



# Before we start:

- This is a bite-sized webinar. For more information and learning see the resources on the last slides and/or access deeper level, interactive training.
- Look after yourself. Self-neglect and/or hoarding issues could be affecting you or someone you know. This webinar could trigger your feelings around that. Seek support if needed.



# Objectives for the session:

1. What is self-neglect? Who does self-neglect affect?
2. How do we recognise self-neglect? What might the indicators be?
3. What might be the causes of self-neglect?
4. Ways of working with people who self-neglect including Bristol based policy and procedures
5. Further resources



# 1. What is Self-neglect? Who does it affect?





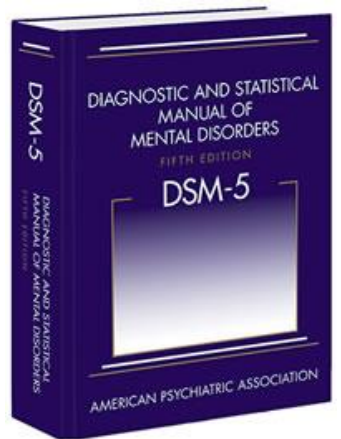
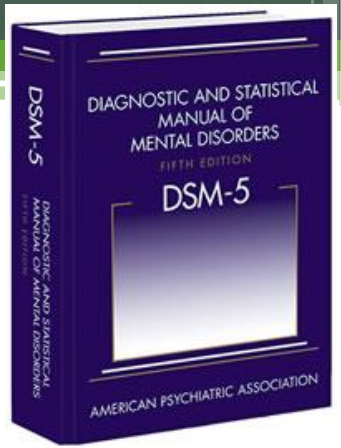
## One definition...

*'Self-neglect is defined as 'the inability (intentional or non-intentional) to maintain a socially and culturally accepted standard of self-care with the potential for serious consequences to the health and well-being of the self-neglecters and perhaps even to their community.'*

*(Gibbons, S. 2006. 'Primary care assessment of older people with self-care challenges.' Journal of Nurse Practitioners, 323-328.)*

# Hoarding Disorder

- Excessive acquisition, saving, difficulty discarding, disorganisation
- ‘Hoarding Disorder’ first appeared in the ‘Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder version 5’ (DSM-5) in May 2013
- Previously considered a symptom of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) - hence the common description ‘compulsive hoarding’



# Hoarding Facts and figures



- have a three-fold chance of being overweight or obese
- were more likely have a spectrum of chronic and severe physical medical concerns
- used mental health services five times as much as the general population.

(Tolin, et al, 2008, Timpano et al, 2011, Mind 2021 )

## Prevalence:

- 5% in US :1.5% in UK :4.6% in Germany
- May be twice as common in men
- Nearly three times as common in people age 55 and older
- Early onset most common, later onset less so

(Gregory, J, 2018)

## 2. How do we recognise Self-neglect? What might the indicators be?





## Types of self neglect

### **Intentional (active)**

- A conscious choice to engage in self-neglect
- E.g. refusal or withdrawal of permission for access, rejection of support

### **Non- intentional (passive)**

- A result of health related conditions that contribute to risk of developing self-neglect
- E.g. dementia, depression, physical



## **Lack of self-care**

E.g. neglect of personal hygiene, nutrition, hydration and/or health

## **Lack of care of the domestic environment**

E.g. squalor or hoarding

## **Refusal of care or services**

E.g. that would mitigate risk to safety and wellbeing

# Indicators of self-neglect may be:

- living in very unclean, sometimes verminous, circumstances
- poor self-care leading to a decline in personal hygiene
- poor nutrition
- poor healing/sores
- poorly maintained clothing
- Isolation
- failure to take medication
- Hoarding
- neglecting household maintenance
- portraying eccentric behaviour/lifestyles



# Impact of self-neglect and/or hoarding

- Escalation of mental, social, emotional and physical health issues
- Social isolation
- Strained relationships with family, friends, landlords, neighbours
- Work issues, issues at work
- Legal/financial problems
  - Credit card debt
  - High expenses – buying, storage unit fees
  - Eviction, divorce, bankruptcy
- Danger to life: 2-5% of properties in the UK are classified as having a hoarding problem, but they account for **25-30% of fire fatalities**



### 3. What might be the causes of Self-neglect?



# People's voices...

**All hoarders are individuals with individual reasons**

...you did not throw clothes away, that is part of my psyche...everyone did it, the whole of British society was deeply encouraged by Mr Churchill to do it...

