CARE AND ENGAGEMENT

A Framework for Person Centered Work in Homeless Services



Who are your Presenters

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More information in the WHOVA app so please connect with us there!

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What to Expect in this session

1. Introductions
2. Housing Solutions Center Background and System Numbers
3. Care and Engagement as a framework:
    a. Capacity building
    b. Engaging with identities
    c. Observing collective and individualistic connections and decision making
    d. Nurturing and applying helpful skills to navigate systemic barriers
4. Conclusion and questions

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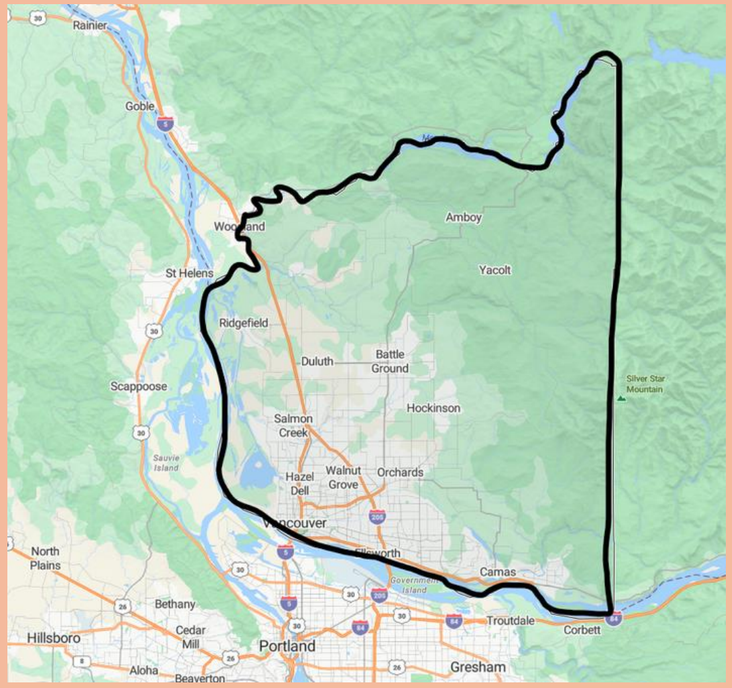
Who are we?

- Housing Solutions Center (HSC) formerly known as Council for the Homeless was founded in 1989 to coordinate Clark County's response to homelessness.
- It centralizes access to services, data, partnerships, and system planning.
- Housing Solutions Center runs core programs like the Housing Hotline, Diversion, Outreach, Housing Coordination, and HMIS.

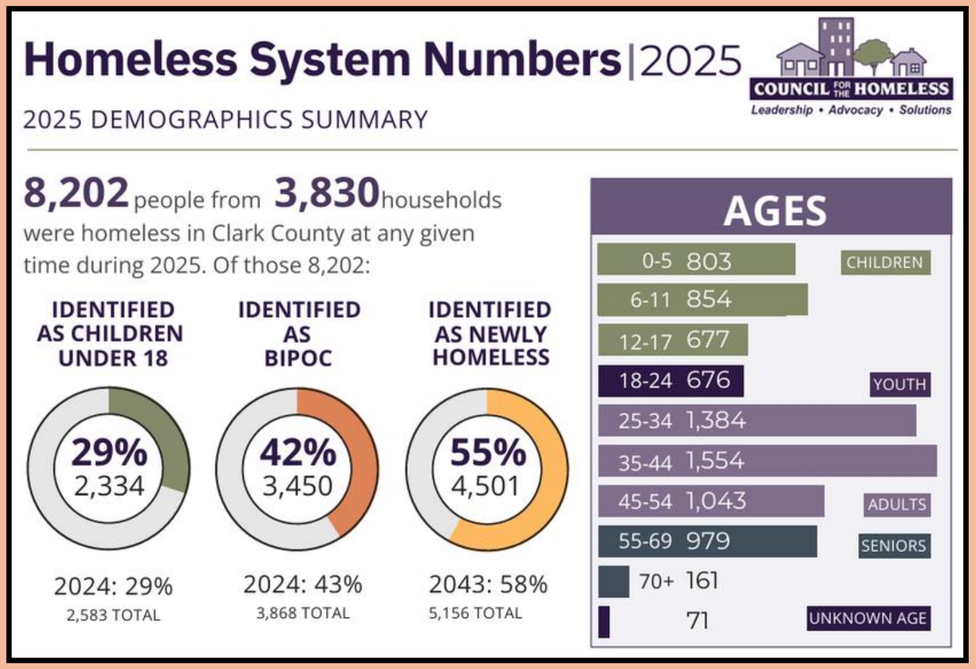


- Local providers rely on HSC for data, training, resources, and collaboration.
- HSC connects sectors across the community to shape policy and expand housing solutions.

