

School-wide well-being through Compassionate Systems Leadership

A FISA-sponsored webinar series

Webinar 4



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Shape of the day (learning intentions)

The Ladder of Connectedness.

- How might we use the Ladder (as a self-reflection tool) to build awareness of our connectedness to each other?
- How does the Ladder help us build and sustain generative social fields?

(Circling back to) Generative Social Fields

- How might we recognize when our work is helping to create and sustain the school cultures and climates to which we aspire?
- Lovingkindness (metta) meditation

Review of the last sessions...

What are some overarching themes in the resilience & wellbeing literature?

- Connection is key
- Interactions between personal & environmental factors = resilience

What is it about CSL that supports these themes?

- Simultaneous consideration of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal (3-legged stool)

How might we integrate CSL to better support resilience & wellbeing in schools?

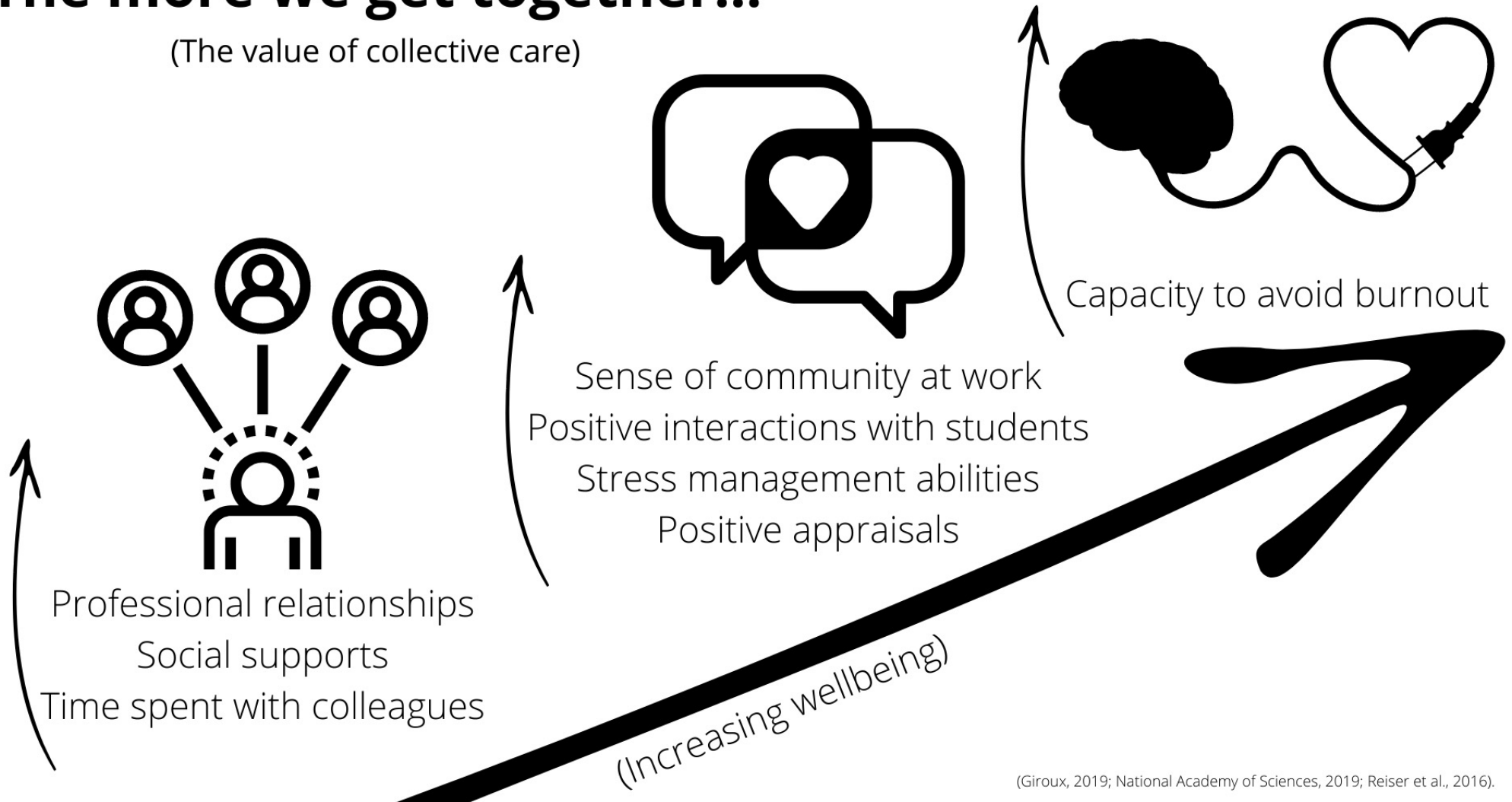
- Systems awareness
- Check ins
- Creative tension as potential energy for working towards vision

How can intrapersonal awareness lead to systems change?

