



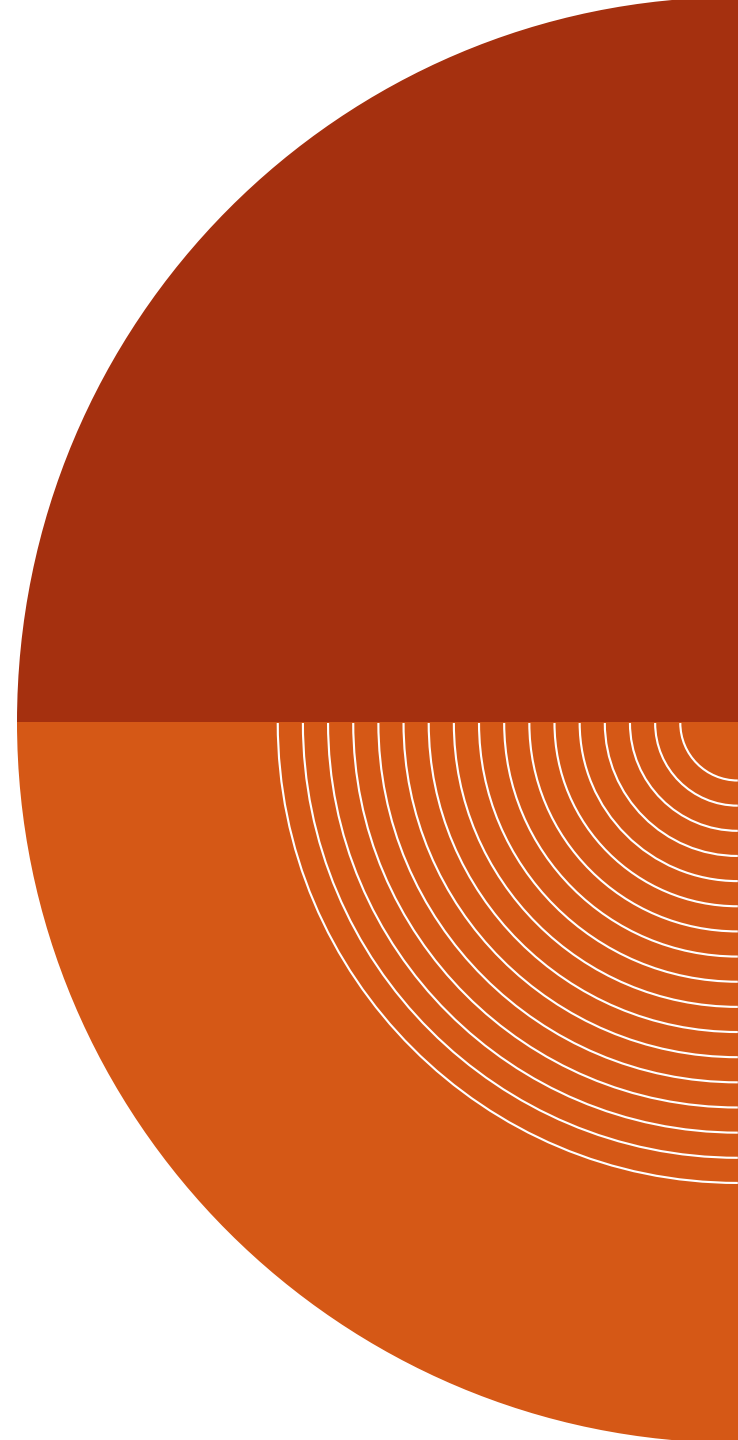
BRIDGING POLICY & PRACTICE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ANTI-BLACK RACISM

The Honourable Wanda Thomas Bernard
Phd, C.M., O.N.S.
Senator – Nova Scotia (East Preston)

AGENDA

- Positioning Intersectionality
- Creating Systemic Change
- Desmond Family Tragedy
- Creating Braver Spaces
- Q&A





