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Gentle Leadership – how do professional caregivers become loving and engaged, so they can help the people we serve becoming loving and engaged.

Vivi Skou

Painted by Jacob Kjeldberg



The Village of Sølund - a 83-year old living facility for 220 residents with comprehensive mental and physical disabilities
A working place for aprox. 750 employees



Loving and engaged.

What does it mean to become loving and engaged?

How does a leader help staffmembers to become loving and engaged?



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It starts with ourself

”Although caregivers vulnerabilities and external threats to our wellbeing are in many ways nothing compared to the people whom we serve, it is important, that caregivers recognize their own vulnerabilities before dealing further with the vulnerabilities of whom we serve.”

(John McGee)



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To be loving

When you feel loved – you feel love inside you – you learn to use your eyes, language, hands being loving towards others.

To be with her in her space in the moment and to interact in a loving way.

To teach her to feel safe by you, loved by you.

To invite into relationships, community.

To create a caregiving community.

Then a person becomes loving.

To work through your heart.

Unconditional love.

The person is valuable and you are curious to get to know more about the person.

To bring happiness and joy to the other person.

To create new moments in a space of attention.

The moments changes the past.

Give her a frame, but do not make her wrong.



Engaged

- ▶ "This is the secret in the entire art of helping. Anyone who cannot do this is himself a delusion, if he thinks, he is able to help someone else. In order truly to help someone else, i must understand more than he – but certainly first and foremost understand, what he understands. If I do not do that, then my greater understanding does not help him at all. If I nevertheless want to assert my greater understanding, then it is because i am vain or proud, then basiccally instead of benefiting him, I really want to be admired by him.
- ▶ But all true helping begins with being humble. The helper must first humble himself under the person, he wants to help and thereby understand that to help is not to dominate but to serve, That to help is not to be the most dominating but the most patient, that to help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other understands".
- ▶ Kierkegaards Samlede Værker 3. udg. Kbh. 1962 bd. 16 s. 26



To be engaged

- ▶ Trust – relationship – community.
- ▶ To be together – instead of being on your own.
- ▶ To share, to belong.
- ▶ The compelling invitation.
- ▶ To be a part of other peoples life.
- ▶ Commitment and responsibility.
- ▶ To create a sense of, that it is good to be together.
- ▶ To take initiatives to share and to invite.



Attitude and language

- ▶ Behavior - reaktion, sorrow, anger..
- ▶ Manipulation - motivation, empathy.
- ▶ Feeling pity - feeling compassion
- ▶ To get out of yourself – To reach futher than yourself.



Reflection

- ▶ All which is unsaid binds energy.
- ▶ Do not make others a target for your own projections.
- ▶ When we become aware of our own force to develop ourselves, we become clear in our way of expressing ourselves.
- ▶ In this way the other person must take responsibility for his own reactions.
- ▶ Which gives us the freedom to develop ourselves.
- ▶ You have to make space, for her to develop herself.



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Leadership

▶ Love her for a year!

- ▶ “You can not get a person to think that life is good, just by saying “life is worth living”. But you can live and act in such a way towards another human being, that the person experiences that he or she is important and valuable”.
- ▶ **Do what you say, you do.**



Leadership

- ▶ To make the caregiver feel safe and loved.
- ▶ To like and to give warmth.



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Leadership and reflections

- ▶ We all have patterns in our lives.
- ▶ We all have something that gets us.
- ▶ To break a pattern demands that we speak clear and involving towards others and oneself.
- ▶ We have to be willing to share our vulnerability to get free of the pattern, when the other person want to stay in the pattern.
- ▶ In leadership we have to dare keep communicating from our feelings.

