

Core Energetics Responses to the Economic Crisis

and other 21st century transitions

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Introduction

Core Energetics and body-oriented psychotherapy grew out of the psychoanalytic movement in 1930s Germany. Wilhelm Reich, one of the early leaders of psychoanalysis, is widely known for developing the concept of character structure as the proper focus for analysis, rather than isolated neurotic symptoms. Reich and his colleagues taught that neurotic symptoms generally stemmed from repression of sexuality. Tracing sexual repression in the lives of individuals to the authoritarian, conservative values of the traditional German family, Reich went beyond individual therapy to undertake extensive political and social change efforts. He attempted to integrate Marxism and psychoanalysis, arguing that neurosis is rooted in the physical, sexual, economic, and social conditions of the patient.

Fascism is an extremely right wing authoritarian ideology that believes in strong centralized government operating in unity with corporate interests, with little support for individualism, openness or opposition.¹ In “The Mass Psychology of Fascism,” Reich argues that fascist movements take hold where family structures embody authoritarian and sexually repressive attitudes. Promoting sexual freedom, Reich said, would unwind sexual repression and weaken the appeal of fascism. He and his followers worked with Socialist organizations to promote adolescent sexuality, availability of contraceptives,

¹ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascism>

abortion, and divorce, and economic independence for women. ²

If Reich was here today in 2010, we might ask how he would encourage body-oriented therapists to respond to issues in the world beyond their office. We can ask the same question of his student John Pierrakos, or of any other visionary figure, but ultimately we have to ask how we ourselves will respond. In this paper I will suggest that Core Energetics needs to proactively address trends unfolding in the world, and based on interviews with Core faculty and therapists, will offer resources to guide next steps.

Starting premises

We can probably all agree on some starting premises. We may share the goals of raising public awareness of Core Energetics, recruiting more students to its training programs, and keeping more graduates actively involved in the Core community. We can also agree on some challenges: only a small part of the population is willing and able to enter therapy, and an even smaller fraction has access to body-oriented therapies – certainly vastly less than the number who could benefit from therapy. The current economic crisis, high rate of unemployment and government budget cuts are increasing individual stress while making it harder to get therapeutic support. It may be possible to make progress toward those goals while addressing the challenges.

² Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Reich

Core Energetics can benefit by meeting community needs

Therapists often promote their services by offering free or inexpensive programs. The Institute for Core Energetics (ICE) and individual practitioners should explore the creation of introductory Core programs, designed for people with little or no experience in therapy, who have been impacted by economic, social and other community challenges. Practitioners could offer these programs in partnership with community, civic and faith organizations, and service agencies.

Practitioners would benefit from free marketing about their practice in the internal communications of trusted local networks. Partner organizations gain by offering new programming in response to economic and social difficulties. As individuals become more resilient to stress and change, the resilience of their families, organizations and communities will improve as well. ICE and Core practitioners should explore how they can be perceived as resources for increasing community resilience. The interviews with experienced practitioners in this paper offer a starting point for discussion.

Responding to current challenges – and anticipating future ones

Today's challenges are generally interpreted as serious, but within the realm of normalcy. However, evidence shows that fundamental, permanent transformations are now underway, and what we think of as normal conditions have already ended. Economic and social challenges are more severe than commonly recognized.

Social change activists strive to educate the public about the link between a visible, short-term crisis and their broader, more abstract goals. Helping professionals assist people affected by crisis. Both groups should plan responses to potential crises ahead.

At this writing, the consequences of the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, the worst environmental disaster in US history, are still unknown. Direct effects include severe impacts to communities dependent on fishing and tourism. "I was just sitting here thinking our way of life is over. It's the end," said fisherman Tom Young of Plaquemines Parish on the coast..."³ Indirect effects include growing recognition that our dependence on limited oil supplies is dangerous and unsustainable,⁴ and that there isn't necessarily a technical fix for all our problems.⁵

From an activist perspective, current crises, and those that will have direct, local and visible impacts in the near term, are educational opportunities. To make our society more sustainable, profound shifts in awareness and attitude are needed. The public is better able to grasp the implications of disasters taking place in real time.

³ "BP, government, warns oil may leak until August," MSNBC, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/37432881/ns/gulf_oil_spill/

⁴ Michael Klare, "The Oil Rush to Hell," May 18, 2010; TomDispatch; http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175249/tomgram%3A_michael_klare,_the_oil_rush_to_hell/

⁵ Our fix-it faith and the oil spill," NY Times, May 28, 2010; <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/30/weekinreview/30rosenthal.html>

The science is clear: over the long term, climate change is certain to cause more frequent and severe storms, floods, droughts, heat waves, and crop failures. Partly because most people don't perceive the direct connection between climate change and any single, specific crisis, the issue is widely ignored in the US.⁶ Studies show that climate change is often perceived as an abstract and uncertain threat, with impacts taking place far in the future, or in distant places.⁷

There has been recent progress for sustainability initiatives in New York City, such as making buildings more energy efficient, and encouraging use of mass transit. I've written that to build support for those initiatives, it's more persuasive to talk about how they will reduce the economic impact of higher fuel prices, which are coming soon, than how they reduce the City's contribution to climate change.⁸

From a helping professional's perspective, crises can be evolutionary opportunities. For activists, helping professionals, and everyone else, getting advance notice of likely crises will enable and guide more effective responses.

It's likely that rather than a return to earlier prosperity, economic volatility and disruption will increase. Rising stress on individuals and communities will exceed the capacity of

⁶ "Public's priorities for 2010: economy, jobs, terrorism," Pew Research Center, <http://people-press.org/report/584/policy-priorities-2010>

⁷ "The Psychology of Climate Change Communications," CRED, Columbia University, <http://www.cred.columbia.edu/guide/guide/principles.html>

⁸ "Building support for NYC sustainability initiatives," April 2010, Miner; "Sustainable Energy Independence for NYC," April 2008, Miner; <http://www.beyondoilnyc.org/>

social and governmental support systems. Therapists will increasingly be exposed to trauma and emergency management situations. The need for services will rise, but the number of potential clients able to pay for individual sessions may fall.

To explore how Core practitioners can prepare for these scenarios, we'll review the economic situation, some other challenges, and several ways of responding to them. Then we'll review advice from Core practitioners on assisting with increased community stresses, expecting they'll apply broadly to community stresses of all types.

The economic crisis

*The world is suffering from the worst downturn since the Great Depression. The crisis has left tens of millions unemployed in the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. The huge baby boomer generation in the United States, now on the edge of retirement, has seen much of its wealth destroyed with the collapse of the housing bubble. It would be difficult to imagine a worse economic disaster. Prior periods of bad performance, like the inflation ridden seventies, look like mild flurries compared to the blizzard of bad economic news in which we are now enmeshed. - Dean Baker, economist.*⁹

The financial crisis is complex. One part was a worldwide housing and credit bubble. Unscrupulous banks and finance companies gave out loans to consumers who couldn't

⁹ Dean Baker, "The cult of subprime central bankers," Huffington Post, May 31, 2010; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dean-baker/the-cult-of-subprime-cent_b_591511.html

afford them, and created vast amounts of exotic financial products based on those mortgages, which turned to dust in the hands of their buyers. Many property owners expected housing prices to keep rising permanently, but falling real estate prices and stock markets left many unable to pay their mortgages, resulting in widespread evictions, foreclosures and prolonged vacancies. This damaged or wiped out many banks and financial institutions, leading to the bailout of banks by national governments. Economic activity has slowed down and trillions of dollars of consumer wealth has vanished. Governments and central banks have responded with unprecedented spending, lending, borrowing, printing money, and bailing out banks and private companies at taxpayer expense – to the tune of literally *trillions* of dollars.¹⁰

Although the economy shows tentative signs of recovery, millions of Americans are still out of work, out of savings, and getting close to the end of their unemployment benefits. Even in a recovery, not enough jobs may be created to absorb record-setting numbers of long-term unemployed. Many people long accustomed to the comforts of middle-class life are now relying on public assistance for the first time, and may be for years. However, social services are less extensive than during the last period of double-digit unemployment in the early 1980s.¹¹

A growing body of research shows that layoffs can have profound health consequences,

¹⁰ “Financial crisis of 2007-2010,” Wikipedia;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_crisis_of_2007%E2%80%932010

¹¹ “The New Poor,” The NY Times, Feb. 22, 2010;
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/business/economy/21unemployed.html>

increasing the risk of heart attack, stroke, arthritis, diabetes, or psychiatric issues.¹²

An era of high joblessness will impact young adults, middle aged workers, and inner cities differently, and will affect our culture for many years. In October 2009, 17.4% of Americans were either unemployed or underemployed (stopped actively job hunting or can find only part-time work), seemingly the highest figure since the 1930s.¹³ 2.8 million homes were foreclosed in 2009. A record 40 million Americans are on food stamps.¹⁴

Trauma is usually understood to be some disastrous event such as a natural disaster or accident. However, trauma is any event or life experience in which the individual feels overwhelmed. The present financial situation of many people constitutes a traumatic experience of epic proportions for millions of people worldwide. In psychological terms, the present US financial crisis is referred to as a cultural trauma or mass trauma. This type of trauma is considered pervasive throughout a culture and becomes a shock to the cultural tissue of a society. This present day financial trauma however, is global in proportion and is affecting the world as much as terrorism or any major natural disaster. This type of psychological disaster is producing severe stress and overwhelming anxiety

¹² "Trauma of Job Loss Often Includes Health Problems," New York Times, Feb. 24, 2010
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/25/us/25stress.html?em>

¹³ "How a New Jobless Era will Transform America," Atlantic Magazine, March, 2010;
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/03/how-a-new-jobless-era-will-transform-america/7919/?source=patrick.net>

¹⁴ "America's Underclass," May 18, 2010; <http://finance.yahoo.com/tech-ticker/america%27s-underclass-the-growing-gap-between-the-rich-and-poor-487302.html>

*among millions of people. – David Berceci, bioenergetics practitioner*¹⁵

Before our interviews, some additional challenges...

