



Reimagining Aging:

An Afrofuturist Approach to Healing Elder Abuse and Advancing Racial Justice



Facilitated by: Deja Taylor, Koren Dennison



Who is AmA ~ Ä

UBUNTU
research & evaluation

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Deja Taylor
she/her



Koren Dennison
she/her

Chatbox Introduction & CheckIn Question

What moment in
Black History
would you had
liked to be a part
of/witness and
why?

BLACK HISTORY
is not a month
IT'S A LIFETIME





Community Agreements

- Listen effectively.
- Listen reflectively.
- Be open and willing to learn
- Use your imagination
- Challenge your thinking



Learning Goal: Build participants' knowledge and capacity to apply Afrofuturist dignity -based framework in Elder Justice Advocacy to heal elder exploitation while honoring Black elder wisdom.

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By the end of the webinar, participants will be able to:

- Define key principles of Afrofuturism and intersectionality and explain their relevance to elder justice.
- Discuss concrete strategies advocates can employ at individual, communal, and systemic levels to center Black elder voices and needs utilizing Afrofuturist and intersectional approaches.

Let's Check Our Knowledge ZOOM POLL

How familiar are you with the concept of "Afrofuturism" as it relates to aging and elder justice?

- A. Very familiar
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Not very familiar
- D. Completely new concept

How confident are you in your ability to apply an Afrofuturist lens to address elder abuse and dignity among Black elders?

- A. Very confident
- B. Somewhat confident
- C. Not very confident
- D. Not confident at all

In your opinion, which area of elder justice work would most benefit from centering Afrofuturist perspectives on aging, wisdom, and elder care?

- A. Direct service provision
- B. Policy/advocacy campaigns
- C. Research and community engagement
- D. Other (please specify)

Where it all begins...

dr. monique inez liston is the Founder, Chief Strategist and Joyful Militant at UBUNTU Research and Evaluation. UBUNTU Research and Evaluation was founded by dr. monique liston as a space to hold her dissertation research findings while protecting Black women's intellectual thought, leadership and vision. UBUNTU is a Bantu term that loosely translates into English, **"I am because we are."** UBUNTU was chosen because it is a word that represents the core principle of UBUNTU as an organization while connecting us as members of the global displaced African diaspora.



UBUNTU Research and Evaluation is a team of unapologetic Black women working as transdisciplinary strategists committed to disrupting systemic oppression.

We **educate** , **facilitate** , and **evaluate** with an explicit focus on race and its intersections with other marginalized identities, including but not limited to gender, sexuality, class, and ability.

We utilize **dignity** as a **framework** for understanding the **relationships** between **inequities** and **solutions**.



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Our work is not the end. We do not do the work of transforming your organization. You do. As individuals and as a collective. Our responsibility may include providing insight, tools, resources and recommendation but ultimately the responsibility to radically transform your organization rests on you. Without personal work within the collective, the organization can not increase its capacity to create equity for itself or the people it serves.

eYV^ VddZc +eYVS Vee Vc - 

Our work together cannot, will not and should not end neatly -- we are working against systems of oppression that are pervasive in the cultures of our organizations and that work is persistent and ongoing. Everyone is on different journeys and will learn how to do things at different paces, we cannot expect everyone to be on the same page within a short time frame.

HARMWILLHAPPEN

Our work as Black women, we will be harmed through this process. We do specific work for ourselves to manage, deal, heal, and restore from harm as it is inevitable in this job. We are not responsible for addressing every microaggression that we personally experience. You need to prepare to deal with unconsciously committing harm by making a commitment to unlearning.

SAYWHITE SAYBLACK SAYYOU DONOTKNOW

Use your race words. Our work is racial equity, justice and liberation. Any discomfort from individuals or the organization to name race specifically and intentionally limits the depth of the work. If you do not know what to say or how to say it, acknowledge the opportunity to learn and move forward with radical vulnerability that serves you, your peers, and your organization.

SÇps qÄÄ^ mÄÄq~

Our work is undervalued. As Black women, with an abundance of lived experiences, advanced degrees and training we provide a level of critical analysis that could not ever actually be fully compensated. Our scopes of work have been diligently created to be mindful of our emotional and intellectual capacity to meet the goals of this project. We are willing to discuss adjustments and additions but cannot do so without adjustments and additions to the budget. For this work to have the most impact, transparency regarding budget is necessary.





W c f d+Sj f d+U _M Vc Rd V f d-




Our work is to make the world better, especially for Black Futures. Our thoughts, ideas, and materials are ours. We work with like minded organizations and retain specific ownership over our individual and collective work. You do not have the liberty to use our work materials, processes, ideas or activities.

Dignity is reciprocal self-worth shared between an individual and society. Every human being should understand themselves to be worthy because the people around them are worthy.





How do you treat
elders with
dignity?



