

Caring in Medicine

Bonnie Miller, MD, MMHC
Professionalism in Medicine
Expert Advisory Panel Meeting
February 12–13, 2020



KERN NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR CARING & CHARACTER IN MEDICINE

Caring in Medicine

The good physician knows his patients through and through, and his knowledge is bought dearly. Time, sympathy and understanding must be lavishly dispensed, but the reward is to be found in that personal bond which forms the greatest satisfaction of the practice of medicine. One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.

Frances Peabody, The care of the patient. JAMA 1927.
88 (12):877-882.

Ethics of Care

- Rooted in feminist theory: Virginia Held, Joan Tronto, others
- Care has been relegated to the private sphere of society, peripheral to public concerns
- Caregiving work has been devalued: done by women, especially those of color
- Care receiving has been stigmatized

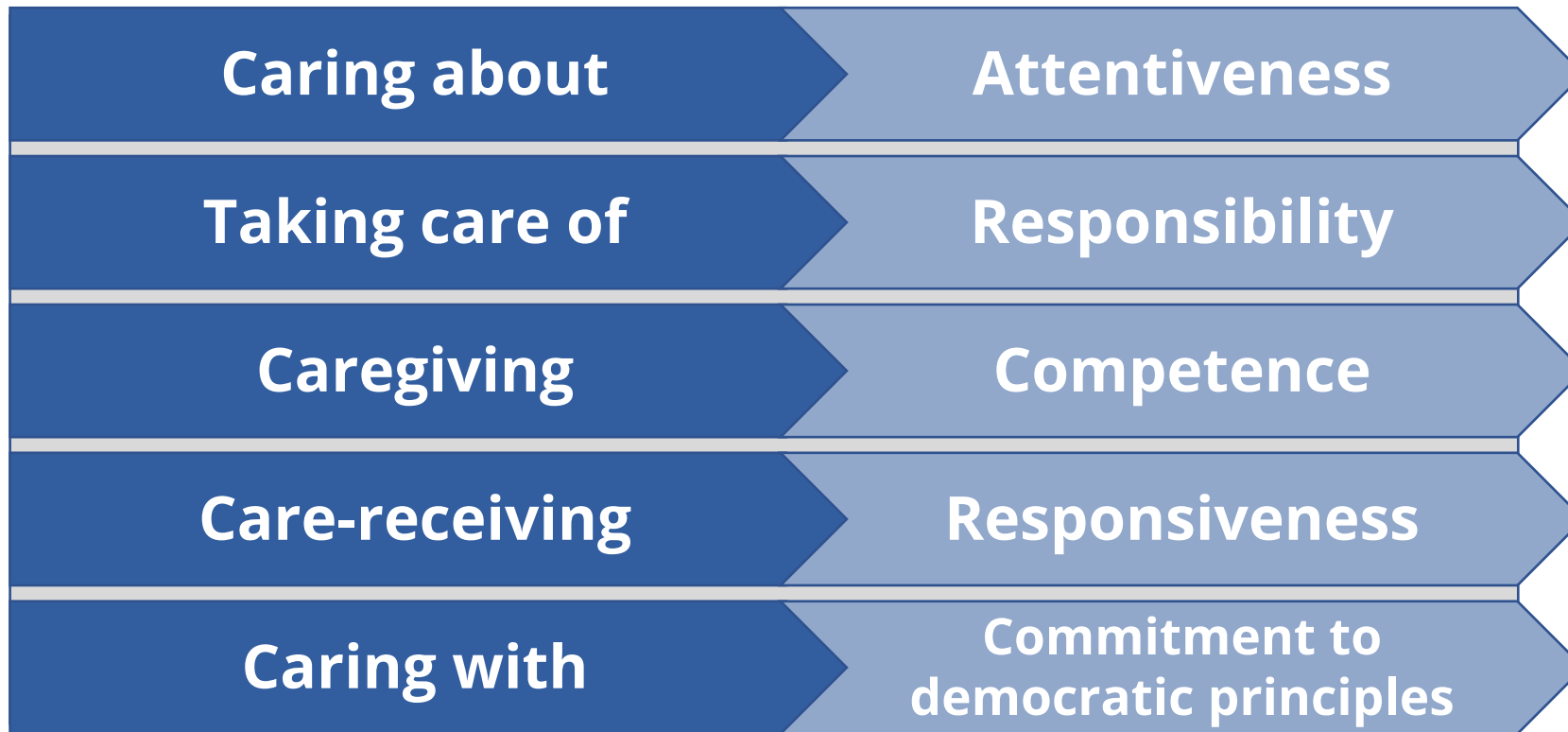
KNN Descriptive Definition of Caring

Care embraces a blend of practices, dispositions and motivations all aimed at ensuring that individuals and populations grow, develop and flourish as best they can.

