



Learning Circles for
Women in Agriculture

Building Resilience Together

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Everyone faces the stress of adversity and change. For people working in agriculture, that adversity and change can be even more challenging. Our livelihoods are at frequent risk from weather disasters, market changes, and other forces beyond our control. We must find a way to adapt to changes in politics, economics, culture, technology and climate.

Building Resilience Together is a way to improve your resilience by intentionally working on your social support system. Social support is a critical part of your resilience. By working on your social support system alongside a small group of other women in agriculture, you'll develop ways of thinking and doing that will contribute to your resilience.

Rethinking Resilience

For a long time, we thought of resilience only as bouncing back after a disaster or traumatic event. While that's still an important part of being resilient, our understanding of resilience has changed to include our response to more frequent stress, like financial or relationship problems. We have also expanded our view to include not just the ability to bounce back, but also the ability to "roll with the punches" by adapting to adversity.

No matter how personally resilient we are, we don't practice that resilience in a vacuum. We live in complex environments and need to adapt to complex changes. Building Resilience Together focuses on improving our adaptability in complex environments by helping you:

- Make connections
- Accept change as part of living
- Move toward your goals
- Practice self-discovery
- Nurture a positive self-view

Learning Circles

Improving your resilience will require some changes, and change can be hard. A learning circle can support you as you make those changes. A learning circle is a small group of learners (5-8 members) who make change together by connecting with each other, sharing their experiences, and providing peer support.

Learning circles meet multiple times over several weeks, giving you time to practice new skills and reflect on what you are learning. Using the Building Resilience Together guides, your circle will meet 8

times. Circles usually meet weekly for about an hour, but the guides can be adjusted to what works best for your circle.

Your learning circle will need a facilitator to keep the meetings moving along. You can have the same facilitator for all your meetings or have a different circle member facilitate each of the meetings. The Building Resilience Together Facilitator's Guide has some great tips for facilitating a circle meeting.

Finally, learning circles are a safe, supportive space. Please honor the feelings and privacy of other members, look for ways to support them, and have fun!

Working Out Loud

Building Resilience Together draws on research and writing in the fields of behavior change, positive psychology, and more. John Stepper's "Working Out Loud" model (www.workingoutloud.com) is a particularly important resource.

The Working Out Loud model is grounded in 5 elements that you'll see mentioned throughout our learning circle guides:

- **Purposeful discovery** - which helps you develop the skills and habits to be intentional in setting goals and developing relationships.
- **Relationship building** - which helps you see the value of connecting with others in improving your resilience, and helps you practice establishing and nurturing relationships.
- **Generosity** - which helps you foster generosity as a motivation for sharing your experiences and supporting others.
- **Visible Work** - which helps you become more comfortable sharing your work and experiences with others. Making your work and experiences visible can lead to new connections that can could improve your resilience.
- **Growth Mindset** - which helps you understand that you can develop the skills, habits and values necessary for to be more resilient by practicing them over time.

Meeting 1

Goals and Self-Discovery



What to Expect

In this meeting, you'll start to get to know the other people in your circle, talk about the guidelines for circle meetings, make some decisions about when your circle will meet and set a goal for your Building Resilience Together experience. Let's get started!

Check-in

Each circle meeting will start with a check-in. During the check-in, you'll have the opportunity to share your progress, struggles, accomplishments, or whatever is on your mind. Check-ins are also a great time to validate and support other circle members. In this first meeting, let's skip the check-in and jump right into the first activity.

Activity 1 - What lights you up? (about 15 minutes)

Before we introduce ourselves to the circle, let's take some time to think about sharing something meaningful to us. Take a few minutes to think about the questions below. Choose one or more questions and try to think of things that are not directly related to your roles at work or at home (mom, spouse, grandma, employee, boss, etc.).



What lights me up?



What do I care most about?



What am I an advocate for?

Once everyone has their answer ready, let's share at least one of our answers with the others in our circle. As people share, feel free to ask a question, share a related idea or experience, or just offer validation by saying something like, "Thanks for sharing that with us."

