



RELATIONAL
COORDINATION
COLLABORATIVE

Brandeis
UNIVERSITY

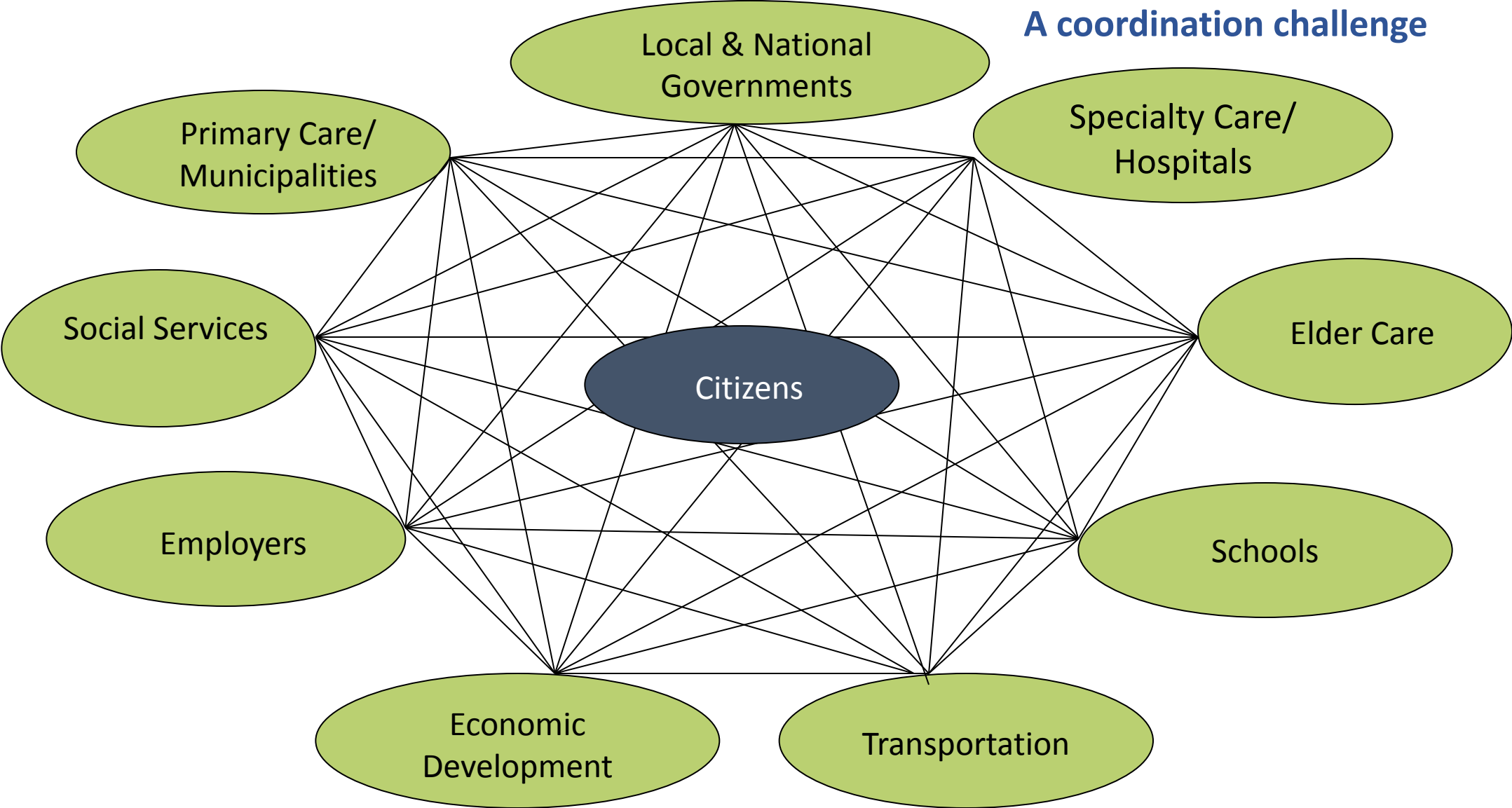
Relational Coordination Playbook

Challenges we face today

- ◆ Elders are living longer with more complex illness
- ◆ Youth are experiencing their own challenges
- ◆ Healthcare requires coordination between many different roles in different organizations and sectors
- ◆ Specialists and primary care providers need to work together but their budgets are separate and limited
- ◆ Other challenges? What is your project?

To find solutions will require different perspectives to
work together in new ways

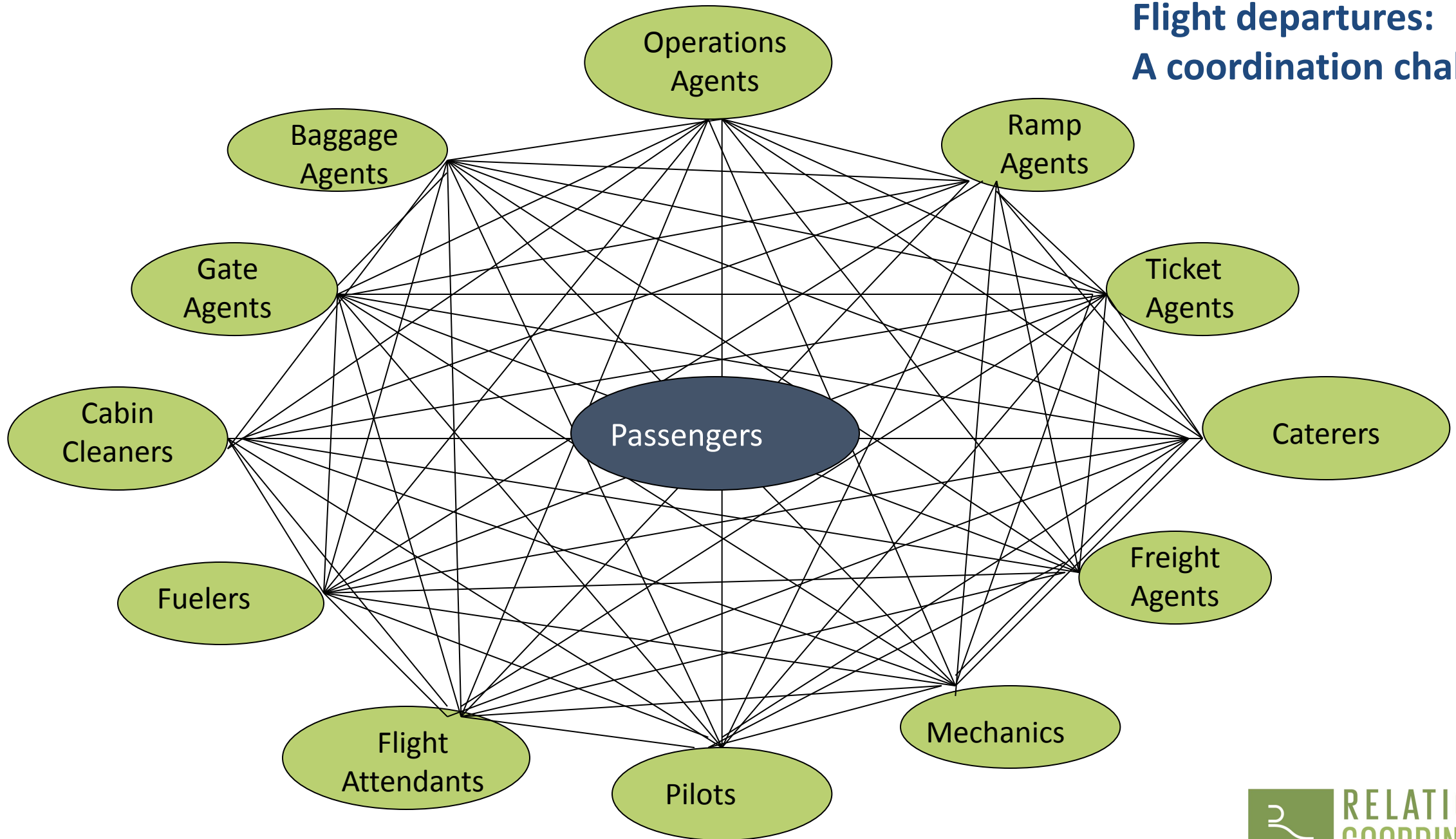
**Building healthy communities:
A coordination challenge**



Today's agenda

- What is relational coordination?
- How can it help us achieve better outcomes?
- How does it work in our organizations now? (Relational Mapping)
- How can we get from here to there? (Relational Model of Change, Six Stages of Change, Organizational Structures Assessment)

Flight departures: A coordination challenge



Relationships shape the communication through
which coordination occurs ...

... for better



Shared goals
Shared knowledge
Mutual respect

Frequent
Timely
Accurate
Problem-solving
communication



... or worse



Competing goals
Exclusive knowledge
Lack of respect

Infrequent
Delayed
Inaccurate
“Finger-pointing”
communication



This process is called

relational coordination

“Communicating and relating
for the purpose of task integration”

Investigated performance effects of relational coordination

- Nine site study of flight departures over 12 months of operation at Southwest, American, Continental and United
- Measured quality and efficiency performance, adjusting for product differences
- Measured relational coordination among pilots, flight attendants, gate agents, ticket agents, baggage agents, ramp agents, freight agents, mechanics, cabin cleaners, fuelers, caterers and operations agents

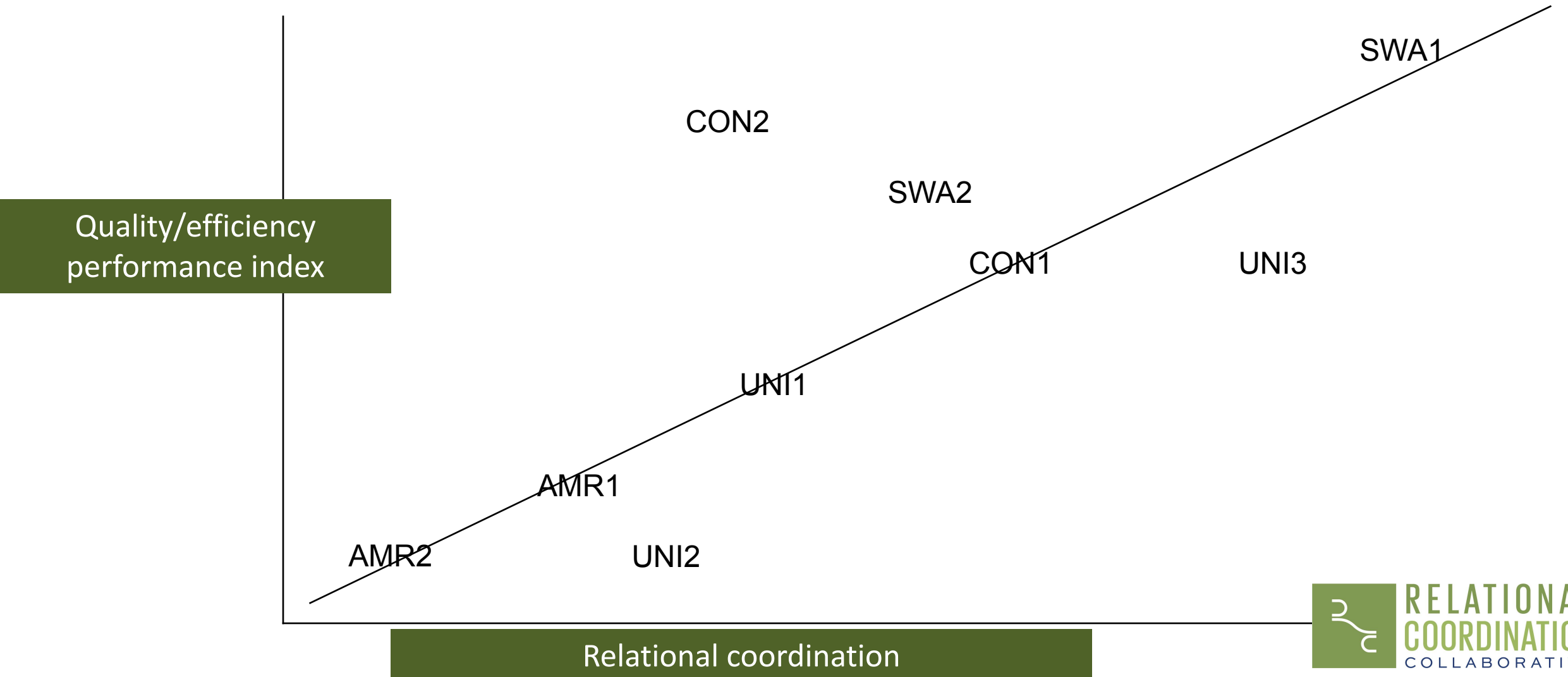
Gittell, J.H. (2003). [The Southwest Airlines way: Using the power of relationships to achieve high performance](#). McGraw-Hill: New York.