I conducted phone interviews with a number of Core practitioners in May and June, 2010. The full interview summaries follow later in this paper. They outline how to create introductory events at community organizations and schools, and workshops geared to help people deal with stress from their personal lives, or from economic and social conditions. They address how to help clients deal with trauma, inner city conditions, and returning from war. Before presenting them in detail, additional challenges will be introduced. I discussed community economic challenges with respondents, expecting that their responses from a Core perspective would generalize to other challenges not as widely discussed.

Michael Antkies: on community outreach

Joanne Bagshaw: spiritual aspects of service work, and its role in trauma therapy

Ann Bradney: Core needs to be more aware of the world and the dramatic changes taking place in it, in order to bring the gifts of lower self work out where it is needed.

Robin Cameron: doing group trauma work an inner clinic

Liz Carl: running introductory Core events at NYC area college classes

Charlie Corley: how you and your clients can deal with financial challenges

¹⁵ David Berceci, <http://traumaprevention.com/2009/06/18/financial-stress-anxiety-trauma-a-global-trauma/>

Brian Gleason: applying body centered psychotherapy to committed relationship

Judy Gotlieb: her pro bono process group for low income Bronx adolescents

Kate Holt: how to run workshops on grief, loss, self care & stress relief

Barra Kahn: the pros and cons of doing Core outreach with experiential workshops

Neal Levy: ideas on introductory workshops, and involving 3rd & 4th year students

Lisa Loustaunau: Core techniques for combat veterans; how the economic downturn triggers ego death & rebirth. Pro bono projects from Core Brasilia.

Warren Moe: Bringing Core into the world through Living Core, trauma process

Kathy O'Connell: on Medicaid clients

Susan Pollack: the need for containment in risky group situations

Ted Riskin: introductory groups for community traumas, moving to acceptance quickly

Achiel van Tienen: low income clients and trauma work

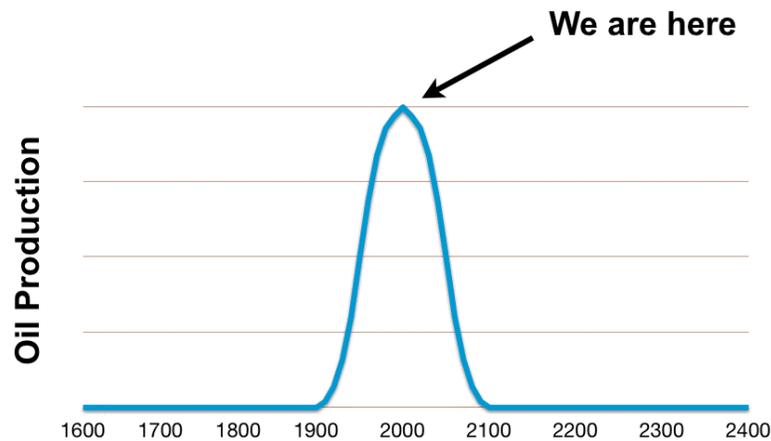
Karyne Wilner: introductory groups, working with community organizations

See full interview summaries later in this paper.

How would a fuel shortage affect the economy?

Most discussion of the financial crisis leaves out energy and environmental constraints. In the past five years, governments have taken on literally trillions of dollars of debt. Can that debt be paid off? Chris Martenson, formerly a Ph.D. biochemist and finance executive, explains that the concept of debt is premised on the assumption that the future economy will always be bigger than the past. If that's not possible, governments will either default on them – as a number of European countries seem to be in danger of doing – or governments will print money out of thin air to pay for them, causing inflation that will reduce the real value of their currencies, and melting away savings held in those currencies. Our debt-based money system took shape in the 19th and 20th centuries, when rapidly expanding use of fossil fuels and other natural resources created rapid growth. If that extraction of energy supplies and mineral resources was temporary and unsustainable, continued expansion of the economy is no longer possible. So what happens to our financial system? Martenson's free series of online videos, which take about three hours to view, offer a clear explanation of how our economy, energy systems and environment interact. They show how we got to where

we are today, and some reasonable expectations for the future.¹⁶ As he says, the next twenty years will look a lot different from the last twenty years.



World oil production to begin permanent decline by 2015

It's widely known that climate change is caused by our emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases, which must be drastically cut to prevent catastrophic global warming.

Carbon emissions come from the fossil fuels – oil, coal, and natural gas. When climate change response is understood as the need for the entire world to voluntarily restrict energy use, it's a very tough sell - like convincing people to become vegans for health reasons. Further, the opposition of powerful business interests has made it politically impossible to achieve the scale of energy use reductions that scientists say is needed.

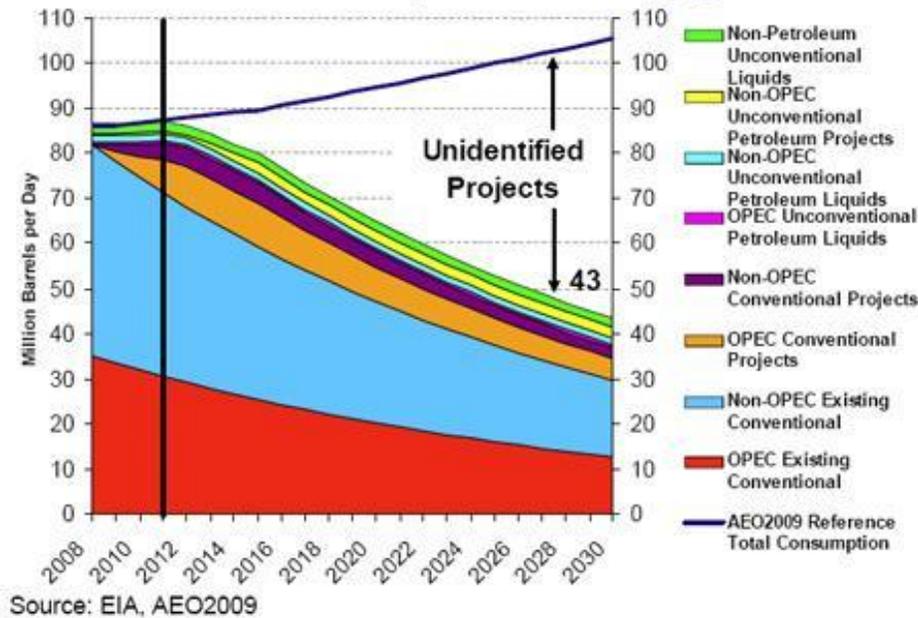
However, that's only part of the picture. Have you wondered why oil companies are taking the trouble to drill for oil a mile under the ocean, and then miles further below the

¹⁶ "The Crash Course," Chris Martenson, <http://www.chrismartenson.com/crashcourse>

ocean floor? It's because all the oil that's easy to find has already been found. *Cutting back on oil use will be inevitable, and not voluntary, because the era of cheap oil is coming to an end.* People began using coal extensively in the 1700s, which started the Industrial Revolution, and turned next to oil, the use of which increased massively in the 1900s, as above. However, discovery of new oil supplies peaked in the 1960s, and many geologists say we've used up nearly half of the world's available oil.

Oil production in the US peaked and went into permanent decline in 1970, after which we began importing oil from other countries. Eventually, production from all the world's oil producing areas will peak and go into decline, which is often referred to as peak oil. This won't mean we're running out of oil, but it does mean that we will have less each year instead of more, even if demand for oil increases. That is likely to drive the price of oil up, and increase volatility in oil price and supply. Our economy and our industrial society were both formed in a time when the supply of cheap oil was always on the rise. Now that will go into reverse, major changes can be expected.

World's Liquid Fuels Supply



Geologists and other experts increasingly acknowledge that world oil production will begin declining by 2015. Officially, the US Energy Information Agency has claimed that world oil production wouldn't begin decline until the 2030s. The chart above, from an EIA presentation to other energy officials, shows that privately, they recognize that decline will begin shortly.¹⁷ A US military planning report released this spring, while not intended for broad distribution, bluntly warns of oil shortfalls of as much as 10 million barrels a day by 2015.¹⁸ A report from British insurance giant Lloyds warns that we are headed toward a global energy crunch and price spike; business leaders who don't prepare for \$200-a-barrel oil, and transition to a low-carbon economy could face

¹⁷ "Meeting the world's demand for liquid fuels," Glen Sweetnam, US EIA, April 2009, page 8, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/conference/2009/session3/Sweetnam.pdf>

¹⁸ "US military warns oil output could dip causing massive shortages by 2015," UK Guardian, April 11, 2010; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/apr/11/peak-oil-production-supply>; US Joint Operating Environment Report 2010, http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2010/JOE_2010_o.pdf; p. 29

catastrophic consequences. ¹⁹ While rapid increases in solar, wind and geothermal energy are necessary, those potential sources of electricity cannot be scaled up sufficiently to replace the amount of liquid fuels in decline. Likewise, nuclear power, ethanol and other biofuels, coal, and hydrogen each have their own limitations. Conservation, efficiency, sensible planning, and cultural change are among the most effective responses. ²⁰

Economic and mental health impacts of higher fuel prices on NYC

Less oil available will probably drive up the prices for gasoline, jet fuel, trucking and transportation. Unlike the effects of climate change, impacts of higher fuel prices will be local, near term, and immediately evident. They will include higher costs for building heating and for transportation - commuting, aviation, the trucking of all sorts of goods, and the operation of police, fire, school and garbage vehicles.