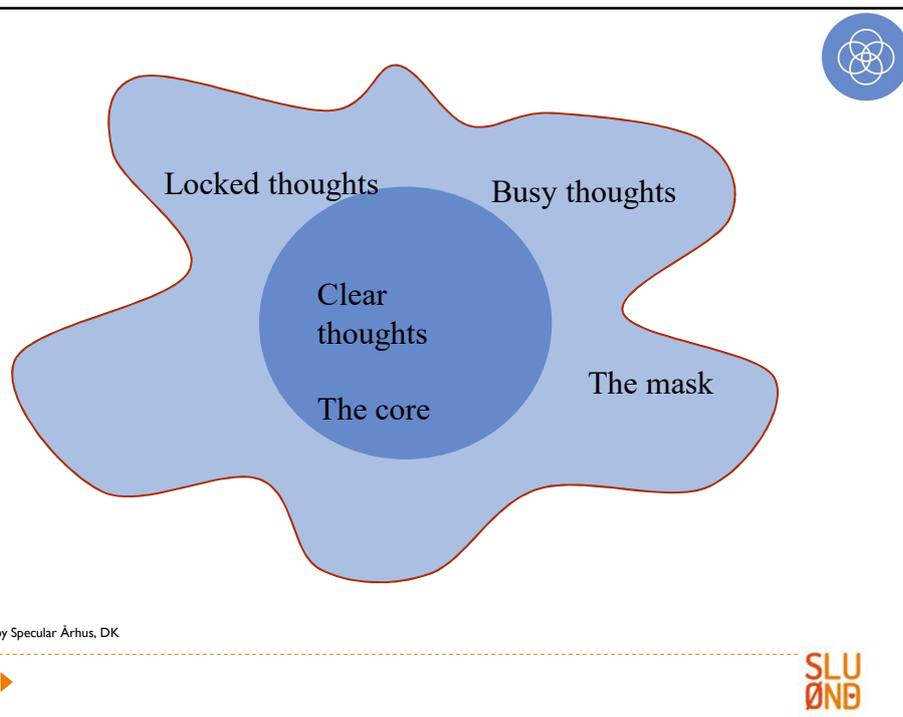


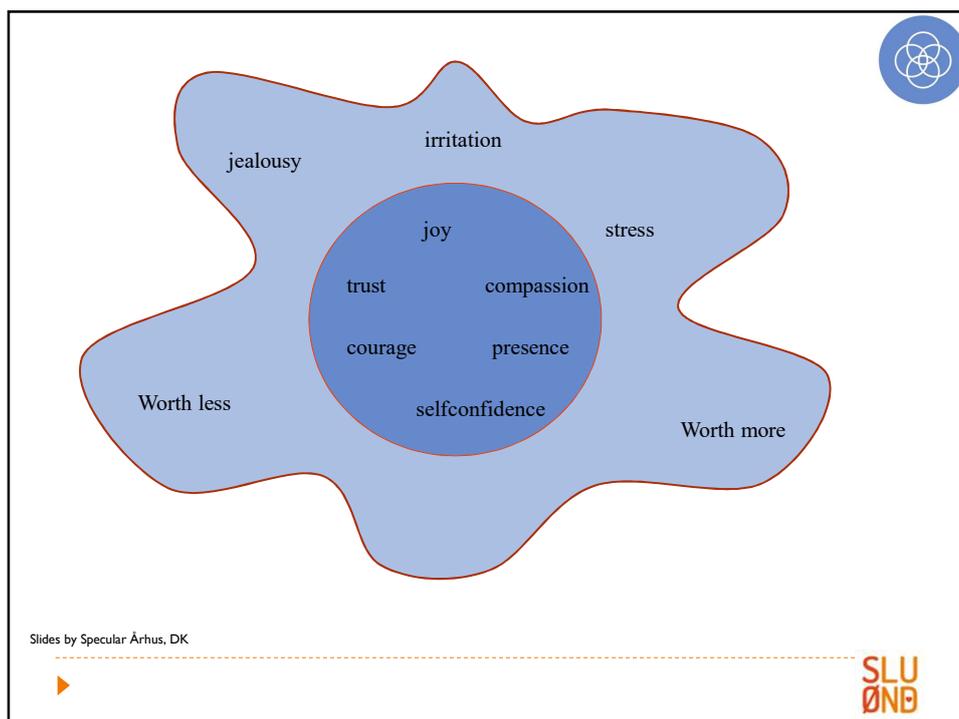
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Quistions

- ▶ What can get to you?
- ▶ What happens in your thoughts?
- ▶ What happens in your body/feelings?
- ▶ How is you expression?





Leadership and feelings

- ▶ Emotions shows us our true feelings.
- ▶ The core/the center – it takes persistence to stay in your core.
- ▶ The mask – to move from the mask to the core/center
- ▶ Working with caregivers
- ▶ Tools - meditation

- ▶ The essence – working with our hearts?

Empathy

- ▶ The ability to sense the other persons feelings and understand the other persons perspective on the grounds of compassion.
- ▶ The more you are in your center, the deeper becomes your intuition and your ability to sense the other person.
- ▶ To be with the other persons feelings without getting flooded by them.
- ▶ To take the confrontation with proper respect for the other person.
- ▶ To ask questions, to tell your own opinion – to create a dialogue.

