

The CE-CERT Model

Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma -
Brian Miller, PhD



- ✚ After-hours “self-care” is insufficient.
- ✚ Risk for burnout and STS can only be reduced through strategies for changing the way you go about your work.
- ✚ These are acquirable skills!
- ✚ Intentional oversight of yourself in the moment, throughout the day is necessary.
- ✚ A long-term, energizing career is possible AND you must find joy in your work to sustain.

Experiential Engagement

FEELING ALL THE FEELS

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

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

Are you willing to open up to the full emotional experience of your work?

You cannot choose WHAT to feel only WHETHER to feel.

The Skills

“I think sometimes in life the biggest challenges end up being the best things that happen in your life.”

-Tom Brady

- ✚ *Set the Intention* – I will notice my feelings during my day.
- ✚ *Attend & Allow* – I will pay attention to the feeling as it arises, intensifies & fades
- ✚ *Non-Reactivity* – I can allow the natural course of an emotion without fighting it or reacting. I can observe my own emotions.

Decreasing Rumination

STOPPING THE SPIN

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

Emotions can quickly arise and pass...
You can replay events endlessly.

“Ruminating about the past will get you nowhere. So go ahead and learn from the past where you can, and then put it behind you. Remember, there is nothing you can do to change it, but you can use its lesson to improve your future.”

-Abraham Twerski

The Skills

- ✚ *Intention* – Give yourself permission to let go. You are not problem solving.
- ✚ *Catch Yourself* – Notice when you are spinning out and label it.
- ✚ *Fully Engage in Activity* – Get out of your head and focus on something external to your thoughts.
- ✚ *Short Circuit* the spin cycle for as little as 2 minutes.
- ✚ *Conversation* – Engage socially, with coworkers, kids, friends, family. This forces you out of your thoughts.
- ✚ *Planning* – Set a concrete, actionable plan to address the stressor and then let it go (again, and again, and again).

Conscious Narrative

CREATING YOUR STORY

We are all constantly creating a story to give meaning to our days' experiences. By taking control of the story, we give ourselves competence, ability to grow and give our work meaning. This prevents burnout.

Why did you choose this career? What will you offer today?

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.**

The Skills

“A person really doesn't become whole, until he becomes a part of something that's bigger than himself.”

-Jim Valvano

- + Give value and personal meaning to your career and your day. Remind yourself regularly **WHY** you do this work.
- + Have confidence in your professional skill.
- + Be willing to experience discomfort.
- + Fully accept the limits of your control.
- + Reflect back on your performance, asking yourself “What did I do well?” and “What did I learn from that?”.
- + Develop a continuous narrative about why you are doing this work and the effect it is having on you.

Reducing Emotional Labor

FINDING JOY

Emotional Labor: Occurs when your true and displayed emotions don't match. Often when trying to present a professional desired image or avoid conflict.

What are sources of emotional labor?

- ❖ Seeing others in judgmental terms
- ❖ Avoiding emotions
- ❖ Feeling ineffective
- ❖ Trying to fix everything

“Those who thrive in this work do so for the simplest of reasons: they enjoy doing their jobs.”

-Clark, 2009; Melamed, Szor, & Bernstein, 2001; Miller, 2007

The Skills

Compassion as Skill

- + Intention—Radical Compassion
- + Acknowledge your own emotional reaction
- + Pause and Reset
- + Get curious of other's perspective
- + Discuss your genuine feelings in a productive manner.

Wholeheartedness

- + Don't waste energy repeatedly questioning, “Should I or shouldn't I?”
- + Commit to your chosen work wholeheartedly.
 - o Or after focused reflection, take steps to change.

Intentional Learning

- + You are ALWAYS learning and growing.
- + Reframe failures or difficult tasks into skills challenges.

Parasympathetic Recovery

RESET AND RECOVER

Paying attention throughout the day and responding in the moment to intentionally re-set your system as needed.

- *Conscious oversight of your level of distress.*
- *Practice in your practice.*



The Skills

“Live. Fight like hell. And when you get too tired to fight then lay down and rest and let somebody else fight for you. That’s also very, very important. I can’t do this ‘don’t give up’ thing all by myself.”

-Stuart Scott

- ✚ *Frequent check-ins on your level of distress (Distress Thermostat)*
- ✚ *Use brief strategies or activities to reset*
 - *Don’t wait until the end of the day!*
- ✚ *Build up your stress buffer*
 - *20 minutes/day in enjoyable activity*
- ✚ *Connect with coworkers*
- ✚ *Find a mentor or supervisor who cares about you as a person.*

Brief Re-set Ideas

- *Feel good music*
- *Photos of happy memories*
 - *Quotes*
 - *Funny cat videos*
- *Inspiring/Entertaining Social Media*