RESTORATIVE DIGNITY

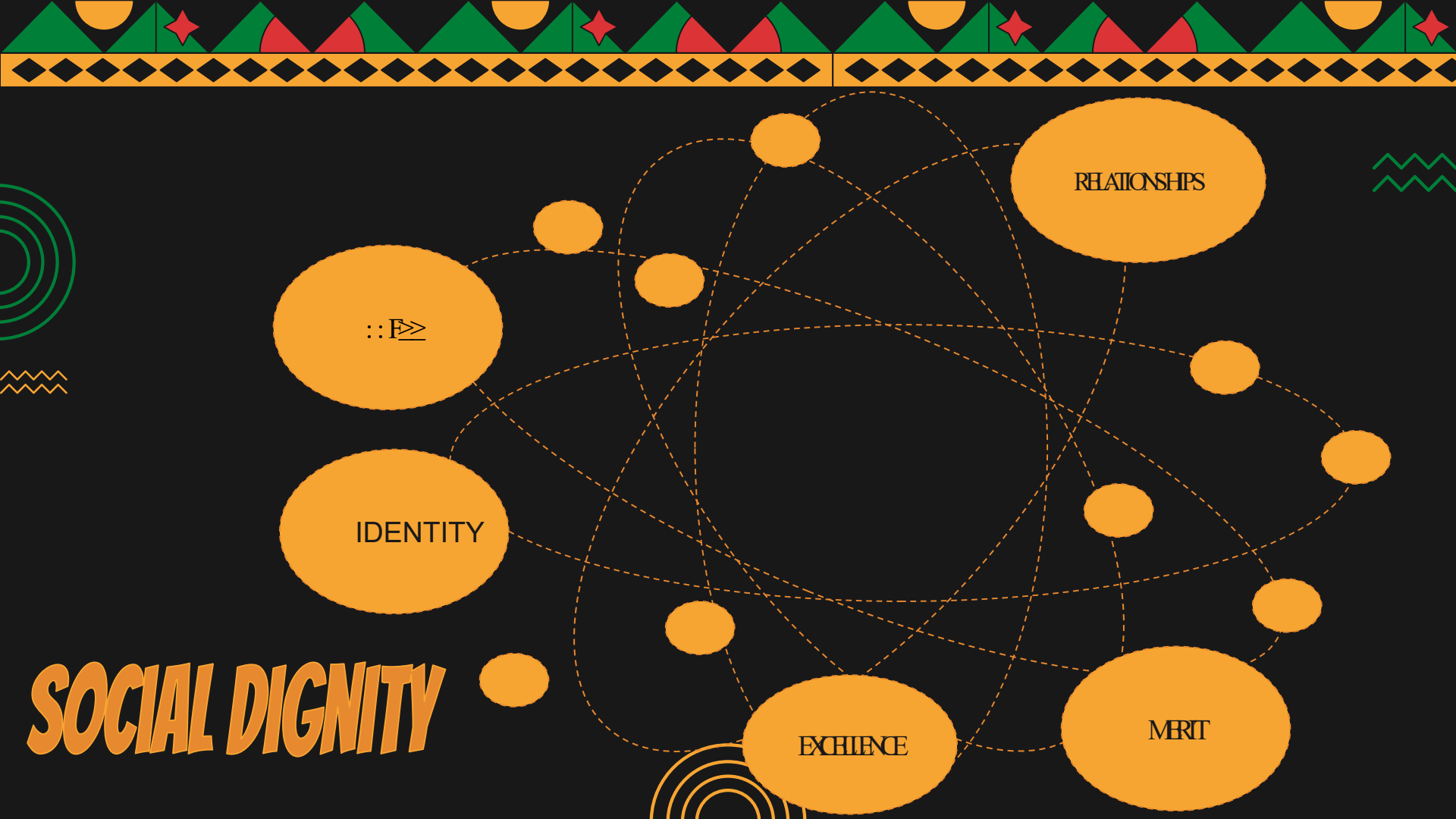
Self Determination

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Rank

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Aspect	What does it look like?	What does it sound like?
Hu m a n i t y		
S e l f - D e t e r m i n a t i o n		
R a n k		



SOCIAL DIGNITY

Identity.

To recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every elder or older adult, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, disability status, or other aspects of identity.

Merit.

To honor elders and older adults life experiences, wisdom, and ongoing contributions; not exploiting or diminishing their humanity.

Access.

For all elders and older adults to have all their basic needs met according to the espoused values of the community.

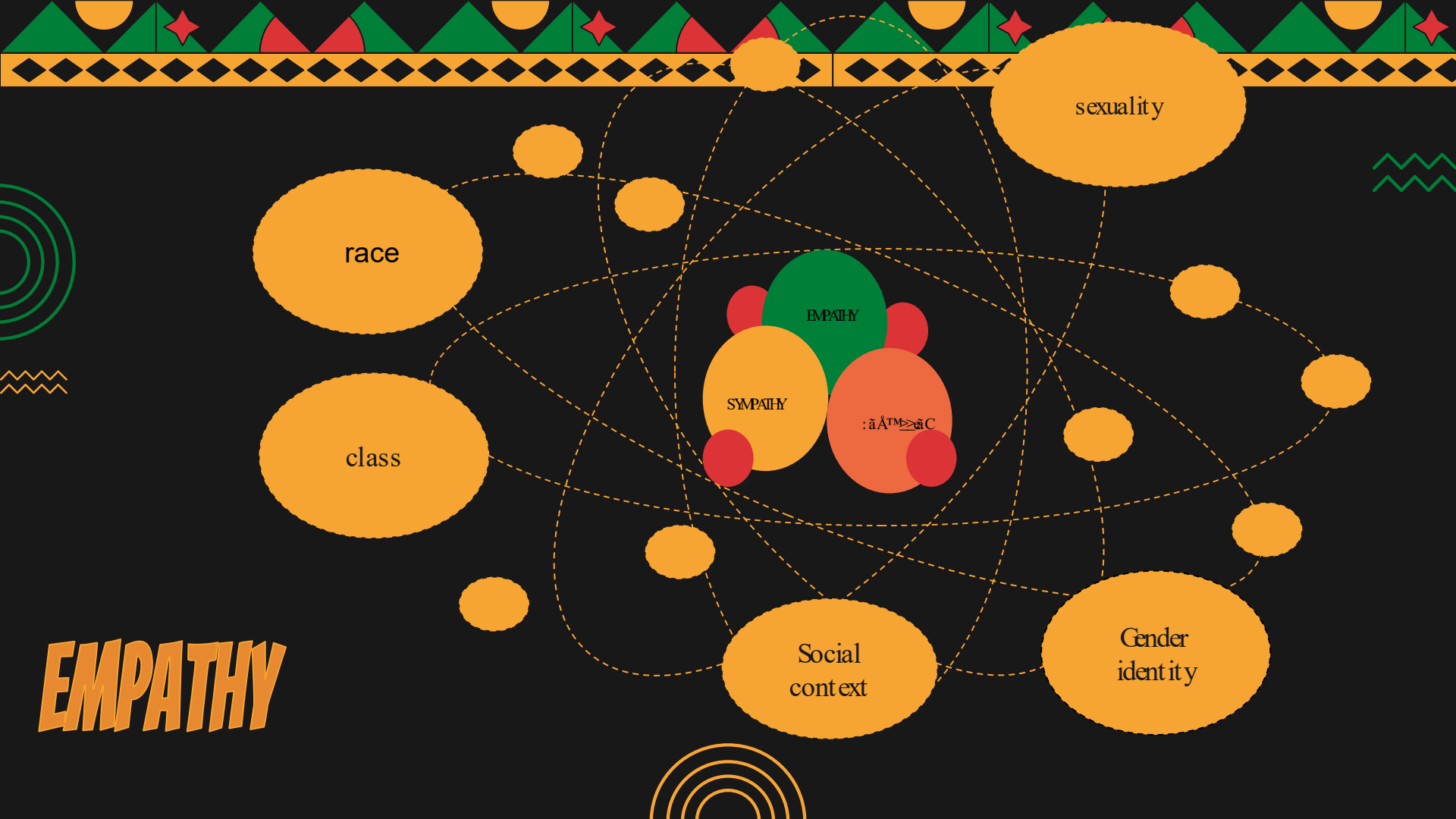
Relationships.