- Ladder of inference → Generative social fields

The more we get together...

(The value of collective care)



(Giroux, 2019; National Academy of Sciences, 2019; Reiser et al., 2016).



Checking in

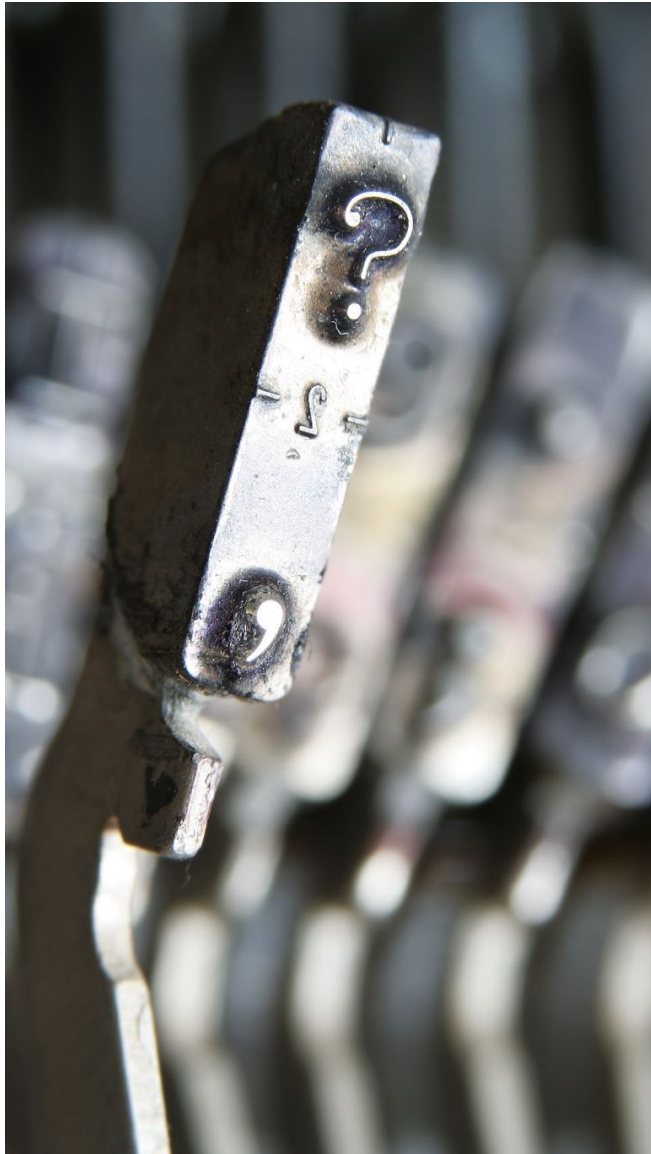
Getting here to being here

Grounding
Journaling
Sharing



Grounding...

(an invitation)



Journaling

We will take a few minutes to reflect upon:

How am I feeling today?

How was it for you to experience this loving kindness meditation of the heart?

What was your breathing like? Your body?

Do you notice a difference now compared to before we started the practice?

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Factors that support well-being



AWARENESS

A heightened, flexible attentiveness to your environment & internal cues such as bodily sensations, thoughts & feelings.



INSIGHT

Self-knowledge concerning how our emotions, thoughts & beliefs shape our experiences & sense of self.



PURPOSE

Being clear about your core values & deeper motivations & being able to apply them in your daily life.



CONNECTION

A feeling of care & kinship toward other people, promoting supportive relationships & supportive interactions.

Visit <https://centerhealthyminds.org/about/why-well-being> for more info.



Ladder (or Circle) of Connectedness

Reflecting on how we are connected to each other.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a vast, arid desert landscape with rolling hills under a bright blue sky filled with fluffy white clouds. A tall, dark wooden ladder stands vertically in the center-left of the frame, extending from the ground to the top of the image. The title 'Ladder of Connectedness' is written in a white, cursive script across the middle of the ladder.

