



# BUILDING BRIDGES:

*The utilization of a narrative humanization approach in the fight to reduce and unlearn stigmatizing beliefs.*



**Dr. Kristin Spooner, DSW, LICSW, CST**

The Radical Social Worker

KristinSpoonTherapy@gmail.com

KristinSpoonTherapy.com



# ROAD MAP

## 01 NARRATIVE HUMANIZATION

What is it? Why is it effective in addressing stigma/stereotyping?

## 02 APPLICATION

How do we use narratives to address bias?

## 03 COMPARE & CONTRAST

How is narrative humanization similar or different to other approaches?



# INTERSECTIONAL INTRODUCTION

Pronouns: She/They

My name is Dr. Spooner and I am a White, cisgender, neurodivergent, queer woman and I am the mother of a 9-year-old kiddo. While I am a first generation college student, I have had the privilege of attending three private educational institutions of higher ed. I understand that my own experiences of classism are not linked to the color of my skin and I continue to work towards being an antiracist co-conspirator in my professional work and personal life. Additionally, I was brought up in an interfaith family (Evangelical Christian and Judaism) and navigated marginalization for my sexual orientation. I also grew up during a time when marriage within the LGBTQ+ population was illegal but I was able to marry my partner, surrounded by a supportive community of other queer folx and allies.



# AREAS OF EXPERTISE:

- Sexual Offending and Problematic Sexual Behaviors
- Paraphilic Disorders
- Pedophilia and Minor-Attraction
- Anxiety/OCD
- Kink/BDSM
- Fetishes
- Trauma/Crisis Intervention
- Gender Identity & LGBTQ+ Affirming Support
- Monogamous and Non-monogamous Treatment
- Comprehensive Sex Education, Bystander Intervention, Child Safety
- Erectile "Dysfunction"







**HOW HAS STORYTELLING  
IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?**

The background features a stylized landscape with three light blue clouds in the upper half and two brown mountains on the left and right sides of the lower half. A large orange sun is partially submerged in a blue body of water at the bottom. The entire scene is set against a background of horizontal light blue lines.

# ***BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING***

Stigma & Stereotyping



Stigmatized beliefs, stereotyping, and prejudice are rooted in the mental models we have learned about people who are part of marginalized groups

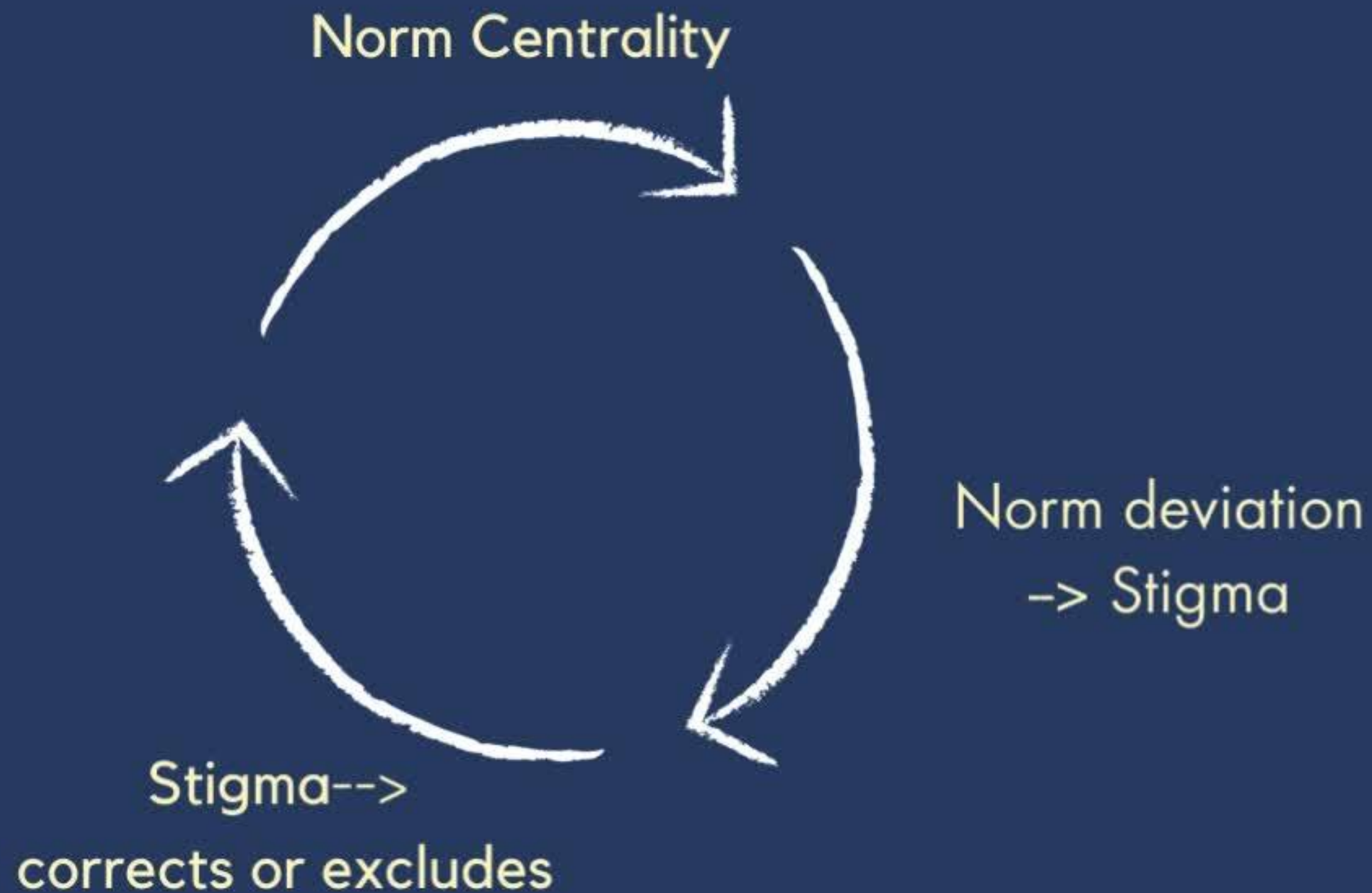
These behaviors/beliefs are often reinforced by social norms that force certain people into “out-groups.”

