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

Book To Deepen Your Insights

Demon Copperhead: A Pulitzer Prize Winner Paperback. Barbara Kingsolver.

Book Description

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, *Demon Copperhead* is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

For Peer Professionals

Social Transmission of Recovery as a Helix of Connectivity, not a Service Checklist: A Conversation with Dr David Best – Recovery Review

As a peer professional, you know recovery isn't just about services or checklists. It's about connection.

In this conversation with Dr. David Best, the focus shifts to the social transmission of recovery as a living, breathing network of relationships—a "helix of

connectivity."

You'll see how recovery spreads through trust, belonging, and mutual support, and why peers are uniquely positioned to nurture that spiral of growth.

If you've ever wanted language to describe what you feel happening in peer work, this piece will give you powerful insight.

On Self-Care

This month's self-care tip is a simple way to calm your body and mind: square breathing. Square breathing can help slow your breath, relax your mind, and bring you back into balance. It's a quick tool you can use anytime you feel stressed or need a reset.

In this short video, our friend and mentor Jim Donovan (an expert in sound healing) shows you how it works

On Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing is sometimes mistaken for a therapy, but in reality, it is a communication style—one that fosters partnership, radical acceptance, compassion, and empowerment.

Isn't that what we all want? **To be seen as the experts of our own lives,**and to have someone walk beside us with support, not judgment.

I learned this lesson the hard way.

When my daughter was just a baby with a 105-degree fever, the ER doctor dismissed her symptoms as the flu and sent us home with Tylenol. I remember the nurse quietly shaking her head "no," but she couldn't contradict him. The next morning, frightened by how listless my daughter had become, I called our family doctor. He gave us an appointment, but not until later that afternoon, not picking up on the urgency in my voice.

When he finally saw her, he took one look and said, "Get her to the ER now." Hours of tests revealed she had spinal meningitis. She was in critical condition for 48 hours, and we lived in the hospital for 10 days. She survived, but the high fever left her with permanent hearing loss.

That experience changed me forever. Being told what to do without being heard nearly cost my daughter her life.

A few years later, I carried that lesson into an incident with my son. When my son needed stitches, I refused to leave his side—even when the doctor told me to step out.

I gently held his head, coached him through deep breathing, and kept his eyes locked on mine. The doctor, initially irritated, later thanked me. My presence had made the procedure possible.

These moments taught me the core truth of Motivational Interviewing: effective care comes from partnership, not power.

That same truth continues to guide my professional work. Over the last two years, I have partnered with R1 Learning to deliver "train-the-trainer" workshops for the California Department of Corrections as they launched a peer specialist training program for incarcerated individuals.

Helping corrections officers and medical staff embrace the spirit of partnership was challenging—and one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

The results were dramatic. Officers who had once seen incarcerated individuals as "bad" people deserving punishment began to recognize their value and worth. Through the R1 Learning system, they experienced firsthand the power of self-reflection on values, stages of change, recovery capital, and emotions.

The Spirit of MI—partnership, acceptance, compassion, and empowerment—was present in every training. Administrators now report that the program is a success, and peers are being seen as assets within correctional facilities.

As a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), I've trained countless individuals and organizations in MI. It is a mindset that improves outcomes, prevents burnout, and protects compassion. **When we honor the individual as the expert in their own life, and bring our expertise alongside theirs, real change can happen.**

Motivational Interviewing benefits everyone.

Whether you want to learn basic MI skills**, apply** MI in criminal justice **settings, or** train your entire staff**, Authentic Trainings can help.**

AT VITAL VOYAGE

I'm excited to share that I've joined the editing team at Vital Voyage as a subject matter expert. Vital Voyage's mission is to shed light on substance use disorder, trauma, adult child syndrome, suicide prevention, recovery journeys, and the future of mental healthcare.

Together, we aim to inspire hope, promote mental well-being, and foster a supportive community for those navigating their mental health journey.

I'm honored to contribute my voice and expertise to such meaningful work.

RECOVERY COACHING TRAINING

Recovery Coach Academy

OCTOBER 27-28

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.

START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY!

Ethical Considerations

NOVEMBER 12-14

Ethical decision-making is an essential skill for every Recovery Coach navigating today's complex behavioral health systems.

In this highly interactive virtual training, you will...

- *deepen your understanding of ethics,*
- *explore real-world ethical dilemmas, and*
- *build a personalized decision-making framework you can immediately apply in your coaching practice.*

This training is for those who have taken Recovery Coach Academy and are working toward CRPA and CARC.

LEARN MORE NOW

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

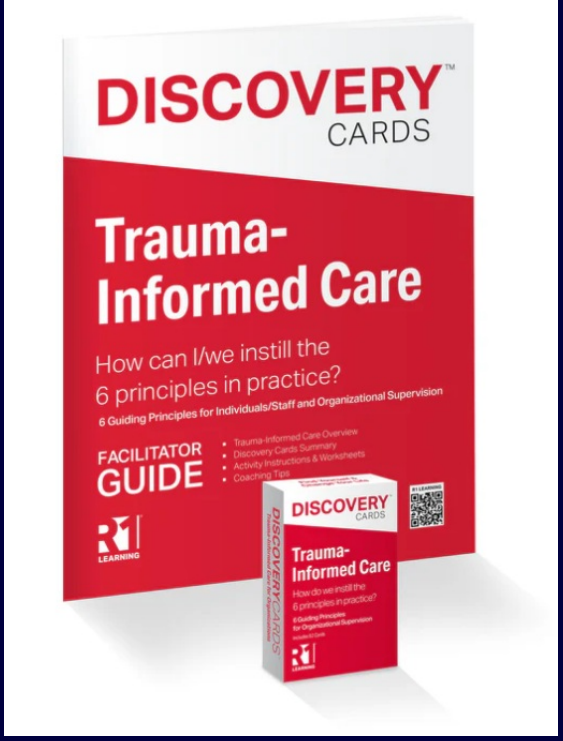
Research shows MI increases engagement, reduces dropout, and lowers recidivism. As one recent graduate shared, "This training was spot on — exactly what I needed."

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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