PWN BLOCK PARTY

History and Approaches to Social Change

Today's session is about...

- Moments in Organizing History (1940's-1970's)

- Empowerment Spectrum & Forms of Social Change

Moments In History

Struggles for Social Justice

Moments In History
A Question of Loyalty in
Time of War:
No-No Boys Stand Up for
Justice
(1940's)

Watch these video clips:
Video Clip #1
Video Clip #2

Read the case study.

Explore these questions:
1. What are the problems?

2. How do they change it?

3. What was won?

Moments In History
The Power of Collective
Solidarity:
Montgomery Bus
Boycott
(1955)

Watch these video clips:
Video Clip #1
Video Clip #2

Read the case study.

Explore these questions:
1.   What are the problems?

2.   How do they change it?

3.   What was won?

Moments In History
The National Welfare Rights
Organization (NWRO)
"Mother Power & Demands
for a Minimum Standard!"
(1960's-70's)

Watch this video clip:
Video Clip #1

Read the case study.

Explore these questions:
1. What are the problems?

2. How do they change it?

3. What was won?
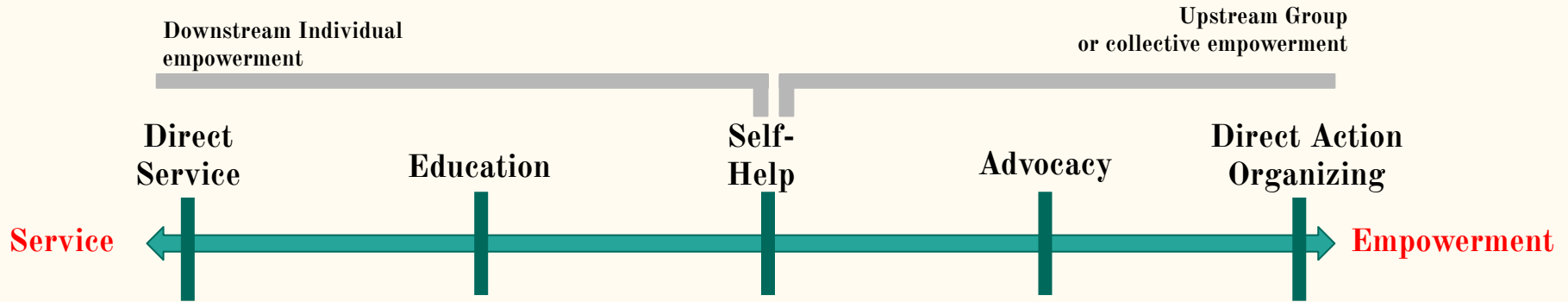
How are these moments of history connected?

Sought institutional/systemic change
Intersectional analysis
Response to historical oppression
(race/class/ethnicity)
Solidarity & collective action
Clear demands & a clear target
Most affected at the center
Built a base of power

Empowerment

Refers to [actions taken] **to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination** in people, and in communities in order **to enable them to represent their interests** in a responsible and self-determined way, **acting on their own authority.**

Spectrum of Social Change Approaches: Illustrating differences using Unaffordable Housing as an example

Downstream Individual empowerment

Upstream Group or collective empowerment

Direct Service — Education — Self-Help — Advocacy — Direct Action Organizing

Service ← → Empowerment

Direct service: A service organization could provide a shelter, or build subsidized housing, make referrals, or help people apply for public assistance. All of these services are done by staff for clients.

Self-help: People who need housing could get together to provide some of the above.

Education: An education organization might study the loss of affordable housing, the rising foreclosure rate or the role of real estate development and publish its findings. A different type of education organization might prepare materials on how to read a lease.

Advocacy: An organization might advocate for people who need housing by giving testimony about the problem to a committee of Congress, or a City Council. The people who need the housing probably won't know that the advocacy group is doing this. The definition of advocacy only requires that you have a good idea, no necessarily a large base of support.

Direct Action: The people who need affordable housing organize. They agree on a solution that meets their needs. With the power of numbers, they pressure electeds and officials to meet their demands. The people most directly affected take action to solve it.

Where on the spectrum would these organizations be placed?

Organization A:
Helps folks receiving General Assistance from the County Social Services with problems regarding their eligibility and checks. They also work with folks receiving General Assistance to address issues related to General Assistance policy and legislation.

Organization B:
Provides employment training to people with mental health problems. As part of the program, they are placed in groups and the members talk about their job training experience as well as the course of their job-search process.

Organization C:
Engages members around issues the residents and staff feel are important for the community. Most recently they organized residents to support Organization "C"'s application to develop 40 units of affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Where on the spectrum would these organizations be placed?

