A close-up photograph of a healthcare professional's hand, wearing blue scrubs and a stethoscope, gently holding a patient's hand. The patient's hand has a ring on the ring finger. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the healthcare professional and a warm, clinical setting.

Patient Engagement: Humans and Healthcare

Copic Patient Safety Conference
Geri Amori, PhD, ARM, DFASHRM,
CPHRM

April 28, 2025

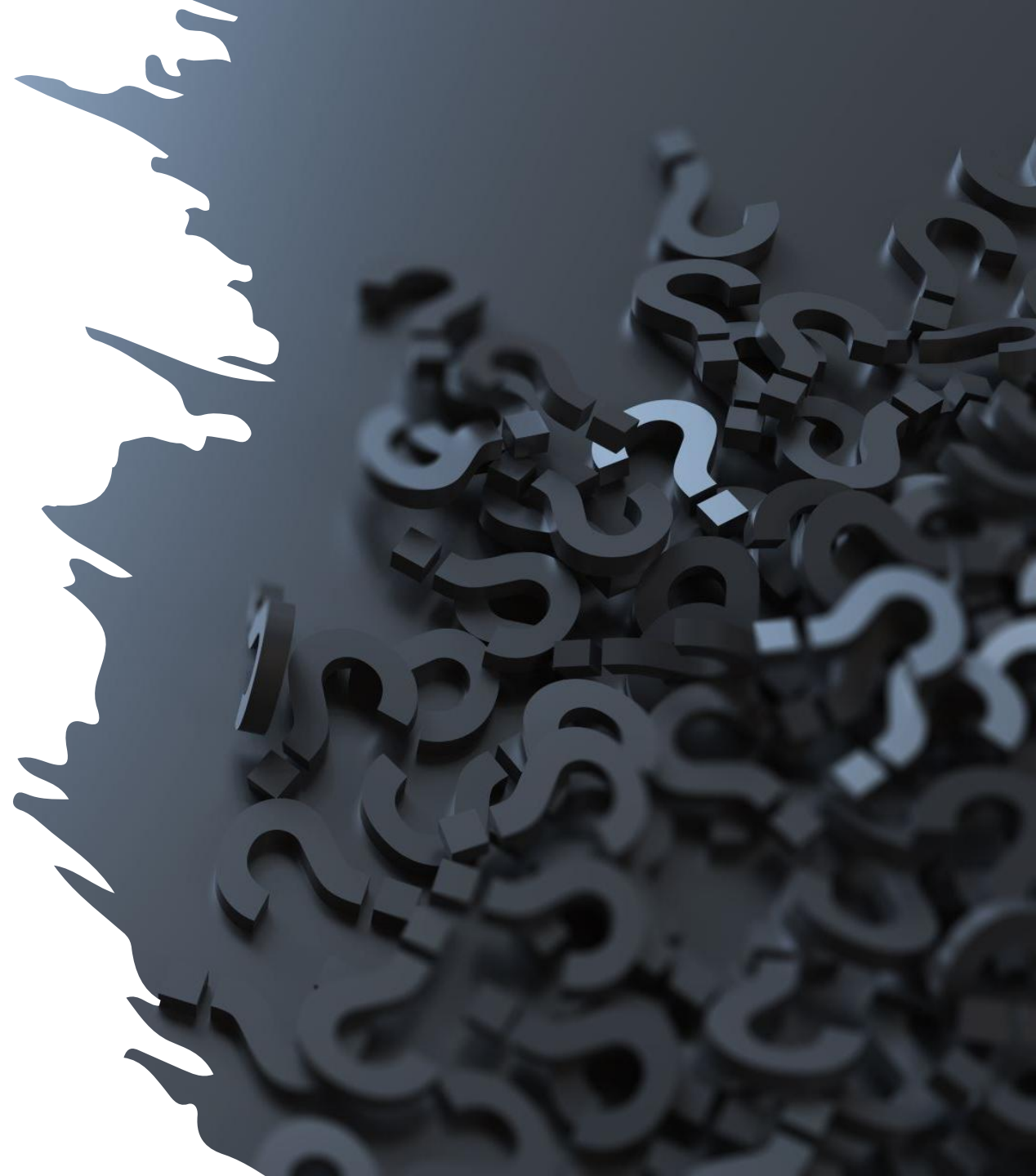
At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Describe the human psychological effect of the healthcare system on those working within it
- Describe the impact of myths and fantasies that the general public hold about the healthcare system
- Discuss methods/tools for bridging that gap to increase genuine patient engagement



Reflect:

Think of a time when you were completely misunderstood in a work situation and were surprised. What was the situation? What about it surprised you?

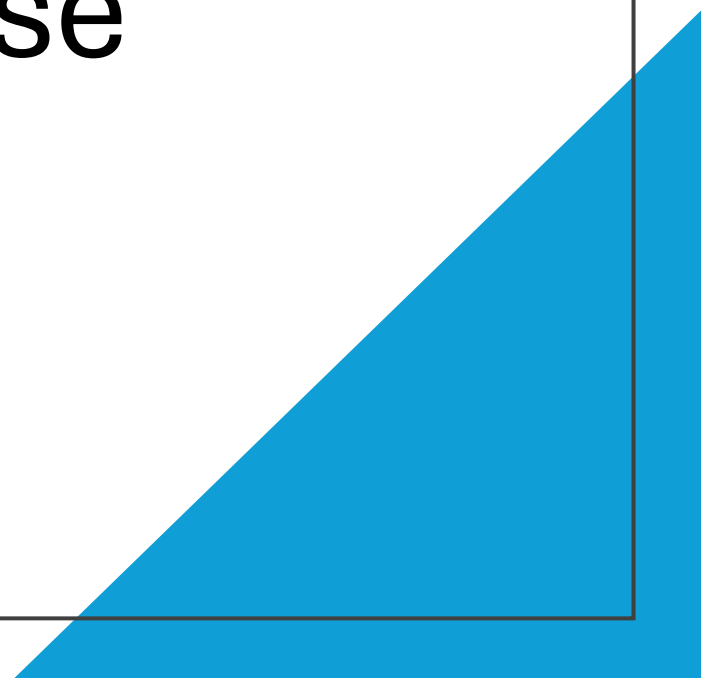


A dramatic, high-contrast photograph of a lighthouse perched on a rocky island. The lighthouse is a small, white, cylindrical structure with a dark top. The sea is turbulent, with large, dark waves crashing and white foam spraying. The sky is dark and filled with heavy, swirling clouds. The overall mood is one of intense pressure and adversity.

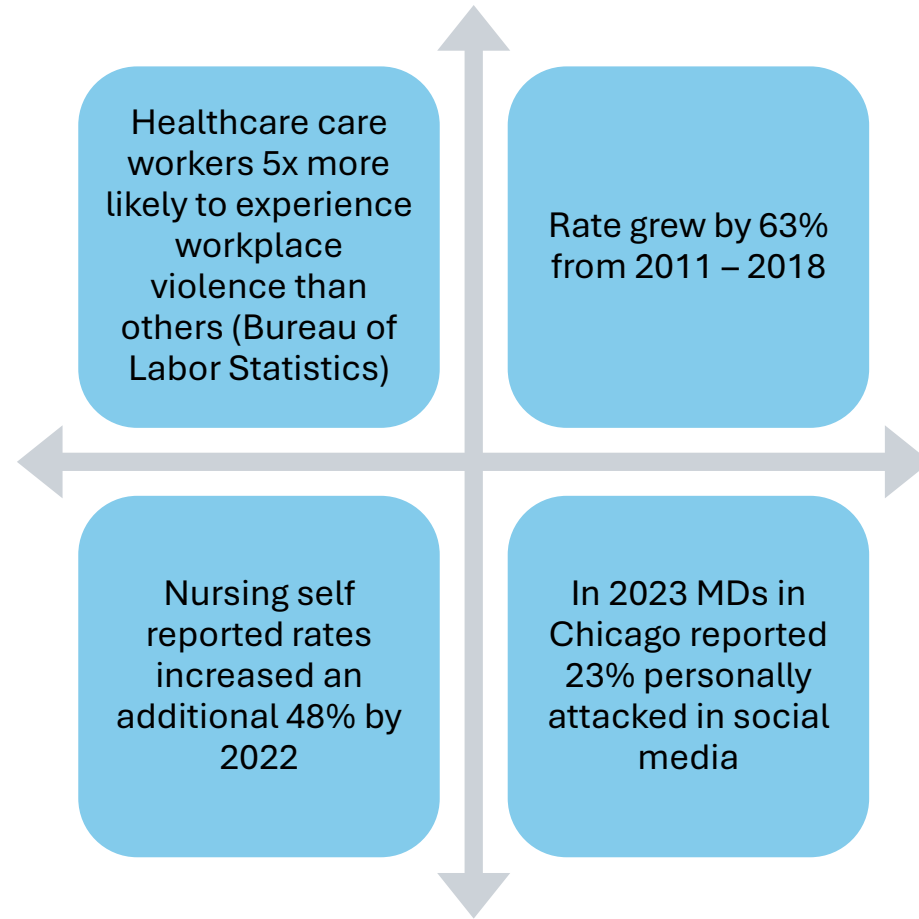
Healthcare: the Perfect Storm

#1: Describe the human psychological effect of the healthcare *system* on those working within it

(Healthcare is a tough place to work!)

