Beyond principle-based ethics - *An eclectic approach to nursing ethics*

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Outline of the paper

- Introduction

- Principle-based ethics

- The evolution of nursing ethics

- The proposed eclectic approach

- Recommendation

- Conclusion

Introduction

- In this paper I argue that principle-based ethics have always been the most common guidelines used in nursing ethics
- Principle-based ethics has set the standard that not only articulated the ethics of care, but provided a common pool of intellectual resources for theorist and practitioners of nursing
- As a new dimension I propose and advocate for the inclusion of the African philosophy of Ubuntu as the foundation of caring ethics in the nursing profession

Current status

- Beyond principle-based ethics is not a call to jettison the practice
- It is an invitation to recognise the changing context of nursing
  - Living in a diverse multicultural society
  - Technology also brought new ethical challenges
  - The question is what ought to de done and what guidelines are needed to influence moral decisions

The need to rethink ethical practices

- Nursing ethics was based on normative principle-based ethics which emanated from philosophy and medical science

- The principle-based ethics were based on the western epistemologies which emphasise human rights and individual autonomy

- We adopted the morals and ethics of caring from ways of knowing which differ from our own and thus alienating us from the communities we serve

- The cultural beliefs and practices of both nurses and recipients of care were overlooked

- The essence of the ethics of caring which defines and symbolises nursing were introduced in the late 19th century

- There are new theories today that can strengthen the ethics of care

Grounds of principle-based ethics

- Principles have been there since time immemorial
- Biomedical ethical framework
- Tom Beauchamp and James Childress published 1st edition of universal principles 1979
  - Respect for persons
  - Beneficence
  - Non-maleficence
  - Justice
- Belmont report (1979), published guidelines for responsible research using human subjects:
  - Respect for persons
  - Beneficence
  - Justice

What are the Challenges that require rethinking of PBE

- Do not provide an exhaustive account of how the principles can be used as a framework for moral reasoning
- Do not provide a full philosophical justification for decision-making
- There is often conflict among principles
- The balancing of principles has been tied to intuition
- They are not ranked making it very difficult during decision-making
- Individual autonomy emphasises caring for oneself

Evolution of nursing ethics

Virtue Ethics

- Virtue ethics is an approach to ethics that emphasises the need to inculcate values that guide human conduct

- Virtue ethics focuses on one's character and virtues for determining or evaluating ethical behavior
- The innate being

Ethics of Care

- Relational
- Recognition of situatedness and contextuality

- Caring

Relational Ethics

- The last two decades relational ethics was introduced
  - Mutuality
  - Relationship
  - Narrative
  - Caring

Sources: Gadow (1999)

- Engagement- dialogue
- Mutual respect- acknowledge differences and accept diversity
- Embodiment- connection between persons
- Environment- interrelationship required to understand self

Source: Bergum and dosetter (2005)

Ubuntu alongside or alternative to PBE

- Ubuntu can be described as an indigenous way of being that is unique in Africa
- It emanates from an aphorism that says "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"
- A person is a person through other persons - I am because you are and you are because I am
- It emphasises relationship with the other, the living, the dead and nature

Ubuntu ethics

- *Ubuntu ethics is defined as a set of values central among which are:*
  - *reciprocity*
  - *common good*
  - *peaceful relations*
  - *emphasis on human dignity*
  - *the value of human life*
  - *consensus*
  - *tolerance*
  - *mutual respect*

Ujomudike (2015)

Ubuntu

tenets of ubuntu	principles ubuntu
- Respect for human dignity - Compassion - An ethic of care - Justice - Tolerance - Respect for others - Dialogue - Consensus - Pursuit for the common good - Respect - Receptivity - Role modeling - Relational and responsibility for others - Reconciliatory	- Collectivism and solidarity - Participatory decision making - Ubuntu emphasises communitarianism - Sharing of responsibilities and challenges - Dialogue which emphasise communication - Solving problems by reaching consensus

Ubuntu as Complimentary

- We do not argue that Ubuntu completely displaces PBE
- Ubuntu brings a cultural and philosophical understanding of communal and social relations that emphasises personhood and community
- It provides another angle from which to establish the basis of ethics

  - Using it one can then examine what is good for the individual

  - Understand how individual and social goods contribute to the building of the person and community

  - Offers a starting point for negotiating the common good and social goods

Ubuntu grounds the necessity of an eclectic model

- Can a single model assist in instilling the caring ethics in the nursing profession?

- Can principle-based ethics continue to be applicable in different contexts without contextualisation?

