

Adult Resilience Curriculum (ARC)

Workbook for Professionals



Published in 2021 by the Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)

The ARC was initially developed in 2013 by Clayton Cook, PhD, and Gail Joseph, PhD, for pre- and in-service teachers. It was later adapted for the Mid-America MHTTC by Aria Fiat, PhD and Andrew Thayer, PhD.

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)
University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)
985450 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68198-5450

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What is the Adult Resilience Curriculum?

The Adult Resilience Curriculum (ARC) helps professionals and their organizations navigate difficult times and overcome barriers to well-being. Through self-paced learning or institutional efforts, ARC provides the structure that is often missing from meaningful well-being programming. It helps prevent and relieve burnout, which can manifest as fatigue, impaired focus, and depersonalization resulting from emotional exhaustion.

The ARC was initially developed in 2013 by Clayton Cook, PhD, and Gail Joseph, PhD, for pre- and in-service teachers. It was later adapted for this book by Aria Fiat, PhD and Andrew Thayer, PhD. Rooted in positive psychology and adult-focused research, the ARC has since been adapted for health care professionals and working adults more broadly. It has been implemented across numerous schools, districts, and health care organizations, many of which saw an increased need for support for their workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mid-America MHTTC provides technical assistance and training on the ARC as well as a training-of-trainers package for teams to take back to their organizations.



Module Outline

0. Introduction to the Adult Resilience Curriculum (ARC)
1. Understanding the Psychobiology of Stress and Well-Being
2. Creating Safe and Supportive Environments
3. Clarifying, Aligning with, and Committing to One's Values
4. Cultivating Awareness Through Mindfulness-Based Practices
5. Connecting Meaningfully with Others
6. Fostering Pleasant Emotions and Experiences
7. Coping with Difficult Thoughts, Feelings, and Experiences
8. Feeling Good Physically Through Nutrition, Movement, and Sleep
9. Rejuvenating Through Relaxation, Recreation, and Routines
10. Bringing It All Together: A Wellness Plan for the Future



Expectations

ARC learners are expected to engage with the “core” modules—Modules 1–5 and Module 10—at minimum. Modules 0 and 1 introduce the ARC framework and cover foundational knowledge of stress and well-being. Modules 2–5 cover non-negotiable well-being concepts including organizational (contextual) well-being, values identification, mindfulness, and connection. In Module 10, learners reflect upon the skills they’ve acquired and create an individual wellness plan for the future.

Each module is equipped with corresponding activities for learners to complete. The activities are intrinsic to the curriculum package, and therefore learners are strongly encouraged to complete them.



How to Use This Workbook

We recommend completing this workbook in conjunction with the ARC video modules, but if you would rather focus on the wellness activities, that’s OK, too. This workbook contains the activities for the core modules as well as journaling space you can use for reflecting on each module’s concepts and activities or simply note-taking.

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/prowellbeing>





MODULE 1

Understanding the Psychobiology of Stress and Well-Being

- Define stress and articulate both its detrimental and optimal effects on our performance and life
- Define the dimensions of well-being and resilience, and connect them to identities as professionals
- Set an initial intention for how you plan to use this training and what you hope to get out of it

Module 1: Psychoeducation

ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 Parking Lot Activity	This activity involves listing stress contributors that individuals can and cannot control. The Parking Lot Activity allows learners to focus on the things they <i>can</i> control.	5-10 minutes
 Individual Action Plan	A strategy for setting and implementing goals. Identify goals related to this well-being training/process, identify benefits and barriers, and prepare for barriers and opportunities.	5 minutes



Parking Lot Activity



WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE?

--	--

YOUR PARKING LOT
Put everything you **DO NOT**
have control over here

YOUR HIGHWAY
Whatever remains,
put here on your highway

--

--

Individual Action Plan

How many goals have you set in your lifetime? 10? 50? 100?
How many of those did you achieve?

Goals are fickle. We can set goals all we want, but a goal alone does not enforce action. In fact, a body of research suggests that setting goals is enough to satisfy people in the short-term, even if they do not achieve them in the long-term. And that is because goals are simply wishes with no real power over who we are or what we do. We need action plans and systems to meet those goals. Goals only tell us if the system is working.

On the next page is an action plan developed and researched by Gabriele Oettingen¹ and colleagues. Here is how to implement it:

1. **Identify Goal:** Allow yourself to wish for the biggest change you want to make in your well-being. What is that wish? This gives you clarity around your well-being intention.
2. **Identify Benefits:** This is another common practice when goal setting. If you hit your goal, what would that get you? And what values do you have that align with that goal? This helps build motivation to achieve the goal you set and ensures that you are pursuing something that matters to you, or is valued.
3. **Identify Barriers:** We all have them. And many are beyond our control. But some are internal—things we can control about our situation—or only *appear* out of our control. Identify those barriers.
4. **Prepare for Barriers:** Here is where you set your system in place. Only focus on the barriers to your goal that are within your control. What action, behavior, support system, habit, etc., will you set to address that barrier itself? This is when we shift our attention away from the goal, and away from uncontrollable barriers, and put in a system that gets us changing other barriers. The system/action is our focus and the goal will be a natural product as long as we engage with the system and make adjustments.
5. **Prepare for Opportunities:** If we are too focused on a goal, we sometimes miss the other opportunities or behaviors or systems that would actually help us get there. What could you do to make sure you take notice of those opportunities? What will you do when they arise?

1 Oettingen, G., & Gollwitzer, P. (2010). Strategies of setting and implementing goals: Mental contrasting and implementation intentions (pp. 114–135).

MODULE 1: ACTIVITY 2

Individual Action Planning

Identify Goal: My goal is...

I plan to do the goal... [Specify time, date, place, and context of goal]

Identify Benefits: Imagine the most positive benefit of achieving the goal.
What would it look like? How does it align with your personal and professional values?

Example Structure: If I work toward [goal], it would [benefits].
It would also connect me to my values of [values].

Identify Barriers: What are the most critical obstacles to achieving this goal? Which ones do you have control over? Which ones do you not? And which can you get more control over?

Prepare for Barriers: What will you do if you encounter critical obstacles?
If [barrier] arises, I will [goal-supporting action].

Prepare for Opportunities: What proactive actions or opportunities will you watch for that will help progress toward your goal? If [opportunity] arises, I will [goal-supporting action].



Module 1: Understanding the Psychobiology of Stress & Well-Being



Use these discussion prompts to guide your reflection on the content of this module, the skills and strategies learned, the content's relevance to your own life, and your personal experiences with this module's content.

These prompts are intended to be completed **at least 1 week after** completing the information part of the module, and **after you have had some time to practice**. This should give you enough time to evaluate the usefulness of this module for you right now, in this moment of your life, to strengthen your well-being.

In addition, these discussions are intended to be done with your **practice partner** or **professional team** (depending on your organization's ARC implementation model). We encourage your partner and/or team to practice EOARS for good listening to help keep the discussion supportive:

E = Empathy statements (e.g., you're in a tough spot, you're doing what you can, I totally agree)

O = Open-ended questions (e.g., how, what, tell me how, in what way)

A = Affirmation (genuine confidence boosters, e.g., you have great insight, you are a determined person, great suggestion)

R = Reflection (repeat or rephrase to understand, e.g., so you feel..., it sounds like..., do you mean...)

S = Summary (special reflection that emphasizes change, e.g., so [brief summary] and that's helping you feel better, right?)



Post-Session Discussion Questions

(complete 1–4 weeks after module & before the next module)

How would you rate your overall stress level?

How can you tell that you are stressed? What are the telltale signs in your body? What about thoughts or actions that tell you that you are stressed?




How satisfied are you with your current practices aimed at improving your well-being?

What factors within your microsystem (e.g., immediate environment) and exosystem (e.g., external environmental factors like neighborhood and community support) support your capacity for resilience?

Creating Safe and Supportive Environments

- Understand the basics of organizational well-being
- Discuss key features of a safe and supportive environment for professional well-being
- Identify ways in which you, as a professional, contribute to the overall culture of well-being

Module 2: Context

ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 <p>Cleaning Up Your Plate</p>	<p>Identify what is currently on your plate, reflect on what needs to be on your plate, and determine one focus area to work on to match your ideal plate.</p>	<p>5-10 minutes</p>
 <p>Space for Vulnerability</p>	<p>Take time to practice soliciting and receiving feedback.</p>	<p>5 minutes</p>
 <p>Establish-Maintain-Restore</p>	<p>A strategy for encouraging and supporting psychological safety in your workplace.</p>	<p>15-25 minutes (+ongoing practice)</p>

Cleaning Up Your Plate

One of the most difficult yet necessary things we need to do is clean up our responsibility plates at work. We can easily get overloaded as individuals and as a community. It is almost like a lunch buffet: We start at one end of the buffet and load up on everything that looks delicious, thinking we have to try everything. And before we know it, we are halfway through the table with no more room, yet there are still delicious entrees. If we are mindful of our selections, we may not get to try everything, but we can be satisfied with our selections and confident that our plate will meet our needs.

