Welcome to a practical framework for Reflective Practice Team Development (RPTD) interventions to support teams working in Psychologically Informed Environments.

Christopher Scanlon
Consultant Psychotherapist & Organisational Consultant
ELFT, SLaM and St Mungo's
c.scanlon@btinternet.com

The Rumsfeld mantra and the ‘dilemmatic space’

- There are known knowns. There are things we know we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things we know we don’t know. But then there are unknown unknowns. These are the things that we don’t know we don’t know.
- **Dilemmatic spaces;** where decision taken inevitable disappointment
- **Negative Capability:** ‘... when a man [sic] is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after reason’.

“The centre cannot hold?”

“Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world …

WB Yeats – ‘The Second Coming’

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world …

- Blaming the victim
- Shame turns to contempt
- Grief turns to grievance
- Violation turns to violence (disrespect)
- Violence is addictive and Addiction is violent (DSH)

“fission/fragmentation – fusion/confusion”

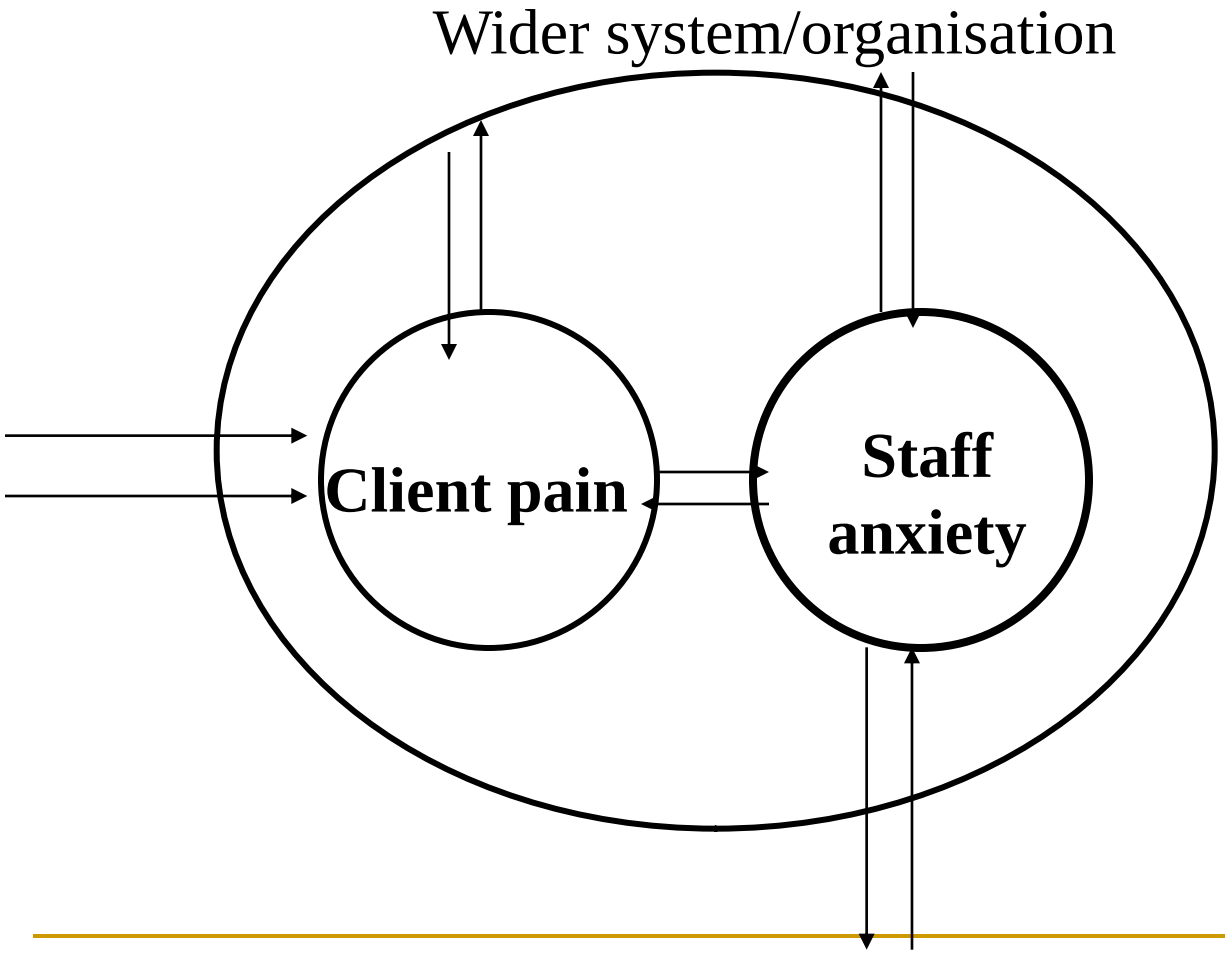
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are filled with passionate intensity”