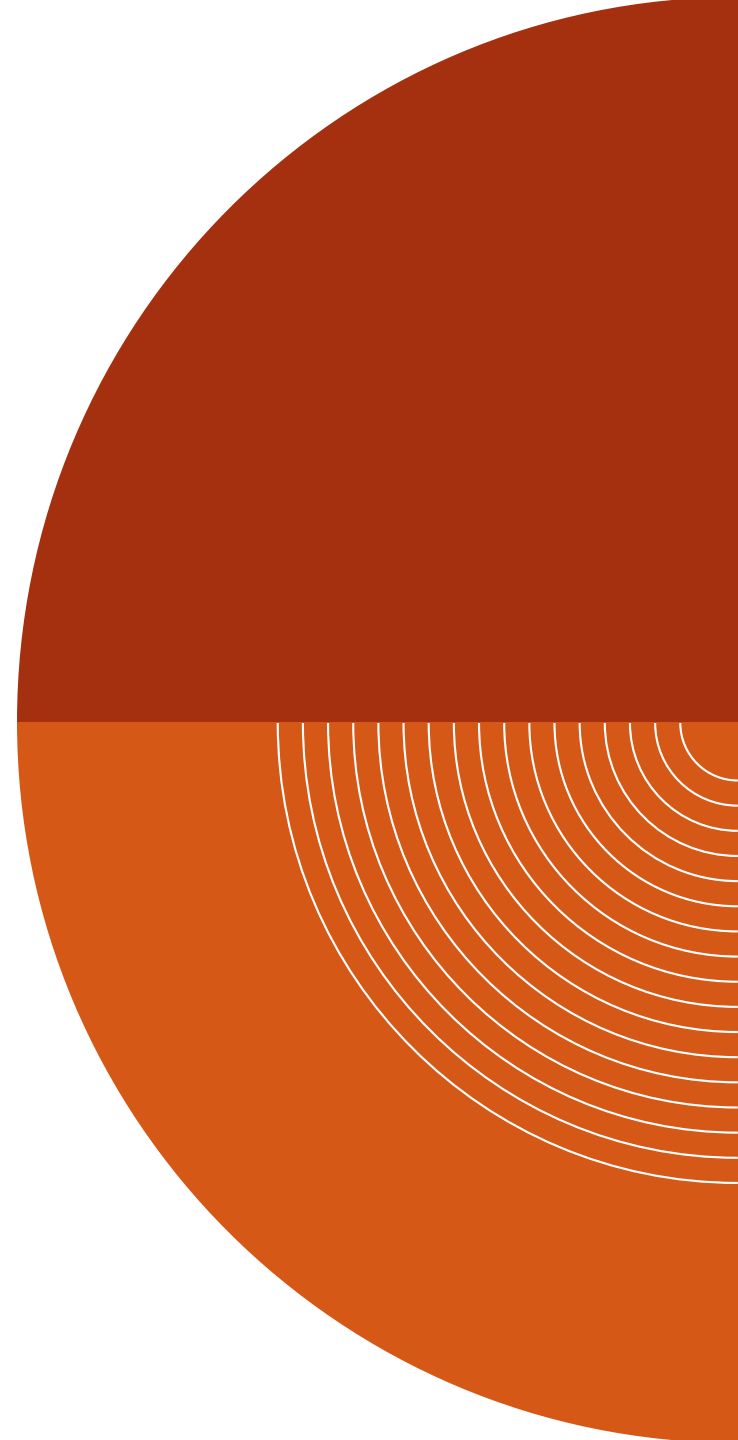
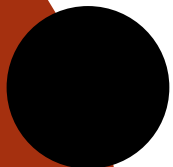
Early years in East Preston

