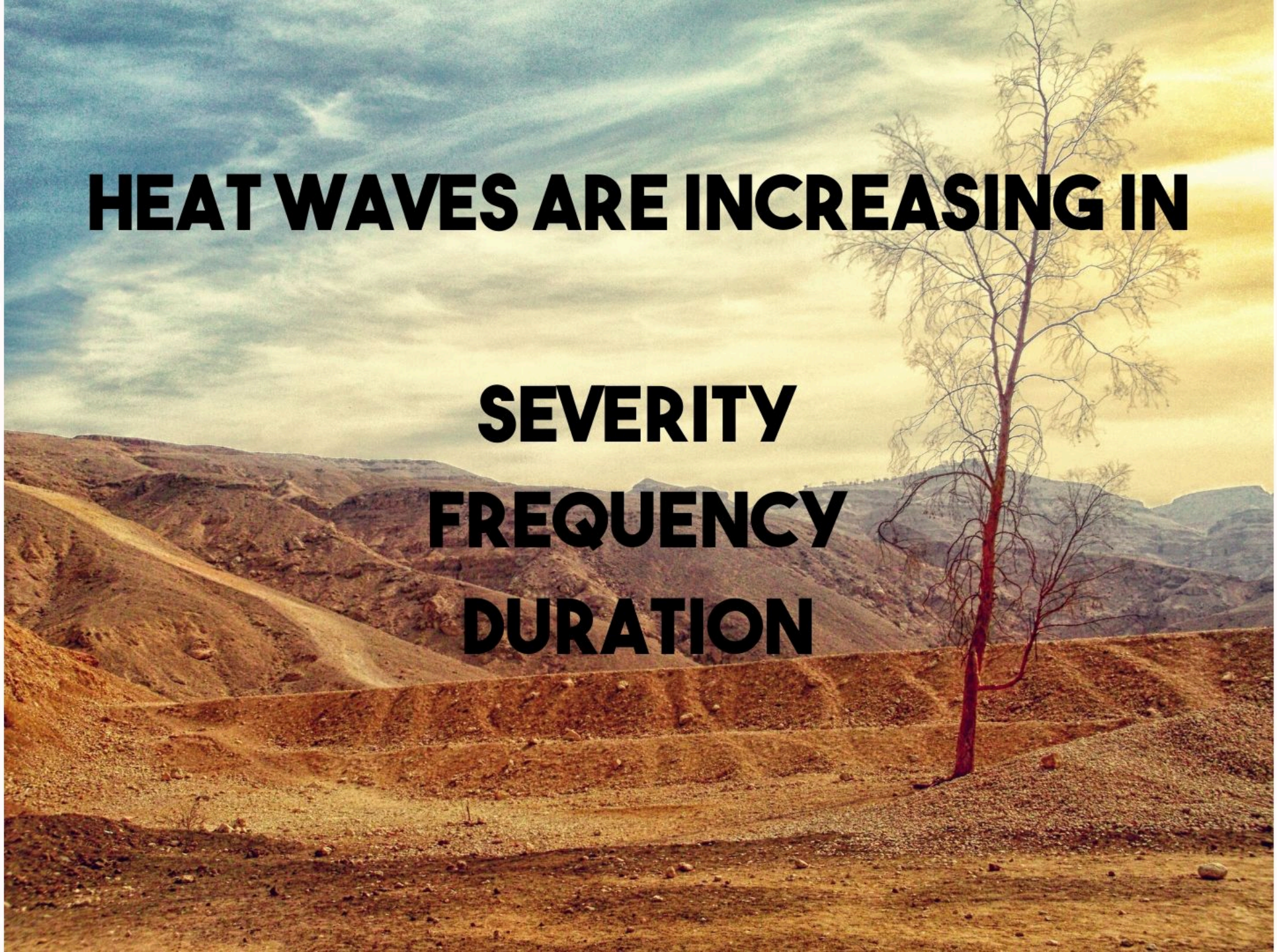
EXTREME HEAT & PUBLIC HEALTH

SONAL JESSEL, MPH
DIRECTOR OF POLICY


HEAT WAVES ARE INCREASING IN
SEVERITY
FREQUENCY
DURATION

...& WE HAVE THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

FEATURE

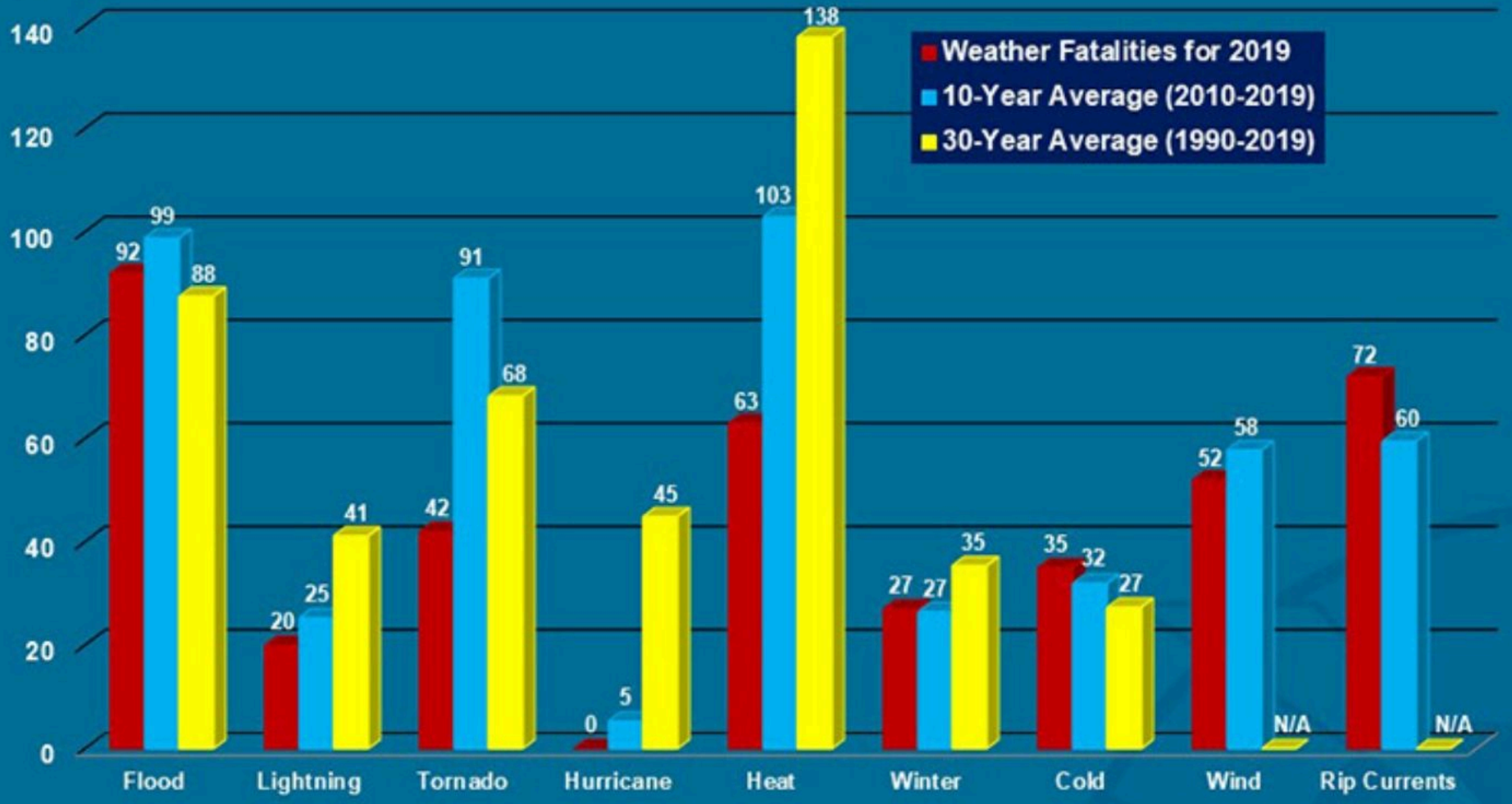
Cooling Season

New York City has set out to protect people — and the planet — from the deadliest disaster: heat.