Relational coordination drives flight departure performance

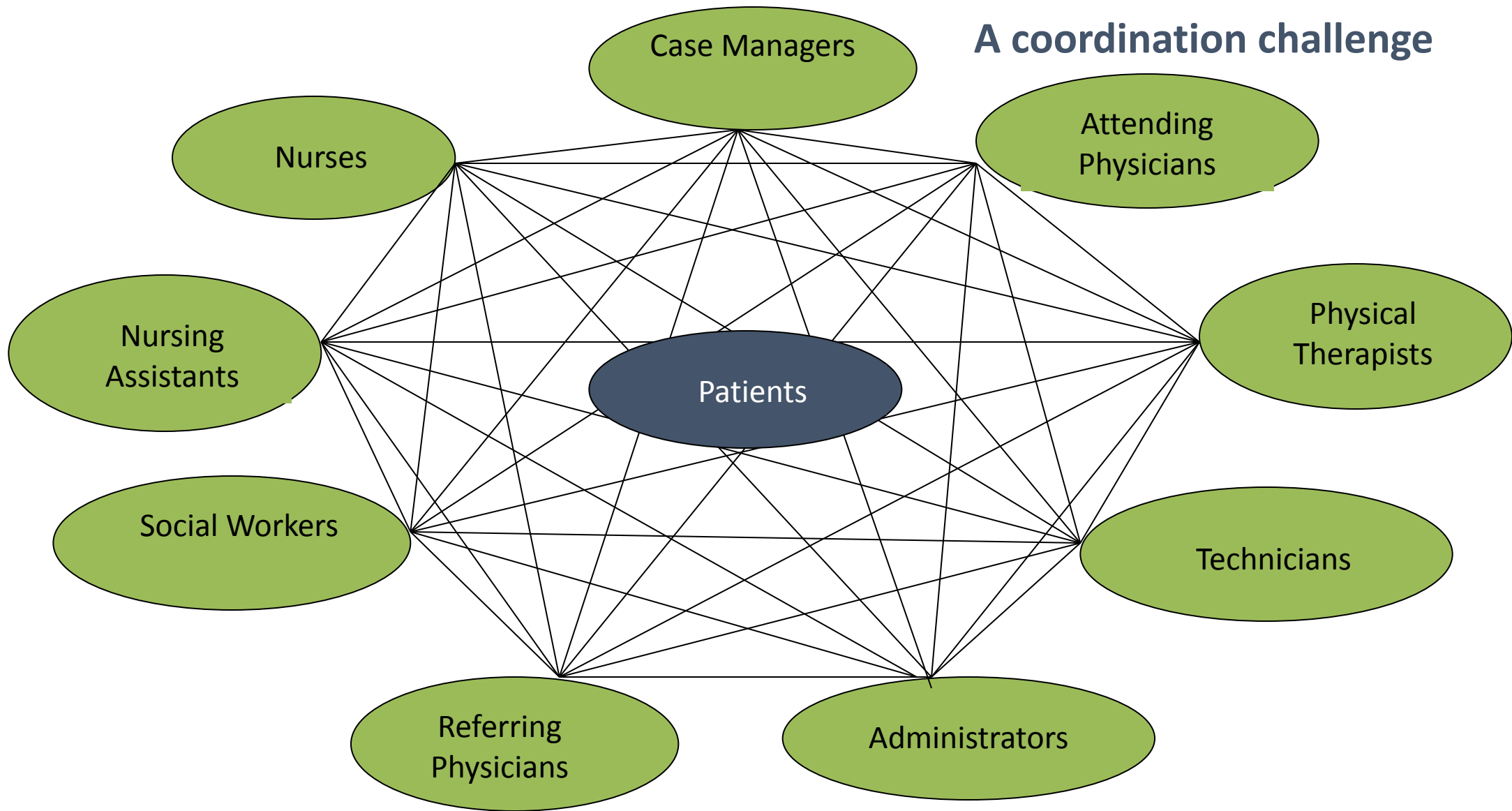
	Efficiency		Quality		
	Gate time/ flight	Staff time/ passenger	Customer complaints	Lost bags	Late arrivals
Relational coordination	-.21***	-.42***	-.64***	-.31*	-.50**
Flights/day	-.19***	-.37***	-.30***	.13	-.22+
Flight length, passengers, cargo	.79***	.45***	.13	.12	-.54**
Passenger connections	.12**	.19**	.09	.13	.00
R squared	.94	.81	.69	.19	.20

Observations are months (n=12) in airport locations (n=9). Standardized coefficients are shown.

Relational coordination drives flight departure performance



Patient care: A coordination challenge



Institute of Medicine report

“The current system shows too little cooperation and teamwork. Instead, each discipline and type of organization tends to defend its authority at the expense of the total system’s function.” (2003)

Physicians recognize the problem

“The communication line just wasn’t there. We thought it was, but it wasn’t. We talk to nurses every day but we aren’t really communicating.”

Nurses observe the same problem

“Miscommunication between the physician and the nurse is common because so many things are happening so quickly. But because patients are in and out so quickly, it’s even more important to communicate well.”

Same study conducted in hospital setting

- Nine hospital study of 893 surgical patients
- Measured quality and efficiency performance -- and job satisfaction, adjusting for patient differences
- Measured relational coordination among doctors, nurses, physical therapists, social workers and case managers

Gittell, J. H. (2003). [High performance healthcare: Using the power of relationships to achieve quality, efficiency and resilience](#). McGraw-Hill: New York.

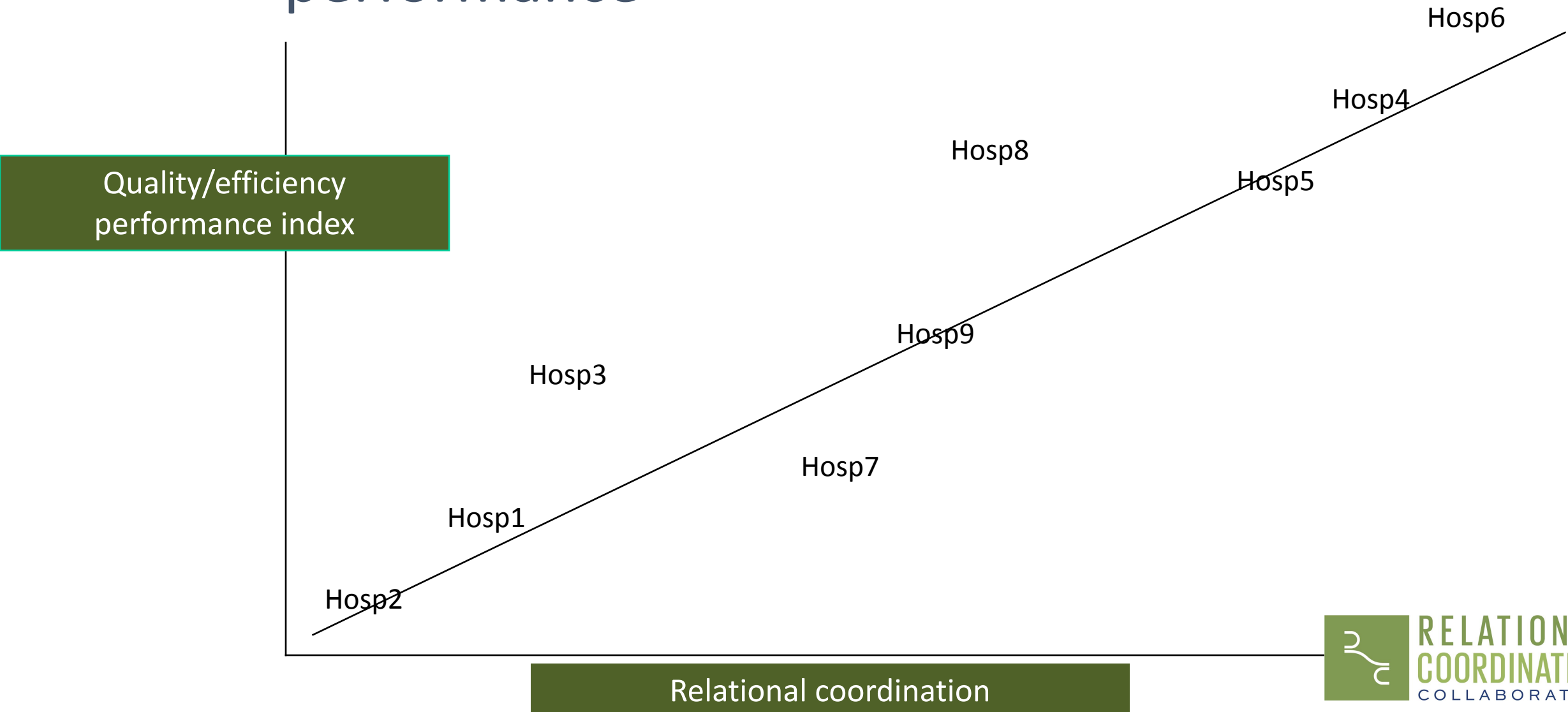
Gittell, J. H., Fairfield, K. M., Bierbaum, B., Head, W., Jackson, R., Kelly, M., ... & Zuckerman, J. (2000). [Impact of relational coordination on quality of care, postoperative pain and functioning, and length of stay: A nine-hospital study of surgical patients](#). *Medical Care*, 807-819.

Relational coordination drives surgical performance

	Length of stay	Patient satisfaction	Freedom from pain	Mobility
Relational coordination	-.33***	.26***	.08*	.06+
Patient age	.02	.00	.01	.04
Comorbidities	.09*	.07	.01	.04
Pre-op status	.03	.01	.20***	.28***
Surgical volume	.11**	.10*	.06+	.03
R Squared	.82	.63	.50	.22

Observations are patients (n=878) in hospitals (n=9). Model also included gender, marital status, psychological well-being and race. Standardized coefficients are shown.

Relational coordination drives surgical performance



Research has continued...

across multiple sectors....

Commercial Sector

- Accounting
- Airlines
- Asset management
- Auditing
- Banking
- Consulting
- Construction
- Electronics
- Engineering
- Finance
- Fishing
- Information technology
- Machine suppliers
- Manufacturing
- Multinationals
- Pharmacy
- Pharmaceuticals
- Private equity
- Renewable energy
- Road infrastructure
- Software
- Telecommunications
- Venture investing

Human Services Sector

- Autism care
- Child services
- Community collaboration
- Criminal justice
- Disability care
- Early child intervention
- Intellectual disability care
- Social movements
- Sports
- Substance use treatment
- Youth services

Education Sector

- Early child education
- E-learning
- Elementary education
- Higher education
- Medical school
- Nursing school
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Translational research

Healthcare Sector

- Cardiology
- Care continuum
- Chronic care
- Community based care
- Diagnostics
- Elder care
- Emergency care
- Gynecological care
- Hepatology
- Health systems
- Home care
- Intensive care
- Long term care
- Medical care
- Mental health care
- Neonatal intensive care
- Obstetric care

Healthcare Sector

- Oncology
- Palliative care
- Perioperative care
- Primary care
- Psychiatric care
- Public health
- Rehabilitation care
- Specialty care
- Surgical care
- Telehealth
- Transplant care
- Trauma care
- Veterinary care

Bolton, R., Logan, C., & Gittell, J. H. (2021). [Revisiting relational coordination: A systematic review](#). *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 57(3), 290-322.

... and multiple countries

North America

- Canada
- United States

South America

- Argentina
- Ecuador

Europe

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- England
- France
- Germany
- Iceland

Europe (continued)

- Ireland
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Portugal
- Scotland
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland

Africa

- Egypt
- Nigeria
- South Africa

Middle East

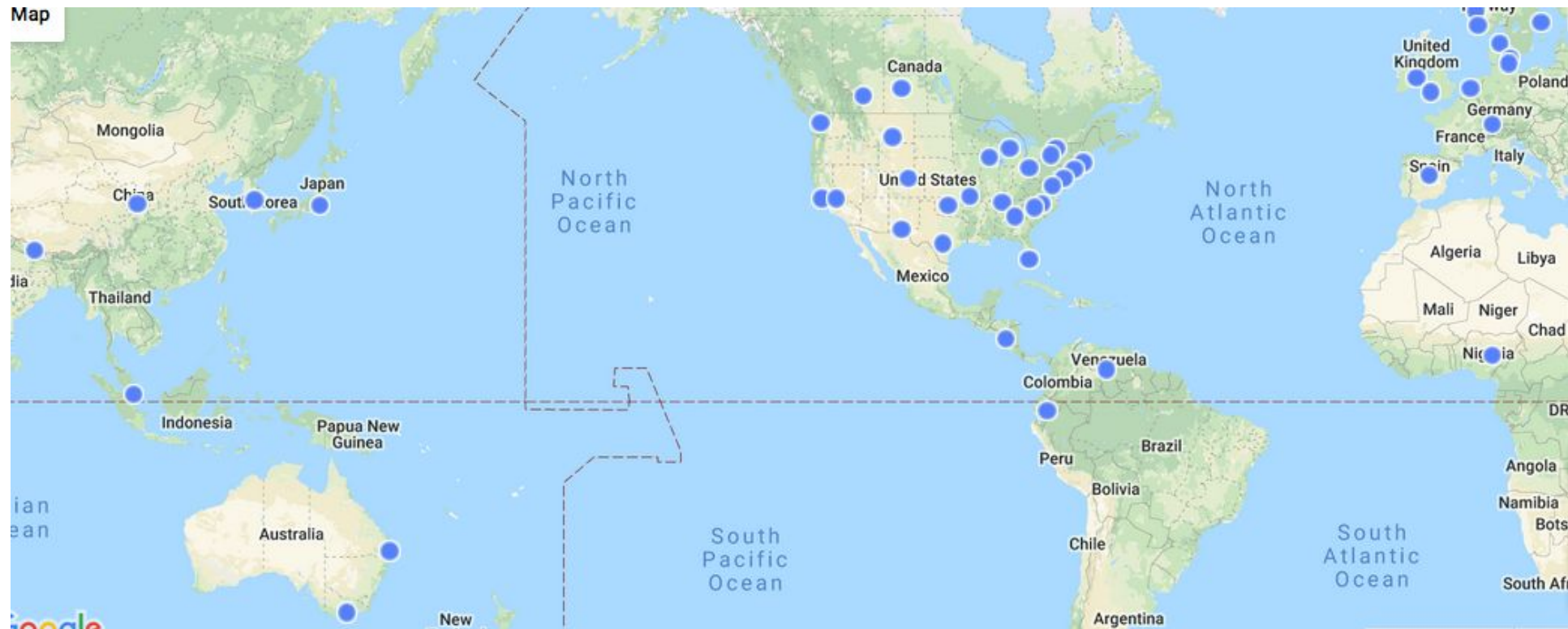
- Israel
- Lebanon
- Saudi Arabia

Asia

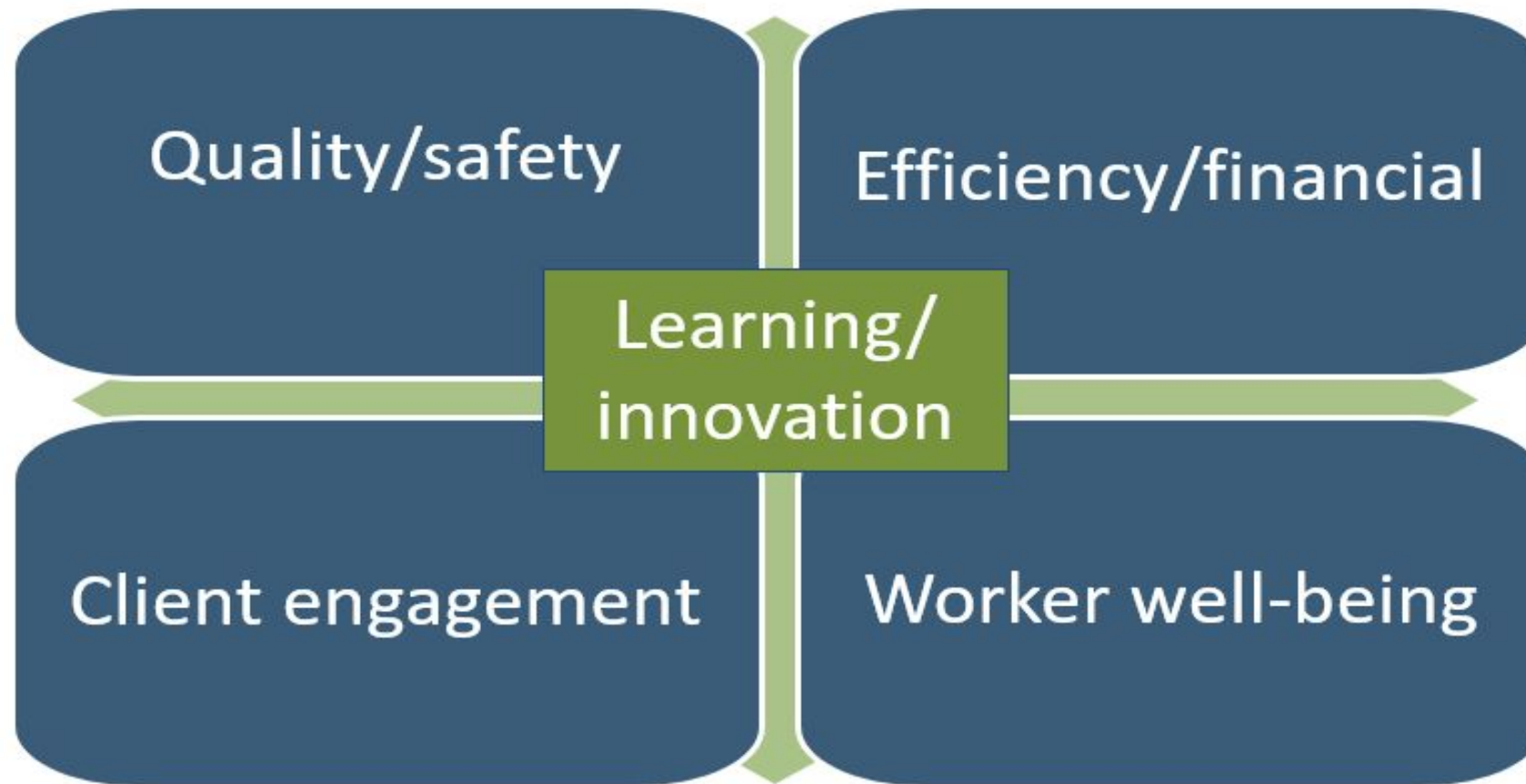
- China
- India
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Pakistan
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Australia
- New Zealand

Bolton, R., Logan, C., & Gittell, J. H. (2021). [Revisiting relational coordination: A systematic review](#). *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 57(3), 290-322.

...around the world



Performance outcomes of RC



Bolton, R., Logan, C., & Gittell, J. H. (2021). [Revisiting relational coordination: A systematic review](#). *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 57(3), 290-322.

When does relational
coordination matter most?

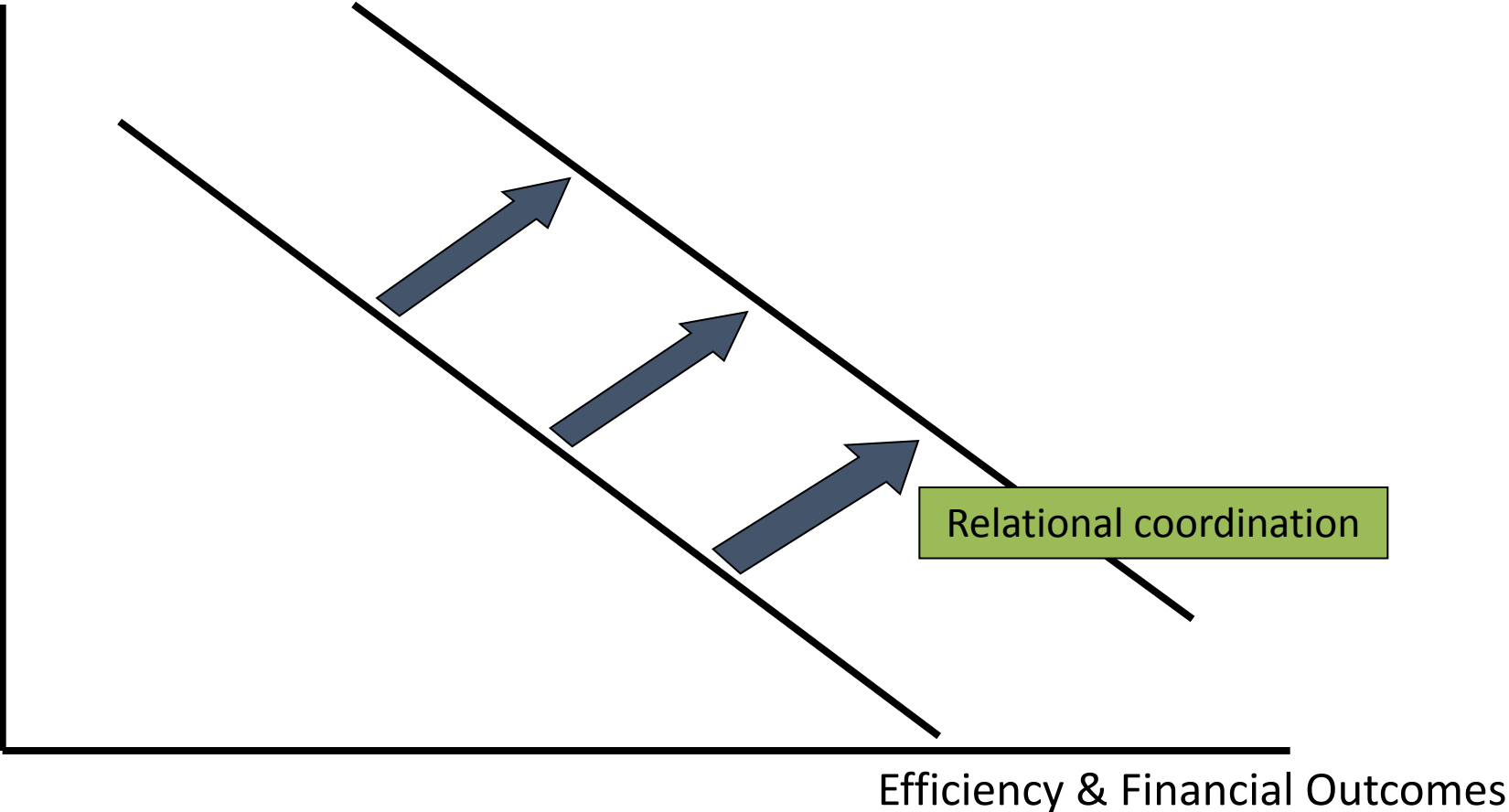
Relational coordination matters most under conditions of complexity

- ◆ Task interdependence
- ◆ Uncertainty
- ◆ Time sensitivity

Gittell, J. (2002). Coordinating mechanisms in care provider groups: Relational coordination as a mediator and input uncertainty as a moderator of performance effects. *Management science*, 48(11), 1408-1426.

RC shifts the quality/efficiency frontier to *create value*

Quality &
Safety
Outcomes



There are *other* useful responses to performance challenges...

- ◆ Reengineering
- ◆ Total quality management
- ◆ PDSA
- ◆ Quality improvement
- ◆ Lean/ six sigma
- ◆ High reliability

Addressing technical issues is necessary - but not sufficient

“We’ve been doing process improvement for several years, and we think we’re on the right track. But we’ve tried a number of tools for process improvement, and they just don’t address the relationship issues that are holding us back.”

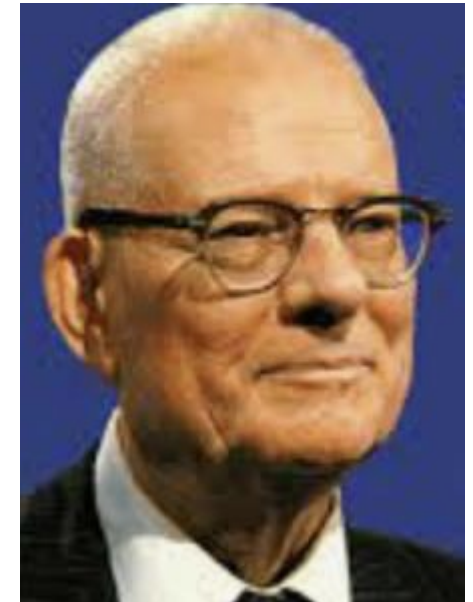
- Bob Hendler, Tenet Healthcare Systems

Baker, N. J., Suchman, A., & Rawlins, D. (2016). [Hidden in plain view: Barriers to quality improvement](#). *Physician Leadership Journal*, 3, 54-7.



How does RC improve learning and innovation?

Relationships of shared goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect promote a culture that supports process improvement



Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the Crisis*. MIT Press.

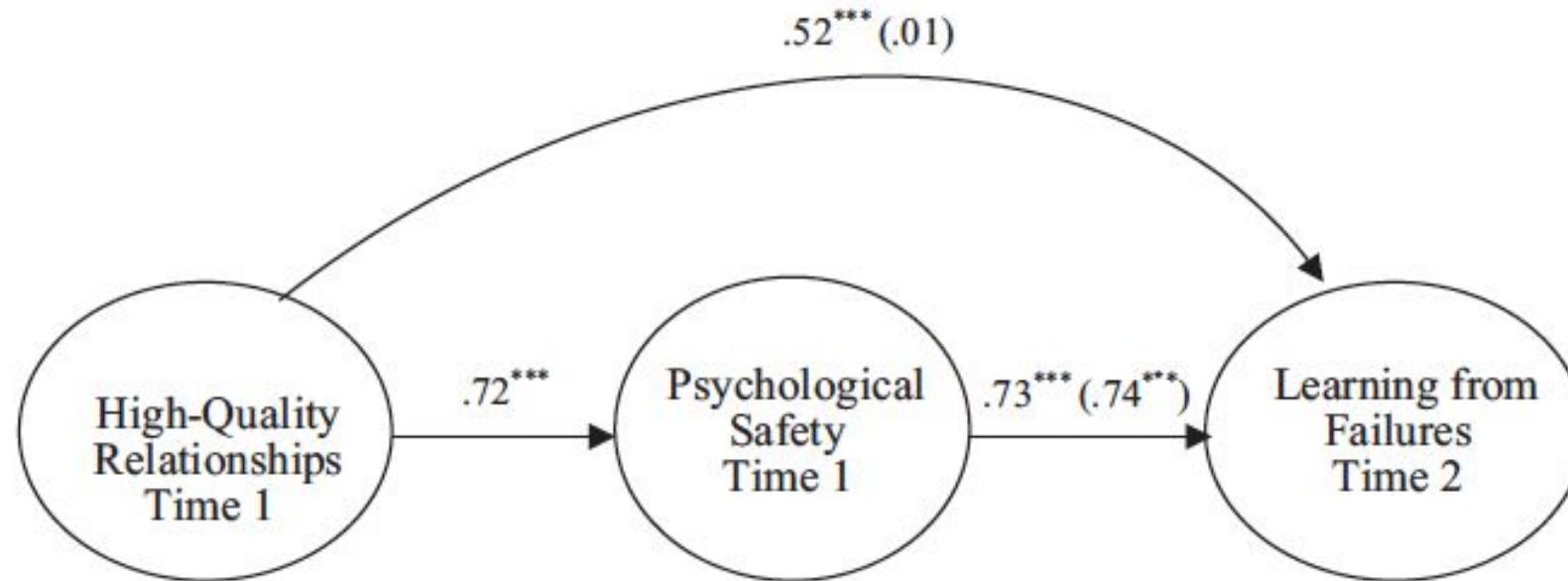
How does RC improve learning and innovation?