Note: Not everything about what goes on our plate seems under our control. Our work, policies, upper managers—all can place explicit and implicit expectations upon us to load up as much as we can. It is simultaneously their responsibility to recognize when expectations and requirements are unreasonable and need to be eliminated. At the same time, it is within our power to draw our own lines to reserve a portion of our plate for the things we know are most critical for us and to protect that at all costs.

This exercise is both an aspirational exercise and an active decision-making exercise. It contains four parts, and by the time you are done, you will have identified action steps for prioritizing your efforts in your work.



MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 1

Part 1: What needs to be on your plate?

You know that old USDA food pyramid that broke down ideal amounts of various food groups? That model has long been abandoned by nutritional experts in favor of visual tools for proportioning up your food plate based on macro-nutrients—proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—and recognizing that there are foods with more or less nutritional value in those categories. In other words, foods are neither good nor bad but have various nutritional utility in meeting our protein, fat, and carb needs.

We can use the same idea with our own lives. Below, identify the objective or purpose of your three main values—either personally or professionally. Think of them as your nutritional building blocks for your well-being. What are your proteins, fats, and carbs? You only get three.

Write them in below. See the example of “Professional Well-Being” as a value that we put under our protein section.

Note: There is no distinction between proteins, fats, and carbs for this exercise. They simply represent our three main values and all are important.

EXAMPLE: PROTEIN	PROTEIN	CARB	FAT
Professional Well-Being	Value here	Value here	Value here

Now that you have your three main building blocks/values, identify as many systems, practices, and policies that actualize those blocks. It doesn't matter how effective they are at this moment, and it doesn't matter if you are using them now.

Make sure to rewrite your values in the top heading.

EXAMPLE: PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING	Value here	Value here	Value here
Well-being programming, computer-free lunch breaks, dinner parties, gym time			

MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 1

Part 2: What does your plate look like now?

The next step is to be honest about how your plate looks like right now. It may not be pretty or ideal, and that is okay. Below, draw and portion out your plate as it currently stands with the practices you listed above. Do your best to remember and display everything you do in your work. And if you can't fit everything on your plate in the proportions, that's okay and is actually quite telling of all the work you are doing.



MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 1

Part 3: What is your ideal plate?

Thinking back to your building blocks and the various activities you could do, what would your ideal plate look like? What would you want to focus on? What aligns most with you and your work values? What activities are most effective within each building block? How much time and what resources would you devote to them? Proportion that out below.

MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 1

Part 4: Making minor changes

One of the biggest blunders people make when trying to change their nutritional routines is that they make sweeping changes immediately without setting up microhabits (see Module 9 for more information about microhabits). We need to avoid making the same mistake with our personal well-being. Proportion your plate on the next page by dropping all the extra stuff that feels necessary but isn't. Keep the practices and systems that still actualize your building blocks, then make room for one slight change to your plate to get you closer to your ideal plate. This is your transition plate. It will not be perfect, but it is closer to your ideal plate. Return to this activity regularly to create new transition plates.





MODULE 2: ACTIVITY 2

Making Space For Vulnerability

With your practice partner or team, practice soliciting and receiving feedback. First, one person will give feedback to their partner or a member of their team using the tips below. Then, both individuals switch roles, giving a chance to each person in the group. Discuss what went well and what was difficult about this. To start, ask your practice partner or team member to select an area of work practice upon which they would like feedback.

Note: When providing feedback, you might feel insecure when discussing a subject your partner selected, but this helps with this initial practice.

Reflect on what you know and have observed about your practice partner's skills within the area they selected. Identify areas of strength and lesser strengths.



Proceed to provide that feedback. Here are some helpful tips for when you are giving feedback to a partner:

- First, ask for permission to provide feedback.
- Be specific but not condescending. The goal is to provide support, not criticize or “one up” the other person.
- Empathize. Providing any kind of feedback is going to cause a wave of emotion for you both. But by practicing empathy and giving space for those emotions without reacting, you create a psychologically safe space for colleagues to express themselves and then be receptive to your feedback.
- Provide feedback promptly; do not wait for a specific time.
- Provide feedback privately. Feedback is an intimate process and we need to respect that.
- Focus on performance, not personality. What this means is we avoid saying things like, “You are lazy sometimes,” and instead we say, “Sometimes the work doesn’t get done at the quality it needs to be.”
- Ensure your feedback is bi-directional by asking for feedback about how you can help your colleague.
- Follow up later about how the feedback was received.
- Do not use the “sandwich” method in which constructive feedback is preceded and proceeded by compliments. Although this method can be useful, it has become so popular that evidence suggests people “see” it coming and can disregard the compliments as inauthentic.

Once you have provided the feedback, switch roles with your practice partner.

After feedback for all involved has been provided, discuss how well the process itself worked for you in hearing and understanding the feedback, your own reactions to it, and your sense of trust and belonging with your partner(s).

Put a reminder in your phone to check back in 24 hours later.

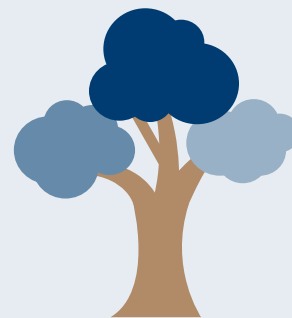
Finally, continue to implement this practice as needed into your interactions with others, and change the context of the feedback such as whether or not you agree with a particular solution to a problem, perspective, or an idea.

Using Establish-Maintain-Restore to Build Psychological Safety

Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) is a research-supported system of strategies and tools used to build effective relationships with others. Critically, even though EMR itself is backed by research supporting its use, it includes elements that are all individually research-based as well. Many of these strategies and tools come from research into adult relationships and fostering safety and connection between friends, family, and life partners.

Given that, EMR can just as easily be used to build psychological safety. As a reminder, psychological safety can be understood as staff feeling that they have time and space to bring up concerns and praises, that they have the actual skills to communicate and receive feedback effectively, and that they have input into changes made within the system. This is achieved through normalizing challenges that all are facing, engaging in open feedback processes throughout the organization, demonstrating what actions are taken as a direct result of feedback, incorporating regular team-building time and activities, and encouraging staff to take risks (e.g., what they prioritize, what care practices they use and what solutions they offer to larger problems).

EMR helps build psychological safety through a concentrated effort on building, maintaining, and restoring relationships. It can be done systematically by anyone in an organization. Here is how it is done.



Understanding the Phases

EMR divides staff relationships into three stages: the Establish stage, the Maintain stage, and the Restore stage. The Establish stage is straightforward and involves using explicit strategies to build healthy relationships with staff members. A key point to remember is that we all naturally establish relationships all the time, but some are more successful than others, some never become established, and some take explicit work. Those that form naturally and those that form through work look no different behaviorally. But there might just be something that makes the work relationships require more focus. That is where the strategies discussed in the guide below help. The Banking Time concept that it highlights is especially useful.

Once a relationship is established, we slightly adjust the same strategies we naturally or intentionally use in order to **maintain** that relationship. It is here where psychological safety begins to develop. Within the bounds of an established relationship, staff can freely share their thoughts, provide and receive feedback and support, offer ideas and solutions knowing that some may like and some may not like their ideas and solutions, and yet the relationship will remain. This is particularly critical for leaders—both formal, such as directors, and informal, such as veteran staff members—as the power difference between leaders and the rest of staff can result in tension on the relationship. Ongoing, purposeful maintenance is important.

Eventually, though, all relationships face challenges and require **restoration**. Although this can be uncomfortable, this is actually a normal part of healthy relationship development. Once one or both parties in a relationship recognize the relationship has been damaged, they can use a variety of strategies to acknowledge and repair it. This process also builds psychological safety because it demonstrates being able to recognize boundaries and rebuild them without threatening the security of the relationship. Review the strategies in the accompanying article when a relationship enters the **restore** stage.

Monitoring the Stages

This can be done for any staff member. Identify all staff within your organization and write down their names. Next to each name, mark if you, personally, feel like you are in the E, M, or R phase of the relationship. If you think we have never really formed a solid relationship with someone, that is most likely an E. If there was a relationship at one point, and it feels less open or feels lacking, that might be an R-stage relationship. Value your own perspective on the relationship; two staff members may have different opinions on the stage of their relationship and psychological safety cannot be built until both agree on that perspective.

From there, identify your “low-hanging fruit.” These are staff members you connect with easily and naturally, regardless of the stage (so, in regards to R, you are able to quickly recognize when the relationship needs to be repaired and can do so easily and successfully). Then identify which are the hard-to-reach fruit. See if you can notice a pattern. Are there gender identity differences between these two groups? What about racial/ethnic or religious beliefs? Do they not like your favorite sports team? Spend some time checking your personal biases and see which might be barriers to building a culture with psychological safety.

