

# Core Competencies for Peer Crisis Support in Transformed Mental Health Crisis System

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Presented By: Eduardo Vega, M.Psy;

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CEO/Founder: *Humannovatlons*





**HUMANNOVATIONS**  
Empowering the Global Mental Health Revolution

A social impact company driven by lived expertise.

The mission of Humannovations is to create a healthier future through innovative solutions that empower people and communities, and reduce the global burden of mental ill-health and suicide.

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Partners



**V!brant** Emotional Health



# PALLIANCE INSTITUTE

for Peer Support & Lived Expertise



**GROWING THROUGH**



# Palliance

The Institute for Peer Support & Lived Expertise



Eduardo Vega, M. Psy.  
CEO, Founder Humannovations

## Faculty

### Lisa Goodale, MSW; Senior Director/Training Maven



#### Lisa Goodale, MSW

Ms. Goodale has over twenty years' experience in the area of mental health training, programs and policy, with a focus on peer support training in clinical and community-based care settings. As a Vice President for the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) she was instrumental in securing and managed a \$1M+ national peer specialist training and certification contract with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and managed day-to-day activities, reporting, and evaluation of a \$250,000 SAMHSA Center for Mental Health Services national consumer technical assistance center grant. She developed new training and consultation business related to implementation of peer support services, peer specialist training/certification, Veteran related issues and needs,

# Eduardo Vega



## Personal Mission and Experience

- Building recovery/growth-oriented approaches to mental health and suicide prevention driven by lived expertise, human rights and community empowerment
- 15 +years Executive Management and Strategic Growth in non-profit, government, etc. (CEO MHASF 2010-2016) State Commissioner; Fulbright Fellow
- 30 years in mental health, social services, advocacy including homeless services outreach/shelters, etc.
- Nationally/internationally active as leader in mental health policy, programs, advocacy, research, peer support programs
- Training and mentorship of crisis counselors, peer specialists and consumer advocates
- Executive Committee of National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention; Steering Comm. Natl Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- Lived Experience: Suicidal intensity, mental health disorder, psychiatric disability, youth criminal justice, housing insecurity, suicide loss multiple, discrimination, clergy sex abuse, divorce

# WELCOME/OBJECTIVES

1. Identify core issues relating to the intersection of psychiatric care, mental health treatment, peer crisis support and the lived experience of suicide
2. Review avenues for integration of peer and lived experience supports related to 988 planning
3. Discuss humanizing model of crisis, suicide and recovery/growth
4. Review key humanizing terms/reframes related to crisis and intensity

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a man and a woman sitting on a beach at sunset. They are facing each other and holding hands. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