Activity 2 - Defining Our Circle (about 15 minutes)

The Building Resilience Together circle guides are exactly that, “guides,” not “instructions.” Your circle can decide when and how closely to follow the guides, as long as you make that decision together.

Number of Meetings

Let’s get some practice making decisions together by deciding how many times we want to meet. There are 3 sets of circle guides; one set for circles that meet 5 times, one set for circles that meet 8 times, and one set for circles that meet 12 times. Meeting fewer times saves time, of course. Meeting more times gives you more time to practice your skills, create strong ties within your circle, and improve your resilience.

It’s critical that everyone in the circle agree to the number of times the circle will meet. Make sure you take the time needed for everyone in the circle to be heard, and to come to a consensus.

Circle Ground Rules

To get the most out of a learning circle, it’s important that we start to build trust with each other and that we feel safe sharing with each other. Review the circle ground rules below. If any of the rules are unclear, discuss them. You may also want to discuss whether your circle wants to adopt any additional ground rules.

- What is said in circles, stays in circles.
- We are here to support each other, not compete with or judge each other.
- We will use relationship as resolution. No disagreement is bigger or more important than our connections with each other.
- This is practice. We will leave space for each other to make mistakes.

Set Your Schedule

If you haven’t already, take a few minutes to schedule your next meeting. If it works for your circle, you may want to try and schedule all of your future meetings. Finding a common time can be challenging, so be patient and make sure you at least get your next meeting scheduled.

For guides on circle meetings for 5 or 12 times,
visit go.unl.edu/wia-circles

Activity 3 - Setting Your Goal (about 20 minutes)

Moving toward a goal is one way to improve your resilience. It's also a great way to keep yourself engaged in the Building Resilience Together experience. We are more likely to stick with a process when we can see and feel the progress we are making.

Let's take 5 minutes of quiet time to think about our personal goals for this experience. As you think about a goal, keep the 3 questions from the "What lights you up?" activity in mind:

- What do I care most about?
- What lights me up?
- What am I an advocate for?

Can you set a goal that relates to what lights you up or what you are an advocate for?

Here are some other questions to keep in mind when setting your goal:

- Can you benefit from the experience of others in pursuing the goal?
- Can you frame it as a learning goal?
- Can you make progress towards it in the number of times your circle has decided to meet?



My Goal

Setting a goal is hard. You may not be able to come up with your perfect goal in 5 minutes. Don't worry. You can always change your goal along the way.

Once everyone has a goal in mind, let each circle member share their goal. After each person shares their goal, feel free to ask a question, share a related idea or experience, or just offer validation by saying something like, "That's an awesome goal. Good luck with it!"

Once everyone has shared their goal, take a minute of quiet time to reflect on how it felt to set and share your goal. Does it feel good to have a destination ahead? Are you worried about achieving your goal?

Now let's wrap-up this activity by taking 3-4 minutes to share talk about how each of us felt.

Voicing intentions (about 5 minutes)

Each circle meeting will end with time for each member to share what they intend to work on before the next meeting. Take a minute to review the “Things to Try” section below, in case you want to include one or more of those activities in your intentions. You might want to jot down what you shared and use it in your “Check-in” at the beginning of the next meeting.

Things to Try

Here are some things you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on your goal and self-discovery.

- Try your “What lights me up?” introduction on a friend, family member, or even someone you just met. What was their reaction? Do you feel like it sparked a connection?
- Reach out to one or more of your circle members to check how things are going for them. It doesn’t have to be much, just a quick email or text to let them know you are thinking about them. Did you get a response? If you did or didn’t, how did that feel?
- Share your goal in public. If you have a LinkedIn account, add your goal to your bio. If you have a Facebook, Instagram or Twitter account write a short post or tweet about it. If you don’t use social media, share your goals with two or three friends. As you shared your goal how did you feel? Did it still inspire you? Did sharing your goal make you think about it differently?