Action Steps

Once you have your low-hanging fruit and the hard-to-reach fruit, select one from the first group that is either in the E or R stage. Select three from the second group either in the E or R stage. And then select 1–2 strategies from the accompanying EMR document aligned with each stage that you will use with these staff members. Set an intention and goal to use these strategies and then do so. Watch the effects. Continue to connect with these individuals, even those that might naturally be difficult for you, until you perceive those relationships have moved to the M stage. Continue building them while also identifying new staff in the E or R stages to connect with and repeat the process.

If everyone is continually committed to building a strong, connected culture, then the other components of psychological safety can follow.

Establish-Maintain-Restore Guide

Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) is a research-based system for building healthy relationships. It is built upon research investigating general healthy relationship qualities and practices. EMR is a complex system, and covering it in its entirety would require a full course-load of materials.

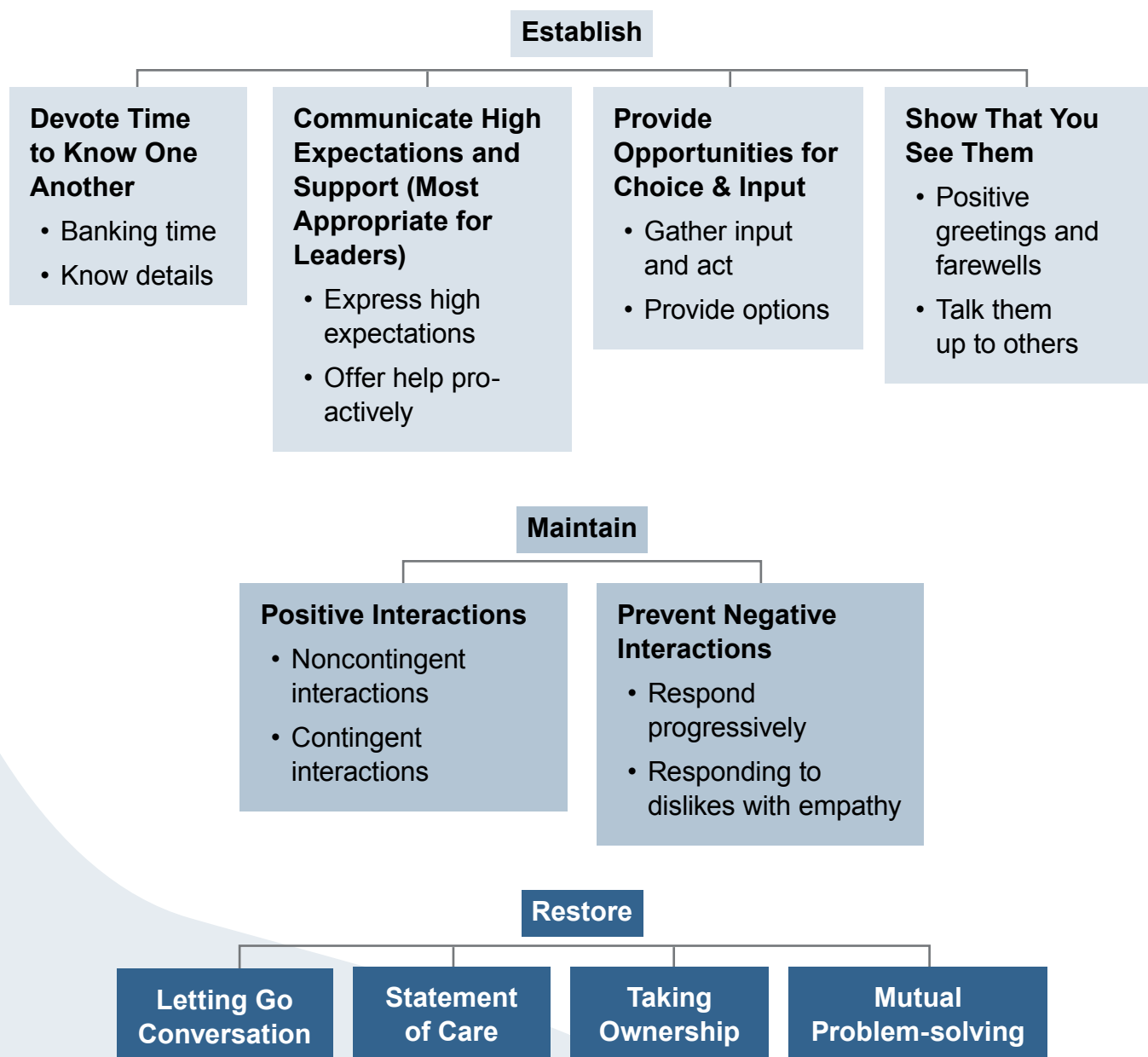
However, its practices can still be of use. This activity is meant to provide an introductory-level guide to implementing EMR as an individual. In other words, it is an ongoing activity.

Section 1: Knowing the Stages

As mentioned above, EMR divides relationships into three stages: an Establish stage, when the relationship begins, a Maintain stage, during which the relationship is a work in progress, and a Restore stage, in which the relationship is deemed damaged and in need of repairs so that it may return to the Maintain stage.

Each stage is accompanied by specific practices that can be implemented in person or remotely. See the figure below.

Bracket of EMR Practice



Section 2: Identifying the Stages

Before learning the practices, we need to identify which staff members are in each stage relative to ourselves. If you followed the prompts above, you may have already completed this step. You can also do that now using the guide below to help be intentional with this practice.

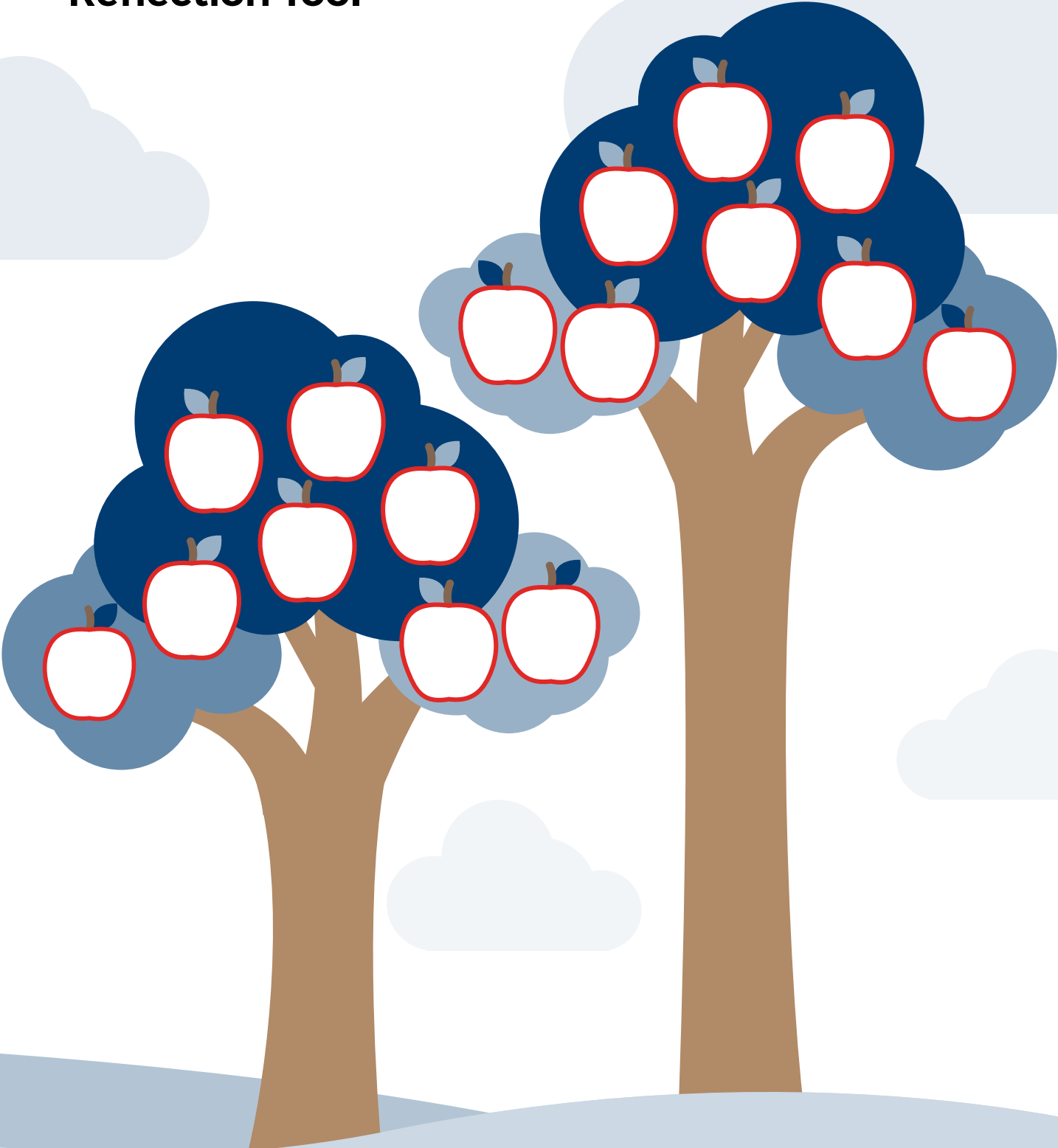
STAFF MEMBER	ESTABLISH	MAINTAIN	RESTORE
NOTES			

Next, we need to figure out if there are any barriers that are preventing some relationships from being Established or Restored. Often, those barriers include some emotional reaction, a bias, a past event, lack of time, etc.

