

**Partnership  
Experiential  
Knowledge**



**Conference**  
Experiential  
Knowledge  
in the Spotlight

Vilnius 22 May 2023

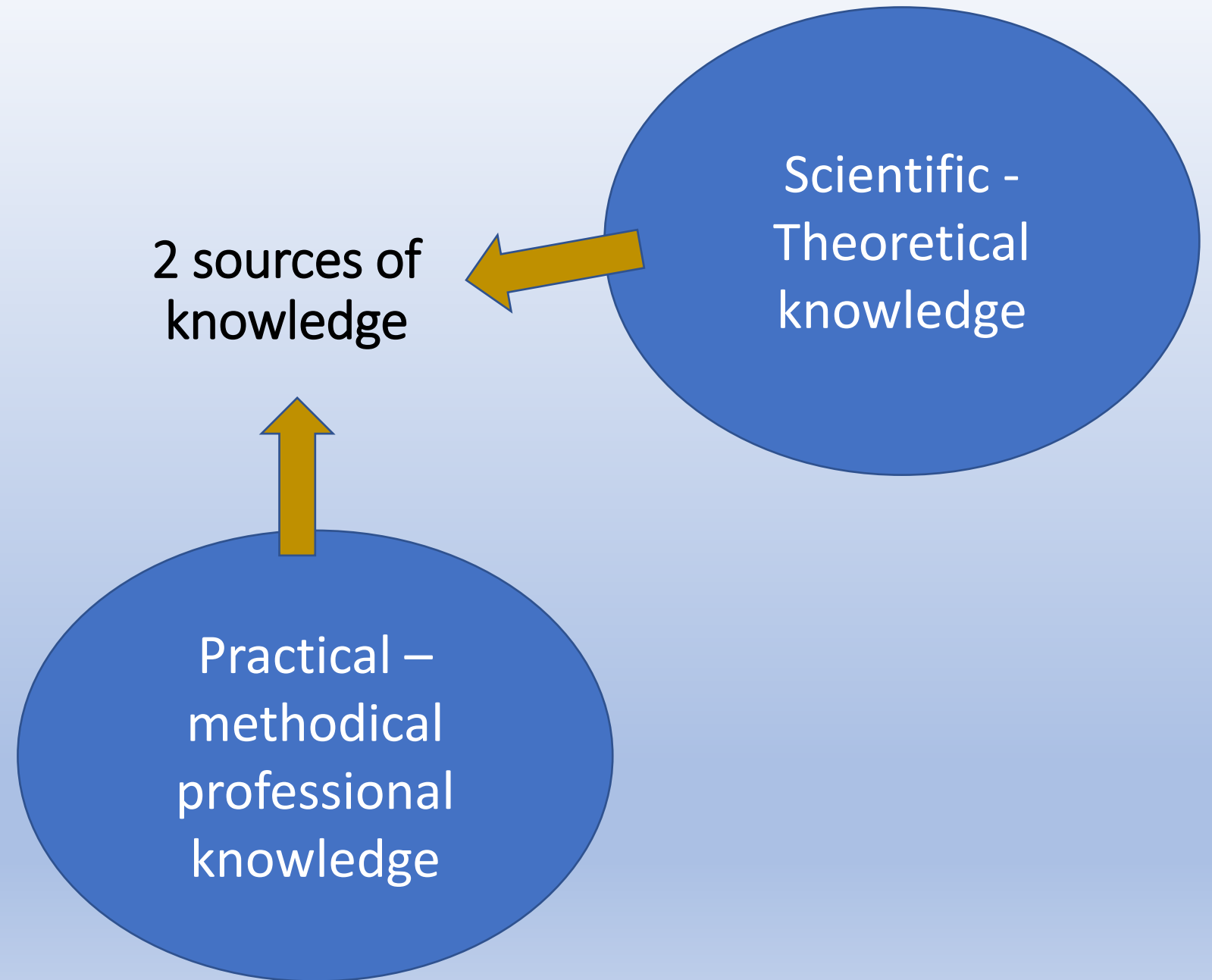
# Emerging values of Experiences and Experiential Knowledge

