

Welcome!

Take a moment to reflect:

How have you have practiced being a "learning community" where you work?

Session 7: Creating a Learning Community

Sonya Barsness & Karen Stobbe

Series Host and Moderator: **Gigi Amateau, PhD**



VCU

College of Health
Professions

Gerontology



CardinalCare
Virginia's Medicaid Program

This series was created by the Virginia Commonwealth University's
Department of Gerontology for the

**Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)
Nursing Facility Quality Improvement Program (NFQIP) using
Civil Money Penalty (CMP) Reinvestment Funds.**

HOUSEKEEPING

Please keep your microphone and camera off until being asked to share them.

You'll be invited to unmute during discussion/Q&A times.

Have a question during the lecture?

Use the **QA tab** anytime—our team is listening!

At the end of today's session, we'll share a short survey link (this link will repeat in an email following the session).

This helps us improve and also lets you **request your certificate of attendance**.

Certificates will be emailed about a week after the event to those who:

- ✓ Attend at least 75% of the session
- ✓ Participate in at least 75% of polls, questions, or breakout activities

Attending as a group?

Please have the registered attendee complete the exit survey and list the names of all group participants.

SERIES PRESENTERS

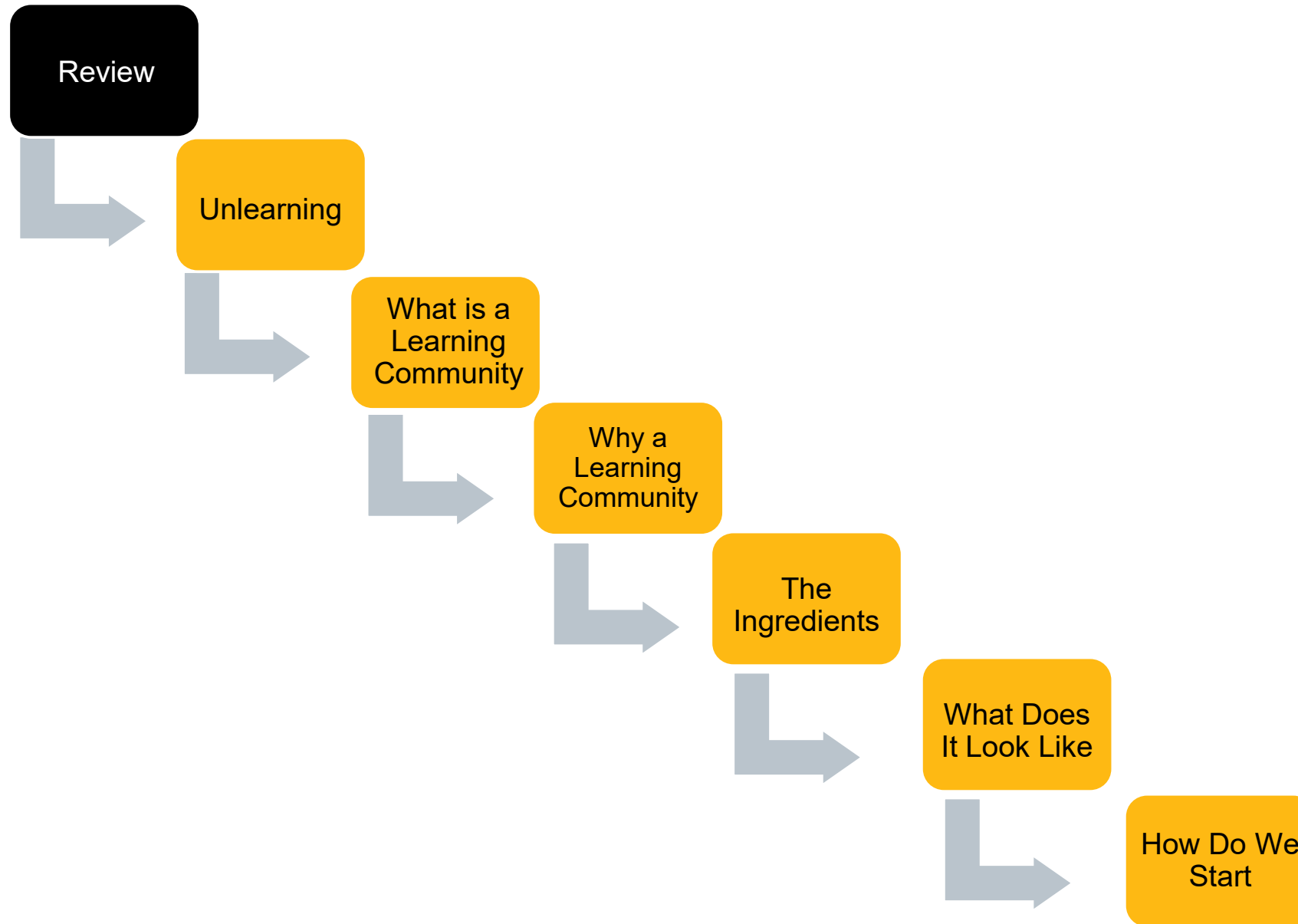


SONYA BARSNESS



KAREN STOBBE

Today: Creating a Learning Community

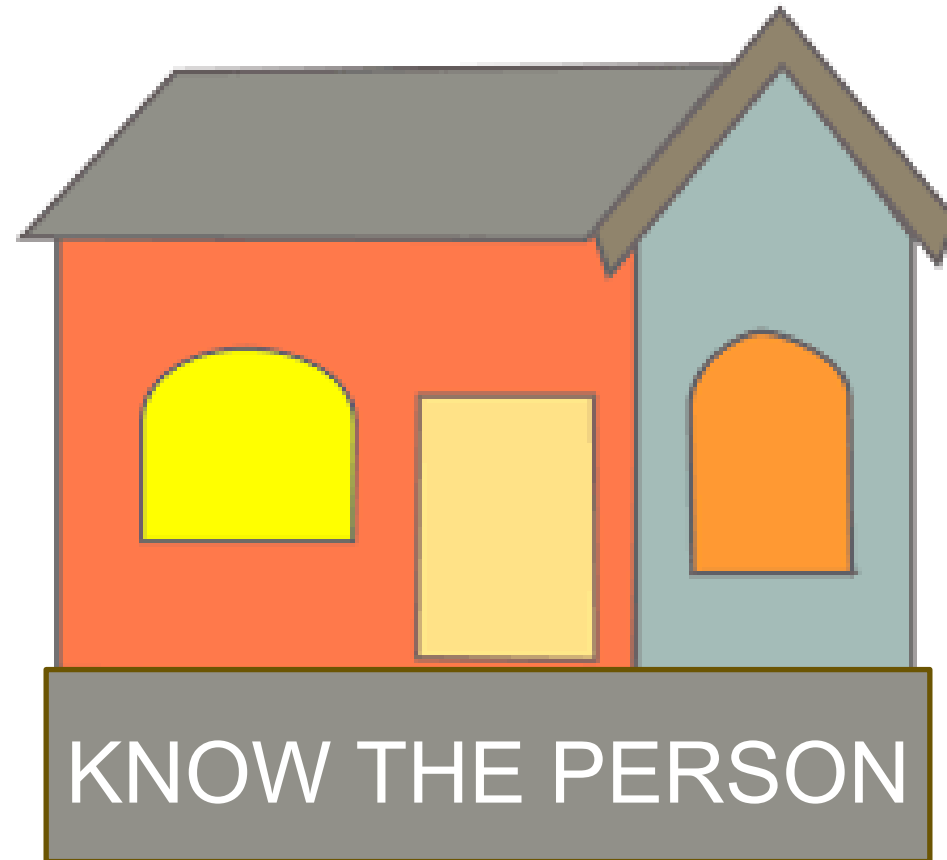


Person-centered values of choice,
dignity, respect,
self-determination and
meaningful living.



