

Achieving Health Equity

naming and addressing
the impacts of racism on health

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Keynote Address

All For One Summit

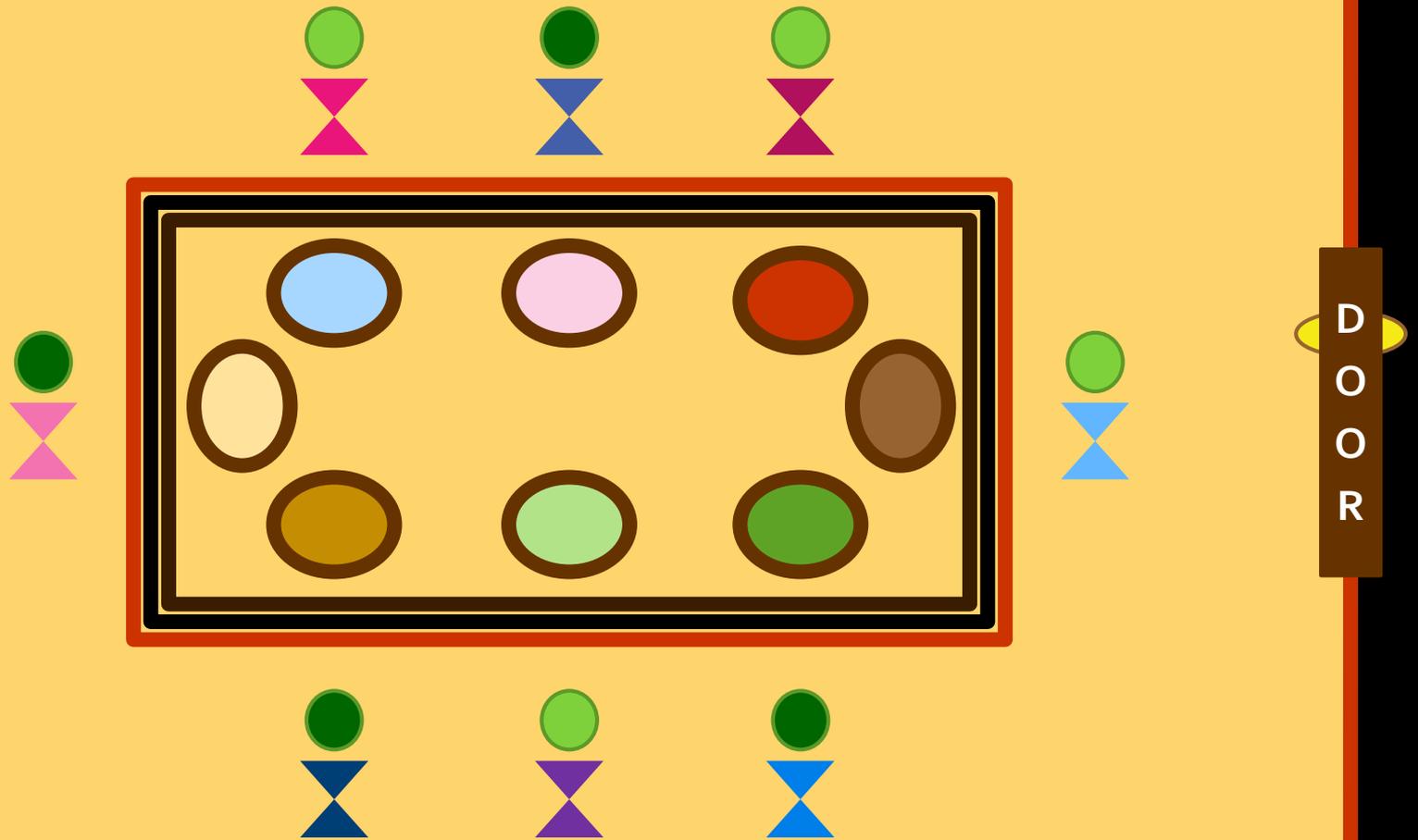
Allegheny County Health Department *Division of Maternal and Child Health*
Allegheny County Infant Mortality Collaborative

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

December 4, 2018

Dual Reality: A restaurant saga





I looked up and noticed a sign . . .

OPEN

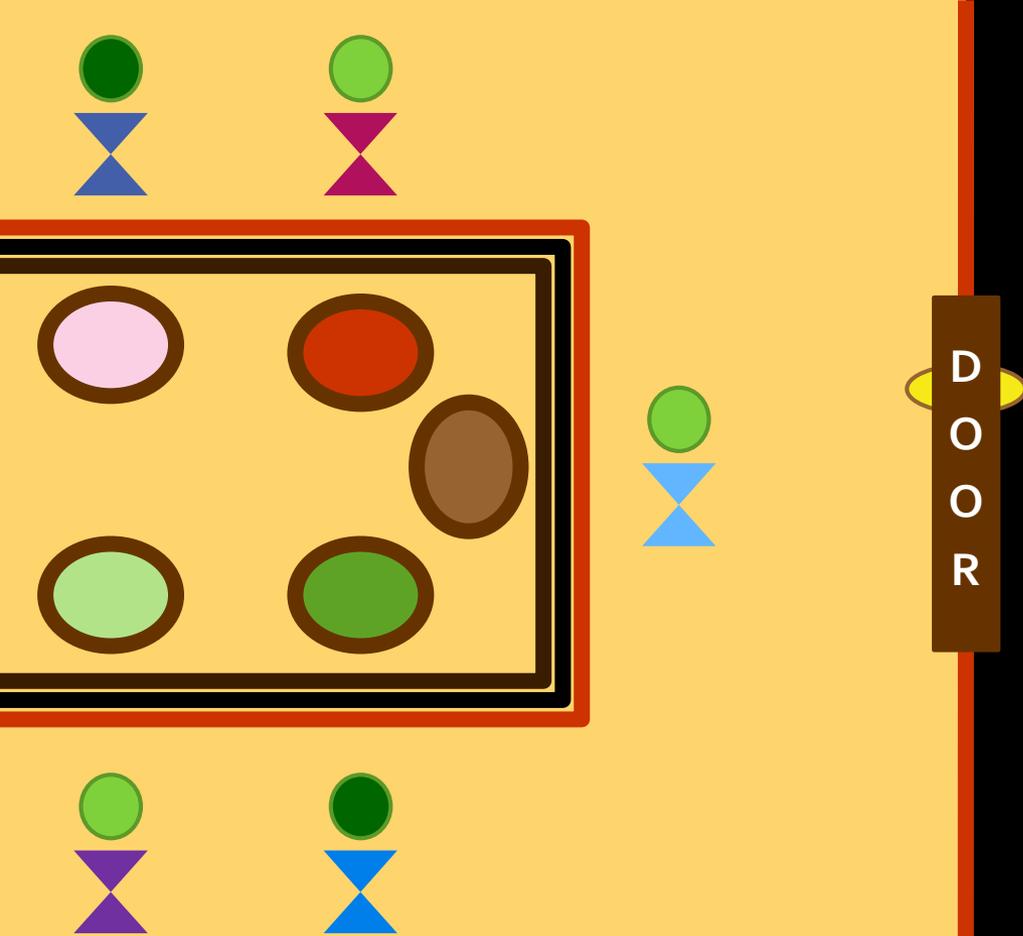




CLOSED

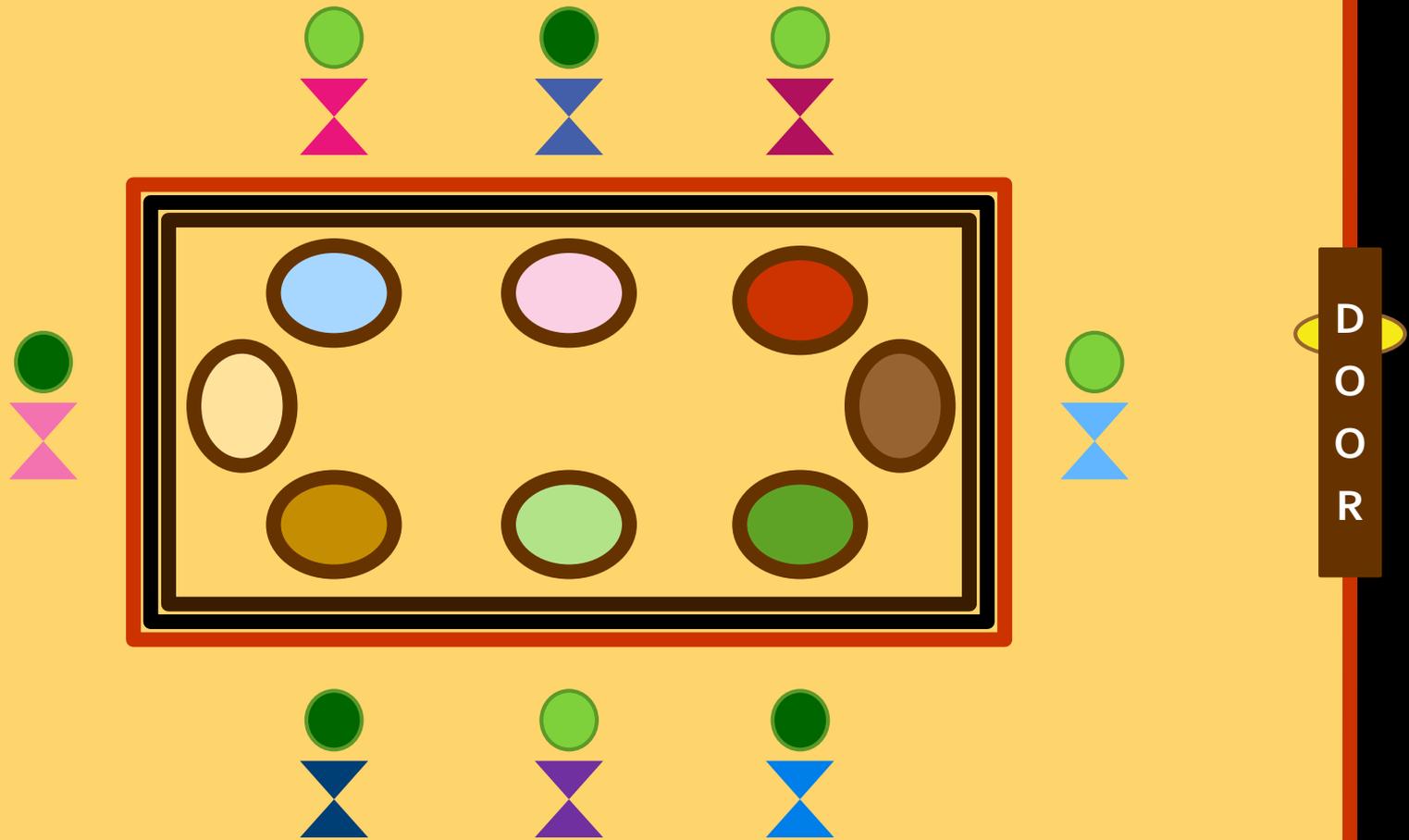


Racism structures “Open/Closed”
signs in our society.



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

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

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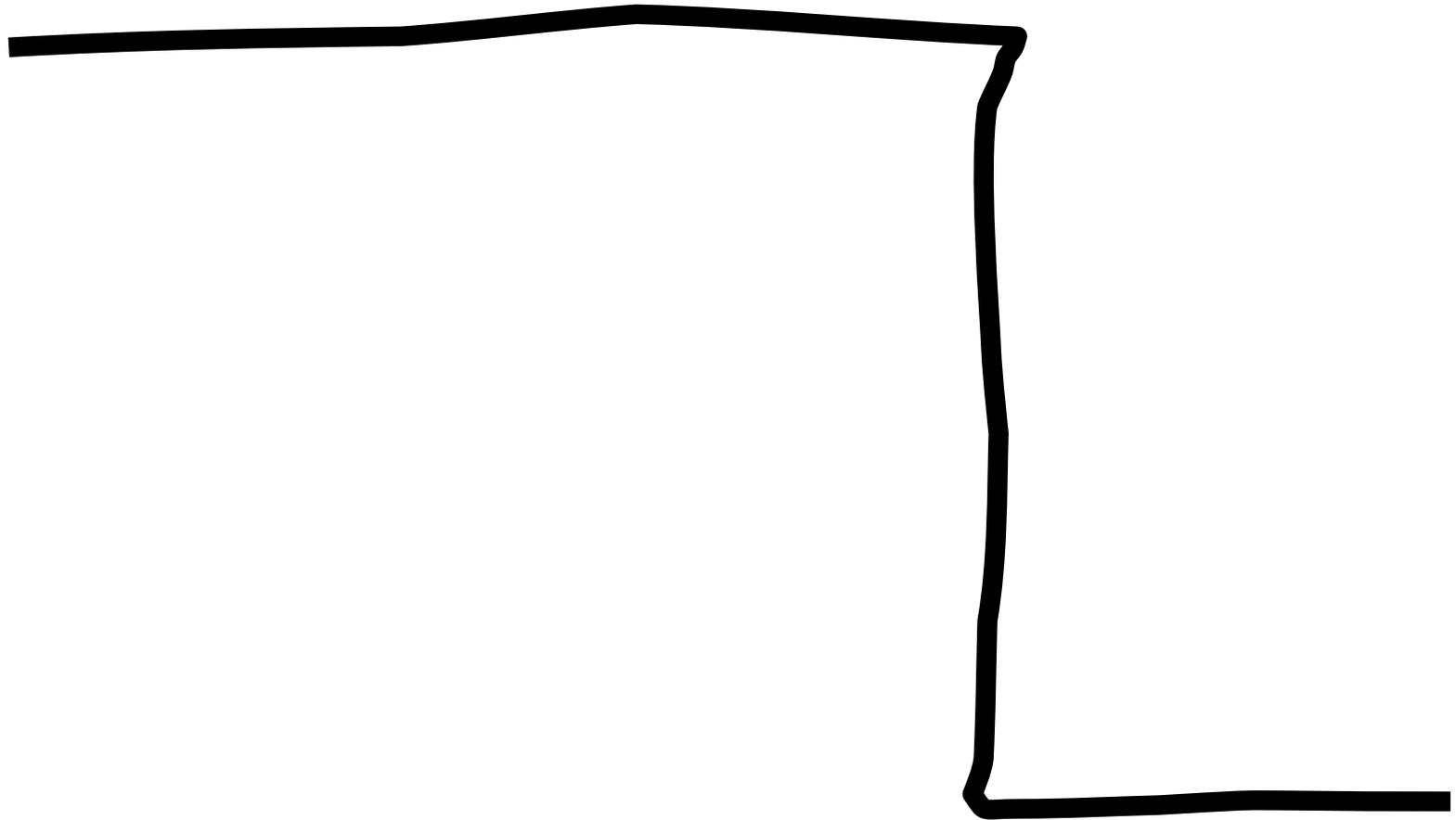
- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities

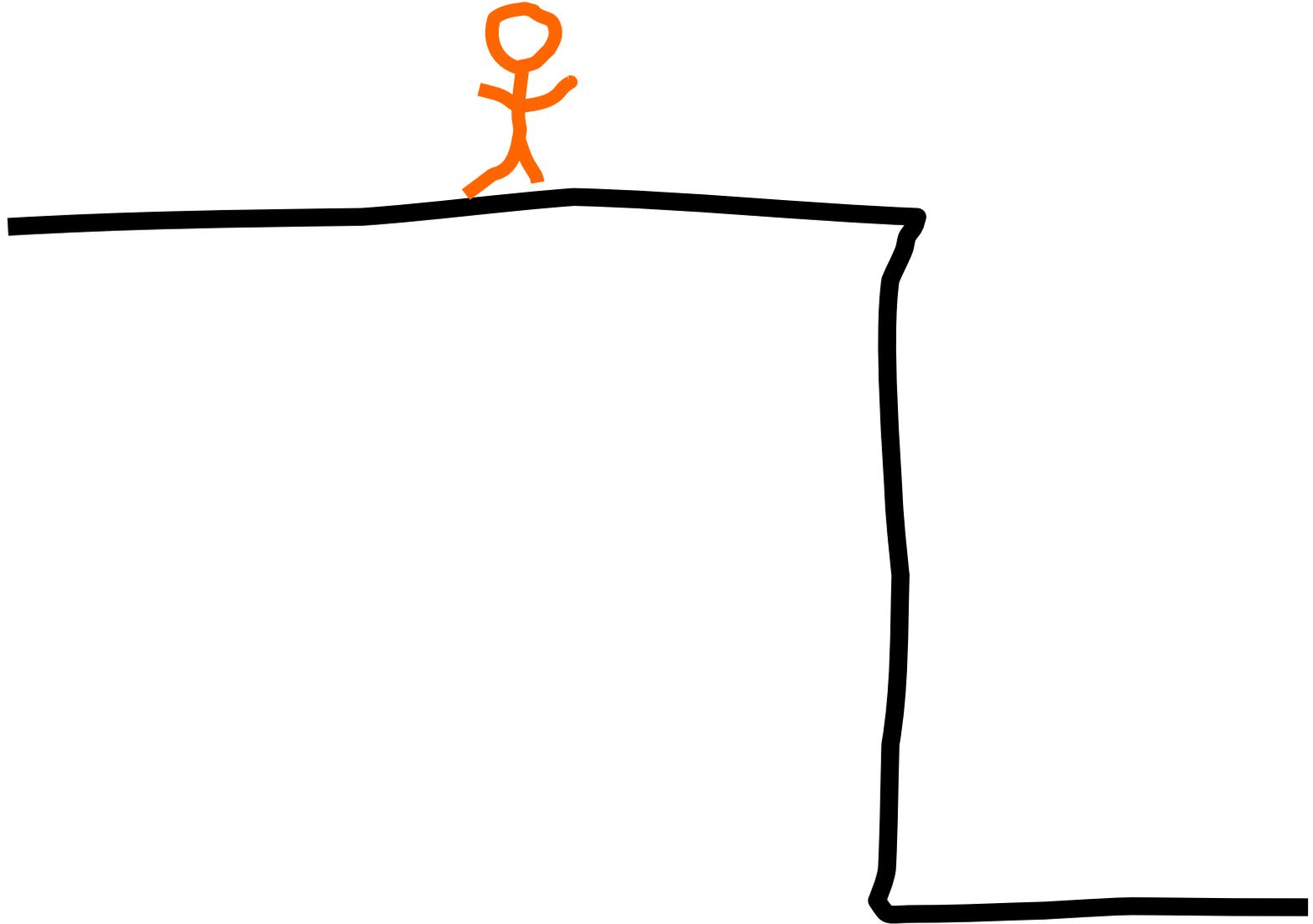
What is racism?

