THE HOME FOR LITTLE WANDERERS

BETTER, BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR KIDS

From Burdensome to Belonging: Using Permanency Tools to Mitigate Suicide Risk with Youth

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Any opinions or views expressed in this presentation are solely my own and do not represent the views or opinions of The Massachusetts Department of Public Health or its partners.

About the Home for Little Wanderers

- The Home is the oldest child welfare organization in the country, founded in 1799
- In Massachusetts, New York, and New Hampshire
- A 1000-employee non-profit organization serving 15,000 youth from birth to 26 years old and their families
- Work with youth and families who are living with the effects of individual and systemic trauma
- Serves youth and families at multiple levels of care: Community Service Agencies, Family Resource Centers, Outpatient and School-based therapy, intensive home-based services, and Residential treatment

Vision Statement

To create an inclusive environment where everyone's identities, experiences, unique knowledge and perspectives are valued. Our hope is that learners leave trainings with increased confidence about who they are in the work and have further developed their voice and skills to support youth, families and each other.

Training Norms

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I will:

1. Explore my own biases and identify my assumptions
2. Be a mindful listener, and listen to understand
3. Be present
4. Ask questions and stay curious
5. Pay attention to and use the pronouns shared by others
6. “Speak from I” - my own experience/perspective
7. Consider the intent vs. impact of my words on others and others on me
8. Assume best intentions
9. Go easy on myself, it’s okay to make mistakes
10. Take space / Make space
11. Take the lessons, leave the details

Learning Objectives

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1. Explain Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide and its implications for understanding connection building as a suicide prevention strategy.
2. Gain skills in fostering a holistic, relational approach to providing competent suicide care by considering all disciplines as part of risk prevention.
3. Practice using the Safety Map tool for family-focused safety planning and community building

Partner Share

1. What are you hoping to learn today?
2. Think about a time when you experienced belonging. What did it feel like? What made this possible?

Debrief

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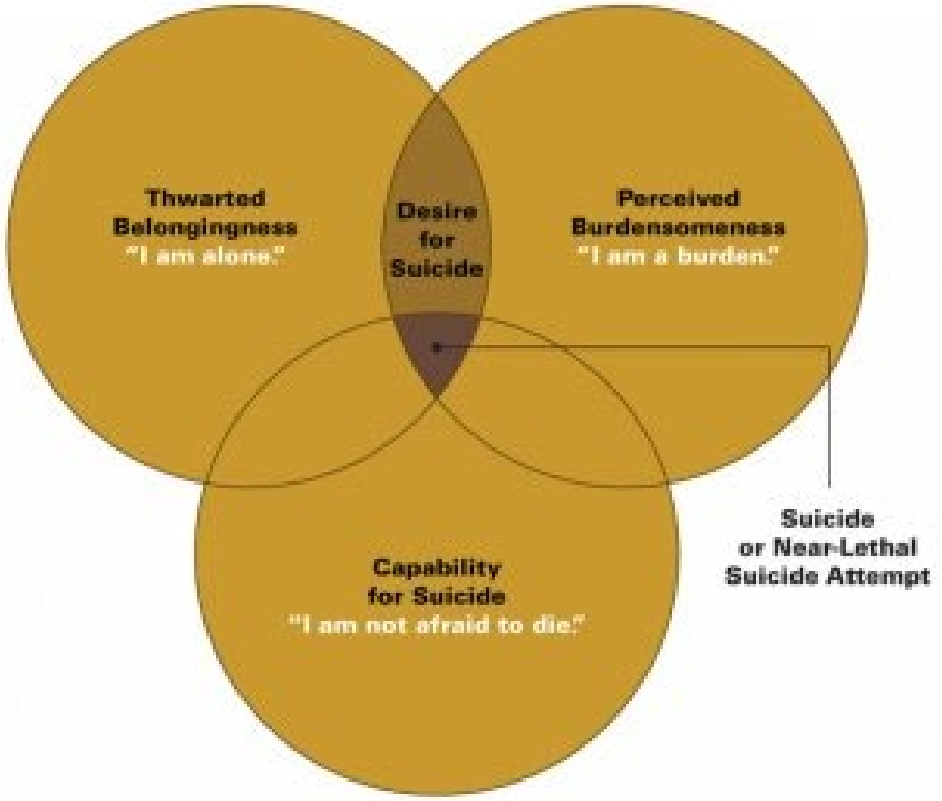
JOINER'S THEORY OF SUICIDE



Why is an ecological framework important in understanding suicide?

An ecological perspective

- Looks at both individual factors and inequitable/oppressive systems as causes of suicide-related outcomes
- The solution is both individual support and community- and environment-centered interventions

Wong, Y. J., Maffini, C. S., & Shin, M. (2014). The Racial-Cultural Framework: A Framework for Addressing Suicide-Related Outcomes in Communities of Color. *The Counseling Psychologist, 42(1)*, pp. 13-54.