Positive relationships evoke positive emotions – activating more advanced part of our brain - thus supporting learning and innovation



Fredericksen, B. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of Biological Sciences*.

How does RC improve learning and innovation?



Carmeli, A., & Gittell, J. H. (2009). [High-quality relationships, psychological safety, and learning from failures in work organizations](#). *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

How does RC improve worker outcomes?

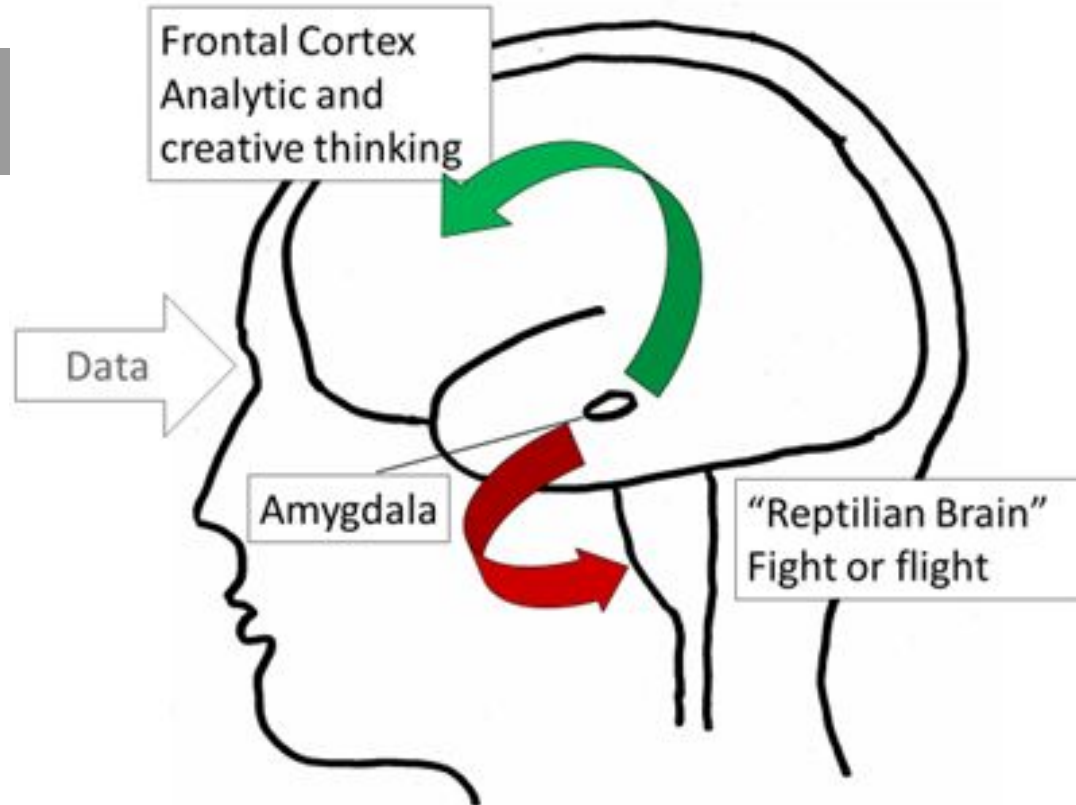
Relational coordination enables workers to achieve better quality outcomes for their clients and customer with

- less wasted effort
- less stress
- therefore less burnout

Gittell, J. H., Weinberg, D., Pfefferle, S., & Bishop, C. (2008). [Impact of relational coordination on job satisfaction and quality outcomes: a study of nursing homes](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(2), 154-170.

How we communicate and relate affects our brains

for better...



...or worse

We can create positive spirals ...



Shared goals

Shared knowledge

Mutual respect

Frequent

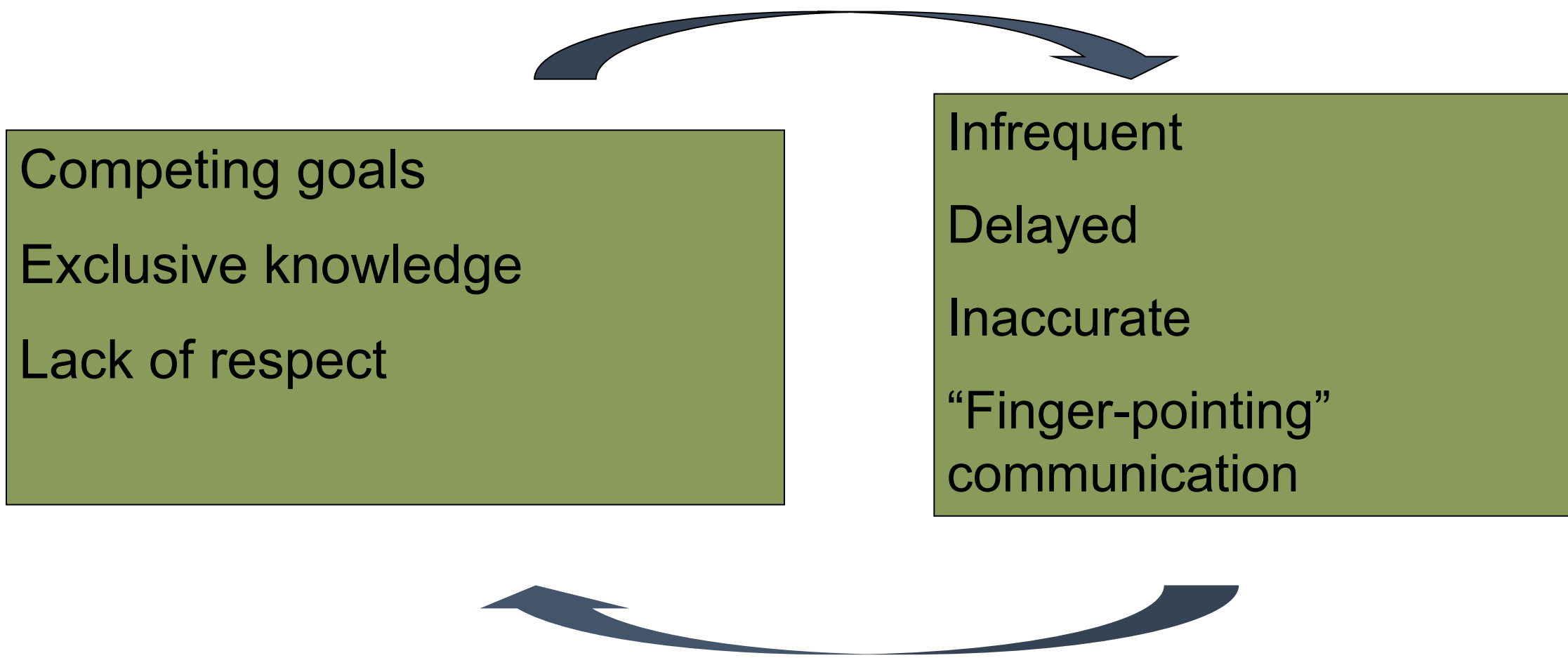
Timely

Accurate

Problem-solving
communication



... or negative spirals



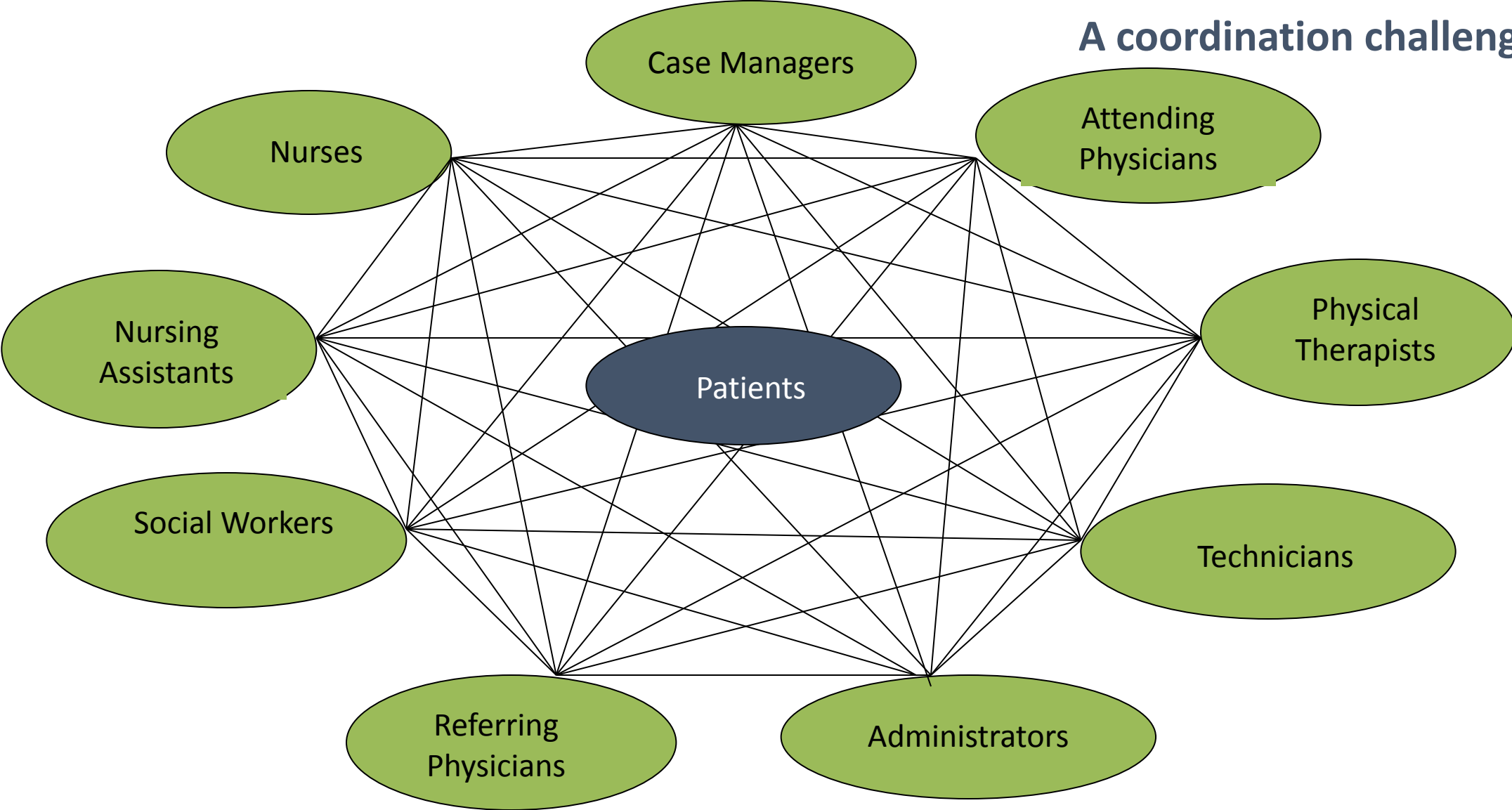
Competing goals
Exclusive knowledge
Lack of respect

Infrequent
Delayed
Inaccurate
“Finger-pointing”
communication

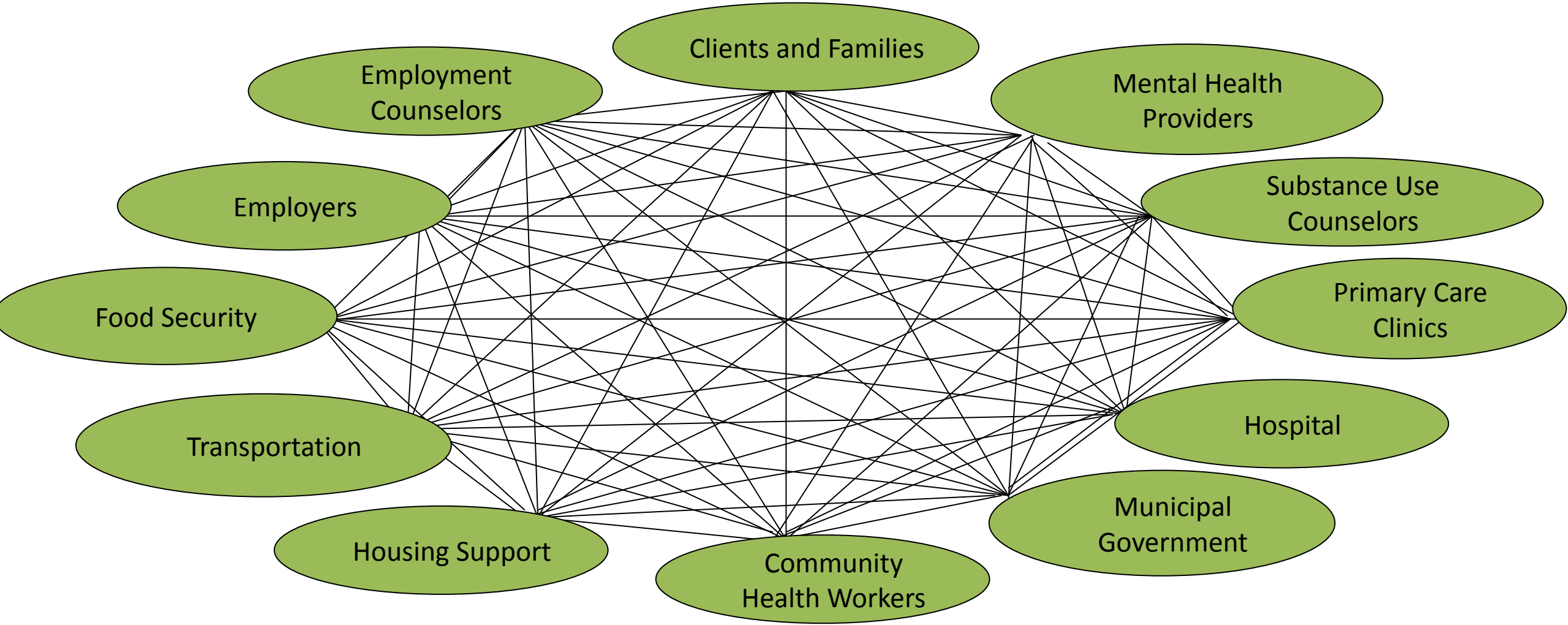
In sum....

