



An Overview: Direct Social Work Practice

Week 3 Plan

Agenda

- How we help
- Orienting perspectives for social work practice
- Evidence-based practice
- Involuntary clients
- Ecological Systems Model
- Social work jobs and roles

Learning Objectives

- ★ Identify and describe key roles, settings, and practice areas where social workers operate, including local examples.
- ★ Explain the purpose of social work and how the profession addresses prevention, restoration, and remediation.
- ★ Analyze the ecological systems model and orienting perspectives (e.g., strengths-based, cultural humility, trauma-informed) as frameworks for understanding client interactions.
- ★ Reflect on personal and professional alignment with the NASW Code of Ethics and its core values.
- ★ Describe strategies for building trust and promoting cooperation with mandated clients.



**“You can close your eyes to
the things you don't want to
see, but you can't close your
heart to the things you don't
want to feel.”**

—Johnny Depp



Recall a time that you were experiencing an intense emotional difficulty and were comforted and supported

- How did you "know" that person was supportive
- What behaviors and words did that person use that was helpful to you
- List these on your poster for future reference



The Purpose of Social Work

Prevention

The timely provision of services to vulnerable persons, promoting social functioning before problems develop.

Remediation

The elimination or amelioration of existing social problems.

Restoration

Efforts to restore functioning that has been impaired by physical or mental difficulties

(Heptworth et al., 2017)



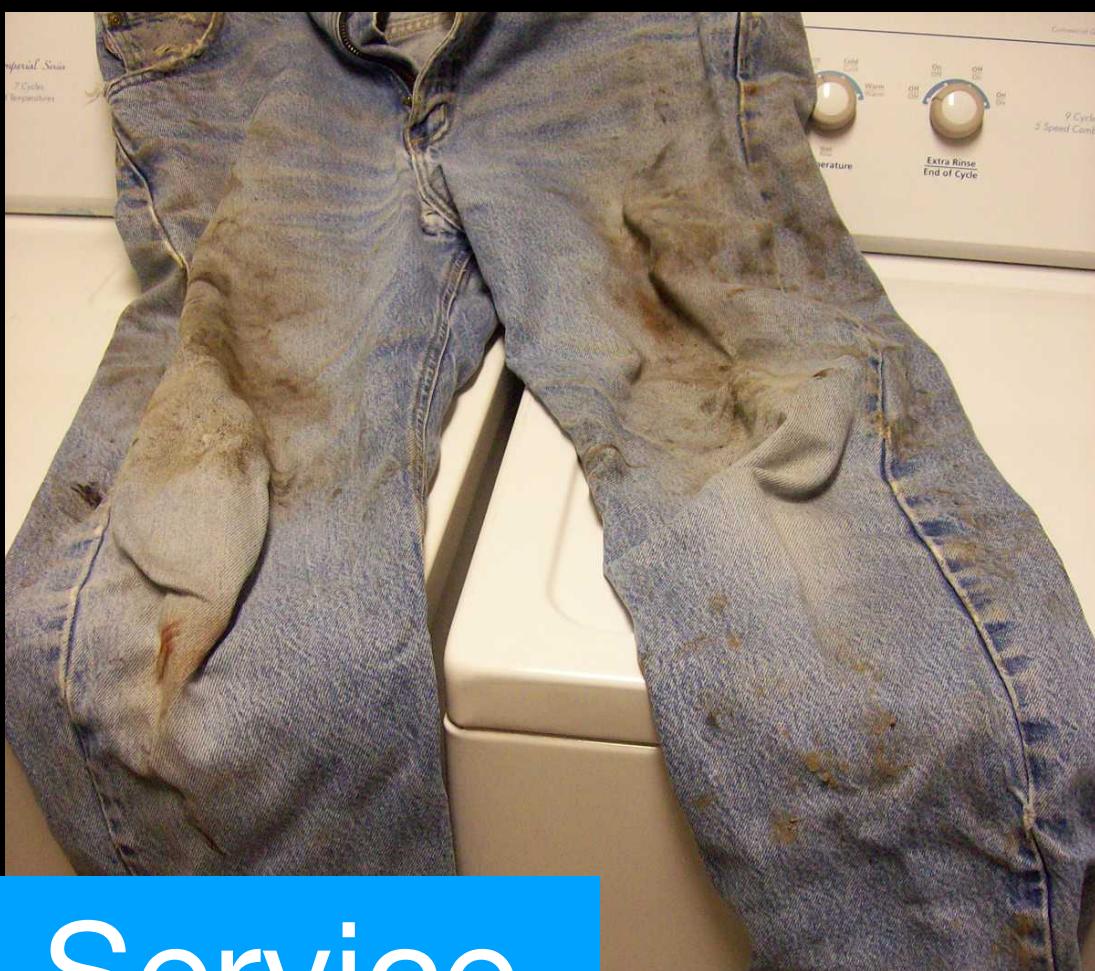
Contemporary Influences on Social Work

- The need for self-care
- Pandemics (COVID-19, violence against Black and Brown people)
- Funding for services
- Technological advances
- Globalization
- Scientific changes
- The sociopolitical environment