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Cultural Theory and Model of Suicide

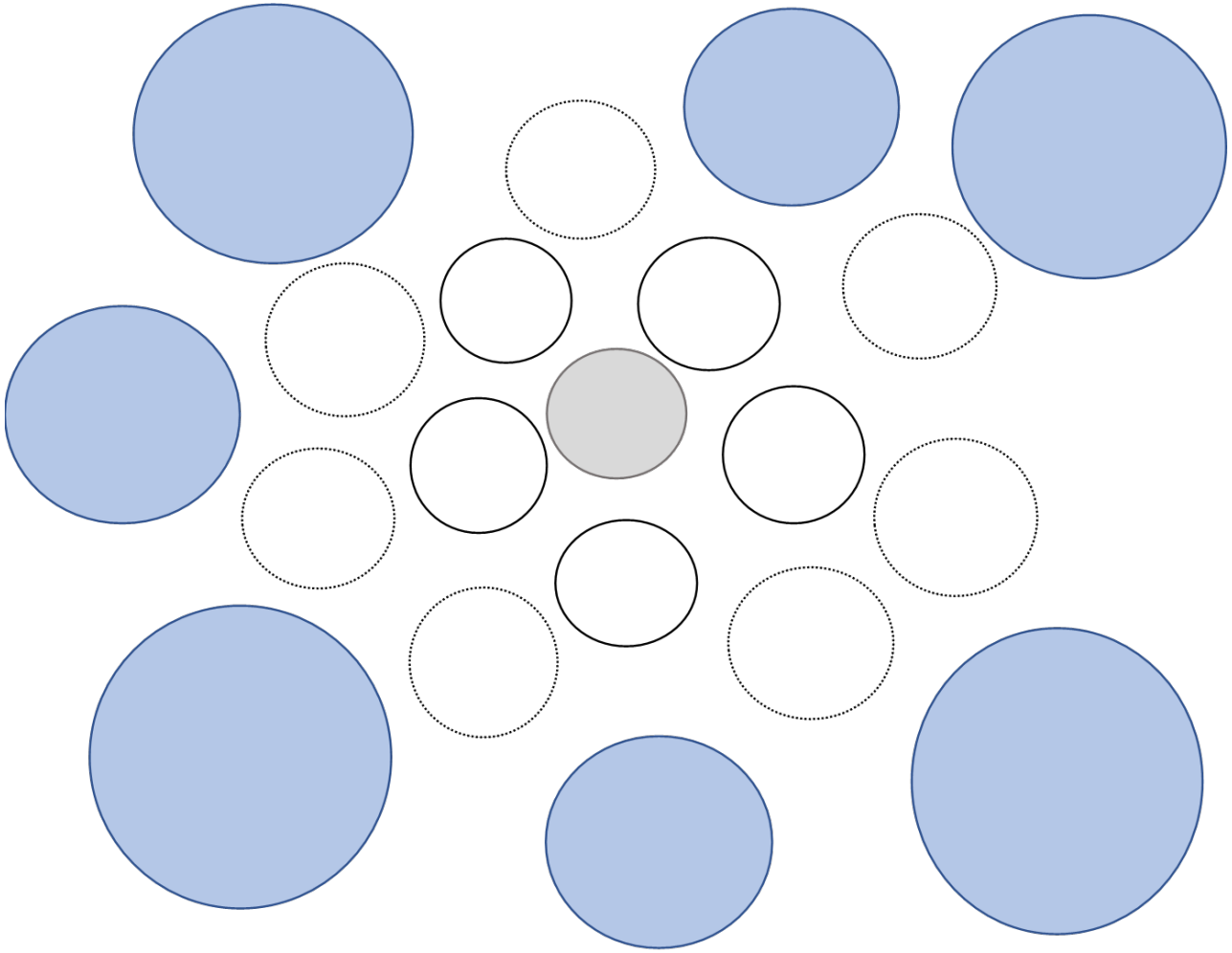
1. **Cultural sanctions:** messages that a culture conveys about suicide

2. **Idioms of distress:** the ways symptoms are expressed by a particular culture

3. **Minority stress:** includes acculturative stress, experiences of discrimination, and inequitable access to the social determinants of health

4. **Social discord:** includes conflict, rejection, or alienation from one's community, family, or friends

Safety Maps



1. The middle grey circle is for your name

2. The circles immediately surrounding this one are for people who you feel close to, who can support you, and who contribute to your well-being. They can provide concrete help and/or accountability.

3. Circles with dotted lines are for people who don't know everything that's going on, but could provide distraction or emotional support outside the crisis. If needed, they may be pulled closer with some work to build trust or strengthen the relationship.