6 PEER/LIVED EXPERIENCE  
SUPPORTS FOR CRISIS AND  
SUICIDAL INTENSITY

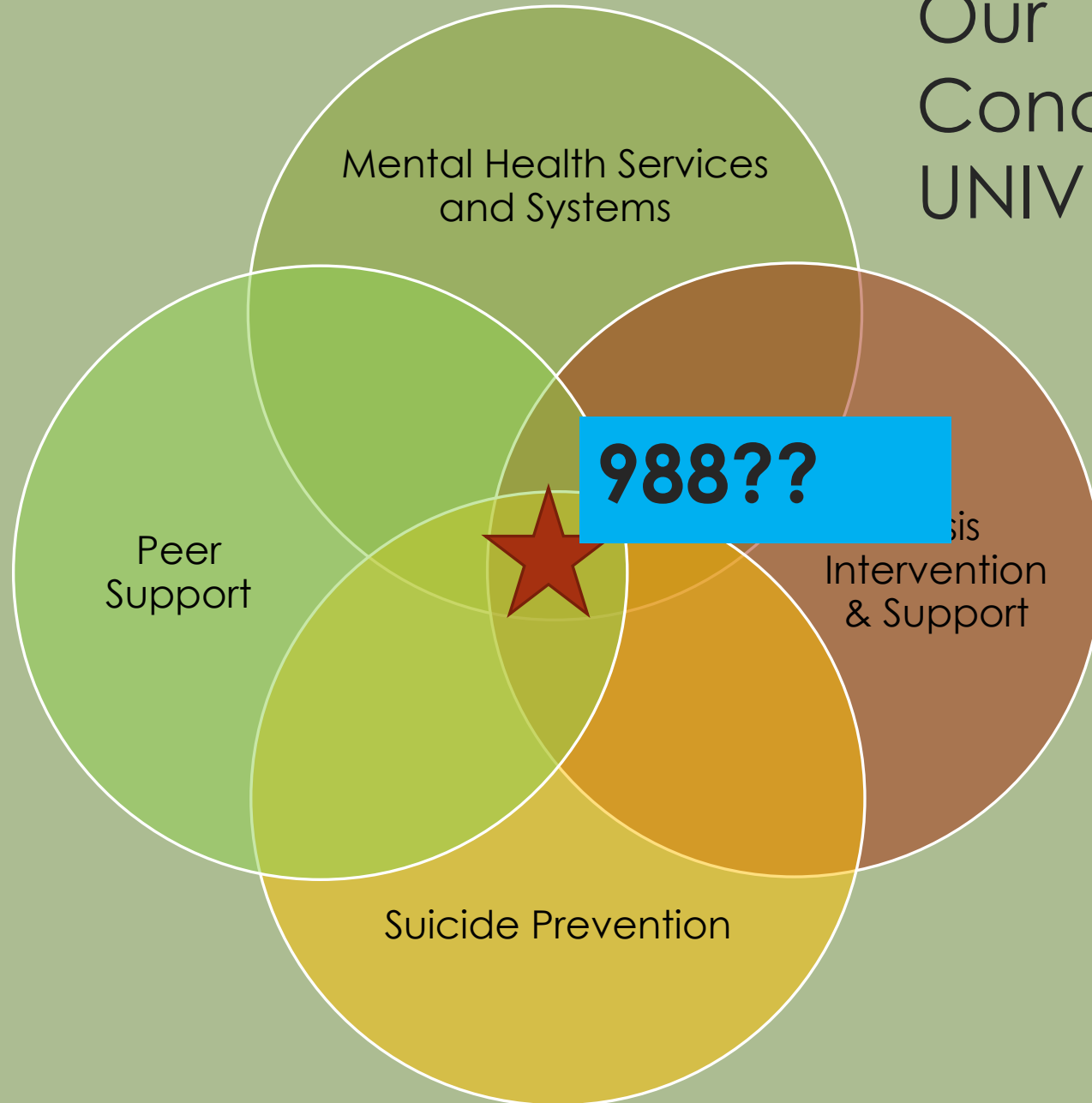


GROWING  
THROUGH

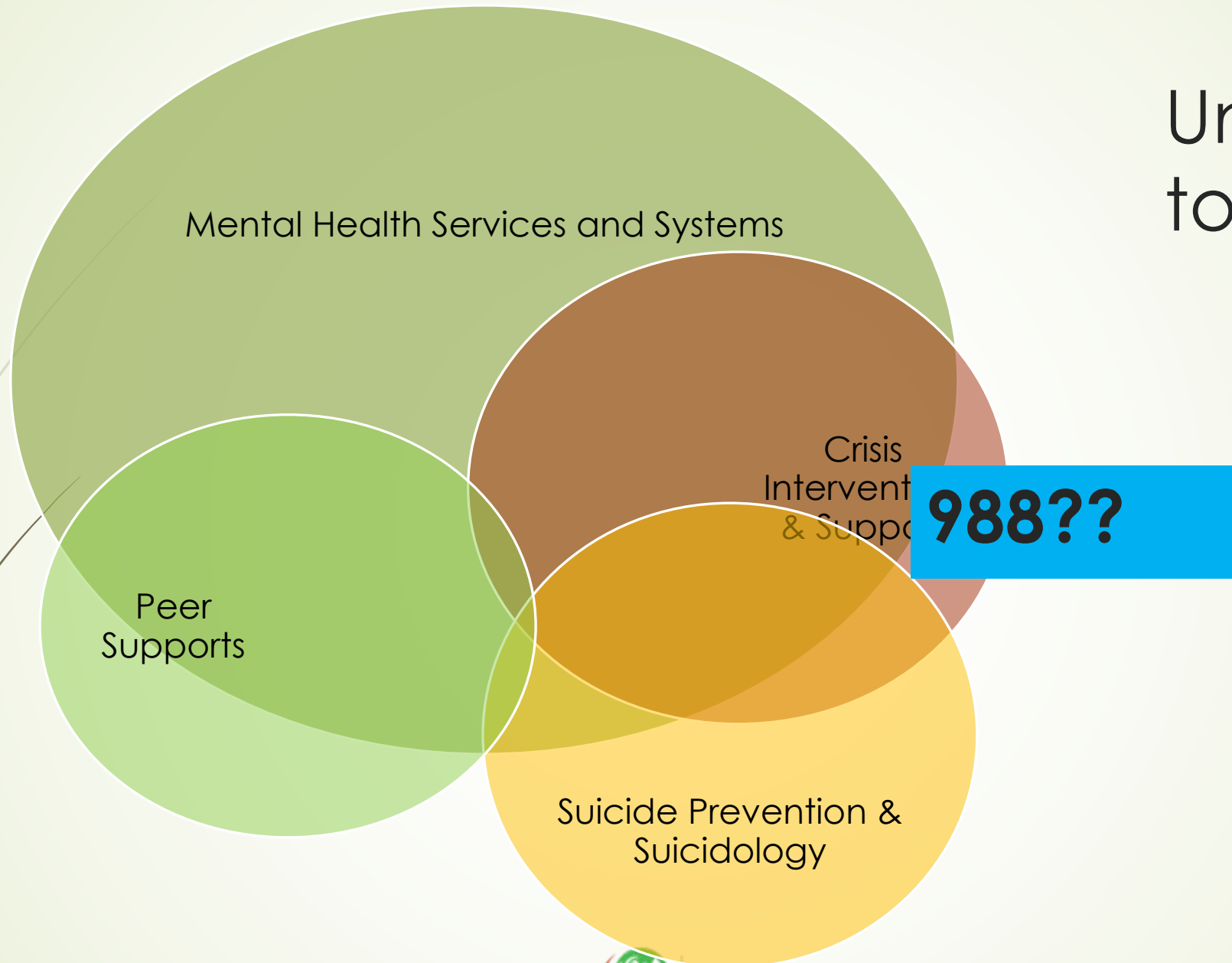
When you're overwhelmed by despair, all you can see is suffering everywhere you look. You feel as if the worst thing is happening to you. But we must remember that suffering is a kind of mud that we need in order to generate joy and happiness.

**No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming Suffering**  
by Thich Nhat Hanh

# Our Conceptual UNIVERSE



# Universe today



WHERE ?

Subthreshold need/access

Maintenance (Therapy, meds)

**DISTRESS/ SUBACUTE**

Intensive (IP, PH/IOP, RTF)

