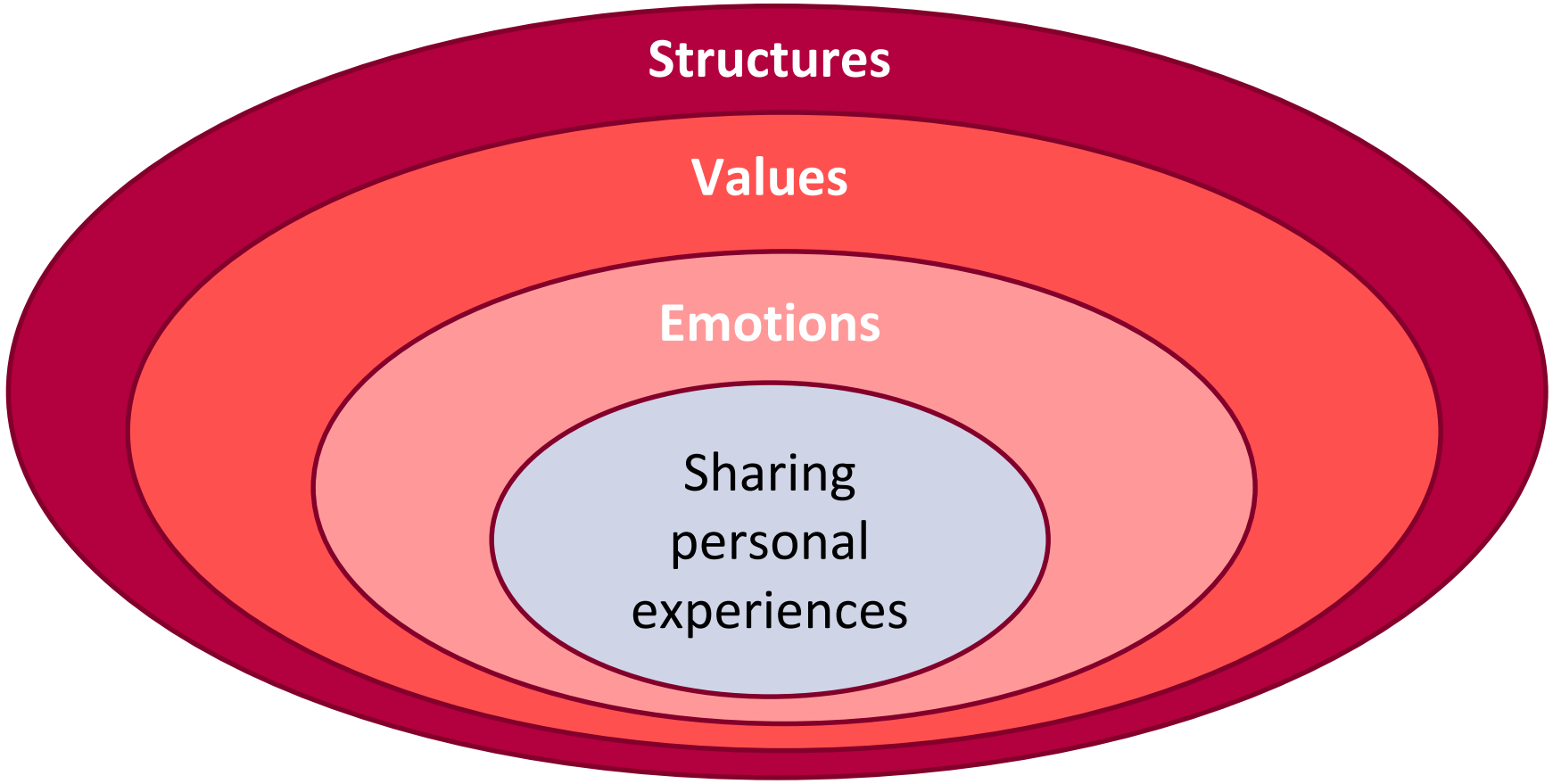
Cross-community listening can be filled with ambiguities