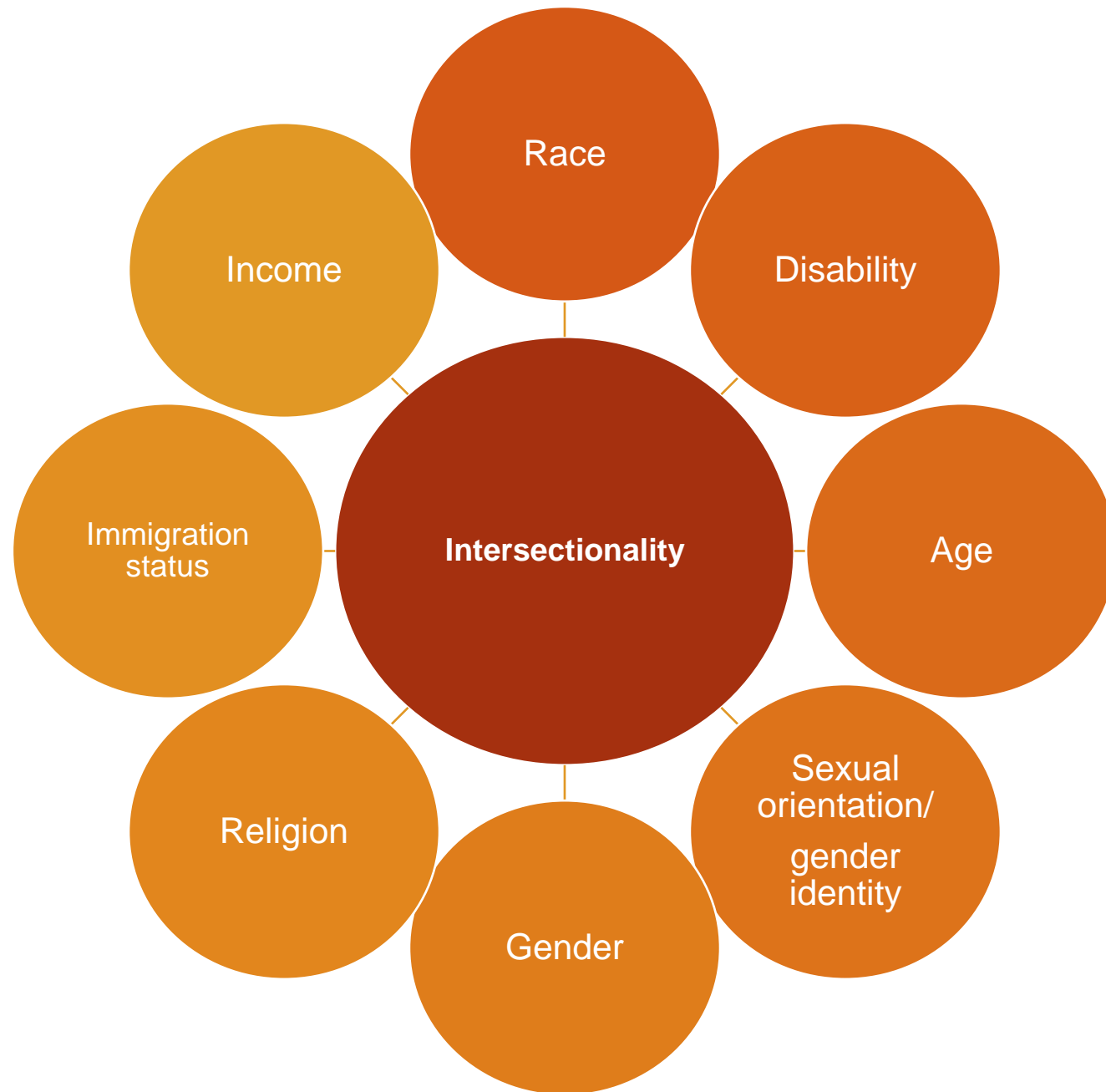


Today in the Senate

MY EXPERIENCE IN GBV SOCIAL WORK

- Advocate for families for 40+ years with ABSW
- Consultant on gender-based violence for initiatives including “*No More Secrets*” produced by Sylvia Hamilton
- Numerous publications on IPV including:
 - “*Breaking the Silence around Violence in African Nova Scotian Communities*”