Crisis/Acute/ Emergent

**PEER CRISIS  
SUPPORTS**

10

# CRISIS SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

## KEY PEER / LIVED EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES



Alternative / Diversion Programs



LE/ SI Peer Support Groups/Meetings



MOBILE CRISIS



HOSPITAL, STABILIZATION UNITS, IOP



Community Crisis Homes / Peer Respite



Phone and text Crisis Contact programs



Post-Crisis Peer Support and Suicide Prevention Support



# What are the Challenges of integrating peer support in crisis services -SYSTEMS

Low Expectations/  
Stigma

Peer Specialist Scope  
of Work

**Concerns around  
Activation/  
Retraumatization**

Limited Practices and  
Evidence

**Uncertainty related to  
Lived Expertise/ Role of  
LE**

Limited models

# What are the Challenges of integrating peer support in crisis services for PLE



**PEER SUPPORT  
VALUES CLASH**



**EDUCATION  
LICENSING**



**CONCERNS  
AROUND  
ACTIVATION/  
RETRAUMATIZATION**




**COERCION/  
RESTRICTIONS/  
GATEKEEPING**




**UNCERTAINTY  
RELATED TO  
LIVED  
EXPERTISE/  
ROLE OF LE**

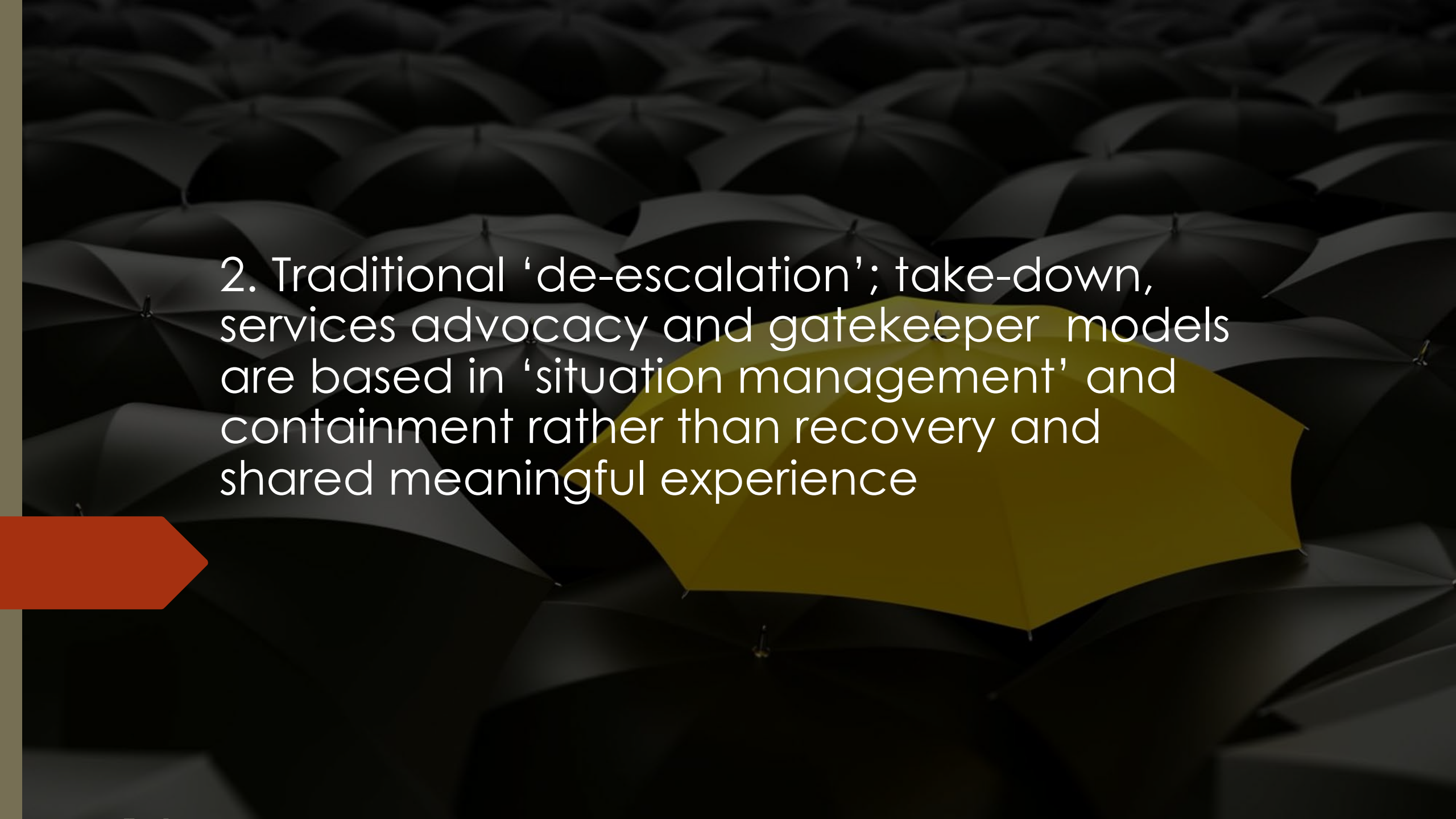


**LACK OF  
SPECIALIZED  
TRAINING**




1: The effective use of lived experience / peer support in crisis related services must be based in the unique values and distinctive competencies of Peer Support



A field of many dark grey umbrellas, with one prominent yellow umbrella in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the scene.