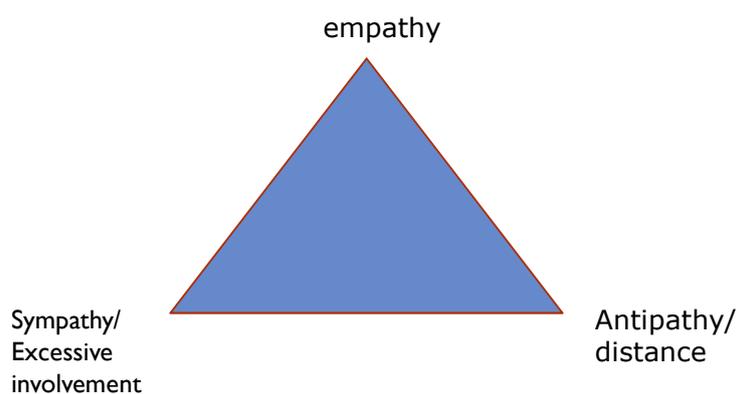


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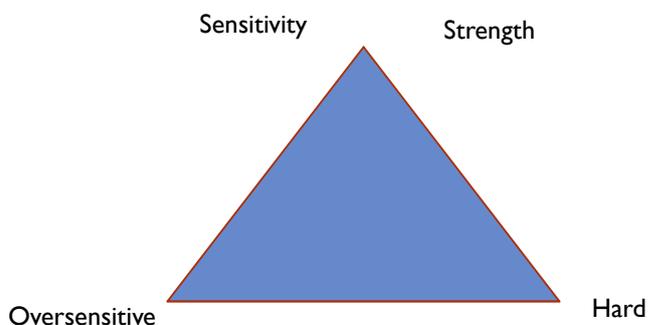
Empathy from the core

Slides by Specular Århus, DK



Robustness and well-being

Slides by Specular Århus, DK



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The core as compas

- ▶ The goal: to be openminded when you meet others.
- ▶ To distinguish and detect when you react from the mask - overreacting or inhibited.
- ▶ Destinguish between professional disagreement and the feeling that something gets to you..



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Feedback

- ▶ Feedback from the center: without condemning, open, honest, involving the other person in your experiences.

Many of us have experienced a rejection of our whole person and not just our actions.



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To trust and to make caregivers feel safe.

- ▶ What are we here for - the people in need of help.
- ▶ Openness – conflict resolution.
- ▶ To avoid brutalisation.
- ▶ You do, what you say
- ▶ You say, I am sorry
- ▶ Interest and curiosity
- ▶ Do not pretend
- ▶ To be a good host in leadership
- ▶ To have a vision
- ▶ To be specific in the feedback
- ▶ Face to face – not just mails



A rolemodel

- ▶ Do not pretend
- ▶ Work with my heart
- ▶ To focus on the people we serve
- ▶ Show how to be kind and loving
- ▶ Show how to help
- ▶ Show your values – talk about them – value people
- ▶ Have dialoges
- ▶ To accomodate
- ▶ To be engaged
- ▶ To motivate – to tell stories – to show
- ▶ To have a vision
- ▶ Humble yourself to the point of near invisibility
- ▶ Awareness of possibilities of action and interaction



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A rolemodel

- ▶ Believing in a person
- ▶ Compelling invitation
- ▶ Passionate persistence
- ▶ Profound flexibility



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Knowledge and tools - inspiring

- ▶ To be professional
- ▶ A professional platform
- ▶ To give meaning
- ▶ Lifestories
- ▶ Developmental psykology
- ▶ Specific knowledge
- ▶ How to create relations
- ▶ How to help carry heavy feelings
- ▶ Supervision
- ▶ To be and how to become a happy detective – ask qustions
- ▶ To facilitate



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To make caregivers feel valued

- ▶ Engagement - transformation
- ▶ To give responsibility

- ▶ Curiosity
- ▶ Be decent
- ▶ "In hands"
- ▶ To show interested
- ▶ To create and develop opportunitites
- ▶ To see the caregivers in both in succesfull and difficult situations
- ▶ To create an envirement of reflexion
- ▶ What do you signal
- ▶ To create a feeling of being "in hands"



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To create a community and to be present

- ▶ To have a vision
- ▶ To work together
- ▶ To show interest
- ▶ To make your self interesting in a professional way
- ▶ To be engaged
- ▶ To create space for dialouges and working together
- ▶ To be acceible
- ▶ To be host
- ▶ To motivate
- ▶ Energy, exitement and enthusiasm
- ▶ To gather, to attract



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To be kind and decent

- ▶ To let your leadership, knowledge and tools pass through your heart.
- ▶ To be kind is also to expect, to develop, to learn, to do things better, to reflect.
- ▶ To be honest to some extend to be authentic
- ▶ To do what you say
- ▶ To deal with the conflicts
- ▶ "In hands"
- ▶ Motivation
- ▶ Be nonjudgemental, take charge, explain meaningfull so that it gives meaning to our work with people in need of help



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