(Heptworth et al., 2023)



NASW Core Values



Service



SOCIAL
JUSTICE

Dignity & Worth



Competence



Integrity



Relationships



NASW Core Values

(National Association of Social Workers, 2021)

Ethical Principles

- **Service**: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.
- **Social Justice**: Social workers challenge social injustice.
- **Dignity and Worth of the Person**: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.
- **Importance of Human Relationships**: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.
- **Integrity**: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner
- **Competence**: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

With a partner,
discuss these
ethical principles
and how they
relate to your life or
how you connect
with it.



Orienting Perspectives for Social Work Practice

Ecosystem Perspective

Strengths
Perspective

Cultural
Humility

Antioppressive
Practice

Trauma-Informed
Practice

Evidence-Informed
Practice

Direct Practice

(Heptworth et al., 2023)



Embedded in
interactions with their
social and physical
environments

Collaborative
problem
solving

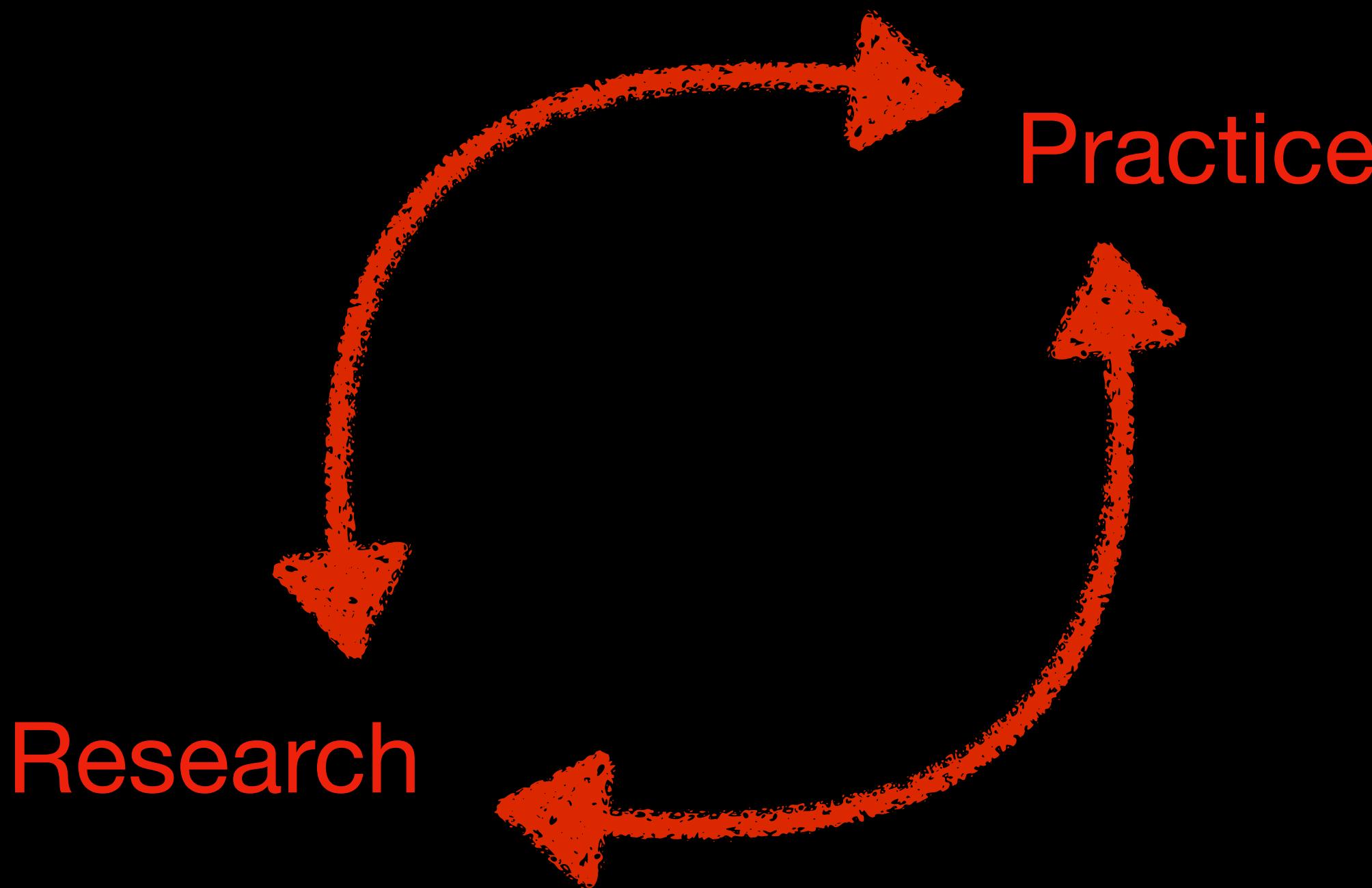
Self-
awareness

Principles for Practice

(Heptworth et al., 2023)



Research-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Research



- ★ Choosing effective interventions
- ★ More effective individual practice
- ★ Development of profession

(Hepworth, et al. 2017)



Evidence-Based Practice

“Focuses not just on knowing about the intervention but on acquiring the skills necessary to carry it out effectively”



(Hepworth, et al. 2017, p. 19)



Common Elements Approach

In evidence-based practice, examining commonalities across effective interventions.