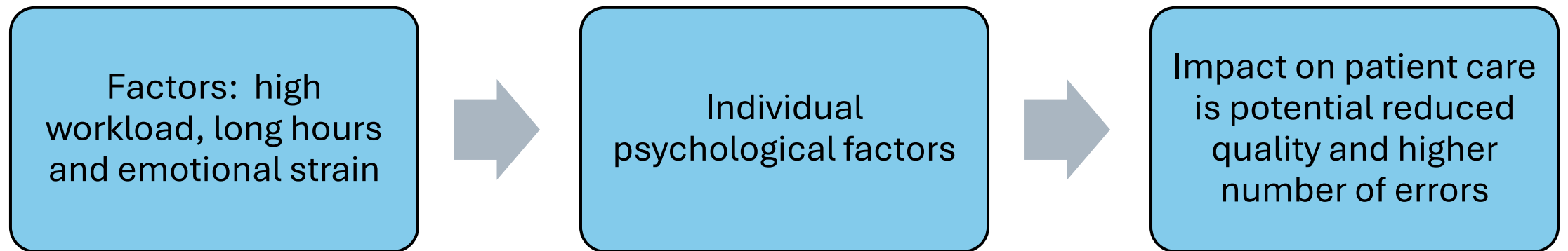


It's Not Your Imagination... Conditions are Worse



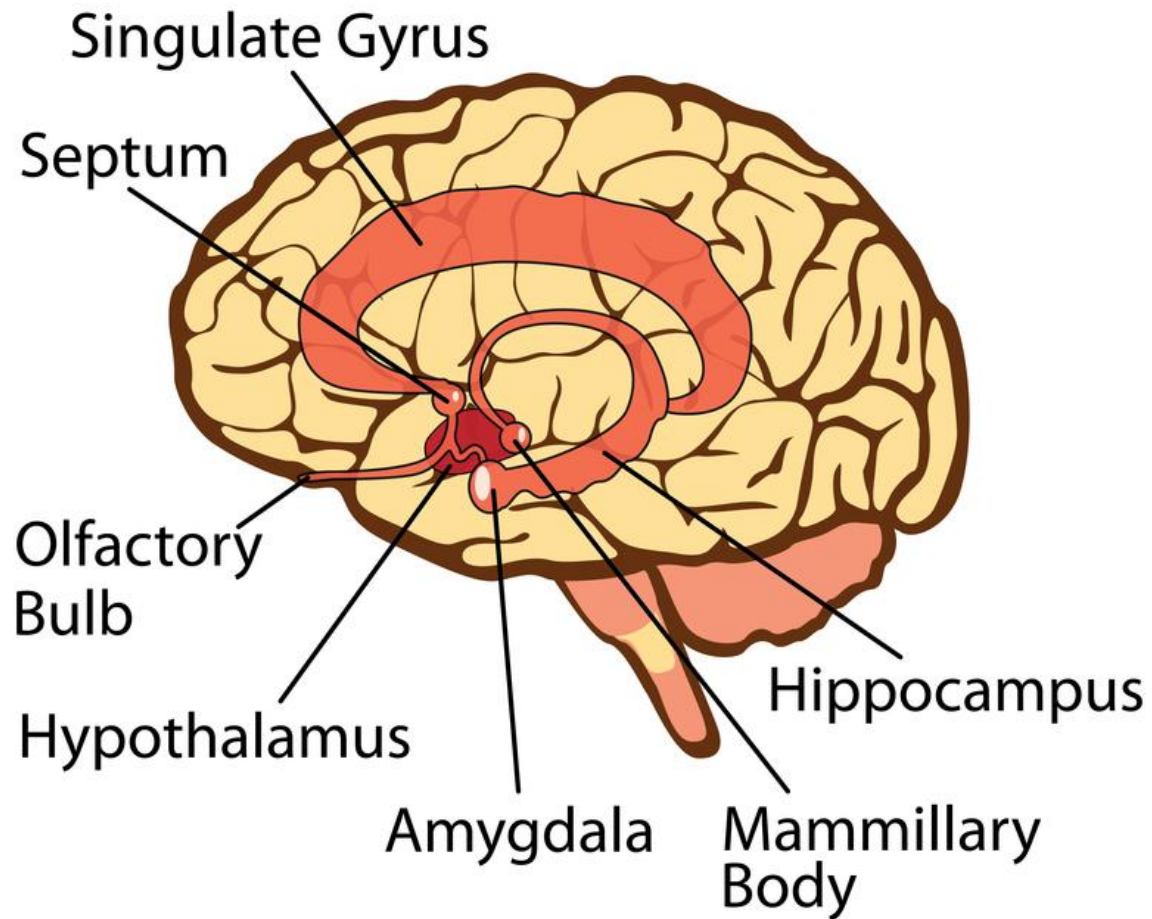
Boyle, P. (2022). *Threats against health care workers are rising. Here's how hospitals are protecting their staffs.* Association of American Medical Colleges. Retrieved from AAMC.

Burnout is Real



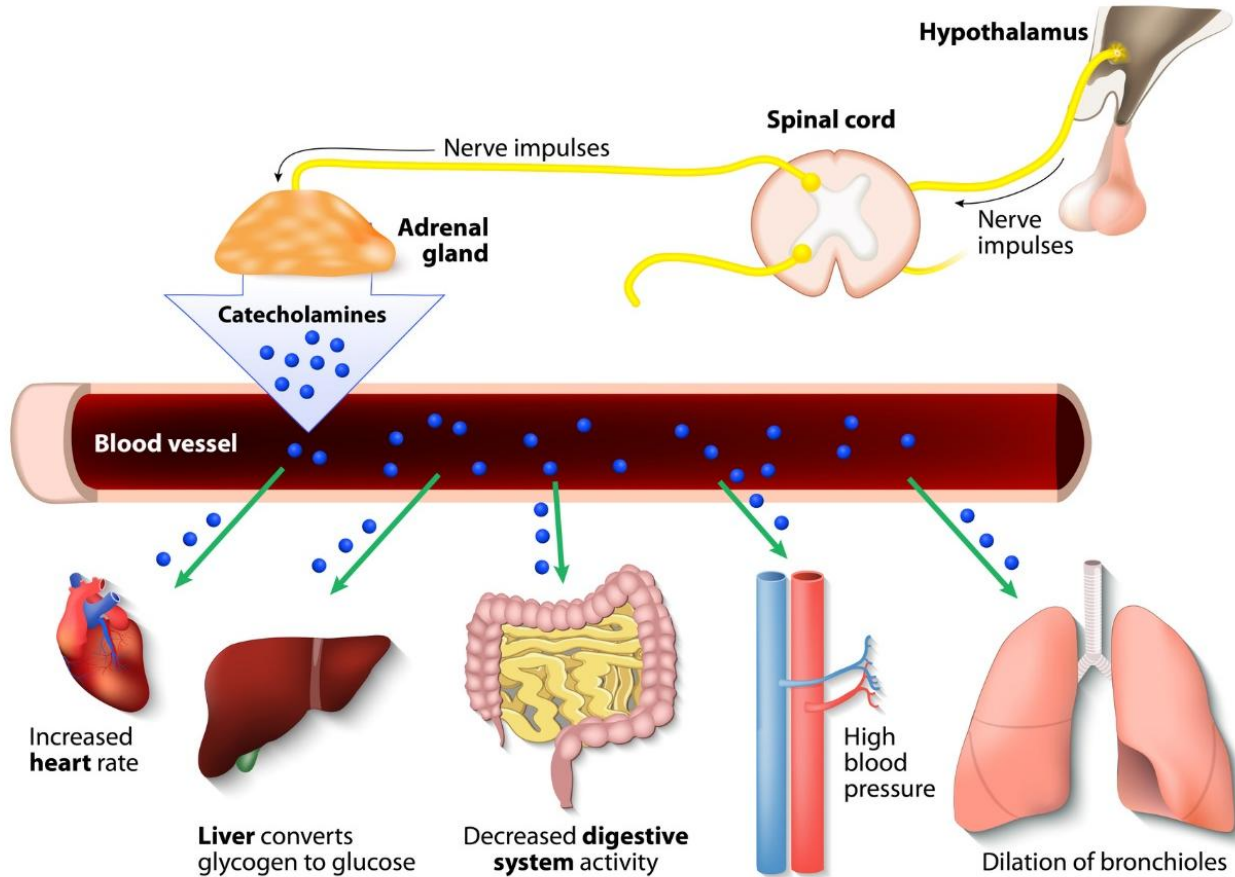
Nagle, E., Griskevica, I., Rajevska, O. *et al.* Factors affecting healthcare workers burnout and their conceptual models: scoping review. *BMC Psychol* **12**, 637 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02130-9>