**I'm lonely but I don't trust anyone**

**I think it was just, as I say, because everything was taken away from me at an early stage...**

**I got it in my head that I'm unimportant, so it doesn't matter what I look like or what I smell like**

**I want things that belonged to people so that they have a connection with me**

**no thank you, I don't want any help**

**It's a very confined space, only a one-bedroom flat...**

# Possible causative factors of self-neglect...



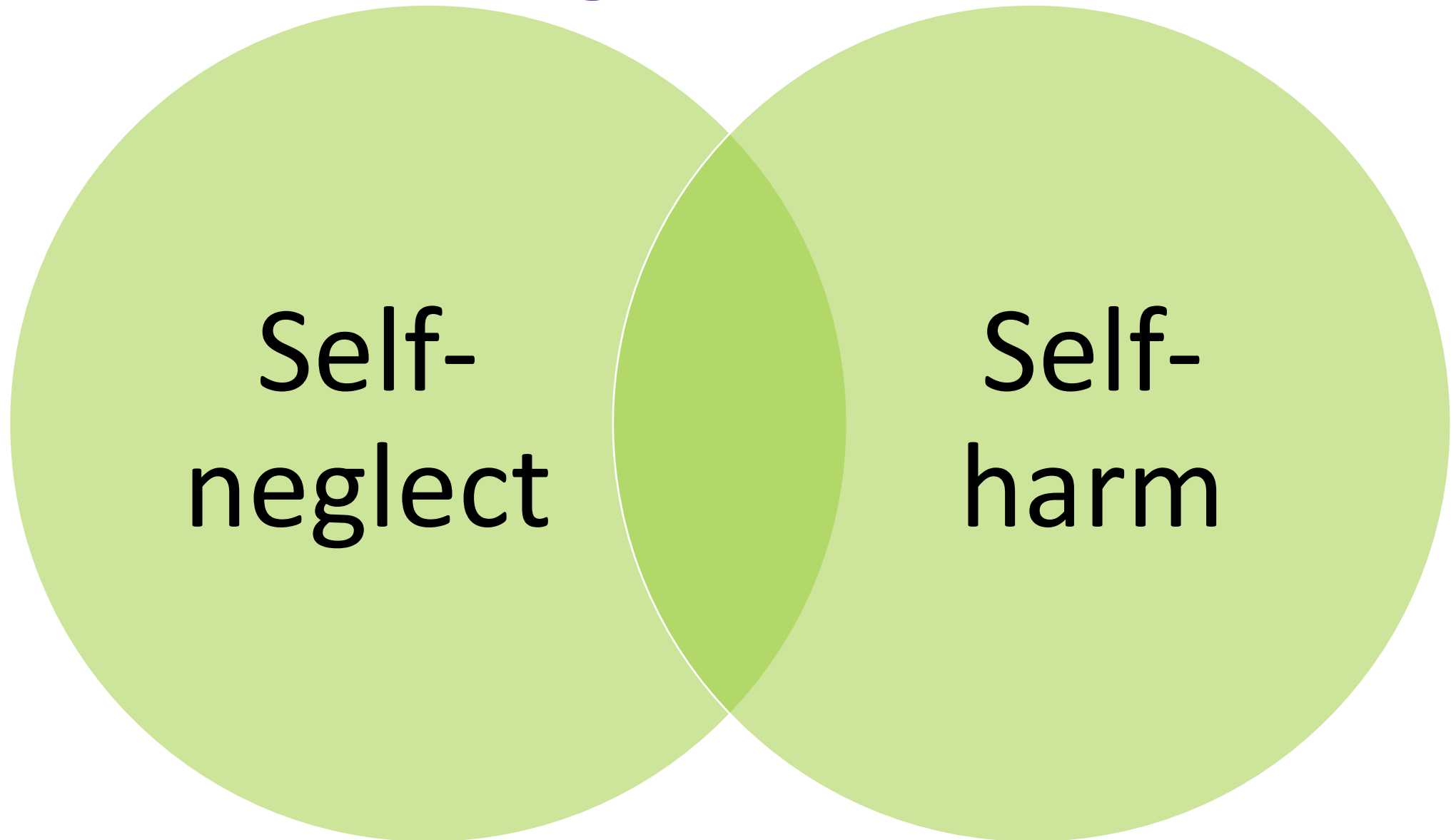
Self-neglect is not a 'life-style choice'.

