

KNN DISCUSSION SERIES

# Foundations for Flourishing

Building Blocks of Character



**KERN NATIONAL NETWORK**  
FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE  
*Character. Caring. Practical Wisdom.*

# A Growing Movement Toward Flourishing in Medicine

The Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine is a movement focused on integrating a **framework** of four foundational elements within the profession of medicine to ignite positive culture change:

*Character.*

*Caring.*

*Practical Wisdom.*

*Flourishing.*



# A Growing Movement Toward Flourishing in Medicine

We advance this work by **connecting** and **convening** stakeholders across the health ecosystem, **catalyzing** transformative initiatives and **influencing** policy and systems change.

## KNN Theory of Change



CONNECT



CONVENE



CATALYZE

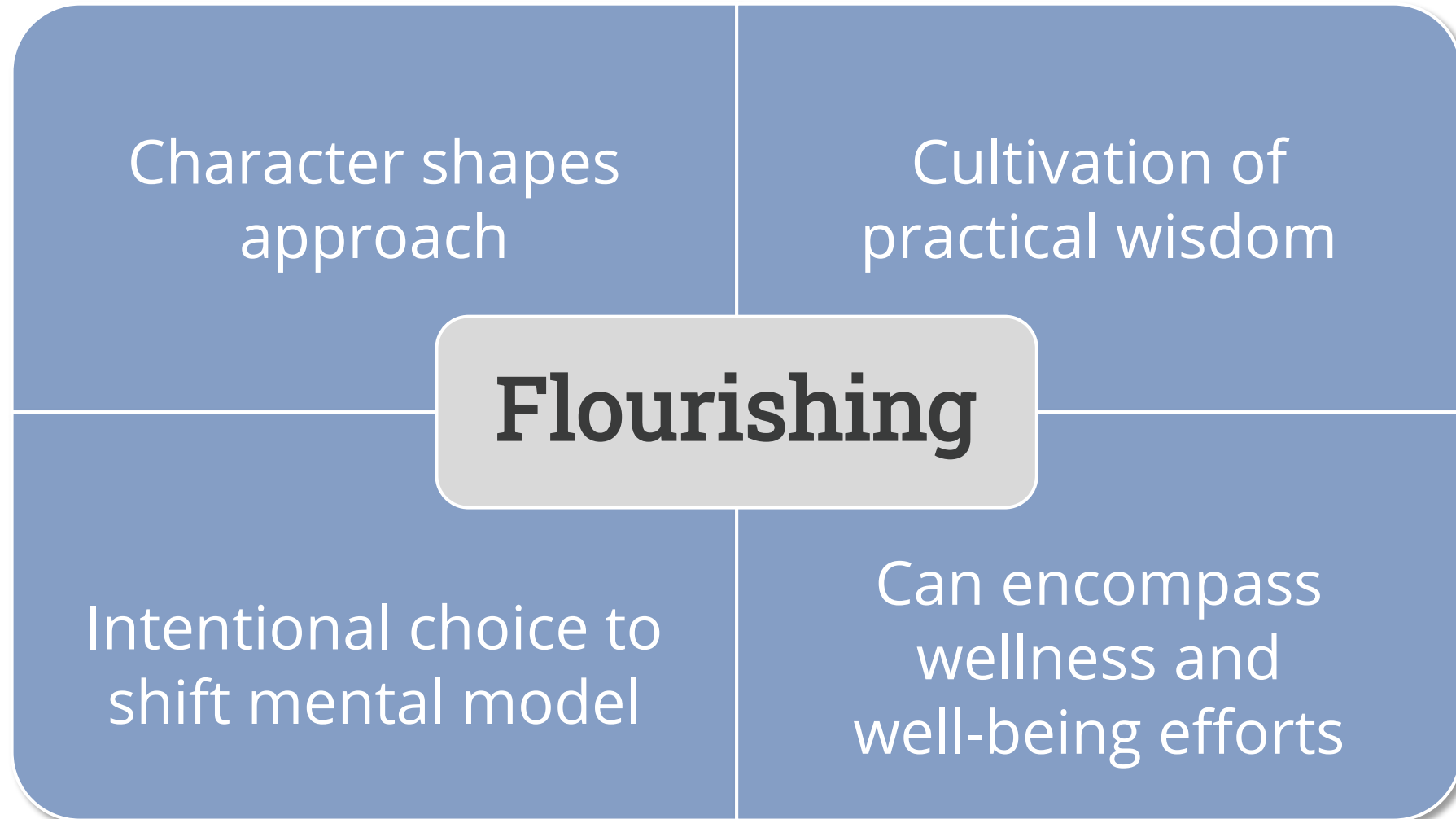


INFLUENCE



# Why a Framework for Flourishing?

# Flourishing: A Holistic Approach to Shifting Mindset and Culture



# The KNN's North Star: A Framework for Flourishing



## Practical Wisdom

Using acquired experience to discern the right way to do the right thing in a particular circumstance, with a particular person, at a particular time.<sup>2</sup>

## Character

A constellation of characteristics—moral, civic, intellectual and performance—formed over time and manifest in dispositions and practices.<sup>3</sup>

## Flourishing

Flourishing refers to a wholeness—of being and doing, of realizing one's potential and helping others do the same. It can be measured across the domains of happiness, life satisfaction, physical and mental health, meaning and relationships, and it is most commonly achieved through pathways of family, work, education and spiritual community.<sup>1</sup>

## Individuals

Medical and Other Health Professions Education

Health Systems and Other Practice Environments

## Society

## Caring

A blend of practices, dispositions and motivations—attentiveness, responsibility, competency, responsiveness and engagement/citizenship—all aimed at ensuring that individuals and populations grow, develop and flourish as best they can.<sup>4</sup>

