

Transformation

Person-Centered Practices

Resilience

Hope

Recovery

**Re-visiting the Foundations of
Person-Centered Work**

John O'Brien

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johnwobrien@gmail.com

Poems

Shoulders

Naomi Sahib Nye

www.panhala.net/Archive/Shoulders_Katrina.html

Two kinds of intelligence

Rumi

<http://oldpoetry.com/opoem/38198-Mewlana-Jalaluddin-Rumi-Two-Kinds-of-Intelligence-wbr->

Music

Get “7 ways to cause a crisis” & many other songs from human serviceland at www.peterleidy.com



Peter Leidy
Singer, Songwriter, Commentator

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New Human Serviceland CD:



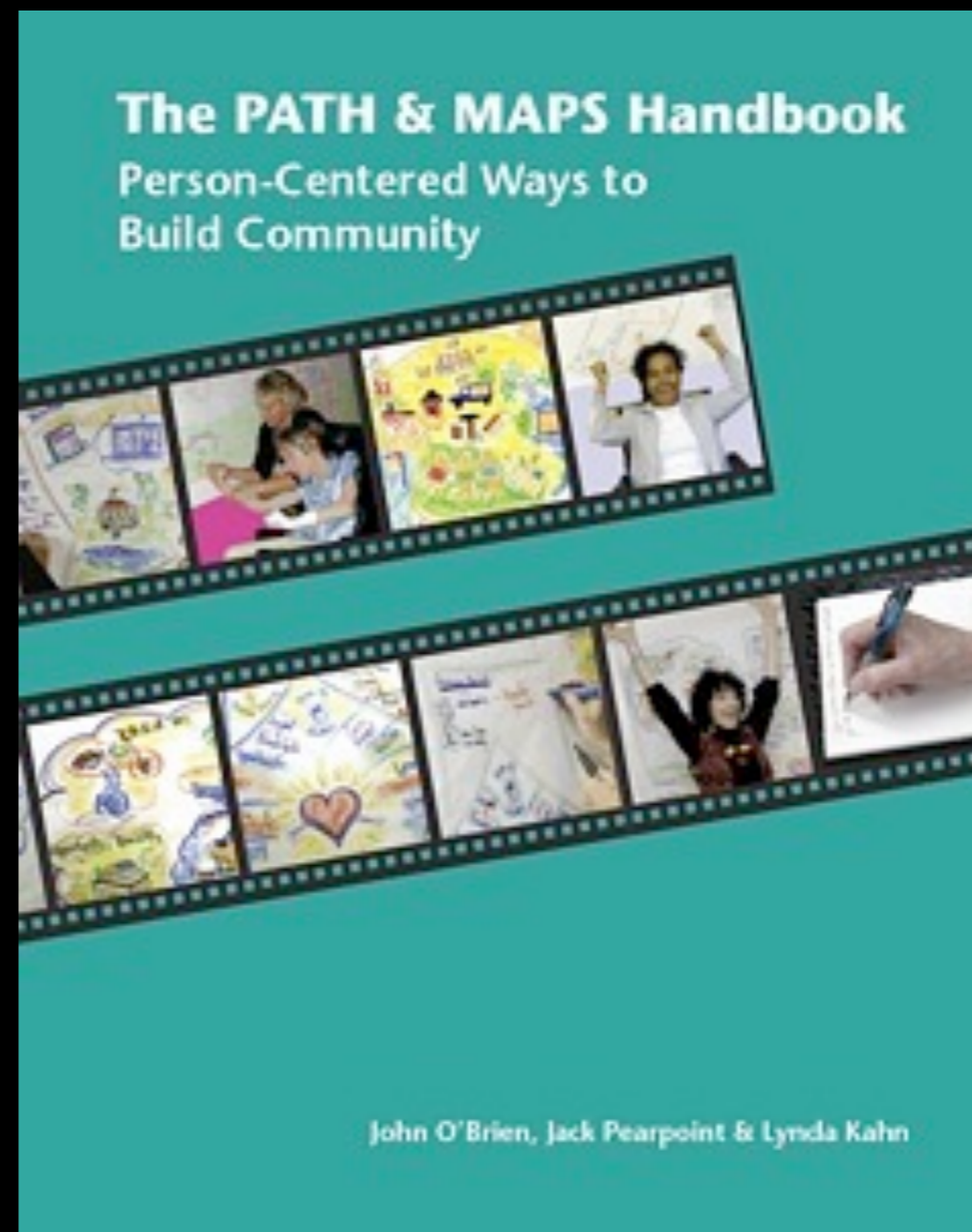
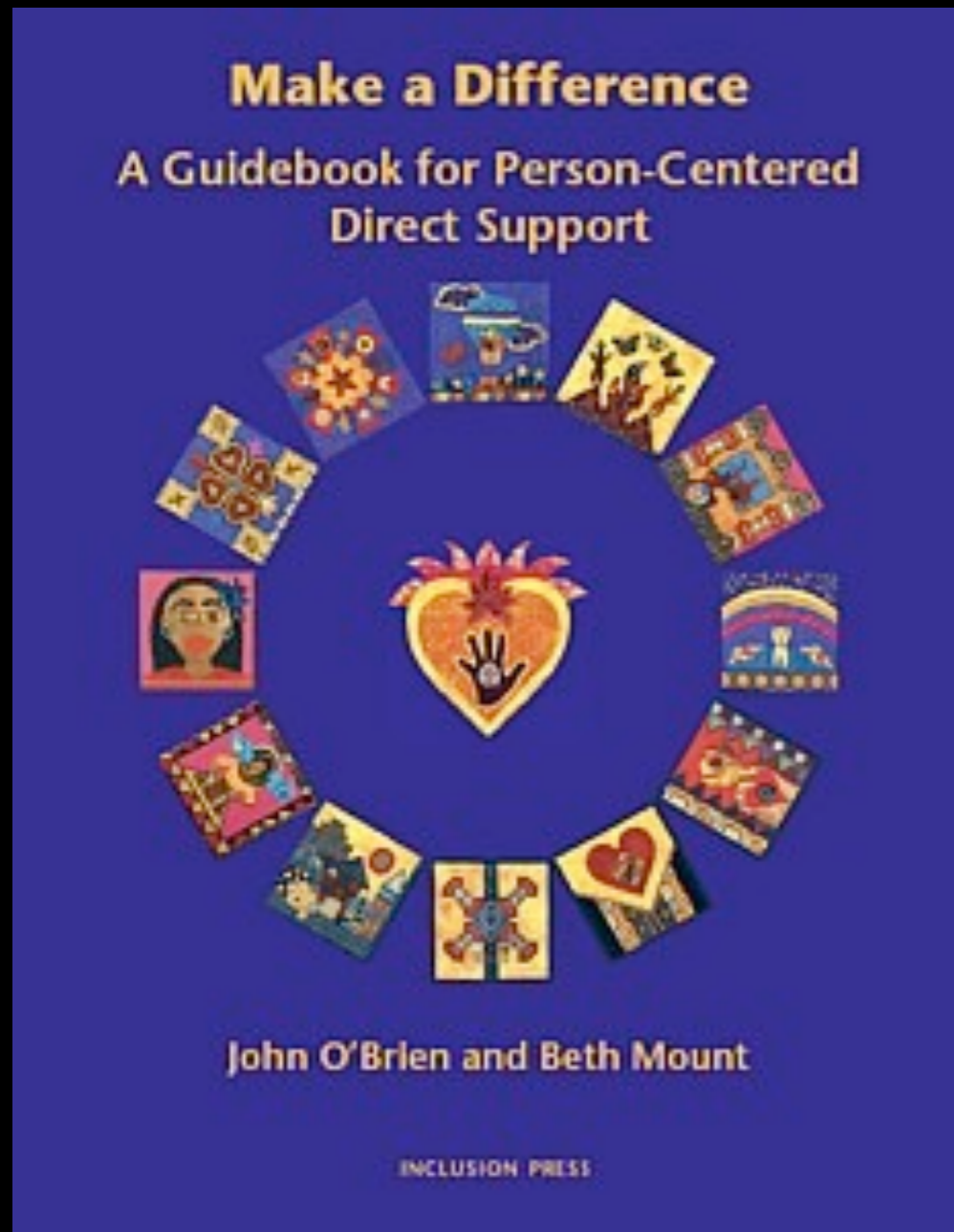
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Contains 14 New Instant Classics:

