Building Safety, Trust, and PRESENCE Within a Local Resilience Coordinating Council

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The Gaia Hypothesis

The earth is more than just a home, it's a living system and we are part of it.

- James Lovelock -
The older paradigm that has dominated group life – and therefore individual existence – for at least the last two hundred years is a model that sees organizations as machines.

"Living Systems" isn’t a metaphor for how human institutions operate. It’s the way it is.

Pascale, Millemann and Gioja
Surfing the Edge of Chaos:
The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business, p.15
a philosophical or theoretical framework
Human group life is an essential condition for the emergence of consciousness.

George Mead
The psychology of the group is the oldest human psychology.

S. Freud, 1921
Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego
LIVING SYSTEMS THEORY
(Miller, 1978)

The Supranational System
The Society
The Organization
The Group
The Organism
The Organ
The Cell
DEFINITION OF A HEALTHY GROUP

Healthy groups foster a culture of greater interaction and collaboration where-in everyone readily offers their assistance to each other to meet group objectives.

Relationship building, therefore, becomes an important element of the culture of healthy groups (Argyris, 1959)
CREATING PRESENCE®

• Online
• Organizational and clinical approach
• For creating trauma-informed, trauma-responsive and trauma-resilient organizations.
P.R.E.S.E.N.C.E. is an acronym for linked guiding values that consistently undergird and inform good practice.

(PRESENCE) (Senge, et al. 2004)
YOUR ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTORY TRACK
FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

DIRECT SERVICE TRACK

CLINICAL TRACK

LEADERSHIP TRACK

INDIRECT SERVICE TRACK
WHAT IS **CREATING PRESENCE**?

- After the **INTRODUCTORY TRACK** of 27 segments, coursework is specialized for the four main groups of staff members using the values of P.R.E.S.E.N.C.E. as the framework for:
  - **LEADERSHIP** (42 segments)
  - **CLINICIANS** (42 segments)
  - **DIRECT SERVICE** (42 segments)
  - **INDIRECT SERVICE** (34 segments)
ADULT LEARNING
SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES, HANDOUTS, VIDEOS FOR VARYING STYLES OF ADULT LEARNING.

VIDEOS
10-MINUTE VIDEO SEGMENTS WITH SELF-TEST QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION BOARDS
WITHIN PROFESSIONAL GROUPINGS

COACHING
INDIVIDUAL FACULTY FOR EVERY ORGANIZATION.
HEALTHY BIOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS
Walter B. Cannon, M.D.

1871-1945
The social organism, like the bodily organism, cannot be vigorous and efficient unless its elements are assured the essential minimal conditions for healthful life and activity (p.322).

The Wisdom of the Body
Walter B. Cannon, 1932
The most efficient and stable human society would be a body politic modeled after the organization of the human body... A BIOCRACY in which the myriad of differentiated cells would be organized into functional organs all cooperating in a dynamic democracy in which any form of dictatorship would lead to degeneration and death”.

Dr. Walter B. Cannon, Presidential Address, American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 28, 1940
A BIOCRACY?!!
RESILIENCE
COORDINATING COUNCIL

• Giving birth to a new and vulnerable being
• DNA
• Nurturing development within safe relational context
• Recognize developmental sequence – parenting at different stages
• Signs of illness / disrupted development/ injury
• Healing methods and measures
RESILIENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

- Giving birth to a new and vulnerable being
- DNA
SPEND TIME BUILDING YOUR GROUP’S DNA
Has a clear and obtainable mission that is driven by a shared, well-articulated vision.
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

• Mission is driven by a coherent, practiced, shared value system.
• The values are modeled by leadership.
• The values can be seen in routine daily behavior.
• The values are embedded in the public presentation of the everything the group does and says.
Focuses on developing the ethical climate necessary to help people who have suffered moral injuries to heal, recover, and participate in a vital community.
ATTRACTED TO GREATER HEALTH

A state of optimum regulation and adaptive functioning of body, mind and relationships that depends on the integration of function.
A healthy living group will have members, both humans and other institutions, who subscribe to a set of common values and who believe that the goals of the group allow them and help them to achieve their own individual goals.

Arie de Geus, 1997
WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR US TO “WALK THE TALK”?
RESILIENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

- Nurturing development within safe relational context
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

• Encourages participatory democratic structures
• Minimizes the abusive use of power
• Values diversity of race, age, gender, education, experience, etc.
• Finds complex solutions to complex problems through creativity, innovation, and teamwork.
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

- Has participatory leaders
- Do their best to model system values
- Count on others’ input for decisions
- Know who and when to include in decisions
- Try to lead consensus whenever possible
- Set high expectations and reward good performance
- Do not play favorites
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

Is committed to open, honest and frequent communication
Resilience Pause
HOW DO YOU TURN A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS INTO A GROUP THAT CAN WORK COLLECTIVELY?
BRAIN REGULATION SKILLS

PRESENCE MEETING
PRESENCE MEETING

- Longstanding practice in community
- Normalizing and honoring emotions
- Basic democratic structure – circling up
- Grounding in the present
- Recognizing emotions in others
- Important in ANY kind of group meetings – being present for each other
- Fundamental stress reduction technique
- Transition into becoming a group
- Individuality to serve the group-as-a-whole
PRESENCE MEETING

• Begins with everyone present, regardless of status, in a circle together.

