

Resiliency Peer Elective Proposal

Structure, Schedule, and Content

Overview:

What is the Resiliency Peer Program?

The Resiliency Peer program is an initiative from the Student Wellness Committee that is under the guidance of Dr. Allison Perrin, Director of Student Affairs for the School of Medicine, and Dr. Elisabeth Conser, Assistant Dean for Student Wellness and Advancement for the School of Medicine. The Resiliency Peer Program is in response to the Student Wellness Committee's identification of a significant need for educating our peers about topics in mental health and burnout prevention. The program is aimed at equipping medical students with tools to better manage stress and reduce burnout by forming a support system of medical students and faculty who are informed about techniques to support student wellness. In addition, the program focuses on the cultivation of evidence-based tools to allow medical students to manage stress so that rather than solely surviving, students can thrive in the challenges offered in medical school and beyond.

Our vision is for the Resiliency Peer program to develop as a unique, student-led TTUHSC initiative that focuses on improving student wellbeing in the form of an elective starting Spring 2021 focused on training and supporting pre-clinical MS1 and MS2 students at TTUHSC SOM. The Resiliency Peers Elective will utilize the Components for Enhancing Clinician Engagement and Reduction of Trauma, or "CE-CERT," a model for safeguarding against provider burnout that was locally taught by Dr. Michael Gomez, Licensed Pediatric Psychologist and former Assistant Professor in the Pediatrics Department at TTUHSC. With the goal of helping people to recognize and manage difficult emotional states, the CE-CERT model features five core domains with respective skill-sets that are tied together by the common thread of conscious oversight and mindfulness. These major domains are: *experiential engagement, parasympathetic recovery, conscious narratives, decreasing ruminations, and reducing emotional labor.*

The sections below will clarify several aspects of the proposed elective, including the structure, schedule, content, and additional background information.

What would be the Elective Structure?

The elective will consist of eight CE-CERT Training sessions on ***Mondays*** from ***12-1pm*** via a hybrid platform on the scheduled dates (below), the only exception to this scheduling is our first session which will take place on ***October 21th*** from ***12-1pm***.

The hybrid option allows for students to attend the sessions in person (highly encouraged) and only due to scheduling conflicts can students attend the meetings online. For each meeting we will have the zoom link projected onto the screen.

The structure of these sessions includes 40 minutes of didactics, 20 minutes of concept application/discussion and follow-up assignments. The 20 minute concept application/discussion will involve table group discussions for both MS1 and MS2 students. All of the sessions will be recorded for future use as well as for those that are unable to attend the live sessions through either modality. The recorded sessions are being placed within a secure folder on TTUHSC's Box website. Future implementations of additional training sessions are to be determined.

- Oct 21th: CE-CERT Introduction
- Nov 4th: Experiential Engagement
- Dec 9th: Parasympathetic Recovery
- Jan 27: Reducing Emotional Labor
- Feb 24st: Reducing Ruminations
- March 3th: Conscious Narrative
- March 10th: Review Session
 - CE-CERT Pillars 1-3
- March 17th: Review Session
 - CE-CERT Pillars 4-5

The first introduction session will be led by Dr. Conser and Dr. Perrin, and the rest of the sessions will be student-led, from the fourth cohort of Resiliency Peers who went through the CE-CERT Training and certification process in the spring of 2024. The last two sessions will be presentation and discussion based, and led by the current cohort of students going through the Resiliency Peers Elective.

What would be in the core training (CE-CERT) for Resiliency Peers?

The Resiliency Peers will be trained in a series of workshops featuring the Components for Enhancing Clinician Engagement and Reduction of Trauma, or “CE-CERT,” a model for safeguarding against provider burnout that was formally taught by Dr. Michael Gomez, Licensed Psychologist and former Assistant Professor in the Pediatrics Department at TTUHSC.