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Elena Cabiati

# Content

- Experiential knowledge and other sources of knowledge
- Service user expertise and its transformative power
- What is the value of experiential knowledge?
- The next step: everybody's personal experiences!
  - To use your own personal experiences
  - To connect to someone else's personal experiences
  - To (help to) develop experiential knowledge





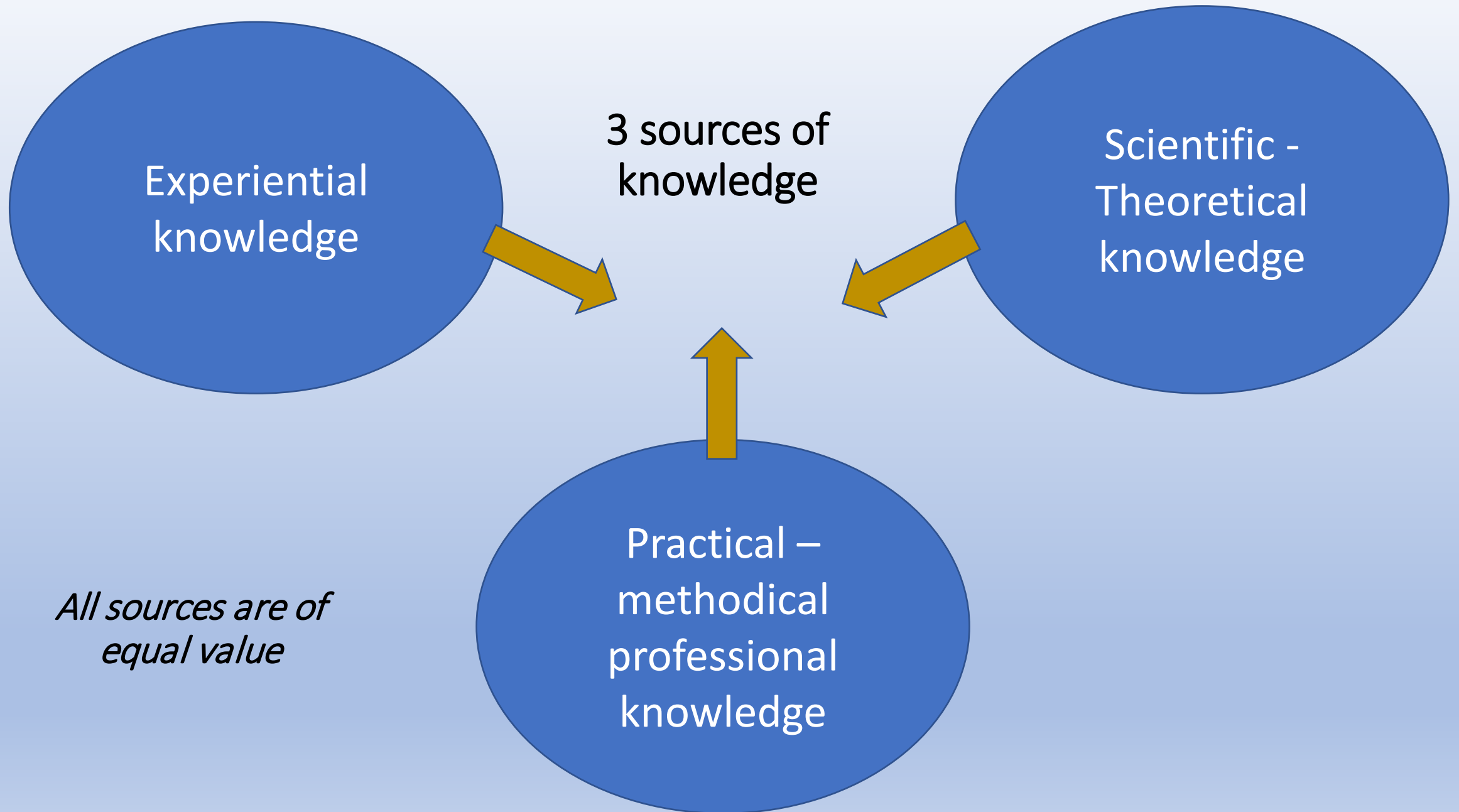
Accompanied by  
institutional  
routines,  
guidelines,  
protocols etc.

