



# Tools for Creating Calm in Times of Distress: Part 1

Thursday, October 5, 2023



CENTER OF  
**EXCELLENCE**  
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# Today's Event Host

## Nikki Harris, MA, CBHC-BS

### COE-NF TRAINING AND EDUCATION LEAD

- For the past 20 years, Nikki has provided program implementation, development, management, external and internal trainings, policy development, quality assurance, and managed training coordination and technical support throughout the southeast region.
- Previously, she served as the program manager for the Division of Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.
- She has a B.A. in psychology from the University of South Carolina, a M.A. in counseling from Webster University and is a certified behavioral specialist.





# Today's Presenter

## Mathew R Roosa, LCSW-R

### CONSULTANT & FOUNDING MEMBER OF NIATX CHANGE LEADER ACADEMY

Mathew is a consultant who provides training, coaching, technical assistance and planning support to universities, research studies, governments and health and human service provider organizations.

Focusing on behavioral health, Mathew's experience also includes psychotherapy for mental health and substance use in agencies and private practice, teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels in human services and social work, agency administration, and governmental planning.

Current areas of focus include evidence-based practice implementation, process/quality improvement (founding member of NIATx), staff and team development, and a wide array of training topics including coaching, mentoring, contingency management, stimulants, CLAS, wellness, motivational interviewing systems implementation, and the NIATx Change Leader Academy.



# Learning Objectives:

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- Develop greater empathy and understanding related to distress.
- Gain insight into personal reactions to distressed people.
- Review tools for responding to distress that will improve engagement.
- Identify risk and safety boundaries.

# Whose Distress?

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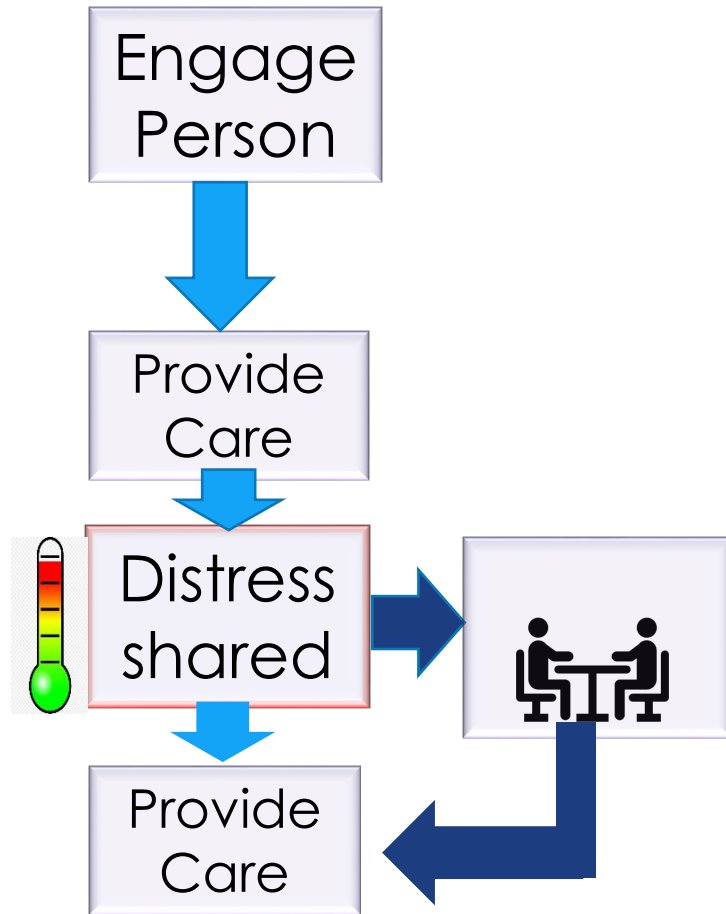
- Resident
- Nursing Facility Staff Member
- Family Member
- Other Partners

# How can we engage people effectively when they are distressed?

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# Responding to Distress: The Pivot & The Challenge



