



Crestwood Recovery Resilience Solutions

## **Mathew Federici: Copeland Center - Moving on from WRAP**

By Dr. Lori Ashcraft

Listening to what the Copeland Center is experiencing and the attitude in which they are holding this experience gives us a good reason to talk about post traumatic growth. I'm pulling some of this information about PTG from some notes I made a few years ago on this topic, and I honestly don't remember where I got some of it. I'll reference those parts I know of but have no way of referencing all the sources. So forgive me for using material and not giving credit to some of the authors.

We hear a lot about PTSD which occurs in the wake of a threatening event or events that rob us of our agency and our means of escape. When we lack sufficient resources to process those events, we fail to integrate our trauma into our understanding of the world as safe enough, predictable enough, or fair enough.

Less widely known—but equally powerful—is the concept of post-traumatic growth, which was first developed in the mid-1990s by psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun. Research has revealed a rich and transformative encounter with post-traumatic growth in five major domains: relations with others, new possibilities, personal strengths, spirituality, and appreciation of life. An integral part of post-traumatic growth theory is the idea that transformation occurs not in spite of trauma, but as a direct consequence of it. In other words, the growth could not have occurred without the trauma—or at least not in the same way at the same moment.

I would encourage us all to remember that many of our silver linings have occurred not in spite of the pain, but rather because of it—and that much of our collective post-traumatic growth is still to come. If we can do this, we can create space for both the grieving of immense loss and the positive affirmation of change.

(The following information has been adapted from an article by Lorna Callier)

To evaluate whether and to what extent someone has achieved growth after a trauma, psychologists use a variety of self-report scales. One that was developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun is the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) (Journal of Traumatic Stress, 1996). It looks for positive responses in five areas:

- Appreciation of life.
- Relationships with others.
- New possibilities in life.
- Personal strength.
- Spiritual change.

The scale is being revised to add new items that will expand the "spiritual change" domain, says Tedeschi. This is being done "to incorporate more existential themes that should resonate with those who are more secular" as well as reflect cross-cultural differences in perceptions of spirituality.

There appear to be two traits that make some more likely to experience PTG, says Tedeschi: openness to experience and extraversion. That's because people who are more open are more likely to reconsider their belief systems, says Tedeschi, and extroverts are more likely to be more active in response to trauma and seek out connections with others.

So now let's go back to the changes the Copland Center is experiencing. It seems to me that, in spite of all the other amazing things the Copland Center has developed, the discontinuance of the work they have always done with WRAP could set the stage for PTSD. Yet, they seem to be leaning into PTG in a heroic way. Their plans for working closely with SAMHSA and the great material that has been developed through the Office of Recovery could give us all ways to be creative and expansive. This doesn't mean they are immune to the pain that change brings, but rather they are choosing to focus on growing through the experience and gaining strength and wisdom from what has transpired. They are setting a wonderful example for all of us to follow when evitable changes occur in our lives.

Many of you know that Gene and I have gone through very painful and incomprehensible changes in our work. The pain and loss we experienced was devastating and recovery seemed like an impossible goal for us. Yet we came out of it stronger and wiser and more resilient than when we went in. Ultimately, what got us through this was an undying commitment to the work we do and knowing that we would continue to do in spite of the pain and loss. Also, for me it was my strong spiritual connection, trusting there was a new pathway that would open and give us access to a meaningful future.

What I hear in Mathew's voice is the strength and commitment and determination to move on into new territory that promises a bright future with freedom to create even more amazing resources for all of us.