

Beyond Call-Outs: Deepening Anti-Oppression Activism

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Overview


- How do we usually think about anti-oppression?
- What do our common sense understandings of oppression leave out?
- How do power imbalances affect our co-ops?
- What can we do?!

Why should we trust this workshop?

- Summary of ~150 scientific articles and books
- Social psychology research
 - Experiments on human behavior
 - How do power imbalances affect people's lives?
 - What is effective for challenging prejudice and promoting social change?
- Sociological research
 - Surveys of housing and worker co-ops
 - What are the most successful ways other co-ops have challenged oppression?

Common sense understanding of oppression

Privileged person
says something oppressive



Assumes oppression is the direct result of an individual's
bad intentions

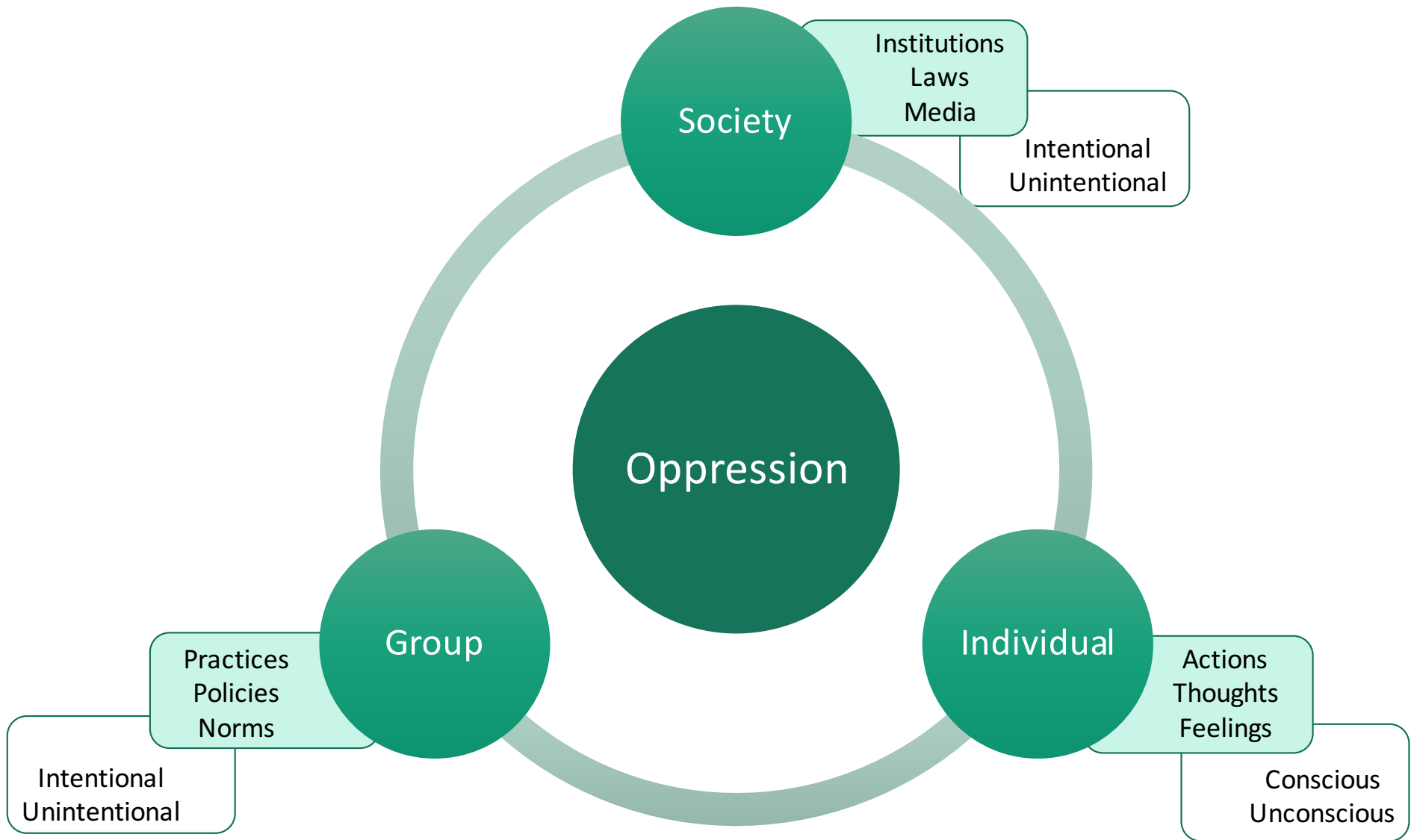
Oppressed person
feels hurt/offended

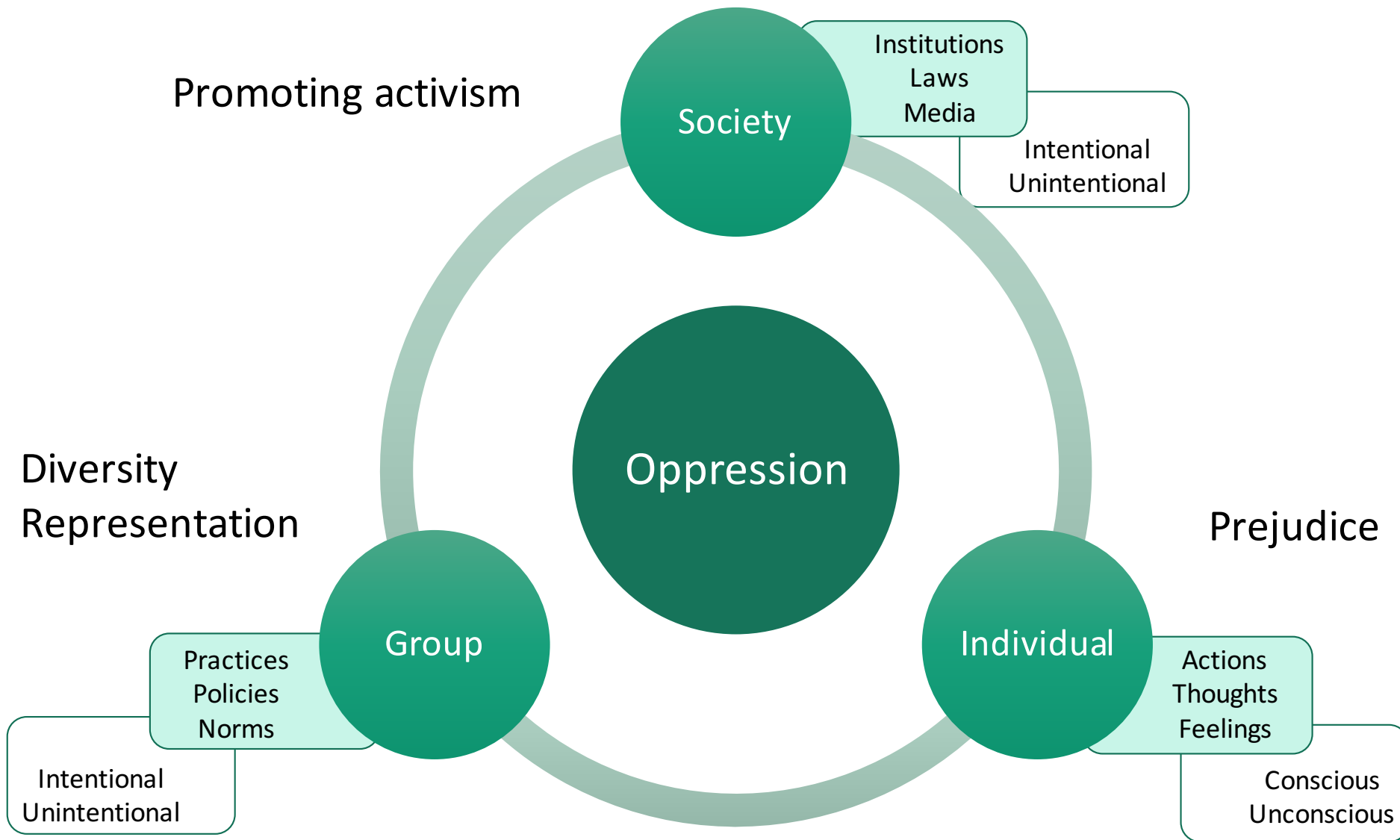


Assumes oppression is easy to identify

Ally
calls the privileged person out

Assumes oppression can be fixed by simply pointing it out





Prejudice

Why is it important?