You may have already completed this step if following the prompts above. If not, you may use the Equity/Tree Reflection Tool on the next page to help with this. To use this tool:

1. Write down the names of staff members you connect with easily on the lowest apples. These are your “low-hanging fruit”—they take little effort to connect with.
2. Write down the names of staff members with whom you have struggled to Establish relationships or whose relationships you need to Restore. Put them in the middle and top apples. These are the co-workers for you who are difficult.
3. Draw a line that roughly divides the apples into those three sections so it is easier to see.
4. Adopt the mindset of a scientist and look for patterns. What is it about your “low-hanging” colleagues that requires less intentional effort to place them in Establish or Maintain? What about the middle and top ones? In what ways might race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, parental background, and even your own personal history with the staff member explain their position?

**Equity/Triage Tree
Reflection Tool**



Section 3: Learning the Practices

Each stage has research-supported strategies for helping move the relationship through that stage. These practices are easy-to-implement, adaptable, and effective. There are also subtle nuances when considering personal and cultural barriers. Below we provide a brief review of select strategies (4 Establish, 2 Maintain, 2 Restore).

ESTABLISH: GETTING TO KNOW STAFF

Banking Time

Purpose

Intentionally carve out time to spend with staff and get to know them as people. Develop an understanding of the person's experiences in and outside of work. This helps everyone feel seen, safe, accepted, and respected. The key component is that by banking time into the relationship, thinking of it like a savings account, when it comes time to make a request, we can "withdraw" from that relationship without overdrawing and harming it.

How to Do

1. Find an existing window of time
 - a. During work
 - i. During slow periods
 - ii. Arrive early to work on occasion to connect with them
 - iii. During lunch
 - b. Before/After
 - i. During work events
 - ii. Over breakfast/dinner
 - iii. Play games before work
2. Ask open-ended questions that are not rote (e.g., not "how are you?")
3. Reflect you are listening
 - a. Pay attention (put away distractions and rotate toward them)
 - b. Reflect back what you hear (either through paraphrase or summary)
 - c. Share information about you only when fitting and it doesn't hijack the attention
 - d. Find similarities
 - e. Ask follow up questions
 - f. Consider suspending your view on something in order to better understand theirs

ESTABLISH: COMMUNICATING HIGH EXPECTATIONS & SUPPORT

Express High Expectations

Purpose

We can hold ourselves accountable to high expectations and instill healthy beliefs about our ability to meet those expectations. Find natural opportunities to communicate expectations to others and the ability to meet them.

How to Do

1. Clearly express high-level expectations
 - a. For example, “When you leave at night, it really helps me get things going in the morning if you make sure this machine is put on standby.”
2. Express a specific belief in ability
 - a. For example, “All practitioners at some point learn how to do this, and I know you will figure it out because I have seen you in action already.”

ESTABLISH: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE AND INPUT

Gather Input and Act on it

Purpose

When colleagues and those you supervise are provided control over what happens within their organization, they experience a deeper connection to their colleagues and their organization. Solicit feedback from colleagues about how work is going and any recommendations for improvement. This is an effective relationship-building practice. It also demonstrates that you truly value their input, no matter how big or small.

How to Do

1. Identify topics in the workplace that colleagues would find relevant
2. Determine the best way to get input
 - a. One-on-one, in pairs, or as groups
 - b. Electronically
 - c. Paper
 - d. Suggestion box
3. Review the input
 - a. Look for themes
 - b. Consider feasibility and relevance to the workplace
3. Develop a plan of action
4. Have fun with it!
 - a. You can solicit feedback about anything. In one setting, one person decided to make a “Battle of the Oreos” event where Oreo flavors were tested and ranked and then they brought in those Oreos regularly for their colleagues.

ESTABLISH: SHOW THAT YOU SEE THEM

Talk Them Up to Another Colleague

Purpose

Direct compliments can be off-putting for some people. Whether they are working through social anxiety or have cultural differences regarding giving and receiving compliments, the message may not always be well-received when a relationship is in its early stages.

Consider instead “tootling”—sharing a positive story or attribute about an employee to their colleagues. Tootling is a term used in education settings to differentiate from tattling, the act of reporting someone’s wrongdoing. Tootling refers to reporting or sharing when someone does something good, kind, or helpful. Build in time to provide tootles at meetings or create a space where they may be posted and seen by other employees.

How to Do

1. Identify something the colleague did, said, or achieved
2. Identify another adult who could deliver the praise and have it be well-received
3. Communicate this praise to the adult and ask them to share it with the person
 - a. They can use email, phone, text, in-person communication, etc.
 - b. Emphasize that you want this person to convey the message to the colleague

MAINTAIN: POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Noncontingent Positive Interactions

Purpose

This is a basic relationship maintenance strategy that shows you care about your colleague regardless of what they have done or do. It validates their humanity and reinforces their sense of psychological safety: that they can make mistakes without them reflecting upon their personhood.

How to Do

1. Continue with greetings and farewells and personalize them when possible
2. Continue to check in about their personal and professional life and provide verbal recognition of their efforts, experiences, and perspectives
3. Find opportunities for laughter and fun
 - a. Interspersing opportunities to joke and play with colleagues creates a positive experience
 - b. Be careful with sarcasm, as it does not always translate well

MAINTAIN: PREVENTING NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS

Responding with Empathy

Purpose

Over the last 30 years, researchers have noted a phenomenon in American citizens called the “Empathy Gap.” In short, we became a nation so focused on self-esteem that we began to overly attribute others’ struggles and failures and behaviors to their own self-concept. After all, if we are so focused on our own self-esteem, everyone else must be too, right? What this has led to is a diminished ability to empathize with others—to see things from their perspective, feel the emotions they are feeling without taking responsibility for them, and to see the person behind the experience. In the event of a potentially negative occurrence in the workplace, start with empathy and work through the interaction to note whether the interaction remains neutral or even transforms into a positive one. This is key to relationship- and community-building

How to Do

1. Practice your **EOARS**
 - b. **E = Empathy statements** (e.g., “This seems to be bothering you; it would bother me, too”)
 - c. **O = Open-ended questions** that elicit their perspective
 - d. **A = Affirm** that their perspective or experience makes sense given the context, even if you do not agree
 - e. **R = Reflect** on what you hear on occasion with slight changes to spur the other person to affirm or reject your understanding of their experience
 - f. **S = Summarize** on occasion very clearly what you have heard (e.g., “So if I have this right, this happened and it made you think about ...”)

RESTORE

Letting Go Conversation

Purpose

If a colleague is frustrated or upset with you, or if you are with them, communication and partnership may break down. Check in with your colleague, and if they share that they feel something is unresolved, give them space. This is especially critical if you have personally resolved whatever conflict arose and they haven’t. A lack of transparency can lead to further breakdowns.

How to Do

1. Internally find ways to let go of the conflict
 - a. Ask yourself, “Am I holding onto something that could be let go?”
2. Consider how you want to convey the message of starting over with the colleague
3. Find a time to have a private conversation to begin the discussion

RESTORE

Mutual Problem-Solving

Purpose

Working with a colleague to fix a conflict is far more beneficial than demanding a solution, barring certain cases such as racially motivated slurs and actions. It also further creates an opportunity to build empathy. If a conflict cannot be resolved through “Letting Go Conversation,” then mutually problem-solving the conflict may help.

How to Do

1. Start with an empathy statement
2. Express your perspective on the conflict while diffusing any potential struggle
3. Invite the person to identify potential solutions
4. Pick an idea, try it, then repeat until the conflict is resolved and your relationship can begin to rebuild



Module 2: Creating Safe and Supportive Environments

Use these discussion prompts to guide your reflection on the content of this module, the skills and strategies learned, the content's relevance to your own life, and your personal experiences with this module's content.

These prompts are intended to be completed **at least 1 week after** completing the information part of the module, and **after you have had some time to practice**. This should give you enough time to evaluate the usefulness of this module for you right now, in this moment of your life, to strengthen your well-being.

In addition, these discussions are intended to be done with your **practice partner** or **professional team** (depending on your organization's ARC implementation model). We encourage your partner and/or team to practice EOARS for good listening to help keep the discussion supportive:

E = Empathy statements (e.g., you're in a tough spot, you're doing what you can, I totally agree)

O = Open-ended questions (e.g., how, what, tell me how, in what way)

A = Affirmation (genuine confidence boosters, e.g., you have great insight, you are a determined person, great suggestion)

R = Reflection (repeat or rephrase to understand, e.g., so you feel..., it sounds like..., do you mean...)

