

From Cultural Competence to Third Order Change



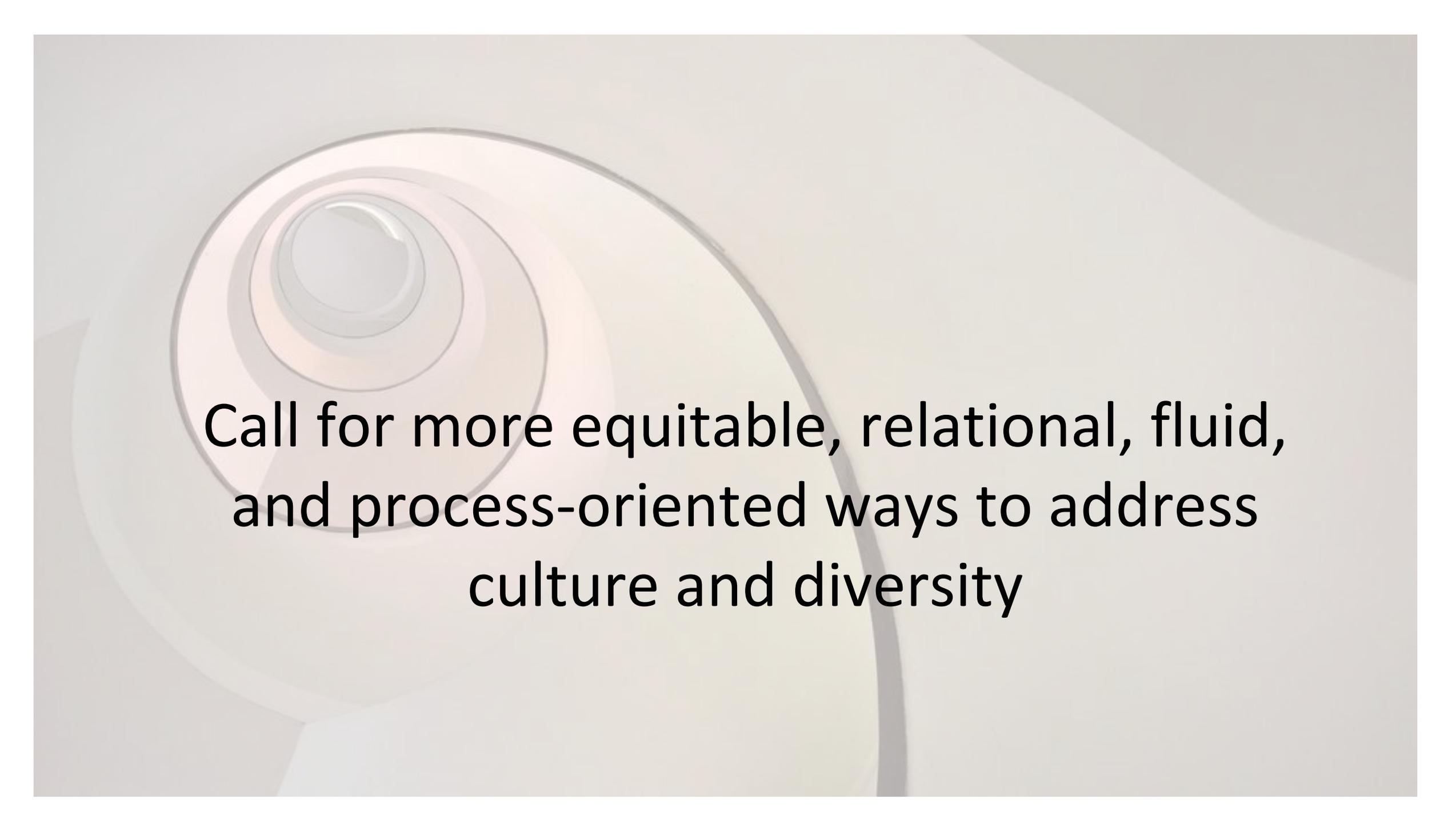
Guidelines for Socioculturally Attuned Practice