WB Yeats – ‘The Second Coming’

Incohesion teams

- Cumulative **trauma** of being squeezed between the madness of the clients and the madness of the organisation ⇒ overwhelm defences of conflicted (dis)organisation ⇒failed dependency ⇒ failure of holding/containing ⇒ secondary traumatisation ⇒ ⇒ collective helplessness ⇒ hostile dependency **incohesion** (un-bonded) ⇒ oscillation between ⇒ **aggregation** (fission/fragmentation) and/or **massification** (fusion/confusion) ⇒ **trauma**s forgotten – dis-membered – "stuck in the middle"

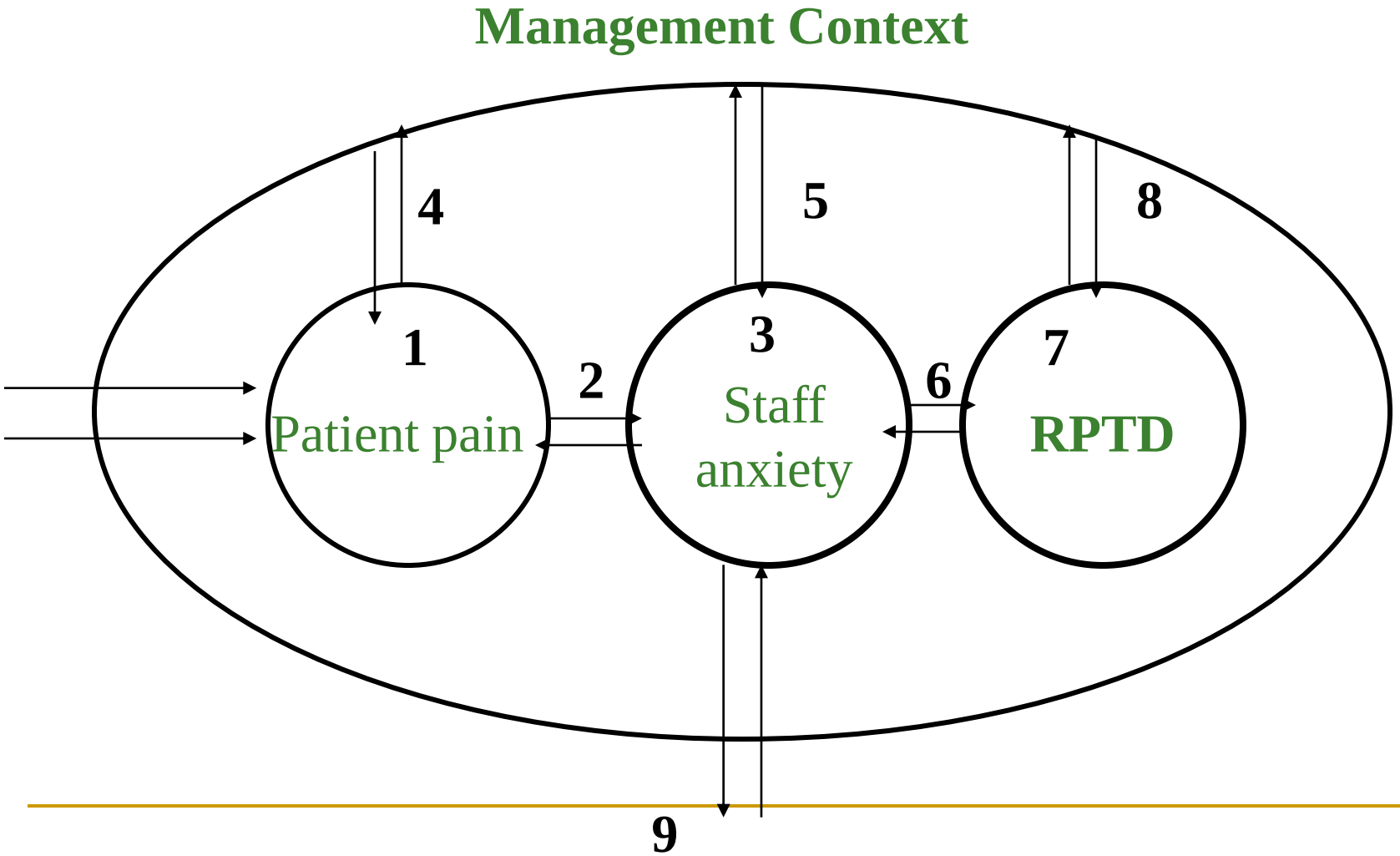
Impact of the work – “stuck in the Middle”



