

A SHIFT TOWARD HOLISTIC CARE USING A FRAMEWORK FOR FLOURISHING AND WHOLE PERSON CARE MODEL

Health Systems Convening Report

In Chicago, Illinois, from May 19-20, 2025, the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN), in collaboration with the Healing Works Foundation, hosted a convening of 37 leaders from 10 health systems to support their identification of opportunities to promote flourishing and whole person care within their clinical care spaces. Presentations on the KNN Framework for Flourishing and the Healing Works Foundation's Whole Person Care (WPC) model highlighted the conceptual and practical connections between them. Both approaches aim to shift healthcare toward holistic, person-centered, and values-driven care and emphasize relational dimensions of health and healing.



Drawing on the beliefs that meaningful transformation is possible even within imperfect systems and that both large and small changes can create real progress, participants attended with others from their system and used the convening to deeply engage and make plans for change within their local spheres of influence. A variety of roles were included in the teams representing a diverse set of talents and resources to contribute to transformation. There was also ample time devoted to learning from and engaging with professionals from other health systems.



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



HEALING WORKS
FOUNDATION
INNOVATING WHOLE PERSON CARE

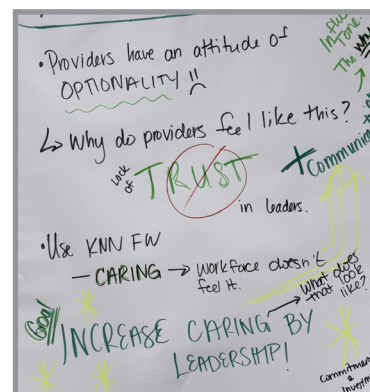
Opportunity Identification

On the first day of the convening, participants focused on learning the KNN Framework and WPC model and identifying one or more opportunities to apply them together within their institutions. Following short presentations on each approach, participants began independently brainstorming potential opportunities for application. They focused on the following questions:

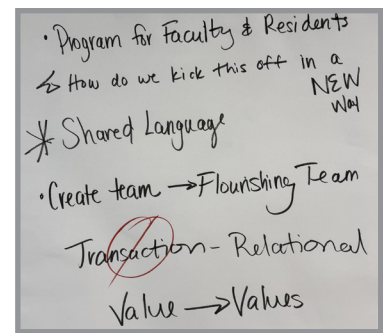
- What opportunities already exist for implementing whole person care and enhancing flourishing for patients and care providers within your institutions?
- What issues might impact changes to healthcare delivery and flourishing in your community/organization?

Mapping the Journey

Following individual brainstorming and team conversation, groups considered their opportunities in more detail by mapping predicted challenges and positive moments during a 6- or 12-month time frame. They were led through the process of visualizing the realization of the opportunity through a journey map exercise. Participants were asked to consider the wholeness of the experience of realizing the opportunity. More than predicting potential obstacles to the implementation process, the journey map required participants to apply future thinking to shape both actions and related thoughts and emotions. They were encouraged to use the WPC model and the KNN Framework to influence their understanding of the opportunity and actions to develop it.



As participants brought with them differing levels of prior knowledge and commitment to the WPC model and/or the KNN Framework, there was a diversity of engagement with each paradigm. For example, those who were introduced to the KNN for the first time shared interest in starting a student chapter while those with greater prior involvement shared the desire to improve communication toward building provider trust in system leadership and reducing the culture of optionality while promoting shared responsibility (“caring with”). Similarly, those who have already implemented WPC within their system shared that they have increased appointment lengths and added same-day appointments to better accommodate the needs of that approach. Those who were just learning about WPC discussed inviting a guest speaker on the model to campus and a desire to deepen knowledge.

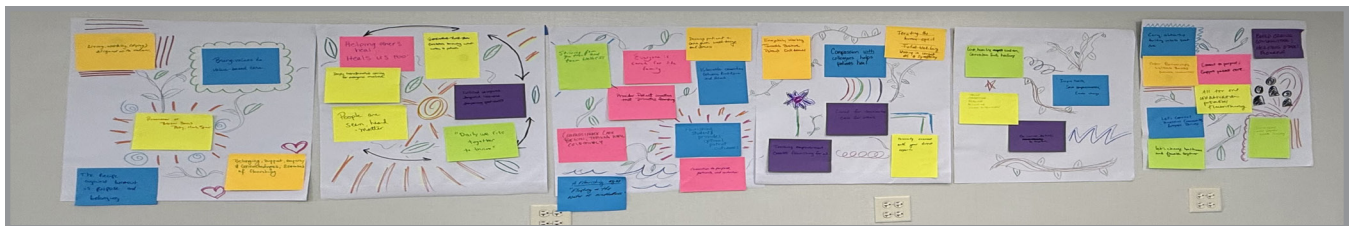


Connecting to Values

Throughout the convening, participants were able to reflect on, discuss and articulate the values that drive their desire to create change toward flourishing and whole person care.