- Our understandings of how the world works shape our thoughts, feelings, and actions all of the time
 - And our understandings of how the world works were developed in an oppressive, violent system

Ideological commitments to equality



Reduction in prejudice



Reduction of oppressive behaviors



Active promotion of social justice

Which strategies work the best overall?

	One Lecture	Engaged Education Long-term interactive presentations	Discussion Groups Long-term facilitated discussion groups
Learn about privilege and oppression	X	X	X
Reduce intentional prejudice	X	X	X
Reduce unconscious bias		X	X
Strong, lasting change in attitudes		X	X
Thinking about social change		X	X
Feel more empowered			X
Increased empathy			X
Reduced anxiety over diversity			X
Learn about own marginalized identity			X
Lead to actual activism			X

Which strategies work the best overall?

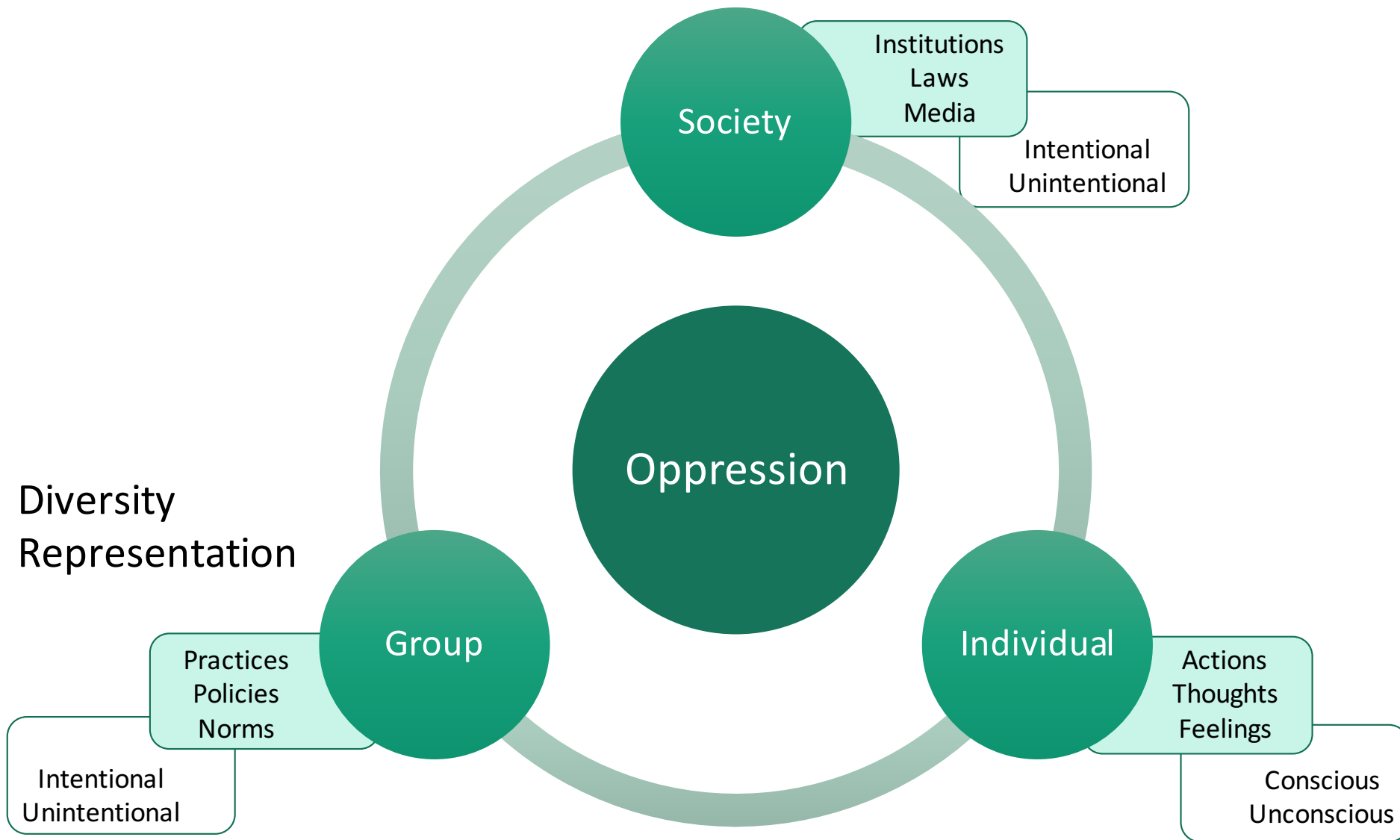
Effective education: components

- Good facilitators are more important than presenters with more knowledge
 - Best: have 2 facilitators of different identities that can model constructive conflict
- Goal of working through conflict together
 - As opposed to expecting everyone to immediately “get it”
- Active learning
 - Discussions and writing prompts
 - Role plays and experimental games
- Contact: face-to-face interactions with marginalized groups
 - Representative presenters, panels, mixed-identity discussion groups
 - EXCEPTION: anti-violence workshops can be more effective with single-identity groups
- Multiple sessions spaced out over time

Which strategies work the best overall?

Most important educational content

- Prevention focus (“you better not fuck up”) BACKFIRES
 - Decreases explicit oppressive behavior
 - Increases anxiety about diversity, increases prejudice
- Promotion focus (working together towards justice) DOES work
 - Decreases oppressive behavior, decreases prejudice, decreases anxiety, increases empowerment, increases cooperation, increases activism



Diversity

Two paths towards diversity

“Fake” diversity

Differences are feared and/or minimized

Goal is to have zero conflict

Effects for privileged: more biased, more prejudiced

Effects for marginalized: feel silenced, feel pressure to hide

Real diversity

Differences are acknowledged and appreciated

Goal is to explore and work with conflicts

Effects for co-op: less turnover, more collaboration, more effective and innovative

Effects for all members: learning, creativity, build trust, more engaged

Diversity

Which strategies promote real diversity?

- Don't trust your own perceptions of diversity
 - Falsely believe that small numbers of marginalized individuals means equality
- Policies that promote diversity and discourage harassment and violence
 - Must be accessible and known to the community
 - Must follow through on policies
- Visible displays of inclusion
 - E.g. art, events
- Solidarity groups/caucuses
- Leaders are very important
 - Help encourage marginalized leaders
 - Make sure leaders are educated on privilege and oppression

Representation: Leadership

How do power imbalances affect leadership?

- Members from privileged groups are more likely to take on leadership roles
- Leaders from marginalized groups are rated as less competent, more hostile, and less likeable than privileged leaders

Representation: Leadership

What's going on here?

“I would love marginalized people to step up into leadership roles, but they never volunteer...”