Let's Review – From Webinar 1

Foundation of Person-Centered Dementia Care



Let's Review – From Webinar 2

The environment can
communicate
negatively or positively

Let's Review – From Webinar 2

Listen fully
Mind, Body & Soul



Let's Review – From Webinar 2

By listening you create the space
for the other to experience
personhood.



Let's Review – From Webinar 3



“If the care environment is focused on the person and their needs, none of the so-called ‘challenging behavior’ needs to happen.”

- Christine Bryden



Let's Review – From Webinar 3

Behavior is a
form of communication.

Behavior is an
expression of a need.



Let's Review – From Webinar 3

Each person listening right now
is an individual.
If we all got diagnosed with dementia
we would still be individuals.
No two people would be the same.



Let's Review – From Webinar 4



Let's Review – From Webinar 4

Rather than just focus on how to prevent or respond to “behaviors” let's overall focus on well-being and how a person's needs might not be met.



Let's Review – From Webinar 5

Leadership is based on influence, behavior, and inspiring others.

Leadership is ultimately a learned behavior—a continuous process of growth, self-awareness, and helping others reach shared goals.

Anyone can be a leader regardless of job title.



Let's Review – From Webinar 5
Let's Review – From

Person-Centered Values

Choice

Dignity

Respect

Individualized

Interdependent

Self-determination

Seeing the Whole Person

Providing Well-Being

Meaningful Living



Let's Review – From Webinar 6

All Hands on Deck means:
It takes everyone to meet the needs
of people living with dementia
in a nursing home.
-Karen and Sonya



Let's Review – From Webinar 6

There is so MUCH that non-care staff, family and volunteers can contribute to a better quality of life for each person living with dementia.

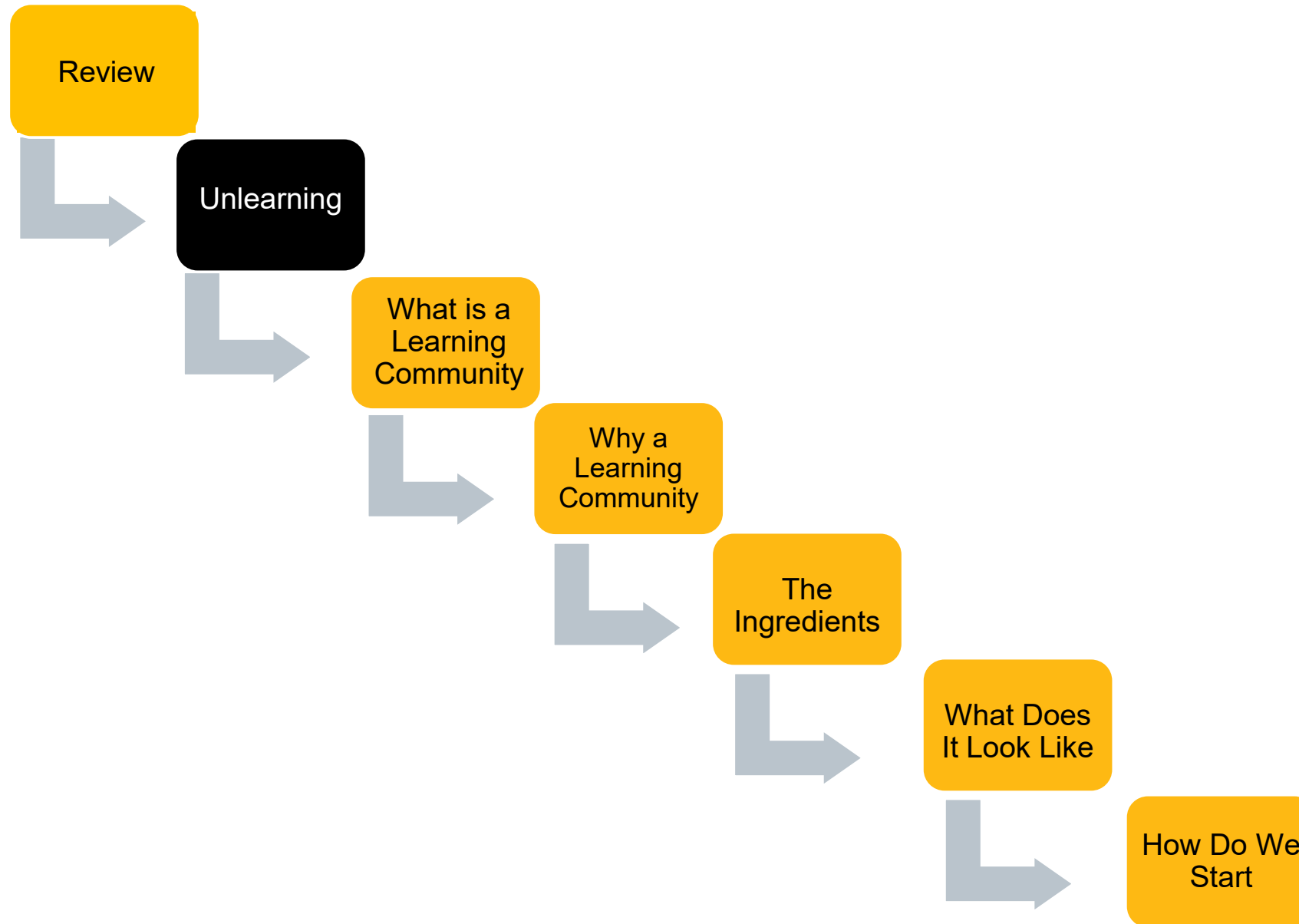


Goal: Person-Centered Dementia Care

- Seeing people living with dementia as individuals.
- Meeting their human needs.
- Honoring personhood.
- Supporting overall well-being.



Today: Creating a Learning Community



Unlearning 1

Nursing Home Education is about...



Having a good training program
and doing it once a year.



Unlearning 2

Nursing Home Education is about...



Training each person only in their discipline.



Unlearning 3

Nursing Home Education is about...



Focusing training on nursing staff.



Unlearning 4

Nursing Home Education is about...



Not following up after training.
(The actual training is enough.)



