Authentic Trainings, LLC

PRACTICAL, RELATABLE, & COMPASSIONATE

Greetings!

Welcome to your monthly dose of expert insights for professional development in SUD. It's a short list of articles and evidence-based tools to help you foster high engagement and retention and nurture the ideal conditions for lasting change. I've also included a self-care tip to help you kindle joy and excitement in your work.

If so moved, please forward this email to another SUD professional who could use it.

For Peer Professionals

Peer professionals play a vital role in recovery-friendly communities. They bring their lived experience along with specialized training, empathy, and the ability to build trust in ways others often can't.

Peers model healthy coping strategies, teach practical skills, and guide people through complex systems. This work builds 'recovery capital' — the personal, social, and community resources that support long-term recovery.

Peers connect people to housing, jobs, health care, and strong support networks. They also involve families in the process, which reduces stigma and strengthens the path to healing.

When communities fully support peers, the entire recovery system grows stronger and more people are able to thrive.

Here's a blog post I read this week about peer professionals you can share with your teams.

Justin S. Bell. "Recognizing Peer Specialists as Professionals." Chestnut Health Systems.

Too often, peer specialists are dismissed as 'paraprofessionals' or compared to unpaid sponsors but that couldn't be further from the truth. This article by Dr. Justin Bell shines a light on how peers hold entire recovery systems together, saving lives while fighting for the respect and resources they deserve.

On Creating Safe, Inclusive Spaces

Heinrich KM, Wyker B, Collinson B, Eddie D, Best D and Hillios J (2025) Psychological safety mediates attendance and recovery-related outcomes within the Phoenix: a sober-active community. Front. Public Health. 13:1458026. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2025.1458026.

This study published in *Frontiers in Public Health* shows that psychological safety plays a key role in recovery outcomes. Among members of The Phoenix, a sober-active community, those who felt psychologically safe were more likely to attend events, build hope and connection, and see improvements in mental and physical health. This research provides compelling evidence for why recovery programs should prioritize creating safe and inclusive spaces.

On Non-Traditional Approaches

Research shows that drumming can reduce stress, build connection, and support emotional regulation, all essential in substance use disorder (SUD) recovery.

That's why Authentic Trainings is thrilled to be developing a new drum circle facilitation training designed for all professionals, especially peer professionals working in SUD settings.

We're partnering with a drum circle trainer with nationwide experience in SUD settings. We can't wait to bring you evidence-based skills that have been proven to engage participants, foster healing, and strengthen recovery communities. Stay tuned for more details soon!

May Retreat on Non-Traditional Approaches

Mark your calendars for May!

Authentic Trainings is bringing together a group of peer trainers to host a unique retreat focused on evidence-based alternative modalities. **Think music, movement, bodywork, psychodrama, and more.**

These powerful non-talk approaches can be integrated by both peers and clinicians to deepen healing and connection. More details coming soon!"

Ruth Riddick Joins Authentic Trainings

Ruth Riddick, CARC, RCP/f, RTR-S joined the Authentic Trainings LLC and A Purpose 4 Life peer training team!

A recipient of the 2024 NYS Justice Peer Initiative Impact Award in Training & Development, Riddick is an experienced trainer offering custom coaching and communications programs.

In 2004, she expanded her portfolio to include a specialization in recovery, adding CCAR programs through its RCP Facilitator designation in 2015. She holds a certification in experiential sociometry and is a Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (CARC).

She serves on the Advisory Board of the International Association of Recovery Coach Professionals (IARCP) and is a professional member of NAADAC and of the NYCB Trainer Registry, which she co-founded in 2020.

Ruth is convenor of the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network's bi-monthly Conversations about Facilitation-in-Training community of practice, and a Board member of the New York Association of Treatment Court Professionals (NYATCP).

Riddick will lead the peer recovery training,Ethical Considerations.

As always, thanks for reading.

Sandy

PS. Does your team need professional development in

- *embracing families,*
- *motivational interviewing, or*
- *trauma-informed care?*

Get a workforce development design to meet your organization's needs.*Email me to get started.*

On-Demand MI Training

Build the communication skills that inspire change.

Ever feel like you're talking *at* your clients instead of truly connecting *with* them?

Or do you watch people repeat the same patterns, even when you're trying your best to help?

The truth is, most professionals were never taught the specific skills that motivate lasting change, especially with people who feel stuck, ashamed, or hopeless about the future.

This on-demand course in Motivational Interviewing gives you simple, proven tools you can start using right away. You'll learn how to...

- Turn difficult conversations into collaboration
- Use core MI skills like open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries
- Apply MI across fields such as social work, healthcare, and education
- Take a trauma-informed, person-centered, and strengths-based approach

The course includes engaging videos, real-life examples, guided exercises, and a downloadable learning guide. You'll earn 4 CE credits (NY OASAS) and enjoy a full year of access so you can review anytime.