2. Traditional 'de-escalation'; take-down, services advocacy and gatekeeper models are based in 'situation management' and containment rather than recovery and shared meaningful experience



The background of the slide is a dense field of dark grey umbrellas. In the center, one umbrella is a bright yellow color, making it stand out. On the left side, there is a solid orange arrow pointing towards the right.

3: Traditional clinical and crisis intervention models are limited in their ability to bridge the values and distinctive competency of peer support through 'adaptation'

A field of dark grey umbrellas, with one yellow umbrella in the foreground. The umbrellas are arranged in rows, creating a sense of depth and repetition. The yellow umbrella is the focal point, standing out against the dark background. The text is overlaid on the scene.

## SOLUTION:

An approach to crisis support / distress reduction that is grounded in growth and recovery and peer alliance

A red arrow graphic pointing to the right, located at the bottom left of the slide.



# PEER CRISIS SUPPORT PRACTICES

About 50 million people experience thoughts of suicide each year in the US.



“Both the objective condition (e.g., living alone) and the subjective feeling of being alone (i.e., loneliness) were strongly associated with suicidal outcomes. . . However, loneliness...had a major impact on both SI and SA.”

J Affect Disord.. 2019 Feb 15;245:653-667. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2018.11.022. Epub 2018 Nov 7.

Suicidal thoughts and behaviors and social isolation: A narrative review of the literature

Raffaella Calati <sup>1</sup> , Chiara Ferrari <sup>2</sup> , Marie Brittner <sup>3</sup> , Osmano Oasi <sup>2</sup> , Emilie Olié <sup>4</sup> , André F Carvalho <sup>5</sup> , Philippe Courtet

# When I am Heard I feel:

Valued  
Powerful  
Cared for  
Loved  
Respected  
Capable  
**Like I'm not  
alone**

Connection  
Supported  
**RELIEF**  
**Calmer**  
**important**





**Apart From**

**VS.**

**'A Part' OF**

- PEER ALLIANCE MEANS CONNECTION AND REDUCED ISOLATION
- SHARED MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES BRING US TOGETHER
- STRUGGLE AND HEALING LEAD TO COMPASSION FOR OTHERS
- PEOPLE “WHO HAVE BEEN THERE” CAN BE POWERFUL AT TIMES OF INTENSITY

PEER CRISIS  
SUPPORT CORE  
COMPETENCIES



Authentic Peer Alliance



Presence in Intensity



Crucial Moment Partnering



Sharing Strength and Struggle

# PEER CRISIS SUPPORT CORE COMPETENCIES



1. Authentic Peer Alliance




2. Presence in Intensity



3. Crucial Moment Partnering



4. Sharing Strength and Struggle



# 1. Authentic Peer Alliance (Palliance)

Equality of  
status

Growth  
Recovery  
Mindset

Shared  
Meaningful  
Experience

Spirit of  
Service



## 2. Presence in Intensity

Activation and  
Distress

Self-awareness  
Tools

Compassionate  
Curiosity

Managing  
Comfort and  
Safety



## 3. Crucial Moment Partnering

Clarifying  
Urgency &  
Emergency

**Suicide Talk**

Enlisting  
Others

Lethal Means  
Reduction



## 4. Sharing Strength & Struggle

Offering  
Shared  
Experience

Managing  
therapy zone

Avoiding  
Advice

Connecting  
to difference

# PEER CRISIS SUPPORT CORE COMPETENCIES



1. Authentic Peer Alliance



2. Presence in Intensity



3. Crucial Moment Partnering



4. Sharing Strength and Struggle



# GROWING THROUGH

*PEER SUPPORT FOR LIFE'S MOST DIFFICULT MOMENTS*

# What is Growing Through?

GROWING THROUGH is:

*a strengths-based, growth-focused approach to supporting others as an ally in times of crisis and intensity, with the goal of fostering meaning-making, recovery and purpose.*