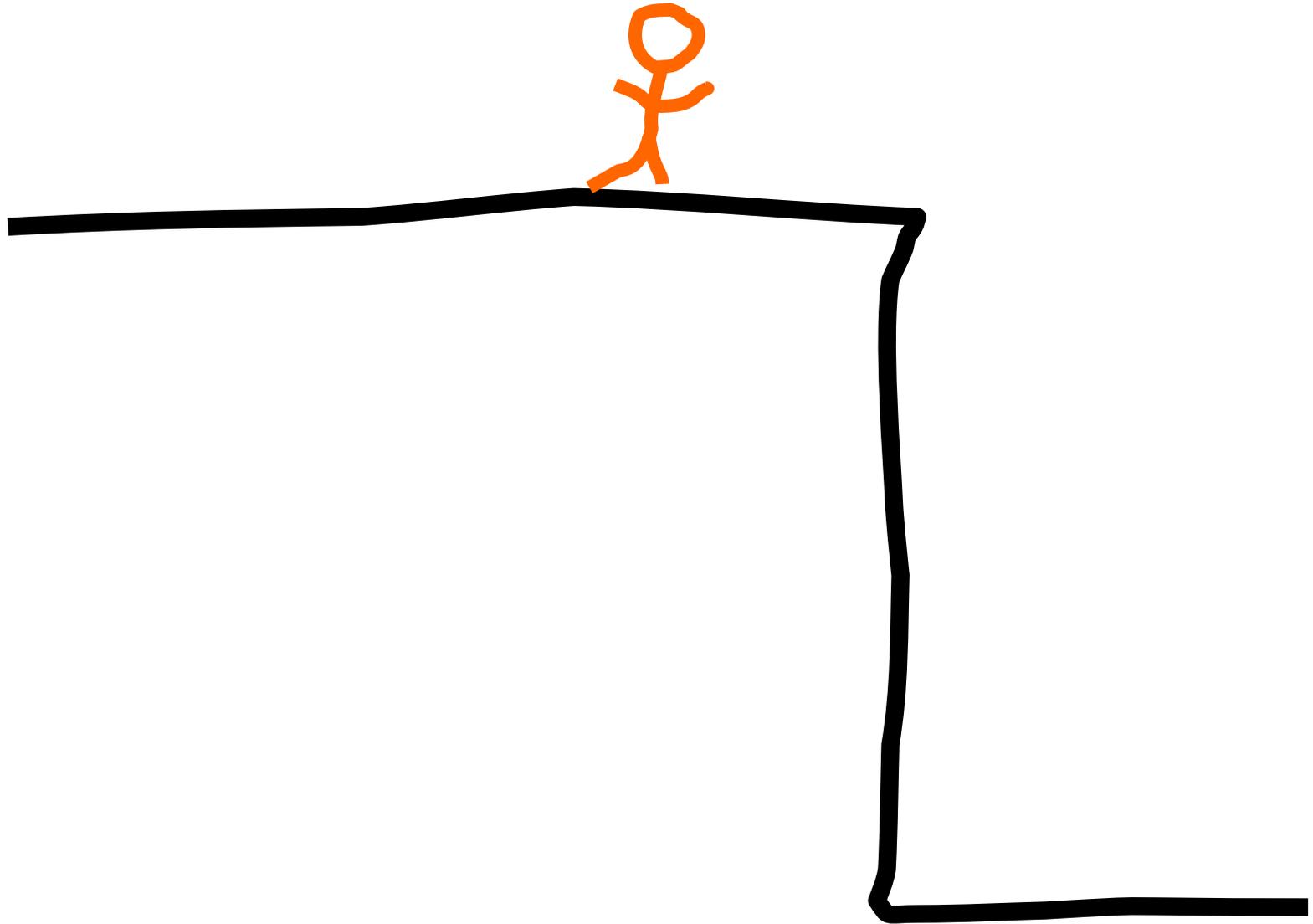
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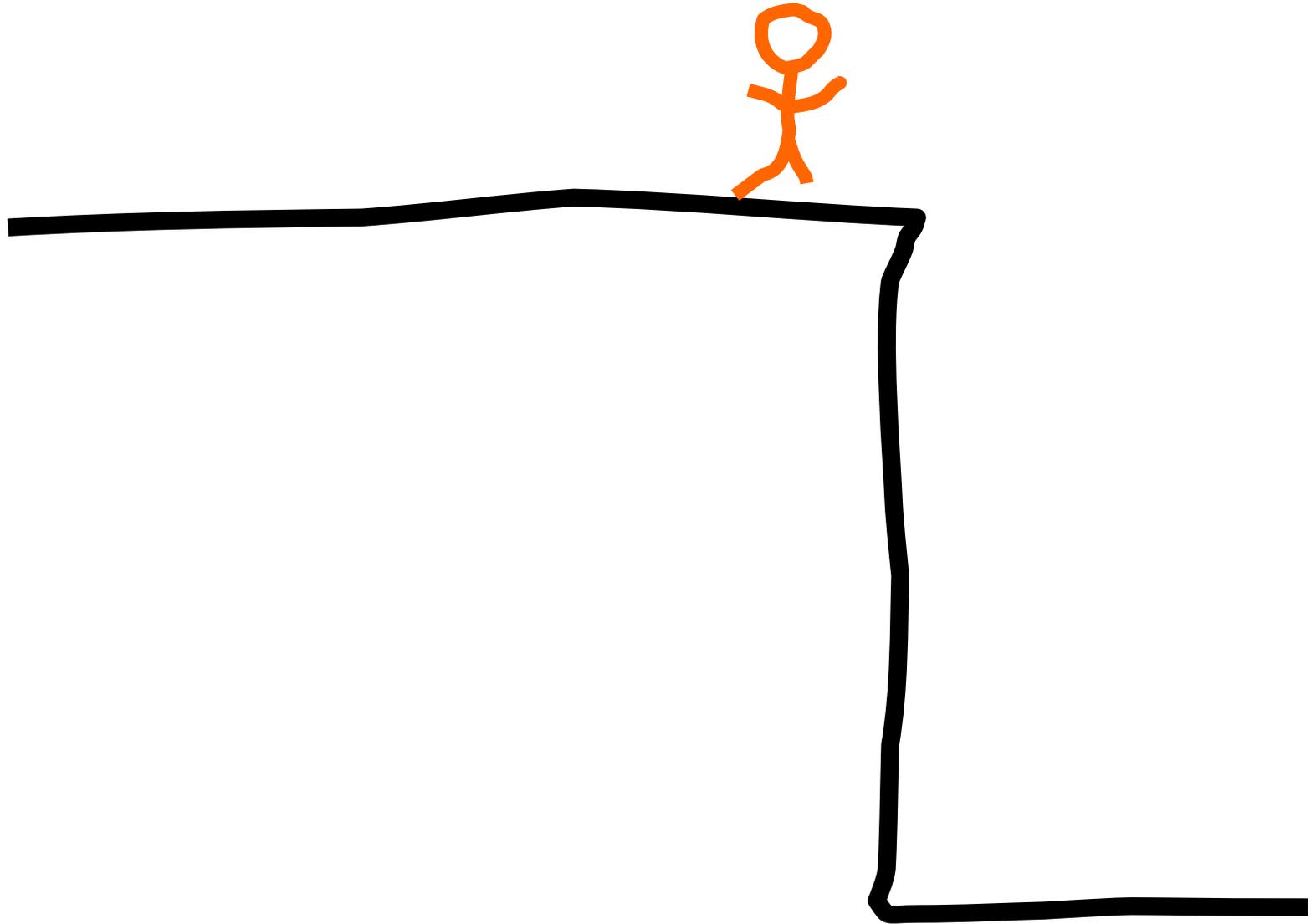
- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources

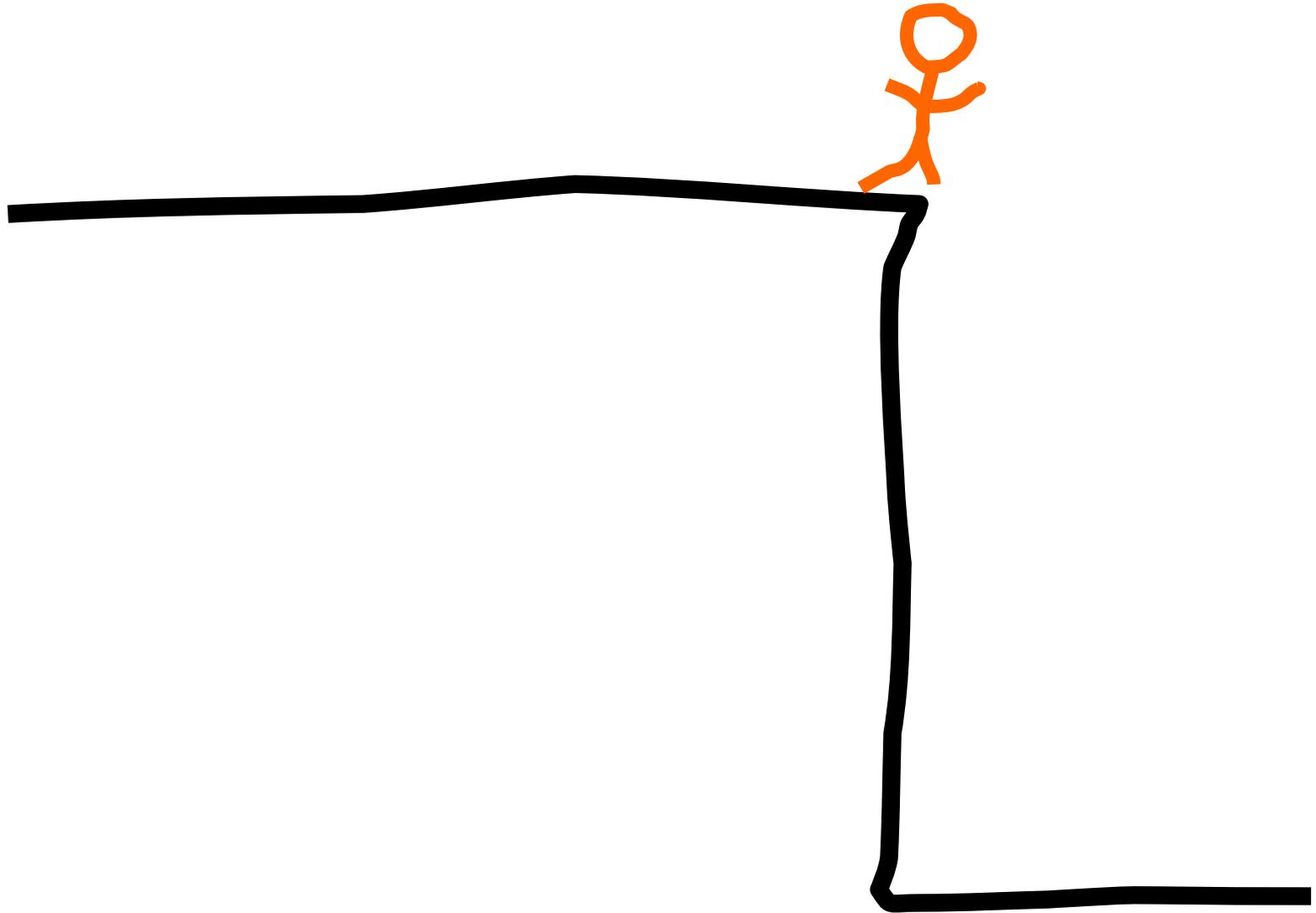
Levels of health intervention

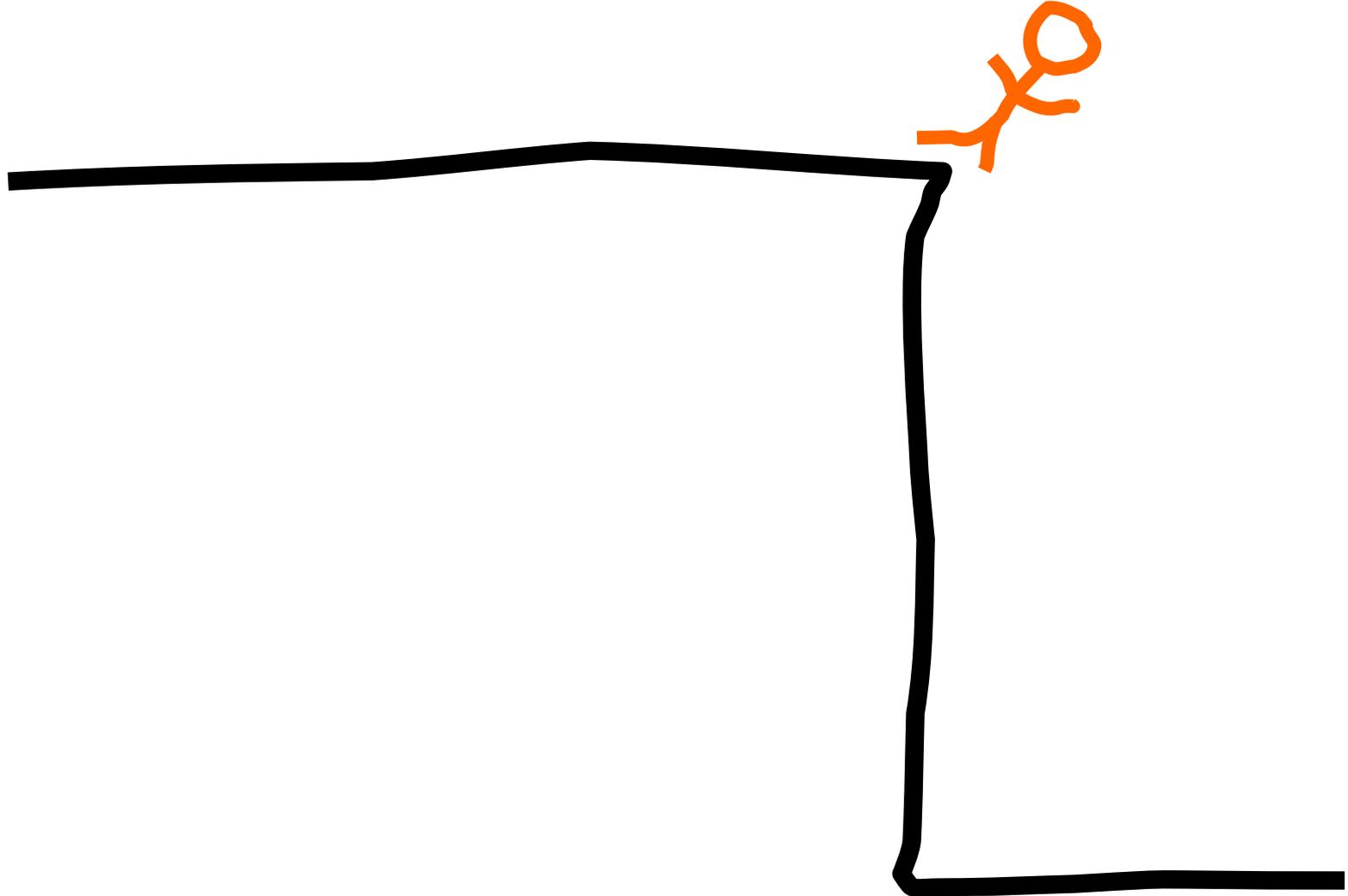


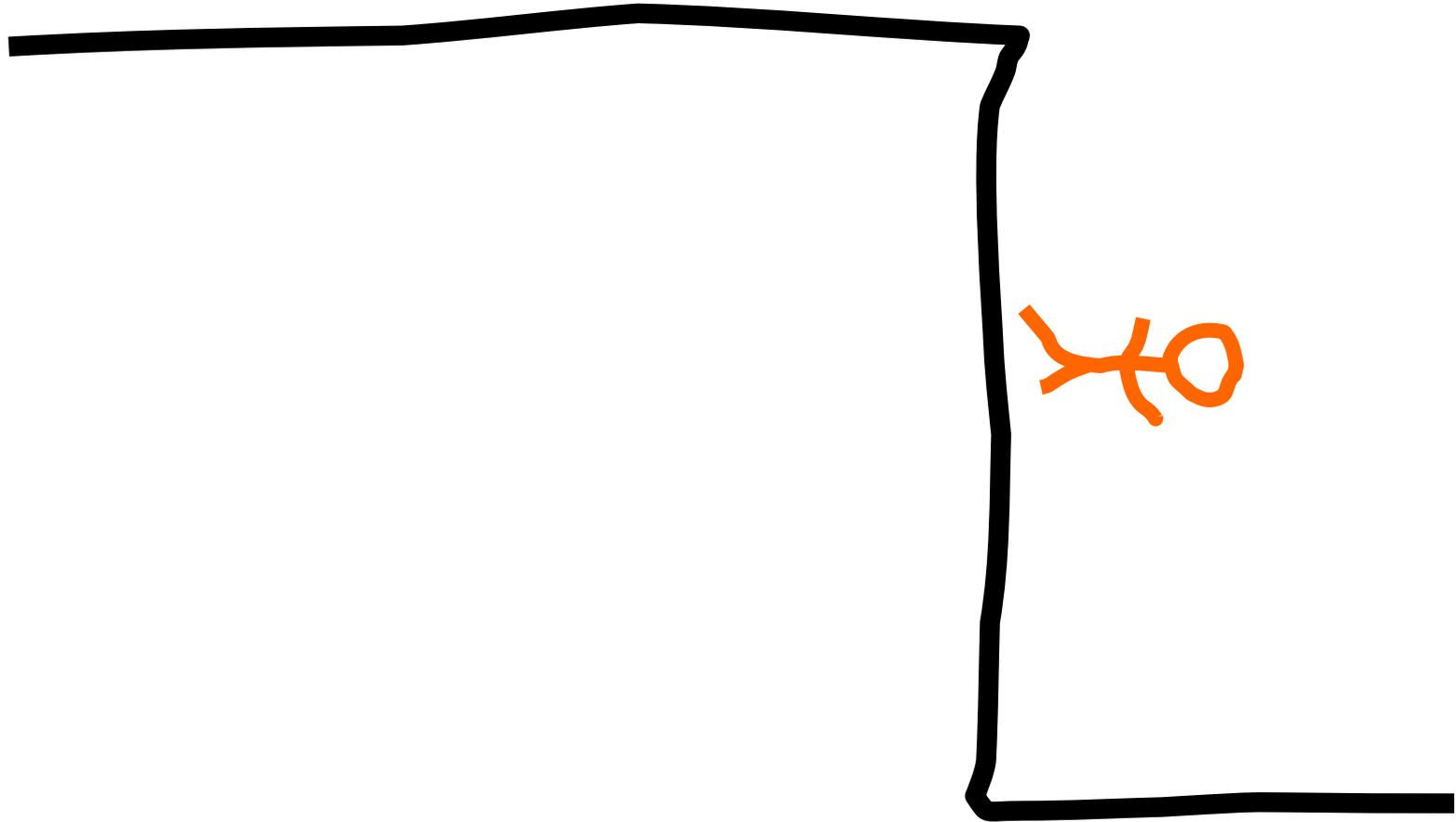


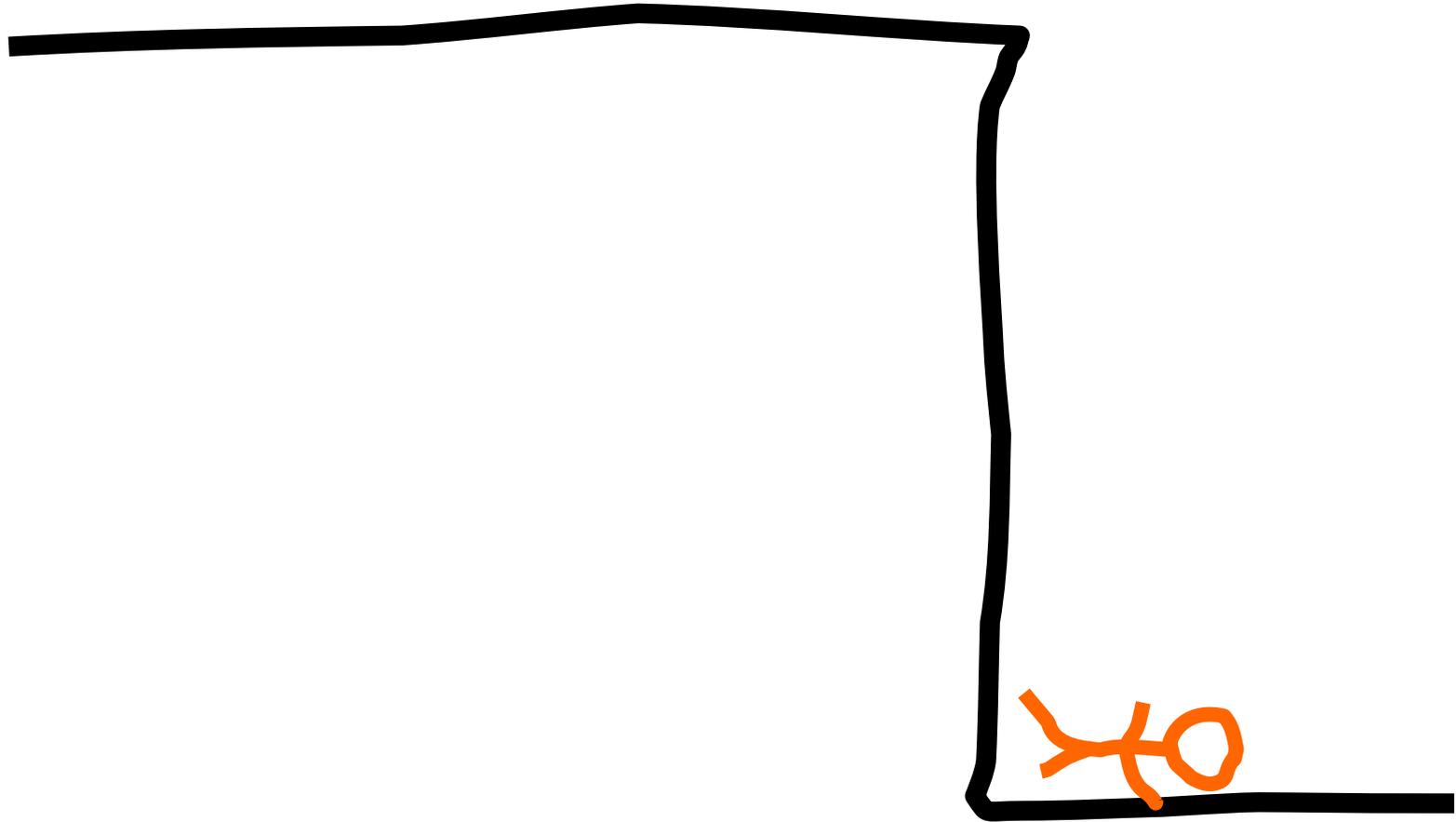


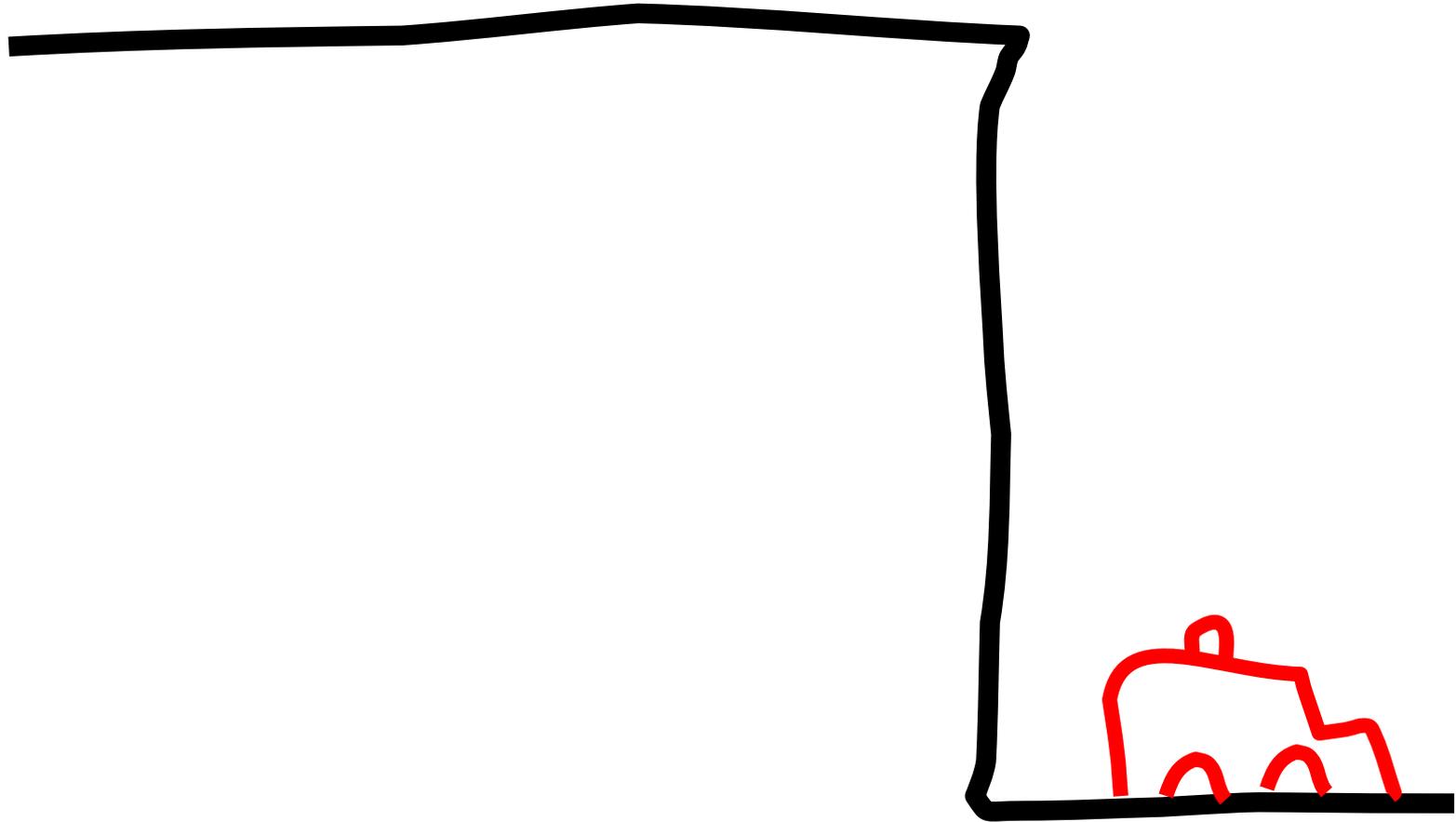


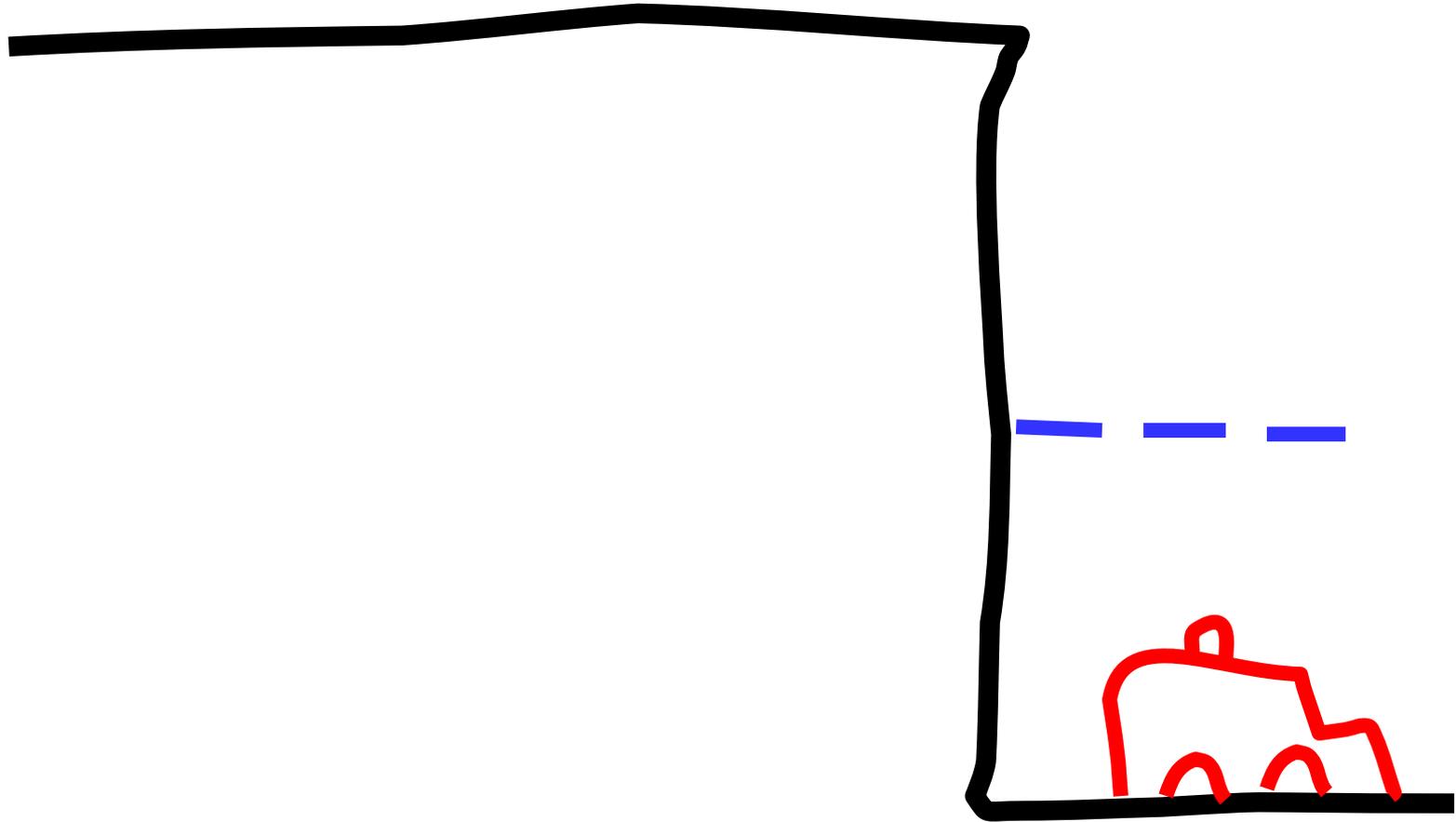


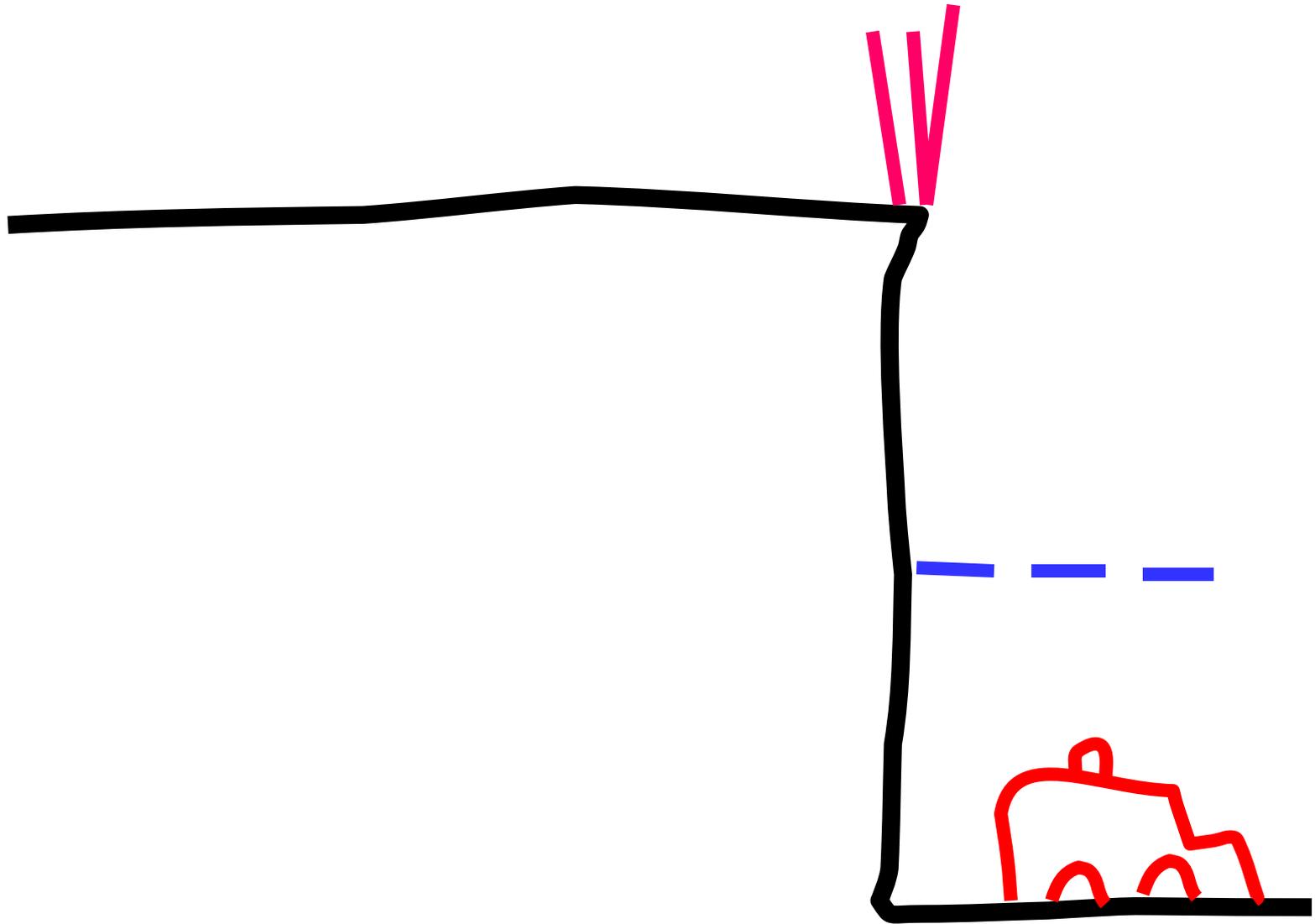


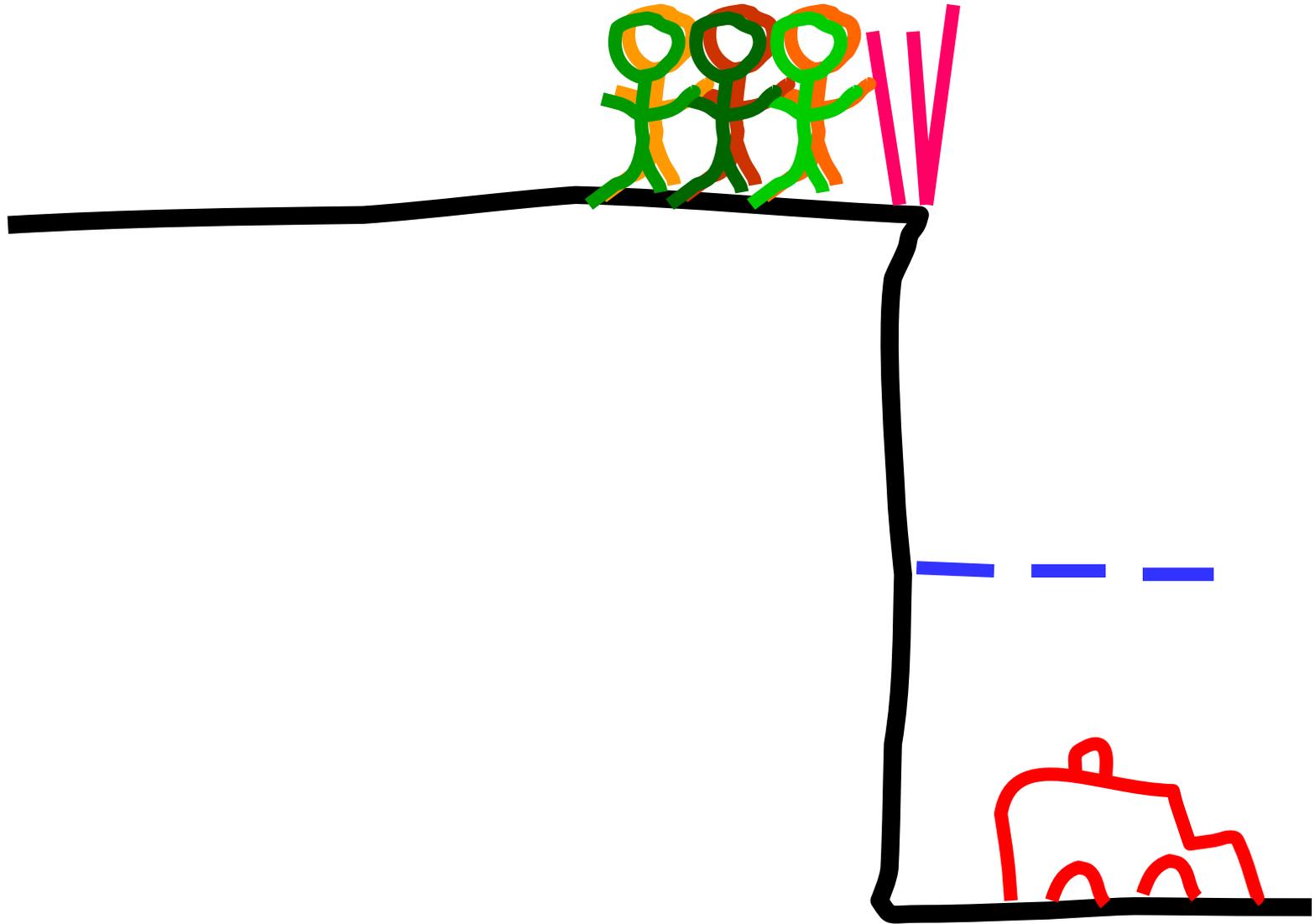


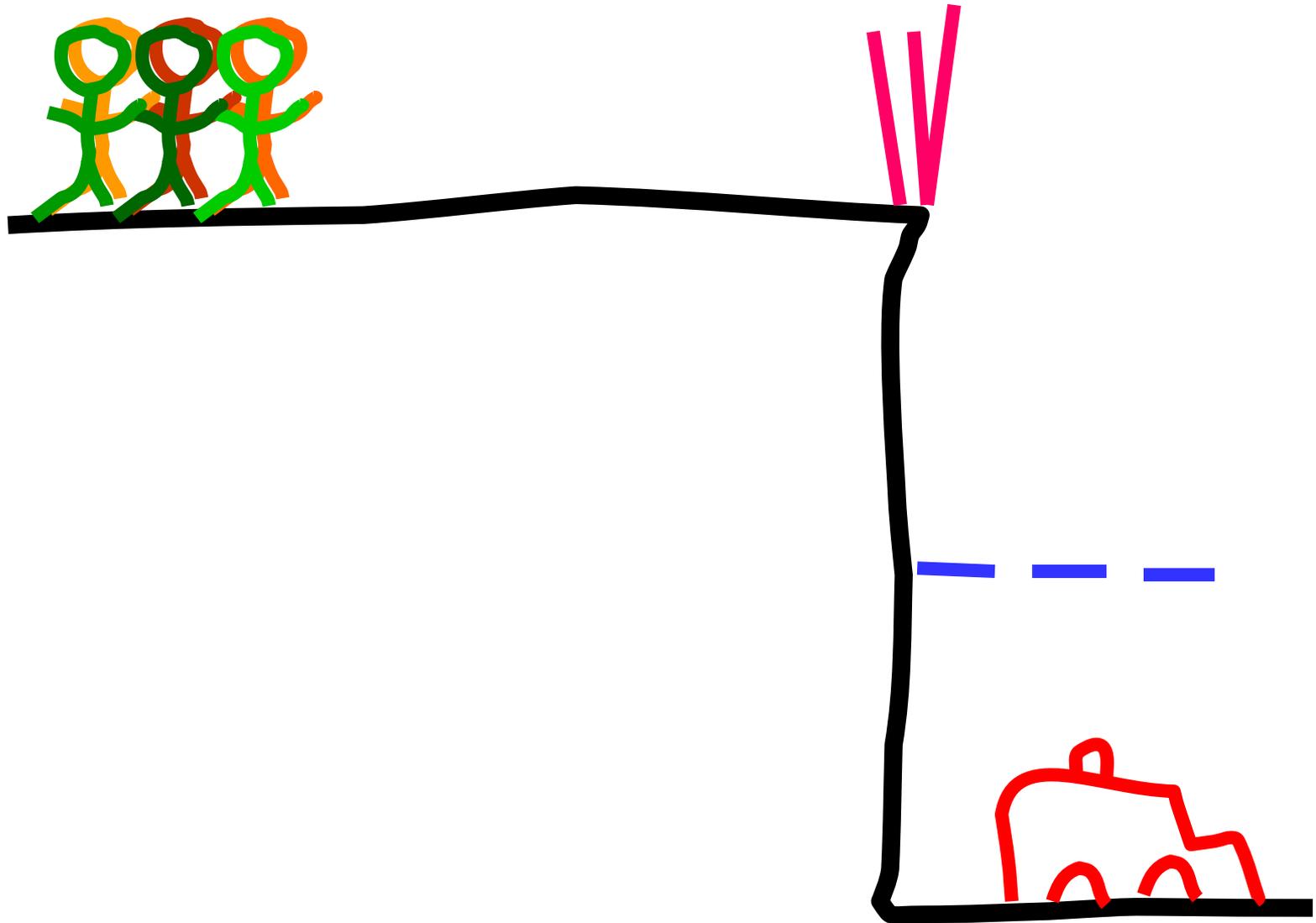


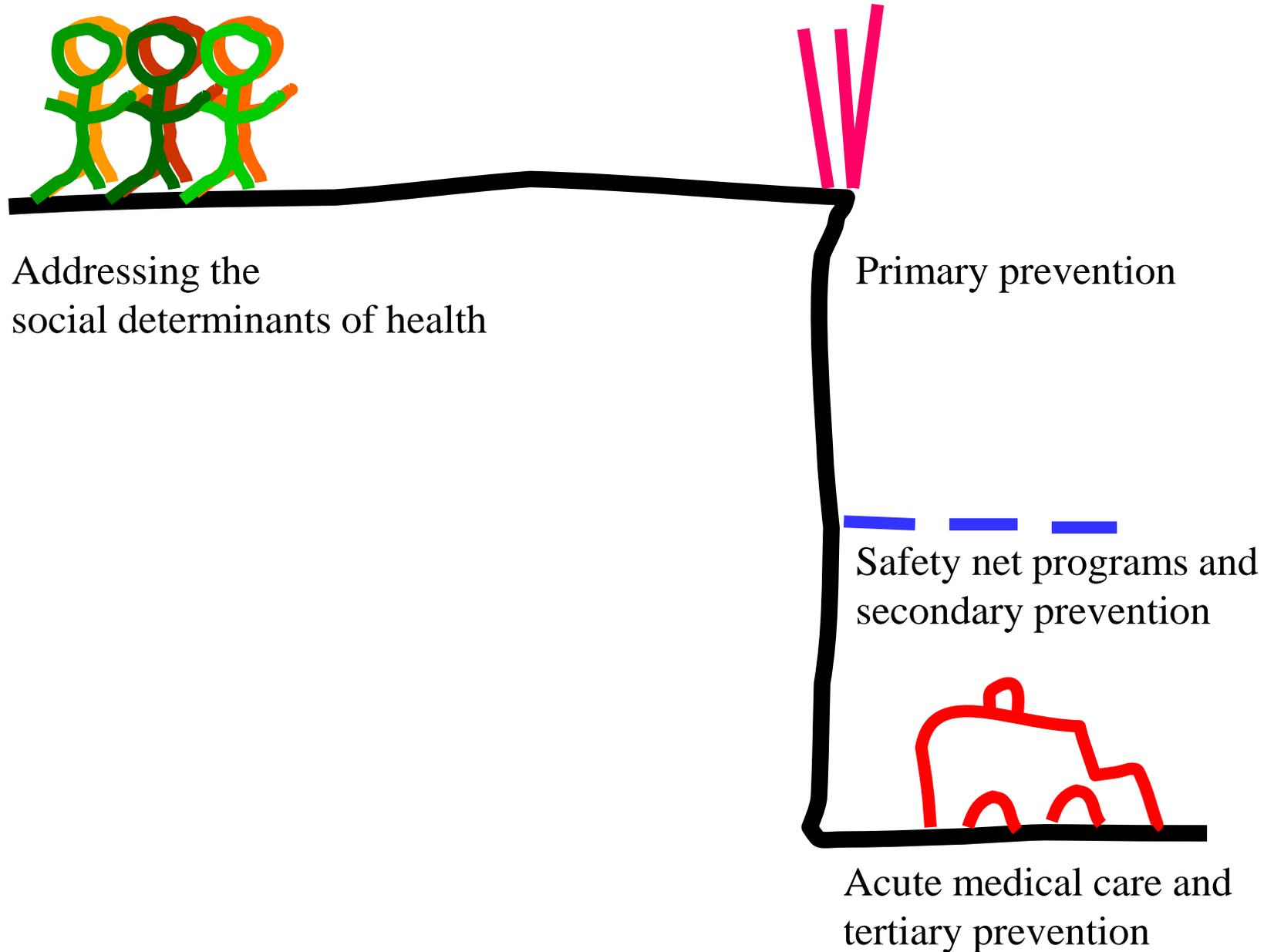












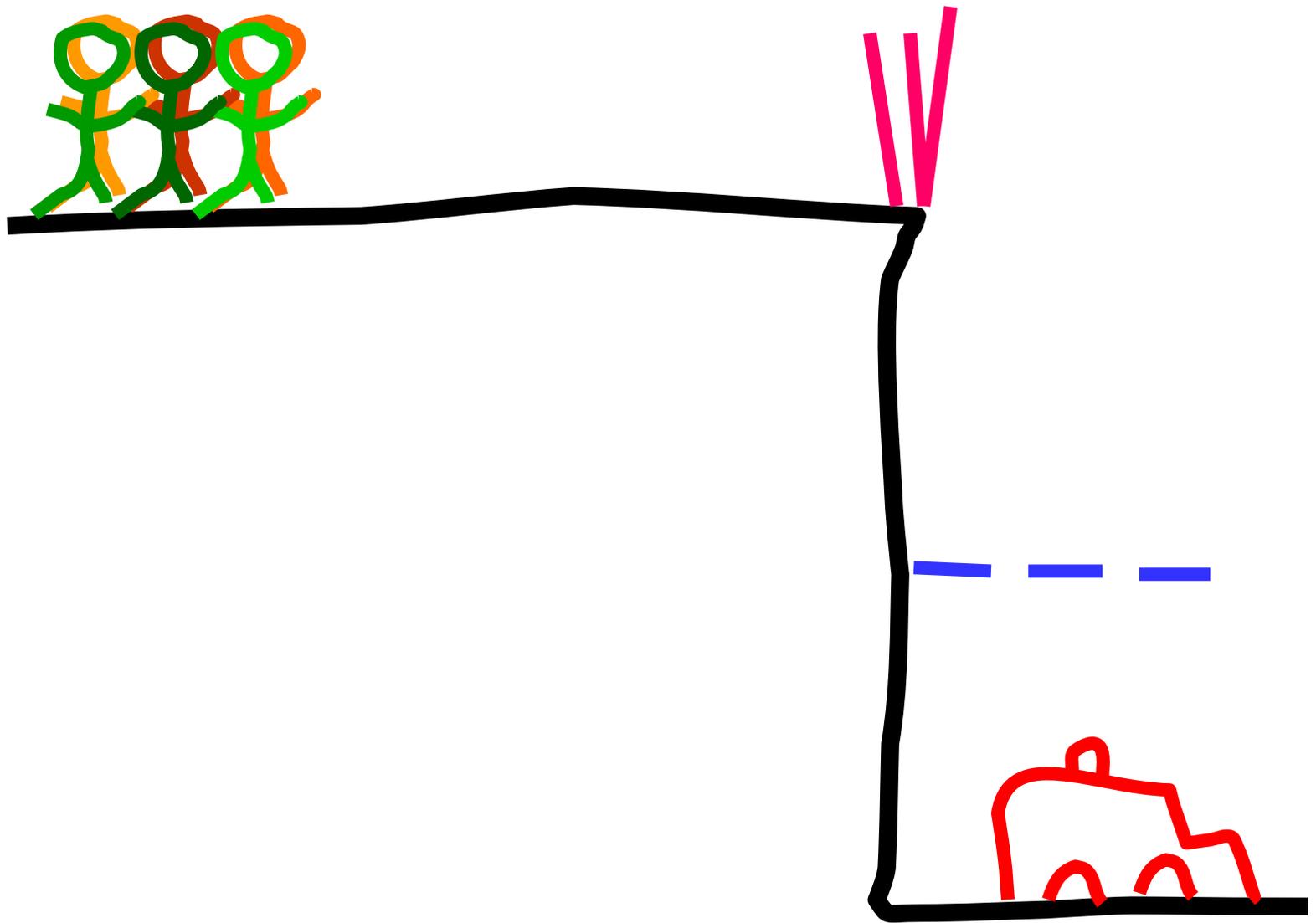