Ladder of Connectedness

Emotional disconnect

Empathic distress

Ingroup empathy

Cognitive empathy

Altruism

Neutral present awareness

Agape

Empathy & Compassion

- Empathy: Entering into the emotional reality of another.
- Compassion: Staying with your own emotional reality while being with another.



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Ladder of Connectedness

Emotional disconnect

Empathic distress

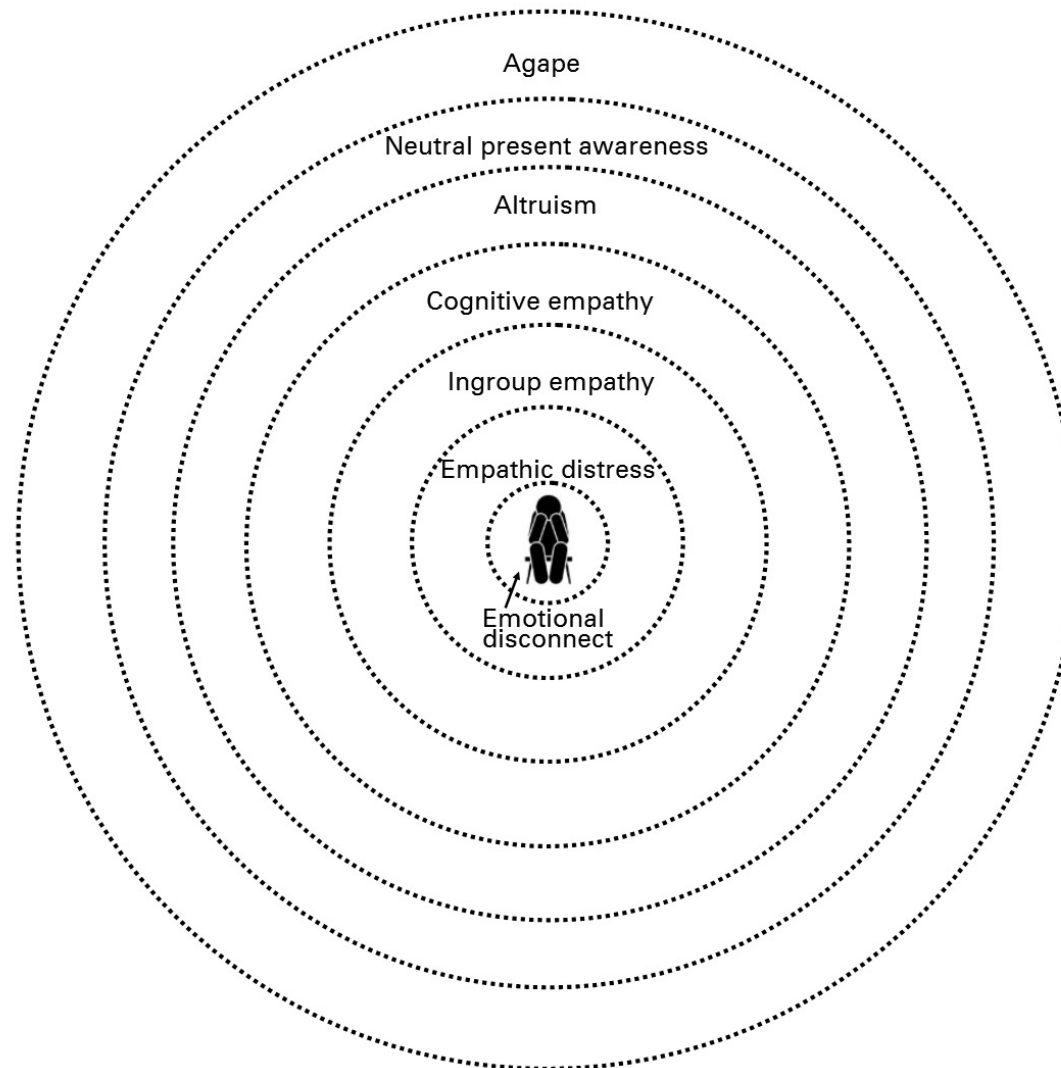
Ingroup empathy

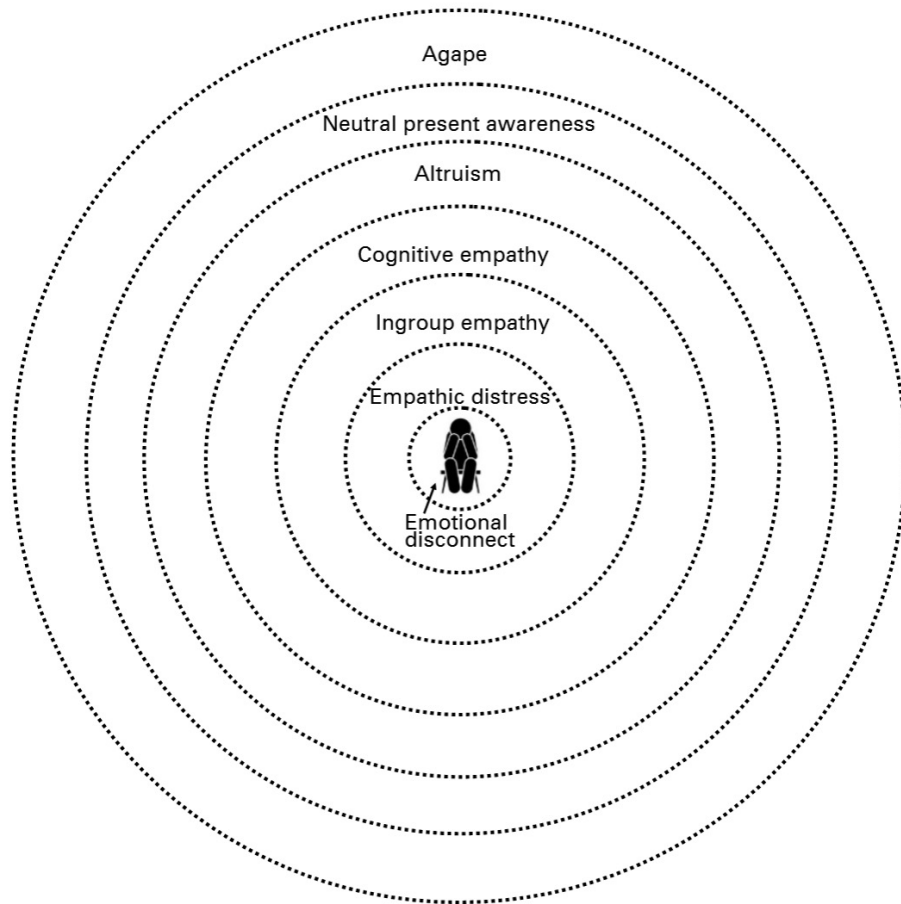
Cognitive empathy

Altruism

Neutral present awareness

Agape

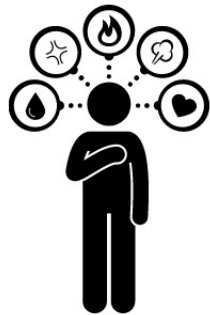




“States” of connectedness are

- non-hierarchical
- simultaneous
- natural (but not inevitable)