Carmen Knudson-Martin
Lewis & Clark College
Portland, OR

Problems with Cultural Competence

- Classify, categorize, and define “others”
- Therapist to bridge gap between self and “other”
- Inequities framed as differences without attending to sociopolitical contexts
- Individualistic, static





Call for more equitable, relational, fluid,
and process-oriented ways to address
culture and diversity

Objectives

1. Identify the elements of a relational, process-oriented approach to cultural competence that integrates cultural sensitivity with attention to societal processes of power, privilege, and equity.
2. Consider third-order change as transtheoretical lens through which to connect sociocultural intersections with clinical practice.
3. Be introduced to six clinical guidelines that promote socioculturally attuned practice.

Roots of Family Therapy

- Paradigm shift - larger context & systemic change
- Feminist critique
- Second-order thinking – inclusion and impact of therapist in system
- Critical multicultural critique



Social Constructionism

- Challenged concept of “Difference”
- Differences arise in the act of defining
- Culture is fluid and enacted

Cultural
competence

Awareness
of clinical
power

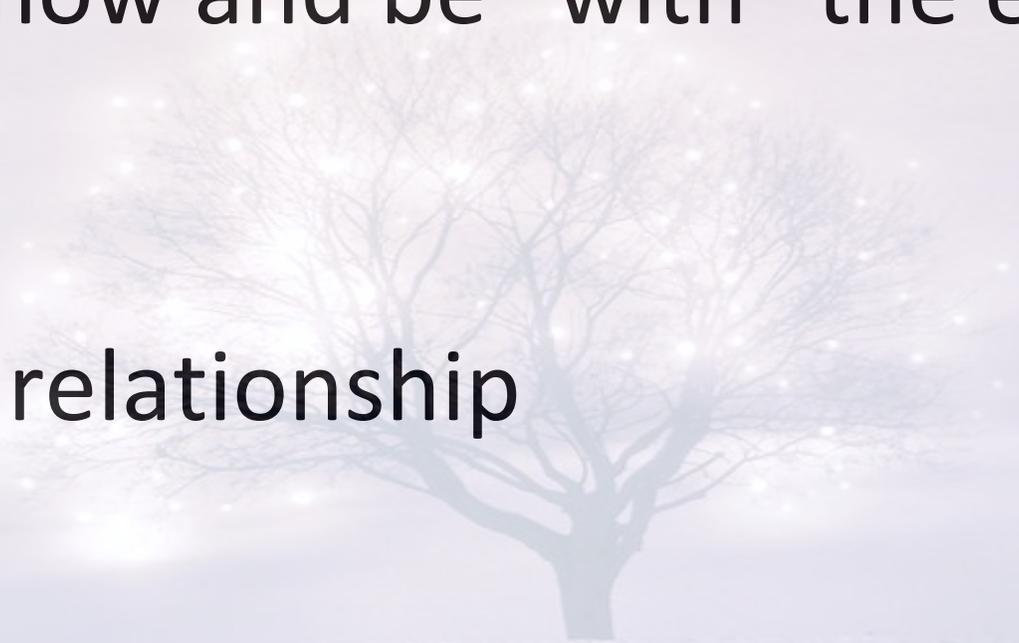
Sociocultural
attunement

Elements of Socioculturally Attuned Practice

- 1 Relational Focus
- 2 Third Order Thinking
- 3 Responsibility Toward Equity
- 4 Nuanced Attention to Context



Element 1: Relational Focus

- Seeking to know and be “with” the experience of all clients.
 - An on-going relationship
 - Not an end
- 
- A large, bare tree with glowing lights in its branches, set against a soft, hazy background. The tree is the central focus, with its branches spreading out and filled with numerous small, bright white lights. The background is a light, misty landscape with a horizon line, suggesting a serene and ethereal atmosphere.

Element 2: Third order thinking

Back to the future

Bateson's Levels of Learning (1972)



“**Learning I** is change in specificity of response by correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives.

Learning II is change in the process of Learning I, e.g., a corrective change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made, or it is a change in how the sequence of experience is punctuated.

