

Can Civility and Compassion make a difference to Transplant in South Africa

Netcare Group

SATS Compassion In TRANSPLANT



CAN THE WAY, WE TREAT EACH OTHER MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO TRANSPLANTATION IN SA

- It is the Foundation for multiple other professional responsibilities
- Essential to the survival of the transplant programme in South Africa
- Essential to the success of transplant in South Africa
- It is essential and beneficial for the patients awaiting transplant
- Essential for the stewardship of healthcare resources
- Compassionate education efforts that respect cultural sensitivities and focus on the universal value of saving lives can help overcome cultural or religious barriers to organ donation.



- Compassion plays a critical role in encouraging organ donation by fostering empathy, raising awareness, promoting altruism, and facilitating difficult conversations around end-of-life decisions.
- When healthcare professionals show empathy and understanding during end-of-life conversations, families are more likely to agree to organ donation. Compassionate communication from doctors and nurses helps build trust and eases the difficult decision-making process for grieving families.
- Health Care Policies that frame organ donation as an act of compassion and emphasize its potential to save lives can increase donor registration. For example, "opt-out" policies, where everyone is considered a donor unless they specify otherwise, tend to be more successful in compassionate, community-oriented societies.

Two significant concepts in organ donation: Empathic tendency and altruism

- Empathy refers to an individual putting themselves into another's place, fully understanding their thoughts and feelings and their own world
- Altruism is defined as making a voluntary sacrifice and not expecting anything in return from an individual or society
- Organ transplantation is only possible with the donation of the organ to be transplanted
- Kaça et al., reported that factors such as helping others and consent positively influence the decision to donate organs
- Knowing that given organs improve another person's quality of life and lengthen their lifetime might boost altruism and encourage organ donation consent
- Altruistic organ donation also refers to giving organs without expecting anything in return

- Research has shown that although organ donation is designed to be of benefit to the recipient, there are also beneficial outcomes for the donor.
- Families often make organ donation decisions based on the perceived wishes of their loved ones. When framed within a compassionate understanding of the deceased's desire to help others, families are more likely to consent to donation.

DO COMPASSIONATE SOCIETIES HAVE A HIGHER TRANSPLANT RATE

- Cultural Emphasis on Altruism and Collective Well-being

In societies where compassion, empathy, and collective well-being are emphasized, people tend to have a stronger sense of responsibility toward others. This often translates into higher rates of organ donation because individuals are more likely to view donation as a way of helping those in need.

Examples: Countries like Spain, which consistently leads the world in organ donation rates, have cultural norms that emphasize solidarity and compassion. The Spanish healthcare system promotes a collective mindset that prioritizes saving lives, which is reflected in the country's high donor rates.

DO COMPASSIONATE SOCIETIES HAVE A HIGHER TRANSPLANT RATE

- Social Norms and Community Solidarity

In compassionate societies, organ donation may be seen as a social norm. When the act of donation is viewed as a common or expected way to help others, more people are likely to register as donors.

Community-driven decisions: Compassionate communities may also rally together in support of public health campaigns that promote organ donation, creating a ripple effect where people are encouraged by peers and family members to consider donating.

DO COMPASSIONATE SOCIETIES HAVE A HIGHER TRANSPLANT RATE

- Effective Public Campaigns and Education

Compassionate societies often invest in public education campaigns that tell human-centered stories of those who need or have received transplants. These campaigns often appeal to emotions like empathy and compassion, helping to reduce fears and misconceptions about organ donation.

In these societies, there's also a greater effort to overcome barriers to donation by addressing cultural, religious, or emotional concerns with sensitivity and care, further boosting donation rates.

DO COMPASSIONATE SOCIETIES HAVE A HIGHER TRANSPLANT RATE

- Supportive Health Systems

Compassionate societies often have health systems that prioritise patient care and ensure that end-of-life conversations, including organ donation discussions, are handled with empathy.

Healthcare professionals in such societies are often better trained in compassionate communication, leading to more families agreeing to organ donation.

Legislation: Countries that prioritize compassionate healthcare also tend to implement supportive policies, such as “opt-out” donation systems (where all individuals are presumed donors unless they actively refuse).

Such policies align with a compassionate, community-driven approach to health.