But how do disparities arise?

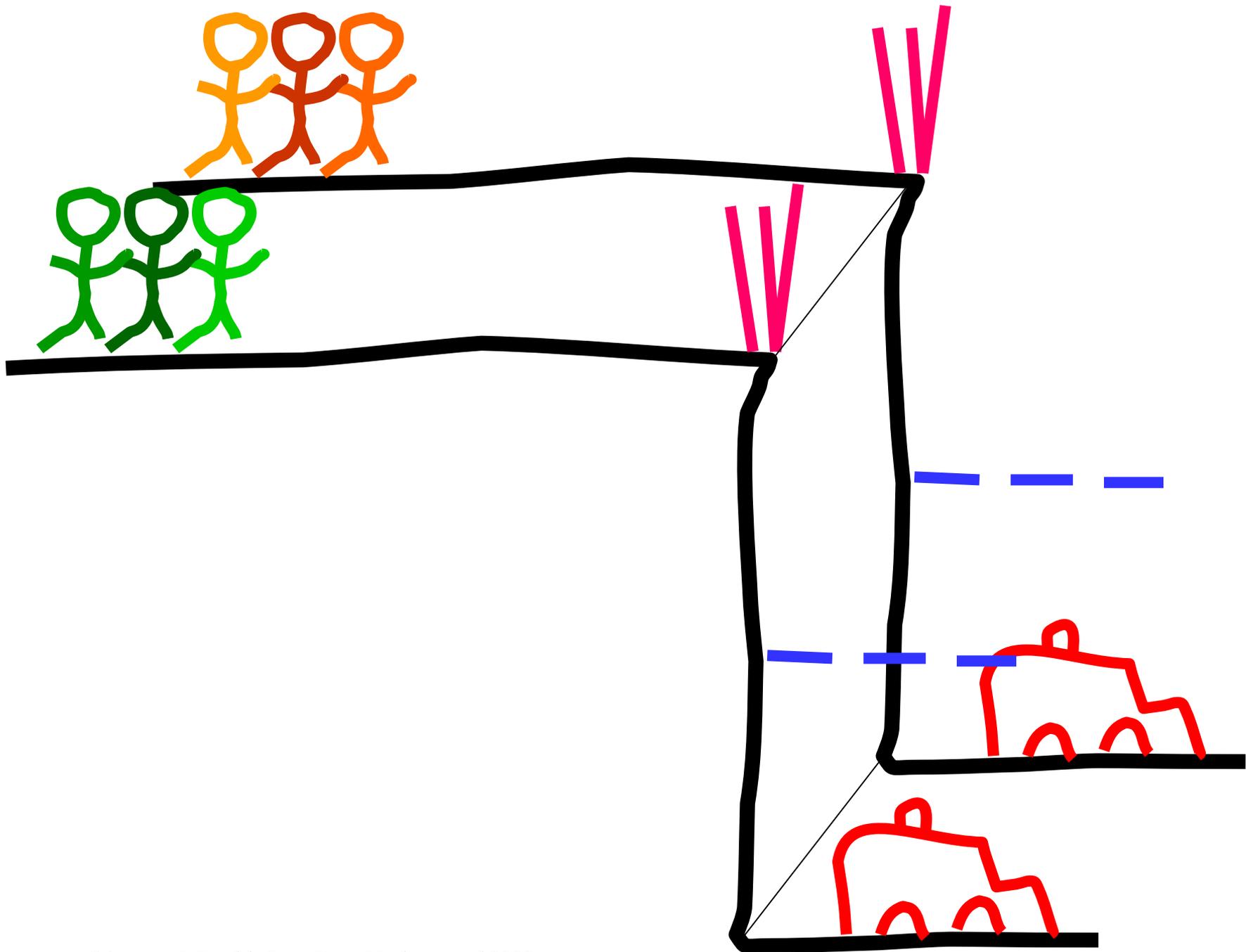
- ❑ Differences in the quality of care received within the health care system
- ❑ Differences in access to health care, including preventive and curative services
- ❑ Differences in life opportunities, exposures, and stresses that result in differences in underlying health status

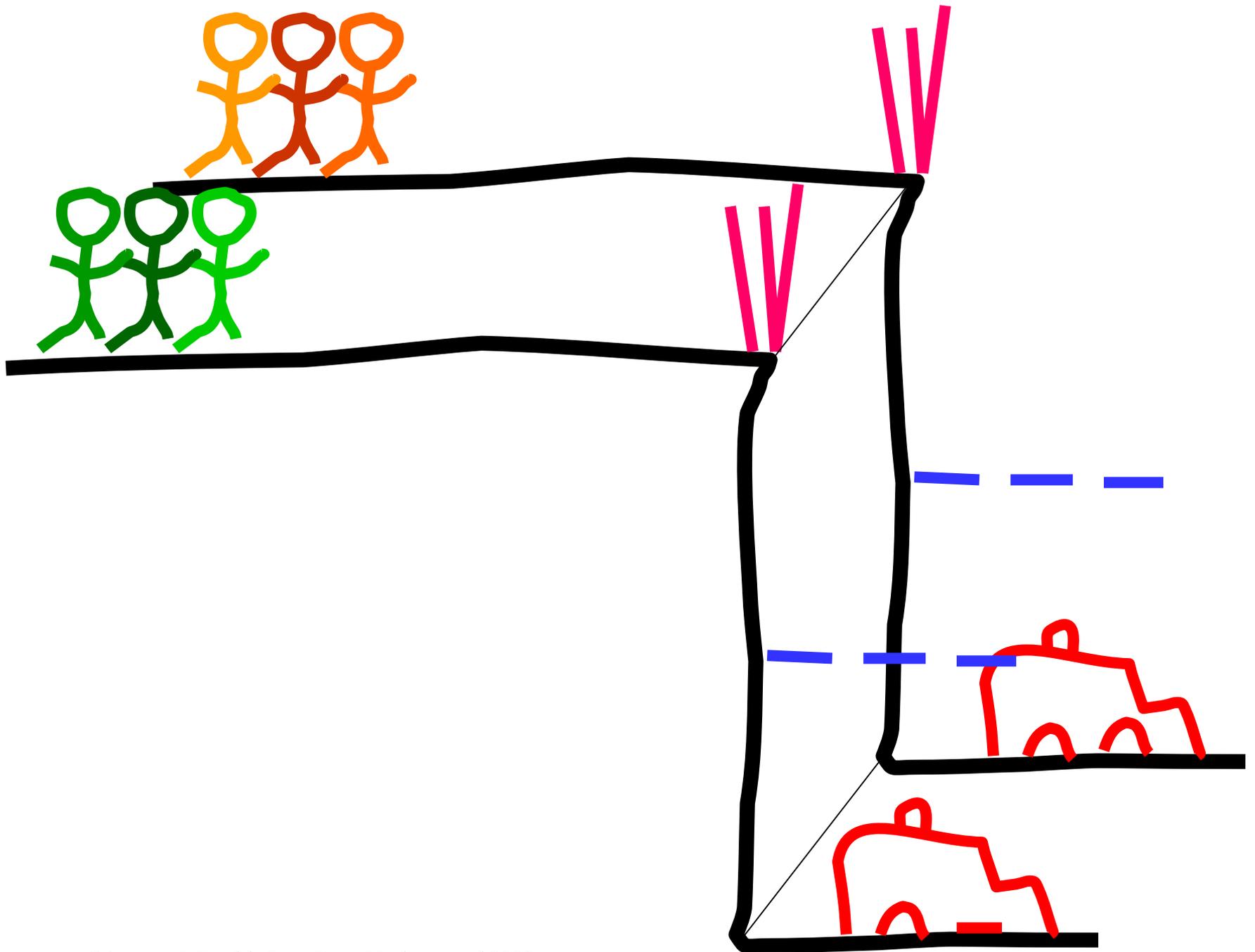
Phelan JC, Link BG, Tehranifar P. Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities. *J Health Soc Behav* 2010;51(S):S28-S40.