LIMBIC SYSTEM STRUCTURES



Physical
and
Emotional
Impact

The activation of the stress system



The
Hypothalamus
Kicks in

Felt experience.....

- Constant rush
- Fear-based reactions
- Reduced patience
- Less mental space to react effectively
- Less desire to be engaged with colleagues and patients

Bottom Line:

People who work in Health Care MUST learn self protection and self care skills:

- Resilience Skills
- Prioritizing family and personal needs
- Learn to recognize your knee-jerk beliefs and reactions
- Mindfulness skills to protect your peace of mind
- Communication strategies

#2: Describe the impact of myths and fantasies the public hold about the healthcare system

(What the public wants often has little to do with the reality.)

Major Patient Beliefs about Healthcare

- Everyone should have access to healthcare
- Healthcare should be “affordable”
- Services should be effective, safe, and responsive to “my” needs
 - Includes: access to qualified healthcare professionals, timely appointments, and comprehensive care
- Divided beliefs about who should run healthcare
- Concerns about wait-time; complex administrative system, inequality in access

Misunderstanding about Autonomy

Autonomy does not mean
“You can demand anything you want.”

- Time
- Complex Medical info
- Conflicts of Interest

Flarey, D., & Katz, J. M. (2024, October 7). *Understanding health care ethics: The principle of autonomy*. AIHCP.
<https://aihcp.net/2024/10/07/understanding-health-care-ethics-the-principle-of-autonomy/>



We Don't Agree, & Everyone is Annoyed (A Look at Gallup Polls)

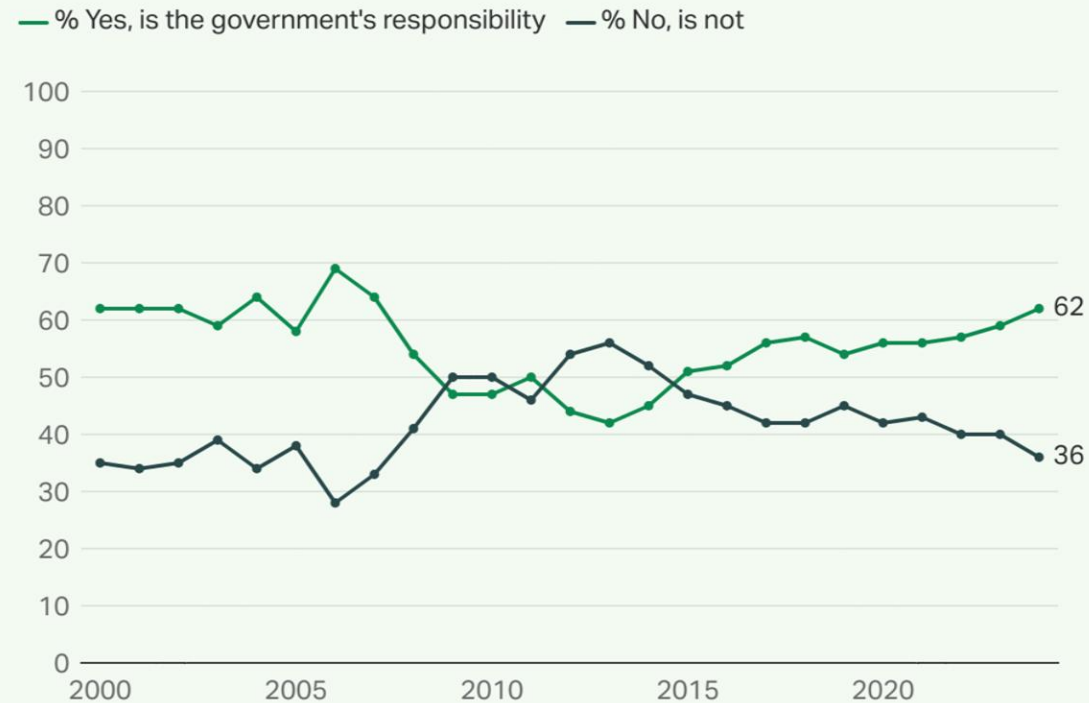
2024: Government Responsibility for Universal Access

- 62% believe government responsibility (up from 57% in 2022)
- 46% government run (up from 43%); 49% privately run insurance administration (down from 53%)
- Fewer Americans than ever rated US healthcare quality and coverage positively

Jones, J. M. (2024, December 9). *More in U.S. see health coverage as government responsibility: Approval of Affordable Care Act also near high point.* Gallup. <https://news.gallup.com>

Americans' Beliefs About the Federal Government's Responsibility to Ensure All Have Healthcare Coverage

Do you think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have healthcare coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the federal government?

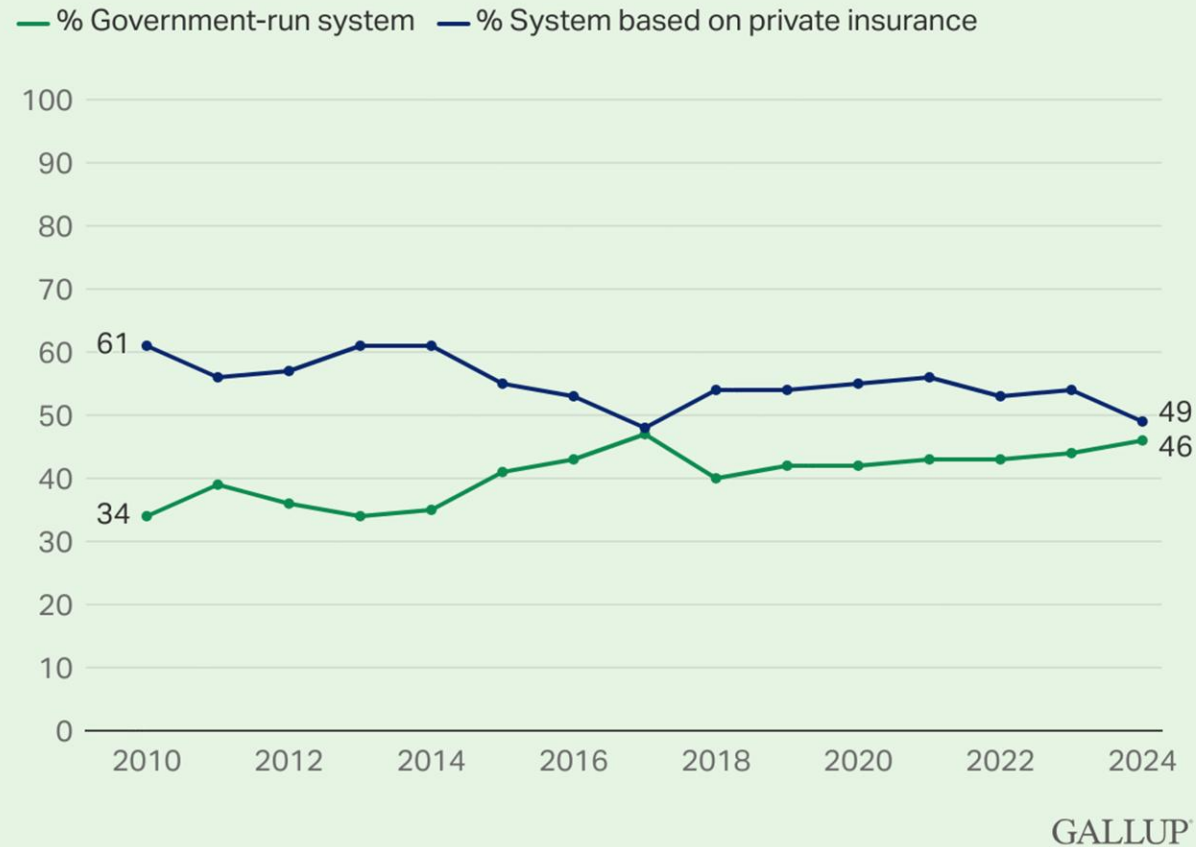


2000 figures are an average of two surveys

GALLUP®

Americans' Preferred Healthcare System

Which of the following approaches for providing healthcare in the United States would you prefer -- [ROTATED: a government-run healthcare system (or) a system based mostly on private health insurance]?



