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.

On Embracing Families

Lisa Ardner and I had dinner with Pam Lanhart, the founder ofThrive! Family Recovery Resources and attended the premiere of the new documentary, Together: Family Recovery in Minneapolis, MN.

It was a privilege to be one of the first to view this incredible film that highlights the link between trauma and substance use disorder and the impact on the families. We are working to bring this film to Syracuse NY, as part of our commitment to family treatment.

ON PAM LANHART

Pam is passionate about helping families use evidence-based best practices to find peace, stay regulated, create conditions that support recovery, and move their loved ones toward change. She believes that a healthy family gives their loved ones the best opportunity to activate recovery. Pam is a certified family recovery coach, peer recovery specialist, Invitation to Change and CRAFT practitioner, and Arise-trained interventionist.

→ [Learn more about Pam and

THRIVE! Family Recovery Resources.]

ON THE DOCUMENTARY TOGETHER: FAMILY RECOVERY

Together: Family Recovery is a powerful and intimate documentary that redefines what recovery can look like—through the lens of family.

Rather than focusing solely on the individual struggling with addiction, the film follows three courageous families who have chosen to walk the path of healing together. From heartfelt interviews to vérité scenes of everyday resilience, we witness how each family member—parents, siblings, even grandparents— undergoes their own journey of growth, connection, and change.

Together offers a modern, hopeful approach to recovery that centers love, communication, and community. Whether it's revisiting childhood homes, attending support groups, or simply sharing a meal, the documentary captures the quiet, profound moments that define what it means to rebuild relationship and rediscover family —together.

→ [Request a screening in your area.]

For Peer Professionals

Recovery Coaching Academy

Become the support you once wished you had.

The Recovery Coach Academy (RCA) is an immersive, evidence-based training that equips you with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to make a real difference in the

lives of others.

This dynamic, 30-hour foundational course was developed by the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) and approved by the New York Certification Board (NYCB).

It is the essential first step toward becoming a certified peer professional in New York State and beyond.

Next Training:

STARTS FEBRUARY 2

Training Dates/Times:

- 30 hours of training over 5 days: February 2-3, 6, 9-10
- 9:00am-4:00pm, ET
- Scholarship application deadline is January 2, 2026.

START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY!

On Self-Care

This month's self-care tip is a quick introduction to the vagus nerve from Authentic Training's collaborator, Jim Donovan.

Think of your vagus nerve as your body's neurochemical "superhighway," carrying vital signals between your brain and organs.

By making a sound with your voice, your vocal cords create a deep inner-body vibration that stimulates this nerve —shifting you from a stressful (fight, flight, freeze) state into a calm, restorative (rest, digest, restore) mode.

Researchers are now studying how vibrational vagus nerve stimulation can positively affect many aspects of health including:

Anxiety relief - (2016) Int Journal of Physical Education
Pain reduction - (2018) Journal of Maxillofacial Surgery
Mood improvement - (2018) Frontiers in Psychiatry

As you stimulate your vagus nerve, it also activates your parasympathetic nervous system, helping you generate natural "feel good chemicals" such as:

☀ Endorphins
☀ Dopamine
☀ Oxytocin
☀ Nitric oxide

Plus the anti-inflammatory assisting neurotransmitter acetylcholine

→ [Follow along as he guides you through a simple brain humming exercise.]

On Motivational Interviewing

On the MINT Conference, October 20-24

Lisa Ardner and I had an incredible time at the MINT annual conference in Minneapolis, MN. It is so inspiring to spend a week with the founders of Motivational Interviewing.

To top it off, all of the giants in MI were there. Some were leading workshops, some were learning right alongside of us. I learned so much in this safe, warm, and collaborative learning environment.

It reminded me of how important it is to place yourself with experienced, compassionate people. I love to learn from people with different perspectives, but do it in an environment of radical acceptance. There were no wrong perspectives, only different ideas.

One of my biggest takeaways is that attending an international conference exposes you to people from all over the world. Some did not speak English and needed interpreters. Yet it enhanced the learning. One of my small group participants was from China, and he was so eager to learn and share how MI is being used in his practice.

In Bill Miller's 4th edition of *Motivational Interviewing,* he expanded the definition to include growth. I am a better MI practitioner and a much better facilitator after attending this training. More importantly, I came back uplifted and encouraged.

If you want to begin your MI journey, or refresh your skills, we have two on-demand courses.

→[Check them out here.]

On Non-Traditional Approaches

Transform Lives with Sound Healing Facilitation Training with Jim Donovan, M.Ed.

Embark on a journey to empower communities and enrich lives through sound healing. Dive into exciting techniques and wellness activities in a way that works with your own ability.

→ [Click here] and explore this affordable, on-demand training that will quickly help you level up your self-care tools for you and your clients.

Stop and Flow with Kristin Onderdonk

Kristin Onderdonk offers evidence-informed trainings that improve retention and deliver measurable results.

Many wellness initiatives leave people feeling good in the moment, then quickly fade.
Stress, burnout, and turnover remain—and the cycle of trying to retain great people continues.

Stress Relief Training Level 1
STOP & FLOW™ changes the norm. Stress Relief Training introduces embodied practices that calm stress, increase resilience, and restore well-being—so people can thrive while supporting systems.

Facilitator Certification Level 2
The STOP & FLOW™ Facilitator Certification equips staff to lead stress-relief sessions in groups or one-on-one. Guided by founder and lead trainer Kristin Onderdonk, certified facilitators bring the practice into daily organizational life and community settings.

Organizational Packages Tiered Contracts
Their organizational packages provide customized contracts with annual support, which may include:

- Multiple Stress Relief Trainings in flexible formats
- Multiple Facilitator Certification Cohorts
- Implementation support that can lead to train-the-trainer offerings
- Mentorship, with options for Kristin to co-lead early sessions alongside staff

Each package is designed to improve retention, boost morale, and create measurable cultural impact—whether in healthcare, education, recovery, or corporate settings.

→{Check out Kristin's training.]

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:

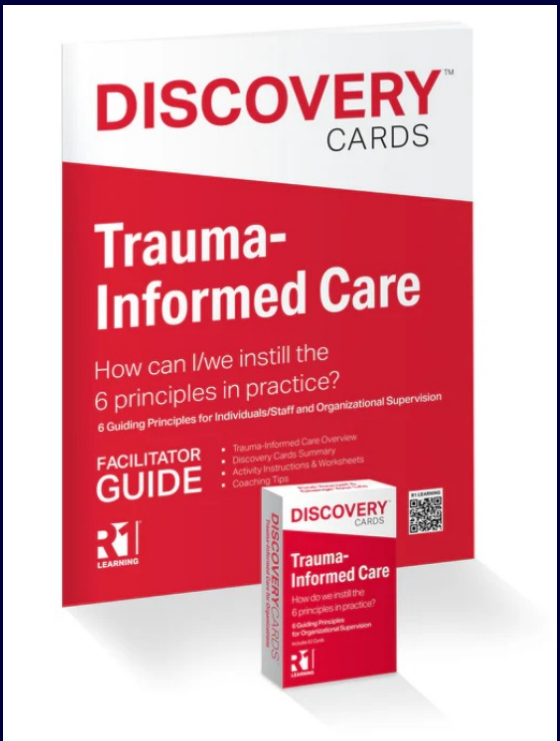
- Flexible, on-demand lessons you can complete anytime
- Skills tailored for criminal justice and allied professionals
- The latest MI strategies (updated August 2023)
- Practical tools you can use right away to improve outcomes

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.

The New York Certification Board
Sandra Rivers
Proud Member
NYCB Trainer Registry
2025

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