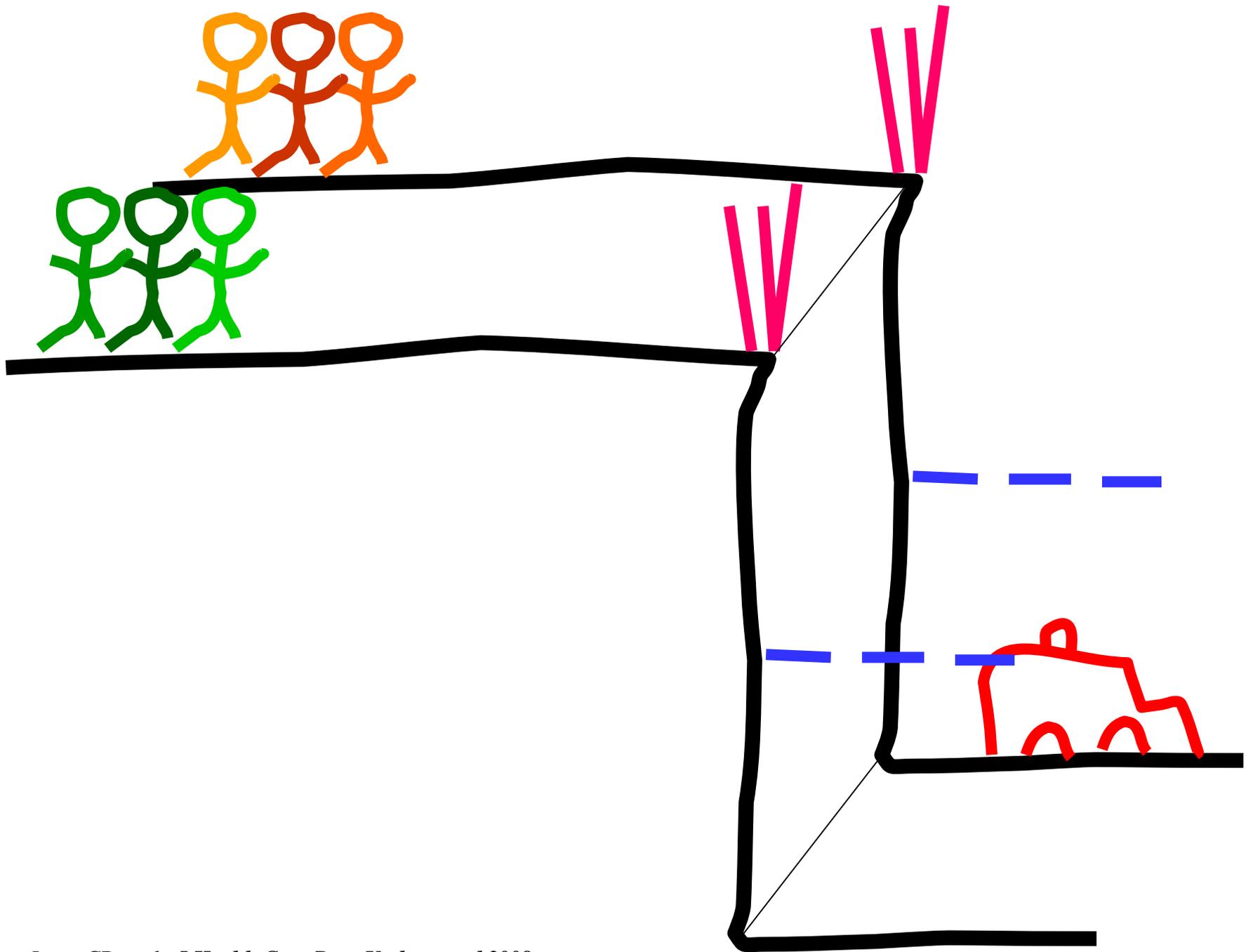
Byrd WM, Clayton LA. *An American Health Dilemma: Race, Medicine, and Health Care in the United States, 1900-2000*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2002.

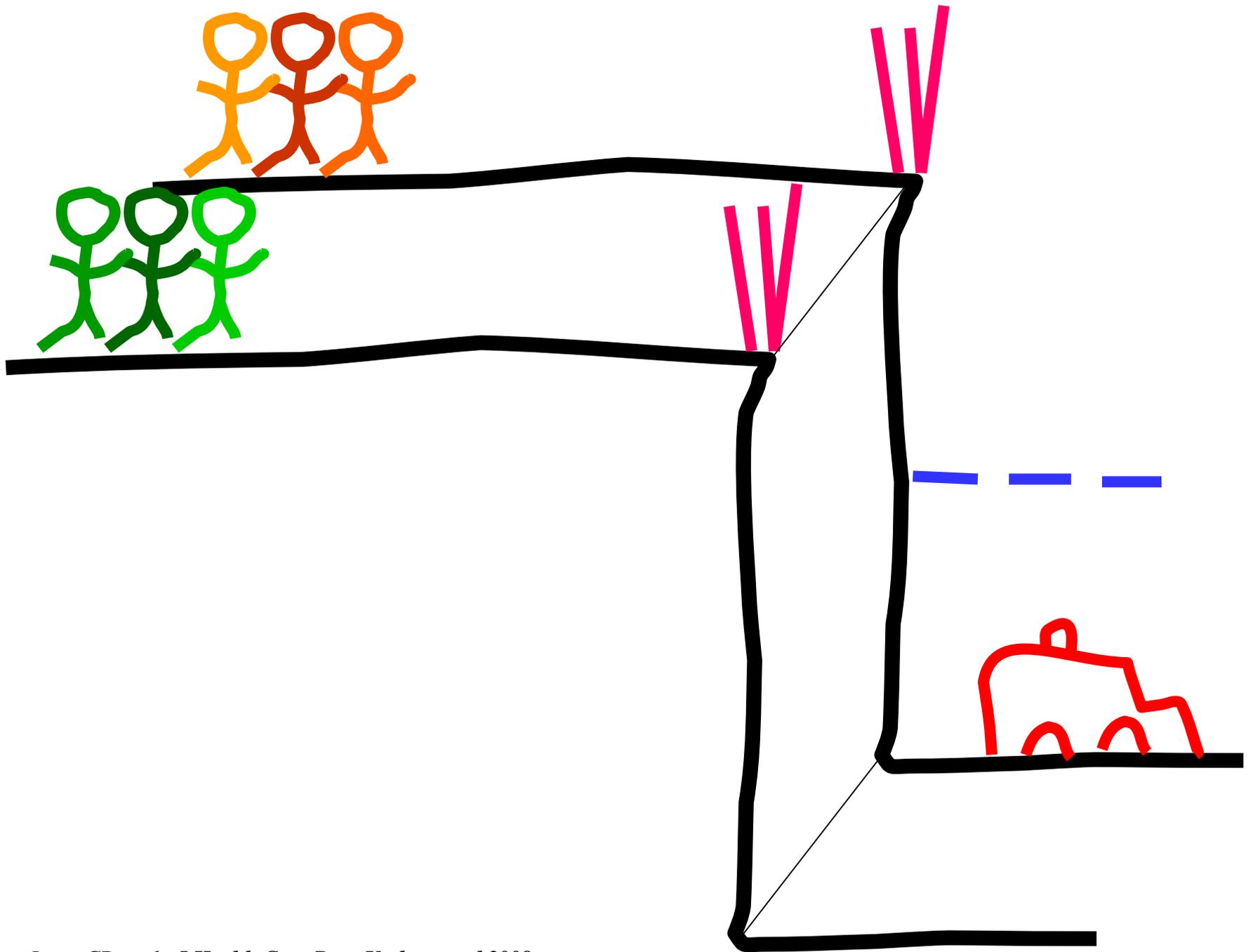
Smedley BD, Stith AY, Nelson AR (editors). *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2002.

