

# CE-CERT in the Time of the Great Stay-Inside



Components for Enhancing Clinician Experience and Reducing Trauma

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# Distinctive Elements of the Great Stay-Inside

- CE-CERT began as an STS intervention— dealing with the before, the during, and the after-trauma exposure
- We are still in the middle of a great pandemic
- This ongoing situation—for the most part—is chronic, low-level stress



**Matt.**

@MattTheBrand



my quarantine schedule:

3:00pm: wake up

3:30pm: dread

4:00pm: coffee and brooding

5:00pm: more coffee and brooding

6:00pm: anxiety attack

7:00pm: dwelling on the past

2:00am: light weeping

2:30am: dread and skincare

♡ 23.7K 8:53 PM - Mar 18, 2020



💬 3,533 people are talking about this



Perhaps some context:

My parents generation (often called 'the greatest generation' were called to go to war.

We are called to stay inside and sit on the couch!

We got this!

# Components for Enhancing Clinician Experience and Reducing Trauma CE-CERT

- Developed by Dr. Brian Miller a new approach to STS
- Evidence informed from exposure-based concepts from trauma, Rumination based CBT, neuro-physiological research: default mode network, Third Wave Treatments -ACT, DBT, Compassion-based, metacognitive, mindfulness, etc., narrative-based treatment Occupational therapy, and other trauma specific models e.g. TF-CBT

# Components for Enhancing Clinician Experience and Reducing Trauma CE-CERT

- All the STS concepts/terms have in common that there is an emotional toll on helpers when engaging persons with emotional, behavioral, physical, economic and socially disenfranchising struggles
- Caring takes a toll (may mimic or become PTSD)
- Originally designed for MHPs model has show effectiveness beyond trauma
- Key is conscious oversight of autonomic dysregulation
- Best viewed as a set of behaviors and strategies (that become 'skills')
- 5 interwoven skill domains that “reverse-engineer” the aversive emotional effects of caring work

## CE-CERT building skills

### Dictionaries defines skill(s) as

- the ability to do something well; expertise: a particular ability.
- **Skill.** An ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills). See also competence.
- a learned power of doing something competently : a developed aptitude or ability
- A skill is a type of work or activity which requires special training (practice) and knowledge

*Which of these  
STS symptoms  
have you  
identified in  
yourself, family  
and/or your  
colleagues at  
different times?*

- Hopelessness
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Trouble listening
- Avoidance of certain clients /tasks
- Frustration, anger or cynicism
- Hypervigilance
- Fear
  - Sleeplessness
  - Chronic exhaustion
  - Physical ailments
  - Minimizing
  - Guilt
  - Numbing or dissociation
  - Isolating from family, friends, and/or colleagues
  - Other?

# Impact of STS on the Workforce

What About  
on the Home  
Team?

## ***Negative impact on work performance***

Client care can be compromised when a professional is emotionally depleted or cognitively affected by STS

Relationships with colleagues can be less satisfying/supportive

## ***Loss of Job Satisfaction***

E.g., forgetting your motivation for entering into the field, feeling less effective in your work

## ***Attrition***

Studies show that STS often predicts that a professional will eventually leave the field for another type of work

## ***Ethical breaches***

E.g., due to avoidance of members, lack of timely follow-through, distracted / inattentive