- Similarly can ubuntu be applied without taking cognisance of the principle-based approach?

- What do differing systems hold in common and where do they diverge

Ubuntu strengthens an Eclectic approach

- This is a new dimension which uses Ubuntu as a philosophical underpinning of the ethics of caring

- An eclectic model "based on the African philosophy of Ubuntu" importantly includes all other epistemologies to build a holistic approach

Similarities between Ethics of care, relational ethics and Ubuntu
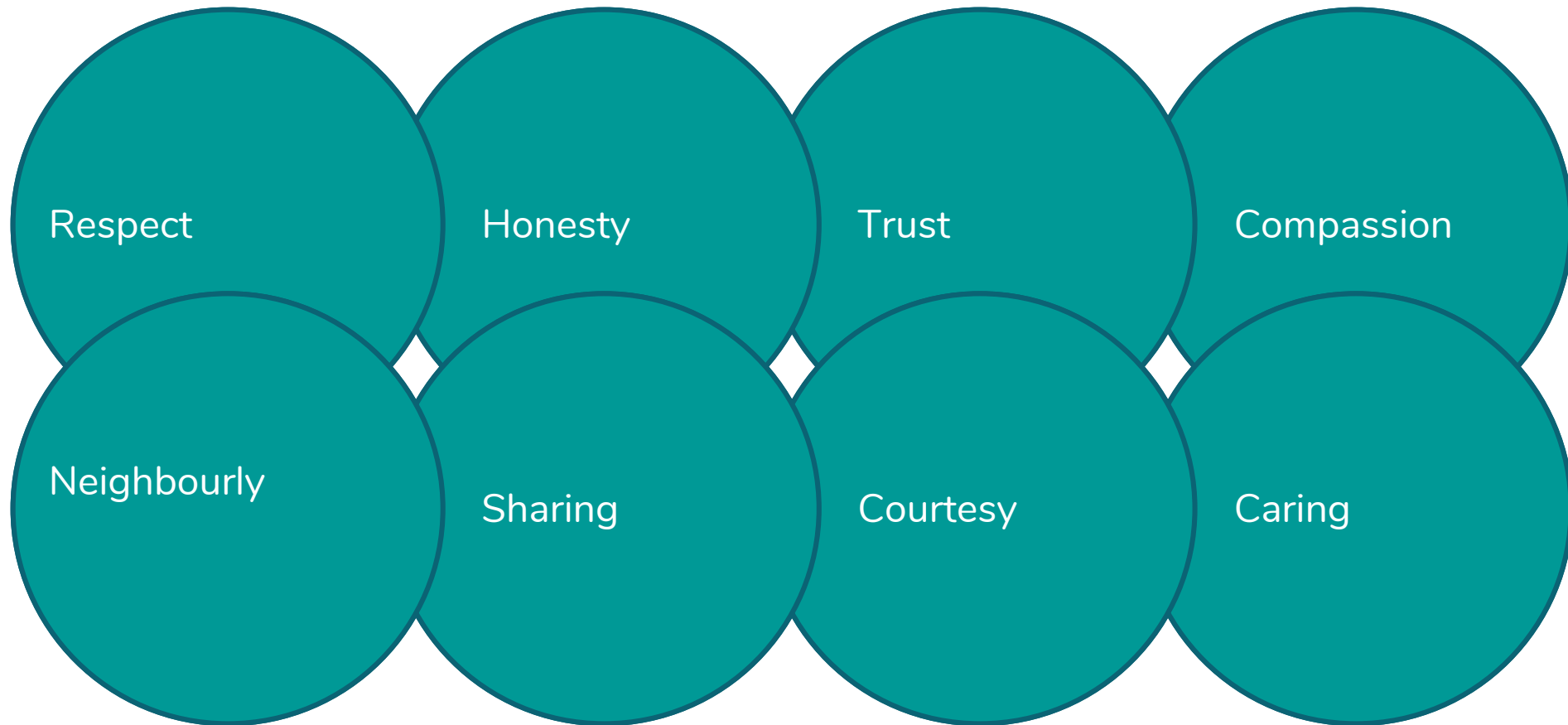

