Healthy Start
Virtual Grantees' Meeting

Naming Racism Again.. in the Midst of a Pandemic

Camara Jones, MD, MPH, PhD

June 24, 2020

HEALTHY start TA & SUPPORT CENTER

NICHQ National Institute for Children's Health Quality

Agenda

Introductions	LCDR Monique Richards
Naming Racism Again.. in the Midst of a Pandemic	Camara Jones, MD, MPH, PhD
Closing	Kenn L. Harris, NICHQ

Camara Jones, MD, MPH, PhD
Morehouse School of Medicine

naming racism
[again | still]
in the midst of a pandemic

Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD

Keynote Speaker
"Ensuring Health and Equity in the Twenty-First Century"
Healthy Start Grantees Meeting
Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Health Resources and Services Administration

Via Zoom from Atlanta, Georgia
June 24, 2020

National Campaign Against Racism

Name racism

Ask "How is racism operating here?"

Organize and strategize to act

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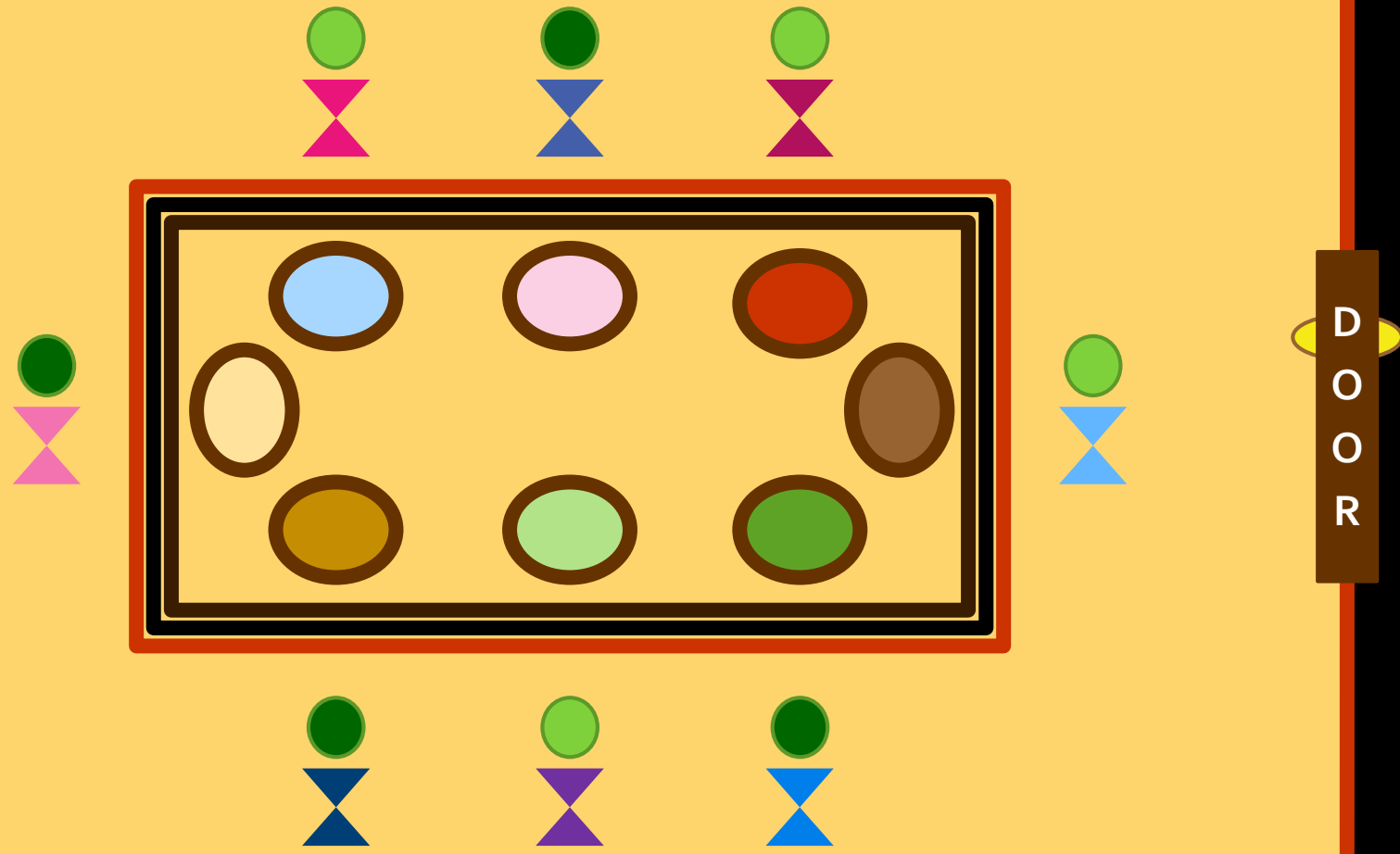
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Dual Reality: A restaurant saga

