



Resiliency in Challenging Times

Presented by Ashley Stewart, Director of Strategic Transformation of C4 Innovations

Resiliency

in Challenging Times



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About Me

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Series Overview

This session will center the realities that service providers and organizations are holding; social challenges, workforce strain, and the responsibility of supporting communities during times of grief and uncertainty. We will ground the conversation in healing, wellness, and compassion while exploring what it means to sustain ourselves and our organizations in complex times. Participants will engage with trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches that emphasize transparency, intentionality, and collective care. Alongside these values, we will introduce practical strategies and tools to strengthen leadership, culture, and operations in the face of change. Together, we will reframe resiliency as a practice of wellness and alignment that helps organizations not only adapt but truly thrive.

Intentions for This Space



Creating authentic space



Taking collaborative action



Starting with Honoring Space

A Note on Resiliency



Compassionate Action- Centered Conversations



Staying True to Ourselves and Our Values in Times of Change

This is not a
moment to
shrink.

This is a
moment to
root deeper.

Navigating
providing
support
during
complex
times.

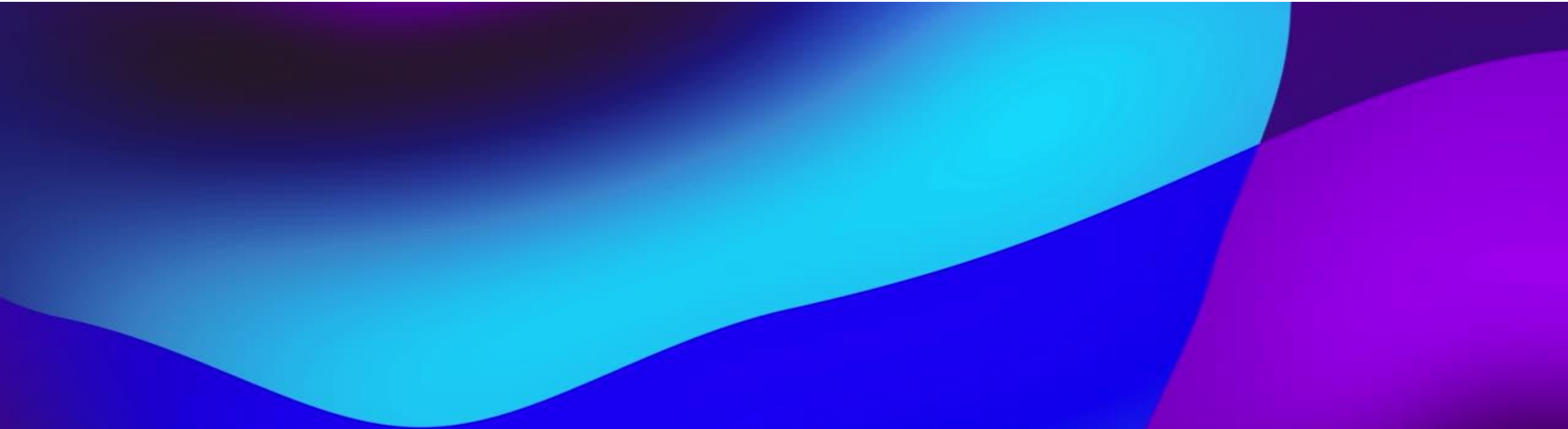
Being Transparent About Our Experiences

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This is not a moment to shrink—this is a moment to root deeper.

In times of backlash and fear, our values must not just survive, they must **lead**. Staying true to ourselves as leaders and providers means anchoring in our *why* even when we feel pressure to silence it.



Compassion: What comes to mind?



Self-Compassion: *Empathy + Action*



We use the term compassion often but rarely define it.



Compassion is broadly defined as an awareness of others' suffering combined with a desire to help alleviate that suffering.



The word “compassion” comes from Latin roots meaning “to suffer together,” reflecting its core of empathetic concern and active desire to be in support or solidarity toward someone you perceive as suffering.



“the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another’s suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.”