Relational

Dependency

Interconnectedness

Reciprocity
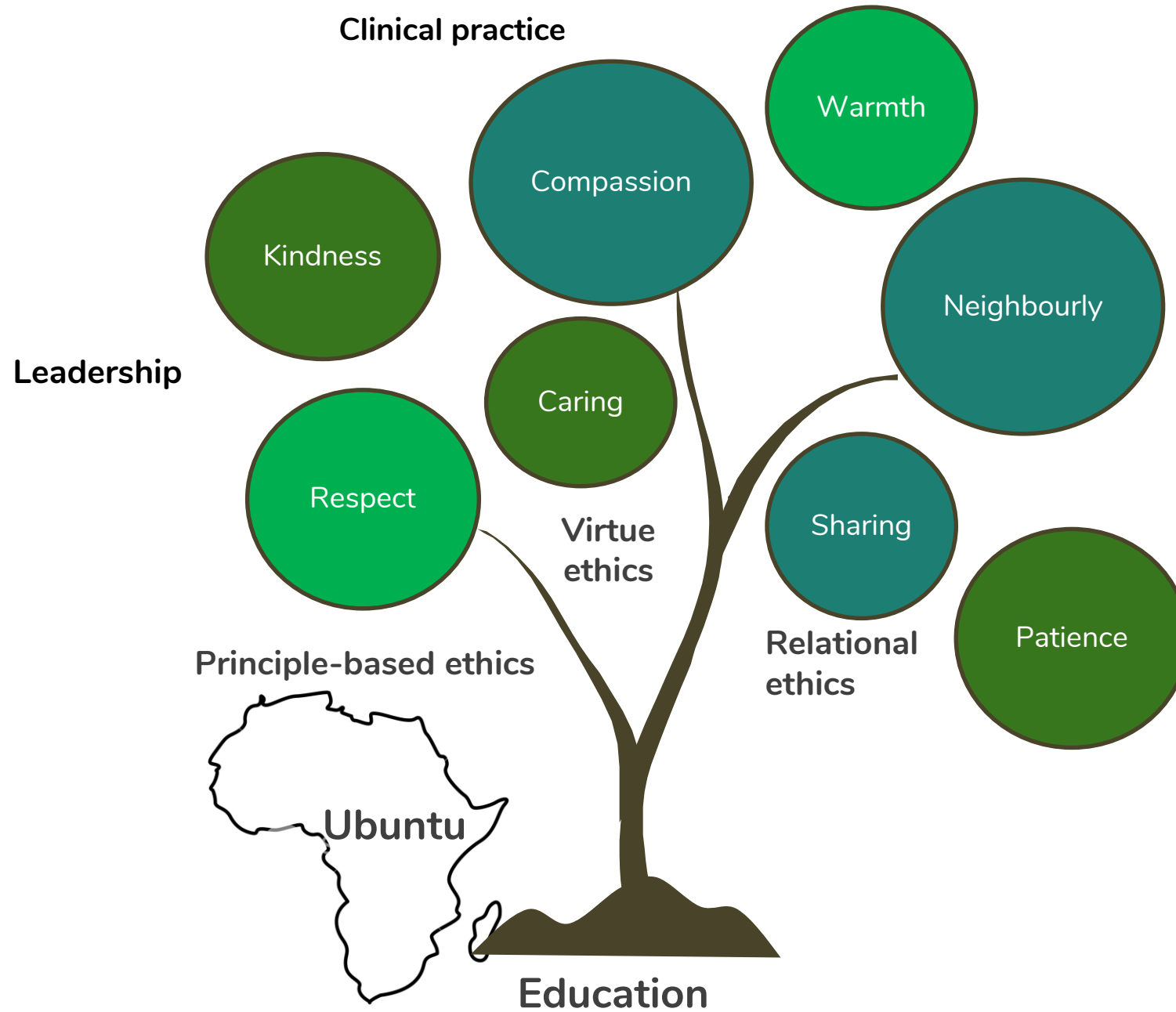
Relationship between individuals, groups and institutions

