

Historical Trauma

Michele Andrasik, PhD, EdM



Medical science and the Black body

THE MIDDLE PASSAGE

Surgeons preserved “human cargo” for maximum profit

SLAVE TRADE

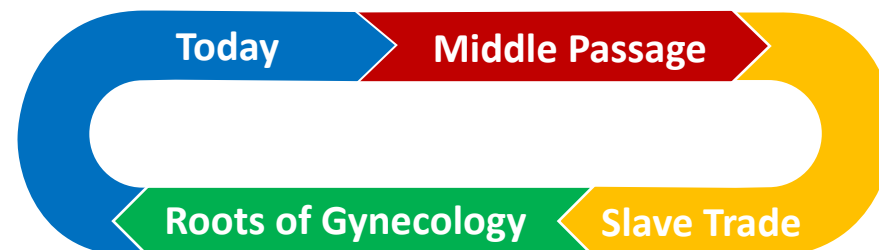
- Physicians inspected bodies of enslaved
- Key professional competency = determining market value of Black bodies
- Bodies as teaching materials
- Black women as bearers of capital of enslavers

ROOTS OF GYNECOLOGY

- Pioneering surgical techniques developed on bodies of enslaved women who were experimented on
- Physicians blamed enslaved mothers and midwives for infant mortality
- Forced sterilization

TODAY

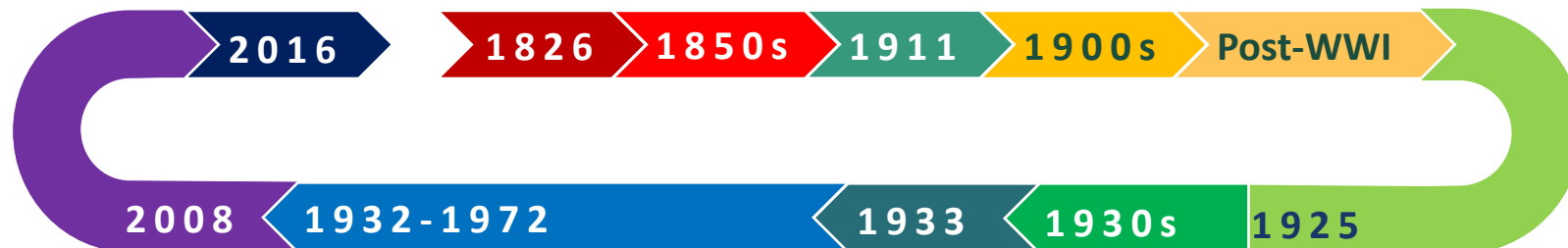
- Pregnancy-related mortality 2-4x higher among Black women
- Black mothers’ self-reports of pain overlooked and minimized
- Black women “make themselves” prone to illness



Bodies marked as different because of race

The Paradox Begins: Justifying a system of inhumane forced labor

White weakness as strength/purported "stamina and invulnerability" of workers of African Descent as evidence of inferiority



Historical trauma

- A set of events perpetrated on a group of people who share a specific group identity with genocidal or ethnocidal intent
- Often result in annihilation or disruption of traditional ways of life, culture, and/or identity
- Contributes to sustained cultural disruption and community destruction



Women in the US: A history of subjugation and abuse

Compelled to obedience to spouses or "master-the law"

Deplorable working conditions

Limited employment options

Denied education

Laws of divorce strip power

"Civily dead" if married

Viewed as property

No voting rights

Role of Women

- Women's rights regarding legal property were limited.
- A woman might have had fiefs in her dowry. However, when she married, her husband gained control over her dowry. In most cases a woman regained control of the property in her dowry if her husband died.
- Women mainly performed household tasks such as cooking, baking bread, sewing, weaving, and spinning.
- Occasionally they also hunted for food and fought in battles, learning to use weapons to defend their homes and castles.