To be put into  
practice

Scientific -  
Theoretical  
knowledge

Practical –  
methodical  
professional  
knowledge





Experiential  
knowledge

3 sources of  
knowledge

Scientific -  
Theoretical  
knowledge

Practical –  
methodical  
professional  
knowledge

*All sources are of  
equal value*

Experiential  
knowledge of people  
with 'lived  
experiences'



A focus on the value of  
personal experiences

Roots:

User and consumer movements  
Emancipation, empowerment  
Social model of disability  
Recovery (mental health)  
Disability rights movement  
Americans with Disability Act  
(1990)  
Social Inclusion & Human Rights  
(CRPD) (2006)

***“Nothing about us without us”***

Experiential  
knowledge of people  
with 'lived  
experiences'

For practitioners, the lived experiences  
can emerge from the personal life but  
also from the professional life

Experiences with a disability,  
traumatic event, chronic illness,  
stigma, poverty, social exclusion

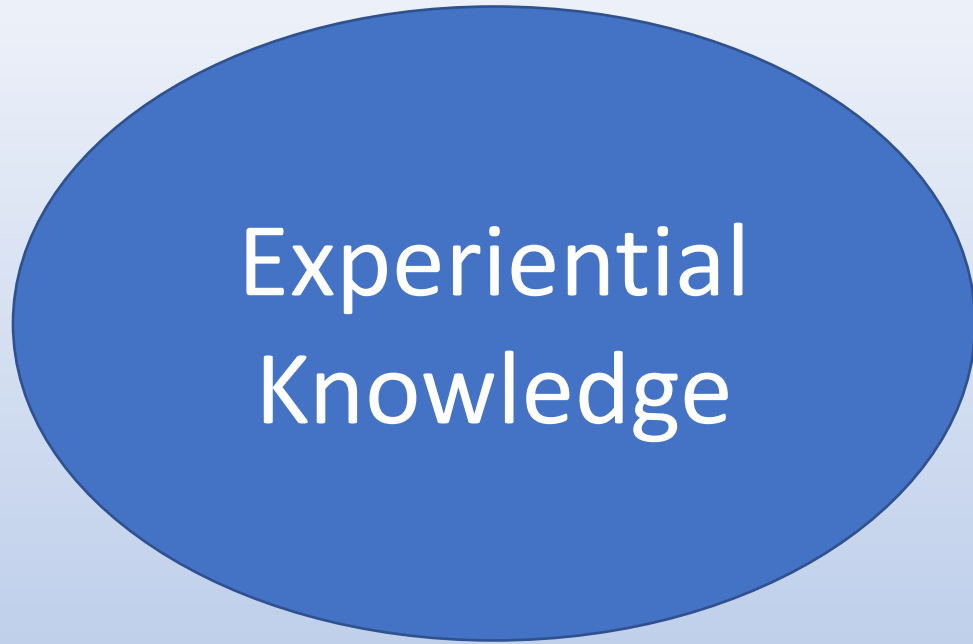
Experiences with services:  
health services, social services,  
institutions

Experiences in the relationships  
with helping professionals

=====

Experiences as a family member





Turning personal experiences into knowledge and expertise that can serve other people and professionals



# Experiential Knowledge

People developed their expertise in different ways, both informally and formally, individually or through interactions with others

Turning personal experiences into expertise that can serve other people or induce welfare and education systems change

Recent developments:

Professionalisation of peer expertise:  
Training programmes  
Vocational training  
University programmes

'peer workers'  
'peer specialists'  
'co-researcher'  
'co-educators'