4. Large blue circles at the edge are for communities, groups, or other networks that could provide you with support.

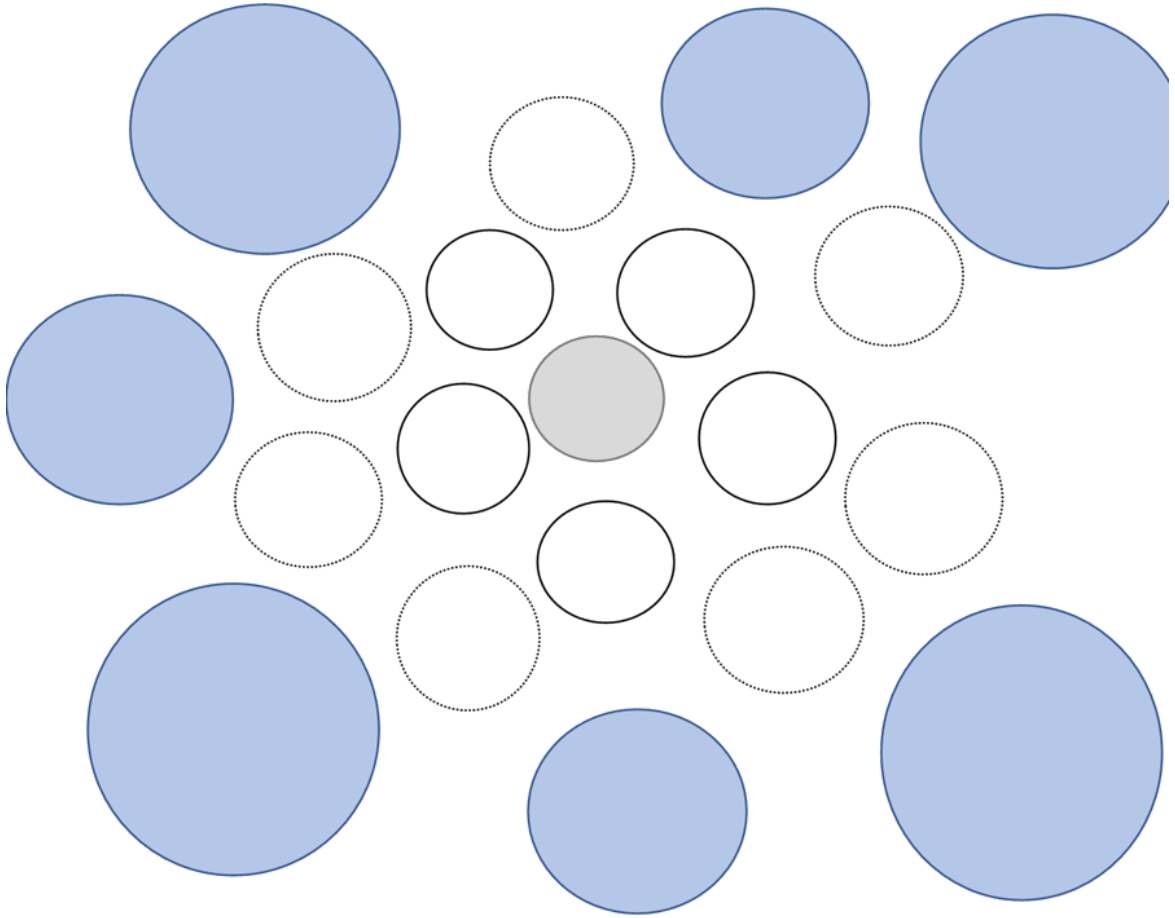
Safety Maps

Highlight Supportive Relationships: Identify those who consistently provide understanding and support during tough times.

Identify Empowering Connections: Focus on relationships that encourage personal growth and resilience.

Accepting Communities: Look for groups or networks where you feel accepted and valued.

Consider Sources of Validation: Highlight individuals who affirm your identity and promote self-worth.



Meet Jett!