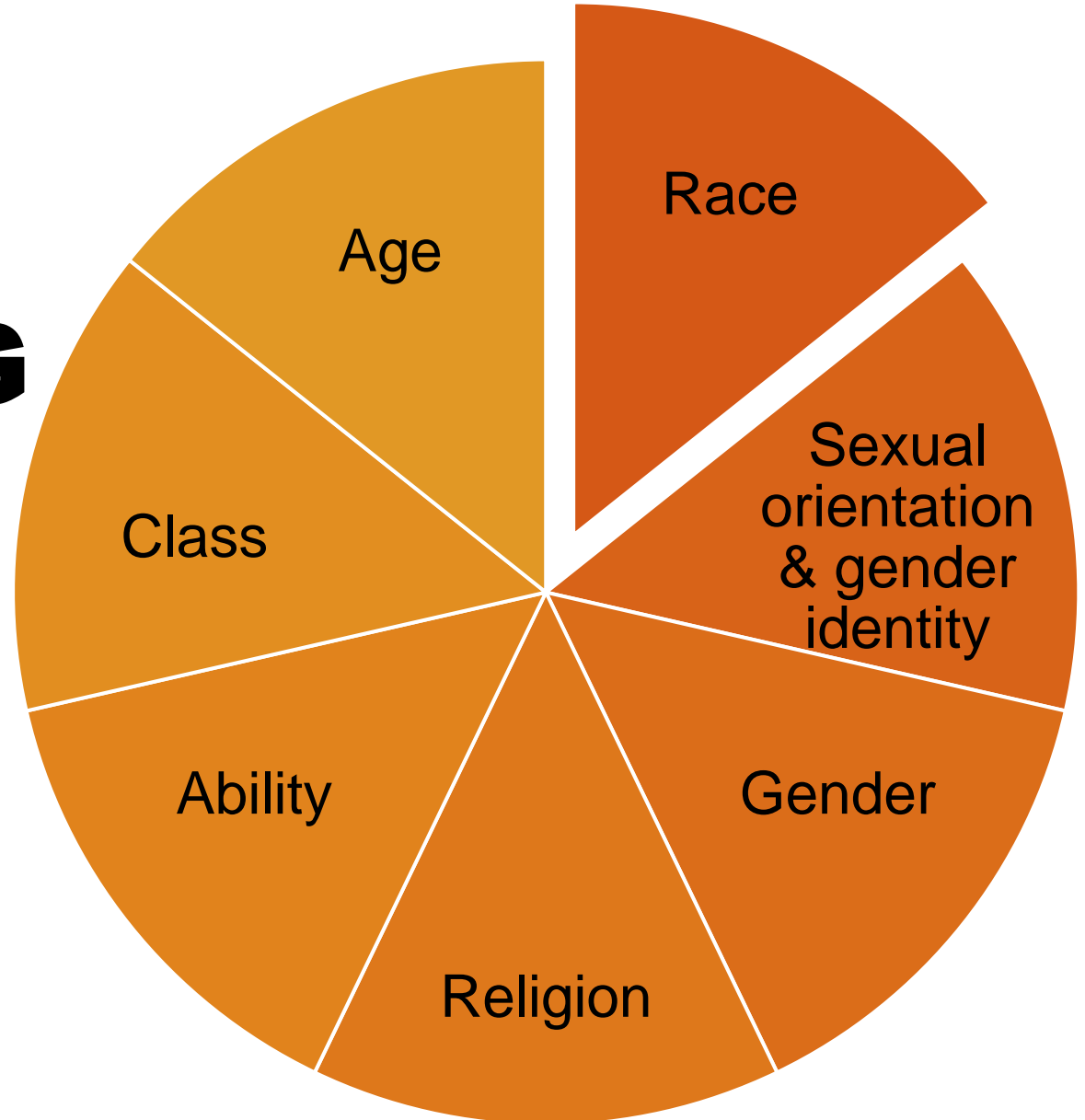






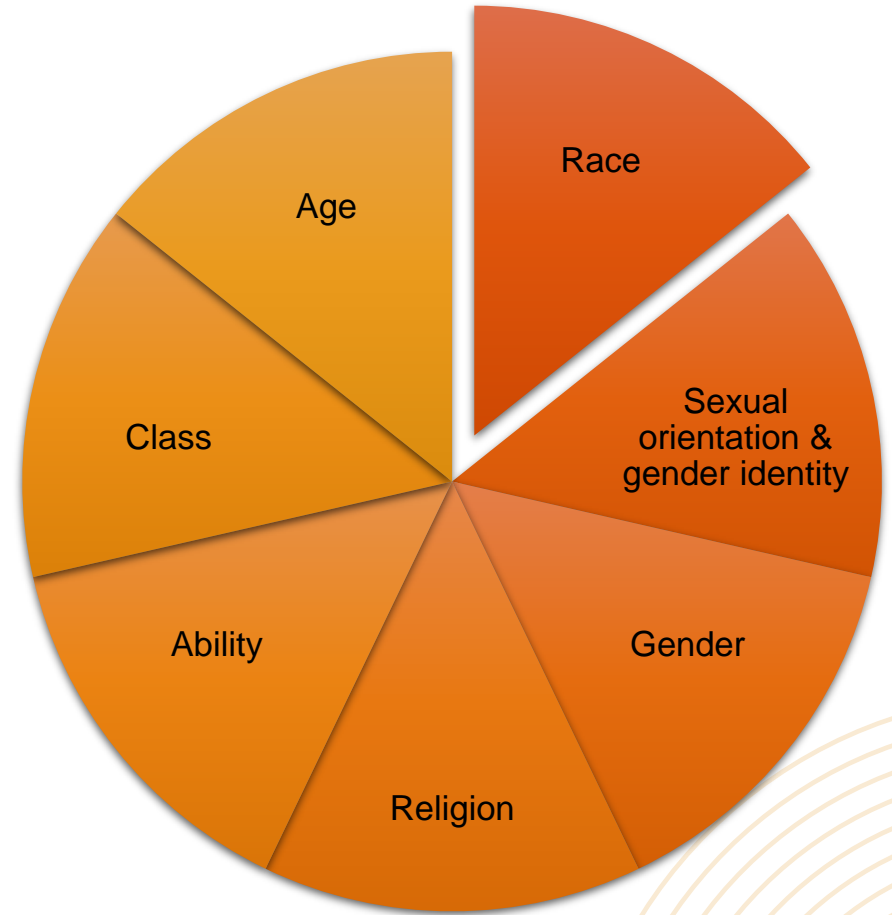
UNDERSTANDING YOUR SOCIAL LOCATION

- Power & Privilege
- Oppression & Marginalization
- Compounding structural barriers



DISCUSSION

Name some ways your social location impacts the ways in which you work in this space.



BRIDGING POLICY AND PRACTICE



Follow and critically analyze **political processes.**



Engage with and inquire about **agency policies.**



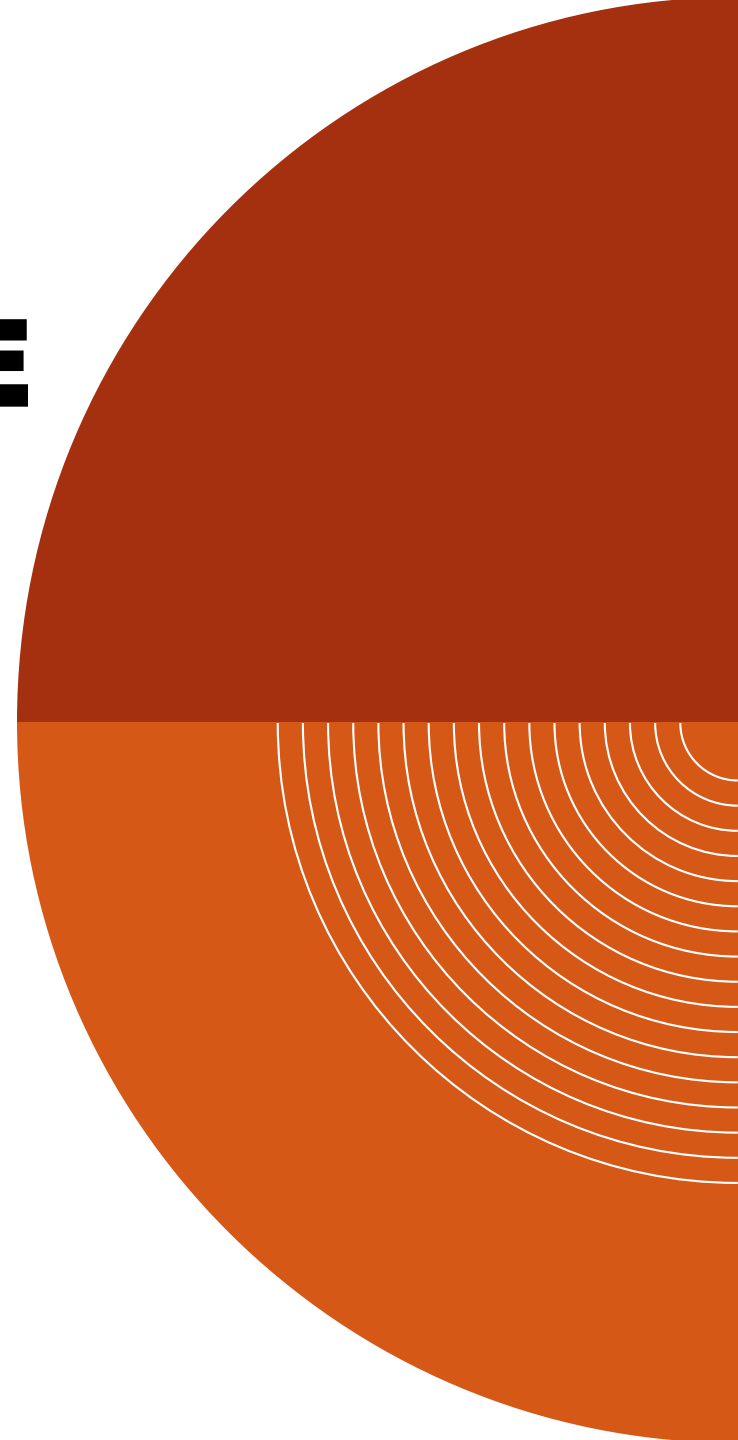
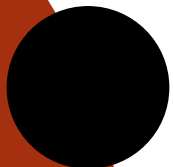
Practitioners become the bridge. Begin by seeing practice and policy as interconnected aspects of your work.

REPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE DEATHS OF THE DESMOND FAMILY MEMBERS



FACTORS AT PLAY: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- Were Shanna, Brenda and Aaliyah able to access culturally responsive family resources leading up to their death?
- Were the professionals involved able to accurately assess risk of family violence accurately, in a culturally relevant way?
- Desmond's access to firearms despite risk factors



THE INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN



SHANNA DESMOND

Age 31



AALIYAH DESMOND

Age 10

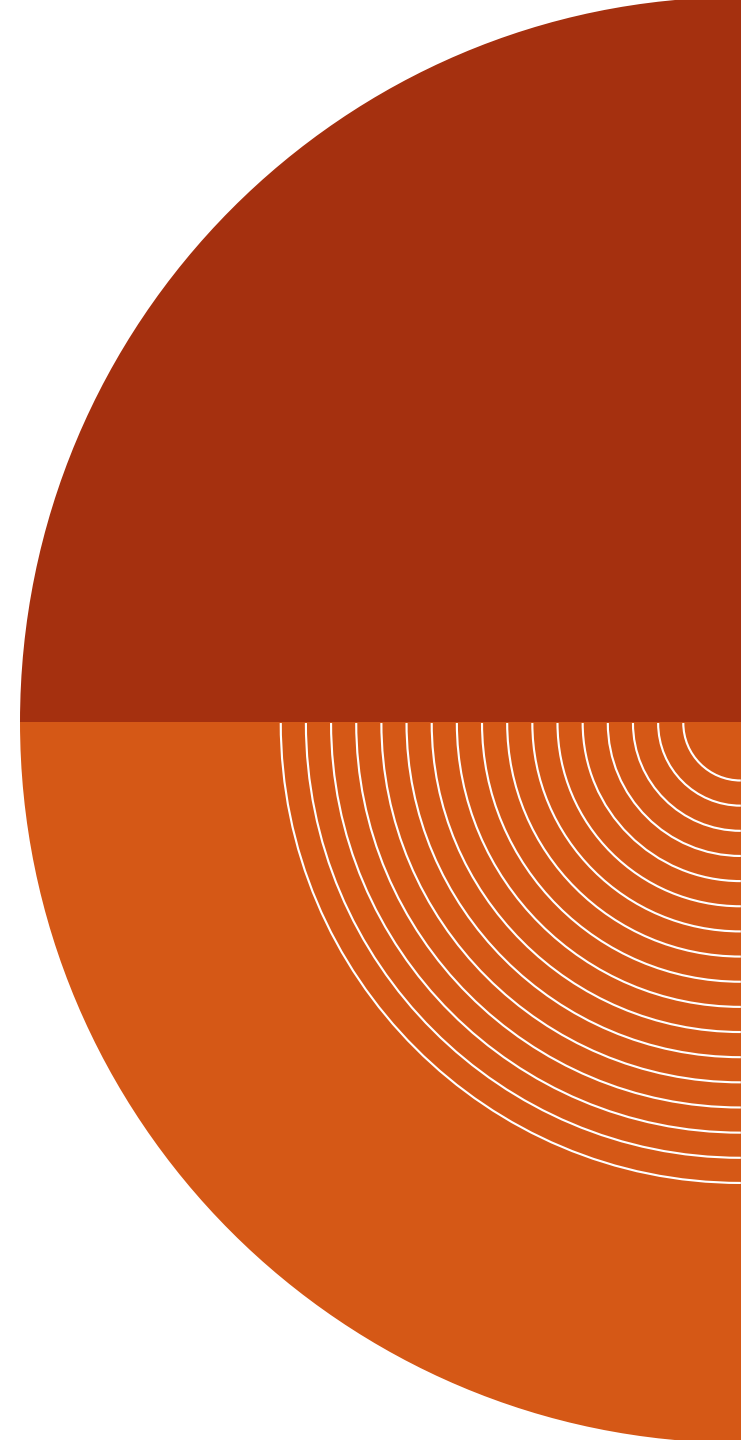
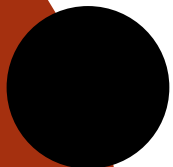