The Net Result:

Patient Hostility towards Health Care

Excessive questioning

Reassurance-seeking

Anger at shortened appointment times, increased administrative burdens, system complexity

Schuermeyer, I. N., Sieke, E., Dickstein, L., Falcone, T., & Franco, K. (2017). *Patients with challenging behaviors: Communication strategies*. Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine, 84(7), 535-542.

Retrieved April 20, 2025

#3: Discuss methods/tools for bridging that gap to increase genuine patient engagement

(What can we do?)



Patient Engagement Effects

- Health outcomes
- Compliance
- Provider productivity
- (Provider mental health)
- (Patient experience)

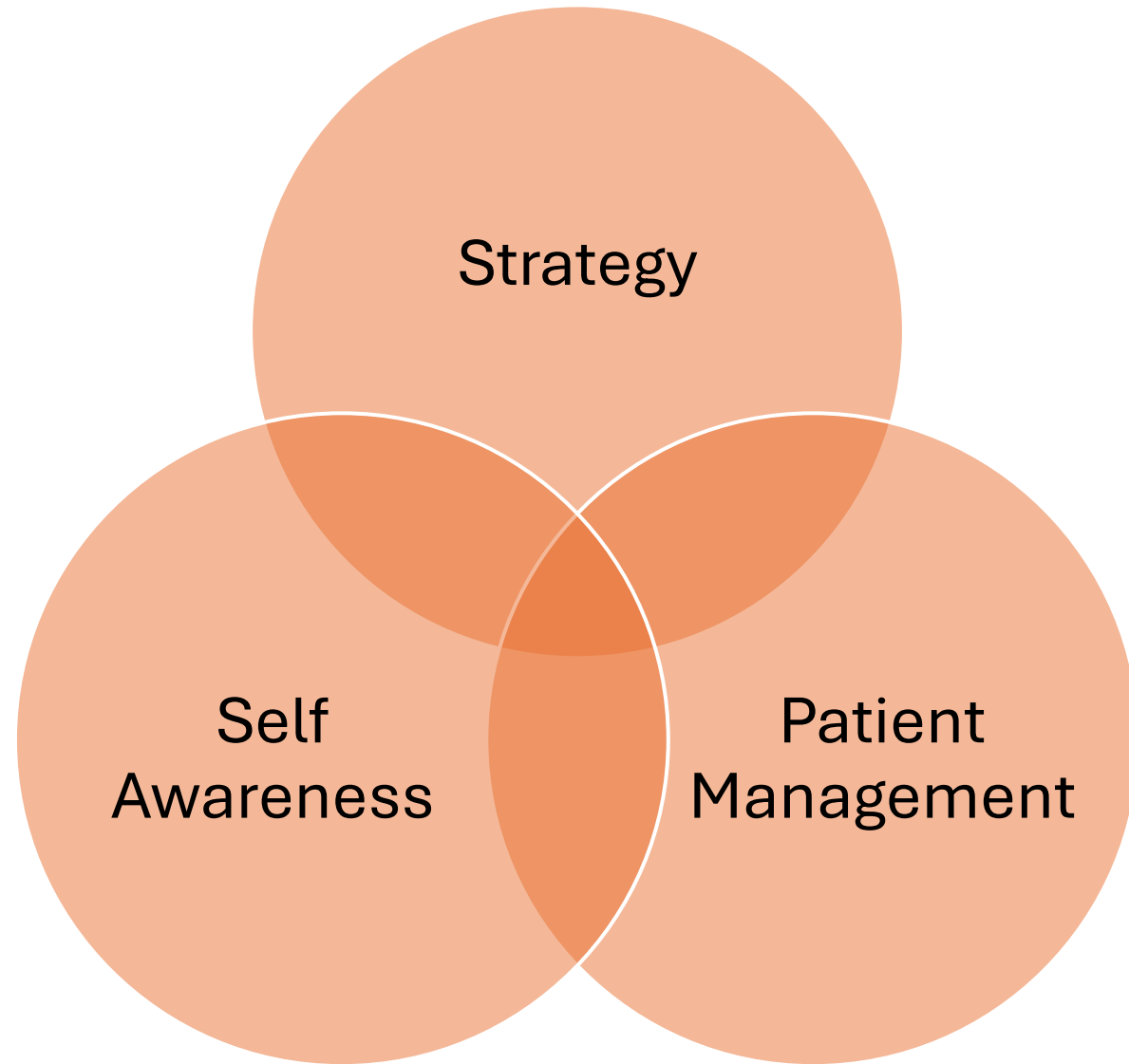
Marzban S, Najafi M, Agolli A, Ashrafi E. Impact of Patient Engagement on Healthcare Quality: A Scoping Review. J Patient Exp. 2022 Sep 16;9:23743735221125439. doi: 10.1177/23743735221125439. PMID: 36134145; PMCID: PMC9483965.

The goal: Engaged Patient

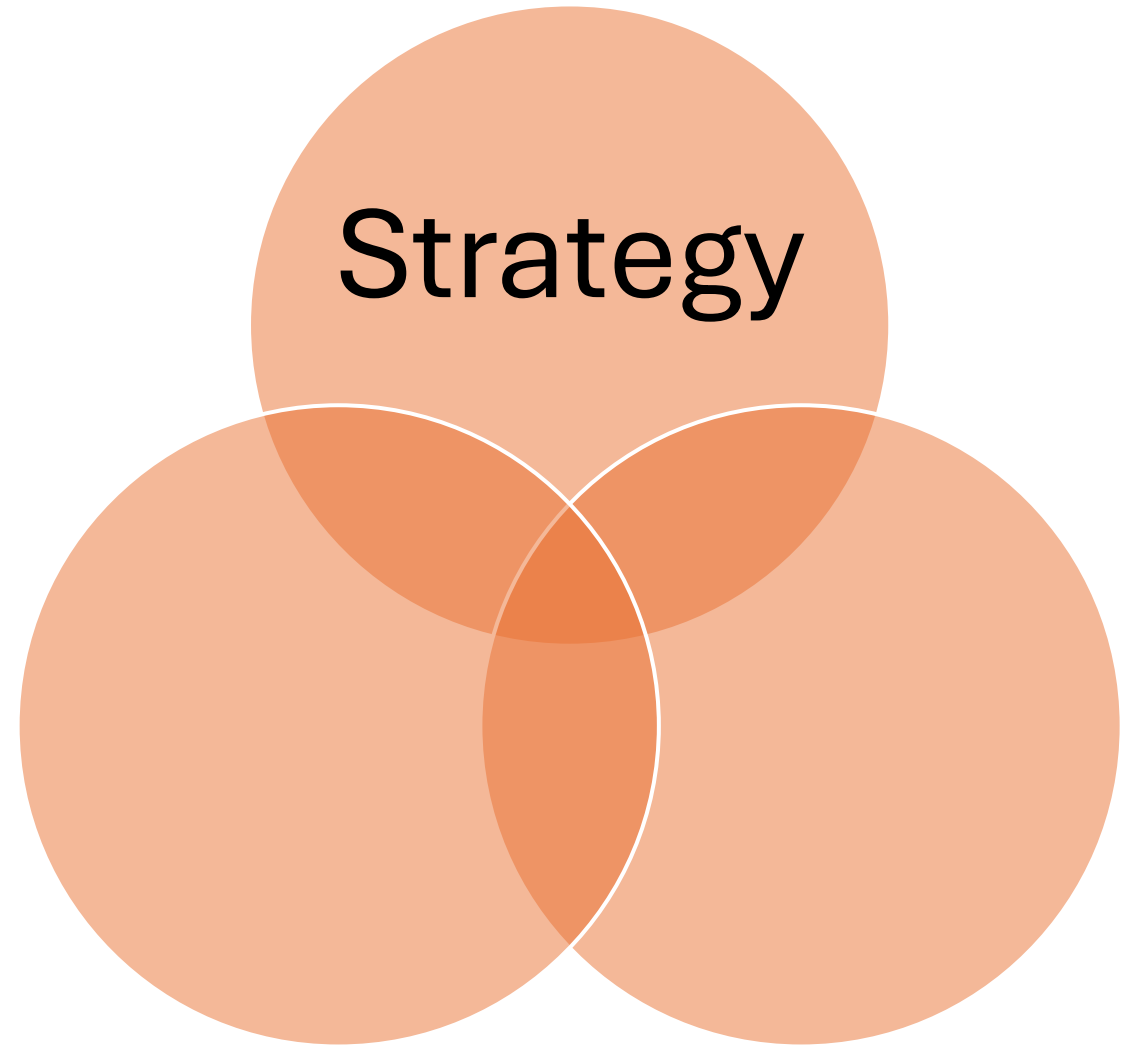
- Understands their health concerns
- Asks questions that matter to them
- Are confident in weighing their options
- Knows how to access their medical records
- Monitors and discusses their symptoms and health experiences

