

Uncovering the Power of Debriefing in Daily Work: The Leadership Edge

Trauma Responsive Leadership in Labor and Delivery:
Implications for Perinatal Patient Safety and Quality

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Debriefing the Front Lines

Debriefing the Front Lines provides

- Structured debriefing of single incident and Cumulative Care Taking Trauma[®]
- Emotional wellness offerings
- Sobriety support
- Nursing Continuing Education workshops through 1:1 sessions and hospital partnerships

MEET OUR *Debriefing Team*



KACIE SALAS

RN, BSN, NC-BC
Critical Care

Subconscious
Healing, Grief + Loss,
Addiction Recovery
and Sober Living



TARA KOSMAS

MSN, RN, NC-BC-CHSE, SOAR
Burns and Critical Care
Education

Survivorship,
Childhood Trauma,
Body Image, Self
Compassion



MICHELLE OAKLEY

RN, BSN, NC-BC
Pediatric Oncology

Presence +
Mindfulness, Betrayal
Recovery, Religious
Deconstruction,
Faith + Aligned Living



Objectives

- 1 Discuss the crucial role leaders have in creating and maintaining healthy work environments that prioritize staff physical and emotional well-being.
- 2 Explore meaningful debriefing practices as a tool for cultivating psychological safety and systems change.
- 3 Reflect on your own leadership practices and identify areas to implement debriefing techniques.

Terms

Cumulative Care
Taking Trauma

Institutional Betrayal

Institutional Courage

Tools

Core Emotion Check
In

Restorative Justice

Debriefing in Daily
Work

Core Emotion Check In



- Simple + powerful tool asking “Name one word to describe how you are feeling.”
- Building block in cultivating psychological safety

Echos a collective message

Validates feelings

Recognizes our humanity

Gives members of the team the opportunity to experience the power of being heard

Creates a sense of safety in numbers

Cultivates psychological safety needed to implement more formal debriefing practices

Fosters Post Traumatic Growth



TRAUMA

Trauma occurs when the nervous system experiences something that is **too big, too fast, too soon, too hurtful or too little for too long.**

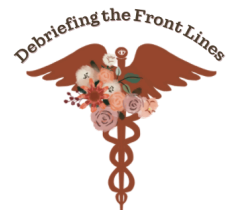
Kolk, V. D., & Bessel, A. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma*