BRENDA DESMOND

Age 52

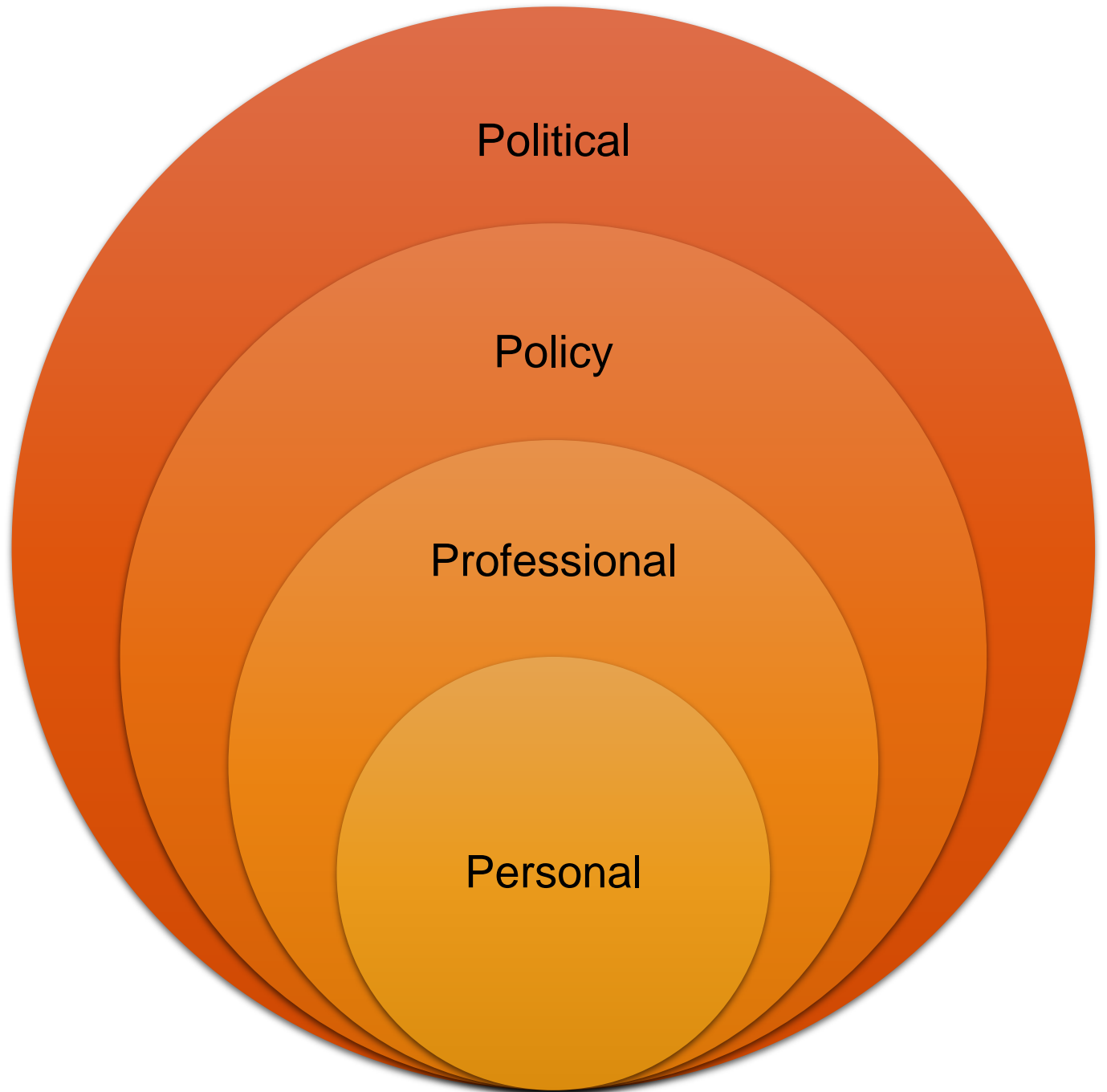
FACTORS AT PLAY: ANTI-BLACK RACISM

- Impact of systemic ABR on mental health
- Barriers to accessing health and mental health services for Black Canadians
- How did an African Nova Scotian veteran who sought out help from 2011-2017 for PTSD “fall through the cracks” ?
 - Are they cracks, or is it the whole system?
 - How do I make changes in my workplace?





IDENTIFYING THE LEVELS ON WHICH CHANGE CAN EXIST





Political

- Political will to see this as a symptom of a systemic issue, not just a once-off tragedy
- Jurisdictions committing to change (federal/provincial/municipal)

Policy

- VAC policies on addressing racism within the forces
- Services offered to Black Veterans
- Policies for agencies on assessing and reporting domestic violence