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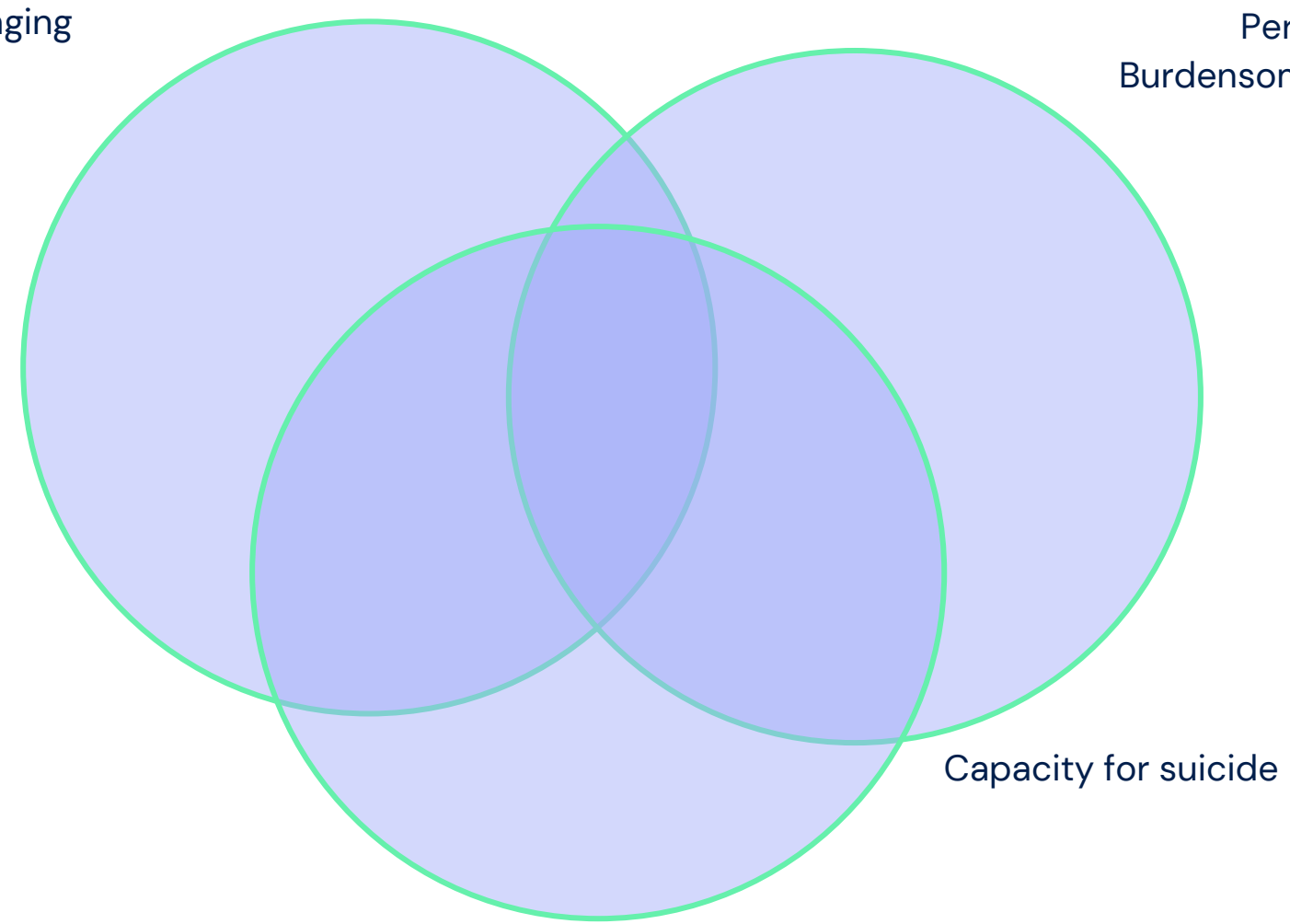
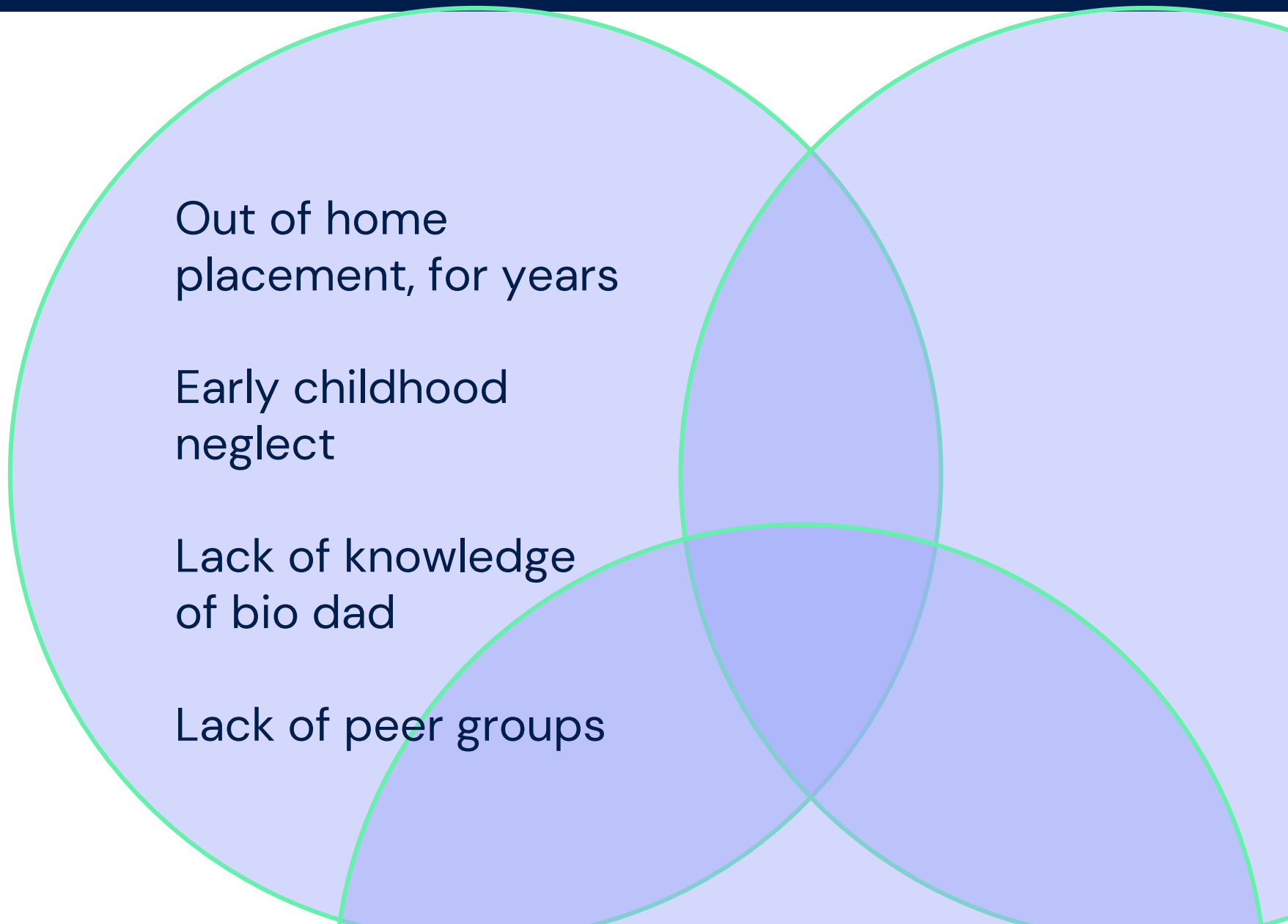
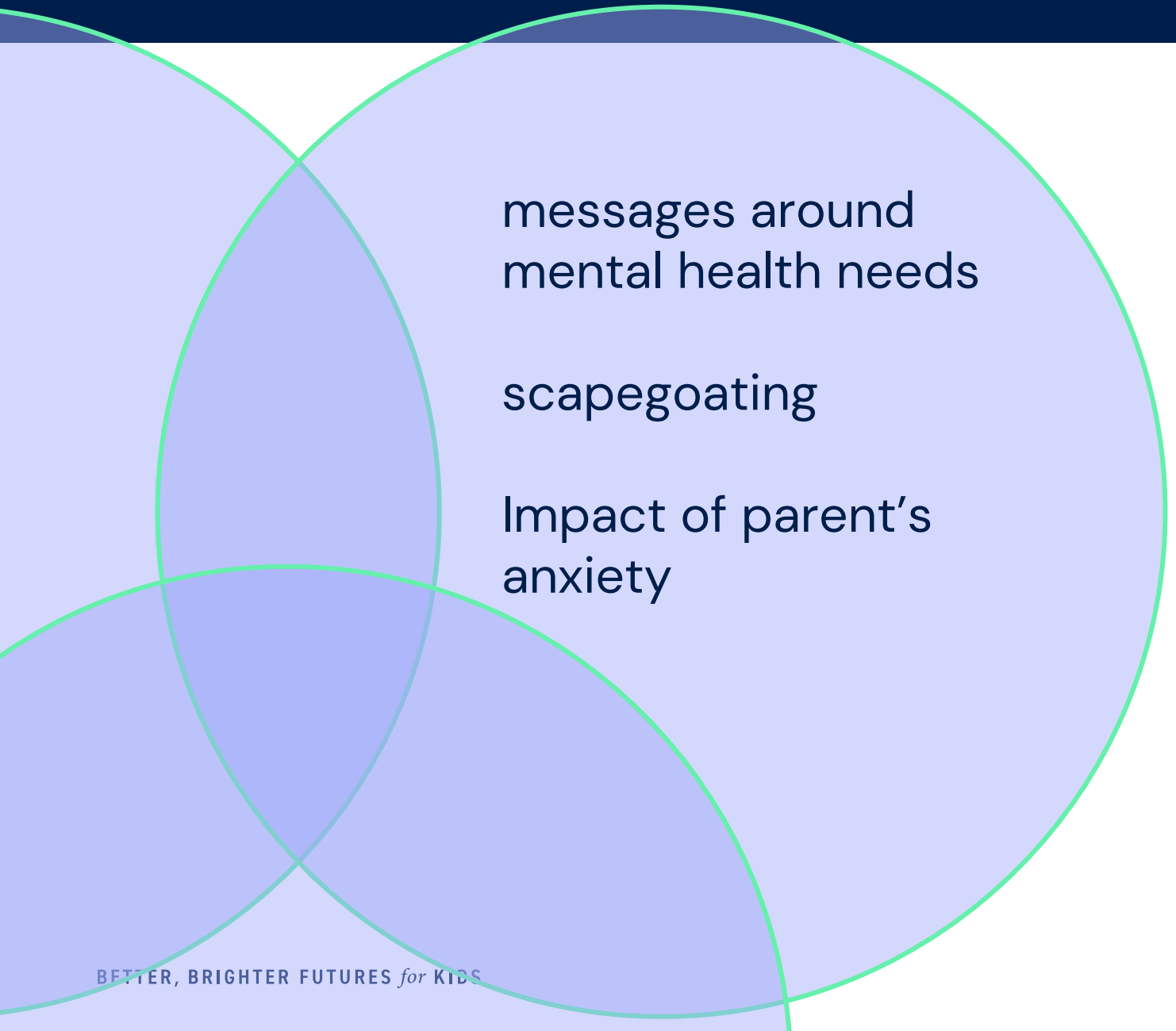
Venn diagram of Jett's experiences