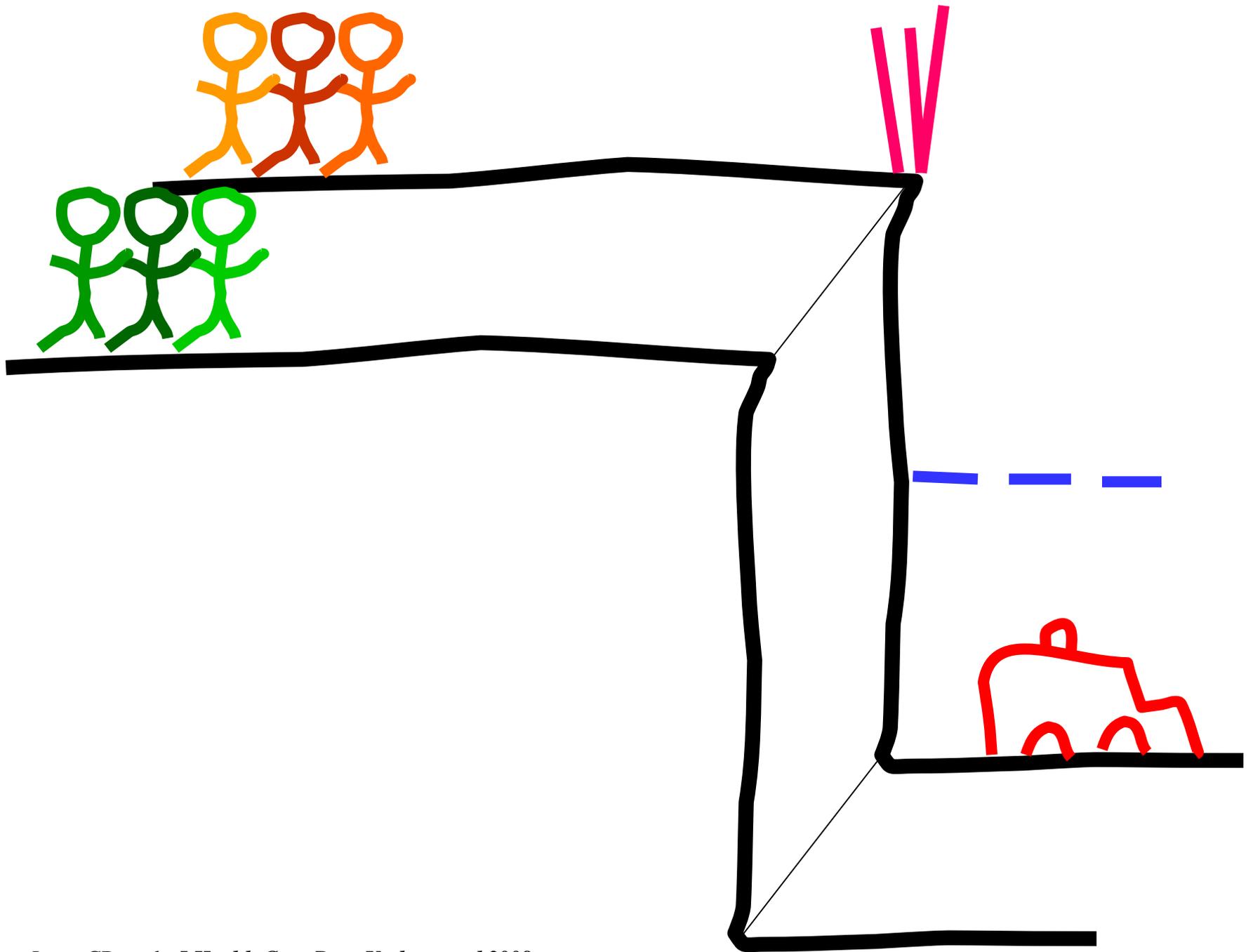


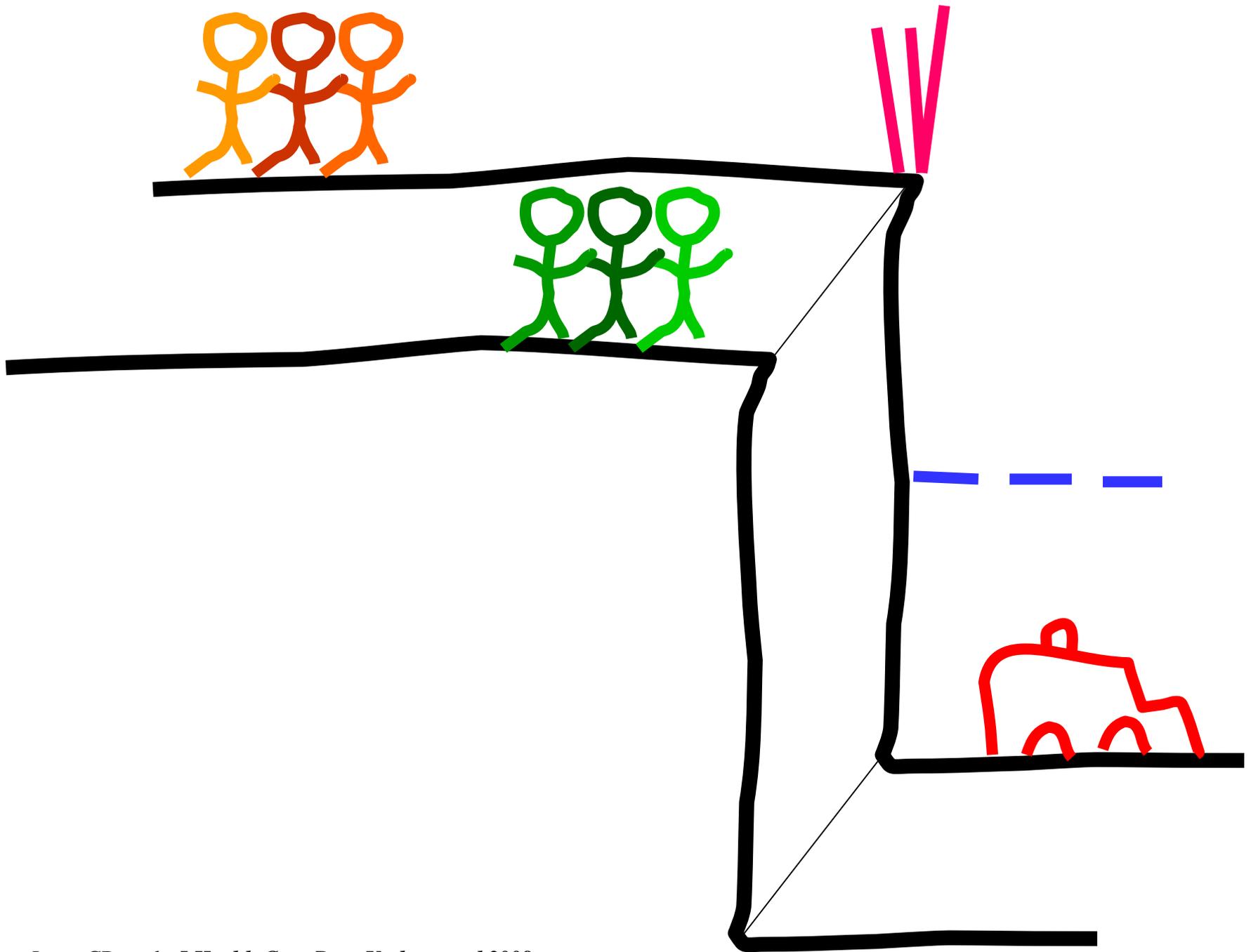


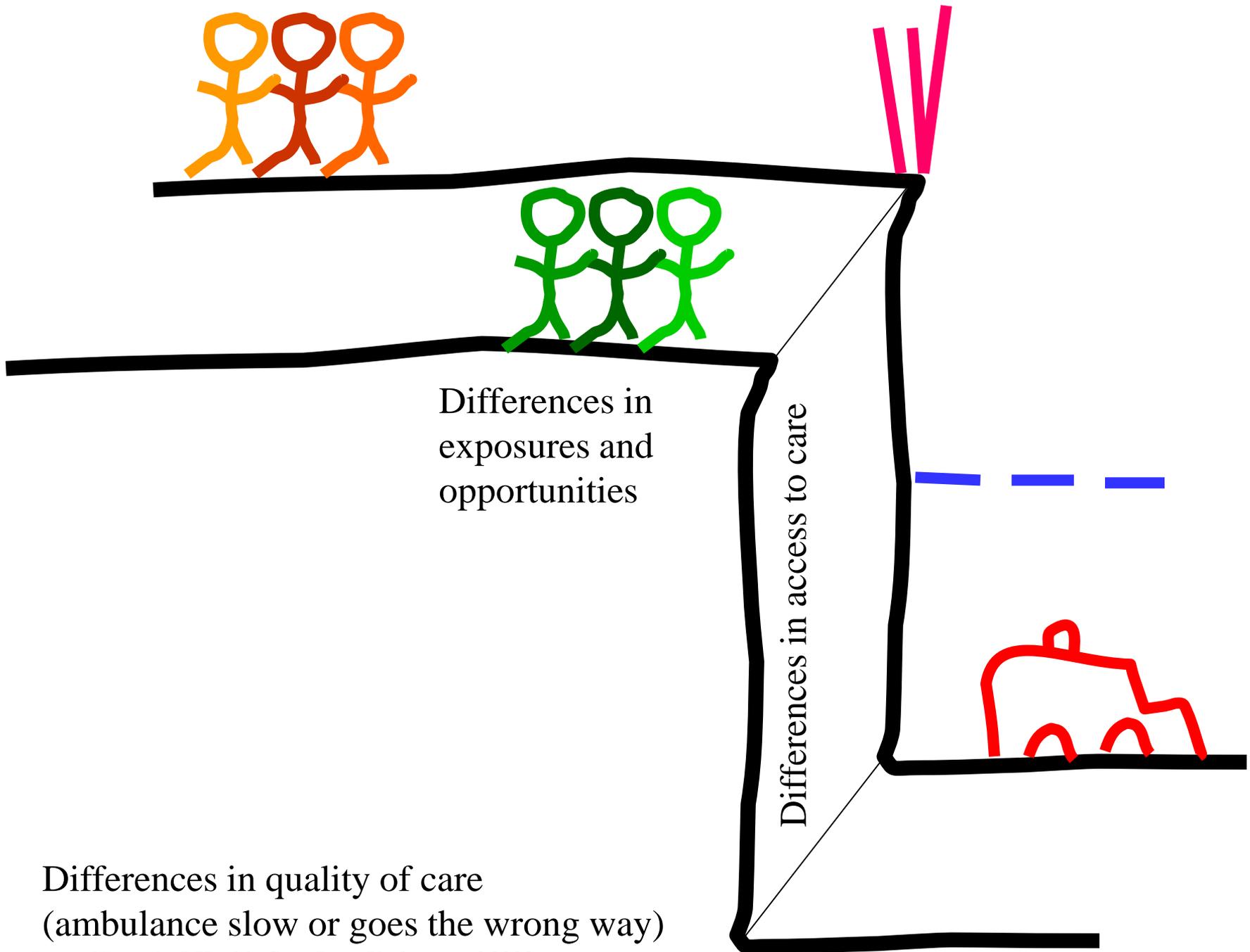


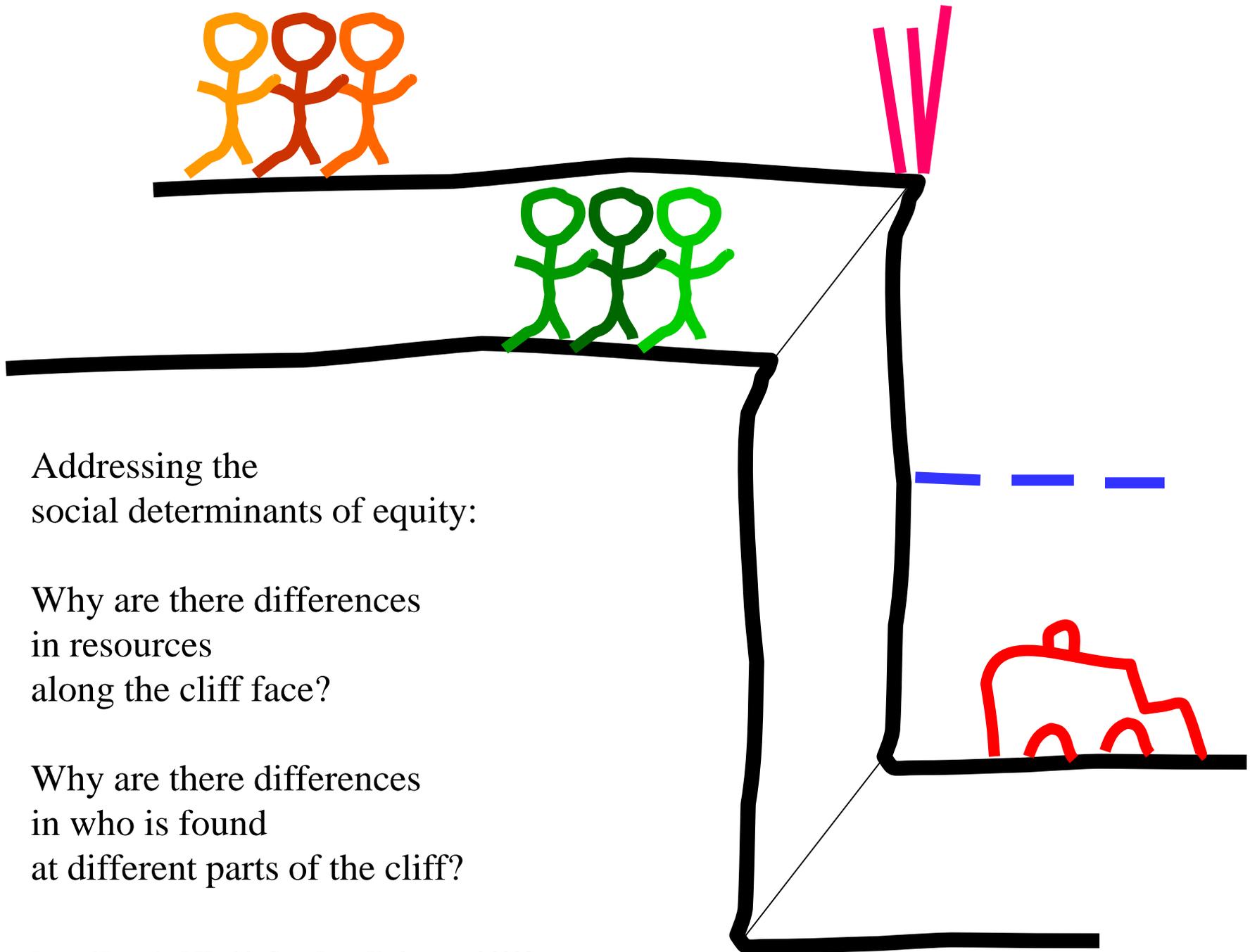












Addressing the social determinants of equity:

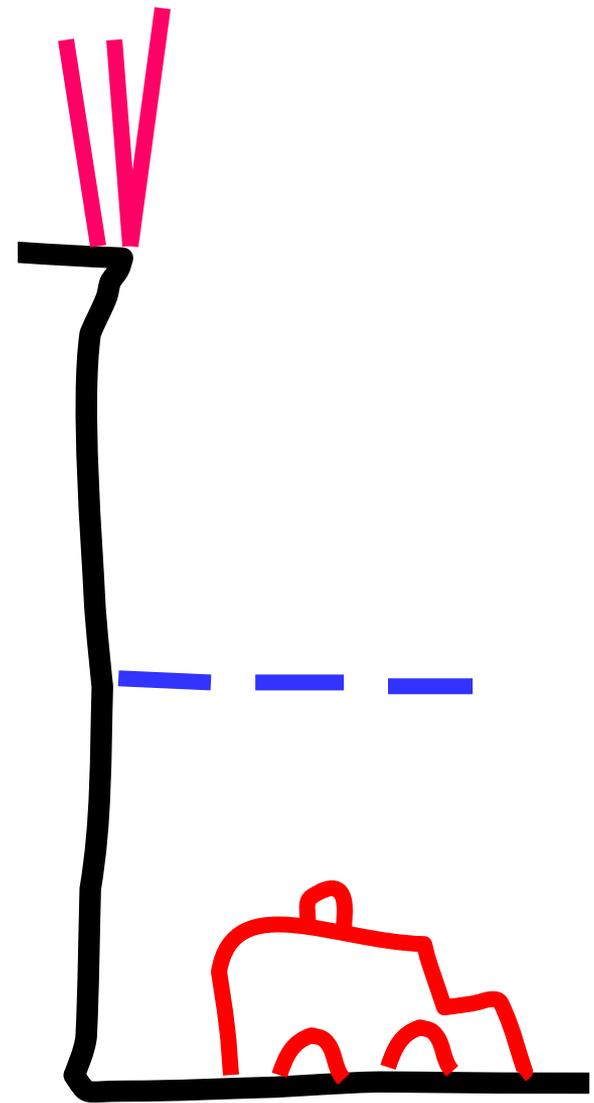
Why are there differences in resources along the cliff face?

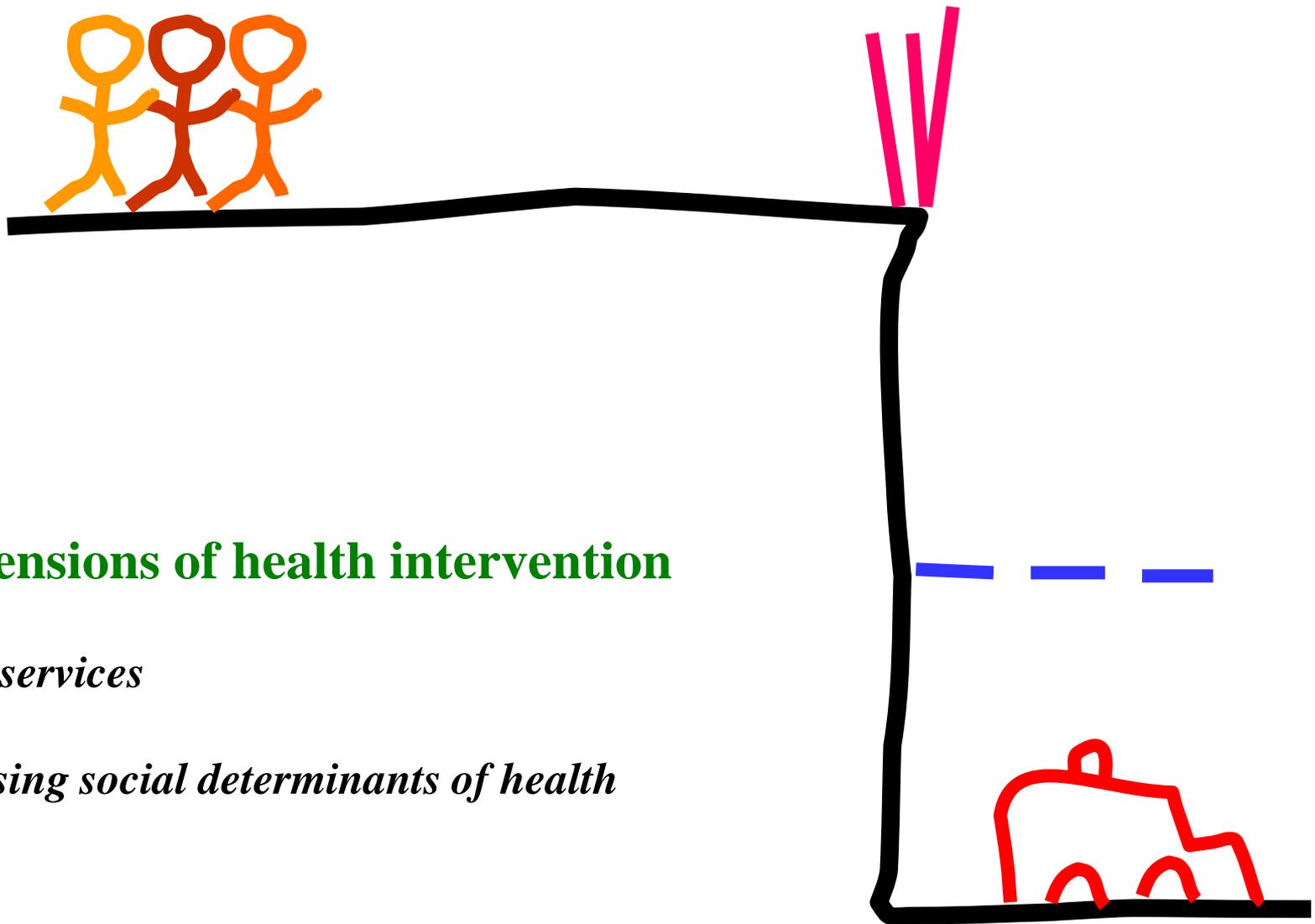
Why are there differences in who is found at different parts of the cliff?

