

# Knowing Yourself, Caring for Others

Mount St. Joseph's Hospital  
ICU Education Day

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# Centre for Practitioner Renewal (CPR)

- Health care is about living/dying, curing/healing; art/science, mind/heart, skills/knowledge, technology/compassion
- Health care is based on a business model of efficiency, the work we do is about relationship—relationship with *self, other and Other*
- Relationship is often sacrificed to action and efficiency

# Centre for Practitioner Renewal

- How do we sustain health care providers in the work place?
- What is the effect of being in the presence of suffering?
- What would be reparative, healing or restore resilience for health care providers?

*Efficiency through relationship*

# Core Messages

- Relationships can sustain if they are maintained (self, other and Other)
- Self awareness is essential to the communication that maintains relationships
- Communication is key to effectiveness, efficiency and resilience

# Self Reflection

Think back to a recent work day.

While you travel to work, what do you notice in your body, your mind and your feelings? As you get to work what do you notice? What is the environment like? What impact does that environment have on you? Who is there with you? What is your confidence in the support those people provide?

## Self Reflection (cont.)

While you're at work, how would you rate your emotional stress level? How often do you pause to unburden from stresses?

As you leave your work, what do you notice in your body, your mind and your feelings? What do you take with you and what do you leave behind?

## Self Reflection (cont.)

As you commute home, how do you feel? How do you unpack your day?

What do you notice when you arrive home? After several hours at home? How much do work-related thoughts intrude?

As you fall asleep do thoughts of work or work relationships intrude? Do you dream about your work? If so, what are the themes and images in these dreams?

# Check-in

## FIFE yourself

### Feelings

What do you feel right now?

### Impression (thoughts)

What is occupying your thoughts?

### Function (behaviour)

What effect does your state have on you?

### Expectations (meaning making)

What expectations do you have of yourself?



# Group Guidelines

C onfidentiality

E qual airtime

N on-judgemental listening

T imeliness

R ight to pass

E ngaged

# Our Experience at CPR

Sustaining Healthcare Providers in the workplace:

Burnout / Compassion Fatigue / Vicarious  
Trauma / Moral Distress / Grief / Depression  
/ Anxiety

# Unfixable Suffering

Trauma: sense of helplessness in the face of  
unfixable suffering

Judith Herman

# The Risks

- Burnout
- Moral Distress
- Vicarious Traumatization (McCann & Pearlman, 1990)  
incomplete empathic engagement and sense responsibility to help
- Secondary Traumatic Stress (Stamm, 1995) knowledge of trauma experienced by another
- Compassion Fatigue (Figley, 1995) preoccupation with individual or trauma

# Our Experience at CPR

Sustaining Healthcare Providers in the workplace:

Burnout / Compassion Fatigue / Vicarious  
Trauma / Moral Distress / Grief / Depression  
/ Anxiety

*and*

“Lateral Stress” among colleagues

# Lateral Stress:

## Accumulated stress discharged between colleagues

- Irritability, frustration, lack of patience
- Intolerance of difficult emotion
- Silencing response
- Scapegoating /bullying/incivility

# Most Common Signs of Distress

- Increased rates of illness
- Withdrawal - Isolation
- Cynicism - Sadness - Depression
- Exhaustion - Presenteeism
- Addictive responses
- Loss of efficiency - Judgment errors
- Challenging team dynamics
- Impaired boundaries - Identification vs.  
Empathy

# Challenges to Well Being in Health Care

“High demand/low control is bad enough; high demand/low control/low support can be deadly.”

Sotile W.M. and Sotile, M.O. (2002) *The Resilient Physician*.