I looked up and noticed a sign . . .
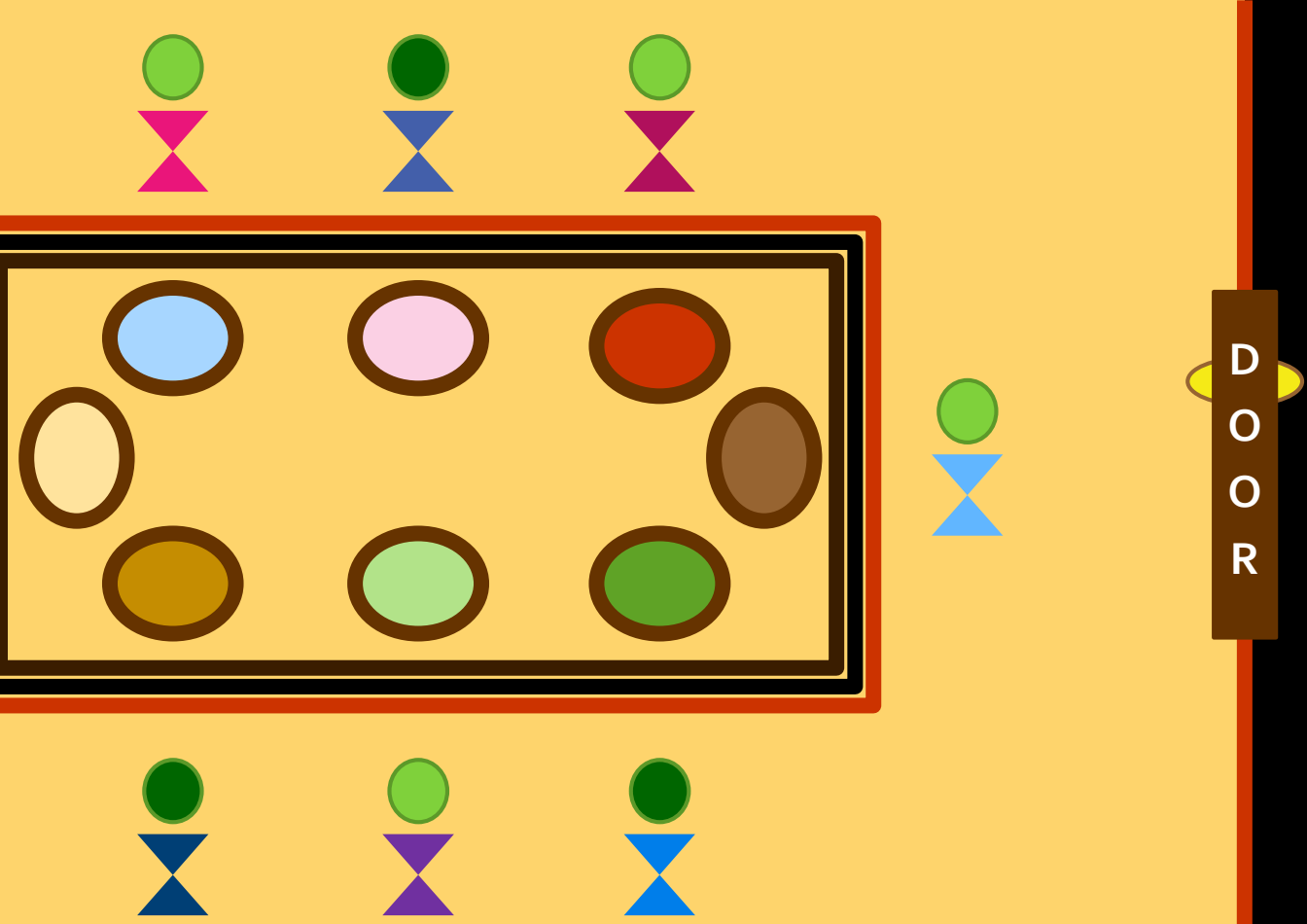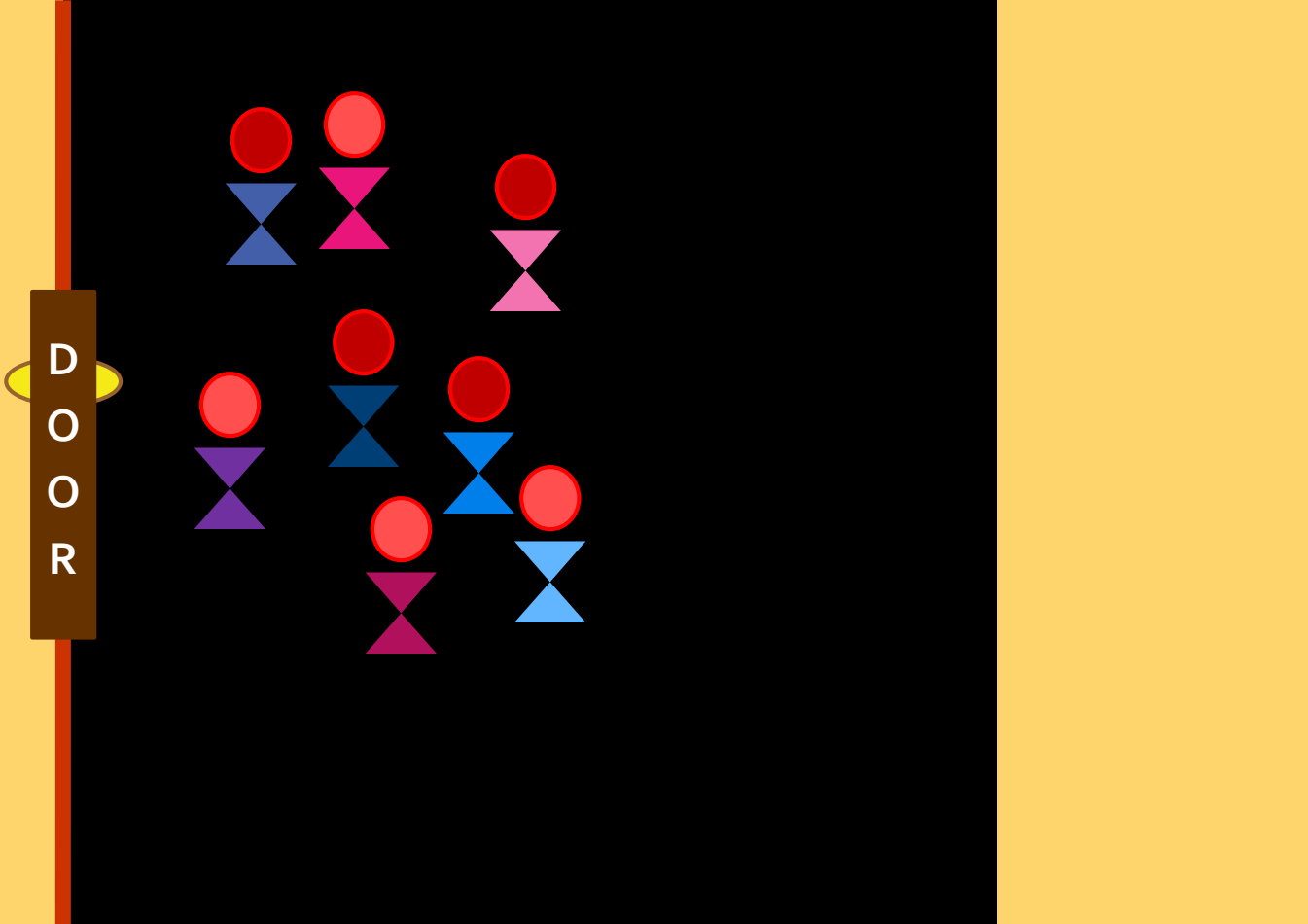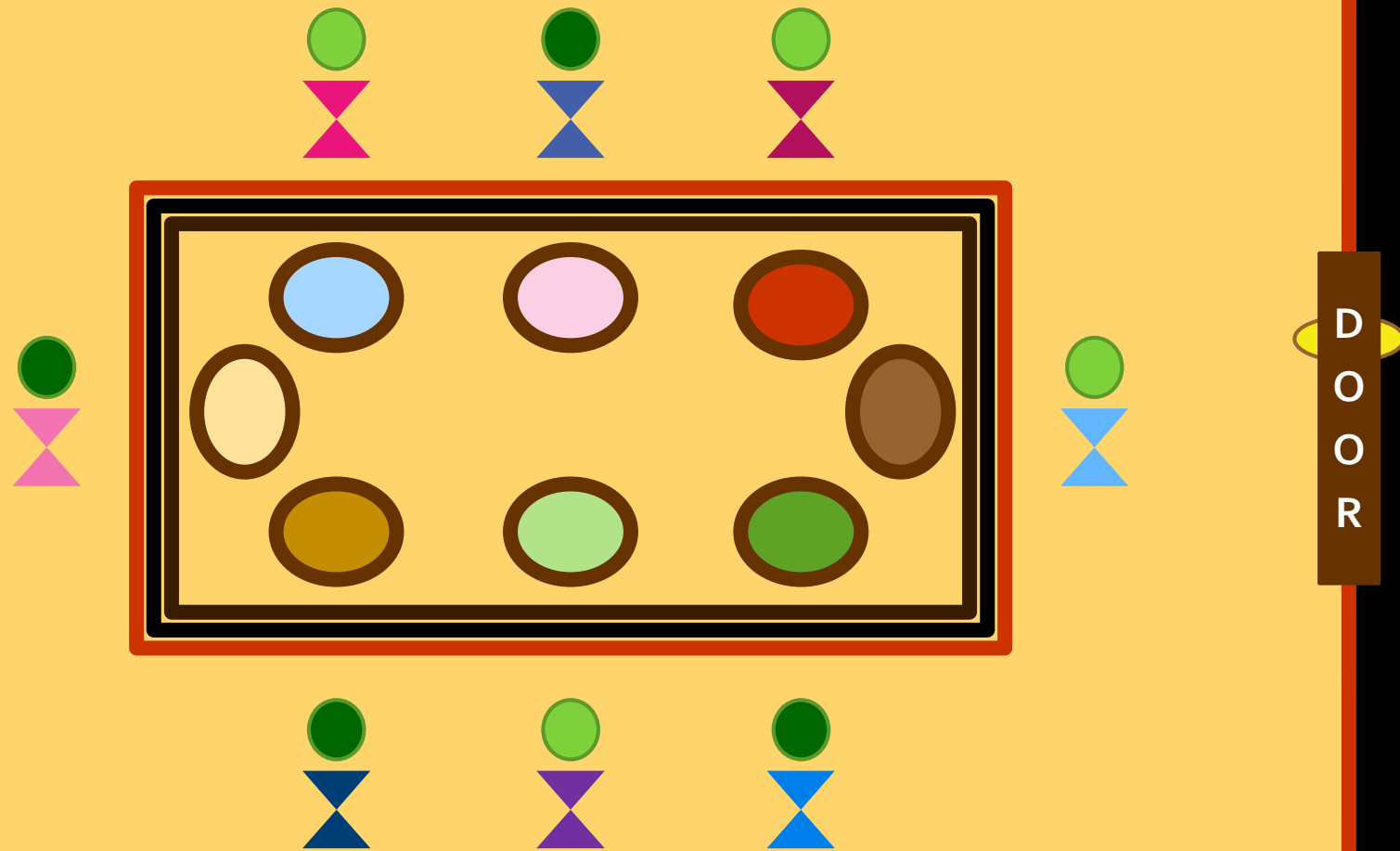
CLOSED

Racism structures "Open/Closed" signs in our society.

It is difficult
to recognize
a system of inequity
that privileges us.

D O O R

Those on the outside
are very aware of the
two-sided nature
of the sign.

Is there really a two-sided sign?

Hard to know, when only see "Open".
A privilege not to HAVE to know.
Once DO know, can choose to act.

What is racism?

A system

Jones CP. Confronting Institutionalized Racism. *Phylon* 2003;50(1-2):7-22.

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A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race"), that

- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources

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Levels of Racism

- ❑ **Institutionalized**
- ❑ **Personally-mediated**
- ❑ **Internalized**

Jones CP. Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale. *Am J Public Health* 2000;90(8):1212-1215.

Institutionalized racism

- **Differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society, by "race"**

- **Examples**
    - Housing, education, employment, income
    - Medical facilities
    - Clean environment
    - Information, resources, voice

- **Explains the association between social class and "race"**

Jones CP. Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale. *Am J Public Health* 2000;90(8):1212-1215.

Personally-mediated racism

- **Differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and intents of others, by "race"**
- **Differential actions based on those assumptions**

- **Prejudice and discrimination**
- **Examples**
  - Police brutality
  - Physician disrespect
  - Shopkeeper vigilance
 - Waiter indifference
  - Teacher devaluation

Jones CP. Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale. *Am J Public Health* 2000;90(8):1212-1215.