DO COMPASSIONATE SOCIETIES HAVE A HIGHER TRANSPLANT RATE

- Trust in Healthcare Providers

In compassionate societies, there is often a higher level of trust in healthcare providers and the healthcare system. When people trust that their medical professionals are working in their best interest and treating them with compassion, they are more likely to feel comfortable making decisions about organ donation.

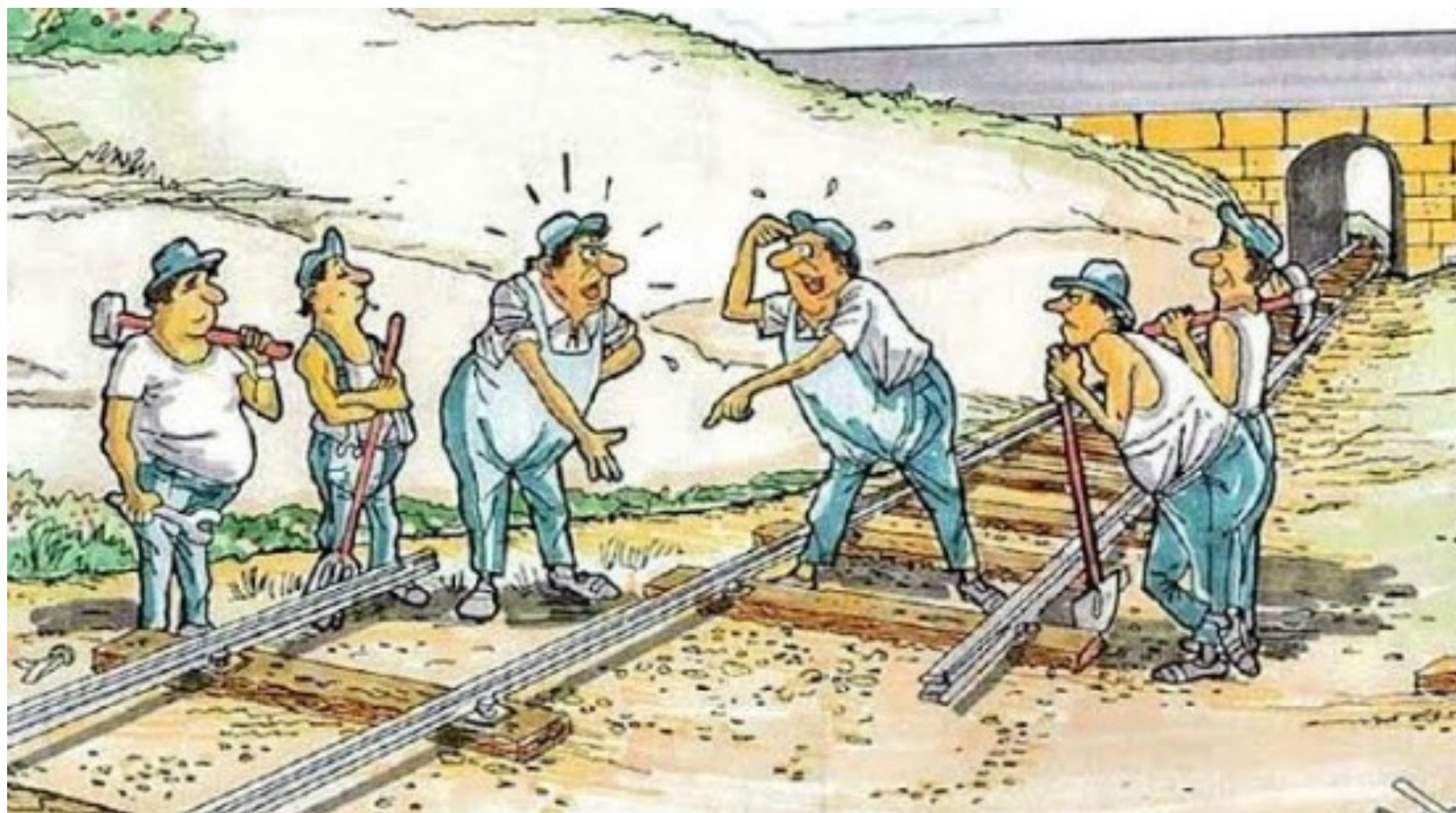
Openness to Discussing End-of-Life Decisions

Societies that embrace compassionate approaches are often more open to having conversations about death, dying, and organ donation. This willingness to engage in difficult but compassionate discussions makes people more likely to plan ahead and register as donors.