Ways for NYC officials to address abrupt fuel volatility as well as gradual climate change were presented in a little-noticed 2008 report by this author. It has since been

¹⁹ <http://www.energybulletin.net/53100>;
http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/16720_0610_froggatt_lahn.pdf

²⁰ "Searching for a Miracle: Net Energy Limits and the Fate of Industrial Society," Post Carbon Institute & IFG, Sept. 2009; <http://www.postcarbon.org/report/44377-searching-for-a-miracle>

corroborated by official reports from the cities of San Francisco, CA, Portland, OR, and Bloomington, IN, which have received only slightly greater notice.²¹ There is an abundant online literature about fuel depletion that rarely enters mainstream media.²² Fuel price volatility will have broad, harmful economic impacts, which are likely to increase the mental health impacts on individuals and communities above levels produced by the current economic downturn. Dan Bednarz, PhD, writes about how public health care providers must anticipate declining budgets.²³

Post-petroleum stress disorder

Grasping the implications of declining fuel supplies leads to a set of issues separate from those associated with economic troubles, although it includes them. What's at risk is not just our security, and that of our families and communities, but the stability of civilization, our technological capacity, and our ways of life.

Kathy McMahon is a clinical psychologist who studies how people cope with learning about peak oil at <http://www.peakoilblues.com/> and <http://www.feistylife.com/>. Common reactions include disbelief and denial; fascination and obsessive study of the issue; anxiety, panic, fear; rage & depression; compulsivity; exulting in the suffering of others

²¹ "Sustainable Energy Independence for NYC," Miner, April 2008; <http://www.beyondoilnyc.org/>; Bloomington Peak Oil Task Force Report, Oct. 2009, <http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/6046.pdf>; San Francisco Peak Oil Task Force, March 2009, http://www.sfenvironment.org/downloads/library/peakoil_final_report.pdf; Portland Peak Oil Task Force, Feb. 2007, <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=42894>

²² <http://www.energybulletin.net/primer>; <http://www.postpeakliving.com/peak-oil-primer#>; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_oil

²³ "Health after Oil: the impacts of energy decline on public health and medicine," Dan Bednarz, PhD., <http://healthafteroil.wordpress.com/>

as deserved payback for their real or imagined shortcomings. Other responses are: a sense of bewilderment and unreality; an irrational grasping at unfeasible solutions (especially technological); turning to nihilism and/or survivalism; and denial. The urgently needed practical responses to these challenges will not be possible unless people are able to cope psychologically and spiritually. Two approaches follow.

The Work That Reconnects and the Great Turning

This form of group work, which began in the environmental and antinuclear activist movements in the 1970s, demonstrates our interconnectedness in the web of life and our authority to take action on its behalf. Developed by scholar and activist Joanna Macy, Ph.D., based on systems theory, Buddhist teachings, and deep ecology, the Work helps participants recognize and take part in the epochal shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization, sometimes called the Great Turning. Now happening on many fronts, it encompasses (1) holding actions, to save lives and species; (2) creating alternative structures for a livable future; and (3) causing shifts in consciousness.

Given the widespread suffering of our time and the dangers confronting us, sorrow, fear and anger arise. Pain for our world is a normal, healthy response; but cultural, political, and psychological factors lead us to repress it. Over sixty group process exercises can dispel repression and psychic numbing. They enable participants to connect to despair and the natural world, and put their lives into broader temporal contexts by envisioning

the ancient past and far future. <http://www.joannamacy.net/>

Inner and outer dimensions of the Transition movement

The Post Carbon Institute is the leading US group simultaneously addressing fuel depletion, climate change and the economic transition. www.postcarbon.org. Post Carbon supports the Transition movement, a new method of community organizing which encourages local grassroots responses to climate change, fuel depletion and economic disruption, all at the same time. As described in the *New York Times* magazine, hundreds of small towns in the United Kingdom have begun the process.²⁴

It starts with basic community basic education about the issues through presentations and documentary screenings. When a critical mass of residents is ready to act, organizers facilitate community meetings using the Open Space method to brainstorm local responses and coordinate grassroots action. <http://www.openspaceworld.org/>

The Transition approaches that have succeeded in small British towns have to be modified substantially to be translated to New York City and have to be modified substantially. Efforts to do so are beyond the scope of this paper. This summary of Transition principles provides a context for how it applies the psychology of addiction to our dependence on oil, and Chris Johnstone's FRAMES model.

²⁴ "The end is near! (yay!)," NY Times Magazine, April 16, 2009, <http://www.energybulletin.net/node/48699>

Transition is based on recognizing that no combination of alternative energy sources is likely to be invented or scaled up that can match the decline in oil supply we will experience, so we must prepare for a low-energy future. ²⁵ Focusing on the positive benefits of this adaptation will encourage more people to collaborate in creating it. Participants are led to see how the future could be preferable to the present by envisioning their community twenty years in the future, having successfully become much more sustainable, locally self-reliant, and less dependent on fossil fuels. Getting people to identify the first steps to this future, and begin taking them together, will strengthen the fabric of society and help us cope with oil price shocks in the short term.

Energy descent, the radical reduction of material consumption, is inevitable during the decades and centuries ahead. By planning for it, we can compassionately assist with the death of the current oil-dependent infrastructure, and the birth of emerging localized economies. In this process, rebuilding resilience is as important a goal as cutting carbon emissions. Resilience is the ability of a system to survive disturbances shocks without a major breakdown, rebuilding as necessary.

Because long-distance transportation will become more costly, relocalization is necessary: producing as much of what a community needs locally as possible. We cannot rely on leadership from the top. We need both top-down and bottom-up responses, and the latter increases the likelihood of the former.

²⁵ <http://www.energybulletin.net/node/51943>; <http://transitionculture.org/>

Having a positive vision is crucial. Peak oil and climate change can be intense and distressing, leading to feelings of disempowerment, sadness, weariness, and of being confronted by something huge and scary that you can't influence. Participants are encouraged to envision getting to a future potentially better than the present as an inspiring adventure.

Applying the psychology of change, from addiction to oil

Chris Johnstone, a psychiatrist who worked for many years as an addictions specialist in the UK National Health Service, applies the Stages of Change model embraced in the addictions treatment field to the oil addiction challenge.²⁶

- Pre-Contemplation (awareness of the need to change): We depend on cheap oil. Recognize concerns and ambivalences.
- Contemplation (increase pros for change and decrease cons for change)
- Preparation (commitment and planning)
- Action (implement and revise plan)
- Maintenance (integrate change into lifestyle)
- Relapse and Recycling: return to Contemplation stage

Industrialized societies are addicted to oil. Addictions refer to stuck patterns of behavior that can be difficult to change even when we know they're causing harm. In dependent

²⁶ <http://www.chrisjohnstone.info/index.htm>

use, someone may either block out information that suggests their favored substance is harmful, or they may continue using it.

Three principles:

- Pay attention to stages of change. Address issues of motivation, resistance, and ambivalence in groups.
- Create spaces for people to feel heard in making their own arguments for change. In dealing with resistance to change, use approaches such as Motivational Interviewing. "By providing a listening space where someone can voice both their concerns and their resistances, ambivalence is brought into view where it can be dealt with."
- If a change seems too difficult, have a preparation stage for training ourselves, to strengthen our capacity to respond. Include psychological training: cultivate positive visions, deal with fear, cynicism, and disbelief.

The FRAMES model

- **F**eedback of personal risk or impairment: a frank assessment of the problem, stark but not disempowering

- Emphasis on personal responsibility for change, rather than merely telling people what they should do
- Clear advice to change: a recommendation to modify lifestyle (but not a prescription), plus community-scale strategies for energy descent
- Menu of options: explore alternatives in development of an Energy Descent Action Plan (using visioning and backcasting as scenario planning tools)
- Therapeutic empathy as a counseling style: supportive, friendly, encouraging, empathetic, engaging (receiving as well as imparting info); creating a sense of embarking on a collective journey
- Enhancement of client self-efficacy or optimism: building a "community-wide belief that we can actually do this."

Oh, by the way... the threat of fascism is still present.