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you have all started a journey together. Celebrate that you were brave enough to share what you shared in this circle meeting. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



How am I feeling about participating in the Building Resilience Together experience?

Not
Great



Super
Excited

mark how you are feeling on the line above



What, if anything, is exciting me about the Building Resilience Together experience?

What, if anything, concerns me?



What obstacles, if any, might interfere with my participation in the Building Resilience Together experience?

What is my plan for avoiding or overcoming those obstacles?



Meeting 2

Building Relationships

What to Expect

In this meeting, you'll start to create a list of people and organizations who can help you achieve your goal. Making connections to improve your social support is important to your resilience. You'll also think about what you might be able to contribute to and gain from the people on your list. Here we go!

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in on the progress we have made toward our goals. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Did you try anything from the "Things to Try" section of the last circle guide? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 - Starting Your Relationship List (about 25 minutes)

Making connections with others builds your social support network, which improves your resilience. We are going to create a relationship list and practice building a relationship with each person on that list.

Let's take 10 minutes of quiet time to find 10 people related to our goal. Use your phone or computer to play Internet detective. If you think of a role (e.g. "someone who has experience doing ..." or "a leader in the field of...") but can't yet find a name right away, that's okay. Just write down whatever information you have.

If you're struggling to come up with names, here are some people you might include:

- People who have done something similar to what you're trying to do
- People whose interests relate to your goal
- People who have written about something related to your goal
- People you admire for their resilience

Include any contact information you can find or already have, including email addresses, phone numbers and social media accounts. For now, don't worry about the "Last contact date" or "Next contact date" in the spaces below.

Next, assign each person on your list one of the intimacy levels below. The intimacy level will help you keep track of your progress building that relationship.

1. The person doesn't know you exist.
2. You're connected in some way. (e.g., you follow them online)
3. You've had one or more interactions.
4. You've done work together (at a job, as a volunteer, on a committee, at church, etc.), even in a small way.
5. You regularly interact, exchange ideas, and help each other.

Name:

Intimacy Level:

Email address:

Phone:

Social media accounts:

Last contact date:

Next contact date:

Name:

Intimacy Level:

Email address:

Phone:

Social media accounts:

Last contact date:

Next contact date:

Name:

Intimacy Level:

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Social media accounts:

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Email address:

Phone:

Social media accounts:

Last contact date:

Next contact date:

Name:

Intimacy Level:

Email address:

Phone:

Social media accounts:

Last contact date:

Next contact date:

Once everyone has at least a good start on their list, each member can share who they found and how each person on the list might help with their goal. After each person shares their list, feel free to ask questions, make suggestions, and offer validation.

Activity 2 – Network Balance Sheet (about 15 minutes)

Building relationships requires give and take. While you hope the people in your relationship list will help you achieve your goal and become a part of your social support network, you also need to think about what you can contribute to them.

In future meetings, we'll consider specific ways you can contribute to the specific people on your list. Right now, let's look at the big picture. Use the network balance sheet below to list the things you want to get from and the things you can contribute to your social support network as a whole.

Once everyone has completed their balance sheet, share what you want and what you can contribute with the others in the circle.

NETWORK BALANCE SHEET

What do I want from my social support network?

What can I contribute to my social support network?

Voicing intentions (about 5 minutes)

Each circle meeting will end with time for each member to share what they intend to work on before the next meeting. Take a minute to review the “Things to Try” section below, in case you want to include one or more of those activities in your intentions. You might want to jot down what you shared and use it in your “Check-in” at the beginning of the next meeting.

Things to Try

Here are some things you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on building your relationships.

- Make your own Network Balance Sheet for a specific group you are involved in. Doing a balance sheet for a community group, a group of friends or even your family can provide some important perspective. Are you getting what you want to get out of the group? If not, why? What do your contributions to the group reveal about your strengths?
- Choose a method for keeping track of your relationship list. Think about what method would be easy to maintain and would keep your list in front of you. Some people have used a notes app on their phone. Some keep a journal or contacts book. Some have a detailed, color-coded spreadsheet. What method would work best for you?