Mechanisms for Team/Organisational Development

- Culture of enquiry
- PIE
- PIPE
- “Relational Security”
- Managed Clinical Networks
- Community of Practice
- Peer-learning communities
- Learning Organisation

Psychologically Informed (Planned) Environment (PI(P)E)



Adapted from Scanlon, 1998

Patient Defences Against Pain

- Splitting and dissociation
- Idealisation & denigration
- Fear of breakdown
- Acting-out unbearable experience
- Unable to hold a consistent image of self/others
- Shame and contempt
- Avoidance of taking responsibility

Staff Defences Against Anxiety

- Identification or detachment vs. Empathy
- ‘Labelling’ vs. Diagnosis/formulation
- Risk avoidance/defensive practice vs. Risk management
- Denial of feelings
- Avoidance of responsibility and/or defensive use of hierarchy
- Role rigidity vs. Flexibility
- Doing rather being
- “Deaf, dumb, blind” spots

Cost to patient

- The sufferer who frustrates a keen therapist by failing to improve is always in danger of meeting primitive human behaviour disguised as treatment

- Tom Main (1957 – The Ailment)

Cost to staff

- Helplessness and exhaustion
- Physical illness
- Substance misuse
- Anxiety and depression
- Reduced affect control.
- Severe mental disturbance
- Overwhelming guilty feelings
- Envy of acting-out (or acting-out)
- Despair

Focus of learning

- **Supportive/restorative -** safe, holding, containing experience
- **Formative -** learning from experience rather than ‘problem solving’
- **Normative** - ethical decision making, standard setting, self and peer audit

Staff Team

Meeting together

- Contagion, chaos and the parallel process
- Defensive nature of hierarchy
- Social defences against anxiety
- Decision making and the democracy
- Valuing affective experience
- Permissiveness with conflict resolution
- Collaboration and empowerment
- Part of rather than apart from …

Culture of enquiry vs *culture of inquiry*

RPTD Project SLaM

- Supported by management executive
- Parts and wholes
- Specifically recruited
- Team of 4 – Consultant level (8c)
- Meet together weekly
- ‘Access to’ and ‘reporting to’ management executive
- Trade Union vs. management ‘lackey’?

Locating the TDC?

- JD and PS
- Peer support
- Managerial linkages
- Para-vision
- Culture of inquiry
- Participatory Action Research and the Learning organization
- What is CPD for TDC?