Individuals within the “in-group” have the power to create norms, withhold social currency, and allocate resources.



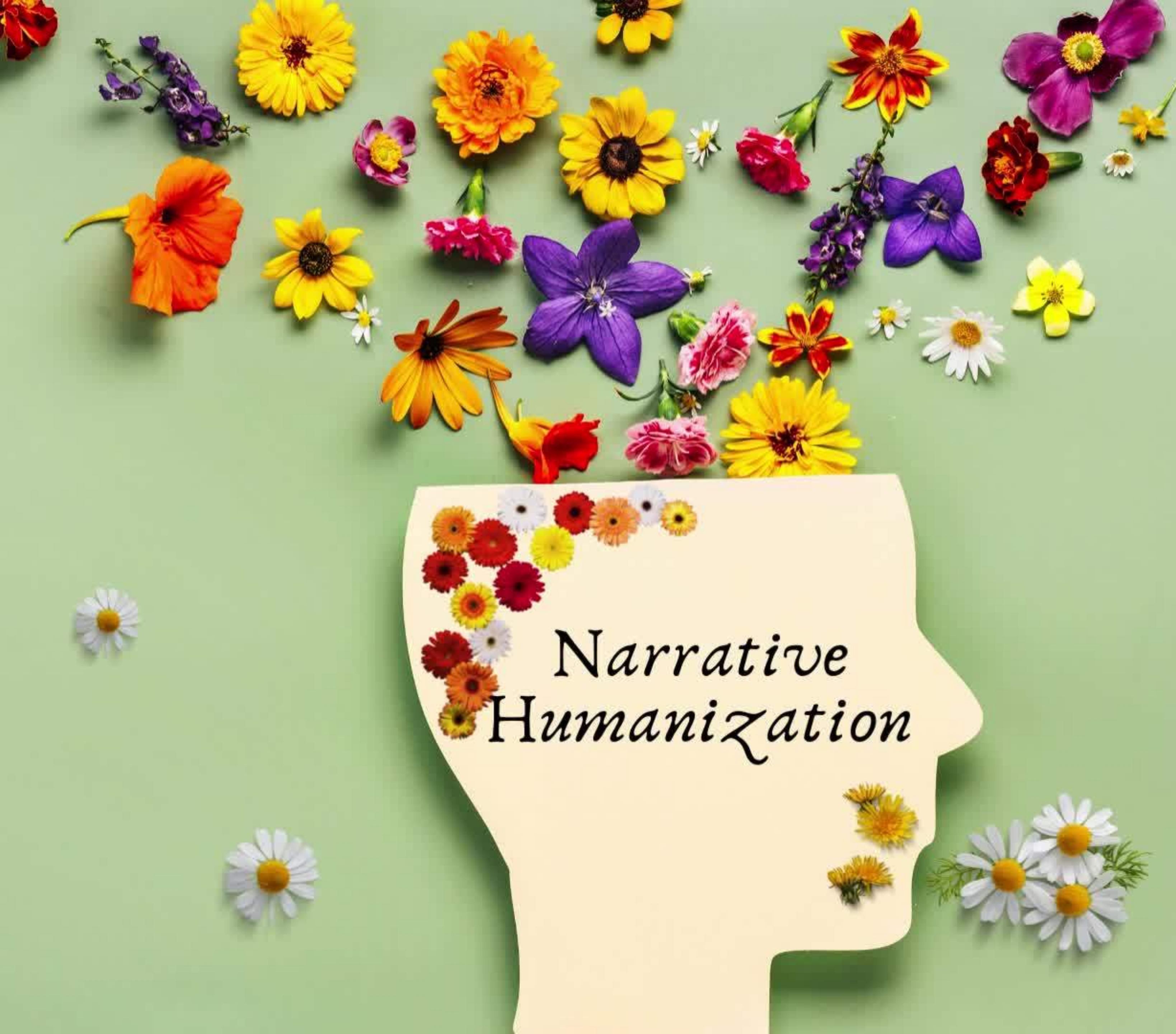


# NORM-CENTERED STIGMA THEORY (NCST)



- Social power is required to create norms.
- Groups with power decide who is excluded
- Gate-keeps social currency.
- Maintains social power structures.





## *Narrative Humanization*

Inaccurate or harmful beliefs about specific groups are broken down, unlearned and replaced with accurate information,

- Uses personal stories, from people within stigmatized group.
- Can allow engagement (questions, dialogue, etc.)
- Amplifies and centers experiences.



# OTHER STIGMA REDUCTION APPROACHES:

## 3 Main Groups of Theory

### Contact Hypothesis

Exposing individuals to positive encounters with representatives from the "out-group."



### Psychoeducation

Provides cognitive & emotional understanding of out-group members.



### Social Categorization Challenging

Instead of trying to change stereotypes or emotional reactions--challenges the idea that "out-groups" are actually "out-groups."





# NARRATIVE APPROACHES



## GENERATING COUNTER-STEREOTYPICAL ROLE MODELS

Help to reduce the reliance of heuristic thinking.



## AMPLIFY VOICES

Encourage and support story telling (when safe). Rewrite social narratives.



## RESISTANCE

We didn't consent to much of the harmful information we have acquired--Take back your thoughts!



# Comapre & Contrast:



## STIGMA & STEREOTYPE REDUCTION METHODS.

### PROMPTS:

- WHICH APPROACH TO STIGMA/STEREOTYPE REDUCTION DO YOU CONNECT WITH THE MOST? WHY?
- ARE THERE TIMES WHEN ONE APPROACH MAY BE MORE EFFECTIVE OVER ANOTHER? WHY OR WHY NOT?
- HOW CAN WE USE NARRATIVE THERAPY & NARRATIVE HUMANIZATION TO ADVOCATE FOR AND SUPPORT CHANGE/INCLUSION?
- OTHER THOUGHTS?