Task, Time, Tools



**Time:** Don't have it

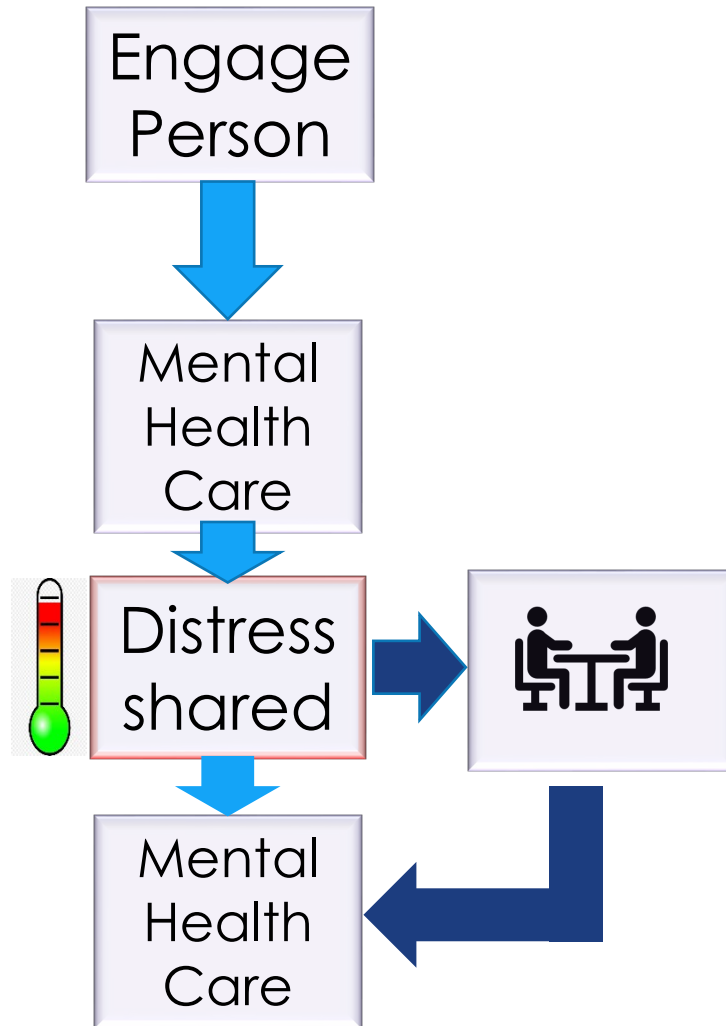


**Tools:** Don't have them



**Tasks:** Need to get back to them.

# Responding to Distress: The Pivot



What **tools** can we use to respond to distress, while completing our planned **tasks**, within the limited **time** available?



# Pandora's Box



# Our Goals:

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## Enhancing our response to distress through:

- Empathy
- Self awareness
- Knowledge of causes
- Tools
- Risk and Safety Awareness