Relationships of shared goals,
shared knowledge and mutual respect help people to
connect in productive ways around
the work they do together

Patient care: A coordination challenge



Building healthy communities: A coordination challenge



But how do we get from
here to there?

Gittell, J. H. (2016). [Transforming relationships for high performance: The power of relational coordination](#). Stanford University Press.

Relational model of change

Structural Interventions

- Select for Teamwork
- Train for Teamwork
- Relational Job Design
- Shared Accountability
- Shared Rewards
- Shared Conflict Resolution
- Boundary Spanner Role
- Shared Meetings & Huddles
- Shared Protocols
- Shared Information Systems
- Shared Space

Relational Coordination

- Frequent
- Timely
- Accurate
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Shared Goals
- Shared Knowledge
- Mutual Respect

Performance Outcomes

- Quality & Safety
- Efficiency & Finance
- Engagement
- Well-Being
- Learning & Innovation

Relational Interventions

- Map and Measure Relationships
- Engage in Humble Inquiry
- Create Psychological Safety

Work Process Interventions

- Assess Current State
- Identify Desired State
- Experiment to Close the Gap

Multi-stakeholder team leads the process

Six stages of change



- Stage 1: Explore context and create change team
- Stage 2: Assess relational coordination
- Stage 3: Assess structures
- Stage 4: Design interventions
- Stage 5: Implement interventions
- Stage 6: Assess progress and spread the learning

A cycle of continuous improvement

Stage 1: Explore context and create change team

- Start with the context
- Who are the key stakeholder groups?
- What are the outcomes they are trying to achieve?
- What are the frameworks that might be helpful to address the challenges?
- Relational coordination might be helpful if there are challenges of coordination, interdependence, systemness
- What is the work process that we need to coordinate?

Explore context and create change team

- Create a change team that represents key stakeholders - choose individuals who can serve as champions
- Introduce relational coordination as a framework
- Create a psychologically "safe space" for stakeholders from distinct perspectives with different perceived levels of power to disagree respectfully
- Engage in relational mapping to visualize the work to be done

How well does relational
coordination currently work in your
organization?

Like this?

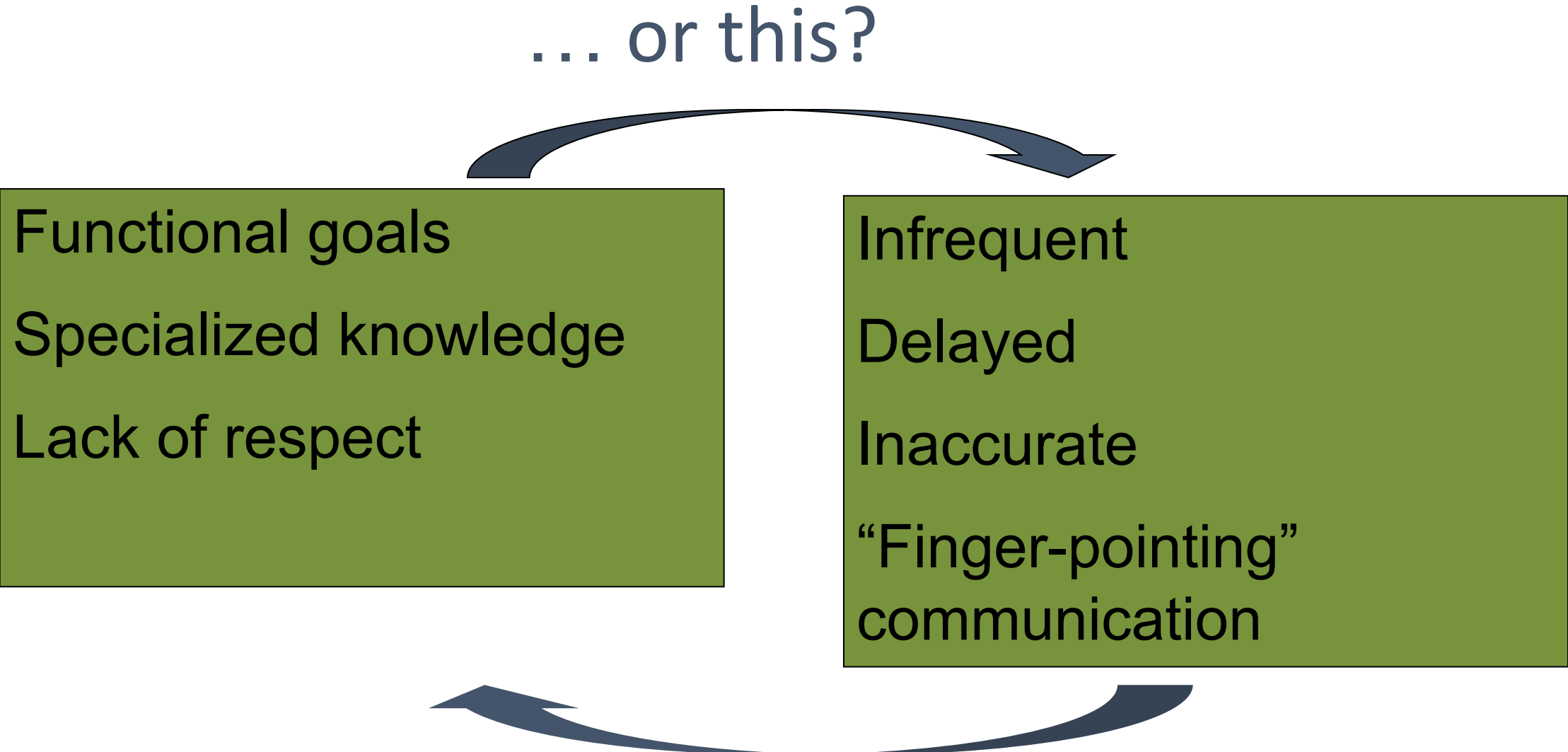


Shared goals
Shared knowledge
Mutual respect

Frequent
Timely
Accurate
Problem-solving
communication



... or this?



Functional goals
Specialized knowledge
Lack of respect

Infrequent
Delayed
Inaccurate
“Finger-pointing”
communication

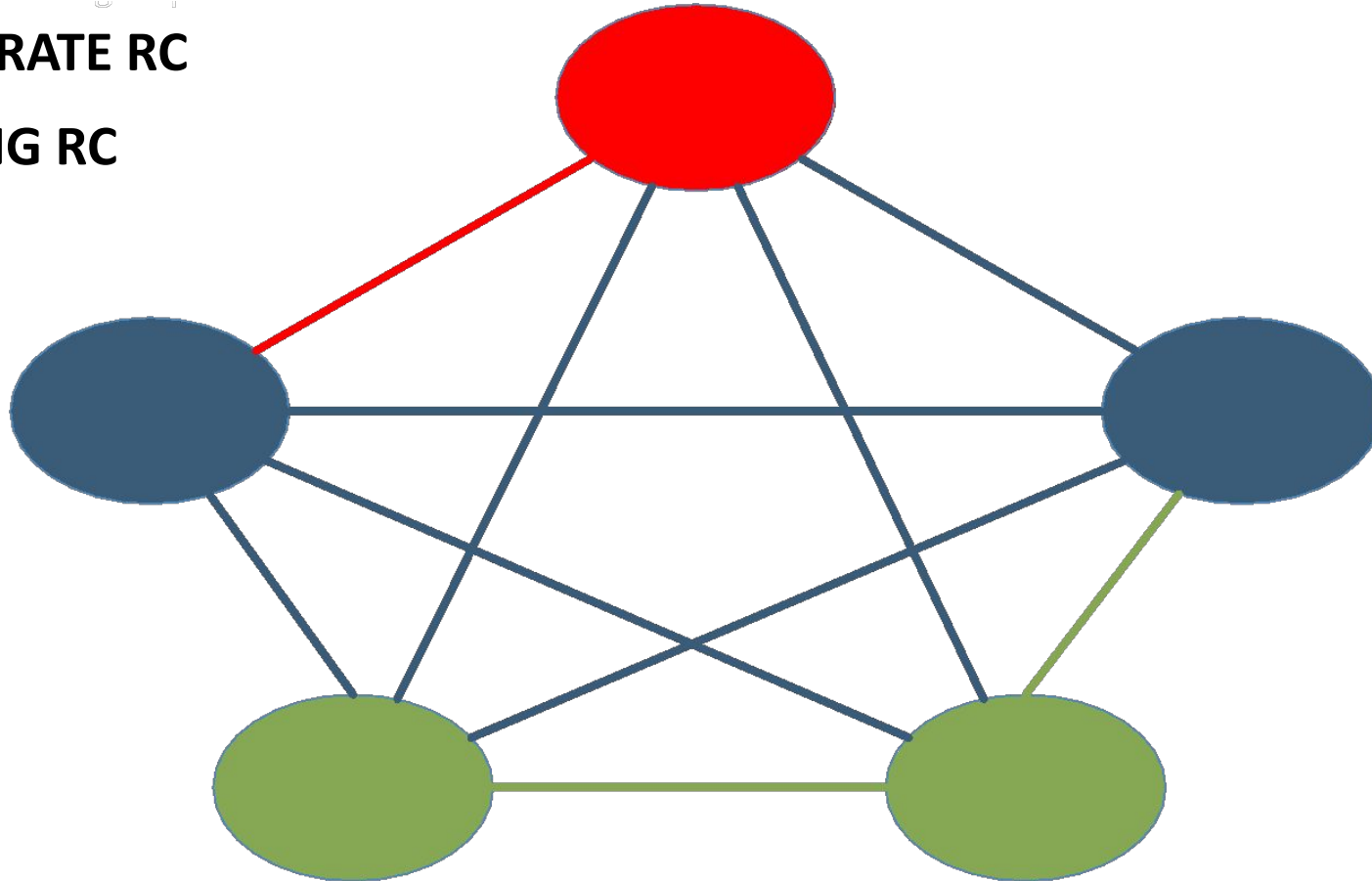
Explore context and create change team

Create a relational map

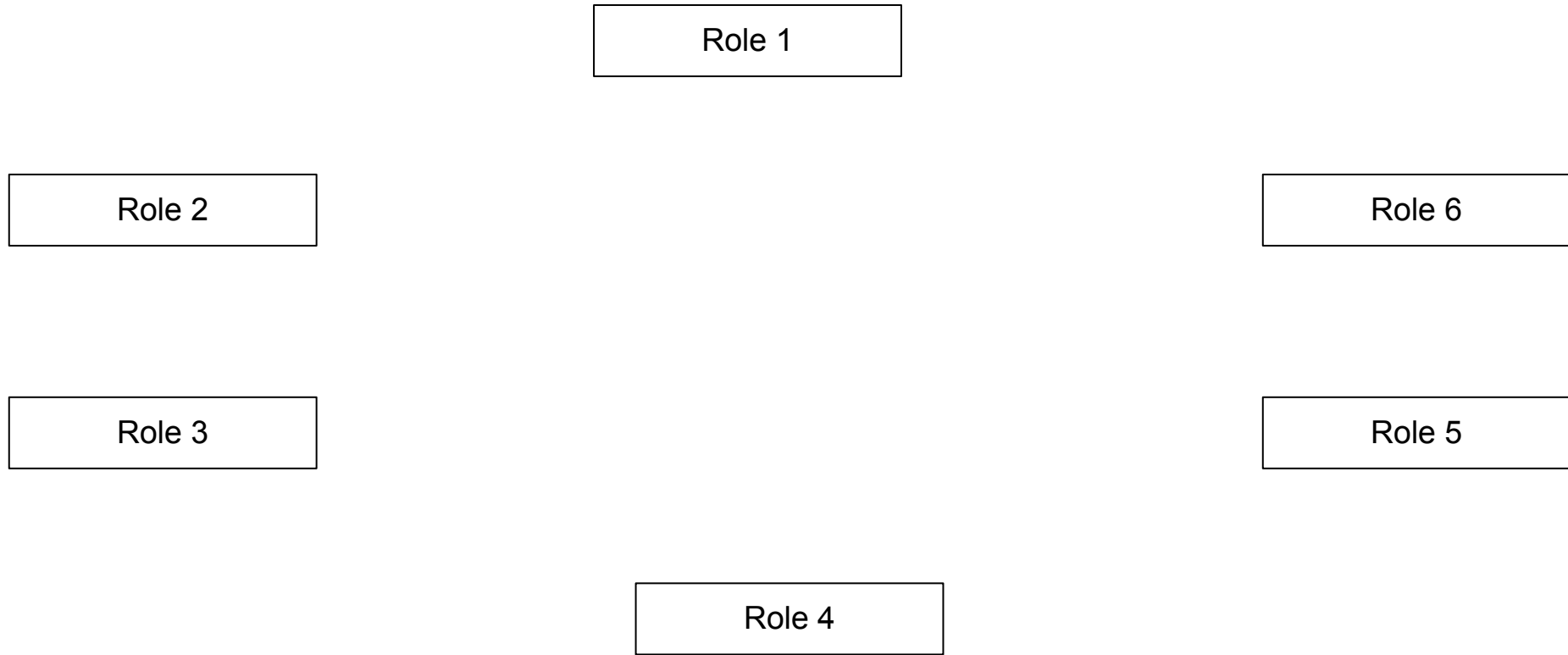
- ◆ Identify a work process that is of strategic importance for your organization and that needs better coordination
- ◆ Which roles are involved? Who is missing?
- ◆ Draw a circle for each role and lines connecting between them (color of circle = within role RC, color of line = between role RC)
 - WEAK RC = RED
 - MODERATE RC = BLUE
 - STRONG RC = GREEN