Reich opposed fascism in Germany in the 1930s. Naomi Wolf studied how 20th century dictatorships came to power, and outlined 10 steps necessary for a fascistic group or government to destroy a nation's democratic character. She argued that after the attacks of 9/11, each of these steps was initiated in the US. The steps include: invoke a terrifying internal and external enemy; create secret prisons where torture takes place;

develop a thug caste or paramilitary force not answerable to citizens; set up an internal surveillance system; harass citizens' groups; engage in arbitrary detention and release; target key individuals; control the press; treat all political dissidents as traitors; and suspend the rule of law.²⁷

Fascist movements in the US could come from Tea Party groups, some of which are funded by oil and gas billionaire David Koch, the 9th richest man in the US.²⁸ A host of extreme right wing and fundamentalist religious groups have been in operation for years.²⁹ Because of the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United vs. FEC*, corporations can pour more money into political campaigns than before. Oil and coal industries have tens of billions in profits to pour into campaigns.³⁰

²⁷ "Fascist America in 10 easy steps," April 24, 2007; www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/apr/24/usa.comment;
"The End of America: A Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot," Naomi Wolf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_End_of_America:_A_Letter_of_Warning_to_a_Young_Patriot

²⁸ "In glitzy shadows, a health reform foe lurks," Boston Globe, Dec. 6, 2009;
http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2009/12/06/in_glitzy_shadows_a_health_reform_foe_lurks/

²⁹ People for the American Way, <http://www.pfaw.org/right-wing-organizations>

³⁰ "High court unleashes tsunami of corporate cash with Citizens United ruling," Jan. 10, 2010;
<http://climateprogress.org/2010/01/21/supreme-court-citizens-united-ruling-polluters-energy/>

Interviews with Core Practitioners

For this paper, the following set of survey questions was widely distributed to Core faculty and students. Few responses were returned. Next, I conducted a number of telephone interviews with Core faculty and therapists. The interviews all took place in May and June, 2010. I asked them to speculate on how body-oriented therapy techniques, theory and practices could be adapted to new settings and conditions. Referencing the economic downturn, I asked how they would approach the creation of low cost workshops and classes, or short-term groups. My expectation was that the responses could be generalized to other challenges, with which not all practitioners would be familiar.

Survey for Core 5 Project

In these rapidly changing times, there is likely to be increased need for the personal growth that Core Energetics can facilitate. Core's training program is now relatively small. Identifying new opportunities for Core techniques and practitioners beyond traditional models is likely to attract more students and clients. It may also create a larger and more active alumni community, and increase the influence of Core on the general public. For Core to take advantage of these opportunities, your input is needed.... I'd like to share the insights of experienced practitioners

already working in these areas, as well as the responses of Core students or clients. Thanks!

Core techniques, whether applied in an ongoing therapeutic relationship, or a short- or long-term group, generally take place in a white, middle class, heterosexual context.

What have been your experiences using Core techniques with clients from different socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic groups, and groups of diverse sexual orientations?

Given the ongoing economic crisis, more people are experiencing financial stress: long-term unemployment, loss of savings, higher debts, and budget cuts.

How are external financial events affecting your clients?

Are economic factors affecting your clinical practice? If so, how?

Do you expect economic conditions to get better, stay the same, or get worse?

How might these scenarios affect your clients, and your community?

Are there other external conditions, positive or negative, that you expect might influence your clients and your community? Which ones? How?

Do you think that there are adequate supportive and therapeutic social services in your

community today? How might future scenarios affect them?

How might these change roles of traditional psychotherapy and Core practice?

How might Core techniques be modified to enable practitioners to create experiences for larger numbers of people, under increased stress, with reduced ability to pay for conventional individual therapy?

How might Core techniques be modified for those with little background in therapy?

How might those practices resemble current Core group work, or be different?

How might Core practitioners develop free introductory talks and inexpensive introductory workshops and classes that address increasing public needs for support services? For training services?

What types of organizations are likely partners for presenting these services?

How might practitioners offer free and inexpensive services to create opportunities for paying work?

How might Core be applied in communities like post-Katrina New Orleans or post-earthquake Haiti?

What about for refugees or returning military veterans?

What other therapeutic systems and techniques would help support clients in these trauma situations?

How might these practices be added to Core Energetics training?

How can Core develop a peer process group model that doesn't rely on highly experienced facilitators?

What questions should be added to this survey?

“The impact of the economic crisis on my core practice is that I have fewer and fewer clients. People are not willing to spend the money right now -- unless they are really in crisis. Others have stopped coming due to continued unemployment and are managing on their own. Potential new clients are not responding to my initiatives. I also acknowledge that I am not beating the bushes for clients. I don't like pressuring people and I am working full time and don't have the time/energy to be more pro-active and still have a life.” - **Anonymous**

Michael Antkies produced a series of Core Energetics introductory videos for public access television. He recommends presenting introductory talks on Core at libraries and health fairs, and to church or temple groups, and civic groups like Lions. Groups

are always looking for evening and weekend programming.

Michael Antkies, CCEP, serves on the faculty of the Institute for Core Energetics, (ICE) and is a member of its Executive Committee. <http://www.antkies.com/core.html>

Joanne Bagshaw is a psychology professor and Core practitioner with a special focus on helping individuals heal from trauma and abuse.

“Whenever there is a crisis, there is also an opportunity for change. One thing that Core can bring to communities is the spiritual aspect of service work. As therapists we are in a unique position in that even if our practices are slow, we are still able to help people, and that feels pretty good. I like to share that concept with my clients who may be making less money, and are reevaluating their lives. My suggestions to these clients are to find ways to do volunteer work or help other people. I even require my psychology students to do random acts of kindness every semester.

Let’s face it: we are all self-centered...getting out of ourselves and focusing on helping other people is life changing. I role model this concept for clients and students by being active in my community. Last year, I co-organized a fundraiser dinner for Women for Women International, and we raised \$15,000! My Co-Organizer was a Nutritionist, and the people that donated and volunteered at our event were all of our clients! I also take volunteer vacations, help my daughter raise money for schools in other countries, am a provider for Give an Hour (offering free therapy to veterans), and do community presentations for Women for Women International. The point is that I don’t just suggest

that my clients do service work, but that I am doing it too. Core can make a presence and inspire change that is outside the individual by being more community focused.

Another aspect of service work that is really important is the role that it plays in healing and resolution for my trauma clients. In phase oriented trauma model (see Herman, 1992; Courtois, 2002), stage 3 trauma work usually involves our clients' rebuilding, reconnecting and expanding their world. Part of that reconnection and expansion with the post-traumatic self can be service work that is related to their trauma. The service work also helps give new meaning to the trauma, deepening spiritual connections.

When I attended Core, there was a brief mention of trauma during Kuno's presentation on anatomy. That was it, and that was not enough. To handle the current and increasing rates of trauma, Core should integrate trauma training in the curriculum. This should be done beginning in the second year, when we cover Anatomy, and continue through the 4th year and beyond. New Core Practitioners should graduate with a basic knowledge on how to work with trauma clients safely, which comes from an understanding of what happens in the body after a trauma. Also, there is a difference between childhood wounding and trauma. Difficult life events happen to everyone, but are not necessarily traumatic. I think it is essential for Core therapists to understand the difference. Core can be either a powerful way for our clients to thrive after trauma, or it can really harm our clients. Good therapist training makes the difference.

To further training, Core could also initiate a CEU program for certified graduates to maintain their certification. This would be a good way to encourage practitioners to continue with workshops and trainings, including trauma.

We all know how powerful Core is, but unfortunately there isn't any research to back up our personal experiences. If we want to go mainstream with Core-- to reach more people, we should start doing qualitative and quantitative research to support our subjective experiences. Other body-centered therapies have already done this (e.g., Hakomi, Somatic experiencing), and thus are more well known and respected. I think Core has been afraid of using science to add credibility to our work...If we really believe in the power of this work than it's time to prove to the world what we can do!

As for providing services to trauma clients, I think as Core therapists we need to be creative and step outside the box, in how we offer therapy. Most people don't have the time or money to go to once a week therapy. But they can come once or twice a month, attend our workshops, join a group, offer phone sessions, offer 30 or 45 minute session, or do a combination of these things." *Joanne Bagshaw, LMHC, MA, is a Core practitioner. <http://www.joannebagshaw.com/>*

Ann Bradney feels that Core needs to be more aware of the world. There are a lot of ways that Core has stayed in a bubble, and a place to start is simply having an intention to become more aware, stop looking at people as simply wounded children, and look at larger issues. Our clients are often privileged white people. Many systems of therapy today look at issues of race, class, the economy, and the environment. The Core model

needs to open up, and recognize how people are affected by social issues. If you try to connect with people without that awareness, you can make a lot of mistakes, and come across like an unconscious, privileged white person with a fixed point of view. To fit into what is clearly a multicultural world, we have to be humble enough to open ourselves to the culture and background of those we meet, and how they do things. To build bridges from our world to these other worlds, we have to learn about these cultures, and the potential blind spots for people from our backgrounds.

We have to translate how we describe what we do to into the language of the community with whom we're speaking, otherwise it won't make sense and will alienate them. Don't automatically rely on the terms mask, lower self and higher self. They're not self-explanatory, and may imply spiritual connotations and understandings that listeners don't share. Instead of "mask," describe the ways we hide, and hold back our most spontaneous creative energy and potential, or the public persona that hides our deeper impulses & actions. Lower self can be described as our destructive energies that we're afraid of and as the part of humanity that separates and creates enemies, and higher self can be described as our highest power. Experiment with neutral descriptions in your own words.

