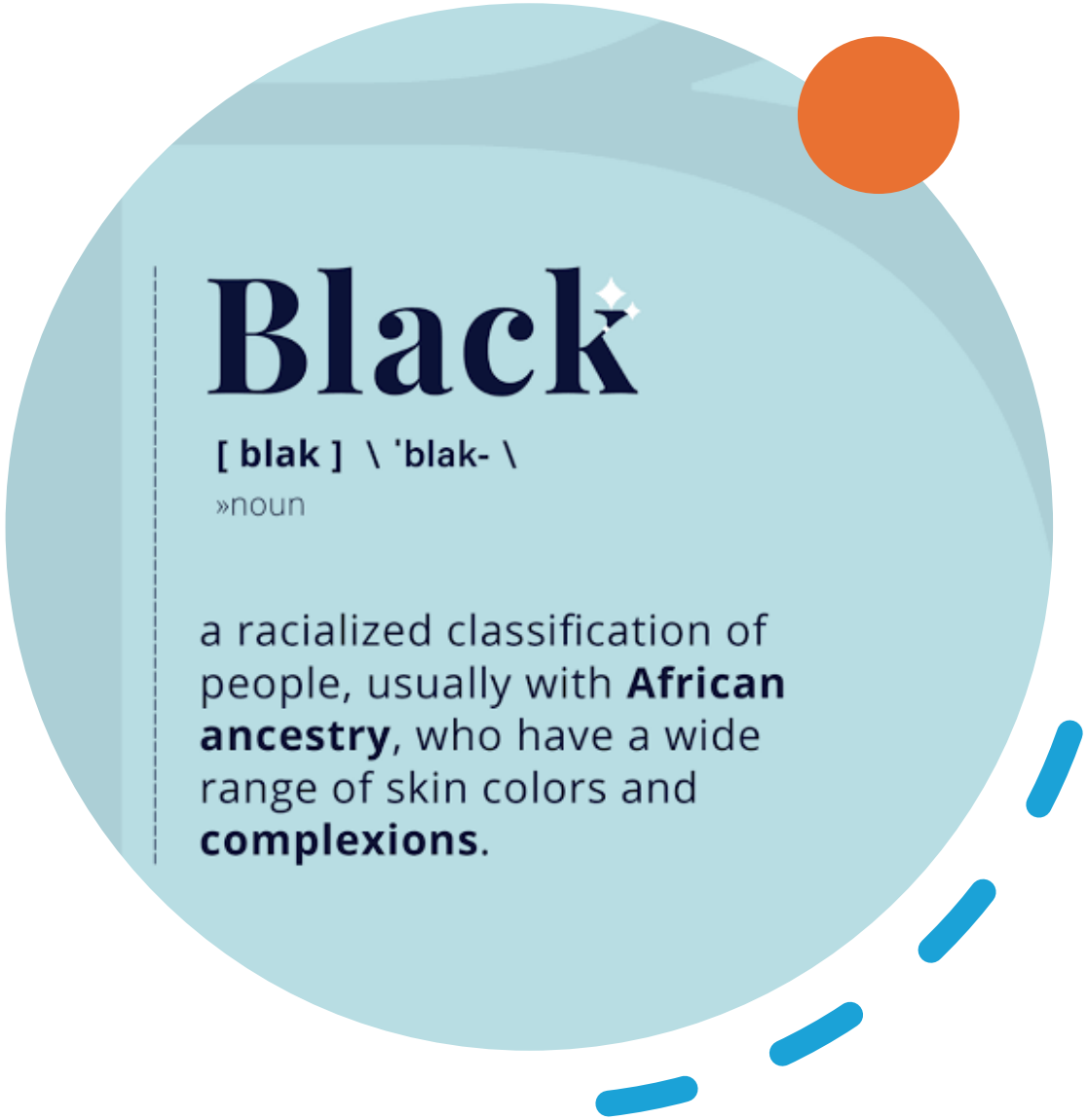
“We Built, We Served, We Changed: Black Achievement, Community and Social Work”

From hidden histories to professional excellence, community power and anti-racist practice.

