



## THREE SENTENCES THAT ENCAPSULATE OUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

### “HOW CAN I HELP YOU?”

In the NNPCN, this starts with the Executive Director and Board, spreads throughout the circle of peers of NNPCN volunteers, and ultimately comes to full circle when you ask your client, *“How can I help you?”* Another way we express that to our client is, *“Please teach me how to help you: tell me about your journey.”* Remember, *“How can I help you?”* is also applicable among peers. As fellow volunteers, we ask, *“How can I help you?”* to one another. All the time!

### “HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF?”

At the NNPCN, you are encouraged to pro-actively develop self-awareness and adopt healthy practices. It is central that you always make time for self-care. Respect your own limits, and pursue personal quality of life. Moreover, as NNPCN volunteer, it is your right to be in constant communication and dialogue with your Supervisor and peers, and when necessary, to express your present needs of support to them. Never hesitate to go to your Supervisor in open dialogue and express exactly where you are at this point of your experience as one of our volunteers. If you need a break, then you need a break. No one can give to another person what one does not possess. To be able to support your client, first you must feel completely supported. *“You can’t pour from an empty glass.”*

### “WE HELP ONE ANOTHER.”

As the saying goes, *“charity starts at home.”* There would be no authenticity, and it would be an irony, if an organization aiming at giving volunteer support to Palliative Care and Bereavement clients, completely free of charge, fell in the trap of an unhealthy organizational culture. Many of us have been primed to be assertive and competitive from childhood, at home and at school. Many organizations still foster a toxic environment, an unhealthy cult of individualism, competition, antagonism, backstabbing, mutual mistrust, social masks, passive-aggressiveness, insincerity, selfishness, indifference, and ambitions. The NNPCN organizational culture is pioneer in our efforts to break up with the old ways of “competition,” and replace it with “collaboration.” We want to put a human face in what we do. A collaborative organizational culture, that considers a central human dimension neglected by the old ideas of “competition:” the fragility and sensitiveness of the human condition. We deal with human beings at their most vulnerable moment: death and grief. This is as human and fragile as one can get. The most human experience we can go through. There is no space for “business as usual” in this situation. To give our clients what they need, first we must live a culture of solidarity, sincerity, and mutual support among us. If you come from a competitive professional or personal environment, the first thing to learn as our future volunteer is to unlearn the notion of success at all costs and the *“I, me and myself”* attitude. Whenever you come to the Office, leave competitiveness and ego outside, at the entrance door of our building. With your help, we are building a new and more human organizational culture.