Structured deep listening

Everyone has a narrative, and every narrative operates on more than one level

Listening for the structure in the narrative aids understanding



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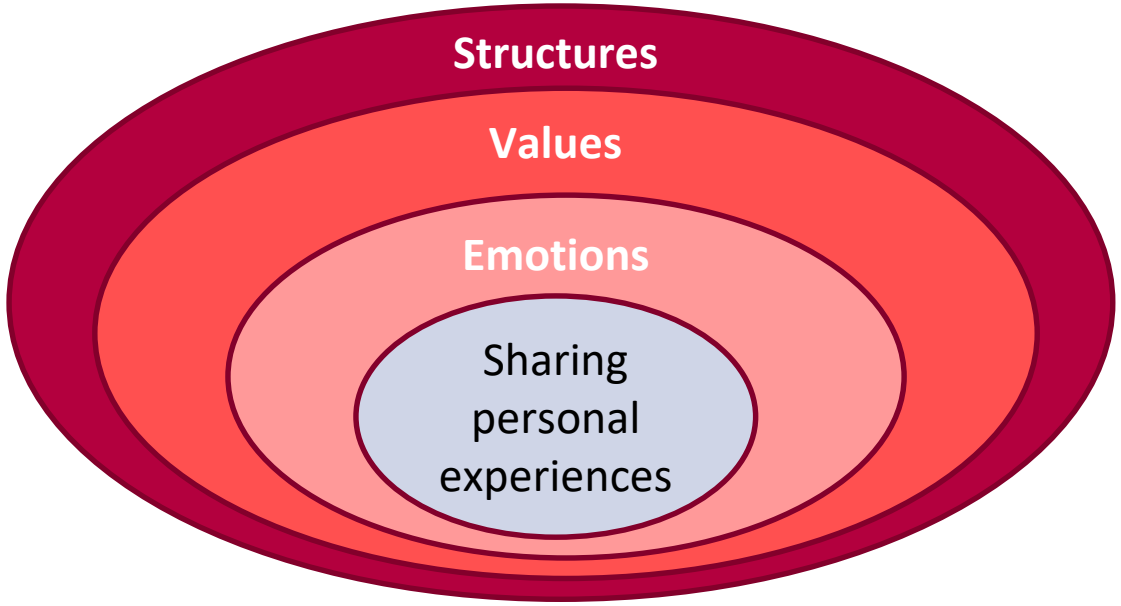
Example: A new concern on climate change and extreme events for coastal cities

1. A funding agency works within policy directives to release a call for proposals. The submitted proposals seem poorly aligned to the call, the financial management of proposing institutions is not robust, reporting is often late, metrics of interest not reflected in outcomes. Dissatisfaction.

2. An awardee in the global south finds the call poorly aligned to the knowledge needs of the context, the constraints on how funding may be allocated are restrictive, the reporting is onerous, and global north partners are extractive in collaboration. Frustration.



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Iri, a local climate scientist is awarded funding from an EU program for a proposal she submitted with an international team.

The 2-year project aims to understand change in precipitation patterns and their impact on small holder farmers.

The project will also work to identify various adaptation options so that the community can better adapt to climate change.

Smallholder farmers in this area rely heavily on their crops for their livelihoods. They have little savings and alternative ways to make a living. Iri grew up in this province and so is really pleased that she will be able to conduct this research.

In some ways the research project does very well, although little of the research was carried out on the impacts of rainfall.

Iri and her colleagues publish their results in a highly rated international journal, they receive a lot of interest from the climate science community for the novel methods they have used, and they receive more funding.

However, they find that the community are not engaged with their messages.

They conduct workshops where they provide data heavy presentations but this seems to confuse many of the stakeholders.

There is much scientific uncertainty in the results with wide uncertainty bars. One of the impact models suggests there might be an increase in severe flooding, however there is very low confidence in these findings so they decide not to include this when publishing their results and disseminating their information to the community.

Moreover, the adaptation options that they present to the stakeholders appear to benefit some stakeholders and not others.

Some of the options are incongruent with the realities of what is feasible for many community members.