

# Reflective Practice

*"I am not as concerned with changing my thoughts as I am with changing my relationship **to** my thoughts."*

# WORKSHOP DESIGN INTENTIONS

- Learn about reflective practice as a framework and tool
- Discover adaptive communication and its connection to reflective practice
- Identify connections between reflective practice, your identities and experiences, and how you communicate in your work and professional relationships
- Leave with 1-3 strategies or take-aways for incorporating reflective practice into your future goals (personal and professional)

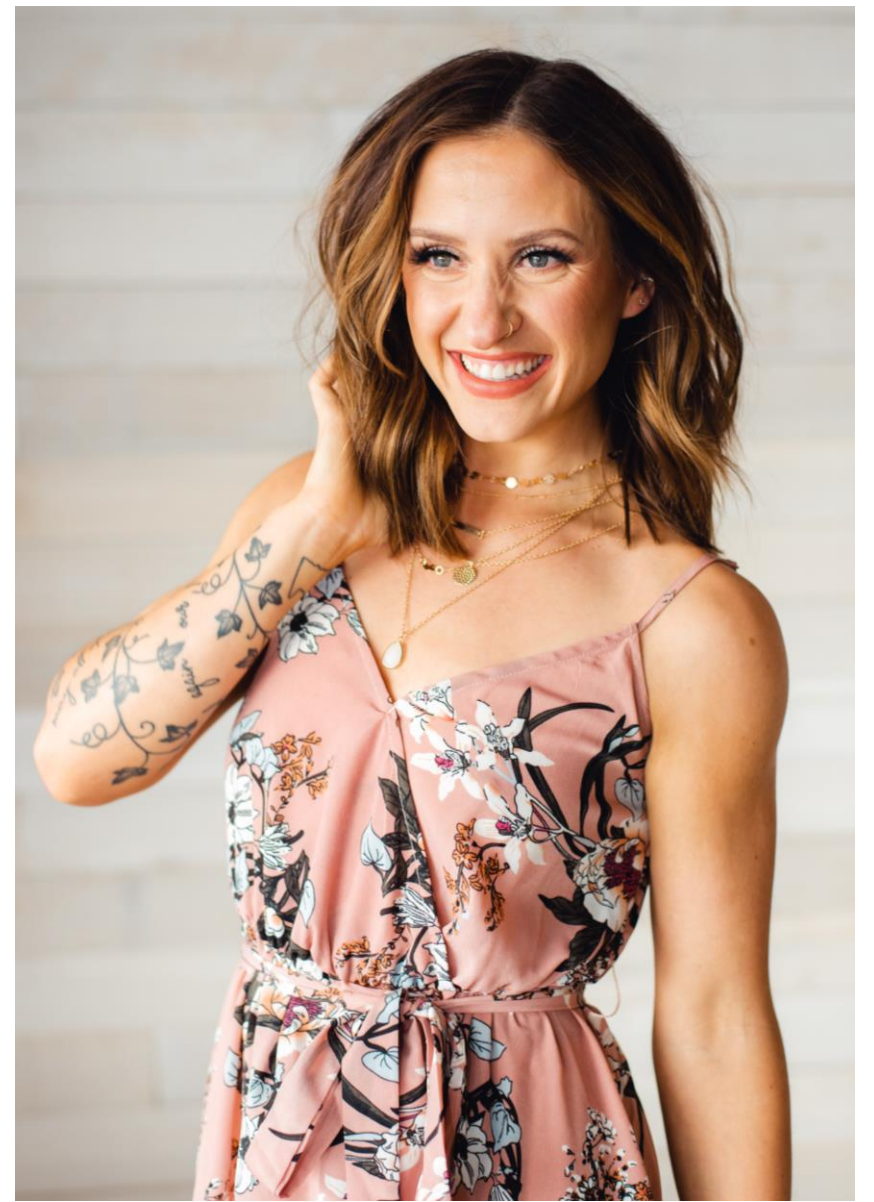
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# GROUNDING

“We never really understand something until we can create a model or metaphor [out of] our own unique personal world. The reality we perceive, feel, see, and hear is influenced by reflection.

Humans don't 'get' ideas - they make ideas.”

# WHAT IS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE?

Reflective practice is a method of thinking and behaving that helps us engage in a process of continuous learning. Reflective practice allows us to more clearly recognize our mental models – the assumptions, frameworks and patterns – that shape our thoughts and behaviors (both conscious and unconscious!)

