

AMPLIFY

Radical Empathy: Shining Bright in the Places That Harden Most

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Practice Manager, Urgent Care

UCI Health



Who is Casey?



BSN, RN, CNML

Certified nurse manager and leader, nurse and healthcare worker x 14 years



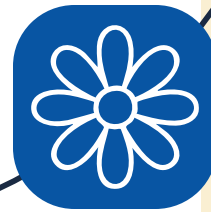
Practice Manager

Inaugural Practice Manager for UCI Health's *premier* Urgent Care



Graduate Student

Currently enrolled in dual masters program - MSN/MBA, graduating Spring 2027



DAISY Award Winner

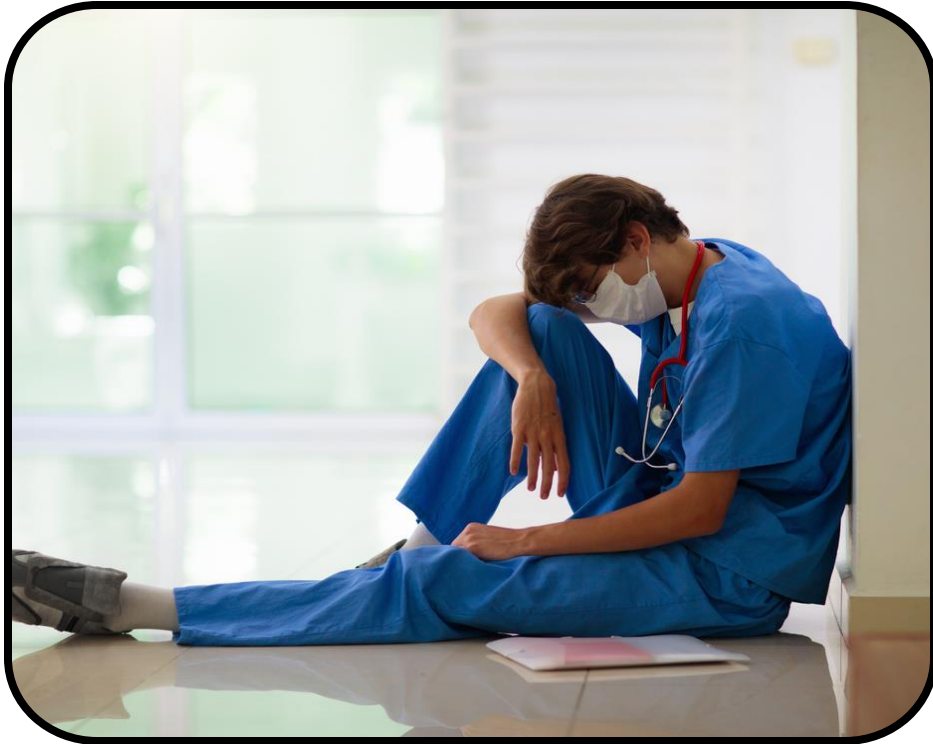
Received while working as an Emergency Room Nurse





Leadership is what you do
when no one is watching.

Why We Harden



More than 50% of US Clinicians
report symptoms of burnout

- Dr. Tait D. Shanafelt – Chief Wellness Officer @ Stanford Medicine - **burnout**: a syndrome defined by depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of lowered personal accomplishment

Sources: American Journal of Managed Care, The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine

Why We Harden

- Symptoms of Burnout:

- Increased apathy
- Absenteeism, tardiness
- Cynicism, sarcasm, pessimism
- Boredom, stagnation
- Inclination towards “busy work”
- Withdrawal from hobbies
- Neglect of personal hygiene/healthy habits
- Lingering illness
- Depression, anxiety, hopelessness

- Risk Factors for Burnout:

- Chaotic practice environment
- Conflicts in values and leadership
- High tolerance to stress
- Limited control over schedule
- Excessive emotional labor
- Limited time spent on meaningful/satisfying work

