

UNIT 3

The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth Caritas Processes



Caritas 5: Promote and accept positive and negative feelings through authentic listening

- Acknowledging that everyone has positive and negative feelings supports caring, forgiveness, and understanding. Being with another in a nonjudgmental way as that individual expresses feelings generates mutual trust and understanding, supports authenticity, and affirms our shared humanity(Watson, 2008).
- Realizing the universality and impermanence of feelings has the power to diffuse negativity and re-define it as a productive process that can create movement towards understanding and resolution.
- Mindfulness perspective: Breathe in and resolve to embrace the impermanence of feelings. Breathe out into the present moment and see all of the challenges and possibilities. Breathe in and begin the conversation with **simple acceptance and curiosity**.



Caritas 6: Use creative scientific problem-solving methods for caring decision making

- “To deeply understand any phenomenon requires observation from many vantage points and then synthesis of all forms of evidence into a cohesive, holistic picture of the event of interest. Only then is it possible to derive and promote lasting, effective treatment and support” (Sitzman & Watson, 2014).
- "Mindfulness means to establish yourself in the present moment. But that does not mean you don't have the right to scrutinize and learn from the past or plan for the future. If you are really grounded in the present moment and the future becomes the object of your mindfulness, you can look deeply at the future to see what you can do in the present moment (Nhat Hanh, 2002a, p. 60).



Caritas 7: Teaching/learning that addresses individual needs and styles

- Genuine teaching is transpersonal and significantly affects both parties within the teaching encounter. Thus, the relationship lives on beyond the context of the teaching, informing the life and behavior of participants (Watson, 2008).
- Our mind is a field in which every kind of seed is sown--seeds of compassion, joy, hope, sorrow, fear, pain, and difficulties... There are both wholesome and unwholesome seeds in our mind-field, sown every day by ourselves, our parents, schooling, ancestors, and society. Mindfulness helps us identify the seeds in our consciousness so that we can then choose to water only the ones that are most beneficial" (Nhat Hanh, 2006).
- Mindfulness perspective: Before teaching sessions, envision a field of vibrant sunflowers. Feel the warmth of the sun and radiate that warmth to others in the teaching exchange.



Caritas 8: Create a healing environment that respects human dignity

- Healing environments exist externally and internally, personally and collectively. True caring/healing evolves from considering each thought, word, and action sacred, with a focus of the interconnectedness of all.
- Mindfulness perspective: "One compassionate word, action, or thought can reduce another person's suffering...One word can give comfort and confidence...one action can save a person's life...One thought can do the same because thoughts always lead to words and actions. With compassion in our heart, every thought, word, and deed can bring about a miracle" (Nhat Hanh, 1997, pp. 5-6).
- You are the environment. Your inner stance to consciously care will transform the environments you are in.



VISUALIZATION TO SUPPORT LETTING GO OF FEELINGS AND SITUATIONS

- Sometimes it's easy to get attached to emotions and situations as if they are something substantial, unchanging, and enduring.
- Over the years, I have personally used and taught a simple visualization as a reminder of the impermanent nature of feelings.
- This visualization is presented on the slides that follow.





Close your eyes and envision the blue sky. Your calm, unperturbed core essence is the blue sky. Breathe in the fresh, cool sparkling air in the clear blue sky that is the true "you."

Now envision a few puffy white clouds drifting by in the sky of your mind. Reach out to grasp a cloud.

Its cool mist floats between your fingers and your hand comes up empty.

Clouds represent the many feelings that pass by your blue core essence.

Clouds look solid and substantial, but if you reach out to hold onto a cloud, it is impossible to grasp it. It is the same with feelings





Clouds continually go by in the calm blue sky of your mind, impermanent, always moving, changing, dissipating, and reforming.

Acknowledge the flow of clouds. Feel the cool dampness as they roll by. Appreciate each cloud for what can be learned from its passing without trying to fruitlessly hang on to any one cloud.

Whether it is negative or positive, none are permanent or graspable.





This approach allows for freedom to experience emotions, to grow and learn from them, without the stress of trying to hang on to or keep something that was never meant to be permanent.

Using this visualization for self and in relation to others helps to keep the expression of positive and negative feelings within perspective.

*This visualization also reminds us of the ever-changing nature of thoughts, situations, and **life**.*



- In Unit 4, we will explore the 9th and 10th Caritas Processes, and learn about Care Continuing with Watson's Touchstones.