Until you've spent a lot of time with any group, you must go in with an attitude that you are learning from them. When Ann began work with a group of Israeli women, she knew there was a huge cultural gap and confronted it directly. She introduced herself by admitting that she had never been in an environment like the one they were in, had

never been face to face with war or deadly conflict. “I live a privileged life in a privileged country. But I have experienced terror, violence, and deep feelings in my own personal life. There are things that I am ignorant of and you will need to teach me about those things, but I am not afraid of the intensity of the feelings here.” Once she made a deep emotional connection with the group, Ann no longer needed to be careful, and had Muslim women with head scarves yelling ‘fuck you.’ Translating Core into their world was easy because the Israeli women were both very spiritual and able to feel deeply. Translating Core for a group of women CEOs was more difficult. They became terrified, but Ann took their cues, and immediately slowed the process down. The language and work for the two groups were profoundly different, but she created a bridge to each.

The world is really changing. I don't think the way we're doing things can continue. A lot of structures are really going to break down, and it will be both bad and good. People need to get out of the concept of therapy, which is a very privileged and self-centered paradigm. Even if we're doing therapy, I believe that the paradigm has to shift from one that is about the therapist and the patient to one that is much more participatory. It's less about being the expert who has an idea about where someone needs to go, and more about being in a relationship that allows more of an equal participation. In a group, it's not 'I am a leader and these are the rules,' but 'I am a leader holding a space for the group wisdom to emerge.'

The concept of therapy has kept people small. We need a different model that allows for people to become as large as they can be in the process, and that requires the therapist

to let go of knowing a lot. We can have our wisdom, but when the leadership is too strong and has too many answers and too many rules, it doesn't allow for individuals, groups or communities to share the leadership. I believe this is what is needed now. We need to train human beings that we are all responsible for what is happening. We have a responsibility to take up our leadership in every area of our lives.

Instead of focusing on the techniques, focus on creating a process and a space that invites full participation, leadership and self-responsibility, within which the techniques are used as tools. People don't often do that is because it's hard to relinquish ego control. It gets hard when you invite that much leadership from a group. You have to let go of being the one that knows, and the amount of energy, aliveness and power that comes out it can be scary. This approach brings the ability to attract and work with large groups of people.

Ann is doing a free training for the entire staff of a group that deals with underprivileged women. Students in Ann's program will work directly with that group's clients. She considers it a win-win proposition: the group and its clients get a workshop, and her students further their learning, and gain connections.

For beginning practitioners, Ann suggests starting where you are. Find a place you feel passionate about, where you have a connection, where people could use your help. Offer to do a talk at your local YMCA, the local abuse shelter. Offer a weekly group for overwhelmed mothers, or a stress reduction session of breathing and grounding at the

office where you work. Keep educating yourself, be willing to go out and do things that people haven't done before and learn as you go. Take notes, see what works, and be willing to make mistakes.

I've done so many things for free to develop my passion. When you offer things for free or very little money, you can attract opportunities, as well as people who couldn't access these services before. Start small: offer to help attendees reduce their stress, then help share deeper things with each other, offer a little teaching about mask, then tell a little truth behind it. Keep going out in the world and offer to give talks. When you go out, see the organizations and learn from them.

Don't let fear stop you. When I started 20 years ago, I didn't know what the hell I was doing. When I led my first Core group, I had so much anxiety that I threw up before each one for about a year. I've learned to tolerate huge amounts of fear for long periods of time. Sometimes I feel like I will die but it always takes me to more powerful places.

One of the reasons we stay small is a limited awareness of world and social issues systems thinking. Do your own reading about the effects of rank, privilege, and diversity. These topics aren't addressed in the Core training program. There's a lot of powerful people working in the world that are saying many of the same things we're saying, but they have a way of taking it to a larger audience. Lower self work is unbelievably powerful. Core needs to open up to the world, so we can bring our gifts out into it where they are needed. Because so many practitioners who work with

conflict are afraid of lower self energy and avoid it, there is a great hunger for those who can work with it.

The moment you invite the world into therapy, your process, energy and awareness all become bigger. The moment you invite in the world, people become bigger – bigger than if you keep talking about your childhood. People are hungry to deal with the world, and if you do this, they will flock to you. People know the world is in so much trouble; they are hungry to connect with the world, understand it, and help it. We can use the Core process both to facilitate people's connection with the world, and help them grow. All your childhood issues and fears will come up anyway, so you might as well do it in a way that helps the world too.

The US and Europe are the last regions in the world where the majority thinks that things are basically still okay. We can still live in a nice house and get a cappuccino but that's not the way most of the world is living now. It's time to wake up. The desire to help the world is getting to be mainstream thinking everywhere. If we're going to be part of a changing world we need to get out of an old model and into a new one.

Ann learned about the trauma release work of bioenergetics practitioner David Berceli from Anna Timmermans, director of the Core Institute in Holland, who presented it at a community night. Berceli is a licensed social worker with 20 years of experience working with victims of trauma in the Middle East and Africa. His series of vibration-producing exercises start by opening the feet and creating grounding, next stress the

calves, and then the thighs, followed by floor work that charges the pelvis and causes vibration in the psoas muscles. Originally applied to disaster relief, the work is also being applied to returning soldiers, emergency services personnel, and those exposed to financial stress. <http://traumaprevention.com/>

Ann Bradney, CCEP, founder and director of the Radical Aliveness / Core Energetics Institute of Southern California, served on the faculty of ICE. www.annbradney.com/

Robin Cameron was a social worker and program director at the Youth Empowerment Mission, in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in New York City. It convinced her that most of what needs to be done is not the subtle unwinding of characterological wounding, but trauma work. In that community, trauma from a variety of causes is widespread: sexual abuse, physical abuse, incarcerated relatives, drug addicted relatives, teen pregnancy, family members in gangs. Levels of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) are severe. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptsd>

Because of trauma, many people cope with dissociation. They struggle to be present in their lives and in their bodies, and experience numbing, depersonalization and disengagement. Community groups in Bed Stuy would have many people living below the poverty line. Much of the work would be trauma release, and helping members to support each other. The conversation would be different from what we're familiar with in Core groups. It would be more about practical needs: helping someone graduate from high school, leave an abusive home, access prenatal care, getting housing for

runaways. There's so much rage and pain.

Teens in the group will be living directly in their family trauma, without support for coping with it. It's useless to get adolescents to sit in a room and talk to you. Robin would have teens stand in a circle, stamping jumping, and screaming yes or no, inviting them to hit a stack of pillows. In any day that Robin's after school program met, about 75% had experienced some kind of conflict or trauma that very day, so giving them an opportunity to hit was priceless. Robin would start workshops by getting people into a line and take turns hitting. Unlike familiar Core groups where hitting is about getting energy to move and is coupled with introspection, this was more about giving teens permission for a necessary catharsis. It was supportive to have an adult encourage the catharsis, affirm that it's normal to feel that way and great to be able to express it. The group would play songs, and paint on newsprint sheets taped to walls. Goals for the girls in the group were to develop self esteem, support each other, learn life skills, and have a place to express themselves, without relying on reflection or verbalizing.

With an adult population, there would be more opportunity for reflection and insight after moving energy, and a continued focus on losses and trauma. The facilitator might say: "I'm aware that most of you are probably sitting on lots of big stuff, much of it for a long time. Here is a space to express, explore, and get support from others, who may have been sitting on lots of the same kind of things." Goals would include helping members to support each other, and overcoming separation and suspicion. If someone lost a relative to drug addiction, have them pick the person who reminded them of that person.

Or ask people to come up, hold each other, stand or sit across from each other.

Robin Cameron, LMSW, CCEP, is a Core practitioner who has recently moved from NYC to England. <http://www.robincameronenergy.com/>

Liz Carl has created several introductory Core experiences, some locally, some in New York City at the Open Center and as a guest teacher in New York and New Jersey colleges. One of these Intros was as a guest professor in Psychology 101 classes at a New Jersey community college with a mostly African American, Hispanic and Asian population. Liz explains how in somatic psychology, the body is involved in trauma treatment. To demonstrate a way to experience energy, she sets students in two opposing lines. Members on one side start walking closer, until their counterparts in the opposing line tell them when to stop, then the roles switch. She discusses breathing, anxiety, the fight or flight response. A simple stomping exercise illustrates grounding. To explain that when we're feeling something the whole body gets involved, she'll find one volunteer willing to exercise their anger, by asking them to imagine someone in your life they're very frustrated with, and then to punch into the pad held by an assistant. Invite a couple to do the towel pull: "give it to me...no way!" Get someone to hit the cube in reaction to a phrase the facilitator suggests, and then get support from the room. She found that if no one in the group is volunteering for individual work, go with less threatening group exercises. Even less experienced Core students can provide such introductory experiences. The minimum requirement is for someone to be there who

can hold the space, sense energy, and see if someone's flooding, getting ungrounded, or having a tough time, so they can be grounded before they leave.

Liz recommends incorporating Core into the lexicon of trauma treatment techniques, and more outreach about Core in the language of the mainstream mental health community. With the help of formal research validating EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) [\[www.emdr.com/\]](http://www.emdr.com/) and Somatic Experiencing, these techniques have been widely accepted, and receive Federal government funding. Core could benefit from research. *Liz Carl, LCSW, CASAC is a senior faculty member and supervisor at ICE. www.lizcarltherapy.com*

Charlie Corley points out that economic downturns affect both clients and therapists. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows us that people have to take care of basics – shelter, food, employment – before they can put energy and time into creative pursuits or self-actualization. If you have a private practice, your living situation depends on how many clients come in or leave. In times of financial stress, all therapists, even very experienced ones, are more likely to lose clients, especially those with limited incomes. People who get fired won't be paying for therapy, and even clients paying through insurance have limits. Clients dealing with economic disruption may become stuck in seeing themselves as devastated, helpless victims. They can be inspired to take action, go after what they want and need, and find a place of growth.