Engaging with Reflective Practice:

- Invites unconscious thoughts and feelings to a more conscious surface
- Offers opportunities for clearer choice- and connection-making
- Leads to more informed action (instead of the automatic following of unexamined “norms” and beliefs)
- Develops our **adaptive communication skills**, including clarity, caring, and conscientiousness

Definition adapted from the Institute of Development Studies

<https://www.participatorymethods.org/method/reflective-practice>



# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE [CAN] LOOK LIKE

- Thinking about our thoughts (metacognition), and having an internal dialogue before, during, and after an event
- Connecting new information to previous learning or understandings
- Applying insights to contexts and situations beyond the one in which they were first learned or experienced
- Considering how our mental models might be influencing our thoughts, behaviors, and interactions with others

# MENTAL MODELS

Mental models are our deeply held internal ideas of “how the world works” (or how we think it *should* work), which keep us in familiar ways of thinking and acting

They are continuously developing along with shifts in our identities, experiences, and relationships

**We are often not conscious** of how our mental models influence our thoughts and behaviors, or how they impact the people around us (and our relationships with them)

- Whether (and to what extent) we feel comfortable in any given environment
- How we gather, interpret, and respond to information
- Whether, how, and with whom we share information (i.e. communicate)
- How we respond to various stimuli across contexts

We don't analyze, try to fix, or judge our mental models.

Gently examining them via reflective practice is a way to investigate whether and how our mental models keep us "stuck" or cause us to behave in ways that contradict our values, harm others, and/or perpetuate harmful systems and practices

**Mental models are neither "right" nor "wrong".**

*They are maps for exploring how we show up in the world, what matters to us, and how our views may have been (and are being!) shaped and influenced.*



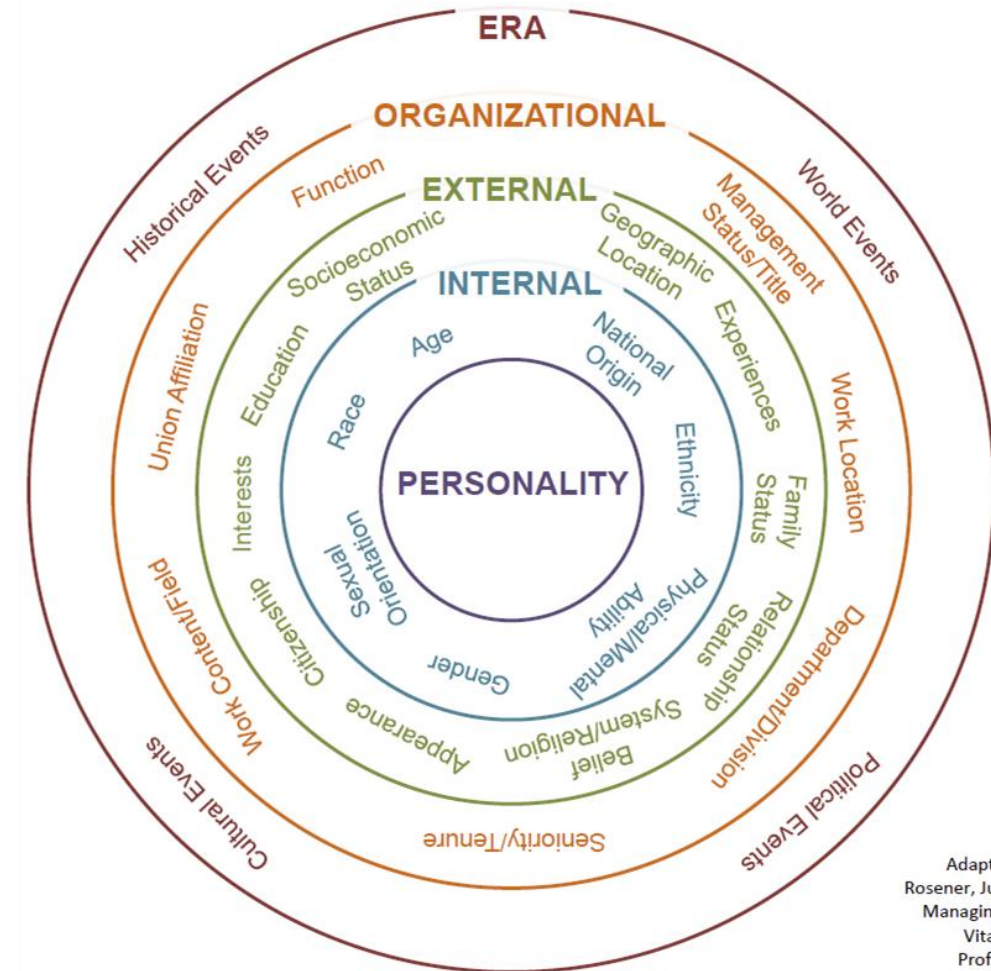
# MENTAL MODELS & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Our social identities are an important part of how our mental models develop and function.

Understanding identities as “things that function within and across systems” (not just “things we are”) is key to exploring our mental models.

For example: someone with privileged social identities will likely have developed mental models that prompt them to think, react, and behave differently than the mental models of a person with oppressed identities.