- She Uses the F-word Quite Frequently [snippet](#)
- Three Times a Week (the outings song) [snippet](#)
- [7 Ways to Cause a Crisis](#) [snippet](#)
- Speak Up, Speak Out
- I'm Going to Write You Up [snippet](#)
- Justin
- You'll Get What (We Think) You Need
- Our Consumers Are So Happy Here
- Walking Right Out That Door [snippet](#)
- Dopamine
- Let Me Pee
- Erik Riggs
- Who Says

Home
Who is this guy?
Schedule
Human Services:
Consulting & Training
Conference Speaking
Direct Support
Articles / Publications
Music
CDs, MP3, DVDs
What People Say
Music (my other side):
Wisconsin Politics
Personalized Songs
Your Office Party
Performance
Human Services Songs
CDs, MP3, DVDs

Print



Our 2010 attempt to put person-centered work in the context of community building

www.inclusion.com/jobrien.html

For books & follow the links at the bottom of the page for free download of papers.

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost.”

Martha Graham



“Are we there yet?”

*If we believe that our current system can deliver on this goal with small changes & more resources, person-centered work will be straightforward & routine.
If we believe we have to transform our relationships, our practices, & our structures, person-centered work becomes more challenging, more creative, & more interesting.*



In many services, people can count on being treated respectfully & having access to current good practice.

Good practice

Respectful relationships

Person-centered work is medium for social innovation when it becomes a space for mindful action that continues to deepen our appreciation of the persons-in-relationship disclosed in our changing relationships & practices.



Our **practices** become mindless without a continuing inquiry into the **benefits** our service assists people to experience –meaningful work, secure housing, resilient relationships, self-efficacy– and the **values** that we find meaning in struggling to embody in our relationships with those who rely on us for assistance.



People who rely on services for assistance in many areas of their lives for long periods of time are at risk of having their lives dominated by symptoms and difficulties that can be summed up in a label.

