The Trauma Resource Institute

Self-Care Skills for those in the Helping Profession
COMMUNITY RESILIENCY MODEL (CRM)

Our Vision
To create resiliency informed and trauma informed individuals and communities.

Our Mission
A commitment to bring wellness skills, based on cutting edge neuroscience, to our
world community, one person at a time, one community at a time.

Presenter: Jenn Paul, MA MFT
jenn@jennpaulmft.com
from the original work of Elaine Miller-Karas

Who Can CRM Skills Help?

What we are covering
- Review why working in a biological model is important
- Discuss the basics of the nervous system
- Learn 3 skills that can help regulate our nervous system
- Learn how we may teach other skills to help them regulate their own
  nervous system

Witnessing Trauma

- This kind of trauma occurs when a worker or helper begins to have traumatic symptoms because of listening
  and witnessing empathically to the traumatic stories of others.

- Helpers can lose their hope. McCann and Pearlman (1990)
Interventions Are Easy To Learn

- A set of six wellness skills taught to members of the community that bring the body and mind back into balance.
- You don’t have to talk about the past
- Even if reading and writing are difficult
- Useful for people of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds
- Can be used with different ages
- Educational materials have been developed (iChill App, wristbands, resiliency pens) that reinforce the wellness skills
- www.ichillapp.com on the web.

What is the Community Resiliency Model?

- Set of six Wellness Skills
- Resets the natural balance of the nervous system
- Brings awareness to a person’s ability to come back into his or her Resilient Zone

Traumatic/Stressful Event or Stressful/Traumatic Triggers

- Edgy, Irritable, Mania, Anxiety & Panic, Angry outbursts, Pain
- Depression/Sadness, Isolated, Exhaustion/Fatigue, Numbness
- Stuck in Low Zone
- Resilient Zone
- Stuck in High Zone

Graphic adapted from an original graphic of Peter Levine/Genie, original slide design by Gene Everett.
Some have a very shallow Resilient Zone where even small stressors bump you out of the Zone.

Some have a deep Resilient Zone where there is a higher tolerance for a wide range of stressors.

**Why a Biological Model Like CRM?**

*Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)*

The largest study of its kind ever done to examine the health and social effects of adverse childhood experiences over the lifespan (Felitti & Anda)

- Adverse Childhood Experiences profoundly impact the developing child.
- These experiences greatly impact the emotional and physical health of a human being into adulthood.
ADVERSITY IS NOT DESTINY

What if we all learned to stabilize our nervous systems?

Turning Adversity into Creative Growth

“The human body has the inner capacity to heal and restore itself and has a wisdom that words cannot speak.”

Elaine Miller-Karas

Primary Focus of CRM:
Biology vs. Mental Weakness

- Responses to trauma and stress can have a major effect on the mind, body and spirit.
- CRM’s focus is on the nervous system.
- CRM looks at traumatic symptoms in terms of biology not mental weakness.
- CRM helps individuals track sensations connected to their well-being (their resilience).

Mirror Neurons: Hardwired for Empathy

- A part of the brain responds when a person experiences pain.
- When you watch a person experiencing pain, your neurons (brain cells) will respond similarly.
- “If I empathize with your pain, I need to experience it myself. That’s what the mirror neurons are doing, allowing me to empathize with your pain—This is the basis of all empathy.”

VS Ramachandran, UC San Diego
Community Resiliency Model Skills

- **TRACKING**: Paying attention to sensations
- **GROUNDING**: Being fully present in the moment
- **GESTURES & MOVEMENTS**: Bringing calming & protective movements to awareness
- **SHIFT AND STAY**: Shifting to a resource and staying in the resource state
- **RESOURCING & RESOURCE INTENSIFICATION**: Using positive or neutral life experiences to create pleasant or neutral sensations
- **HELP NOW!!**: Strategies to get back to R-Zone

Skill 1: Tracking
Tracking refers to paying attention to sensations

- Tracking is the foundation for helping stabilize the nervous system.
- Tracking helps a person learn to tell the difference between sensations of turmoil and upset and sensations of balance within the nervous system.
- Exploring sensations connected to well-being is key to helping one feel better in mind, body and spirit.
- Tracking is used with all the skills.

Understanding CRM, is knowing this:

**THE SURVIVAL BRAIN understands**

The Language of SENSATION
**Organizing Principle: Three Parts of The Brain**

- **Cortex: Thinking**
  Integrates input from all 3 parts.
  Cognition, beliefs, language, thought, speech.

- **Limbic Area: Emotional**
  Assesses risk.
  Expression and mediation of emotions and feelings, including emotions linked to attachment.

- **Survival Brain: Instinctual**
  Carries out "fight, flight, & freeze."
  Unconscious.
  Digestion, reproduction, circulation, breathing - responds to sensation.