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# Celebrating Juneteenth

Why celebrating Juneteenth is more important now than ever

Alverno Devine, DDiv., Program Manager



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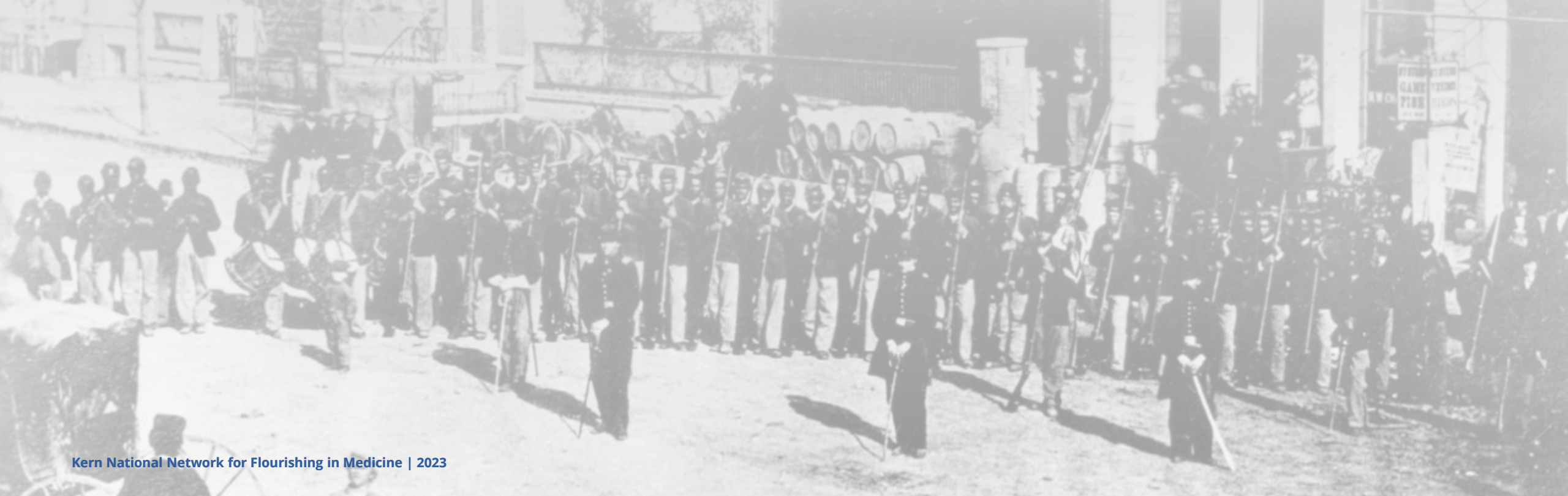
# WHAT IS

# JUNETEENTH?



# “Juneteenth” Means....

The word “Juneteenth” is a mashup of “June” and “Nineteenth”. On June 19th, 1865, federal troops rode into Galveston, Texas, to announce that all enslaved people must be freed.





# 250,000 slaves



So, Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom!



# JUNETEENTH

**Juneteenth also gives us the opportunity to talk about the principles of the founding of our Country**



June 19, 1865



# The symbolism of the Juneteenth flag



Let us look at Juneteenth just as we look at Independence Day.

# JUNETEENTH

SENSES *of* FREEDOM

JUNE 19<sup>th</sup>, 1865

Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine | 2023

This Juneteenth 2023 brings a new sense of hope and freedom.



W

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**I CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON HOPE. JUNE  
19TH REMINDS ME THAT I AM THE  
FORCE OF POWER TO CHANGE THIS  
WORLD AND TO FOLLOW IN THE  
FOOTSTEPS OF MY ANCESTORS TO  
WORK TOWARDS LIBERATION.**