Learning III is change in the process of Learning II, e.g., a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made. (p. 298)”

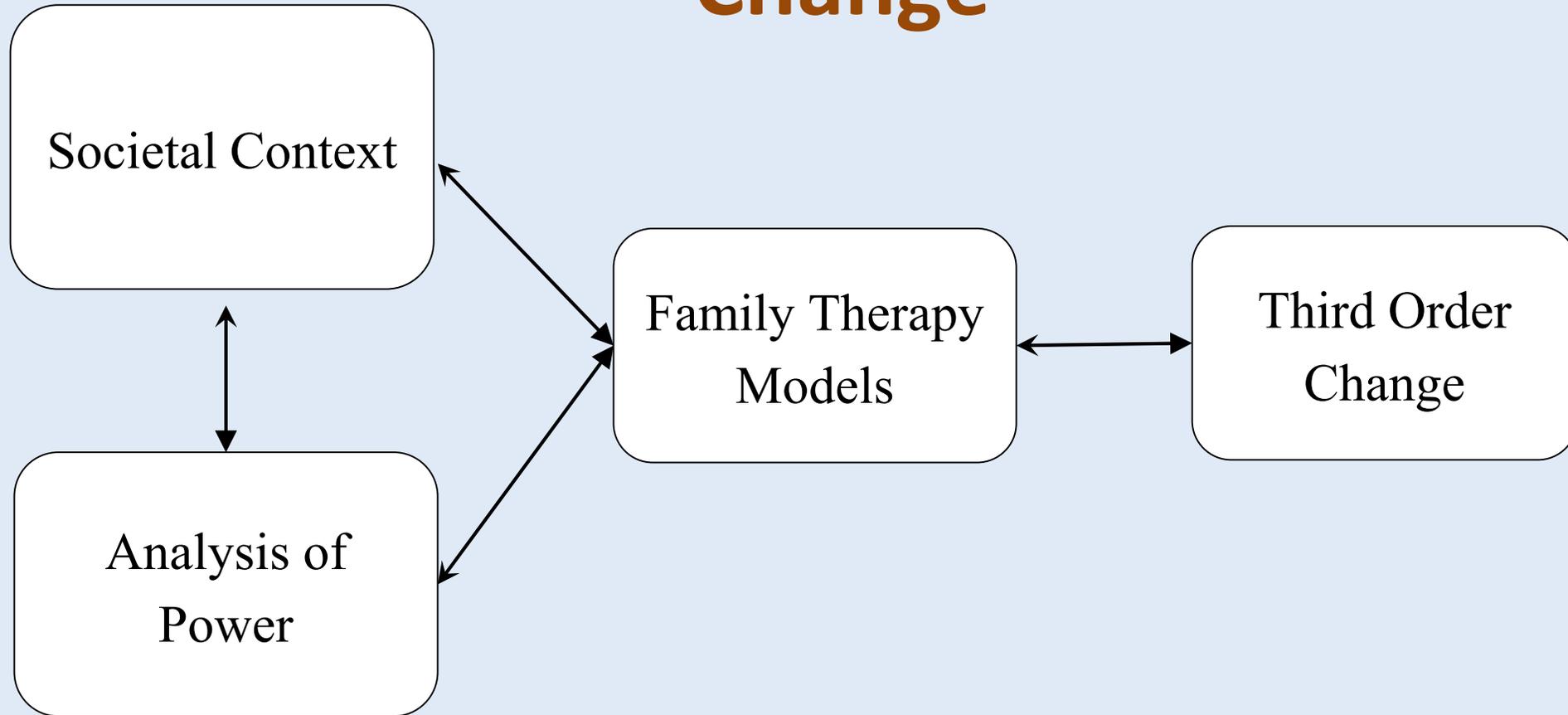
Applying Third Order Thinking

- Takes a meta view of systems of systems to map relationships between society, families and ourselves
- Connect the dots between social forces and individual/relational problems
- Is cognizant of the impact of what we notice and how we organize information
- Provides direction for integrating societal context into therapeutic goals

3rd Order Change

- ❖ Systems of systems
- ❖ Change in assumptions – sets of alternatives
- ❖ Connect power dynamics at intimate relational levels to broader societal context

Becoming an Agent of Third Order Change



Element 3: Responsibility Toward Equity

- Diversity is about who our practice includes
- Equity is about how they are treated

Ken Hardy (2016)



Equitable Practice is Good Practice



Promoting socially just relationships is best practice.