S = Summary (special reflection that emphasizes change, e.g., so [brief summary] and that's helping you feel better, right?)

Knowledge Check Questions

(complete during/immediately after the module)



Why is it important for leadership to engage in prioritization? What can happen if an organization fails to prioritize?

What are the characteristics of a healthy and supportive environment for professionals?

In what industries has psychological safety been researched and developed within organizations, and what are its main features?



Post-Session Discussion Questions

(complete 1–4 weeks after module & before the next module)

What is your organization's greatest climate strength? How can you use that to improve overall climate and safety?

What strategies and supports have you used to prioritize your own well-being within your work? How can those be supported by the work environment?






What could your leadership do to promote a safe and supportive environment? What could you do to contribute to a safe and supportive environment for your colleagues?

How full is your plate? Other than ARC, what practices would you need to prioritize and receive support for to create a little more room on your professional plate?

Clarifying, Aligning with, and Committing to One's Values

- Determine the difference between values and goals
- Clarify your own values and identify goals that let you track your progress toward values
- Create an action plan to spend time deeply engaging with your values

Module 3: Values

ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 True North	With one relevant value in mind (acknowledge that others might drop off), determine how well-aligned you are to that value, then determine what skills you need and what barriers must be removed to get back to that value.	5-10 minutes
 Bullseye	Focus on four value domains, determine how in sync your behaviors are in each domain, and identify specific barriers that are preventing your actions from reflecting those values.	15-20 minutes
 Life Values Inventory	Explore your values, including those that are apparent, those you are not aware of engaging in, and those you may want to re-emphasize.	20 minutes
 Individual Values Journey	In-depth exploration of several potential values in life beyond professional well-being, shifting from one value domain to another based upon context.	20 minutes
 Retirement Party	Explore your actions in alignment with values based on social perception, contrast desirable life path with current life path, and identify which actions are needed to bring those into sync.	10-15 minutes

True North

This is a condensed version of the “Life Values Inventory” exercise for when you need quick clarity and readjustments toward your values. It is best used when you are already clear on the difference between values and goals and have already clarified your own values. If you are unsure about either of those, please complete the other activities first.

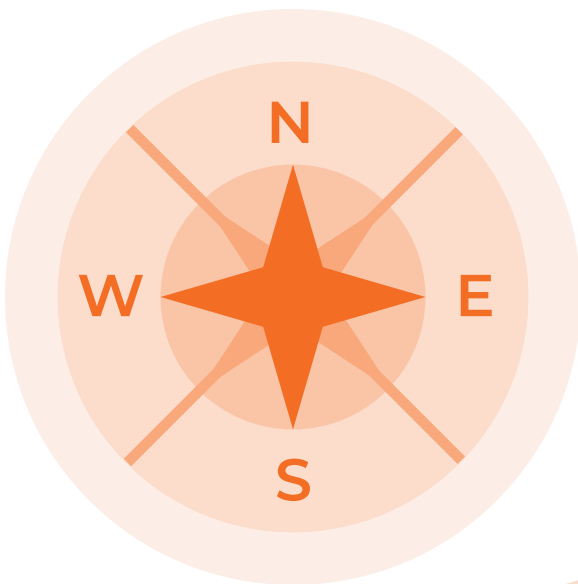
You can use this exercise regularly in your own life as a way to reflect upon and adjust your actions to keep them in alignment with your values that most matter in that moment.

What are your 3 values in focus right now?

These are your True North values that you can follow whenever feeling lost.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Place an X around the compass below that roughly marks how well you have been following your True North values.



Reflect on your current strategies for dealing with stress and problems. What are they, and are they working? List as many as you can think of and rate how well they are working to address your needs versus simply avoiding your needs.

What skills do you need to make the journey back toward your True North?

Reflect on the three prompts below:

How aware are you of your emotions, thoughts, and experiences?

How open are you to difficult thoughts, emotions, and experiences without avoiding them?

How engaged are you with the present moment?

Bullseye

Your Values

Deep in your heart, how do you want to behave? How do you want to treat yourself, others, the world around you? What sort of person do you want to be? What strengths or qualities do you want to develop?

Work/Education: includes workplace, career, education, volunteering, study, and skills development.

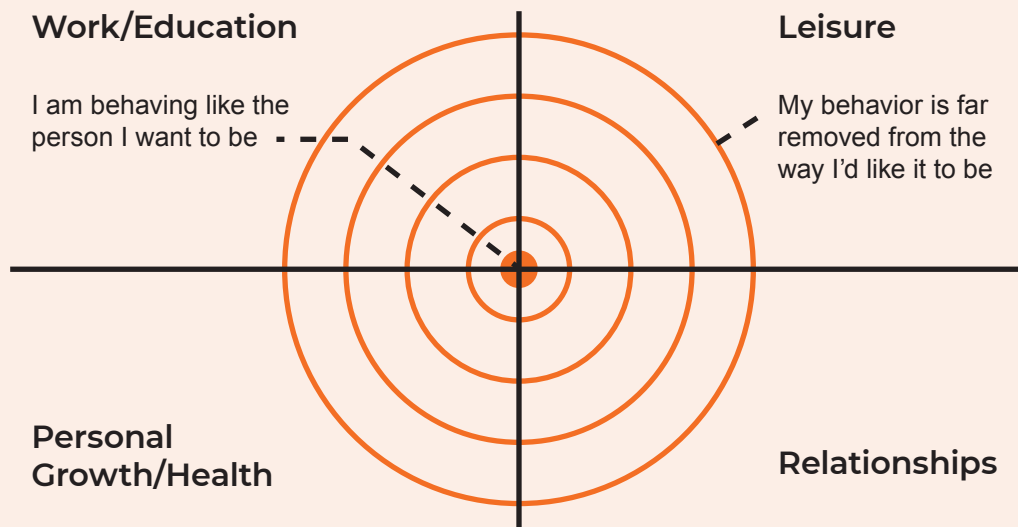
Relationships: includes your partner, children, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers, and other social contacts.

Personal Growth/Health: may include religion, spirituality, creativity, life skills, meditation, yoga, nature; exercise, nutrition, and/or addressing health risk factors like smoking, alcohol, drugs, overeating, etc.

Leisure: how you play, relax, have fun or enjoy yourself; activities for rest, recreation, fun, and creativity.



Place an X in each area of the dartboard, to represent your average position in the last week.



Action Plan

Pick one quadrant: What are two or three values you want to bring into play?

What actions will you take?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What skills do you need to help you do this?

Life Values Inventory

As we have mentioned, values are things that are meaningful and important in life and bring you a sense of vitality or purpose. Values are aplenty, and the specific combination of values that guide us differ per person. In addition, values might grow or lessen in importance depending on your current path in life.

It is important to take time to pause and explore your current values. Some of these values may already be apparent to you because you engage in them consistently. You might engage with others but not be aware of them, thus their ability to give you purpose is lost or underutilized. Other values may have declined in importance to you, and this may be okay with you or you may want to re-emphasize them. You can only know for sure by identifying your values as they are now.

One thing to remember is that it is really common to mistake values for wishes or goals. We will focus on goals in a moment. When trying to identify values, try to think of actions and not outcomes. That may help you clarify your values from goals (e.g., reading for enjoyment vs. reading a specific number of books in a year).

The following exercise is an in-depth exercise for those who really like digging into their values. If you want a shorter version, try the True North exercise, which has a similar structure. We also encourage you to try the other exercises, as they may help in unique ways.



Below are some of the common areas in life that people value with some common reflective questions. They serve as the guiding compass when navigating the many hills, paths, and unexpected journeys in life. Review them and take a moment to ask yourself some of these questions.

Physical Well-Being

What values do you have regarding your physical well-being? How do you want to look at yourself?

Family Relationships

What kind of relationships do you want with your family? What kind of mother/father/brother/sister/uncle/aunt do you want to be? What is important to you about a good family?

Intimate Relationships

What kind of partner do you want to be? What quality of relationship do you want to be part of? How do you want to spend time together?

Citizenship/Community

What kind of environment do you want to be a part of? How do you want to contribute to your community?

Mental/Emotional Health

What helps you maintain sound mental health? Why is this important to you? What issues would you like to address?

Spirituality

What kind of relationship do you want with God/nature/the Earth/mankind? What does having a spiritual life mean to you? How can you exercise this?



Friends/Social Relationships

What sort of friend do you want to be? How would you like to act toward your friends? How can these relationships be improved?

Hobbies/Recreation

How would you like to enjoy yourself? What relaxes you? When are you most playful? Are there any special interests you would like to pursue?

Education/Training/Personal Growth

How would you like to grow? What kind of skills would you like to develop? What would you like to know more about?