**– MARIAH COOLEY**





Milwaukee is home to one of the oldest Juneteenth celebrations in the country

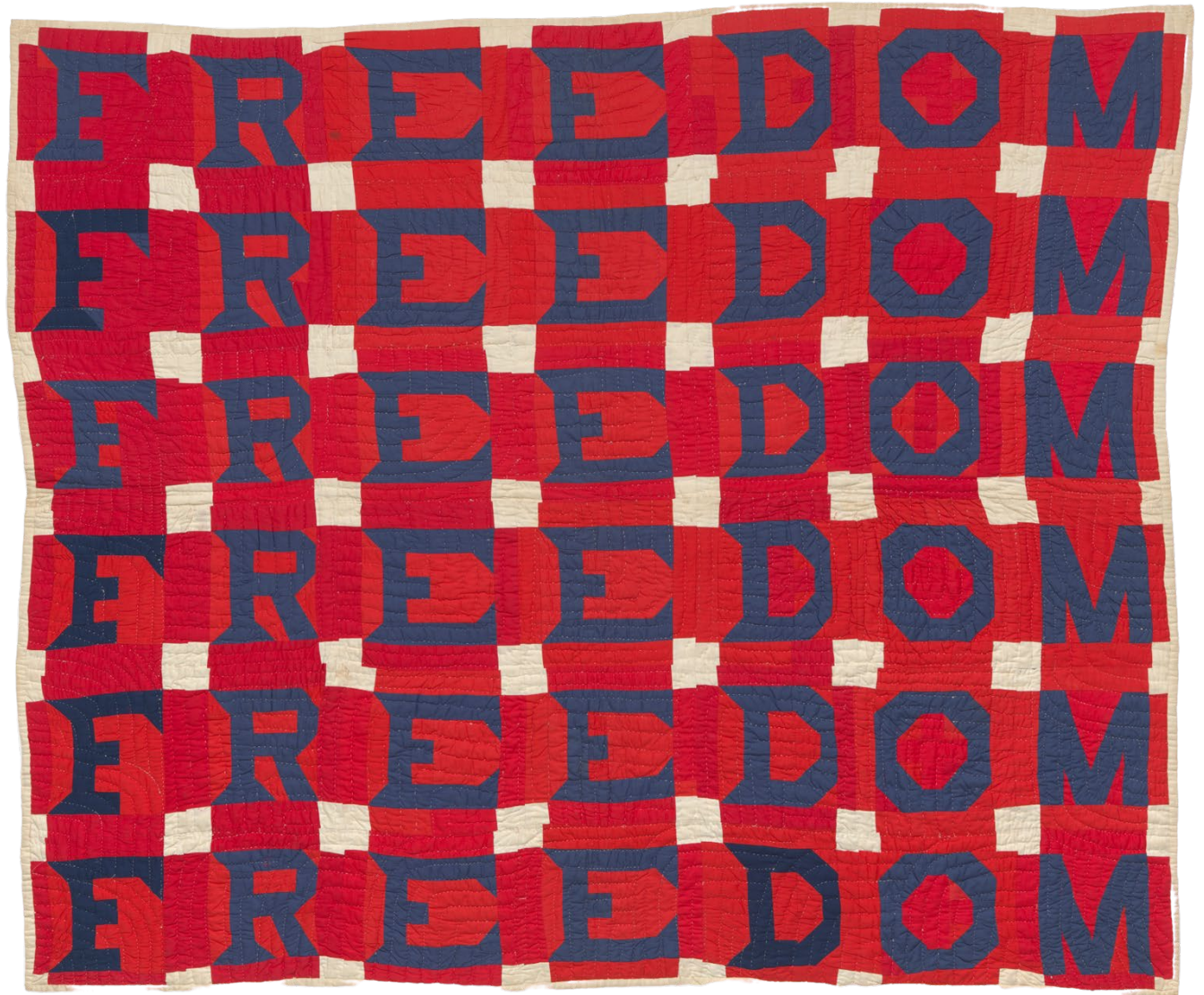


# References and Resources

- **More than half of states will recognize Juneteenth as an official public holiday in 2023** - <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/06/09/nearly-half-of-states-now-recognize-juneteenth-as-an-official-holiday/>
- **Tocqueville on Christianity and American Democracy** - <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/tocqueville-christianity-and-american-democracy>
- **Harvard Business Review | Diversity and Inclusion | How Your Organization Can Recognize Juneteenth** - by Ella F. Washington and Jasmine Sanders, June 17, 2021, <https://hbr.org/2021/06/how-your-organization-can-recognize-juneteenth>
- **Four enduring myths about Juneteenth are not based on facts** - <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/20/1105945119/four-enduring-myths-about-juneteenth-are-not-based-on-facts>
- **Why celebrating Juneteenth is more important now than ever** - It's time for America to truly grapple with its legacy of slavery. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/6/19/17476482/juneteenth-holiday-emancipation-african-american-celebration-history>
- **Meaningful Juneteenth Celebration Ideas for the Workplace** - [https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/ways-to-celebrate-juneteenth?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7aqkBhDPAIIsAKGa0oJC54ogD-g63BReZHAMNg7jMBo6UiIHQ7gNbJXwFYOt6HpxUS\\_mozlaAl-AEALw\\_wcB&acid=&co=US&gclidsrc=aw.ds](https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/ways-to-celebrate-juneteenth?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7aqkBhDPAIIsAKGa0oJC54ogD-g63BReZHAMNg7jMBo6UiIHQ7gNbJXwFYOt6HpxUS_mozlaAl-AEALw_wcB&acid=&co=US&gclidsrc=aw.ds)
- **Princeton University | Department of African American Studies** - June 17, 2022 Juneteenth, “A Celebration of Freedom” - <https://aas.princeton.edu/news/juneteenth-celebration-freedom>
- **51 Most Powerful Juneteenth Quotes (2023)** - *PUBLISHED: MAY 18, 2023, UPDATED, JUN 15, 2023* - <https://www.goodgoodgood.co/articles/juneteenth-quotes>



# Thank You!



# Foundation for Flourishing: Building Blocks of Character

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# The KNN's four foundational elements