Unlearning 5

Nursing Home Education is about...



Offering in-services as the only way to learn.



Unlearning 6

Nursing Home Education is about...



Getting a certification program
completed and pushing that
through marketing.



Unlearning 7

Nursing Home Education is about...



Having staff get certified and
assuming that it all they
need to know.



Unlearning 8

Nursing Home Education is about...



The nursing staff all being trained
in the same thing.



Unlearning 9

Nursing Home Education is about...



Providing opportunities for self-paced learning with no opportunities to unpack the content with others.



Unlearning 10

Nursing Home Education is about...



Teach a one size fits all practice
and that will work with everyone.



Unlearning 11

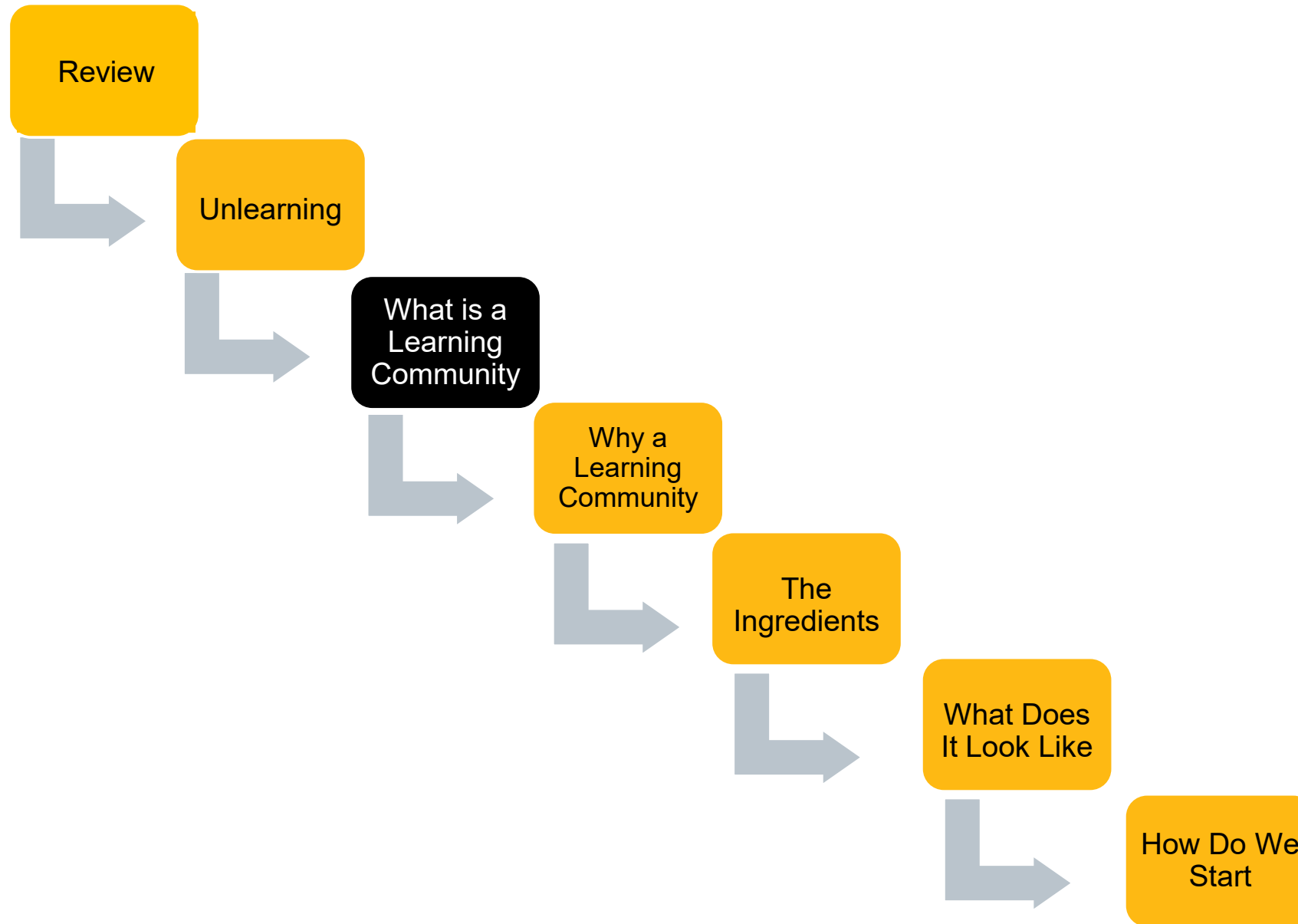
Nursing Home Education is about...



Education only happens in a class.



Today: Creating a Learning Community



Who Wants to Be A
Learning Community?



What is a Learning Community?



A Learning Organization Is...

“an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together”.

- Peter Senge



A Learning Organization Is also...

“an organization that learns continuously and transforms itself, through total employee involvement in a process of collaboratively conducted, collectively accountable change directed towards shared values or principles”

- Watkins and Marsick



Learning Nursing Home Community

In a learning nursing home community every person has the opportunity to learn, and share what they know, on an ongoing basis.

- Sonya and Karen



The Advantage

An organization's ability to learn
is its ultimate advantage.

- Jack Welch



In a Learning Community...

we are always learning.

learning never stops.

each person is both a learner and a teacher.

learning is formal and informal.



And In a Learning Community...

learning is in and outside the classroom.

learning is experiential.

learning includes putting into practice.



Hands-on Deck

A learning community is “all hands-on deck” with different opportunities to learn.

In a learning community we are always striving to grow and do better.

A learning community is a culture that we create.



Ingredients for a learning community

Recipe
Learning Community

INGRIDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

make it your own!