Thwarted Belongingness



Perceived Burdensomeness

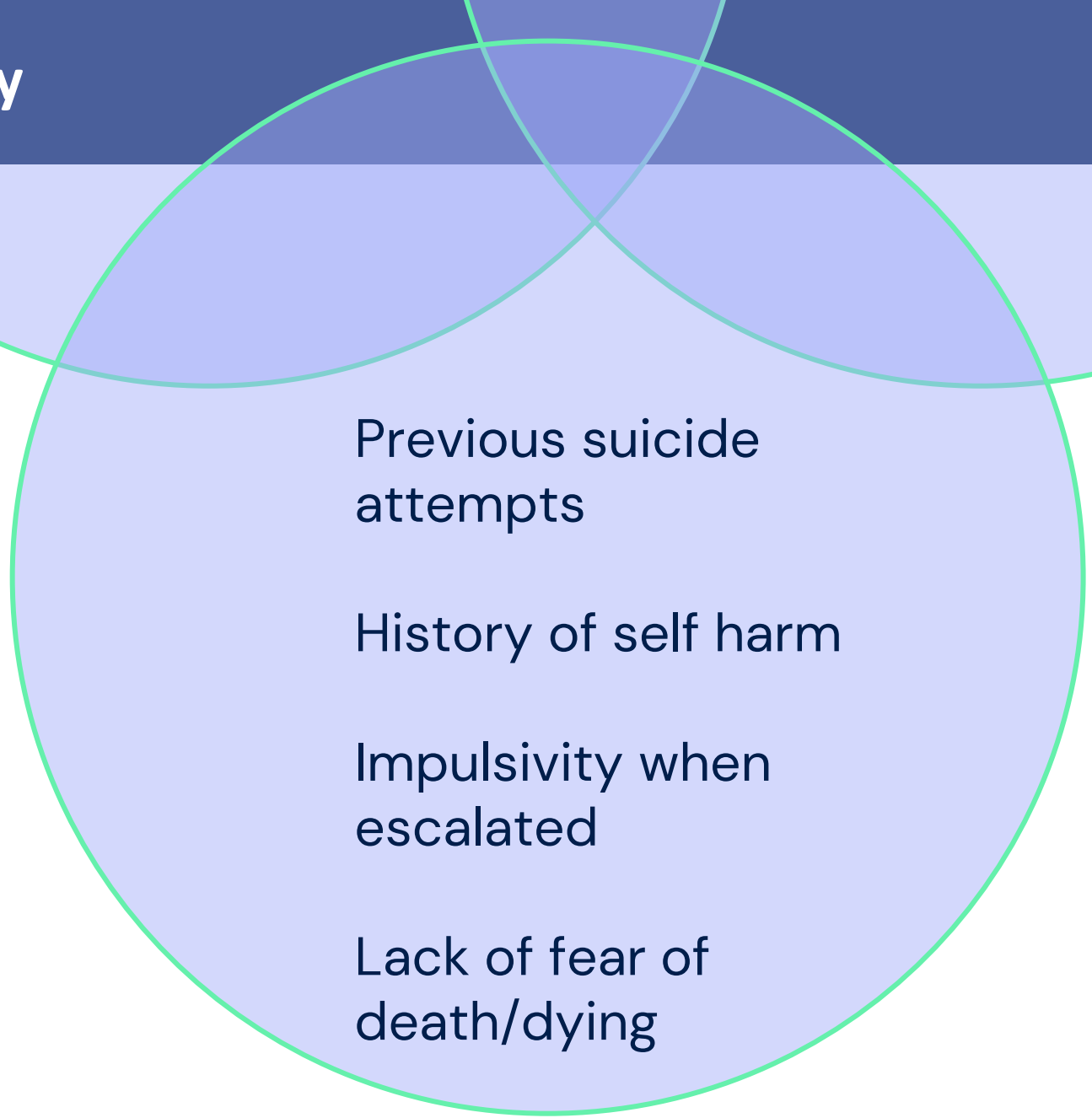


messages around mental health needs

scapegoating

Impact of parent's anxiety

Acquired Capability



And then we add gender!