Internalized racism

❑ **Acceptance by members of the stigmatized "races" of negative messages about our own abilities and intrinsic worth**

❑ **Examples**
- Self-devaluation
- "White man's ice is colder" syndrome
- Resignation, helplessness, hopelessness

❑ **Accepting limitations to our full humanity**

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Levels of Racism: A Gardener's Tale

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Who is the gardener?
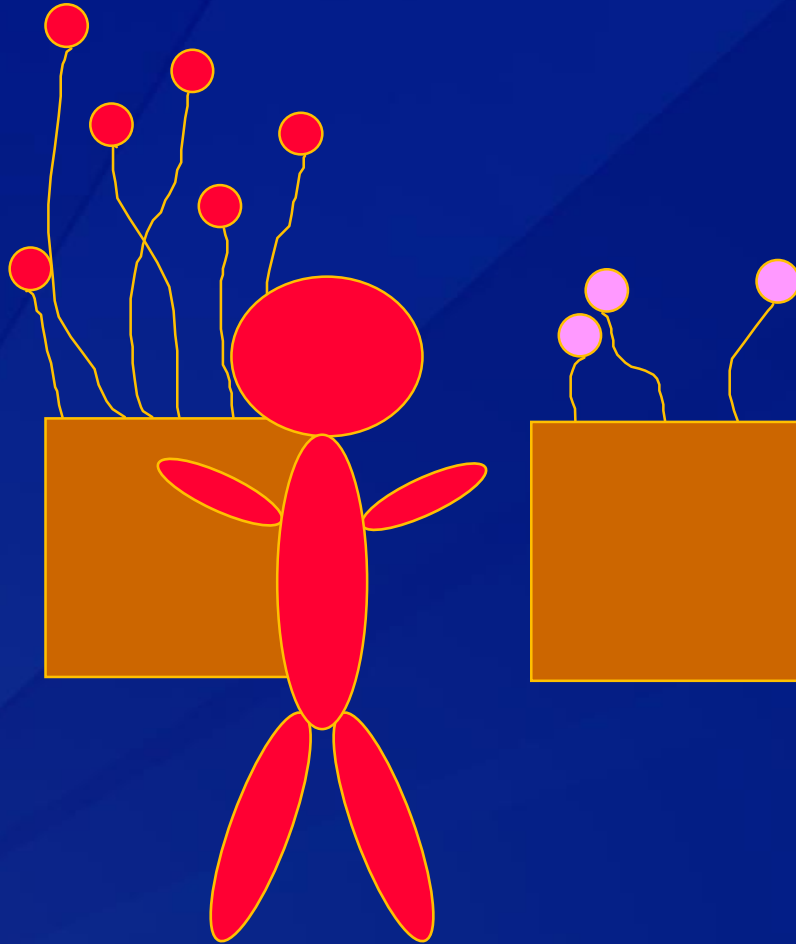
- Power to decide
- Power to act
- Control of resources

❑ **Dangerous when**
  - Allied with one group
  - Not concerned with equity

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"How is racism operating here?"

- **Identify mechanisms**
  - **Structures:** the *who?*, *what?*, *when?*, and *where?* of decision-making
  - **Policies:** the written *how?*
  - **Practices and norms:** the unwritten *how?*
  - **Values:** the *why?*

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- ▪ **Norms:** Blue Code of Silence
- ▪ **Values:** View of Black men as inherently threatening

Excess deaths of "Black" people from COVID-19
"How is racism operating here?"

❑ **More likely to become infected**

  ▪ More exposed

  ▪ Less protected

❑ **Once infected, more likely to die**

  ▪ More burdened by chronic diseases

  ▪ With less access to health care

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- ▪ **Values:** Hierarchy of valuation by work role | age | existence of chronic diseases; skepticism about lottery for rationing

What is health equity?

- ❑ **"Health equity" is assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people**

- ❑ **Achieving health equity requires**
  - ▪ Valuing all individuals and populations equally
  - ▪ Recognizing and rectifying historical injustices
  - ▪ Providing resources according to need

- ❑ **Health disparities will be eliminated when health equity is achieved**

Jones CP. Systems of Power, Axes of Inequity: Parallels, Intersections, Braiding the Strands. *Medical Care* 2014;52(10 Suppl 3):S71-S75.

Barriers
to achieving health equity

❑ **Narrow focus on the individual**
- ▪ Self-interest narrowly defined
- ▪ Limited sense of interdependence
- ▪ Limited sense of collective efficacy
- ▪ Systems and structures as invisible or irrelevant

❑ **A-historical stance**
- ▪ The present as disconnected from the past
- ▪ Current distribution of advantage/disadvantage as happenstance
- ▪ Systems and structures as givens and immutable

❑ **Myth of meritocracy**
- ▪ "If you work hard you will make it"
- ▪ Denial of racism
- ▪ Two babies: Equal potential or equal opportunity?

Barriers
to achieving health equity

- **Myth of zero-sum game**
  - "If you gain, I lose"
  - Fosters competition over cooperation
  - Masks the costs of inequity
  - Hinders efforts to grow the pie
- **Limited future orientation**
  - Disregard for the children
    No *"Seven generations"* perspective
    No *"How are the children?"* focus
  - Usurious relationship with the planet
- **Myth of American exceptionalism**
  - Disinterest in learning from others
  - Sense of US entitlement