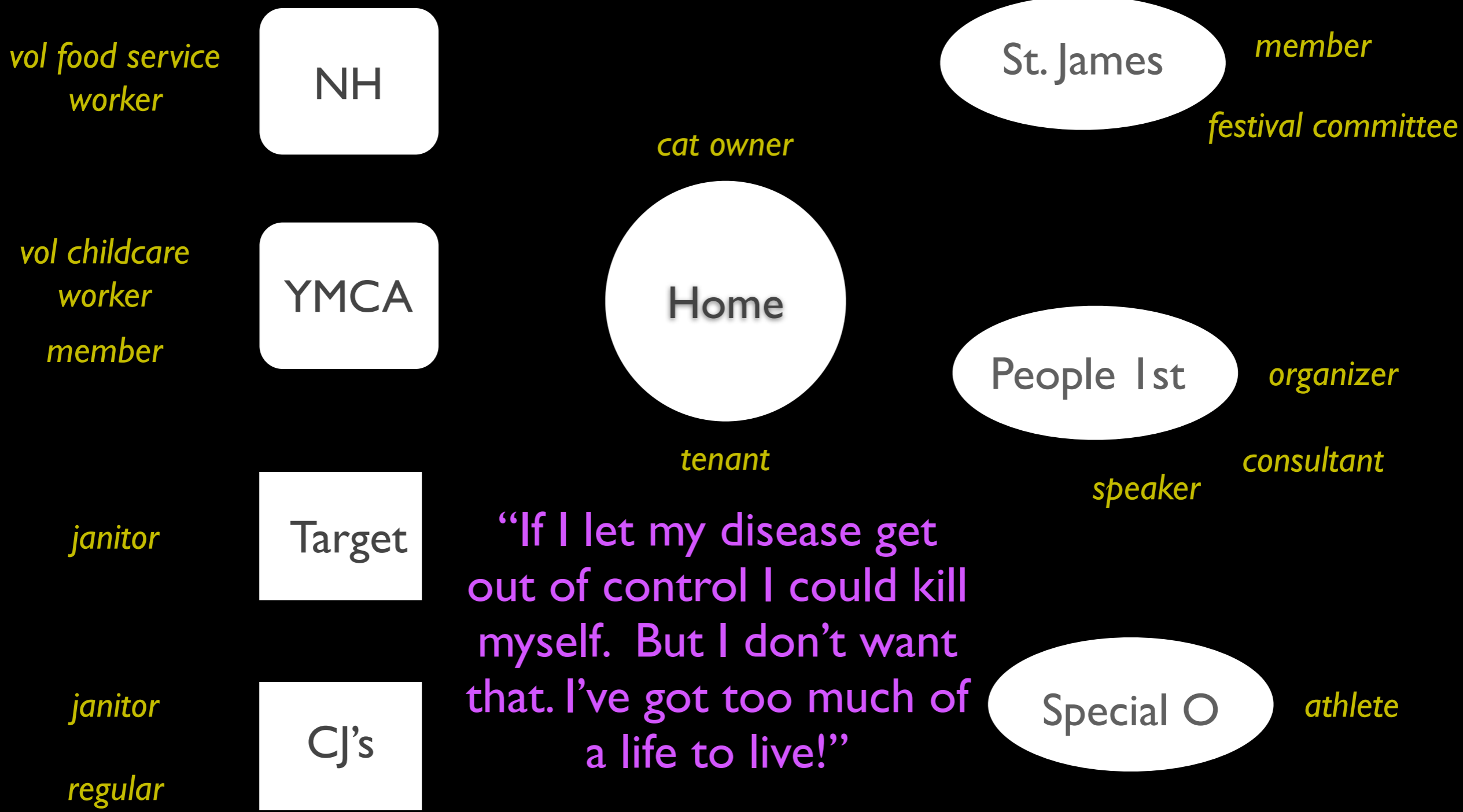
W A I R B E L

Life

Person-centered work amplifies the possibilities for a good life that includes but is not defined by a person's impairments.

Life **LABEL**

Competent person-centered work assists a person into a variety of personally meaningful community roles & relationships such as the array of different opportunities for contribution & support marked by these results of a 12 year struggle for liberation from institutional life.



