

# Creating an Equity and Care Ecosystem in Education

Background image:  
Red Sea!

Maha Bali, PhD  @bali\_maha

Center for Learning & Teaching, American University in Cairo,  
Virtually Connecting & Equity Unbound  
Kent State University, October 2021



السلام عليكم

How are you  
feeling?



Photo by [Alireza Zohoor Parvaz](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Agenda

1. Checking in
2. Chatterfall
3. Intersections of Equity and Care
4. Ecosystems of Equity and Care
  - a. Roumy Cheese
  - b. Levels within classroom & institution
5. TRIZ - what stands in our way?
6. Takeaways



These slides are open  
for commenting at:



<https://bit.ly/KentBali>

# Chatterfall

Please  
respond in the chat



What's an important thing you learned or achieved in the past year?



Image from Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/photos/sunset-rope-swing-girl-silhouette-5737120/>



For me - to be useful to others, esp via community-  
building resources

<https://onehe.org/equity-unbound>



Image from Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/photos/people-jumping-happiness-happy-fun-821624/>

If you were to create a documentary or book about your biggest challenges in 2020, what would it be called?

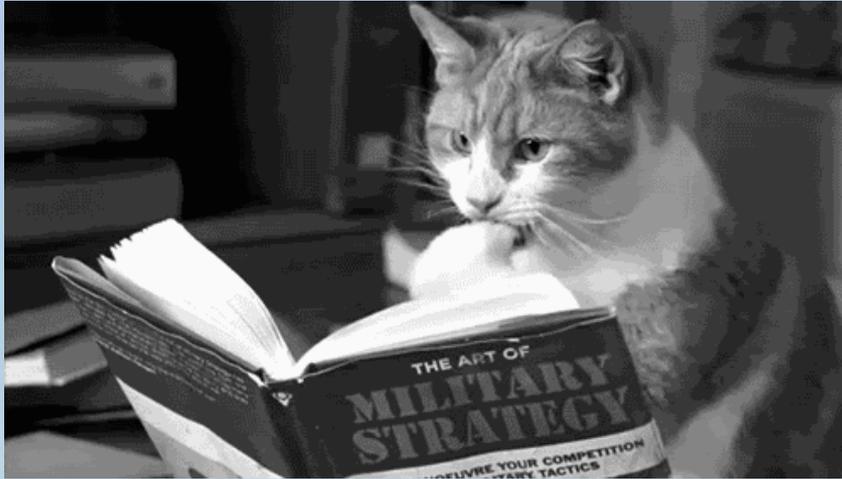


Image from: <https://giphy.com/gifs/cat-book-1TgECF0mNVirC>

What is something  
that has helped  
you survive or  
brought you joy  
the past few  
months?

<https://giphy.com/gifs/mightyoak-springtime-bees-trees-flowers-bloom-l46CbKgZ1hvJjxfZS>



Kintsugi (Japanese art)  
What was broken or  
damaged during the  
pandemic? How can we  
repair or heal it into  
something more beautiful?



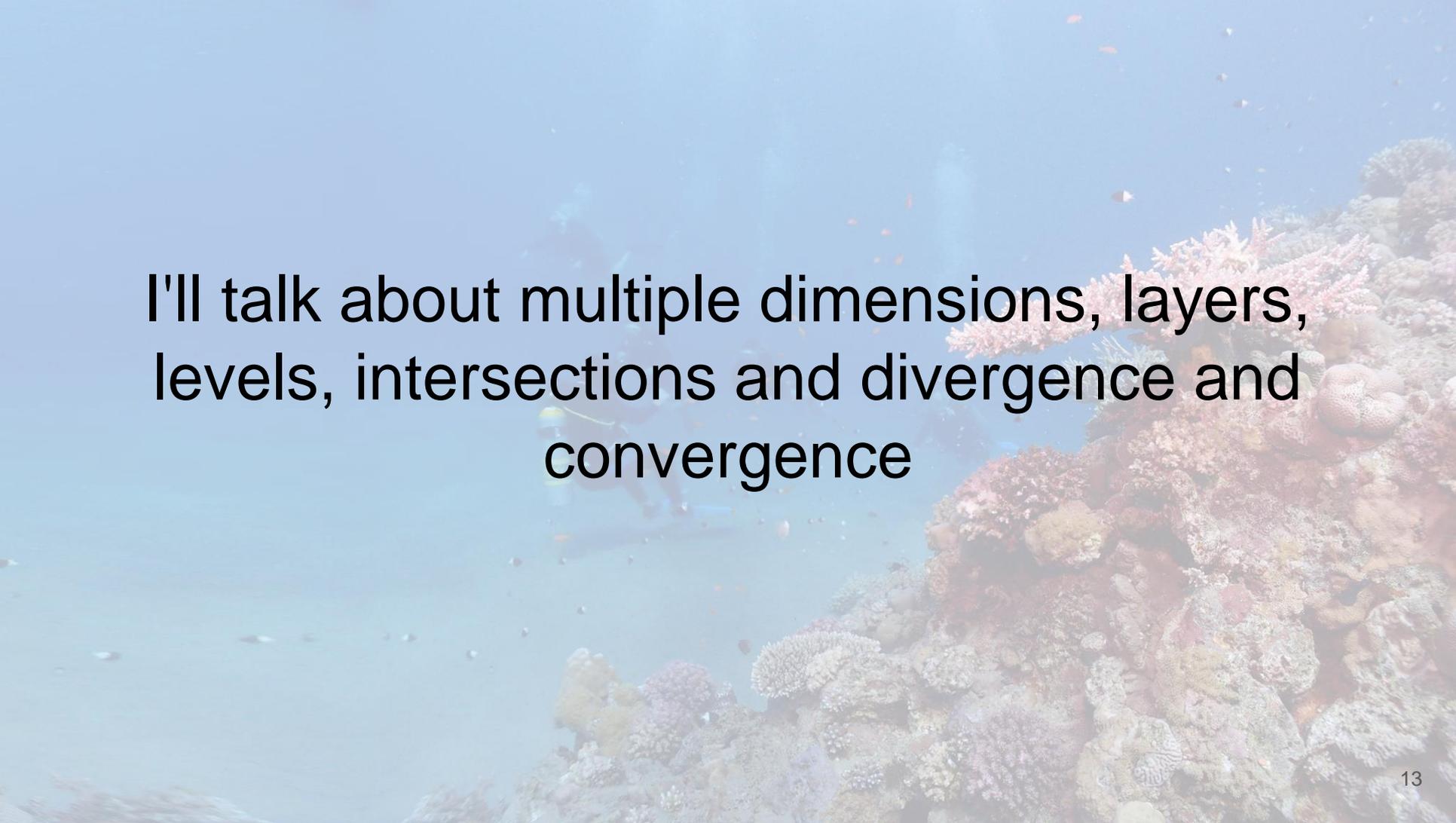
Image by @riho\_k on Unsplash  
<https://unsplash.com/photos/JuDPjcutors>

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, a diverse coral reef is visible with various species of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are seen swimming in the clear blue water. The text "Equity and Care Need to Flourish within an Ecosystem" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Equity and Care Need to Flourish within an Ecosystem

“Teachers who care, who serve their students, are usually at odds with the environments wherein we teach”  
bell hooks, 2003,  
*Teaching in Community*, p. 91



An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Small fish are scattered throughout the water. In the background, a diver is visible, slightly out of focus. The overall lighting is soft and blue, typical of an underwater environment.

I'll talk about multiple dimensions, layers,  
levels, intersections and divergence and  
convergence

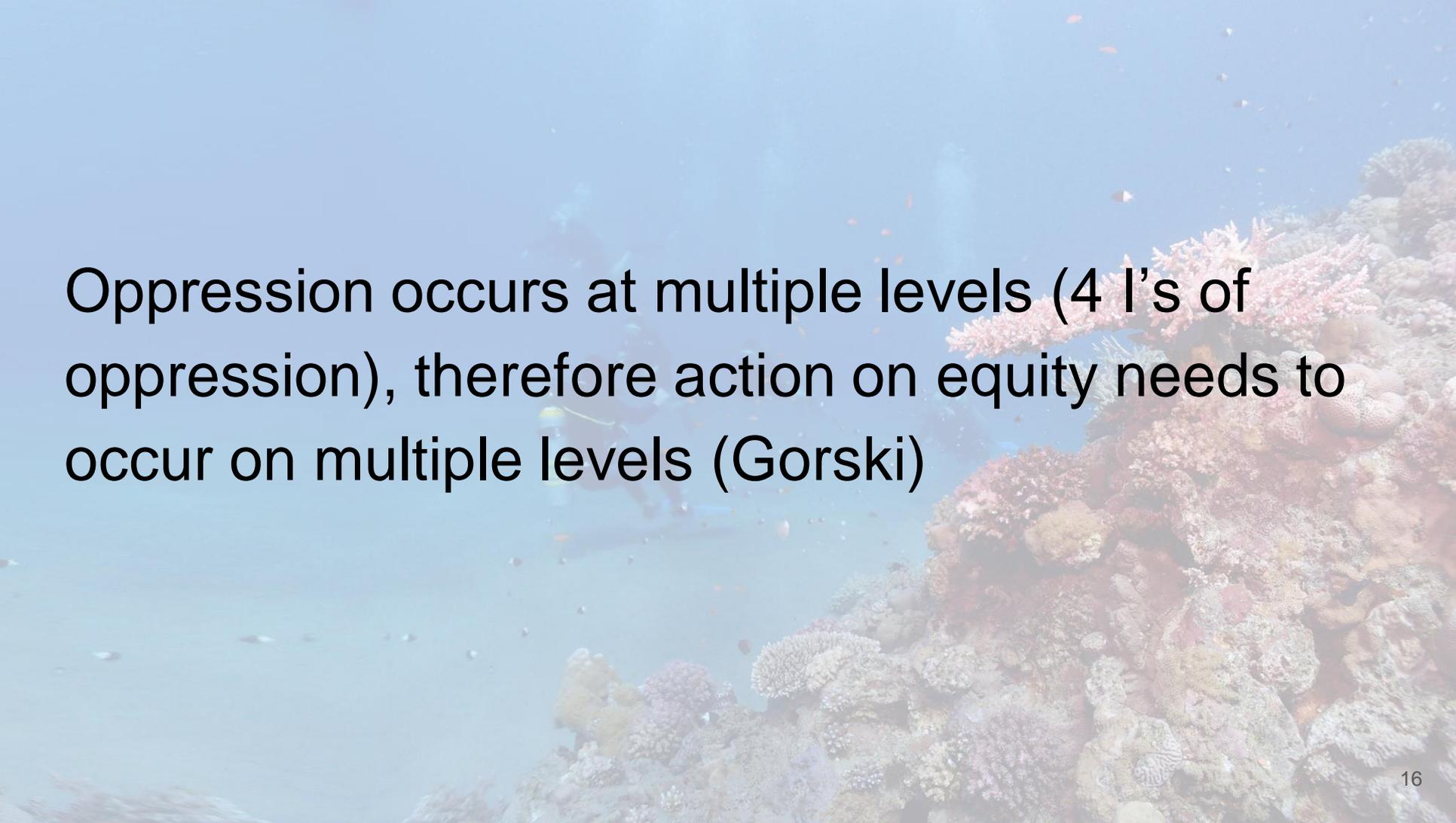
An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are visible in the background, swimming through the clear blue water. The overall atmosphere is serene and highlights the beauty of marine ecosystems.

# **Broad conclusions about equity and care:**

(Bali & Zamora, forthcoming)

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The foreground is dominated by a dense, colorful reef structure with various types of coral in shades of pink, orange, yellow, and purple. In the background, the water is a clear, light blue, and several divers are visible, some appearing to be swimming or observing the reef. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a healthy marine environment.