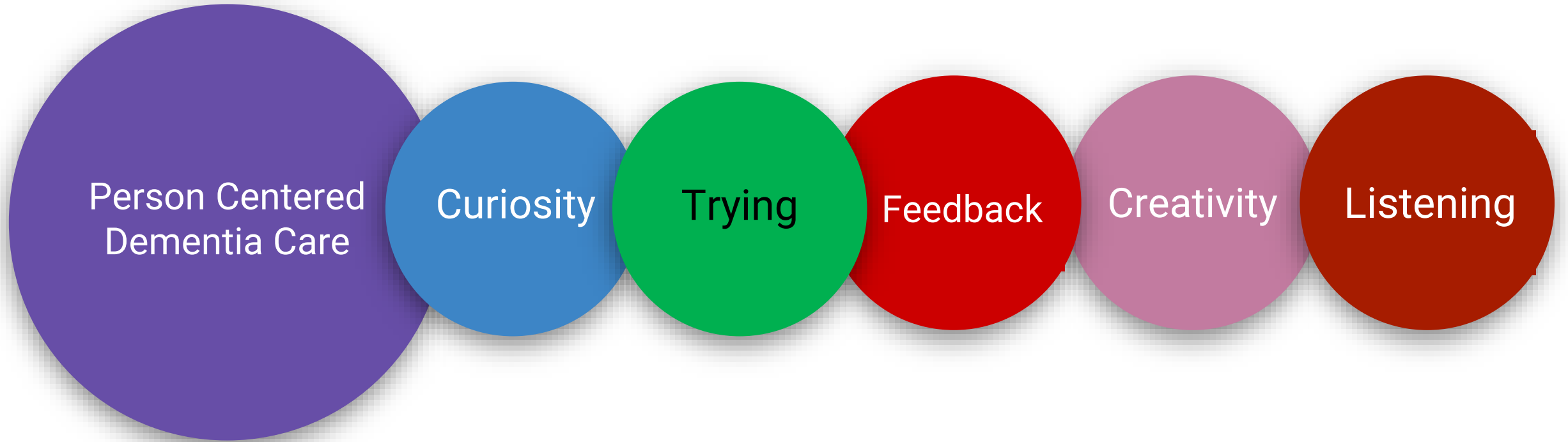
Ingredients for a Learning Community

Person Centered
Values

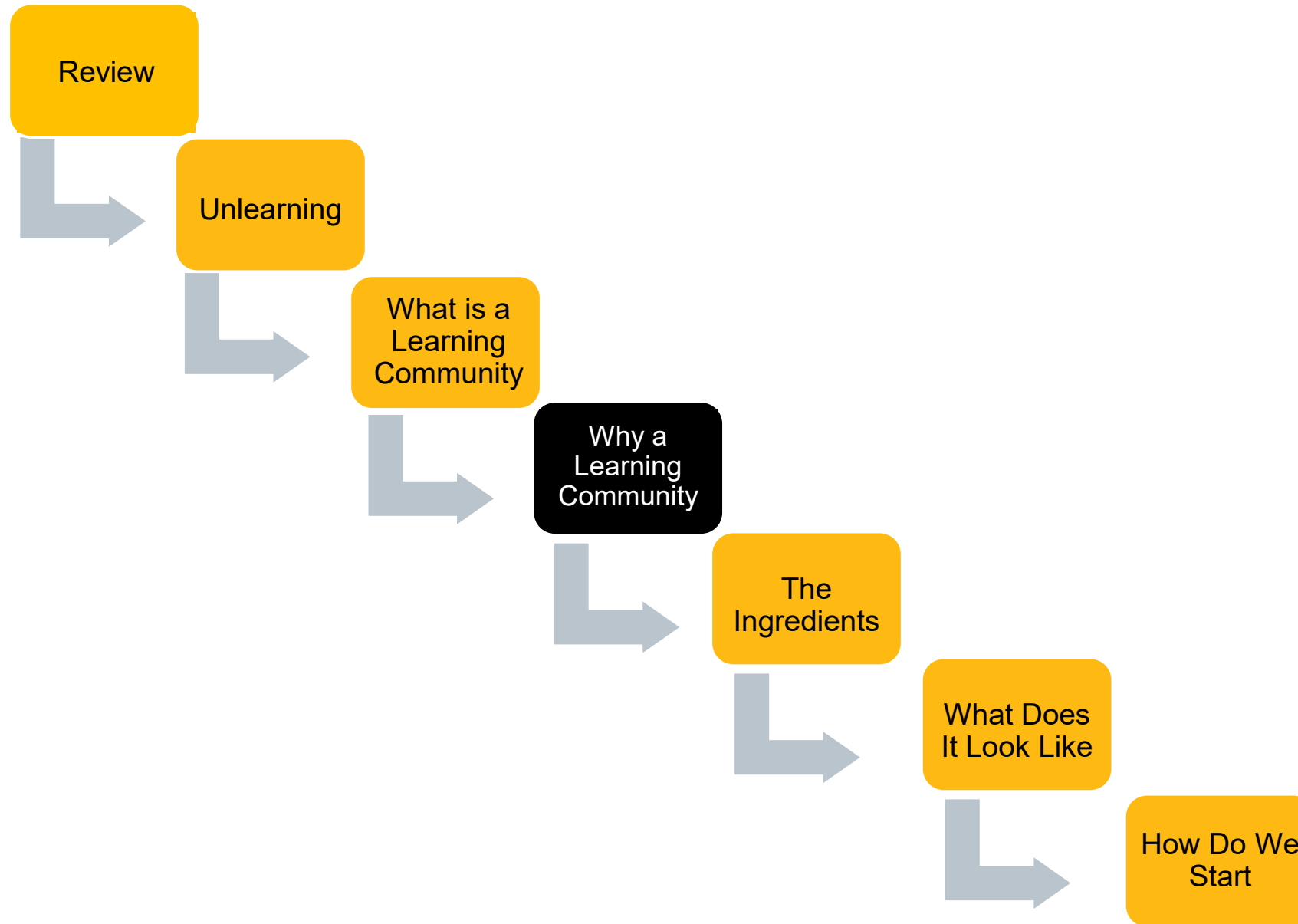
Choice
Dignity
Respect
Individualized
Interdependent
Self-determination
Seeing the Whole Person
Providing Well-Being
Meaningful Living



Ingredients for a Learning Community



Today: Creating a Learning Community



Honestly, it not only won't be helpful, but it also won't stick.

Classroom, Computer, Certification Education is NOT enough

We can keep offering training,
but if we do not unpack it with staff “on the floor”
it will not be helpful.



The Top 10 REASONS Why a Learning Community?

1. WHY

2. WHY

3. WHY

4. WHY

5. WHY

6. WHY

7. WHY

8. WHY

9. WHY

10. WHY



The Top 10 REASONS - Why a Learning Community?

HELPS ADAPT TO CHANGE

ENCOURAGES 'THINKING'

REINFORCES LEARNING

**INCREASES STAFF
RETENTION/MORALE**

BETTER COMMUNICATION

LEARNER CENTERED

SKILLED TEAM

CREATES INNOVATION

BETTER CARE

BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE



Person-centered Values



Choice
Dignity
Respect
Individualized
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Self-determination
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Meaningful Living



