

# Vulnerability: Practical implications for professionals in the social care field

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Why concern ourselves with exploring this concept of vulnerability?

VULNERABILITY IS  
THE BIRTHPLACE OF  
INNOVATION,  
CREATIVITY AND  
CHANGE.

~ Brene Brown





**Vulnerability**  
Just Ahead



		<b>Capacity to cope and/or advance</b>	
		HIGH	LOW
<b>Sensitivity or harm/hazard exposure</b>	HIGH	Vulnerable/insecure	High vulnerability/insecurity
	LOW	Not vulnerable/insecure	Vulnerable/Insecure

Sumner and Mallett (2013)

# Contextualising vulnerability

- Underlying conditions that brought about hazard
- Wider structural conditions within the system (Material Dimension)
- Ability of the individual/family and or community to cope with the hazard
- Has the hazard been socially constructed?

# Aligning with United Nations criteria

- **Physical factors**, which describe the exposure of vulnerable elements within a region;
- **Economic factors**, which describe the economic resources of individuals, populations groups, and communities;
- **Social factors**, which describe non-economic factors that determine the well-being of individuals, populations groups, and communities, such as the level of education, security, access to basic human rights, and good governance; and
- **Environmental factors**, which describe the state of the environment within a region. All of these factors describe properties of the vulnerable system or community rather than of the external stressors.

# How do you see the world as a professional?

Is our own perspective (lens) okay?

Connelly & Harms (2013) suggest it is not





# Relational Lens

Focusing on how people and issues  
relate to one another

‘is it just a plaster on a wound’?