Tejada, L. (2020, October 15). *It's not me, it's you. Why patient engagement fails and how to fix it*. Providertech. Retrieved from Providertech

3-Pronged approach to Address Barriers to Patient Engagement



1st Prong:
Give Patients Tools &
Teach Them to Use
Them



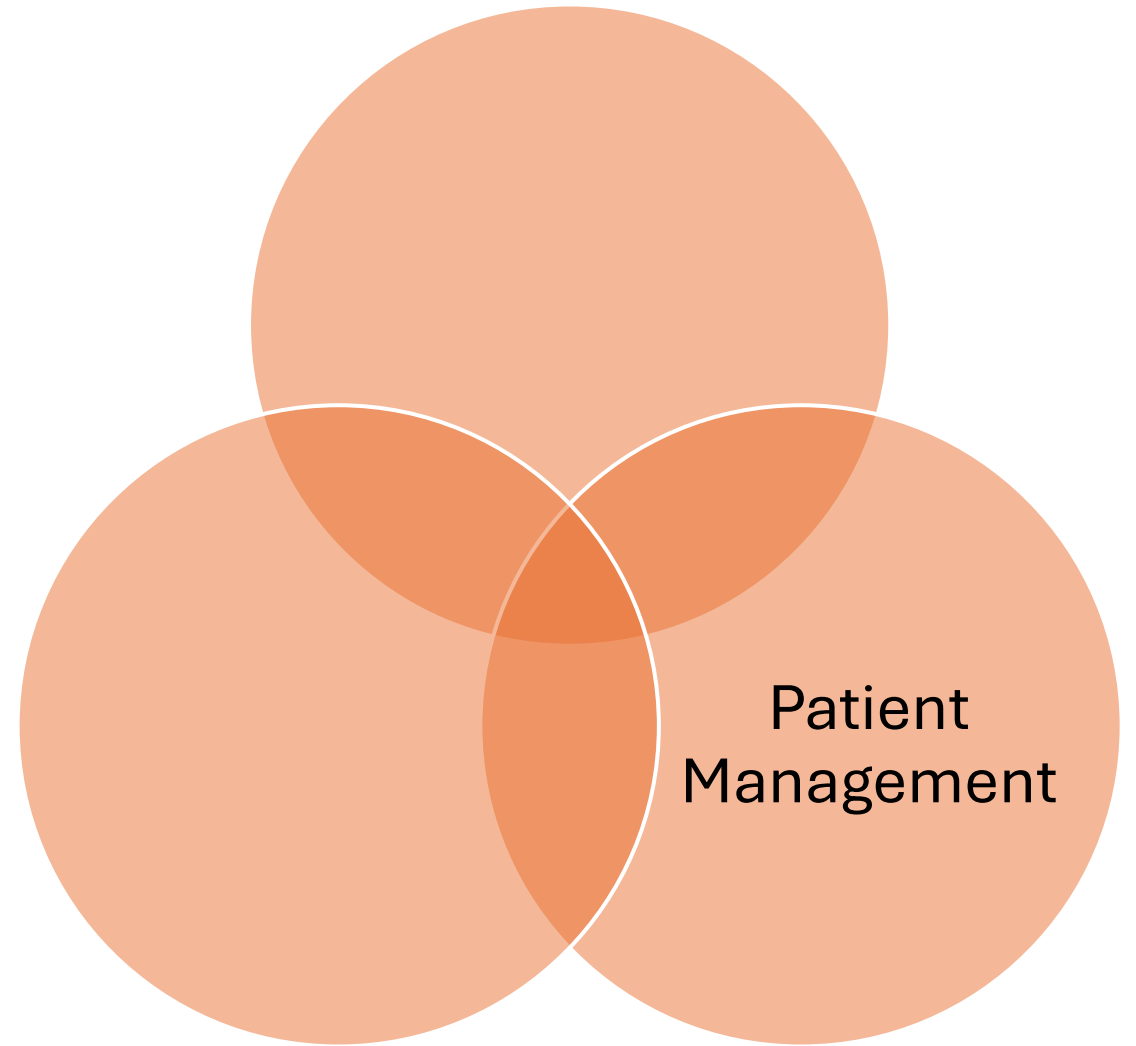
Make it easier for Patients

- Health literature in plain language
- Provide detailed sheets about common medical conditions and treatments
- Provide information about options and costs
- Empower patients by giving them tools about what questions to ask
- Tell them the online sites YOU recommend
- Put consents and information in plain language

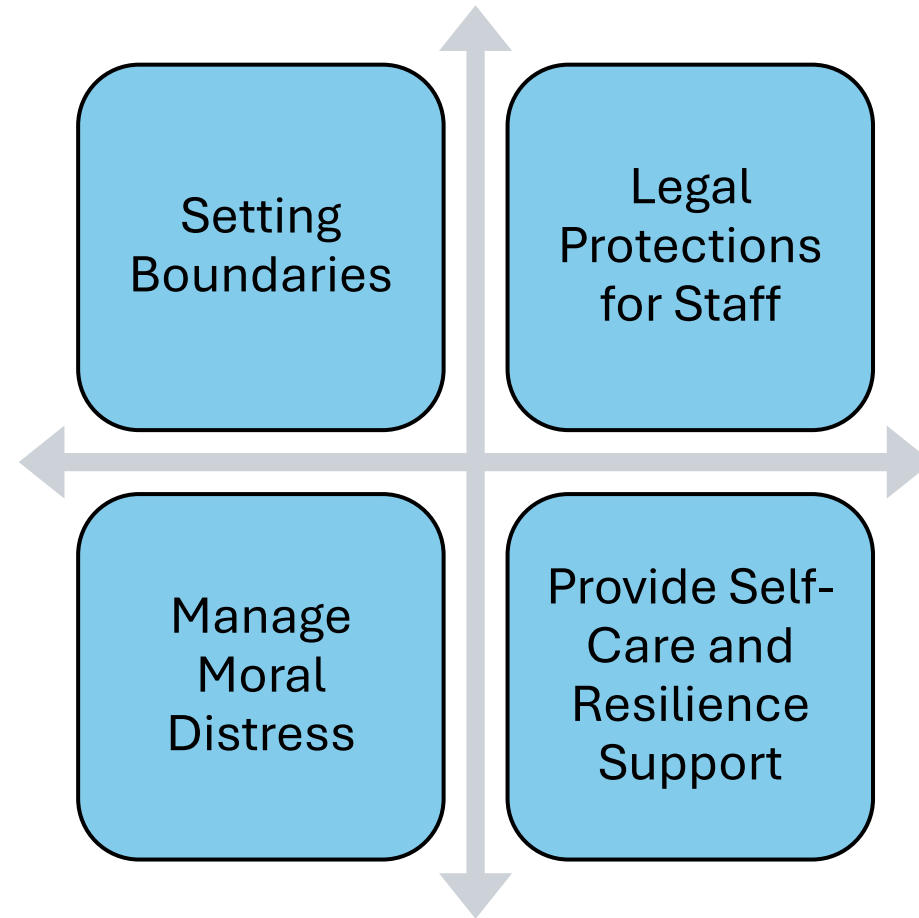
Other Strategies:

- Let patients CHOOSE their preferred communication
- Offer technology in the office
- Offer technology training
- Create a patient centered care culture
- Streamline paperwork/administrative time
- Automate appointment reminders
- Engage between visits – Texts or emails for status update or to see if the patient has questions

2nd Prong:
Keep it Safe and
Civil



Organizational Support



Boyle, P. (2022). *Threats against health care workers are rising. Here's how hospitals are protecting their staffs.* Association of American Medical Colleges. Retrieved from AAMC.