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Together making home possible



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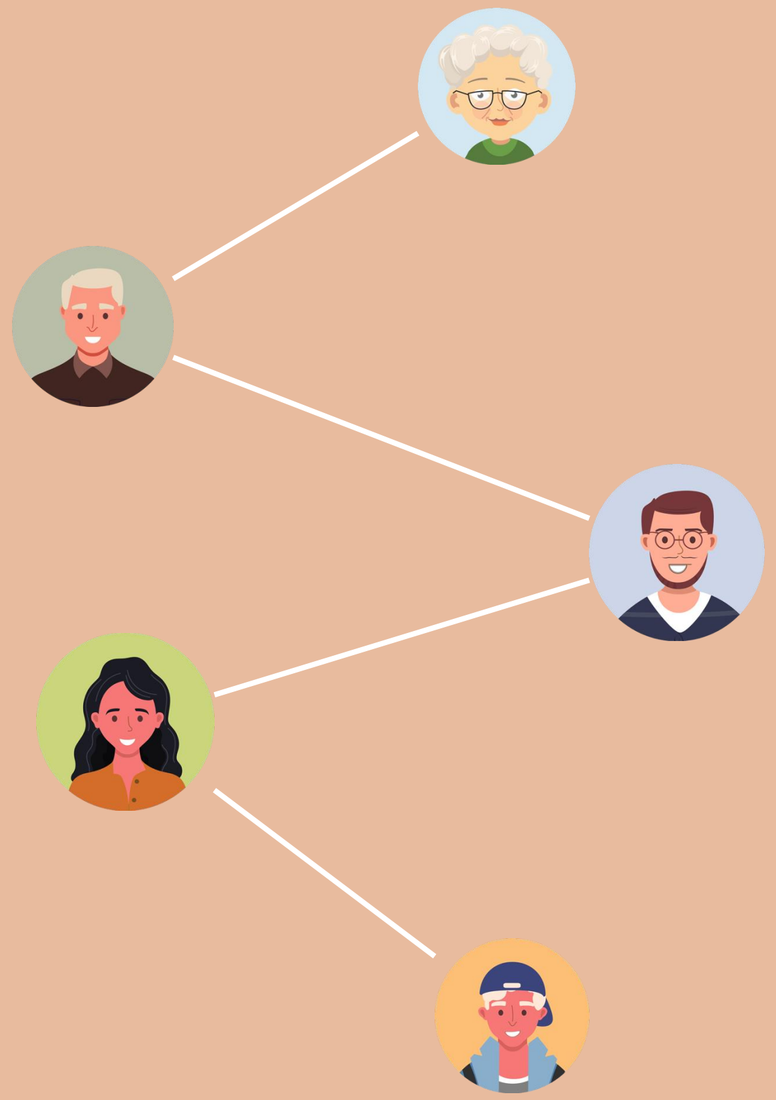


[2025 CFTH-System- Numbers-Report | PDF]

Who are we?
By the numbers

- 4,500+ people were newly homeless in 2025.
- 1,140 seniors experienced homelessness, down by 79 people.
- Senior rent-assistance stabilizations increased by 5%.
- 42% of people experiencing homelessness identified as BIPOC (vs. ~22% of county population).
- BIPOC residents are significantly more likely to experience poverty and homelessness across all age groups. [2025 CFTH-System-Numbers-Report | PDF]
- Rising housing costs and reduced federal funding.

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Who are we?

- Special Projects Team - response to gaps identified in our system
- Bridge to Stability

Care and Engagement as a Framework:

- Capacity Building
- Engaging with Identities
- Observing Collective and Individualistic Connections and Decision Making
- Nurturing and Applying Helpful Skills to Navigate Systemic Barriers

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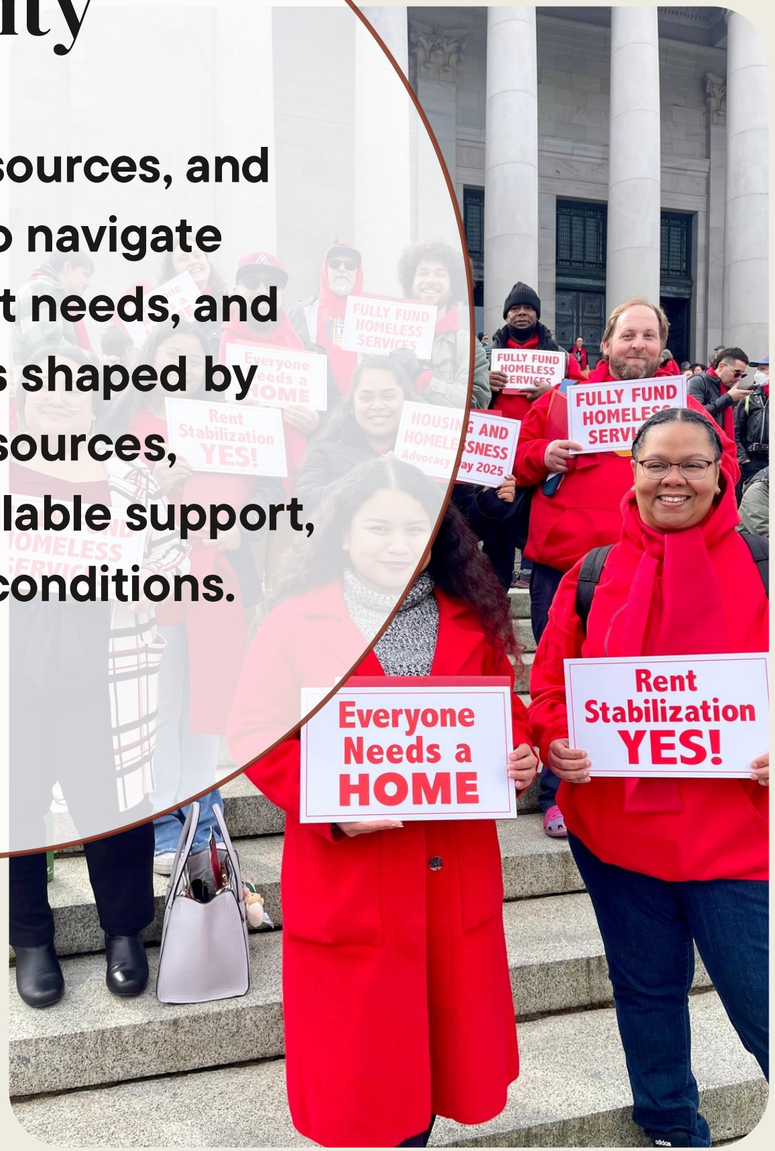