- Situated in the context of relationships; built on acceptance of interdependence
- Acknowledges inherent power imbalances; eschews dominance, seeks humility
- Trust is a precondition and is also generated in a reinforcing loop
- Not necessarily altruistic; mutually beneficial and rewarding
- Standards and aspirational qualities are embedded; care practitioners strive to continually improve their efforts

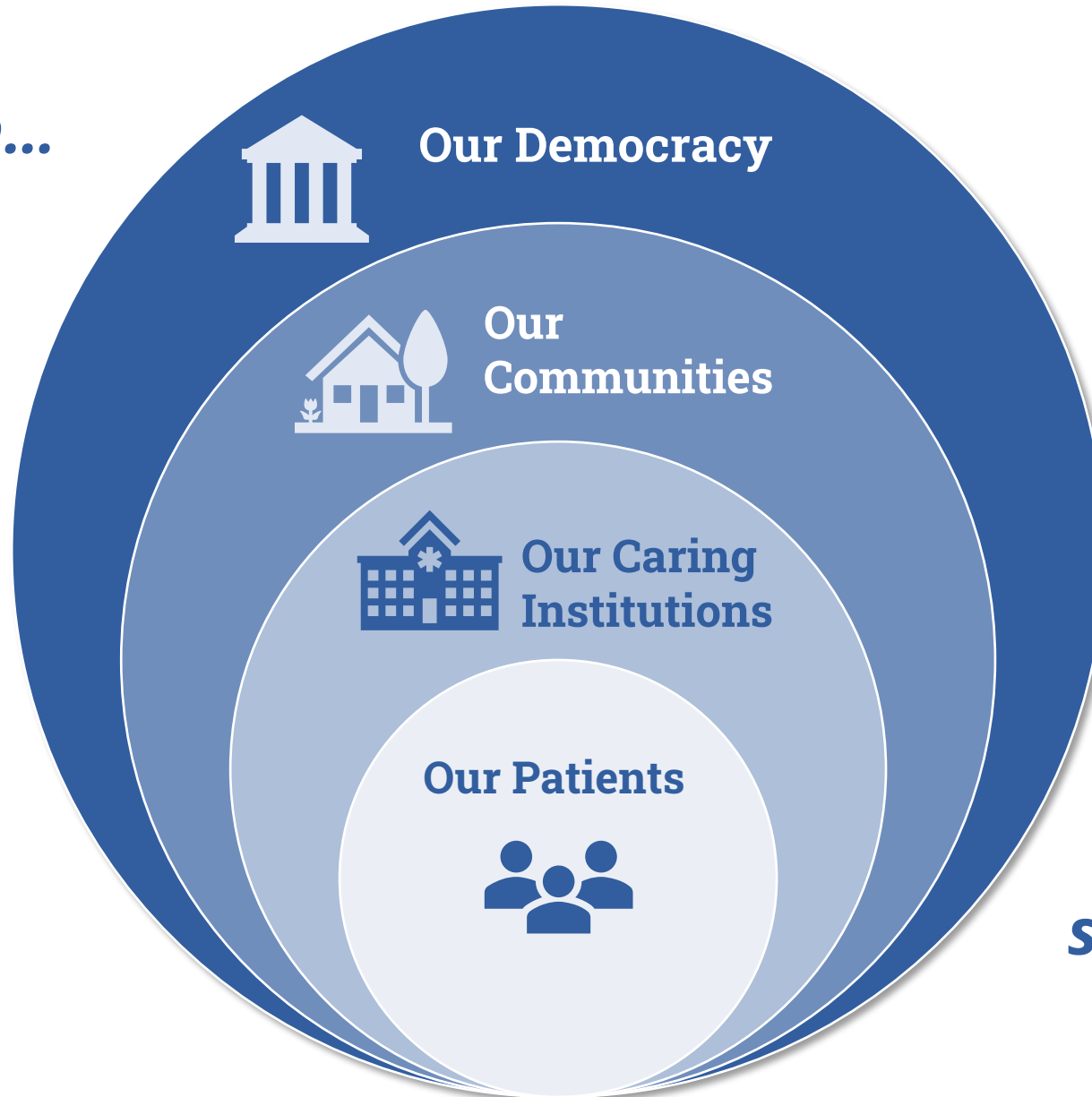
Caring as a Practice

Five **phases of care** have corresponding **moral elements**:



Adapted from Tronto, Moral Boundaries, Caring Democracy

If medicine is a caring profession...



...what is the scope of its caring responsibilities?

About the Kern National Network for Caring & Character in Medicine (KNN)

- The KNN is a collaborative composed of seven medical schools dedicated to advancing principles of caring and character in medicine
 - **Our Vision:** The KNN aspires to promote human flourishing through the profession of medicine
 - **Our Mission:** To foster caring and character in the profession of medicine through efforts with health professions education, healthcare systems, network partners and society

The Kern National Network Partners