Symptoms of Power Imbalances

Depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms, etc.

Invalidation of personal identity

Relationship distress

Loss of flexibility

Inability to address conflict

Struggle for power

Cost of Resistance/resistance labeled as pathology





Myth of Neutrality →
Ethical Positioning



Intentionality

Epistemic injustice

Social meanings invalidate subordinate voices
and experience (*Fricker 2007*)



Accountability

A topographic map with a pushpin. The map shows terrain contours and various geographical features. A black pushpin is stuck into the map, pointing to a specific location. The background is a light blue and white gradient.

Being responsible for our our practices may privilege dominant cultural beliefs and practices.

Element 4: Nuanced Attention to Context

Avoid stereotyping

Attend to unique niche (*Falicov, 2014*)

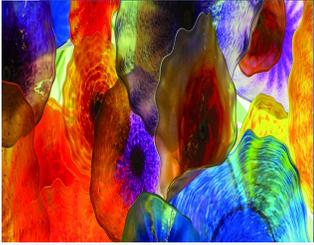
Both knowing and not knowing

Tensions in Socioculturally Attuned Practice

Entering into multiple, often conflicting sociopolitical worlds

May not be “either/or”



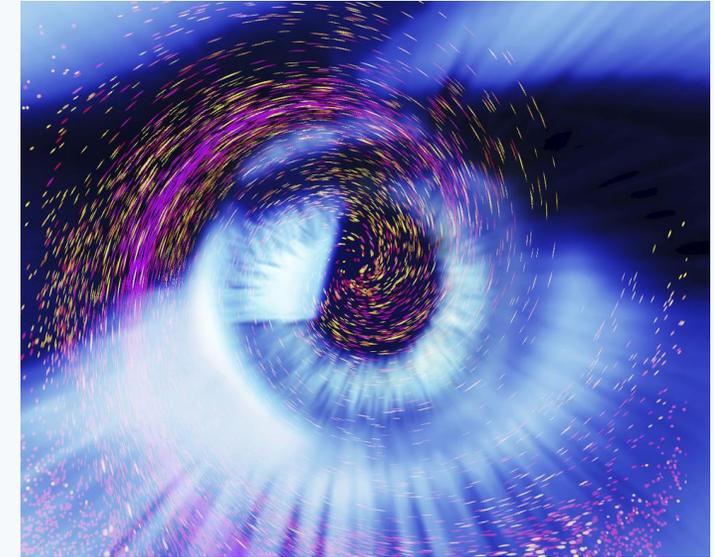


Guidelines for Socioculturally Attuned Family Therapy- “ANVIET”

- **Attune:** Understand, resonate with, and respond to experience within societal contexts
- **Name:** Identify what is unjust or has been overlooked - amplify silenced voices.
- **Value:** Acknowledge the worth of that which has been minimized or devalued.
- **Intervene:** Support relational equity - disrupt oppressive power dynamics.
- **Envision:** Provide space to imagine just relational alternatives.
- **Transform:** Collaborate to make what is imagined real - third order change

ATTUNE

- *Notice* how beneath-the-surface sociocultural power dynamics can easily shape what gets identified as the clinical focus.
- *Apprehend* and emotionally resonate with how socio-contextual factors connect to clients' experience.
- *Recognize and attend* to how power dynamics are part of clients' experiences and are reflected in session.





- In the process of “naming” we select some experiences or ways of knowing and directly or implicitly link them to possible feelings and actions.
- Guide the conversation to name unfair or unjust circumstances and amplify voices whose experiences are likely to be silenced.

VALUE

Socioculturally attuned therapists develop special radar for ferreting out and highlighting strengths that dominant cultural and power processes mask.