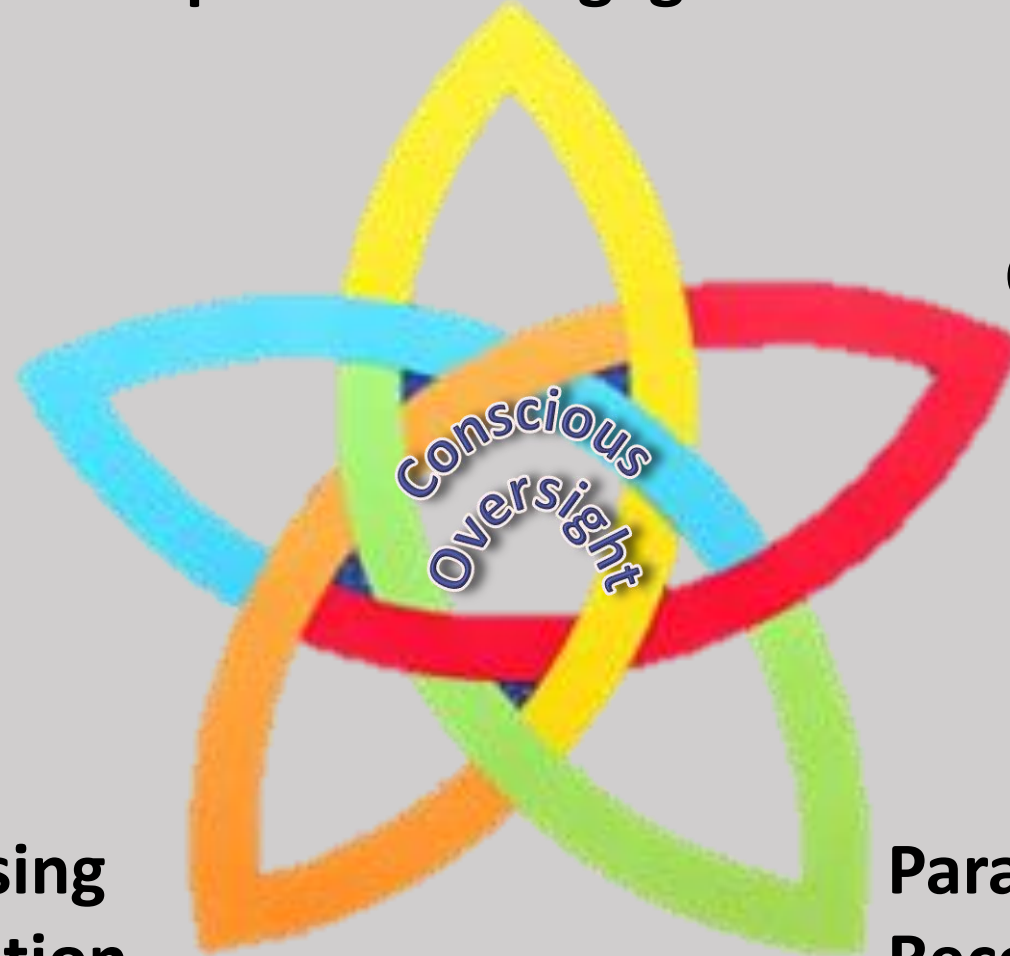
**Experiential Engagement**

**Reducing  
Emotional  
Labor**

**Conscious  
Narrative**

**Decreasing  
Rumination**

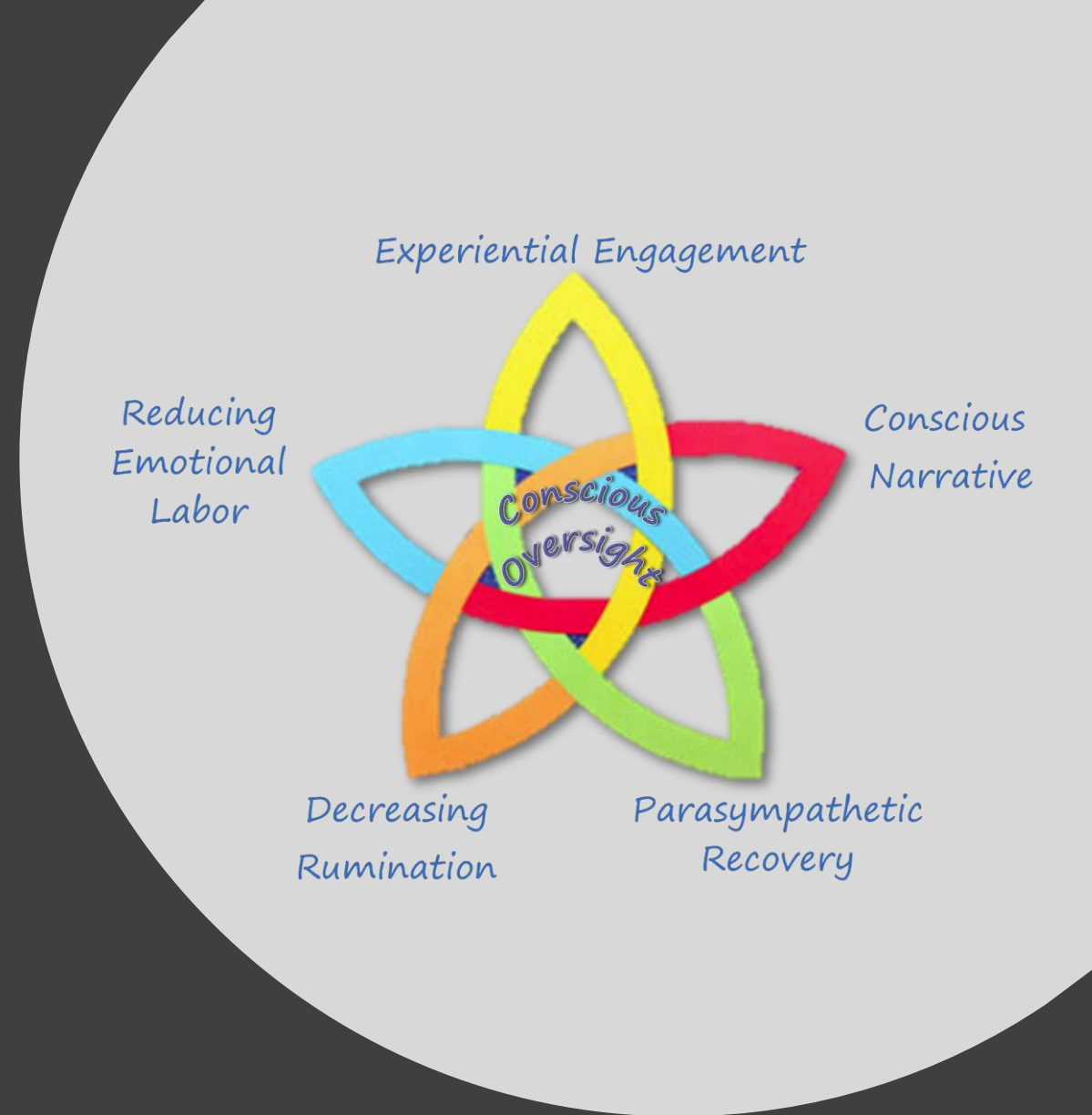
**Parasympathetic  
Recovery**



# The First Domain: Experiential Engagement

- The Principle: Avoiding situations or aversive feelings interrupts the normal, metabolic process that resolves the stress response.
- Full experience of aversive experiences allows resolution;
  - prevents accumulation of stress and
  - prevents incubation of anxiety
- Requires
  - Targeting (intention)
  - Conscious Oversight
  - Mindful non-reactivity

# Experiential Engagement Applied to the Great Stay Inside

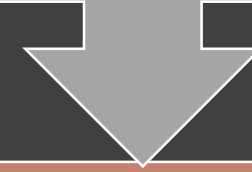


# The Second Domain: Reducing Rumination

- Primary Emotions have a discrete amount of physiological energy
  - Duration of a single “feeling event” = 90 seconds
- After the primary feeling event, we can re-create the event via imaging in our cerebral cortex
- Reducing Rumination skill is “leaving the experience in the experience”
  - How do we “rest the mind”?

# Reducing Rumination Applied to the Great Stay Inside

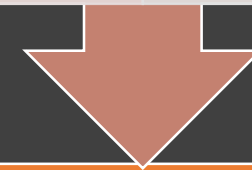
We are in a low-level state of fight-or-flight all the time (with no where to flee and nothing to fight)



The goals are two-fold:

To have moments of resting the mind

To avoid “freezing”



How to reduce rumination:

Notice and label  
rumination

Short-circuit  
ruminative process  
for at least 2 mins.

Focused  
conversation

Any absorbing  
activity

# The Third Domain: Conscious Narrative

- The CBT-for-Therapists Aspect of the Model
- Noticing and Directing the story we telling ourselves about this great event
  - The antecedent (foundational) narrative;
  - The concurrent (running) narrative;
  - The consolidation (what it all meant) narrative
- Our brain has evolved to need the “three acts” to contextualize and resolve intense experience