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Stagnating organizations use their power over people to avoid rethinking their assumptions & to try to keep demand predictable.



*Look, we're
already
there.*

Person-centered work can be part of the mechanism of stagnation when its practitioners decline the task of social innovation & enforce comfortable boundaries

Slot person into already available categories & offerings

Assess “readiness”

Think in binaries

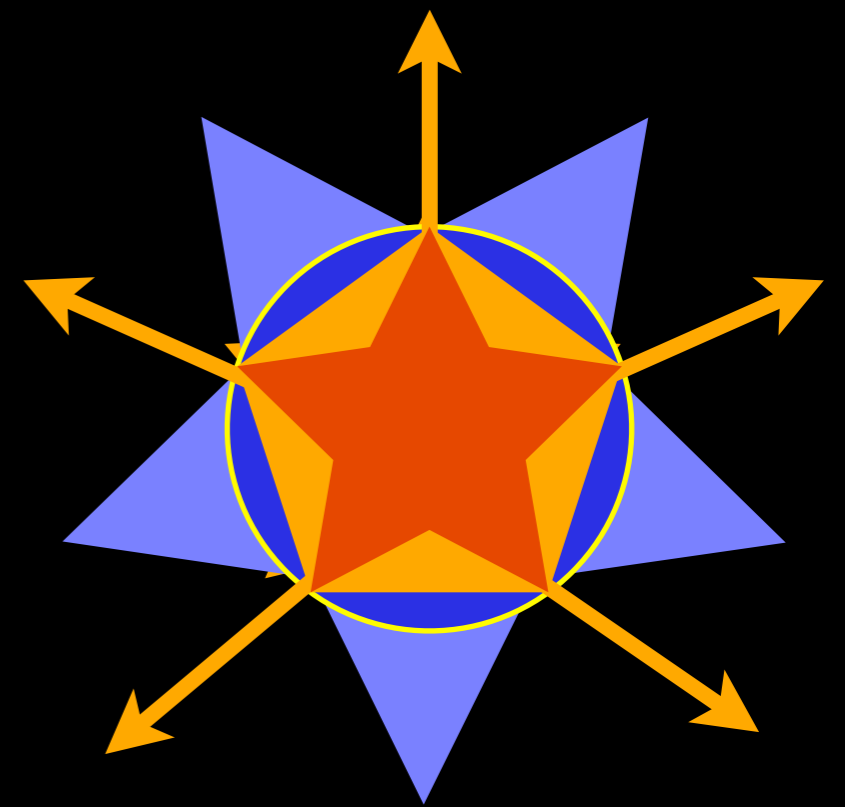
“realistic”/”unrealistic”