Source: The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine

**Burnout is not
a character flaw.
It's a system condition.**

Radical Empathy: The History of Empathy

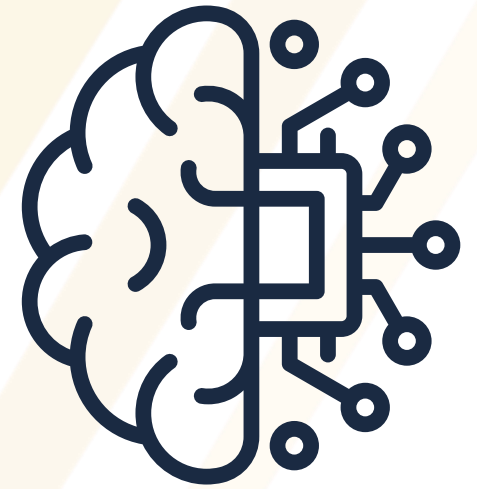


- Einfühlung (mid-1800s) - “Feeling into” — emotional resonance to art
- Theodore Lipps (late 1800s) - Empathy as “feeling one’s way into” another’s experience
- Martin Buber (20th century) - “I and Thou” vs. “I and It”
 - Connection vs. Objectification

Source: Journal of Patient Experience

Radical Empathy: The Science of Empathy

- Empathy = brain + heart
- Shared neural circuits activate when we see others' emotions
- We feel others' pain in small doses
- Combines emotional sharing + perspective-taking
- Trainable & influenced by bias
- Self-empathy supports empathy for others

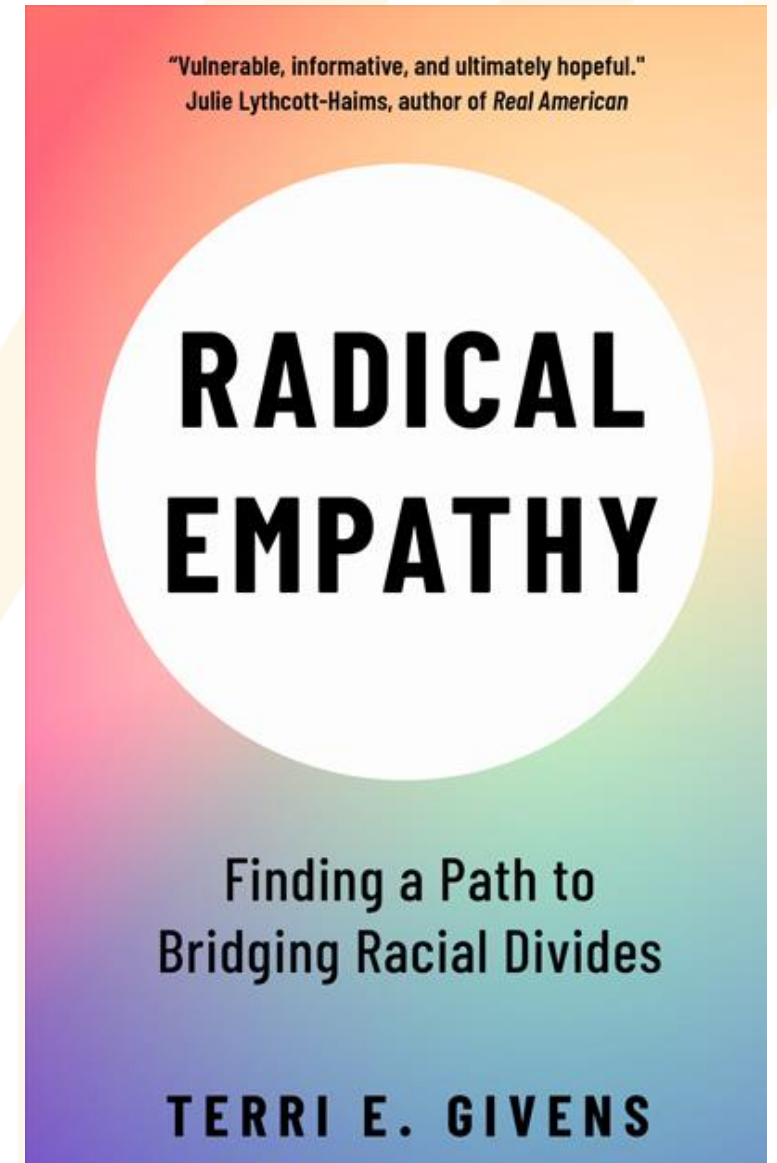


Source: Journal of Patient Experience

Radical Empathy:

The Origins of *Radical Empathy*

- Terri Givens introduced the term radical empathy in 2021 through her work in:
 - Political science & social justice
 - Racial inequality & lived experience
 - Systems that fail to hear or value certain voices



Radical Empathy: What It Is

- Empathy:
 - Recognizing another person's emotions
 - Responding with understanding
- Radical Empathy:
 - Seeking to understand someone's experience
 - Taking action that honors dignity



Radical Empathy: What It Is Not

- Sympathy or pity
- Ignoring context or outcomes
- Passive leadership
- Performing kindness without action
- Soft or weak

Emotional Intelligence: The Engine Behind Empathy

- 5 Components of Emotional Intelligence:
 - Self-awareness
 - Self-regulation
 - Motivation
 - Empathy
 - Social Skills



Radical empathy begins with a simple refusal: the refusal to reduce people to roles, behaviors, or metrics.

Tool 1: Lead by Example

Setting the Emotional Tone & Micro-Behaviors

- Leaders set the culture through our actions:
 - Socializing with purpose (SWP)
 - Preoccupation with failure
 - Micro-behaviors and moments of connection or honored dignity



Tool 1: Lead by Example

Setting the Emotional Tone & Micro-Behaviors



Casey Micheil



FOR EXTRAORDINARY NURSES

HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

February 2023

Casey Micheil, RN

Emergency Dept.

West Anaheim Medical Center

Anaheim, CA

United States

Tool 1: Lead by Example

Setting the Emotional Tone & Micro-Behaviors

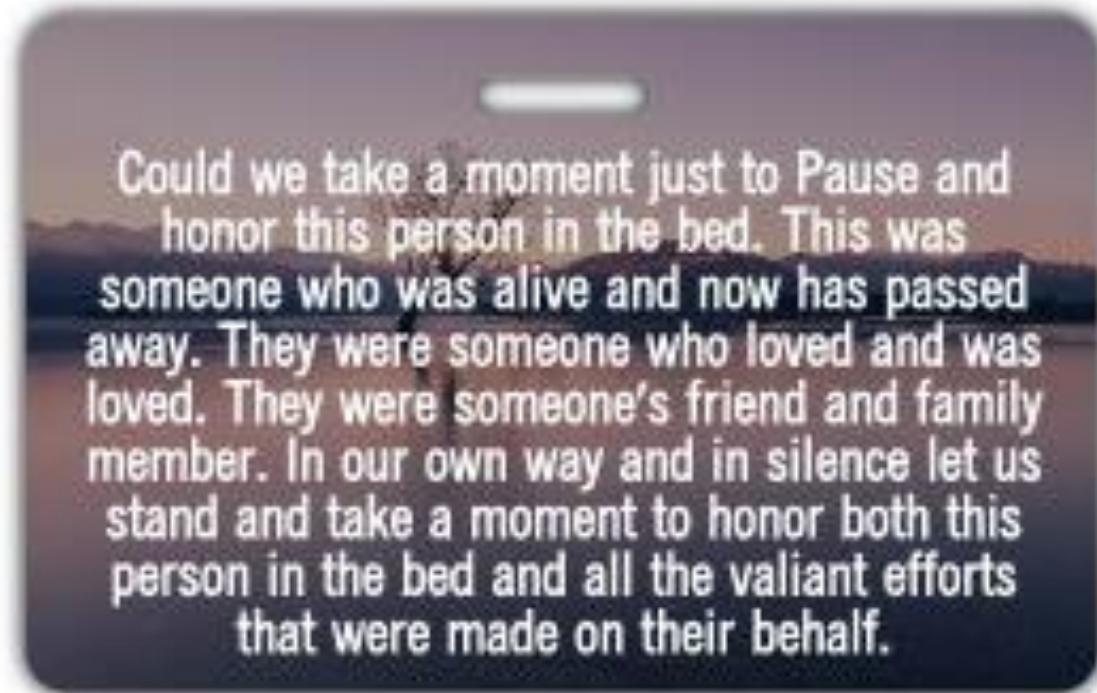
My mom was brought in by ambulance to West Anaheim Medical Center. From the get-go, Casey's energy and spirit were positive and friendly. She took the time to listen and see how she could tend to my mother, who was extremely weak. With the prior shifts, my mother needed to provide a urine sample and a commode was brought in, but there wasn't much support provided to me and my brother. When Casey took over my mother needed to use the restroom and I asked for a commode. Casey very kindly expressed her concern for how weak my mother seemed when she was checking her vitals and recommended using the wand stick. I was never familiar with this, and Casey was very hands-on with her help ensuring my mother felt, heard and that her sense of dignity was not compromised. That level of empathy was very powerful, and I could tell that Casey goes above and beyond to not only ensure the safety (physical) of her patients but also that they experience psychological and emotional safety. She stepped out of the room to give my mother space to relieve herself.