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to reflect on what you need from your social support network. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



How am I feeling about participating in the Building Resilience Together experience?

Not
Great

Super
Excited

mark how you are feeling on the line above



What, if anything, is exciting me about the Building Resilience Together experience?

What, if anything, concerns me?



What obstacles, if any, might interfere with my participation in the Building Resilience Together experience?

What is my plan for avoiding or overcoming those obstacles?



Meeting 3

Giving the Universal Gifts

What to Expect

In this meeting, you'll start working on your relationships with the people on your relationship lists. You are going to use the approach John Stepper outlines in "Working Out Loud," which starts with small gifts given in the spirit of generosity.

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Did you try anything from the "Things to Try" section of the last circle guide? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 - Giving the Gift of Attention (about 15 minutes)

The approach we are going to use to build our relationships is based on "reciprocal altruism," the idea that we are willing to make sacrifices for others because we believe, if we do, others will make sacrifices for us. This idea is important because it helps us look at our relationships less as a series of transactions (for example, "I'll help you move your couch, if you watch my kids next week"), and more as a commitment to mutual support. That mutual support starts with small gifts given in the spirit of generosity.

The first small gift we are going to offer is the gift of attention. John Stepper calls attention and gratitude the universal gifts, because everyone likes to receive them. Go through your relationship list and give attention to at least 3 people. Attention can be very easy to give, especially if the recipient is present online. If any of the people on your list have a public social media account (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook), you can offer attention just by liking or sharing one of their posts. If they have an Instagram or Twitter account, you could simply follow them. If you can't access their LinkedIn or Facebook account, send them a connection or friend request. If they don't have an online presence, think about how you could say "I see you" or "I care about what you have to say" in a low-stakes way.

Write down the person you gave attention to and the way you gave attention to them below.

1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

Activity 2 – Giving the Gift of Gratitude (about 15 minutes)

Now let's give the gift of gratitude. Pick 2 people from your relationship list that you'd like to thank for something they have said or done. Pick 1 person to thank privately and 1 to thank publicly. Take 5-10 minutes to think about who you would like to thank and what you would like to say.

Gifts of Gratitude	
Recipient	Thank you Message
Private	_____
Public	_____

When you have your messages ready, go ahead and send them. You can send your private thank you by email or text. You can offer public appreciation via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or any other channel you like. Once you have sent your gifts of gratitude, update your relationship list with the date of your contribution.

Activity 3 – The Spirit of Generosity (about 10 minutes)

Remember, we are trying to build relationships by giving small gifts in the spirit of generosity. We are trying to build trust, and trust is hard to build when we expect something in return for our contributions.

Take a few minutes to read “The Generosity Test” (<https://workingoutloud.com/blog/the-generosity-test>), a short blog post by John Stepper.

What did you think of the post? How would you do on the Generosity Test? Take a few minutes to share your thoughts with your circle.

Voicing intentions (about 5 minutes)

Each circle meeting will end with time for each member to share what they intend to work on before the next meeting. Take a minute to review the “Things to Try” section below, in case you want to include one or more of those activities in your intentions. You might want to jot down what you shared and use it in your “Check-in” at the beginning of the next meeting.

Things to Try

Here are some things you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on giving gifts in the spirit of generosity.

- Try give 5 small gifts to five individuals—all five in one day. It doesn't matter if the acts are big or small, but it is more effective if you perform a variety of acts, including giving attention and gratitude. The acts do not need to be for the same person. The person doesn't even have to be aware of them.
- Find three opportunities to perform a random act of kindness. Examples include feeding a stranger's parking meter, donating blood, helping a friend with a chore, providing a meal to a person in need, or bringing a coworker a cup of coffee. Focus on the feeling of generosity.
- Choose one more person from your list to give attention to and one more person to give gratitude to. These are the universal gifts. When given in generosity they can help build relationships. After each act, write down what you did in at least one or two sentences; for more of a happiness boost, also write down how it made you feel.