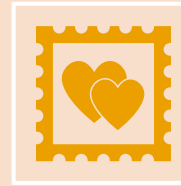
Different Than Empathy or Sympathy

- **Empathy:** Which is the capacity to *feel with* or understand another's emotions
 - **Sympathy** which often refers to feeling *for* someone without necessarily understanding or acting to help
-
- Unlike sympathy (a more distant, reaction), compassion entails a deeper connection and an urge to take supportive action
 - Empathy can sometimes lead to *empathic distress*, compassion often reduces that experience as it involves caring *for* others' suffering with a proactive, other-oriented focus that drives helping behavior.

Compassion and the Brain



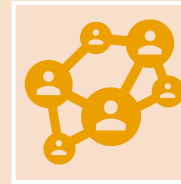
Neuropsychological studies show that compassion is both a skill and a choice; one that folks often avoid because of the effort it involves.



However, the research also supports the incredible benefit and how rewarding living a compassion-filled life can be for our own wellness.



Empathy and compassion involve multiple parts of the brain, and engages neural networks that are linked to reward pathways associated with positive feeling and motivation.



Therefore, while empathy can connect us and help us feel with people, compassion moves us in a different way that is less emotionally fatiguing and more affirming.



**Why is
Compassion So
Important for
Psychological
Safety?**

Psychological Safety & Change

- Our early understanding of psychological safety is grounded understanding the extent that people feel secure and confident in their ability to navigate change. (Schein & Bennis, 1965)
- It expanded to describe a persons' comfortability showing up as their full selves to work, without fear of negative consequences. (Kahn, 1990)
- Further expansion, leads to definitions that are more central to teams (groups of people) and collective ideas of acceptance (Edmondson, 1999)*.
- Today, psychological safety is often described as feeling safe* to take risks, to advocate, to speak up, to intervene, disagree, propose new ideas, etc., without fear of repercussions. Ability to share creative ideas, to demonstrate the value of diverse and creative ideas without judgement. (McKinsey, 2023)

INCLUSION & AUTHENTICITY

“If an environment feels threatening, we’ll tend to conform in order to achieve a sense of protection and safety... Those leaders who are willing to take this on will benefit from more innovative conversations, organizational learning, and employees feeling confident and engaged because they’re bringing their true selves into the workplace.”

-Patricia Faison Hewlin

INCLUSION & AUTHENTICITY

“When our body and mind experience safety, our social engagement system enables us to **collaborate, listen, empathize, and connect**, as well as be **creative, innovative, and bold** in our thinking and ideas. This has positive benefits for our relationships as well as our lives in general.”

-Ellen Boeder



ROOTS DON'T RELOCATE IN THE STORM

Uphold

Uphold values-based decision making.

Lead

Lead with psychological safety and cultural humility.

Protect

Protect reflective space.

Resist

Resist “urgency culture;” prioritize humanity over productivity.