For elders and older adults to exist in community with others, free from forced isolation and protected each elder's relationships

Excellence.

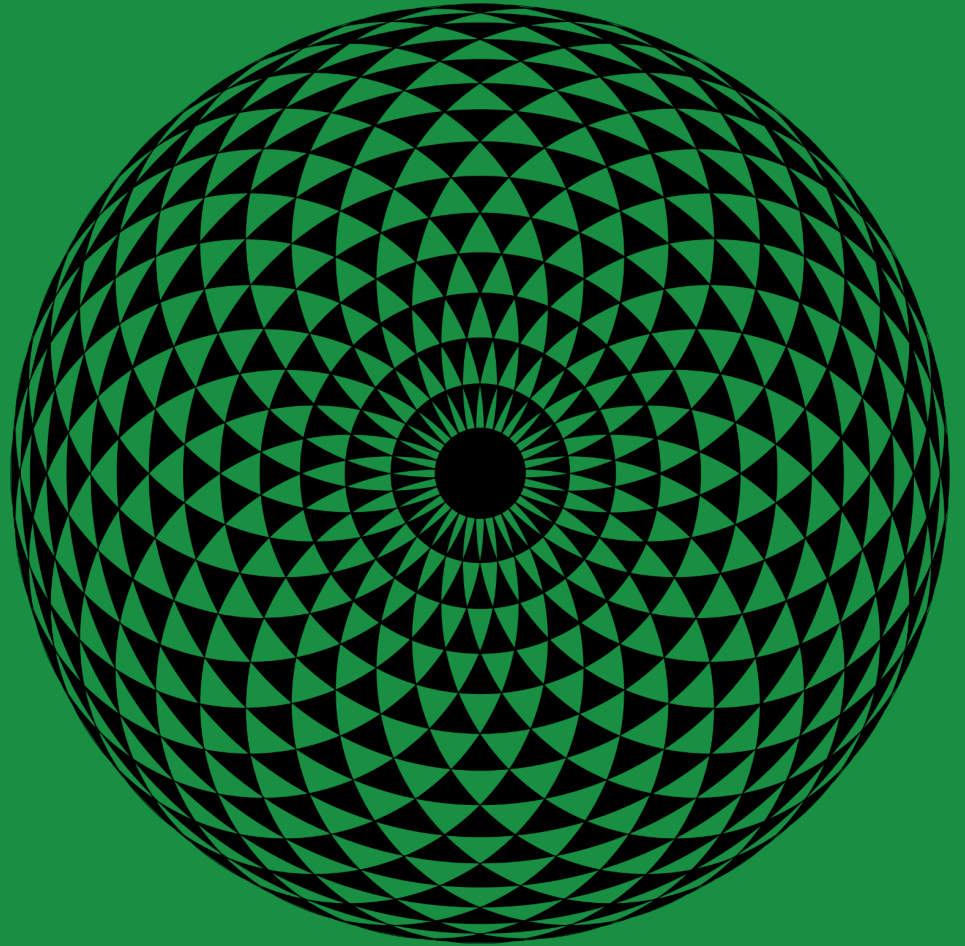
To support elders and older adult's pursuit to achieve human excellence

Aspect	“I” Statement	“Everyone” Statement
Identity	I am worthy to be seen for who I am, as I am, and for who I say I am.	Everyone is worthy to be seen for who they say they are, as they are, and for who they say they are.
Merit	I am worthy to earn recognition, status, and all associated benefits for my skills, talents and efforts.	Everyone is worthy to earn recognition, status, and all associated benefits for their skills, talents, and efforts.
access	I am worthy to have all basic needs met according to the values of my community.	Everyone is worthy to have all basic needs met according to the espoused values of their community.
relationships	I am worthy to exist in community with others, free from forced isolation and to protect each person’s relationships.	Everyone is worthy to exist in community with others, free from forced isolation and to protect each person’s relationships.
excellence	I am worthy to pursue and achieve human excellence.	Everyone is worthy to pursue and achieve human excellence.



What we practice at
the small scale sets
the patterns for the
whole system.

- *adrienne maree brown,*
Emergent Strategy



Chatbox Discussion!

Considering both Restorative & Social Dignity, which aspect do you already practice and which one will be a challenge for you?



Humiliation

a violation to the right
of dignity

When dignity is
present
humiliation is
absent and
vice versus

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Self Reflection:

**In what ways do you
have power to shape
an elder person's or
older adult reality?**

Power prevents
recognition and
relationships, key
sources of dignity, to
**be respected,
protected, and
fulfilled**

“Power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition.” ~ Dr. Wade Nobles

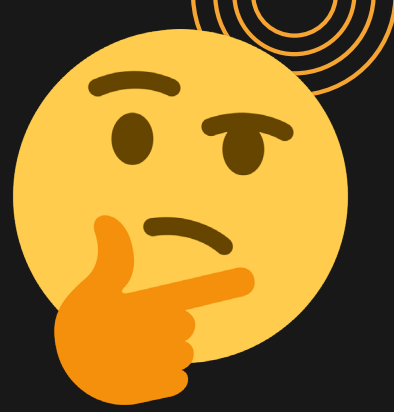
DIGNITY

versus

Humiliation

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Chat-box reflection



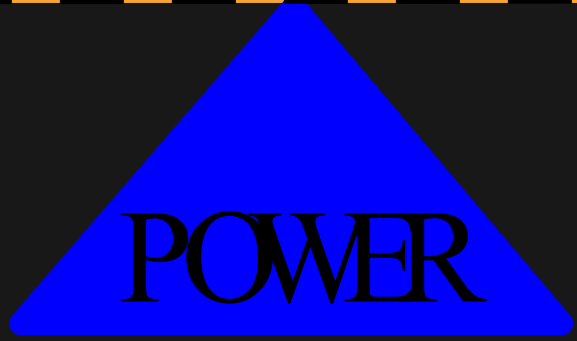
What power do you have to
cause (intentionally or
unintentionally) humiliation to
an older adult or elder person
in your life?