By Ray Addai – Anti Racist Practice Consultant

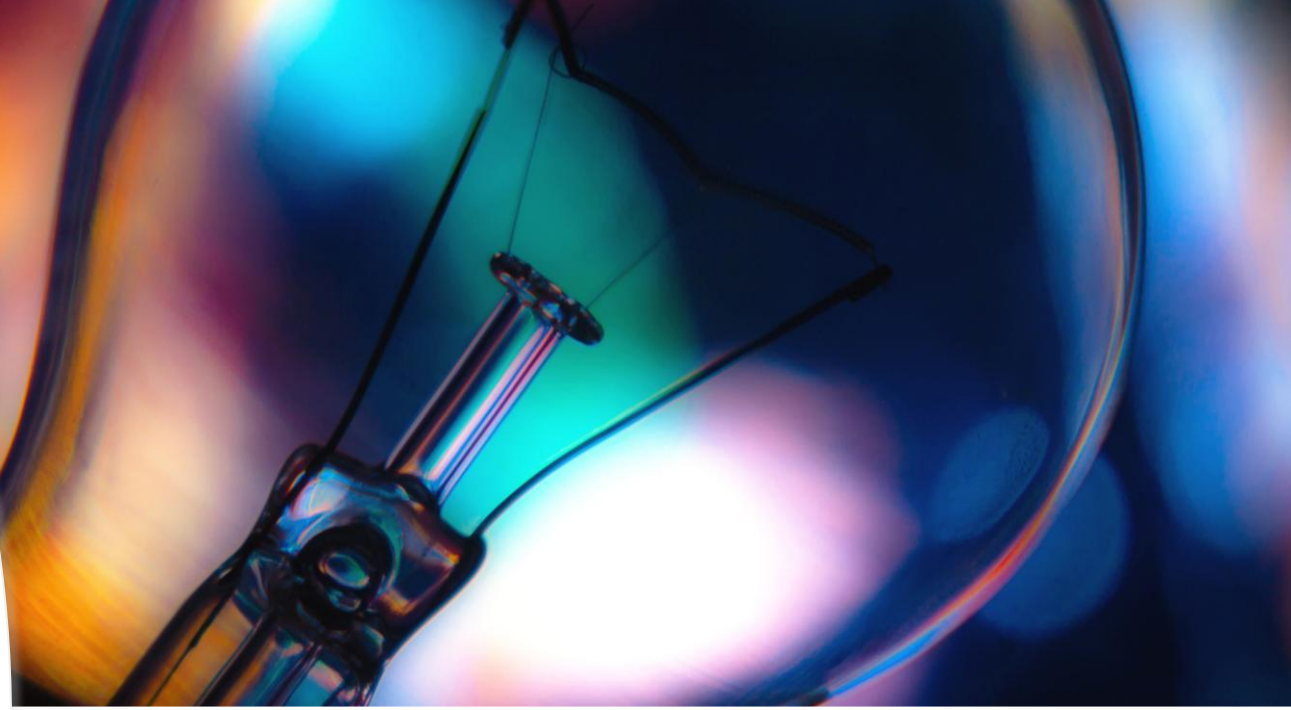


Why Black?


Black
[blak] \ 'blak- \
»noun
a racialized classification of people, usually with **African ancestry**, who have a wide range of skin colors and **complexions**.

Introducing me

- Qualified social worker since 2015
- Community activist
- Led and developed anti racist strategic transformations
- Developed models and tools which promote anti racist practice
- Collaborated with BASW





