

# Together We Flourish: Pursuing a Wholeness of Being and Doing in Medicine

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

# My Roots





**Who has  
inspired you  
and been  
significant on  
your journey?**



# Why Flourishing?

Flourishing offers a more  
**holistic** view and  
**aspirational**  
course to chart...

for **today** and  
**tomorrow**

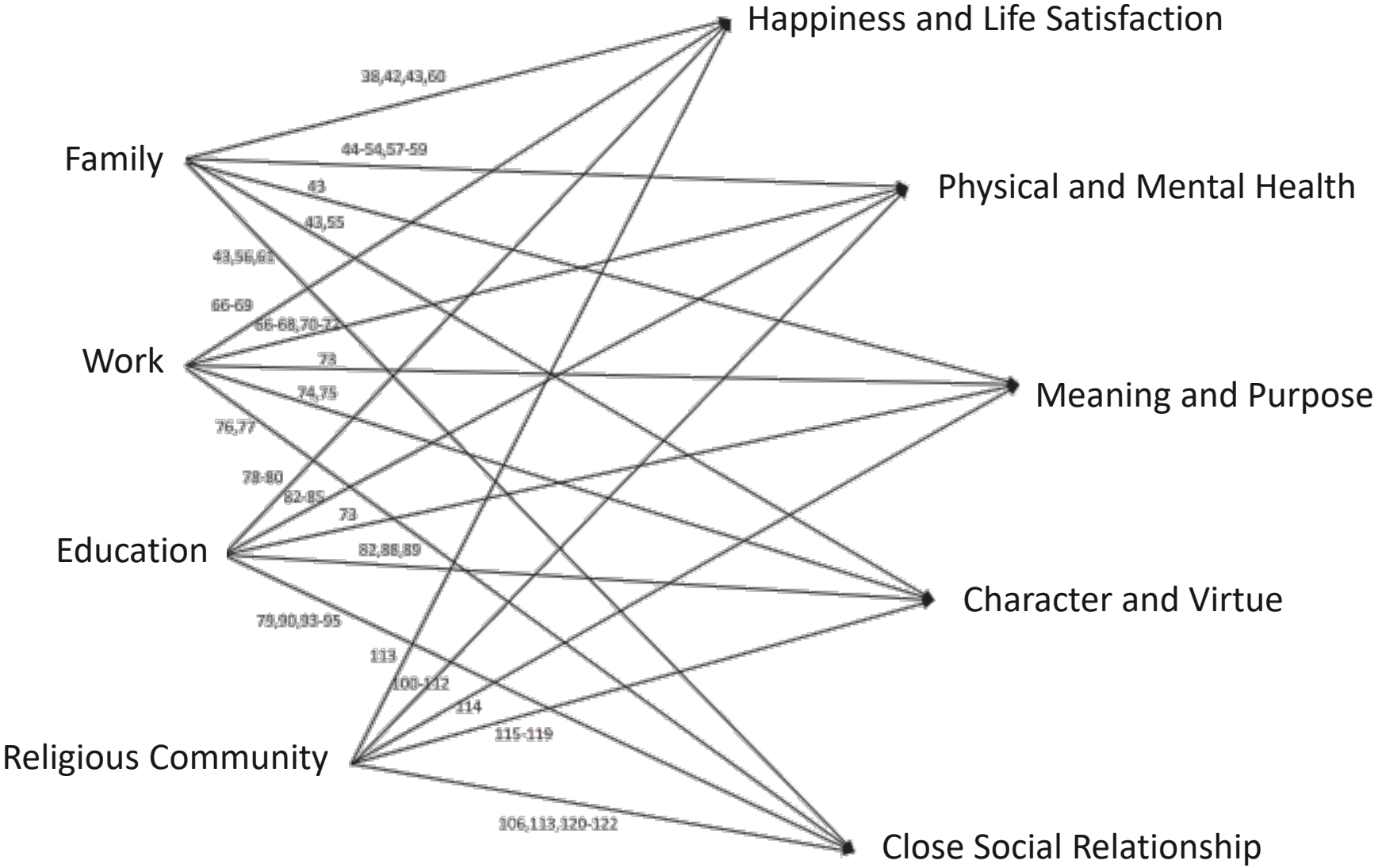
# Flourishing as Defined in KNN Framework

“Flourishing refers to a wholeness—of being and doing, of realizing one’s potential and helping others do the same.<sup>1</sup> It can be measured across 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>2”</sup>