CUMULATIVE CARE TAKING TRAUMA

The overexposure of abnormal and traumatic events with no time for

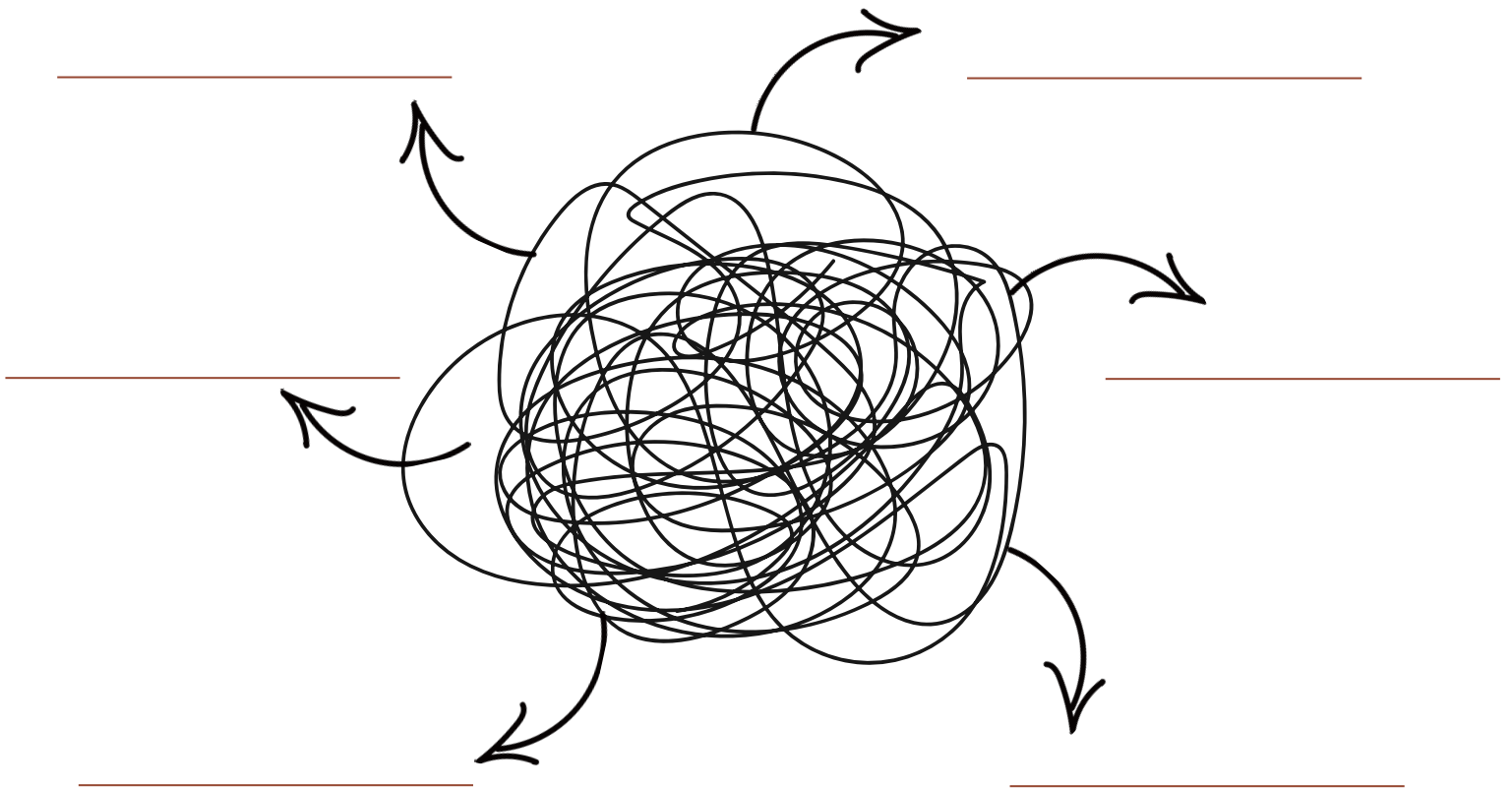
- Acknowledgment
- Discussion
- Processing
- Recovering (a sense of safety)

that results in emotional, physical and spiritual suffering.



SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Cumulative Care Taking Trauma is a result of not only overexposure of traumatic events but the systemic factors



These factors contribute to feelings of

Institutional Betrayal

Actions that defy the expectation for safety and violate relationships between individual and institution; a violation of trust that carries a psychological weight



Manifestations of Cumulative Care Taking Trauma

- Not being able to delineate where one trauma ends and another begins
 - Inability to rest, increased anxiety and feelings of continual urgency
 - Living in a state of sympathetic activation
 - Feelings of shame, guilt, grief, unworthiness and soul exhaustion that easily spill over into life outside of work
 - Exacerbation, episodes or flashbacks of personal and childhood trauma outside of nursing
 - Persistent limiting beliefs
 - Paralyzed in trauma
 - Detachment, disconnection + isolation
-
-
-
-



Awareness Building

How does Cumulative Care Taking Trauma show up in your leadership practice?

2. How do leaders?

- Foster a culture of safety
- Role model empathy
- Encourage open, retaliation-free communication
- Uncover vulnerabilities

that prevent further harm to staff

AND CARE FOR YOURSELF?



THEORY OF OVER IDENTIFICATION



3 Components of Self Compassion

01 Loving Kindness

02 Common Humanity

03 Mindfulness

Neff, K., & Germer, C. (2018). The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook. Guilford Publications.

Theory of Over Identification

- The opposite of mindfulness
- Often confuse compassion with over identification of others suffering – we take on what others feel
- Two modes of Over Identification Sympathetic + Defensive





SYMPATHETIC MODE

- Needs of the STAFF trigger a sympathetic response in you.
- You feels what the STAFF does.
- The STAFF's hope, fears and become yours.
- It is hard to identify yourself .