Similarities between virtue ethics and values of Ubuntu

Respect

Honesty

Trust

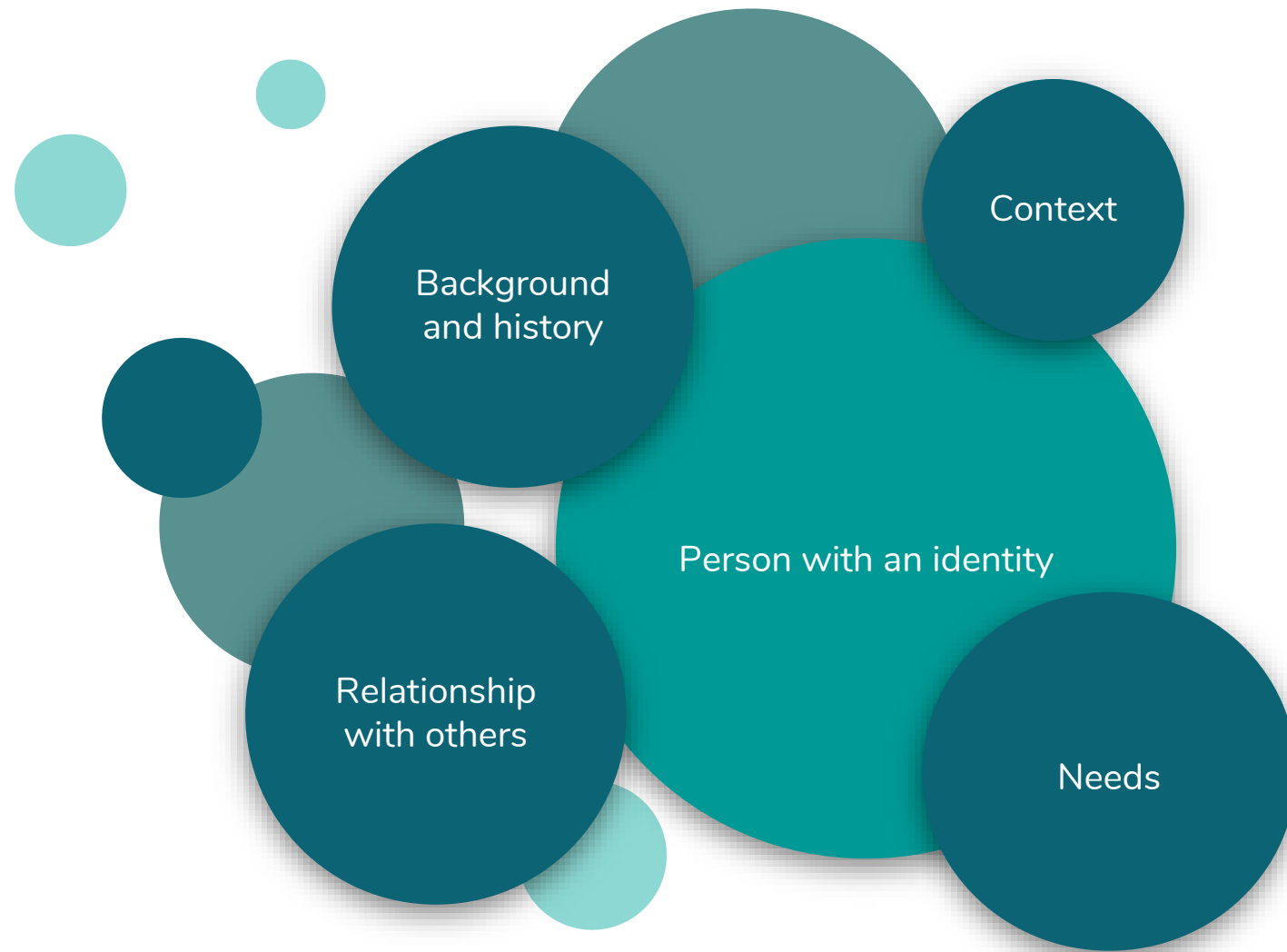Compassion

Neighbourly

Sharing

Courtesy

Caring

Components of the eclectic model

- Ubuntu is the stem
- Virtue ethics
- Principle-based ethics
- Relational ethics
- Ethics of care