Most people don't see the nuts and bolts of keeping a practice going, especially during dry times. It's the nature of the business of therapy to let clients go, with faith that more clients will follow. Having or lacking clients affects the therapist's emotions, and tests their sense of trust and safety. Therapists are very aware of the monthly financial contribution each client makes to their budget, but rarely speak of it. So therapists need to market themselves, and be visible to potential clients, whether through teaching, or developing a website. They must also learn to live within their means, and successfully deal with money, and the details of their own lives. If not, they will be increasingly affected by the burdens of their clients.

Charlie Corley, LMHC, MEd, is a senior faculty member of ICE, a member of its Executive Committee, and President of the NY Core Center.

Brian Gleason observed that many people have done lots of deep process work that hasn't translated into successful committed relationships. Brian has focused on applying body centered psychotherapy to this aspect of life. Relationships, beyond simply providing security or leading to procreation, should support each partner in fulfilling their human potential, and bring their individual gifts into the world. The Exceptional Marriage system created by Brian and his wife Marsha encourages each partner to use the other as a mirror to show precisely what they need to work on in their life. Even after 32 years of marriage, he's continually reminded that the possibility of growth and new self-discovery in the crucible of the relationship never ends.

Most couples choose to develop a relationship oriented toward safety rather than the harder path of growth. But efforts to create safety oriented relationships are at best only partly successful. When people choose a safety oriented relationship, energy and eros disappear, which is the reason most relationships die. Growth inevitably brings one up against places you resist, and things we don't want to look at, leading to conflict and confrontation. While there can be bad aspects of conflict, there are positive things to be discovered in relationship conflicts. They are almost always about emotions and how to express them. Rather than the term 'conflict resolution,' which focuses on the outcome, Brian prefers 'conflict engagement process.'

While couples do need help with their wounds, the goal of the work is not just to feel better, but to enable couples to bring their enhanced connection back to the world. To make the work available to those with limited time and funds, Brian has considered putting versions online, creating teleconferences and conference call support groups for low rates, and referring to the services as mentoring rather than therapy.

Brian Gleason, LCSW is a senior faculty member of ICE, a member of its Executive Committee, and director of Exceptional Marriage. www.exceptionalmarriage.com

Judy Gotlieb co-facilitates with her husband a pro bono process group for adolescents from low income families living in the Bronx. These kids are hungry to be heard and are

very open to trying new things, including Core exercises and process work. They live through various traumas ranging from domestic violence, rape and molestation, racism, neglect & abandonment, gang activity, being shot at, parent's substance dependence, divorce, eviction and not having enough money for food, transportation and medical expenses. Several of her private practice clients are out of work. One can't afford to take time off work even though she is going through chemo and radiation for cancer. To deal with economic pressures on her clients, she is offering her sliding scale more, cutting fees in half for several clients, and doing more pro bono work. She has had many potential new clients not schedule an appointment when they hear she doesn't accept insurance. Judy expects economic conditions to get better, but now, notices that people in the affluent town of Wilton, CT where she lives losing their jobs and turning to the food bank. She recommends Core movement classes focusing on grounding to create Core experiences for larger numbers of people. As to offering free or inexpensive services, Judy encourages practitioners to trust that giving freely leads to good things. She hopes that Core training can touch upon cutting edge trauma techniques, such as EMDR and the bioenergetics work of David Berceci.

Judy Gotlieb, MFT, is on the faculty of ICE, and co-creator of its Connecticut training program. www.lovelifecounseling.com

Kate Holt offers grief workshops, and has recently done presentations on self care for groups of nurses and health care providers. To manage stress, Kate presents many

stress relieving techniques working at the physical, emotional, mental, will and spiritual levels, and encourages participants to use at least one option a day from any level.

People come to grief workshops for many reasons. Each person is able share, either in dyads or to the whole group, what brings them to the workshop, and what they are experiencing. Our culture has a limited way of dealing with loss. “There is some ritual to support the loss of a person but not of other losses. People don’t bring lasagna for you when you get divorced. We need other rituals, and the support of people around us.” People lie down on the floor and do staccato breathing, then name and reach out for what they lost, feeling the yearning for it. People either return to the circle and have a chance to process in front of the room, or go back to dyads. Goals for the process work can be as simple as getting people to acknowledge how they’re feeling, and allowing them to get support of the group.

An introductory workshop for people coping with stress might start with the facilitator explaining what will take place. Group members would take three minutes each to share what’s causing the stress in their life, either in dyads if the group is big, or to the whole group if it is small. If they return to the full group from dyads, ask how it was for them to share their experience. Share basic information about how there is both habitual holding of stress in the body, and how we do it on a day to day basis.

Character structure formation may be too complex, but briefly explain how defenses get formed and habitual ways of holding energy are set. The new stress-producing factor is added on to whatever we’re holding from the past. When activated, the stress response

or sympathetic nervous system, enables us to run from an attacker, but is less helpful in today's imagined attackers, such as deadlines or relationship conflicts. Moving energy helps to activate the calming, parasympathetic nervous system, which for allows for clear thinking about ongoing challenges.

Get people up on their feet and do several exercises to charge energy in their legs. Stretching, jumping, saying 'no,' and 'get off my back,' followed by a discharge position like the waterfall or the bow. The goal is to get some involuntary movement. *Kate Holt, RN, is on the faculty of ICE. <http://www.kateholt.info/>*

Barra Kahn likes to do Core outreach by offering experiential workshops, with the knowledge that this has limited validity in building her practice. Maybe one person out of a group will try a few sessions. Many people would like to do Core but can't afford it, even at discounted rates. People in spiritual communities are most receptive to Core work. "In my experience, Core work does not attract inner city people. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this makes sense. People need to put food on the table and pay their rent before they can start thinking of how to raise their consciousness level." Those who struggle daily to pay for food and rent can't afford a Shalom Mountain intensive at \$800, one-time training weekends like the Forum or EST at \$400, or even \$50 for sliding scale individual therapy.

Individual workshops and events can be very powerful for opening doors and raising awareness, but are unlikely to magically transform people unless they are followed up with regular, consistent weekly work. Because of the economic situation, many of her clients are asking for to reduce their sessions from weekly to only two sessions a month. She prefers to allow clients to discover for themselves that they need to work more regularly. *Barra Kahn is a Core Energetics practitioner. www.barrakahn.com/*

Neal Levy says that Core can create a space in which people are encouraged to tell their truth and have their feelings in an uninhibited, embodied way. This can benefit anyone, even in the scope of a one-time workshop. One obstacle is that some people with limited experience with therapy will want to do practical problem solving around stresses in their lives. The facilitator must make clear the workshop is about having feelings, moving the energy around them, and emotionally connecting to whatever issue brought them in. It would be good to have people hit the cube, although this could be scary for people who are ungrounded, schizoid or have experienced violence. Whether people have positive or troubling experiences, they should be able to get support after the event. If 3rd or 4th year students assisted at the event, attendees could be directed to schedule follow up sessions with them for a nominal fee. *Neal Levy is an assistant faculty member of ICE.*

Lisa Loustaunau:

“Over 2 million Americans have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The life-

changing experiences they each have will directly affect their families and in turn the larger communities we all live in. You don't go into a war zone and return the same person as you were before, and healing is not about going back to the way you were before that experience. Judy Gotlieb, myself, with possibly some of the other members of the Connecticut Core teaching team are forming a group to work with returning veterans at no charge.

Ed Tick, Ph.D., in his book War and the Soul, describes how the warrior archetype is the first to awaken in a young man. Lessons of this archetype include those of death, rebirth, dismemberment, and memberment. Soldiers leave on a journey that takes them far outside the circle of their community, to protect family, tribe, & nation. That is what they do. What is supposed to happen when they return, is to be brought back into the center of the circle and helped to heal from their wounds, and where they can in a sense allow new parts of themselves to be born, just as some parts may have died. If this healing doesn't happen, these soldiers will permanently be at risk of harming themselves and others. These issues which affect these young men and women transcend politics. An interesting website is <http://www.soldiersheart.net/> to learn about some of the ways that are being used for supporting veterans in their healing process from a deeply soulful approach.

Current modalities typically used in VA hospitals are Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), both reason & behavior-based techniques. But some VA's are experimenting with other kinds of modalities. Core Energetics is a modality which I believe can be very useful in supporting veterans in the re-regulation of

their distraught and altered nervous systems, because our work is so powerfully about charge and discharge. In trauma of any kind, the nervous system generates a huge charge throughout the system. If a person can fight or flee, the energy can dispel itself and eventually return to a base level. Veterans in today's wars face a constant threat from IEDs (improvised explosive devices) from any location or direction, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for months a time. It's a constant state of threat, of high alert, high charge, which frequently has no way to be dispelled. Everyone returning from these wars will likely find themselves somewhere on the PTSD continuum at least for a time. When symptoms continue past a certain amount of time (I believe it is somewhere between 30 - 90 days) a diagnosis may be given. Anyone working with veterans should also be aware of the incredibly high incidence of TBI (traumatic brain injury) that is a result of the powerful shock waves created by the explosives and the vibrations that go right through the body (even if there is no direct head injury). Practitioners working with this population need to learn more brain injury, particularly as mild TBI is easily missed as symptoms are similar to other conditions. Information is available at www.bianys.org

*Symptoms of PTSD include; **Hyper-arousal** (overcharge in core language) evident in sleep issues, outbursts of anger, sexual aggression, difficulty concentrating, hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle response. **Numbing**, wherein nervous system experiences the simultaneous activation of both sympathetic and parasympathetic branches, can be seen in avoidance of thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated to the trauma, avoidance of people, places, or activities connected to the trauma. Loss of interest in participation in normal events, detachment or estrangement from others.*

Intrusive recollections, flashbacks, nightmares.