Complex mix of personal, mental, physical, social, health, environmental and historical factors such as:

- Disturbance in physical or mental health – unable to care for self
- Depression, or feelings of not deserving any better, lack of motivation
- Pride
- Fear
- Not wanting to conform to social norms
- Response to past losses, abuse or trauma
- A coping mechanism that serves a useful purpose
- Lose of family assistance, social support or financial means
- Links with self-harm
- Many more...



## Quick focus on self-neglect versus self-harm





## Pause for thought...

What is hoarding?

What is the difference between collecting and hoarding?  
Who decides?

Who here hoards?

What do you hoard?

Why do you hoard?

What is the difference between cluttering and hoarding?  
Who decides?

# Hoarding exercise



# Models of understanding and possible intervention...



## Cognitive behavioural:

- Information
- Beliefs
- Emotions

## Psychodynamic:

- Negative or traumatic experiences
- The 'hoard' becomes a cocoon and represents safety
- Projects self into things
- 'Things' compensate for rejection or loss

## Medical:

- Strong familial heritability
- Common medical or mental health conditions include:
  - obsessive-compulsive disorder
  - Acquired brain injury
  - Autistic spectrum disorder
  - Dementia
  - Depression

## 4. Ways of working with people who self-neglect including Bristol based policy and procedures



# Ethical dilemmas arise from competing imperatives

**Respect for autonomy  
& self-determination**

**Duty to protect &  
promote dignity**

**Prioritising self-  
determination: hoarding  
as a 'lifestyle choice'?**

**Duty of care to  
protect from harm:  
hoarding as 'risk'?**

**“What good is it making  
someone safer if it merely  
makes them miserable?  
None at all!”**

Lord Justice Munby (2013) *Safeguarding,  
Capacity and the Law*



## Some related laws...

**Human Rights Act  
1998**

**Mental Capacity Act  
2005**

**Public Health Act  
1984**

**Animal Welfare Act  
2006**

**Housing Act  
1988**

**Care Act 2014**

**Mental Health Act 2007**

# Care Act routes for self-neglect and hoarding



**Local Authority**

**Care Act, S.42**

- duty to make enquiries

**Care Act, S.9**

- duty to assess

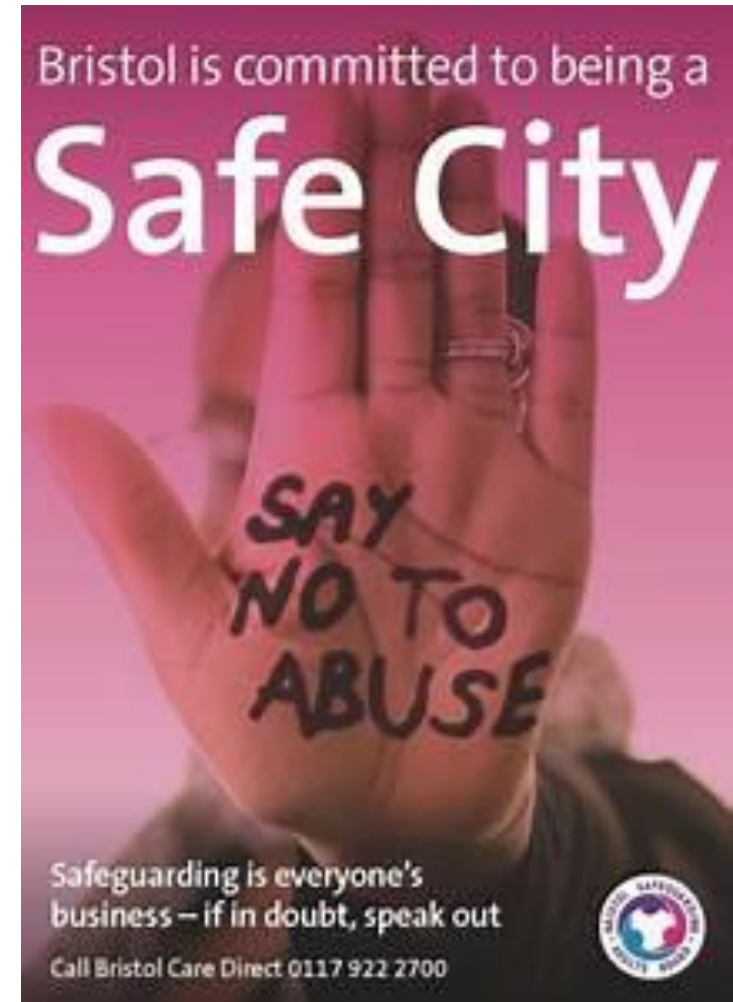
Gap – 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, voluntary,  
private agencies