Employment/Career

What kind of work is valuable to you? What qualities do you want to bring as an employee? What kind of work relationships would you like to build?

On this page are common values within each domain. Notice how each value listed is an action. This means these are ongoing pursuits. Some of them may be things you have never attempted or valued yourself. Read through them and find a mixture of existing and new values.

Family Relations

- Work on current relationships
- Spend time with family
- Take an active role in raising my children
- Maintain consistent, healthy communication

Marriage/Couples/Intimate Relationships

- Establish a sense of safety and trust
- Give and receive affection
- Spend quality time with my partner
- Show my partner how much I appreciate them

Friendships/Social Relationships

- End destructive relationships
- Reach out for new relationships
- Feel a sense of belonging
- Have and keep close friends
- Spend time with friends
- Have people to spend time with

Mental/Emotional Health

- Seek activities and experiences that give me pleasure
- Have free time
- Be independent and take care of myself
- Challenge my negative thinking
- Make my own decisions
- Engage in therapy
- Take my medications
- Stay active

Physical Well-Being

- Live in secure and safe surroundings
- Engage in regular exercise
- Have a steady income to meet physical needs
- Eat foods that are nourishing to my body
- Maintain a balance between rest and activity
- Get enough sleep

Citizenship/Community

- Contribute to the larger community
- Help people in need
- Improve society
- Be committed to a cause or group that has a larger purpose
- Make sacrifices for others

Spirituality

- Follow traditions and customs
- Live according to spiritual principles
- Practice my religion or faith

- Grow in understanding myself, my personal calling, and life's purpose
- Find meaning in life
- Develop a personal philosophy of life
- Spend time in nature
- Focus on the greater good

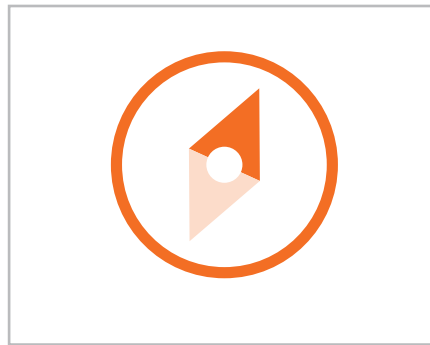
Education/Training/Personal Growth

- Be involved in undertakings I believe personally are significant
- Try new and different things in life
- Learn new things
- Be daring and seek adventure
- Have an exciting life
- Learn to do challenging things that help me grow as a person

Employment

- Be powerful and able to influence others, have authority
- Make important decisions that affect the organization
- Be a leader
- Make a great deal of money
- Be respected by others
- Be seen by others as successful, be ambitious
- Become well-known, obtain recognition and status
- Be productive, work hard
- Achieve significant goals
- Enjoy the work I do

On this last page, replace the guiding questions with your chosen values from the list above, or others that you identified on your own. Try to have a mixture of current values and new values, and “try on” those new values by finding specific actions that fulfill them. For example, if you selected “Spend time in nature,” you may choose a micro-change by including a walk into your weekly routine, or you can go big by hiking in a new park, or even bigger by camping for a weekend without technology. Give this inventory a try.



My Values Journey

DOMAIN	THINGS I'VE VALUED (Events that made me smile, touched me, were fun or meaningful, or made me feel alive)	FAVORITES ***** = Top *** = Middle * = Okay	STEP INTO THE FUTURE (What actions can I take to have more of this in the next year? What are some small steps I might try?)
Connecting with others			
Giving to others and having a positive influence			
Being active			
Embracing the moment			
Challenging myself and learning			
Caring for myself			
Other:			
Other:			

Retirement Party

One way to think about values and the meaning they give us is to determine what sort of story we want to leave behind for others to share. This does not mean it has to be the most fantastical, adventurous, amazing story—instead, it means, what story gives your life the most meaning to you?

This activity helps you explore what this story might be. Take your time going through it and give yourself the space to immerse yourself in the imaginative process. You have total control here.

After a long career, you have decided to retire. To celebrate, your colleagues, friends, family, and clients plan and throw a party in your honor. There is good food and drink, your favorite music is playing, and attendees are playing games.

What food is there?

What drinks are people having?

What music is playing?

What games are they playing?



Halfway through the night, several people line up behind a microphone. One of them taps on the microphone to get everyone's attention. You and the rest of your party guests look to the first speaker. They lean into the microphone and say, "Thank you all for coming tonight. Those of us in line here

wanted to share our thoughts and memories of the guest of honor tonight. We are friends, family members, partners, colleagues, and clients, and we all have things we want to say about their work and overall, just what they mean to us."

Who is standing in line to speak? Be as general or specific as you would like:

The first person approaches and begins to speak...
Who are they? What do they say about you as a worker and person?

The second person approaches and begins to speak...
Who are they? What do they say about you as a worker and person?

The remaining people all approach and begin to speak....
What things do they say about you?

If your retirement party proceeded exactly like this, would you be satisfied with the purpose of your life and work?

Now, go through the exercise again. Give yourself the same amount of time to imagine and dive into what this experience will be like.

But make one change...you are not retiring in the future. You are being forced to retire now.

Go through each exercise again and reflect on how this changes things. Who would attend your retirement party right now? What would they say about you right now? And would you be satisfied with this outcome?

If there is any discrepancy between how your retirement party looks now, and how you would want it to look if you had complete control over it, where is that discrepancy?

What is the minimal step you can take to bring these two versions of your retirement party into sync?



Module 3: Clarifying, Aligning with, and Committing to One's Values

Use these discussion prompts to guide your reflection on the content of this module, the skills and strategies learned, the content's relevance to your own life, and your personal experiences with this module's content.

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R = Reflection (repeat or rephrase to understand, e.g., so you feel..., it sounds like..., do you mean...)

S = Summary (special reflection that emphasizes change, e.g., so [brief summary] and that's helping you feel better, right?)



Post-Session Discussion Questions

(complete 1–4 weeks after module & before the next module)

Are your behaviors consistent with who you want to be, or is there a disconnect? If there is a disconnect, what is getting in the way of you being the person you want to be in whatever relevant value domain?

How did the exercises go for you? Did you notice any benefits in your mood, how you felt or how you dealt with stress after doing them?





Based on your experience, how do you think clarifying values and committing to them could help people feel more satisfied with life?

What was challenging about value clarification, alignment, and commitment?

Cultivating Awareness Through Mindfulness-Based Practices

- Define the difference between mindfulness and mindlessness
- Know the elements of mindfulness and be able to apply them
- Evaluate the effectiveness of mindfulness strategies in the moment

Module 4: Mindfulness

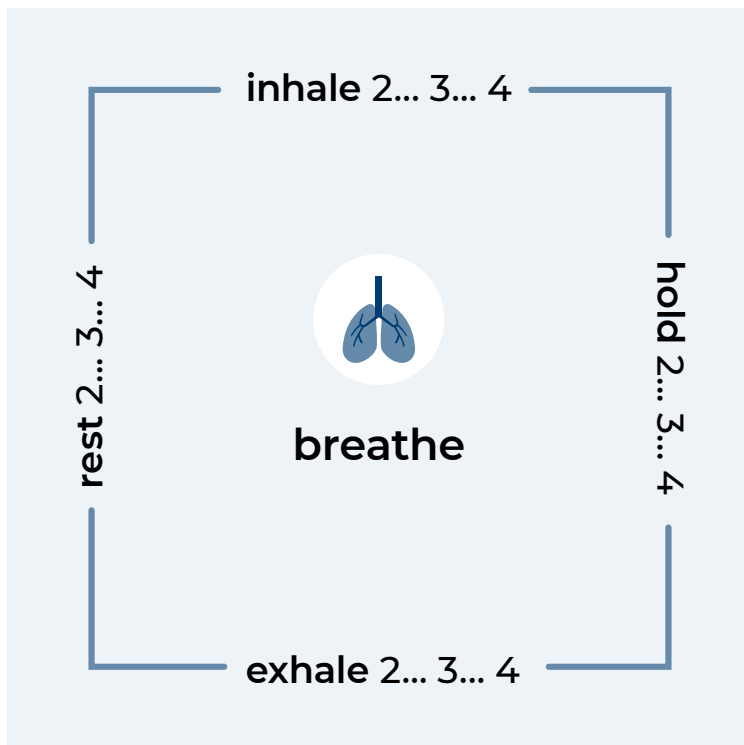
ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 <p>Mindful Breathing</p>	<p>A traditional practice that involves taking a breath in, holding it, then doing a controlled exhalation.</p>	<p>2-3 minutes</p>
 <p>Dropping an Anchor</p>	<p>Used to “anchor” oneself in the moment during a difficult time.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
 <p>Mindful Chore</p>	<p>Used as a way to practice dropping into a mindful state when in the middle of an action that also requires attention.</p>	<p>5-7 minutes</p>
 <p>Soles of the Feet</p>	<p>Used as a way to quickly reorient our attention from something negative in the immediate environment to a focal point that is largely neutral—the soles of the feet.</p>	<p>3 minutes</p>

Mindful Breathing

Picture someone meditating. What immediately comes to mind? Are they sitting cross-legged, saying, “Ohm,” and deep breathing? There is a reason breathing is a core part of meditation and, more generally, mindfulness and relaxation.