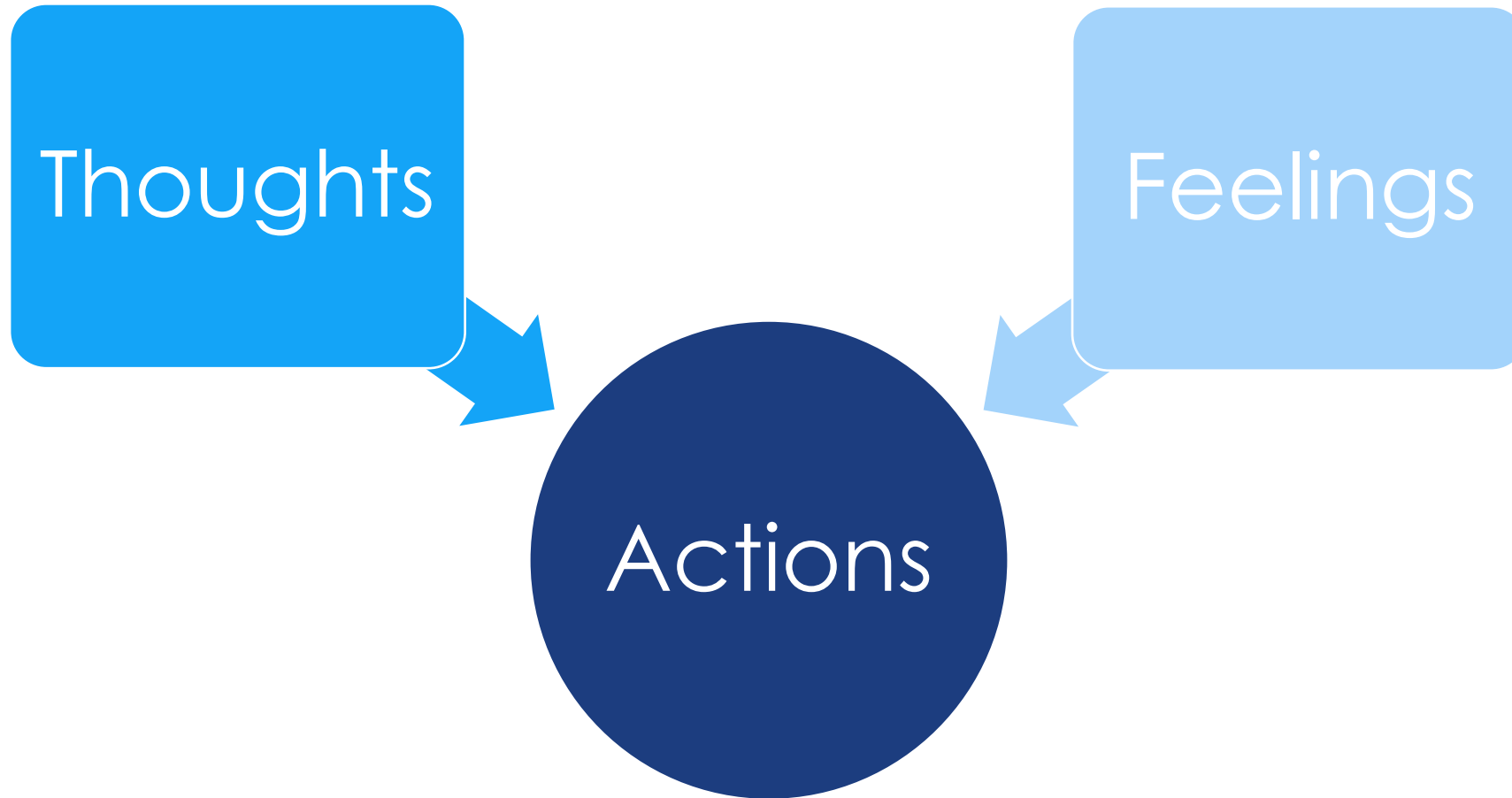
# Creating Calm

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**EMPATHY**



# Empathy = Understanding





# *What's in a name?*

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“Creating Calm for Distressed People”

“Dealing with Difficult People”

It is hard to work with people who have thoughts and feelings that lead them to act in certain ways.

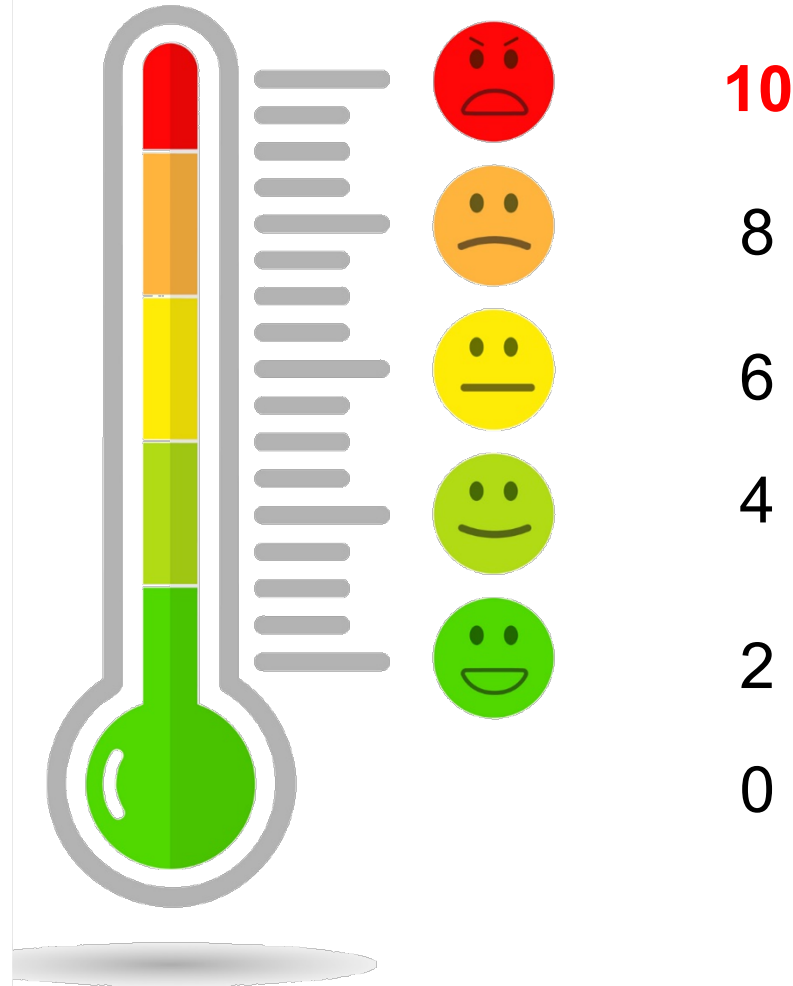
It is hard to work with people who are so...