Ecological Approach

All Parts of Our Experience Matter

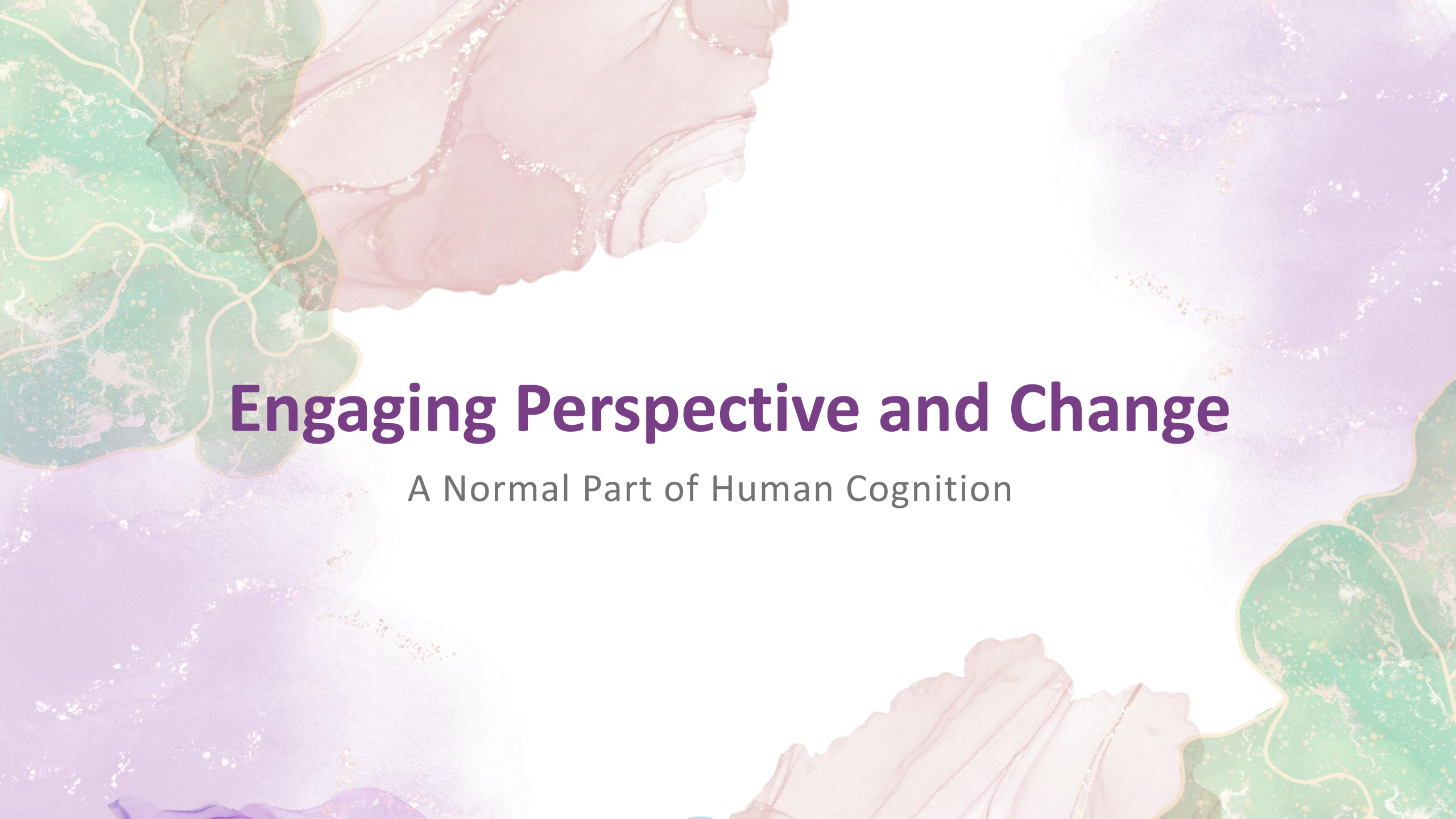
TAKING AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

What is *ecology*

- 1: a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments.
- 2: the totality or pattern of relations between organism and their environment.
- 3: an often delicate or intricate system or complex.

"What is one value you will not let be compromised —no matter the external pressure?"