My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to think about what it means to be generous. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



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Super
Excited

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Meeting 4

Dealing with Change

What to Expect

As we work on building our resilience, we might experience setbacks. In this meeting, you'll work on keeping things in perspective. Change is inevitable, and accepting change is important to our resilience. When things are not going as well as you wish they were, remember to keep taking small steps forward.

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Did you try any random acts of generosity? If so, how did they go? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 – Marking Change (about 25 minutes)

We are constantly adjusting to change, even if we don't realize it. When big changes come along or when change happens quickly, we might struggle to deal with it. That's when we need to look back and realize we have dealt with change before and survived. To help us see the changes in our lives, let's take about 10 minutes to think of 4 kinds of changes we've experienced in the past year and how we got through those changes. Make a few notes below, to look back on when you are struggling with a change.

Changes	
What Changed	How did you deal with it?
A Small Change	<hr/>
a Sudden Change	<hr/>
A Exciting Change	<hr/>
A Difficult Change	<hr/>

Let's take some time to share our changes, and how we dealt with them with our circle. As we share, remember our circle ground rules:

- What is said in circles, stays in circles.
- We are here to support each other, not compete with or judge each other.
- We will use relationship as resolution. No disagreement is bigger or more important than our connections with each other.
- This is practice. We will leave space for each other to make mistakes.

Activity 2 - The Stories We Tell Ourselves (about 15 minutes)

When we make contributions expecting something in return instead of in the spirit of generosity, we risk telling ourselves stories that may not be true.

Let's take about 5 minutes to read John Stepper's blog post, "When Someone Doesn't Respond To You" (<http://workingoutloud.com/blog/when-someone-doesnt-respond-to-you>).

Discuss the post in your circle. What did you think of the post? Have you ever invented a negative story about why someone didn't get back to you? How can we avoid "tit-for-tat" thinking?

Things to Try

Here is something you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on your resilience.

As we work on our networks, one challenge is how to be our authentic selves. When we reach out to those we want to be a part of our network, we are risking rejection, so it's not surprising that we might try protect ourselves from that rejection by holding parts of ourselves back or even pretending to be someone we are not. But being our authentic selves is critical not just to building sustainable relationships, but also to our own happiness.

When you notice you may not be bringing your authentic self to a relationship or interaction, try asking yourself these 4 questions shared by Carley Hauck (<https://www.mindful.org/4-questions-foster-authentic-self/>):

1. What am I afraid would happen if I shared my experience right now with this person?
2. How will feel if I don't share what I'm thinking and feeling?
3. If I weren't afraid, what would I most want to say to this person right now?
4. How can I share this with even more vulnerability?

Being aware of why you are having trouble being authentic is important, but it doesn't mean you'll instantly be able to get over your fears. As you reflect on your answers to those 4 questions, think about how you might be able to practice vulnerability. Find a safe space to practice in (like your circle), start small and build your comfort with knowing yourself and sharing yourself with others.



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to reflect on what you need from your social support network. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

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Reflection



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Meeting 5

So Much to Offer



What to Expect

Building Resilience Together is a strengths-based approach to building relationships and resilience. In this meeting, we are going to think about all of our experiences and think about how they can be strengths in our lives by becoming the basis for building relationships with others.

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Do you feel like your relationships are getting stronger? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 – 50 Things About You (about 25 minutes)

In this activity, we are going to use self-discovery to find the things about ourselves that can help us connect to others. Self-discovery is an important part of building resilience. Spending time thinking about yourself can help you reflect on how you remained resilient through difficult experiences, and it can help you identify the personal strengths that contribute to your resilience.

Let's take 5 - 10 minutes to write down as many facts about ourselves as we can. You might start with more obvious facts like your age, relationship status, or hometown, but you'll find you'll have to dig deeper for facts as you go. Write down your facts on the next page.