1. Su, F (2020)

2. VanderWeele, TJ (2017)

# Common Pathways to Flourishing





**Think about a time you observed or experienced flourishing:**



**What does flourishing look or feel like to you?**



**The big question:  
How do we actually move  
toward flourishing?**

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

Flourishing

Practical Wisdom

Individuals

Medical and Other Health  
Professions Education

Health Systems and Other  
Practice Environments

Society

Character

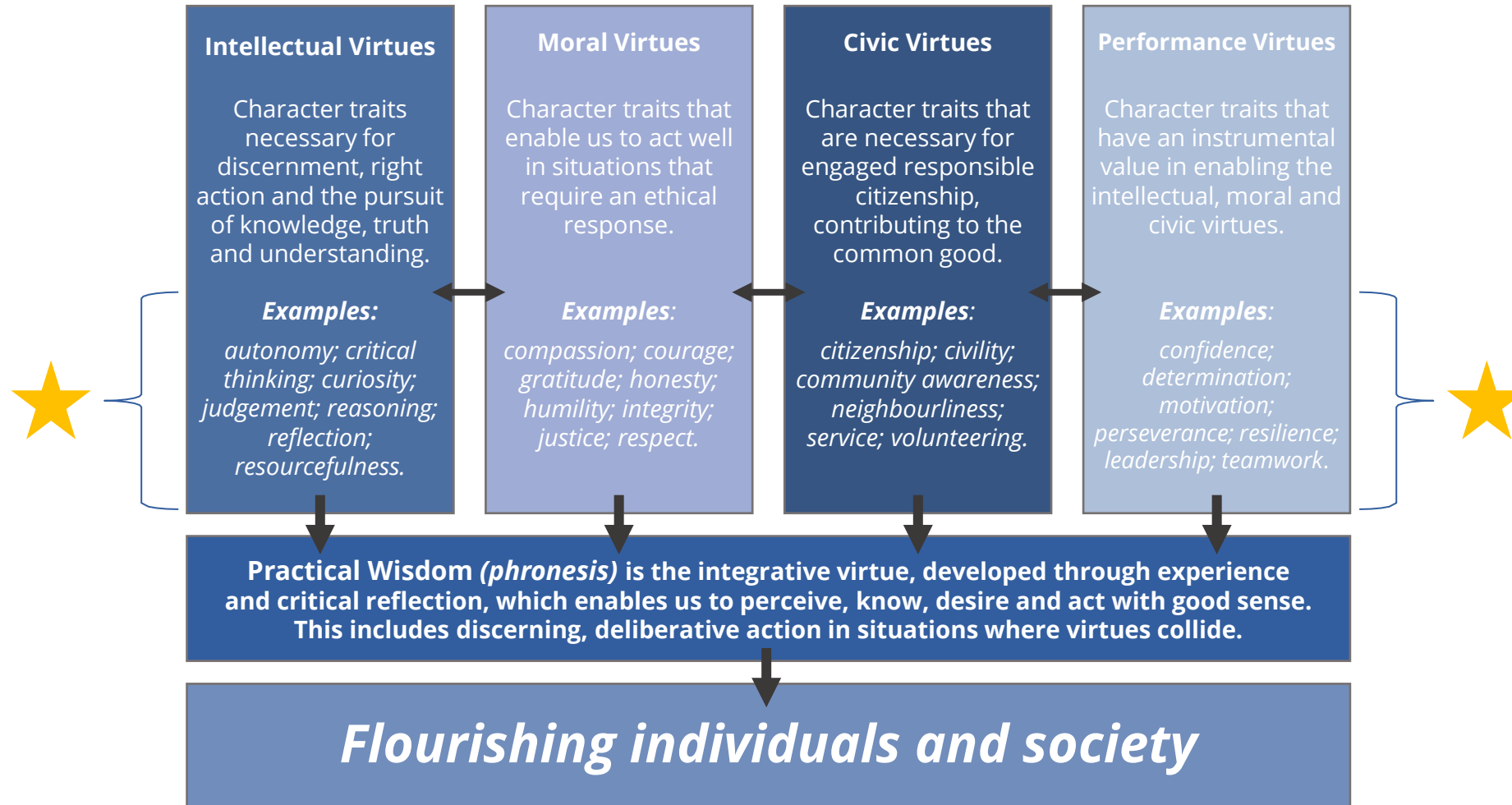
Caring



# Character

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

# Cultivating the Building Blocks of Character



Leading with  
**integrity**  
and **authenticity**



# 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>

# Viewing Caring as a Practice, Not Simply a Trait

Moving beyond a one-dimensional concept of caring provides a richer vocabulary around its **elements** and **applications for systems**:

Caring about	Attentiveness
Taking care of	Responsibility
Caregiving	Competence
Care-receiving	Responsiveness
Caring with	Commitment to democratic principles

*Adapted from Tronto, Moral Boundaries, Caring Democracy*

If **caring** is an essential part of reaching our full human potential...