# What Participants Learn



**Confidence and effectiveness in addressing themes of intensity and crisis:**

- ▶ **How to be fully present and supportive with anyone experiencing distress, suicide/self-harm and/or other intense feelings**
- ▶ **Skillful use of 'compassionate curiosity' to understand what another person is feeling and thinking**
- ▶ **Non-judgmental listening skills to build trust and communicate effectively**
- ▶ **How and when to utilize shared lived recovery experience**
- ▶ **Collaboration to keep safe, foster protective factors, and growth/recovery for a positively transformed future**

# Why Growing Through?

- ▶ **People Experiencing Intensity Deserve:**
  - ▶ Not to be criminalized, feared, coerced, manipulated or punished
  - ▶ Interest and respect for their process
  - ▶ Connection to Others “who have been there”
  - ▶ Community alternatives to emergency and inpatient hospitalization such as Peer Respite and related services
  - ▶ Support within their communities that is culturally responsive and grounded in dignity
  - ▶ Collaborative support in staying safe and 'growing through'
- ▶ EVERYWHERE



# *Growing Through* TRANSFORMATION

Growing Through is founded in the GROWTH/RECOVERY MODEL of crisis


- the difficult moments we encounter in life are crucial part of our growth, and essential to finding purpose and meaning within
- These moments while painful have meaning and value all their own.





A field of dark grey umbrellas with one bright yellow umbrella in the foreground, slightly to the right of center. The umbrellas are arranged in rows, creating a sense of depth. The background is dark, making the umbrellas stand out.

# Supporting Growth, Recovery Distress and Intensity

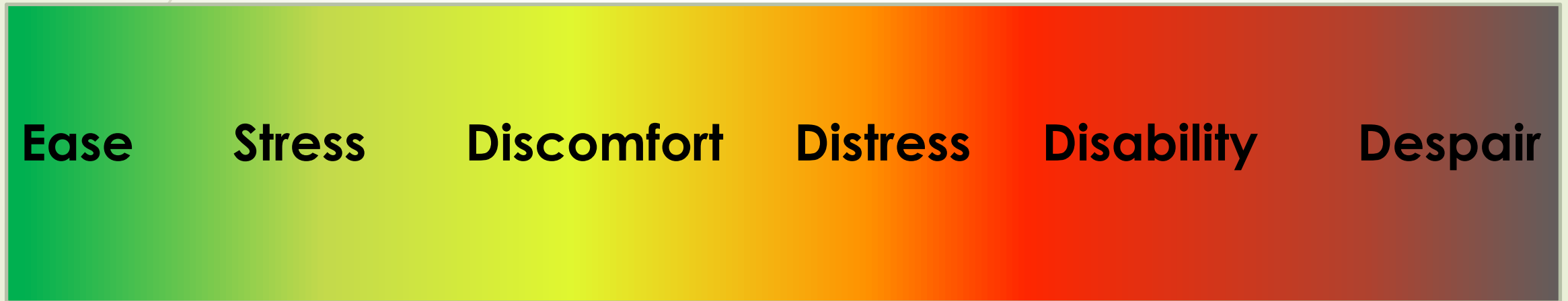
An orange arrow pointing to the right, located on the left side of the slide.

5 D's, 5 P's

The Big R, the 3 L's



# *Intensity Continuum*



# The 5 D's





# The 5 P's

➔ Purpose

➔ Prospects

➔ Perseverance

➔ Presence

➔ Pleasure

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# The Big R

All materials © Eduardo Vega, 2017





# The 3 L's

**LISTEN**

**LISTEN**

**LISTEN**



# THE HERO'S JOURNEY





# GROWING THROUGH



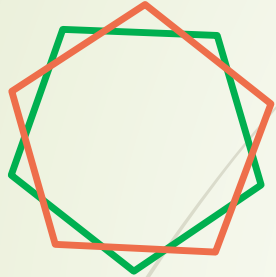
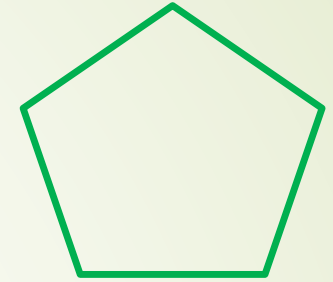
*HUMANNOVATIONS*