REFLECTION



Engaging Perspective and Change

A Normal Part of Human Cognition



Grounding in Cognition



Grounding on Cognition

Positive

Negative

Neutral



Creating inclusive work
culture is everyone's lane

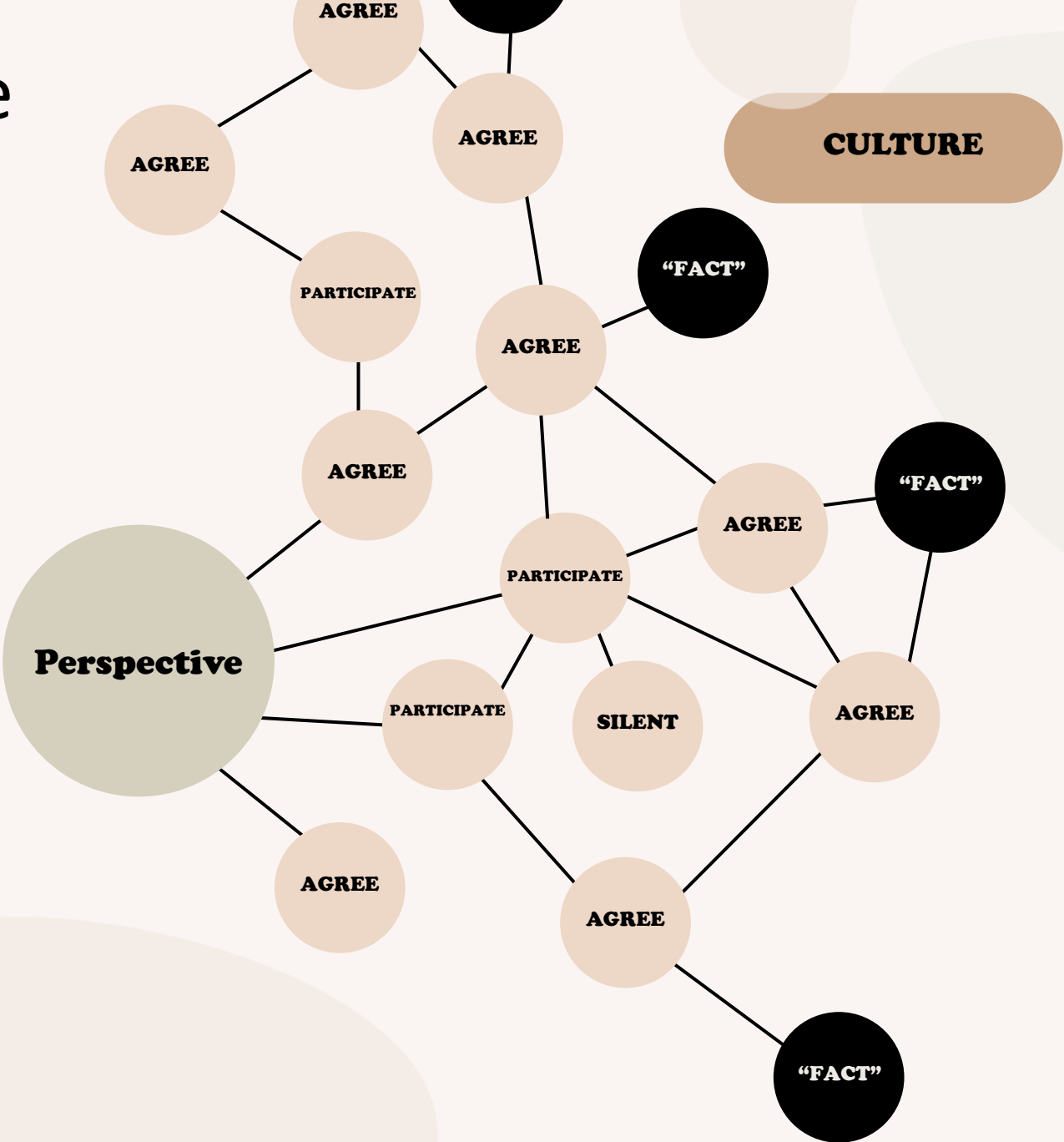


The “Problem” with Culture Change

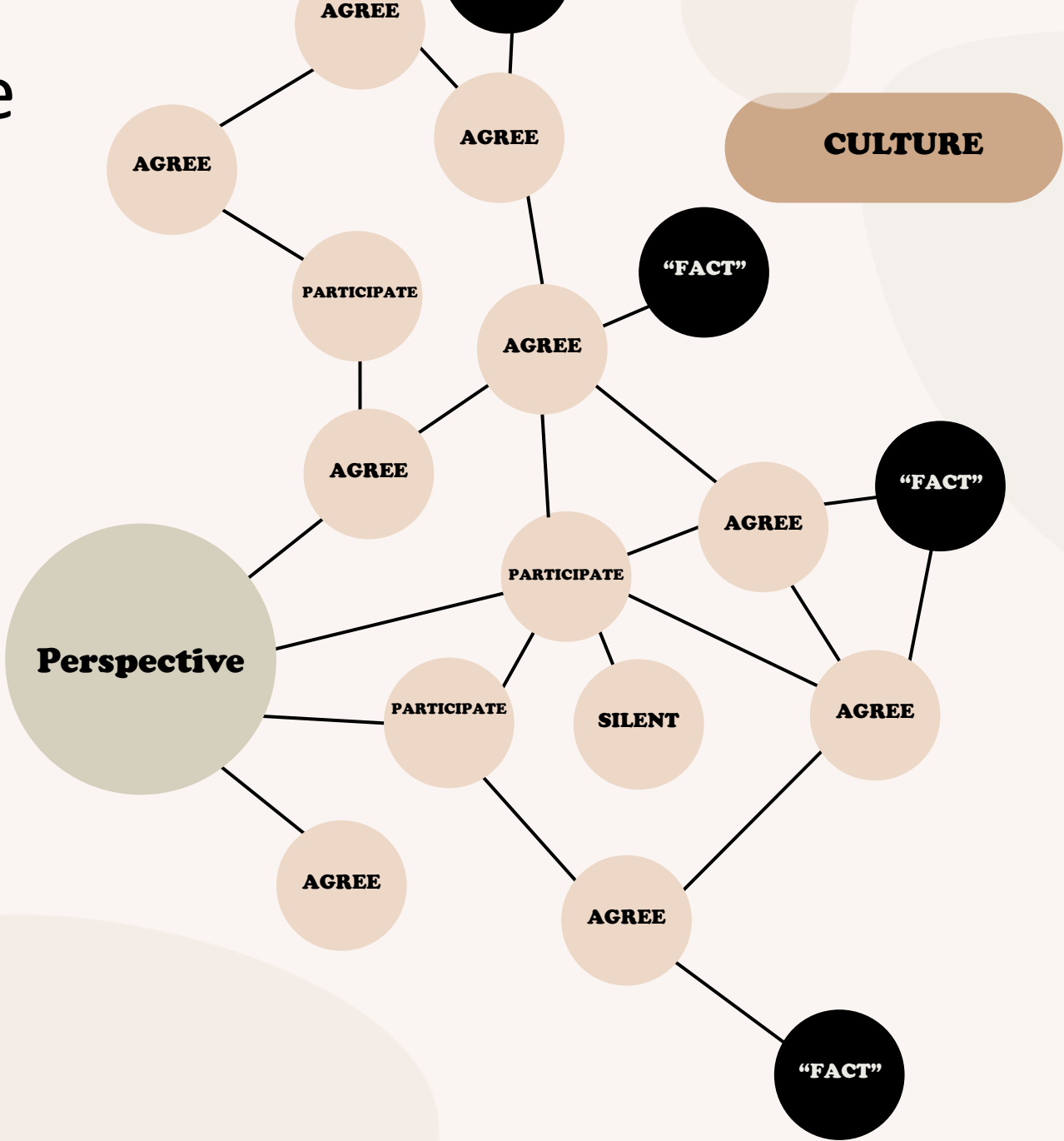
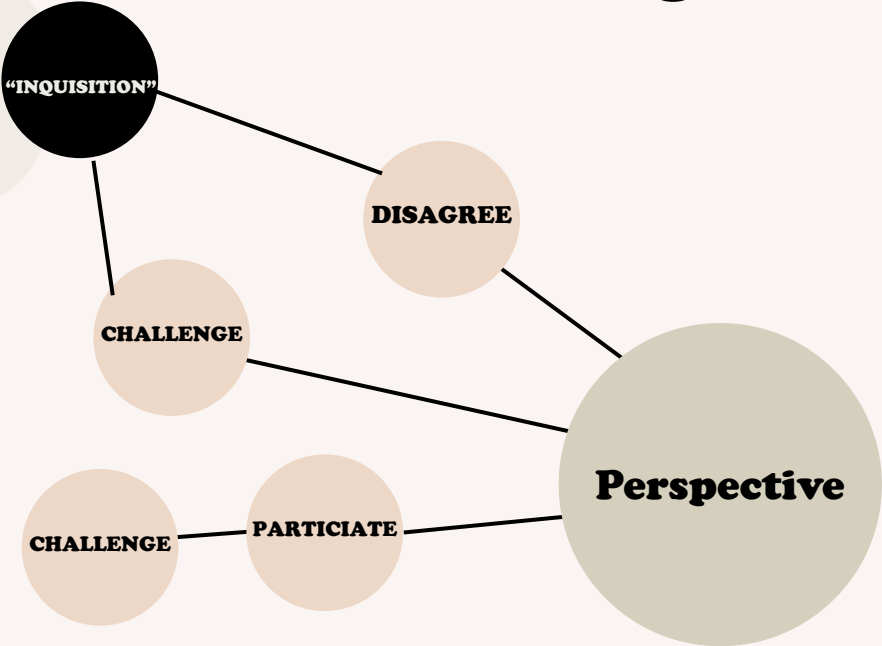
Perspective