When families in these societies experience compassionate end-of-life care, they are more likely to feel that agreeing to organ donation is in line with their loved one's values and wishes.

Spain and Croatia are often cited as examples of societies with high transplant rates. Both countries have national systems that emphasize compassion, solidarity, and collective responsibility for public health. Their success is often attributed to a mix of cultural compassion and supportive legislation (such as presumed consent laws).

Countries with lower donation rates: In contrast, countries where mistrust of the healthcare system is high, or where the discussion of death and organ donation is culturally taboo, tend to have lower rates of organ donation.



THE COMPASSIONATE AND PROFESSIONALISM CHARTER FOR TRANSPLANT IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Excellence in clinical care is appropriately emphasised, in healthcare these standards also include exemplary behaviour and social responsibility
- Reflection of values and can be effective in bringing about positive changes
- Contain social, ethical and societal goals that positively influence transplant organisational success

CAN COMPASSION AND CIVILITY BE TAUGHT?

The ability to provide civil compassionate ethical care is an **expected core competency** of all healthcare workers and healthcare administrators.

Civility and Compassion are a powerful aspect of the human experience and can be trained.

Weng et al. (2013) suggested that compassion can be cultivated with training and that greater altruistic behaviour may emerge from an increased understanding of the suffering of other people.

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Functional Neural Plasticity and Associated Changes in Positive Affect After Compassion Training FREE

Olga M. Klimecki ✉, Susanne Leiberg, Claus Lamm, Tania Singer

Cerebral Cortex, Volume 23, Issue 7, July 2013, Pages 1552–1561, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhs142>

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WHY COMPASSIONATE END OF LIFE DECISIONS SHOULD START EARLY TO PROMOTE DONATION

- Respect for Patient Autonomy

Honoring Choices: Compassionate end-of-life discussions give patients the opportunity to express their wishes regarding their treatment, care, and how they want to spend their final days. This respect for their autonomy is deeply caring because it empowers them to make choices based on their values and dignity.

- Reducing Anxiety and Uncertainty

Clarity on What to Expect: These discussions help patients and families understand what is likely to happen, reducing fear of the unknown. Compassionate communication allows them to ask questions, share their concerns, and prepare emotionally, which can bring a sense of peace in an otherwise difficult time.

WHY COMPASSIONATE END OF LIFE DECISIONS SHOULD START EARLY TO PROMOTE DONATION

- Providing Emotional and Psychological Support

Acknowledging Emotional Needs: When healthcare providers take the time to engage in these conversations with empathy, they provide an emotional outlet for patients and families to express fears, grief, and hopes. This compassionate support can significantly improve the emotional well-being of both the patient and their loved ones.

- Helping Families with Decision Making

Easing the Burden on Families: End-of-life discussions relieve families of the heavy emotional burden of making decisions in a crisis. Knowing their loved one's wishes ahead of time helps prevent family disagreements, guilt, or confusion during an already stressful time.

WHY COMPASSIONATE END OF LIFE DECISIONS SHOULD START EARLY TO PROMOTE DONATION

- **Aligning Medical Care with Personal Values**

Ensuring Meaningful Care: These conversations help ensure that the care provided aligns with what the patient truly wants, avoiding unnecessary procedures or treatments that might prolong suffering rather than provide comfort. Compassionate communication guides patients and families through understanding what constitutes meaningful care, especially in the face of terminal illness.

- **Fostering Trust Between Healthcare Providers and Patients**

Building Trust: A compassionate approach in end-of-life discussions helps build trust between healthcare providers and patients. When caregivers take the time to engage in difficult conversations, listen attentively, and demonstrate empathy, it shows that they prioritize the patient's well-being above all.