Barriers
to achieving health equity

❑ **White supremacist ideology**

- Hierarchy in human valuation

- "White" as the ideal and the norm

- Sense of "White" entitlement

- Dehumanization of people of color

- Fear at the "browning" of America
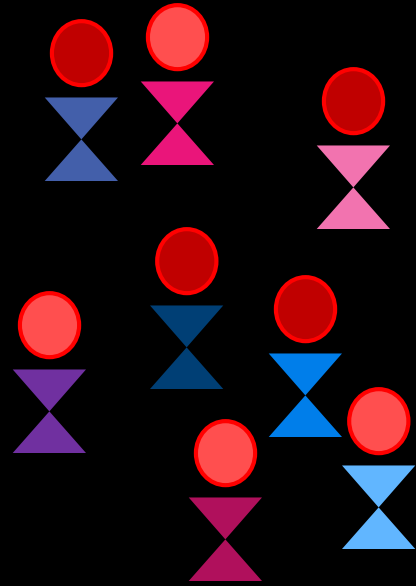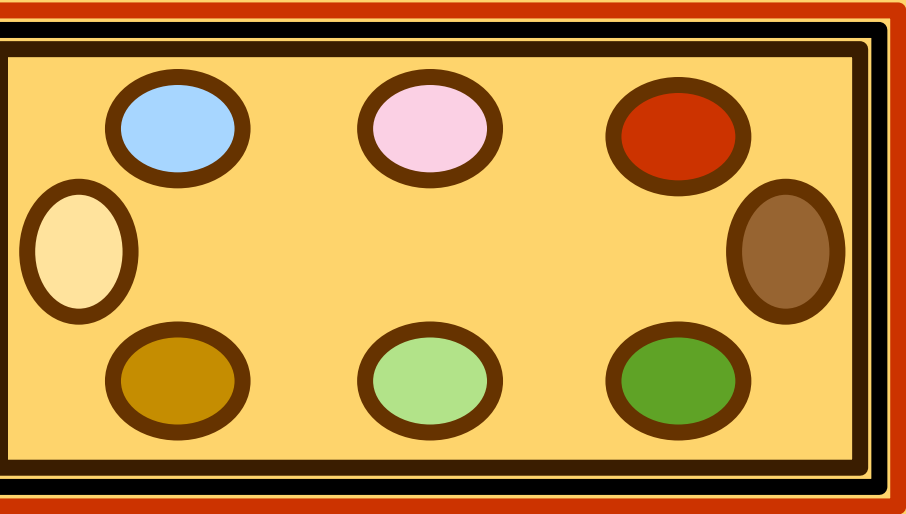
What can we do today?
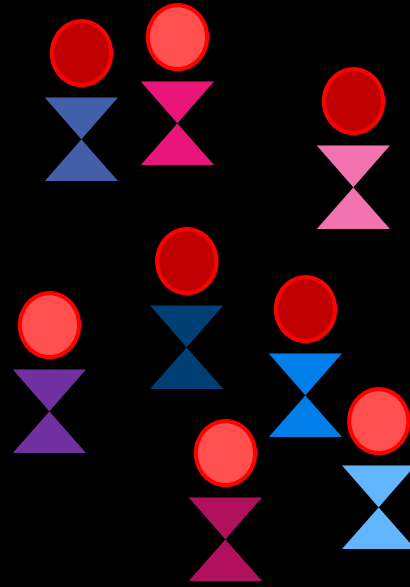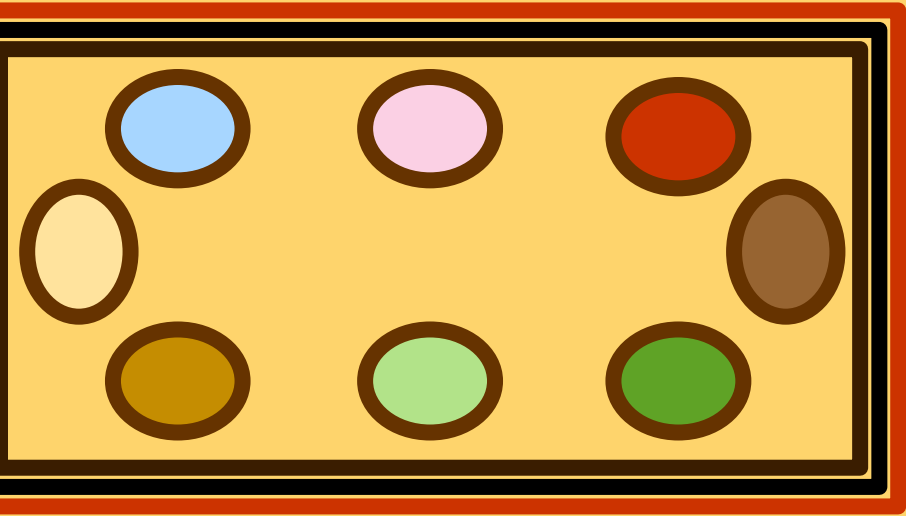
Look for evidence of
two-sided signs
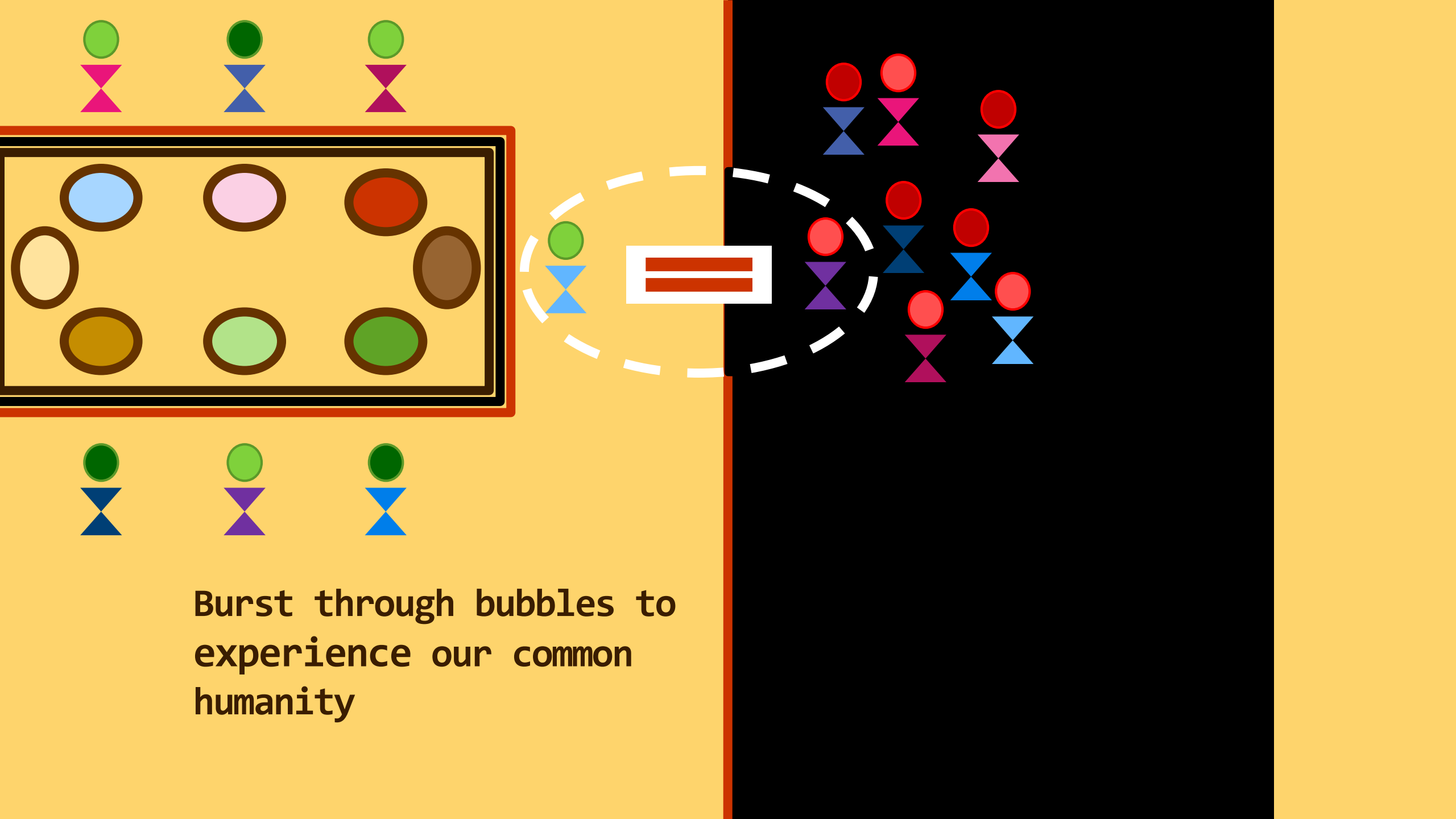
Burst through bubbles to experience our common humanity

Be interested
Believe
Join in
The stories of others

See "the absence of"