- influenceable

SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL/CARING LABOUR OF WORK IN SCHOOLS



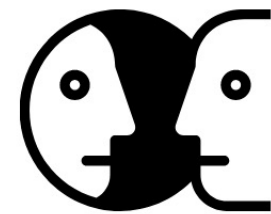
Teachers, counsellors, and other helping professionals (i.e. professional carers) regularly experience emotion in the course of their very relational work.



Emotion can be exhausting and is a contributory factor to burnout, yet we rarely talk about these experiences in our professional settings.



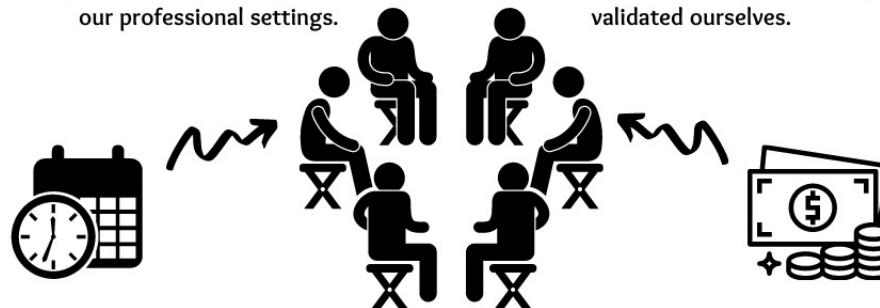
Talking about emotional experiences is one way that we can validate each others' experiences while also being validated ourselves.



As we encounter each other, we also encounter ourselves in new and deeper ways (if we are open to the possibility).