‘Doing ok’ accessing universal services as  
needed

# Key links: Duties and responsibilities

## Safeguarding Adults

- Is the person self-neglecting and/or hoarding vulnerable?
- Do they need some sort of help with daily living or support (for example due to a learning disability, mental health issues, age related health, mobility etc.)
- If so also make a referral to Safeguarding Adults
- <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/report-suspected-abuse>







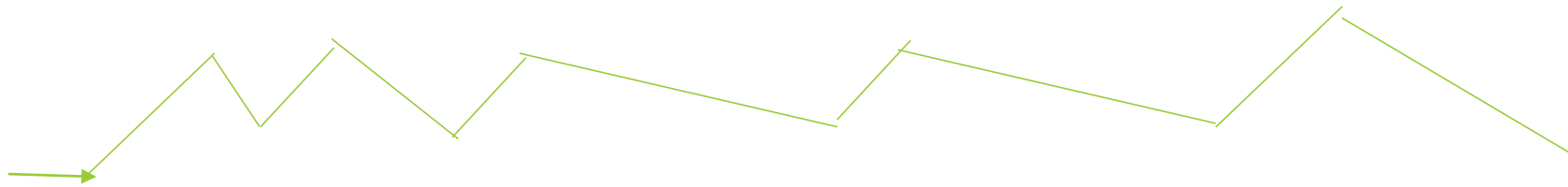
# Helpful approaches to intervention

- Moving from being ACE aware
- To trauma informed practice and recognition of trauma across the life course (accumulation of trauma over a lifetime).