CE-CERT is a skills-based model that helps participants learn specific ways to emotionally connect and fully engage in their work on a daily basis, while protecting against risk factors for burnout. With the goal of helping people to recognize and manage difficult emotional states, the CE-CERT model features five core domains with respective skill-sets that are tied together by the common thread of conscious oversight and mindfulness. These major domains are: *experiential engagement*, *parasympathetic recovery*, *conscious narratives*, *decreasing ruminations*, and *reducing emotional labor*--- described briefly in the following outline (a more complete lesson plan is available upon request):

1. Experiential Engagement

- a. Teaching students to better notice and acknowledge feelings as they arise, and recognize the difference between natural emotions (such as anger, fear, sadness) and artificial emotions (such as guilt, worry, regret)
- b. Training students to increase their tolerance of distressing emotions by allowing them to follow their natural course without avoidance or repression.

2. Parasympathetic Recovery

- a. Collection of strategies that should be built into the entire day, not just “relaxation after work.” In other words, intentionally allowing for emotional space and finding ways to ground oneself during and between stressful situations
 - i. One example is the SOS paradigm (“Slow down, Orient, and Self-Check”) that helps individuals achieve clarity in their current situation, what they are doing, and what to focus on next

3. Intentional/Conscious Narratives

- a. Equipping students with the ability to cultivate an appropriate mindset going into a stressful event, having the presence of mind to problem-solve during a stressful event, and then subsequently reflecting and processing a stressful event in a healthy and constructive way

- b. A key component of healthy processing is how we interpret stress and transform that stress into positive engagement, thereby increasing students' window of tolerance, and decreasing states of hyperarousal

4. Decreasing Ruminations

- a. Becoming better at noticing and labeling rumination, the repetitive patterns of thought that actually inhibit problem-solving, and instead redirecting ourselves into a state where we are concentrated on goal-oriented, specific, actionable thoughts that are more productive and task-focused

5. Reducing Emotional Labor

- a. Emotional labor is defined as the cognitive load associated with the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfill the requirements of a job
- b. Instead of "artificial" emotional labor, students practice developing authentic ways where we can express ourselves and build empathy through practice
 - i. We assert the powerful idea that empathy can be learned and strengthened over time, and we need to adopt a "stance of curiosity" and look for ways to acquire empathy with intentional choices in our daily lives and work

What is required to successfully complete the elective?

Successful completion of the elective involves maximizing interaction with the group and the content that is being presented; therefore, we will be requesting that participants come to the meeting in person or (if necessary) to attend the meeting online, have their camera on and provide at least one contribution per session. Additionally, each participant will make a final presentation of one of the CE-CERT pillars of their choosing. These presentations will be turned in (in powerpoint form) and presented with your group in the final 2 "review" sessions.

What happens if a scheduled session has to be missed?

All of our sessions will be held over Zoom and will be recorded. These recorded sessions will be held in our secure TTUHSC Box folder. In the case of needing to miss a session, the session will be made up in the form of watching the recorded session that was missed and completing a writing assignment. For successful completion of the elective, we are limiting allowable absences to a maximum of 2 sessions.

How are the current Resiliency Peers equipped to train future cohorts?

In April 2020, the Student Wellness Committee selected 11 MS1 students to participate as the inaugural group of Resiliency Peers. Additionally, the 6 currently active members of the Student Wellness Committee have completed the CE-CERT Training and are certified to feedback and serve as additional Resiliency Peers. In total, 17 medical students, across MS1-MS3 years, have been trained in the CE-CERT model (with Dr. Perrin participating in several sessions).

A member of the Student Wellness Committee (currently Varsha Kanneganti, MS2) has the specific role of coordinating the Resiliency Peer program, including MS1 and MS2 applications for participating Resiliency Peers, attendance and accountability for the CE-CERT online training sessions, and additional supplemental meetings through the year to guide the current cohort of Resiliency Peers as they support themselves and their fellow classmates.

For any questions, please contact:

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