
MORTGAGE PAYMENTS
COST OF CHILDCARE
CAREERS
RETIREMENT
COST OF EDUCATION
CREDIT CARD DEBT
WORKING LONGER HOURS
PREVENTION
HOUSING & ASSETS

Businesses

- Shopping/strip malls
- Bookstores
- Banks
- Fitness centers
- Veterinary clinics
- Office complexes
- Coffee shops
- Restaurants/bars
- Golf courses

Mental Models:

- Internal picture of how our mind works, exist below our awareness

- Theories-in-use, often unexamined

- Determine how we act

- Can help or interfere with learning

Compare Mental Models:

- Stability
- Time
- Problem solving skills
- Possessions
- Money
- Love
- Destiny
- Clothing
- Education
- Family Structure
- Humor

Hidden Rules

	POVERTY	MIDDLE CLASS	WEALTH
POSSESSIONS	People	Things	One-of-a-kind objects, legacies, pedigrees.
MONEY	To be used, spent.	To be managed.	To be conserved, invested.
PERSONALITY	Is for entertainment. Sense of humor is highly valued.	If for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.	Is for connections. Financial, political, social connections are highly valued.
SOCIAL EMPHASIS	Social inclusion of people he/she likes.	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Emphasis is on social exclusion.
FOOD	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Was it presented well? Presentation important.
CLOTHING	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer important.
TIME	Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings or survival.	Future most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.	Traditions and history most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition and decorum.
EDUCATION	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
DESTINY	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Noblesse oblige. ('Nobility Obliges')
LANGUAGE	Casual register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about networking.
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Tends to be matriarchal.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has money.
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of local setting.	Sees world in terms of national setting.	See world in terms of international view.
LOVE	Love and acceptance conditional, based upon whether individual is liked.	Love and acceptance conditional and based largely upon achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional and related to social standing and connections.
DRIVING FORCES	Survival, relationships, entertainment.	Work, achievement.	Financial, political, social connections.
HUMOR	About people and sex.	About situations.	About social faux pas.

Based on your mental model or economic class:

IF YOUR CAR BREAKS DOWN, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

IF YOU LOSE YOUR JOB, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As a client, if you did everything your Case Manager told you to do, got a job and kept it for a year, never missing a day of work, how much closer (if at all) would you be to being out of poverty at the end of that year than you were at the beginning?

http://playspent.org/

What resources can create better outcomes?

Communication and Creating Relationships

Deposits	Withdrawals
Seek first to understand	Seek first to be understood
Keeping promises	Breaking promises
Kindness, courtesies	Unkindness, discourtesies
Clarifying expectations	Violating expectation
Loyalty to the absent	Disloyalty, duplicity
Apologies	Pride, conceit, arrogance
Open to feedback	Rejecting feedback

Deposits made to individuals in poverty	Withdrawals made from individual in poverty
Appreciation for humor and entertainment provided by the individual	Put downs or sarcasm about the humor of the individual
Acceptance of what the individual cannot say about a person or situation	Insistence and demands for full explanation about a person or situation
Respect for the demands and priorities of relationships	Insistence on the middle class view of relationships
Using the adult voice	Using the parent voice
Assisting with goal setting	Telling the individual his/her goals
Identifying options related to available resources	Making judgements on the value and availability of resources
Understanding the importance of personal freedom, speech and individual personality	Assigning pejorative character traits to the individual

| Personal Skills Required	Have the skill? Can do now? Need some work? Need Lots of work
Explain Rules Use Adult Voice Avoid power struggles Use metaphors Kindness, courtesies Admit when wrong Give clients time before getting to the agenda Appreciation for sense of humor Knowledge of local resources Understand story structure and casual register Clarify expectations Explain choices and consequences Assist with goal setting	

Cultural Competence

https://youtu.be/rspZv2a0Pp8?si=qYJya1otvCyfsuIL

3-minute Ted Talk

https://youtu.be/ucEAcIMkS0c?si=O1qGqRYuVUN7Tc4Q

2-minute NPR clip

Cultural Competence Continued

- The term "cultural" refers to an individual or group's ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and educational frame of reference.

    It also speaks to differences in family characteristics, language, dialect, gender, ability, values, sexual orientation, life conditions, religion and community.