When we are stressed, our attention becomes narrowed on the thing that stresses us. We also experience a flood of hormones, including cortisol, which primes our body to act. Our muscles tighten. And our breath either halts or quickens depending on the need (holding your breath for a short-distance sprint can actually help, hence our chests tighten when stressed).

Directly countering this automatic response by drawing our attention to our breath keeps it under our control and brings us down from this automatic stress response. It also gives us something steady to focus our attention on that can be a bit like a physical mantra for mindfulness. Although many adults and children are quick to discount this simple technique, we encourage you to give it a try. Mindful breathing can be used for an extended period of time prior to encountering a known stressor or quickly after noticing a stressor, when you need a moment to collect yourself before reacting.



This image is a guide for box breathing. To use it, begin inhaling at the top, tracing your finger or eyes along the top while counting to 4. Breathe in the whole time. Then hold it while tracing along the right side while counting to 4. Then, with control, exhale everything out while counting to 4. And then rest, neither inhaling nor exhaling for a count of 4, before trying again.

Practice this for 1–2 minutes on your own, then try the challenges on the next page. Spend 1–2 minutes with each one.

Breathing Challenges

1. Practice mindful breathing in the shower, bath, or sauna. This combines a strong, present-moment sensory experience with deep breathing. Become familiar with this feeling of relaxation.
2. Practice mindful breathing while in a room in your home with music of your choice playing.
3. Practice mindful breathing while in a room in your home with no other sensory experiences.
4. Practice mindful breathing while commuting to work.
5. Identify a common stressor at work and practice mindful breathing before and during that stressor.
6. Incorporate mindful breathing throughout your day such that it becomes a normal response to stressors.

With each of these challenges, mindful breathing may become increasingly difficult because of waning supports or because the stressful incident is increasing in intensity. Find your personal threshold where mindful breathing is useful and keep working it into your daily life.

You can also combine mindful breathing with some of the other activities in this module. It is particularly good with Soles of the Feet, which helps to keep you grounded in the present moment through sensations.



Dropping an Anchor

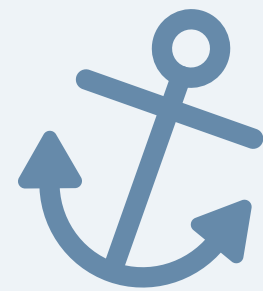
Let's use Mindful STOP (**Stop** what you are doing, **Take** a few deep breaths, **Observe** your inner experience, **Pause & Proceed** purposefully) in conjunction with some physical sensations to practice a technique called Dropping an Anchor.

There are many occasions during which you might need to “drop an anchor.” When you are feeling stressed and reacting to emotions such as frustration, exhaustion, or anxiety, you are disconnected from the present moment. You might be concerned about the past or the future, and your emotions are swelling. Your body is being primed by the parasympathetic response discussed in Module 1; in short, it is doing what it is programmed to do in times of stress, which is automating *everything*. To stop this, you need to create some space.

Breathing is directly connected to our parasympathetic response. Think of it like a built-in off-switch for pulling you out of fight, flight, or freeze mode. This is why it is central to so many relaxation and mindfulness techniques, including this one. In Dropping an Anchor, we will use some of our pent-up physical energy to create sensations that we can focus on. Finally, we will “ground” ourselves by checking in with our surroundings. This gets us out of our heads, away from whatever is dominating our attention, and returns us to the present moment.

To drop an anchor, first think of an embarrassing memory or something “light” that has bothered you recently.

What is it?



Keep that in your mind for a minute or two. And then proceed through the anchoring steps below:

1. Push your feet hard into the floor, as if you were trying to push the ground away from you.
2. If you are sitting, also sit forward.
3. Push the palm of your hands firmly together.
4. Take notice of your sensations as you consider this memory, thought, or feeling. What do you feel in your feet, hands, and back?
5. Now, look around and notice 5 things. Focus on these 5 things and try to identify a unique detail about each of them.
6. Notice 4 things you can hear.
7. Notice 3 things you can feel.

How did that feel? If you think you have the core steps memorized and practiced, try the next step below.

Now, think about a difficult or painful memory, thought, or emotion that swells inside of you. This is likely something that you would typically avoid or attempt to push aside. Instead of distracting yourself or ignoring it, drop an anchor and sit with it for a moment without reacting.

What is the thought/memory/emotion?

Keep it in mind for a minute or two. And then proceed through the anchoring steps above. How will getting better at and regularly dropping an anchor when stressed or wandering through your life mindlessly help with your own well-being? How will it help with the professional work you do? **Take time to answer these questions with your practice partner.**

MODULE 4: ACTIVITY 3

Mindful Chore

This practice is adapted from a core exercise detailed in Gardner and Moore's 2007 book, "The Psychology of Enhancing Human Performance: The Mindfulness-Acceptance-Commitment (MAC) Approach."¹ In this book, Gardner and Moore detail their success working with high-profile athletes on stress management, improving performance, and maintaining their health despite rigorous training demands and high-stress performance requirements.

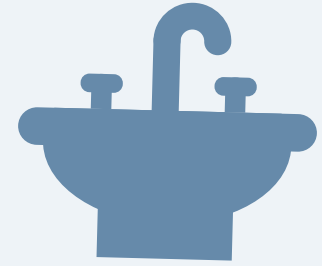
Most people experience periods of elevated stress over the course of their careers. In addition to straining your emotional and physical health, stress can deplete you at times when you most need a boost and negatively impact your ability to perform.

Use this practice for a more active application of mindfulness. It is good practice to become proficient in dropping into a mindful state when in the middle of an action that too requires attention.

To Begin:

Go to your sink and clear out a space for you to wash a dish. Grab a dish, either clean or dirty, and ideally a plate or something with a lot of surface area.

Run the water gently (we will be running water for a while and want to be conservative) and at a comfortable but still warm temperature. Put soap on the dish and grab a rag or simply use your hand. You need to be able to feel the plate.



¹ Gardner, F. L., & Moore, Z. E. (2007). The psychology of enhancing human performance: The mindfulness-acceptance-commitment (MAC) approach. Springer Publishing Company.

Start washing the plate. As you do, try to focus on what you feel: the warmth of the water, the feeling of the soap, the feeling of the plate and all its bumps and crevices. Continue washing the same dish, using the same gentle motions, for 7 minutes.

During the 7 minutes, you will notice thoughts coming into your mind. You might be questioning why you are doing this. You might be wondering if your hands will turn wrinkly from all the water. You might even notice the water isn't as warm as you'd like, or it is too warm. Whatever thoughts emerge into your mind, simply notice them and let them drift by. Gently bring your attention back to the act of washing the dish.

You might start getting bored. If so, recognize that you are bored and then bring your attention back to washing. You may even want to quit. But you can easily wash a dish for 7 minutes. It is not physically demanding. It is simply a challenge because our brains are constantly producing thoughts and reasons to not do things. Stick to the activity for 7 minutes.

Once you are finished, reflect on the following points:

1. What was the content of your thoughts like? Did you swing back and forth between boredom, irritation, curiosity, and even stress about past or present thoughts? What does that tell you about the nature of the mind?
2. In the moments when you brought your attention gently back to the activity, what did you notice about your attention and emotional experience in that moment?
3. Did you find yourself naturally gravitating to using the values response from Module 3 in this activity? If not, how might providing a value strengthen the intentionality of this activity when you begin wondering, "Why in the world am I washing this same dish for this long?"

After reflecting on this activity, practice it again except replace it with another mundane chore. Do you need to vacuum? Try vacuuming the same spot for several minutes. Do you need to put laundry away? Try folding and unfolding the same shirt over and over for several minutes. Each time reflect on your experience and notice what your mind and emotional responses are. And yet, you are still able to persevere and complete the activity. Notice if your stress and frustration with repeating the same activity dissipates as you get better with mindfulness.

To finish, expand this practice to any activity. If you have to go grocery shopping after work and you feel tired, practice it mindfully. Planning on going for a run? Practice mindfulness while running. Going into a work call? Practice mindfulness while you do so and reflect on how it changes your relationship with that moment.

Tip: Combine this practice with values affirmation and committed action to notice how these two practices—values-aligned behavior and mindfulness—support each other and your well-being.

Soles of the Feet

This practice helps teach adults how to reorient their attention from something negative or triggering in their immediate environment to a focal point that is largely neutral—the soles of the feet. Because the attention is now directed from a distressing environmental trigger (remember, your mind is part of the environment, so this means even negative thoughts and memories!) to a neutral point, the brain can quickly shift out of a stress response to a neutral, calm response. This meditative practice was originally developed for children with autism who have difficulty with changes in their environment and routines (e.g., transitioning from one activity to another), and has since been replicated effectively with children and adults with different needs, backgrounds, and experiences.