- Character
- Caring
- Practical wisdom
- Flourishing



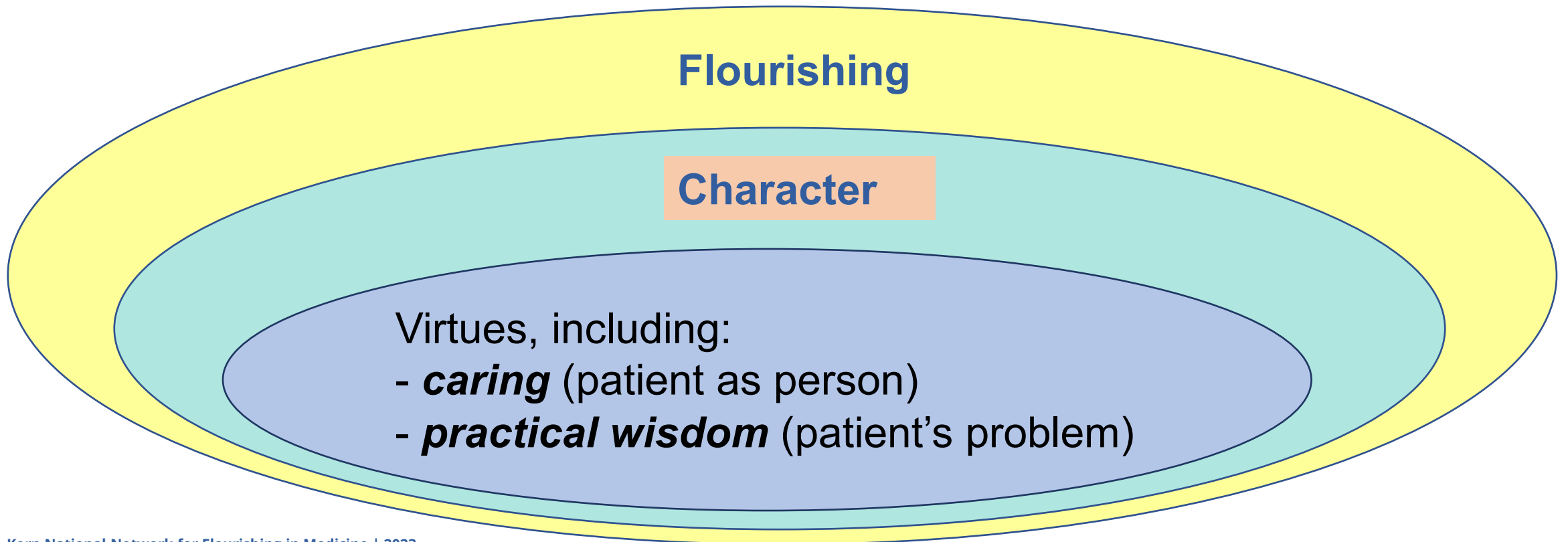
Character:  
we tend to  
know it when  
we see it

An example ...



# Character in context

Flourishing encompasses character, which entails virtues, which include caring and practical wisdom.



# Why character matters in healthcare

Healthcare is a *moral* practice (not merely technical), because it aims to help people under special circumstances:

- patient's need (vulnerability)
- professional's *professing* to be a healer (promise)
- inherent inequality (power differential)
- fiduciary relationship (trust)
- non-proprietary knowledge
- moral community

Pellegrino, Edmund D. and David Thomasma. *The Virtues in Medical Practice*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1993 (pp. 155-6).

- Character matters because people matter.
- Character reflects the inter-personal reality of those who act and those who are affected by actions.
- Healthcare is always about *persons* – not merely bodies, problems, or outcomes.



# Defining character

“Character is understood to mean the morally evaluable, reason-responsive, and educable part of individual personhood: of who we are as persons. It connotes a moral component, is not understood solely in behavioural terms, but as including the use of discernment, sensitivity, and the ability to hold morally grounded motivations.”

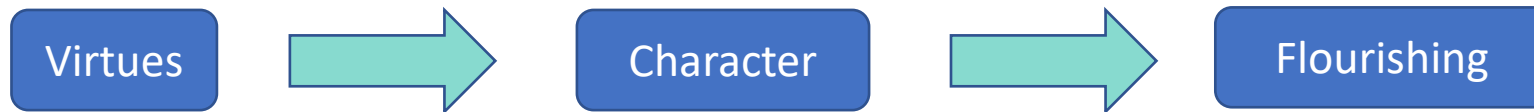
- involves morality, rationality, growth, motivation, personal identity

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics, University of Birmingham, UK, 2023.

# Defining virtues

“Virtues are specific excellences of human character that constitute settled states, making up one’s character, and enabling humans and their communities to flourish.”

- Virtues comprise character and enable flourishing



The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics, University of Birmingham, UK, 2023.

# Another description of character and virtues

“Motives and intentions ... reflect the kind of person I am, my inner disposition and character.... [The virtues] are inner habits of heart and mind, stable dispositions that move us to think and act in particular ways, in contrast to passing inclinations that lack deep roots and are too easily lost. Virtues are what constitute the good life: excellence of character.”

Holmes, Arthur F. *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007 (pp. 131-2).

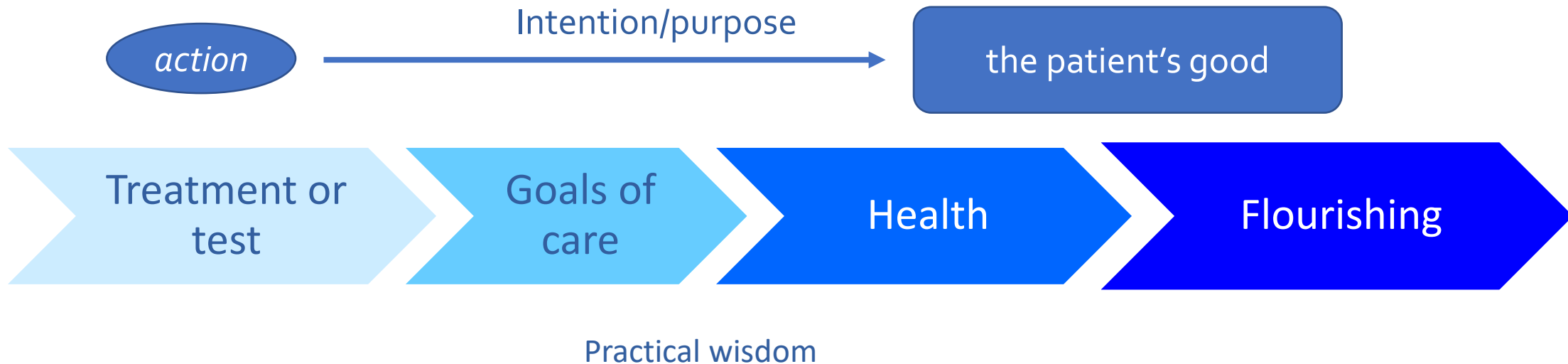


# Virtue (and virtue ethics) in broader context

The Moral Event				
Element	Agent	Act	Circumstance	Consequence
Theory	Virtue	Principles	Particularizing theories	Utilitarianism
Foci	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Character</b></li> <li>• <b>Caring</b></li> <li>• Intention</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Duty</li> <li>• Rule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Caring</b> for <i>this</i> person or group in <i>this</i> place, time</li> <li>• <b>Narrative</b></li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Harms/goods</li> <li>• Pain/pleasure</li> <li>• Utility calculus</li> </ul>

