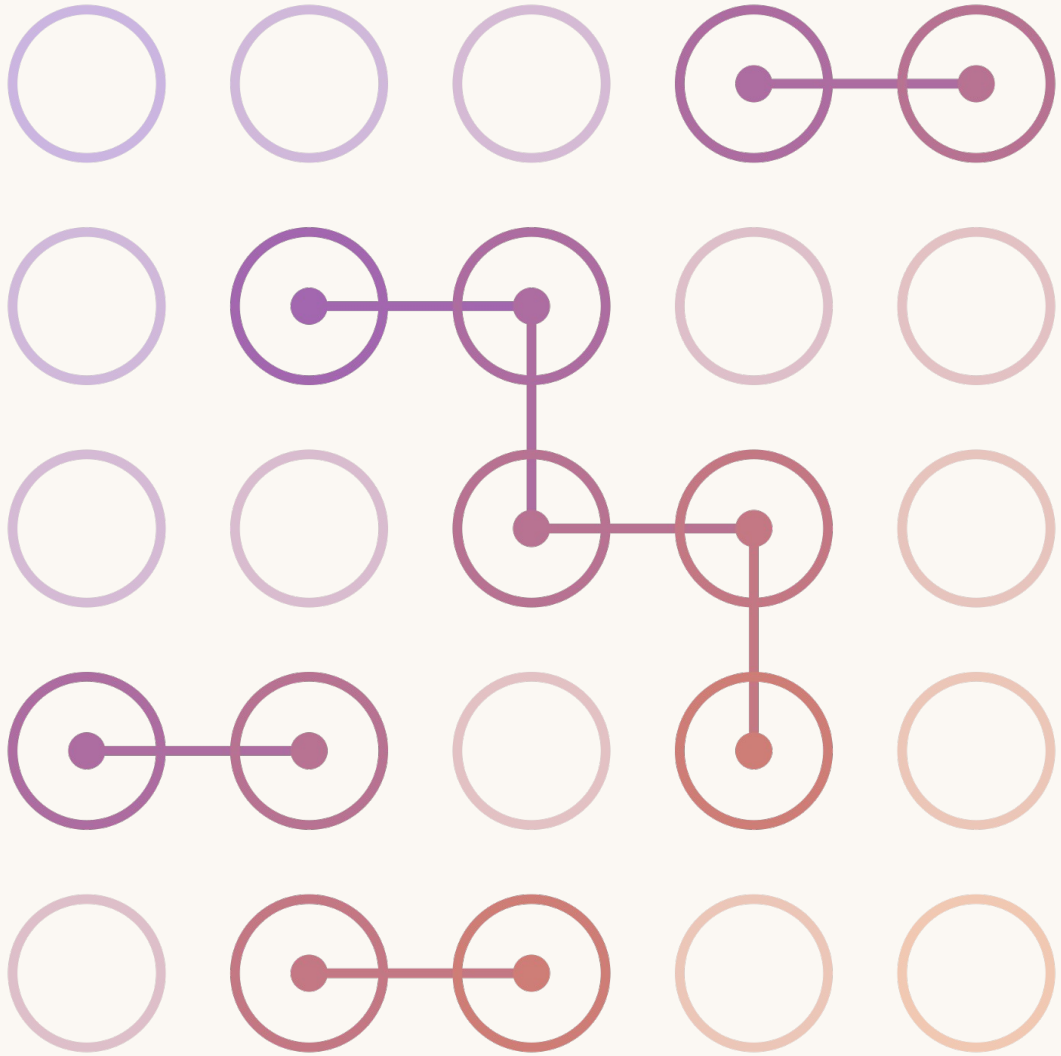
CONNECTED CARE · MYSTERY PATIENT TOOLKIT

The Reachability Test

Care is a relationship. Everything else is infrastructure.