Equity is multidimensional (Fraser, 2005);  
oppression is multidimensional (Collins, 2002)

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Small fish are scattered throughout the clear blue water. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Oppression occurs at multiple levels (4 l's of oppression), therefore action on equity needs to occur on multiple levels (Gorski)

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there is a large, diverse coral reef with various colors including pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are visible in the background, swimming and exploring the reef. The water is clear and blue, with some small fish swimming around. The overall scene is vibrant and detailed.

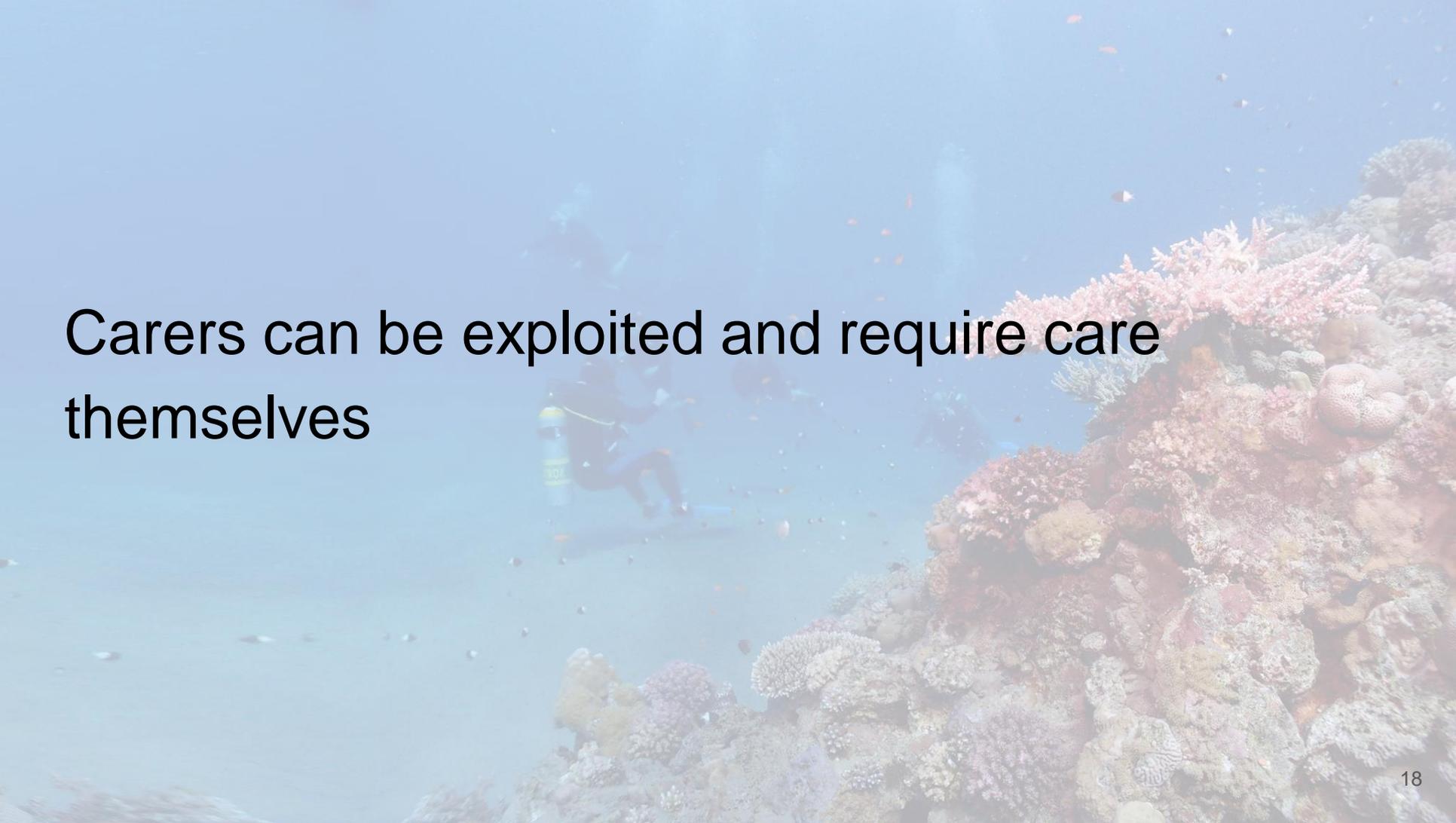
# Care is not monolithic; care can be harmful

Caines, A., & Richard, S. (2020). 'DigCiz Weaponization of Care' OER20 Blog. <https://oer20.oerconf.org/news/2020/02/digciz-weaponization-of-care-by-autumm-caines-and-sundi-richard/#gref>

David, E. J. R., & Derthick, A. O. (2018). *The Psychology of Oppression*. Springer. New York: NY.

Dowie-Chin, T. & Schroeder, S. (2020). Critical, calculated, neoliberal: differing conceptions of care in higher education, *Teaching in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2020.1749588

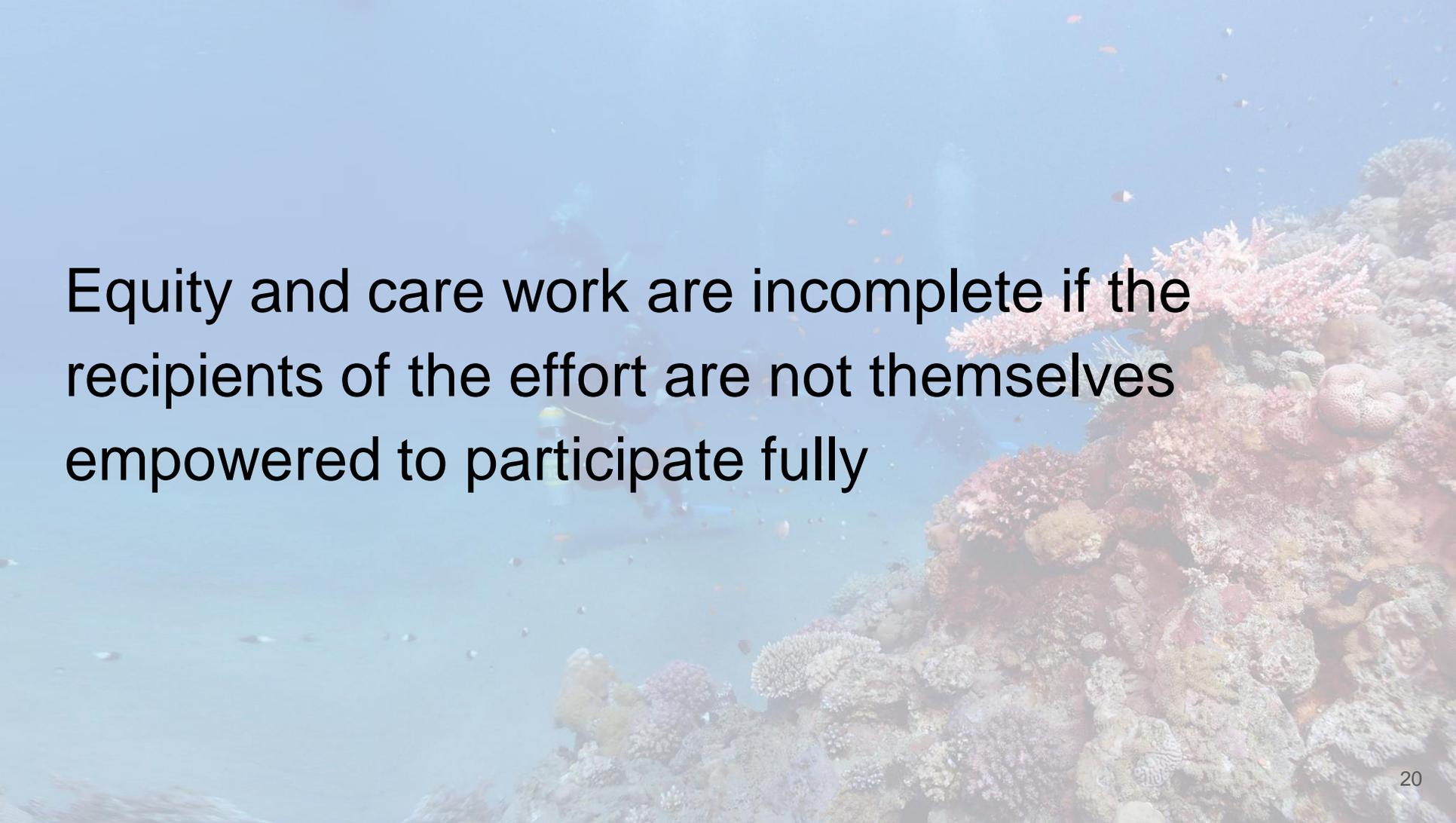
Eales L, & Peers D. (2020). Care haunts, hurts, heals: The promiscuous poetics of queer crip Mad care. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. Jul 1:1-19. doi: 10.1080/10894160.2020.1778849. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 32609080.

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there is a dense and colorful coral reef with various species of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are visible in the mid-ground, swimming and exploring the reef. The water is clear and blue, with some small fish scattered throughout. The overall scene is vibrant and detailed.

Carers can be exploited and require care themselves

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, a diverse coral reef is visible with various species of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are seen in the mid-ground, swimming and observing the reef. The water is clear and blue, with many small fish swimming around. The overall scene is vibrant and healthy.

There is power in relationships involving care

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with numerous small fish swimming around. The coral is diverse in color and shape, including branching corals, brain corals, and sea fans. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a shallow depth.

Equity and care work are incomplete if the recipients of the effort are not themselves empowered to participate fully

# Roumy cheese analogy

<https://blog.mahabali.me/educational-technology-2/swiss-cheese-analogy-for-covid-19-rumi-cheese-analogy-for-inclusive-education/>

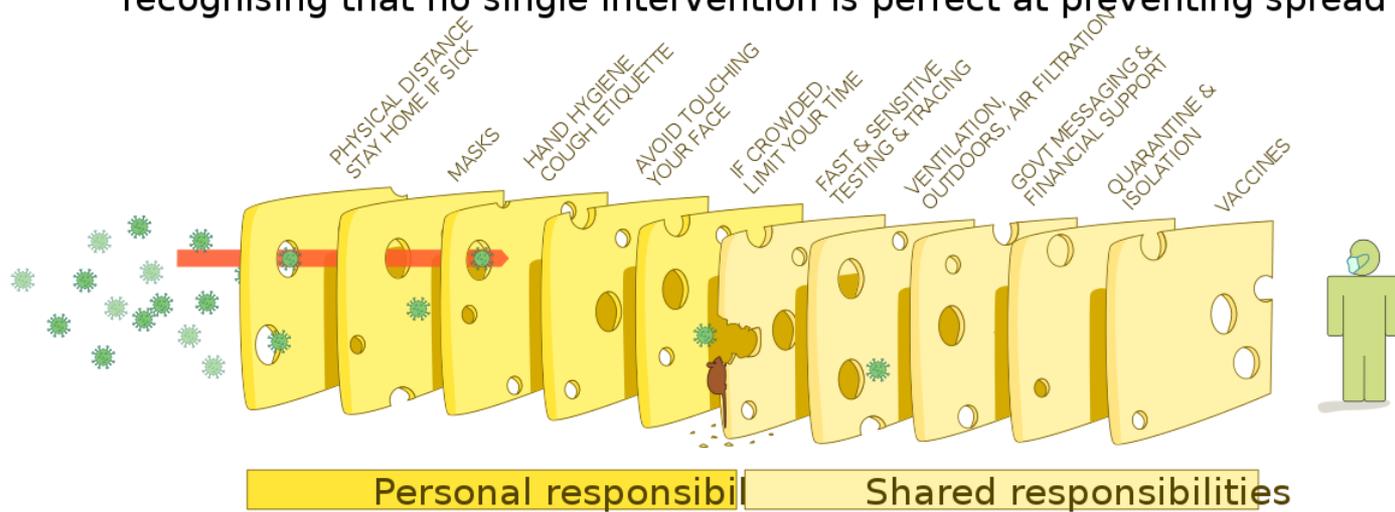
Original by Ian McKay is about how no “one” mode of preventing spread of infection can protect you against the COVID-19 virus, but multiple together can help “fill the holes” more effectively