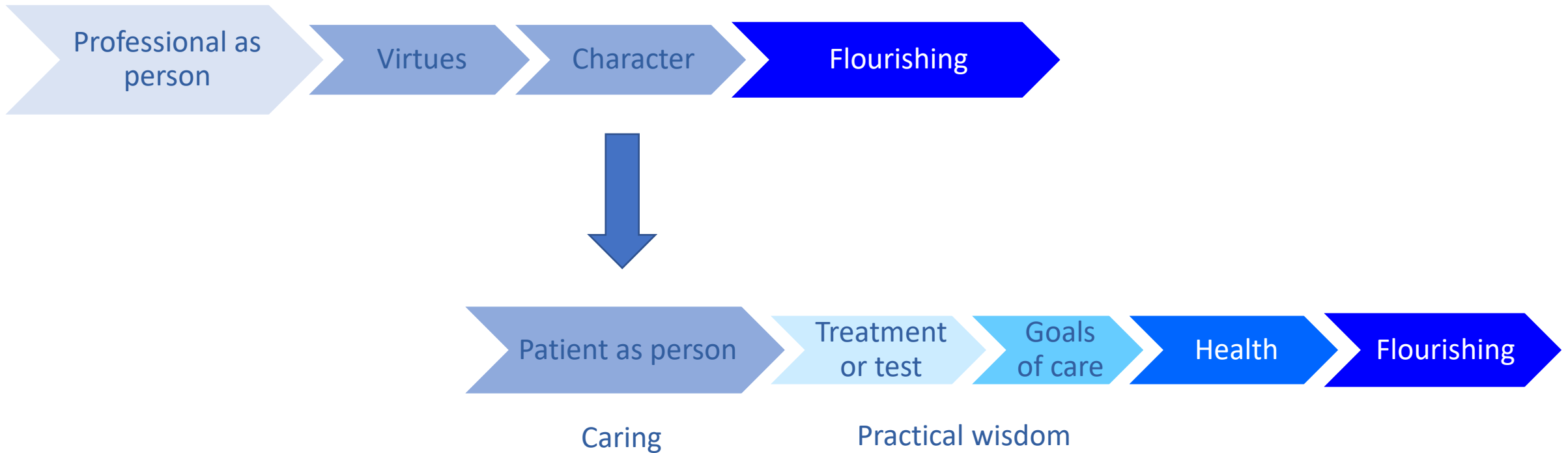
Edmund D. Pellegrino. Toward a Virtue-Based Normative Ethics for the Health Professions. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 1995;5:253-277 (p. 271 – Figure 1)

# Virtue ethics is goal-oriented



Kaldjian LC. Concepts of health, ethics, and communication in shared decision making. *Communication & Medicine* 2017;14(1):83-95.

# Virtue ethics is person-oriented



# Habits form virtues that build character

According to Aristotle...

- Virtues are instilled by habit.
- Virtues are states of character that are acquired by doing the acts one would do if one already had the state of character.
- ***We become what we do*** (e.g., we become brave by doing brave acts).
- Habits instill a sensitivity as to how to act in various circumstances.
  - There are no rules that prescribe exactly how a virtuous person should act.

Lear, Jonathan. Aristotle: the desire to understand. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 (pp 164-7).

# Virtues and emotions

According to Aristotle (and other ancients):

- Having a **virtue** is having the **character** that allows one not only to **know** the right thing to do, but also to **take pleasure in doing it**
  - one is repelled by the thought of acting wrongly
- Having virtue is a state of one's **character and emotions**, not merely a disposition to act in certain ways.

“The virtuous person, then, not only does the right thing but has the right **feelings and emotions** about what she does.”

Annas, Julia. The Morality of Happiness. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1993 (pp 48-9, 55-6).