Dr Fatih Mehmet Gul · connected.care/tools



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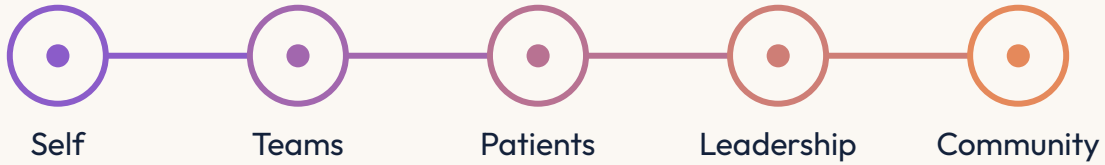
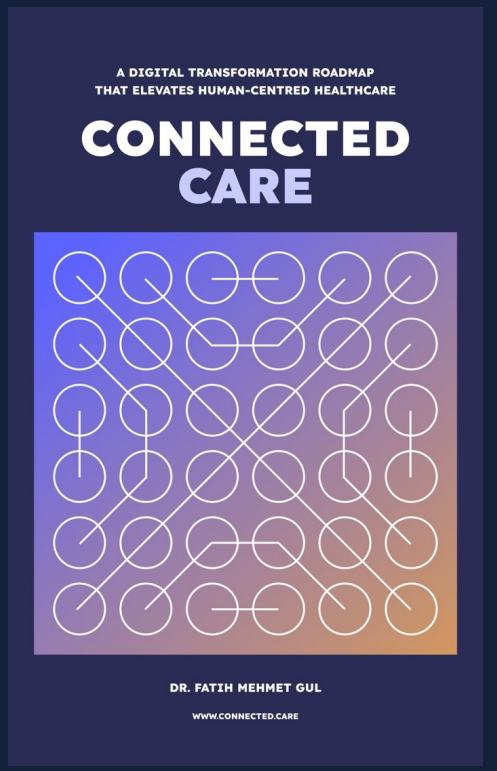
Care is a relationship. Everything else is infrastructure.

Connected Care is a method for putting human relationships at the centre of every technology decision in healthcare. It asks one question of every system, screen and machine: which relationship is this for?

It began in 2015 with Dr Fatih Mehmet Gul, a physician and hospital leader who has built and run hospitals across Europe, the United Kingdom and the Middle East. This toolkit is one of seven practical tools built on the method.

THE FIVE CONNECTIONS





THE BOOK

Connected Care

A Digital Transformation Roadmap that Elevates Human-Centred Healthcare

Dr Fatih Mehmet Gul

Published 2026 · Paperback, hardback and Kindle

The framework behind this toolkit, in eleven chapters.

connected.care/the-book

Buy on Amazon

HOW IT WORKS

Act as a patient of your own hospital, and time it

DAY 1

Choose

Two to four leaders act as mystery patients, on personal phones.

DAY 1

Script

A simple, realistic reason for each contact.

DAYS 2 TO 6

Test

Run all seven tests, including one at night or the weekend.

DAY 7

Score

Score each test and find the slowest step.

DAY 7

Fix

Fix the slowest step first, with an owner and a standard.

Be fair, be real

Do not warn the contact centre. Test what a frightened parent meets at 2 a.m., not what a manager meets at 10 a.m.

This is about design

Long waits come from staffing models, menus, bots without a way out and missing call-backs, not from individuals.

Record exactly what happened, then score it

Test	Stage	How to run it	What we recorded	Score 1 to 5
1 Call the main number	Before	Time until a human answers. Other industries aim for about 20 seconds.		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
2 Book an appointment online	Before	Minutes and steps to complete a booking without help.		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
3 Find a specialty in everyday words	Before	Search the website for “ear, nose and throat” or “heart doctor”.		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
4 Reach a person through the chatbot or app	Before	Can you get from the bot to a human in one step?		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
5 Reach your doctor, nurse and pharmacist after a visit	After	Time to a response from the care team after discharge or a clinic visit.		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
6 Leave a message	After	Is the call returned, and how fast?		○ ○ ○ ○ ○
7 Try out of hours	During	What happens at 2 a.m.? Call, message and use the app.		○ ○ ○ ○ ○