DEFENSIVE MODE

- The STAFF demands cause anxiety in you leading to self protective behaviors
- Emotional distancing, withdrawal, excessively task oriented, derogatory labeling like demanding or uncooperative.
- Anger → Guilt + Shame = Moral Injury

Reflect:

What mode do you find yourself operating in most often?
 What affect does this have on your personal well-being?
 And on your leadership?

INSTITUTIONAL COURAGE[®]

A pledge to protect and care for those who depend on the institution.



An institution's commitment to seek the truth and engage in moral action, despite unpleasantness, risk, and short-term cost. It is a pledge to protect and care for those who depend on the institution. It is a compass oriented to the common good of individuals, institutions, and the world. It is a force that transforms institutions into more accountable, equitable, effective places for everyone.

Center for Institutional Courage, 2024



Awareness Building

What examples of Institutional Courage have I witnessed?

How do I show Institutional Courage within my leadership role?

How can I show Institutional Courage?





RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Approach + tool to repairing harm based on dignity,
healing and community

Goal: Utilize this approach and the questions to

- ✓ Reflect before following up with staff
- ✓ Anchor in your own sense of safety before proceeding
- ✓ Mindfully move through a challenging situation
- ✓ Focus on connection over correction

Seeks to
answer:



Who was harmed?

What are their needs?

Who is responsible for making things right?

How can we work together to repair the harm?

5 PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- I. Invitation for participation
- II. Working towards repair
- III. Direct Accountability
- IV. Reintegrate where there has been division
- V. Strengthen individuals and community (teams)

Restorative Justice Center, 2024.

DEBRIEFING

Through guided self reflection, debriefing offers clarity surrounding traumatic incidents and assists in establishing a process for recovering a sense of safety in the aftermath of trauma.

- 01 Identify medical errors
- 02 Improving communication
- 03 Reviewing team performance
- 04 Providing emotional support following a critical event
- 05 Meeting goals
- 06 Addressing challenges
- 07 Pursuing opportunities

Purpose of
Debriefing



Safety --> Patient (+ Staff)
Quality --> Outcomes
Staff Wellness --> Retention



Debriefing to Maintain Healthy Work Environments

Trauma Informed Communication



Call out
courage



"Thank you for trusting me."

Communicate
Courageously:



"What am I missing?"
"Tell me more."

Clarifying your
understanding



"From what I'm hearing, you are feeling ____."

Boost
Character



"This is a difficult situation and you've shown
____ in how you are handling things."

Convey
Caring



"I am here to support you, what do you think
would be most helpful right now?"

Debriefing to Maintain Healthy Work Environments



Trauma Informed Communication

Check in
+ Follow Up



"I will check in on you on ___"
"What has been the biggest challenge since we last met?"

Express
Gratitude



"Thank you again for coming to me with your concerns and knowing it is a safe space to do so."

Embrace Risk
and Failure



"What do you think our unit could learn from this?"

Reflect:

- What parts of these statements feel uncomfortable?
- What parts resonate?
- If this isn't my normal style of communicate, where can I begin incorporating it daily work?

Awareness *Building*

RECOGNIZING OUR HUMANNESS

Reflect back on your words,

What story do these words create about my experience today?



Summary

- ✓ Reflective practice drives individual, team and institutions to actualize potential, increase staff retention, create safety and drive quality, dignified patient care.
- ✓ Utilizing the Core Emotion Check In Tool, principles of Restorative Justice and creating authentic turn key statements can help to normalize emotional reactions to complex work.
- ✓ Institutional betrayal perpetuates Cumulative Care Taking Trauma and requires Institutional Courage to undue the harm caused.
- ✓ To care for healthcare workers is to care for the future health of our commUNITY.
- ✓ Self compassion is a vehicle for social + systems change.
- ✓ Change is incremental and doesn't have to begin with grand gestures but small consistent practices that establish trust.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