## PRACTICES





## 5 *Growing Through Values*

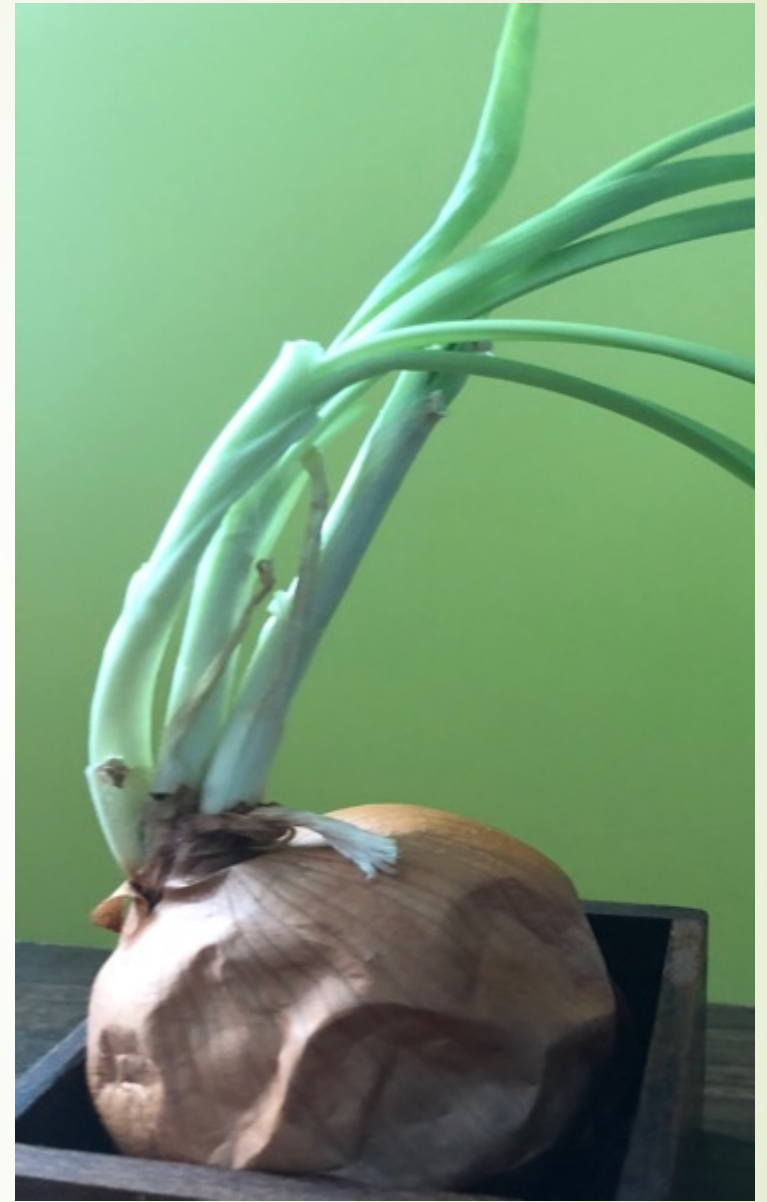


1. Great Gifts & Gratitude (GG)
2. Recovery Roads (RR)
3. Progress in Pain (PP)
4. Solidarity in Suffering (SS)
5. Future Fruit (FF)



**H.O.P.E.**

**HOLD ON, PAIN ENDS**



LEARN MORE

[www.growingthrough.net](http://www.growingthrough.net)

Contact us to schedule a no-obligation information call:

- ▶ Lisa Goodale, Training Maven- [lisa@humannovations.net](mailto:lisa@humannovations.net)
- ▶ Eduardo Vega, CEO – [director@humannovations.net](mailto:director@humannovations.net) or (415) 933-0980
- ▶ <https://www.humannovations.net/contact>



**HUMANNOVATIONS**

*Transformative Solutions for  
Healthy Minds and Communities*