



Relational Practice Movement

The Relational Practice Manifesto



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relationalmovement.net



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The Relational Practice Movement

The Relational Practice Movement is a response to the isolation and dehumanisation of people across our public services, both staff and users. Our mission is to replace the current financially-motivated and disempowering practices across the sector with revitalising and enabling ones that put humans and interpersonal relationships at the centre of each intervention.

The movement unites people across education, criminal justice, charities, health and social care to build a more humane and connected world.

The call for Relational Practice in all areas of public service is a rallying cry for a deeper connection with ourselves and others.



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What is Relational Practice?

When we spend time with others, that's relational.
When we listen and share with them, that's relational.
When we choose to put these things at the centre of the way we work, that's Relational Practice.

Relational Practice gives priority to interpersonal relationships, in both external and internal aspects. It is the foundation upon which any effective intervention is based, and it forms the conditions for a healthy relational environment. It requires:

- relationships based on honesty, reliability, consistency, curiosity, flexibility, and authenticity;
- an enabling and facilitating attitude;
- an understanding of the inner and outer lives of individuals in their social field.

Depending upon the setting, there will be variations in the balance between the various elements.

An Urgent Need of Our Times

Worldwide, the pandemic has both revealed and exacerbated the deep isolation we are experiencing. Our public services are in crisis and the scale of the problem facing us is unprecedented. As humans, we are wired for connection but the modern world often deprives us of it. This inhibits us in two ways:

The case for agency

If staff hold all the power, this keeps users dependent on services and does not give them the opportunity to take control of their lives or have a say in their care. This dynamic also takes a toll on staff as they are expected to have all the answers.

The case for humanness

Staff often experience compassion fatigue, burnout, and disconnection from self and others. They struggle to maintain healthy boundaries in their continuous attempt to provide. They find little to no space for their own needs and humanness.

Building healthy relationships can provide effective and safe services, better meet everyone's need for connection, avoid burn-out, and improve the health and wellbeing of all involved. We believe in sharing power rather than misusing it. By taking time to build genuine, honest relationships, we can empower people on all sides of our services while working together.

The Three "R's" of Relational Practice

Reflect

With widespread disillusion across different sectors, we must acknowledge the gaps in public services based on industrial-style, impersonal interventions that dehumanise people.

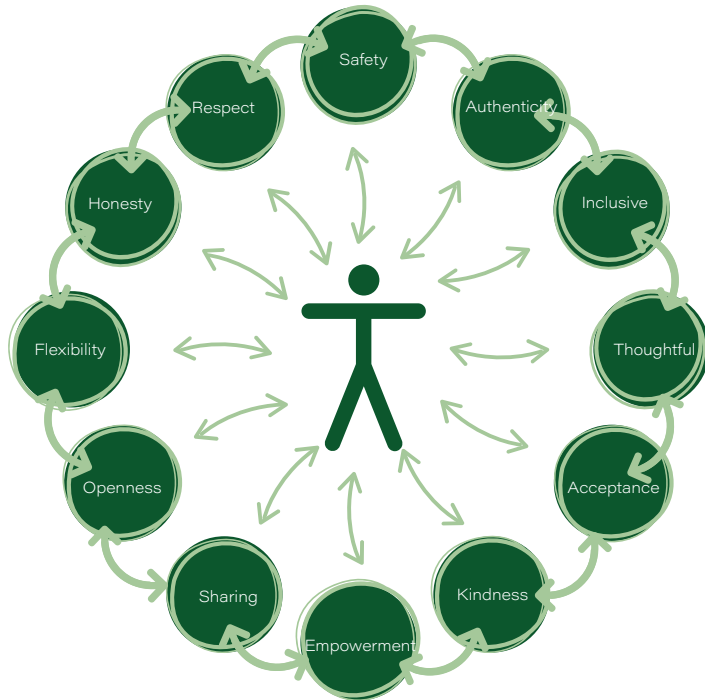
Revitalise

Relational Practice encourages working together, ensures wellbeing, and sees each person as a whole, unique individual with different strengths and circumstances.

Rebuild

Improved relationships rebuild trust in individuals, services, and communities. By empowering people on all sides, Relational Practice creates lasting change that goes beyond immediate support and brings hope into people's lives.





We exist in relation to each other; alone, we are isolated and vulnerable. A disconnected top-down service labels people as problems, leaving no space for anyone to take responsibility for themselves or connect with others. This damages our capacity to work together, especially in an economically-driven world where interactions are too often treated like transactions.

When human connections are lost, we see the breakdown of communities and relationships, and people struggle to find hope for the future. For each of us to be happy and successful, we need to feel like a part of something greater.

Relational Practice helps people who have felt silenced to find their voices, then listens and acts with them when they speak. By respecting and empowering everyone involved, the Relational Practice Movement allows us to create that sense of belongingness that we, as human beings, truly need.



Separate but Together

Relational practice: a move from separated, fragmented service models focused on costs and problems to united, connected services that embrace each person as a whole.



Caption: Separate but Together

Not Just Acting but Connecting

Understanding is the first step towards meaningful action. We invite everyone to reflect and encourage conversations about why treating people as *people* is crucial to an effective public service.

We must build this movement to transform the system. Together, we can mobilise those in positions of power to join us as allies.

Across the sector, we need to **reflect** on the failures in existing systems, **revitalise** caring environments, and **rebuild** effective services.

If you are an individual, think about how your work could be more relational. Start by considering how you can listen to others more effectively in your interactions and work alongside them.

As an organisation, build your staff's capacity to work relationally, create safe spaces to reflect on your existing power structures, and design changes that encourage sharing of power. Start by making time to reflect on your current practices together.

If you are in a position of political or social influence, support organisations, institutions, and professions to work relationally. Start by including the principles of Relational Practice in new policies.

We believe Relational Practice is our best chance to build a sustainable, compassionate, and hopeful future. Our vision is that Relational Practice in different sectors should include:

Fewer prisoners and less violence

Health staff empowered to use their initiative in caring for people they support

Children enjoy a more creative and personalised approach to learning

Health and social care will be equally concerned with emotional safety and physical risk

What could Relational Practice do for you? Fill out this box with your ideas.



Visit our website to share your ideas and learn from others.

Join us in creating caring and optimistic services - one authentic relationship at a time.



Relational Practice is the radical act
of re-introducing empowerment and
kindness into the very heart of our
public services.

learn more at
relationalmovement.net