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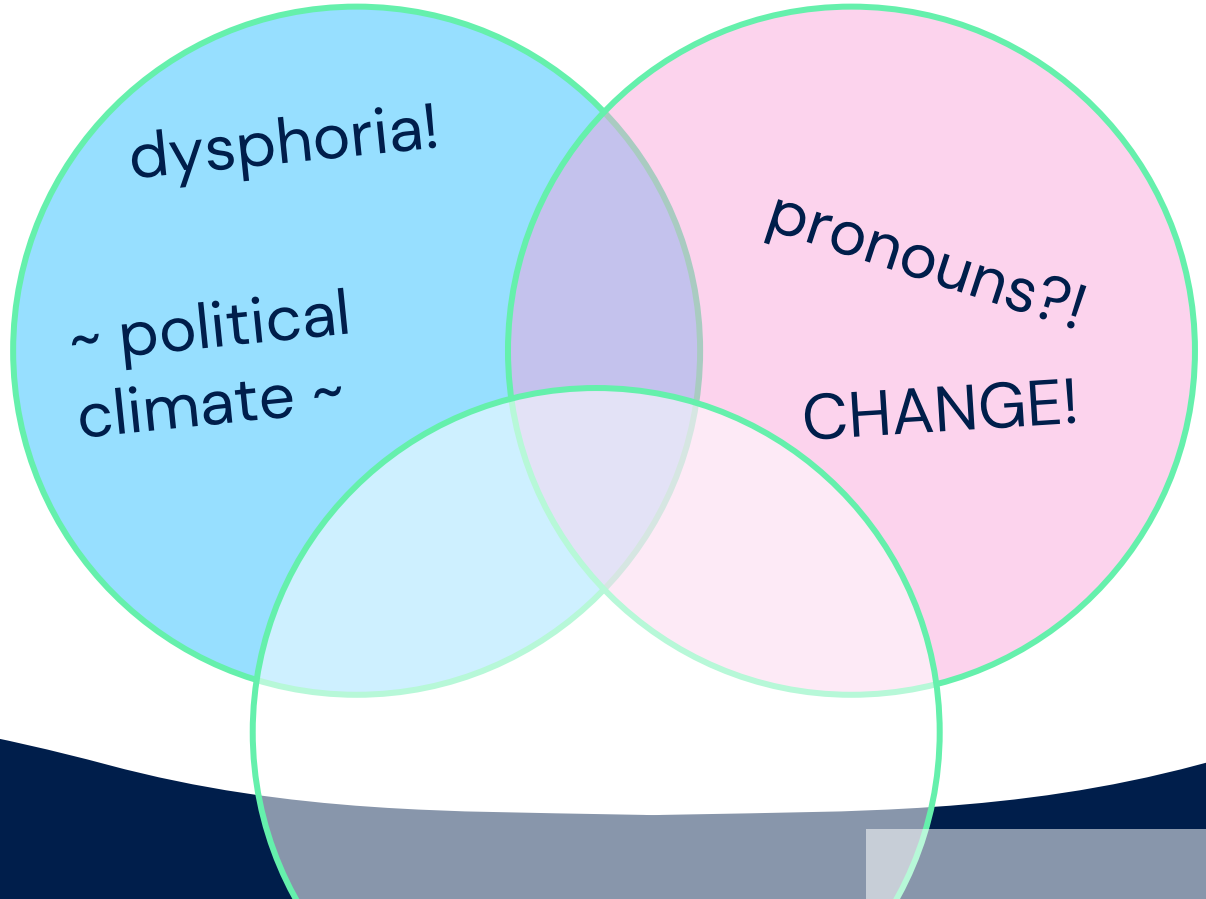