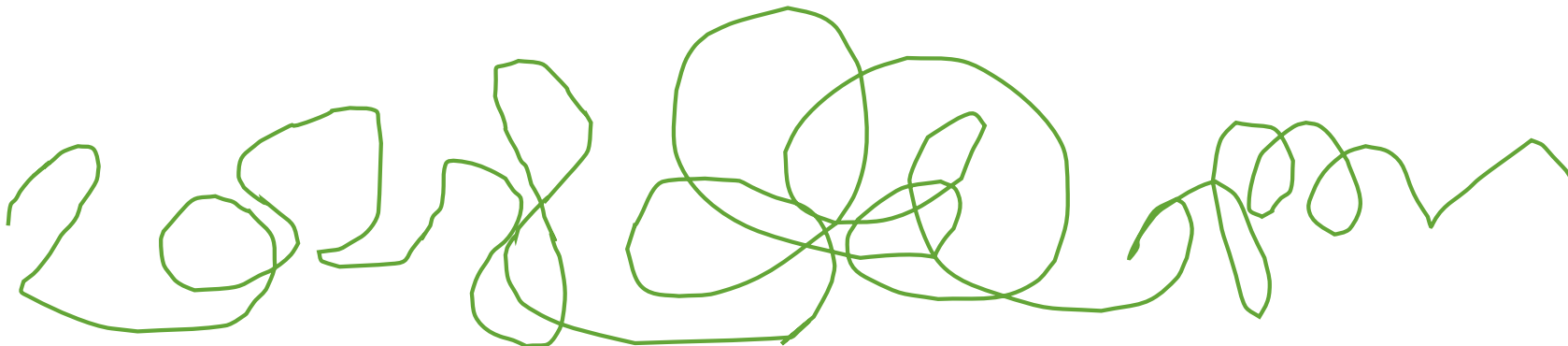
**Plan A**



**Plan B**



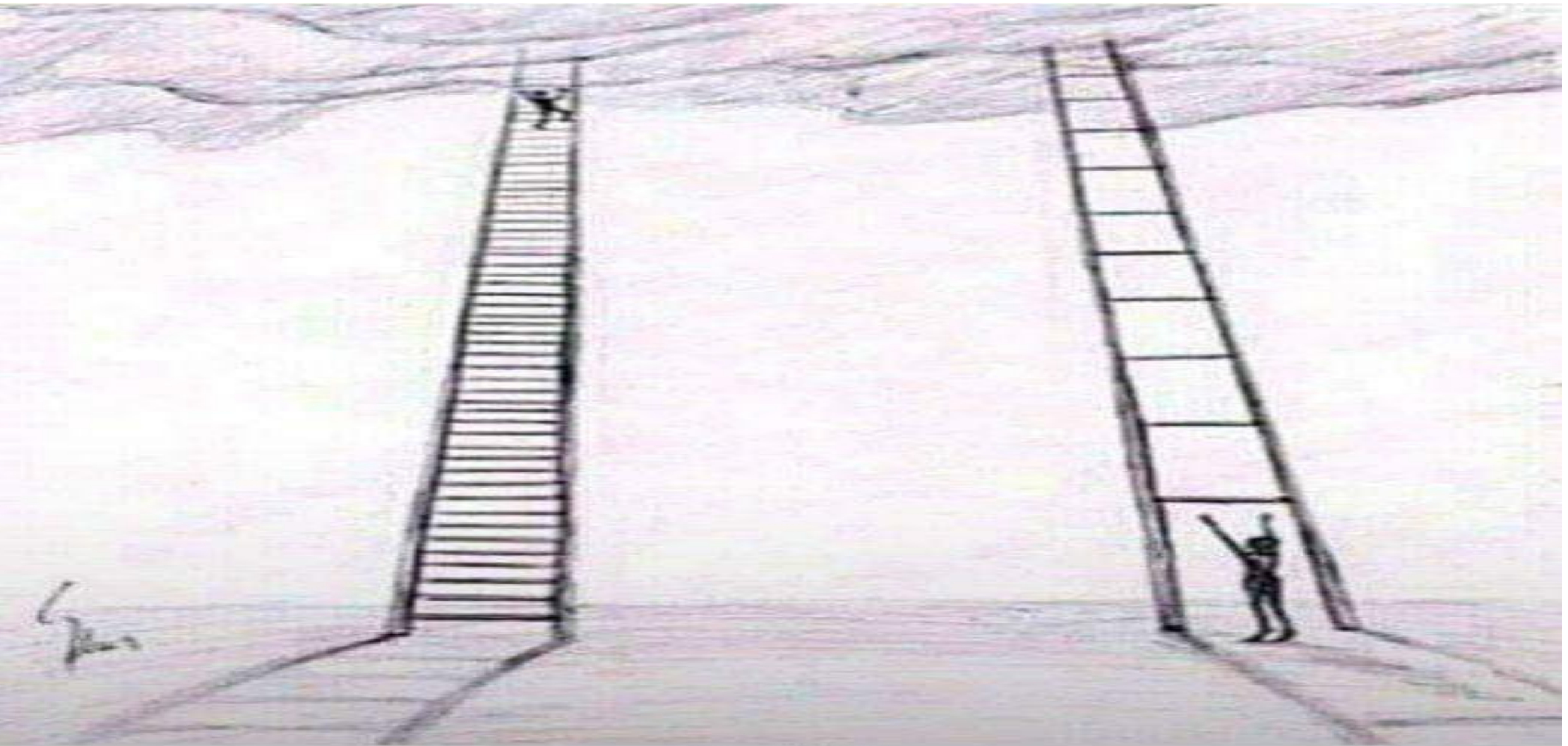
**Real life**



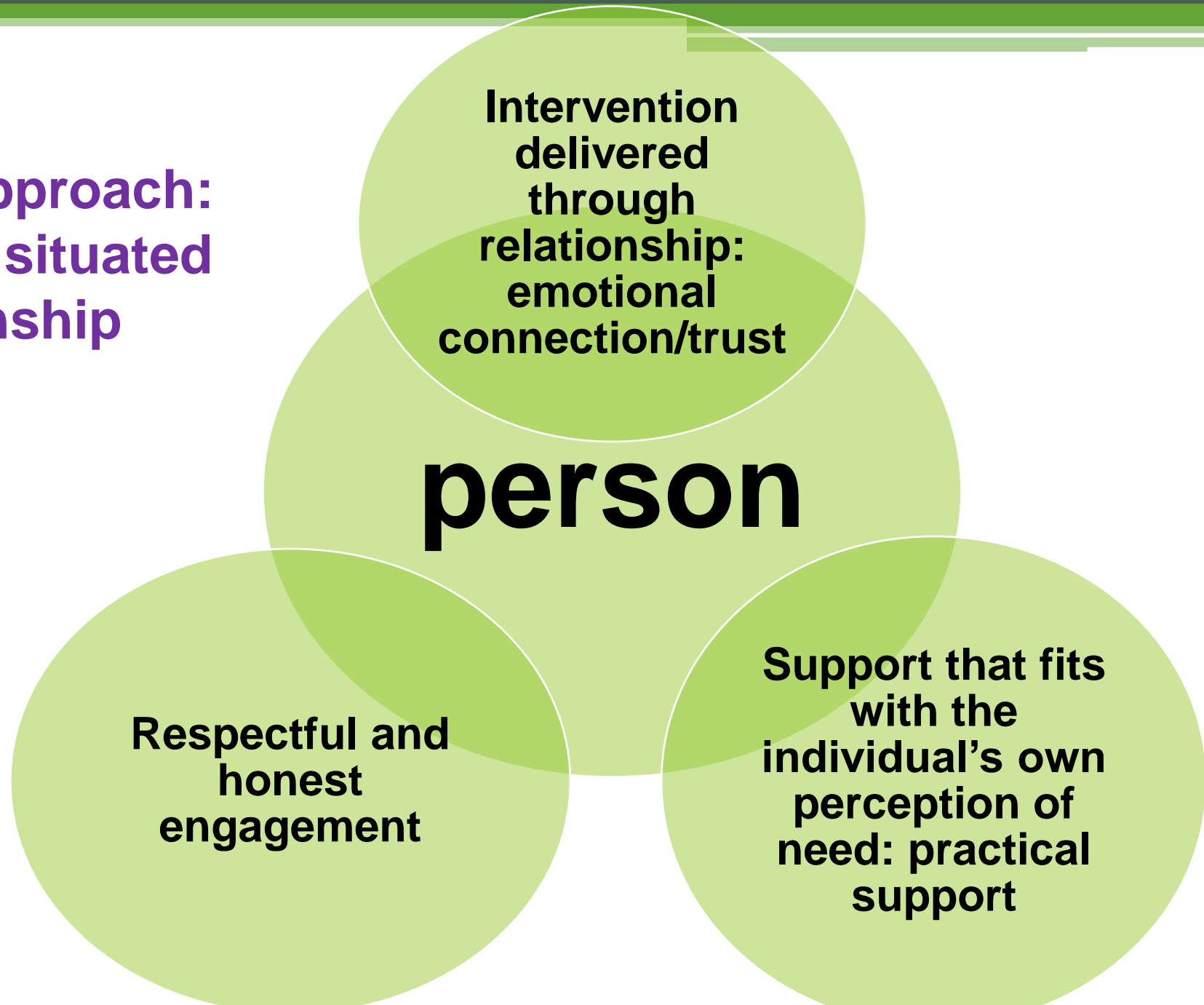
# Best practice around Self-Neglect



# Engaging...small, achievable goals



**A relational approach:  
ethical action situated  
within relationship**



## Possible Interventions...

- Monitoring
- Safe drinking schemes
- Fire risk minimisation
- Adaptations and repairs
- Provision of equipment or furniture
- Attention to health concerns
- Emergency respite
- Hospital admission
- change of living environment



- Deep cleaning
- De-cluttering
- Life management
- Care packages
- Enforced action
- Therapeutic activity
- Psychotherapy
- Intervening
- Peer support

## Result = Peoples voices like these....

They all said, 'we're not here to condemn you, we're here to help you' and I couldn't believe it. I thought I was going to get an enormous bollocking.

"They ... weren't helping ... just leaving it for me to do. Whereas when x came, they were sort of hands on: '*Bumph! We've got to do this*' ... '*shall WE start cleaning up now?*'"

She got it into my head that I am important, that I am on this earth for a reason.

He has been human, that's the word I can use; he has been human.

# Assessing: factors to consider – hoarding and self-neglect

- History, nature and person's views
- Fire, hygiene, structural safety issues
- Persons awareness of risks
- How much behaviour interferes with daily activities
- Mental or physical health issues, disabilities
- Strengths and protective factors
- Risks posed to others in or outside the household
- Dynamics of relationship(s) with carer, family, landlord, others
- Mental capacity around specific decisions



(Ripfa, 2015)



# Clutter Image Rating Scale (CIRS)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/1631520/Clutter+scale+rating+chart/67a431d4-63c0-9e9d-4fb1-a435e5c2878d>