SCORING GUIDE

A plain description for every score, so testers agree

Test	5	4	3	2	1
Call the main number	A human within 20 seconds	21 to 60 seconds	1 to 3 minutes	More than 3 minutes	Never reached a human
Book an appointment online	Under 3 minutes, clear throughout	Under 5 minutes, some confusion	5 to 10 minutes	More than 10 minutes	Couldn't complete it
Find a specialty in everyday words	Found it at once, in plain words	Found it, one detour	Found it after several tries	Found it only by its technical name	Couldn't find it
Reach a person through the chatbot or app	In one step, with the context passed on	In two steps	After two or three steps	Only after many loops	No way to reach a person
Reach your doctor, nurse and pharmacist after a visit	Within 2 hours	Same day	Within 2 days	More than 2 days	No response
Leave a message	Returned within 2 hours	Returned the same day	Returned within 2 days	Returned after more than 2 days	Never returned
Try out of hours	A person, quickly, with next steps	A person, after a wait	Guidance, but no person	A recorded message only	Nothing: closed, no guidance

READ

The slowest step shows where patients give up

REACHABILITY

/ 35

Sum of the seven tests

SLOWEST STEP

The lowest-scoring test

OUT OF HOURS

/ 5

Test 7: 2 a.m.

BAND

From the table below

Score / 35	Band	What it means
29 to 35	Reachable	Patients can reach a human when they need one. Keep testing after every change.
21 to 28	Reachable with effort	People get through, but they have to work at it. Fix the slowest step first.
14 to 20	Hard to reach	The front door is failing many patients. Make the slowest step a leadership priority.
7 to 13	Unreachable	Patients are being lost before care begins. Act now, starting with the phone and the call-back.

FIX

Fix the slowest step first, then set a standard

Test and what we found	Action	Owner	First step this week	Measure	Check-in

STANDARDS TO CONSIDER

- A target time for a human to answer
- One step from any bot to a person
- Every message returned, with a named owner

REPEAT

- Every quarter
- After any change to the contact centre or front door

Five connections, from the inside out

01

Connected Self

Equip the caregiver first. Caregivers confident with their tools give their attention to the patient, not the screen.

02

Connected Teams

One team starts with a relationship. Everyone knows who is who, and can reach them fast.

03

Connected Patients

Heard before, known during, accompanied after: from home, back to home.

04

Connected Leadership

The open door, at scale. Data sends leaders to the corridor, not away from it.

05

Connected Community

A 50-year neighbour, present on the community's good days and bad days.

Technology runs across three layers and 37 touchpoints: patient-facing, caregiver-facing and the hospital foundation. Every touchpoint should serve at least one connection.

The four Rights: a method, not a product

Right Technology

Does it serve the relationship, or replace it? Eight questions and five design rules before anything is bought.

Right Ethics

Is it fair and dignified, built for our population, language and culture, with another door for those who can't use it?

Right People

Are the staff and patients who use it trained and confident, with clinical champions who own the change?

Right Measures

Do we measure human outcomes beside technical ones, and decide to scale, fix or drop?

Plan, test, measure and improve: the same cycle every quality team already knows, with the human relationship as the outcome.

Seven free tools, one book, one conversation

Tool	Use it online, save results, get the toolkit
Human Touch Assessment	connected.care/human-touch-assessment
Technology Filter	connected.care/technology-filter
Journey Walk	connected.care/journey-walk
Hospital Technology Map	connected.care/technology-map
Human-Touch Business Case	connected.care/human-touch-business-case
Reachability Test	connected.care/reachability-test
Caregiver Digital Readiness Check	connected.care/caregiver-digital-readiness

THE AUTHOR

Dr Fatih Mehmet Gul

Physician and healthcare leader with more than 25 years in hospital leadership across Europe, the United Kingdom and the Middle East. Author of the book Connected Care (2026), host of The Chief Healthcare Officer podcast, and Honorary Professor at UCL Global Business School for Health.