3 dimensions of health intervention

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Health services

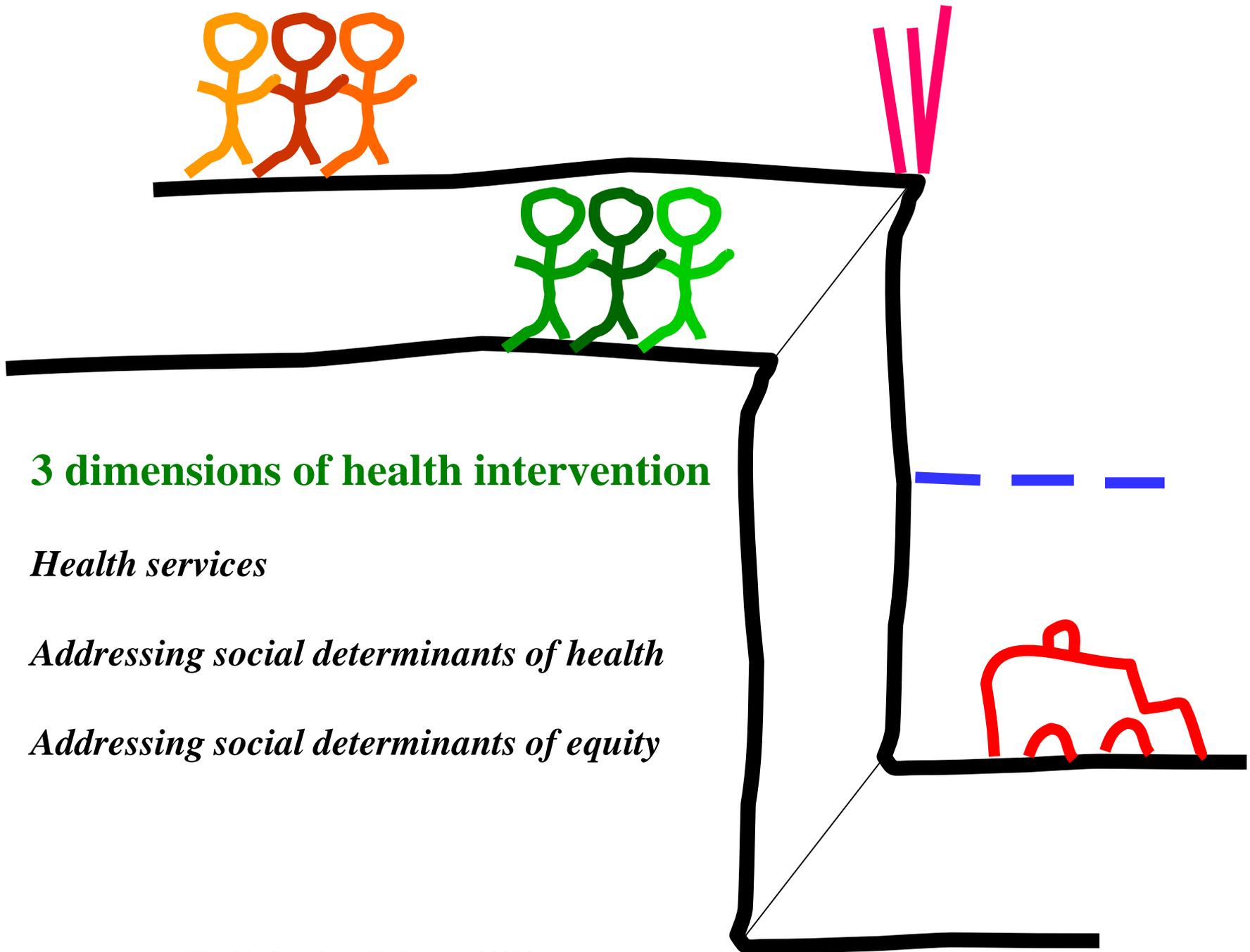


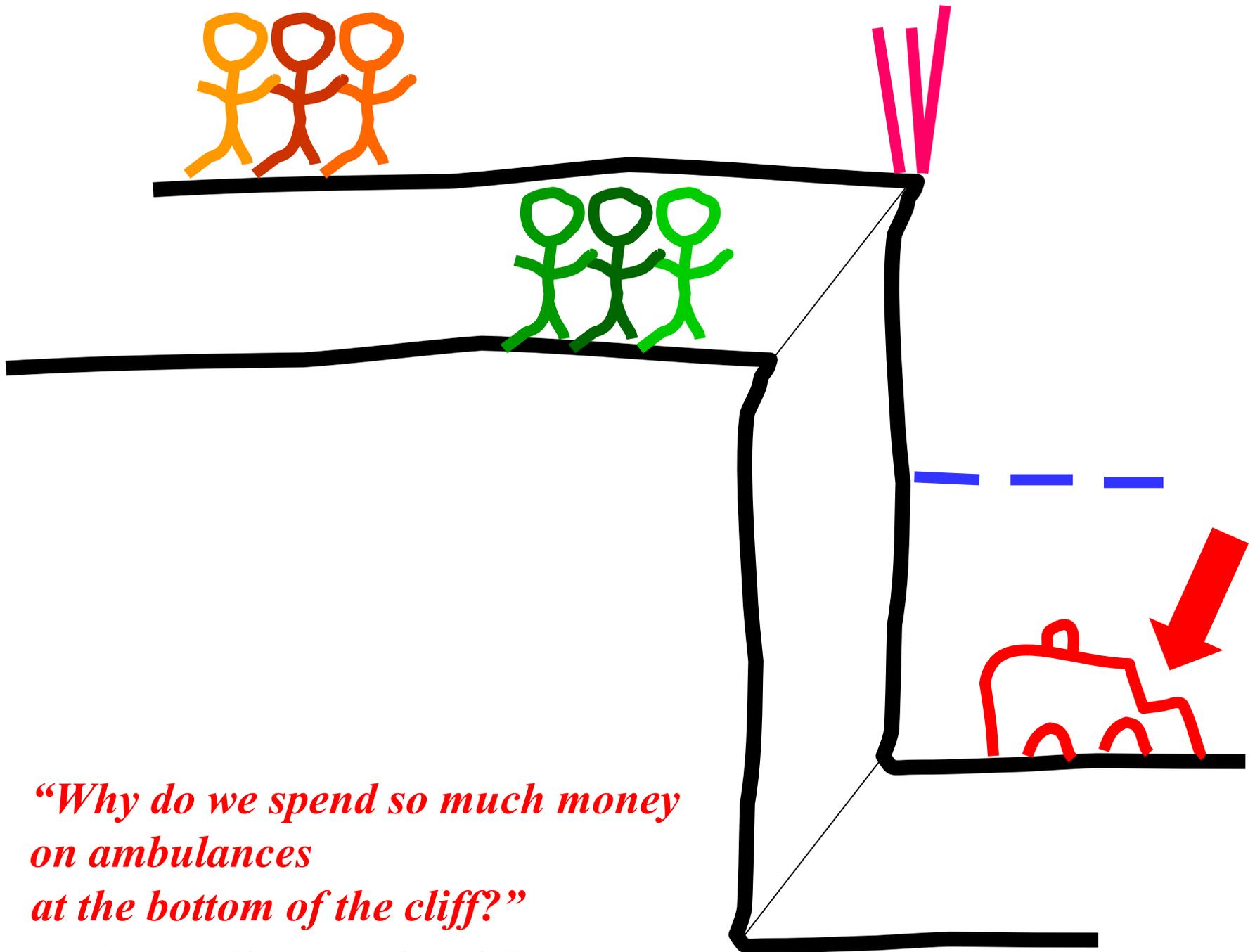


3 dimensions of health intervention

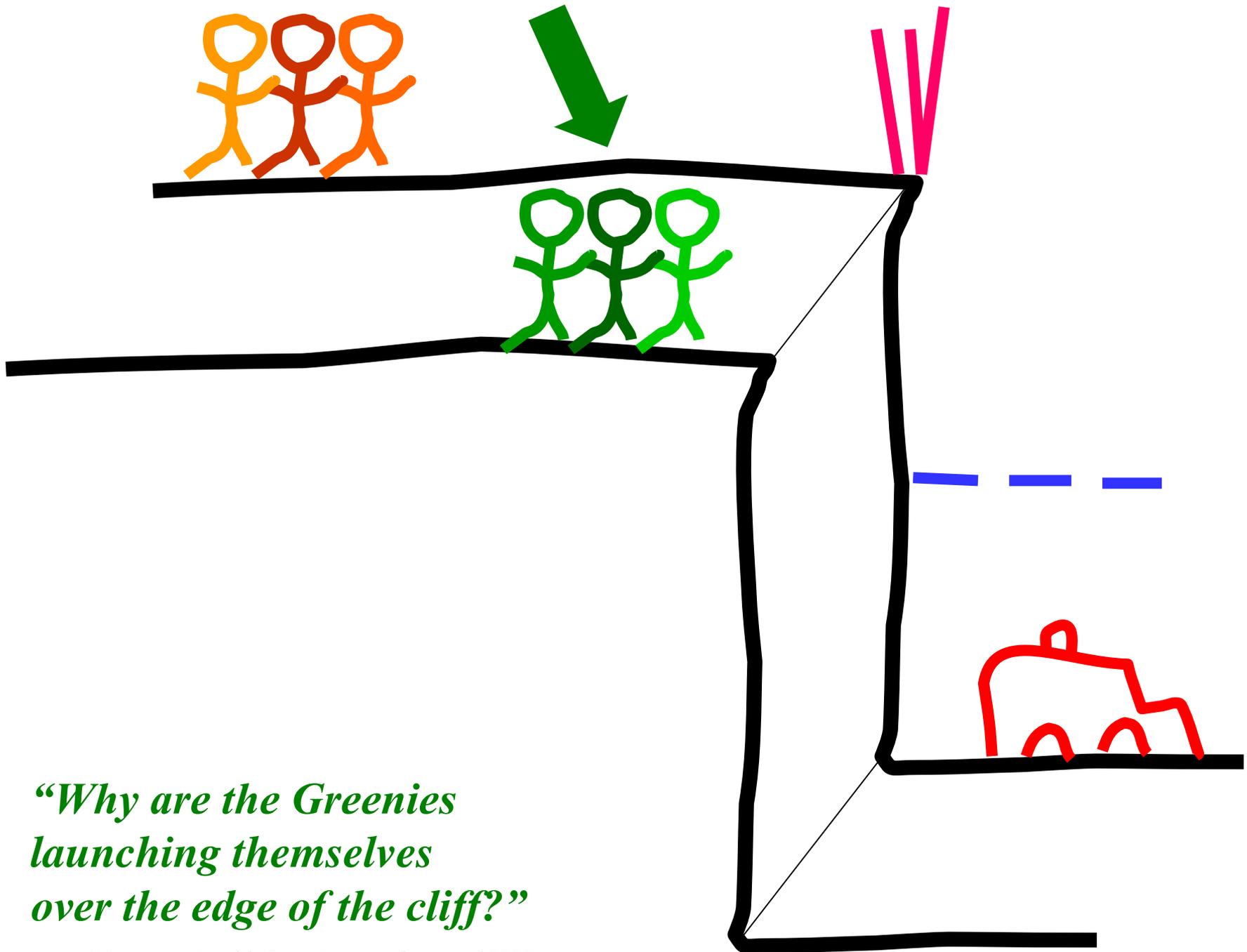
Health services

Addressing social determinants of health

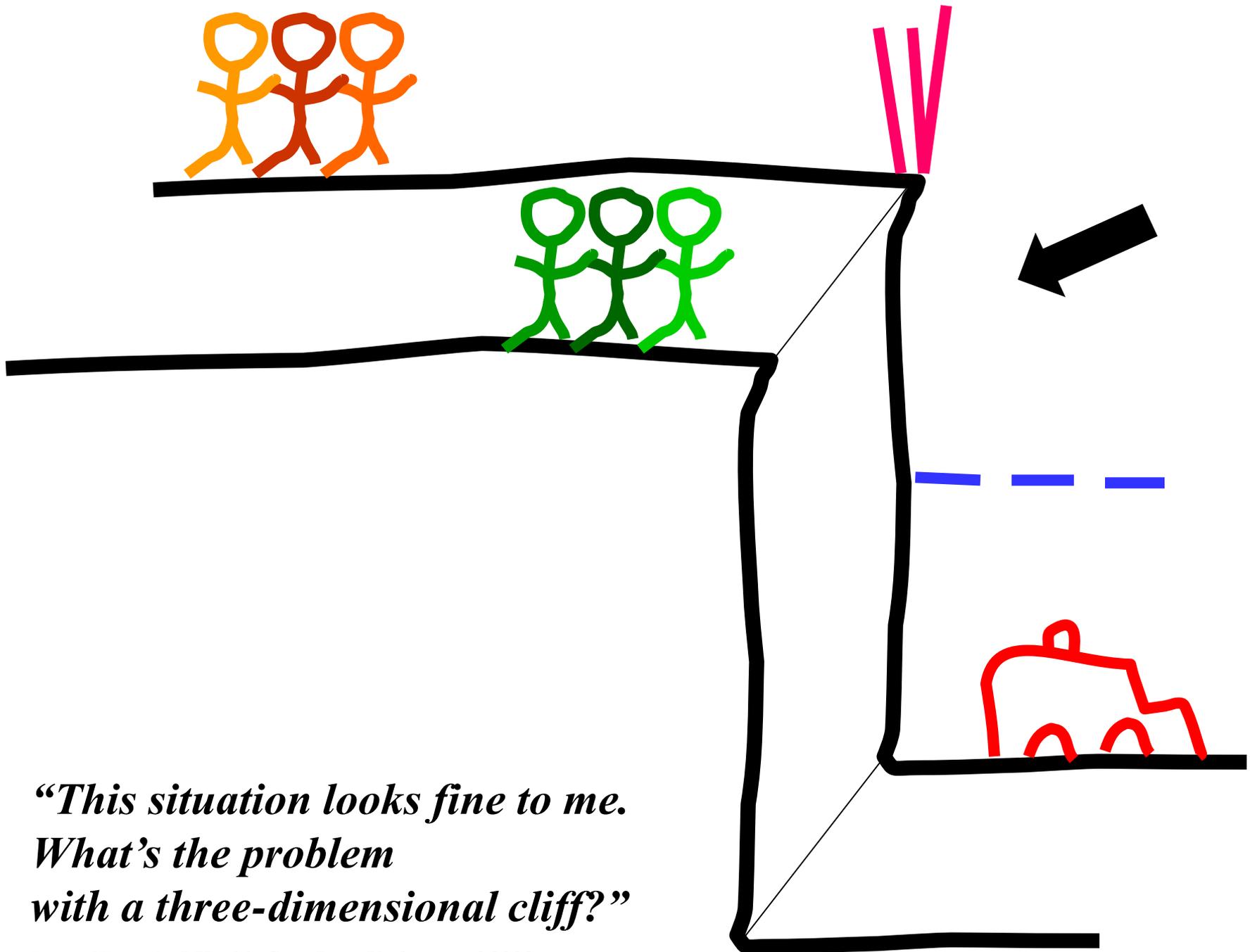




*“Why do we spend so much money
on ambulances
at the bottom of the cliff?”*



*“Why are the Greenies
launching themselves
over the edge of the cliff?”*



*“This situation looks fine to me.
What’s the problem
with a three-dimensional cliff?”*

Levels of Racism

- ❑ Institutionalized
- ❑ Personally-mediated
- ❑ Internalized

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”**

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

Internalized racism

- ❑ **Acceptance by the stigmatized “races” of negative messages about our own abilities and intrinsic worth**

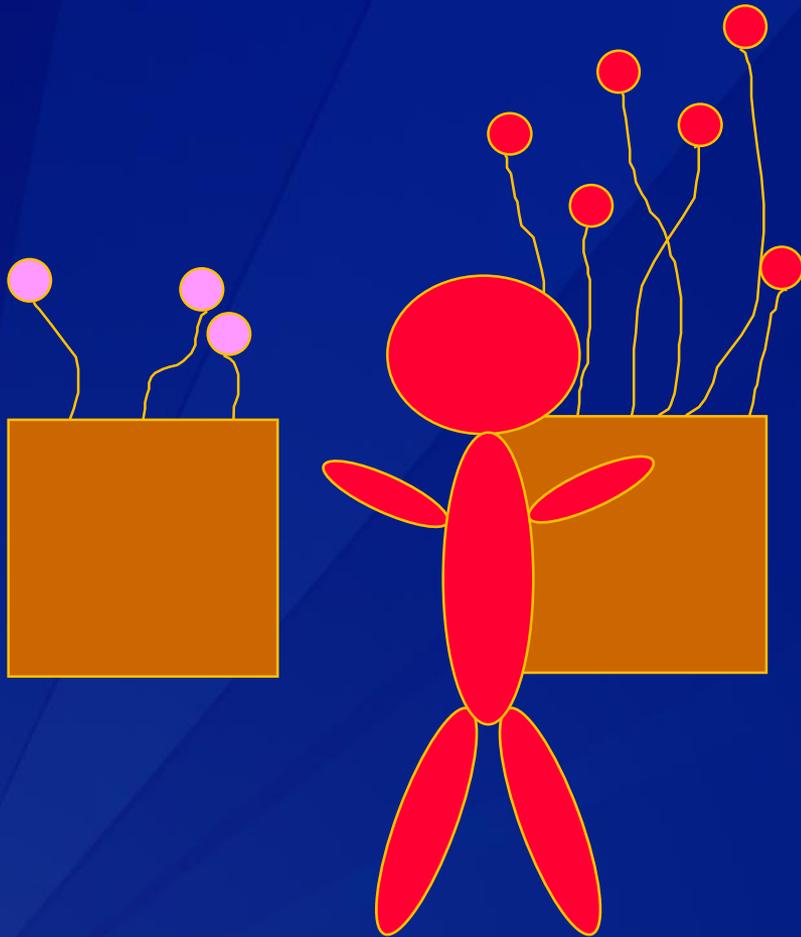
- ❑ **Examples**
 - Self-devaluation
 - “White man’s ice is colder” syndrome
 - Resignation, helplessness, hopelessness

- ❑ **Accepting limitations to our full humanity**

Levels of Racism: A Gardener's Tale

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

Who is the gardener?



- Power to decide
- Power to act
- Control of resources

■ Dangerous when

- Allied with one group
- Not concerned with equity

“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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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**

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 culture**

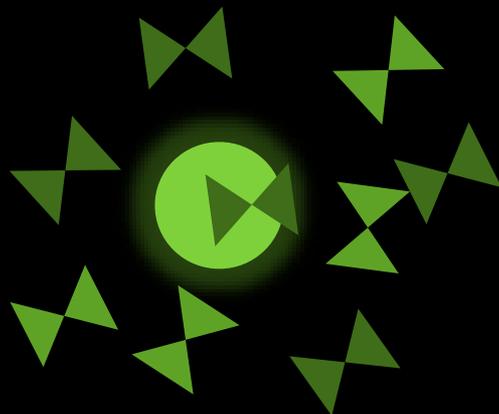
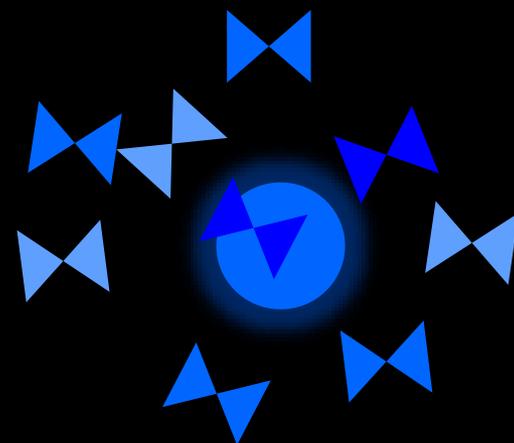
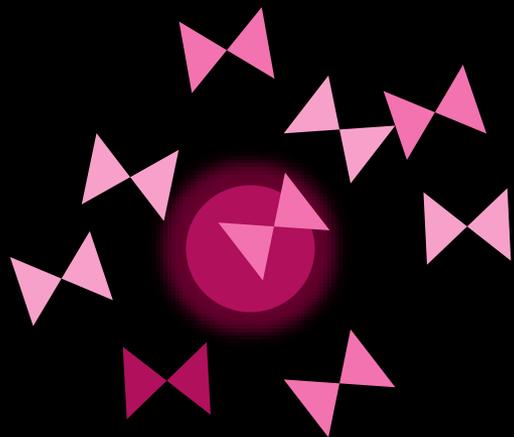
- The present as disconnected from the past
- Current distribution of advantage/disadvantage as happenstance
- Systems and structures as givens and immutable

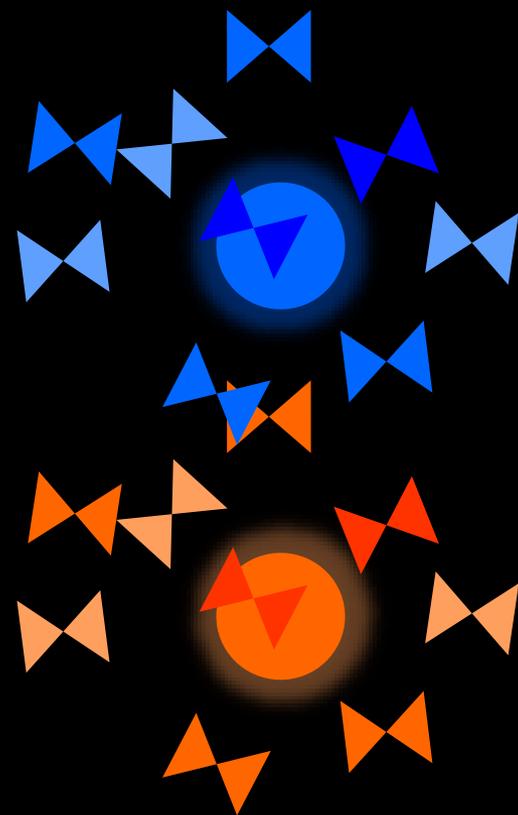
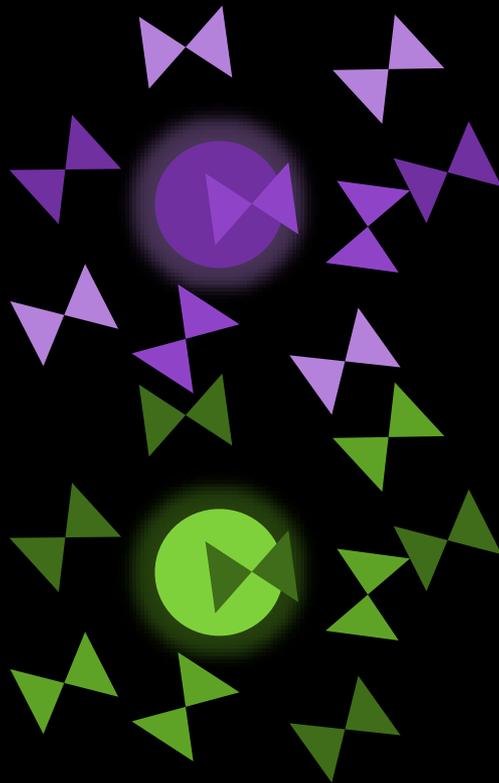
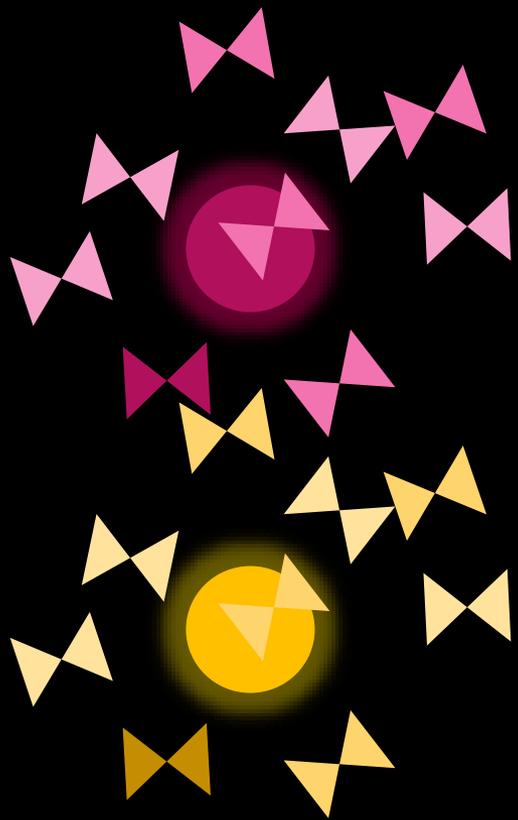
❑ **Myth of meritocracy**

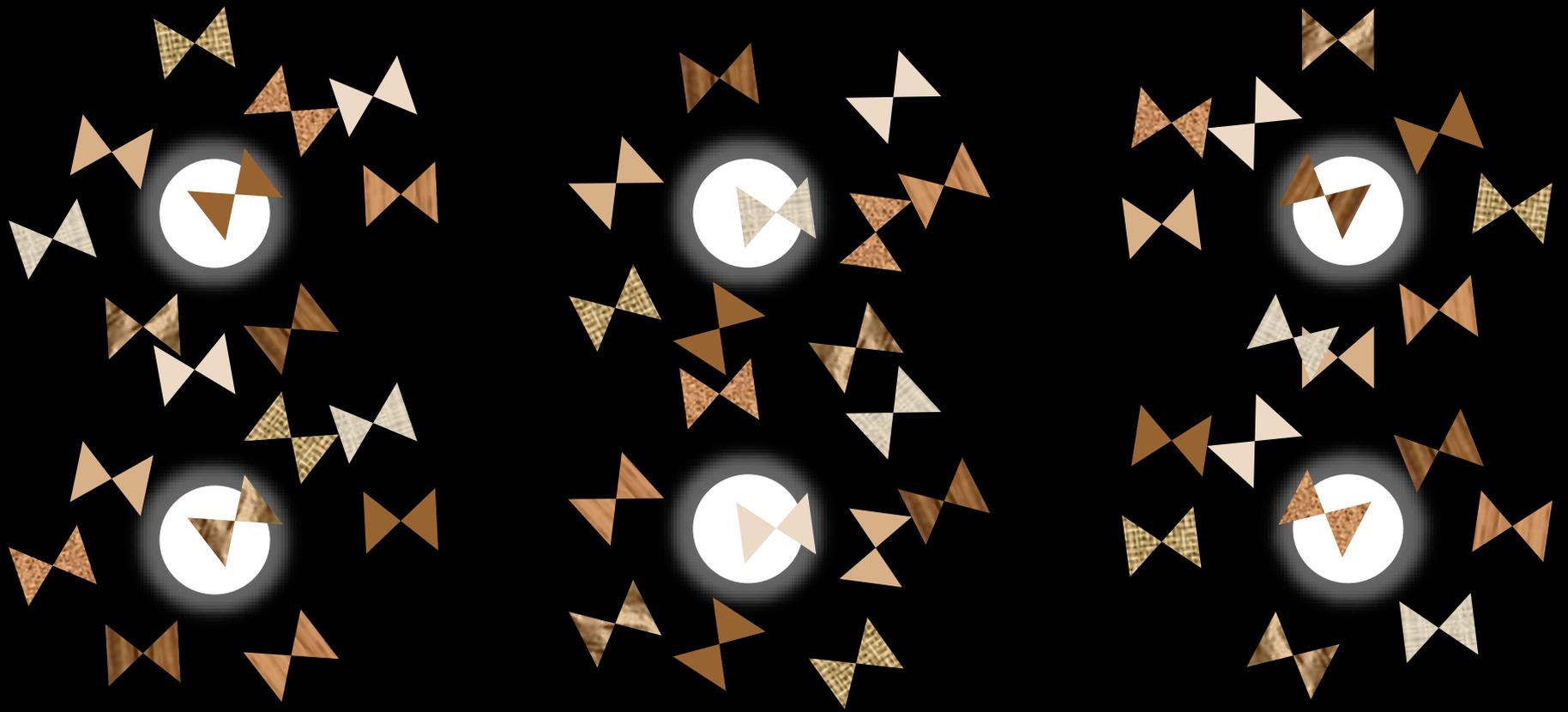
- Role of hard work
- Denial of racism
- Two babies: Equal potential or equal opportunity?