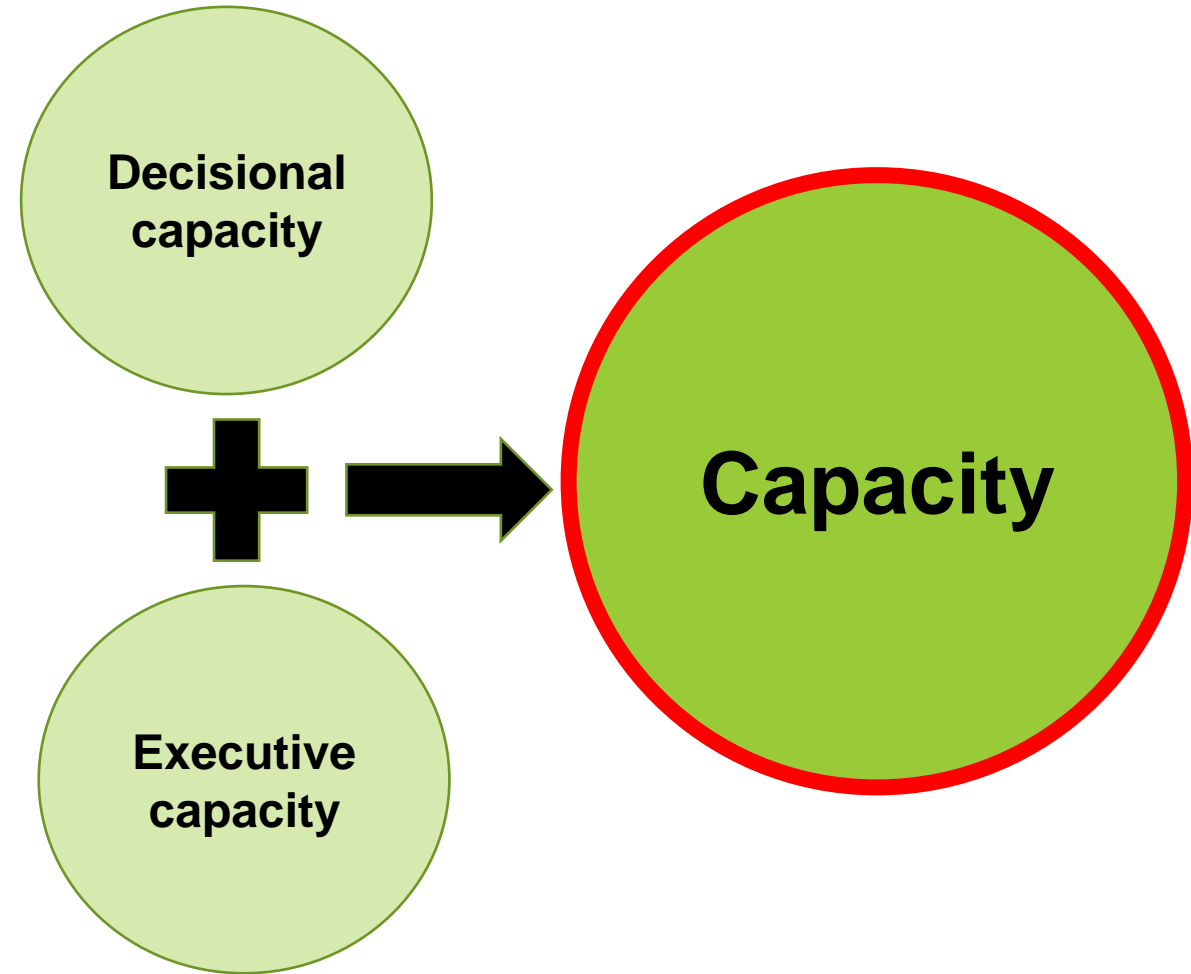
# Reminder...

## Mental capacity involves...

- The ability to understand and reason through a decision AND the ability to enact it in the moment