# Grief

Change



Loss



Grief

Anger/Rage

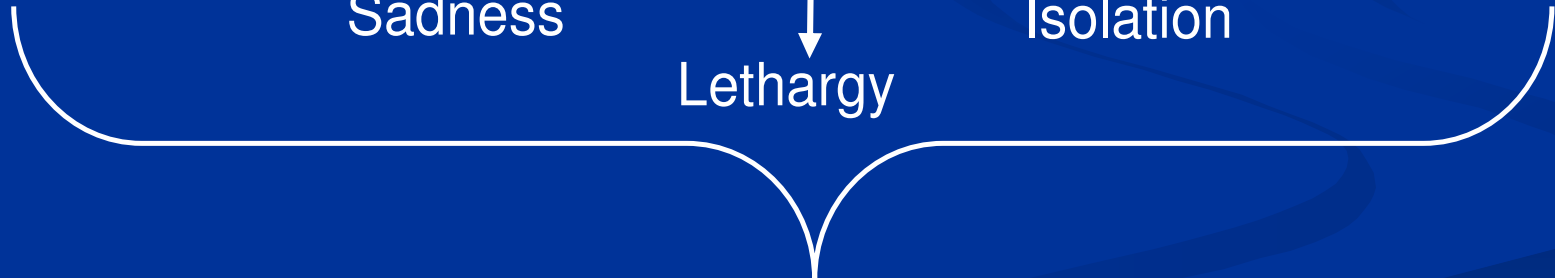
Sadness

Lethargy

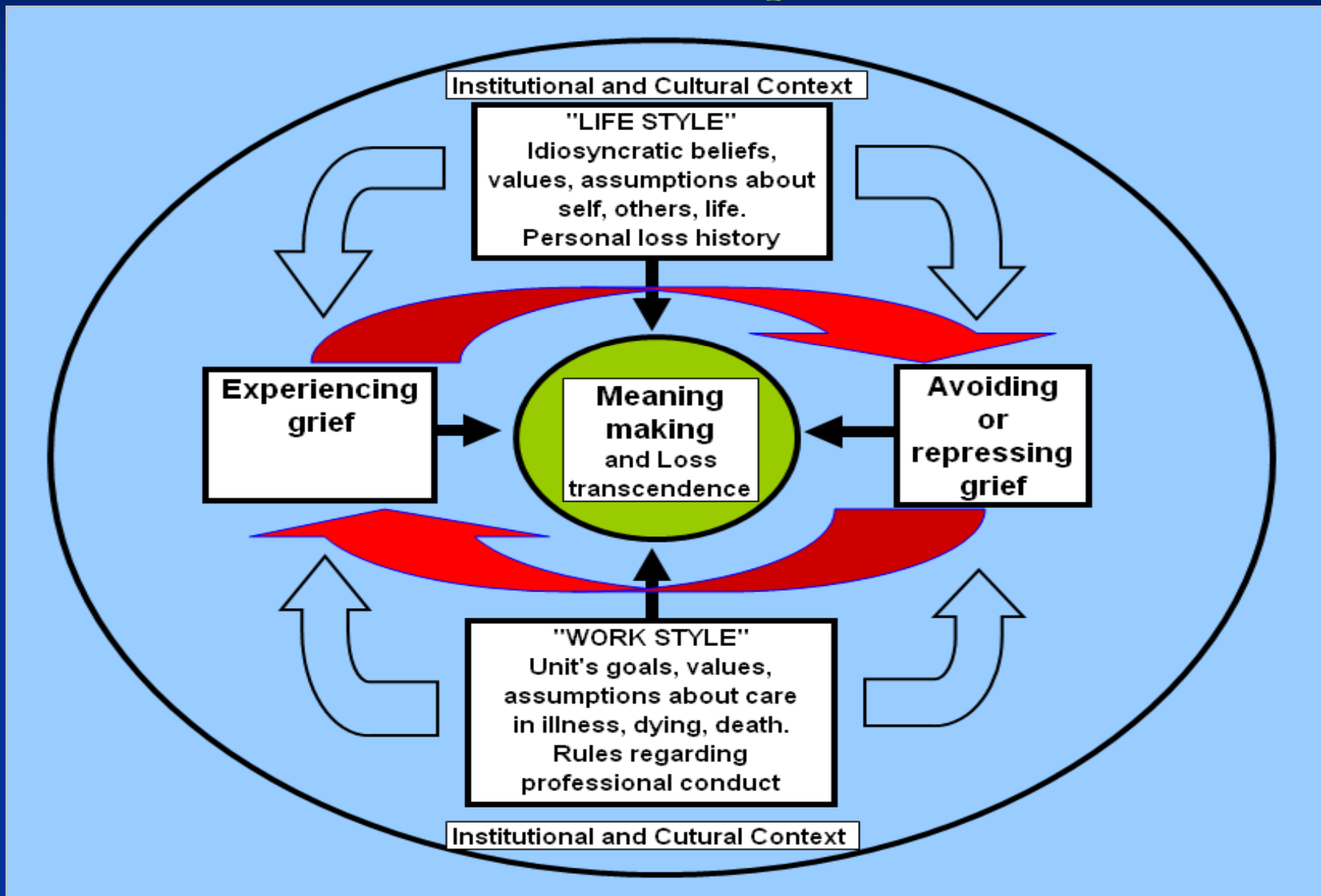
Isolation

Uncertainty/Fear

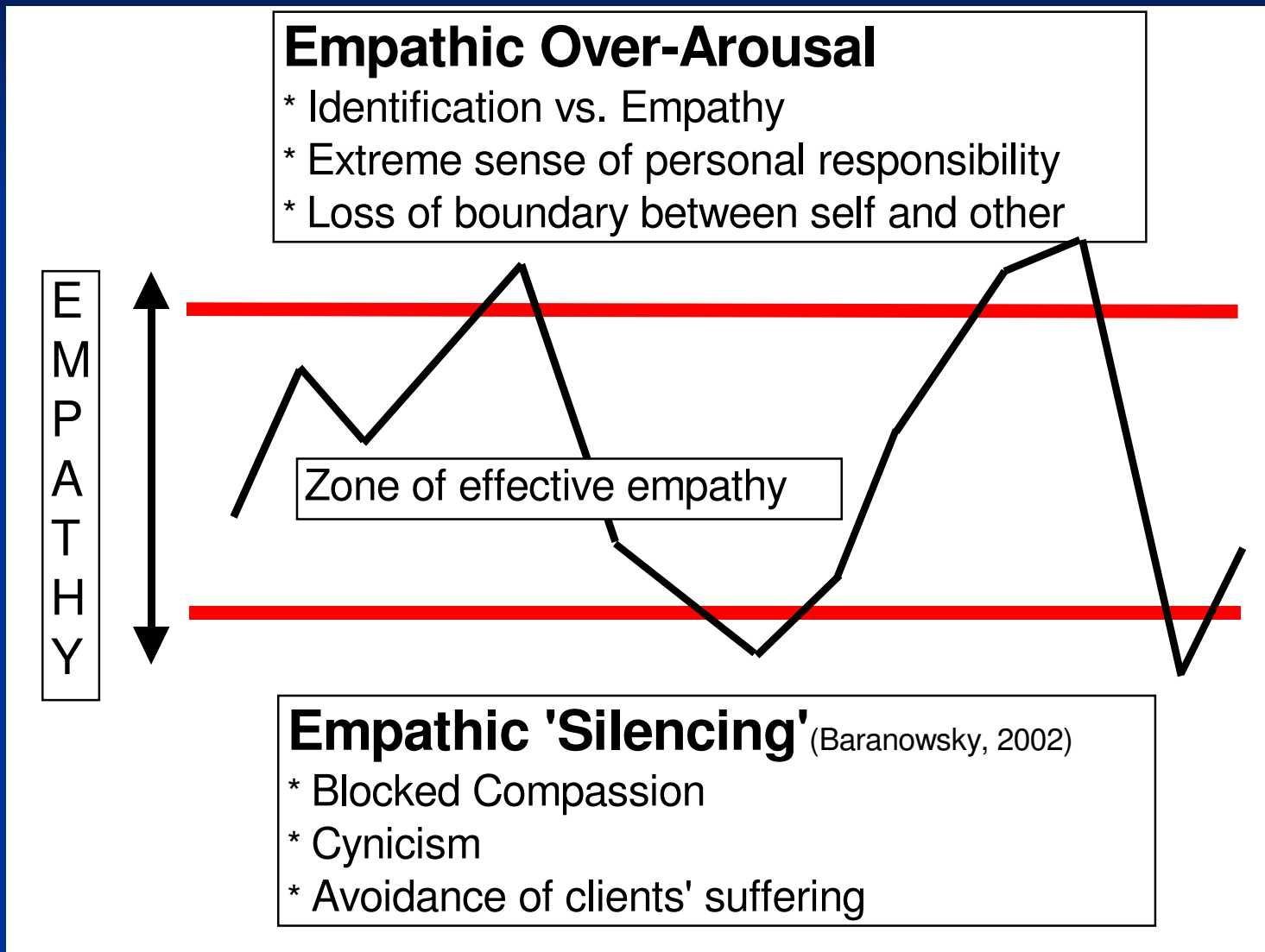
Impact on Relationships



# Emotional Processing for HCPs: Grief Model (Papadatou, 2000)



# Window of Effective Empathic Engagement



# Action versus Presence “Mode”

Whitehead, 2012

- Action Mode
  - Acute situations – Life or Death
  - Focus on pre-established protocols or pathways
  - Reduced personal/emotional experience
- Presence Mode
  - Calmer situations – No immediate need for intervention
  - Focus on mindful awareness of self and other
  - Greater receptivity to new information

# The “Functional Disconnect”

(Whitehead, 2012)