By Kea Krause on Aug 13, 2019

"THE ANNUAL MEAN AIR TEMPERATURE OF A CITY WITH 1 MILLION PEOPLE OR MORE CAN BE 1.8–5.4°F (1–3°C) WARMER THAN ITS SURROUNDINGS" (EPA)

Weather Fatalities 2019



THIS GRAPH DOES NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY!

"WE ARE IN THE SAME STORM, BUT NOT ALL IN THE SAME BOAT"

WHO'S ESPECIALLY AT-RISK TO EXTREME HEAT IMPACTS?

- Older adults
- Children
- People with chronic illness
- Pregnant people
- Outdoor workers

Image from: eclosh.com

WHO'S ESPECIALLY AT-RISK TO EXTREME HEAT IMPACTS?

- Older adults
- Children
- People with chronic illness
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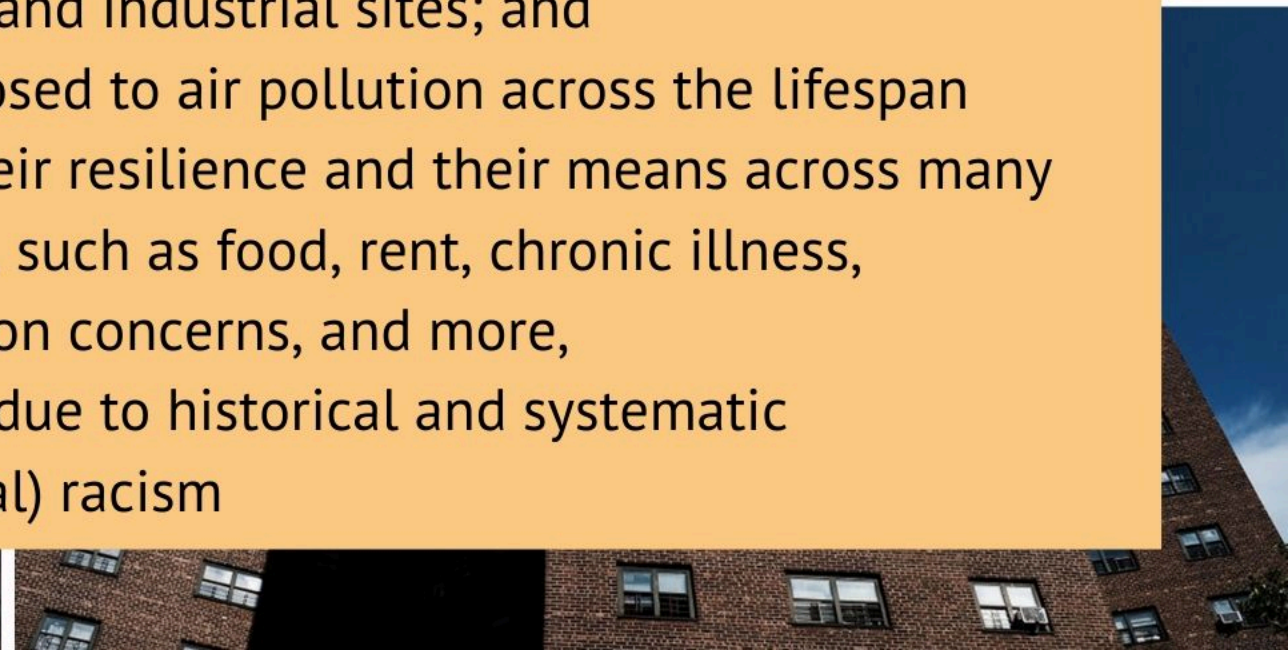
...but also people who

- live in older, poorly maintained apartment buildings;
- live in crowded apartments with intergenerational living;
- live in neighborhoods with less green space access,
- live in neighborhoods with more air pollution from buildings and industrial sites; and
- been exposed to air pollution across the lifespan
- stretch their resilience and their means across many hardships, such as food, rent, chronic illness, immigration concerns, and more,

....and it is all due to historical and systematic (environmental) racism



WE ACT
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

CLIMATE CHANGE
[Extreme heat]

