

Project Stance Fieldnote

Love, Guidance, Groups, and Capacity

A Fieldnotes.scot stance note for Fieldethics, declarations, care, guidance, groups, and capacity-first conduct

This note sets the project stance moving forward. It is offered as a public ground, not a branding asset or detachable vocabulary.

Core line

The aim is not softer systems. The aim is more honest ones.

A project that claims to be built around care must be able to ask what care becomes once it enters real conditions.

Care is not protected by intention alone. Love, help, guidance, group belonging, and support can all become harmful when they are not held by humility, feedback, conduct, and capacity awareness.

This is one of the central stances of the work.

Good intention does not remain good simply because it began as care. Once care enters a system, a relationship, a record, a service, a recovery route, a classroom, a health setting, or a family process, it begins to create conditions. Those conditions must be examined.

The first question

A caring route can still become coercive. A helpful worker can still become centralising. A supportive group can still become performative. A wise guide can still become an attachment point. A standard route can still overload the person it claims to support.

The question is not only: Was care intended?

The better question is: What conditions did this care create, and who became more or less able to grow inside them?

1. Love That Cannot Be Corrected Becomes Power

Love, concern, and care become dangerous when they cannot receive correction.

This is true in families, services, institutions, recovery routes, safeguarding systems, public policy, education, health, and community work.

A person or system may sincerely believe it is helping. But if the route does not allow feedback, if it cannot hear distress, if it treats challenge as ingratitude, if it turns disagreement into evidence against the person, then care begins to harden into power.

Care needs humility to remain care. Humility does not mean weakness. It means the route remains able to learn from its effects.

- Did this help?
- Did this burden?
- Did this make truth easier or harder to speak?
- Did this increase dignity, safety, and capacity?
- Did this protect the person, or mainly protect the helper's view of themselves?

Good intention without humility becomes moral authority.

Moral authority without feedback becomes harm.

2. The Guide Must Not Become the Destination

Support should help a person make better contact with reality. It should not make the person dependent on the support.

This applies to professionals, services, recovery groups, mentors, spiritual teachers, advocates, institutions, and AI systems.

A good guide holds a route open. A poor guide becomes the route.

The aim of support is not to make the worker, teacher, group, service, or system indispensable. The aim is to increase the person's capacity to see, choose, act, repair, relate, and develop with more reality contact than before.

Support becomes distorted when it requires dependence in order to prove its value.

- Is this support increasing the person's agency?
- Is it improving their contact with reality?
- Is it helping them act with more responsibility?
- Is it making the route clearer beyond the helper?
- Or is it making the person more attached to the helper as the only safe point?

The worker is not the centre of the person's development.

The guide is scaffolding, not the building.

3. A Group Is Only Supportive When Its Conduct Protects Truth

Groups can be protective. They can reduce isolation, hold memory, create rhythm, model change, and give people language for what they could not carry alone.

But a group is not automatically safe because it calls itself supportive.

Groups can also become shame fields, performance fields, dominance fields, compliance fields, gossip fields, or belonging systems that punish honesty.

A group becomes genuinely supportive only when its conduct makes truth safer than performance.

This matters for participation projects, recovery routes, lived-experience spaces, staff teams, classrooms, therapeutic communities, activist spaces, and public forums.

- What does the group reward?
- What does it punish?
- Who can speak honestly?
- Who has to perform belonging?
- Who carries the discomfort?
- Who gets protected when harm is named?
- Does the group create development, or does it create role-play?

A group that demands the appearance of insight may block real accountability.

A group that protects dignity while allowing reality to be faced can become developmental infrastructure.

4. The Ethical Route Must Be Calibrated to Capacity, Timing, Burden, and Developmental Need

Equal dignity does not mean identical treatment.

People arrive with different capacities, different burdens, different histories, different bodies, different risks, different supports, and different proximity to power.

A route that treats everyone the same may still be unfair if the conditions are not the same.

Capacity-first work does not remove responsibility. It locates responsibility properly.

The ethical question is: What is this person being asked to carry, and what conditions currently make that possible or impossible?

- Some people need challenge.
- Some need rest.
- Some need structure.
- Some need protection from overload.
- Some need truth spoken plainly.
- Some need language before they can act.
- Some need embarrassment to puncture denial.
- Some need dignity restored before accountability becomes possible.

The same intervention can develop one person and crush another.

The same standard can protect one route and overload another.

The same demand can be fair in one field and impossible in another.

So the work asks for calibration, not indulgence.

Responsibility should scale with power, capacity, role, and proximity to the conditions being created.

Project Stance

This work is not anti-care, anti-guidance, anti-group, anti-discipline, or anti-accountability.

It is against routes that use the language of care while refusing to examine their effects.

It is against support that creates dependency.

It is against groups that reward performance over truth.

It is against standards that ignore capacity, burden, timing, and developmental need.

The stance

Care must remain correctable.

Support must increase reality contact.

Groups must make truth safer than performance.

Routes must be calibrated to capacity.

Responsibility must scale with proximity to conditions.

The aim is not softer systems.

The aim is more honest ones.

Dignity, safety, and honest development require care that can be questioned, guidance that does not possess, groups that protect truth, and routes that understand what people are actually being asked to carry.

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