

The CE-CERT Model

Components for Effecting Clinician Experience
and Reducing Trauma - Brian Miller, PhD

Experiential Engagement

*Reducing
Emotional
Labor*

*Conscious
Narrative*



*Decreasing
Rumination*

*Parasympathetic
Recovery*

- These are acquirable skills.
- The skills are not “self-care” strategies, but rather, strategies for changing the experience of doing our work in real time.

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Skill Domain 1: Experiential Engagement

Establish, balance, and maintain a connection to a client and the client's experience and to acknowledge and experience the feelings that arise as a result of this engagement.

Our goal is to open up to the full emotional experience of trauma work.

- Emotions can be experienced without damage.
- Emotions are not traumatizing.
- Trauma comes from feeling overwhelmed & helpless.

“What are you going to do with the emotional pain that comes with your work?”

(Harry Spence, quoted by van Dernoot Lipski)

- *Intentionality of Awareness* - What am I feeling?
- *Attend & Allow* – Pay attention to the feeling as it arises, intensifies & fades
- *Non-Reactivity* – Allow the natural course of an emotion to take place without fighting it.

Skill Domain 2: Decreasing Rumination

Rumination: the mental process of reimagining past events and projecting future concerns and behaviors – often in the form of worry or dread.

**Emotions are quickly metabolized...
Thoughts can regenerate indefinitely.**

Have you ever tried to “leave work at work?”

*Is your work of such little value
you want to forget about it?*

- *Intention* – Give yourself permission to let go.
- *Acknowledge* that you are ruminating – Notice and label it.
- *Task Positive Network* - Avoid mind wandering.
- *Short Circuit* the cognitive/emotional link.
- *Conversation* – Engage socially

Skill Domain 3: Conscious Narrative

When we have developed a narrative that explains ourselves in relationship to our work—and the intense experiences that we have—the autonomic arousal calms, and we return to our window of tolerance.

When people ask what you do, what do you say?

Our narratives include what we tell ourselves:

- ❖ Before an experience (the antecedent narrative)
- ❖ During the experience (the concurrent narrative)
- ❖ After an intense experience (the consolidation narrative)

Do you believe that your work is enjoyable and meaningful, or that it is aversive and unsustainable?

Either way, you're right.

- *Develop a career sustaining antecedent narrative.*
- *Have confidence in your clinical skill.*
- *Be willing to experience discomfort.*
- *Radically accept your professional limits.*
- *Allow for periods of supervisory reflection.*
- *Develop a continuous narrative about why you are doing this work and the effect it is having on you.*

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Skill Domain 4: Reducing Emotional Labor

Emotional Labor: The process of regulating experienced and displayed emotions to present a professional desired image during interpersonal transactions at work.

What are sources of emotional labor?

- ❖ Seeing clients in judgmental terms
- ❖ Emotion Focused Coping
- ❖ Feeling ineffective
- ❖ Trying to fix everything

Compassion as Skill

- *Intention—Radical Compassion*
- *What am I feeling?*
- *Curiosity and model of mind*
- *Use of behavioral strategies when empathic reactions are weak.*
- *Discuss your genuine feelings in a skillful, constructive manner.*

Wholeheartedness

- *Not wasting energy on “Should I or shouldn’t I?”*
- *Not doing anything you aren’t already doing—just committing to do it wholeheartedly.*

Intentional Learning

- *Reframing difficult tasks into skills challenges.*
- *Personal accomplishment mediates burnout.*

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Skill Domain 5: Parasympathetic Recovery

Paying attention to our well-being and work strain on a continuous basis and responding in the moment by intentionally re-setting our system as needed.

Skills:

- *Conscious oversight of your level of distress.*
- *Having “go-to’s” for returning to homeostasis.*

Drop Anchor: Examples of Mindfulness Moments

- ✓ Noticing signal to be mindful and present (post where you will see it)
- ✓ Quick check-in with self before beginning documentation
- ✓ Two feet/one breath
- ✓ 5 minute end-of-workday check-out

Ways to Increase Stress Hardiness

- ✓ Develop positive stress mindset
- ✓ 20 minutes a day (at least) in a moment of complete stillness (meditation, exercise, flow activity)
- ✓ Nurturing and employing social supports
- ✓ “Re-balancing” rather than “Work-life balance.” Intentionally adjust time and energy flexibly based on current needs rather than 8-5 fixed mindset.

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Practicing your Practice

Experiential Engagement

Commit to one practice/habit that will increase your awareness and acceptance of your emotional experience during your workday.

Decreasing Rumination

What are 3 task positive activities you can do to combat rumination?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conscious Narrative

What career-sustaining narrative can you tell yourself ...

...on your morning commute to prepare for your important professional role?

...to accept the intensity and distress that, at times, accompanies trauma-focused work?

...about why you serve trauma-impacted youth and families?

Reducing Emotional Labor

How do you bring compassion and wholeheartedness into your work?

Parasympathetic Recovery

What are 2 Mindfulness Moment practices you can incorporate into your daily routine?

- 1.
- 2.