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- 50.

Now let's take some time to share our facts in our circle. Did you write down any facts that surprised you? Were there facts that you think provide a basis for connecting with someone or deepening an existing relationship? Many people find it difficult to talk about themselves, but do your best to share your authentic self. Remember, this circle is a safe space to practice being authentic and vulnerable.

Activity 2 – More Contributions (about 15 minutes)

We have already given the gifts of attention and gratitude, but there is so much more we could give. Below is a list of types of contributions you could make to the people on your relationship list. Gifts are always more meaningful when you choose them with the recipient in mind, so try to be intentional in choosing your gift and who to give it to.

Go through the list of 10 types of contributions below and write down:

- a specific contribution that you could make
- who you would want to share that contribution to
- why you think they would be interested in that small gift

Share Your Experience

It doesn't have to be a profound experience. Just letting someone know you've been through something they are experiencing can be a gift.



What specific experience could you share?



Who would you share it with?



Why might they be interested?

Share Your Ideas

Sharing your ideas can help others and even spark new ideas.



What specific idea could you share?



Who would you share it with?



Why might they be interested?

Share Your Process

What's obvious to you might be amazing to others. Sharing how you do something can be an eye-opening gift from someone.



What specific idea could you share?



Who would you share it with?



Why might they be interested?

Share What You've Learned

when you learn something new, spread the word. The best time to share is when you learn something, so you don't forget to share.



What specific thing you've learned could you share?



Who would you share it with?



Why might they be interested?

Share Your Challenges

Sharing a challenge you are going through can help both you and the person you are sharing with. You will both know you are not going through your challenge alone.



What specific challenge could you share?



Who would you share it with?



Why might they be interested?

Share Your Connections

We know social support is important, so contribute to someone else's support network.

When you introduce two people to each other, you are giving gifts to both of them.



Which two people do you could you introduce to each other?



What do they have in common?



How might they help each other?

These contributions could be very simple. If you have done research for yourself on child-care providers or new computers, you might think about sharing what you found with someone on your relationship list. What's your process for making a shopping list or managing your family calendar? Those are potential contributions.

Remember we are practicing generosity, so we are not looking only for contributions that will impress people or help us "get ahead" somehow. We are not trying to figure out the contributions that will get us the most likes or retweets. We are just offering small gifts in the spirit of generosity. Don't forget to update your relationship list when you give the gifts you planned above.

Things to Try

Here is something you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on your resilience.

Try come up with specific gifts for these types of contributions:

- Share your research
- Share your projects
- Share your motivations, why you did what you did
- Share the work of others you admire



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to come up with your facts about yourself.

Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



How am I feeling about participating in the Building Resilience Together experience?

Not
Great



Super
Excited

mark how you are feeling on the line above



What, if anything, is exciting me about the Building Resilience Together experience?

What, if anything, concerns me?



What obstacles, if any, might interfere with my participation in the Building Resilience Together experience?

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Meeting 6

Cultivating a Growth Mindset

What to Expect

You can grow and change. Your skills, abilities, knowledge and behavior are not fixed. They can be improved with practice. If you believe those 3 sentences, you have a growth mindset. In this meeting, we'll work on developing our growth mindset and practice one process for changing our behavior.

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Did you make any of the contributions you planned in the last meeting? If so, how do you think they went? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 – Fixed vs. Growth Mindset (about 20 minutes)

Developing a growth mindset can benefit our resilience. Let's start by reviewing the descriptions of the fixed mindset and growth mindset from Benefit Mindset.

fixed mindset

The symbol of the fixed mindset is the **everyday expert**.

In a fixed mindset, we believe **our basic abilities can't be changed**.

We avoid trying new things and **focus on replicating what we already know**.

We say things like **"I'm no good at math."** or **"I'm just not a dancer."**

growth mindset

The symbol of the growth mindset is the **everyday learner**.

In a growth mindset, we believe **our basic abilities can be improved**.

