Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
2024 Fellowship Program
Project Proposal

PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

Relationships Project

PROJECT TITLE:

Creating a Pattern Library for Relationship-Centred Practice

Partner Organization: Relationships Project

[The Relationships Project](#) is committed to bringing about a paradigm shift towards a world where building and maintaining good relationships is considered the first mile, not the extra mile. Over the past five years we have been acting as a field builder, helping to catalyse, support and grow a field of practice around putting relationships first across the UK and beyond.

Our work is focused on three key priorities which, in combination, help create the infrastructure for this field of practice to thrive on:

- **CONNECT:** Create spaces for connection, conversation and shared learning about relationships, helping practitioners committed to a belief in the power of good relationships to feel less alone
- **UNDERSTAND:** Develop our collective understanding of relationship-centred practice and why it matters, helping to establish greater recognition and validation for this way of working
- **EMBED:** Translate the learning around 'what works' when it comes to relationship-centred practice, supporting more practitioners to work consistently in this way

Learn more at: www.relationshipsproject.org

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location of the Project: Remote

The Relationships Project team operate in GMT+1 time, and are located across the UK (East London, Newcastle and Shropshire). While we occasionally meet up in person, this role is accepting fully remote applicants from around the world.

Section 1: Description of the Project

A Pattern Library for Relationship-Centred Practice

Over the past 5 years, we at the Relationships Project have had the privilege of learning alongside hundreds of Relationship-Centred Practitioners about how they put relationships first in their community, organisation or system. Through these conversations, we've learnt that:

- Just like every relationship is unique, our approach to building them must be reflexive and adaptable. There can be no 'cookie cutter' approach to relational work: it must be informed by the context in which it is taking place and the people who are involved

- Whilst relational work is necessarily shaped by context, there are common 'patterns' that we witness across sectors and specialisms; behaviours, competencies and conditions which underpin and enable relationship-centred practice

We have begun work to draw together the hard-earned wisdom of relationship-centred practitioners across the field about 'what works' when it comes to putting relationships first. We are using this wisdom to create a 'Pattern Library': a digital, community-built wayfinder which will provide support and guidance to those looking to embed relational ways of working into their community, organisation or system.

Each 'Pattern' in the library will:

- share information, guidance and support around a specific behaviour, competency or condition which helps underpin and embed relational work
- combine practitioner learning, academic insight and useful resources (such as frameworks, training and peer learning opportunities)

Section 2: Goals of the Project

The Pattern Library for Relationship-Centred Practice will support practitioners who believe in the importance of putting relationships first but who are feeling 'stuck' when it comes to taking practical steps towards embedding relational ways of working. Through surfacing and sharing the hard-earned wisdom of relationship-centred practitioners who have gone before them, and combining this with theory, evidence and signposting to further resources and support. The Pattern Library will include multimedia resources, including:

- Video recordings of 'dinner table dialogues' involving practitioners with expertise in the pattern being discussed
- Audio recordings submitted by other practitioners who have wisdom to share
- Written summaries of the key aspects of each Pattern
- Diagrams and illustrations, where relevant

Patterns will be researched and created through a combination of:

- Hosting conversations between practitioners with firsthand experience of the challenge or question, in which they can share their insight, experience and tips
- Desk research underpinning theory and collating useful resources

Section 3: Guiding Questions

We are looking for support from a Fellow in developing Patterns for the Pattern Library. Our network will vote on the Patterns they would like us to develop first, but they are likely to include insight and approaches relating to the following sorts of questions:

- Active boundary setting: How can relational practitioners set, maintain and regularly review appropriate boundaries in their work?
- Relational safeguarding: How can safeguarding policies support and enable relational work, whilst maintaining the safety of all involved?

- Building relationships across a power dynamic: How can genuine, reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships be established in situations where there is a notable power discrepancy?
- Establishing relationships across lines of difference: How can trusting, open relationships be established between individuals and groups who see themselves as having little in common with one another (or who have a history of tension or conflict)?
- Having difficult conversations: How can practitioners approach difficult but necessary conversations whilst maintaining a trusting relationship?