# Virtues that help us heal

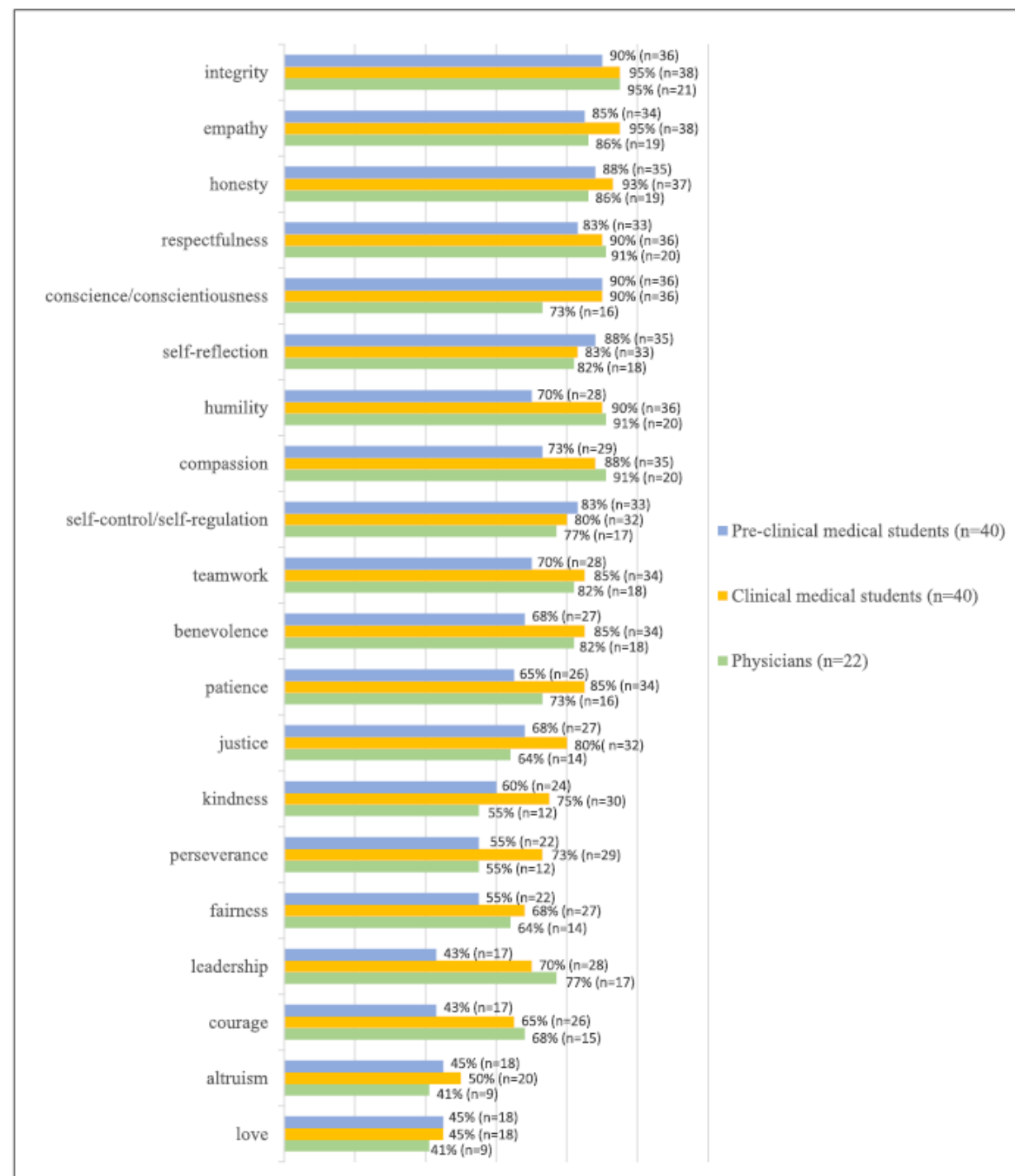
- Trustworthiness (fidelity to trust)
- Benevolence
- Effacement of Self-Interest (altruism)
- Compassion and Caring
- Honesty
- Justice
- Courage
- Temperance (self-control)
- Practical wisdom
- Integrity

Pellegrino & Thomasma. *The Virtues in Medical Practice*, 1993  
Pellegrino, Edmund D. Toward a Virtue-Based Normative Ethics for the Health Professions.  
*Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 1995;5:253-277 (pp. 269-270)

# Virtues relevant to healthcare

Comparative frequencies of the top 20 virtues considered essential for practical wisdom in medicine.

Kaldjian LC, Yoon J, Ark TK, Shinkunas L, Jotterand F.  
Practical wisdom in medicine through the eyes of medical students and physicians. *Medical Education* 2023 Apr 29 (online ahead of print)





What can we do to  
build character?



# Character development

Aristotle saw virtues as habits of mind that can be cultivated.

- They do not emerge naturally over the course of time.
- They do not arise merely from formal instruction.

Virtues develop (are internalized) as a result of reflection and deliberation about the choices and decisions we constantly make and the ends we desire.

- It takes effort.
- We are responsible agents in our own character development.

Holmes, Arthur F. *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, 2nd ed.  
Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007 (pp. 137-8).

# Teaching and learning virtue and character

- Identify different approaches to ethics (as applied to professions)
  - Distinctive contributions of virtue ethics (*being* a certain kind of person)
  - Emphasize key virtues
- Identify moral issues and develop ethical reasoning
- Acknowledge influence of organizational culture
- Provide role-modeling (within the community, also from literature)
- Attention to reflection, critical thinking, good reasoning, cultural context, and practical experience

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics, University of Birmingham, UK, 2023.

