

# FROM DOPE DEALER TO HOPE DEALER

Lifting up Vulnerable Voices!

Redemption through compassion  
second chances, purpose, and accountability



Turning Point Recovery Center  
Brattleboro, VT



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# Agenda:

- My Story
- The Bigger Picture
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
  - Compassionate Accountability
  - Lifting vulnerable voices seen/unseen challenges

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# My story & my experiences as a drug dealer

## ● My childhood (ACEs)

- Father took his own life
- Single parent home who struggled with alcoholism
- Moving to Vermont

## ● Teen years

- People, place, and things
  - Filling voids of self worth and love with money and substances (false sense of being wanted/loved)
- No male role models - Institutions gave me negative role models

## ● Adulthood

- Opiate addiction
- Federal Prison
- Trauma (sister & mom)

## ● The “Turning Point”

- Harm Reduction & MAT helped my abstinence based recovery be what it is today (MAT, medical marijuana, doing things for the wrong reasons lead to doing them for the right reasons)
- Purpose & Meaning (TPWC, Project CARE)
- Compassionate Accountability & Opportunity

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# WHO I WAS

**1998 -age 11: Domestic Assault**

**1999 -age 12: Unlawful Mischief**

**2000 -age 13: Vandalism and unlawful mischief**

**2003 -age 17: Sale-crack cocaine**

**2004 -age 17: Unlawful trespass and simple assault/voc**

**2005 -age 19: 2 counts possession of narcotics**

**2014 -age 27: Unlawful trespass**

**2015 -age 28: Possession and sale of heroin**

**Number of Years Incarcerated/institutions: 13**

**Years on Probation: 22**



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# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- ACEs refer to traumatic events or stressors that occur during a person's childhood
- Emerged from a study in the 90's by the CDC-Kaiser Permanente (17,000 + surveyed)
- Identified ten ACEs: physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, household dysfunction, parental incarceration
- The study shows a link between childhood adversities and various health and social outcomes in adulthood

# Three Types of ACEs

## ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

## NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

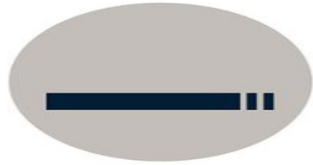
# ACEs Increase Health Risks

According to the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, the rougher your childhood, the higher your score is likely to be and the higher your risk for various health problems later.

## BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



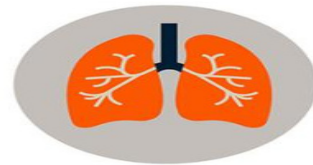
Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

# ACEs Data

1. 4 or higher are significantly more likely to develop substance use disorders
2. 4 or higher are linked to a higher likelihood of self-harm and/or suicidal ideation
3. 4 or higher show 11x the level of intravenous drug use
4. 4 or higher are 7x more likely to struggle with illicit drug use
5. 4 or higher are 4.5x more likely to develop depression
6. 1 or higher the chance of alcoholism doubles
7. 2 or higher is 4x the risk of alcoholism
8. 4 or higher are...
  - a. 3x the levels of lung disease and adult smoking
  - b. 4x as likely to have begun intercourse by age of 15
  - c. 15 2x the level of liver disease
  - d. Average 20-year shorter life than folks with a ACE score of 0



## My “Turning Point”....

*“When my number’s called,  
I’m going to do my job.  
That’s the way I look at it.”*

