

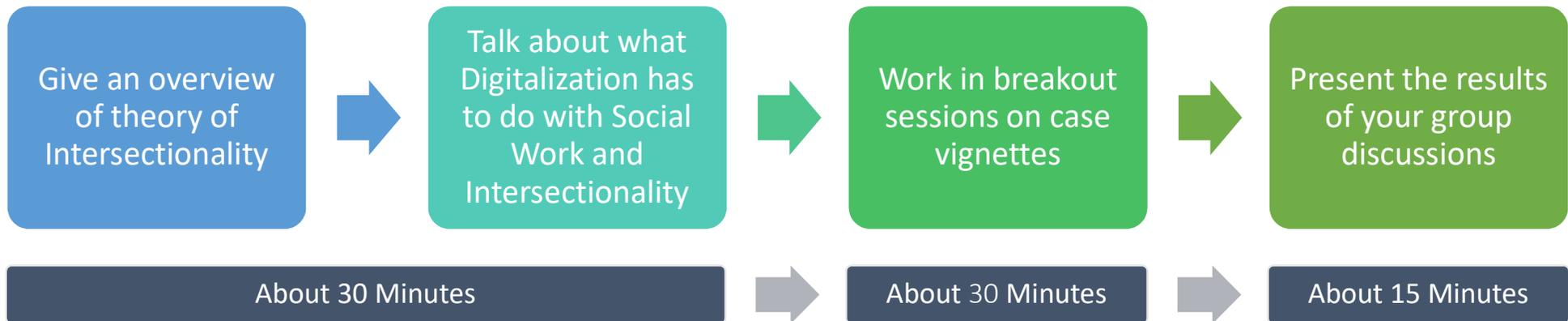
# **Digitalization** and Social Work from an **Intersectional** Perspective

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# In this workshop we will...



# The theory of Intersectionality

## Intersectionality

analyzes how social categories and their intersections create inequality and discrimination

## social categories are

race\*, class, gender, body, disability, sexuality, education, ...

Intersectionality doesn't list differentiating categories - discover **interlocking** systems of oppression

**There is no such thing  
as single-issue struggle  
because we do not live  
single-issue lives.**

–Audre Lorde



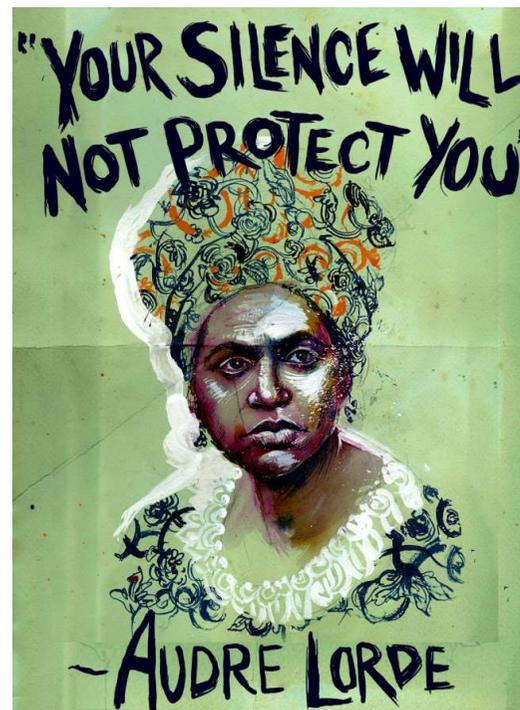
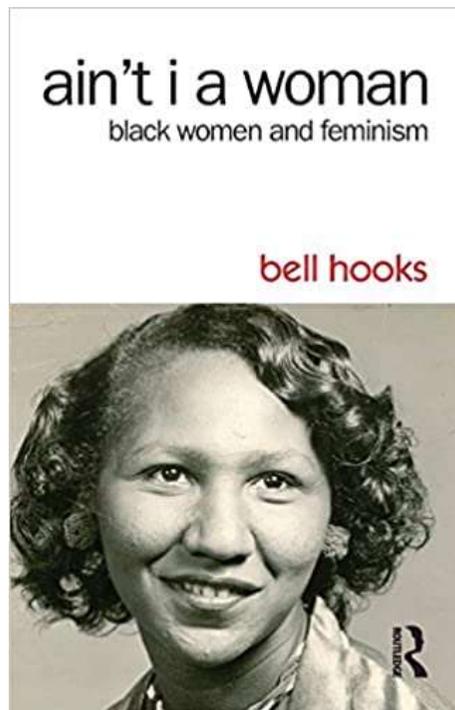
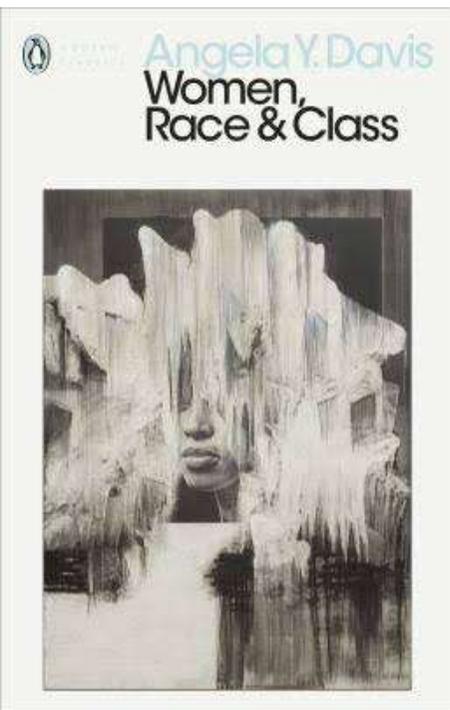
## Sojourner Truth: “And ain't I a woman?”

