Community Resiliency Model®

Written by Elaine Miller-Karas of the Trauma Resource Institute
Commitment to the Democratization of Mental Health
To create resiliency and trauma informed communities
Affordable, Portable, Adaptable, Accessible
“Resiliency is an individual’s and community’s ability to identify and use individual and collective strengths in living fully in the present moment, and to thrive while managing the activities of daily living.”

~Miller-Karas (2013)
KEY CONCEPTS 1
Primary Focus
Biology vs. Mental Weakness

- The focus is on the biology of the human nervous system.
- There are common human reactions to stressful/traumatic events that effect the mind, body and spirit.
- The Community Resiliency Model helps individuals and communities shift perspectives from human weakness or pathology to biology.
- This vista makes interventions more accessible to those who are not “psychologically-oriented”.
THE KEY CONCEPT of the Community Resiliency Model ®

• To read the nervous system so a person can tell the difference between sensations of distress and sensations of well being

• When a person is able to read the nervous system, there is then a choice of what to pay attention to: sensations of distress or sensations of well being
A sensation is a **physical experience** in the body.

Sensations originate in billions of receptors distributed in every part of the body.

Life experiences, including our thoughts and feelings, have a corresponding sensation within the body.

Yellow shows regions of increased sensation while blue areas represent decreased feeling in these composite images. Image created by Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glerean, Riitta Hari, and Jari Hietanen.
Interoception & the Insula

*Our ability to observe body sensations in response to how we think, feel and move*

- The insula Integrates mind and body
- Reads the physiological state of the body (e.g. pain, itch, temp, etc.)
- Generates emotions and physical sensations that can bring about actions to keep the body in a state of internal balance
- The insula is connected to the limbic system and the cortical executive control centers, which explains how body awareness could reduce impulsivity and promote emotion regulation and clearer thinking. (Haase et al., 2016)
What is the Resilient Zone or the OK Zone?

- A state of well-being in mind, body and spirit
- When in the Resilient Zone/OK Zone one is able to handle the stresses of life
  - You can be annoyed or even angry but do not feel like you will lose your head
  - You can be sad but not feel like you will be washed away by the river of sorrows
Things happen in life and our thoughts, feelings and reactions move around in the RZ/OK ZONE
Trigger or Stressful Event

Stuck in the High Zone

OK Zone

Stuck in the Low Zone

- Depression/Sadness
- Isolation
- Exhaustion/Fatigue
- Numbness

- Edgy
- Irritable
- Mania
- Anxiety & Panic
- Angry outbursts
- Pain

Depression/Sadness
Isolation
Exhaustion/Fatigue
Numbness
Are you in your ZONE?

The Community Resiliency Model

Traumatic or Stressful Event

Stuck on HIGH
Hyper-arousal

Amped Up
Hyper-vigilant
Nervous
Irritable
Angry
Rage
Pain

The Resilient Zone

Sadness
Isolation
Exhaustion
Fatigue
Numbness
Pain

Stuck on LOW
Hypo-arousal

Learning can happen only when you are in your zone.
Goals of the Community Resiliency Model

**Children/Teens/Adults**

- To widen the “Resilient Zone” so one is better able to handle life stressors
- To reset the nervous system to bring it into balance after stressful/traumatic events
- To intercept the hijacking of the NS by learning skills for self-care
- To integrate the skills into the activities of daily living
- To teach the wellness skills to children and teens in age-appropriate ways

**Community**

- To create teachers through Teacher Training Programs, identifying the natural leaders of communities, who teach the Community Resiliency Model through their own cultural lens
- To widen the “Resilient Zone” for all adults and children worldwide
HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY MODEL HELP?
Who can Community Resiliency Model help?

❖ Children, Parents, Caregivers, Teachers, Administrators, School staff, security officers, siblings and other community and family members.
❖ For Self-Care
Skills Are Easy To Learn

”Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way”
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

❖ A set of six wellness skills taught to members of the community that bring the body and mind back into balance.

❖ You don’t have to talk about the past
❖ Even if reading and writing are difficult
❖ Useful for people of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds
❖ Can be used with different ages

❖ Educational materials have been developed (iChill App, wristbands, resiliency pens) that reinforce the wellness skills
❖ www.ichillapp.com on the web.
How can Adults help Children & Teens?