...what is the **scope** of our caring responsibilities?





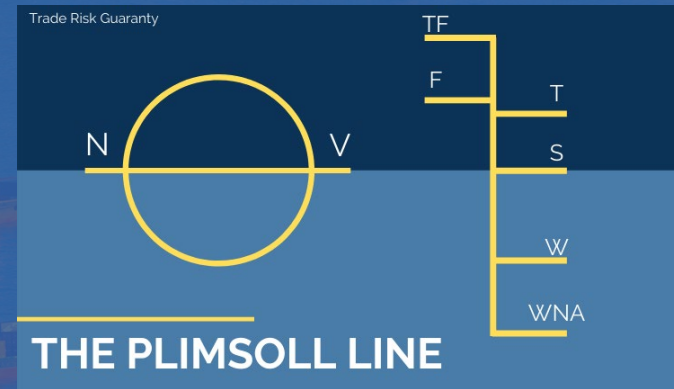
**How might  
lessons from  
patient care  
inform our  
organizational  
cultures?**

# What a Caring Community or System Could Look Like

## The Plimsoll Line Check-In

Source: Shared by Krista Gregory, MDiv, BCC, founder of the Center for Resiliency at Dell Children's Medical Center

- 1) Get Aware:** Where is your line right now?
- 2) Assess and Address:** What do I need (or need to do) right now?
- 3) Adjust Perspective:** Look for opportunities for connection and self-compassion.



Rev. Krista Gregory explains the Plimsoll Line Check-In approach to KNN Conference participants

# 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>

# Using Practical Wisdom to Navigate Complexity



- **Deliberating and discerning the best path forward in a particular situation**
- **Continually developed through experience, reflection and integration**
- **Place and power of narratives**

# Collective phronesis

the power of  
coming together



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



## Practical Wisdom

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## 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>