Original by Ian McKay from Wikimedia Commons CC-BY 4.0

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Swiss\\_cheese\\_ver3.0.svg#/media/File:Swiss\\_cheese\\_ver3.0.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Swiss_cheese_ver3.0.svg#/media/File:Swiss_cheese_ver3.0.svg)

## The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Virus Pandemic Defence

recognising that no single intervention is perfect at preventing spread



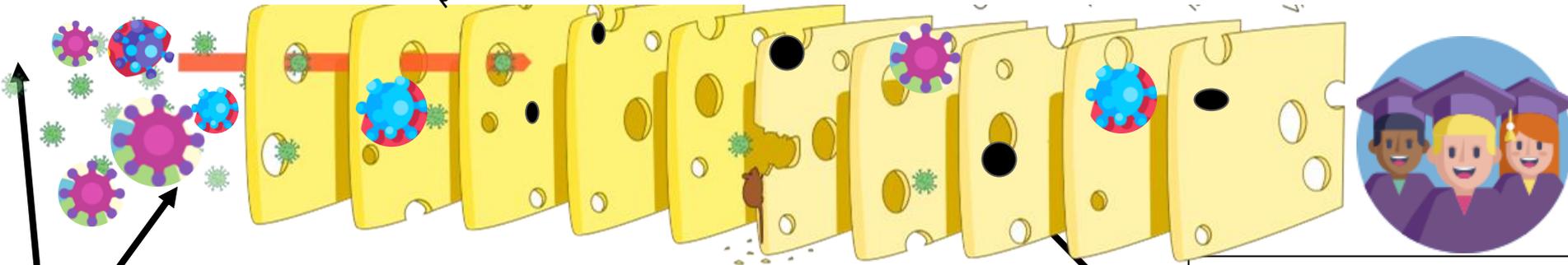
Each intervention (layer) has imperfections (holes).  
Multiple layers improve success.

Ian M Mackay  
virologydownunder.com  
with thanks to jody lanard, katherine arden & the Uni of Qld  
Based on the Swiss cheese model of accident causation, by James T Reason, 1989  
version 3.0  
update: 24oct2020

# Roumy Cheese Analogy for Caring, Equitable Education

Maha Bali & Leigh-Anne Perryman CC-BY-SA  
Adapted from  
[Ian McKay's virus analogy](#)

Supporting identity & handling bias  
Adopting transformative/liberatory  
pedagogies  
decolonising curricula  
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy



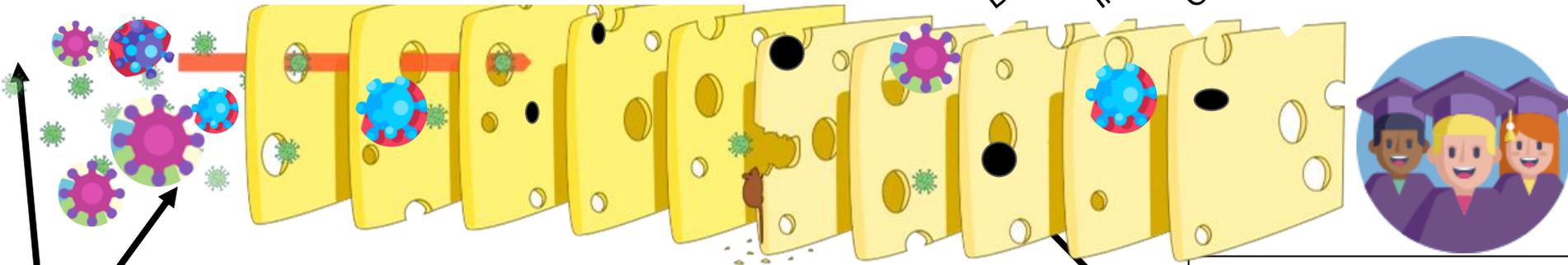
Diverse Causes of Inequity, Need for Care:  
E.g. Racism, xenophobia, coloniality, epistemic injustice

Black peppercorn  
represent how some  
actions meant to promote  
justice for one group can  
be harmful for another  
group

# Roumy Cheese Analogy for Caring, Equitable Education

Maha Bali CC-BY-SA  
Adapted from  
[Ian McKay's virus analogy](#)

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy  
Universal Design for Learning  
Self-mapped Learning Pathways  
Intentionally Equitable Pathways  
Learner Agency  
Trauma-informed Hospitality  
Building community in class  
Institutional Policies (P/F, proctoring)  
Other practices?



Diverse Causes of Inequity, Need for Care:  
E.g. Racism, classism, heteropatriarchy, ableism, neuronormativity, xenophobia, etc.  
Can be large (systemic) or small (individual) & intersectional

Black peppercorn represent how some actions meant to promote justice for one group can be harmful for another group

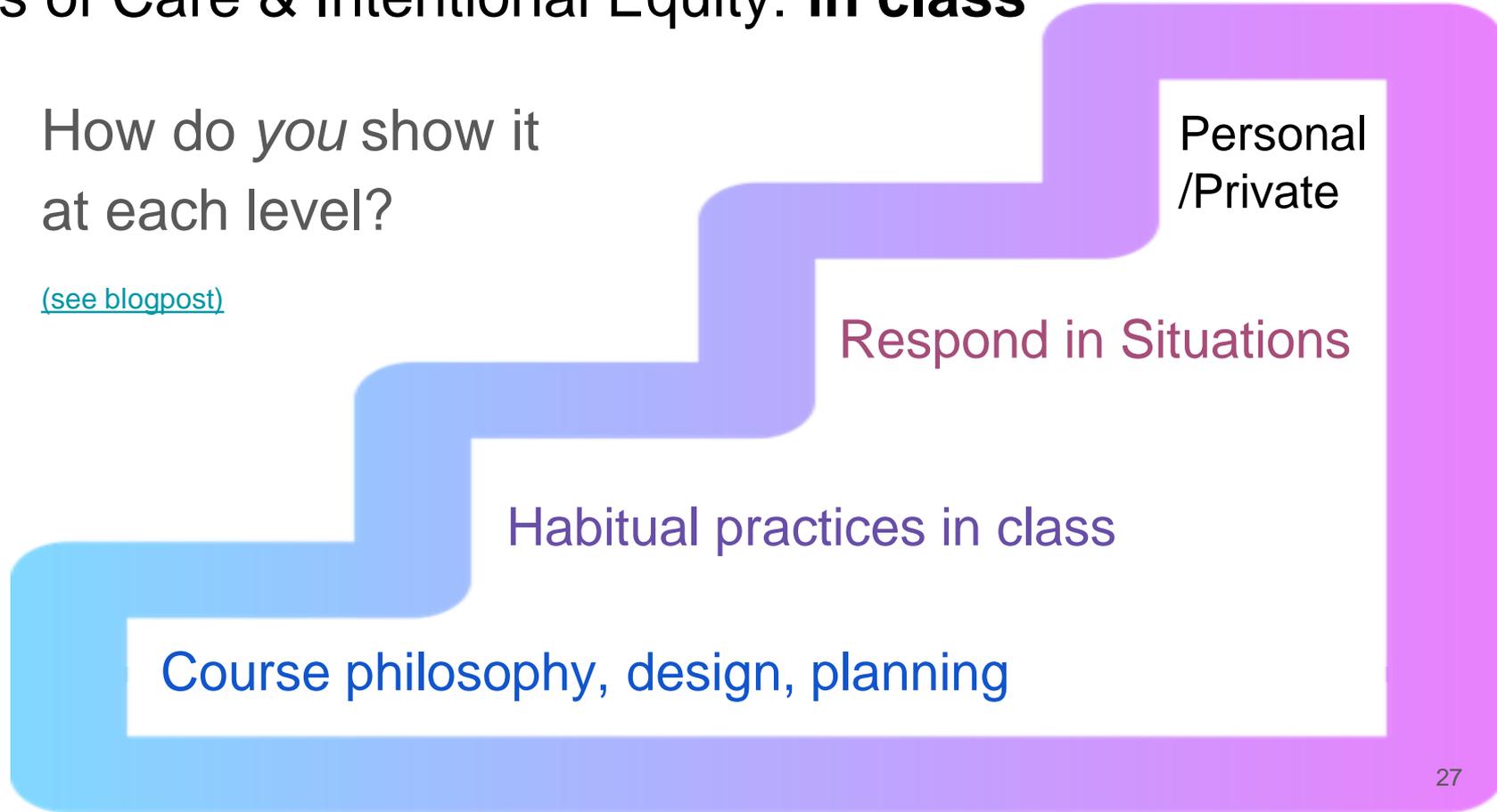
An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there is a dense, colorful coral reef with various species of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. In the background, two divers are visible, one in the center and another further back. The water is clear and blue, with many small fish swimming around. The overall scene is vibrant and detailed.

# How Do We Center/Embody Care?

# Levels of Care & Intentional Equity: **in class**

How do *you* show it  
at each level?

[\(see blogpost\)](#)



# Care with Parity of Participation (Fraser)

"In the caring approach, we would prefer to advise: do unto others as they would have done unto them."

(Noddings)

I say: "Do unto students as THEY would have done unto THEM)

Noddings, N. (2012). The language of care ethics. *Knowledge Quest*, 40(5), 52.

Bali, M. (2020). <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/do-unto-students-they-would-have-done-them>



# Levels of Care & Intentional Equity: **systemic**

How do *you* embody it  
at each level?

[\(see blogpost\)](#)





Equity/Care matrix: [Bali & Zamora \(2020\)](#) Bali & Zamora (forthcoming)