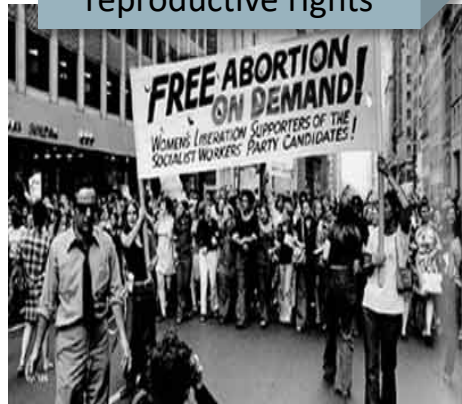
Limited roles – housework & caretaker

Women's rights movement = white & cisgender

Lack of access to leadership positions

Invisibility

Limited or no reproductive rights



Attacks on reproductive health

Murder (common among trans women)

Lower pay

Widespread gender-based violence & sexual assault

Hate crimes

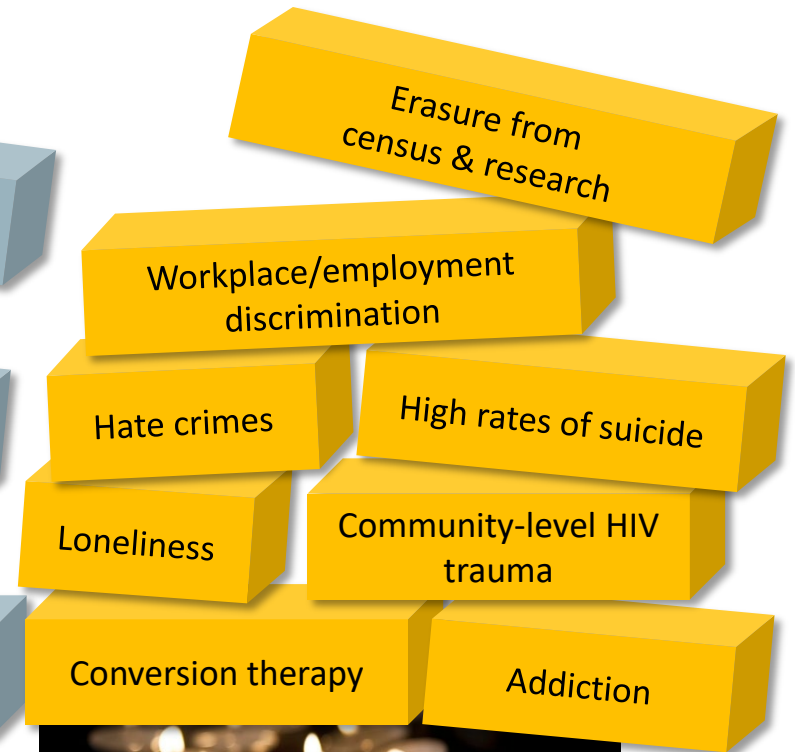
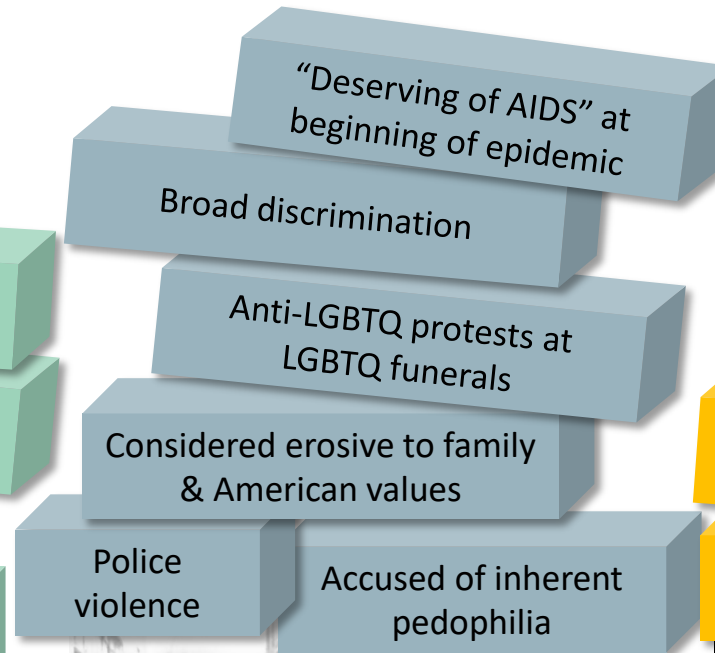
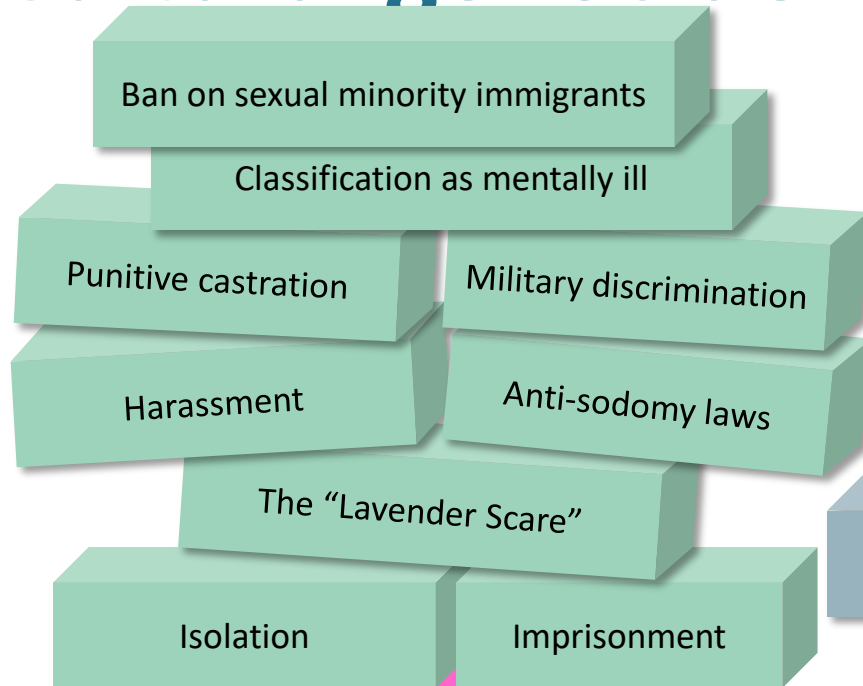