Perspective

The Opportunity for Culture Change



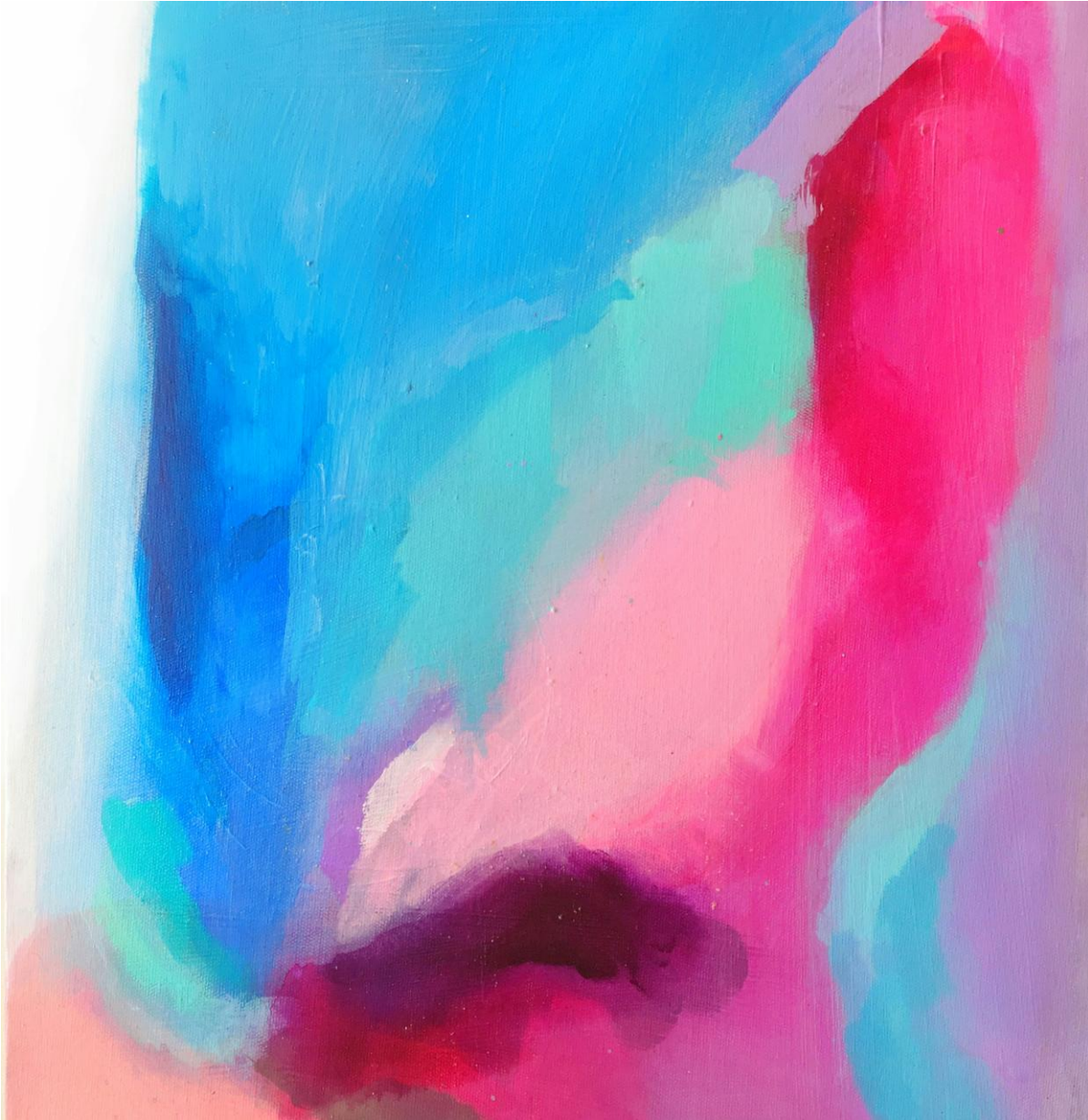
The Opportunity for Culture Change





On Continuing Forward





What really is Self-Care?

