



# Building a Foundation of Respect & Mitigating Stigma

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**BIENVENIDOS A  
LA ZONA LIBRE  
DE CULPAS**



# THE TUBERCULOSIS VILLAGE ALLAFIYA TINGA (THE VILLAGE OF HEALTH)

- 1980's - Medical Superintendent and Director of the TB Village at the Baptist Medical Center in Northern Ghana
- Secure compounds which housed up to 60 TB patients and their families
- TB patients were required to have a family member with them to provide for their needs
  - A deposit was placed by the family to ensure that there was financial resources to buy food
  - Commitment to stay for 9 months



# THE KEYS TO SUCCESS ALLAFIYA TINGA (THE VILLAGE OF HEALTH)

**Success rate over 80% at Allafiya Tinga vs. 20% at Regional Center**

## Allafiya Tinga

- Care was provided locally
- Medication supply lines were reliable
- All dosing was supervised

## Regional Center

- Patients take TB medications home and return when refills are needed

**What was happening that enabled our success?**



# CROSS CULTURAL EVOLUTION



- Trained as a missionary
- Posted to a District Hospital in a rural town in Northeast Ghana
- Not long before I realized how different I was
- The followers of the Traditional Religion were in constant contact with the supernatural world.
  - What did I presume to teach them?
  - I asked myself, who are these people and how can I be part of them?
  - It was not I who had a spiritual message to them but it was me who needed their spiritual insight.

# MY AMAZING ADVENTURE INTO CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND KINSHIP

This path has included

- Language acquisition
- Village living
- Development of trust
- Finding my role in the town
- Establishing true friendships within the Ghanaian community
- Longevity

that led to my integration into the community

# LANGUAGE LEARNING



Leads to cultural immersion



Helps to unknnow cultural biases



Allows investigation of proverbs or common sayings – provides a point of commonality



Provides insights to world views



Helps to find further points of contact and understanding



Forms a bond that can lead to cooperation in the future

# PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

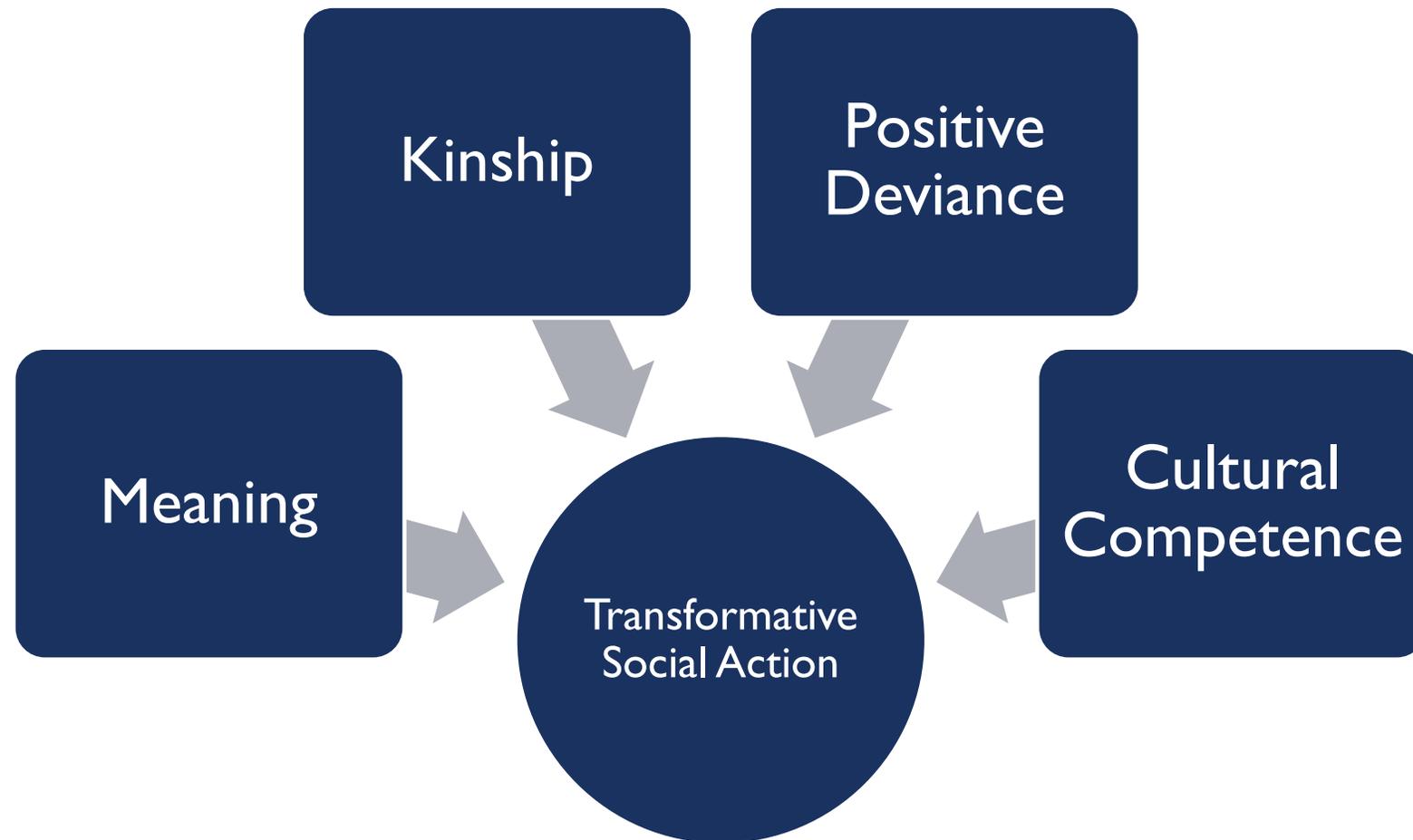
- Cultural Change
- Linguistic Change
- Spiritual Change
- Allows you to appreciate rather than fear a moment