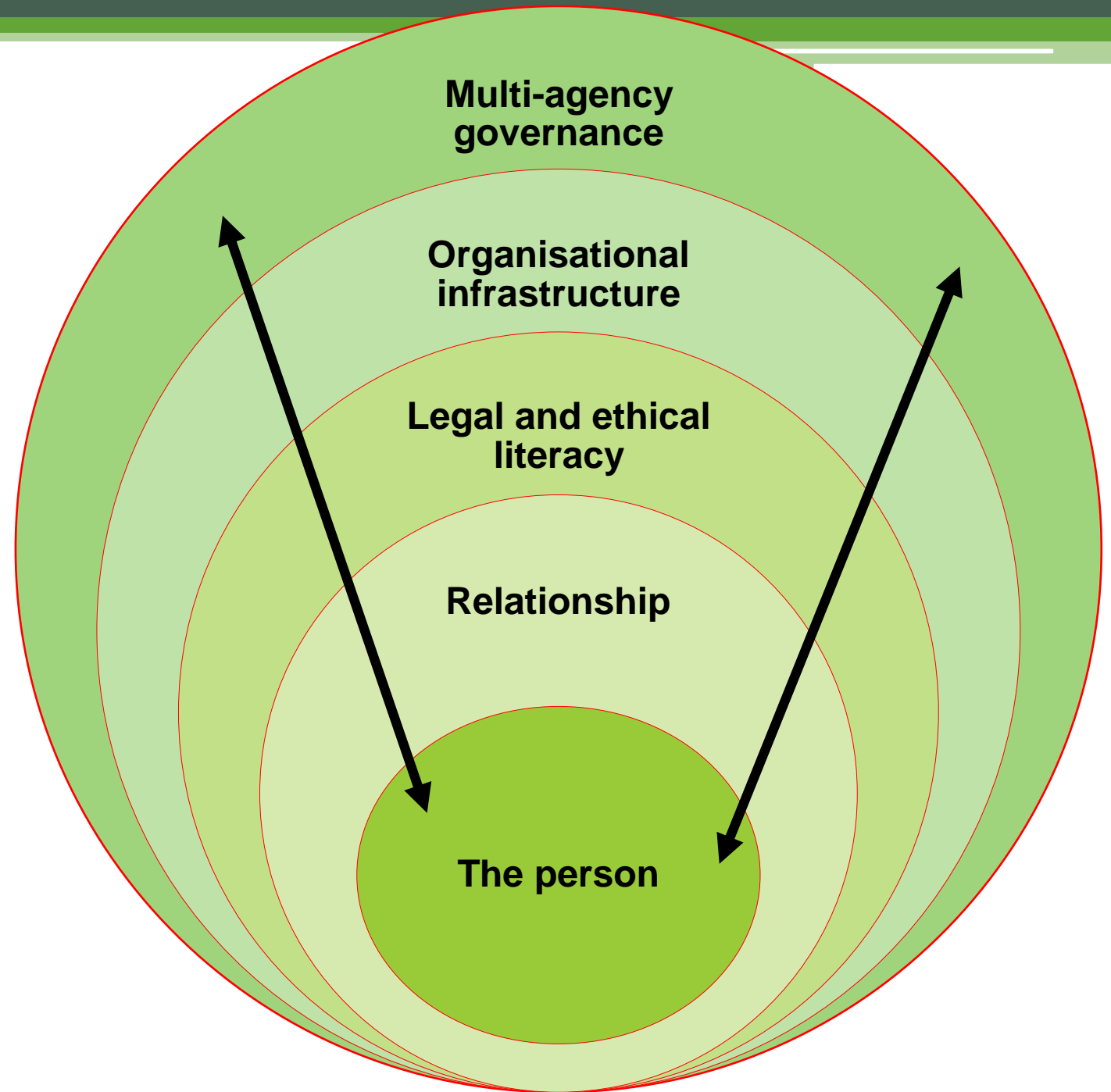
## Impaired *executive* function (frontal lobe impairment) affects...

- Understanding, retaining, using and weighing relevant information in real-time, problem-solving



# Best practice around self-neglect: whole system alignment

(Preston-Shoot, 2017)



# Recording: top tips

## Record:

- Assessment
- Decision-making
- Intervention
- Options considered and rational for actions and/or inactions.
- Who you have collaborated with
- Decisions



The case should **not** be closed simply because the person refuses an assessment or to accept a plan to minimise the risks associated with the specific behaviour(s) causing concern.

# 5. Further Resources



# You...

Be a peacock, share:

- good practice
- tips
- Information, resources etc.



## **KBSP, Bristol's Multi-Agency Guide for Self-Neglect, 2021**

<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/policies-and-guidance/self-neglect/>

## **We Care - Making SPACE:**

- to help people change from the inside-out, rather than outside-in;
- People focussed treatment, not object focussed treatment.

[www.wecr.org.uk/making-space/4593544490](http://www.wecr.org.uk/making-space/4593544490)

## **Research:**

Dr James Gregory, Lecturer/Clinical Psychologist, [j.d.gregory@bath.ac.uk](mailto:j.d.gregory@bath.ac.uk) & [Research | HoardingUK](#)

## **Avon Fire and Rescue Service**

[www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-services/home-fire-safety-visits](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk/our-services/home-fire-safety-visits)

## **Clutter rating scale**

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/1631520/Clutter+scale+rating+chart/67a431d4-63c0-9e9d-4fb1-a435e5c2878d>

[www.hoardingdisordersuk.org](http://www.hoardingdisordersuk.org)

[www.hoardinguk.org](http://www.hoardinguk.org)



"I've learned that people will forget  
what you said, people will forget  
what you did, but people will never  
forget how you made them feel."

Dr Maya Angelou