Rather than criticizing or rejecting our identities and experiences, reflective practice invites us to hold our identities and examine their functions *simultaneously*.



Adapted from: Loden, Marily & Rosener, Judy, "Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource," McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 1990.

# Reflective Practice &

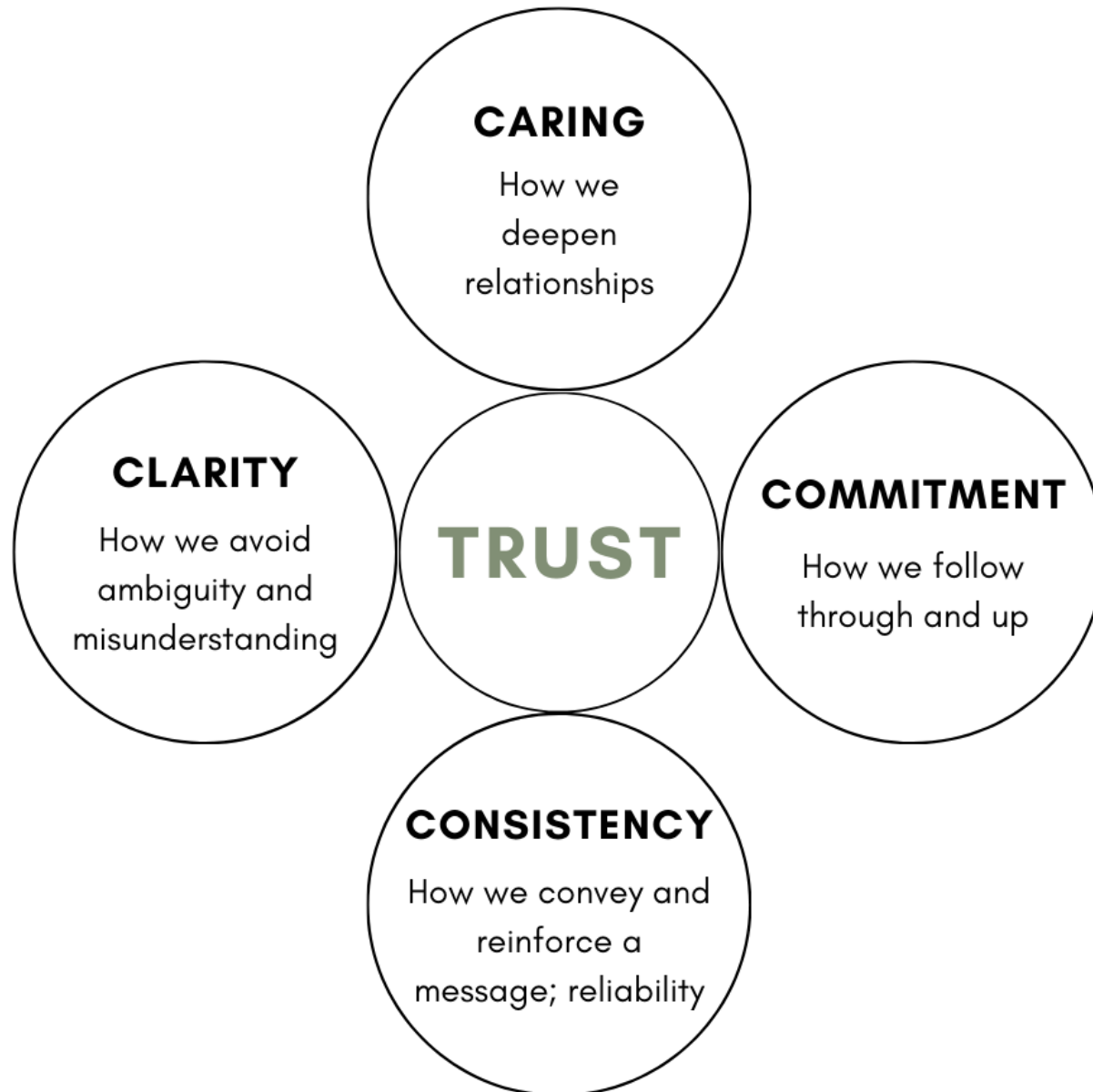
# A D A P T I V E   C O M M U N I C A T I O N

The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things.

Information is giving out; communication is getting *through*.