By the end, you'll know how to build authentic connection, turn resistance into teamwork, and **help people believe in their ability to change.**

WHAT A STUDENT RECENTLY TOLD US ABOUT THE COURSE

> *"I was a social worker for many years, and I wish I had this training a long time ago! This training is the best training I have ever had. It provides the interviewing skills I need to help others. It is applicable to so many different public-facing careers, too. I can even see how MI can help me communicate with my teenager in a more positive way. Thanks so much."*

Start Motivating Others Today!

Frustrated with the same conversations that go nowhere?

Many justice professionals want to help people change, but old communication habits just aren't working. Clients fall back into the same patterns, and it's exhausting to keep talking *at* people without seeing progress.

This on-demand course in Motivational Interviewing (MI) for Criminal Justice Professionals shows you how to break through.

MI is proven to help justice-involved individuals feel motivated, engaged, and invested in their own change.

You'll learn how to:

- *Build trust quickly*
- *Turn resistance into collaboration*
- *Encourage real commitment to a better future*

Who should take this course?
Anyone working in treatment courts, family courts, probation, substance use

treatment, mental health services, or related fields.

What you get:

- Flexible, on-demand lessons you can complete anytime
- Skills tailored for criminal justice and allied professionals
- The latest MI strategies (updated August 2023)
- Practical tools you can use right away to improve outcomes

Research shows MI increases engagement, reduces dropout, and lowers recidivism. As one recent graduate shared, "This training was spot on — exactly what I needed."

Start building the skills that lead to better conversations, better outcomes, and safer communities.

Get Instant Access Today!

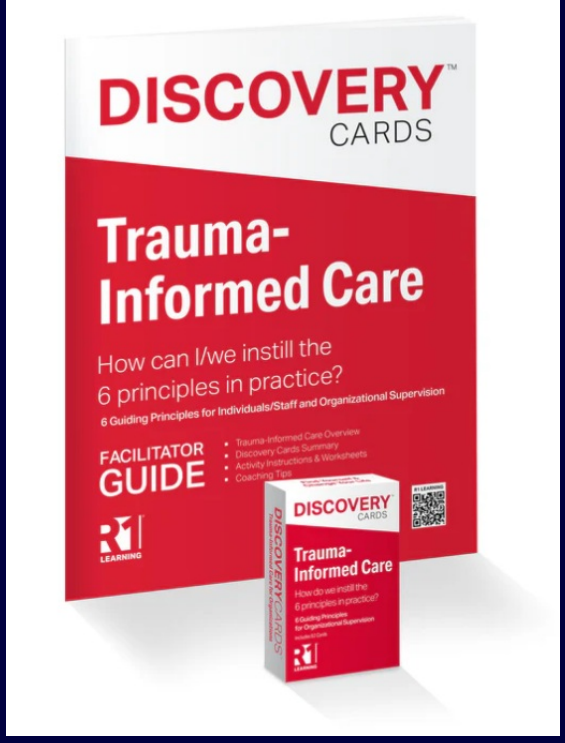
R1 Learning Discovery Decks

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Adopting a TIC approach is not accomplished through any single technique, training, or checklist.

Effective trauma-informed care requires constant awareness, attention, caring, sensitivity, and possibly a cultural change at the organizational level.

On-going individual and organizational assessment of the 6 Guiding Principles will help embed this approach into daily practices.

The purpose of this R1 Learning topic is to help organizations, staff, and practitioners assess services in conjunction with SAMHSA's TIC 6 Guiding Principles and improve the outcomes for individuals served.



Topic Kit includes one Discovery Cards deck and one Facilitator Guide – everything you need to run an effective session.

Buy additional card decks to match your typical group size. Using behavior-based and color-categorized cards, group members will gain a deeper understanding of 6 Guiding Principles and 3 Environment Types.

The Facilitator Guide provides group leaders with everything needed to run structured, action-oriented sessions, including activity worksheets, and coaching tips. Discovery Cards increase engagement, participation, and self-discovery and spark great discussions in group settings.

Buy today, and improve your engagement and outcomes.

Use the code **SANDY10%** to save on your own R1 Discovery Trauma Informed Care Deck.

Explore the TIC Discovery Deck.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Topic Kit

This deck helps individuals identify which of ten (10) ACEs they experienced and which of the seven (7) Resilience Practices helped/help them endure, survive, and thrive.

Topic Kit includes:

One Discovery Card Deck (one for each group member; buy additional decks to match your typical group size). Card decks include:

- Sorting cards
- Category model definition cards
- Activity cards with questions to explore

One Facilitator Guide, which includes:

- Model overview
- Card deck summary
- Activity instructions and worksheets
- Coaching tips

Use the code **SANDY10%** to save on your own **R1 Discovery ACES Deck.**

Explore the ACES Discovery Deck.

Sandra Rivers is a proud member of the NYCB Trainers Registry.
#20207022.

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