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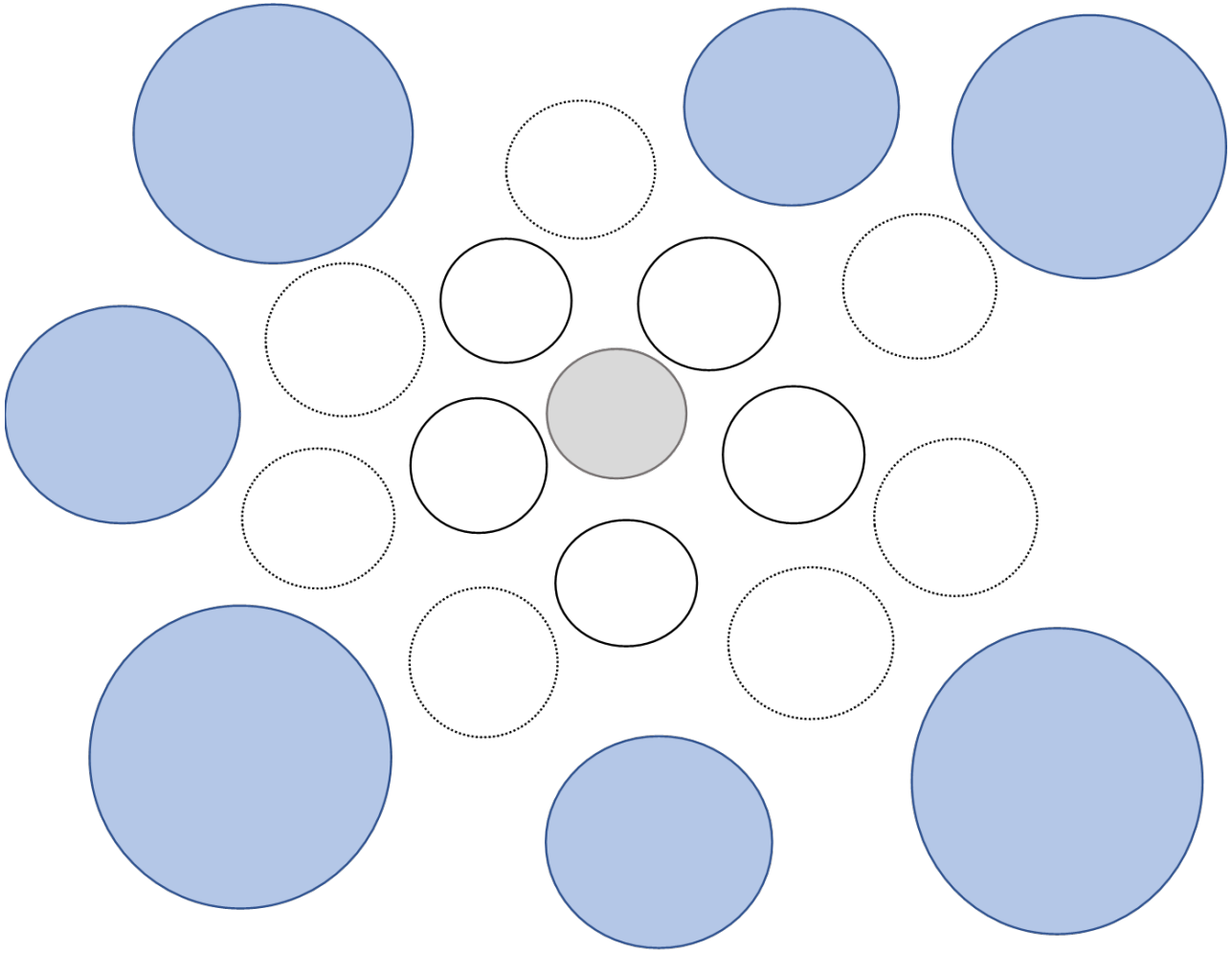
Jett & Wendy & Elliot

What is Permanency?

- Supporting families in responding to mental health crisis in a way that:
  - Embodies cultural humility
  - Strengthens the families existing internal and external resources
  - Keeps young people in their communities and/or minimizes the duration of out-of-home placements