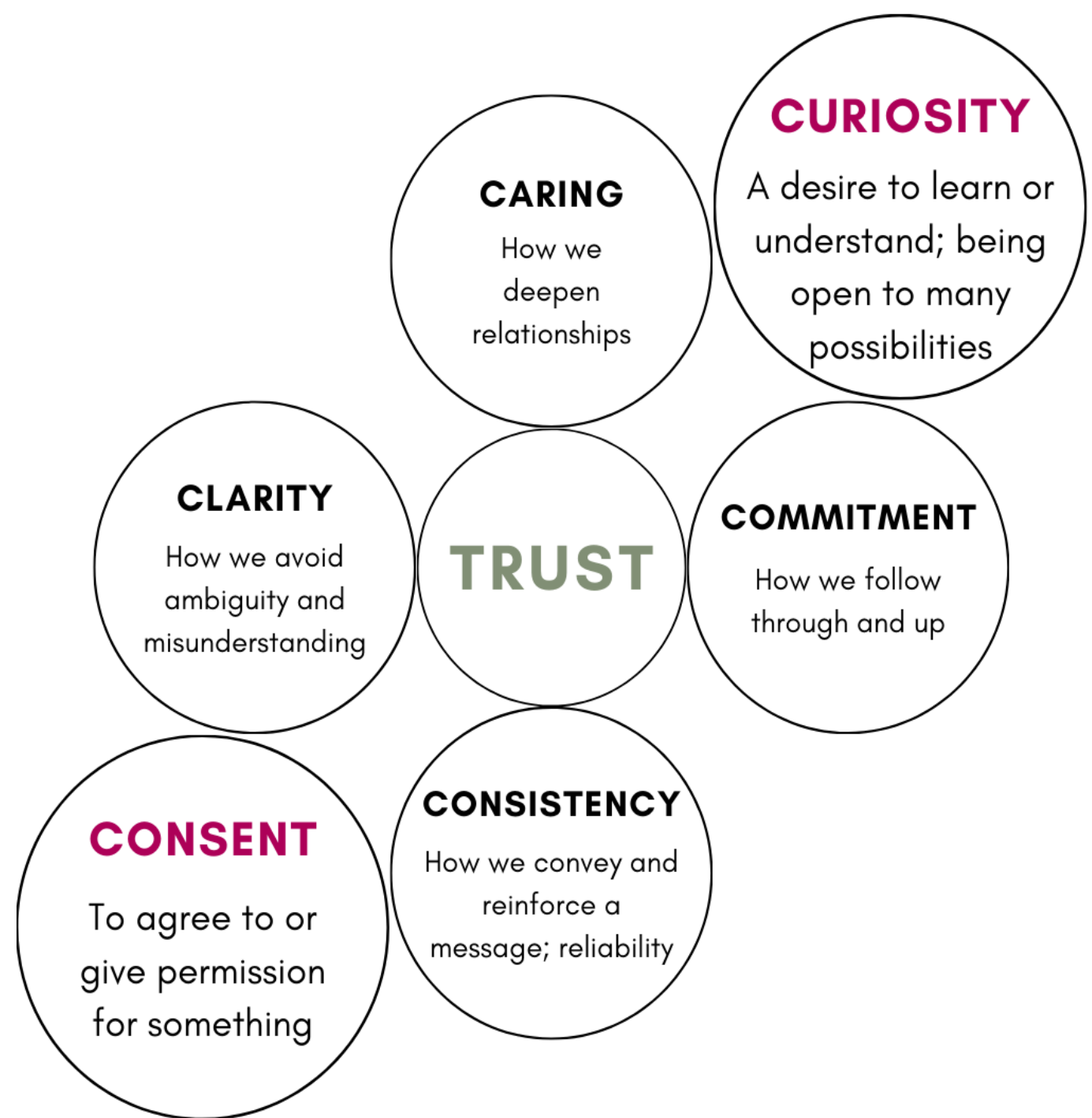
-SYDNEY J. HARRIS

# COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION



# Reflective Practice: *TWO MORE Cs*

Because reflective practice is rooted in checking assumptions and asking good questions, we are able to add **curiosity** and **consent** into our communication components (and behaviors!).



# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE REDESIGNS

- Using possibility prompts
- Don't be afraid of yes or no questions
- Offer simple and small choices

What are you struggling with? 

Could you tell me a bit more about your experiences with this so far?

Why don't you show me what you've done up to this point? 

Would it feel helpful if I look at what you've already done, or would you prefer looking it over on your own first?

I don't know if I understand what you mean. 

I want to make sure I'm understanding you. Could I tell you what I'm hearing, and you can let me know if that's what you mean?

# THE GOLDEN QUESTION(S)

- What do you need from me in order to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - have a good experience in this job?
  - feel good about moving forward?
  - make a decision?
  - feel seen/heard/understood/supported/safe?
- How can I be helpful for you right now? /  
Is there a way I can be helpful for you right now?

# MOVING FORWARD

*Reflective practice is, at its heart, a liberation practice.*

- Greater tolerance for ambiguity
- Greater tolerance for multi-truths (“opposite” notions being simultaneously true)
- Increased patience for healthy conflict and disagreement
- Increased ability to think systemically
- Much more open and adaptive communication
- Ability to identify and name expectations and needs (with compassion and care!)