*Maha Bali*

*Mia Zamora*

*Equity Unbound*

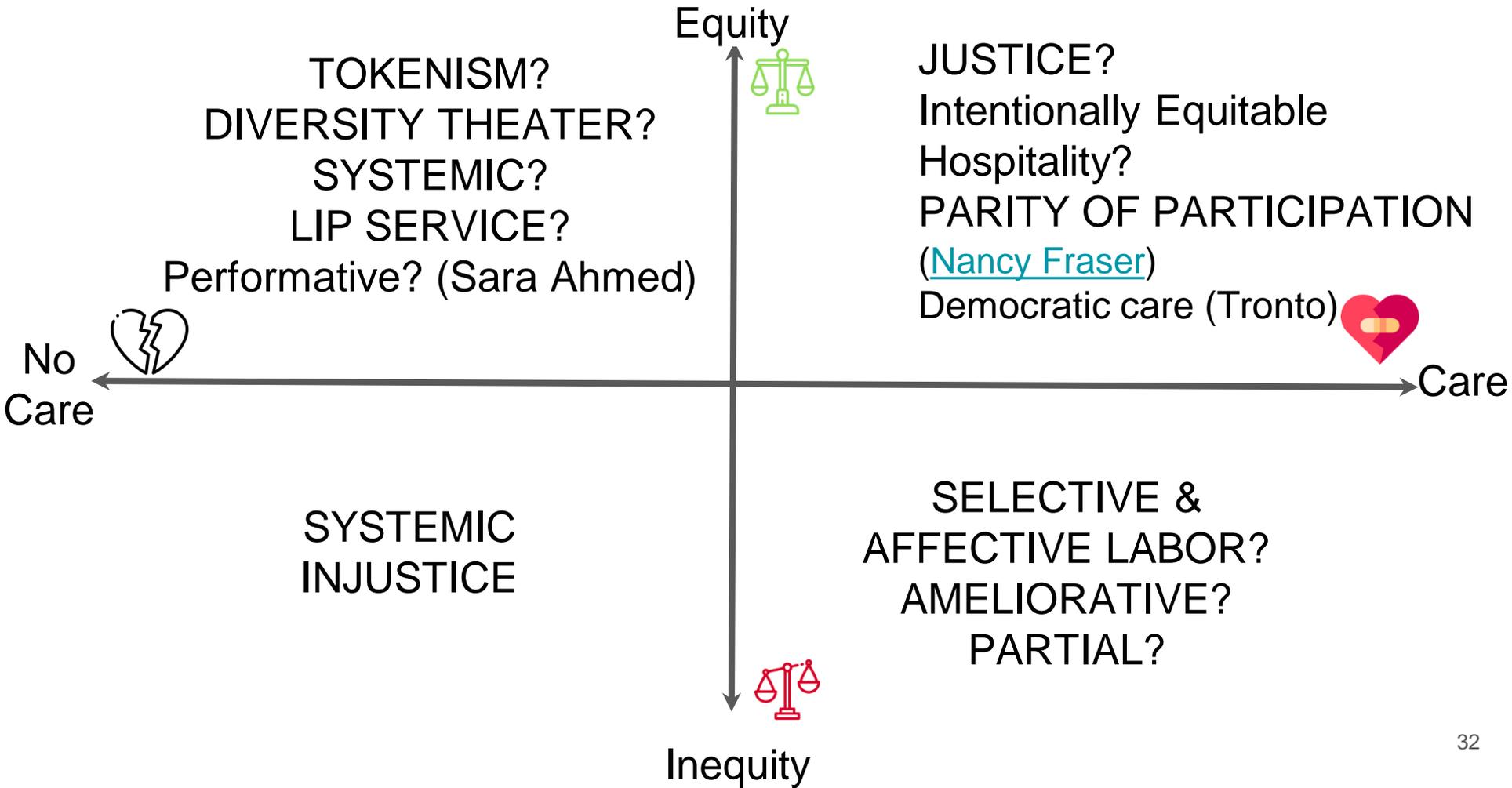
**open**  
**education**  
**conference**

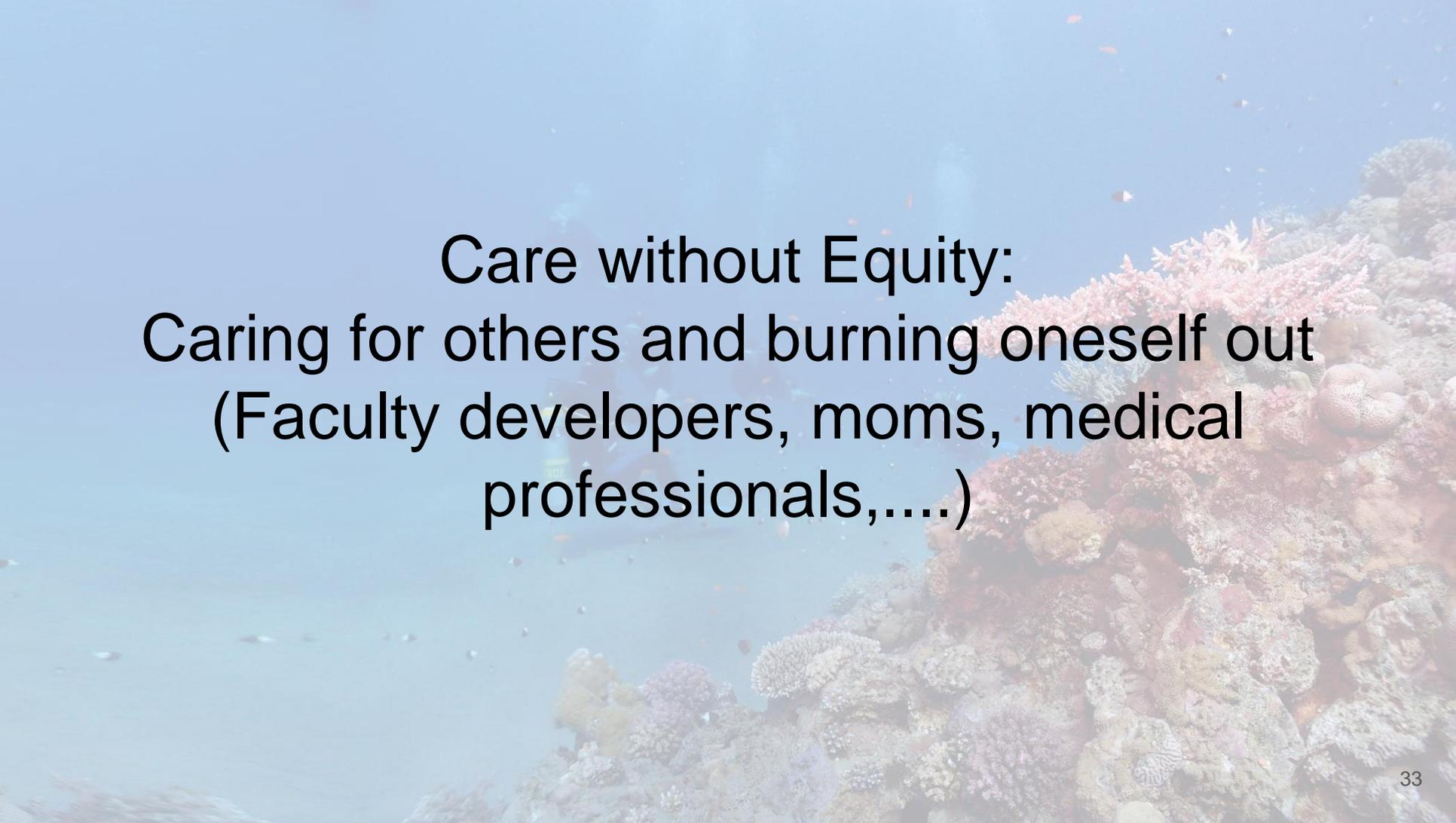
**KEYNOTE SESSION**

*November 9-13, 2020 • #OpenEd20*

What is EQUITY without CARE and what is  
CARE without EQUITY?





An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various colorful corals in shades of pink, orange, yellow, and purple. Small fish are visible swimming in the background. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

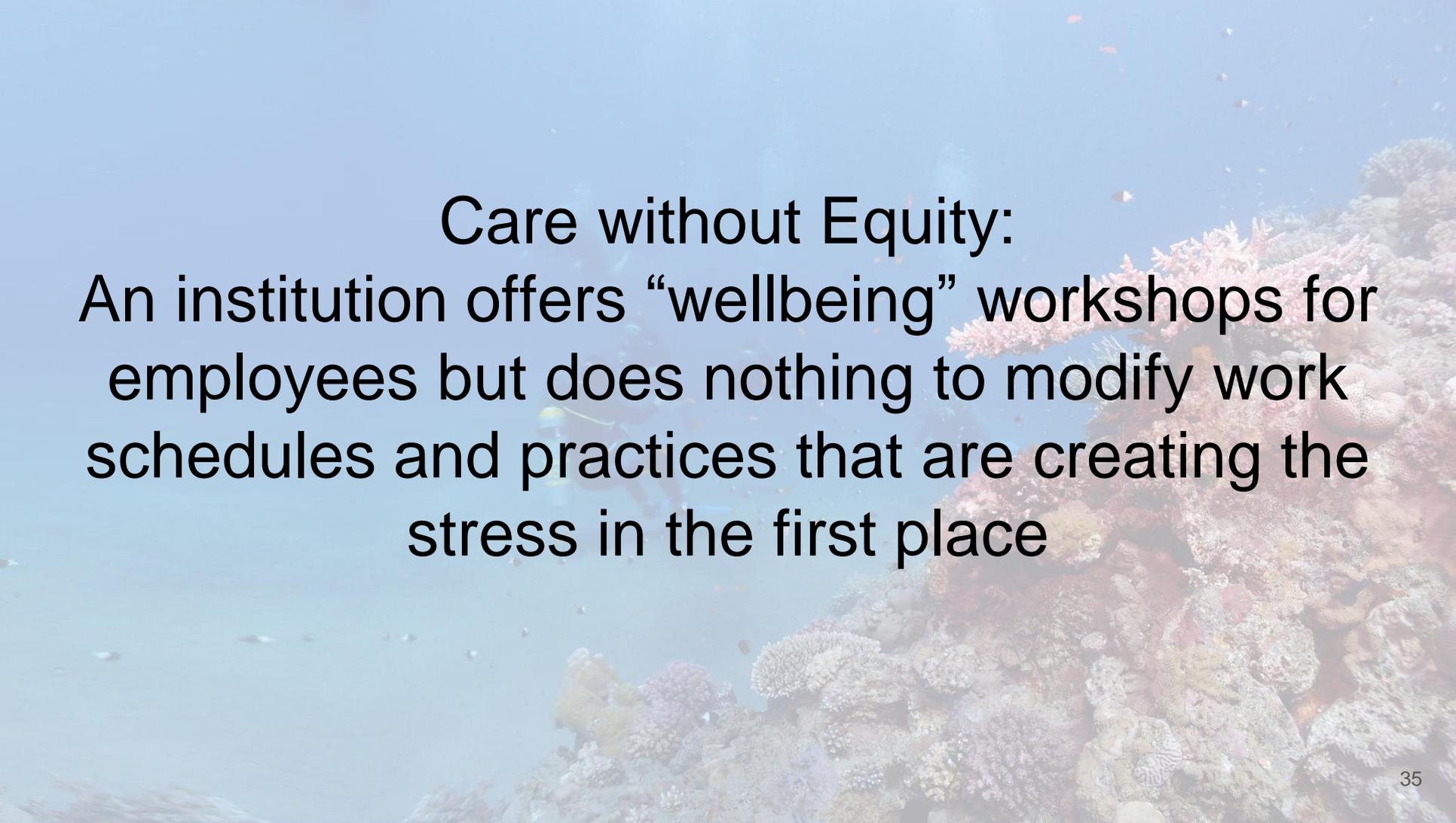
Care without Equity:  
Caring for others and burning oneself out  
(Faculty developers, moms, medical  
professionals,....)

