



# Module 3. Unfamiliar Cultural Lenses

Enhance Awareness

Cross Cultural Communication:

Communities & Conservation

[wfsc.tamu.edu/jpackard/wfsc681](http://wfsc.tamu.edu/jpackard/wfsc681)

# Identify cultural boundaries

- “either you are with us or you are against us”
- Often we are not aware of cultural differences until we get the feeling “this person does not understand”
- When underlying beliefs are “tacit”
  - Insiders understand, due to shared experiences
  - Outsiders may not understand, yet can learn when underlying beliefs are made explicit
- Resiliency training can help conservation professionals: bring the implicit to be explicit, then check the accuracy of beliefs

# Resiliency Training for Conservation Professionals

TRIGGER: Event or Experience

Dialogue at a stakeholder meeting



BELIEFS: Tacit Cognitive Filter or Interpretation

Similar lenses

Different lenses



EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Connected, satisfied

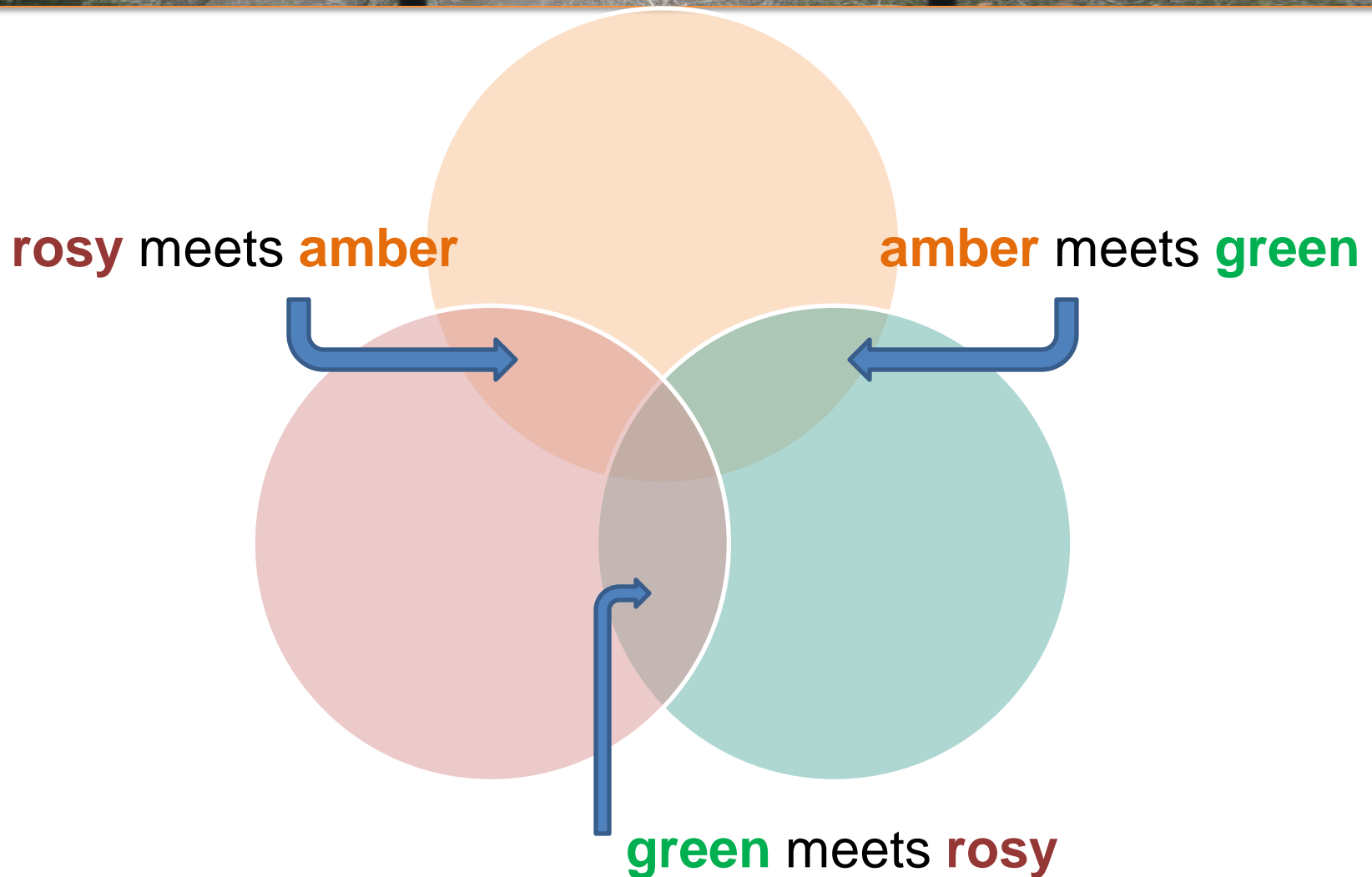
Frustrated, angry

# Applications of resiliency training

- resiliency: ability to return to normal after a shock  
<http://www.resiliency.com/>
- The Nature Conservancy- Reef Resilience  
<http://www.reefresilience.org>
- Penn Resiliency Program- adolescent depression  
<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm>
- U.S. Army- post-traumatic stress disorder  
<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/prt/index.html>