# Conscious Narrative and the Great Pause

The Antecedent Narrative:  
Your schema for interpreting  
this

- “There will be upside to this downside”
- “I will open to this experience (good and bad)”

The Concurrent Narrative

- “I will open to this anxiety”
- This stress is a signal to do something:
  - Reach out to someone;
  - Plan;
  - Rest the mind;

The Consolidation Narrative:  
What this could mean to us  
all—there will be a third act

# The Fourth Domain: Reducing Emotional Labor

- Emotional Labor: “the process of regulating experienced and displayed emotions to present a professional desired image during interpersonal transactions at work”
- Easing Emotional labor: Compassion-As-Skill; Wholeheartedness: Intentional Learning
- What are the sources of emotional labor during this pandemic?
  - Fighting feelings of helplessness;
  - Emotional suppression



# The Fifth Domain: Parasympathetic Recovery

- Sympathetic Response= Fight/flight/freeze
  - Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flock, Flap (Freak)
- Parasympathetic = Recovery, Return to Homeostasis
- CE-CERT develops skills for “cognitive breathing” in real time:
  - Fully opening to the experience (the inhale);
  - Full recovery (the exhale)
- Not “work/life balance”
  - Not “after we return to normal”

# Parasympathetic Recovery During the Great Stay- Inside

Conscious oversight of  
your level of distress

- Check-in with self
- Acknowledging distress

“Dropping Anchor”  
when distressed

Team Support

5 min.  
movement/hour

No more “sad desk  
lunches”

End of day transition

List what you  
accomplished 1-2 min.  
(narrative)

List what you will pick  
up on tomorrow 1-2  
mins (reducing  
rumination)

Send 1-2 thank-yous  
(team support,  
narrative of gratitude)

20 mins. each night of  
“returning to Tao”

“The work of culture is to  
make suffering bearable”  
--Anthropologist Clifford Gertz

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