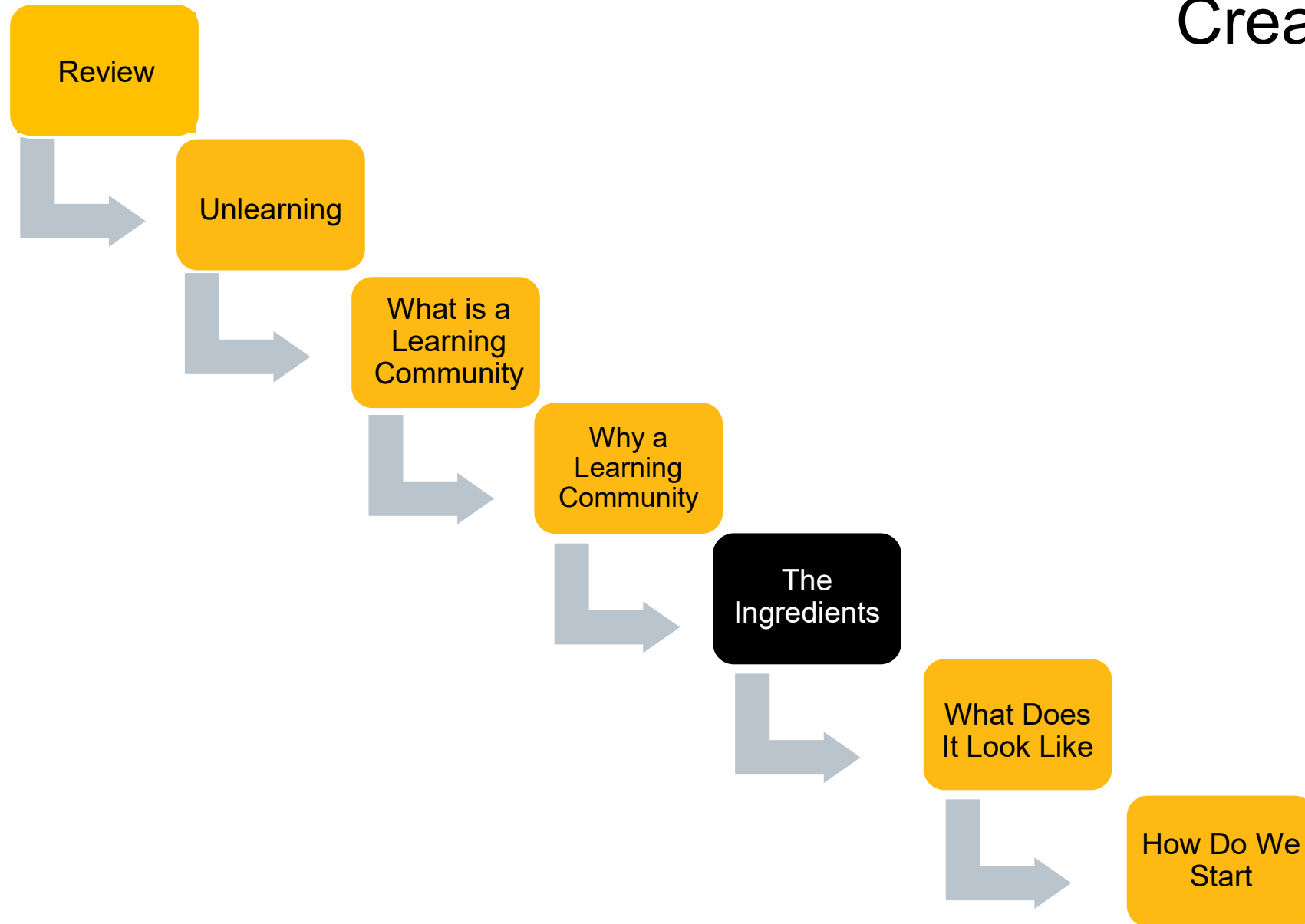
Goal: Person-Centered Dementia Care



- Seeing people living with dementia as individuals.
- Meeting their human needs.
- Honoring personhood.
- Supporting overall well-being.



Today: Creating a Learning Community



definition 3 continued

Permission Slip

-----, may

Ask questions freely

Give feedback

Be creative

Say you don't know

Be curious

Try

Share what you know

Signed *Your Supervisor*



HUMILITY

Team members (including those in a supervisor role) are willing to acknowledge when they don't know something,
know something,
or something is not working,
and they are supported in this.



SHOWING HUMILITY

Showing humility means **listening more than you speak, admitting when you are wrong, and putting the focus on others** instead of yourself.

*It is not about thinking less of yourself,
but rather thinking of yourself less.*



Ingredients for a Learning Community

**Person Centered
Dementia Care**

Curiosity

Trying

Feedback

Creativity

Listening



CURIOSITY

Curiosity is the tendency to take an interest in your environment or in other people, and to seek out information that can help you solve problems or simply find out more.



Why?

What if?



PRACTICING CURIOSITY

Practicing deep curiosity can help you connect with yourself and others. It's not just intellectual; it's about searching for understanding in a way that can stir your heart and spirit.

Scott Shigeoka [Seek: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World](#)



DEEP CURIOSITY

Deep curiosity isn't just something you have or don't. It's more like a muscle, something that strengthens when you exercise it.

The more we use it, the more likely we'll get the benefits.

Not only does it help us to connect, but psychological research also shows that practicing curiosity makes us more likable, better leaders, and reduces anxiety and fear – which is why many therapists use it as a tool.

Scott Shigeoka [Seek: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World](#)



Approaching Curiosity



LISTENING WITH OPEN MIND

Creating a culture where **trying** is encouraged. There is a mentality that we **try** things and learn from them.



GETTING STAFF TO TRY

How do we get staff to try?

- Create a safe space.
- Make it easy to share ideas for everyone's personality.
- Respond to all ideas not just the “good” ones.
- Remove any fear of failure. We see mistakes as learning.
- Celebrate diverse perspectives.



FEEDBACK



A community where people feel comfortable giving and receiving **feedback** (respectfully and kindly) so they can keep learning.



Feedback
should be
thought of
as a gift.





But...
what if it feels
like a punch in
the gut?



ENGAGING AND DISCOVERING

We don't have to love **feedback**.

We don't have to accept it blindly.

But we *can* learn to engage with it in a way that helps us grow.

And sometimes, the real gift isn't the **feedback** itself — it's what we discover about ourselves in the process.



SHAPING THE FEEDBACK

Feedback is complex. It's shaped by three key factors:

- What is being said
- Who is saying it
- What personal history we associate with it



REACTING TO FEEDBACK

Feedback isn't just about what's said—it's about how we react. That reaction shows us a lot about ourselves.

That's where real growth starts.



Answer in Q & A

How do you want to receive feedback
from a co-worker?



FEEDBACK AS A COMMUNITY

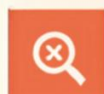
Decide as a WHOLE community

How you can give feedback to one
another in the moment? And Later?

What are the ground rules?



criticism **VS** feedback

	
 HURTFUL	HELPFUL 
 FOCUSED ON THE PERSON	FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEM 
 TEARS DOWN	BUILDS UP 
 DWELLS ON THE PAST	POINTS TO THE FUTURE 
 FAULT FINDING	FACT FINDING
 HARSH ASSUMPTIONS	ASSUMES POSITIVE INTENT
 MONOLOGUE	DIALOGUE



Culture of creativity, which includes...

- ...solution finding

- ...brainstorming

- ...flexibility and adapting to change



CULTURE OF CREATIVITY (cont.)

Yes and...
Mind mapping
Idea Circle
Brain Writing
5 Whys
Starbursting
New name



Brainstorming

1. Come up with as many ideas as possible. The more, the better.
2. Encourage wild ideas. The weird ones can lead to something great.
3. Build on each other's ideas. Mix, match, and improve as you go.
4. No judgment.
5. No crosstalk.
6. Focus on the topic.



FLEXIBILITY

**Individuals are flexible in their
willingness to change**

**Policies and procedures are flexible to
support new learning**



LISTENING

We need to
listen & learn
from
each other.