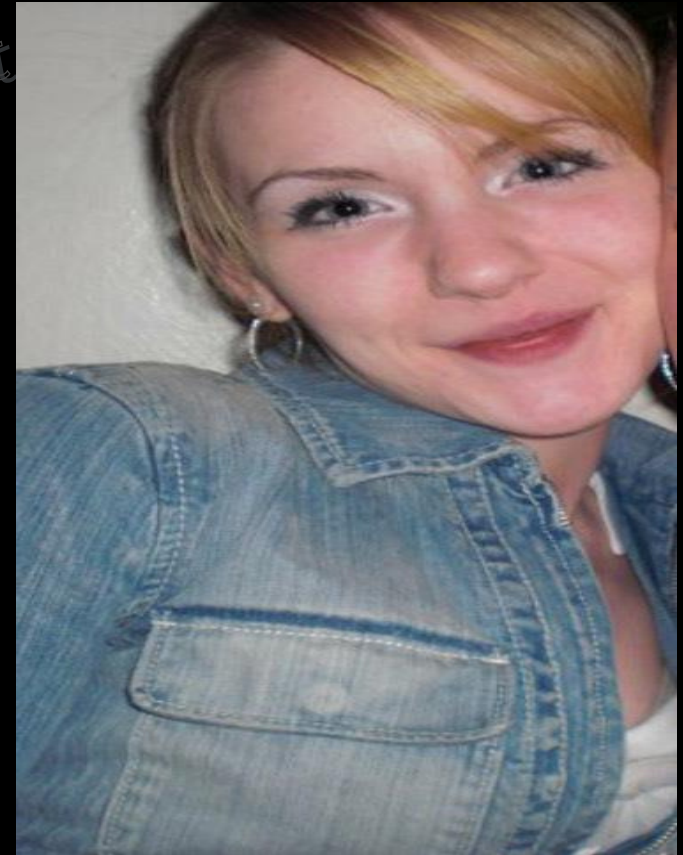
Dez Bryant



# Turning Trauma into Meaning

- September 12, 2017
  - February 7, 2019

***For the first time ever, I used my trauma and bad experiences as a reason to thrive instead of an excuse to get high and escape.***



# Turning Point/Peer Support

- Community
- Connection
- Meaning - how something or someone is defined, as well as an intention or reason for doing something
- Purpose - the fulfillment or consummation of the meaning
- Support

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# Compassionate Accountability

**Compassion**—originates from compati, literally means “to suffer with.”

The connection of suffering with another person brings compassion beyond sympathy and into the realm of empathy.

**Accountability** — being aware and responsible for one’s actions

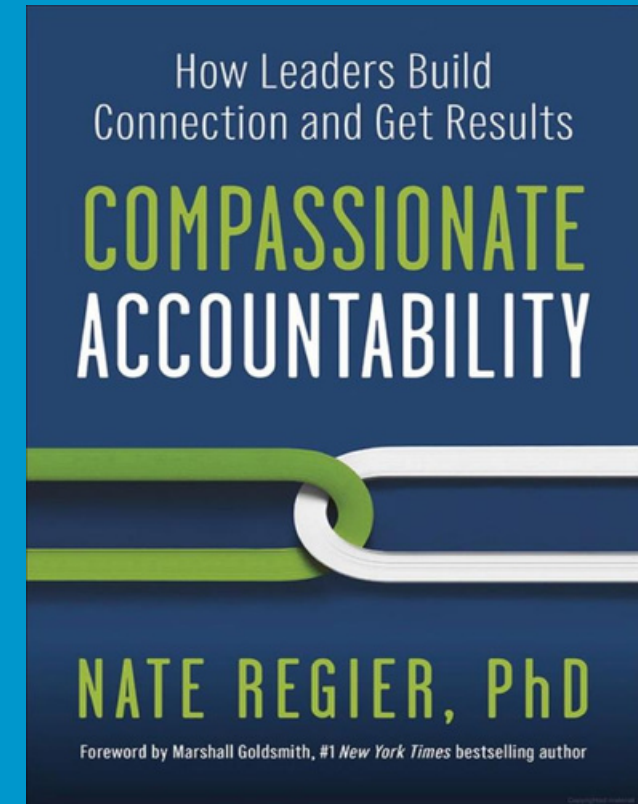
## Compassionate Accountability

*the process of building connection while getting results through:*

Openness to one’s own and others’ feelings, needs, and wants

Curiously exploring possibilities without taking over responsibility or the solution

Persistence around commitments, goals, boundaries

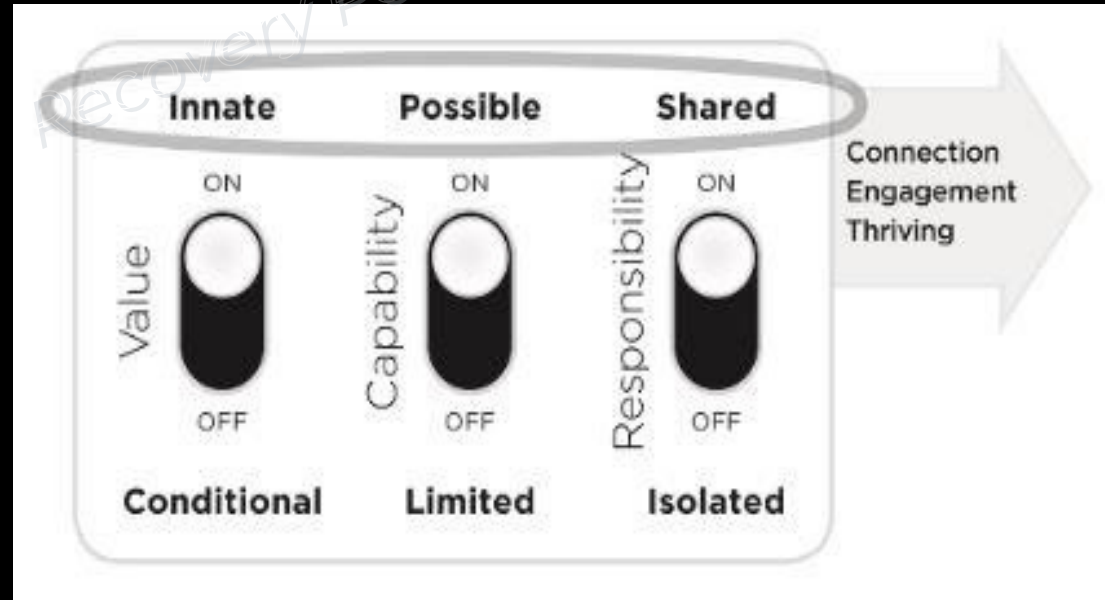


When my number's called, I'm going to do my job. That's the way I look at it. ~ *Dez Bryant on competition.* -Dez Bryant