Common Factors Approach

In evidence-based practice, emphasizing broad factors shared by different intervention approaches, such as strength of relationship or alliance.



Deciding when and how to intervene with clients in social work practice

- Increase decision-making
- Assess environment
- Sensitive to diversity
- Evidence-based practices
- Critical thinking

(Heptworth et al., 2023)



Define Critical Thinking Skills and Apply Them to Practice

Universal Intellectual Standards

(Paul & Elder, 2014)

- ★ **Purpose:** The reason or goal behind the thinking should be clearly stated, relevant, and justifiable.
- ★ **Question:** The central issue or problem being addressed should be clear, unbiased, and framed to capture the complexity of the matter.
- ★ **Information:** The data, evidence, or experiences used should be accurate, relevant, sufficient, and address the complexities of the issue.
- ★ **Concepts:** The ideas, theories, or principles used should be clearly defined, well-explained, and applied appropriately.
- ★ **Assumptions:** The beliefs or ideas taken for granted should be identified, examined for validity, and not left unquestioned.
- ★ **Inferences:** The reasoning that connects evidence to conclusions should be logical, coherent, and clearly explained.
- ★ **Point of View:** The perspective from which the issue is considered should recognize alternative viewpoints and engage with relevant objections.
- ★ **Implications:** The consequences and outcomes of the reasoning should include awareness of the potential effects, both intended and unintended.



Types of Clients

legally
mandated

voluntary

non voluntary



Involuntary Clients

- Acknowledge to yourself that the client is indeed voluntary.
- Try to put yourself in the clients shoes.
- Label and help the clients express their negative feelings.
- Clarify your role for the client.
- Know the limits of your authority, and in effect power over the client.

10 Tips for
Working with
Mandated Clients

(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)



Involuntary Clients

- Give them as many choices as possible including minor options.
- Figure out what you can do for the client that he or she wants.
- Use pro-social modeling and reinforcement in order to encourage and promote client pro-social values and behaviors.
- Allow the client to gain trust in you and in the intervention process.
- Accept the fact that, ultimately the client has the right to choose whether or not to cooperate with you.

10 Tips for
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(Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2015)