## CURRENT THINKING

- Poole KG. **Patient-Experience Data and Bias - What Ratings Don't Tell Us.** N Engl J Med. 2019 Feb 28;380(9):801-803.
  - Value Based rather than Volume Based Care
  - The person in front of you Matters
- Rajbhandari R, McMahon DE, Rhatigan JJ, Farmer PE. **The Neglected Hospital - The District Hospital's Central Role in Global Health Care Delivery.** N Engl J Med. 2020 Jan 30;382(5):397-400
  - Quality District Hospitals are necessary to integrate vertical programs into horizontal platforms to deliver a range of services to meet the needs of the community they serve.

# THE ESSENTIALS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL ACTION



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**Cultural Competence:** Ability of healthcare professionals to demonstrate consideration for the social, cultural, psychological needs of their patients

# THE ESSENTIALS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL ACTION



**Meaning:** Comes from within.

It is the fullness of a life characterized by right action and right conduct, based in love.

The more one forgets her/himself within a cause to serve or another person to love, the more human we are and the more we actualize ourselves.

# THE ESSENTIALS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL ACTION



**Kinship:** The web of social relationships that form an important part of the lives of all humans in all societies.

There is a potential for the interconnection of all people as kin.

This begins with honestly identifying our own implicit bias to allow us to enter into kinship with those culturally different from ourselves.

# POSITIVE DEVIANCE



- An approach to behavioral and social change based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers.
- It has been found that, even during the initial explanation of the positive deviance concept in communities:
  - Community members respond with excitement and enthusiasm to get started
  - They are motivated by learning that they are doing something right
  - They are motivated by the idea that a successful solution to their problem already exists, instead of receiving criticism for their inadequacies.

# POSITIVE DEVIANCE

- This approach to behavioral and social change takes advantage of the community's existing assets or strengths.
- An ideal PD facilitator:
  - Is an active listener,
  - Asks specific open-ended questions
  - Demonstrates empathy and humility
  - Withholds their own expertise unless asked
  - Can be challenging if the person facilitating is unprepared for such lack of control and power-sharing



# STIGMA

- Social stigma is the disapproval of, or discrimination against, a person based on perceivable social characteristics that serve to distinguish them from other members of a society.
- Social stigmas are commonly related to culture, gender, race, intelligence, and health.
- Linking negative attributes to groups facilitates separation into "us" and "them".
  - Seeing the labeled group as fundamentally different causes stereotyping with little hesitation.
  - "Us" and "them" implies that the labeled group is slightly less human in nature and at the extreme not human at all.
  - At this extreme, the most horrific events occur.