Organization A:
Helps folks receiving General Assistance from the County Social Services with problems regarding their eligibility and checks. They also work with folks receiving General Assistance to address issues related to General Assistance policy and legislation. **Organization A provides a direct service to people receiving General Assistance. They engage in advocacy to address issues as needed.**
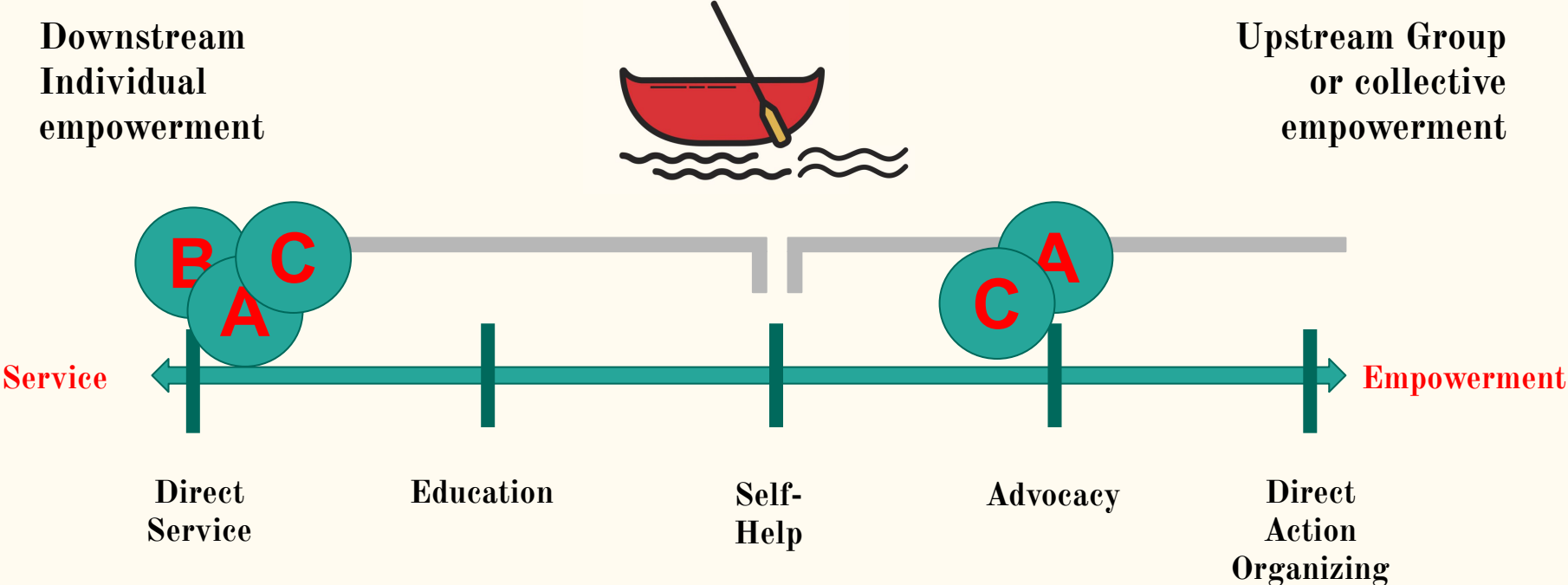
Organization B:
Provides employment training to people with mental health problems. As part of the program, they are placed in groups and the members talk about their job training experience as well as the course of their job-search process. **Organization B provides a direct service to people with mental health problems.**

Organization C:
Engages members around issues the residents and staff feel are important for the community. Most recently they organized residents to support Organization "C"'s application to develop 40 units of affordable housing in the neighborhood. **Organization C is somewhere between direct service and advocacy. They engage community to support their goals, which also meet some of people's needs, although not the larger issue.**

POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK

Spectrum of Social Change Approaches

Downstream
Individual
empowerment

Upstream Group
or collective
empowerment

B **C**
A

C **A**

Service

Empowerment

Direct
Service

Education

Self-
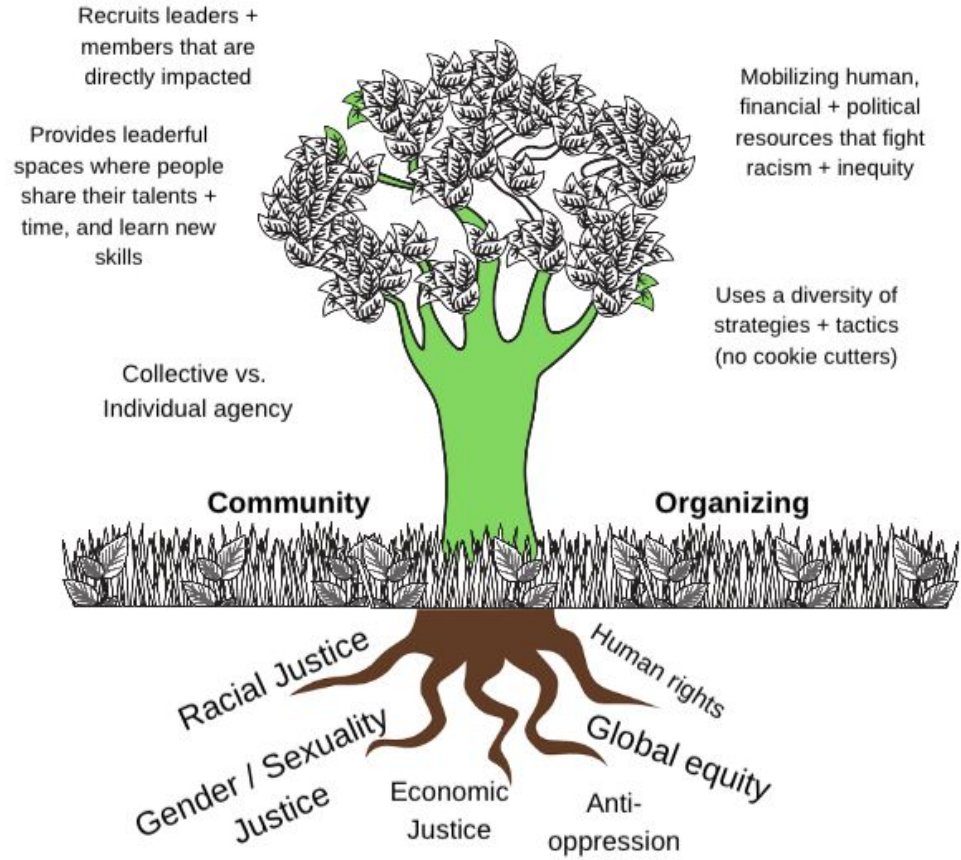Help

Advocacy

Direct
Action
Organizing

Community organizing is the practice of building a base of people in order to empower one's community to achieve social change through collective power.

How do we do this?

We organize to build power through campaigns that promote institutional change.

Institutional change happens when a public or private institution changes its POLICIES, PROCEDURES and/or PRACTICES in response to a community's demands.

APPROACH versus METHOD

Community organizing is a METHODS-based practice.
Each approach on the spectrum has its own set of practices.
Organizing methods can inform these approaches.