# **A Path Forward**

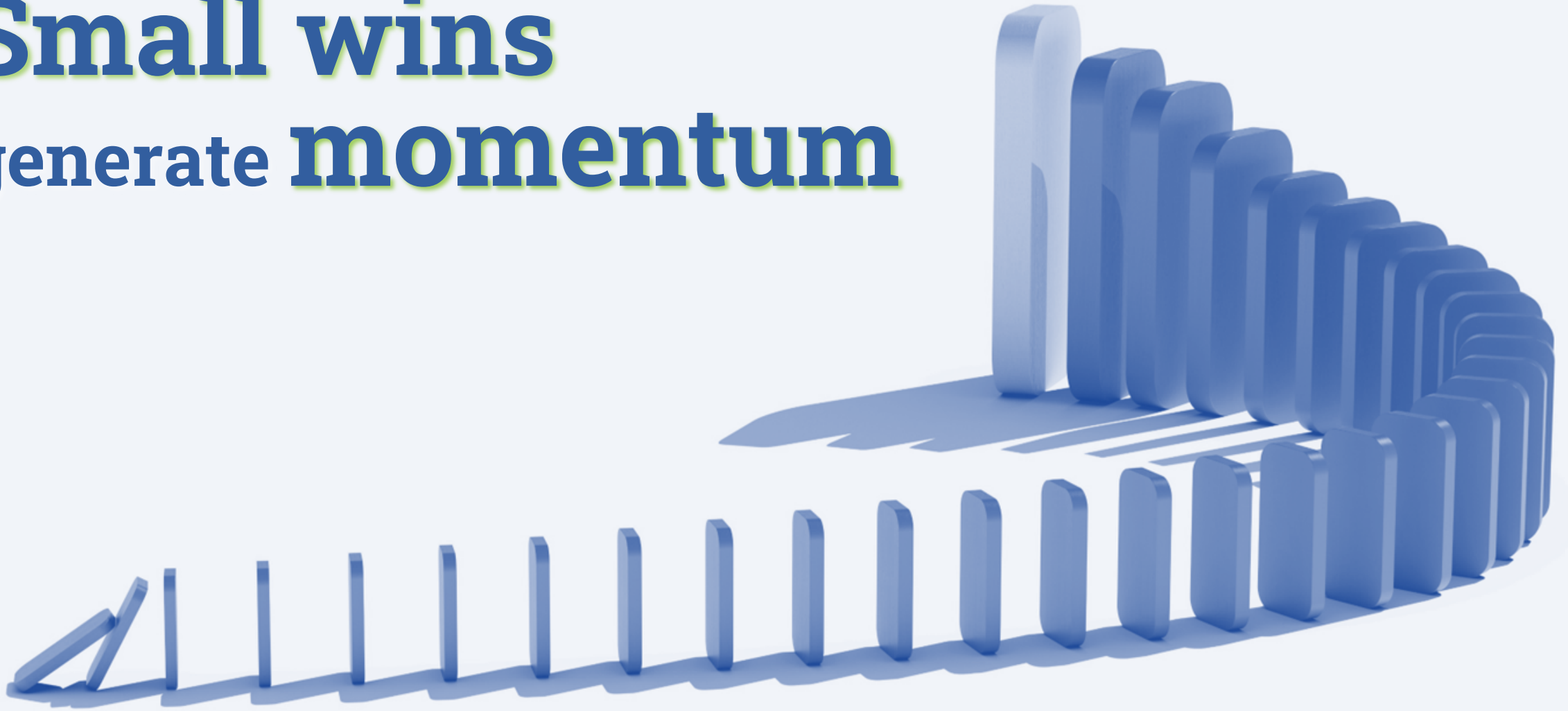


**“The adjacent possible is a kind of shadow future, hovering on the edges of the present state of things, a map of all the ways in which the present can reinvent itself...”**

– Steven Johnson



**Small wins**  
generate **momentum**





# Assume All Are Potential Allies

- Who are current allies?
- Who are potential allies?
- How can you establish an authentic relationship?

*Cohen & Bradford Influence Model – Step 1*



# **What Will You Do to Cultivate a Culture of Flourishing...**

- **In the next month?**
- **In the next year?**

# Thank You

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# Appendix

# Symbolic Significance of Framework Imagery

- **Blue concentric rings:**  
show the levels of the ecosystem across which the elements of character, caring and practical wisdom operate to promote flourishing from the individual to society as a whole
- **Tree as a whole:**  
represents how the profession of medicine contributes to flourishing through character, caring and practical wisdom
- **Tree trunk:**  
depicts interrelationship of character and caring as a structure that supports and leads to flourishing
- **Branches:**  
two main branches represent the different but related roles of character and caring; practical wisdom is represented by the off-shooting limbs from the main branches
- **Leaves:**  
different leaf colors reflect that flourishing can ebb and flow

# Definitions Informing Evolving Work

- 1) Flourishing:** “A state in which all aspects of a person’s life are good; involves numerous domains of life, including happiness and life satisfaction, physical and mental health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships.” (VanderWeele)
- 2) 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.” [One who:]
  - “knows the proper aims of the activity she is engaged in, wants to do the right thing to achieve these aims, and wants to meet the needs of the people she is serving;
  - knows how to improvise, balancing conflicting aims and interpreting rules and principles in light of the particularities of each context;
  - is perceptive, reads social contexts, and [...] sees the gray in a situation;
  - knows how to take on the perspective of another, [...] feels empathy and make decisions that serve others;
  - knows how to make emotion an ally of reason, rely on emotion to signal what a situation calls for, and inform judgment without distorting it; and,
  - is an experienced person.” (Schwartz and Sharpe)

- 3) Character:** “The complex [constellation] of psychological characteristics that [motivates and] enables individuals to act as moral agents.” (Berkowitz and Bier)

These characteristics are developmentally dependent and contextually formed over time. Character manifests in dispositions and practices, which are influenced by situations and valued according to the sociocultural context.

- 4) Caring:** “A blend of practices, dispositions and motivations all aimed at ensuring that individuals and populations grow, develop and flourish as best they can. Caring is:
  - situated in the context of relationships and built on acceptance of interdependence;
  - acknowledges inherent power imbalances but eschews dominance and seeks humility;
  - reliant on trust as a precondition and is also generated in a reinforcing loop, and is mutually beneficial and rewarding.” (Tronto, Held, and Mayeroff)

*Note: all definitions were adapted from their referenced sources on the following slide*

# References for Framework Components

## Flourishing

- 1) VanderWeele, T.J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(31), 8148-8156.  
Su, F.E. (2020). *Mathematics for human flourishing*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

## Practical Wisdom

- 2) Schwartz, B., & Sharpe, K. (2010). *Practical wisdom: The right way to do the right thing*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.

## Character

- 3) Berkowitz, M.W. & Bier, M.C. Research-Based Character Education. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 2004;591(1):72-85.  
Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2022). The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools. University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Retrieved from: <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Framework-for-Character-Education-2.pdf>  
*In addition, this definition was adapted from and informed by the work of several other authors including Larry Nucci, PhD and Philippa Foot, PhD.*

## Caring

- 4) Tronto, J.C. (2013). *Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice*. New York, NY: NYU Press.  
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