Professional

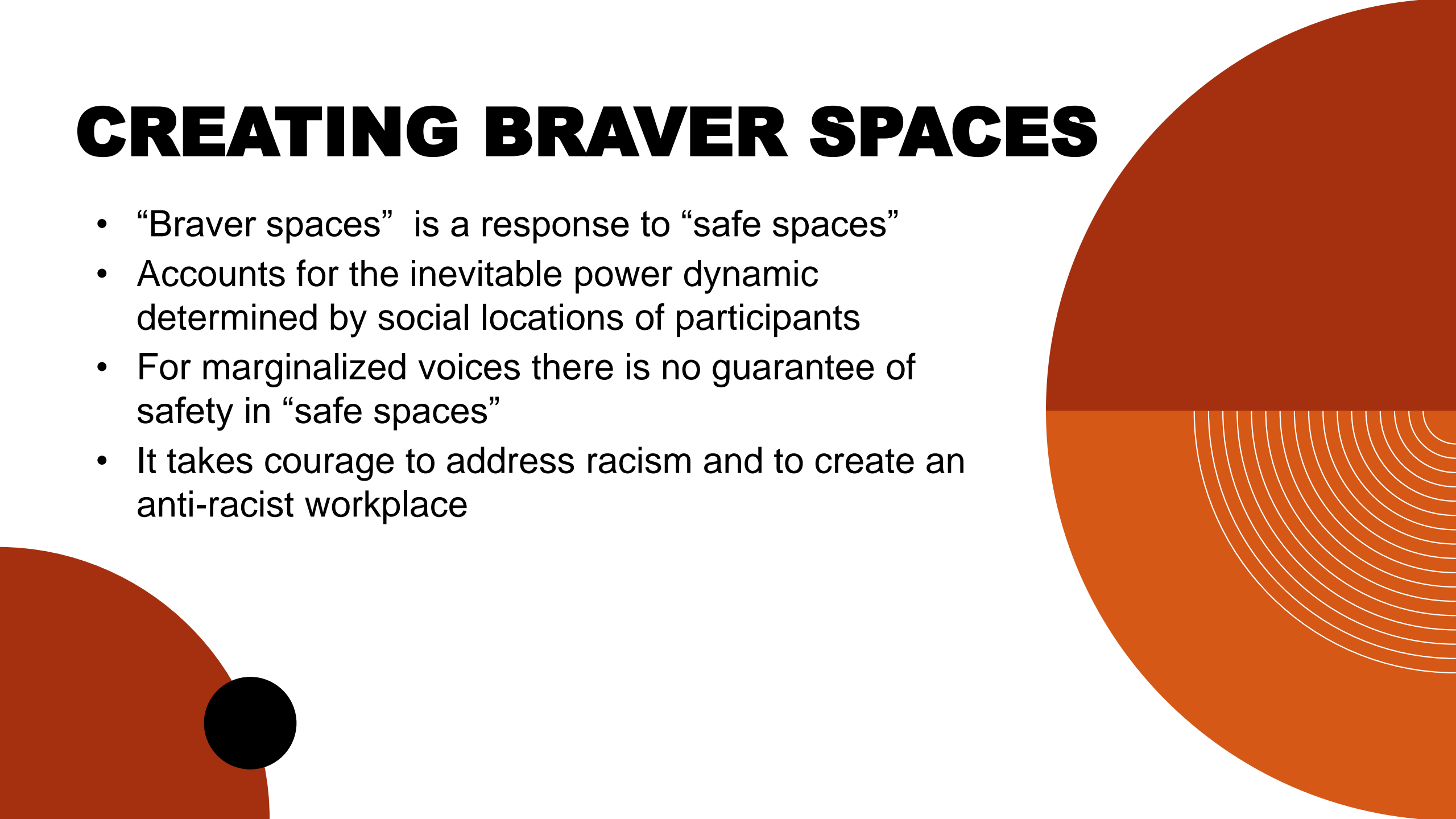
- Mental Health agencies and professionals keeping up to date on suicide and homicide risk assessment and interventions
- DV and MH services prioritizing accessibility to services for ANS

Personal

- How do YOU see this tragedy? What are your biases and assumptions? How has your perspective been shaped by media?
- Do you see this as a systemic issue or an individual failure?

CREATING BRAVER SPACES

- “Braver spaces” is a response to “safe spaces”
- Accounts for the inevitable power dynamic determined by social locations of participants
- For marginalized voices there is no guarantee of safety in “safe spaces”
- It takes courage to address racism and to create an anti-racist workplace



BE BRAVE AND ASK...

“How do race and racism play a factor in this conversation?”

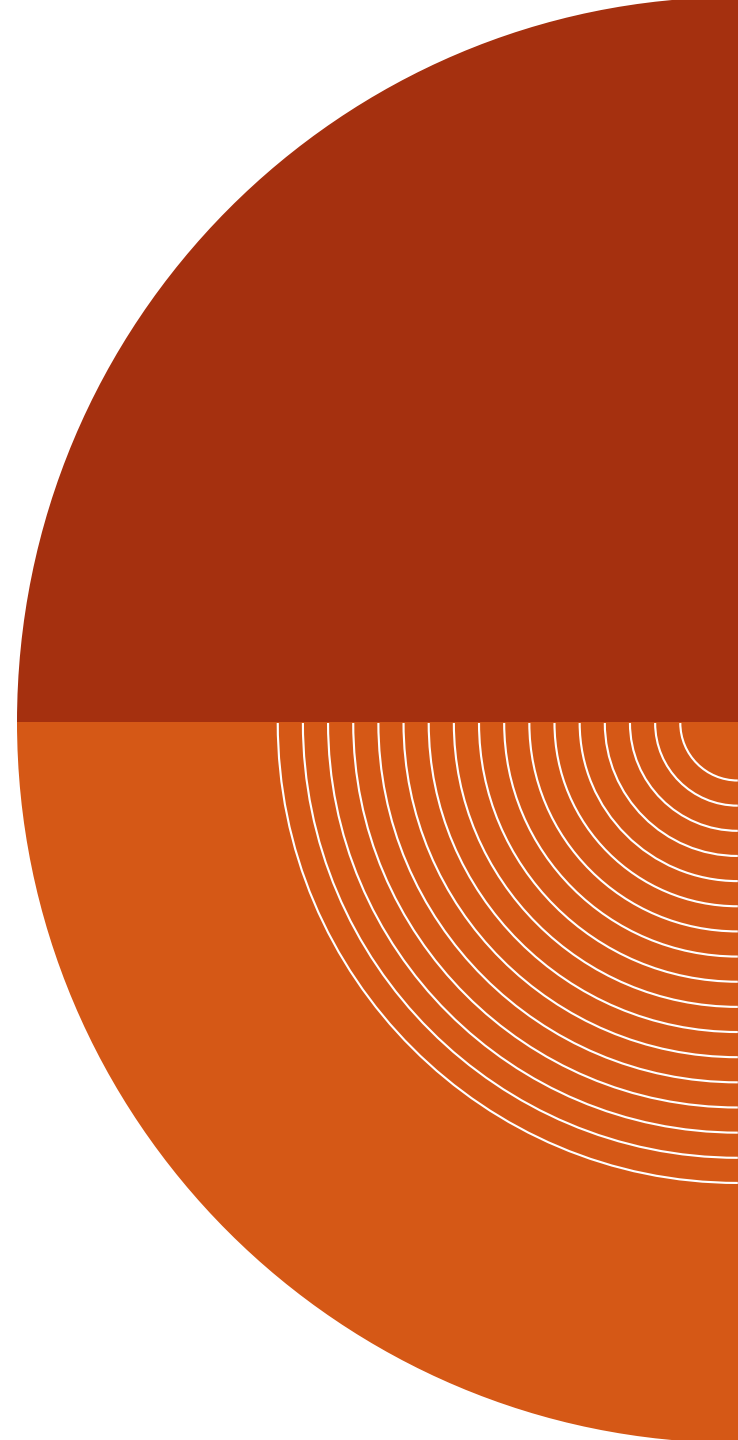
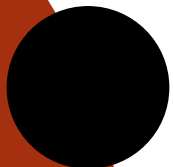
“What is my role in addressing the gender-based violence during this point in Canadian History?”

