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.

Spotlight on the Holidays and New Year

Authentic Trainings LLC has had an incredible year, and I wanted to highlight some of the new products we have developed for the clinical setting.

We have always trained in Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma Responsive Care, but in 2025, we went deeper.

We had the privilege of supporting Crouse Addiction Services as they implemented a family education program at their inpatient unit. In the process, we developed and variety of new trainings all aimed at preparing the staff to include family members in the treatment process.

I have always believed that the inclusion of family members is the logical, practical and most impactful strategy that should be implemented in all treatment programs.

I do realize that not all families will engage and not all families are safe to engage. Yet, without them, it always felt like treating people in a vacuum. Individuals with SUD live in family systems and most of them come to treatment and return to those family systems.

Here's a quick look at the new trainings coming in 2026.

- Embracing Families in SUD Treatment – basic education
- Embracing Families in SUD Treatment – Intermediate – experiential exercises to use with family members.
- Embracing Families in Individual Sessions

- Embracing Families in Group
- Men's Trauma – 12 Week full curriculum, including guide, detailed modules, handouts, and activity guide.

In 2026 and beyond, let us bring Trauma Informed Care and Family programming to your organization. → **Email me to get started today.**

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!

Need Renewal Hours?

We offer two great on-demand courses that together equal 14 hours of CEs than can easily be applied to your required renewal hours.

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

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

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.**

Start Motivating Others Today!

- 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!

On Self-Care

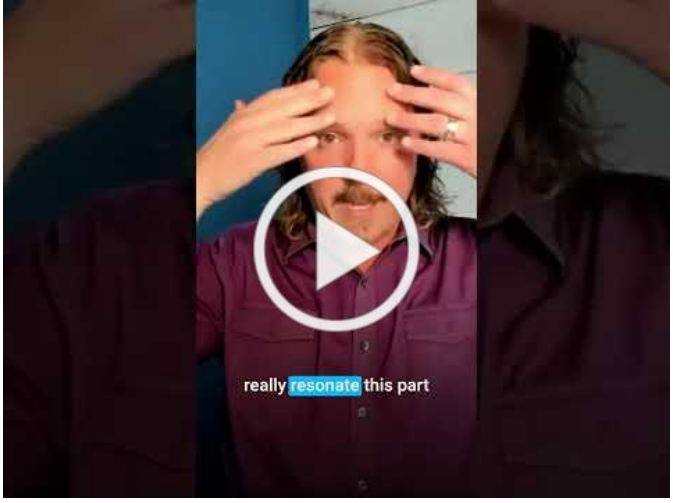
This month's self-care tip is a simple way to release head tension that can cause headaches, migraines, and brain fog.

Sound Healing really works. Try humming "AIM."

The vibration can release tension and calm your system.

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

In less than 60 seconds, you can transform your day and state of mind.



Auricular Stimulation for Stress Management

This quick and simple exercise uses gentle ear massage to stimulate nerve endings in the outer ear (auricle). It helps calm the nervous system, reduce stress, and promote relaxation—without needles or special equipment.

Steps:

1. Sit comfortably and relax your shoulders.
2. Place your thumbs behind your ears and your index/middle fingers in front.
3. Massage the ear slowly from top to bottom:
4. Top ridge – pinch and roll gently.
5. Middle ear – massage in small circles.
6. Earlobe – gently pull down and roll between fingers.
7. After massaging, gently tug the ear outward and take a deep breath.
8. Close your eyes, place your palms lightly over your ears, and breathe deeply three times.

On Embracing Families

On Helping Children When a Loved One Has a Substance Use Disorder (SUD): A Family Guide

Children can be deeply affected when a parent, caregiver, or loved one struggles with a substance use disorder. This guide offers simple, supportive strategies families can use to help children feel safe, understood, and connected.

1. Create Emotional Safety & Routine. Children feel more secure when life feels predictable. Try:

- Keeping consistent routines (bedtime, meals, school time).
- Explaining changes in advance: “Mom will be at treatment today, but Grandma will pick you up.”
- Responding calmly when children express big feelings.

2. Talk Honestly—at Their Level. Children sense when something is wrong. Clear communication reduces fear and self-blame. Helpful phrases:

- "Dad has an illness that affects how his brain works."
- "Mom is getting help to feel better."
- "You didn't cause this, and it's not your job to fix it."

