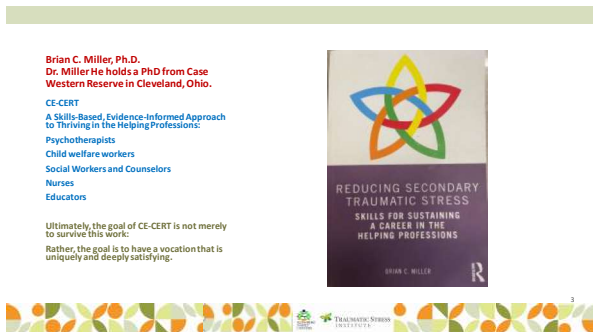








CE-CERT

Components for Enhancing Clinician
Experience and Reducing Trauma

Brian C. Miller, PhD



SUSTAIN VS. THRIVE

- **Problem :**
 - Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Trauma, Stress
 - The emotional toll of the work on the helping professional
- **Traditional Solution**
 - Boundaries and Self Care
 - Has it worked for you yet?



Maybe it is time for an evidenced-based approach?



THE CHALLENGE

Common Responses

- "Accentuate the positive eliminate the negative."
- "Your job is too hard!"
- "You must be a saint!"
- "Do more to take care of yourself."
- "Minimize your exposure to traumatizing events or feelings."

Experiential Engagement

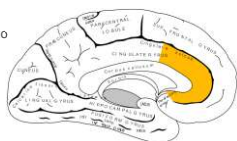
- "Enter the woods at the darkest place."
- We cannot choose what to feel, only whether to feel.
- Are you willing to open yourself to all the aspects of your job you try to avoid?
- Avoidance, not engagement, leads to burnout!

In order to love your job deeply you must be capable of feeling deeply.



COMPASSION: Essential for healing and thriving

- **Resides in the Anterior Cortex** – Only accessible to us when we are safe, calm, and not in a state of fight or flight.
- **Emotional Regulation Skills** – Are essential to develop in order to be an effective clinician



COMPASSION

- Compassion is not depleting, it is regenerating
- **Emotional Regulation Skills** – Are essential to develop in order to be an effective clinician
- **Feeling helpless and overwhelmed is depleting**

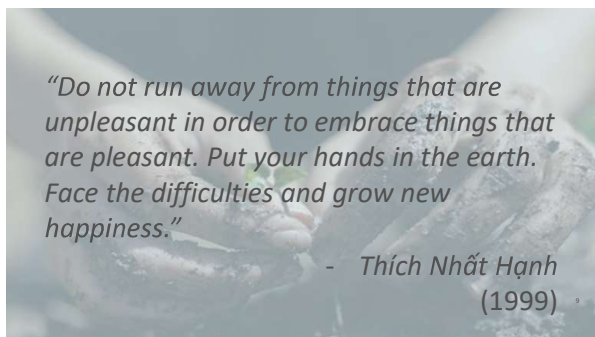


Our clinical interventions will fail if we do not possess and nurture our own emotional regulation and regeneration skills.



"Do not run away from things that are unpleasant in order to embrace things that are pleasant. Put your hands in the earth. Face the difficulties and grow new happiness."

- Thích Nhất Hạnh
(1999)



The Myth of Work Life Balance

Treatment as usual strategies

- Hold on until you get home and practice self care
- Don't think about work while you are at home
- Two bucket theory – work depletes us, home life fulfills us
 - Neither are always true
 - Not sustainable



Skills: "Entering the woods at the darkest Place"

1: Setting an Intention

I am open to experiencing discomfort anxiety and sadness
 I notice and acknowledge my feelings
 I allow hard feelings to run their course without trying to stop them
 I understand that I can either feel or not feel- I cannot choose which feelings to feel

2: Willingness

What have I been doing with the pain that arises at work?
 "I will **am**our up." Or "I will unglove and feel the pain."