Explore context and create change team

-  WEAK RC
-  MODERATE RC
-  STRONG RC



Explore context and create change team

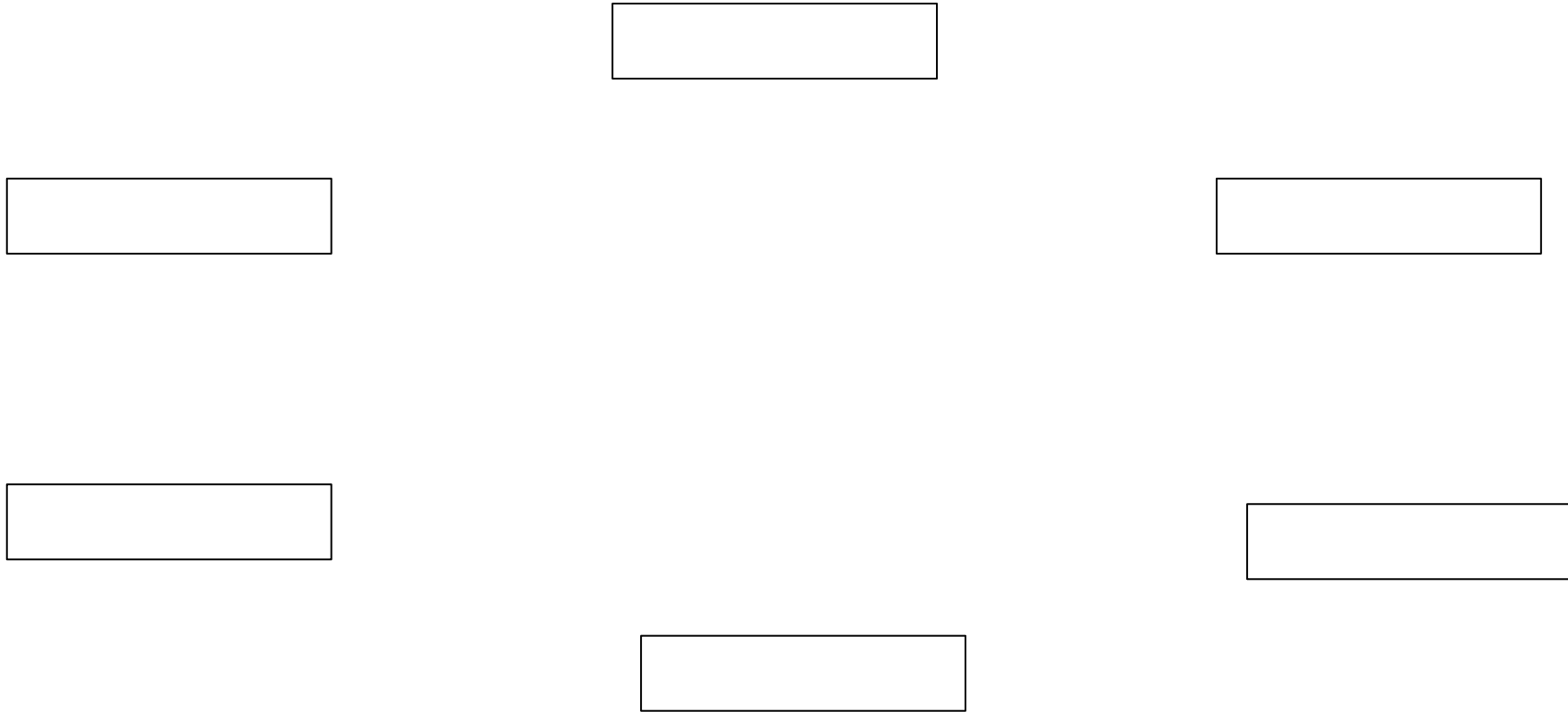





-  WEAK RC 
-  MODERATE RC 
-  STRONG RC 

Explore context and create change team



Explore context and create change team



-  WEAK RC
 -  MODERATE RC
 -  STRONG RC
- Below the legend, there are three horizontal lines: a red line, a blue line, and a green line, corresponding to the colors in the legend.

[Relational Mapping Worksheet](#)

Explore context and create change team

Reflect on your map and report back

- Where does relational coordination currently work well?
- Where does it work poorly?
- What are the underlying causes?
- How does this impact our outcomes?
- Where are our biggest opportunities for change?

Explore context and create change team

Based on your map

- Determine the focal work process for improvement
- Determine who else to include on the change team
- Determine which sponsors are needed for the work to succeed

Stage 2: Assess relational coordination

- RC survey goes beyond relational mapping by engaging more participants, allowing them to share their assessments confidentially
- RC survey is highly scalable, enables you to assess teamwork beyond well-defined teams
 - Frontline workgroups
 - Top management team
 - Board of directors
 - Organizational partners
 - Clients, customers, patients, service recipients

Assess relational coordination

- RC survey generates diagnostic information regarding the current state of relational coordination
- Selected results are shared with participants as a basis for designing interventions in an inclusive process
- Facilitates conversations between diverse groups, including those who prefer qualitative data and those who prefer quantitative data
- RC survey includes 7 questions asked about each of the roles in your focal work process
- RC survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete

Assess relational coordination

When setting up RC survey, you will be asked:

- What is the work process that needs coordination? Could be broad - “the work we do together” or specific - e.g. “the audit process”
- Which additional questions would you like to ask?
- Which roles are involved?
- Who will you invite from those roles and what are their emails?
- Who will invite them and how?
- What are the start, reminder and end dates (recommend 2 weeks)

Share survey draft with one colleague in each role to validate

Make edits, hit **send**

Request automated report when survey closes

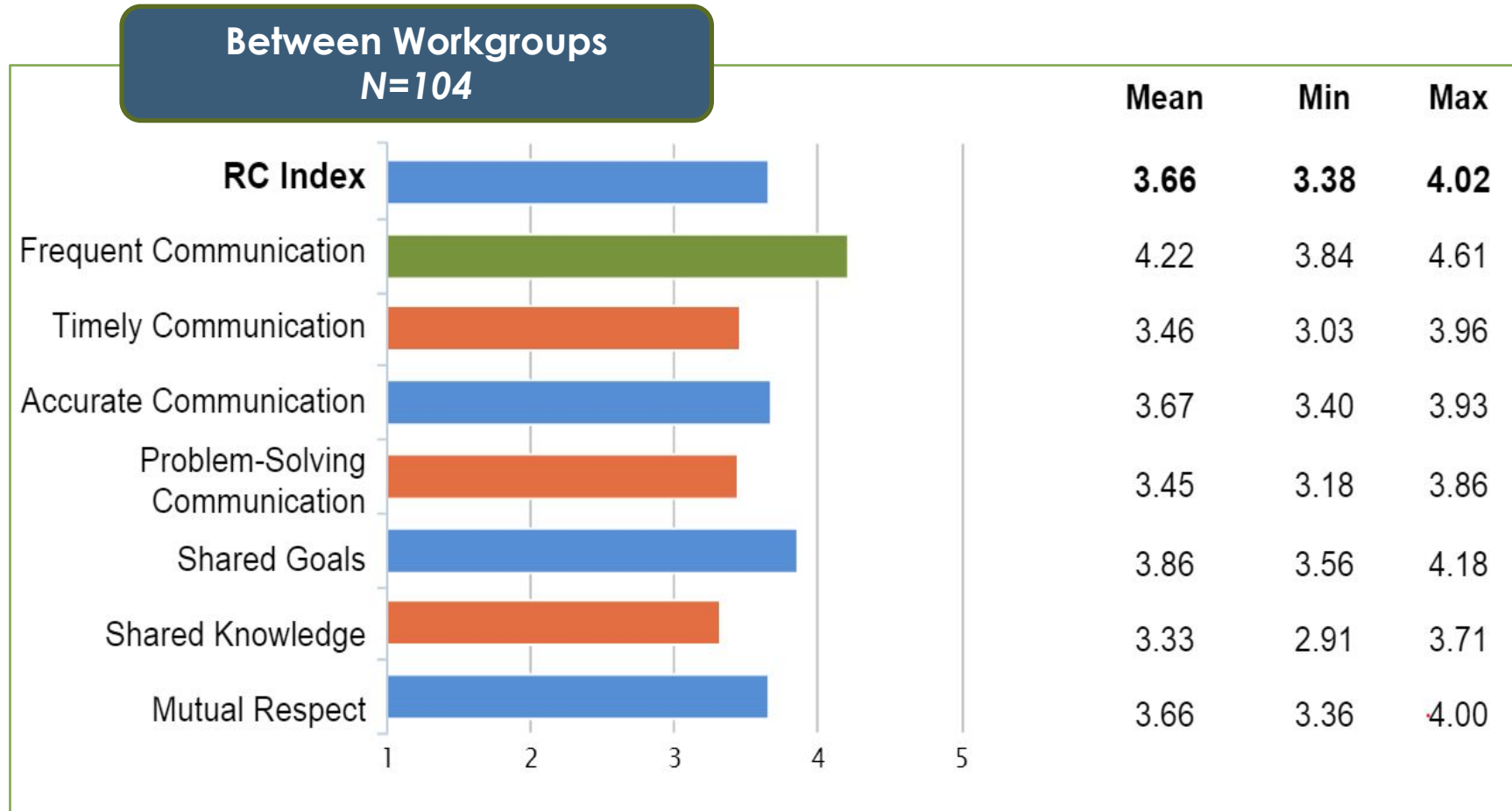
Assess relational coordination

Frequent Communication	How frequently do people in each of these roles communicate with you about [the work you do together]?
Timely Communication	How timely is their communication with you about [the work you do together]?
Accurate Communication	How accurate is their communication with you about [the work you do together]?
Problem Solving Communication	When something goes wrong, with [the work you go together], do people in these groups blame others or work with you to solve the problem?
Shared Goals	Do people in these groups share your goals for [the work you do together]?
Shared Knowledge	Do people in these groups know about your role in [the work you do together]?
Mutual Respect	Do people in these groups respect your role in [the work you do together]?

Assess relational coordination

- Change Team shares selected RC results with participants
- “Looking into the mirror”
- “Putting the elephant on the table”
- A starting point for new conversations
- A starting point for reflection and change
- **These results should not be used as a report card**