# If you've seen one distressed client....

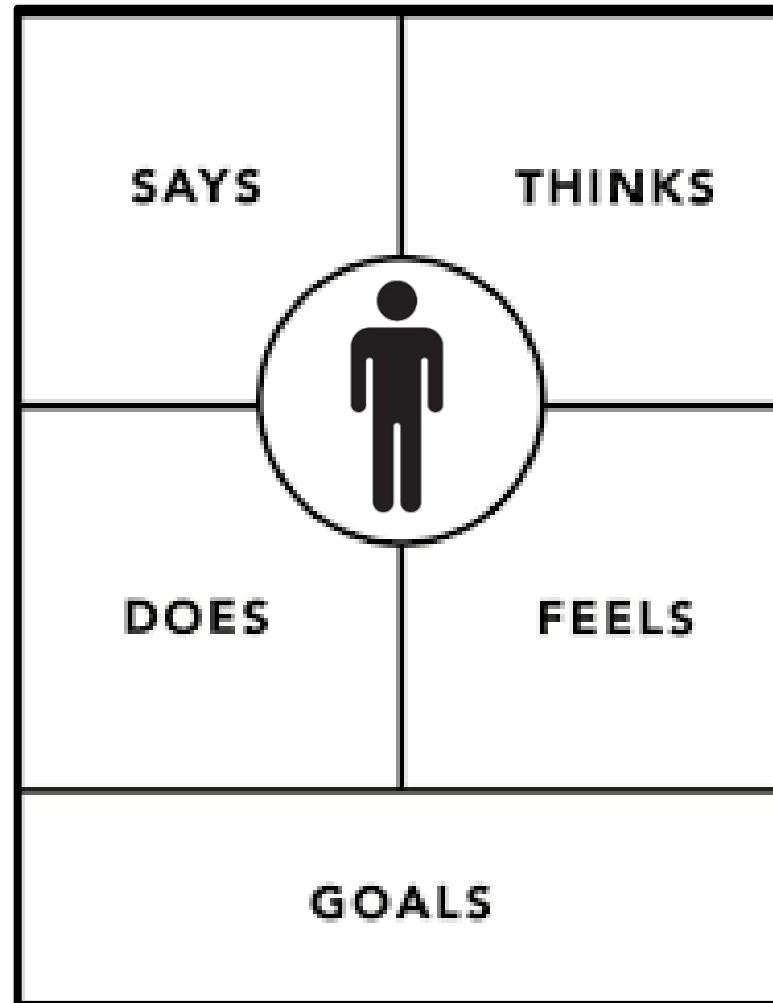
Each person is unique.  
Each situation is unique.

Assess and respond without  
assumption.