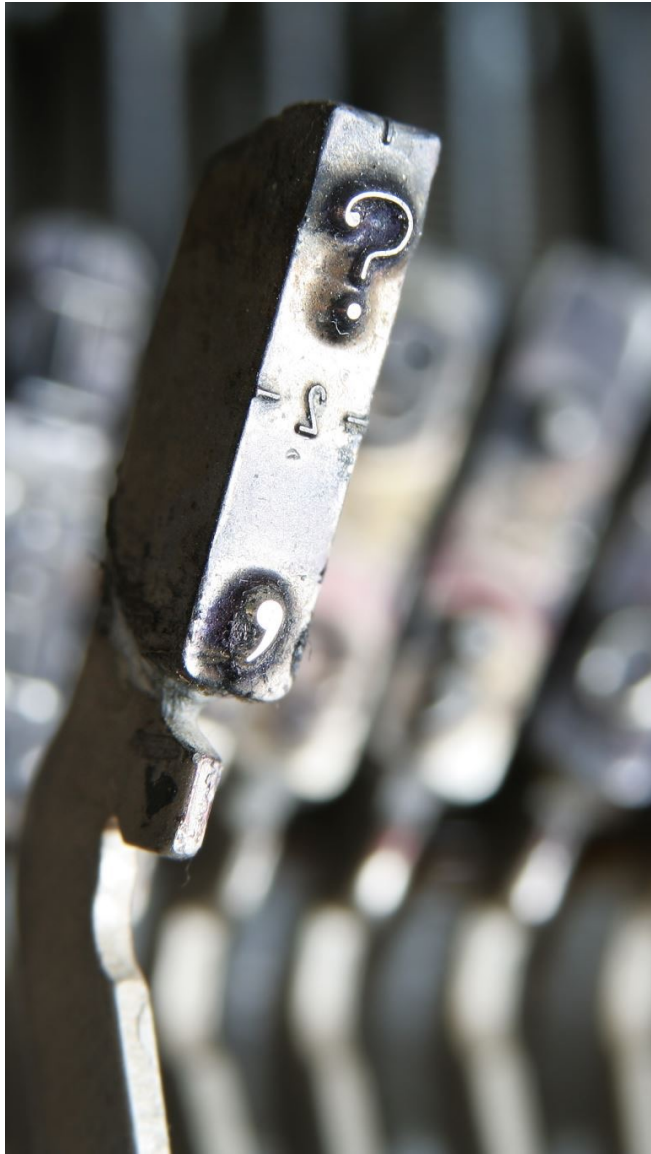
The experience of being seen for our whole (i.e. rather than our "professional") selves and validated as thus helps us to shift our ways of interacting with others - including students.



Caveat: asking people to add one more thing to their plates without support for that "one more thing" perpetuates issues in our existing systems of support for staff well-being as it reinforces a message that it is the sole responsibility of individuals to be able to continue in one's work long-term, even given widely acknowledged challenges in our systems. Material resources (e.g. dedicated paid time) are vital signals that this work and the people doing it are valuable: they are important & worth investment.



Deliberate care + compassion for school staff--> modelling of care + compassion for students--> increased care + compassion in communities--> paradigm shift!



Journaling

- Which parts of the Ladder of Connectedness connected or resonated most strongly with you?
- Where and when might you recognize having experienced these (or other) aspects of connectedness in your life?
- How might awareness of this tool influence the culture/climate of our shared spaces?