- Understanding the intersections of relationship centered practice, and belonging.

The audience for the Pattern Library is primarily practitioners who believe in the importance of putting relationships first but who are feeling 'stuck' when it comes to taking practical steps towards embedding relational ways of working.

Section 4: Key Deliverables

- **1 blog post** (500 – 1,000 word), posted to SCSC's website
- **A Community Engagement Initiative** (CEI) in support of the Final Output
- **A Final Output**
  - This project will involve producing 2-3 Patterns for the Pattern Library and a complementary 18-25 page report to be published on SCSC's website,
    - The 18-25 page report will be supported by the primary and secondary research used to develop the Patterns.
- **2-3 Patterns** for inclusion in the Library, each of which should include:
  - An introduction to the behaviour / competency / condition which underpins relational practice (e.g. active boundary setting; having difficult conversations)
  - Insight and wisdom from 3-4 practitioners (ideally in the form of a conversation between the practitioners on Zoom which we can help facilitate)
  - Theory and evidence which helps to further explain how that behaviour / compentency / condition relates to relational work and can be developed or embedded
  - Signposts to useful resources, frameworks, tools and training
- **A Final Presentation** with the cohort

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant

We think the ideal candidate for this work will:

- Have a demonstrable commitment to putting relationships first in all that they do
- Be comfortable and confident in speaking to - and coordinating - practitioners from different backgrounds and specializations around a specific topic

- Be skilled in synthesising and summarising information from multiple sources, including academic papers, blog posts and practitioner-led discussions
- Work well in a team enviornment, comfortable asking for support and brainstorming / co-creating with members of the Relationships Project team
- Be curious, inquisitive and genuinely interested in learning about 'what works' when it comes to embedding relationship-centred practice in communities, organisations and systems

About the Fellowship/What the Fellowship Offers

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness (SCSC) Social Connectedness Fellowship empowers young people and people with a variety of different types of lived experience to partner with groundbreaking organizations from around the world to carry out innovative research on social isolation and belonging.

SCSC defines belonging as connection to the 4 Ps: people, place, power, and purpose. This is to say that belonging comes through our relationships with other people as well as through our rootedness in nature, our ability to influence social, political and economic decision-making, and our capacity to find shared meaning and purpose in our lives. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity to apply the lens of Belonging, thinking intersectionally, and holistically about the problems of the 21st century.

These are paid positions, starting on **May 6, 2024**, and ending on **September 27, 2024**. From **May – August the position is full time, 35 hours per week** and in **September the hours are reduced to part time, 10-20 hours per week**.

SCSC Offers:

- Competitive wages, $15-28 CAD per hour, adjusted according to each Fellow's geographic location and experience.
    - Purchasing power and location will be heavily considered.
- Opportunity to work with national & international community partners
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship
- Ability to network, and be part of an international cohort
- All Fellowship works are published on the SCSC website
- The Fellow's work will be supported by regular supervision meetings with both organizations, and a 1-week long orientation at SCSC.

Program Requirements:

- Be able to work at least 4 hours per day (in alignment with the 9-5 workday) in Eastern Standard Time to ensure overlap with the Toronto-based team.
- Be ready to engage in regular online meetings, check-ins, capacity building sessions, and work remotely.
- Ability to take initiative, manage their time effectively, work independently, and draw from different resources to support their work.
- Have a passion for research and building a more inclusive, belonging-oriented world.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applicants to apply even if they do not meet all the criteria. We believe all candidates have something to bring to the organization and the role. If you have skills outside the job description that you think can benefit the project, let us know in your cover letter. We encourage all equity-seeking groups, such as immigrants, Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, people with disabilities, and people who have been justice-impacted to apply.

Please tell us if you need accommodation throughout the application process and we are happy to support you.

You can email any accommodation requests to scfellowship@scscglobal.org