*„That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, [...]. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles [...]. **And ain't I a woman?** Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?”*

(Sojourner Truth, 1851)



# Black feminists (1980s)



# Intersectionality and **Kimberlé Crenshaw**

The term Intersectionality was  
coined by the lawyer and  
leading scholar of critical race theory  
Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRci2V8PxW4>



**Who are  
the clients  
of social work?**

# Digitalization and Social Work

## Digitalization changes Society

The way we interact, the way we communicate, the way we look for jobs, the way we educate / get educated, the way we do shopping, the way we inform ourselves / get informed, the way we watch TV or read newspapers, the way we plan trips or holidays, the way decisions are made, the way etc.

## **To an extent: digital exclusion equals social exclusion**

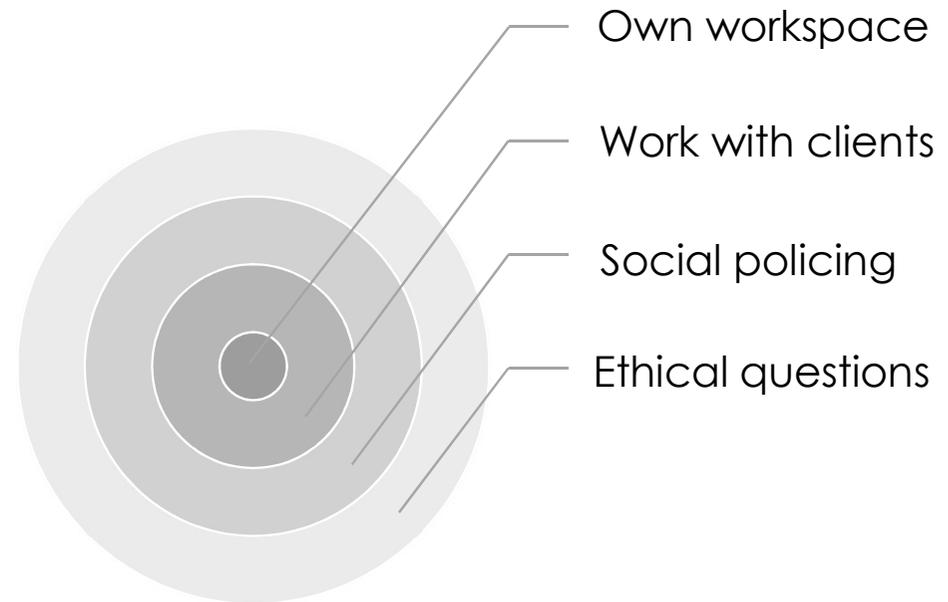
Key words: Digital divide / digital gap, automated decision making, algorithmic bias, gender targeting, big data, privacy protection, social media, cyber bullying, cyber mobbing, hate speech, ...

# Digitalization and Social Work

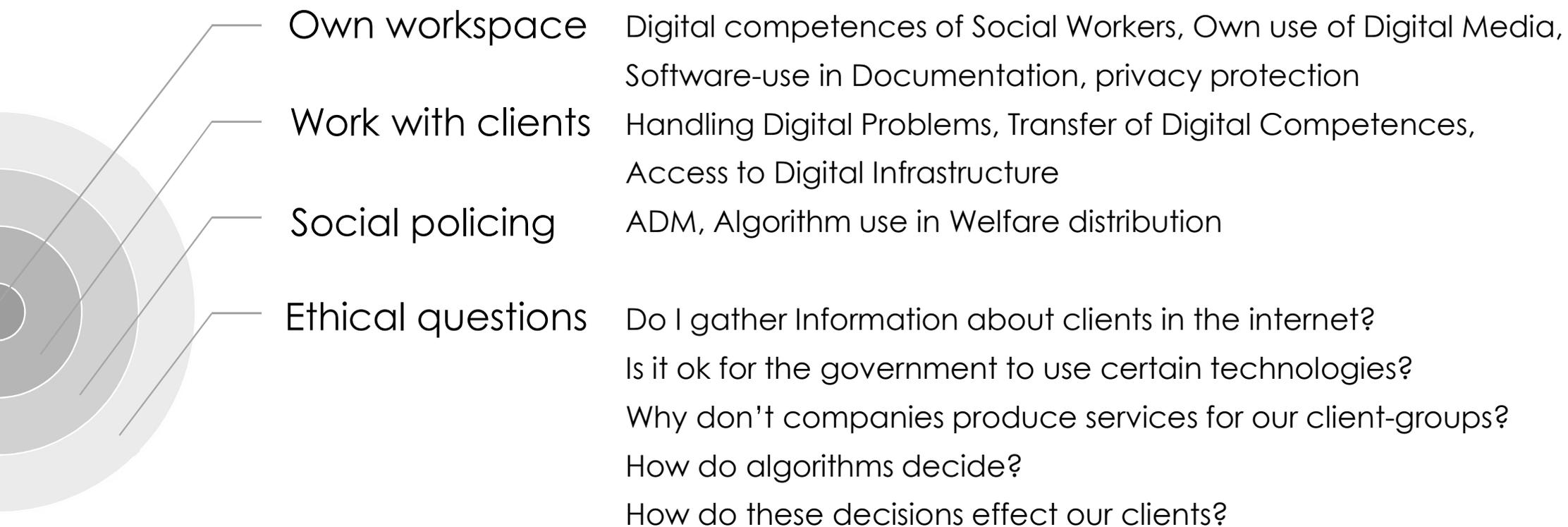
Social work has always worked with the problems that occurred because of the Transformation of society