What is capacity?

Capacity

is the ability, resources, and opportunity to navigate challenges, meet needs, and take action. It is shaped by personal resources, relationships, available support, and systemic conditions.







Needs can include:

1. Housing
2. Recovery Services
3. Mental Health Support
4. Food Access
5. Financial Assistance
6. Employment









Barriers can include:

1. Language Access
2. Limited to No income
3. Navigating Systems
4. Disability or MH Conditions
5. Mental or Behavioral needs
6. Cultural or Religious expectations
7. Societal Barriers

Participant Capacity

INHERENT POTENTIAL

- Phil may have the ability to learn, make decisions, advocate for himself, manage his finances, and work toward housing stability.

CURRENT CAPACITY

- Phil's ability to act on those strengths may be limited by his financial situation, transportation barriers, the number of applications he must complete, and the time and energy required to navigate multiple systems.

C&E BRIDGE TO SUPPORT

- Coordinate accessible transportation to appointments.
- Help Phil identify and prioritize applications.
- Explore benefits-navigation assistance and the requirements for each program.
- Help him obtain replacement identification.
- Explore options for addressing previous rental debt and how it may affect housing opportunities.

Agency and our personal capacities

INHERENT POTENTIAL

- Sierra has strong relationship-building skills, empathy, cultural awareness, and the ability to support participants through difficult circumstances.

CURRENT CAPACITY

- Racial discrimination, delayed organizational support, cultural conflict, and repeated exposure to traumatic stories are affecting her emotional capacity.

AGENCY BRIDGE TO SUPPORT

- Provide timely supervisory intervention and address discriminatory behavior.
- Help Sierra establish boundaries while respecting her cultural values.
- Offer appropriate supervision, emotional support, and strategies for managing secondary trauma.
- Review workplace policies and procedures to protect employees from discrimination.

Who is responsible for your Capacity?