➢ When CRM skills are taught to adults who care for children and teens
  ➢ They can model the skills use
  ➢ They can make better choices/respond better to behaviors

➢ By learning the skills, adults can become more attuned and are able to read their own and the child’s nervous systems

➢ Children look to adults for reassurance and safety
  ➢ This is why it is important for caregivers and teachers to use the skills to regulate themselves first before assisting a child

Apply your mask 1st!
## Perspective Shift
adapted by Elaine Miller Karas from a slide by Jane Stevens (ACES Connection)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Trauma-Informed</th>
<th>Resiliency-Informed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• People are bad.</td>
<td>• People are suffering.</td>
<td>• People are resilient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People need to be punished.</td>
<td>• People need an effective intervention.</td>
<td>• People need our compassion as they learn new skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People just don’t care.</td>
<td>• Many people care, but lack understanding and skills.</td>
<td>• Any person can learn self-regulation skills based on science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We need to stop making excuses for people.</td>
<td>• We need to learn how trauma impacts a child’s and adult’s development.</td>
<td>• We need to learn how skills of well-being can reduce suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is wrong with you?</td>
<td>• What happened to you?</td>
<td>• What is right with you? What are your strengths?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY CONCEPTS 2
The Limbic Area: Amygdala Designed for Survival

- The amygdala is the appraisal system of the brain.
  - Signals rest of nervous system when there is a threat
  - Sounds an alarm to take action based on life experience
  - Reminds us when there is danger like a warning system to take action because we could be in danger
After a traumatic event some children will always be afraid even when there is no threat.

The amygdala may sound the alarm so often that there is no peace or calm.

Even a small stress can cause a child to be terrified and afraid.

Some children can get stuck in the high zone while others are stuck in the low zone.

Some children go back and forth between being stuck in the high and the low zones.

It can be difficult for children to concentrate when in this state.

BRUCE PERRY 2008
PORGES (2011)
Implicit Memory

Includes body memories like sensations associated with positive as well as traumatic memories.

Cues trigger implicit memories
- Does not have a sense of self & time
- Develops before birth
- Can be triggered out of the blue

Memory Capsule

Muscle relaxation, slower breathing, steady
Heart rate, relaxed stomach muscles.
Feelings of peace or happiness

External Reminder

Internal Reminder

Visuals (people, places & things)

Sounds

Smells

Internal body sensation

Breath

Muscle relaxation

Heart rate

Memory Capsule
pain, numbness, dizziness, trembling, nausea, palpitations, anxiety, shame, anger, or intrusive thoughts

External Trigger
- Visuals (people, places & things)
- Sounds

Internal Trigger
- Internal body sensation
- Muscle tension
- Headache
- Stomachache

If sensations are triggering memory capsules...we need to learn To read our sensations so we can intercept sensations of distress!

Neuroplasticity: The brain can change!

This is Hope!
We can build new more resilient pathways!
Caregiver Responsiveness

Synchrony between caregiver and child develops as a consequence of learning each others sensory expressions and rhythms. The attuned caregiver reads the nonverbal expressions of the child’s sensory system and helps to regulate the child’s nervous system during times of distress and well being.
CRM Skills
The Skills of the Community Resiliency Model

- Resourcing
- Grounding
- Help Now!
- Gesturing
- Shift and Stay

TRACKING
The Skills of CRM
The Basic Three

- Resourcing
- TRACKING
- Grounding
Skill 1
Tracking: Reading the Nervous System
**Skill 1: Tracking**

*Reading the Nervous System*

Tracking refers to paying attention to sensations

- Tracking is the foundation for helping stabilize the nervous system.

- Tracking helps children and adults learn to tell the difference between sensations of distress and upset and sensations of balance and well-being within the nervous system.

- Exploring sensations connected to well-being is key to helping one feel better in mind, body and spirit.

- Tracking is used with all the skills.
Tracking the Autonomic Nervous System

Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic
Prepares for Action

The SNS controls organs during times of stress

- Breathing rate
- Heart rate
- Pupils Dilate
- Blood Pressure
- Sweating
- Stress Hormones

Parasympathetic
Prepares for Rest

The PSNS controls the body during rest

- Breathing rate
- Heart rate
- Pupils Constrict
- Blood Pressure
- Sweating
- Stress Hormones

Digestion
Saliva

Digestion
Saliva
### Common Sensations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress &amp; Trauma</th>
<th>Resiliency</th>
<th>Release</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shallow Breath</td>
<td>Deeper Breath</td>
<td>Shaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Heart Rate</td>
<td>Slower heart rate</td>
<td>Trembling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense Muscles</td>
<td>Relaxed Muscles</td>
<td>Burping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>Yawning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold/chill</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Heat/warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vibration/tingling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For some people, even sensing pleasant or neutral sensations can trigger unpleasant, even painful sensations.
- If you find yourself sensing uncomfortable sensations, you can try to bring your attention to pleasant or neutral sensations.
- If this is too difficult, you can stop.
We Pay Attention to Sensations of Well Being because What we pay Attention to Grows

Brain cells that fire together wire together! Carla Schatz
Skill 2: Resourcing

What uplifts you, gives you strength, joy or peace?

