A Steinian approach to an empathic understanding of hope:

Among patients and clinicians within the culture of palliative care.
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There is a tightly woven culture within medicine

- Sometimes only permits language and perception in a guarded non-informative manner

- Can be unwittingly restrictive and exclude all except for those from within this orthodox and privileged culture (Gillett, 1998)
This Steinian approach to empathic caring

- considers what it means when clinicians are faced with the hopes of others that may not coincide with their own notion of *hoping* or when they leave hoping for the patient or to others to maintain
The caring side of medicine is never done in isolation nor is it cultural specific or a meritorious act.

- This paper draws on the work of Edith Stein (1891-1942) and her approach to caring, especially that of empathy in the context of the human person, reason, faith and hope.
It becomes necessary to consider the role that empathy plays within the context of hope, particularly in the field of palliative care.

Haney suggests that empathy is a means to the knowledge of humanness and that the knowledge we have surrounding human nature can support and encourage empathy (Haney, 1994).

Stein believes that it is possible to “empathize” or “sense in” another person even though one does not explicitly experience what another undergoes.
It is important to sense in a person with terminal cancer rather than be sympathetic or pity their essential hope.

- Being empathic to the hopes, dreams and desires of others enables people to potentialize their individual psychophysical being and rebalance themselves so they can confront what is before them.
Empathy has been defined by Edith Stein as:

“An act in which a foreign experience is comprehended”

(Stein, 1916, 1989)
An empathic act occurs internally and it requires the giver to show an attitude of openness, reciprocity and receptivity (Stein, 1916, 1989).

And empathy can change people in an enriching and humbling manner by increasing knowledge of the self and others (Meier, 1998).
The history of empathy, within the clinical setting, entered modern discourse as Einfühlung (Stein, 1916, 1989).

- And can be described as “feeling yourself into the subjective experience of another person” (Schafer, 2004).

- In the presence and pertaining to hope it is synonymous with a personal future that a person believes that they have (Cutcliffe, 1996).

- Verducci (2000) places empathy into three distinct stables:
  - Aesthetic empathy
  - Sympathetic empathy
  - Compassionate empathy
The question being asked in this discussion

- Is the empathic understanding of hope necessary for the therapeutic relationship to succeed between clinicians and their patients who have terminal cancer?

- While a clinician continues to actively treat a person’s symptoms, a positive future still exists for that person in their mind.

- Conversely, any individual that holds the balance of power or who has the power to inspire hope can bring about a loss of hope, either temporarily or permanently when cure becomes palliative.
The capacity to empathize requires-

- the development of theory of mind – an understanding of one’s own and others’ mind

- Such development begins in infancy and is propelled by opportunities to interact socially and thereby learn about and reflect on how the mind works (Perner, 1994)
Stein describes the world that we live in as:

- Not only a world of physical body, “but as a sensitive living body belonging to an “I” and an “I” that senses, thinks, feels, wills-hopes-desires” (Stein, 1916, 1989, p.5)

- This living body fits into the experiential phenomenal world of the self or I and is at the centre of orientation of the phenomenal world (Stein, 1916, 1989)
Compassionate Empathy or *Einfühling*

- Husserl used the term *Einfühling* which originally was coined by Robert Vischer (1847-1933) and Edward Titchener later translated this word into English as *Empathy*

- “I project my own life into the lifeless form (artworks)...Only ostensibly do I keep my own identity...I am mysteriously transformed into this Other” (Vischer, 1973-1893, 1994, p. 19-20)
From Husserl to Stein

Husserl used the term *Einfühlung* in a logical sense as we feel our way in a cognitive, questioning and emotional sense but he failed to elaborate and Stein took up this unfinished work of her boss and wrote her PhD thesis on the topic “*The problem of empathy*”

Stein suggests that *Einfühlung* or empathy is an act of reflection or we register the lived experience of someone else as an outsider.
For this current research on hope

- I needed to consider empathy with relation to how people hope and what they hope.

- And being empathic to the presence of things hoped for acknowledges that a person living with terminal cancer has their own particular personal future that a person believes that they have.
Empathy is our *dermis*

- It is our ‘getting below the surface’ about an expressed or intimated – an act of being perceptive

- “It is the experience of foreign consciousness” (stein, 1916, 1989, p.11)
We acknowledge the experience that someone is having

We fulfilling explicate that experience or our affect resonates with theirs or in our language *We connect with another*

Empathy occurs because we actively intuitively perceive a given situation and we pick it up and run with it
By picking up on a given situation/emotion

- We perceive the act or state
- We internalize this perceived state and...
- We take the final step and acknowledge the state thus enabling self-examination of ourselves
It is about being intuitive

- Paying genuine attention
- Accepting another’s experience – standing alongside but not walking in another shoes
We must dwell for as long as it takes

- To ensure a pure and accurate feeling of
- Or for their feelings

- We must take the thought, faith and hope of others seriously and let them stand just the way they are
- By standing together and feel similarly
- And clearly comprehend the emotional and situation of the other
Finally

- Through empathy we recognize that “I” am one among many
- Empathy affords the knowledge of self as well as others
- Stein writes that we become clear what we are not and what we are more or less than others... Self knowledge provides an important aid to self-evaluation (p.105)

- Thus empathy requires affective resonance
- Cognitive understanding and
- Cognitive distance while the empathizer grasps the other’s emotional and situational reality
- It is the foreignness of the feeling (Verducci, 2000, p78)
The End