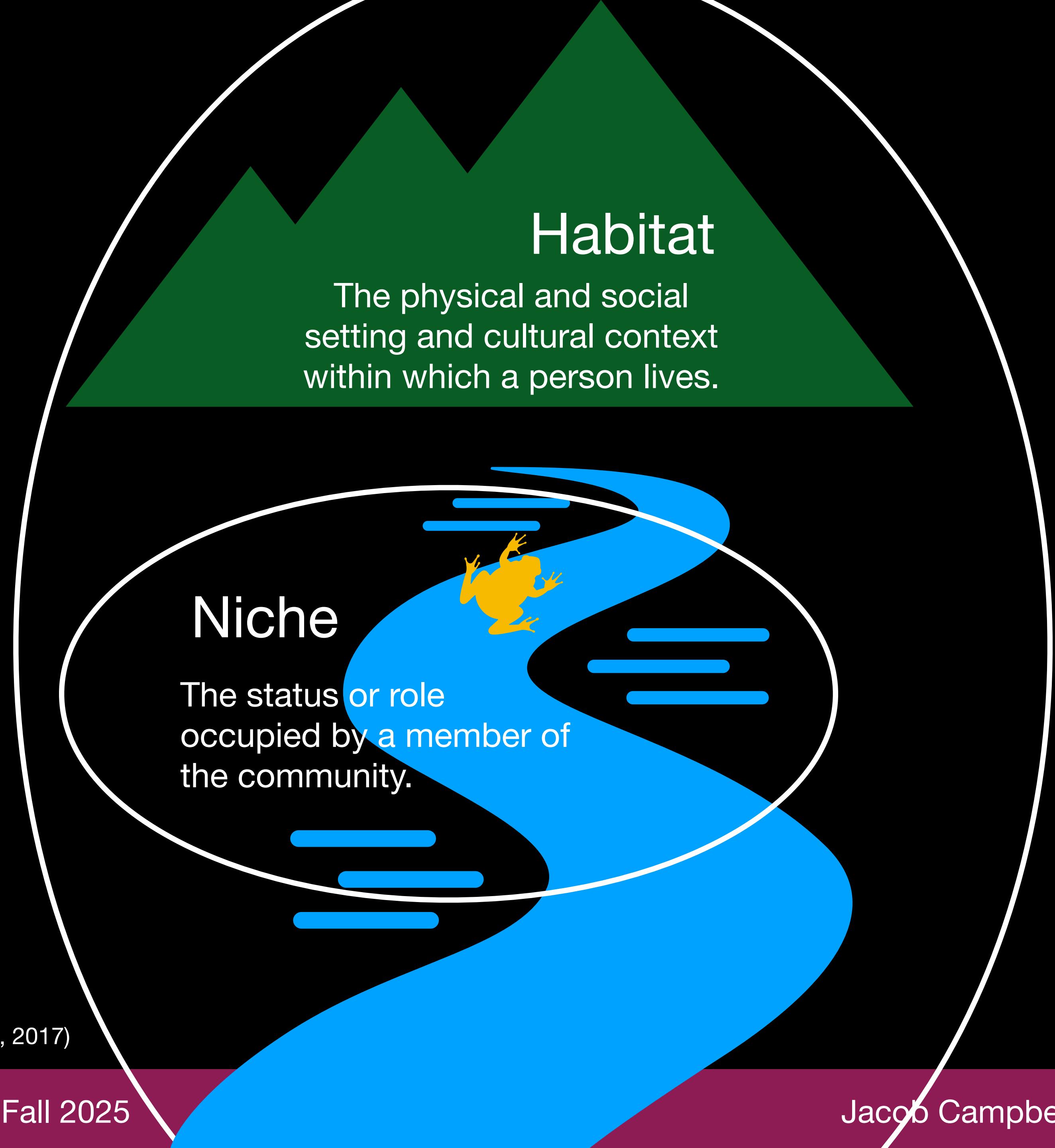
Ecological Systems Model

A model of interacting elements that enables social workers to examine strengths and weaknesses in transactions between persons, families, cultures, and communities as systems.

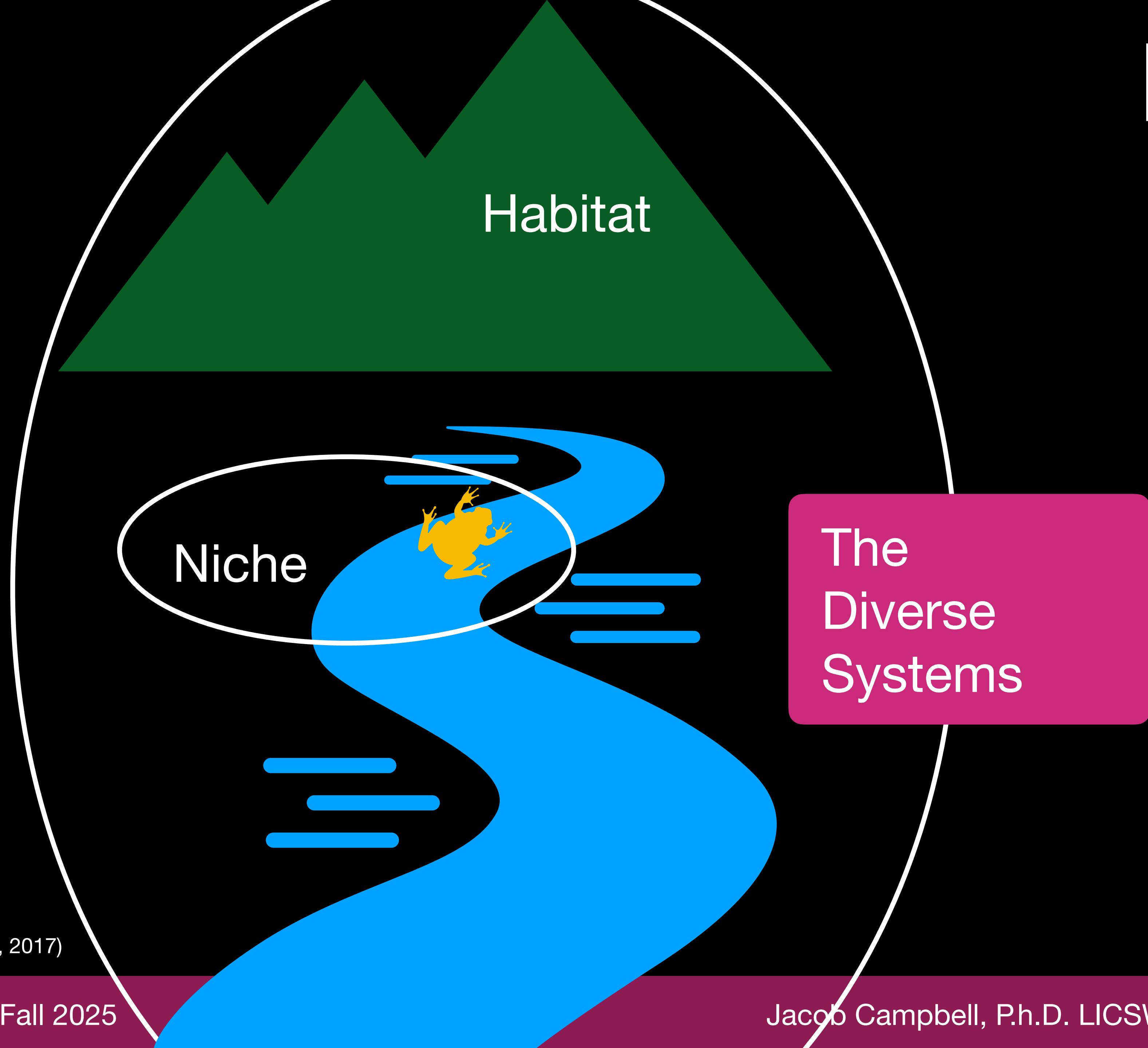
(Heptworth, et al., 2017)