Casey was very hands-on with her help ensuring my mother felt, heard and that her sense of dignity was not compromised.

Throughout the rest of the stay, Casey was thorough in her explanations and took the time to genuinely listen to our concerns and make sure my mother was comfortable and well. While the circumstances that brought us in were extreme and we were very worried and scared for my mother, we could not have asked for a better nurse to be with us through this ordeal. We would be remised to not express our gratitude for the great work Casey does. The nursing profession and especially West Anaheim Medical Center are lucky to have her, and we were blessed with her as our mother's nurse that day. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Casey!

Tool 1: Lead by Example

Setting the Emotional Tone & Micro-Behaviors



Source: Scrub Pocket

Tool 2: Transparent Humanity

Vulnerability & Trust

- Show authenticity without losing authority:
 - Intentional 1:1 connection
 - Seek feedback visibly
 - Follow through
 - Model appropriate vulnerability



Tool 3: Empathy with Structure

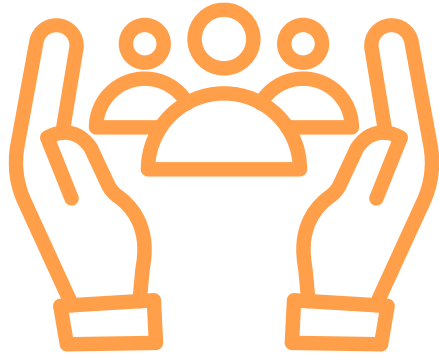
Connection & Clarity

- Combine human connection and operational goals:
 - Clear expectations
 - Feedback anchored in dignity
 - Embed empathy into systems
 - Measure what matters