Including experiential knowledge in training of service providers and curricula of bachelors social work



ROUTLEDGE  
INTERNATIONAL  
HANDBOOKS



The Routledge Handbook of  
Service User Involvement  
in Human Services Research  
and Education

Edited by Hugh McLaughlin, Peter Beresford,  
Colin Cameron, Helen Casey and Joe Duffy

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Research  
Highlights in  
Social Work

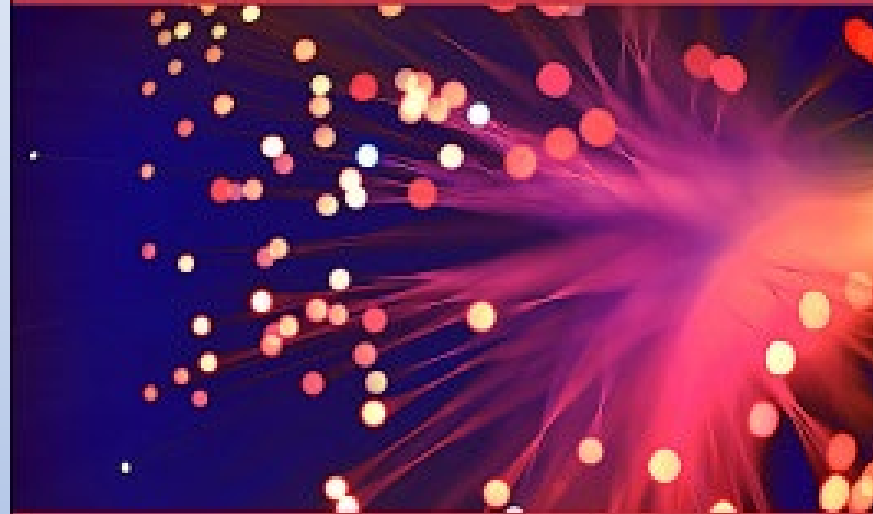
SOCIAL CARE,  
SERVICE USERS  
and USER  
INVOLVEMENT