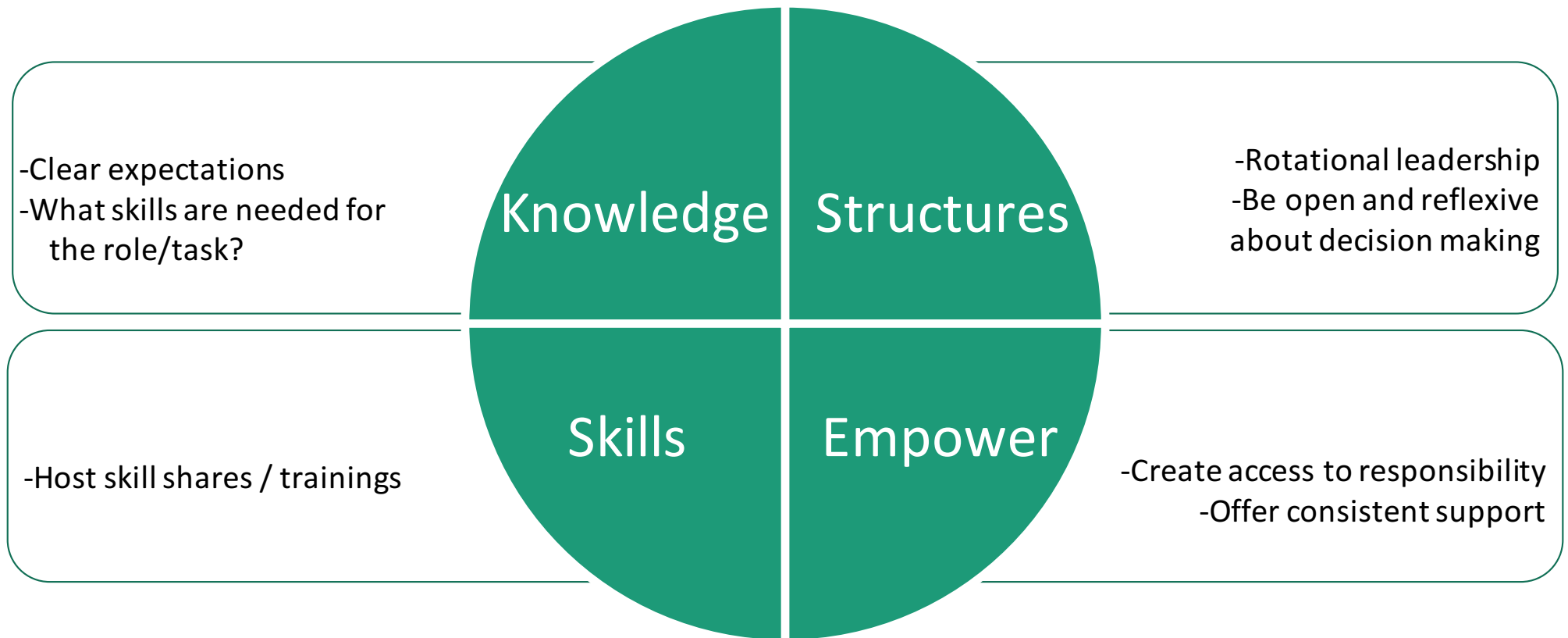
- Current model of leadership is based on white masculine standards
- Good leaders are seen as people who are naturally assertive, take initiative, and are good at telling others what to do

“We're all equal here – no one / everyone is a leader!”