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS

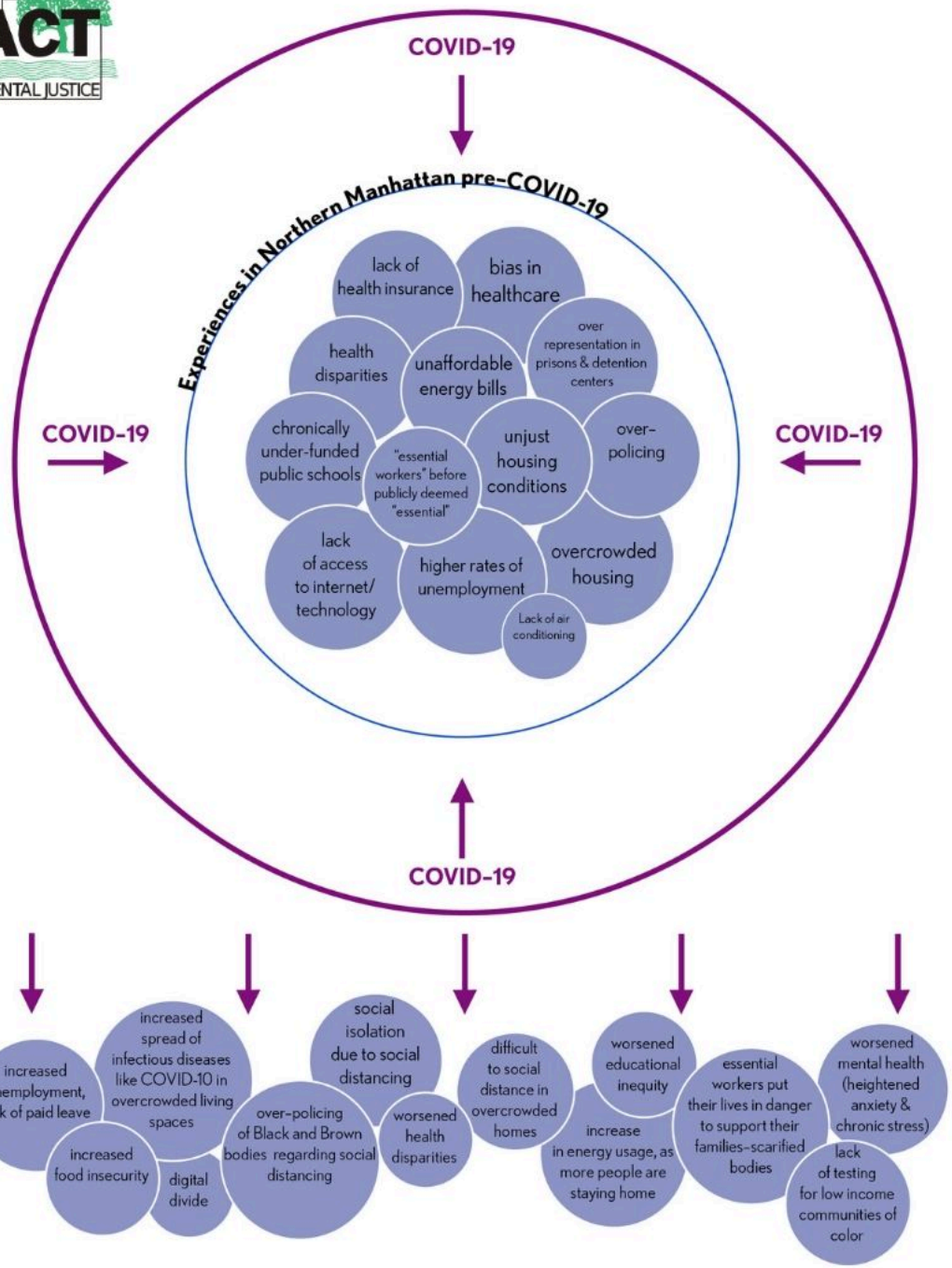
EXTREME HEAT IS A (CLIMATE) JUSTICE ISSUE