Ecological Systems Model



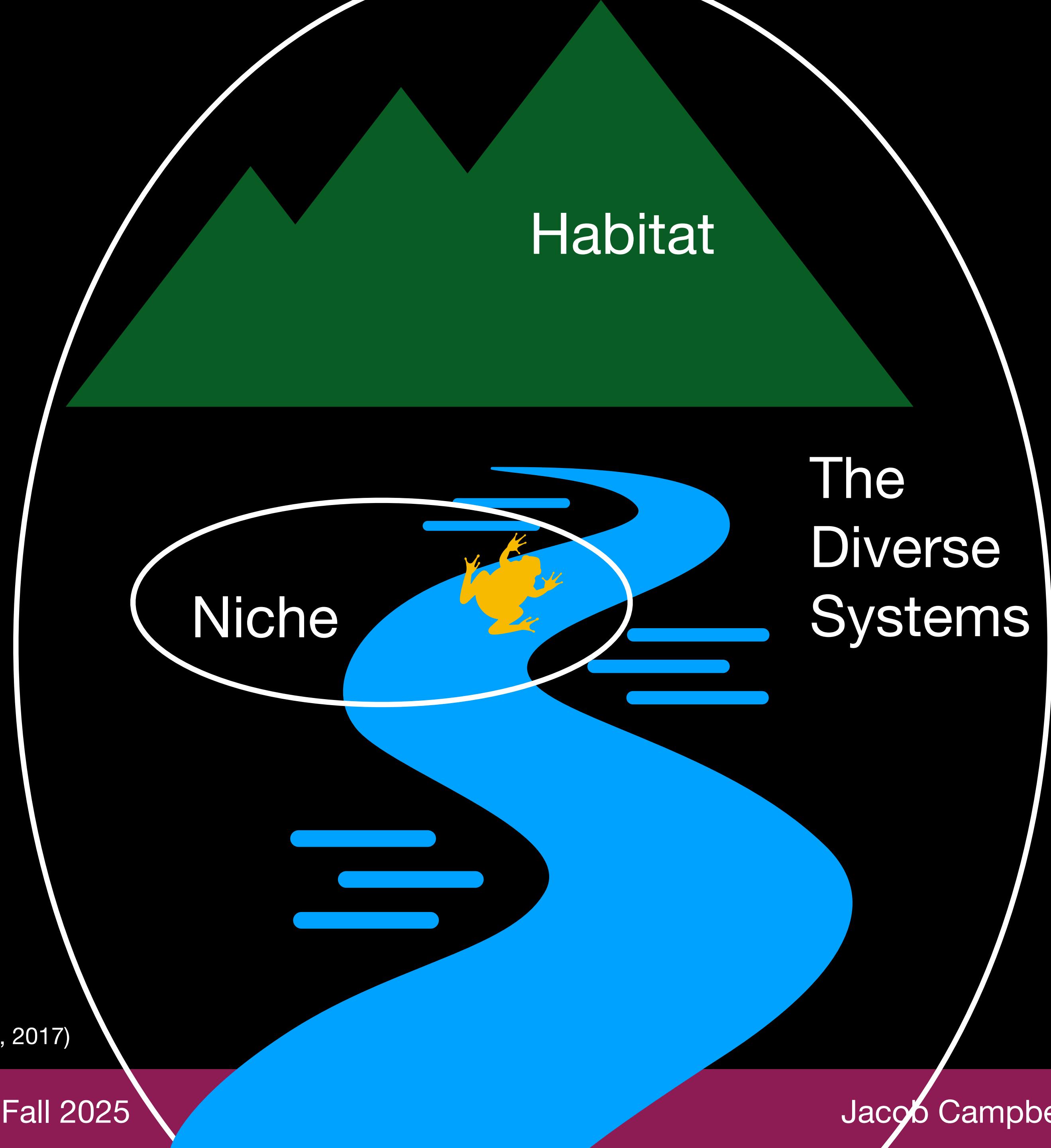
Ecological Systems Model



- ★ Subsystems of individual
- ★ Interpersonal systems
- ★ Organizations, institutions, communities
- ★ The physical environment