## Care without Equity...

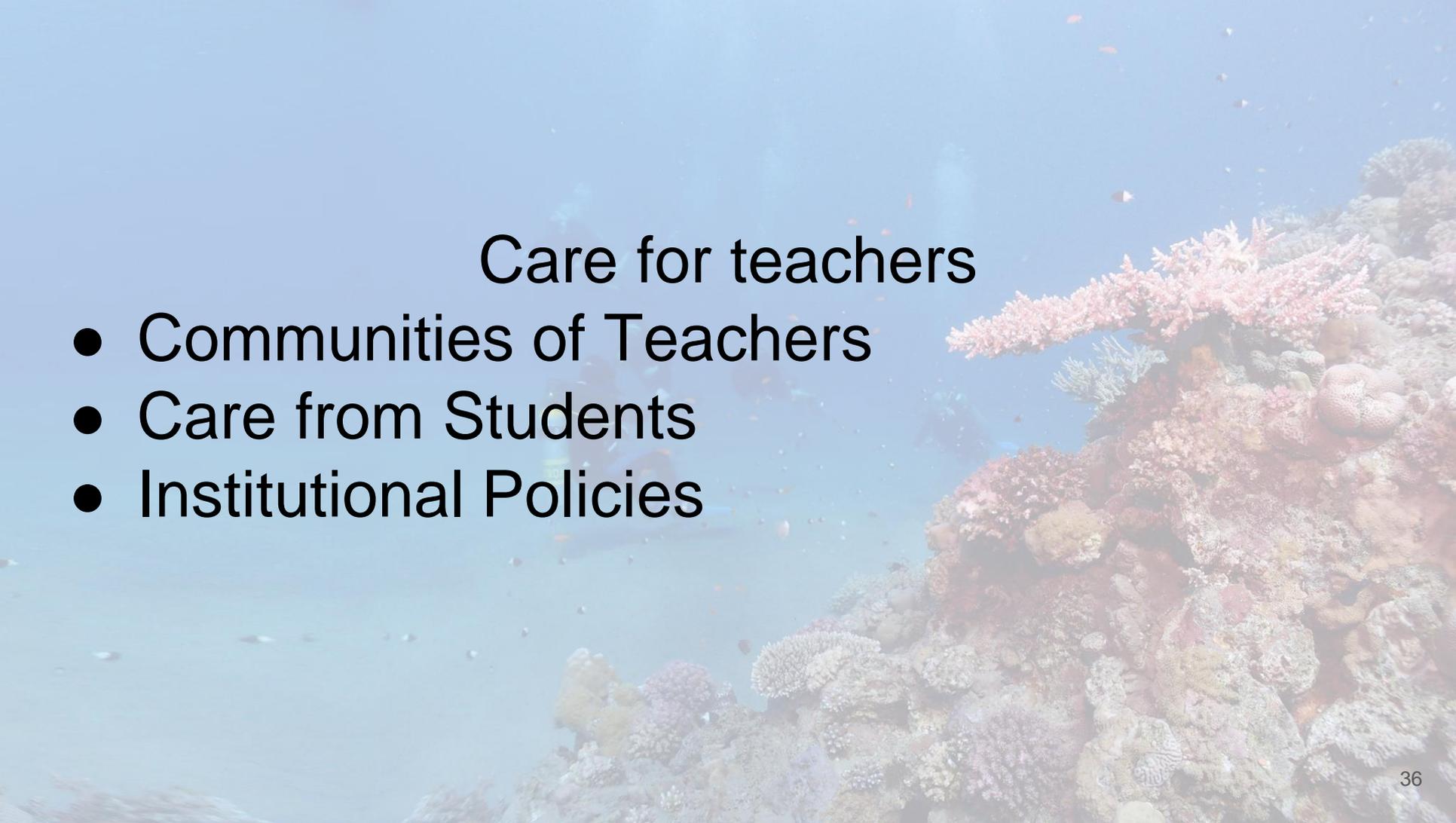
“To do my job well, I invest fully in people. Because I invest fully in people, the university doesn’t—it doesn’t have to. Because the university doesn’t, I invest fully in people. And on and on and on.” - [Brenna Clarke Gray](#), p.

52



An underwater scene featuring a vibrant coral reef on the right side, with various colorful corals and small fish swimming in the clear blue water. The text is overlaid on the left and center of the image.

Care without Equity:  
An institution offers “wellbeing” workshops for employees but does nothing to modify work schedules and practices that are creating the stress in the first place

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various colorful corals and small fish visible. The reef structure is complex and multi-layered, with different types of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. The overall scene is bright and lively.

## Care for teachers

- Communities of Teachers
- Care from Students
- Institutional Policies

# Equity without Care

“Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Equity without  
Care: Can you think  
of examples of  
equitable policies  
that can only be  
utilized by a few?



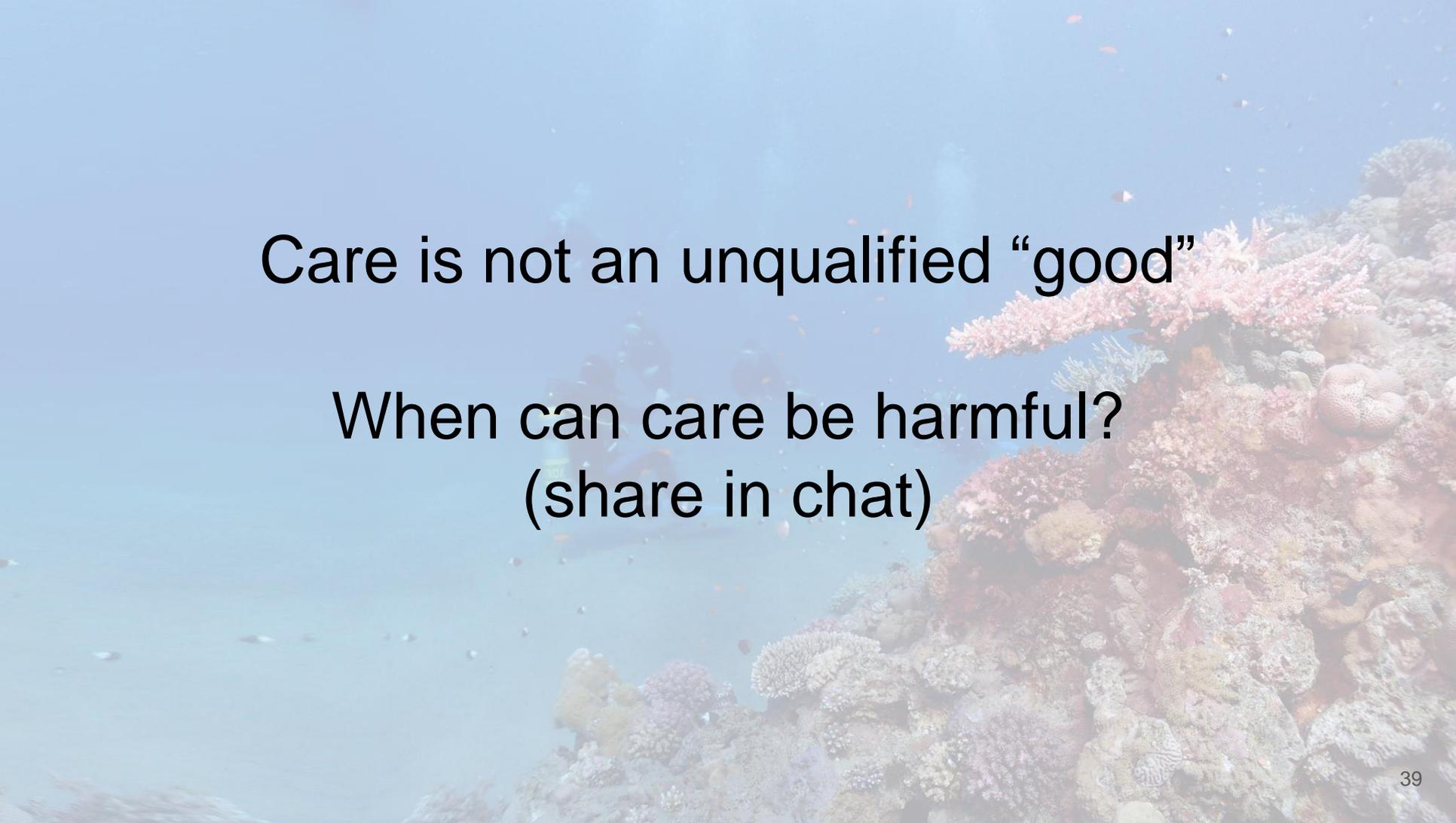
**Abbey Elder**

@OpenAccessElder



Replying to [@OpenAccessElder](#) and [@Bali\\_Maha](#)

Equity without care is when the system was changed so that everything \*can\* work for everyone's needs, but those in charge don't communicate that changes have been made. The equity of the system may only be utilized by a few. In other words, true equity requires a modicum of care

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various colorful corals and small fish visible. The reef structure is complex and multi-layered, with different types of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Care is not an unqualified “good”

When can care be harmful?  
(share in chat)

# Care with **Parity of Participation**

## Parity of Participation

- “Equal partners” with equal power to influence decision-making
- Economic, cultural and political justice

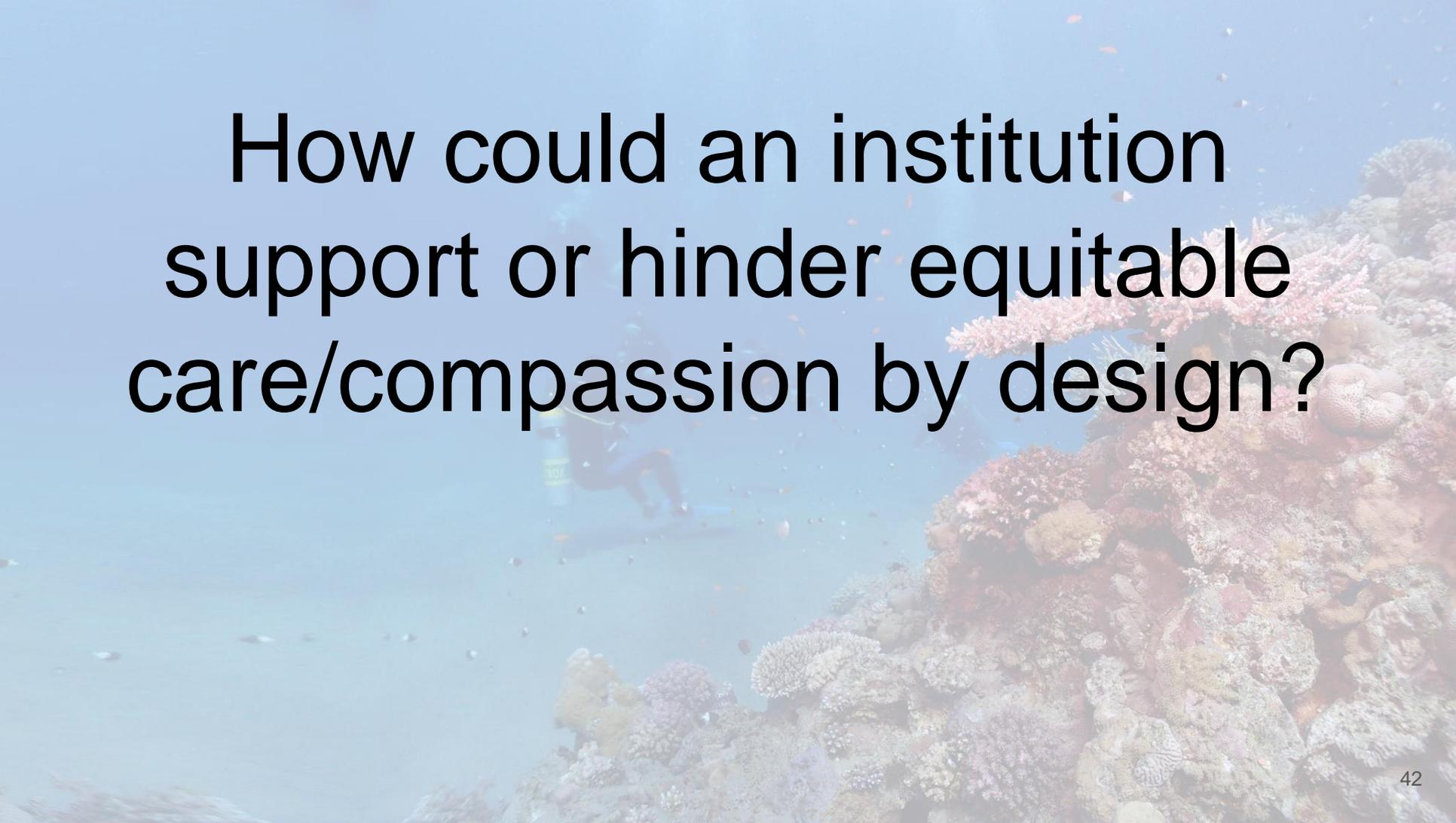
Fraser, N. 2005. Reframing justice in a globalizing world. *New Left Review*, 36, Nov/Dec. Available from: <https://newleftreview-org>



## Democratic Care (Tronto, 2015 [Who Cares?](#))

“democratic care requires switching perspectives and not just thinking about what *we* want. We need also to look at care from the standpoint of **care-receivers, who will have different ideas about what kind of care they want or need to receive...** In a “caring-with” democracy, we can set a goal of **structuring institutions and practices** so that each person’s **individual preferences** can be honored.” (Tronto, 2015, p. 34, emphasis in bold added)



An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Small fish are scattered throughout the water. In the background, a diver is visible, slightly out of focus, swimming near the reef. The overall lighting is soft and blue, typical of an underwater environment.