# The Three Switches (VCR)

- **Valuable** - This switch is powered by the belief that EVERYONE has inherent worth that is their performance or behavior
- **Capable** - Driven by the belief that EVERYONE has the potential to learn, grow, and contribute
- **Responsible** - Driven by the belief that EVERYONE is responsible for their own thoughts, feelings, and actions.



***Compassionate Accountability:  
Emphasizes dignity,  
collaboration and shared  
responsibility.***



# Compassionate Accountability Summary

## 1: Understanding Compassionate Accountability

Compassionate accountability is a concept that combines compassion and accountability to foster a positive and productive work environment. It involves being open to one's own and others' feelings, being resourceful in problem-solving, and being persistent in commitments. Compassionate accountability is about balancing empathy and responsibility, promoting a culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. It leads to improved team performance and overall job satisfaction.

## 2: The Three Switches of Compassionate Accountability

The three switches of compassionate accountability are value, capability, and responsibility. The value switch is about recognizing and affirming the inherent worth of each individual. The capability switch involves fostering a culture that encourages learning and development, and the responsibility switch promotes personal accountability and respect for boundaries. These switches, when activated, create a positive and productive work environment.

## 3: Using the Three Switches in Practice

To use the three switches effectively, leaders should consistently affirm the unique worth of each team member (value), provide opportunities for team members to demonstrate their abilities and support them in overcoming challenges (capability), and promote a culture of personal accountability, respecting boundaries and not over-thinking, over-feeling, or over-doing for others (responsibility). By activating these switches, leaders can foster a culture of compassionate accountability that leads to increased team performance and job satisfaction.



# Seen and unseen challenges of lifting up vulnerable voices

## Seen challenges include:

- **Lack of representation:** Vulnerable voices are often underrepresented in health fields, local communities and businesses and well known positions. This makes it difficult for folks to be heard and understood.
- **Discrimination:** Vulnerable voices are often discriminated against and silenced. This can be due to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, criminal background, substance use disorder and/or recovery.
- **Lack of resources:** Vulnerable voices often lack the resources they need to make their voices heard. This includes access to education, transportation, family support, technology, and financial support.

## Unseen challenges include:

- **Internalized oppression:** Vulnerable people may have internalized the negative messages they have received about themselves and their communities. This can make it difficult for them to speak out and assert themselves.
- **Fear of retaliation:** Vulnerable people may fear retaliation for speaking out. This could include losing their job, being ostracized by their community, or even being physically harmed.
- **Lack of self-confidence:** Vulnerable people may lack self-confidence in their ability to make a difference. They may feel that their voices don't matter or that they don't have the skills or knowledge to be effective advocates.

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# Soft Skills vs Hard Skills

## Soft Skills VS Hard Skills

### SOFT SKILLS

Also known as "people skill" or "interpersonal skills"

Typically related to one's personality traits and ability to work with others

Can be applied across a wide variety of industries and job types

Often difficult to quantify or measure objectively

### HARD SKILLS

Also known as "technical skill" or "job specific skills"

Typically related to a specific area of expertise.

Generally more specific and less transferable between different industries or job types

Can be more easily quantified or measured objectively



### Hard skills



Specific competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to perform a specific task or role.

#### Hard Skills:

- Microsoft office
- Interpreting data
- Financial planning
- Copywriting
- Troubleshooting
- Project management
- Spoken languages

vs

### Soft skills



Personality traits, social competencies and skills, knowledge, and abilities used to perform interpersonal activities and unique tasks.

#### Soft Skills:

- Communication skills
- Timekeeping
- Critical thinking
- Leadership skills
- Motivation
- Ambition
- Negotiating



“When we view compassion as an opportunity to get alongside people and walk together through the pain, we can find solutions that transform everyone involved in the relationship.”

Nate Regier

***Don't we already do this in our recovery work?***

“When you  
change the  
way you look  
at things,  
the things  
you look at  
change.”

Albert Einstein

**Compassionate Accountability**

**Recovery Accountability**

**Shows us, teaches us, gives us**

**HOPE**

**We are already there.**

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