PROPERTY ERA

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ERA

CURRENT DAY

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & queer: Cultural genocide



HaRT³S

PRE-STONEWALL ERA

STONEWALL ERA

CURRENT
DAY

African Americans: Ethnocultural genocide

Widespread sexual assault & rape of Black people

Prohibition of native language, customs & traditions

Systematic abuse

Denial of education

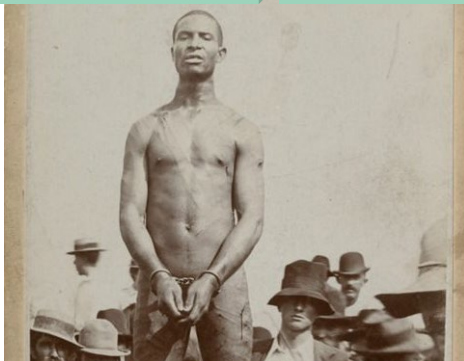
Sold as property

Forced breeding

Shackled, stored & shipped in inhumane conditions

Stolen from lands

Enslaved (1619-1865)



SLAVERY ERA

Denial of VA & other benefits

Police violence

Redlining

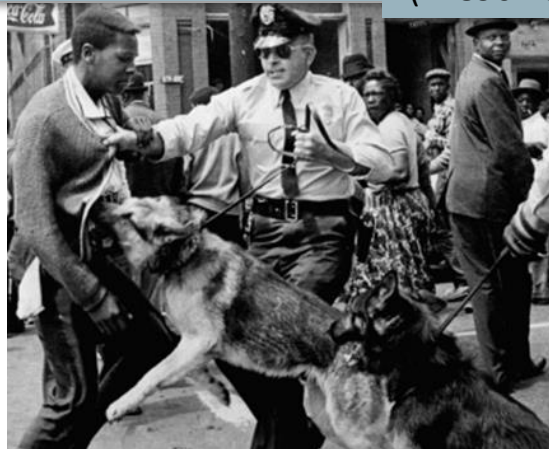
Convict leasing system

Sharecropping

Abolition of slavery replaced w/ restrictive Black codes

Mass public lynching (late 1880s-1920s)

Jim Crow (~1890-1965)



JIM CROW ERA:
SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

Negative stereotypes & microaggressions

Health disparities

Mass incarceration

Police violence

Highest homicide rates



CURRENT DAY



HaRT3S

American Indian & Alaska Native: Ethnic & cultural genocide

Tradition of extermination

Pandemics from introduction of new disease

Community massacres

Genocidal policies

Stolen land

Prohibition of spiritual & cultural practices

Forced relocation & marches

Colonization

Broken treaties

Poor health

Negative stereotypes & microaggressions

Forced removal of children (1879-1935+)