“affordable”/”unaffordable”

“right”/”wrong”

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Learning organizations search for situations that challenge settled ways of thinking & stretch themselves to develop new competences. They thoughtfully choose challenging partners & risk collaboration with them, even when the collaboration increases uncertainty & anxiety.

The contribution of person-centred work depends on the fundamental question its practitioners and their partners are oriented to explore in action. The question is shaped by our understanding of ethics.

This is a common understanding. Ethical conduct is defined by laws, regulations, policies & professional codes enforced by inspection & sanctions.

Well formed rules can provide wise guidance, especially about what to avoid & how to behave in situations that fit the rules, but they reflect the best of past practice & reinforce assumptions that may need to be challenged.

Ethics is following rules

Orientation to this question limits possibilities unnecessarily when there is a need for deep change. People can believe that they have met their ethical obligations by simply following prescribed procedures on schedule. Person-centered work becomes the application of defined tools.

How can we comply with the requirement that we work in a person-centered way?

This question opens room for some learning by suggesting an ethical responsibility to adapt the way things are done to better accommodate individual differences. This question does not imply an ethical obligation to collaborate in inventing ways that move beyond current limits. There is an assumption that “we are already there” in terms of capacity to assist recovery.

**How can the services we
currently offer better fit
this person’s individual
situation & preferences?**



This understanding of ethics energizes people who want to search together for new ways of offering assistance that give growing numbers of people who might otherwise be marginalized & subjected to professional control access to valued community roles & greater power to direct their lives.

**Ethics is the quest of
less and less trivial modes
of human relatedness.**

-Herbert McCabe

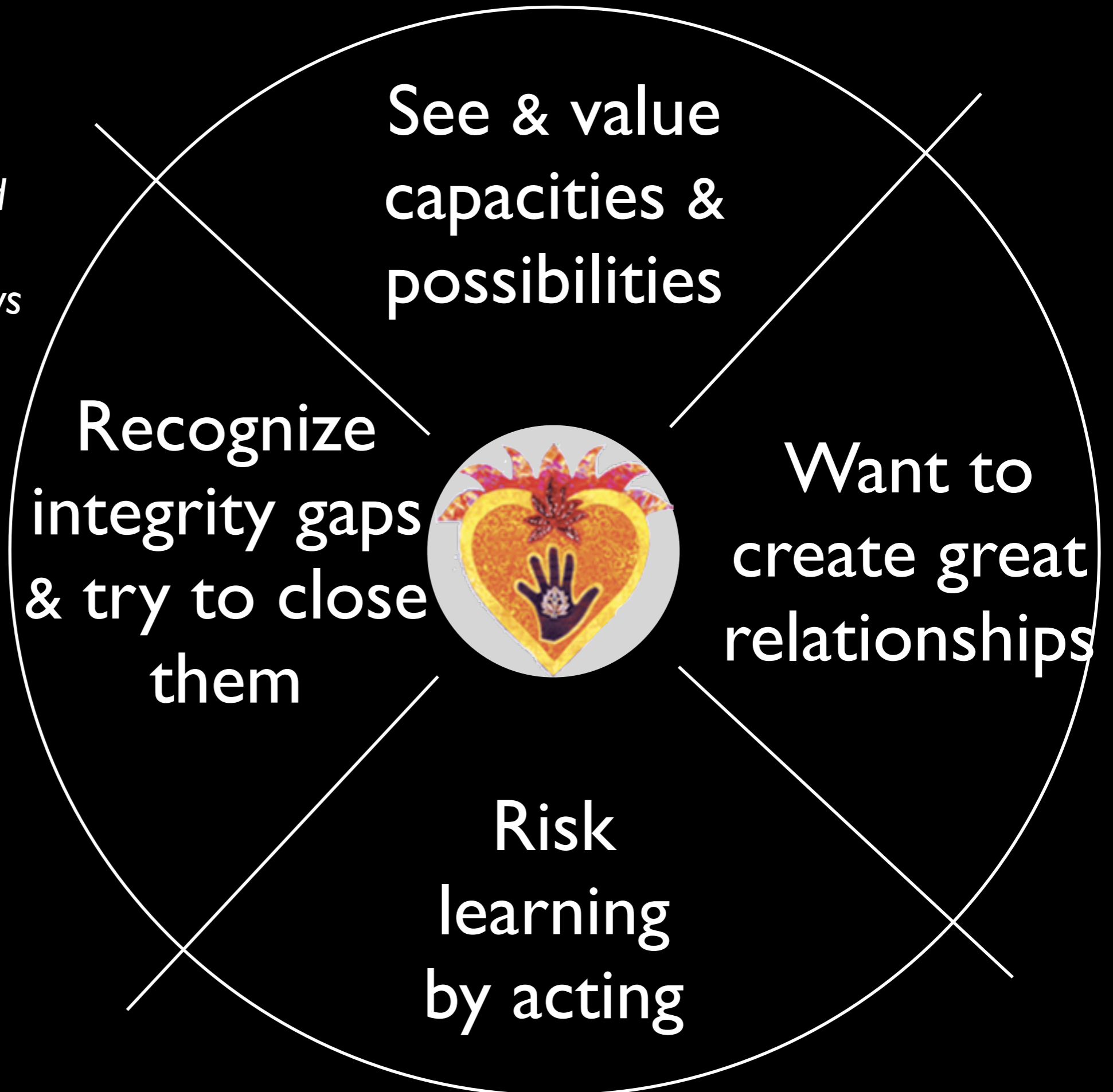
These forms of violence flow from trivial relationships in which the person is simply an object, fated to a marginal life, victimized by history. Standing against them involves a shared quest for more equal & interesting relationships; relationships open to surprise & new ways for people to cause difficulties for one another.