• Then ask the five questions, one person at a time in any order you like. Some examples
  • Go around the circle
  • Pass a feather or talking stick
  • Toss a beanbag, ball
  • Etc.
PRESENCE MEETING

• Who are you?
  • Affirmation of identity
  • Willingness to become part of the group
PRESENCE MEETING

• What feelings are present?
  • Everyone is expected to show up for each other: connect with each other and in community
  • Feeling words necessary – get a cheat sheet or look at the emojis
  • It’s a feeling, not a state – they come and go, they are not permanent
  • Reminder that we can push through emotions and still be effective
• What or who are you grateful for?
  • Takes us to the R in Reverence, focusing on the positive not always the negative – very hard to do when you are chronically stressed - evokes a different mental and physical state
  • articulating gratitude to regulate our brains
PRESENCE MEETING

• What feels important to do, be or accomplish?
  • Goal setting – what is it you want to accomplish or who do you want to be?
  • Can be for the whole day or just for the immediate moment
  • Moves us out of trauma reactivity to thinking about the future
  • Reminder that we have power
• Who can you count on for help?
  • Community-building – you have individual agency but we need other people to be effective.
  • Based on human need for attachment, cradle to grave
  • Very powerful when the person is in the room when you say this – creating an invisible network of connections
  • Repetition forms a network of protectiveness, concern – you are building a system
  • With children, very powerful when an adult asks to be able to ask them for help
  • Same for adults in clinical settings – levels the hierarchy and creates community – empowered to do good things.
PRESENCE MEETING

• Start online and phone meetings this way
• Avoid using “good”, “fine”, “OK” – not really feelings and tell us nothing
• It’s NOT group therapy
• Have fun, be creative with format as long as you stick to content:
  • Affirmation of identity question
  • Feelings question
  • Goals question
  • Gratitude question
  • Asking for help question
PRESENCE MEETING

• WHO ARE YOU?
• WHAT ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?
• WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?
• WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?
• WHO CAN YOU ASK FOR HELP IN THIS CIRCLE TODAY?
RESILIENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

- Recognize developmental sequence – parenting at different stages
ORGANIZATIONS DEVELOP TOO

Nonprofit Lifecycle Stages

Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity

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Excerpts from the book Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity.
GROUPS DEVELOP IN STAGES
STAGES OF CHANGE – IT’S A SPIRAL

- Thinking about it
- Preparing for Action
- Taking Action
- Maintaining a Good Thing for Life!

Relapses or sliding backwards occasionally is not unusual

Not Ready Yet
LIVING SYSTEMS MUST LEARN

• We can’t presume we “know best”
• We learn through trial-and-error
• Living systems depend upon feedback loops
A HEALTHY SYSTEM
Knows how to unlearn

“YOU MUST UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED”
LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

KEY QUESTIONS

• What should we keep?
• What should we eliminate?
• What should we do that is new?
RESILIENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

- Recognize signs of injury/illness/developmental disruption
GROUP-AS-A-WHOLE

The dynamics of the group-as-a-whole are different from the dynamics of a collection of individuals.

Agazarian and Peters, 1981
A HEALTHY SYSTEM HAS PERIODIC CHECKUPS AND RECOGNIZES SIGNS OF INJURY....
ROUTINE CHECKUPS

• Decides what metrics make sense consistent with mission and vision
• Uses that knowledge to inform objectives and change process
• Regularly reviews metrics to assess sustained change.
AND EFFECTIVELY RESPONDS TO DANGER

A HEALTHY SYSTEM MANAGES CONFLICT
A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

• Has routine conflict management strategies.
• Uses all kinds of conflict as opportunities for new learning.
• Seeks creative, integrative solutions to challenging problems.
Groupthink is a phenomenon where people tend to confirm with group decisions to avoid feeling outcast, leading to errors in decision making.
CONFORMITY

• when pressure to conform is at work, a person changes his opinion not because he actually believes something different but because it’s less stressful to change his opinion than to challenge the group.
SOCIAL INFLUENCE

• When a person’s private judgment was unlike the judgments expressed by other people, the person would abandon his own judgment, even when his judgment was correct.

• Influence could be attenuated by even one other person who sided with the person
Social loafing occurs when someone in a group takes the opportunity to “free-ride” on other group members’ efforts and is unwilling to do the work that other people in the group are doing.
When people are asked to brainstorm on a controversial topic, they have fewer ideas than those who brainstorm about a non-controversial topic.

The same is true when there's an authority figure or an expert in the group or when subjects are told that experts are watching and listening to them through a one-way mirror.

If the boss is fitting in with the group, members are likely to be more worried about what he or she thinks than what their peers think.