The concept of self-care is variable. Many people, professionals, scholars, and communities define it in significantly different ways. While there may be differences in how people talk about self-care, there is agreement that self-care is important and that we should be prioritizing it. Overall, self-care is seen as an essential practice to nurture and care for our mental, physical and psychological wellness.

Self-Care in Many Terms

- In some definitions, self-care is described as **spending time and engaging in activities that will help you live well and improve your physical and mental health**. Suggestions for this definition of self-care often include making sleep a priority, participating in relaxing activities, saying “no” to some things and setting priorities, demonstrating more gratitude toward others, having a positive outlook, eating healthy and balanced meals, and connecting with other people.
- Other definitions focus on “**treating**” **oneself** and doing something markedly different in our daily routine to prioritize wellness when we feel overwhelmed or stressed. Recommendations include indulging in a tasty treat, getting a massage, or traveling.
- One perspective emphasizes that the former definitions of self-care are co-opted or misrepresenting historical roots of self-care which reflect strength, strategy, and resilience of systemically marginalized, excluded, and oppressed populations. These definitions of self-care focus on **self-care as preservation and liberation in the face of social challenges**. This includes choosing people who are safe to interact with and expressing ourselves authentically.
- In some literature, self-care is described as management techniques and interventions for **medical adherence**. This might be specific to treatment plans for people facing physical or behavioral health conditions, where a combination of medication and supportive strategies are needed to be well.
- Other supporting literature suggests that self-care is **inherently community-centered** by definition, and a growing amount of the literature shifts self-care to a workplace focus and amplifies the need for **collective practices and workplace wellbeing**.

Opportunities for Self Care

- **Cultural Expression:** I have opportunities every day to lean into my cultural identities and to be myself around people who make me feel safe.
- **Movement:** I have the opportunity to engage in movement or physical exercise regularly.
- **Rest:** I have the opportunity to meaningfully rest, including sleep, to recover and nurture my energy levels.
- **Nourishment:** I feel balanced and nourished in my eating routine. (Self-care honors that this looks different for everyone, and what is considered nourishing is very personal to people.)
- **Emotional Expression:** I have opportunities to express myself and my feelings.
- **Quiet Time:** I am able to have quiet time each day for thinking, meditation, breathing, listening to music, or any other form of mindful activity of my choosing.
- **Interests:** I have hobbies or interests that I am able to look forward to each week.
- **Social Connections:** I get to spend quality time with people around me who feel safe and supportive.
- **Defining Wellness:** I have a personal definition of self-care and wellness that leads my journey. I take the opportunity to define and redefine what wellness looks like in different seasons of my life.

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of several wooden chess pawns. The pawns are arranged in a row, with the one in the center foreground being the most prominent and in sharp focus. The others are progressively more out of focus as they recede into the background. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a gentle glow. The background is a bright, hazy white, suggesting a window or a bright light source.

Collective Wellness and Self-Care

Things to Observe



Secondary Traumatic Stress: This term specifically refers to the stress reactions and symptoms resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by another individual and the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.



Vicarious Trauma: While similar to secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma involves changes to a person's inner experience, including their beliefs and cognitive schemas.



Compassion Fatigue: This term describes the profound emotional and physical erosion that occurs in helping professionals over time due to the chronic use of empathy when supporting people who are suffering. Therefore, it is important to engage in collective compassion, having a strong framework, and establishing a cultural norm.

Let's Get Strategic

With change and engagement, we must also navigate

1. Change Fatigue

2. Compassion Fatigue

3. Decision Fatigue

Organizational Wellness

Both **individuals** and **organizations** have a role to play in promoting self-care and overall well-being.