DIGNITY



HUMILIATION



POWER

This is equity. There's a balance in power everyone's dignity is respected, protected and

DIGNITY



POWER

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This is inequity. There's an imbalance in power, some people have dignity while others are experiencing humiliation.




Dignity, Change, and Power

(5 minute journaling)



Considering all the changes that happen as we age, how have you used your power to affirm elders' restorative and social dignity to prevent their humiliation?



**“Ageism
(as it relates to elder
abuse) is the systemic
denial of human dignity
due to one's status as
elders or older adults”
-dr. monique liston**



**“Racism is the
systemic denial of
human dignity
because of their
proximity to
whiteness.”
-dr. monique liston**

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“Our beliefs about bodies disproportionately impact those whose race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age deviate from our default notions. The further from the default, the greater the impact. We are all affected-but not equally.”

-Sonya Renee Taylor, *The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self Love*



Disparities and Racism Experienced Among Older African Americans Nearing End of Life

New study: Disability and income prevent Black Americans from aging at home



Mary Walrath-Holdridge
USA TODAY

Published 12:55 p.m. ET Oct. 12, 2023 | Updated 8:39 p.m. ET Oct. 17, 2023

THE CRISIS | June 8, 2021

Aging While Black: The Crisis Among Black Americans as They Grow Old

By Rodney A. Brooks

How does racism and ageism intersect to disproportionately rob Black elders of dignity across health, economic, social and other spheres?





CHAPTER FIVE

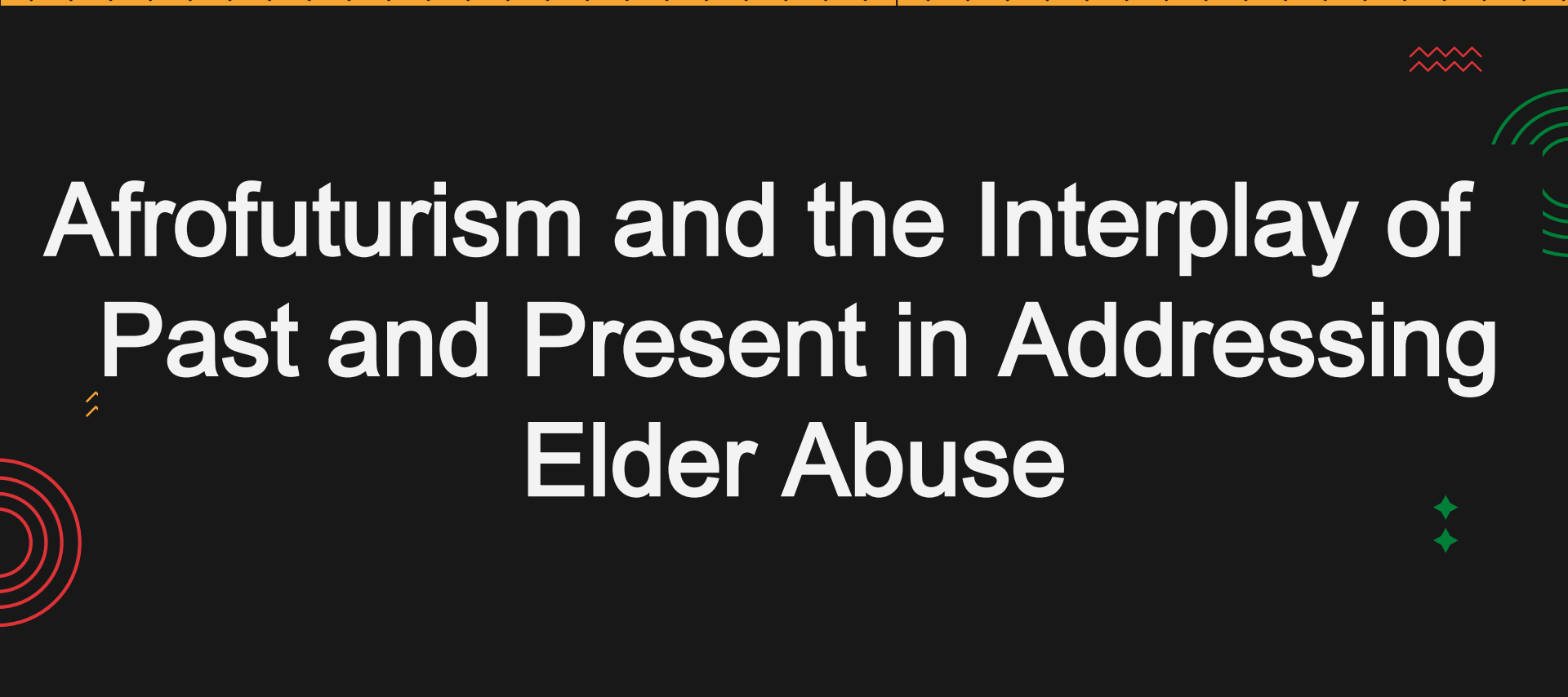
A lifetime of racism makes Alzheimer's more common in Black Americans

Pause
Breathe
Resume





Afrofuturism and the Interplay of Past and Present in Addressing Elder Abuse







Defining our terms



Afrofuturist Evaluation: uses systematic processes that assess merit, worth, function, or significance by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence ~~while~~ **radically imagining all Black people dignified and flourishing in the future.**



Afrofuturist Evaluative Thinking: critical thinking applied in the context of evaluation, motivated by an attitude of curiosity and a belief in the value of evidence, that involves identifying assumptions, posing thoughtful questions, pursuing deeper understanding through reflection and perspective taking, and informing decisions in preparation for action ~~while~~ **radically imagining all Black people dignified and flourishing in the future.**





This year's Black History Month
centers





"African Americans and the Arts."