EDITED BY PETER BERESFORD AND SARAH CARR



# Involving Service Users in Social Work Education, Research and Policy

*A Comparative European Analysis*



Edited by Kristel Driessens and  
Vicky Lyssens-Danneboom

*< Research in social work >*

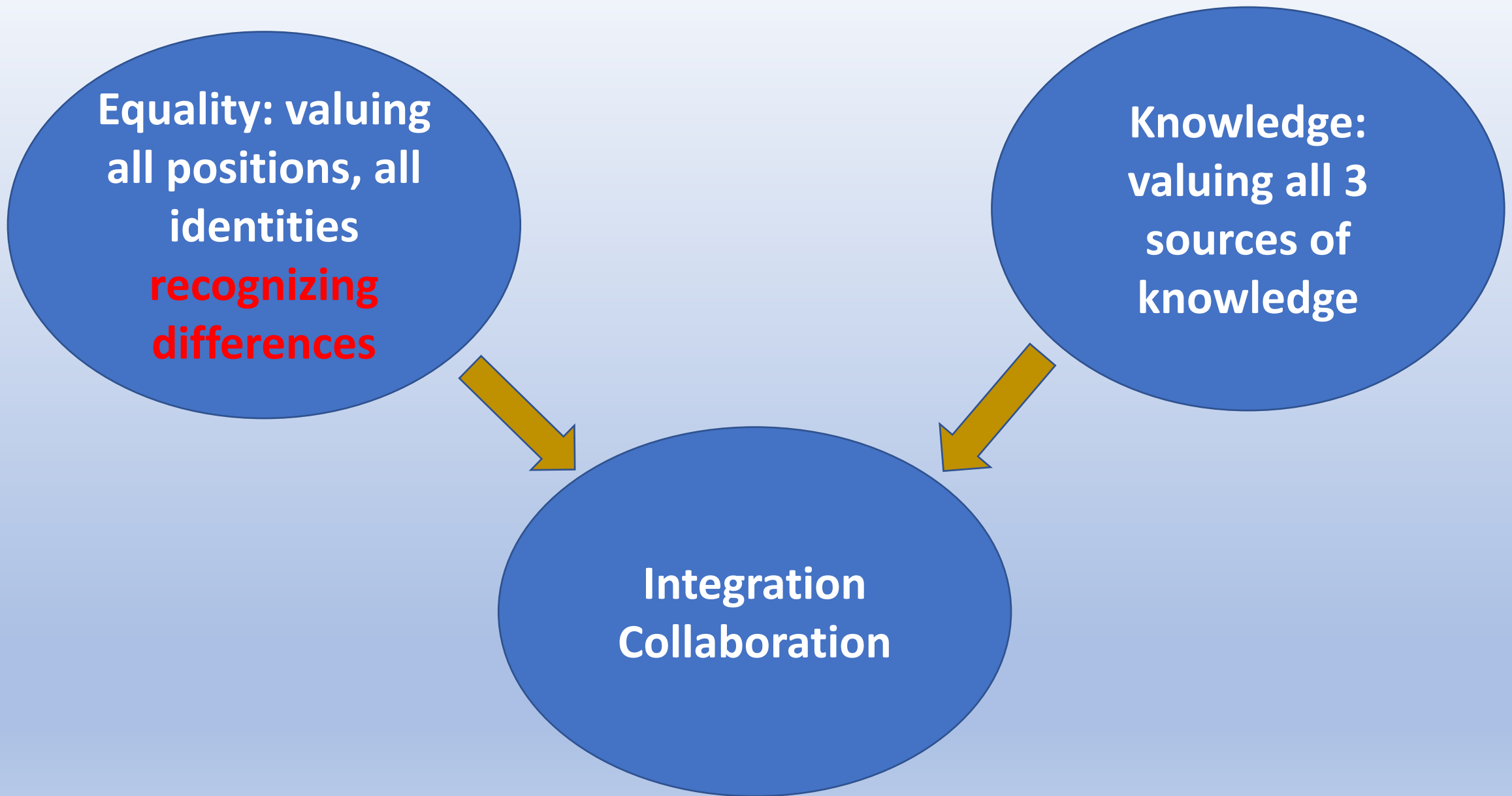
**P**

**“Person with a  
disability”  
“Client”  
“Patient”  
“Person in need”**

Experiences and  
actor positions  
connected to  
different roles and  
identities

**“professional  
worker”  
“specialist”**

Family member  
Colleague  
Friend  
Peer



# How to apply?

- Integrating experiential knowledge starts with recognition of the value of the experiences and the perspectives of persons you work with (in the role of 'client', 'patient', 'family carer', 'neighbour', 'student')
- To apply it it's important to be aware about the rationale of the involvement (including expectations), space for reflections and elaboration, a welcoming environment
- Connects well with:
  - Strengths-based and anti-oppressive approaches (e.g. CARE Model, Strengths Model, Collaborative methods, Relational methods)
  - Narrative approaches
  - Dialogical interviewing
  - Open Dialogue
  - Co-construction of perspectives and co-production of actions
- Working with the experiences of family members and other persons in the social network / the community