How well are we able to serve individuals within a cultural context, if we as the professionals, seek to hold clients accountable based on our mental models?
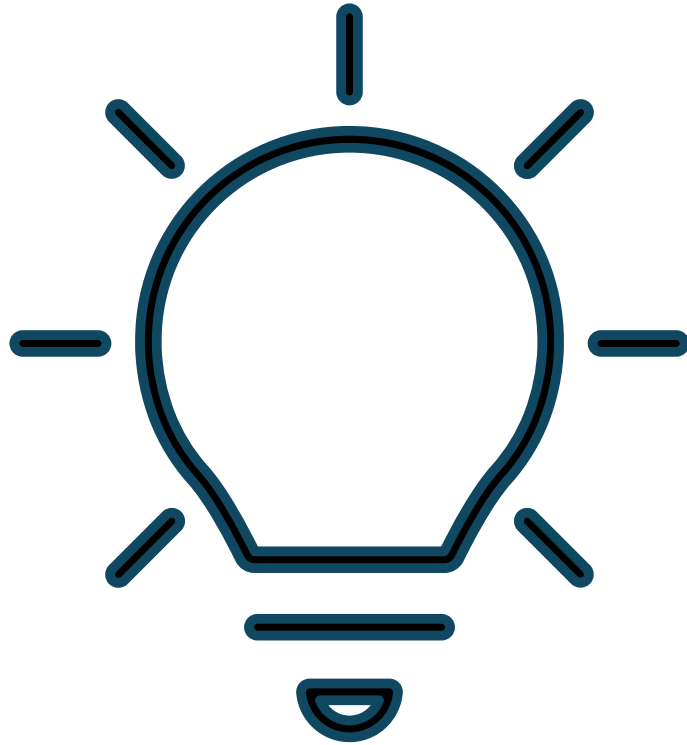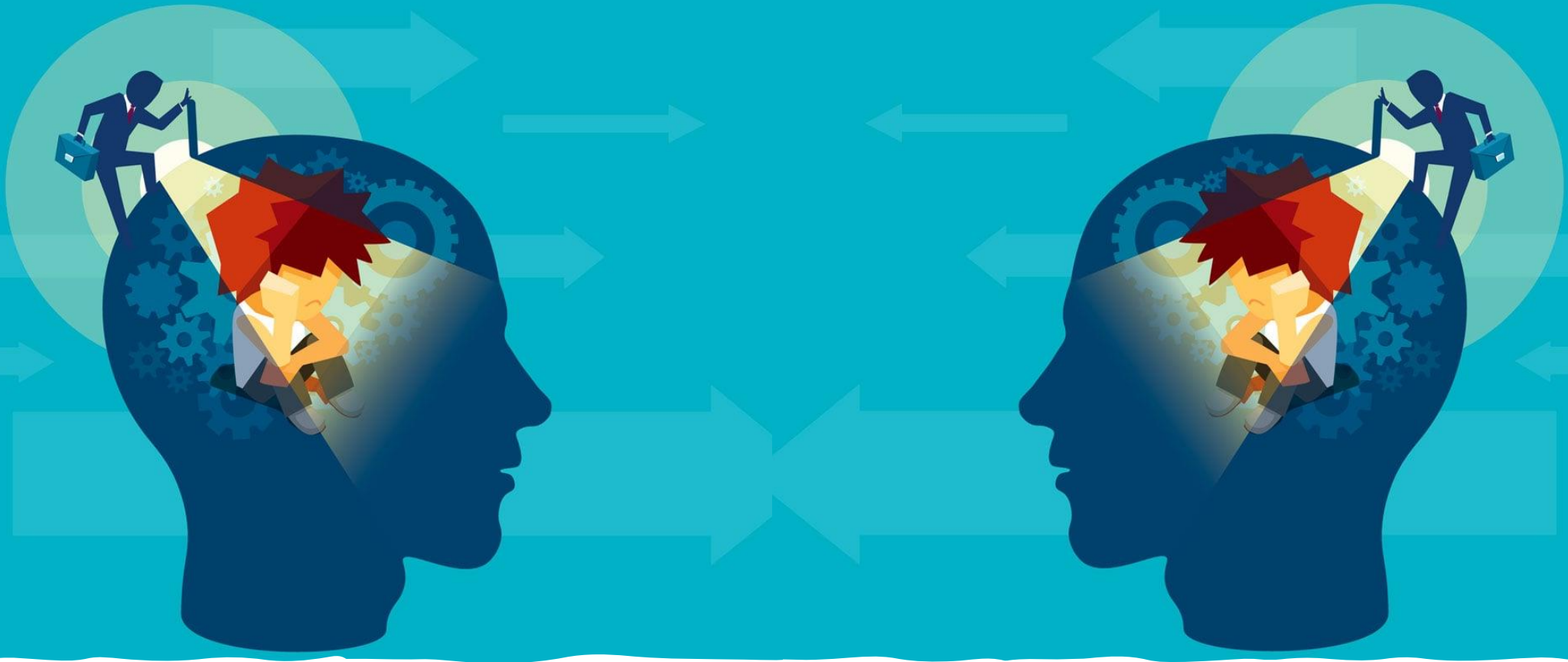
National Standards:

Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.

Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.
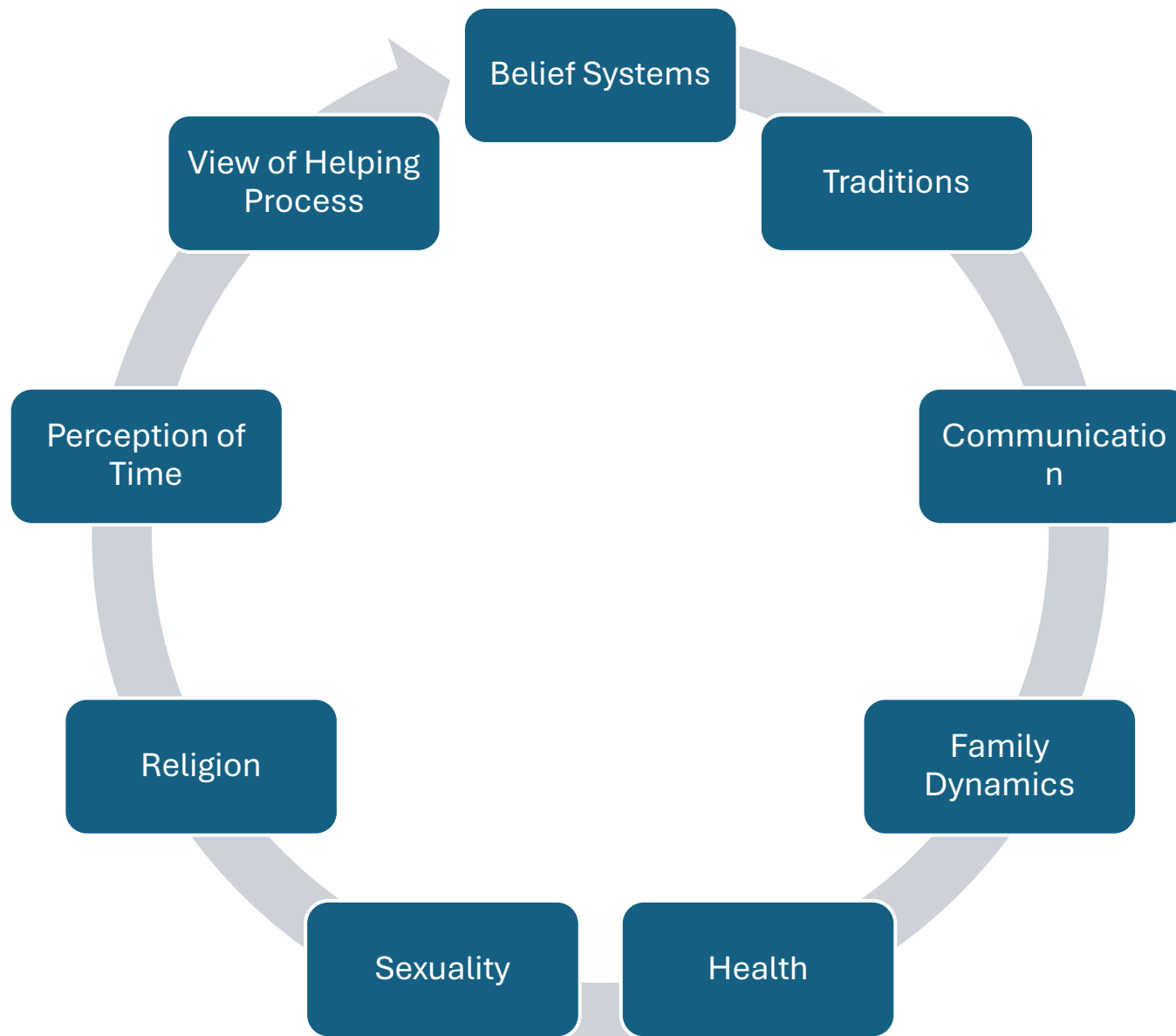
What you believe………………What the client believes

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice speaks to the idea of fair processes, and how people's perception of fairness is strongly impacted by the quality of their experiences and not only the end result of these experiences. Yale University

Individuals' perceptions of procedurally just encounters are based on four central features of their interactions with legal authorities:

❑ Whether they were treated with dignity and respect;

❑ Whether they were given voice;

❑ Whether the decision-maker was neutral and transparent; and

❑ Whether the decision-maker conveyed trustworthy motives.

You don't see the world as it is, you see it according to who you are.
-Steven Covey

A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.
-John le Carre

Individual/Agency/Community Lense:

- *If we do not have an accurate model for poverty, we will miss the mark with implementing policy?*

- *Do we create agency policy and expectations conducive to the clients or our staff?*

- *Are we setting realistic expectations for the clients we serve?*

Afterthought:

What are three ways you can improve your personal skills for working with individuals in poverty

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three ways you can improve programming, theory and structure to better serve individuals in poverty?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- What, if any, follow up services does your organization need?

Q&A

Contact Information

Yvonne Jones, Sr Court Analyst
Yvonne.jones@courts.wa.gov
360-704-5564