Operationalizing Radical Empathy

Model, Relate, Embed



Model the Culture

- Tone
- Micro-behaviors
- Learning moments



Relate with Transparent Humanity

- Trust
- Feedback
- Follow-through



Embed Empathy in Structure

- Clarity
- Accountability
- Results

Radical Empathy in Practice

How We Know It's Working



Radical Empathy in Practice

How We Know It's Working

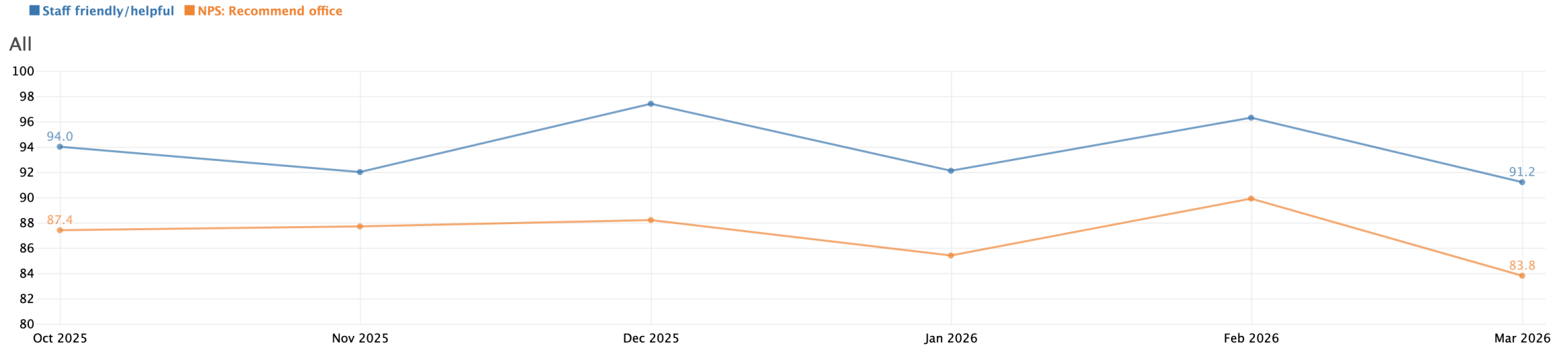
- Issues and conflicts surface early
- Repair happens quickly
- Communication is proactive
- Teams stay aligned under pressure
- Healthy work environment & coworker engagement feedback
- Patient experience remains strong

Radical Empathy in Practice

How We Know It's Working

Respondents

1,504



| | Benchmark | Oct 2025 | Nov 2025 | Dec 2025 | Jan 2026 | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Staff friendly/helpful | 86.6 | 94.0 n = 133 | 92.0 n = 138 | 97.4 n = 151 | 92.1 n = 151 | 96.3 n = 109 | 91.2 n = 68 |
| NPS: Recommend office | 72.9 | 87.4 n = 135 | 87.7 n = 138 | 88.2 n = 153 | 85.4 n = 151 | 89.9 n = 109 | 83.8 n = 68 |

**Leadership is not what you do,
it's what your influence inspires
others to do.**

The Ripple Effect: How Empathy Spreads

- Leader behavior → sets culture
- Team behavior → engagement & trust
- System impact → patient experience & innovation



Amplify Your Leadership:

Empathy Gives You License to Lead Boldly

- Voice challenges
- Propose solutions
- Influence change

Cultural Multiplier:

The Culture You Create is Contagious

- Psychological safety
- Team engagement
- Patient trust and satisfaction
- Operational ease due to alignment

**“If in any moment of decision the
best thing you can do
is the right thing,
the next best thing you can do is
the wrong thing, and the worst
thing you can do is nothing.”
— Theodore Roosevelt**

Empathy in Action:

Your Leadership Opportunities

- Psychological safety
- Team engagement
- Patient trust and satisfaction
- Operational ease due to alignment

**Radical empathy isn't about
being softer leaders,
it's about being braver ones.**



**What is one choice you'll
make tomorrow to lead with
radical empathy?**



Questions?

Sources

- American Journal of Managed Care: <https://www.ajmc.com/view/making-an-evidencebased-case-for-urgent-action-to-address-clinician-burnout>
- Journal of Patient Experience: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5513638>
- Journal of Urgent Care Medicine: <https://www.jucm.com/recognizing-preventing-provider-burnout-urgent-care>
- Scrub Pocket: <https://scrubpocket.com/the-pause-badge-card/>

I Need Your Feedback

Scan the QR code to submit
your feedback digitally.

Prefer paper?

On the form in front of you, please score me and the
content I shared with you today.

AFTER THE CONVENTION

You may claim CME here www.urgentcareassociation.org/learning-center/cme/

Let's Stay in Touch

Thank you!

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Nurse Leader | Radical Empathy in Healthcare |

Keeping the Care in Urgent Care