Ed Tick encourages us to think more holistically about PTSD, something that Core Therapists are well trained to be able to do. He sees it not as mental illness and not as a moral failure, but as proof of our humanity. It arises specifically from the kill or be killed experience. That makes it different from other kinds of trauma that therapists work with. He also calls it Post Terror Soul Distress and Post Terror Social Disorder. Many soldiers say that going to war is not the hardest part, coming home is, with a terrible feeling of not being seen or understood. Tick also calls it a result of interrupted initiation, and there is an imperative to help channel and transform the energy of the warrior archetype into a creative flow so the soldier can have the re-birth experience and so complete the initiatory process.

Core training teaches us as practitioners to tolerate intense feelings and energy, and to face our lower self, our own inner killer. When I was at a recent conference with Judy, attended mostly by social workers on understanding the needs of veterans, the question was asked, how many in the audience knew the part of themselves that could kill. Out of an audience of 200 or so, Judy and I raised our hands along with perhaps 15 or so others. It was powerful. Though we cannot begin to imagine we really have a clue what some of our veterans have experienced, as Core practitioners, I do believe we know something about channeling powerful energy in ourselves and helping that energy ground. Also our inner work of facing our own darkness has hopefully brought us a place of knowing that none of us are really "above" certain things.

The group will focus a lot on grounding, making contact, breathing, and connecting to their own bodies and feelings. Noticing the tensions they hold, learning about their own energy system and about charge and discharge and how to use these when intense stuff comes up. How to support them in containing strong feelings/energy and not acting out. I see us moving into body work in an organic way, taking it slowly until we have a better sense of what happens energetically to the individuals in the group and the group as a whole. I anticipate that initially we might be focusing a lot on discharge. We hope to create a safe circle for sharing their experiences. It is important to set parameters (clear rules, which soldiers understand, about the group, the use of the equipment, and not acting out. Just like other process groups have. I anticipate we may have some difficulties with consistency as far as attendance, so helping the group bond will be important. Support in taking emotional risks (appropriate ones but still risks) will help this happen. Helping them give and receive from one another. They may have lost a sense of trust, or a sense of purpose knowing themselves only as soldiers. Their connections to family and community may have eroded. Some may not be ready to talk much yet. Fortunately so much of our therapy doesn't just focus on the talk part, though that I believe will be very important for them, to share their stories and create new bonds. Veterans need a space to be with others who have had similar experiences. They are taught to look out for their "brothers" more than themselves. In a core process group they can learn that it is not either/or but can be both. Some will probably be reticent in dropping into feelings or revealing their vulnerability, believing it to be weakness. (This is also characteristic for those with psychopathic defenses). But as we all learn in working with Core Energetics, it is in our vulnerability where we are

the strongest. That word and the experience will probably need re-defining for them. This will happens in the actual experience of taking the risk and discovering safety at the other end, which is something that is at the heart of so much of our Core work.

Finally, we have not yet decided if the group will be mixed for men and women because MST (Military Sexual Trauma) is so prevalent. MST is a ridiculous name for rape, which whitewashes the experience. Currently 30% of women in the service are raped, 55% report some form of sexual harassment while in active duty. This is trauma on top of trauma. Many women do not report for fear of breaking the cohesion of the group and for fear of reprisals. The trauma of war, the trauma of rape, and the trauma of betrayal by someone that was supposed to have had their back, and for many the trauma of being afraid to report is devastating. I think the initial question to ask a woman veteran in an interview is NOT - have you been raped or sexually harassed? But "Would you benefit from being in a women only group"? Practitioners need to be sensitive to this."

I encourage all Core practitioners, really anyone that works with or knows veterans in post-deployment, to find out what services are available in their communities that help veterans and their families. There is actually quite a bit out there once you start looking. Also veterans should be encouraged to register with their local VA's, whether they seek treatment or services at this time or not. The more veterans register, the greater the funding for new programs. Women in particular don't register, but also many men, because they are afraid to admit that they may need some support, or that it will somehow reflect badly on their military records. The VA's are working very hard right now trying new programs and expanding services. Many vets do not know the benefits

and services that are available to them through their local VA's.

Lisa also shared some of what she has seen at Core Brasilia training program, where Lisa has taught for several years. There they have set up a very low cost clinic where students gain experience in practice while at the same time serving members of their community that cannot afford a normal fee. There are also some faculty members that have done process work with the community leaders of indigenous villages, either individually or as a group, to support and inspire the leadership. In turn the leaders better serve the members of the community. Given that “individual therapy” is just not an option for so many people there, this has led to some creative ways of bringing the work into communities.

Recently a 5th year student in Brazil, for her project, offered Core exercise classes to teachers of a school in her town with high dropout and low scores and attendance. She worked several mornings a week with the teachers before school started for a school year. After that, dropout and absentee rates had gone down, and test scores went up. It made sense to support the energy of teachers to stay open, flow, and ground.

We have to face the economic downturn. Many people have defined themselves by their job, their position in society, and their economic situation. Their egos have been attached to social structures that no longer exist. People who have lost jobs are being wrenched to a new perception of themselves, which can be seen as smaller or larger.

Lisa says “They may not have asked for it, but they now have an opportunity to become someone they didn't know they were before. Sooner or later we all have experiences

that force us to redefine what and who we are, from the Core perspective I see this as an invitation to become more of who we are meant to be. That having been said, the downturn has sent many into survival mode struggling to make ends meet We should know what agencies in our communities are available to help with support services because these will be clients that cannot afford individual sessions unless you take insurance or are willing to give some pro-bono time.”

People often feel that they won't survive if something terrible happens, but then that event may take place and a new way has to be found. “There is an ego death associated with powerful experiences of change. When life turns us upside down, something may in fact die, and if we have some support maybe we can find a glimmer of trust that on the other side is a rebirth. But we have to be careful how and when we use this metaphor. People in pain and chaos need to be acknowledged in that experience. As Core practitioners what we can do is help a person's energy to keep flowing in those times as best as possible. We need to hold the trust when they cannot, sometimes that is hard because we hit our own distrust of change. It's not easy to hold to a large enough perspective while at the same time honoring the experience of the moment. That is a kind of skill which John Pierrakos referred to when talking about the 4th stage of Core Energetics. He spoke of the process of unification of the paradoxes. Chaos and order, destruction and creation, going through darkness to emerge in light. We know something about that in Core Energetics.

What can each of us do in response to difficult times? The best we can - which for me usually means just trying to keep an open heart and my energy moving. I want that for

my clients as they go through frightening changes. Life takes us in new directions in dramatic ways at times. I believe that if we keep doing the work that helps us to keep saying yes, then we'll all probably find ourselves in some pretty interesting places in ten years." *Lisa Loustaunau, M.F.A., CCEP, is a senior faculty member at ICE, and co-director of its Connecticut training program. www.coreenergeticsct.com; <http://www.lisaloustaunau.com/>*

Warren Moe

ICE's four year training program is geared toward training therapists, and to immerse a few students deeply into Core process for their personal growth. The shorter Living Core program, by training non-therapists in Core Energetics principles and helping them bring it into their lives, aims to bring Core more fully out into the world. Living Core trains lay people to give structured introductory presentations between 3 – 6 hours on basic Core concepts such as lower self, mask and higher self, followed by an entire community education program. Framed not as a therapy, but advanced training for fuller living, Living Core is not subject to the requirements of licensure and professional certification that therapists must meet. Volunteer-led events would raise awareness of the Core process, enlisting more people into various levels of participation. Teaching people the basic Core concepts, that we all have similar needs and defenses, and that people are more similar than they are different, makes them less likely to project lower self on other communities and economic strata and see that they are the problem. Core's message is one of unification – we're all humans, dealing with the human

condition. Graduates of both Living Core and ICE's 4 year program, especially those who don't have or want a therapy practice, would be guided in setting up Living Core programs as volunteers. They would be provided with standardized, very structured materials to present in their neighborhoods, through school, organizations, agencies and prisons. The materials would help people feel into what their life task is, and bring Core into their lives however they are called to do, whether through their family, business or community practice.