Clinical practice

Warmth

Compassion

Kindness

Neighbourly

Leadership

Caring

Respect

Sharing

Virtue ethics

Patience

Principle-based ethics

Relational ethics

Ubuntu

Education

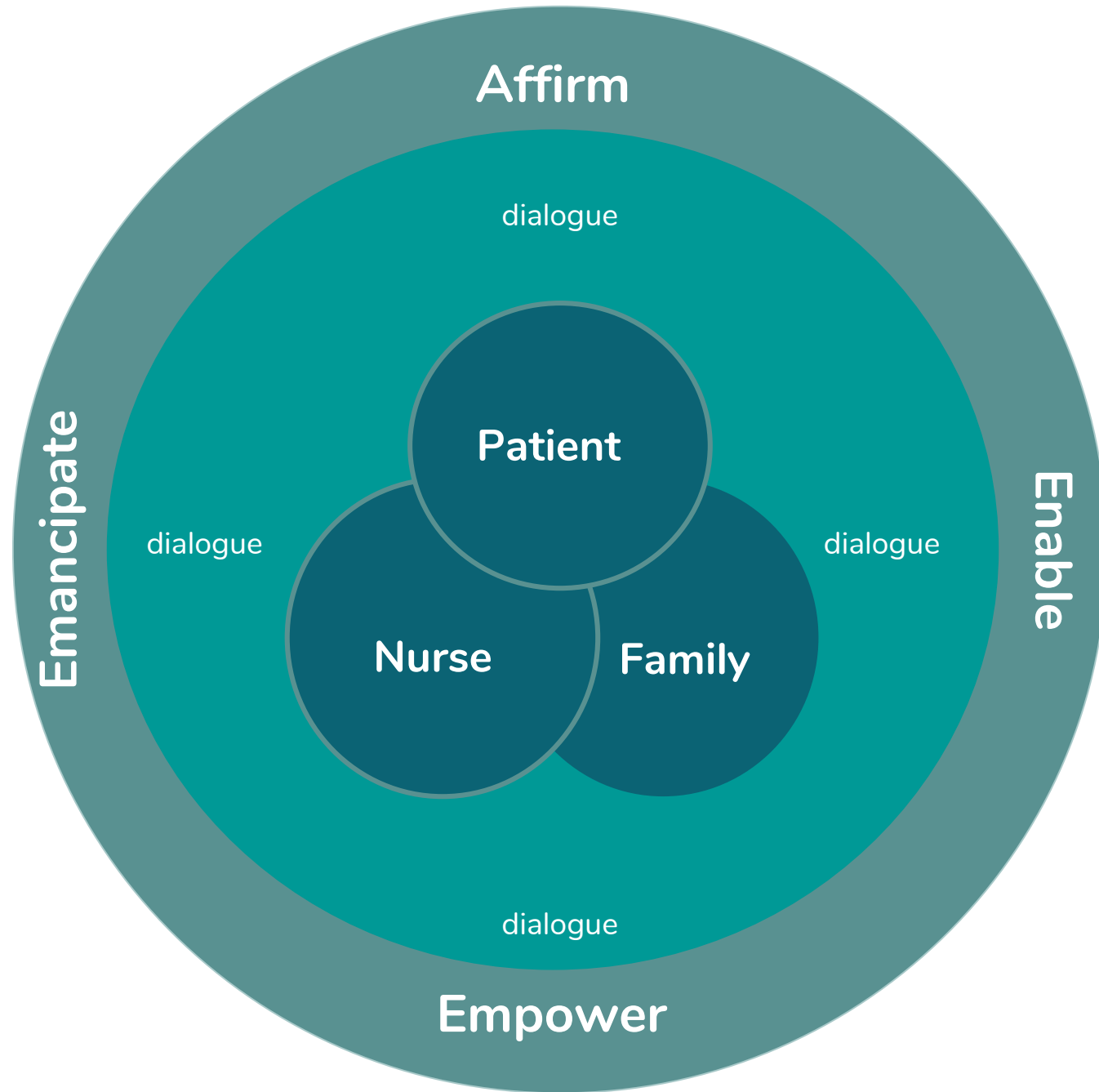# Ubuntu in health care prioritises the person

- A person who has his/her own identity
- Affirming her own identity yet recognising her relationship with others
- The individual's life has meaning within the context of the meaning of the lives of others in the community
- History and background which determines adaptation and coping in different circumstances
- A sense of obligation and belonging to a group
- Solidarity with others is central to communalism as an ethos

Context

Background and history

Person with an identity

Relationship with others

Needs

Ubuntu and the Nursing profession

- Ability to understand and identify needs
- Communication skills and dialogue
- Becomes a tool to understand patients