The Ingredients

Listen with an open mind



No matter who is speaking they may provide the insight that you never would have thought of. Use the wisdom and diversity of your community to move forward.



The Ingredients

Listening to what people might be having challenges with,
and listening to what they are doing well with.

Listening also does not mean telling.



The Ingredients

Residents are the true experts of their lived experience and their needs.

We need to listen and learn from them.



The Ingredients

We learn from people of different roles, not just one expert.

We are open to the possibility that others have things to teach us, and that we can teach others.



What Is a Learning Community?

MIXING BOWL

*Ingredients
for a Learning Community*



Marion is a quiet and very pleasant person. She doesn't say, "I want to go home". She enjoys painting, pet visits and baking club. She has a daughter who visits weekly from 2 hours away.

Marion is always near a door, when she sees a chance to walk out, she does.



Curiosity



Trying



Feedback



Creativity



Listening



A recipe card template with a light beige background. The title 'Recipe' is in a large, black, cursive font, and 'Learning Community' is in a smaller, blue, cursive font below it. The 'INGREDIENTS' section has a large, empty rounded rectangle. The 'DIRECTIONS' section has the word 'METHODS' in bold red text, followed by eight horizontal lines for writing. The card is decorated with various food illustrations: a yellow lemon, a bowl of blue liquid, a pizza with purple toppings, a cucumber on a cutting board, and various fruits and vegetables like watermelon, tomatoes, and leafy greens.

Recipe
Learning Community

INGREDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

METHODS



How Do We Start

How to Have Continual Learning



How Do We Start

Feedback Loops



Creating a cycle of continuous feedback from residents, staff, families.

Continuously gathering new ideas from your community.

Gathering continuous feedback on new training ideas.



How Do We Start

Respond to feedback

Use ingredients in responding:
curiosity, trying, creativity,
listening

Part of loop



How Do We Start

Repetition and Reinforcement

Repetition &
Reinforcement



Each repetition helps reinforce
the connection in your brain.

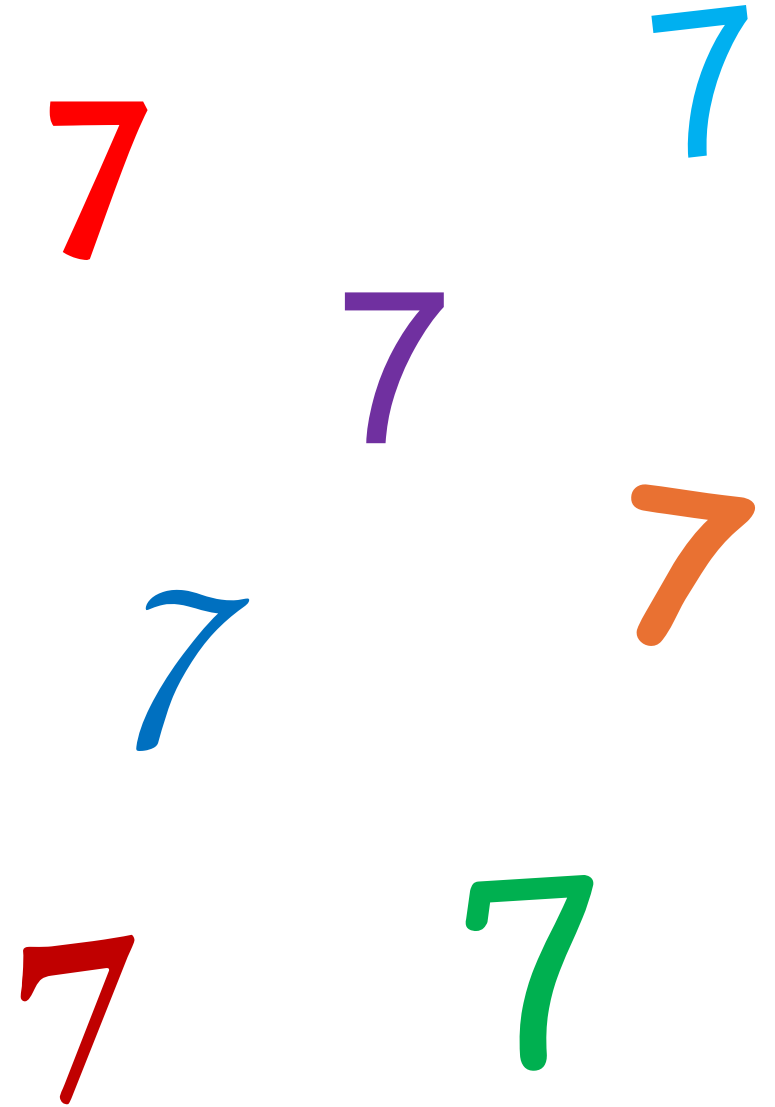
It's like building a path through a
forest: the more you walk the
path, the clearer it becomes.



How Do We Start

The famous rule of thumb is the **Rule of Seven**, which states that a person needs to hear or see a message **seven times** before they truly remember, understand, or act on it.

- Jeffrey Lent



How Do We Start

7 times.

1. Discuss eye level and eye contact in written and post flyer and email.
2. Have a dry erase board or flip chart paper in the break room for staff to answer the question: Why do we we need to make eye contact?
3. During a Huddle/Stand up do an eye contact exercise. See handout list.
4. Facilitate a 30 min. workshop on nonverbal communication for all staff.
5. Model the making eye contact and getting to everyone's eye level.
6. Ask residents to cut out pictures of eyes from magazines and then tape them inside of cabinets, doors or on walls - anywhere staff will regularly see them.
7. Come back to a Huddle/Stand up meeting to discuss how it's been working.