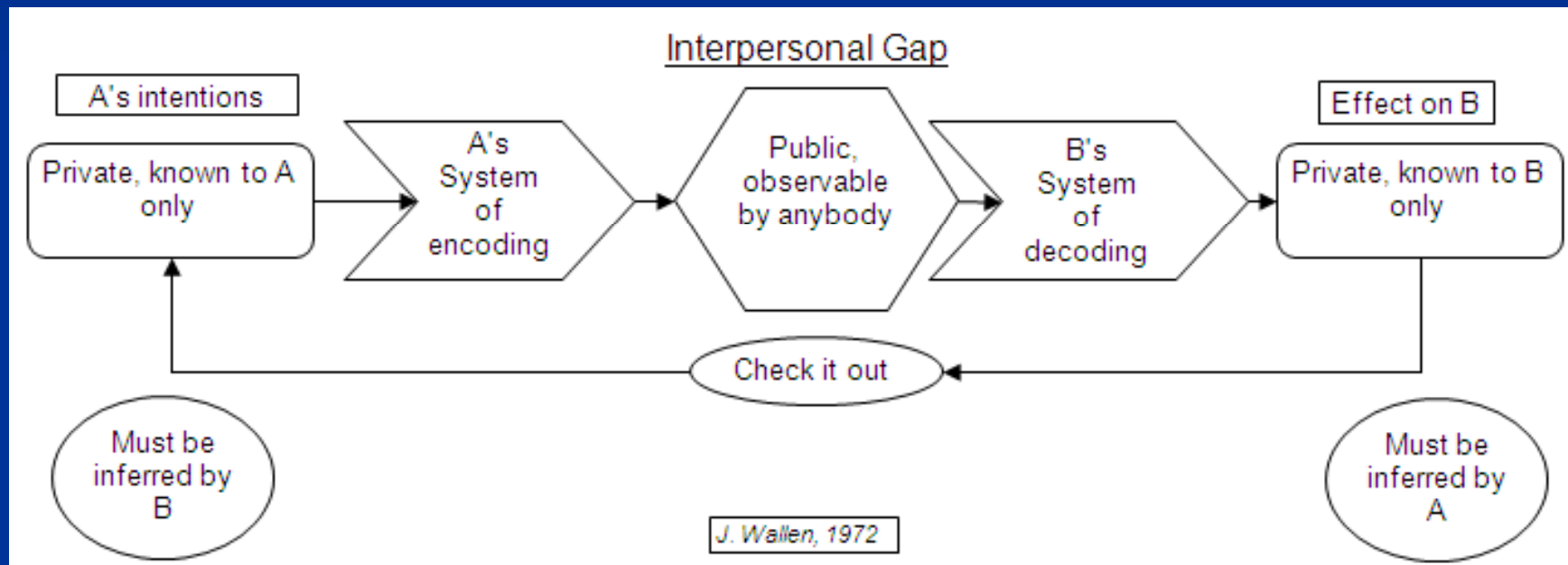
- An Emotional Disconnect – considered part of
  - Burnout
  - Compassion Fatigue
  - Vicarious / Secondary traumatic stress
- Functional Disconnect
  - Creates emotional distance in order to be functional
  - Only remains functional if there is a balancing “emotional re-connect”
  - Disconnect can be generated by focusing on protocols
  - Reconnect can be generated by focusing on mindfulness

# Basic Human Needs

- Exist
- Relate
- Grow

Alderfer, 1969

# Interpersonal Gap



# Satir Iceberg



**BEHAVIOUR** (action, storyline)

**COPING** (stances)

**FEELINGS** (joy, excitement, anger hurt, fear, sadness)

**FEELINGS ABOUT FEELINGS**  
(decisions about feelings)

**PERCEPTIONS** (beliefs, assumptions, mind-set,  
subjective reality)

**EXPECTATIONS** (of self, of others, from others)

**YEARNINGS** (loved, lovable, accepted, validated,  
purposeful, meaning, freedom)

**SELF: I AM** (life force, spirit, soul, essence)



# Communication Template

*A*ttend

*B*ridge

*C*omment

*D*evelop Relationship / Plan

# Communication Template

## “A”ttend

- Self: What am I aware of?
- Other: What is the other person experiencing?

## “B”ridge

- Introduce subject (from general to specific)
- Use context awareness (dr/pt, colleagues, etc.)
- Invite engagement

## “C”omment:

- Say message
- Check for understanding
- Ask for what you need

## “D”evelop Contract:

- Acknowledge impact on other (include feelings, experiences and behaviours)
- Establish timeline/follow-up

# Vital Importance of Relationships (self, other and Other)

- Emotional self-regulation is learned through early relationship bonds
- Most effective resource for stress management = social support
- Personal sense of meaning, achievement, future orientation involves core relationships
- “Emotional disconnect” in response to acute stress or grief can be deadly

# Debriefing

- Create agreement about how to debrief
- Focus is impact rather than content

# End of Day Ritual

- Leaving work and reconnecting to yourself
  - Find ways to ‘emotionally re-connect’ using mindfulness / self-FIFE / or ?
  - Be mindful of your communication with those who are your support system – both at work and home

## The vital need for supportive relationships

*“Adults remain social animals ... in some important ways, people cannot be stable on their own – not should or shouldn’t be, but can’t be. This prospect is disconcerting to many, especially in a society that prizes individuality as ours does. Total self-sufficiency turns out to be a daydream whose bubble is burst by the sharp edge of the limbic brain. Stability means finding people who regulate you well and staying near them.”*

Lewis, Amini & Lannon. A General Theory of Love. (2000).

# Centre for Practitioner Renewal

[www.practitionerrenewal.ca](http://www.practitionerrenewal.ca)