3: Noticing

Invite self-reflection, give your self a cue and be aware of what is going on in your body.

4: Allowing

Be totally mindful of these feelings, or as Buddhists say, "Don't push the river."



Commencement Address

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xf5mx4j3byUaGOxWb5SrUthKFUIUx4f6/view2usp=drive_link



We Aren't Zebras!

- Why don't animals experience trauma?
- Natural stress cycle:
 - Event
 - Breathe and experience fully
 - End event
 - Recover



RUMINATION



***"My life has been filled
with terrible misfortunes,
most of which have never
happened."***

- Michel de Montaigne



Sage Wisdom

"My mind is like a bad
neighborhood. I try not to go there
alone."

- Anne Lamott



Rumination

- Chewing on previously swallowed food
- A continuation of stressful events through mental re-imagining that is stressful rather than problem solving
- It isn't distraction but rather absorption that de-energizes the rumination
- Action plans help- increasing our sense of mastery



Reducing Rumination



What to do?

- Notice and label
- Pay attention to your body
- Conversation and connection
- Physical movement
- Breathing and meditation
- Journal
- Engage in an absorbing activity
- Plan action steps such as learning or policy change



Name it to Tame it! Our Use of Narratives

- Narratives harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain.
- Narratives situate us in time
- They connect us with others
- They place events in context



Foundational Narrative

- Why do you do this work?
- How can you make that purpose active during your work day?
- Not ignoring pain and frustration
- How do you attribute and describe the difficulties you face, and do you see improvement?
- Pride and joy in your purpose



"Some people wonder all their lives if they made a difference.
The Marines don't have that problem"

- Ronald Reagan



Antecedent Narrative: What we tell ourselves before an event

- How do you describe your job to others?
- What are you expecting as you drive to work?
- How do you describe your workplace and your co-workers?
- Do you expect to be welcome, seen and supported?
- What are your hopes for your day?



Happy Warrior vs. Flogged Soldier



Implicit Narrative

Stories we do not realize that we are telling ourselves-
The result of living in our society for all people



- Who is most dangerous?
- Who do we feel hopeless about?
- Who do we trust to have our back?
- What do we expect from leaders?



Conscious Narrative

- Imagining the best possible day (like athletes visualizing perfect performance before their event)
- Grace and goosebumps
- Narrative of competence and compassion
- I know what to do. I can make a difference.
- Narrative includes pain, and includes joy and meaning
- Acknowledge limits
- Opportunities to influence our narrative



Consolidation Narrative

What we say to ourselves and each other after an event



- How do we make sense of what happened?
- Created with others
- Intense experiences demand a narrative
- Opportunities to create and share narratives
- Find the meaning in what happened

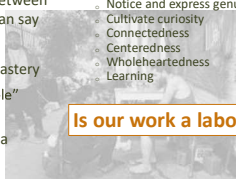


Making the Work Easier

- We have good jobs
- Emotional labor- difference between what you feel and what you can say
- Challenge for staff of color
- Emotions caused by lack of mastery
- Stress caused by "unacceptable" emotions
- I used my full self and I made a difference

Radical compassion

- Not earned
- Step out of trauma triangle
- Notice and express genuine feelings
- Cultivate curiosity
- Connectedness
- Centeredness
- Wholeheartedness
- Learning



Is our work a labor of love?



Work-Life Balance

Who do you know that never thinks about work at home?



WORK

Creating replenishment at work

- Notice crisis has ended
- Recovery practices
- Talk with someone
- Acknowledge distress (do we feel able to share distress?)
- Physical movement
- Conscious compassion for self and others
- Plan for action and mastery

LIFE

Creating replenishment outside of work

- Rituals for end of day:
 - review, plan, thank
- Rituals for returning home
- Absorbing activities (at work and at home)
- Connection with community, family, pets



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Questions



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Riding Connection - Learn More



Kintsugi Pottery: What is broken can be healed; we all have cracks and imperfections



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