How Do We Start

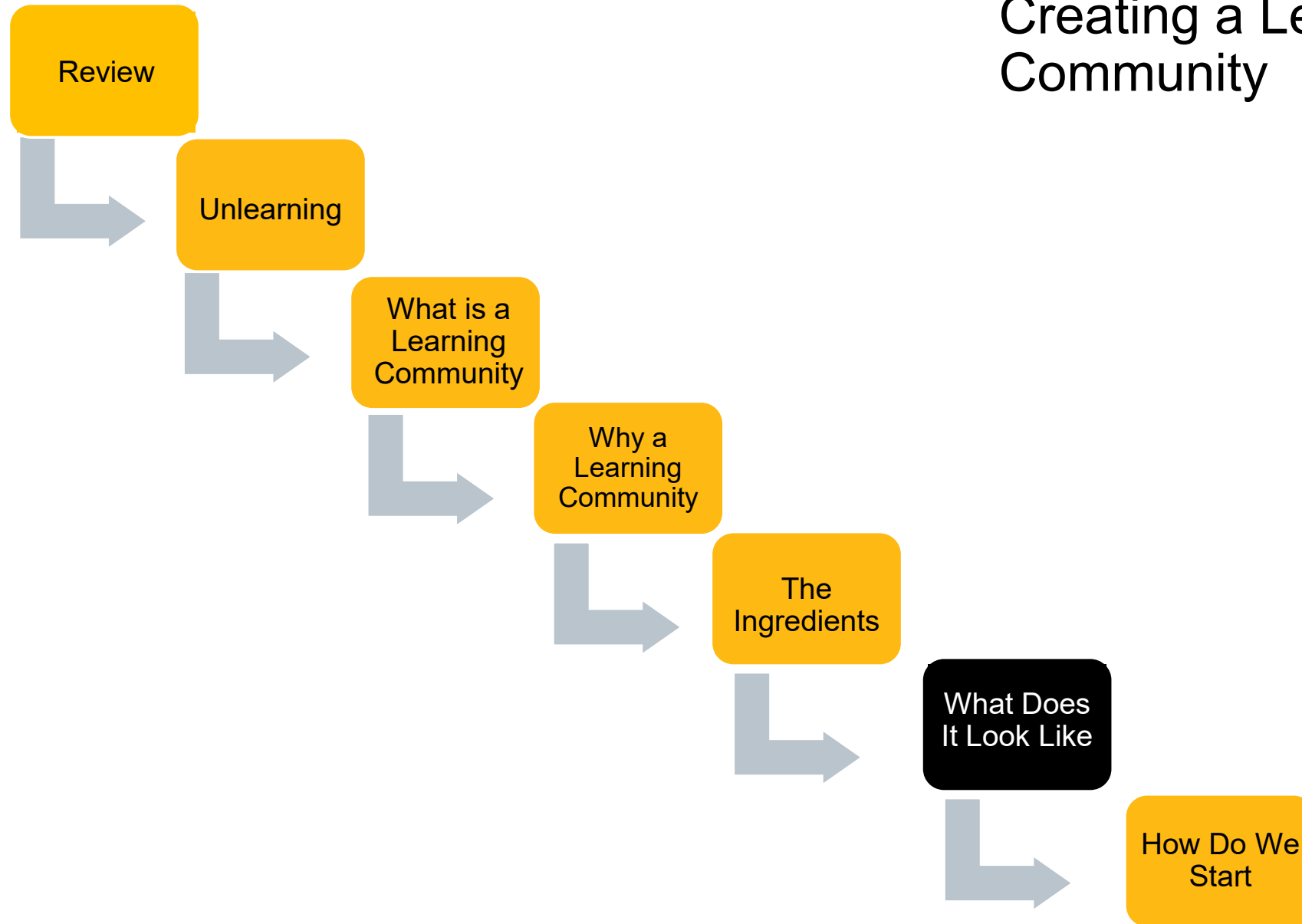


How Do We Start

To build a successful learning community, you need to establish shared goals, foster psychological safety, and encourage active participation. Shift from a teacher-centered dynamic to a collaborative partnership where every member feels a sense of belonging and takes ownership of their collective growth.



Today: Creating a Learning Community



Learning Opportunities



Learning opportunities
with time for team
members to ask
questions and discuss.



What Does It Look Like

Learning in a team
huddle with
brainstorming on
how to put an idea
into practice.



What Does It Look Like

Hair stylists
approaching the
leadership and
asking for a class on
having
conversations with
people with
dementia.



What Does It Look Like

1:1 or group
coaching with team
members on how to
invite residents with
dementia to
an activity



What Does It Look Like

Team members discussing openly with leadership why they are not sure how something they learned will work, and how they might make it work.



What Does It Look Like

A residents teaching team members about how it feels to be bathed by someone.



What Does It Look Like

A group of dining and nursing team members having a brainstorming meeting about how to improve the dining experience for people living with dementia.



What Does It Look Like

A lead CNA teaching a class to new CNAs on communicating with people living with dementia.



What Does It Look Like

A class for team members and family members on creating meaningful visits with people living with dementia.



What Does It Look Like

Team members are offered a self-paced course with follow-up in huddles or team meetings.



What Does It Look Like

What Does It **FEEL** Like?

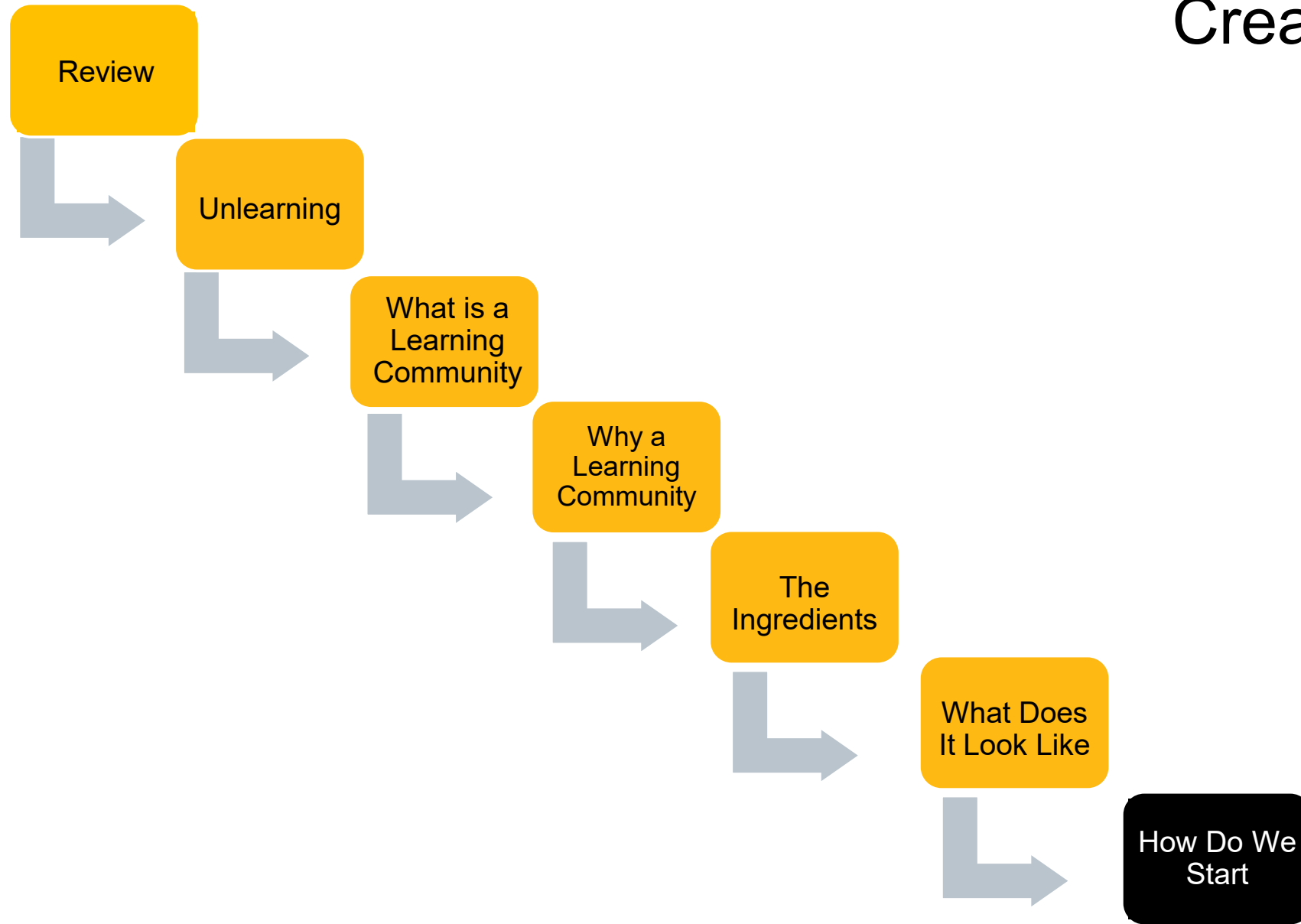
deeper understanding

being heard

inclusion



Today: Creating a Learning Community



How Do We Even Start?