# Use the Empathy Map

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# Empathy-Trust Spiral



# Creating Calm

## **SELF-AWARENESS**



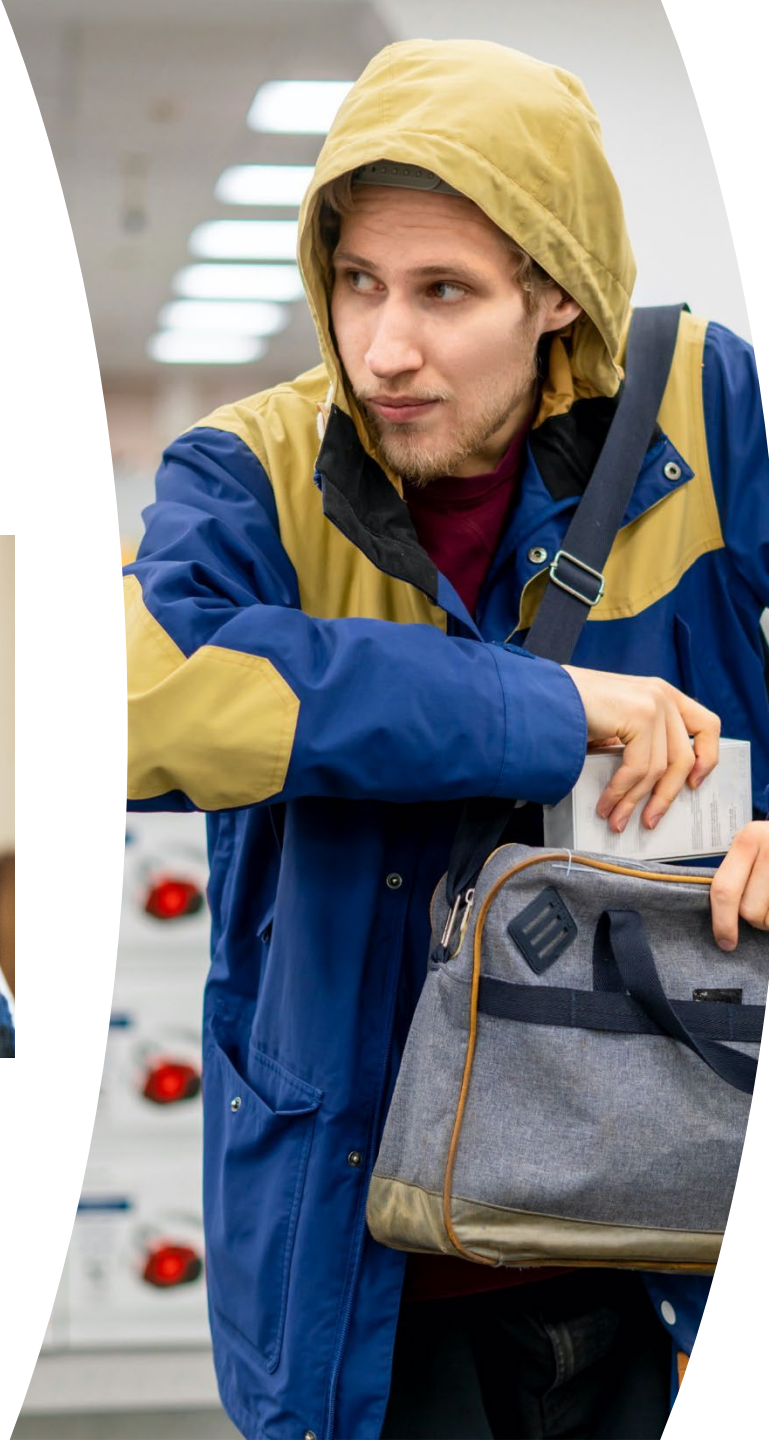
# Know Yourself

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**If you saw:**



# How do you respond to strong emotional expressions?

**Happiness - Sadness - Fear - Disgust - Anger - Surprise**

- If you saw somebody...
- Roll up your sleeves and do something?
- Take control/Tell people what to do?
- Take a step back to consider?
- Get help?
- Mind my own business?

# Ineffective Reactions

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- Fear/ anger - pull back/push away, flight or fight.
- Fix it fast - intolerance of distress, frustration 'about time' needed, tough to "sit with" it.
- Rule-based – "You cannot do that."
- What else?