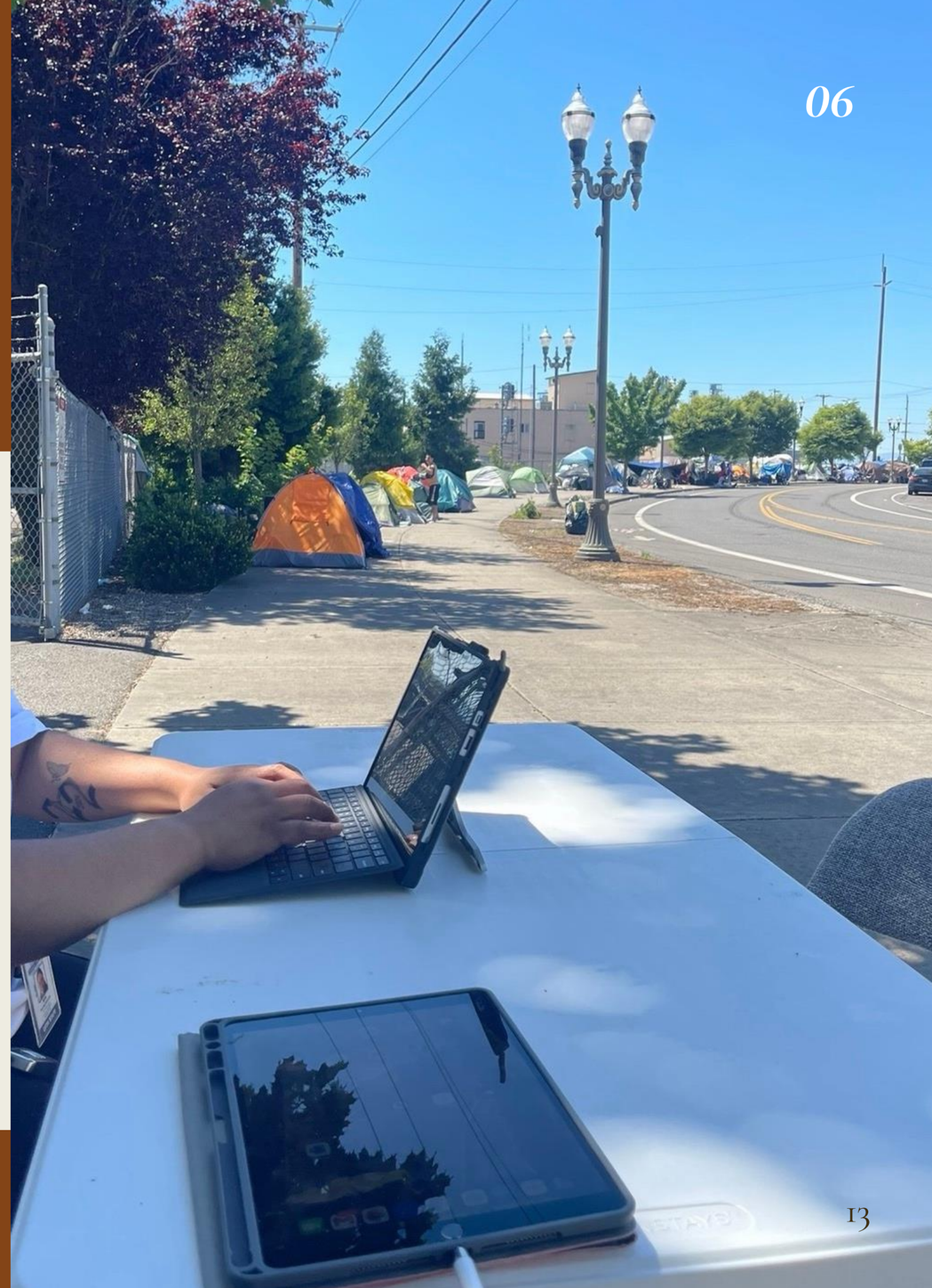
When Capacity Is Stretched Thin

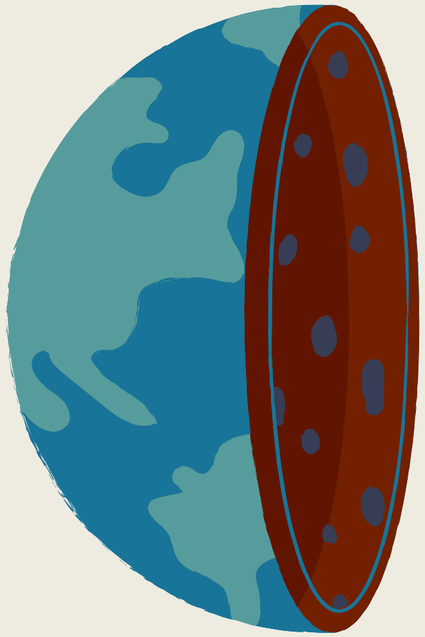
- Losing our humanity: Risk dehumanizing the people we serve.
- Losing connection: Allow role demands to overshadow relationships and community partnerships.
- Losing our purpose: Forget why we chose to do this work.
- Hiding behind our roles: Use professional authority to avoid accountability and reciprocity.
- Replacing compassion with systems: Allow negligence, ignorance, or detachment to overshadow understanding.













The Surface: Our First Impressions

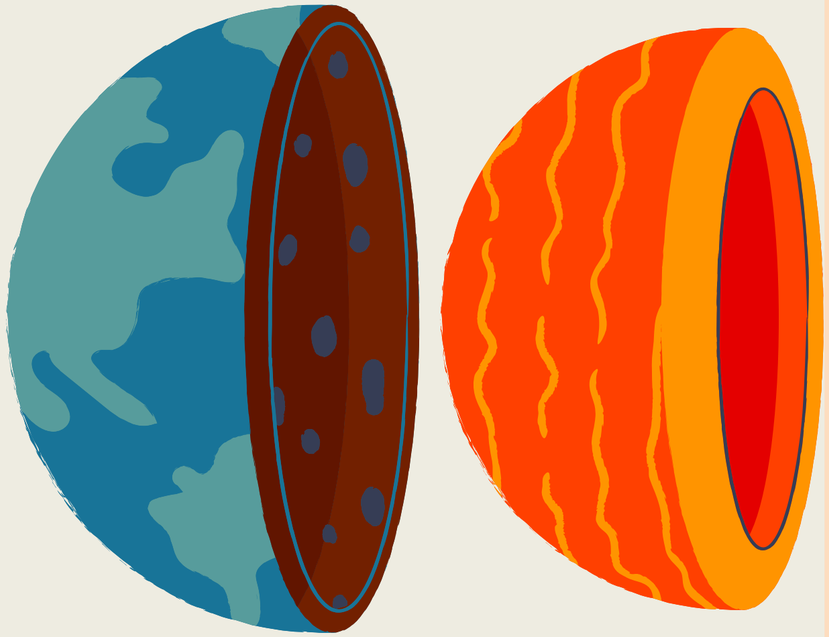
What am I observing?
We notice a participant's appearance, speech, and body language.

What might I be missing?
Their sense of safety, cultural experiences, or fear of being judged.

The reminder: What we see is only the surface.

Ex: Vinny and the RV

Ex: Vinny and the lost dog



What has shaped this person?
Their emotions, beliefs, conditioning, trauma, and lived experiences.