Have a Strong Safety Plan

- De-escalation Communication
- Physical safety engineering and protocols
- Run drills

Boyle, P. (2022). *Threats against health care workers are rising. Here's how hospitals are protecting their staffs.* Association of American Medical Colleges. Retrieved from AAMC.

Learn Ways to Handle Unrealistic Demands

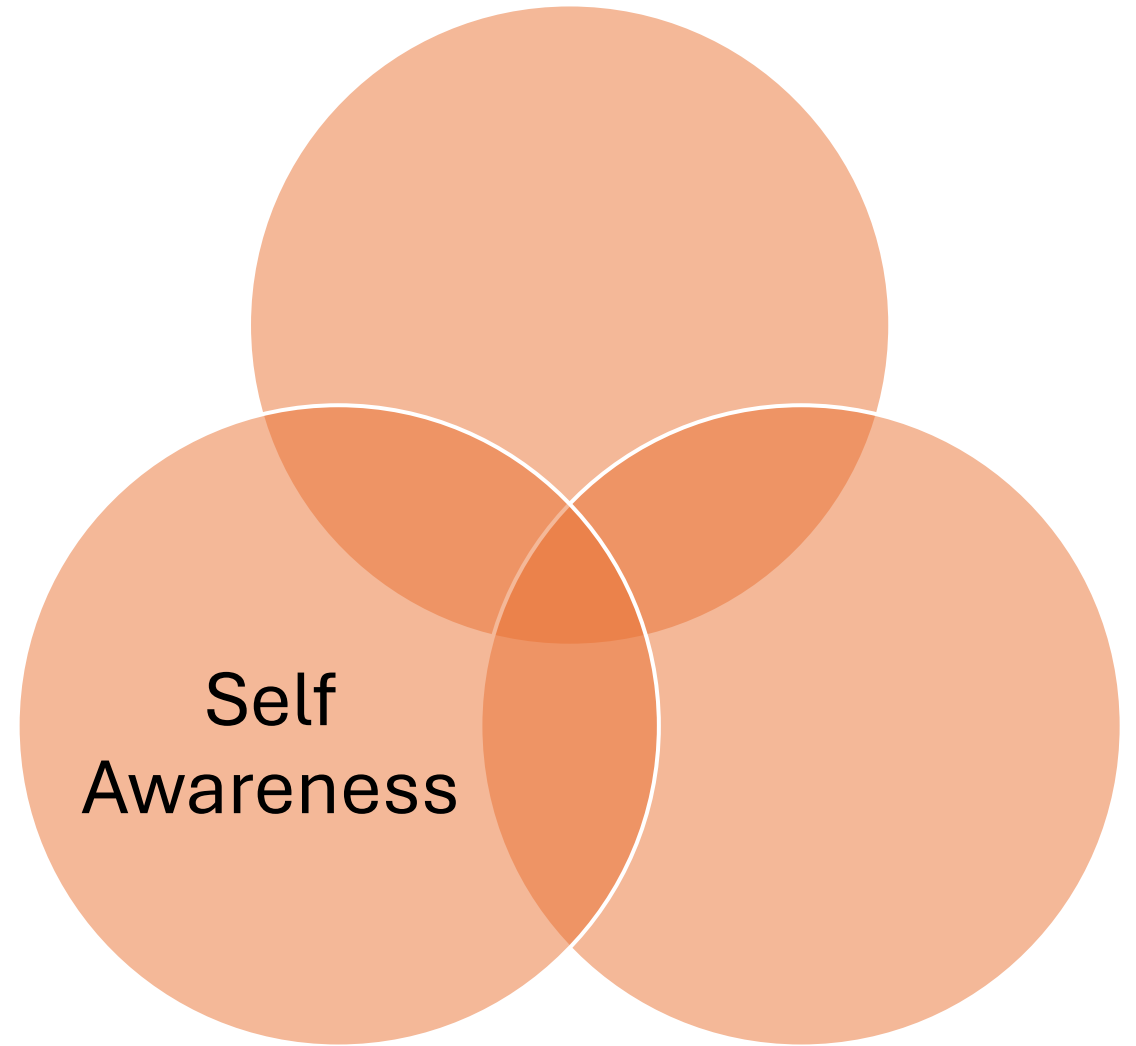
- Understand the patient's true goal
- Protect the long-term relationship
- Prioritize medical necessity over patient demands
- Accept patients where they are emotionally
- Document
- Avoid personalizing negative comments
- Engage and empower the patient

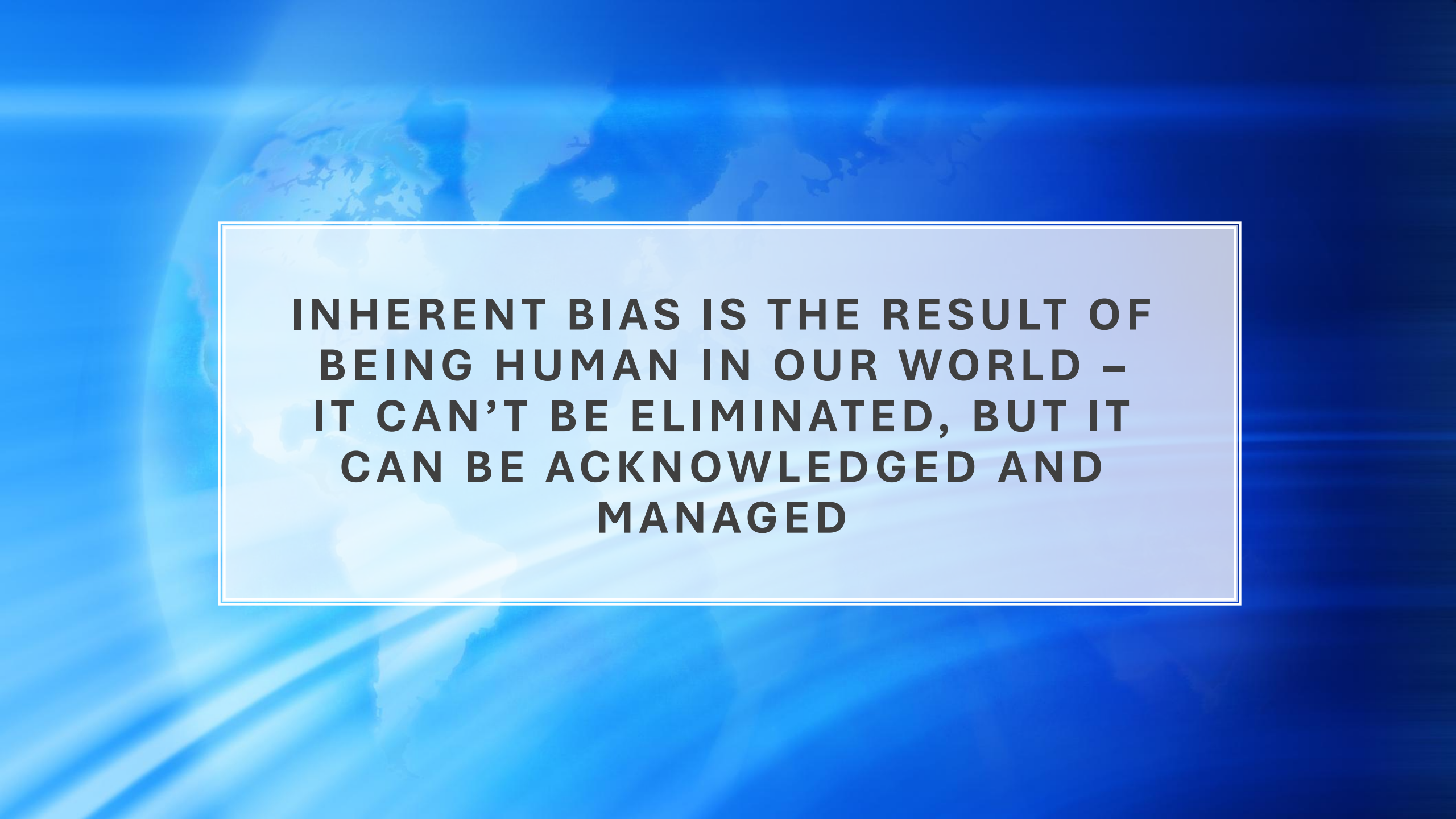
Frasca, D. J. (2021). *How to respond to unreasonable patient expectations. Family Practice Management, 28(6), 36.*