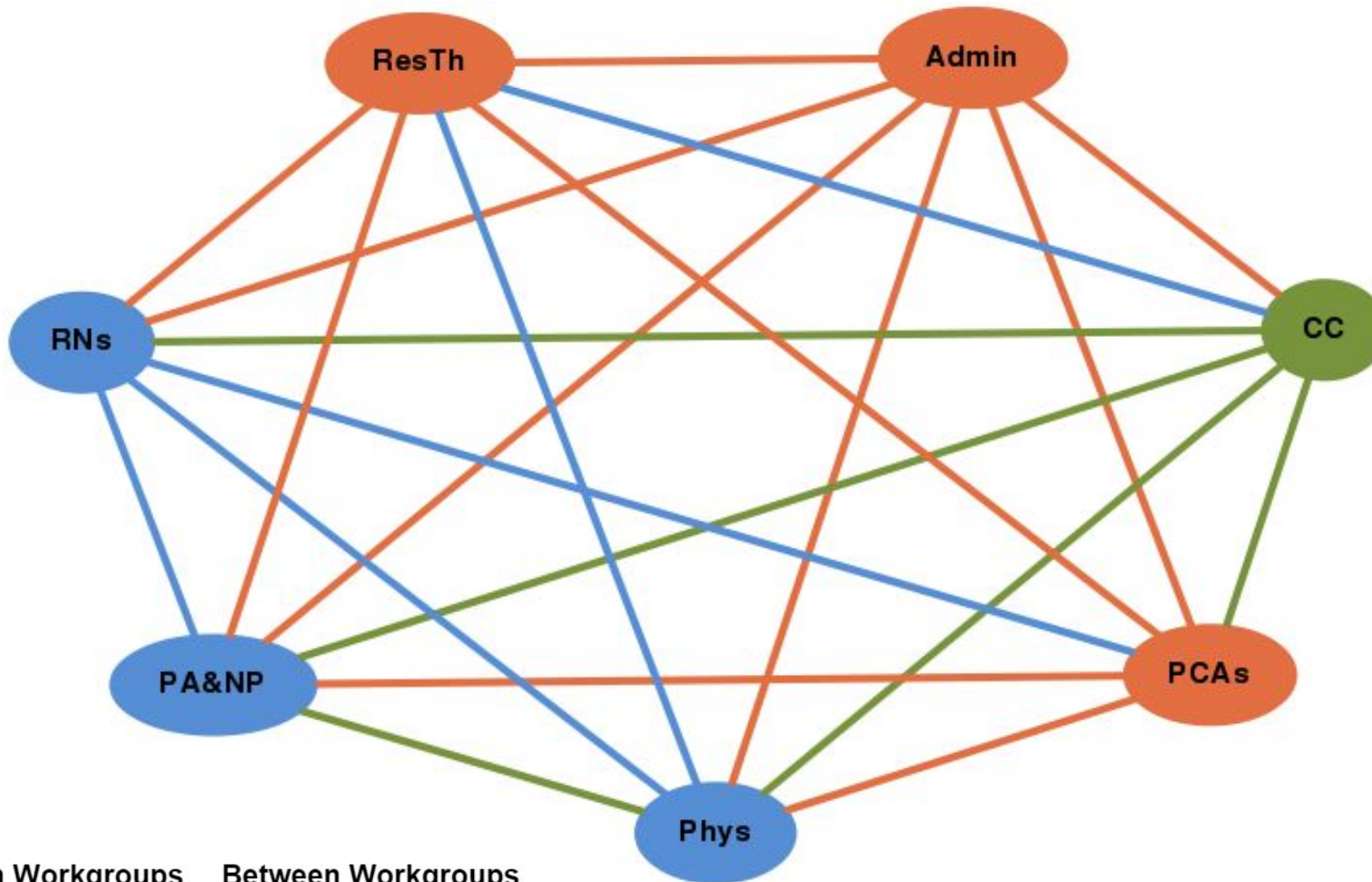
Assess relational coordination



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	Within Workgroups	Between Workgroups
Weak	<4.1	<3.5
Moderate	4.1-4.6	3.5-4.0
Strong	>4.6	>4.0

Assess relational coordination



	Within Workgroups	Between Workgroups
Weak	<4.1	<3.5
Moderate	4.1-4.6	3.5-4.0
Strong	>4.6	>4.0

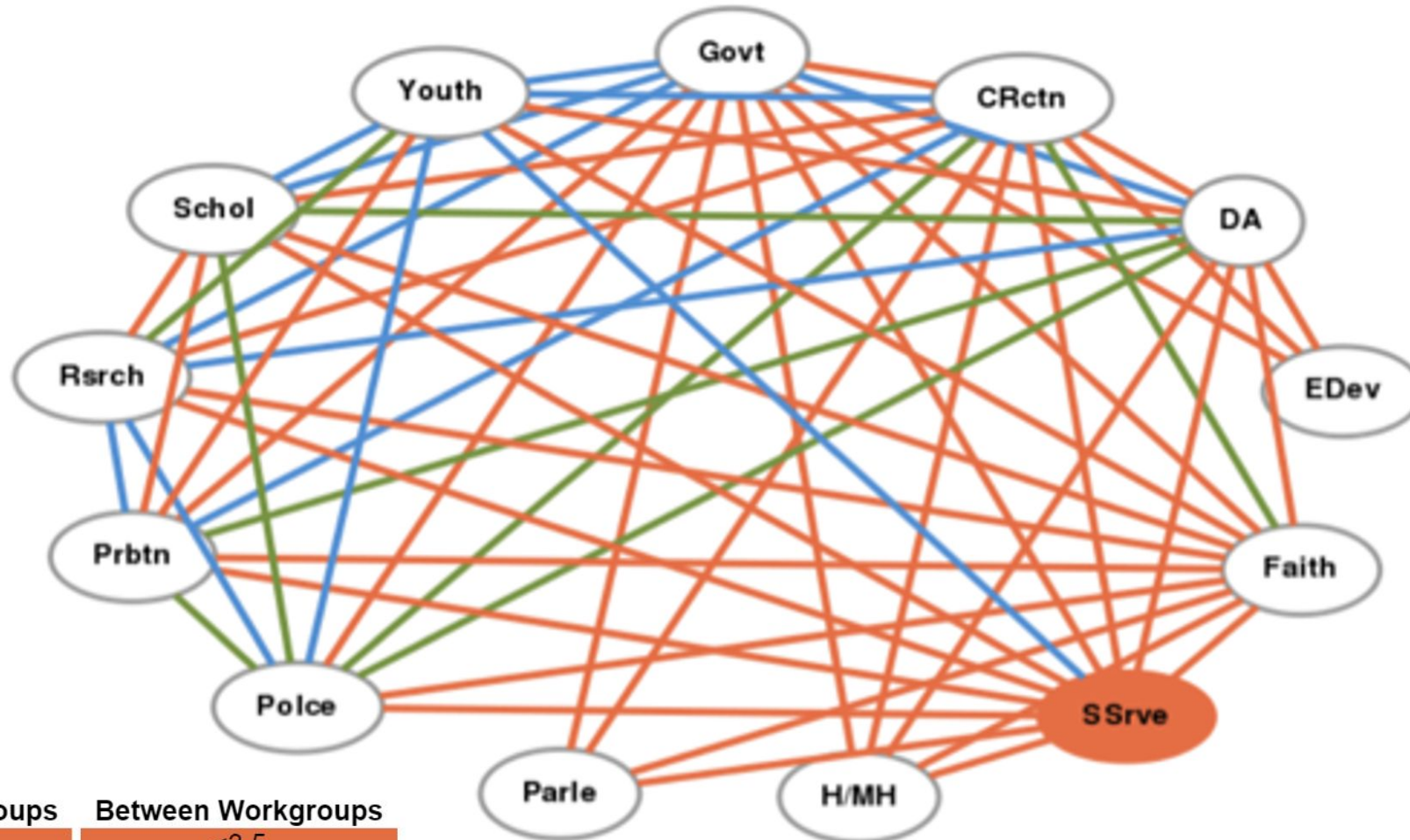
Assess relational coordination

		Ratings of						
		Admin	CC	PCAs	Phys	PA&NP	RNs	ResTh
R a t i n g s b y	Administrative Support	1.79	1.79	1.79	1.79	1.79	1.79	1.79
	Care Coordination	4.43	4.86	4.29	4.52	4.71	4.67	3.86
	Personal Care Assistants (PCAs)	2.62	2.40	4.02	2.29	2.29	3.50	2.40
	Physicians	3.58	4.26	3.47	4.25	4.19	3.84	3.50
	Physicians' Assistants and Nurse Practitioners (PAs & NPs)	3.75	4.29	3.39	4.30	4.55	3.96	3.20
	Registered Nurses	3.37	4.08	3.70	3.55	3.98	4.22	3.49
	Respiratory Therapy	2.57	2.57	2.57	3.14	3.14	3.43	4.00

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	Within Workgroups	Between Workgroups
Weak	<4.1	<3.5
Moderate	4.1-4.6	3.5-4.0
Strong	>4.6	>4.0

Assess relational coordination



	Within Workgroups	Between Workgroups
Weak	<4.1	<3.5
Moderate	4.1-4.6	3.5-4.0
Strong	>4.6	>4.0

Assess relational coordination

	G o v t	C R c t n	D A	E D e v	F a i t h	S S r v e	H / M H	P a r l e	P o l i c e	P r o b a t i o n	R e s e a r c h	S c h o o l	Y o u t h
City Government	--	2.00	3.57	2.86	2.43	2.71	3.14	2.14	3.14	2.29	3.86	3.71	3.86
Corrections	3.29	--	3.43	2.20	4.43	1.71	1.86	2.50	4.43	3.57	3.00	3.00	3.57
District Attorney Office	4.14	4.43	--	1.50	1.50	2.67	2.50	--	4.57	4.86	4.00	4.29	3.29
Employment Development	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Faith-Based Services	3.00	2.00	3.71	3.29	--	3.29	3.29	2.67	3.00	2.86	3.00	3.00	3.29
Family/Social Services	2.39	2.17	3.23	2.35	2.54	2.72	2.44	2.28	3.00	2.45	2.74	2.69	3.77
Health/Mental Health	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Parole	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Police	2.57	1.60	3.14	2.71	2.57	2.83	1.00	1.00	--	4.29	3.57	4.43	3.57
Probation	3.29	3.57	3.43	3.71	3.86	3.71	3.71	3.20	3.57	--	3.86	3.29	3.29
Research/Academia	4.14	1.20	3.86	3.71	2.86	3.71	3.29	1.40	3.86	3.00	--	3.43	4.29
School/School-Based	3.57	3.29	5.00	3.14	3.29	3.86	3.43	--	5.00	4.00	2.86	--	4.00
Youth Outreach	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Stage 3: Assess structures

- The relationships we observe through mapping and the RC survey are not only the result of personal attributes - these relationships are strongly shaped by existing structures
- Existing structures were often designed for control rather than for coordination
- We can ask: Which of our structures are currently *most supportive* of relational coordination?
- Which structures are currently *least supportive* of relational coordination?
- Where are the opportunities for improvement?

Assess structures

- ◆ Place the roles in your focal work process across the top of a matrix
- ◆ Place organizational structures down the left column
- ◆ For each structure, ask “How well does this structure support each role to coordinate with the others?”
 - ◆ STRUCTURE PROVIDES WEAK SUPPORT FOR THIS ROLE TO DO RC
 - ◆ STRUCTURE PROVIDES MODERATE SUPPORT FOR THIS ROLE TO DO RC
 - ◆ STRUCTURE PROVIDES STRONG SUPPORT FOR THIS ROLE TO DO RC

[Organizational Structures Assessment Tool \(OSAT\)](#)

Assess structures

Structures

Selection for Teamwork

Training for Teamwork

Relational Job Design

Shared Accountability

Shared Rewards

Conflict Resolution

Boundary Spanner Role

Shared Meetings & Huddles

Shared Protocols

Shared Info Systems

Shared Space

Role 1

Role 2

Role 3

Role 4

Role 5

Role 6

	Role 1	Role 2	Role 3	Role 4	Role 5	Role 6
Selection for Teamwork						
Training for Teamwork						
Relational Job Design						
Shared Accountability						
Shared Rewards						
Conflict Resolution						
Boundary Spanner Role						
Shared Meetings & Huddles						
Shared Protocols						
Shared Info Systems						
Shared Space						



WEAK SUPPORT



MODERATE SUPPORT



STRONG SUPPORT

Assess structures

Structures

	Nurses	Case managers	Physicians	Residents	Physical therapy	Respiratory therapy
Selection for Teamwork	Strong Support	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support
Training for Teamwork	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Relational Job Design	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Accountability	Moderate Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support
Shared Rewards	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support
Conflict Resolution	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Boundary Spanner Role	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support
Shared Meetings & Huddles	Strong Support	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Protocols	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Info Systems	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Space	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support

 WEAK SUPPORT

 MODERATE SUPPORT

 STRONG SUPPORT

Assess structures

- Which structures are currently *most supportive* of relational coordination?
- Which structures are currently *least supportive* of relational coordination?
- Where are the biggest opportunities for improving your structures?
- Where will you start?
- What obstacles will you face?

Stage 4: Design interventions

Structural Interventions

- Select for Teamwork
- Train for Teamwork
- Relational Job Design
- Shared Accountability
- Shared Rewards
- Shared Conflict Resolution
- Boundary Spanner Role
- Shared Meetings & Huddles
- Shared Protocols
- Shared Information Systems
- Shared Space

Relational Coordination

- Frequent
- Timely
- Accurate
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Shared Goals
- Shared Knowledge
- Mutual Respect

Performance Outcomes

- Quality & Safety
- Efficiency & Finance
- Engagement
- Well-Being
- Learning & Innovation

Relational Interventions

- Map and Measure Relationships
- Engage in Humble Inquiry
- Create Psychological Safety

Work Process Interventions

- Assess Current State
- Identify Desired State
- Experiment to Close the Gap

Multi-stakeholder change team leads the process

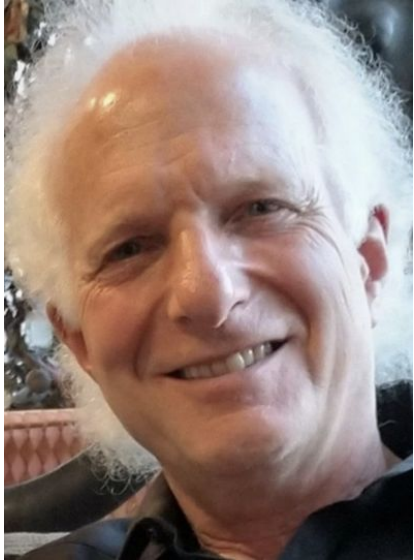
Design interventions

- Change team assesses findings from RC Survey and Org Structures Assessment Tool (OSAT) in partnership with key stakeholders
- Change team designs **relational, structural** and **work process** interventions based on the findings
- Change team reaches out to sponsors and experts as needed - clients, frontline workers, middle managers, top management team, IT department, QI department, HR department, etc.

Three types of interventions

- **Relational interventions** help to strengthen relational coordination directly
- **Structural interventions** help to support and sustain relational coordination
- **Work process interventions** are participatory structured problem solving methods to strengthen relational coordination and improve desired performance outcomes

Relational interventions



“Relational interventions are interventions that improve participants’ capacity to self-manage their interdependence; to understand their common goal, to understand how their work fits into the larger work process, and to carry out their work with a mindfulness of how their actions affect the work of others.”