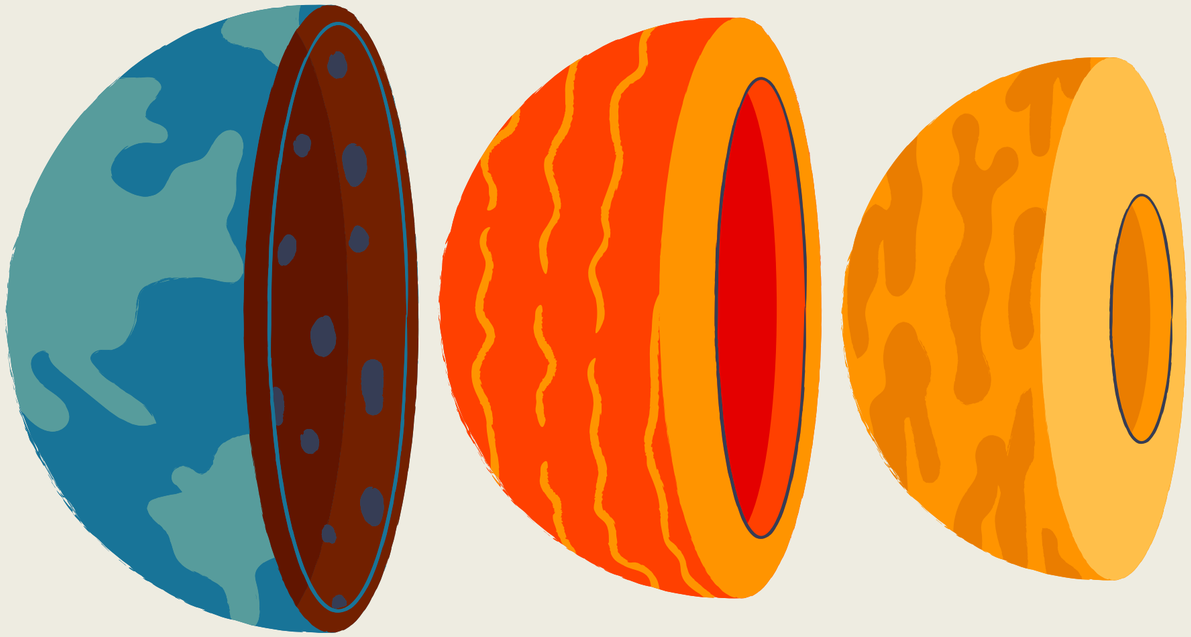
How might this influence them?
Past harm or negative experiences with law enforcement may affect their ability to trust others.

The reminder: What lies beneath the surface can influence how a person shows up.

Individual example:

Vinny and law enforcement

Vinny and office or medical settings



Earth's Outer Core — Capacities and Resources

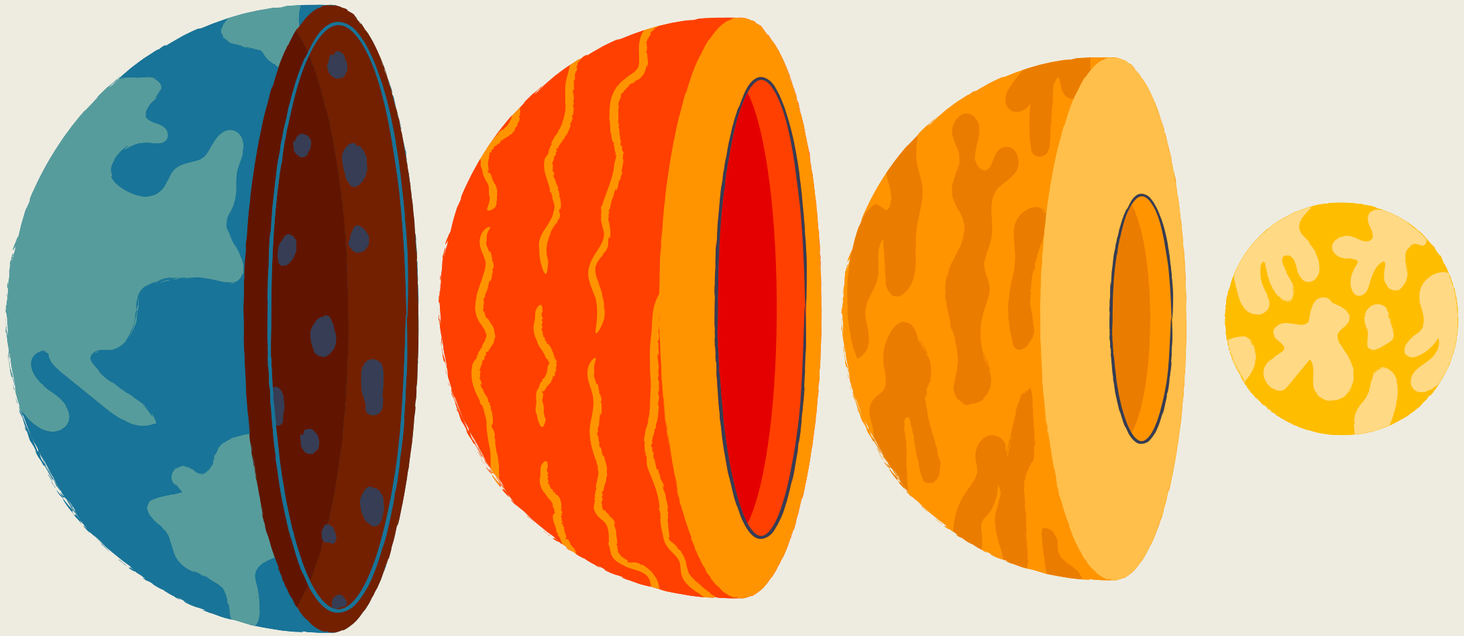
What influences their ability to move forward?
Their energy, problem-solving, adaptability, and available resources.