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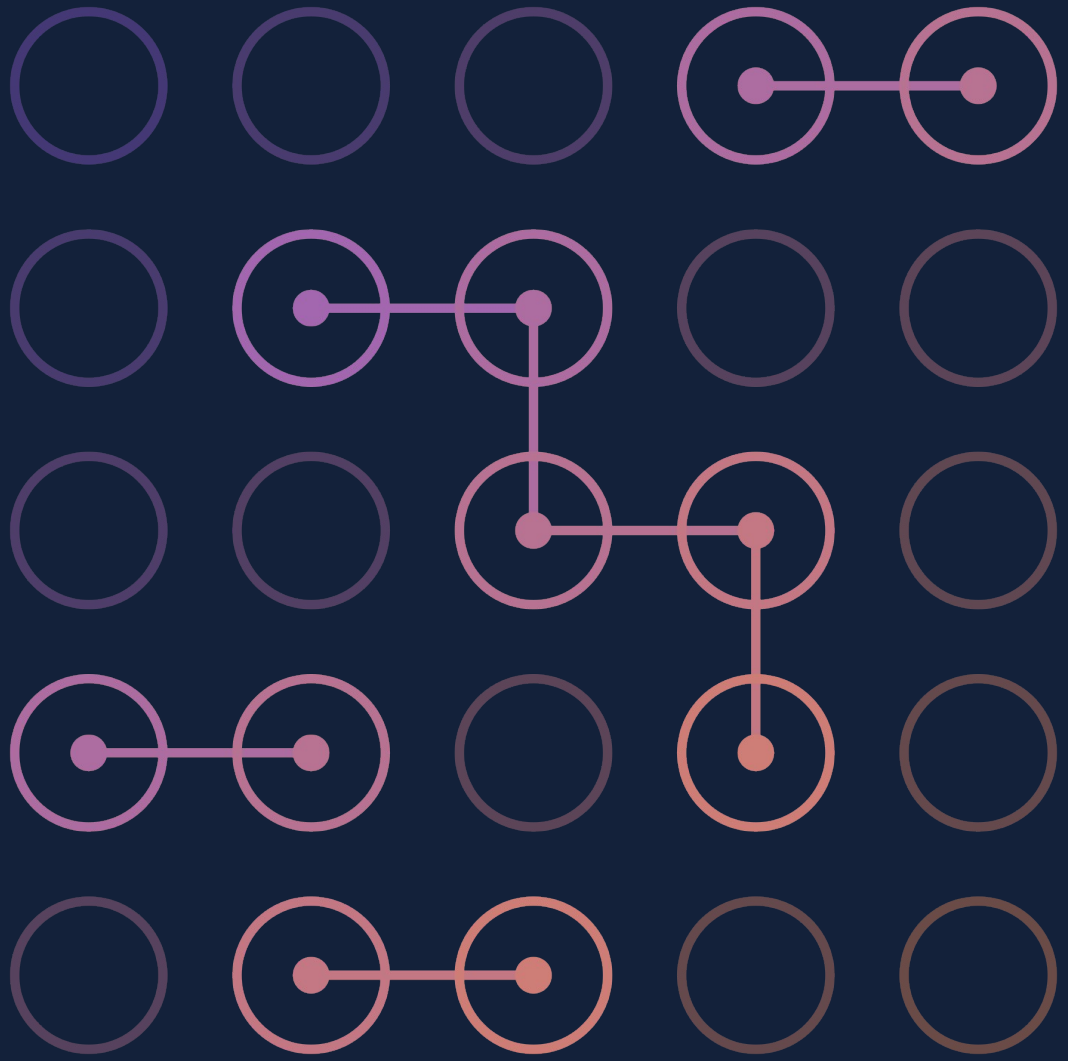

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