– Tony Suchman

Relational interventions

- *Relational mapping* to see the whole
- *Humble inquiry* to create psychological safety
- *Top priorities* to identify shared goals
- *Conversations of interdependence* to build shared knowledge
- *Conversations of difference* to build shared knowledge
- *Improvisation* to see the perspective of others
- *Walk a mile* to see the perspective of others
- *Stepping stones* to shared personal narratives
- *Behavioral standards* to build mutual respect

Gittell, J. H. (2016). [Relational interventions](#) in *Transforming relationships for high performance: The power of relational coordination*. Stanford University Press.

Relational intervention to build psych safety

- Set up the room to signal inclusion
- Be attentive to who is invited, why they are invited and your expectations for their participation
- Role model positive relational behaviors
- Establish behavioral standards
- Engage in humble inquiry

Relational intervention to build psych safety

PEARLS

P artnership	We'll get through this together
E mpathy	It sounds like that was difficult for you
A cknowledgement	That was really well done
R espect	I respect that about you
L egitimation	Anyone would feel [happy/disappointed] after going through that
S upport	Just know I'm here to help

Relational intervention to build psych safety

- Humble inquiry
- Express vulnerability by asking questions to which you don't know the answer
- Admit publicly you are dependent on the expertise of others, thus lowering status barriers based on expertise
- “I know alot but I can't possibly know everything - we need diverse perspectives to see the whole picture”

Relational intervention to build psych safety

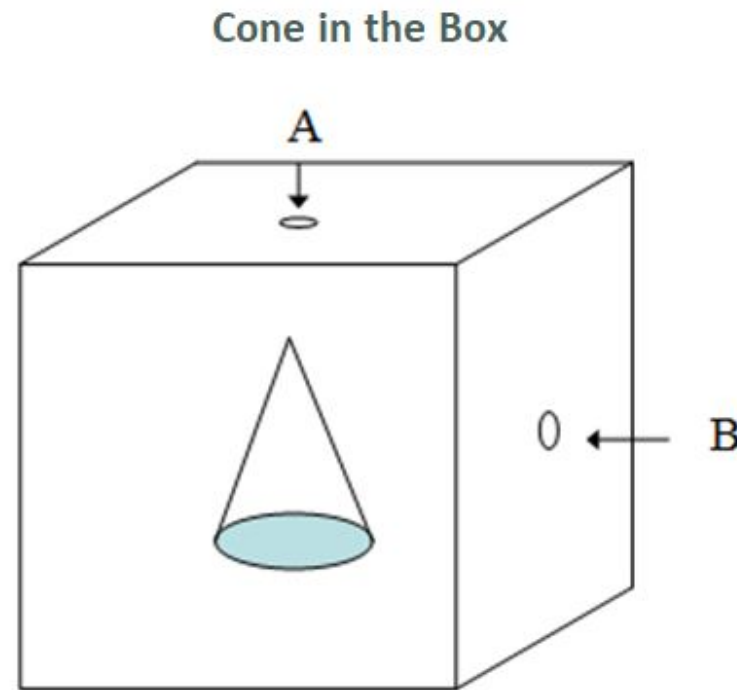
- Relational repair
- Are you OK? Did I say the wrong thing? (empathy, humble inquiry)
- Reflect back what you hear (reflective listening)
- I have a lot to learn (acknowledge)
- Propose a follow up action

Relational intervention to build shared goals

- Sit around a table or on zoom with all roles in focal work process
- Each person writes down top three goals their role has for the work, on sticky notes (real or virtual)
- Place in the center, organize by theme
- Note common themes, note differences
- Any goals that you can all agree on?
- Any different goals that you can support?
- Any competing goals you will need to resolve, and how?

Relational intervention to build shared knowledge

When we include diverse perspectives, we can see more together



Adapted from Brown J. "A Leader's Guide to Reflective Practice." Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2007.

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Relational intervention to build shared knowledge

- Conversations of interdependence
- Find one partner from another role and ask:
 - What do you find most meaningful about your work?
 - What it is about how I do my work that helps you do yours?
 - What could I do differently that would help you more?
- Then switch places

Relational intervention to build shared knowledge

- Conversations of similarities and differences
- Find one partner from a different role and ask:
 - What are some of the things we have in common? Professionally? Personally?
 - What are some of our differences? Professionally? Personally?
 - How might those differences impact how we work together? Positively? Negatively?
 - How could we use our differences to create more value?
- Then switch places

Relational intervention to build mutual respect

- Sit around a table or on zoom with all roles in focal work process
- Each person writes down three things that help them to feel respected, on sticky notes (real or virtual)
- Put them in the center, organize by themes
- Note common themes
- Note differences
- Create behavioral standards for the group, based on the themes

Structural interventions

- Select & train for teamwork
- Relational job design
- Shared accountability
- Shared rewards
- Shared conflict resolution
- Boundary spanner roles
- Shared meetings & huddles
- Shared protocols
- Shared information systems
- Shared space

Gittell, J. H. (2016). [Structural interventions](#) in *Transforming relationships for high performance: The power of relational coordination*. Stanford University Press.

Organizational structures assessment tool

Structures

	Nurses	Case managers	Physicians	Residents	Physical therapy	Respiratory therapy
Selection for Teamwork	Strong Support	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support
Training for Teamwork	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Relational Job Design	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Accountability	Moderate Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support
Shared Rewards	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support
Conflict Resolution	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Boundary Spanner Role	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support
Shared Meetings & Huddles	Strong Support	Strong Support	Weak Support	Weak Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Protocols	Strong Support	Strong Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Info Systems	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support	Strong Support
Shared Space	Weak Support	Weak Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Moderate Support	Weak Support

 WEAK SUPPORT

 MODERATE SUPPORT

 STRONG SUPPORT

Structural interventions

- Which structures are currently *most supportive* of relational coordination?
- Which structures are currently *least supportive* of relational coordination?
- Where are the biggest opportunities for improving your structures?
- Where will you start? What obstacles will you face?
- Who will you need to engage from within (and possibly outside) the organization?

Work process interventions

Participatory structured problem solving methods can help to build relational coordination

- Total quality management
- Quality improvement
- Lean/six sigma
- High reliability
- Improvement science

Gittell, J. H. (2016). [Work process interventions](#). *Transforming relationships for high performance: The power of relational coordination*. Stanford University Press.

Stage 5: Implement interventions



Developed by Dr. Tony Suchman,
Relationship Centered Health Care

- ⌘ Be the change (parallel process); you can't use the old culture to create the new one
- ⌘ Include all relevant stakeholders (some may be less visible)
- ⌘ Use RC to open up conversations, not to close them down
- ⌘ Engage people in doing the work for themselves rather than doing it for them

Implement interventions

- Motivate stakeholders who come from distinct perspectives with different perceived levels of power to contribute time and effort to a change project
- Create a psychologically "safe space" for them to disagree respectfully
- Facilitate sensitive discussions among them
- Take care to avoid using metrics including RC survey results as report cards

Stage 6: Assess progress and spread the learning

- Change team **assesses** progress with periodic assessments of RC, org structures and performance outcomes
- Change team **spreads** the learning through leadership mandate or positive contagion

Assess progress and spread the learning

Relational interventions for organizational learning: An experience report

Introduction: Quality improvement and implementation science practitioners identify relational issues as important obstacles to success. Relational interventions may be important for successful performance improvement and fostering Learning Health Systems.

Methods: This case report describes the experience and lessons learned from implementing a relational approach to organizational change, informed by Relational Coordination Theory, in a health system. Structured interviews were used to obtain qualitative participant feedback. Relational Coordination was measured serially using a validated seven-item survey.

Results: An initial, relational intervention on one unit promoted increased participant engagement, self-efficacy, and motivation that led to the spontaneous, emergent dissemination of relational change, and learning into other parts of the health system. Staff involved in the intervention reported increased systems thinking, enhanced focus on communication and relationships as key drivers for improvement and learning, and greater awareness of organizational change as something co-created by staff and executives.

Thygeson, N. M., Logan, C., Lindberg, C., Potts, J., Suchman, A., Merchant, R., & Thompson, R. (2021). [Relational interventions for organizational learning: An experience report](#). *Learning Health Systems*, 5(3).



Six stages of change



- Stage 1: Explore context and create change team
- Stage 2: Assess relational coordination
- Stage 3: Assess structures
- Stage 4: Design interventions
- Stage 5: Implement interventions
- Stage 6: Assess progress and spread the learning

A cycle of continuous improvement

Relational model of change

Structural Interventions

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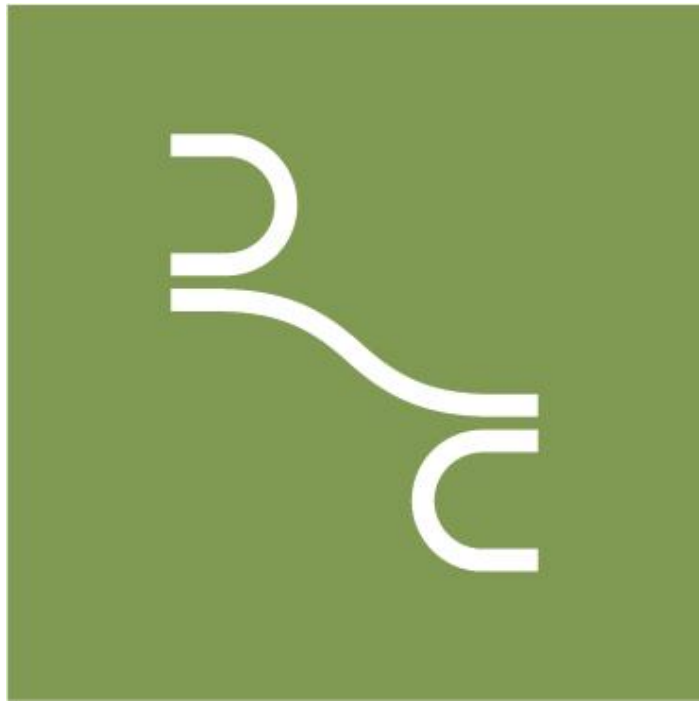
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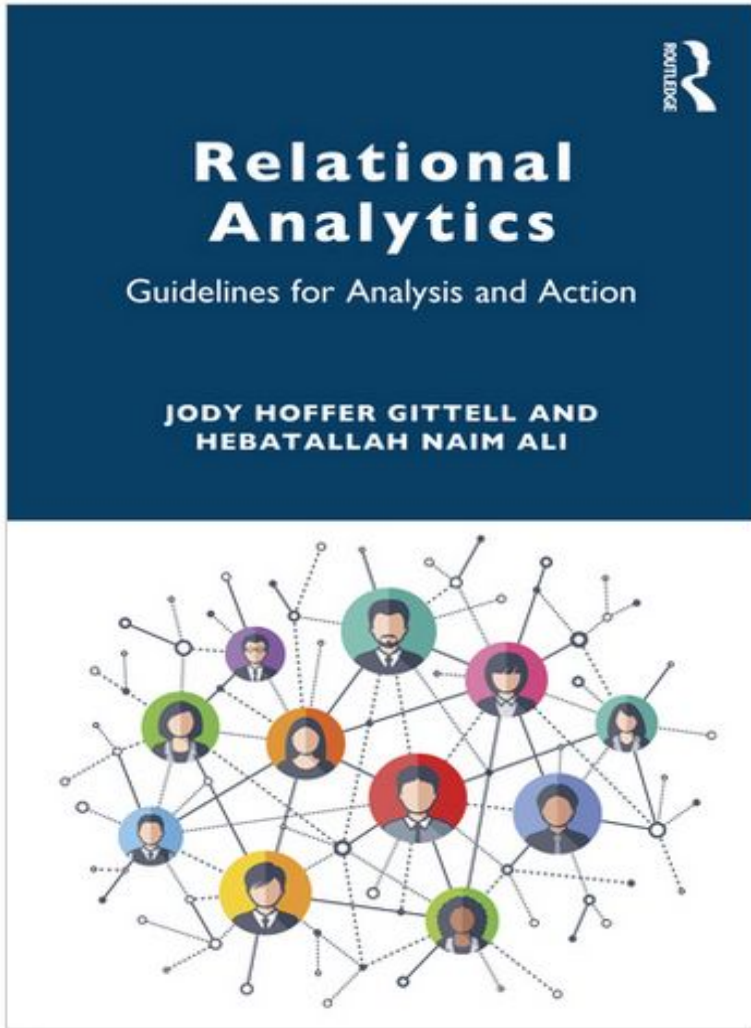
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Multi-stakeholder team leads the process



RELATIONAL
COORDINATION
COLLABORATIVE

[Visit the Relational Coordination Collaborative for more resources and a supportive community](#)



We are witnessing a revolution in people analytics, where data are used to identify and leverage human talent to drive performance outcomes. Today's workplace is interdependent, and individuals drive performance through networks that span department, organization and sector boundaries. This book shares the relational coordination framework, with a validated scalable analytic tool that has been used successfully across dozens of countries and industries to understand, measure and influence networks of relationships in and across organizations, and which can be applied at any level in the private and public sectors worldwide.



Gittell, J.H. & Ali, H.N. (2021). *Relational Analytics: Guidebook for Analysis and Action*. Routledge Publishing.



RELATIONAL COORDINATION ANALYTICS

[Visit Relational Coordination Analytics for analytic and reporting support](#)