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**Basics on Sensation**

People describe sensations in various ways

- Position/location: up, down
- Size: small, medium, large
- Density or texture: rough, smooth, thick, thin
- Weight or pressure: heavy, light, firm, gentle
- Vibration or movement: shaking, twitching, quick, slow
- Temperature: cold, hot, warm
- Pain: intense, mild
- Muscles: tight, loose, calm
- Breathing: rapid, deep, shallow, light, heavy
- Heart rate: fast, slow, rhythmic

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**Skill 2: Resourcing**

Anything that gives comfort, calm and/or joy.

- Resourcing builds a sense of internal strength and resiliency and reinforces a sense of one’s own abilities and capacities.

- Pleasant and/or neutral sensations connected to individualized resources can bring a direct experience of well-being that helps stabilize the nervous system.

- A person can experience new hope that there are other sensations that can help bring them back into their Resilient Zone.
**Skill 2: Resourcing**

- **External Resources** include positive experiences and memories and can include the people, places, activities, skills, hobbies, spiritual guides and animals that give you joy, peace or calm.

- **Internal Resources** include an individual’s:
  - Personal characteristics such as kindness, compassion and humor.
  - Body resources such as strong legs, body’s ability to heal from illness, etc...

**Skill 2: Resource Intensification**

- Ask 3 or 4 additional questions about the resource to expand the sensations connected to the resource.

- Resource intensification strengthens the elements of the resource in order to override attention that automatically goes to unpleasant sensations.

**Skill 2: Identifying Resources**

1. Write down three resources.
2. Circle one resource.
3. Write down 3 or more details about your resource.
4. Read your resource and the three details about your resource.
5. As you read about the resource, notice what happens on the inside.
6. Share your resource with a friend.
Skill 2: Resources can have many natures

- Discussion of a Resource can sometimes shift out of pleasant sensations and into difficult memories and/or uncomfortable body sensations.
- This is OK. Resources can have many parts:
  - Gently invite the person to shift back to the positive aspects of the resource.
  - Invite awareness to part of the body that feels more comfortable or neutral.
  - Often the person can learn to hold both parts of the resource and this actually strengthens the resource.
- If this is too hard, ask whether a different resource might be easier to work with.

Skill 5: Help Now! Strategies

A Skill for Self and for Others

- Can be used for self-care when we are stuck in the High Zone or Low Zone.
- Can be taught to other people to help them get back to the Resilient Zone when stuck in High or Low Zones.

HELP NOW!

1. Drink a glass of water or juice or cup of tea
2. Look around the room or wherever you are, paying attention to anything that catches your attention.
3. Name six colors you see in the room (or outside).
4. Open your eyes if they have a tendency to shut.
5. Count backwards from 10 as you walk around the room.
6. If you’re inside, notice the furniture, and touch the surface, noticing if it is hard, soft, rough, etc...
7. Notice the temperature in the room.
8. Notice the sounds within the room and outside.
9. If you’re outside or inside, walk and pay attention to the movement in your arms and legs and how your feet are making contact with the ground.
10. Push your hands against the wall or door slowly and notice your muscles pushing or stand against a wall and push your body against the wall facing forward
Now that you know how to use these skills for your own self care,

**REMEMBER**

You can also teach them to the women and families that you work with!

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**Resources after a Crisis**

- Another series of resource questions can be interwoven to help survivors recount the story to reduce the chance of re-traumatizing.
  - “Who helped you first during the event or after it was over?”
  - “Who helped you the most?”
  - “Who is helping you the most now?”
  - “Tell me the moment you knew you had survived?”
  - “What or who helped you get through it?”

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**CRM Skills and The Trauma Story**

- Survivors may think healing means they must tell the story of their suffering.
- Although the story of past experiences may be important to be shared and witnessed, the story of the traumatic experience does not have to be retold.
- If a person you are sharing CRM Skills wants to tell you their story, you can gently ask them about the SURVIVAL elements of their story.
- Remember, CRM skills are NOT psychotherapy.
- Adapting Resourcing: When you notice a person getting knocked out of their resilient zone, you can use Stealth CRM Skills like:
  - “Did anyone help you make it out?”
  - “Can you remember the moment when you knew you were going to survive?” or “Who else survived?”
  - “Can you remember the moment that help arrived?”
  - Who is helping you the most now?
Creating A Self-Care Plan

1. What are you doing already to widen your Resilient Zone?
2. If you found the CRM skills helpful, how could you weave the skills into your daily routine? Which skills would be the most helpful?
3. What specifically do you need to do differently to embark on a better self-care plan if you think yours needs improvement?
4. Write a statement of encouragement to yourself that could strengthen your resolve to improve your self-care plan and stay with it.

The Trauma Resource Institute

www.traumaresourceinstitute.com
www.communityresiliencymodel.com