- Without clear expectations and practices, leadership is organized in less explicit ways
- Unspoken norms of who has power: experience, friendship, social hierarchies

Representation: Leadership

Which strategies build leaders?



Representation: Decision Making

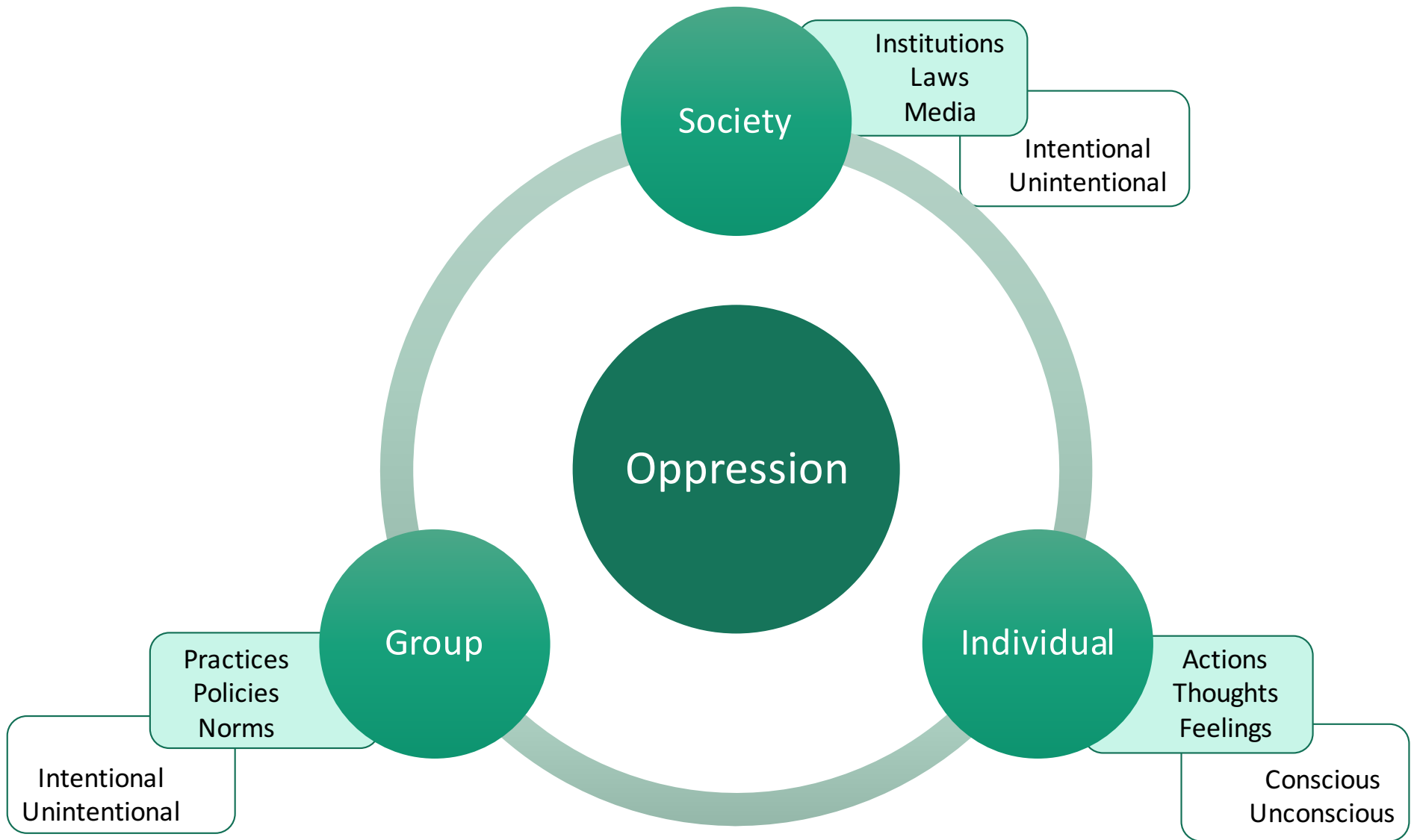
How do power imbalances affect meeting spaces?