Ecological Systems Model



Closed Systems
Open Systems

Target System

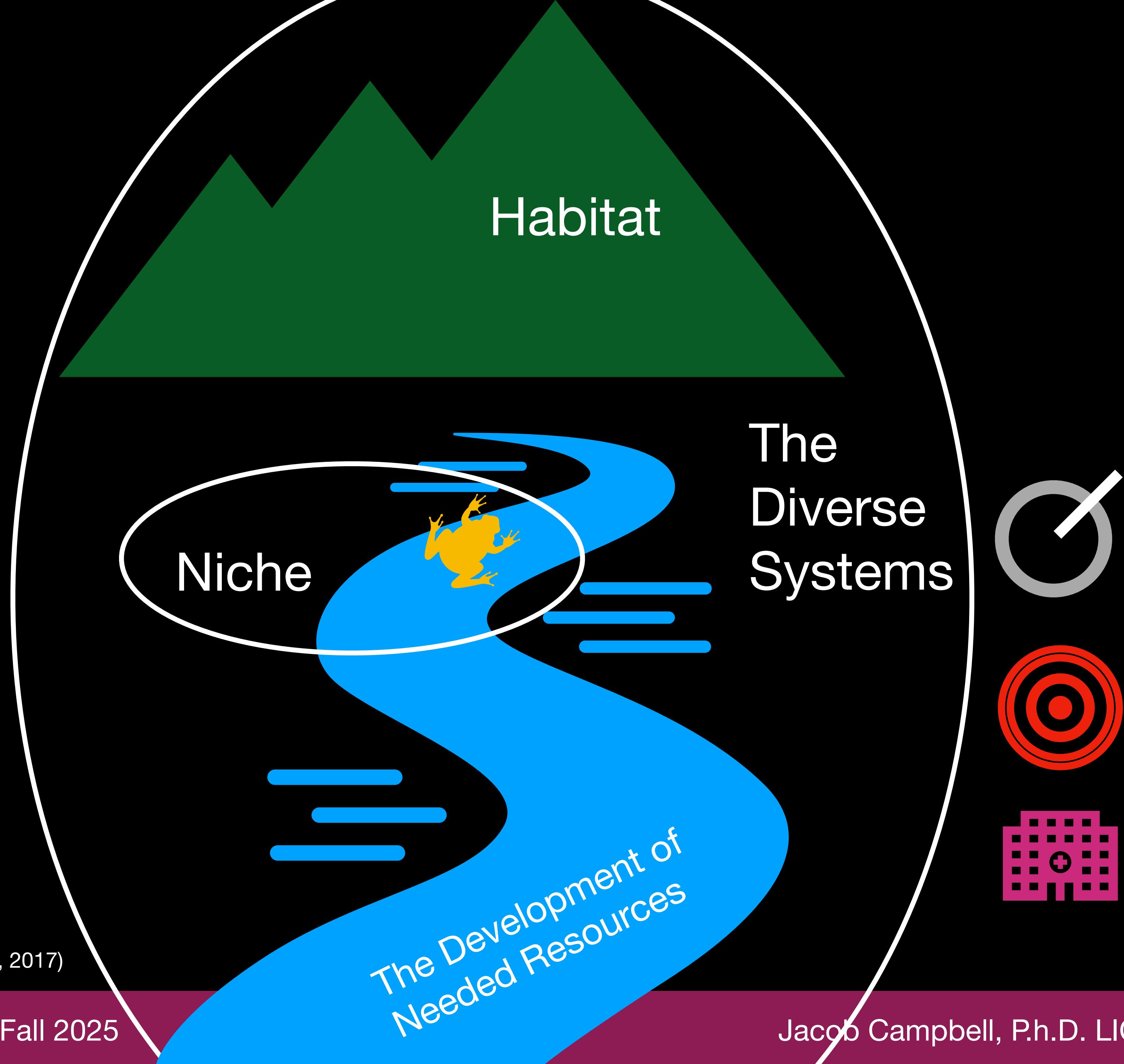
Action System
(agency system)