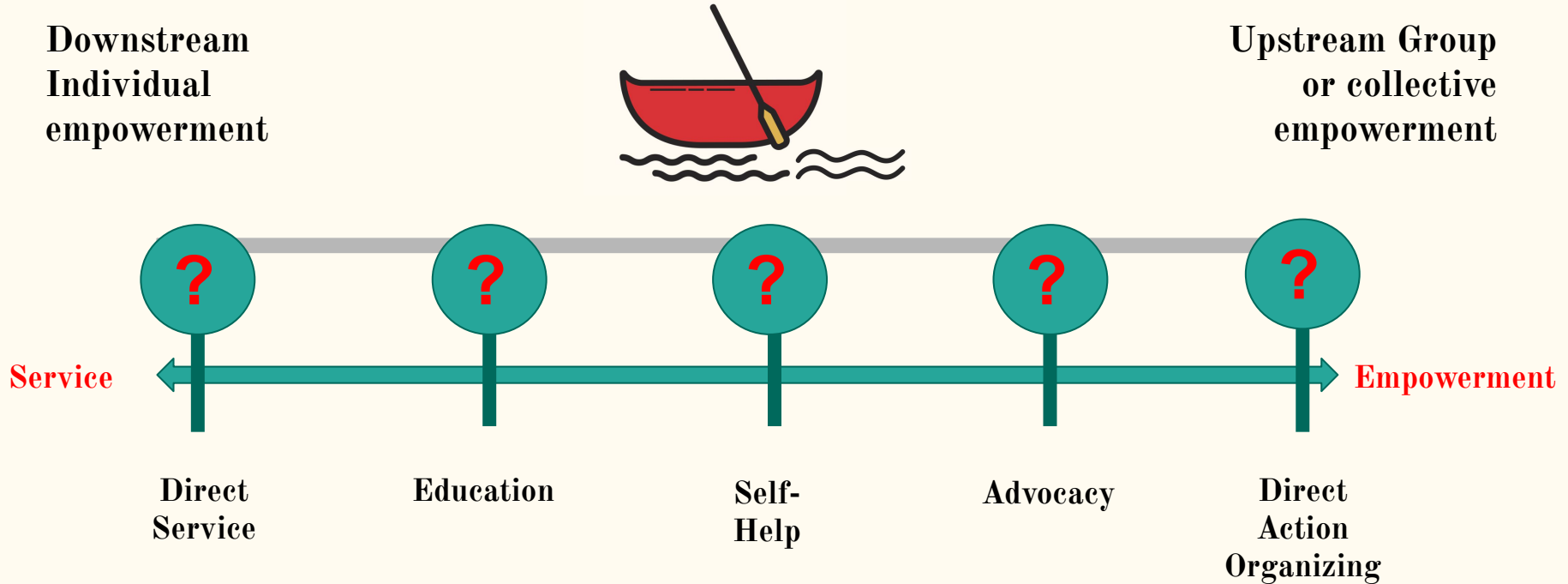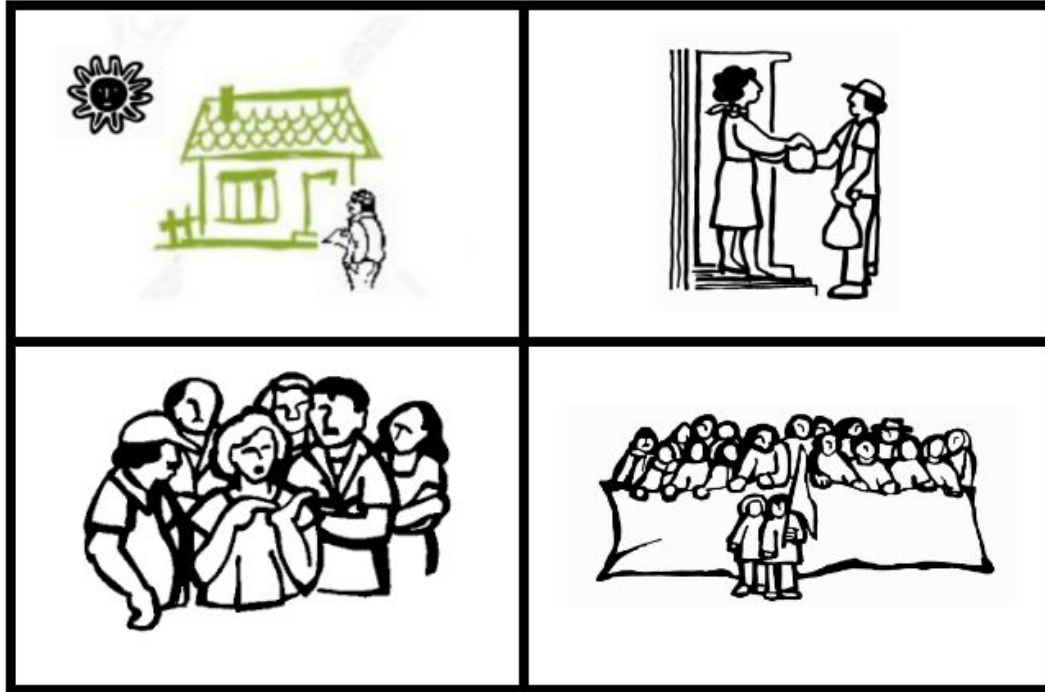|	
Approach is the way in which something is approached.	Method is the way in which something is done
Refers to the direction or angle	Refers to a process
Refers to the theoretical framework in general	Refers to step by step guidelines
Approach has to be decided before selecting the method	Method can be selected after deciding the approach

Organizing methods & practice can help us "paddle upstream" towards collective empowerment.

Downstream
Individual
empowerment

Upstream Group
or collective
empowerment

Service

Empowerment

? Direct
Service

? Education

? Self-
Help

? Advocacy

? Direct
Action
Organizing

The process of transforming individual problems to community issues to base-building for collective action is community organizing.

Try it on for size...

- Plot your organization on the spectrum of social change approaches.
- Have an conversation - formal or informal - within your organization about whether or not moving upstream on the spectrum is possible.
- Consider what the definition of empowerment means to you personally.

PWN

BLOCK PARTY

JOIN US ONLINE THIS SUMMER TO LEARN HOW TO
REACH AND ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY --BLOCK BY BLOCK.