What barriers might they face?
A participant experiencing substance use may struggle to complete housing applications or follow through with next steps.

The reminder: Difficulty taking action does not automatically mean a lack of motivation or ability.

Vinny and the journey through recovery

Vinny and the pacifika cultural mindset

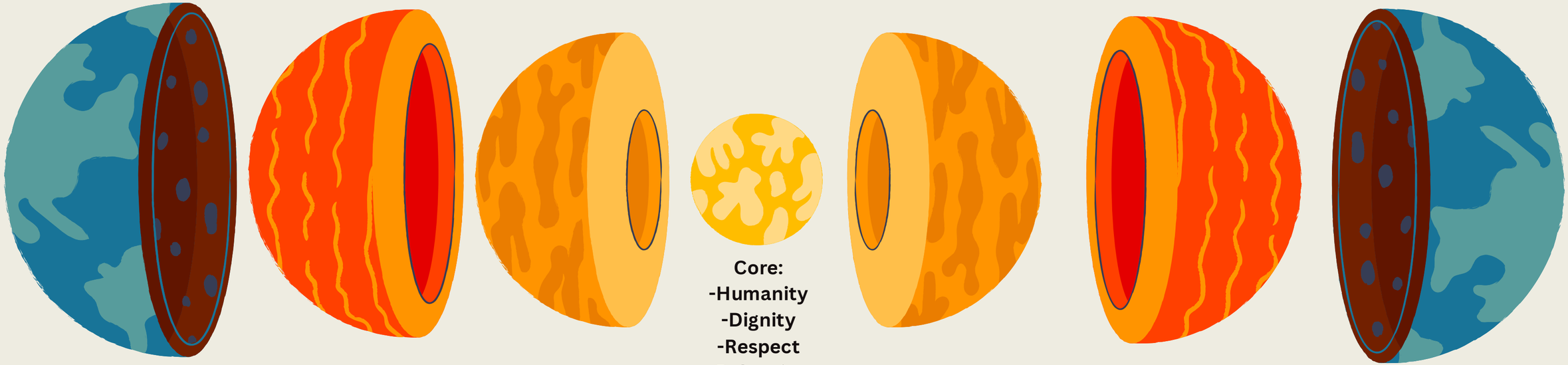


Inner Core - The Deepest Self

Who is this person beyond their circumstances?
Their identity, culture, values, relationships, and goals.

What should we recognize?
A participant living with a disability or mental health condition is more than their diagnosis.

The reminder: See the whole person, not just the needs they bring to us.



Core:
-Humanity
-Dignity
-Respect
-Belonging

Vinny’s barriers
Vinny’s abilities

Challlenge:
Misinterpreting his intentions and not recognizing how to ask deeper questions to understand.

Vinny’s reaction cause by distrust
Vinny’s perception vs. the truth

Challenge:
Navigating unfamiliar systems while living with chronic pain and limited social support can create additional stress and barriers.

Vinny’s physical appearance
Vinny’s visible pain



Challenge:
Others may misinterpret his facial expressions, underestimate his abilities, or fail to recognize that he needs accommodations.

ENGAGING WITH IDENTITIES

Truth

We recognize that every person carries multiple layers: lived experience, individual and collective identities, trauma history, strengths, protective factors, and personal narratives

The Challenge

Our responsibility is to meet people authentically where they are, not where we expect or wish them to be.

The Answer

Willininingness to be present through using active listening and understanding.