The system that has the intervention happening to it

The system that is doing the intervention



Ecological Systems Model



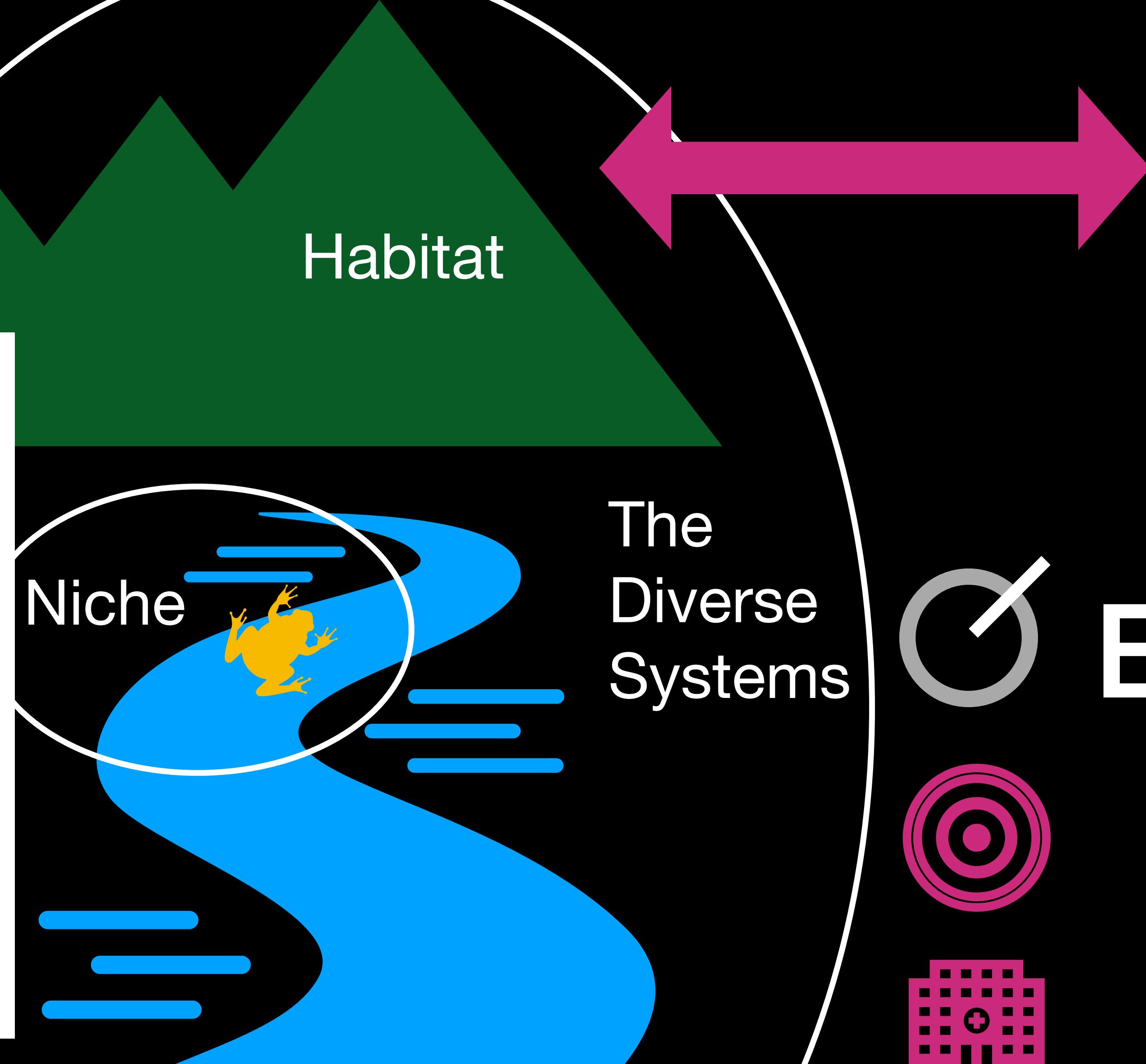


Mutual Influence
of People and
Environments

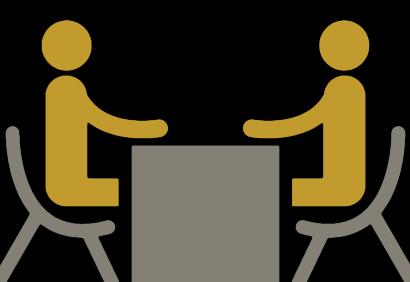
Ecological Systems Model

★ **Equifinality:**
The principle that the same outcome can be achieved even with different starting points.

★ **Multifinality:**
The principle that the same starting point may lead to different outcomes.