Day One: Six-Word Stories and Fireside Chat

As a moment of personal reflection, participants wrote six-word stories representing what a flourishing institution, department, or team that uses WPC looks like to them. The stories reflect a shared vision of flourishing grounded in relational care and human connection as well as the desire of providers to feel supported in their efforts to align the systems they work in with their personal values. Throughout the convening this was referred to as shifting from thinking about (financial) value to (character) values.



The evening of the first day included a fireside chat with Lee Jones, MD (Rush University) and Priya Radhakrishnan, MD (Honor Health) who encouraged participants to listen to each other and to seek companionship, to imagine otherwise and to take action. Dr. Jones shared the quotation below from Amelia Earhart as inspiration.

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.”



Day Two: Reflecting on Virtues Toward Purpose

During the second day of the convening, participants were led through an exercise to ground their opportunity in the building blocks of character.¹ This element of the KNN Framework for Flourishing provides a taxonomy of virtues including intellectual, moral, civic, and performance. This organization of virtues provided an important lens for participants to articulate their motivations for addressing the opportunities they identified the day before.

Across the organizations, there was a strong pattern of drawing on moral virtues (compassion, humility, respect) and civic virtues (citizenship, service, community). Participants shared these virtues not as abstract ideals but as living expressions of institutional mission and purpose.

Action and Impact

Following time to discuss the resources each member of their team brings to the proposed opportunity, participants were presented with examples of concrete strategies drawing on the WPC model and intentionally and explicitly connected to the interrelated elements of the KNN Framework for Flourishing. Participants considered the potential outcomes and metrics of the initiatives they had mapped out the day before.

	Outcome	Initiative	Example Metrics
Character	Increased ethical alignment in decision-making processes across service lines	Executive Rounds: Senior Leads shadow frontline staff monthly and reflect on character-based dilemmas and ethical tensions	*80% participate in quarterly character reflection sessions *20% reduction in reported moral distress among clinicians *70% improvement in staff perception of leadership integrity
Caring	Improved retention and engagement of clinical staff	Peer-to-Peer Support and Recognition: System-wide program grounds team appreciation in caring behaviors and emotional intelligence	*30% improvement on the survey item, "I feel valued by my team" *15% drop in turnover within 6 months *60% participation in monthly peer-nominated awards
Practical Wisdom	Improved interdisciplinary decision-making in high-stakes settings	Flourishing Case Reviews (FCRs): Interdisciplinary teams focus on complex care dilemmas that surface competing priorities (e.g., efficacy vs. compassion, autonomy vs. outcomes)	*80% of case reviews document shifts in team insights or practices *20% improvement on the survey item, "We resolve conflicts constructively."

In support of the convening conversations being a catalyst toward transformation, participants concluded the second day by writing impact statements to support taking the work of the convening back to their home institutions. Each group imagined different purposes and audiences for their statements, based on their unique needs. Taken as a whole, the statements reflect a rich desire to bring both approaches into focus. Some examples of these first attempts to combine the concepts and terminology include the following:

- *Whole health offers a path to flourishing anchored in values.*
- *In a time of disconnect and overwork, we seek to bring together our HCPs to build community and improve all sorts of outcomes including patient outcomes and staff retention.*
- *Whole person advanced primary care is the key to meeting the quintuple aim. Fostering team wellness allows for all team members, patients, and communities we serve to flourish.*

Though working in single-institution teams, the opportunity to engage in cross-systems sharing of these ideas-in-progress was an important element of the convening, offering time to connect through shared purpose and a sense of community in the work. Across the participating health systems, there is a clear commitment

to values-based transformation, rooted in relationships to co-create cultures where patients and care teams flourish. Flourishing through whole person care is recognized as a shared outcome that benefits patients but also caregivers, medical students and residents, and the broader community. There is a call for actionable, scalable initiatives that can work within the financial and systemic constraints of nonideal systems.

Next Steps

The convening was an impactful opportunity for participants to find time to engage with others at their own institutions, cross-institutionally, and with experts from both the KNN and the Healing Works Foundation. At the conclusion of the two days together, participants shared ideas for tangible initiatives that draw from the principles of one or both approaches. There was strong enthusiasm for continuing to work together toward their design and launch. The KNN shared plans for post-convening opportunities for continued connection and support, including:

- Re-convenings to share informal updates
- The annual KNN Conference
- The KNN FOREST learning consortium, including a health systems convening community and resources
- Implementation support through partnership



Acknowledgments

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Reference

1. Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Framework for Character Education in Schools. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues; 2022. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/character-education-/framework-for-character-education/>

Health Systems Convening Participants

46 attendees, including representatives from KNN and Healing Works Foundation, noted with asterisks, and one guest panelist, noted with a double asterisk.

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Health Systems Convening Participants (Cont.)

46 attendees, including representatives from KNN and Healing Works Foundation, noted with asterisks, and one guest panelist, noted with a double asterisk.

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