# References

- Corrigan, P. W., Morris, S. B., Michaels, P. J., Rafacz, J. D., & Rusch, N. (2012). Challenging the public stigma of mental illness: A meta-analysis of outcome studies. *Psychiatric Services*, 63(10), 963–973. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201100529>
- Harper, C. A., Bartels, R. M., & Hogue, T. E. (2018). Reducing stigma and punitive attitudes toward pedophiles through narrative humanization. *Sexual Abuse*, 30(5), 533–555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063216681561>
- Harper, C. A., Lievesley, R., Blagden, N. J., & Hocken, K. (2022). Humanizing pedophilia as stigma reduction: A large-scale intervention study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 51, 945–960. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02057-x>
- Jahnke, S., Philipp, K., & Hoyer, J. (2015). Stigmatizing attitudes towards people with pedophilia and their malleability among psychotherapists in training. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 62(10), 93–102. <https://doi.org.ezproxy.simmons.edu/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.07.008>
- Walkington, Z., Ashton-Wigman, S., & Bowles, D. (2020). The impact of narratives and transportation on empathic responding. *Poetics*, 80(1), 1–8.
- Worthen, M. G. F. (2020). *Queers, bis, and straight lies: An investigation of LGBTQ stigma*. New York: Routledge.
- Worthen, M. G. F. (2022). Heteronormativity and the victimization of bisexual and pansexual women: An empirical test of norm-centered stigma theory. *Critical Criminology*, 30, 1035–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-022-09632-1>
- Wurtele, S. A. (2021). “They’re not monsters!” Changing university students’ perceptions of child sex offenders through education and contact. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 32(2), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2021.1892159>