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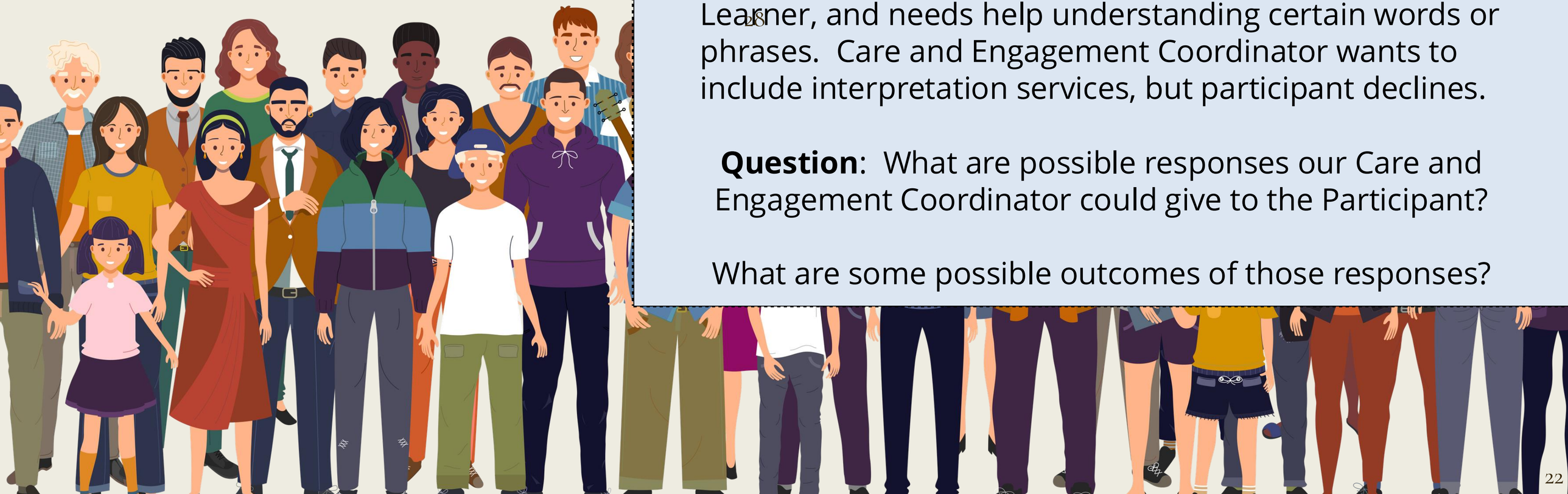
Example of Engaging the Whole Person

- Be willing to work through frustrations:

- **Story Example:** Engaging with a Participant who is seeking housing opportunities whose barriers include language and cultural barriers. Participant is an English Language Learner, and needs help understanding certain words or phrases. Care and Engagement Coordinator wants to include interpretation services, but participant declines.

Question: What are possible responses our Care and Engagement Coordinator could give to the Participant?

What are some possible outcomes of those responses?



ENGAGING WITH IDENTITIES

In order to be present, we must first confront our preconceived biases and expectations

Example: Thinking Pt needed translation service is expectation I had set, but it wasn't what the Pt wanted.



What is Active Listening and Understanding?

Active listening is a deliberate effort to listen with concentration, attention and focus to understand the meaning being conveyed by the participant (Monashu Unversity, https://tinyurl.com/4xua9c8y)

- Observe the Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication of the participant
- Pay attention to the content of the message: Ideas, information, and explanation.
- Confirmation that you understood what the participant said.
- Ask good follow up questions?

Active listening and Understanding requires **deliberate effort** from the listerner.

What are ways that we can prepare ourserlves to listen to our participants?

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Creating Space for Care and Engagement

- Allowing space for PT to share what's on their mind.
- Checking on basic needs (ei. Do you need food/water?) before beginning
- Repeat back their concerns "I hear that you are concerned about X and if X is not resolved y will happen, We want to prevent Y from happening".

Barriers when working with Identities

- When presented with culture barriers, we must work to dig deeper and expand our own understanding.
- For example, When working with a participant whom holds collective beliefs, it may take several sessions before trust may develop.

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Observing Collective and Individualistic Beliefs & Decision Making



Maslow & Blackfoot Perspectives

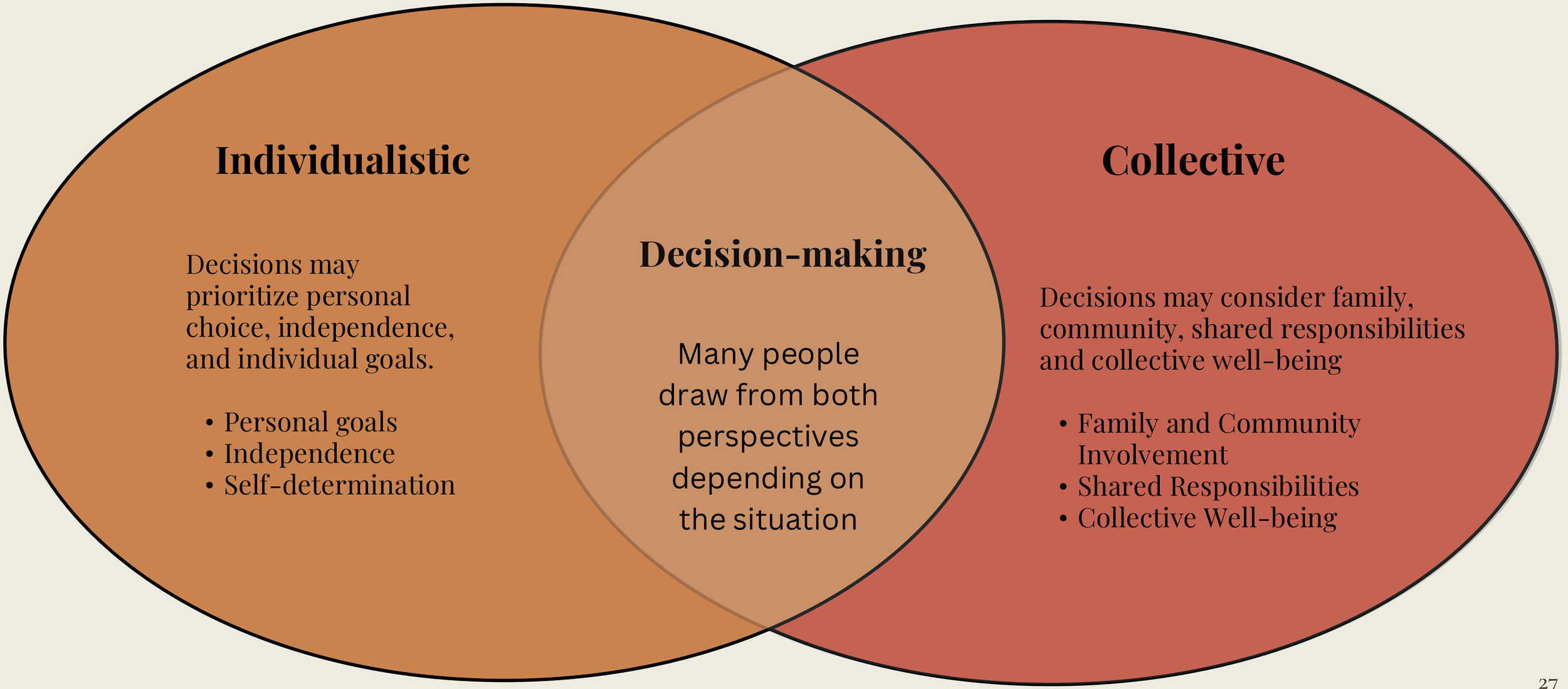
- Worldview: How we understand human needs
- Information In: What we notice and how we interpret it
- Communication Out: How we respond and support others
- Social Work: How we define needs, barriers, and success
- Systems: How our beliefs shape policies, services, and expectations