Reveal inaction
in the face of need
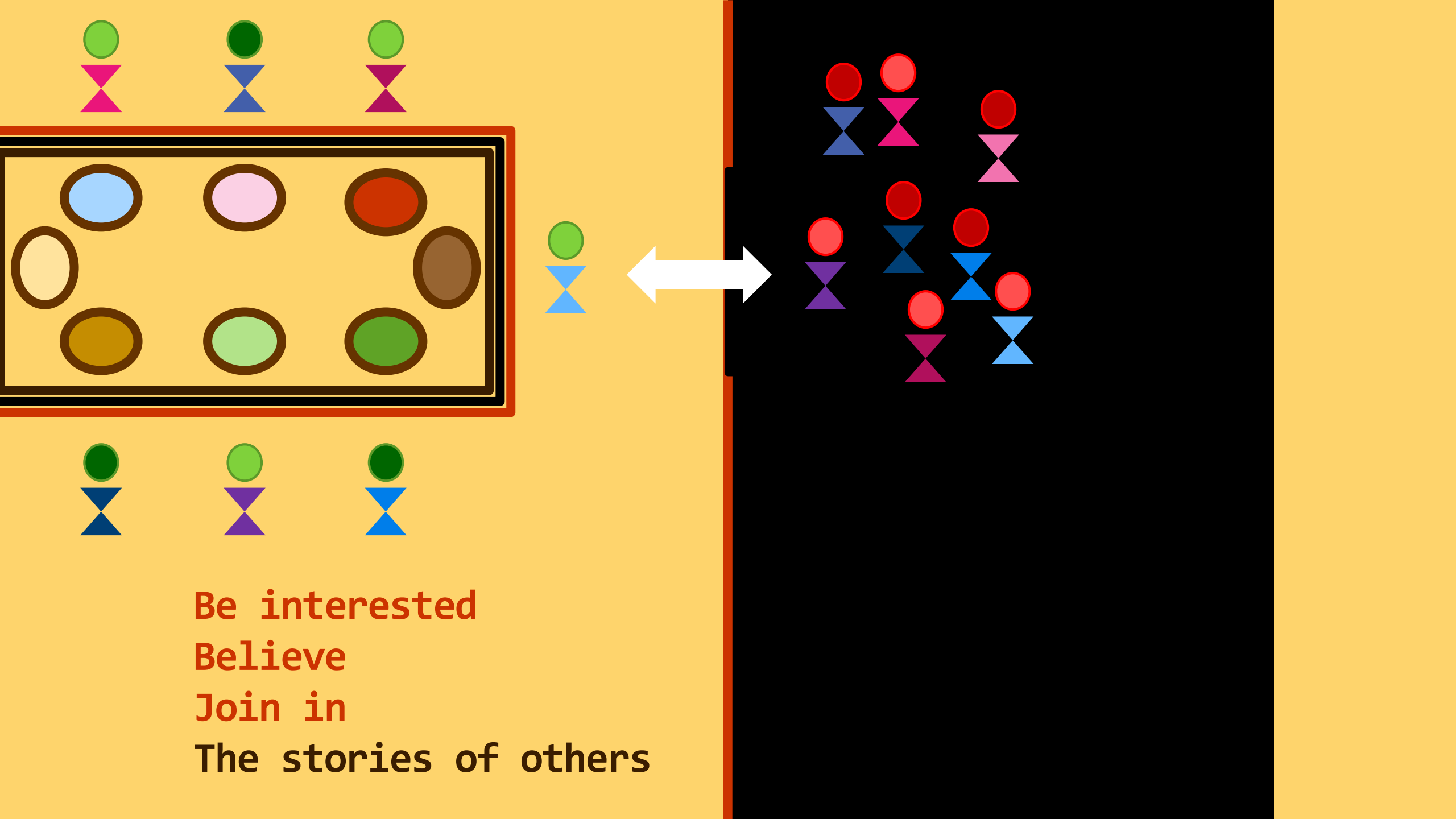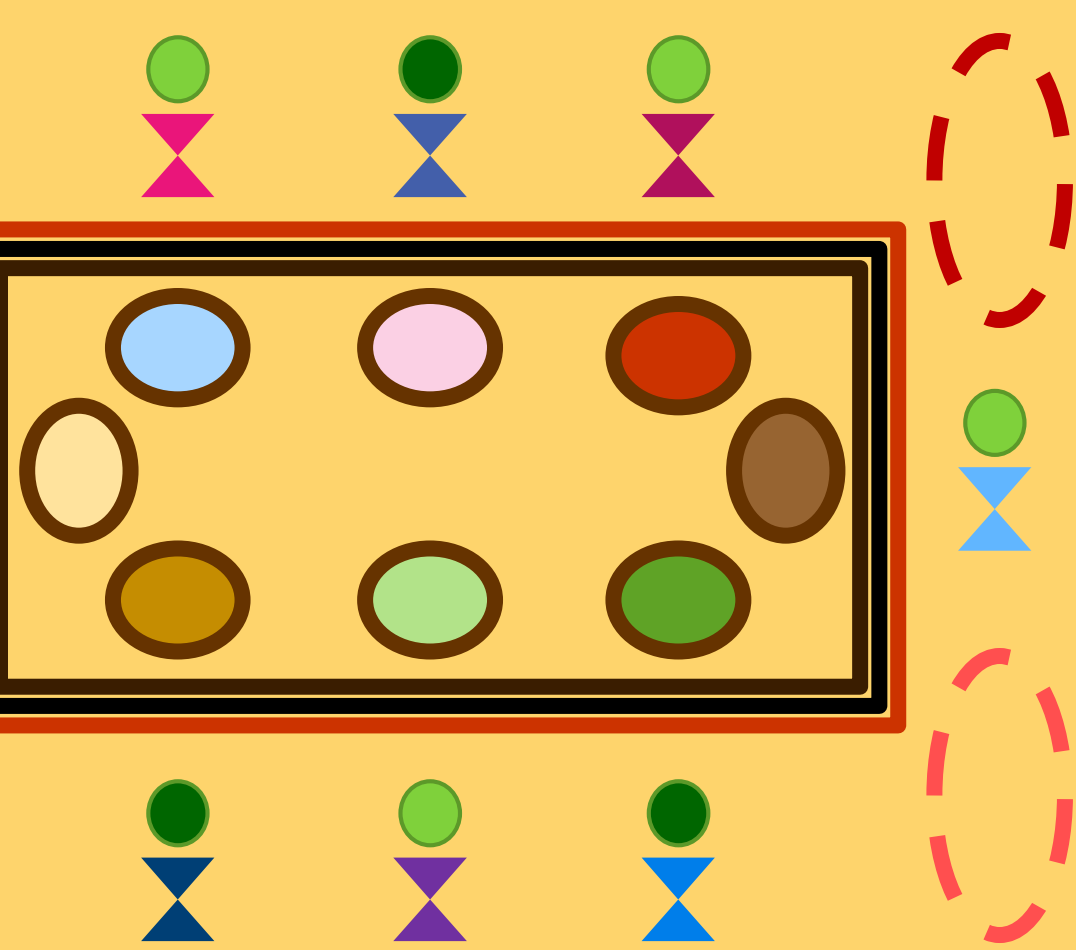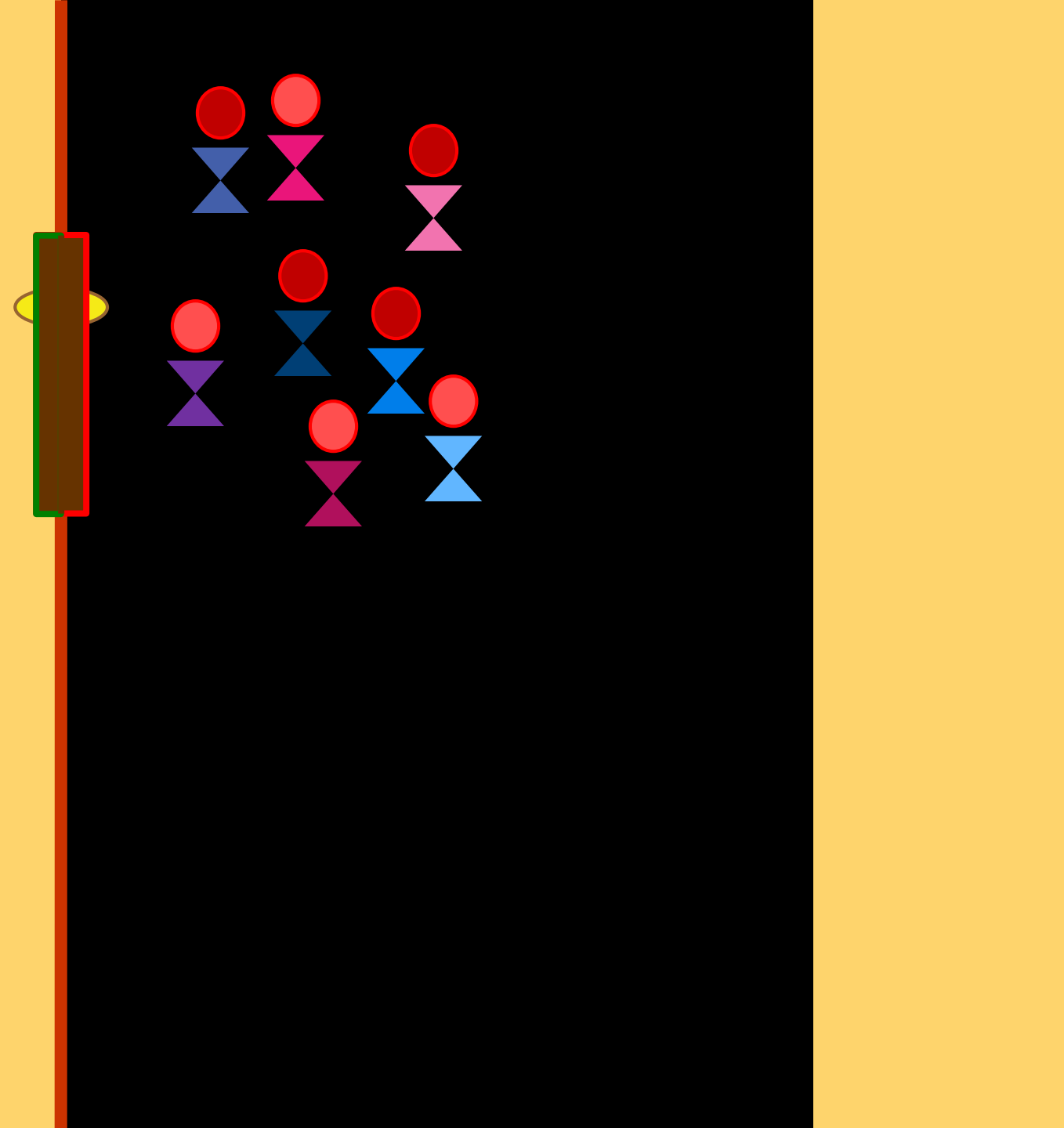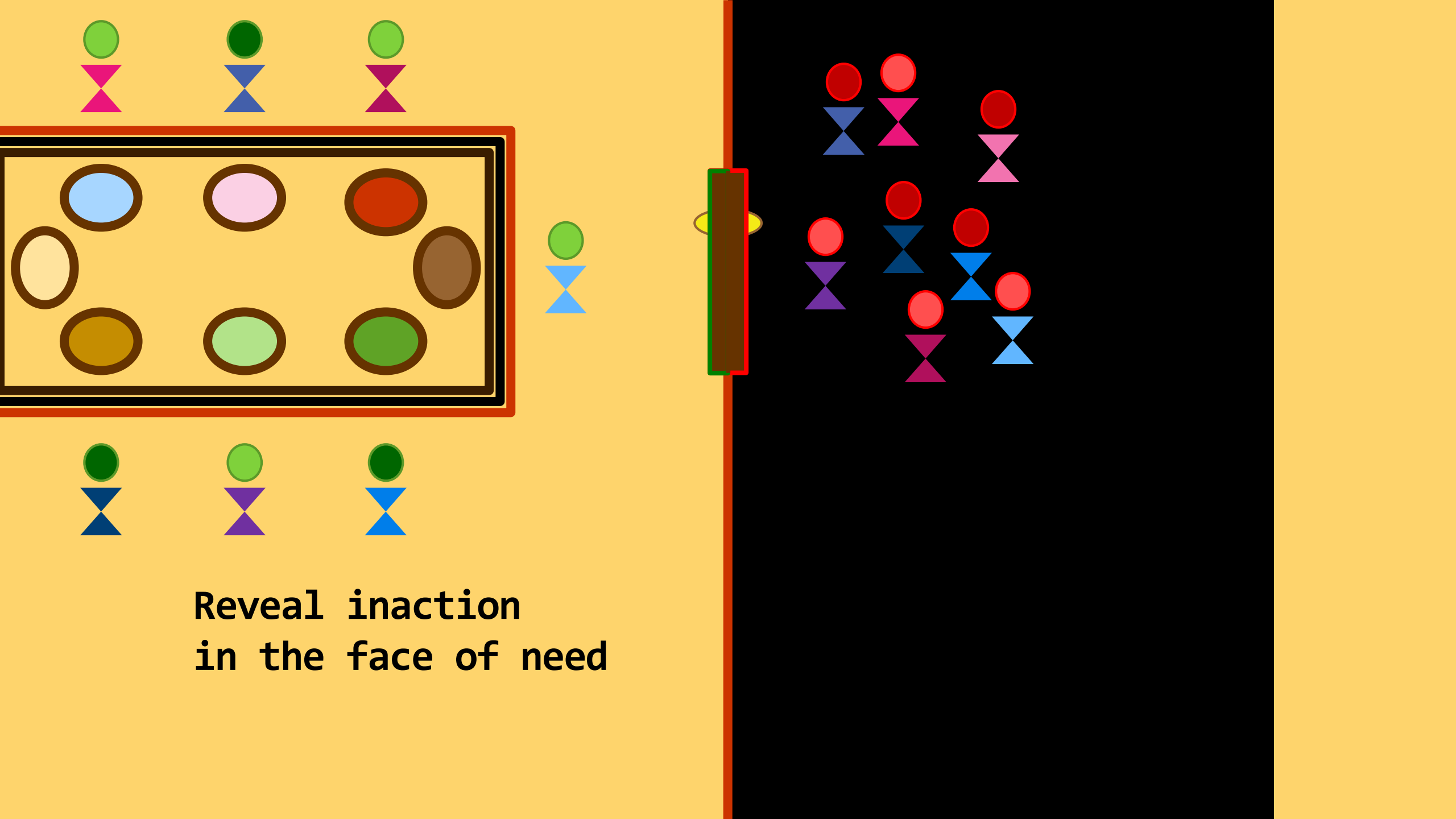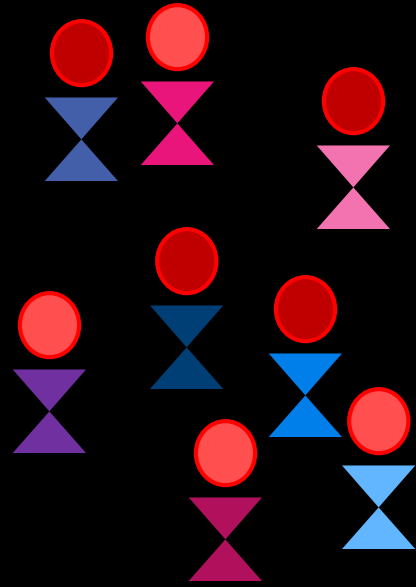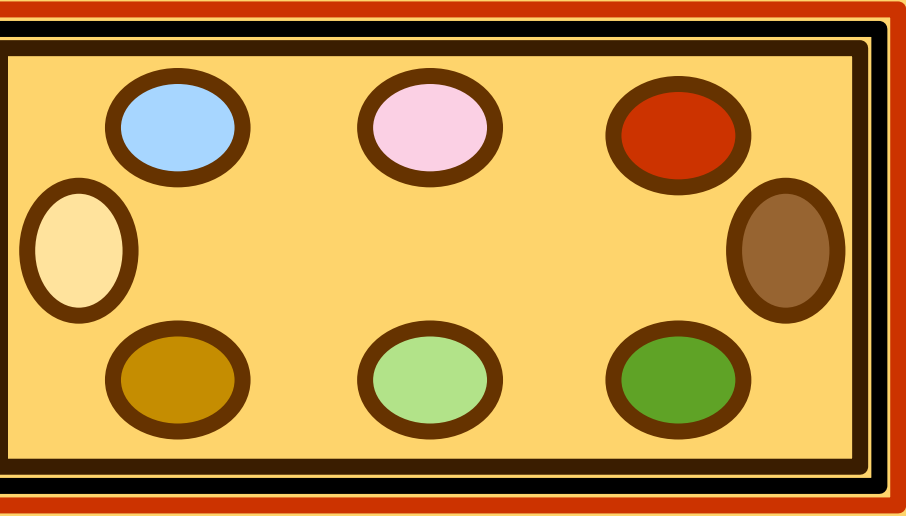
Know our