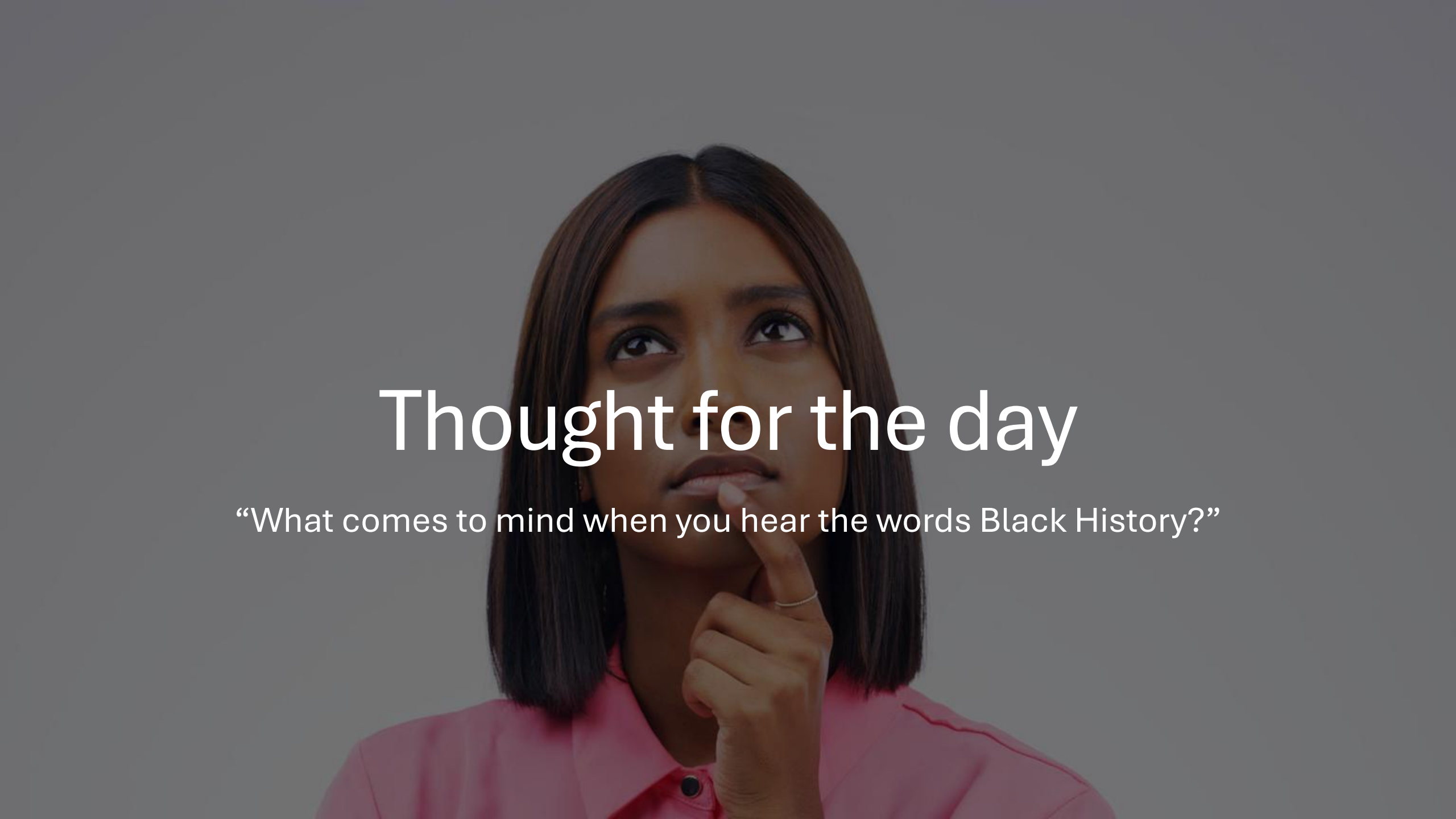
Outcomes



To understand how Black achievements and strengths from our Black communities can influence our social work practice.



To understand how the positive contributions of Black people can teach us about identity, resilience, power and professional practice.


Thought for the day
“What comes to mind when you hear the words Black History?”

Who do we remember?

Who do we forget?

Who are we standing on the shoulders of?






Changing the narrative

Communities built what institutions didn't provide

Black African and Black Caribbean communities brought so much to post war Britain:

- churches
- community centres
- supplementary schools
- youth organisations
- Black newspapers
- mutual aid
- community associations
- informal childcare
- political organisations
- music and cultural spaces.

From a social work lens

- “What would happen if we stopped seeing communities primarily as sources of risk and started seeing them as sources of resilience, knowledge and protection?”
- How would we view Black community spaces?
- Black films
- Black music & festivals
- Black intellectual spaces
- Black dialects













Black professionals who changed institutions



Is representation enough?

A service can have Black employees and still have:

- racialised decision-making
- disproportionate intervention
- culturally insensitive assessments
- poor responses to racism
- barriers to progression
- organisational cultures that silence challenge.



Who taught you?

“Who looked after you?”

“Who encouraged you?”

“Who gave you your first opportunity?”

“Who kept your community together?”

“Who supported families when statutory services weren't there?”

How are we honouring our community stars?

- Black nurses
- teachers
- social workers
- foster carers
- community activists
- youth workers
- faith leaders
- parents
- grandparents
- volunteers
- entrepreneurs
- sports coaches
- community organisers.

What does Black history have to do with social work?

Can we really assess a child without understanding:

- race
- ethnicity
- culture
- family history
- migration
- religion
- community
- belonging?

Are we sometimes too quick to describe Black families as:

“chaotic”
“dysfunctional”
“hard to engage”
“non-compliant”

Shouldn’t we be asking:

“What strengths have enabled this family to survive?”



Is community:

a protective factor

or

something professionals become suspicious of?



If a Black child says:

“People treat me differently because I'm Black.”

Do we believe them?