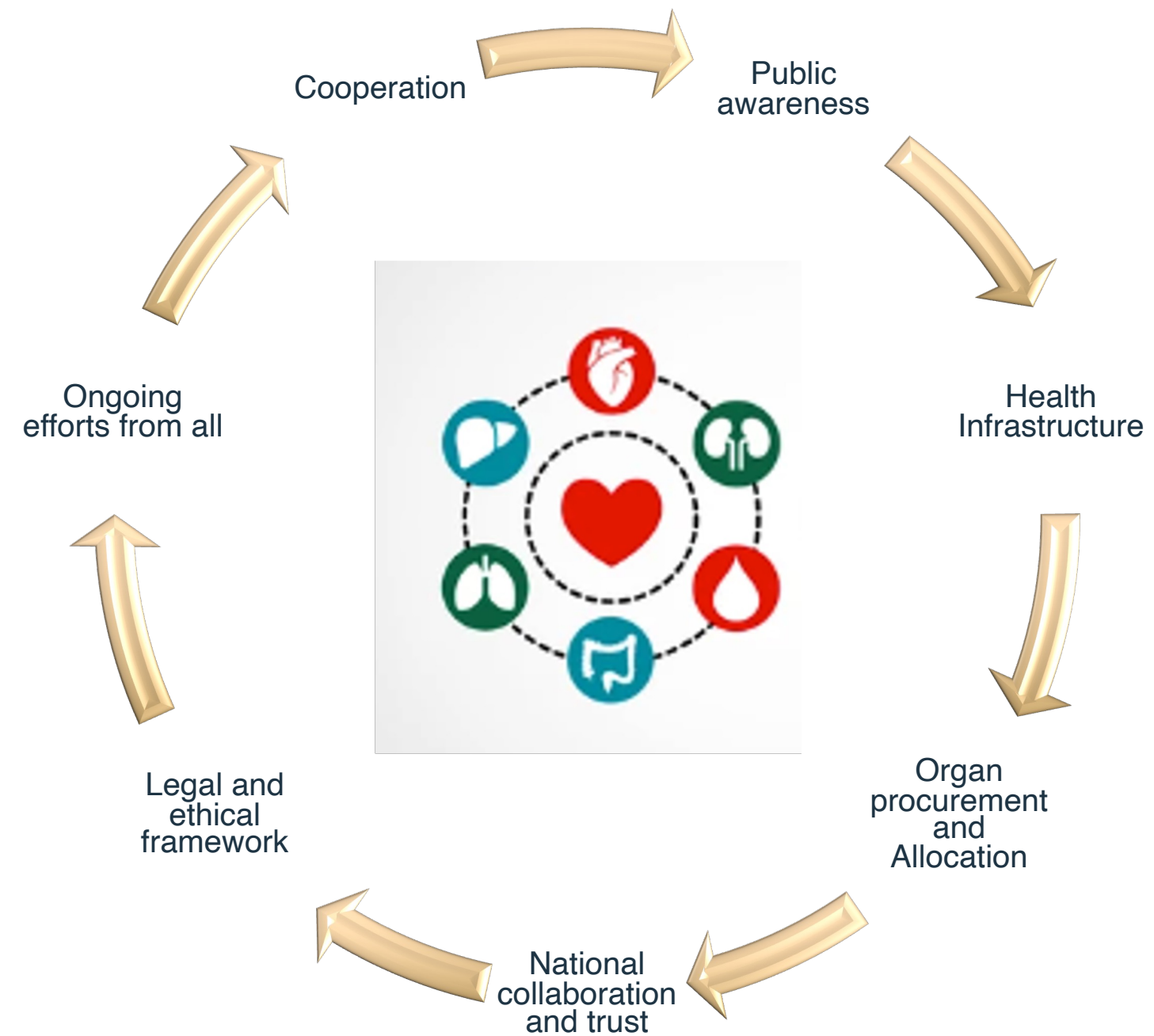
- Facilitating Peaceful Transitions

Enabling Acceptance: Compassionate discussions help people come to terms with the reality of death. By discussing goals of care, such as comfort and quality of life, patients can shift their focus from curative treatment to a peaceful, dignified end-of-life experience. This helps patients and families accept the transition more peacefully.

THERE ARE MANY NEGATIVES IN TRANSPLANT

- Ignorance and prejudice continue to be the general causes of society's lack of response to the social need of organ donation, particularly with respect to the deceased donor
- Medical teams are largely untrained in organ donation
- The fears concerning a diagnosis of brain death
- These myths, misinformation and prejudices are barriers to donation referral and transplantation
- Organ shortages in South Africa are a healthcare crisis

CIVILITY ETHICS AND TRUST ARE IMPERATIVE TO ENHANCE A SHARED VISION FOR TRANSPLANT IN SA



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Thank you

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