# Cultivating character

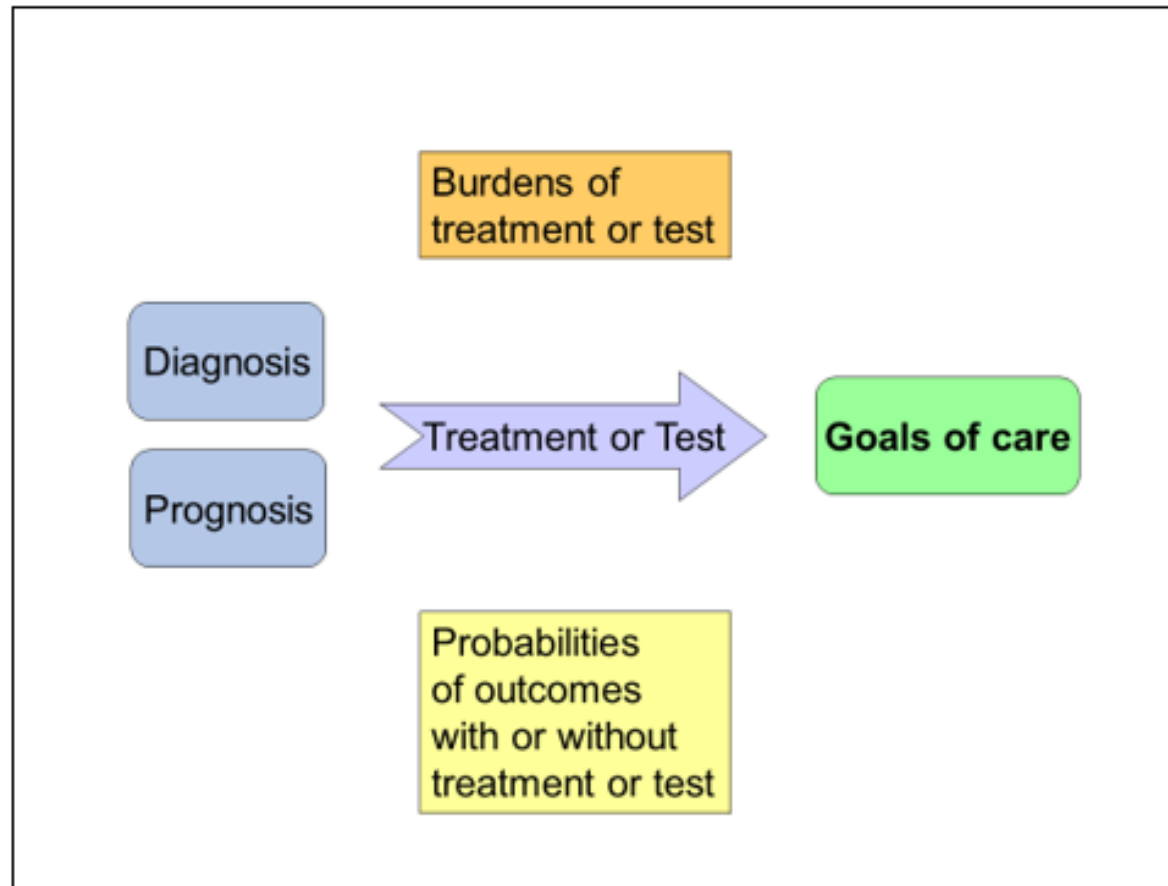
## Encourage:

- as many points of influence and opportunities as possible
- repetition over extended time (habits don't change quickly!)
- internal motivation
  - fan flames already burning
  - reduce impediments (engage the hidden curriculum and its negative effects)
- critical thinking
  - full range of ethics: agent, act, circumstance, consequence
  - self-critical reflection:
    - 1) What kind of a person should I be? (virtue)
    - 2) How do I treat other people? (caring)
    - 3) How do I solve problems and achieve goals? (practical wisdom)

# How can we cultivate character?

- **Role-modeling:** even one encounter is powerful
- **Mentoring:** longitudinal relationships
- **Narratives:** reading, writing, and sharing stories
- **Deliberation:** real-time in the practice environment
- **Reflection:**
  - experience-based & forward looking
  - good experiences and disturbing ones
  - honest feedback
  - individual & group
- **Awareness of the culture:**
  - honest assessments of the good and the bad
  - engage the hidden curriculum
- **Practice:** exercise good habits in patient care...

# Goal-oriented reasoning (practical wisdom)

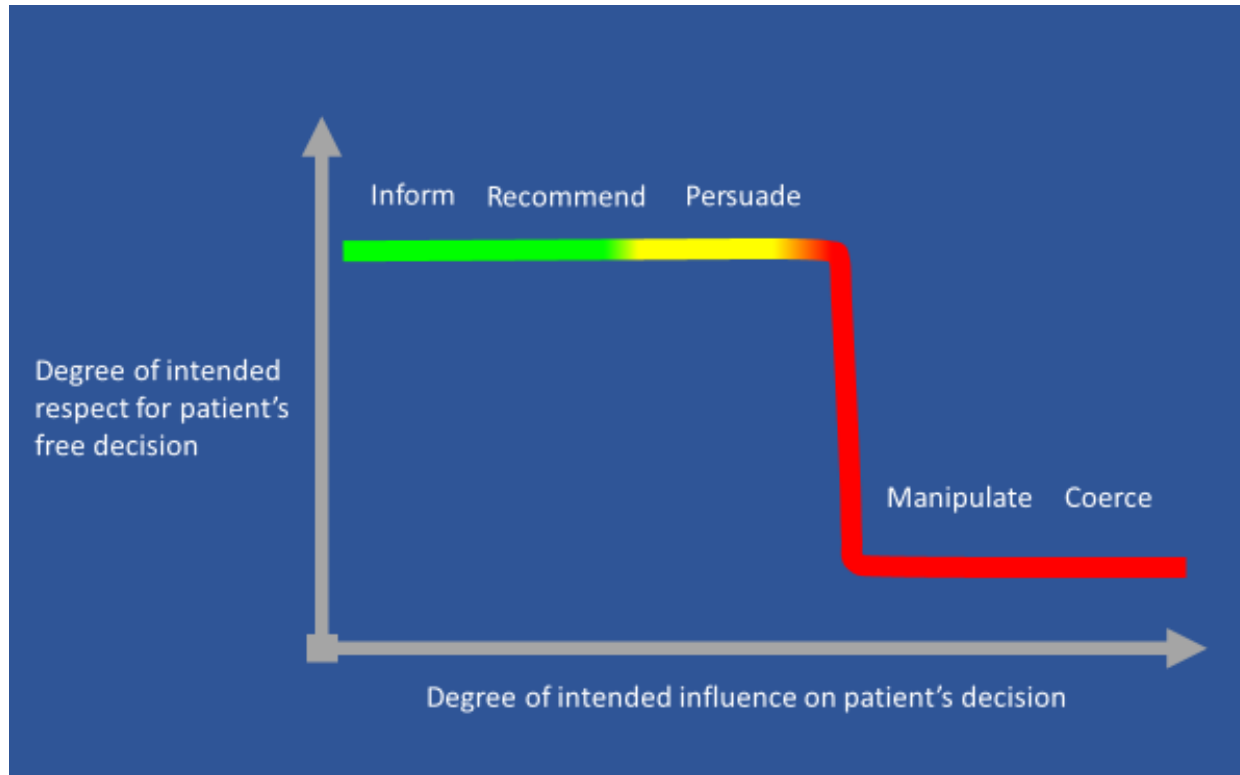


Kaldjian LC. Clarifying core content of goals of care discussions. *J Gen Intern Med* 2020;35(3):913-915.