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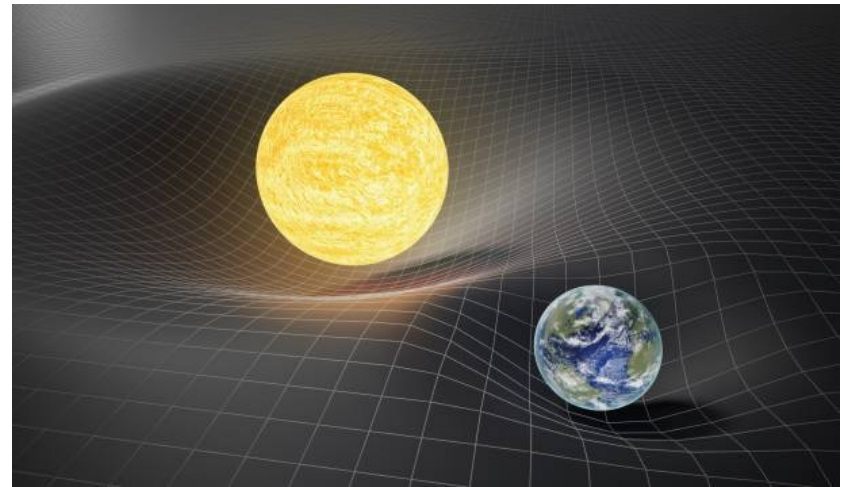
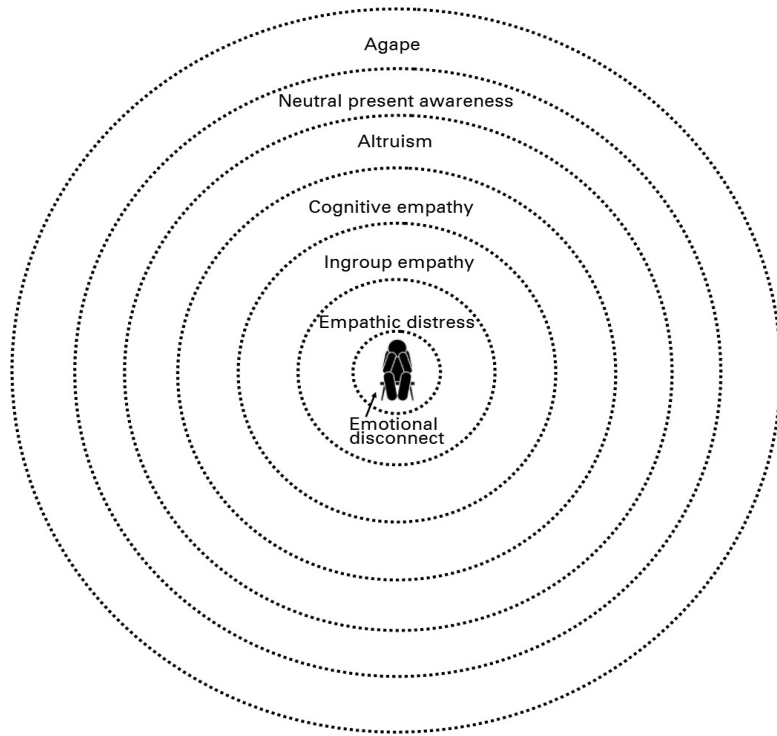
Neutral present awareness

Agape

Break through (breakout) room

What might be the effect(s) if “we” were aware of the Ladder of Connectedness?
Remember the guidelines: each person gets 1-2 minutes to share as much or as little as they wish from their journaling; listening is more important than talking.





Theory of Relative Responsibility for the Social Field

Ladder of Connectedness	Scale of Belonging (kinda)	My (Tiffany's) interpretation
Emotional Disconnect/ Objectification	Blatant Isms in full effect	I>U; dehumanizing people
Empathic Distress	Privilege	Please don't show me your humanness because it makes me uncomfortable and I probably don't understand it or can identify with it and/or my feelings/comfort means more than your discomfort
Ingroup Empathy	Othering – qualifying your existence in relationship to my experience/reality and from a deficit-based perspective	If your pain is like mine, I completely understand and see you are hurting; if not, it's probably not that bad...
Cognitive Empathy	Place your understanding in the context of their existence/experience, not yours	I understand that you are feeling something
Altruism	No intent to cause harm	I want no harm to come to others
Neutral Awareness	I see you and wish you well in your existence, but you are still separate from me	However you choose to show up, is however you choose to show up and I acknowledge and respect that
AGAPE	Belonging – widening our circle of human connection and concern; both individually expressive and institutionalized; access and integrations are necessary, but not enough; hence special accommodations i.e. equitable practices are viewed as necessary structures of a well-functioning/designed system not a burden to the system	I=U

Break through (breakout) rooms

What is your experience of a generative social field? Where and when is (or has this been) a reality for you? How might you have experienced this field differently in different states of connectedness?





Journaling to a Close

- Something I learned today...
- I am curious about...
- Something I'll do (next, later today, this weekend, before the end of the week, etc.)...
- A question I still have is...
- Something from today that I am grateful for/thankful for/appreciative of is...

Break through (breakout) rooms

What is on your mind as we come to the end of our time together today? In the breakout room, please share one thing that stands out for you and one thing you could take and use right now. Consider also what kinds of work you might build based on what you have learned.



Time to rest and digest...

Thank you!

Questions? Comments?
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