We recognize **we can get better with practice and focus on how we can grow**.

We say things like **"I believe I can get better at math."** or **"I'm not good at dancing...yet."**

Let's take 5 minutes to come up with examples of times we've relied on a fixed mindset and think about how we might have approached that situation with a growth mindset.

MINDSETS

Fixed Mindset Example	How would a growth mindset change it?

Now let's share our examples in our circle. If someone is having trouble applying a growth mindset to a situation, let's offer them help without judgment.

Activity 2 - WOOP (about 20 minutes)

WOOP is a method for making a change in your life. It can be a great supplement to the small steps to behavior change we've been practicing in the Building Resilience Together experience. WOOP stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan. In the WOOP method we focus on what we want to change (our wish), how that change will affect our life (the outcome), what things are keeping us from making the change (the obstacle) and how we can avoid or overcome that obstacle (the plan).

Let's take 10 minutes to practice the WOOP method. Think of something you do or don't do that you'd like to change. It doesn't have to be related to your goal for this experience. Write down your Wish, Outcome, Obstacle and Plan below. We'll provide some examples based on the growth mindset statement, "I'm not good at dancing...yet."

What is your WISH?

Example: "My wish is to become a better dancer."

What is the OUTCOME?

Example: "My partner loves to dance, but I don't feel comfortable on the dance floor. If I get better at dancing, I'll feel more comfortable, and I'll make my partner happy."

What is your OBSTACLE?

Example: "I'm so uncomfortable dancing in front of people that it keeps me from signing up for lessons."

What is your PLAN?

Example: "I could look for dance lessons on YouTube and practice on my own. When I get more comfortable, I could ask for my partner's help. Maybe we could take lessons together."

Let's take some time to talk about our WOOPs. Do you think this can help you with making a change?

Things to Try

Here are some things you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on your resilience.

- There is a WOOP app to help you keep track of your progress and prompt you towards behavior change. Download and try the WOOP app at <http://woopmylife.org/app/>.
- Taking time for reflection can help you cultivate a growth mindset. Make space in your calendar for reflection. You can schedule time once a week or a smaller amount of time each day, but schedule it in your calendar and honor it like you would any other appointment. Use this time to think about your day or week – what did you hope to accomplish, what do you need to do tomorrow or next week to keep moving forward?



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to work on your growth mindset. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



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Meeting 7

Mapping Our Strengths



What to Expect

In this meeting we are going to focus on our strengths, individually and as a group. If we know our own strengths and the strengths of the people in our social support network, we'll have a clear idea of the resources we can access in difficult times. We can also use that information to guide which of our own abilities we want to improve and how we might grow our social support network with an eye toward filling gaps in strengths and knowledge

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? Did you use the WOOP app? Did you schedule time for reflection? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 - Identifying Our Strengths (about 20 minutes)

We are going to start by identifying our strengths, but we want to dig deeper than what you might put on a job application. "Organization skills" and being a "people person" can be strengths, but we want to try get beyond the obvious using the following questions from Nurture Development. Let's take about 20 minutes to answer these questions.



What contributions do you like to make to others?

- What's your thing?
- What's your jam?
- What do you like doing that makes you forget time?



What matters to you that you'd join with others in doing?



If three other people were willing to help, what would you love to do to make your community a better place to live?



What are the three activities you do best?

1.

2.

3.



What are the three skills you would most like to learn?

1.

2.

3.



What are your passions?



What gives you great joy or pleasure?



What are your gifts of the head?
What do you know about?

(music, movies, singing, playing music,
history, languages, birds, sports, books,
etc.)



What are your gifts of the heart?

(volunteering, listening, being with
children, nursing, poetry, caring for
others, etc.)



What are your gifts of the
hands?

(recycling, gardening, cooking, walking,
quilting, fishing, arts and crafts, driving,
plumbing, delivering, sewing, cutting
hair, ushering etc.)



What would you like to teach
others?



If you could start a business,
what would it be?



How do you have fun?