Adopt Trauma Informed Care Strategies

- Use behavioral nudges to encourage appropriate behavior, not strong-armed controls
- Create opportunities for people to recover from interactions that trigger emotion
- Also create opportunities for staff to recover from interactions that trigger emotion
- Provide training on Trauma Informed communication

Prong 3:
Be Aware of
Personal Bias in
Communication





**INHERENT BIAS IS THE RESULT OF
BEING HUMAN IN OUR WORLD –
IT CAN'T BE ELIMINATED, BUT IT
CAN BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND
MANAGED**



MOST BIAS IS HARMLESS

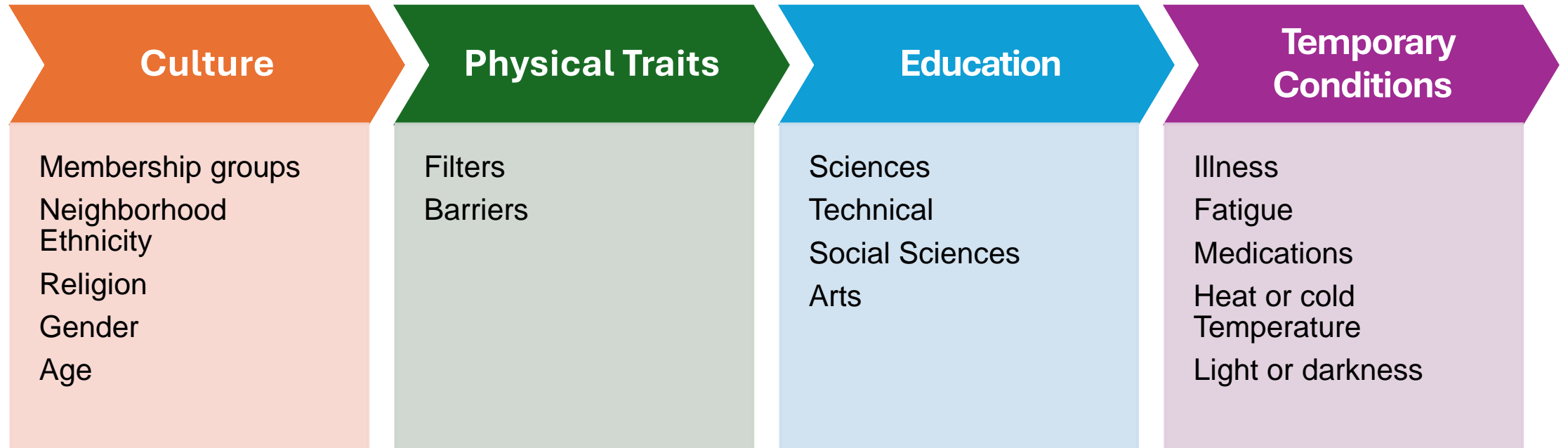
They are called “preferences”
and they guide our everyday
choices.





**VIEW IS THE “WATER” WE SWIM IN
EVERY DAY IN OUR LIVES....**

“Seeds” of View Bias



Indicators of Inherent Bias

Beliefs (Something we
“know” to be true.)

Assumptions (Something we
“hold” to be true without
proof)

Clue: Emotional Reactions

Common Beliefs (Biases) that “Rule” us

People ***should always*** be kind

People ***should always know*** what to do in these situations

People gossip ***because*** they are small minded

People in roles ***should know*** what is expected of them

Patients ***should know*** that we are trying to help them

Any person who has been a nurse/PA/physician this long should know

Common Assumptions that “Rile” Us

They are out to get me

If I don't make a fuss, nothing will get done and the situation will get worse

They are incompetent and so I will fail

They don't like me

They just ***want*** to sue

They think they are better than I am

They think they are privileged

REFLECT: WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE
MOTIVATIONS/SKILLS/ OR INTENTIONS OF
OTHERS? HOW DO THESE AFFECT YOU AS
YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THEM?