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Reflection: Are we building systems around people, or expecting people to fit into our systems?

Observing Collective and Individualistic Beliefs

How we make decisions



COLLECTIVISM & CLIENT–SOCIAL WORKER COMMUNICATION

Example:

Social Worker: “You may qualify for this housing program.”

- A client might hear:

  “I qualify and will probably get housing.”

The social worker may actually mean:

“You meet some initial criteria, but eligibility and availability still need to be determined.”

Key point:
Understanding the words does not always mean understanding the intended message.

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Look Beneath The Surface

NURTURING AND APPLYING HELPFUL SKILLS TO NAVIGATE SYSTEMATIC BARRIERS.

- Clients are multi-tasking barriers that come from their personal lives, but also pressured by the requirements of the system not built to nurture or support their level of needs.
- Care and Engagement navigate through open bridges built to support, while engaging with client's current knowledge on systems.



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SEEKING HOUSING SOLUTIONS SERVICES IN CLARK COUNTY

- Calling our hotline.
  - Making A Profile
  - Getting an assessment
  - Checking in monthly on housing
- Connecting with Outreach
  - Staying Engaged with Outreach worker
  - Getting Assessment
  - Checking In through staying engaged with Outreach worker.



BARRIERS THAT PARTICIPANT FACE

- What if they don’t have a phone?
- What if they have mental health barriers such as anxiety or depression?
- What if they need interpretation services in order to communicate?
- What if the person experiencing homelessness culturally believes it’s wrong to ask for help?



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CASE CONFERENCING

Age: 62

Identifies as: Female

Housing Status Upon Entering Bridge To Stability program: Living in a Shed in the back of her sons yard.

Barriers: Pt expressed a lack of hope and did not believe that she would be housed.

Progress:

Participant and Care and Engagement Coordinator began to meet weekly. C&EC would validate Pt's frustration with the systems inability to provide stable housing, and continue to hold space for PT to find possible housing opportunities such as shelter and signing up for open housing opportunities. Pt was able to move out of the shed and into shelter.

Today:

Participant is housed with a Project Based Voucher.

SMART GOALS AND GOAL SETTING

S... SPECIFIC

M... MEASURED

A...ATTAINABLE

R... REALISTIC

T.. TIMELY

GOAL PRIORITIZATION

- PARTICIPANT SETS GOALS

-C&EC HELPS PT ORGANIZE GOALS AND BREAK THEM INTO STEPS

-C&EC BUILDS BRIDGES TO ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

CARE AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK IS NECESSARY IN..

- Providing those who are seeking services the opportunity to receive those services without “falling through the cracks”.
- Providing support and space to express their frustration at a system that is causing them harm, meanwhile works to build bridges to meaningful resources (vetted and maintained).
- Providing partipants with the capacity to consider new opportunities that they may not been aware of or lacked access to obtain.



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Conclusion & Questions

Data on Exits from the program in 2025:

54% of participants exited into a more stable situation than when they entered. That is 20 out of the 37 people supported in the first year of this program.

Current Demographics of our program: 40 total

GENDER

20 women
20 men

AGE

27: <60
6: 60-64
5: 65-74
2: 75+

RACE / ETHNICITY

White: 18
Pacific Islander: 15
African American/Black: 2
American Indian/Alaska Native: 2
Asian: 1
Mixed Race: 1
Data not provided: 1

They are “incredibly resourceful, empathetic, and thorough. They were even able to identify needs I didn’t know how to articulate for myself. I also felt very much understood and validated. Thank you.”



Thank you!!

Find out more about the Housing Solutions Center at: [Home - Housing Solutions Center]

Connect with us!

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