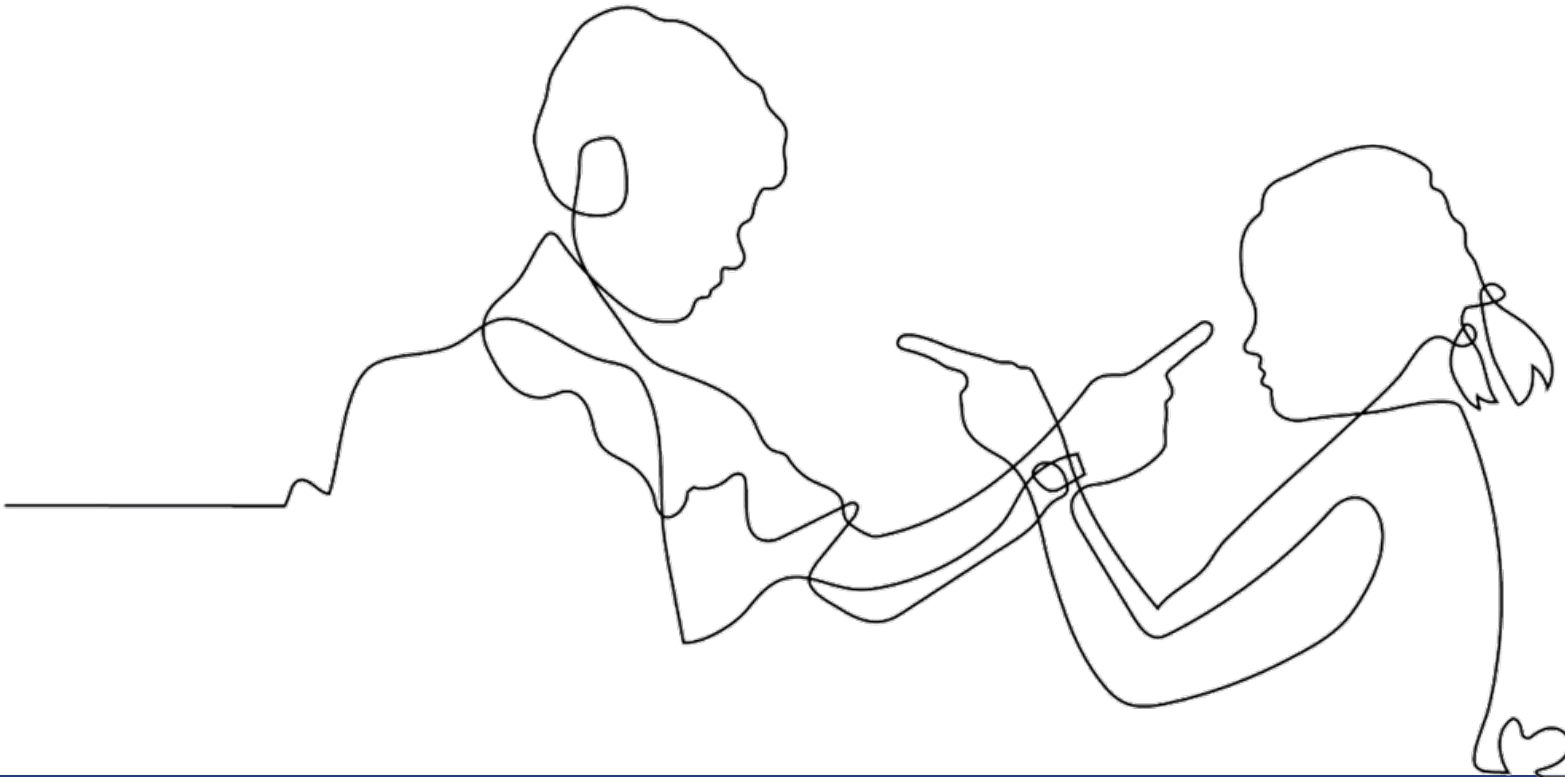
# Do you respond to distress with language based in power, judgement, direction, control?

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- *“Try to calm down.”*
- *“We do not do that here/I am not able to help you with that.”*
- *“There is no reason to be upset.”*
- *“Our policy is...”*
- *“Please do not take that tone with me.”*
- *“If you continue to do this, I am going to need to...”*
- *“Yelling at me is not going to change the fact that....”*