ALONE IS NO LONGER ENOUGH



DEBRIEFING THE FRONT LINES

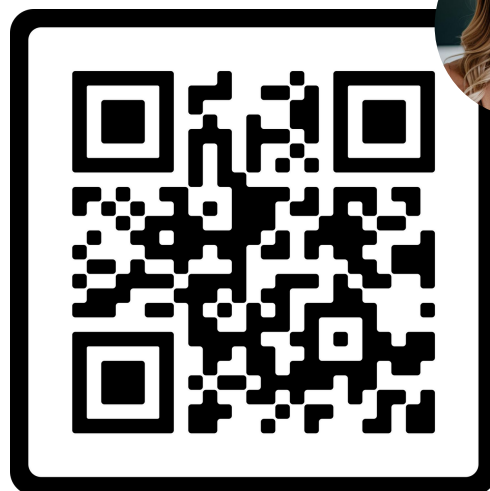
ALONE IS NO LONGER ENOUGH



Explore website



Complete presenter
evaluation



DEBRIEFING THE FRONT LINES

Cope Ahead Plan



Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Tool

Enables you to have a secure plan (+establish a sense of safety) when beginning to experience overwhelming distress, anxiety and panic.

Can be created and used prior to any encounter that is creating anticipatory anxiety (example: work, family gathering, etc.)

Goal: The Cope Ahead Plan helps navigate the feelings that arise from difficult situations through identification of

- Warning Signs (emotional + physical)
- Coping Strategies
- Useful Distractions
- People to Contact - Personally + Professionally



First, I will



Next, I will



Then, I will



Last, I will

Utilizing the above sequence, create your Cope Ahead Plan

“I am alone and (insert your descriptive word/language)...

“When I am (insert your descriptive word/language) and around other people...

“When I am (insert your descriptive word/language) and at work ...

In moments of anxiety, mental fog and self doubt often appear. These moments can leave you paralyzed and unsure of the next step. Creating a Cope Ahead Plan, allows you to move through anxiety, anger, doubt, pain and sadness with more ease.

TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST



OFFER SUPPORT + CONVEY CARING

- Ensure a safe & welcoming environment for open dialogue.
- Actively listen to staff concerns while managing personal reactions.
- Validate feelings and experiences shared by staff.
- Provide resources for mental health support.
- Encourage staff to share their needs & preferences.
- Incorporates principles of safety, trustworthiness, & transparency in communication.
- Example statement:* "I am here to support you. What do you think would be most helpful right now?"

CALL OUT COURAGE

- Acknowledge and commend staff for sharing their experiences and feelings.
- Highlight instances where staff demonstrate strength.
- Example statement:* "Thank you for trusting me."

SELF ASSESSMENT: MANAGING YOUR REACTIONS + PRACTICING CULTURAL HUMILITY*

Be fully present: tame your wandering wind.

Listen to understand: develop a discipline of not preparing a response and take time, should you need, to consider a response when another is done speaking.

Respond productively: label your emotions

Appreciate being challenged: welcome the opportunity to learn more and grow as a leader.

Watch out for blank spots and biases:

"What stories am I telling myself?"

*Cultural humility involves an ongoing process of self-exploration & self-critique combined with a willingness to learn from others.

It means entering a relationship with another person with the intention of honoring their beliefs, customs, and values.

BOOST CHARACTER

- Take a strengths based approach to communication
- Acknowledges attributes of strength & professionalism
- Example Statement:* "This is a difficult situation & you've shown ____ in how you are handling things."

COMMUNICATE COURAGEOUSLY + CLARIFY

- Clarifies understanding & articulates what is heard.
- Ask open-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of staff concerns.
- Summarize key points shared by staff to ensure accurate understanding.
- Encourage staff to elaborate on their thoughts & feelings.
- Provide clear, concise information regarding policies & procedures if applicable.

CHECKING IN + FOLLOWING UP

- Summarize next steps.
- Provide clear communication as to next follow up.
- Inquire about progress and concerns.
- Encourage staff to share their progress.
- Provide resources for mental health support.
- Express gratitude.
- Example statements:* "I will check in on ____."
- "What has been the biggest challenge since we last met?"
- "Thank you again for coming to me with your concerns."

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