(Heptworth, et al., 2017)



Ecological Systems Model



Habitat

Niche

The
Diverse
Systems

(Heptworth, et al., 2017)

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Jacob Campbell, Ph.D. LICSW at Heritage University

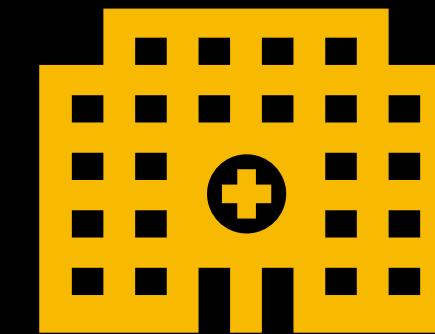




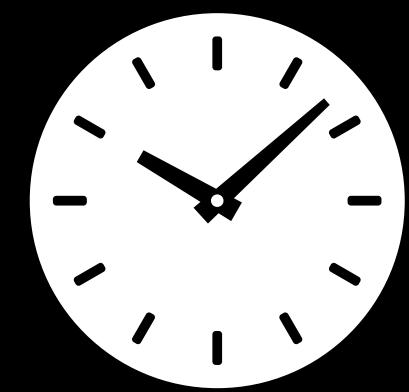
Work with Immigrants



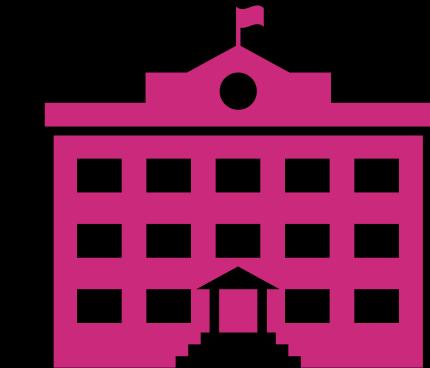
Housing or
Financial Services



Hospital and Health
Services



Working with
Aging Clients



School Social
Work



Child Welfare



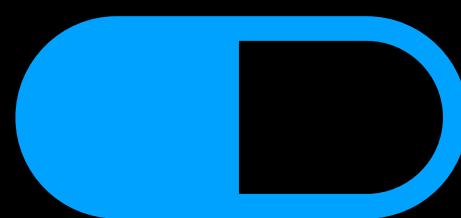
Child, Youth, and
Family Services



Mental Health Services



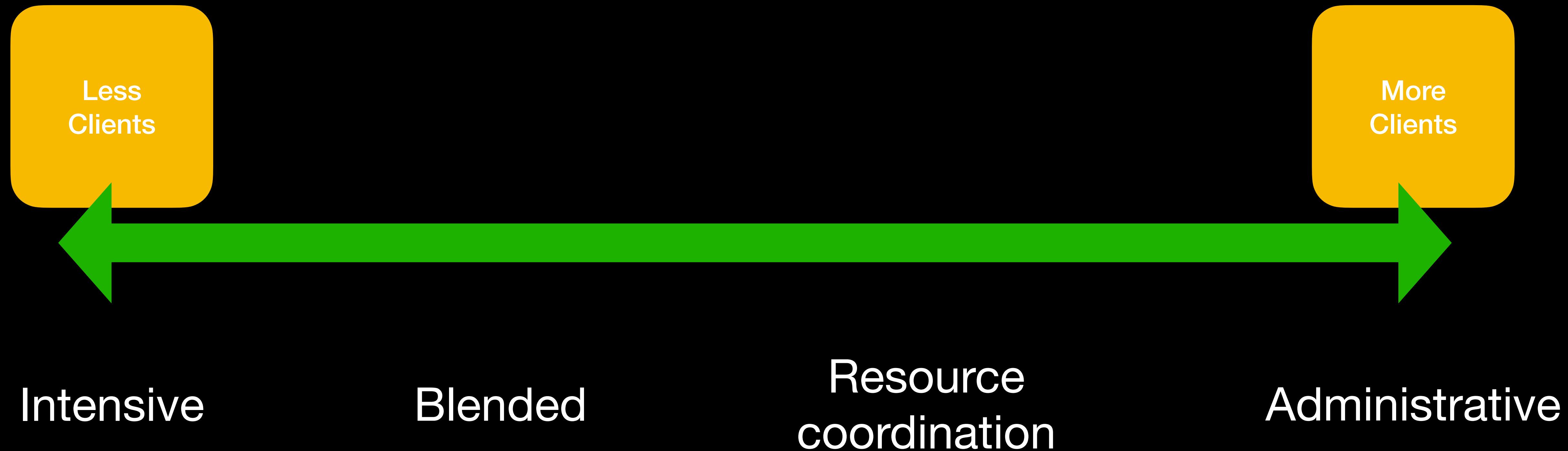
Disability
Services



Chemical and Substance
Abuse Services



Levels of Case Management



(Summers, 2015)



Direct Service Provider

- ★ Individual casework or counseling
- ★ Couples or family therapy
- ★ Group work services
- ★ Educator, disseminator of information

Researcher & Research Consumer

Social Worker Roles and Functions

System Developer

- ★ Program developer
- ★ Planner
- ★ Policy and procedure developer
- ★ Advocate

System Linkage Roles

- ★ Broker
- ★ Case manager, coordinator
- ★ Mediator, arbitrator, advocate

System Maintenance Roles

- ★ Organizational analyst
- ★ Facilitator, expediter
- ★ Team member
- ★ Consultant / consultee
- ★ Supervisor

(Heptworth, et al., 2017)