**Move from
CAN'T to How**



How To Start

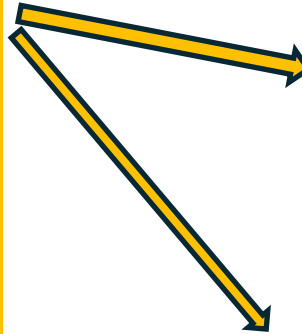
- Share - no matter how small or big
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



How to Share

- All Community Meeting
- Small meetings
- In an email
- Stand up/Huddle
- Flyer in breakroom
- Ask team members to share

What to share

- Why the idea
- Share don't tell
- Who it affects



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- Ask what do you think?
- What might this look like here?
- What are concerns?
- Reply to email
- Have an anonymous box
- Use post-its in a meeting
- 1:1 feedback



How Do We Start Listen

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try

- Review
- Try again

- 
- Don't interrupt
 - Take every person seriously
 - Validate feelings
 - Thank each person for sharing



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- After everyone who wishes to share has, consolidate answers/comments
- Share answers anonymously
- Start with themes/agreement



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- Create a Learning Team or whatever the group wants to call themselves
- Have the team develop a plan: who, how, when & where
- Start small
- Communicate plan to everyone



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- Try the area in a small part of the community or one small change
- Everyone must be onboard with the change and how to do it
- Collect feedback



How Do We Start

How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- Consolidate all feedback
- Present it to the whole community
- Discuss why worked/didn't
- Get consensus of what to change
- How to move forward (new plan)



How Do We Start

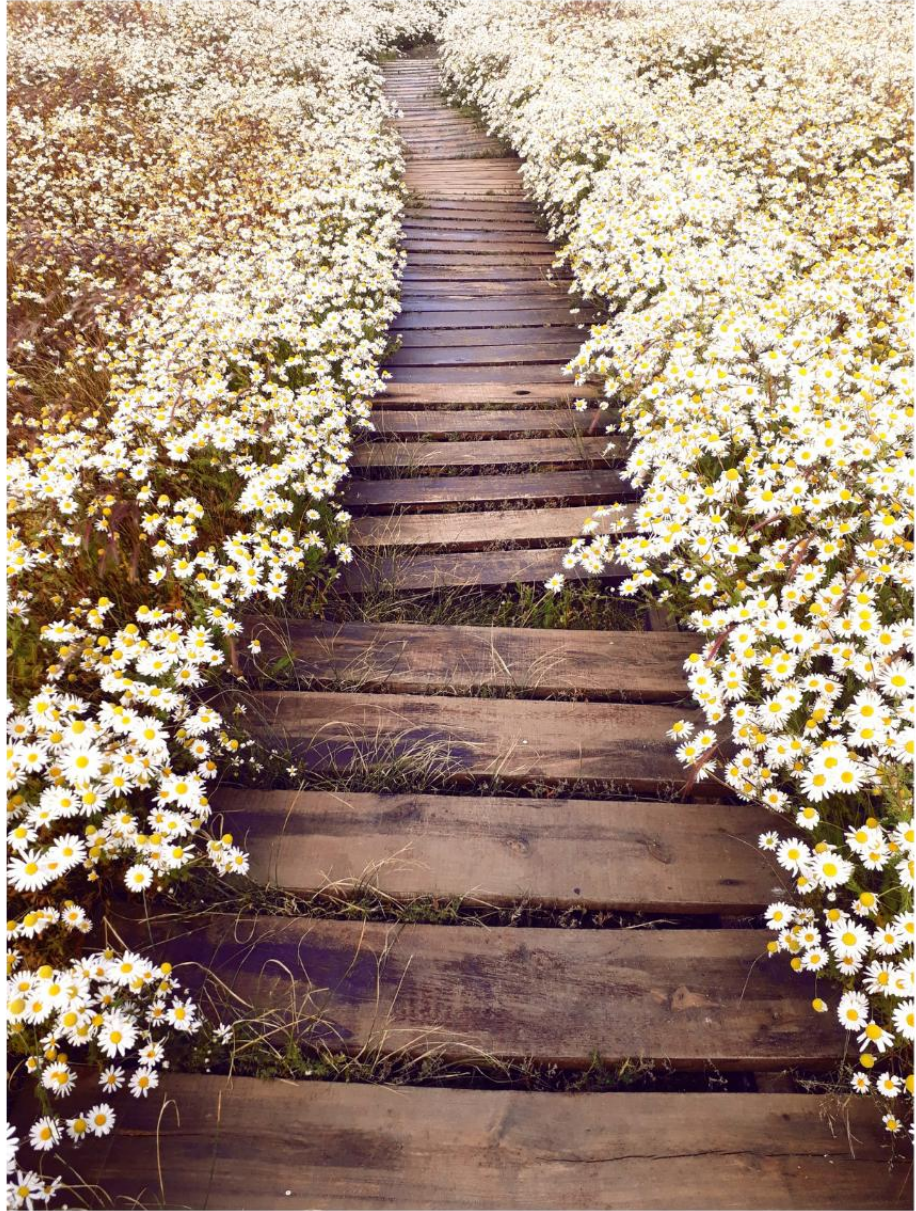
How To Start

- Share - no matter how small or big
- Get Feedback
- Listen
- Reach consensus
- Co-Develop
- Try
- Review
- Try again



- See Try.
- Review & be curious
- Try again (3x)
- Then if it's not working,
Come to a consensus of
what to do next
-





A closing reflection question

**What is one thing
you are going to do
to start a “learning community”?**

Please write in Q&A



Thank You!

Let's continue this conversation.

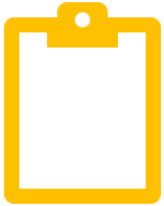
Karen Stobbe — kstobbe1@gmail.com

Sonya Barsness — sonya@sbcgerontology.com

THANK YOU!

**Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)
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REMINDERS



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Huddle-Up 7: Creating a Learning Community

September 9, 2026, 1:00pm - 2:00pm ET

Sonya Barsness & Karen Stobbe
Series Host and Moderator: Gigi Amateau, PhD



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CardinalCare
Virginia's Medicaid Program