Think of any creative medium - visual
art, music, poetry, creative writing -
that's an example of an Afrofuturist
Liberated vision where Black elders,
in all their diverse identities and
abilities, are honored and thriving
with dignity.

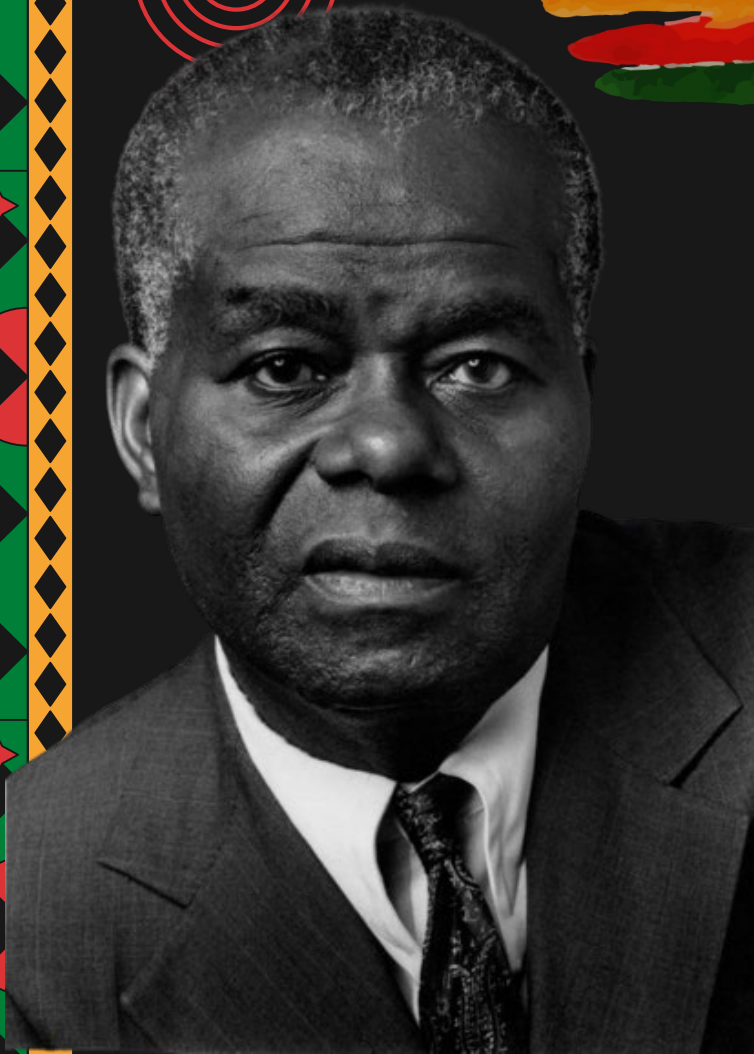


Time

**Do the past, present, and future
exist all at once?**



**We Can Not Talk About The
PRESENT State of Elder Abuse
or the FUTURE without talking
about the PAST**



In African society, the charge of "medu lawu" meaning "train your replacement" was charged to every member of society, from the youngest child to the elders ready to transition.



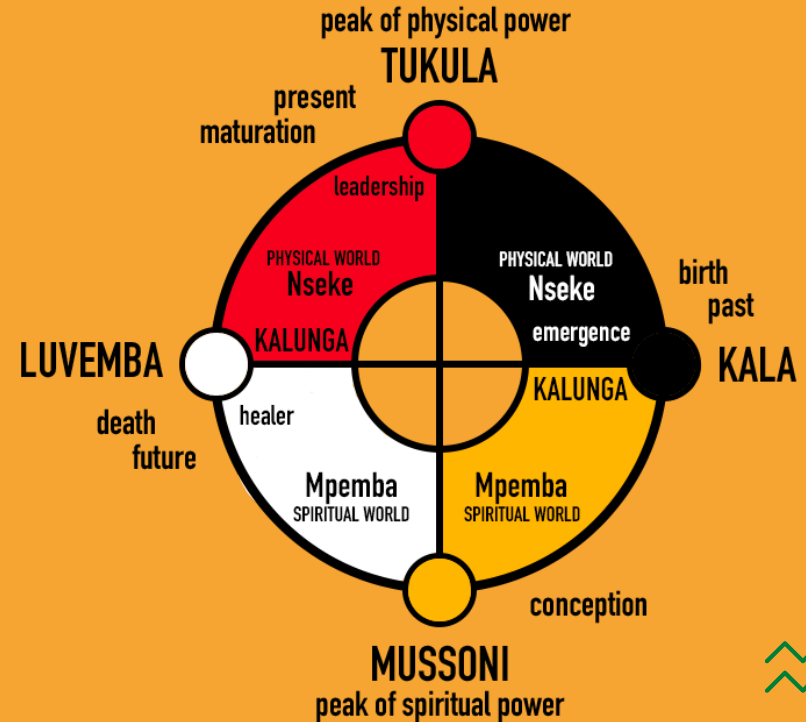
How were you
mentored and
supported to
get where you
are today?

What
knowledge did
your elders
pass down?



Elder Abuse: Understanding the Present through the Lens of the Past and Future

- The East represents birth, the beginning of life, and new beginnings.
- The West represents death, the end of life, and the spiritual world.
- The North represents wisdom, knowledge, and the ancestors.
- The South represents the material world, fertility, and life.



How might embracing an Afrofuturist vision, where elders are seen as anchors to the past and guides to the future, change how we value and care for older members of the Black community?