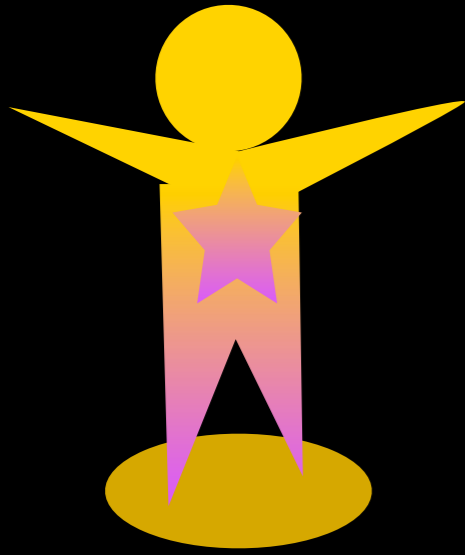
Attentional violence: not to be seen in terms of your highest future possibility but only in terms of your past

Structural violence: misery & poverty.

Direct violence: abuse & neglect.

At the organizational level, the quest for more interesting relationships is served by a culture that encourages these ways of seeing & acting.



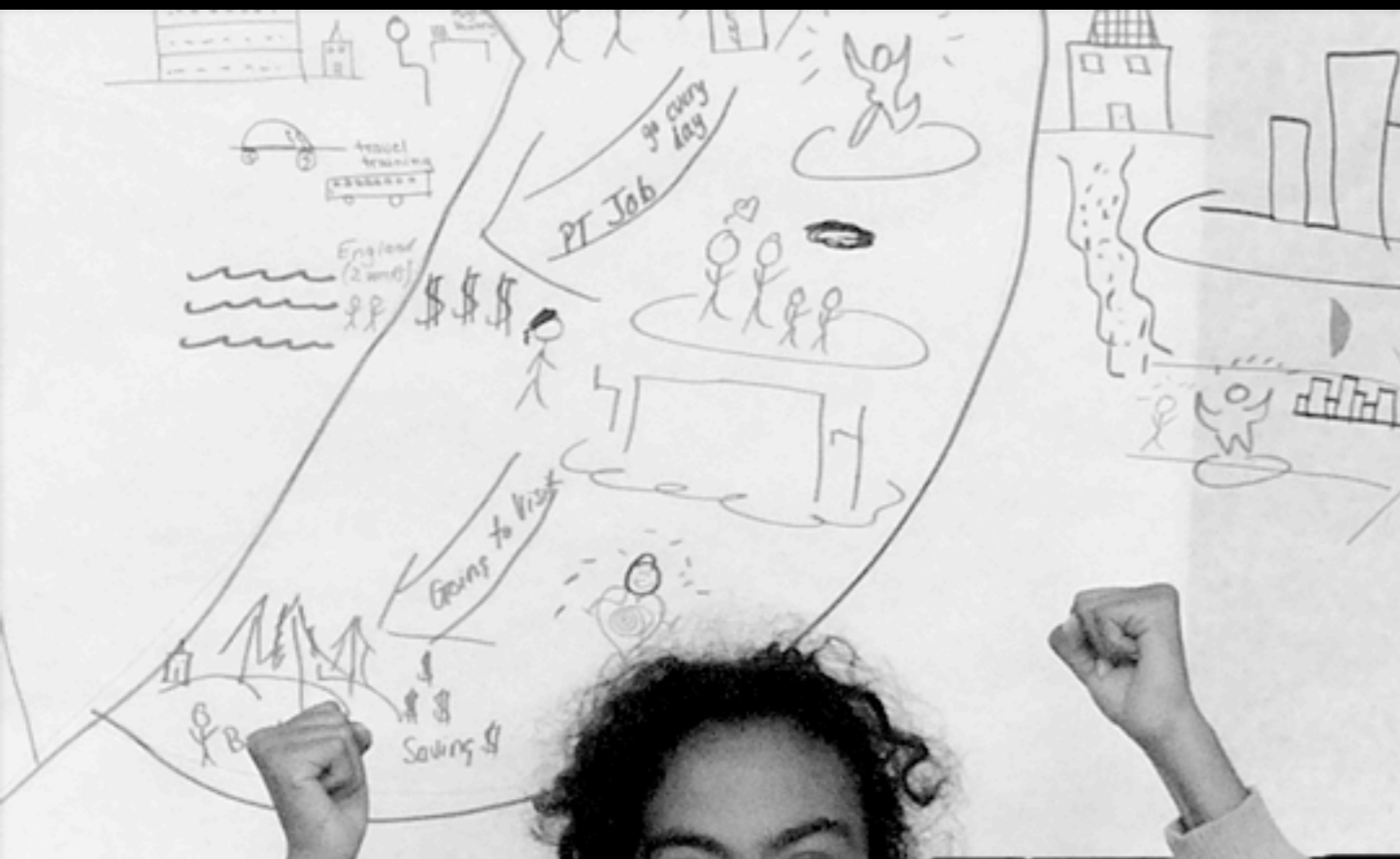


This question guides an approach to person-centered work that is open to the responsibility for collaborating with the person in action outside existing boundaries to discover gifts & capacities and expand opportunities for contribution.

**How can this person
show up in ordinary life
as a valued friend &
contributing citizen?**

Taking up a contributing role in a society that mindlessly assumes that some people can be thrown away because they have nothing to offer takes the courage & resilience that comes when supportive relationships with allies embolden people to follow an unfamiliar path.





Gathering a circle of allies to clarify purpose & chart a path that embodies that purpose can encourage & guide the social innovation that opens & supports new roles.

Life is hard, but poetry helps me get through. I want to give this gift to others.

– Nelcy Rameriz

The question of gift & contribution for each individual opens a more extensive question that involves all of us in taking action that will build a more inclusive & resilient community.

**How can we all show up in
more places that attend to,
cultivate, & benefit from the
gifts of difference?**

The bridge to a more just & inclusive community is not yet wide, smooth, & well engineered. There are no easy & instant recipes to move out of stigma, exclusion & economic disadvantage.

Understanding person-centered work as the quest for forms of assistance that will create possibilities for more diverse & interesting relationships only offers the promise of testing & pushing back the limits of our common life.



**Each day forces us
to totter on planks we
hope
will become bridges.**

—Kevin Hart