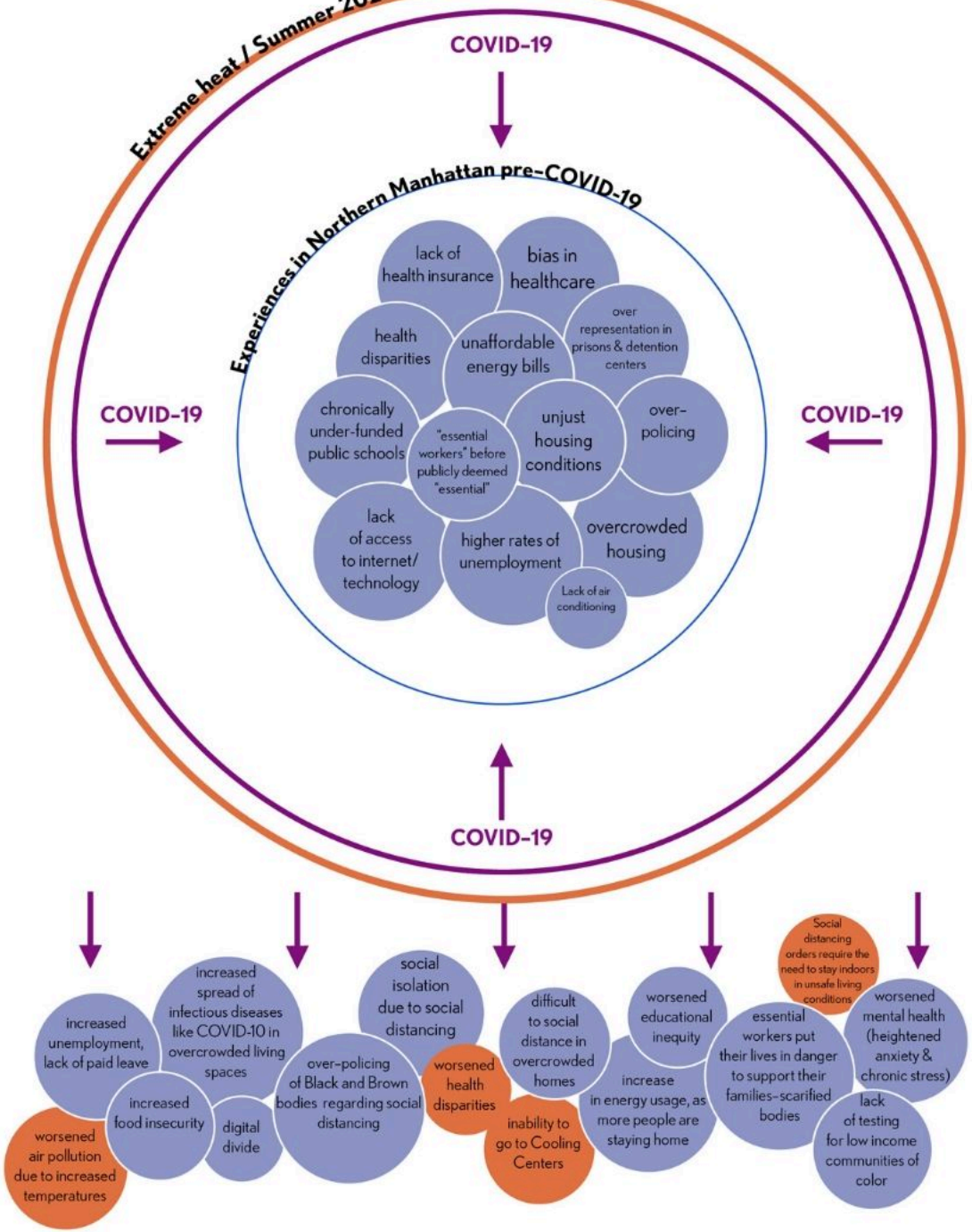
OUR SYSTEM OF WHITE SUPREMACY AND ANTI-BLACKNESS SAYS WE ARE OKAY WITH BIPOC BEARING THE BRUNT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