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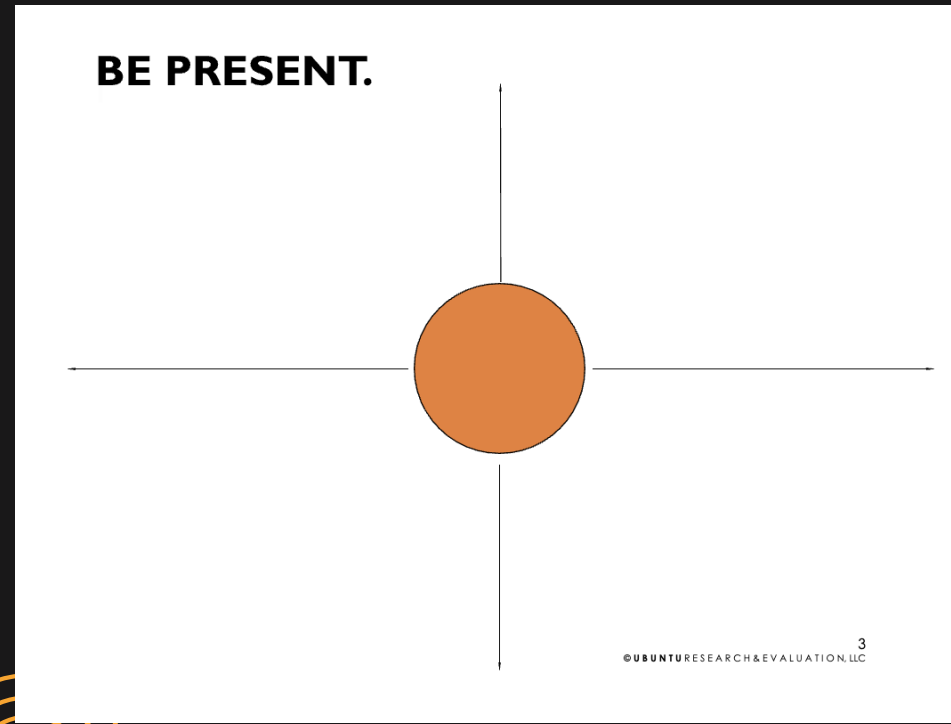


"Being present" in preventing elder abuse:

Understand time and space.

Vertical context: current state of elder abuse and its intersections

Horizontal context: history of elder abuse and the impact of current efforts on the future.



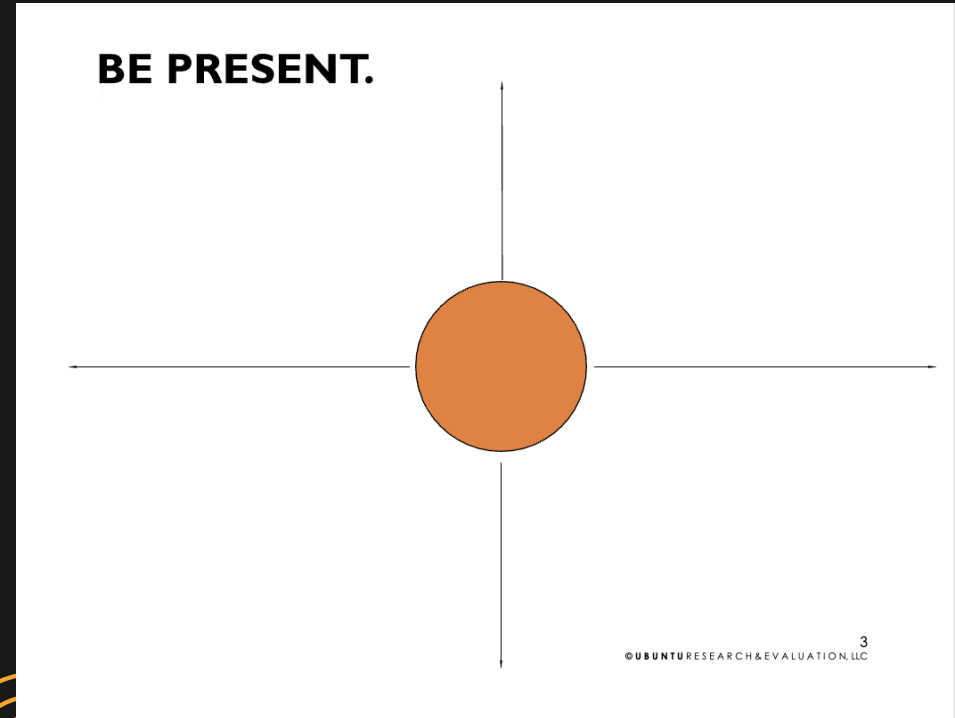
Liberated Future for Elders:

West: Past events that shaped the current situation

North: Current factors impacting elder abuse prevention

East: Future goals and actions to prevent elder abuse

South: Current efforts shaping elder abuse prevention in the present context



East (Beginnings): What hopes, dreams, and talents defined your childhood? What elder or older adult helped guide you?

South (Fertility/Growth):

What passions and goals shape your present power to contribute? Whose shoulders do you stand on today?

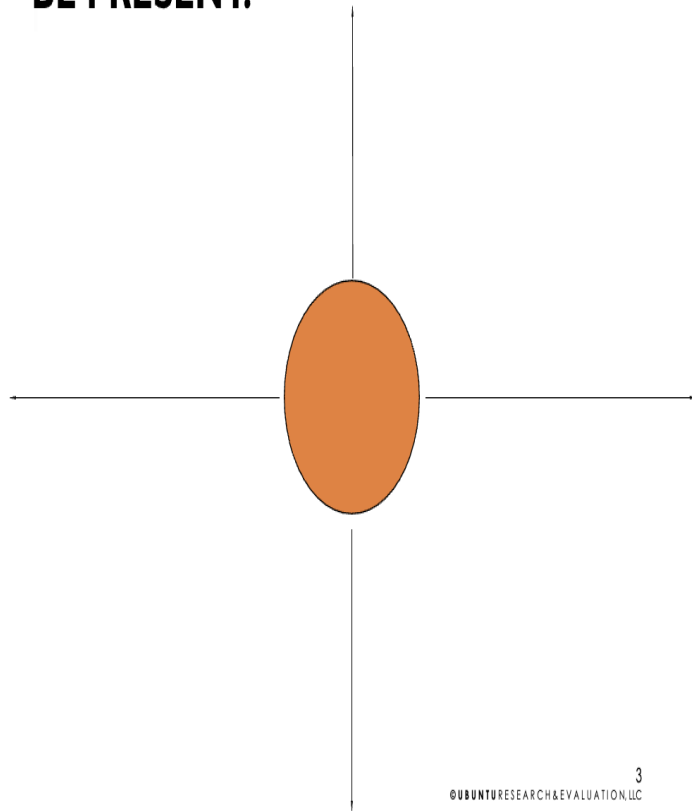
West (Transition):

Envision yourself as an elder entering this stage. What wisdom will you pass down to guide those behind you?