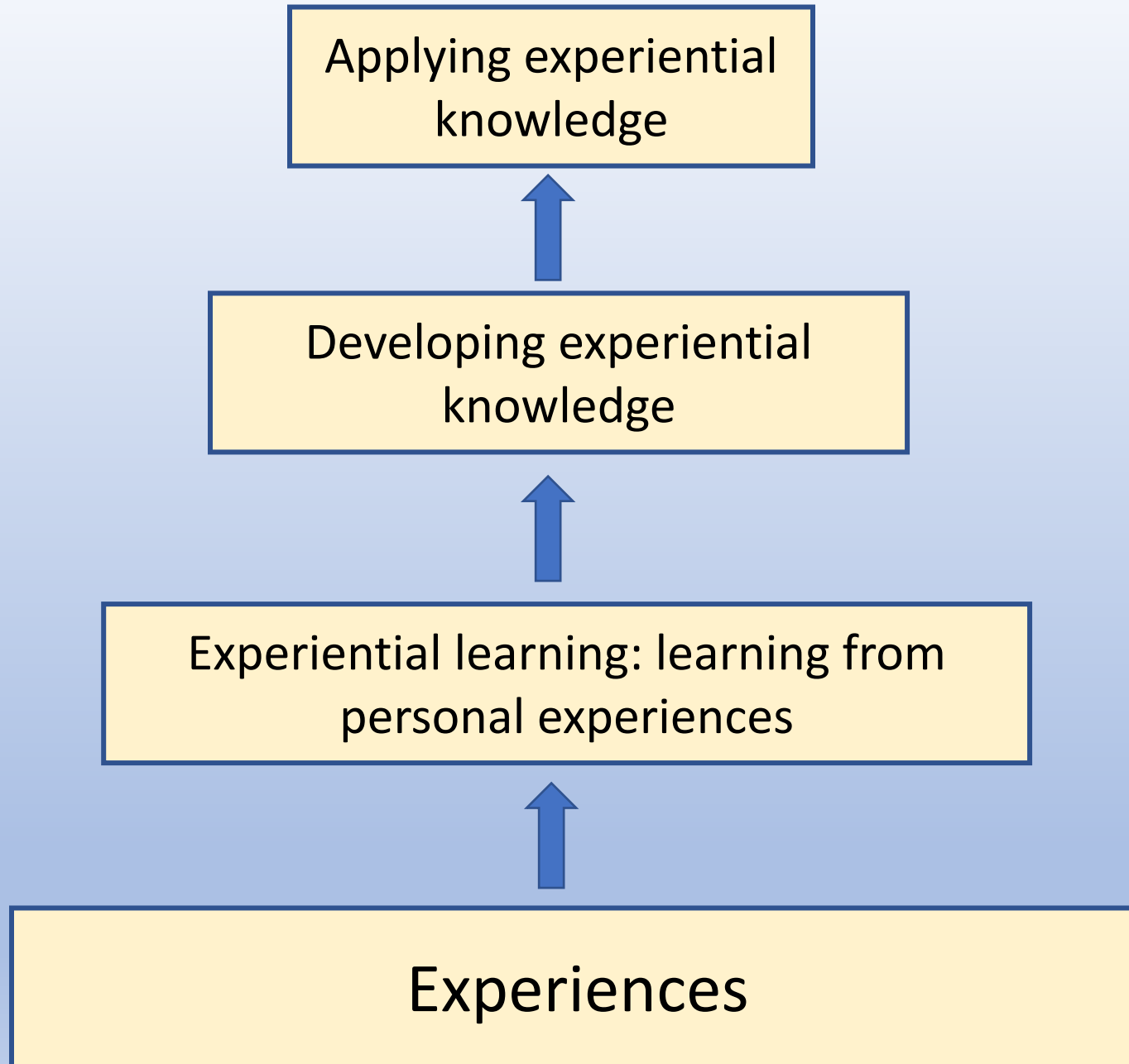
# The next step

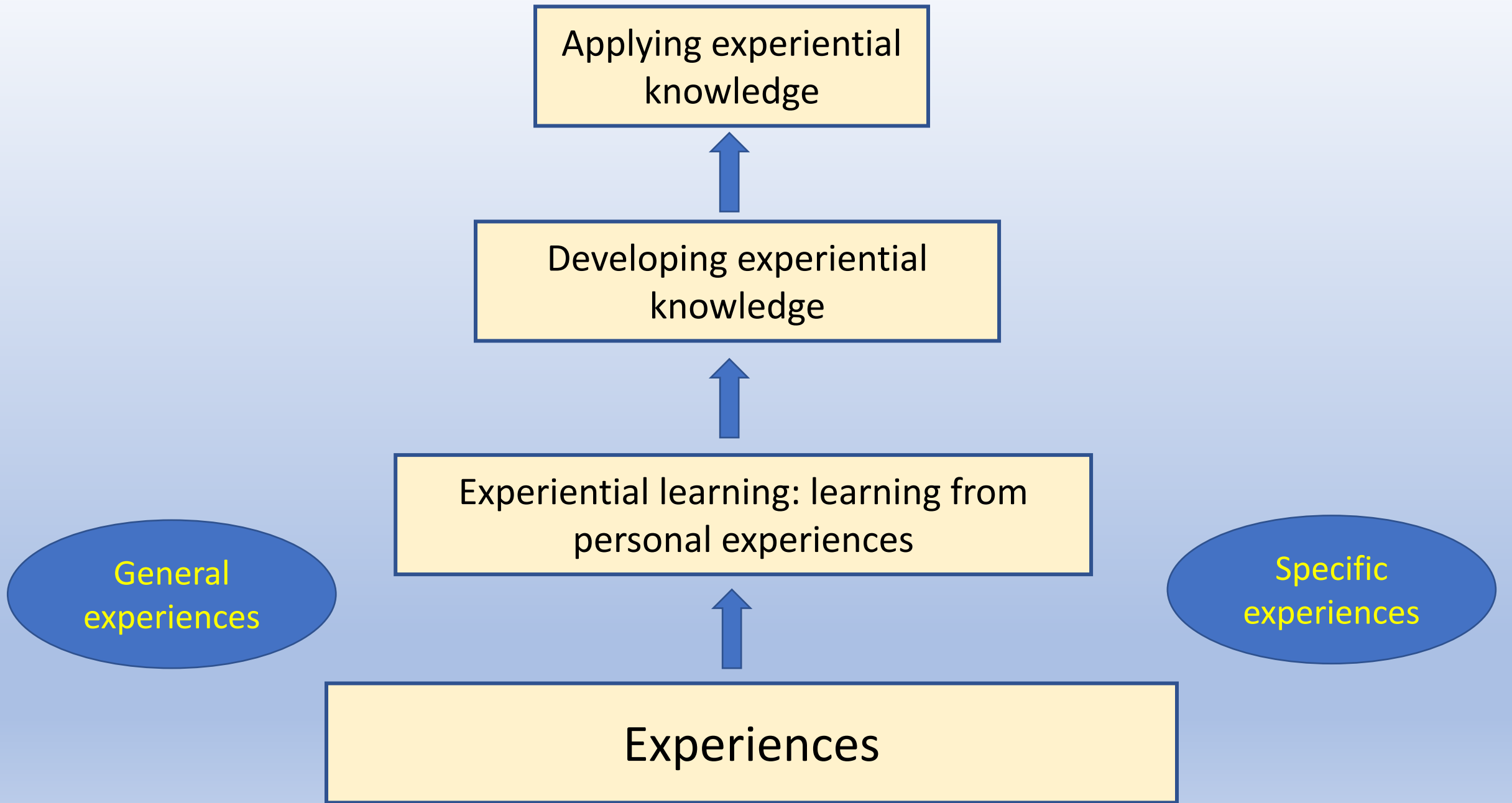
- Not only 'experts by experience' have experiential knowledge
- Everybody has experiences and potentially everybody can turn our experience in experiential knowledge
- And can use these experiences, and turn these experiences into knowledge
- Integrating this knowledge into professional practice, education and research



# What about your own experiences?

- Your personal experiences are part of you as a person, *and* as a student / lecturer / social worker / nurse
- You can develop your own experiential knowledge starting from the recognition of it
- You can use this as a resource for your personal life and work
- This contributes to enhance your knowledge and expertise and to develop relationships – good care is always embedded in a relationship
- Combining personal expertise with professional expertise (skills, theoretical knowledge) increases the quality of professional work





In your  
personal life

As a professional

Applying experiential  
knowledge

Developing experiential  
knowledge

Experiential learning: learning from  
personal experiences

Experiences