Mandatory imprisonment of parents who refused

Rampant sexual & physical abuse of children

"Kill the Indian, Save the Man" policy

Lack of concern about "missing" women

Destruction of natural resources on native lands

Suicide epidemic

Underfunding of Indian health services

Child abuse & neglect

Highest rates of violence & victimization

Interpersonal violence

Police violence



THE WHITE MAN ARRIVES

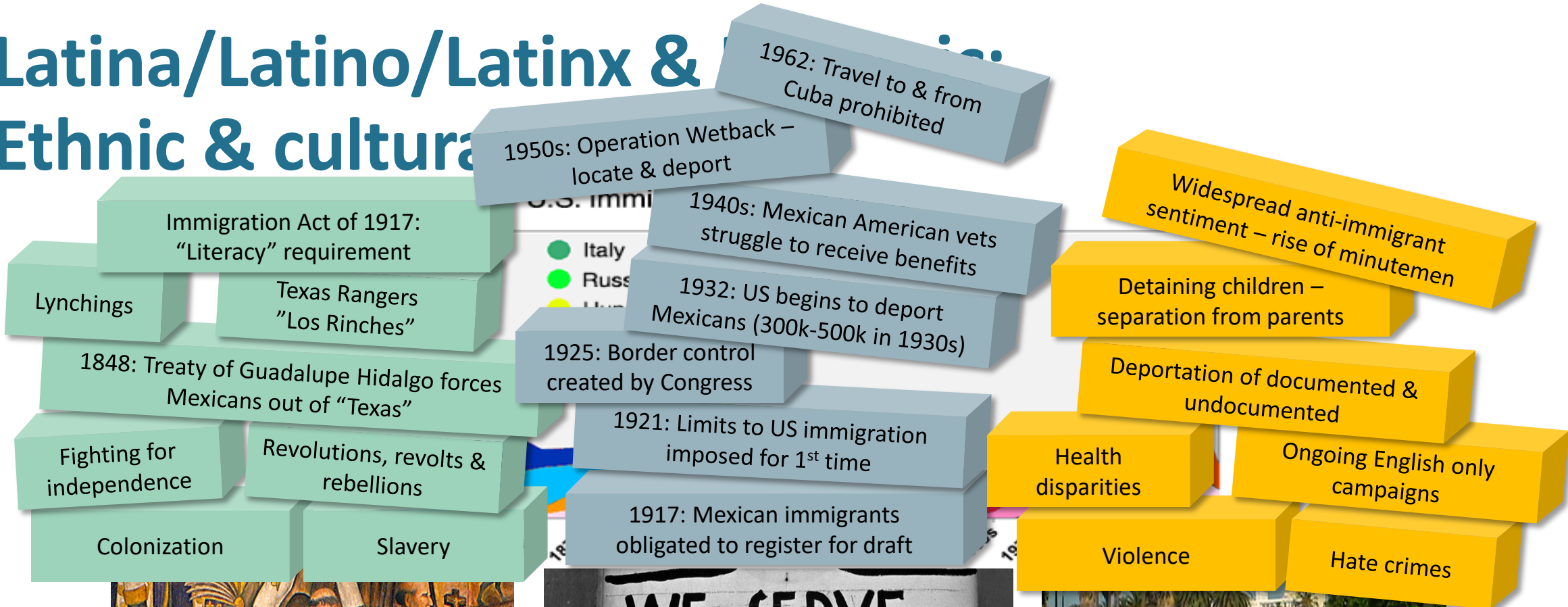


NOT ALLOWED TO BE "INDIAN"



CURRENT DAY

Latina/Latino/Latinx & Ethnic & cultural



COLONIZATION



NO SPANISH HERE



CURRENT DAY

Asian/Pacific Islander: Ethnic & cultural genocide

Deplorable working conditions
 Denied right to own property
 Denied citizenship – “US nationals”
 Predatory taxes
 Women fetishized, men emasculated
 Imported as laborers
 Family not allowed
 Yellow Peril
 Banned from schools

Normative anti-immigration laws
 Redlining & restricted to impoverished areas “China towns”
 Territories denied representation & citizenship
 Labor movement met w/ violence
 Denial of VA benefits
 Japanese internment camps

Lack of disaggregated data = silencing
 Filipinos in underpaid/long hour service industry jobs
 Underrepresentation
 Denial of ethnic studies programs at universities
 Gentrification
 Invisibility
 Stereotypes



LABORERS NOT CITIZENS



NATIONAL THREAT



CURRENT DAY



The impact of historical trauma

Trauma of these events is “embodied” or **held personally and passed down over generations** (Walters et al, 2011)

May Impair Ability to cope effectively with stressors

When high levels of stress are experienced in day-to-day life, a **heightened stress vulnerability** may result in PTSD or other related symptoms of trauma (Kellerman, 2001)