Japanese Lanterns: Colored perceptions



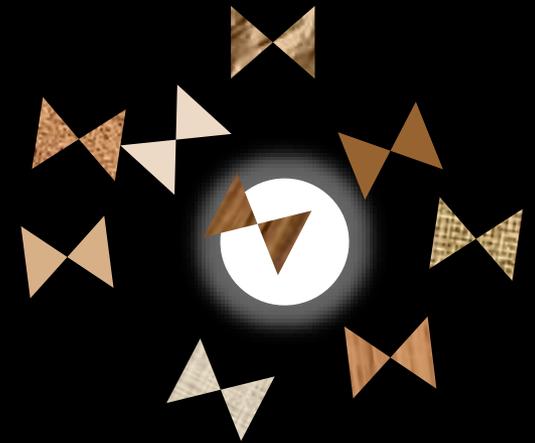
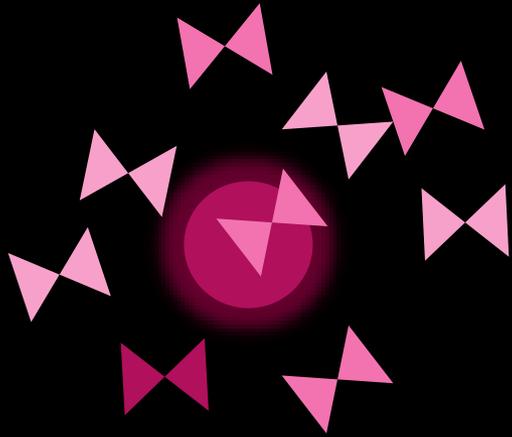






The colors we think we see are due to the lights by which we look.

These colored lights distort and mask our true variability.



What is “race”?

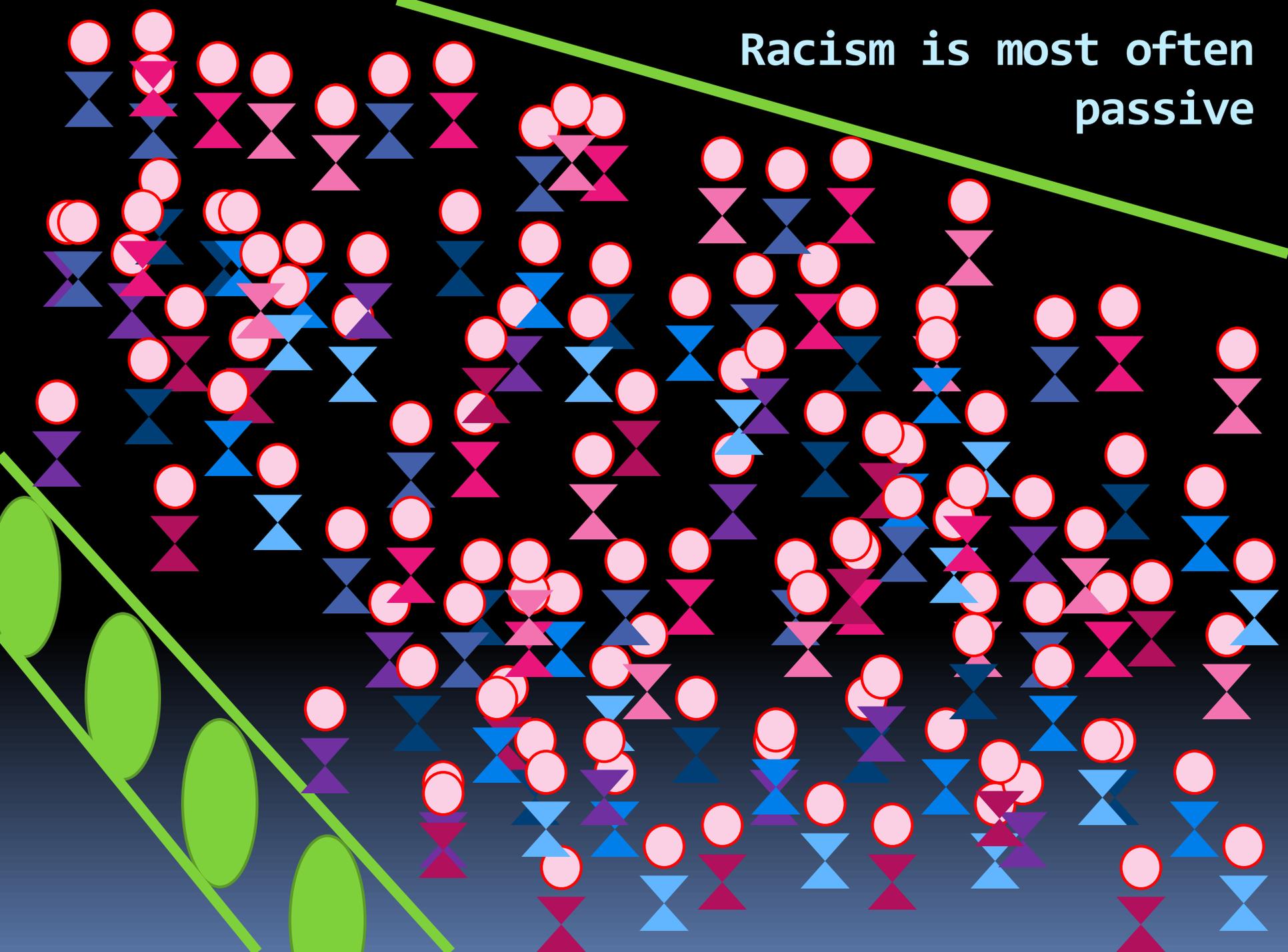
A social classification,
not a biological descriptor.

The social interpretation of how one looks
in a “race”-conscious society.

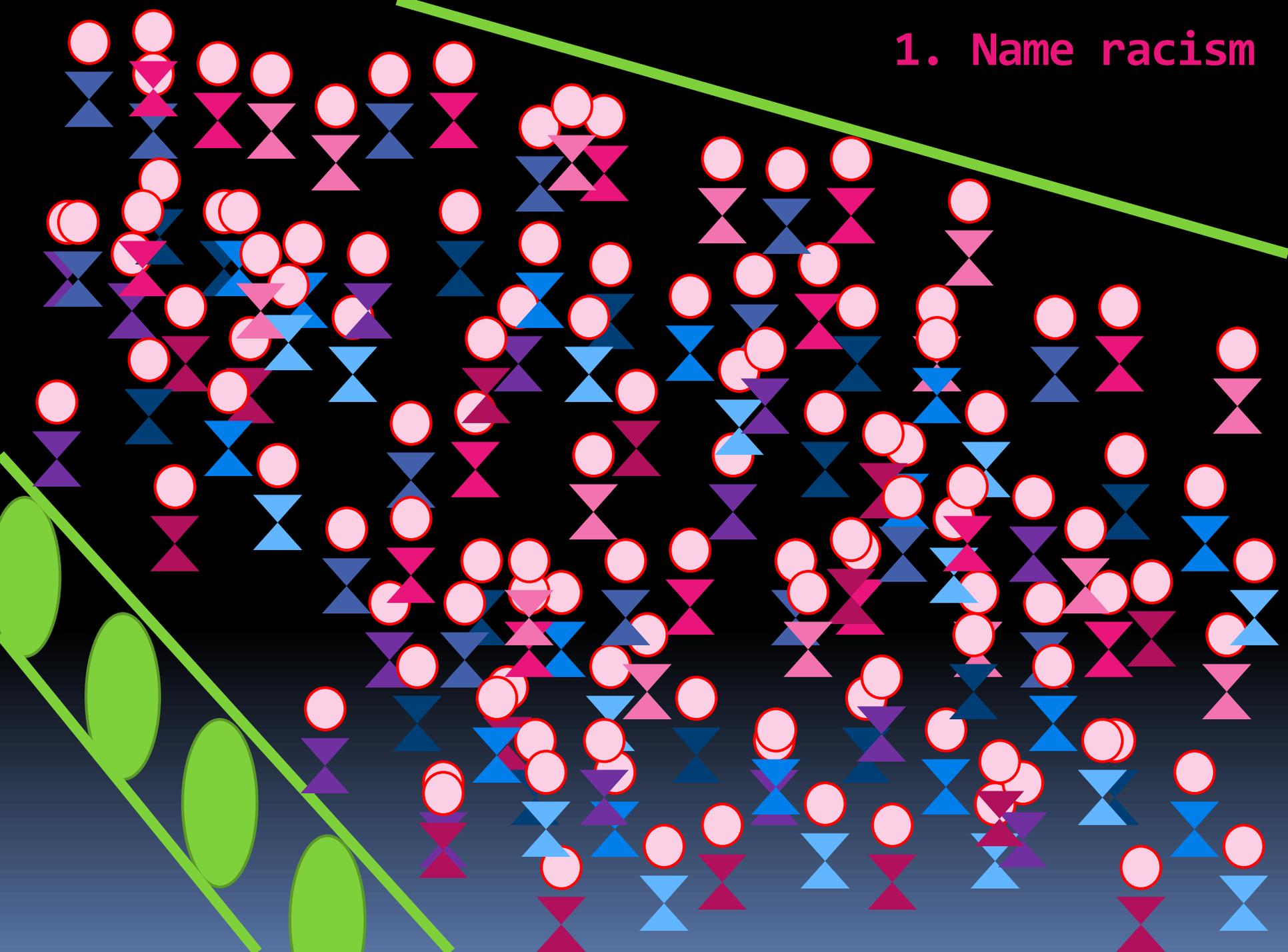


Life on a Conveyor Belt: Moving to action

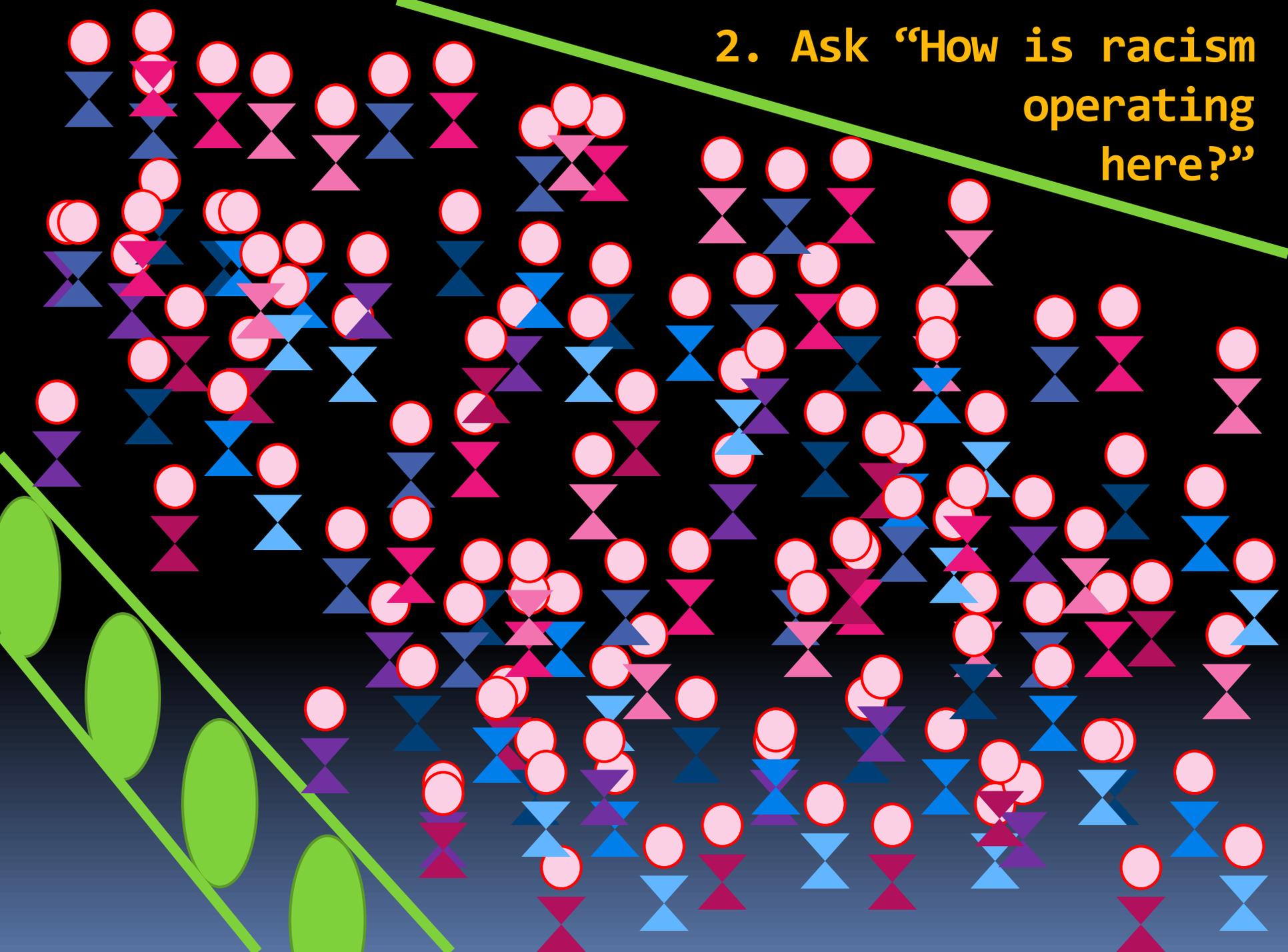
Racism is most often
passive



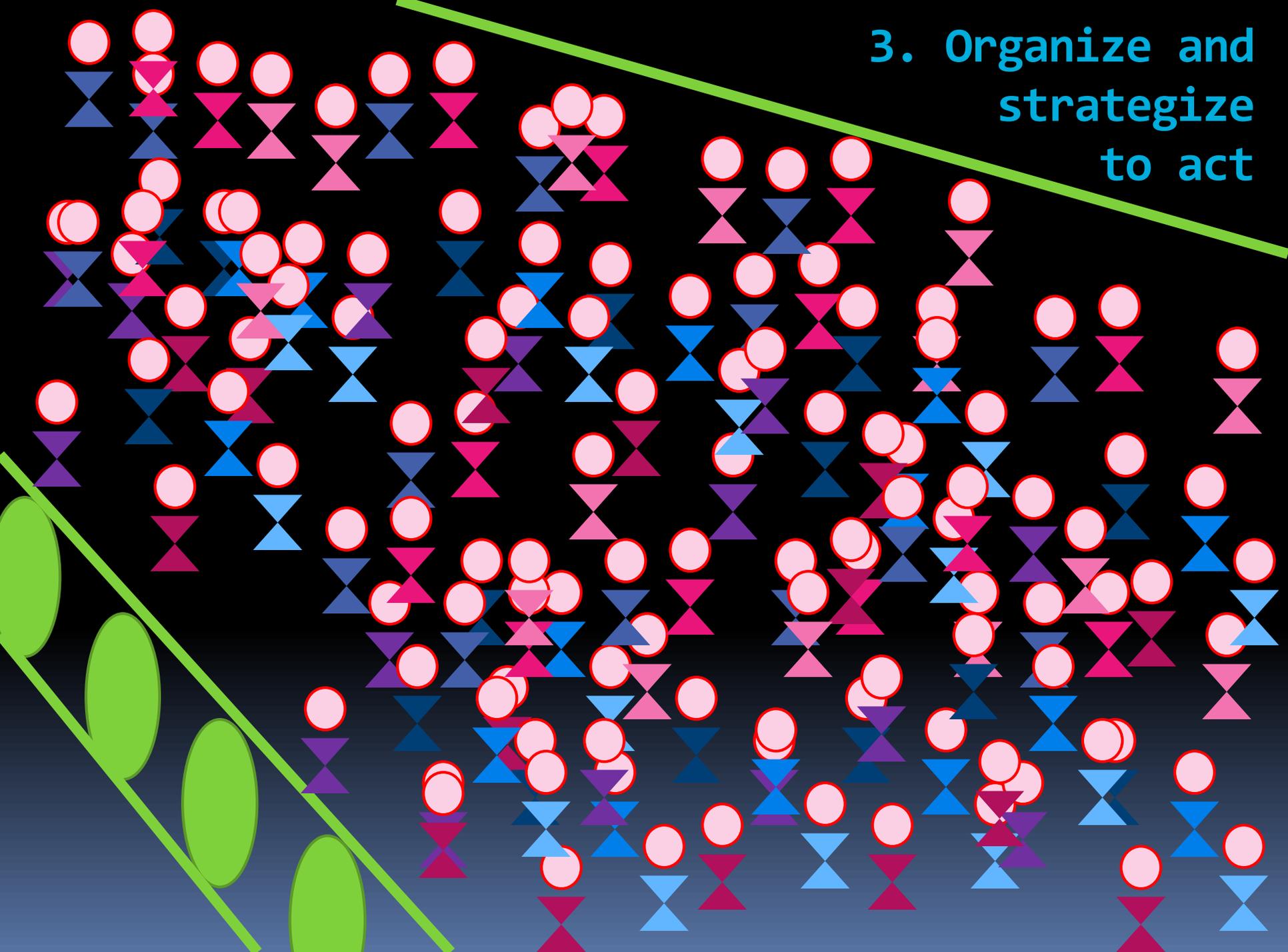
1. Name racism



2. Ask "How is racism operating here?"



3. Organize and strategize to act



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