To reduce the negative effects of social inhibition, the first step is to make sure that the members of the group feel truly equal and that no authoritarian figure is present.
GROUP POLARIZATION

When the majority of a group initially leans toward one position – even when that position is extreme - their consensus tends to influence others in the group that hold a more moderate position and then the whole group moves toward the extreme position.
GROUP POLARIZATION

- Those who hold a minority position often silence themselves or otherwise have disproportionately little weight in group deliberations.
- Group members often have information but do not discuss it.
- The result is to produce inferior decisions
Unconscious repetition of painful or negative relationships that become ingrained patterns over time and that are reenacted with other individuals or groups.
REENACTMENT
Resilience Pause
RESILIENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL

• Availability of self-healing strategies
COMPLEXITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS

S.E.L.F.
A HEALTHY SYSTEM
Develops a shared language for working together, organizing change, solving problems.
S.E.L.F. A COMMON LANGUAGE

What are the Safety issues?
- Physical, psychological, social, moral, cultural

What are the Emotional management issues?
- Mad, Sad, Glad, Scared, Shamed

What are the Loss issues?
- What losses have already occurred?
- What will be lost in the process of change?

What are the Future issues?
- Why change?
- What is the goal(s)?
SHARED DESTINATION: Earth Renewed

S.E.L.F. = SHARED LANGUAGE & A SHARED COMPASS
S.E.L.F. - ORGANIZING CHAOS

• Simple enough language for all to understand.
• Conveys indispensable ideas about healing from trauma and adversity.
• Becomes an effective problem-organizing and problem-solving tool
• Gets everyone on the same page
• Very dynamic.
• Applicable to children, families, staff and organization
There is no specific order so you can use it the way you think.
Phases you move in and out of, not stages you climb.
You are at a job and a supervisor publicly humiliates you. Use SELF to figure out what to do.

• S: My supervisor’s comments make me feel unsafe at work and so I am going to talk to my supervisor and tell him that I did not appreciate the way he went about publicly humiliating me.

• E. My supervisor clearly experienced emotional management issues as he should have never publicly humiliated me that way - that’s no way to motivate an employee to do better

• L: I feel a deep loss of trust in my supervisor and in order to restore that trust I am going to go talk to him about how I feel.

• F: I envision a future where I feel safe and successful in my workplace and so because of this, I am going to talk to my supervisor about how I feel.
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

- Has well-regulated emotions
- Recognizes patterns
- Is emotionally intelligent
- Understands individual and group dynamics
A HEALTHY SYSTEM

- Recognition of emotional dysregulation as primary sign of exposure to stress, adversity, and trauma.
- Has tools in place that help promote emotional regulation for everyone.
- Emotions are honored but do not rule
- There is recognition that emotions are contagious and become collective.
BRAIN REGULATION
SKILLS

EMOTIONAL VOLUME
PLAN
A KEY ELEMENT TO A SAFETY CULTURE ARE INDIVIDUAL EMOTIONAL VOLUME PLANS

A EMOTIONAL VOLUME Plan is a list of activities that a person can choose when feeling emotionally overwhelmed so that she/he can avoid engaging in unsafe behavior.
Regardless of our age, experience, or education, when we become emotionally upset our thinking brains do NOT work well and we can do and say things that we later regret.
QUESTION 1: What emotion(s) cause you the most distress and are the most difficult to manage?

- Anger?
- Shame?
- Sadness?
- Fear?
- Helplessness?
- Guilt?
EMOTIONAL VOLUME PLANS

• QUESTION 2: What situations turn up the emotional volume for you so you go from 0-10 very rapidly? What are your triggers?

  • At work?
  • At home?
  • In stores?
  • On the highway?
  • In close relationships?
  • With colleagues?
  • With clients?
EMOTIONAL VOLUME PLANS

• QUESTION 3: What are the signals you recognize in yourself - or that other people recognize in you – that your emotions are escalating?
EMOTIONAL VOLUME PLANS

• Develop some strategies to bring the emotional volume down:
  • focus on physical things like breathing, moving, pacing, stretching
  • Deliberately activate your parasympathetic system to counteract your stress response
BRAIN REGULATION SKILLS

WELLNESS PLAN
CREATE A WELLNESS PLAN

- Engage in self-care behaviors
- Physical activity – exercise, dance, strenuous manual labor, yoga
- Maintain a high-energy level through proper diet, sleep, exercise
- Identify those triggers which may cause one to experience vicarious traumatization
- Get therapy if personal issues and past traumas get in the way
Make a Plan

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO YOURSELF
A HEALTHY SYSTEM
Knows how to party! CELEBRATE EVERY CHANCE YOU GET!
ON YOUTUBE

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO SAFETY PLANNING
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEhhnwKK0CU&t=396s&ab_channel=CTIPPPORG

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO WELLNESS PLANNING
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdkE9hudUs0&t=2s&ab_channel=CTIPPPORG
www.sandrabloom.com
S.E.L.F Psychoeducational Group Curriculum

www.creatingpresence.net
Creating Presence online organizational approach for creating trauma-informed, trauma-responsive, and trauma-resilient organizations.