- **Supervision:** I have the opportunity to, and engage in, regular supervision and consultation with peers, colleagues, and supervisors for support and perspective.
- **Professional Development:** I have the opportunity to, and participate in, workshops, seminars and training sessions that help me feel up to date on the latest practices and skills necessary for my role.
- **Resources:** I feel I have all the resources necessary, including time, to accomplish my tasks in a meaningful and dynamic way.
- **Authenticity:** I feel comfortable to bring my authentic self, including important aspects of my cultural identity, into the work that I am doing.
- **Boundaries:*** I feel I am able to, and have the skills to, maintain professional boundaries with the people I serve in order to balance work demands and personal needs and prevent burnout.

Organizational Wellness

- **Support Spaces:** I have ample peer supportive spaces, where I can share professionally relevant experiences and gain and offer mutual support.
- **Self-Reflection:** I have the ability within my role to self-reflect on my work and my own emotional responses. I am able to identify stressors as well as areas for growth.
- **Workload:** I have the skills and resources to organize and manage my workload effectively.
- **Environment:** My work environment is conducive to my productivity and my wellness.
- **Intentional Time:** I am able to, and take, intentional time for meals and breaks during the day, allowing me to be refreshed and present in my work.
- **Goals:** I am able to set realistic and achievable goals each day in my work.
- **Healthy Teams:** I am able to engage with activities that strengthen my relationships and enhance workplace morale.
- **External Support:** I have wellness practices or health services that permit me to address personal and professional challenges.

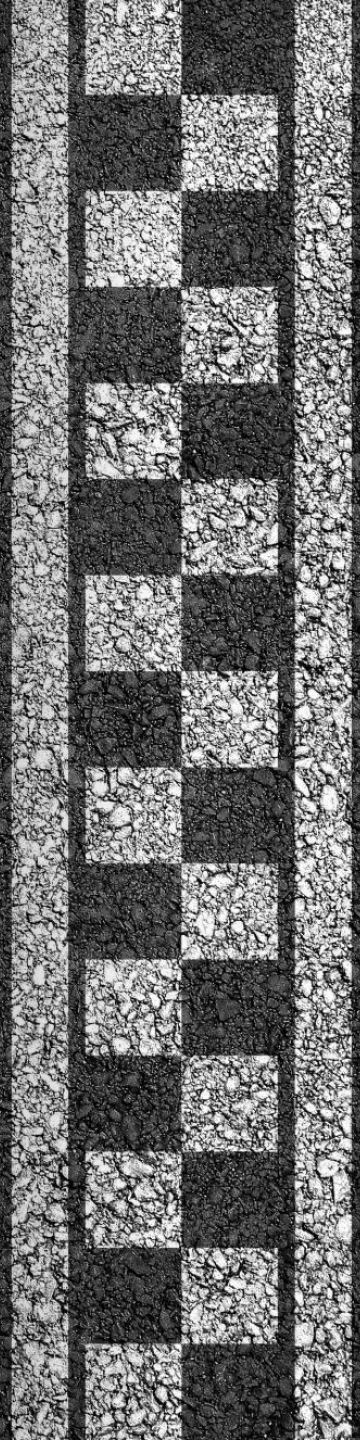
Promoting Wellness

Cultivate	Cultivate Authenticity in the Workplace
Commit	Commit to Culture Change
Address	Address Inequities
Build	Build Accountability Structures



The Importance of Transparency

It's everyone's lane



AUTHENTIC CHANGE FRAMEWORK



ACKNOWLEDGMENT



ACCOUNTABILITY



ACTION

Acknowledgement

[Truth] Acknowledge with clarity the past and present.



Accountability

[Trust] Take accountability for missteps, ignorance, participation, lack of awareness, complicity, and missed opportunities.

Action

[Trauma] Demonstrate awareness by stating actionable steps toward a different outcome.

Acknowledgement

[Truth] Acknowledge with clarity the inequities. Past and present.

Authentic Change

When we acknowledge the truths of situations, are accountable and engage in action-focused solutions we build trust.



Accountability

[Trust] Take accountability for missteps, ignorance, participation, lack of awareness, complicity, and missed opportunities.

Action

[Trauma] Demonstrate awareness by stating actionable steps toward a different outcome.

Closing Considerations

In a world demanding neutrality, we choose integrity. In systems demanding silence, we choose truth.

- What is your fierce commitment as a professional during this season of change?





Thank You

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mosaic
opioid recovery partnership

Thank You

mosaic.rizema.org