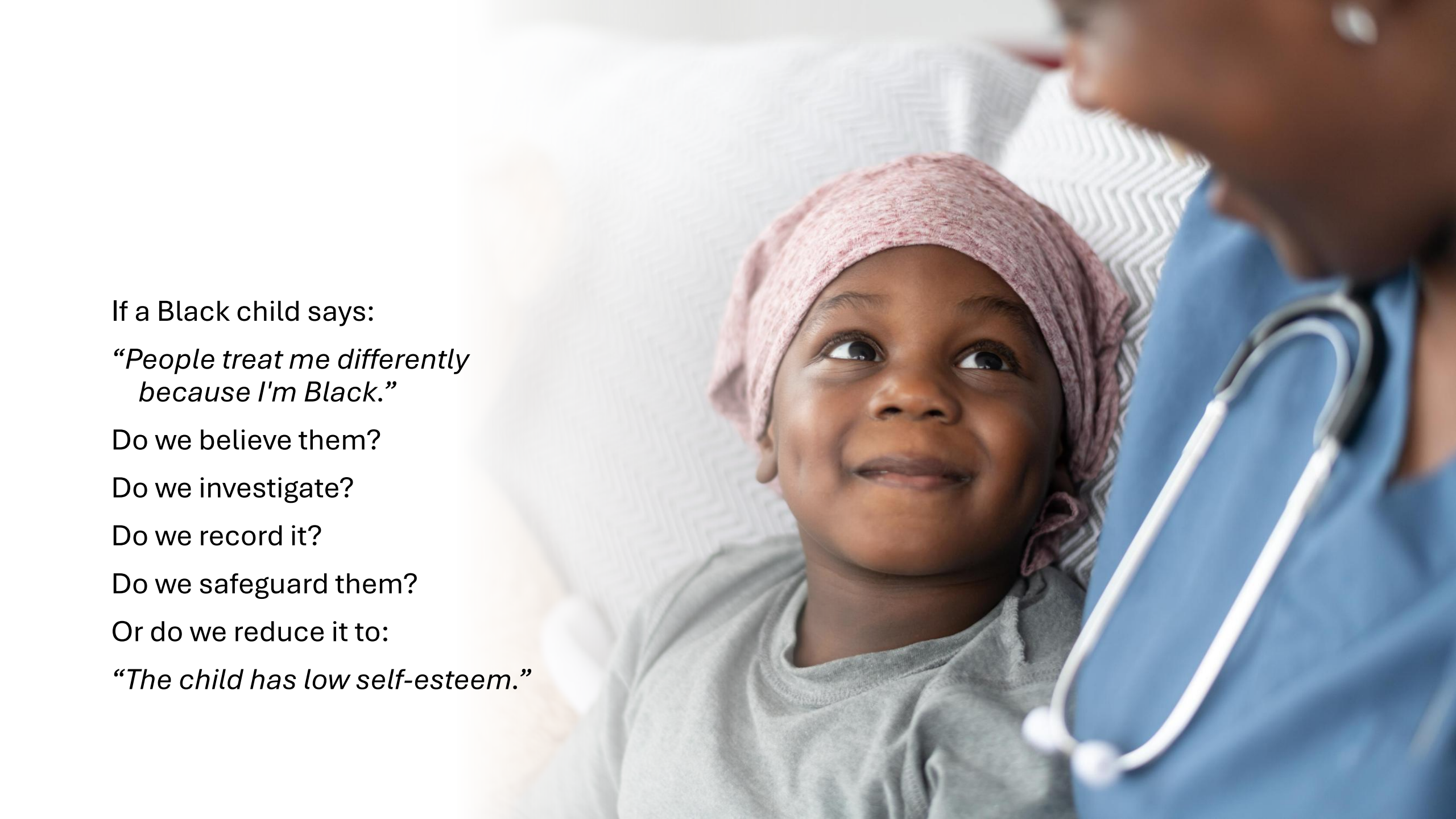
Do we investigate?

Do we record it?

Do we safeguard them?

Or do we reduce it to:

“The child has low self-esteem.”





Who has the power?

- “Who gets to decide what is normal, what is risky, what is resilient, what is neglectful and what is good parenting?”

Rewrite the narrative

Have a go at re-writing this in the chat from a culturally sensitive perspective.

Please think about what assumptions and stereotypes are subtly hidden in the sentences.

“The family are very insular and rely heavily on their own community. They are reluctant to engage with professionals and have strong cultural beliefs about raising children.”

“History is not only what happened before us.”

“History is also what we choose to do now.”

“What will the children and families and communities we work with say about our contributions to their story?”



Thank you for your time

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