- Implicit or unconscious bias is bias in unconscious judgment and behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g. implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and with intentional control.
- We all hold them.
  - For example, the use of word witch doctor instead of traditional healer implies that the local healer is a fake.
  - My own experience with traditional healers reveals them as one of the bedrocks of society.
  - Disregarding or diminishing them is a great fault of any public health initiative.
- We can't just think away our unconscious bias, as we are not even aware of it, but must be challenged by our interaction and realization of the value of the “different” person in front of us.

## IMPLICIT BIAS



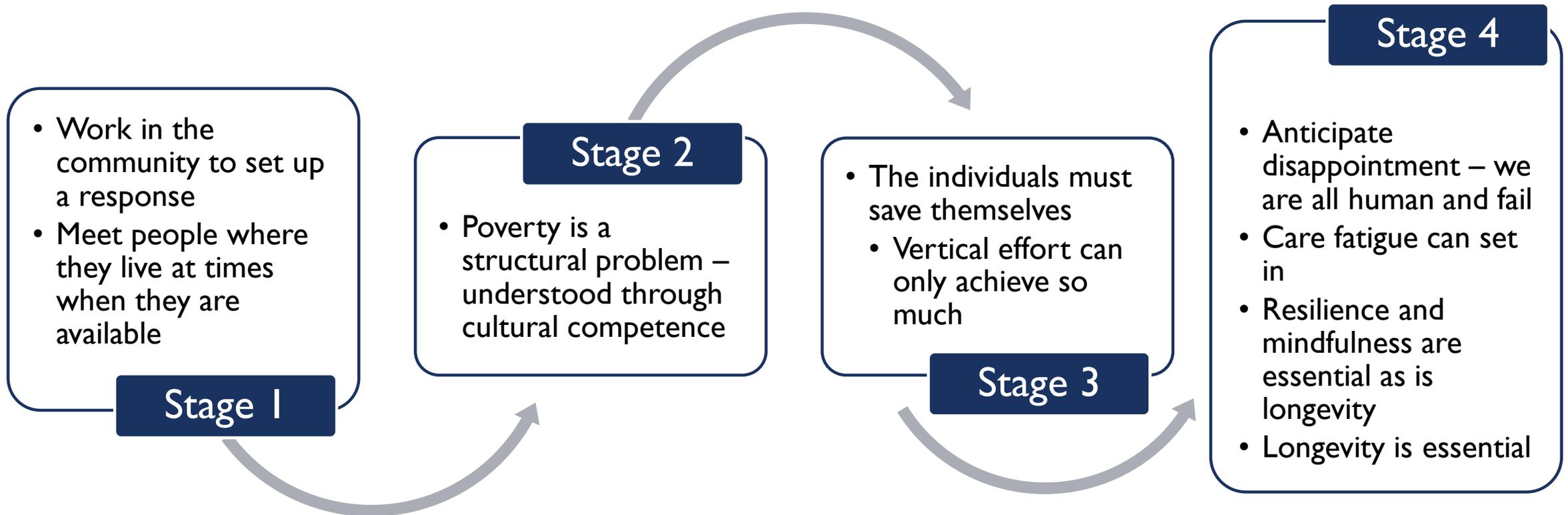
# COMPASSION

Only definable in the context of action.

# COMPASSION

- Is not confined to a group
  - Is not conditioned by outcomes
  - Nor is it necessarily evidence based.
  - It is not based on right thinking, philosophy, feelings or religion, but right doing.
  - It has nothing to do with pity, which is the enemy of compassion.
- The essence of compassion lies in the fruitfulness of a life dedicated to a cause greater than oneself, characterized by right action based in love.

# STAGES OF COMPASSION: IN RELATION TO THE RESOURCE POOR



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There is so much possible, with the right combination of cultural competence and true compassion, salted with meaning, and an awareness of our implicit bias, that we can do to make available at the local level, the technological fruits that modern science offers.

Just saying... “here it is”... is not enough.

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# MY CHALLENGE TO ALL...

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- Let meaning guide you to your place of service and with that desire
  - Develop the skills that will make your dreams come true
  - Plant yourself in a community for years if necessary.
  - Slowly follow the path to true compassion with the goal to alter unfair structures that perpetuate the diseases of poverty.
  - Realize that you will fail many times and that success will only come by pulling ourselves up to try again.

*Rumi tells us, “As we set out on the road, the road appears.”*