Core can be brought to locations where there has been widespread trauma. Practitioners would help people find and clarify their feelings about the traumatic events, get support in deep places. Core work could help people find where the trauma of the current event taps into and activates trauma from their personal history. By working with the body, Core techniques could help people process deeper feelings from stressful or traumatic experiences and go beyond them. The stress could be not having enough money to pay the bills, loss of jobs, or a traumatic event like 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina. Warren recommends setting up short term process groups for 6 – 8 weeks. The basics of group dynamics would apply. Group leaders would try to build support, trust and safety in the group, get group members to drop their defenses, and share their deeper feelings about the stress. *Warren Moe, MS, LMHC, CCEP, the incoming Director of ICE, is a member of its Executive Committee, and is Director of NYC Living Core.* www.nyclivingcore.com

Kathy O'Connell's Medicaid clients work with both the anger from having a disability, and the need to justify their need for services to agency bureaucrats. Given the NY State financial crisis, this situation is likely to worsen. She would ask clients to associate how they're feeling with what's going on in the world, and help them connect the internal experience with the external event that triggered it. *Kathy O'Connell, CRC, LMHC, is director of Abilities Consulting & Counseling. www.abilitiesconsulting.com*

Susan Pollack counsels that those coming to introductory workshops without a connection with Core can be uncomfortable with the unfamiliar cathartic techniques, so be gentle in the beginning. Don't challenge a group member really hard if you don't have a pre-existing relationship with them. Having a group exercise, stomp, breath, and lie down in a mandala while listening to soft music can be opening and helpful.

Susan worked for 8 years in a clinic, with a mostly African-American or Hispanic population. Many women of Caribbean backgrounds have come to the US to work as housekeepers or home health aides, with their children following later. There's a lot of pain about their families being broken up. Women are expected to be strong, hard-working, keep a stiff upper lip, and not talk about problems. Some of them had a lot of anger. African-American or Hispanic men who grew up in projects may have a lot of rage and trauma. Core techniques to release rage in sessions may be unsafe and inappropriate, when what's needed is containment. Talk therapy, meditative exercises & breathing may help get people in their body more safely. *Susan Pollack, LCSW, MSW, has served on the faculty of the ICE.*

Ted Riskin reminds us that in a group responding to external stresses, people will need to move energy. They'll be angry, scared and shut down, in resistance to what is. A likely first response to a loss, or when people get in a difficult situation, is denial. One form it takes is to not feel it, to hold our breath, stop moving, and block the flow of energy. Core helps open those blocks and get people into their grieving process. To move out of denial we help them to feel the anger. As Jon Kabat-Zinn says in "Full Catastrophe Living", feel the whole thing: the amazing unfairness of it, the terror of what's going to happen to my family. We can support each other in feeling at this level. We can let people feel what they're feeling, move through the anger, grief and loss, and move to acceptance. And that's when they can see reality for what it is, and act effectively. What we have to offer is really practical, getting people as quickly as possible to acceptance.

To people who keep repeating what they should have received or experienced, Byron Katie replies that this response takes them out of the reality of what actually happened. There was an oil spill: your fishing business, your coastline, and community are very likely screwed. Bring a cube into the room. Tell them that we validate your anger, and ask to hear it. If we can help people hit the cube, feel the anger, be seen and be honored, it can prevent people from going to a place of being alone. The lower self image can be pushed back by showing them they're part of a community, and encouraging people to work together and get through this. People may come up with judgments and blame at an external focus, all of which may be objectively true. Get the

speaker to refocus on what's happening inside of them, and validate their anger so it can be used effectively. If someone shares their feeling of hopelessness or being helpless, validate it, while clarifying that this is a feeling state, not the reality of what someone can or can't do about it. First, validate the feeling fully. Then you may be able to help them question the fact.

For an experience of only two hours, move the group toward acceptance as much as possible. Start by asking people to introduce themselves and say a little about their story. Set a timer for three minutes, and explain that when it goes off they don't have to stop in one second, but to finish their thought so the group can move on.

Explain that this isn't a meeting about how to fix the problem; as a facilitator you can't offer that. What you can help with is their internal reaction to the problem. Your house is being foreclosed? Breathe through it. Breathe and allow the flow of energy to go through your body, and try to accept some things that seem unacceptable. The oil spill happened, I feel what I feel, and I can breathe through it. Focus on how to stay present and just breathe when everything around you is changing and crumbling. Ask how to be with something that feels overwhelming. If you come in able to accept 20% of your feelings and what is, and are 80% in denial, the hope is that at the end of two hours, you can change or reverse the proportion.

Practitioners want to be careful they are not perceived as being callous or without empathy. Don't reword people by telling people to just get over it. We encourage

people to feel everything they feel, and not invalidate those feelings, until they get to a place where they say this is what's happening, and know they have to deal with it. We can help them open up the flow of energy, have a container for their feelings, and help them digest things that are at first indigestible. People will move through this process in stages. If people feel safe in expressing some of their anger, maybe they would come back the next week and take it deeper. Read the room and see what people are up for. Ted offers this "Radix Rounds" exercise: Participants are in concentric circles, or some configuration with partners. As a bell is chimed, one person says "I am angry at..." or "I get angry when..." and keeps coming up with more. If no words come to complete the sentence, continue saying, "I'm angry about..." until they do. After each statement, the partner says: "I accept your anger." After four or five minutes, the bell rings and partners switch speaking and listening roles. Then partners share their experience and shift to a new partner, continuing with fear, sadness, joy, etc.

Ted Riskin, LCSW, serves on the ICE faculty. <http://www.tedriskin.com/>

Achiel van Tienen charges low income clients a third of his normal price. Because of the economy, he has fewer clients, and some have reduced how often they come in. Achiel "The political situation in Holland is not very stable; there is a lot of negativity in our society. People feel insecure and are scared. It is hard to say how this influences my clients. There is a lot of aggression/anxiety under the surface." To support clients in trauma situations, he uses Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing [www.traumahealing.com/], and the Trauma Release work of David Berzeli, which is

easily taught to clients and volunteers. *Achiel van Tienen serves on the faculty of the Netherlands Institute of Core Energetics.*

Karyne Wilner affirms that if economic conditions don't improve, it would make sense to do more groups. Decide if you want to work with elderly, disabled, or the economically challenged, and determine the appropriate agencies or community centers to partner with. Practitioners would have to present a proposal to the agency, outlining what they have to offer, and their credentials and certifications. The fees could supplement income from their practice, and for some people, community or team building work would be their main practice, rather than therapy. For community workshops in general, Karyne would recommend doing some energy & grounding work, explaining how energy flow leads to both physical and mental health, then do a series of grounding, and charge / discharge exercises. One could introduce the concepts of lower self, mask, higher self, or character structures, then break into small groups & talk about them. In working with community organizations, help them see what keeps them from working as a team, where there is competition and judgment between people. Use Core work to show how they can speak the truth to each other.

For community events dealing with economic or other external problems, she would get group members to express their frustration, work on their own energy, and look at their own belief systems to ensure they are not adding to the situation by feeling hopeless and not seeing a door or a way through. *Karen Wilner, M.ED., M.A., M.S., PSY.D. is Assistant Director of ICE. <http://www.corevibrations.com/>*

Conclusion

Core Energetics practitioners, and the Institute for Core Energetics, urgently need to look at the larger trends taking place in the world today. They will dramatically increase need for mental health services, while decreasing the ability of individuals and governments to pay for them.

As bioenergetics practitioner and trauma specialist David Berceci says, the global financial crisis is a psychological disaster, producing severe stress and overwhelming anxiety for millions of people. It constitutes a traumatic experience of epic proportions, comparable to terrorism or any major natural disaster. Unfortunately, the economic crisis will not be easily resolved. Instead, it will be amplified by environmental and natural resource issues. Climate change will result in weather that is hotter, stormier, and more erratic, but will unfold gradually, and will often be ignored.

However, the oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico is anything but gradual. Besides directly impacting communities throughout the South, it will worsen the national economic situation. Behind the oil spill is a more profound insight, generally repressed, that needs to be brought to consciousness so we can adapt to reality, and prepare for coming changes. The reason we're drilling for oil a mile under the ocean, and three miles deep into the ocean floor, is that the easily available oil has long since been

found, and we're that desperate for our next fix. A growing number of economic, geological and military experts acknowledge that world oil production will begin declining soon, with oil shortages likely by 2015. Because the implications are very disruptive, this awareness is repressed by political and business interests, mainstream media, and our culture as a whole. Continuing to ignore the full scope of the problem will make responding more difficult, when we are eventually forced to cope with it.

What is the role of Core Energetics in this? How can practitioners prepare themselves and their clients for the volatility and unpredictable lifestyle changes on the way?

This report looks at therapeutic approaches which are well aware of these challenges. Joanna Macy has devised a series of group process exercises that meld deep ecology, Buddhism, and indigenous traditions. Psychiatrist Chris Johnstone's application of addiction treatment theory to oil dependence is at the heart of the Transition method of community organizing.

Core Energetics practitioners have been refining trauma work for individuals and small groups for decades, and has much to offer in times of growing need. Core faculty and practitioners interviewed for this report were asked how they would create group experiences for people undergoing serious stress who are not familiar with therapy. The interviews will contain some of the starting points and next steps for a discussion within the Core community on how to provide services to the broader public, beyond the limited numbers of those seeking individual or group therapy, or able to afford them. It's

not just altruistic. The number of people able to afford individual therapy may decline. Practitioners who can use Core and other trauma response practices to help stabilize individuals and communities in crisis may be able to find new sources of funding. Also, communities in crisis are more dangerous places to live. If Core can position itself as a valuable training resource for community service providers, enrollment for current and new Core trainings is likely to increase.

What's next? Consider how the issues discussed in this report may affect you, your clients, and your community. Look through the therapeutic responses shared in the interviews. How might you use them in your own practice? Or, if you don't have a therapy practice, how could you share them in your community? I invite the Core faculty to explore how to bring these issues into the ICE curriculum, and how to support the Core community in preparing for the challenges ahead.