Rule in vs. Rule out

Safety Maps



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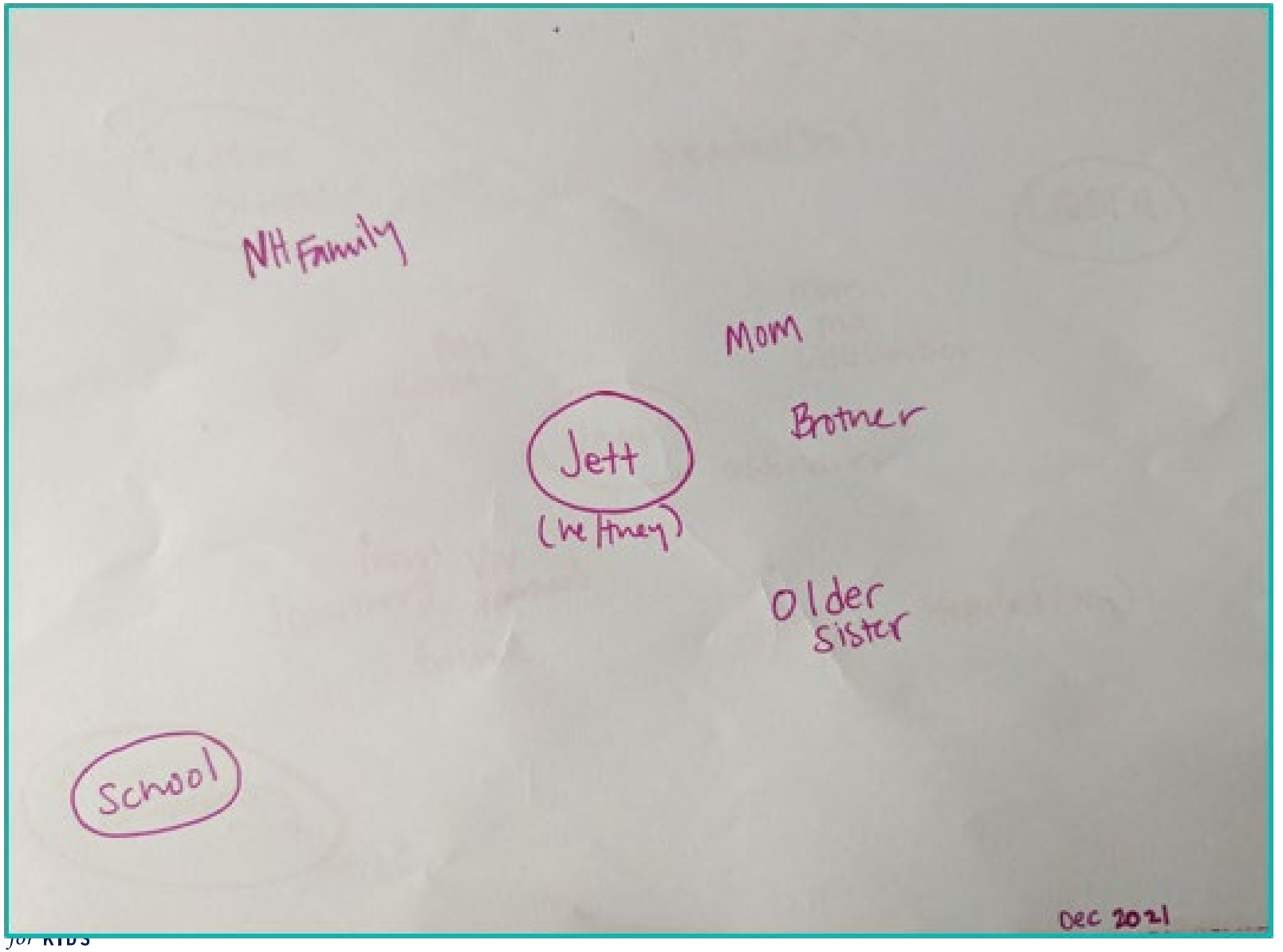
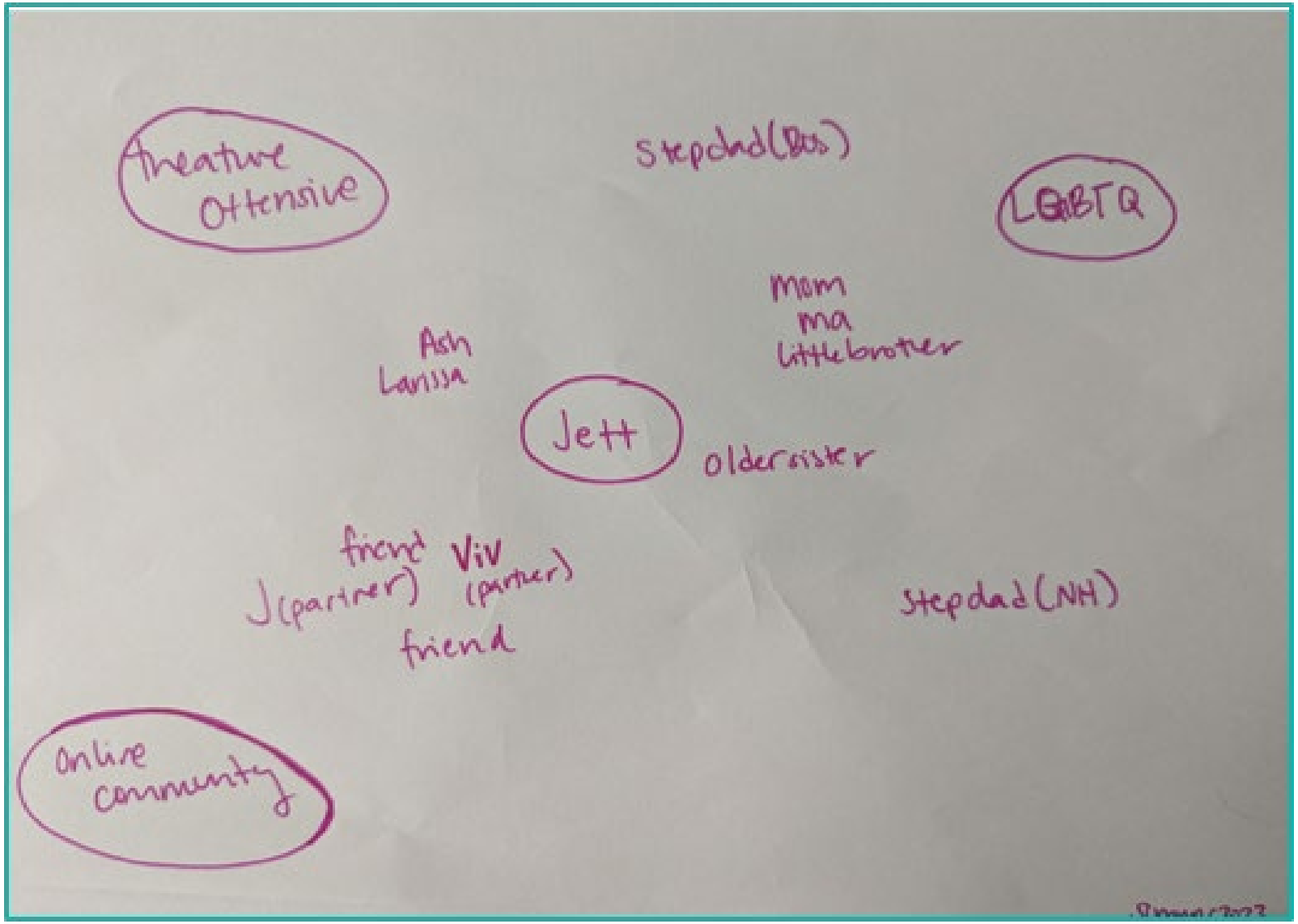

NH Family
Mom
Brother
Jett
(he/they)
Older Sister
School
Dec 2021


theatre offensive
stepdad(Bio)
LGBTQ
mom
ma
littlebrother
Ash
Larissa
Jett
olderssister
friend
J(partner)
Viv
(partner)
friend
stepdad(NH)
online community

ACTIVITY: Venn Diagram and Safety Map

Complete a safety map and Venn diagram for one of your clients, or a client with whom you're familiar. In groups of 2-3, take turns presenting your client. When not presenting, ask clarifying questions and provide ideas

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What stood out to you as you completed the Venn diagram and pod maps for your clients?

Take Aways & Commitments

1. Share something you're thinking about differently after today's discussion.
2. What is one actionable commitment you will make in your clinical work based on today's discussion?

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https://www.thehome.org/training-institute/