Society

- The individual exists in a liberal society, however, he has an obligation to society
- The individual depends on society to achieve the fullest potential of his ability
- The responsibility to play a part in the development of society
- It is a social and ethical principle that tries to define the place of the individual as a primary element of social order
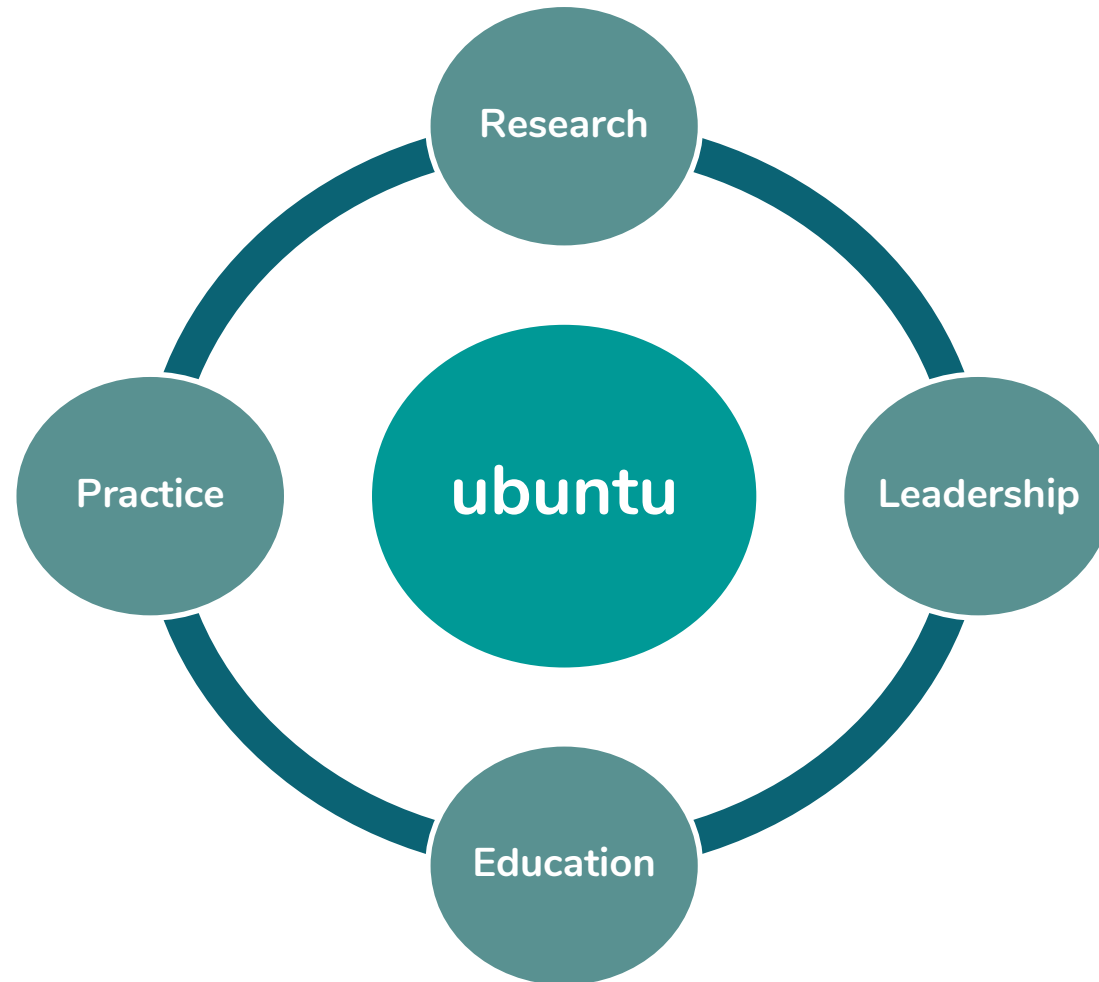
Health

- The welfare of the group is greater than the welfare of a single individual
- A sense of harmony or unity
- A common purpose to strive for

Recommendations

Research

Practice

ubuntu

Leadership

Education

Education

- The primacy of values in the socialization of nurses

- Ethics and Philosophy should play a role

- In some communities religious values remain pivotal as long as they are not exclusive

- Ubuntu offers both dimension of the personal and communal

- Mainstreaming Ubuntu in nursing education would better prepare the professional staff needed for 21st Century Nursing

Research

- There is a urgent need to carry research on Ubuntu ethics
- This is demanded by the growing intellectual quest for theories from the Global South
- New theoretical perspectives will enable us address contemporary issue
- Research will prepare nursing professionals in several ways:
- Relational accountability and responsibility
  - Respectful representation
  - Reciprocal appropriation
  - Rights and regulation

Leadership and Practice

Leadership

- Policies reflecting ubuntu

Practice

- Nursing care that resonate with ubuntu

Conclusion

- Our deepest moral obligation to become more human - *umuntu*

- Living Ubuntu guided by collective wisdom

- As nurses we must adopt "we thinking" rather than "I"

- Instilling Ubuntu ethics among young nurses will assist us in taking the profession forward

Thank you

References

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- Larkin,PJ; de Casterlé, BD and Schotsman, P. A relational ethical dialogue with research ethics committees. Nursing Ethics 2008 15 (2) © 2008 SAGE Publications