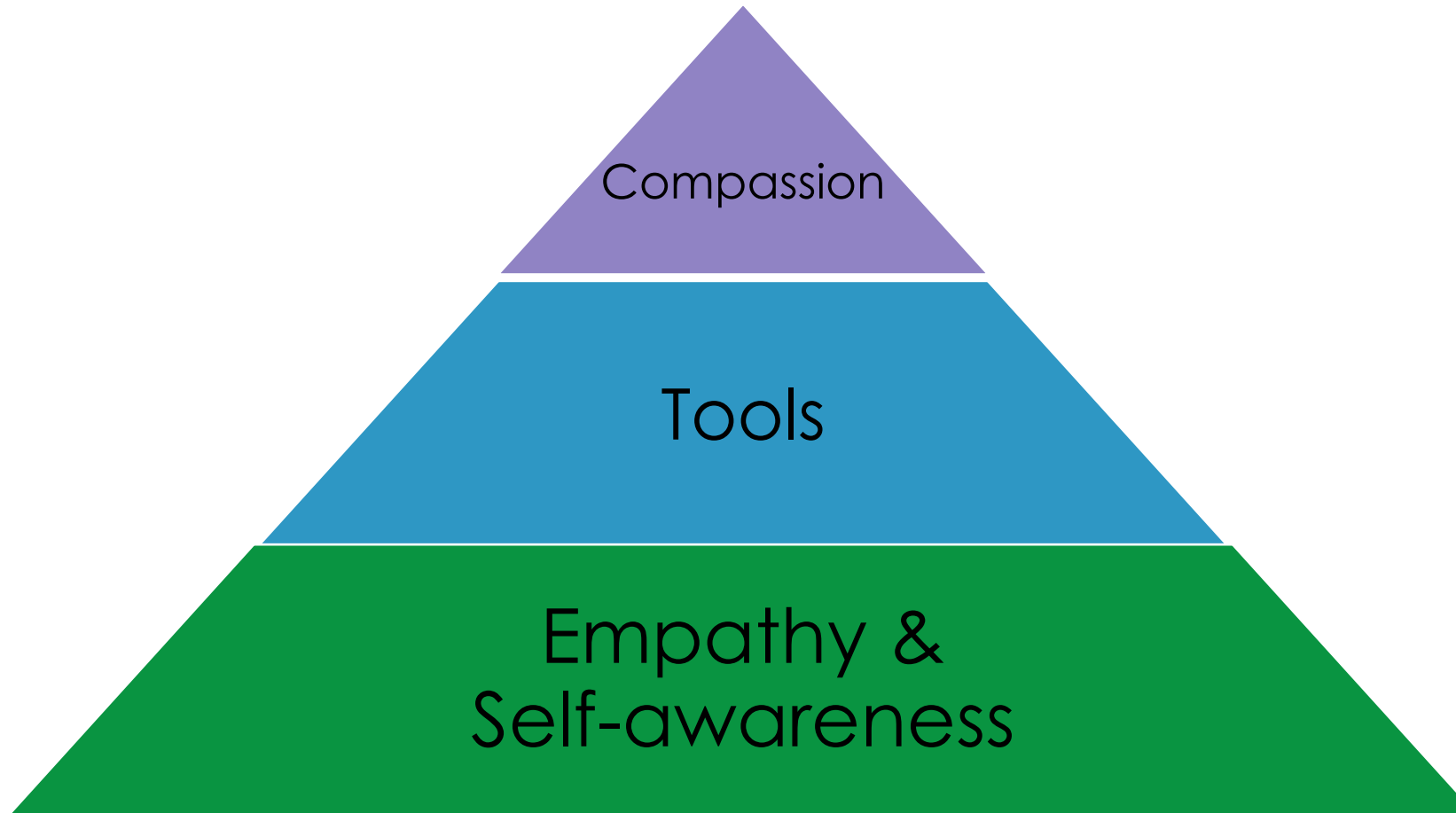
# Transference and Countertransference

*Who pushes your buttons?*





# Build a Foundation for Compassion, Empathy in Action:

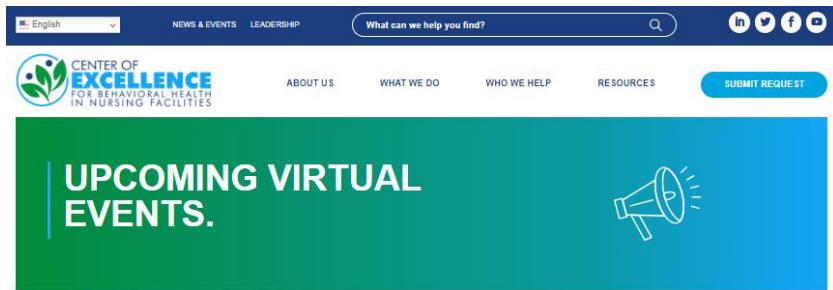


# Questions?



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## Contact us:

For more information or to request assistance, we can be reached by phone at **1-844-314-1433** or by email at [coeinfo@allianthealth.org](mailto:coeinfo@allianthealth.org).

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# Thank You!