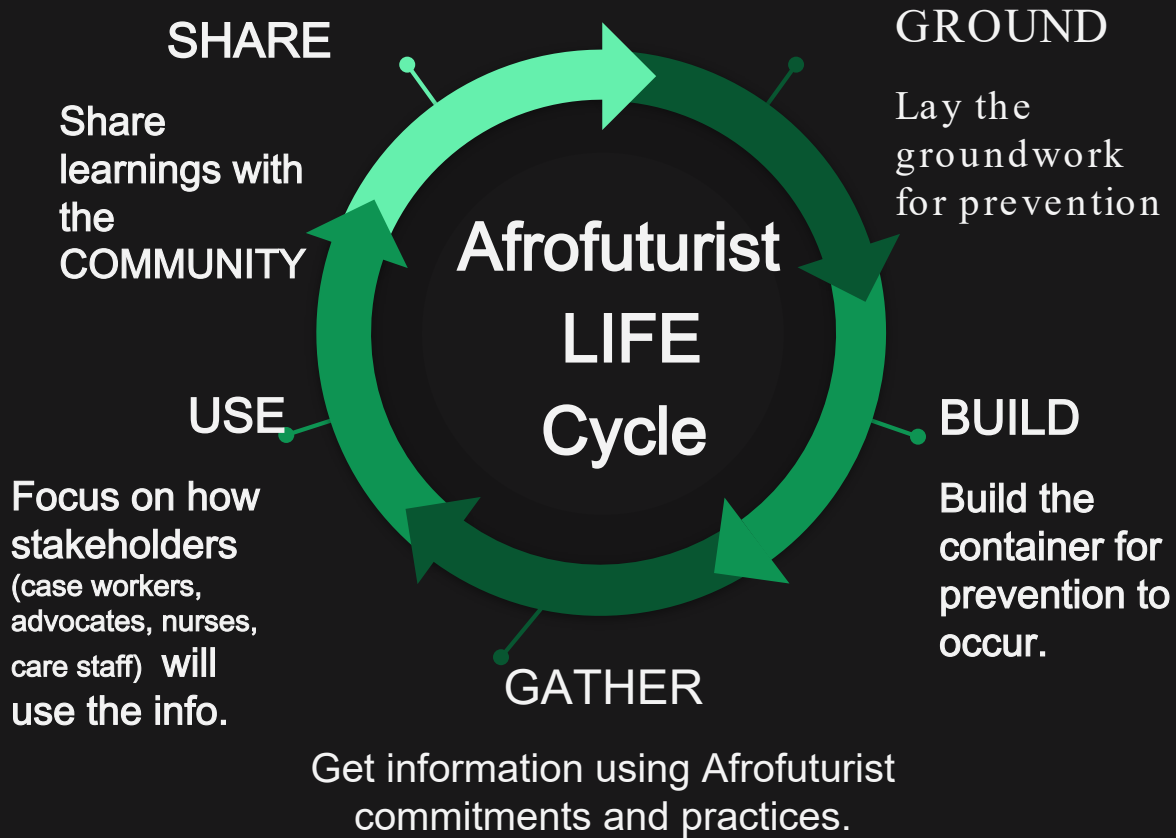
North (Ancestry/Wisdom):

What resilient ancestral traditions and elder guidance light your way forward? What will your life's legacy be?

BE PRESENT.



Afrofuturist Learning Cycle



The cycle is iterative.

There is no “end” just a point where you decide to stop.

You will pick the cycle back up again.




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Reimagining Aging: Embracing Afrofuturism to Combat Elder Abuse

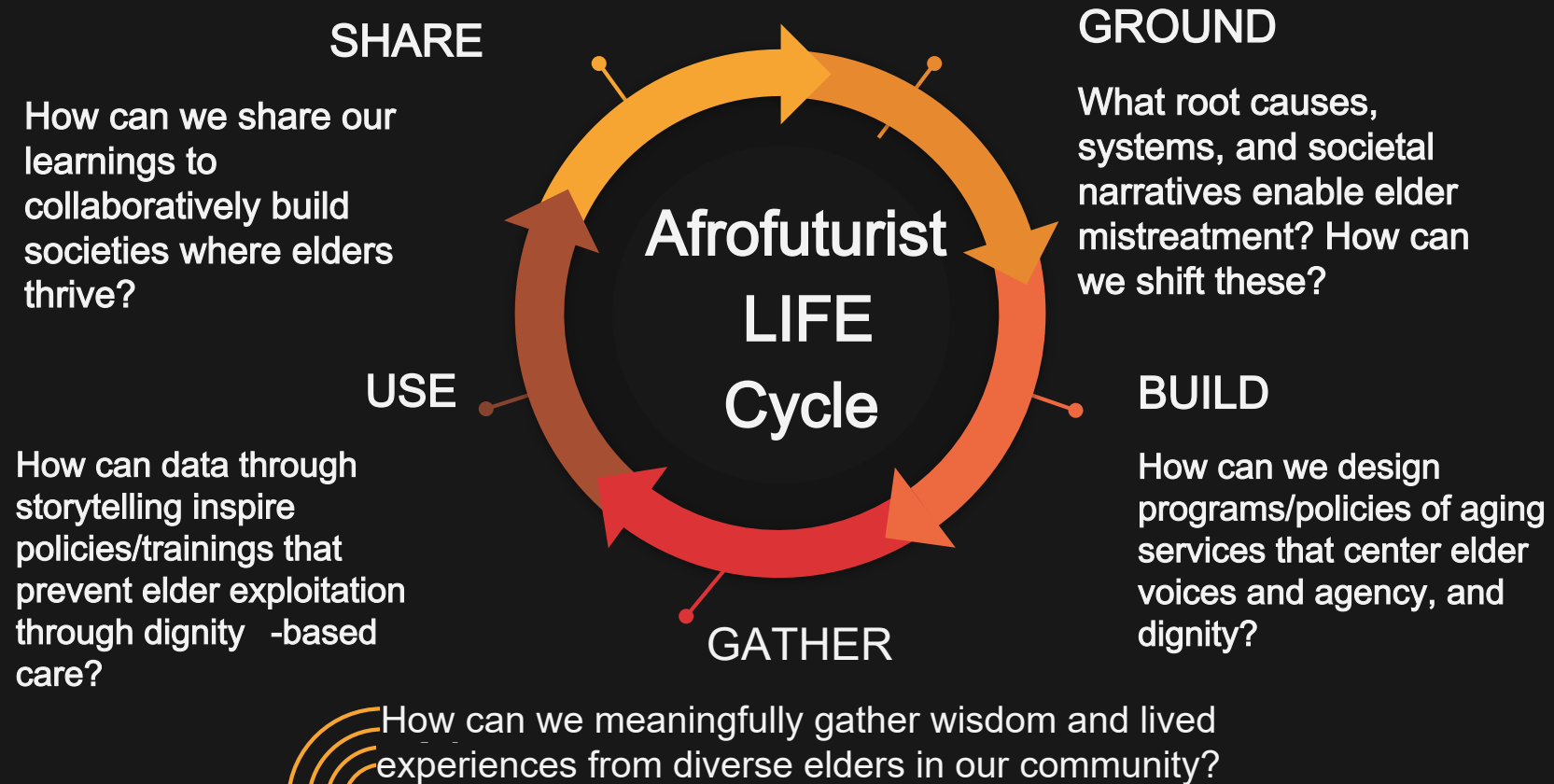
Afrofuturism offers a transformative lens to envision a future where elder abuse is eradicated, and aging is celebrated.