CHALLENGES THIS SUMMER

WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



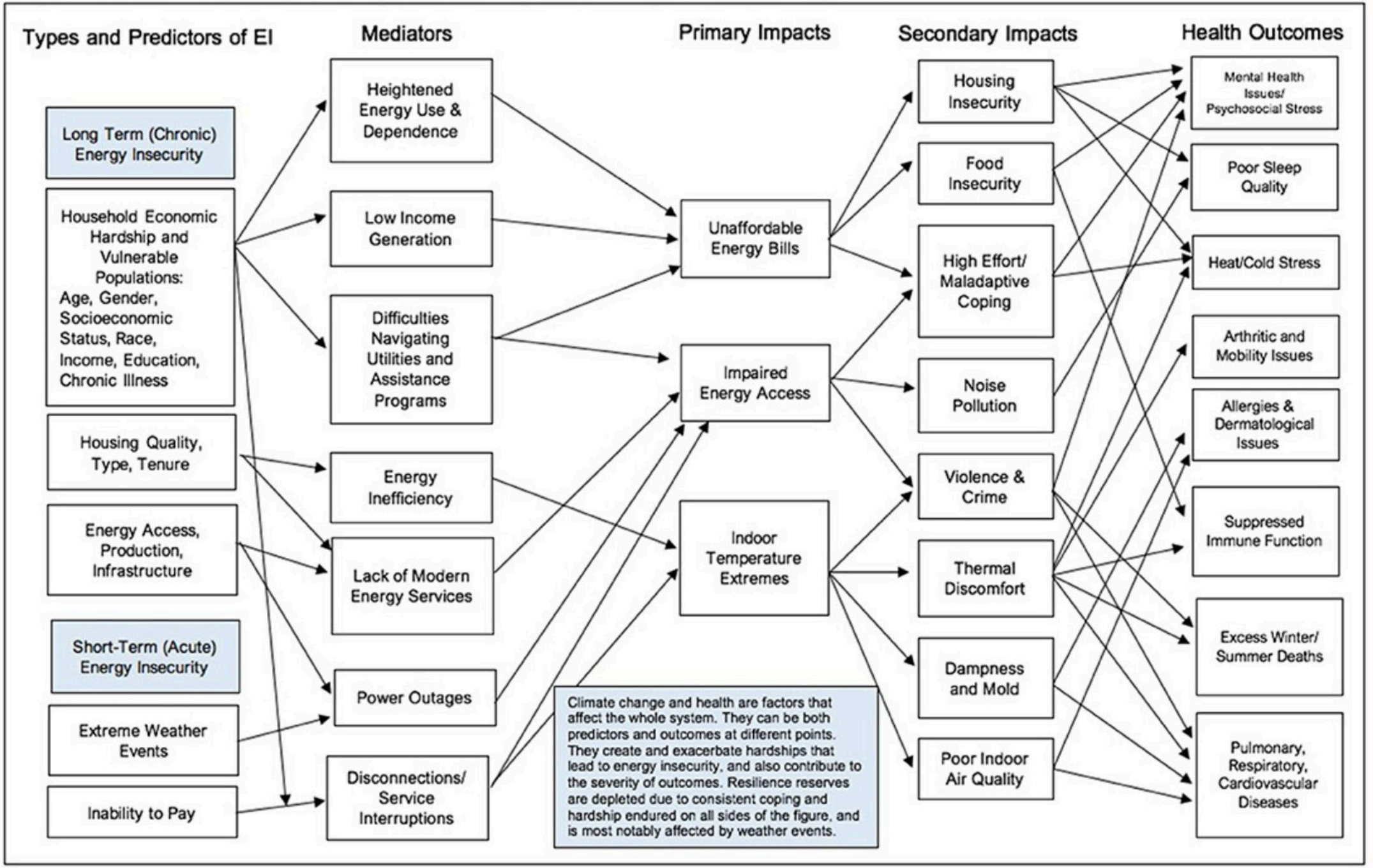


PEOPLE ARE STAYING AT HOME MORE THIS SUMMER.

Address energy insecurity

The inability to adequately meet basic household energy needs due to the interplay of physical conditions of housing, household energy costs and energy-related coping strategies.