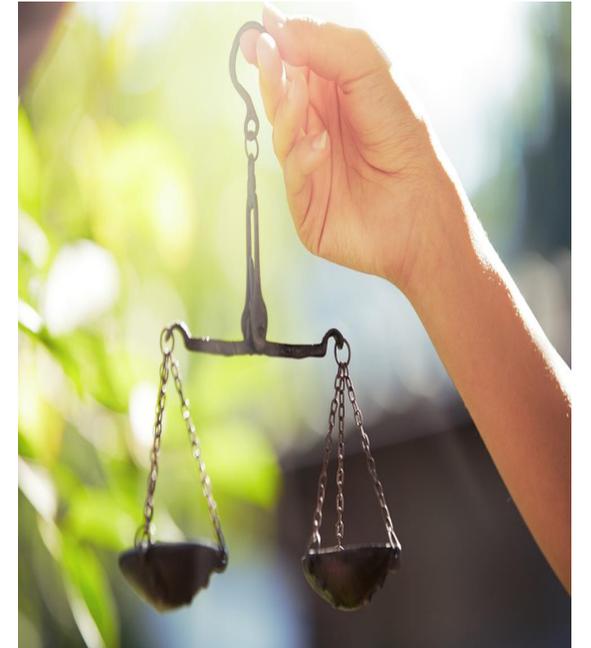
For Example:

- Strengths associated with females or with cultures that place less emphasis on individuality and competition
- Skills and mindsets needed to survive racism, homophobia, limited economic resources, disabilities, etc.
- Symptoms as resistance to power and domination



INTERVENE

- Use facilitative role to recognize and raise awareness of the impact of societal power dynamics
- Actively intervene to disrupt oppressive power dynamics and support relational equity
- Promote shared responsibility and accountability
- Collaborate with clients to create ways to transform inequitable relationships



ENVISION

- Third order change requires room to envision just relational alternatives
- Introduce conversations regarding alternatives to dominant culture patterns
- Be transparent and engage as a participant in the clinical conversation