# Interfaces between lenses





# Interfaces: **rosy** meets **amber**

## Likely to AGREE

- Land is a source of income in times of family crisis.
- Land conservation efforts should prioritize activities that help people make a living off of the land.
- Conservation is managing land for its highest and best use and that can change according to economic and social needs.

## **Rosy** & **Amber** DISAGREE

- *No items identified based on quantitative analysis*

# Resiliency analysis: **rosy** meets **amber**

TRIGGER: Event or Experience

Pat refuses a conservation easement, on her land adjacent to the National Park.



BELIEFS: Tacit Cognitive Filter or Interpretation

Land is a source of income in times of family crisis.



EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Understanding, sense of agreement



# Interfaces: **amber** meets **green**

## Likely to AGREE

- Land conservation is about using resources wisely so that they will be available to meet the varying future needs of diverse landowners and communities.
- Land conservation could be integrated into growth and development if political, social, and economic systems worked the way they were supposed to.

## **Amber** & **Green** DISAGREE

- Conservation at all costs is unreasonable. Some costs cannot be tolerated.



# Resiliency analysis: **green** meets **amber**

## TRIGGER: Event or Experience

Pat refuses a conservation easement, on her land adjacent to the National Park.



## BELIEFS: Tacit Cognitive Filter or Interpretation

Lyn: Conservation at all costs is unreasonable.

Kim: The cost to the family is justified by the benefit to the park.



## EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Frustration , “you just don’t understand”



# Interfaces: green meets rosy

## Likely to AGREE

- The purpose of conserving some lands is to provide income from food, fiber, and timber production.

## Green & Rosy DISAGREE

- Some land needs to be conserved where nature can be allowed to flourish with little or no contact from humans.
- Land use decisions should be primarily governed by landowners.
- Humans are the dominant species and meeting our needs should be a priority.

# Resiliency analysis: **green** meets **rosy**

## TRIGGER: Event or Experience

Pat refuses a conservation easement, on her land adjacent to the National Park.



## BELIEFS: Tacit Cognitive Filter or Interpretation

Kim: The government should dialogue with park neighbors.

Chris: Land use decisions should be primarily governed by landowners.



## EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Frustration , “you just don’t understand”

# Tacit understanding: speak within the view of each group

- Amber.** *A balance of humans' and nature's needs should guide land conservation such that it is integrated into community growth, by using adequate planning and appropriate technology to allow communities to meet economic and housing needs through active inclusion of all interested stakeholder groups in the decision making process.*
- Rosy .** *Land conservation is best accomplished through voluntary actions by landowners who are engaged in profitable production of natural resources (food, fiber, timber), thereby protecting economic assets for their families and communities, now and in the future.*
- Green.** *Land conservation is important and a moral imperative because it maintains the quality of life (in terms of clean air and water, continuity in local communities, landowner equity, open spaces, a sense of place, rural identity, native species in healthy ecosystems) by protecting esthetically valuable sites from irreversible damage.*

# Listen for gaps: between groups

- Body language: non-verbal communication
  - Silence
  - Averted eyes
  - Frown
  - Crossed arms
- Verbal flags:
  - “whatever”
  - “no problem”
  - “this is a waste of taxpayer dollars”
  - “what have you been smoking?”
  - “you are the boss”



# Cognitive Filters

- May block incoming information
  - Lack of communication
  - “not worth my time”
- May distort the message
  - Miscommunication
  - “conservation is government abuse of landowners”
- May trigger resistance to the message
  - Unproductive conflict based on a stereotype
  - “you are trying to cram this down my throat”





# Ethical Responsibilities

Why should conservation professionals be aware of unfamiliar cultural lenses?

1. Media announcements for stakeholder meetings
2. Information campaigns to change undesirable behavior of individuals within communities
3. Research biases in survey responses
4. Resistance to science-based decision making



# summary

- This training module helps identify tacit beliefs that may underlie emotional triggers at the interfaces between social groups with different cultural lenses
- You are encouraged to listen for the tacit gaps in communication when your emotional intuition alerts you to potential differences in beliefs
- The utility of resiliency training is: use your own emotional triggers with hindsight to identify specific events and tacit beliefs that can help you better understand unfamiliar cultural lenses