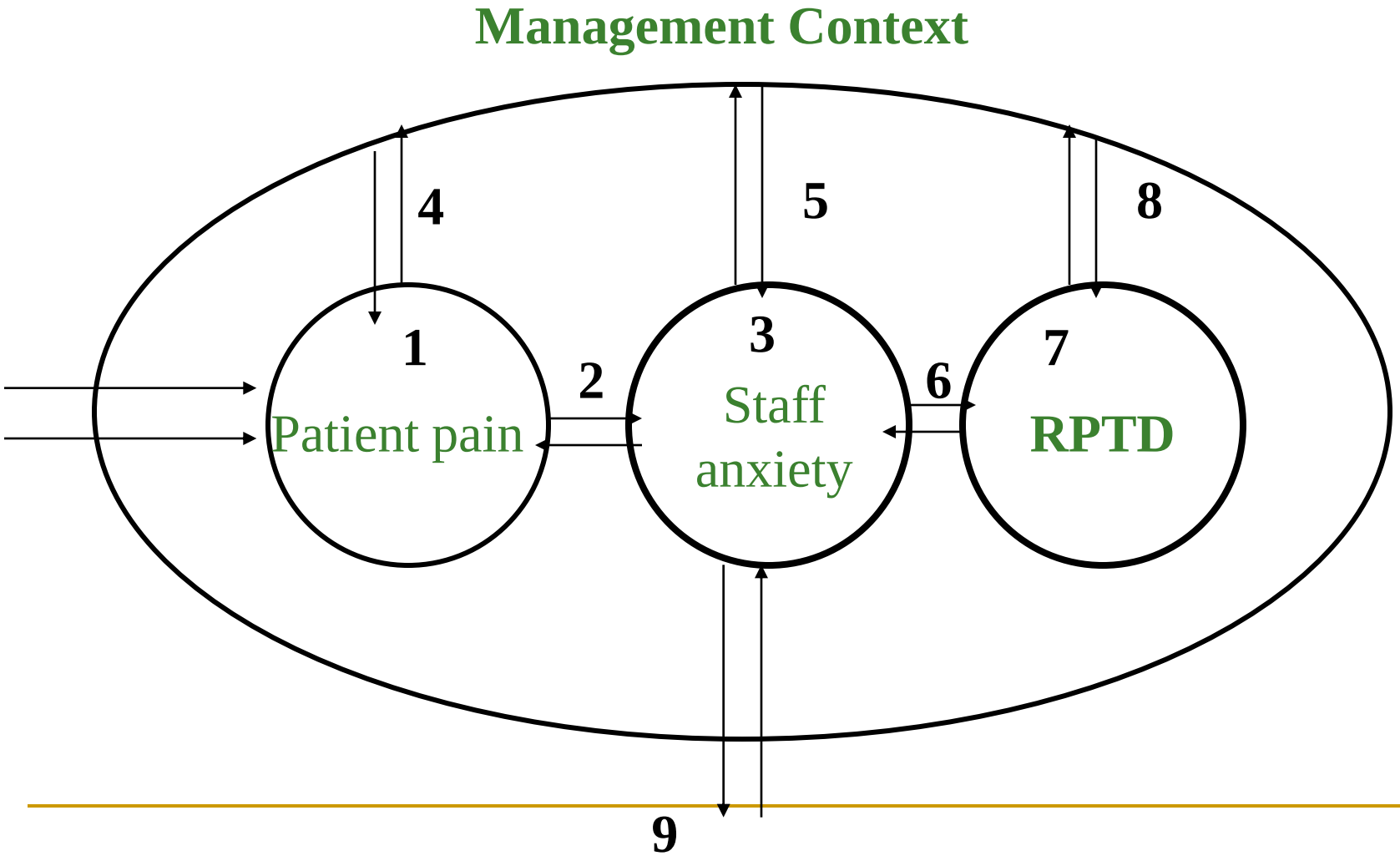
If you can keep your head when all about you
Are loosing theirs and blaming it on you,

Or being hated, don't give way to hating ...,

If you can meet Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors the same …

Excerpts from 'If' - Rudyard Kipling

Psychologically Informed (Planned) Environment (PI(P)E)



Adapted from Scanlon, 1998

Selected references

- Scanlon, C & Adlam, J. (2012.) On the (dis)stressing effects of working in (dis)stressed homelessness organisations. *Journal of Housing, Care and Support*, 15, 2; 74-82.
- Scanlon, C. and Adlam, J. (2012) 'Dangerous Liaisons': Close Encounters of the Un-boundaried Kind *in* A. Aiyegbusi and G. Kelly (eds.) *Professional and Therapeutic Boundaries in Forensic Mental Health Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Scanlon, C. (2012) 'The Traumatised Organisation-in-the-mind: Creating and maintaining spaces for difficult conversations in difficult places in J. Adlam, A. Aiyegbusi, P. Kleinot, A. Motz & C. Scanlon (Eds). .) *The Therapeutic Milieu Under Fire: Security and Insecurity in Forensic Mental Health*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Scanlon, C. & Adlam, J. (2012a.) 'Disorganised responses to refusal and spoiling in traumatised organisations' in E. Hopper (ed.) *Trauma and Organisations*. London: Karnac.
- Adlam, J. & Scanlon, C. (2011.) 'Working with hard-to-reach patients in difficult places: a Democratic Therapeutic Community approach to consultation', pp. 1-22 in A. Rubitel & D. Reiss (eds) *Containment in the Community: Supportive Frameworks for Thinking about Antisocial Behaviour and Mental Health*. London: Karnac.
- Scanlon, C & Adlam, J. (2011c.) Who watches the watchers? Observing the dangerous liaisons between forensic patients and their carers in the perverse panopticon. *Organizational and Social Dynamics*, 11, 2, 175 – 195.
- Scanlon, C. and Adlam, J. (2011a.) ''Defacing the currency': a group-analytic appreciation of Homelessness, Dangerousness, Disorder and other inarticulate speech of the heart?' *Group Analysis* 44 (2), 131–148