How could an institution support or hinder equitable care/compassion by design?



**Maida Ali**

@maidaali



Replying to [@Bali\\_Maha](#)

For students to finish the courses of Spring 2020, our uni extended the deadlines for work and grade submission by 5 months. It helped the struggling students to integrate back into their routines effectively. They would've failed courses otherwise.

4:43 PM · 08 May 21 · [Twitter for Android](#)



**Anne-Marie Scott**

@ammienoot

Replying to [@Bali\\_Maha](#)

We gave students free course extensions with no strings so they could pause studies when COVID first hit. We saw students persist & grow more generally, rather than a wave of withdrawals (our learners are typically older & in work). Care is also a sustainability practice.



**Sukaina Walji**

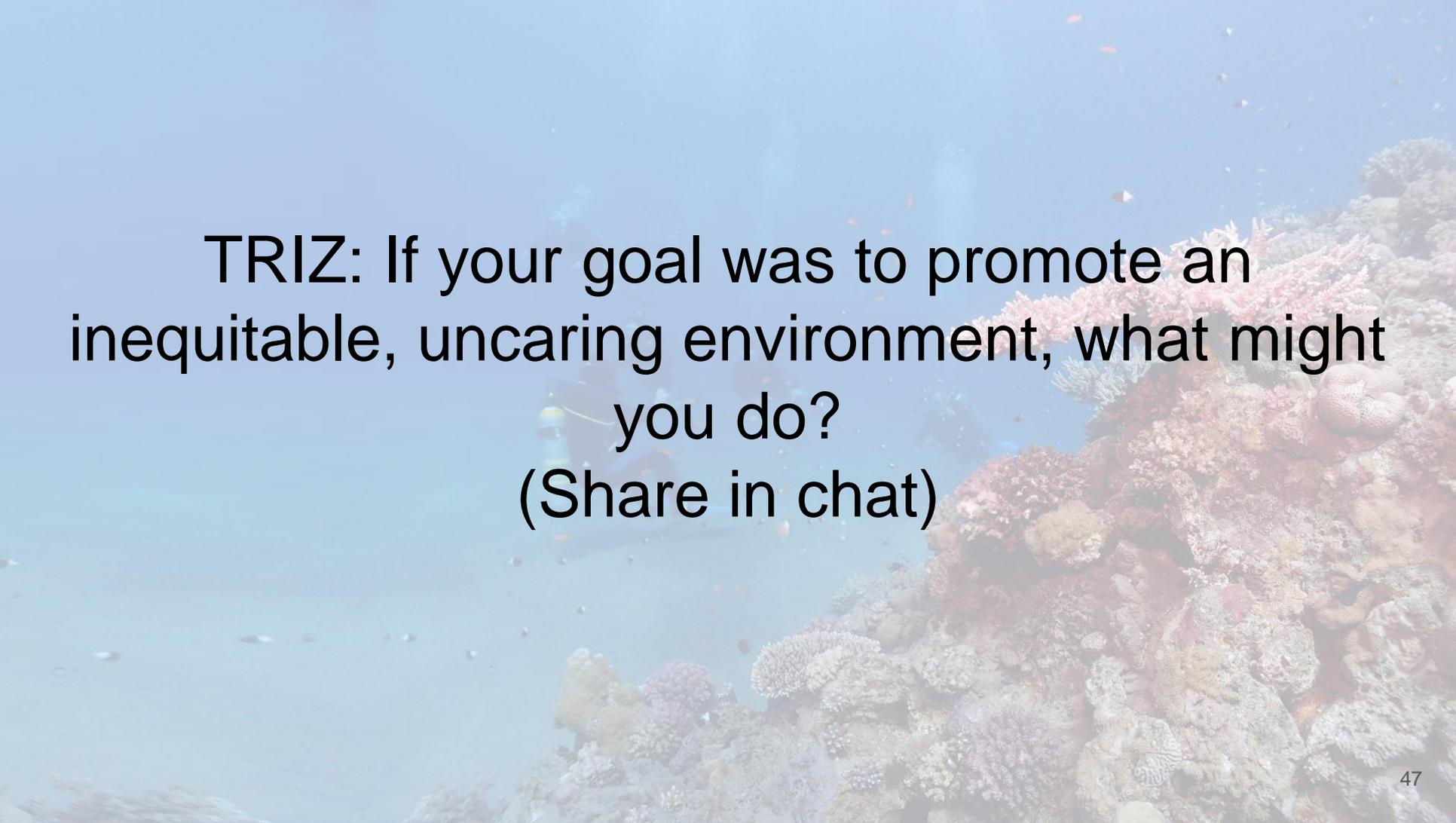
@sukainaw

Replying to [@Bali\\_Maha](#) [@actualham](#) and 13 others

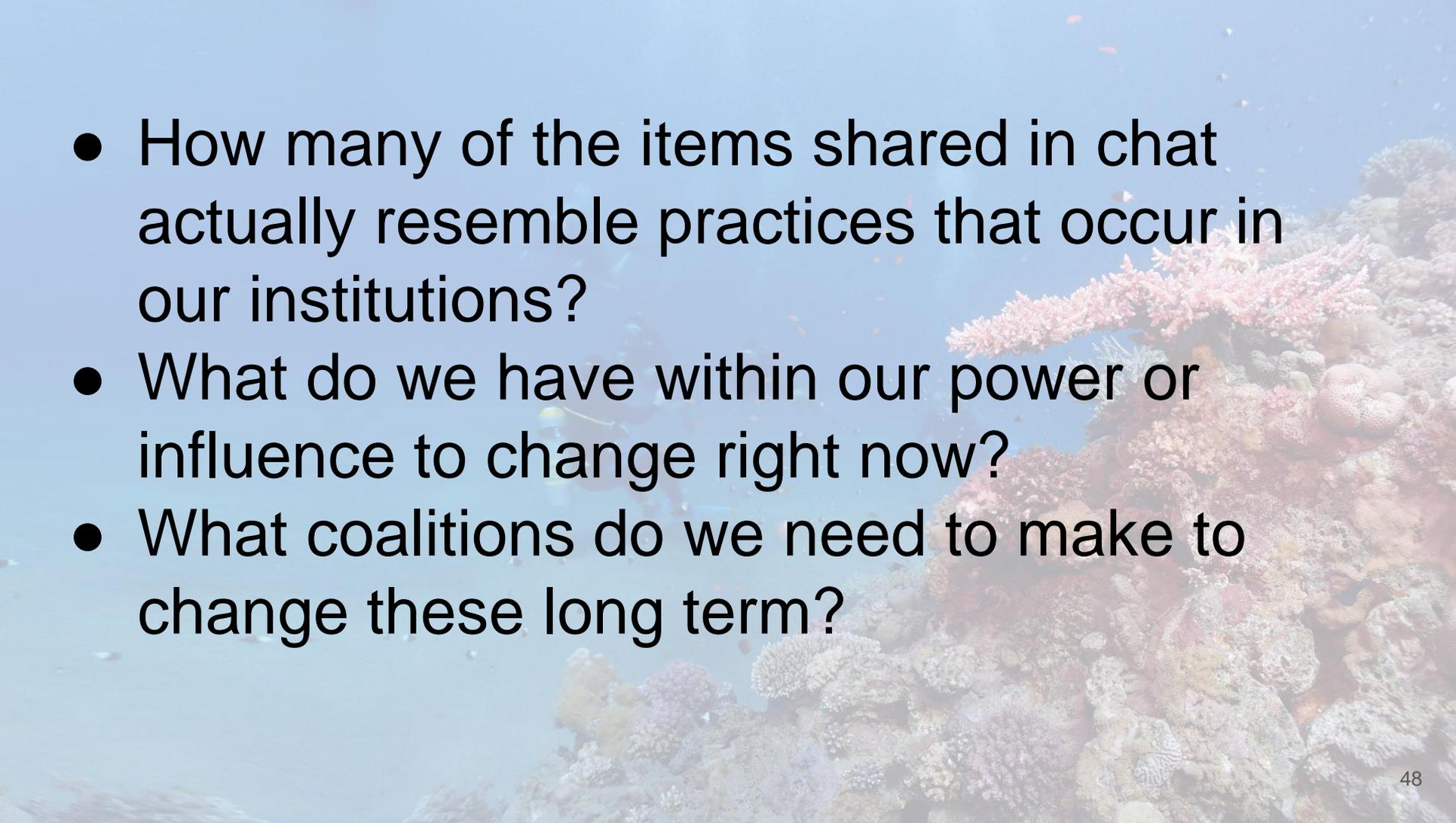
Apart from actual initiatives such as device and data provision or accommodations in assessment, a positive for me was responsive and iterative decision making to support students, which prior to pandemic context might have been taken months and years. Hope such agility endures.

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Several divers are visible in the background, swimming near the reef. The water is clear and blue. The text "Institutions can hinder care/equity" is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Institutions can hinder  
care/equity**

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various colorful corals and small fish visible. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

TRIZ: If your goal was to promote an inequitable, uncaring environment, what might you do?  
(Share in chat)

- 
- The background of the slide is an underwater photograph of a coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various types of coral visible, including branching corals and large, rounded brain corals. The lighting is bright, suggesting a shallow depth.
- How many of the items shared in chat actually resemble practices that occur in our institutions?
  - What do we have within our power or influence to change right now?
  - What coalitions do we need to make to change these long term?