Digitalization can affect social workers within three areas

Ethical Questions concern all of the three areas



# Digitalization and Social Work



# Intersectionality and Digitalization

social work is highly effect by social categories and by Digitalization processes

Digitalization could increase social inequality but it also can help to reduce it

## **Please ask yourselves and discuss:**

- Which social categories concern the person's life?
- How does the person get in contact with Digitalization in this context?
- Which actions can/should/might be taken by the social worker?

## Case 1 – Room 1

The team leader within a social organization (male, 55) has a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS). Up to now he has fulfilled his job in the organization, which has locations in two different cities, very well and independently. Now the management has decided to start a Digitalization Process which involves all of the time registration, documentation, accounting and human resources management.

## Case 2 – Room 2

A visually handicapped student works part time to earn her living. The money is barely enough, but besides her time-consuming studies she can't work longer hours. Her studentship is almost exhausted, as she needs more time for her studies due to her disability. Till now she could handle her life and her studies independently. Due to the COVID-19-pandemic the university switched all the courses to distance learning. The tool used is not accessible for visually handicapped people.

## Case 3 – Room 3

A social worker, who has experienced flight and was educated in the Middle East, wants her Diploma to be approved in Austria. Therefore she has to complete numerous money and time-consuming training hours and examinations. In Addition, she has to fulfil care responsibilities. Her Kids are ten and thirteen years old. Her husband died during war. She receives a small financial support for her education. Unfortunately it is not enough to purchase work equipment for her and the children. Furthermore she has the feeling, that her previous digital knowledge is not enough in order to complete the education. This is why she frequently stays away from educational appointments, which causes problems with the authority in charge for her financial support. Potentially she'll have to pay the money back if she does not complete her training. This is what puts additional pressure on the woman.

## Case 4 – Room 4

You are streetworker in an urban district where socially deprived people live. It is a satellite town which was built about 20 years ago, as there was visible shortage of affordable living space in the city. There are proportionally many migrant people, refugees or People of Colour living within this district. Also the unemployment rate within the population is quite high. Again and again you notice that police presence is significantly increased compared to other districts in the city. Even though the criminality is not higher. But due to the high police presence it comes to arrests and penalties because of trivial crimes like peeing in public, teens being out after 10pm, etc.

# Case 1 – Room 1

**Social Categories:** age, body, (dis)ablism

**Contact with Digitalization:**

- Lack of digital knowledge / digital competence
- Might need adjusted working space
- Benefit: Home-office, travelling between the two locations might become unnecessary

**What can Social Workers do:**

- Organize Training
- Offer Counselling in order to receive assisting technology on the working space (also for home office)

## Case 2 – Room 2

**Social categories:** gender, (dis)ablism, class

### **Contact with Digitalization:**

- Accessibility in the web or in technological infrastructure is a huge topic
- For visually handicapped People this could be:
  - Compatibility of tools to screen reader technology
  - Assisting technologies such as Brail keyboards

### **What can Social Workers do:**

- In Austria there is the CHG (law, which should offer equal opportunities for people with disabilities): Personal assistance
- Intervene within the university

## Case 3 – Room 3

**Social categories:** gender (care responsibilities), race, class - social status (refugee, poverty)

**Contact with digitalization:**

- Lack of digital knowledge / digital competences
- Lack of digital infrastructure

**What can social work do?**

- Provide digital infrastructure
- Provide training
- Provide counselling
- Intervene towards the authority

## Case 4 – Room 4

**Social categories:** race, class - social status (unemployment, poverty), level of education (gentrification)

### **Contact to Digitalization:**

- Predictive Policing: Algorithms calculate probabilities of criminality by the use of parameters which favour criminal acts.

### **What can social work do?**

- Knowing about those mechanisms
- Being sensitized
- Being critical towards the use of technology and questioning the effects of technology use

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