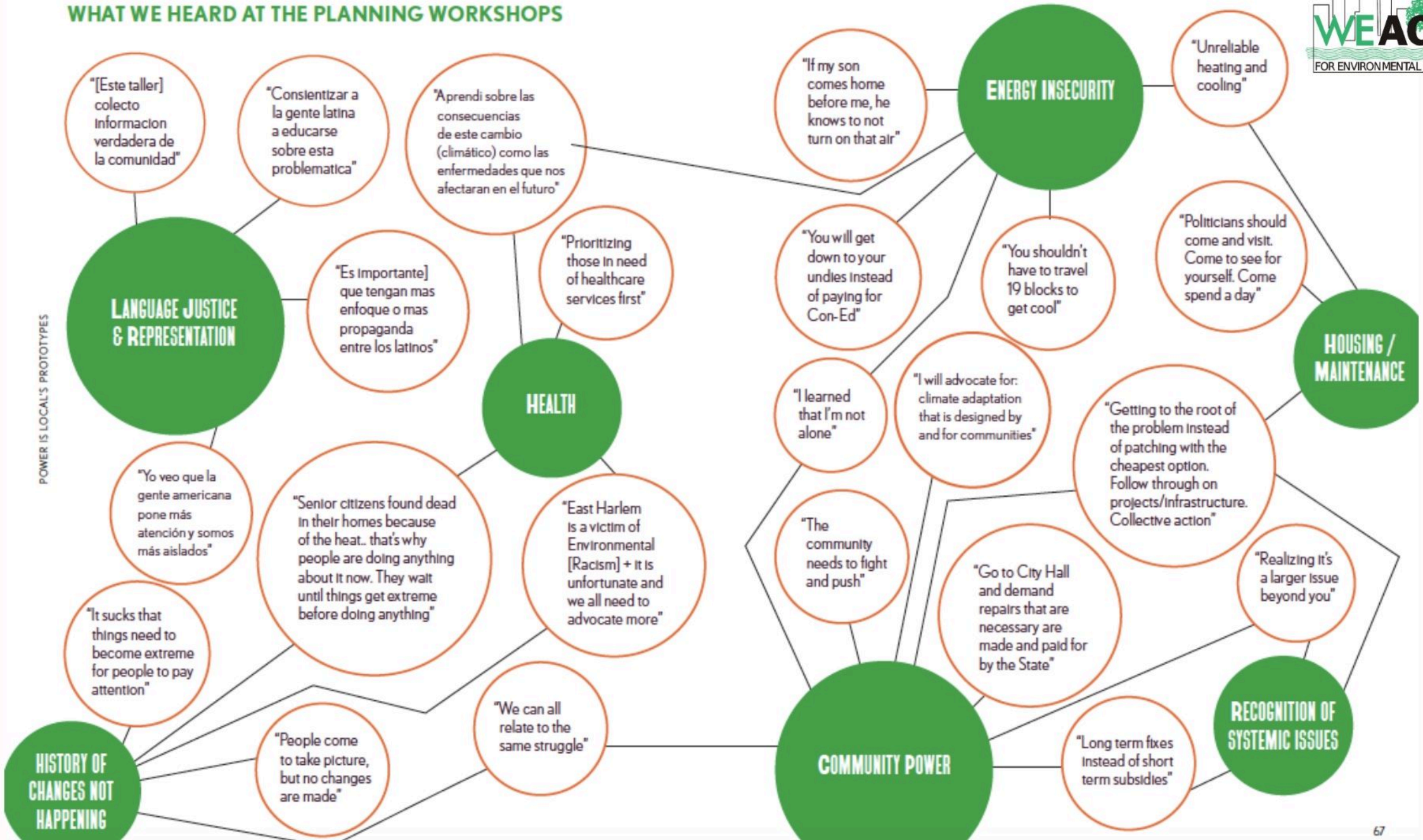
WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Jessel, Sonal, Samantha Sawyer, and Diana Hernández. “Energy, Poverty, and Health in Climate Change: A Comprehensive Review of an Emerging Literature.” Frontiers in Public Health 7:357 (December 12, 2019). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00357.

EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO A **HEALTHY** & **COOL** HOME

WHAT WE HEARD AT THE PLANNING WORKSHOPS



“Senior citizens found dead in their homes because of the heat…that’s why people are doing anything about it now. They wait until things get extreme before doing anything.”

WE NEED PROTECTIONS FOR LOW INCOME COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO ARE BIPOC

- feel safe and healthy in their homes
- feel safe and healthy outside

BECAUSE IF HOME IS NOT SAFE FROM HEAT, OUTSIDE IS NOT SAFE FROM VIOLENCE, THEN WHERE IS SAFE?

WE ACT
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

@Sonal360_

@weact4ej

www.weact.org/heat

THANK YOU