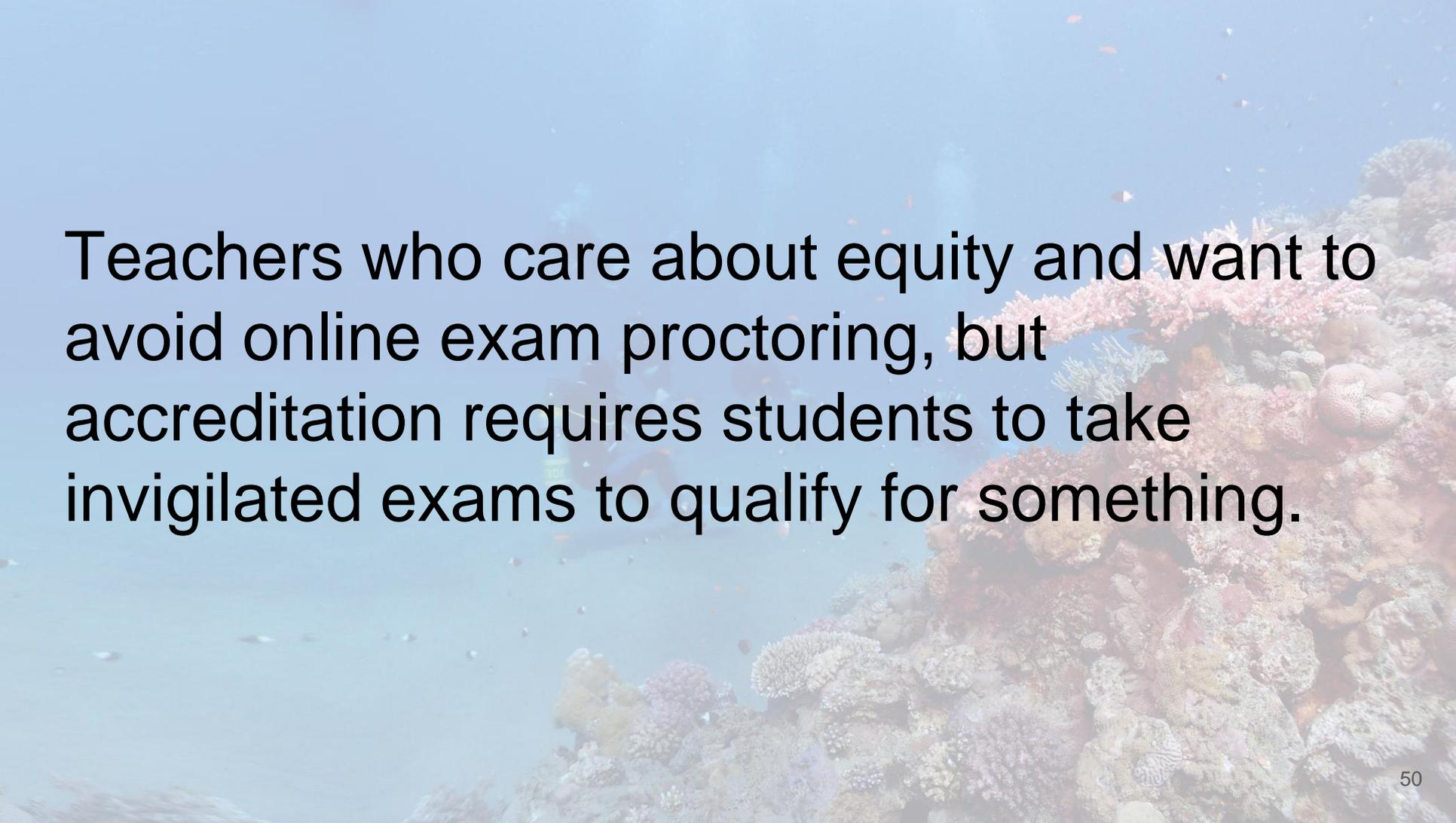


**Emily Regan Wills**

@aj nabieh

Replying to [@Bali\\_Maha](#)

B: If a student taking a differentiated exam through our disability services arrives 15 minutes late to that exam, they are not allowed to sit it or reschedule it. Academic accommodations should not make things harder!

An underwater scene featuring a vibrant coral reef on the right side, with various types of coral in shades of pink, orange, and white. The water is clear and blue, with several small fish swimming around. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Teachers who care about equity and want to avoid online exam proctoring, but accreditation requires students to take invigilated exams to qualify for something.

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there is a dense and colorful coral reef with various species of coral in shades of pink, orange, and brown. The water is clear and blue. In the background, two divers are visible, one of whom is wearing a yellow tank. The overall scene is bright and vibrant.

Community building activities that would  
center care going forward

<https://onehe.org/equity-unbound>



About Our experts Glossary

Sign In

Sign up

## COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Equity Unbound has teamed up with OneHE to develop some open educational resources for online community-building

TRY AN ACTIVITY ▾

### Why is building a sense of community important?

Watch the welcome video below to find out why [Equity Unbound](#) are creating and curating free community building activities for educators.



Welcome

Mia Zamora



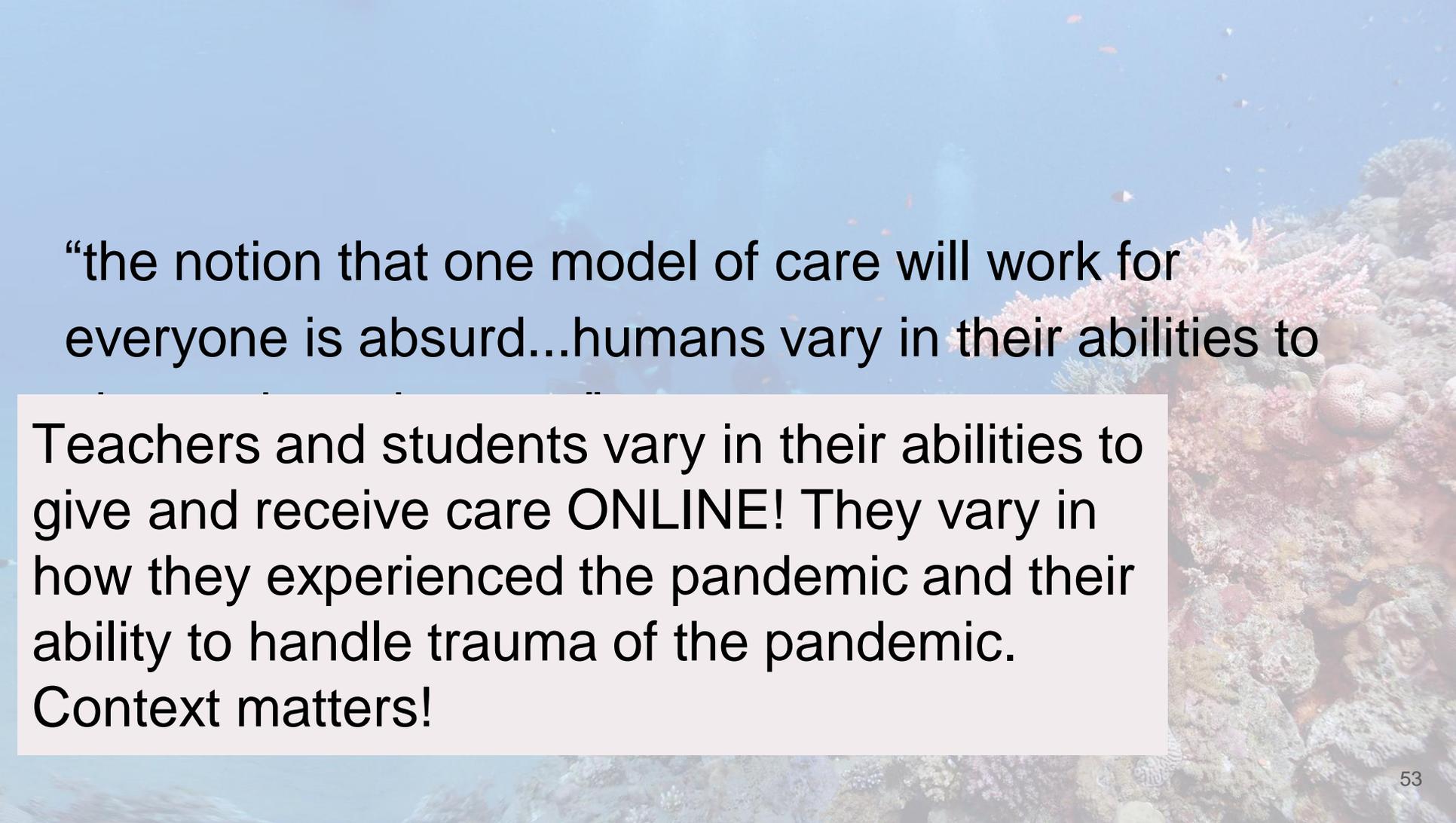
Autumm Caines



Maha Bali



Dimensions of  
Community-  
building centered on  
care and equity

An underwater photograph of a coral reef. The water is clear blue, and the reef is covered in various types of coral, including branching and brain coral. Small fish are visible swimming in the water.

“the notion that one model of care will work for everyone is absurd...humans vary in their abilities to

Teachers and students vary in their abilities to give and receive care ONLINE! They vary in how they experienced the pandemic and their ability to handle trauma of the pandemic. Context matters!

# Values Underpinning the Design

- Intentionally Equitable Hospitality ([Bali, Caines, Hogue, DeWaard, Friedrich, 2019](#))
- Who has access? Whose culture dominates? Who has political power?
- Adaptation by design AND adaptation in the moment.  
For care and equity



# Building community going forward...

- Annotate the Syllabus ([watch Remi Kalir describe](#))
- Survey students ([samples](#))
- Talk about & practice trauma-informed pedagogy ([video by Mays Imad](#) & [checklist from Karen Ray Costa](#))
- Gratitude journaling ([conversation + resources](#))
- Troika consulting ([demo video - promote peer support](#))
- TRIZ ([demo video of this playful innovative problem-solving approach](#))
- Theater of the Oppressed (use body not just face to express)
- Grade in alternative ways (different [approaches + resources](#))



# Regularly use warm-up activities

<https://onehe.org/equity-unbound/warm-up-activities/>

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY

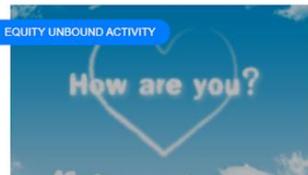


## Collaborative Storytelling

Promote a sense of community and break the ice in class with collaborative storytelling activities.

Jasmina Najjar

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Four Ideas for Checking In

Particularly important during a pandemic, but this is a good way to start any class.

Maha Bali, Mia Zamora

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Imaginary Buffet (or Potluck)

The purpose of this activity is to engage students with each other's 'small talk', by making a game out of active listening.

Mava Hev

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## PowerPoint Karaoke

Engage students in improv presenting, and enhance oral presentation skills in a light and humorous way.

Maha Bali, Jasmina Najjar, Hoda Mostafa

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Share an object from home

Encourage students to share something of themselves.

Maha Bali

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Spiral Journal

Promote focus and reflection while allowing individuals to compose responses thoughtfully and calmly in writing.

Maha Bali, Mia Zamora

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Theater of the Oppressed: Opposites

Warming up before class or after a break in a longer class. Encouraging use of the body, refreshes students' bodies and minds.

Tina Pippin

EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Theatre of the Oppressed: Image Theatre

To invite students to use their bodies to represent, collaboratively, an image of something that is worth discussing.

Maha Bali

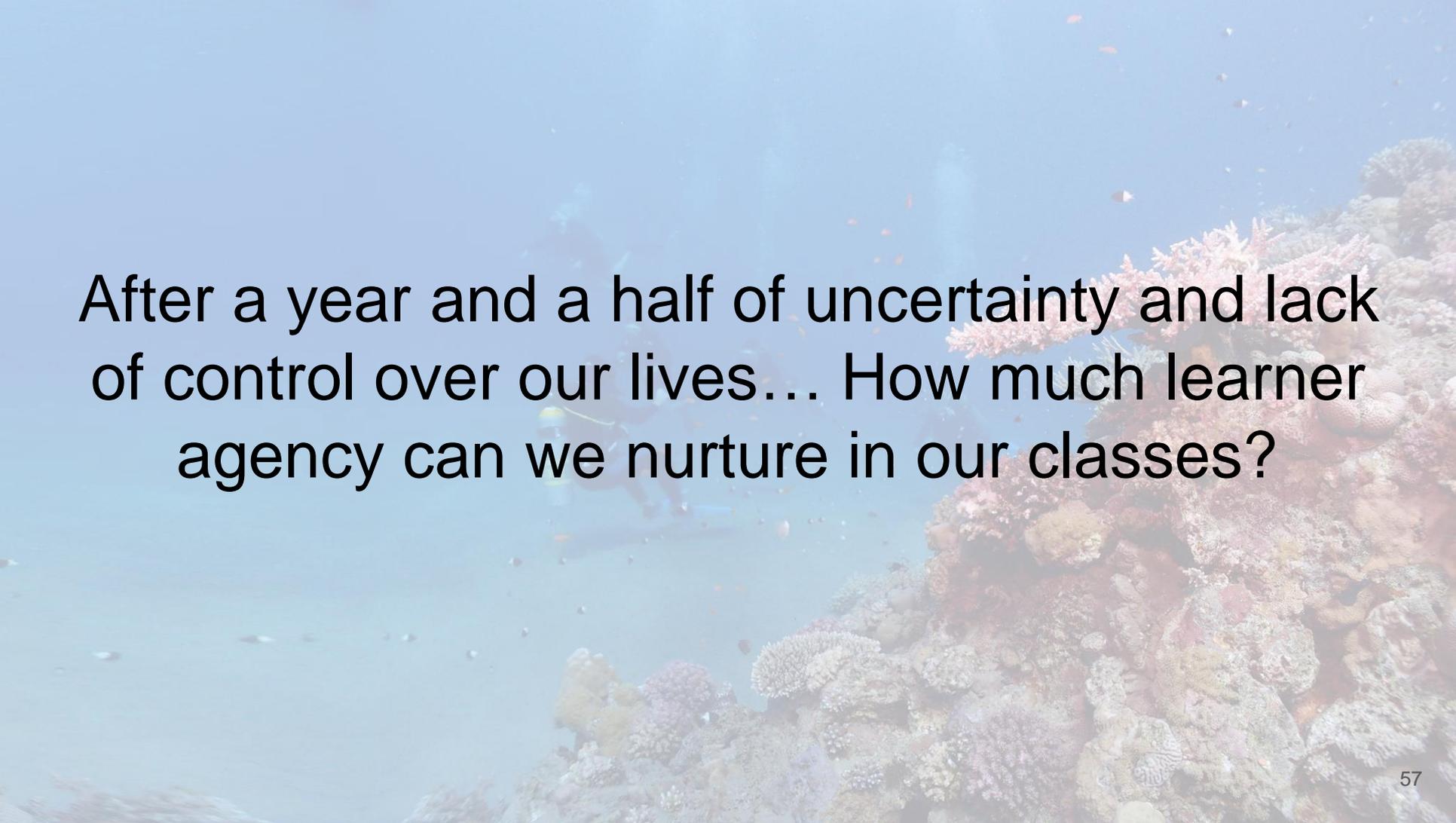
EQUITY UNBOUND ACTIVITY



## Thick Greetings

Try out a slower and more deliberate opportunity for everyone to introduce themselves.