“How do I make change in my community?”

The kind of change needed by Aaliyah, Shanna, Brenda and Lionel Desmond.

DISCUSSION

Share a time you had to be brave during a difficult situation that had a positive or surprising outcome.



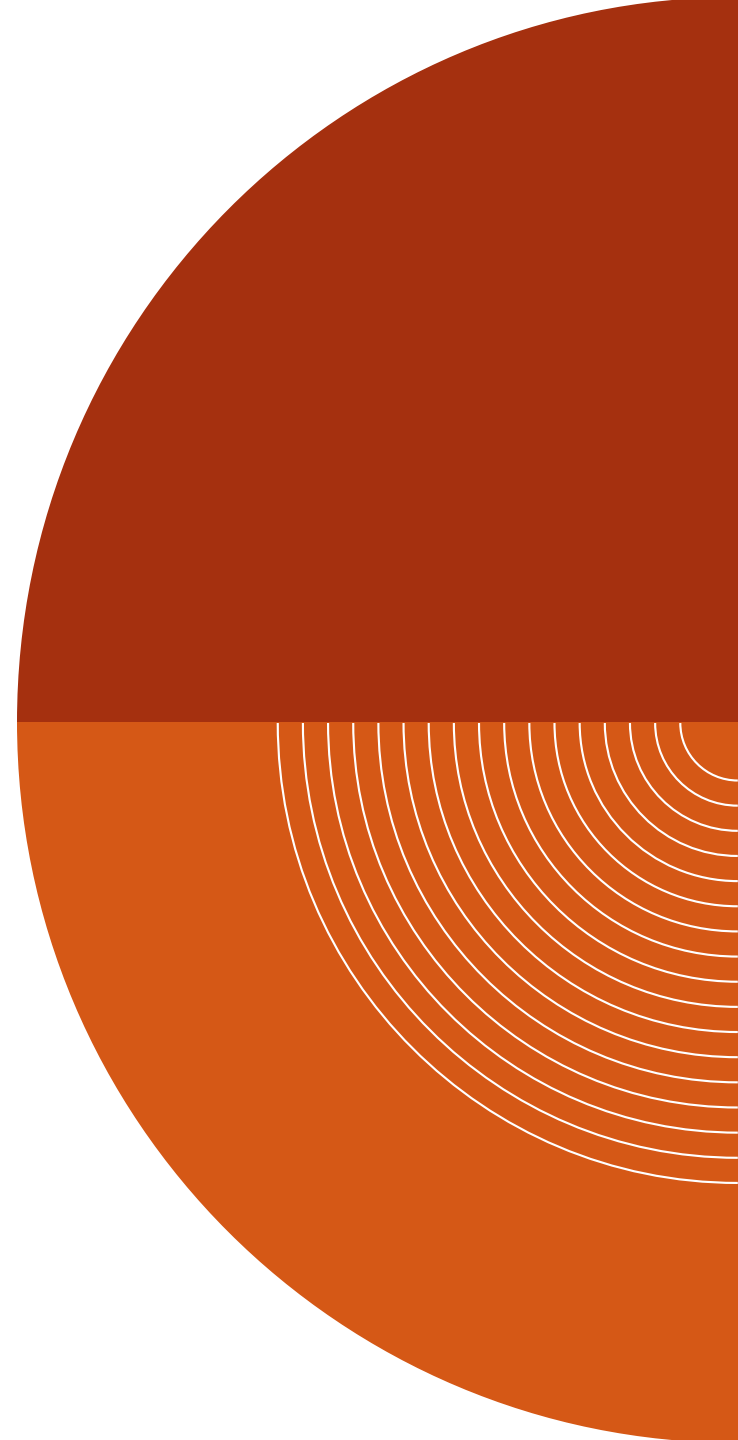
CALLS TO ACTION

- Change is an individual and collective responsibility. ***We all have a role.***
- Make the Shifts:

Shift your mindset to be anti-racist.

Shift your workplace to be a braver space.

- Find ways to build bridges between policy and practice in your work



QUESTIONS

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