- Marginalized individuals (especially women) are less likely to speak up
 - When there is an equal balance in conversation, everyone (including other women) thinks that the women dominated the conversation
 - Not just about numbers: “token” privileged members take up a disproportionate amount of space and power
- All genders (including other women) interrupt women at high rates
 - Once interrupted, women are much less likely to speak again
- Identities of leaders impact conversations
 - When have male leaders, men talk 2.5 times longer than women

Representation: Decision making processes

What strategies promote equality?

- Don't trust your own perceptions of equality!
 - Need to accurately measure how long people talk for, whose ideas get implemented, etc.
- Boost representation of marginalized members (both in numbers and in power)
- Use creative facilitation tactics
 - E.g. fishbowls, go-arounds, dynamic stack
- Be strategic about voting:
 - If have few marginalized individuals, use unanimous rule
 - If have many marginalized individuals, use majority rule



How can we promote activism outside our co-ops?

- Build efficacy (feel like you can make a difference)
 - Promotion focus: help people see what they CAN do
- Develop optimism and empowerment
 - Build strong, compassionate, supportive ties in our communities
- Get comfortable with conflict – learn how to use conflict as a way to deepen relationships

Questions?

Violence and sexual assault:

What factors increase the likelihood of violence?

- Imbalances in numbers and power
- History of organizational tolerance of harassment, abuse, and violence
- Culture that values masculine standards of dominance and toughness
- Perceptions of OTHER people's norms is often more important than your own personal beliefs
 - And we underestimate how much other people value consent and safety

Violence and sexual assault: *Which interventions prevent violence?*

- Policies against harassment, violence, and rape
 - Must be accessible and known to the community
 - Must follow through on policies
- Education/training (will cover more later)
 - Focus on WHEN and HOW to take responsibility
 - Focus on building practical skills
- Encourage open dialogue, especially between privileged individuals
 - People care more than we think they do

What strategies work the best overall?

Intergroup dialogue: components

Intergroup dialogue involves:

- Regular, on-going discussion group
 - Members from mixed identities
 - At least 2 facilitators from different identity groups, who can model constructive conflict

Components of intergroup dialogue:

- Active learning (readings, videos, teachings, etc.)
- Facilitated discussion

Goals of intergroup dialogue:

- Share experiences and knowledge in an honest and respectful space
- Work through conflict together to build collective knowledge and trust