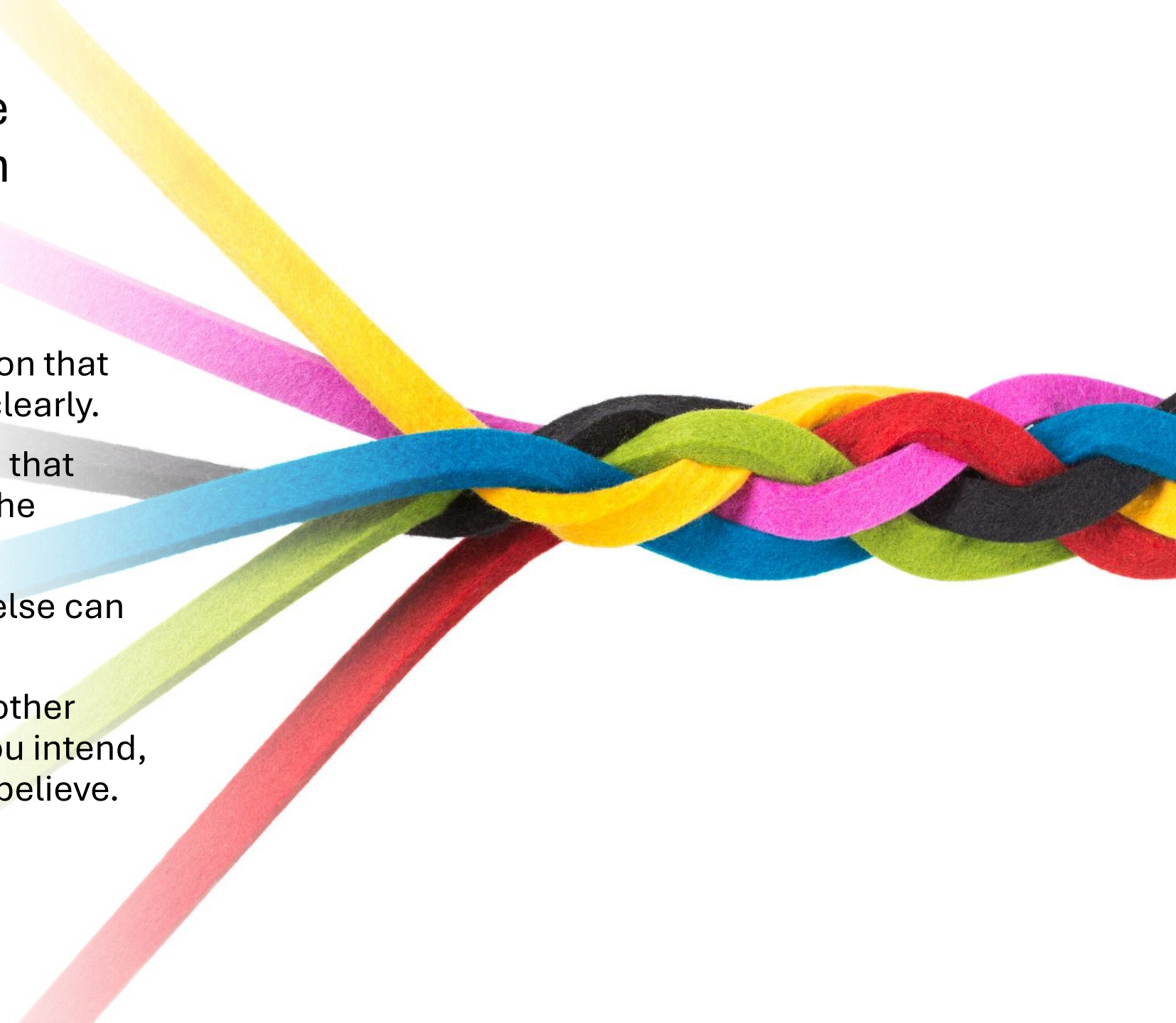


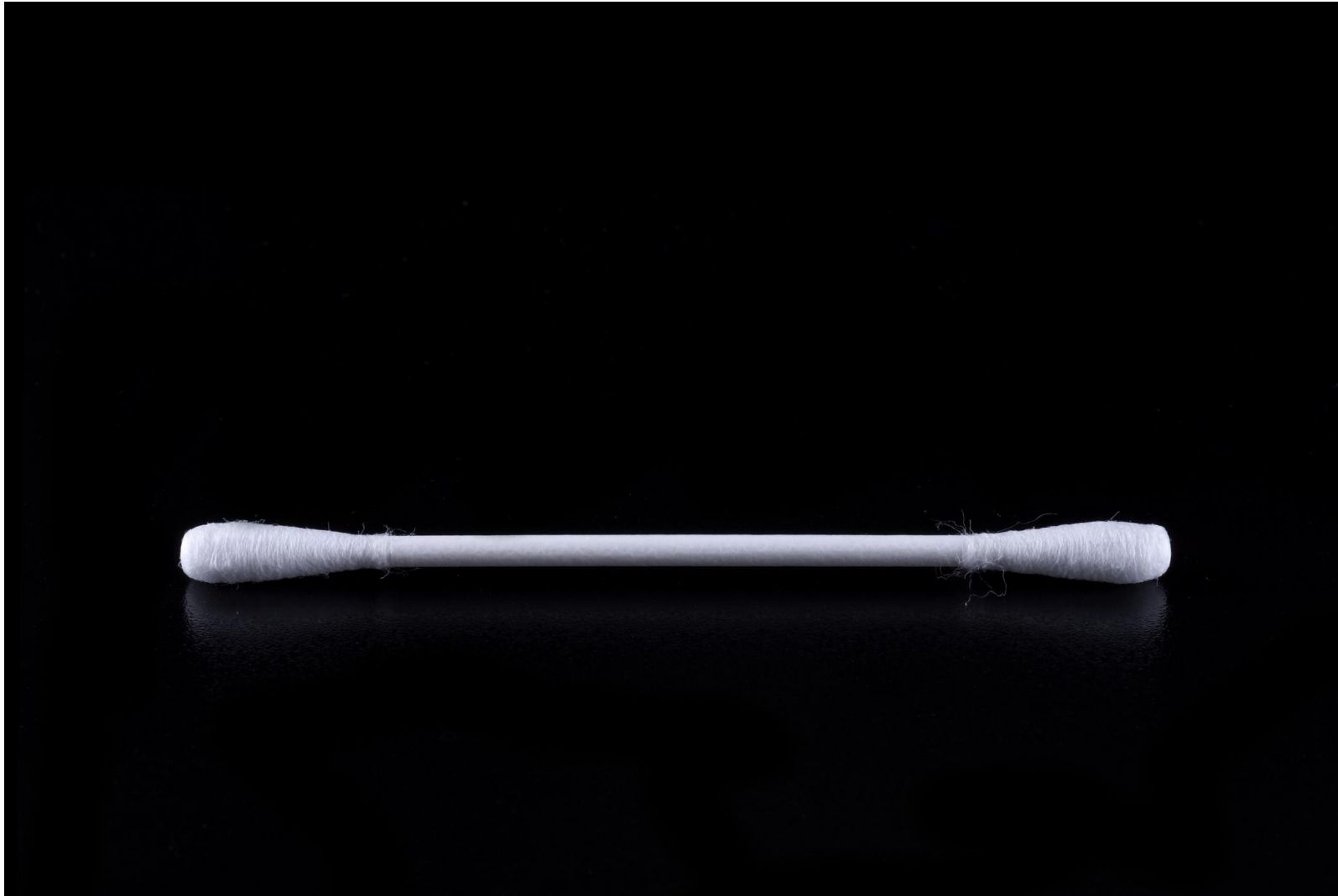
BELIEFS AND
ASSUMPTIONS ARE
NOT FACTS ABOUT
THE SITUATION.

THEY ARE LEARNED
RESPONSES.

How can you reduce the influence of view/bias in your relationship with patients?

- Be willing to let go of the notion that you are seeing the situation clearly.
- Be willing to let go of the idea that there is only one way to see the situation.
- Be willing to question “what else can this be?”
- Be willing to accept that the other person is not hearing what you intend, but what they hear, see, and believe.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Use effective listening skills.

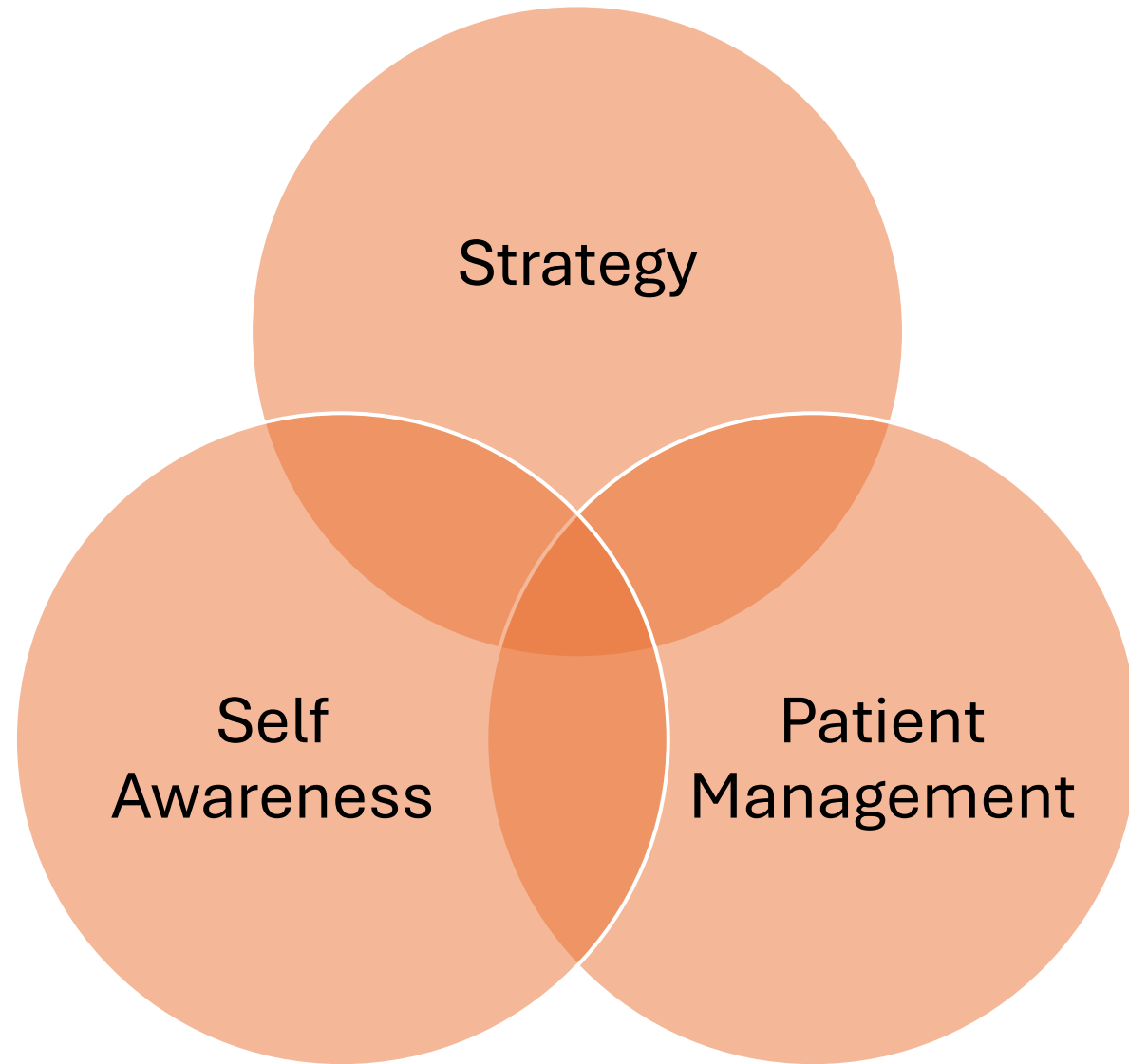




Quit Taking it Personally

Katherine E - 2008

It takes All
Three Prongs!





WE SEE
THINGS AS
WE ARE,
NOT AS THEY
ARE.



“WE’LL SEE”

Thank You!

t h a n k y o u

Together, we can improve healthcare experiences