TRANSFORM

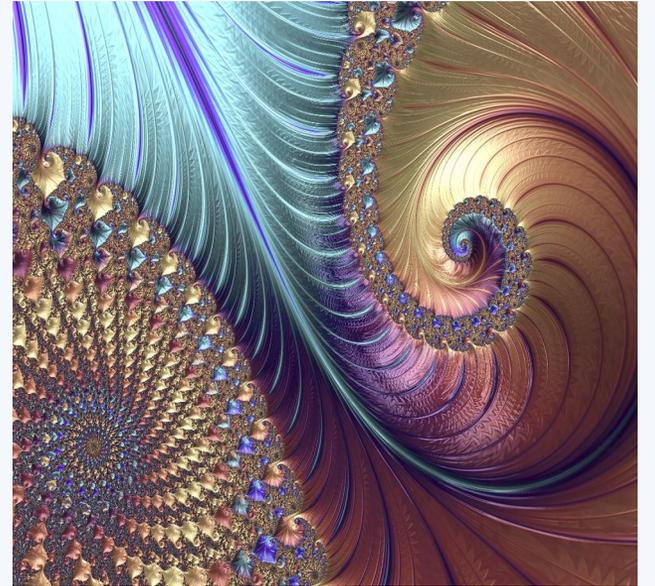
Make the imagined real

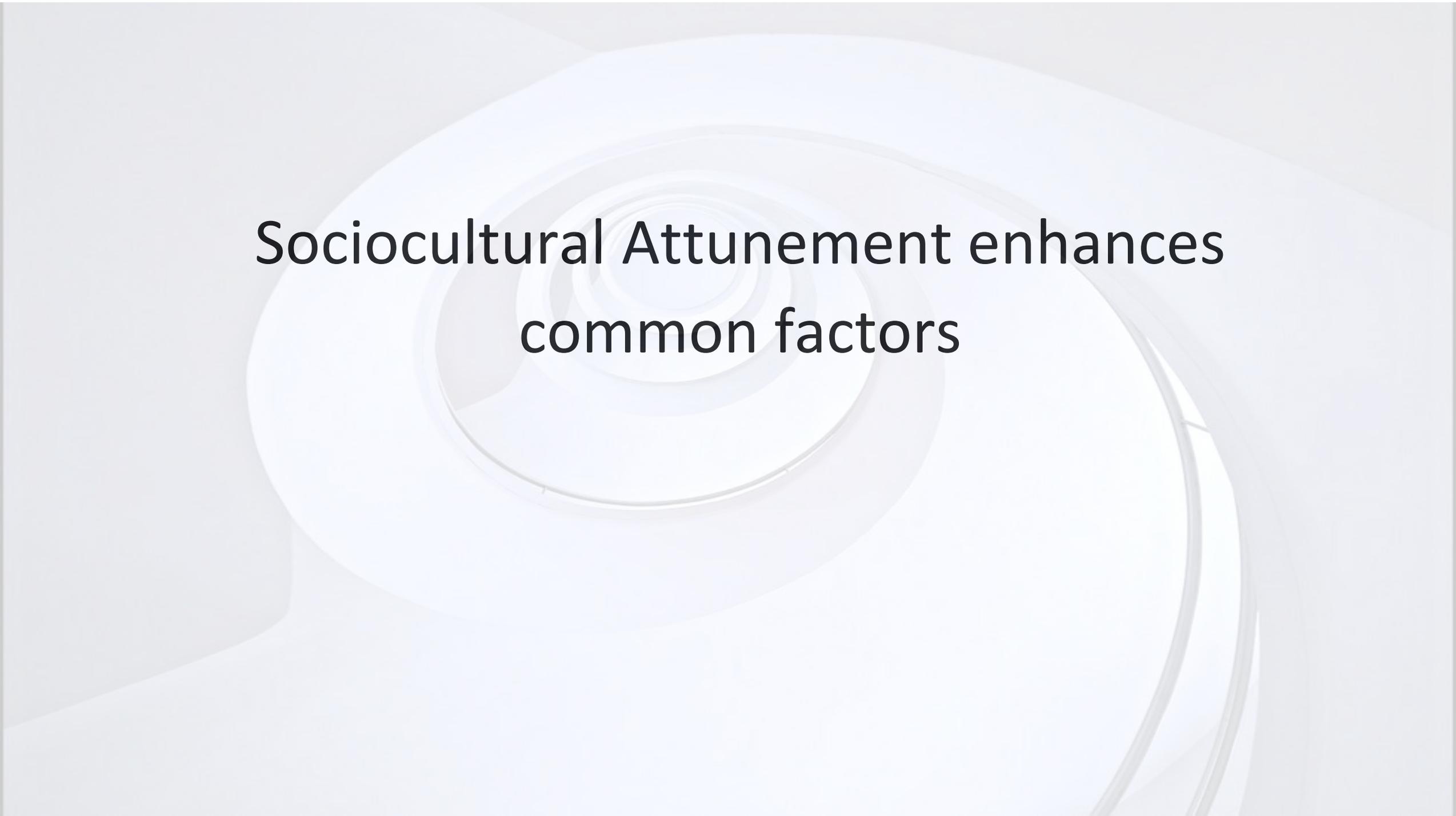
Bring clients back to their equitable goals and highlight what they are doing to enact their vision

Practice responsive persistence.

Help people build networks that support their ideals and devise strategies that resist dominant societal norms.

Encourage conscious responses to familial and societal injustices and the futures with which they seek to align.





**Sociocultural Attunement enhances
common factors**

Future Directions

A dandelion plant with several white seed heads is growing out of a crack in a grey asphalt surface. The background is a light, hazy blue sky. The overall image has a soft, ethereal quality.

Examine sources of knowledge and discourses that influence our work

Expand systemic family therapy training, research, and practice in ways that actively support equitable relationships and just societal systems

SOCIOCULTURALLY ATTUNED FAMILY THERAPY

Guidelines for Equitable Theory and Practice



Teresa McDowell, Carmen Knudson-Martin,
and J. Maria Bermudez



Teresa McDowell, Ed.D.
Carmen Knudson-Martin, Ph.D.
Lewis & Clark

J. Maria Bermudez, Ph.D.
University of Georgia