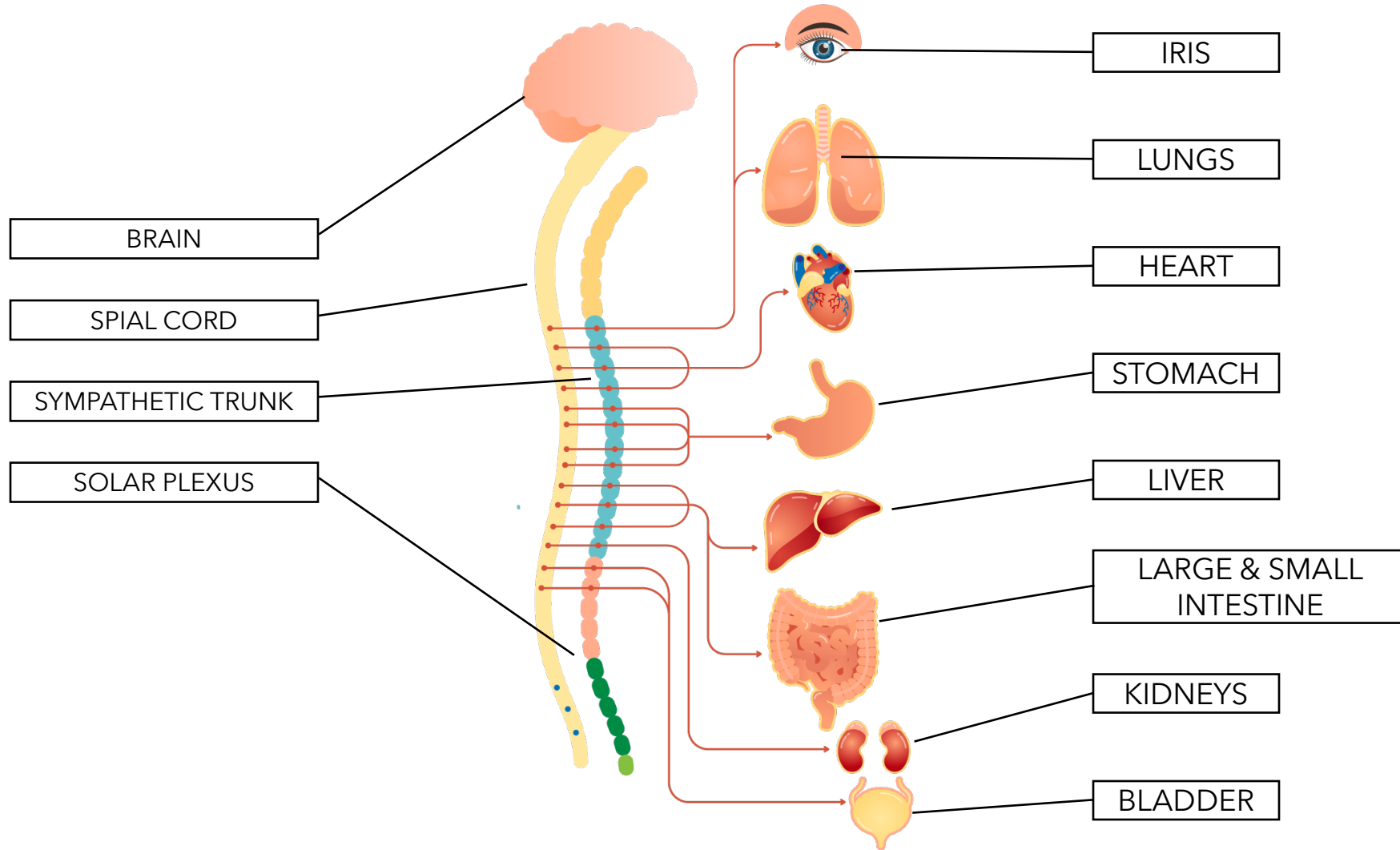
Stressful environmental conditions can leave an **imprint or “mark” on epigenome** (cellular material) (Serpeloni et al, 2017; Ryan et al, 2017)

Psychological and nutritional stress during pregnancy can lead to biological changes **predisposing children to negative health outcomes**

Biological and psychological expressions of historical trauma are **likely contributors to current health disparities**

Impacts the individual, the family, and the community

THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM





Questions?

Discussion

Thank you