# Social Justice Lens

Supporting rights and aspirations of  
people and communities

Advocating for change to systems  
New innovative ways of solving issues

# Reflective Lens

Questioning

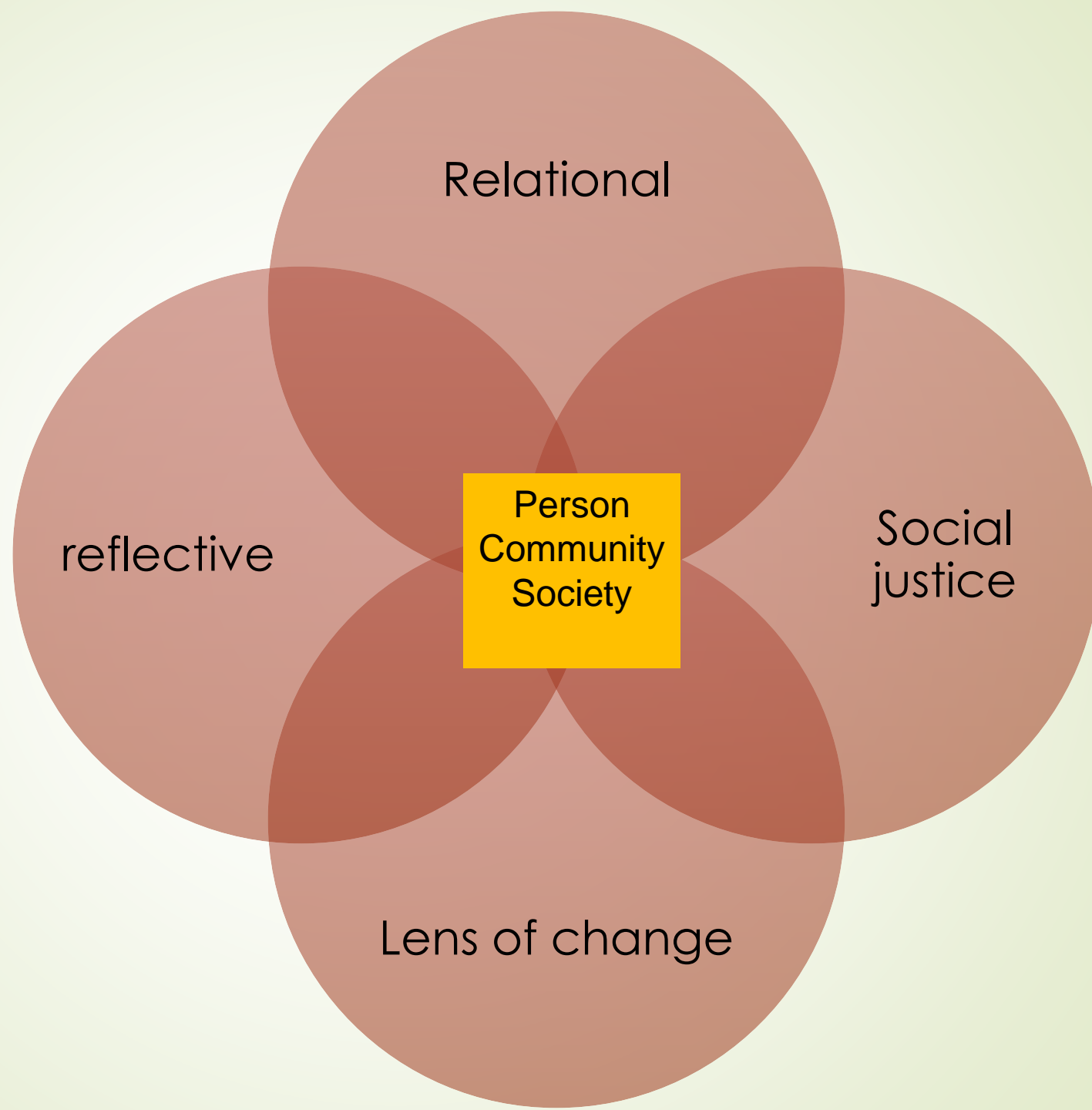
Not defensive of  
own/current status

# Lens of change

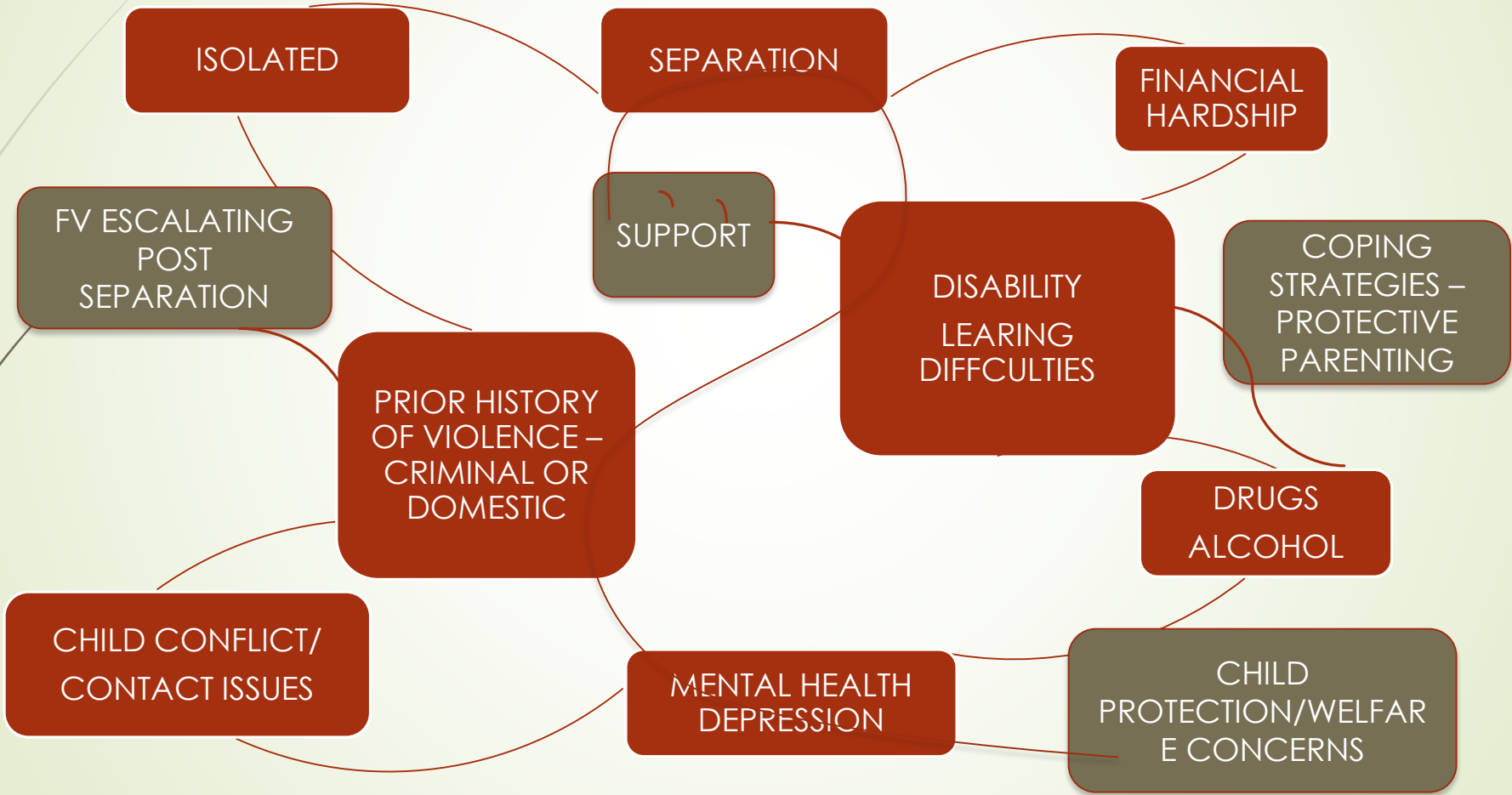
Looking at issues through a  
systems approach

Strengths based approach

Social Constructivism



# Exploring family violence and vulnerability



# What does it mean for you as a professional?

Wellard (2008)

Being open to not knowing

Being open to being wrong and venturing ones views, perceptions


Put oneself in and learn from situations in which you feel uncomfortable/foreign

Allow your knowledge of issues like oppression, exclusion to become part of your emotional states and that assist you to interpret the world – allow it to affect you

Be open to altering not just your beliefs but your actions.



# Challenges and Strategies for a professional in this space

- What strategies can you as a professional implement or intend to implement to meet challenges of yourself, people and communities in embracing vulnerability?
  - How can we as part of a global collective work together?
- 




# How can we create change?

I ALONE  
CANNOT CHANGE THE WORLD  
BUT I CAN CAST A  
STONE  
*ACROSS the water to create*  
MANY RIPPLES  
MOTHER TERESA

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CREATE SOCIAL CHANGE?

A community of like-minded people that grows over time, builds social capital, and advocates for change through collective action.





"It's only when we embrace our vulnerability  
that we're able to reach our potential."