Maha Bali, Mia Zamora, Autumn Caines, Laura Gibbs, Rebecca J. Hogue

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with various colorful corals and small fish visible. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

After a year and a half of uncertainty and lack of control over our lives... How much learner agency can we nurture in our classes?

# Take Stock Using Ecocycle planning

A Liberating Structure [www.liberatingstructures.com](http://www.liberatingstructures.com)

Influenced by complexity science and agriculture

Work of Hurst, D. K., & Zimmerman, B. J. (1994). From life cycle to ecocycle: a new perspective on the growth, maturity, destruction, and renewal of complex systems. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 3(4), 339-354.

P.S. to watch a video of us Ecocycling one element of Community Building Resources with Nancy White, see:

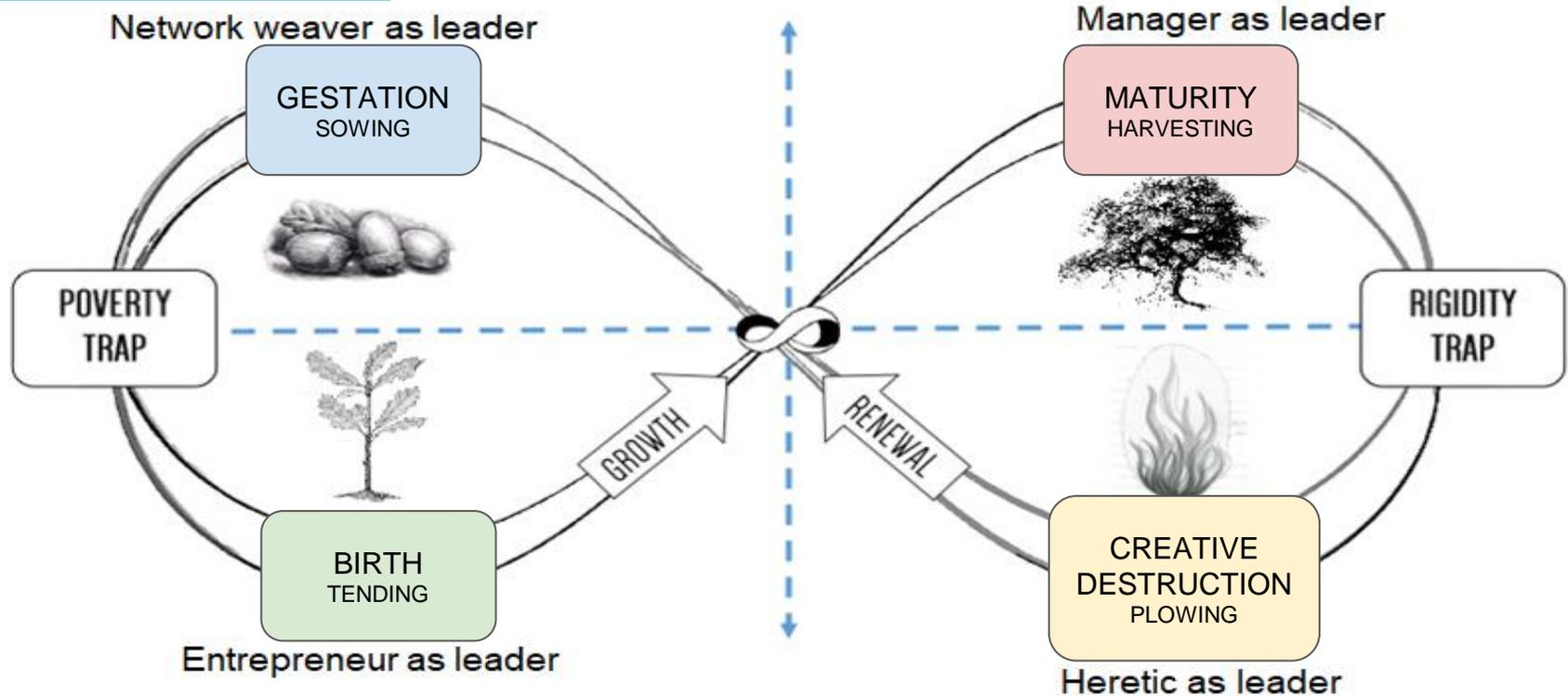
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRJ3nymjtGo>



# Ecocycle Planning

Template adapted from:

<https://app.mural.co/t/seattleliberatingstructuresi4601/m/seattleliberatingstructuresi4601/1601578665506/ad4b2f41bed07cdf2537654b6221077bde20cf4f>



# Ingredients for Sustainable Change

Sustainable change requires five key ingredients. Projects falter in predictable ways when any one ingredient is missing.

- Vision:** "What are we doing and why?" to combat confusion.
- Incentives:** Reasons, perks, advantages to combat resistance. Incentives also increase buy-in, which prevents sabotage (conscious or not).
- Skills:** The skill sets needed to combat anxiety.
- Resources:** Tools and time needed to combat frustration.
- Plan:** Provides direction to eliminate the treadmill effect. The plan needs to include specific, actionable first steps to prevent false starts, as well as an assessment plan to combat skepticism.

Ingredients for Sustainable Change from: <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/Teagle/media/GlobalMediaLibrary/document/resources/IngredientsForSustainableChange.pdf?ext=.pdf>



Cont'd  
 Ingredients for Sustainable Change from:  
<http://www.teaglefoundation.org/Teagle/media/GlobalMediaLibrary/document/s/resources/IngredientsForSustainableChange.pdf?ext=.pdf>



Sources:

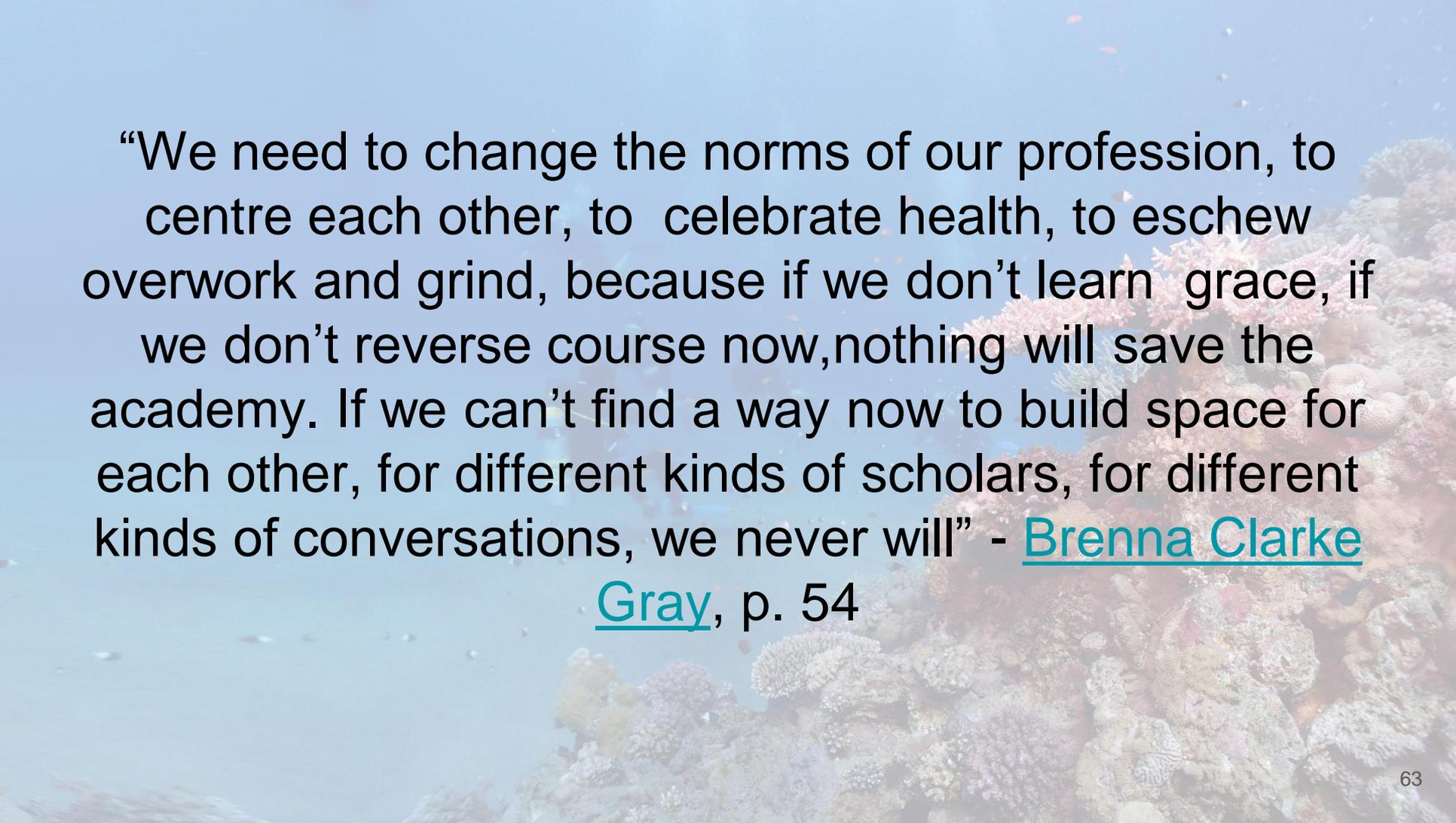
Knoster, T., Villa, R., and Thousand, J. (2000). *A framework for thinking about systems change*. In R. Villa and J. Thousands (Eds.) *Restructuring for caring and effective education: Piecing the puzzle together* (2nd edition). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including branching and brain corals, in shades of pink, orange, and brown. Small fish are scattered throughout the clear blue water. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Consider replacing

- “Vision” with “co-created shared vision”
- “incentives” with “participation”

An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from above. The reef is composed of various types of coral, including branching and table corals, in shades of brown, orange, and white. Small fish are visible swimming in the water.

“We need to change the norms of our profession, to centre each other, to celebrate health, to eschew overwork and grind, because if we don’t learn grace, if we don’t reverse course now, nothing will save the academy. If we can’t find a way now to build space for each other, for different kinds of scholars, for different kinds of conversations, we never will” - [Brenna Clarke Gray](#), p. 54

Thank You!



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(Some graphics by my daughter, H. Fouad)