What is your greatest accomplishment in life so far?



What will be your greatest accomplishment in the future?

Activity 2 – Mapping (about 25 minutes)

Now we are going to map our strengths as a group. First, we need a cartographer (map maker). Any volunteers? Next, each of us will read through our answers to the questions above. As we do the cartographer will make a map of the strengths. As you share your answers, help the cartographer out by highlighting patterns and themes that you are seeing.

Here is an example of strengths map that might help the cartographer get started.



Once everyone has shared (don't forget to let the cartographer share their strengths as well), and the map is finished, the cartographer can take a photo of it and send it to all the circle members. This map is an awesome resource for your resilience. The people in your circle are now part of your social support network.

Things to Try

Here is something you could try between now and your next circle meeting to continue to work on your resilience.

- Make a strengths map of the people on your relationship list. What do you think their strengths are? As you map out their strengths, think about where there might be gaps. Do you need to add to your relationship list to help develop the social support network you'll need?



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you took to think about your strengths. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



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Meeting 8

Reflection and Celebration



What to Expect

In this meeting we are going to look back on what we have accomplished and look forward to what we can do together. Most importantly, we are going to celebrate each other, the connections we've made and the relationships we have built.

Check-in (about 10 minutes)

Let's start by checking in. Each member can take this opportunity to share how they are doing. Take a look back at your "Reflection" section from the last meeting. Did your experience match your expectation? Were you able to overcome any obstacles? This is also a great time to validate and support other circle members.

Activity 1 - Destination Postcard (about 15 minutes)

Where do you want to go from here? One way to help you get there is to envision that future. Create a destination postcard that describes what the future looks like if you have accomplished your goal. You can create a drawing, bulleted list, poem, short story, whatever helps you describe the future. Here are some things to think about:

- What were the keys to making progress on your goal?
- How would you have normally approached things? How did you do it differently?
- How did you overcome obstacles?
- When did you realize you were going to be successful? What happened?

Be sure to include how your future self feels when you are successful and fulfilled - and how you might feel in the future if you didn't make the effort to pursue your goal. Choose whatever format or outline feels right for you. Just remember to create the postcard for yourself, and not to impress someone else.

If you are comfortable, share your destination postcard with your circle.

Things to Try (about 25 minutes)

Don't let your journey end here. Building your resilience is an on-going process. To be resilient, you need to keep learning, reflecting, and building relationships. You need to keep taking small steps toward change. With that in mind, let's talk about things we can try to keep our momentum.

- Make a plan for keeping this circle connected. You could continue to meet, share your contact information, or start a Facebook group or group text.
- Set aside time to invest in yourself. Take a look at your calendar and schedule appointments over the next four weeks for deepening relationships with people related to your goal.
- Send your destination postcard to your future self via futureme.org. Simply go to futureme.org, outline or copy your postcard there, and pick a date at least 30 days in the future. (It's a free service, supported by ads and crowdsourced donations.) You'll be surprised and even amazed when you receive it.
- After a break of a few weeks or months, consider forming another Building Resilience Together Circle with the same people or with new members. New people tend to give you extra energy and even more diversity of perspectives and experiences.
- What are your ideas for keeping the momentum going?



My Intentions

CELEBRATION!

In whatever time you have left, take a minute to celebrate! Celebrate the fact that you showed up today. Celebrate the time you spent together in this circle and the gifts you have given each other. Celebrate the fact that you are here working on your resilience.

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!

Reflection



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Credits

We have adapted the working out loud process, asset-based development, positive psychology and other approaches for this experience. The following people and organizations informed these ideas and activities.

Jessica Beckendorf

Karen Jeannette

John Stepper: <http://workingoutloud.com/>

Harold Jarche: <http://jarche.com/>

Improv Edge: <http://www.improvedge.com/>

Charles Duhigg: <http://charlesduhigg.com/how-habits-work/>

The Community Roundtable: <https://www.communityroundtable.com/grow/truth-innovation-and-communities/>