# Person-centered decision making (respect and caring)



Kaldjian LC. To Inform, recommend, and sometimes persuade: the ethics of physician influence in shared decision making. *Southern Medical Journal* (accepted for publication)

# Compassionate responses to suffering (caring)

To address suffering, we should learn to ask questions such as:

- “Are you suffering?”
- “What exactly are you frightened of?”
- “What do you worry is going to happen to you?”
- “What is the worst thing about all this?”

Cassell EJ. Diagnosing suffering: a perspective. *Ann Intern Med.* 1999;131:531-534

A practical approach to compassion

1. recognize suffering
2. be empathically resonant with the person
3. desire to relieve the person’s suffering
4. act to attempt to alleviate the suffering in some way

Vachon, Dominic O. *How Doctors Care: The Science of Compassionate and Balanced Caring in Medicine.* 1st ed. San Diego, CA: Cognella, 2020.

# Using clinical experience to encourage reflection on virtue & character



# Reflection: example (1)

A student's reflection on the role-modeling of **goal-oriented decision making, and caring ...**



# Reflection: example (2)

A student's reflection on the role-modeling of **virtues and character...**



# Integrating the personal and the professional

## *Personal-Professional Compass Program*



### Objectives

- encourage students to integrate their personal and professional values and goals.
- encourage students to reflect on and learn from their personal experiences in training.
- encourage students toward virtues needed for the humanistic practice of medicine.
- facilitate peer and mentor relationships that can enhance personal-professional integration.
- prepare students to write an authentic and compelling personal statement for residency applications.

#### Reflection prompts:

1. a mentor admired and emulated for personal/professional characteristics that are relevant to a medical career
2. the virtues that are considered most important in medicine, and how these virtues may relate to each other
3. a patient-based encounter in which a professional's character was instrumental to a humane approach to care.
4. awareness of a personal mistake, failure, or deficiency related to one's professional work that needs to change, with reflection on how that change might come.

# In closing

- *Flourishing* encompasses *character*, which entails *virtues*, which include *caring* and *practical wisdom*.
  - A person of character has virtues and is therefore flourishing.
- We can cultivate character in ourselves and encourage it in others.
  - Character formation is an intentional process
    - We *form* good habits, but we *fall* into bad ones (Kallenberg, 2017)
- In healthcare, we have many opportunities to encourage character
  - Reflection, deliberation, calibration within a community – with the help of narratives, role-modeling, mentoring, feedback, and practice



# Thank You

Thank you to our presenters and attendees for participating in today's session.

- Thanks also to the Kern Family Foundation whose investment makes this series possible
- Continue the discussion in the **KNN online community**
- Please **join us in October** for the next session on **caring**—look for registration details to follow!

## CONTACT US

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**Email:** [knn@mcw.edu](mailto:knn@mcw.edu)

**Twitter:** @KernNetwork

**Web:** [knncaringcharactermedicine.org](http://knncaringcharactermedicine.org)



## JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Scan QR code to learn more about becoming a **Catalyst organization** or a **Changemaker**





# Join the Movement Toward Flourishing in Medicine

The KNN is leading a movement to unite organizations and individuals with a shared goal of transforming clinical learning and practice environments so that all those within can flourish. We **connect**, **convene** and **catalyze**, all toward **influencing** the culture of medicine — for the good of society, communities, institutions and individuals. Join the movement toward flourishing in medicine to access resources on innovative practices, learn from others and enrich national efforts, and ultimately move forward with greater momentum together.

**Inquire About  
Organizational Options**

**Join as an  
Individual**

Questions? Contact Tara Fikejs at [tfikejs@mcw.edu](mailto:tfikejs@mcw.edu)

## Why Become a Catalyst Organization?

- ✓ **Show institutional commitment** to positively transforming the culture of medicine, with Catalyst organizations and logos recognized on the KNN website
- ✓ Participate in **convenings** around ongoing research and projects nationally and identify **multi-institutional opportunities for collaboration**
- ✓ **Access expertise** to advance organizational work related to flourishing
- ✓ Share and **amplify relevant work and institutional accomplishments**
- ✓ Build on and **expand efforts to enact flourishing** in the field
- ✓ **Shape the future of academic medicine** as part of a group of forward-thinking organizations

## Introductory Structure and Pricing

	Catalyst (Organization)	Changemaker (Individual)
Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory one-year rate begins at \$5,000 per school</li> <li>- Sliding scale based on FTE (faculty + staff) size and scope</li> <li>- Full organization gains access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$200 introductory one-year rate</li> <li>- No dues for learners (students, residents, fellows)</li> <li>- Individual access</li> </ul>
2023 KNN Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>3</b> conference registrations for 2023 included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1</b> individual conference registration for 2023 included</li> </ul>

### Initial Highlights

- Multi-institutional virtual group onboarding sessions
- Exclusive access to experts within KNN Foundations for Flourishing series
- Individuals across the organization gain access to resources for implementing innovative practices and private online community space
- Reception for members of the movement at September 2023 KNN Conference

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# Cultivating the Building Blocks of Character