- Person
- Place
- Activity
- Faith
- Strengths
**Skill 2: Resourcing**

Conversationally, we ask about the resiliency story by integrating survival and coping questions in our intervention. We call this Resourcing.

“Do you remember when help arrived?” or “Do you remember the moment you knew you had survived?” or “Do you remember the moment that your friend/family member survived?”

“When you have had hard times in the past, what or who helped you get through?”

“Who or what is helping you the most now?”
Conversational Resourcing and Tracking

Community Resiliency Model Guides may interweave skills in a conversational way when talking to someone who may be in a state of distress, we call this CONVERSATIONAL CRMMING

The Guide may ask:

❖ What or who helps you get through hard or stressful times?
OR
❖ What or who helps calm you or uplifts you during difficult situations?

What is helping you?

My faith
My friends
Skill 1: Tracking and Resourcing Exercise

Paying attention to sensations of well being while thinking about a personal resource.

• Step 1: Can you bring to mind something or someone that gives you hope, peace or helps you get through tough times.
• Step 2: While thinking of this resource, fill in the details about this resource. For a few seconds think about all the reasons why this gives you hope, peace or helps you through tough times.
• Step 3: If you can bring an image of this resource to your mind. Bring in the details.
• Step 4: As you think about this resource, bring your awareness to sensations connected to this resource that are pleasant or neutral.
GROUNDING
Skill 3: Grounding
The direct contact of the body or part of the body with something that provides support in the present moment.
You can ground through your hands, feet, and whole body!

- Sitting on a chair or couch or the ground
  - Standing against a wall or hard surface
  - Sensing our feet making contact with the ground
  - Being supported by a surface
- Lying on
  - the floor,
  - bed,
  - ground
**Grounding Exercise**

- Find a comfortable position, take your time...
- Bring your attention to how your body is making contact with the chair, sofa, floor, wall, bed, etc...
- Bring your attention to sensations that are pleasant or neutral...
- Notice which part of your body is most supported. As you do so, notice your breathing...heart rate...muscle tone...notice your back making contact with the chair, sofa, floor, wall bed, slowly bring your awareness to your feet and notice how your feet are making contact with the ground...notice what happens on the inside...
- If you become aware of uncomfortable sensations, bring attention to places that feel neutral or better. Notice the change...
- Slowly scan your body and bring your attention to all sensations that are pleasant or neutral as we get ready to end...
- When you are ready bring your attention back to the room.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrjSsAC4muU&feature=youtu.be
RESEARCH

Statistically significant reductions in depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms and hostility indicators
RESEARCH UNDERWAY

- Claremont Graduate University, Paul Zak’s Laboratory, California
- Loma Linda University, California
- Emory University, School of Nursing
- University of Kigali, Rwanda
- Cal State, Dominguez Hills, California
- Fairfield University, Connecticut
- SEE Project – Emory University
Our Vision
To create resiliency informed and trauma informed individuals and communities.

Our Mission
A commitment to bring wellness skills, based on cutting edge neuroscience, to our world community, one person at a time, one community at a time.

CRM Resiliency training has been brought to Mexico, the Ivory Coast, China, Kenya, Rwanda, the United States, Darfur, Somalia, Guatemala, Japan, Serbia, the Philippines, Haiti, Trinidad, St. Vincent, Uganda, Nepal, Germany, England, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya.
The Trauma Resource Institute

Connect With Us!

@TRIresilience

@traumaresourceinstitute

Building Resiliency to Trauma: The Trauma and Community Resiliency Models by Elaine Miller-Karas (2015) Routledge
AN ELEGANT DESIGN: THE CAPACITY TO HEAL

The human body has the inner capacity to heal and restore itself and has a wisdom that words cannot speak.

- Elaine Miller-Karas

“I think this is what Nelson Mandela meant by the ‘Rainbow Nation.’ Learning about how to stabilize the nervous system is equality and is beyond nations, culture, religion and ethnicity.”

~ CRM Teacher, South Africa