power
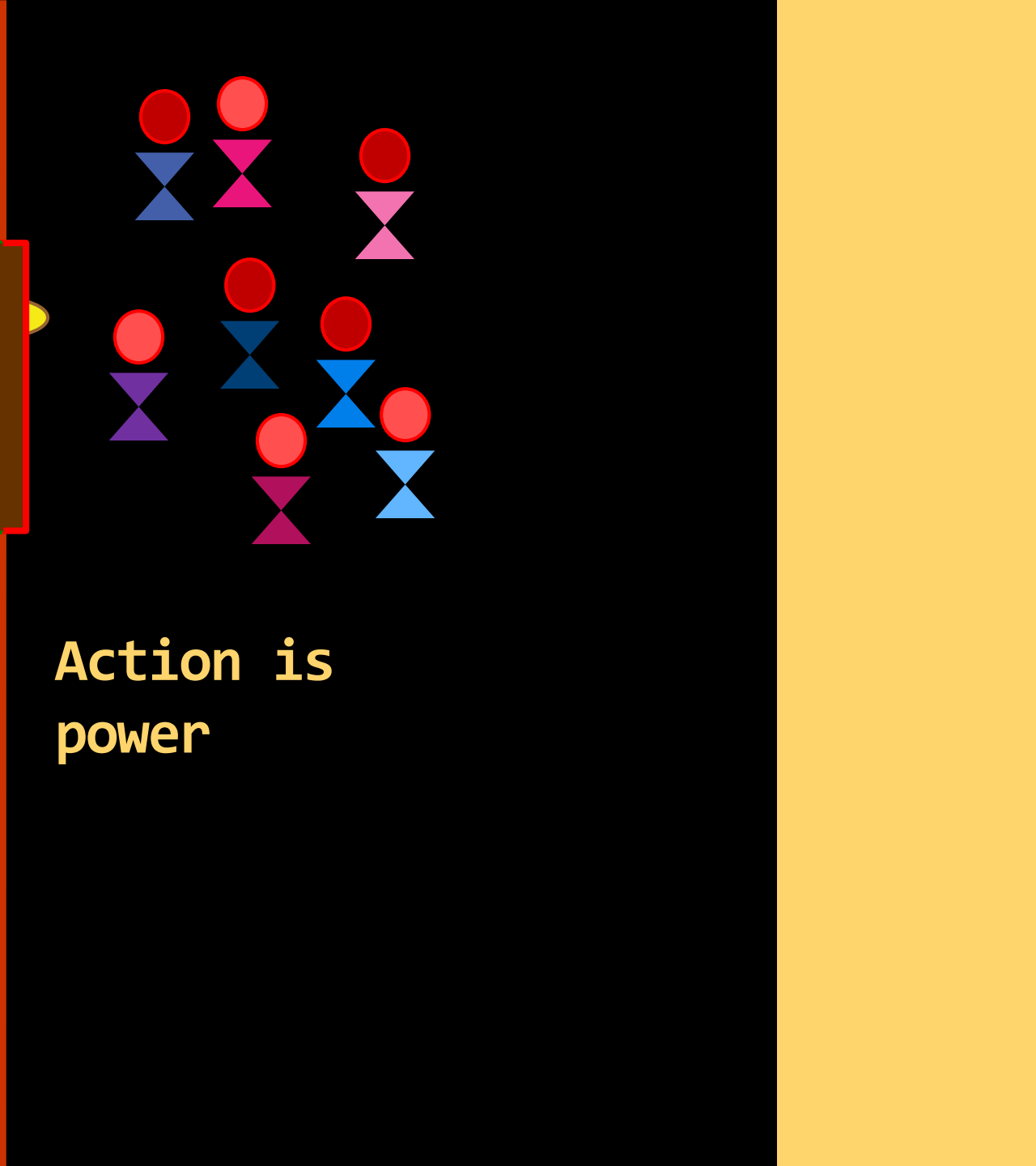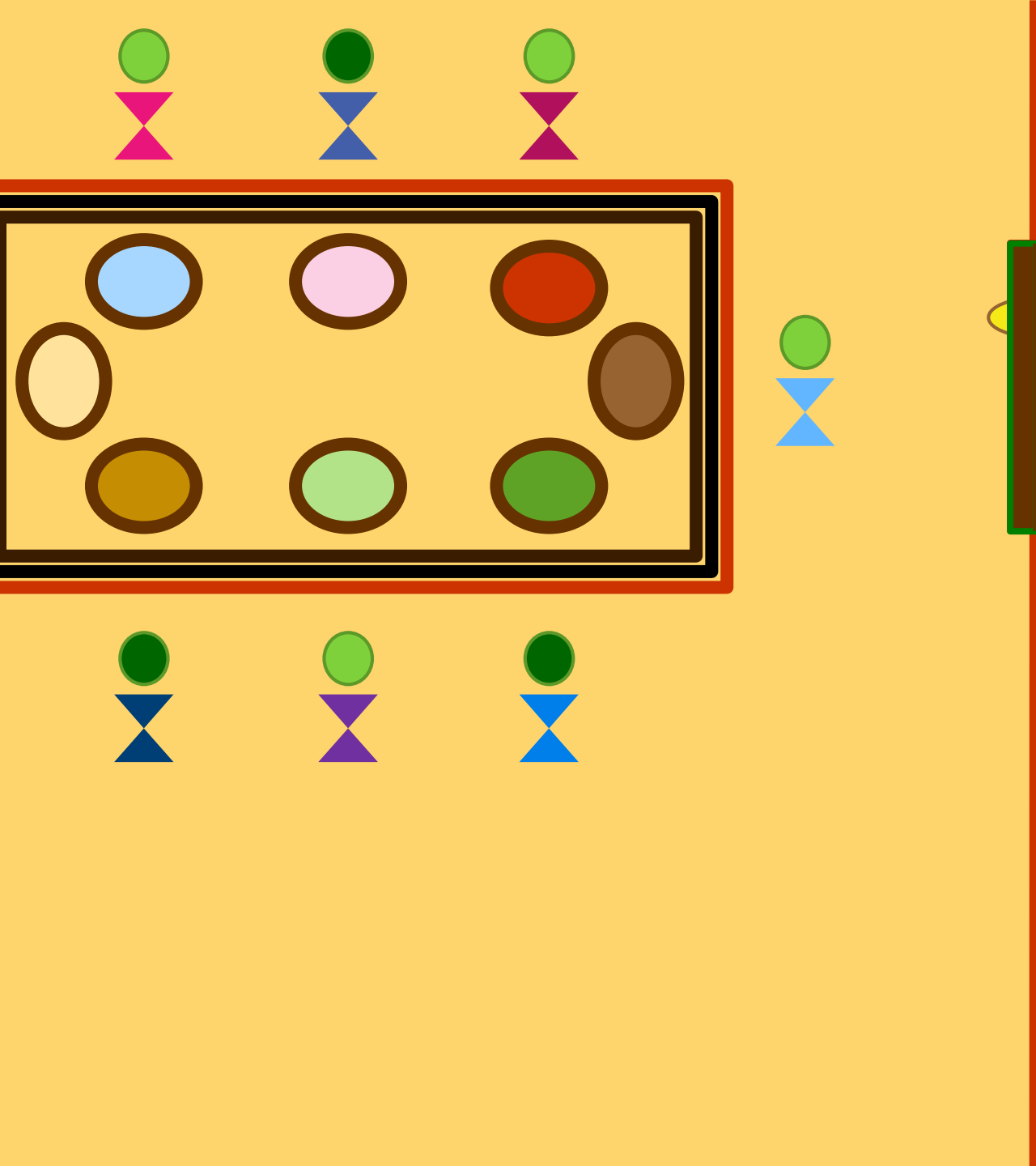
Action is
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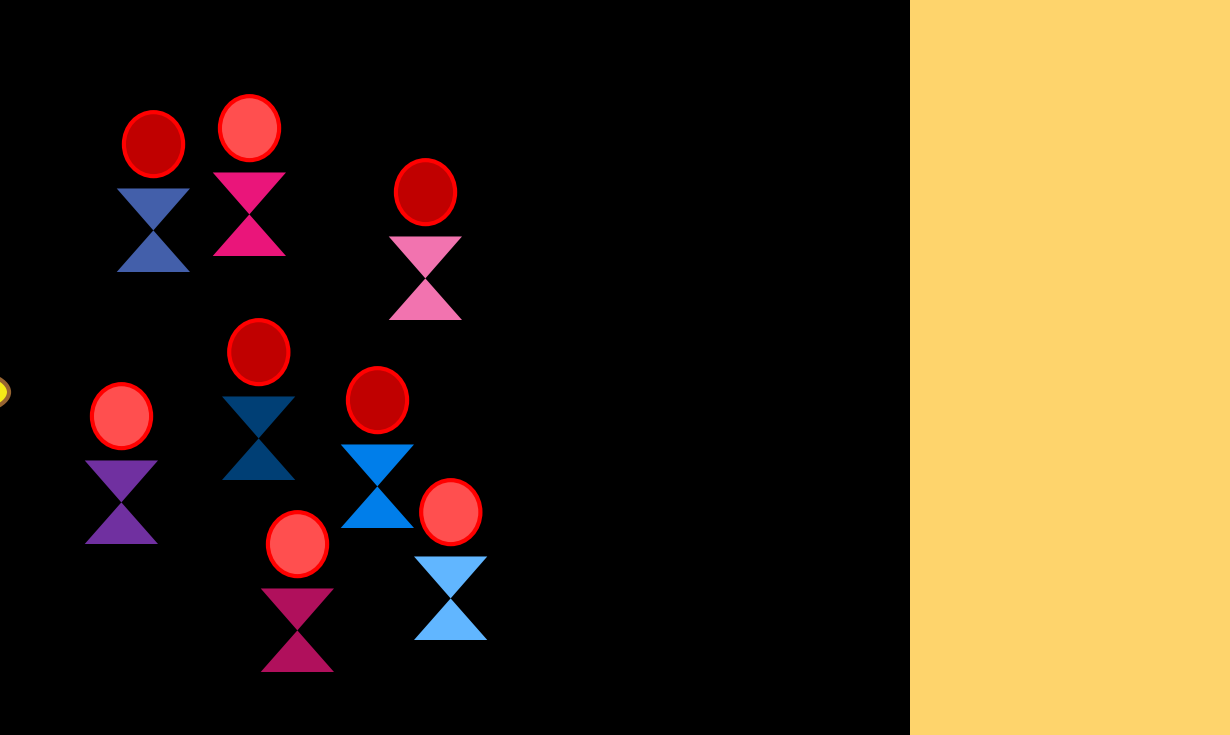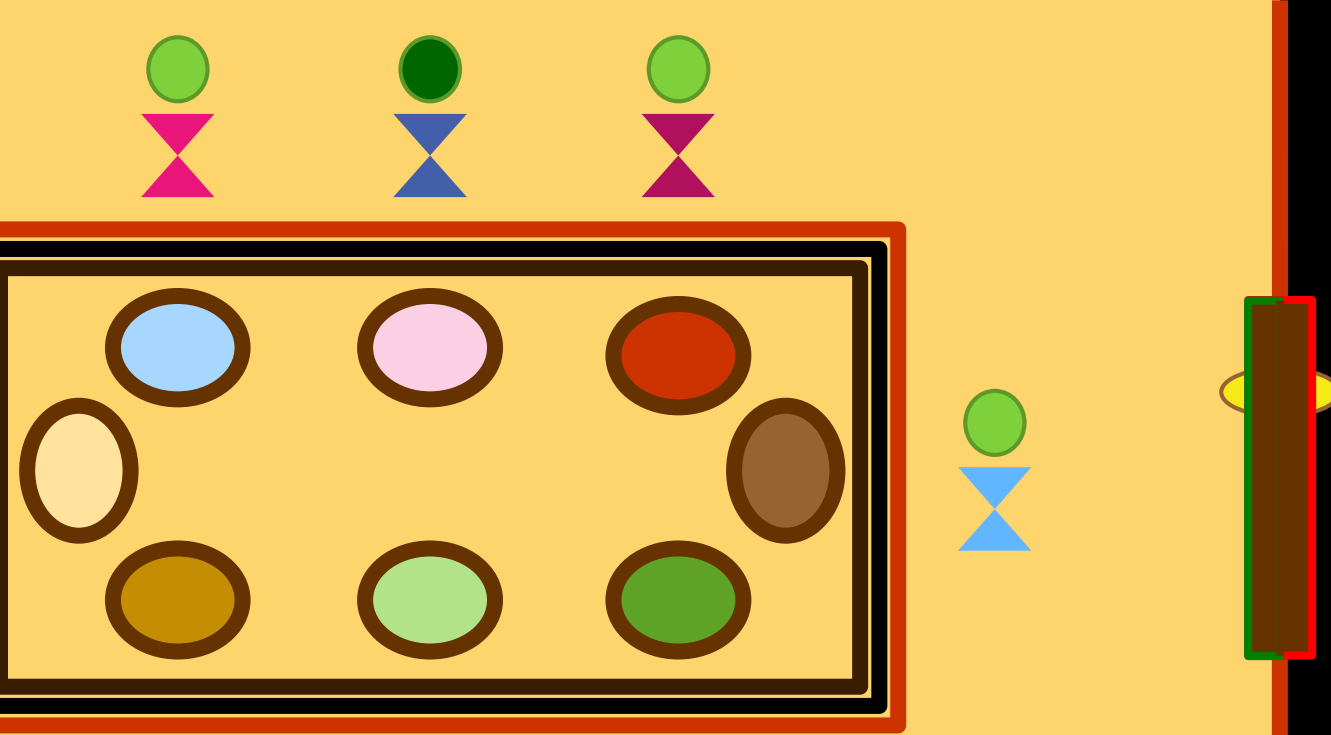
Collective action is power