Encourage questions, but answer only what they ask.

3. Normalize Feelings. Children may feel sad, angry, confused, or guilty. You can say:

- "It makes sense to feel that way."
- "Lots of kids feel worried when a parent is sick."

Use emotion charts, drawings, or journaling to help them express themselves.

4. Build Their Support Team. Children need safe adults and positive activities. Consider:

- Identifying 2–3 trusted adults (relatives, teachers, mentors).
- Encouraging hobbies, sports, clubs, or groups that offer connection.
- Exploring youth support programs such as Alateen or Camp Mariposa.

5. Keep Children Out of Adult Problems. Children should not manage adult stress or conflicts. Avoid:

- Arguments in front of the child.
- Asking children to take sides.
- Having children monitor the parent's recovery or relapse.

Their job is to be a child, not a caregiver.

6. Teach Healthy Boundaries. Many children try to "fix" or "save" the struggling parent. Reassure them:

- "You can care about someone without being responsible for them."
- "Grown-ups have helpers. Your job is school, friends, and play."

Boundaries lessen guilt and emotional burden.

7. Offer Safe Ways to Express Feelings. Children benefit from healthy outlets for stress and worry. Ideas:

- Coloring, drawing, or journaling
- Playing outside or doing physical activities
- Using a "worry box" to place fears inside
- Reading storybooks about feelings or addiction

8. Support Recovery While Protecting the Child

When a parent seeks help, children may feel anxious or confused.

Families can:
• Explain treatment in simple, hopeful ways.
• Set boundaries for visits if the parent is not stable.
• Celebrate small recovery milestones together.

• Avoid promising that relapse will “never” happen.

9. Create a Child-Friendly Safety Plan. Safety plans give children a sense of control.
Include:

- Who they can call if they feel unsafe
- Where they can go (a neighbor, relative, family friend)
- A script: “I need help. Can I come over?”
- A rule: Never ride in a car with someone who has been using

10. Connect With Professional Support . Families don’t have to do this alone. Helpful supports include:

- Family therapy or children’s counseling
- School counselors
- Youth support groups
- Parent support groups
- Peer recovery coaches

Key Message for Children

“I didn’t cause it. I can’t control it. I can’t cure it. I can take care of myself by talking about my feelings, making healthy choices, and connecting with safe people.”

Useful Resources from NACoA

- Hope & Healing for Children Impacted by SUDS
- Seven Cs

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.*

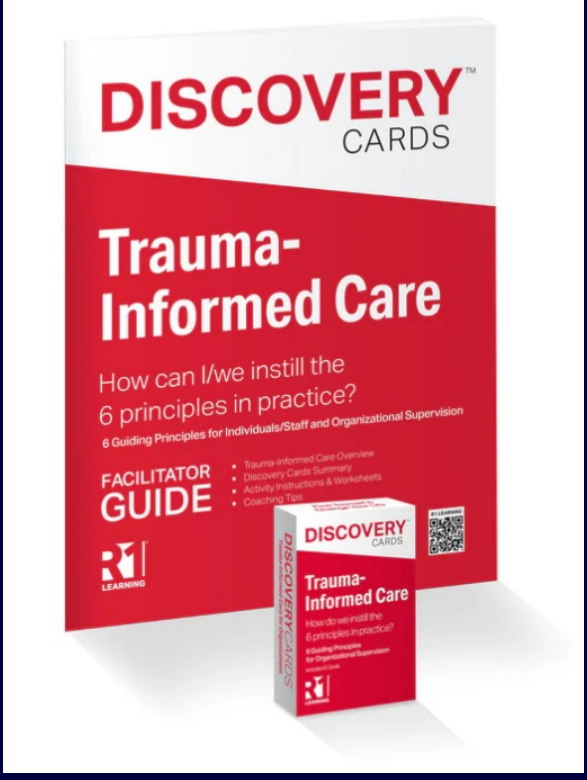
Forwarded this message?

→ Sign Up Here.

Get exclusive content, private Q&As, training discounts, and inspiring self-care tools delivered to your inbox.

No spam, ever. Just evidence-based tools to help you help others.

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.

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