



Relational Practice Movement

The Relational Practice Manifesto



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www.relationalmovement.net



The Relational Practice Movement

The **Relational Practice Movement** is a response to the isolation and dehumanisation of people across our public services, both staff and users. Our mission is to replace the current financially-motivated and disempowering practices across the sector with revitalising and enabling ones that puts humans and interpersonal relationships at the centre of each intervention. The movement unites people across education, criminal justice, charities and health and social care, to build a more humane and connected world. The call for **Relational Practice** in all areas of public service is a rallying cry for a deeper connection with ourselves, others and the natural world. Public services will always need regulation but not at the cost of kindness.



What is Relational Practice?

- *When we listen, feel and share with others, that's **relational**.*
- *When we place ourselves in the other persons shoes, that's **relational**.*
- *When we choose to put these things right at the centre of the way we work, that's **Relational Practice**.*
- ***Relational Practice** gives priority to interpersonal relationships, in both external and internal aspects. It is the foundation upon which any effective intervention is based, and it forms the conditions for a healthy relational environment.*

It requires:

- relationships based on honesty, reliability, consistency, curiosity, flexibility, authenticity and responsibility;
- enabling and facilitating attitudes;
- understanding our inner lives and external relationships.

Relational Practice can vary across different organisational settings, but the principles remain the same.

An Urgent Need of Our Times

Worldwide, the pandemic revealed and exacerbated the growing isolation we are experiencing. Our public services are in crisis and the scale of the problem facing us is unprecedented. As humans, we are wired for connection, but the modern world often deprives us of it. This inhibits us in two ways:

The Case for Agency:

If staff and the systems in which they work hold all the power, this keeps users dependent on services. This does not give them the opportunity to take control of their lives or have a say in their care and support. It also takes a toll on staff as they are expected to have all the answers.

People using services need to feel like they are active participants rather than passive recipients.

The Need for Humanity:

Staff often experience compassion fatigue, burnout, and disconnection from themselves and others. There is a struggle to maintain healthy boundaries in the continuous attempt to provide support and care. They find little to no space to get their own needs met and to be able to share human kindness.

Building healthy relationships can provide effective and safe services. We can be better at meeting everyone's need for connection, avoid exhaustion and improve the health and wellbeing of all involved. By taking time to build genuine, honest relationships, we can empower people on all sides of our services while working together.

The Three "R's" of Relational Practice

Reflect

With many people feeling widespread disillusion across different sectors, we must think about the gaps in public services which arise from industrial-style, impersonal interventions. These can dehumanise people and often isolate them from each other.

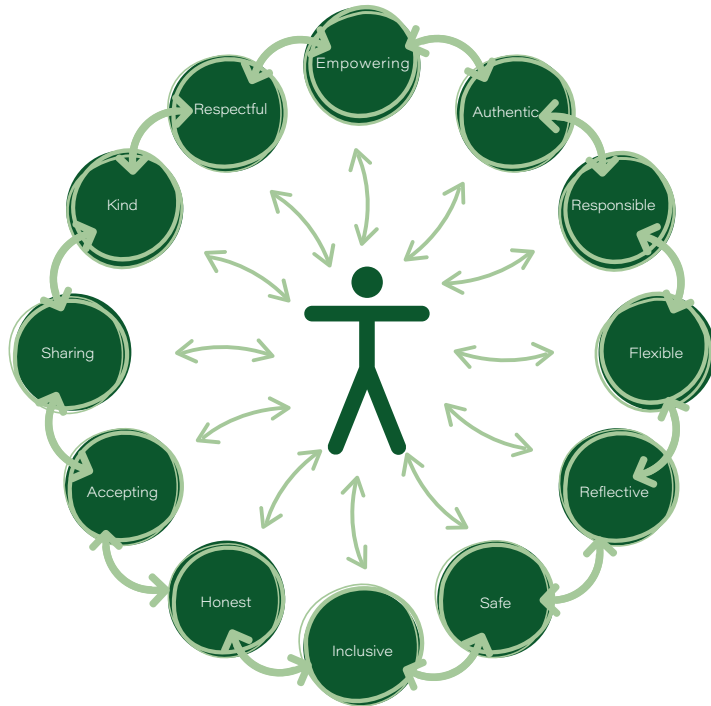
Revitalise

Relational Practice is the act of working together to promote and ensure wellbeing. Each person is seen as a whole, unique individual, who brings their different strengths and circumstances in.

Rebuild

By improving relationships, trust can be rebuilt: in individuals, services, and communities. The act of empowering people on all sides creates lasting change. This goes beyond immediate support and brings back the hope into people's lives.





We all exist in relation to each other; but when alone, we can experience isolation and vulnerability. A disconnected top-down service labels people as problems, leaving no space for anyone to take responsibility for themselves or connect with others. This damages our capacity to work together, especially in an economically-driven world where interactions are too often treated only as transactions.

When human connections are lost, we see the breakdown of communities and relationships. People struggle to find hope for the future. For each of us to be happy and successful, we need to feel like a part of something wider.

Relational Practice helps people find their voices, then listens and acts with them when they speak. By respecting and empowering everyone involved, the Relational Practice Movement urges us to create that experience of belonging that we, as human beings, truly need



Separate but Together

Relational Practice is a movement away from separated, fragmented service models, focused primarily on costs and problems. **Relational Practice** provides individuals with an experience where they feel connected by services that value them, and their contribution, as a whole.



Caption: Separate but Together

Think! Feel! Act!

Understanding is the first step towards meaningful action. We invite everyone to reflect and encourage conversations about why treating people as **people** is crucial to an effective public service.

We must rebuild our ways of working to transform the system. Together, we can mobilise those in positions of power to join us as allies.

Across the public sector, we need to **Reflect** on the failures in existing systems, **Revitalise** caring environments and **Rebuild** effective services.

- If you are an individual, think about how your work could be more **relational**. Start by considering how you can listen to others more effectively in your interactions and work collaboratively.
- As an organisation, build your staff's capacity to work **relationally**. Create safe spaces to reflect on your existing power structures, and design changes that encourage sharing of power. Start by making time to reflect on your current practices together.
- If you are in a position of political or social influence, support organisations, institutions, and professions to work **relationally**. Start by including the principles of **Relational Practice** in new policies.

We believe **Relational Practice** is needed to build a sustainable, compassionate, and hopeful future. By supporting individuals and communities, our vision is that **Relational Practice** in different sectors should include:

- Reduction in crime and violence in society and within the prison population
- Public service staff are empowered to use their initiative in providing services and caring for people.
- Children enjoy a more creative and personalised approach to care and learning, with more emphasis on emotional and social development than performance targets
- Health and social care will be fundamentally concerned with emotional wellbeing and safety rather than only physical risk
- Staff in public service offices will not need high security processes and procedures to protect themselves from members of the public, and will be able to work in relational ways

What could **Relational Practice** do for you?

Visit our [website](#) to share your ideas and learn from others.

Join us in creating caring and optimistic services - one authentic relationship at a time.



Relational Practice:

the radical act of re-introducing
empowerment and kindness into the
very heart of public services.

learn more at

www.relationalmovement.net