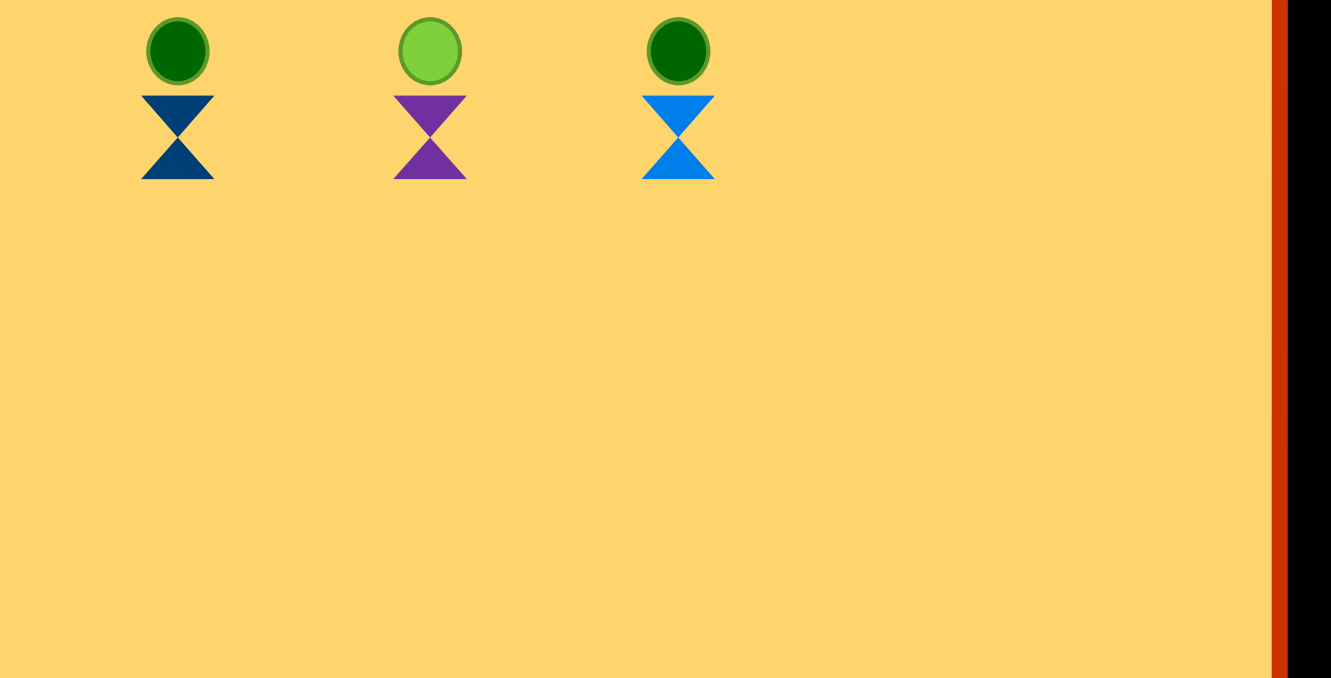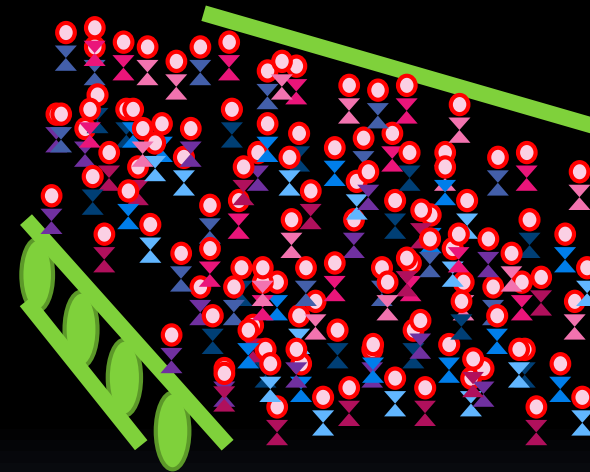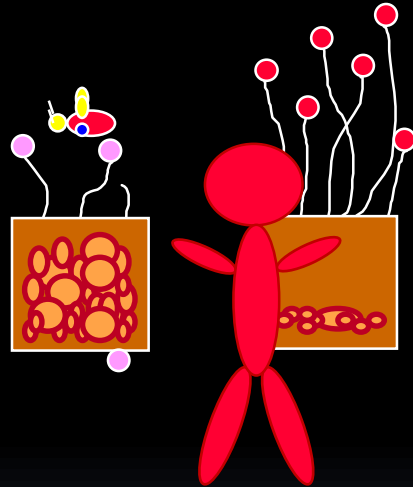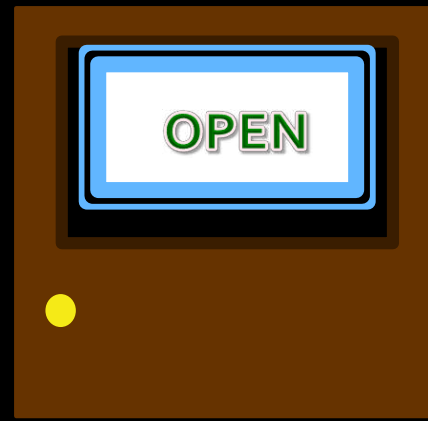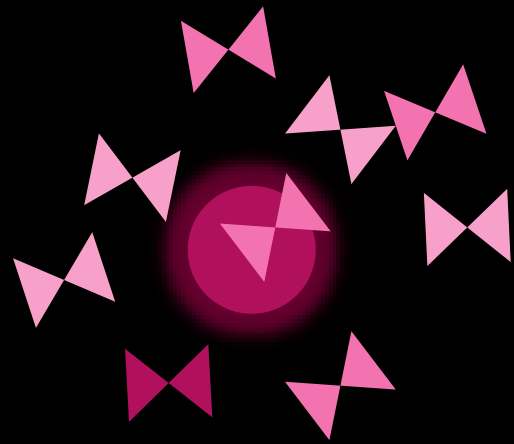
Telling Stories:
Allegories on "Race" and Racism
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNhcY6fTyBM

Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD

2019-2020 Radcliffe Fellow
Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University

Past President
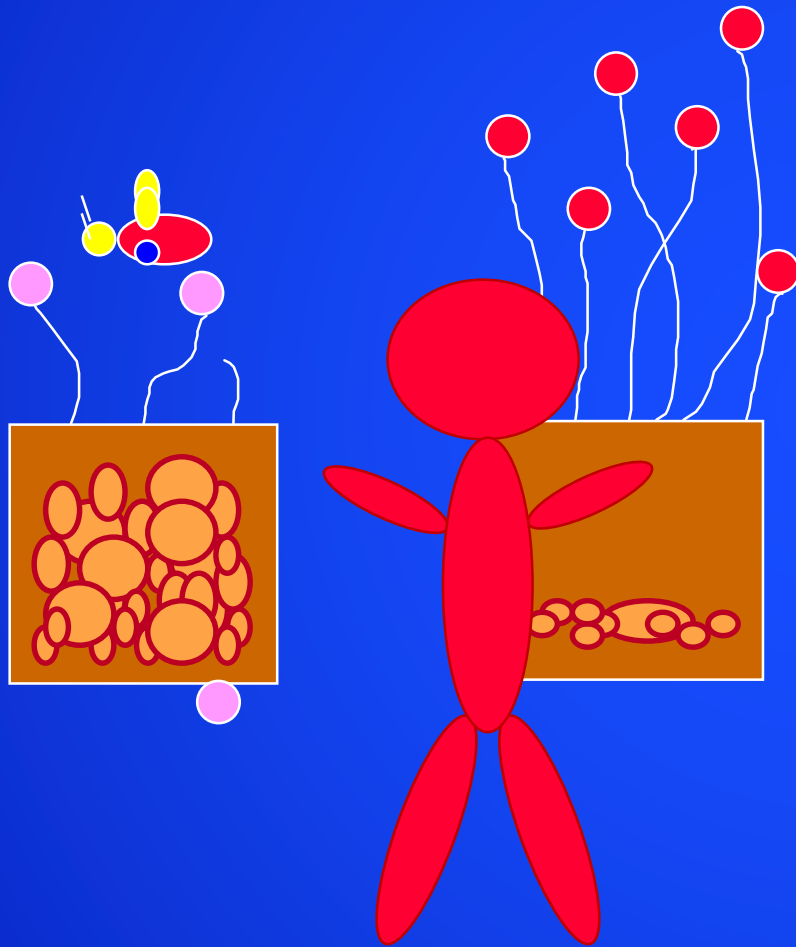*American Public Health Association*

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**Levels of racism:
A theoretic framework and
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**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QFCcChCS
MU**