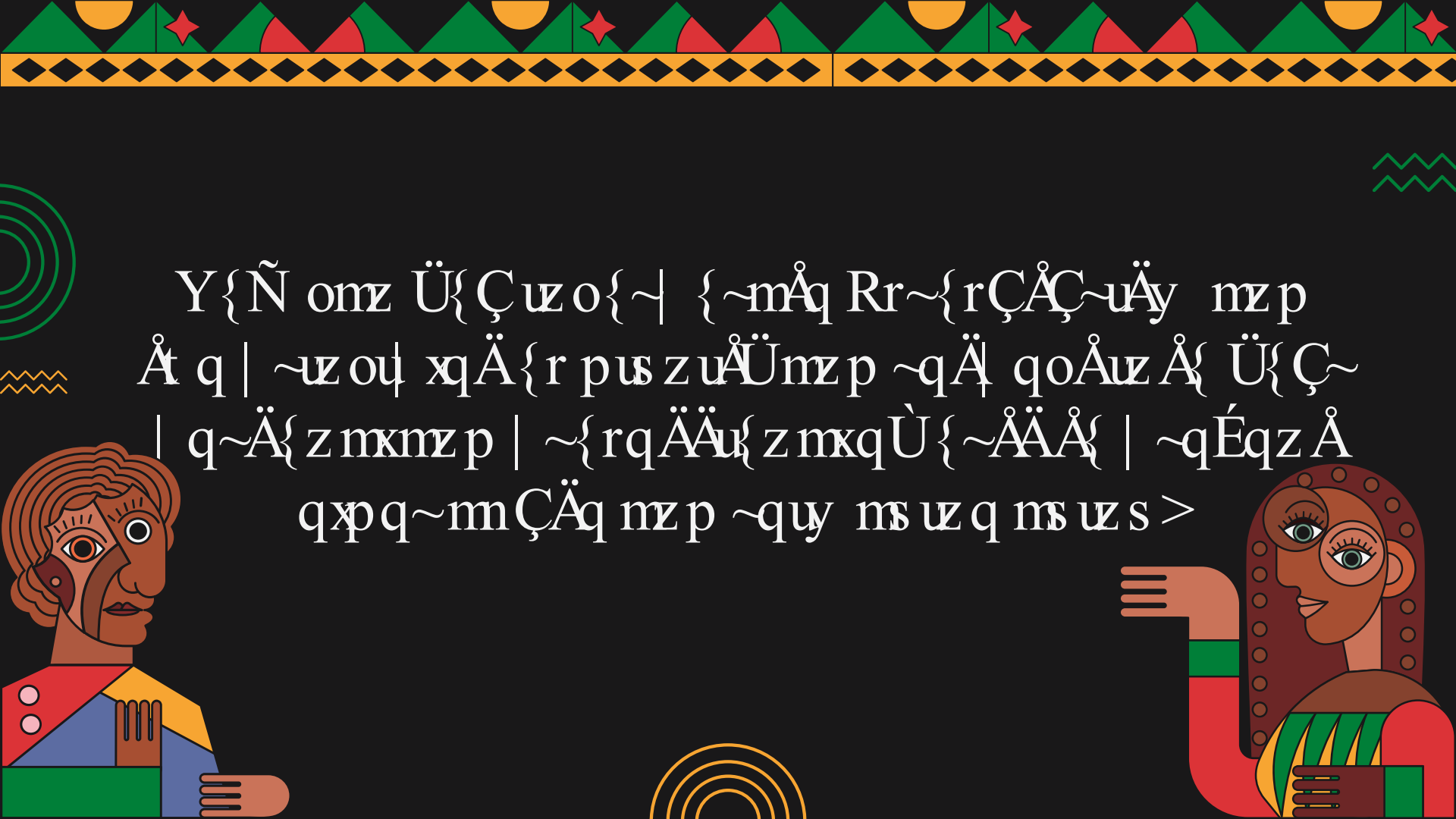
Through Afrofuturism, we center the dignity, respect, and agency of older adults, fostering a society that values their wisdom and contributions.

Reimagining aging requires collective action and collaboration across sectors to build inclusive and age-friendly communities that prioritize elder well-being.



How might centering elder dignity and wisdom in your work help reshape aging narratives in our culture?





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END OF WEBINAR ZOOM POLL

What aspect of applying Afrofuturist frameworks to elder justice did you find most challenging or illuminating during this webinar?

How confident are you now in your ability to integrate Afrofuturist principles of dignity and wisdom into elder advocacy after today's discussion?

- A. Very familiar
- B. Somewhat familiar
- C. Not very familiar
- D. Completely new concept

What is one insight or take away you gained that you will apply to help transform aging narratives and elder services?

Chatbox Sign-out

Reflecting on your discussions and participation in today's session on intersectionality, Complete this sentence starter in writing (electronically or on paper):

"From participating today, I commit to..."

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