To complete this activity, either follow along with the transcript included on the next page or click on the audio file below. This recording was produced by Aria Fiat, PhD, and put to the test by hundreds of participants at a convention. The data from that study indicated that participants experienced an immediate and noticeable drop in stress reactivity in the body, measured by electrodermal activity, leading to reduced stress levels for several minutes after completing the activity.

Note: Click on the icon if you are on a computer and listen to the brief recording.



Soles of the Feet Transcript

SPEAKER (DR. ARIA FIAT)

Sit comfortably with the soles of your feet flat on the floor

Take several deep breaths. In 123
(each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each exhale ~3 seconds)

If you want you can close your eyes relax

(Pause ~5 seconds)

Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose. In 123 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each exhale ~3 seconds)

When you breathe in bring all the air all the way down into your belly. In 123 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Out 1 2 3 (each breath ~3 seconds)

Notice your breathing

(Pause ~5 seconds)

Keep breathing in slowly and breathing out slowly

(Pause ~5 seconds)

Think about your feet and toes, push your feet softly against the ground

(Pause ~1 second)

Pay attention to how the ground feels under your feet

(Pause ~1 second)

Slowly move your toes. Feel your shoes covering your feet. Notice how your socks or your shoes feel on your feet? Feel the heels of your feet against the back of your shoes.

Does it feel soft? Are your feet aching or do they feel comfortable?

(Pause ~10 seconds)

Keep breathing naturally and focus on the soles of your feet until you start to feel calm

(Pause ~5 seconds)

Let all your thoughts drift away. Let yourself feel calm and relaxed. Slowly breathe in the fresh air and breathe out all of your worries or frustration

(Pause ~10 seconds)

Take a few more deep breaths

(Pause ~12 seconds)

Feel any leftover tension leaving your body, Feel your body relax. Feel the calmness take over your body

(Pause ~5 seconds)

When you are ready, gently open your eyes

(Pause ~10–15 seconds)

Remember that you can use this exercise any time you want to feel more calm or have a clear head.



Module 4: Cultivating Awareness Through Mindfulness-Based Practices

Use these discussion prompts to guide your reflection on the content of this module, the skills and strategies learned, the content's relevance to your own life, and your personal experiences with this module's content.

These prompts are intended to be completed **at least 1 week after** completing the information part of the module, and **after you have had some time to practice**. This should give you enough time to evaluate the usefulness of this module for you right now, in this moment of your life, to strengthen your well-being.

In addition, these discussions are intended to be done with your **practice partner** or **professional team** (depending on your organization's ARC implementation model). We encourage your partner and/or team to practice EOARS for good listening to help keep the discussion supportive:

E = Empathy statements (e.g., you're in a tough spot, you're doing what you can, I totally agree)

O = Open-ended questions (e.g., how, what, tell me how, in what way)

A = Affirmation (genuine confidence boosters, e.g., you have great insight, you are a determined person, great suggestion)

R = Reflection (repeat or rephrase to understand, e.g., so you feel..., it sounds like..., do you mean...)

S = Summary (special reflection that emphasizes change, e.g., so [brief summary] and that's helping you feel better, right?)

Knowledge Check Questions

(complete during/immediately after the module)



How would you define mindfulness?

What has research identified as benefits of practicing mindfulness?

What are clues that you are being mindful versus being mind-full?

What are two or three ways you can integrate mindfulness into your day?

How can mindfulness impact your professional endeavors?

Post-Session Discussion Questions

(complete 1–4 weeks after module & before the next module)



In what ways do our organizational and societal cultures create barriers to mindfulness?

How did you notice mindfulness affecting your life? What were the benefits and challenges?

One of the biggest difficulties with mindfulness is that there is no correct answer. It simply is about “being.” How well were you able to “be” in a given situation?




Mindfulness is important for values; it supports our ability to pause and engage with values. But we also have to value mindfulness. How can you support that value and practice?

Mindfulness is considered a core skill in ARC because it is vital to successfully implementing all other components. Look ahead at the later ARC modules. How does mindfulness underpin those other topics?

Connecting Meaningfully with Others

- Distinguish effective and ineffective social support and discuss how to advocate for your needs
- Identify feasible ways to provide service to others
- Identify potential mentors and role models and incorporate building or improving those relationships into your action plan

Module 5: Connections

ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 <p>Fill a Bucket</p>	<p>Focus on what types of interactions help to “fill” your bucket and what types of interactions “empty” your bucket.</p>	<p>5-8 minutes</p>
 <p>Build a Mentorship</p>	<p>A self-reflection process for considering ways in which mentoring may benefit you.</p>	<p>10-15 minutes</p>
 <p>Coals and Diamonds</p>	<p>A reflection tool to help identify the types of social support desired in certain areas of your life and what types of social support is not desirable.</p>	<p>10-15 minutes</p>



MODULE 5: ACTIVITY 1

Fill a Bucket

This is a reflective exercise to help you understand your own response to various connections with others. Some of the ways we connect with people—whether we are drawn to a person’s character or shared activities—leave us feeling energized and supported. Other ways we connect with people can leave us feeling drained. Sometimes, those factors that help us feel energized at first become draining if they are too intense or too frequent.



Spend a minute or two thinking back to recent experiences you have had while interacting and connecting with others. These can be conversations with family members or colleagues, interactions with clients, events you have gone to—any time you were interacting with others or engaged with a community.

Directions: Next to the bucket marked with a “+” below, list all the ways in which you connect with and give to others that fill you up. Consider how recently you last engaged with each person or participated in each activity.

In the bucket about to spill over with negativity, list all the ways in which you give too much or feel drained by others. How recently did you last engage with each person or participate in each activity?



What did you learn from this activity?

MODULE 5: ACTIVITY 2

Building a Mentorship

This practice is divided into two sections. The first is intended to facilitate a needs assessment and identification of potential mentors to help strengthen those needs. This section is useful for anyone at any stage of their wellness journey, but especially for those who work in organizations that do not have an embedded mentorship program.

The second section provides some initial action steps and activity recommendations to encourage the growth of your mentorship relationship. These are meant to be used incrementally throughout the relationship, so return to this activity as needed.

Section 1: Identifying a Mentor

Give yourself 1-2 minutes of uninterrupted time to reflect on who you want to be as an adult and a professional. If you have completed the values module already, draw from that experience. Identify a few key values, goals, and behaviors you want in your adult life. Write them in on the following pages. Use another piece of paper or, if completing digitally, add additional boxes if you need more space.

Take some time _____

Under each value, goal, or behavior you want, identify what skills you need to succeed. If you completed the Bullseye activity from the values module, you can use those skills too.

Take some time _____

Finally, in the last box, identify one individual in your life (professional or personal) that has demonstrated competency in those values, achieved similar goals, or behaves similarly. If you can identify someone you know that could mentor you in multiple areas, fantastic but it is not expected that one person meet all your needs. Be prepared to build a mentorship network.

Directions: After you have identified your potential mentors, start with one. Approach them, share your wants, and ask if they would be willing to mentor you.

Example Mentor Questions

What do you want?

Ex: Writing a book

What do you need?

- Help managing writing time
- Structure to develop plots
- Creating realistic characters
- Developing my prose
- Navigating publishing processes
- Marketing my book

Who can provide?

Successful author I know



Mentor One Questions

What do you want?

What do you need?

Who can provide?



Mentor Two Questions

What do you want?

What do you need?

Who can provide?



Mentor Three Questions

What do you want?

What do you need?

Who can provide?



Mentor Four Questions

What do you want?

What do you need?

Who can provide?



Section 2: Mentorship Activities

Below is a list of activities to engage in once a mentorship relationship is established. Some of these are best completed early in the relationship and periodically reviewed, while others are great to use throughout the relationship.

Identify goals: Complete this at the beginning of a mentorship as well as periodically throughout so that both mentor and mentee know what they are working toward.

Action plan: For each goal, create an action plan. An effective action plan targets a goal, acknowledges the “why” of that goal (i.e., why that goal is important or what value it actualizes), acknowledges barriers to that goal, develops if-then plans for when that barrier emerges, then builds in rewards for making progress toward goal.

Identify challenges: This is similar to identifying barriers in the action plan and is focused on identifying new challenges as they arise.

Role-play: Role-playing can be uncomfortable, yet it remains one of the most effective methods for developing skills and fluency with a process.

Shadow: We learn a lot by first observing others doing a job. Find time for the mentee to shadow the mentor.

Provide networking opportunities:

One of the biggest benefits for a mentee is an expansion of their personal and professional networks. Mentors can facilitate this by connecting mentees with individuals directly or inviting them to events where networking might naturally happen.

Provide feedback (written and oral):

Feedback is a great way to share expectations and bring attention to specific areas of improvements as well as areas of strength.

Share career history: Mentees can often find themselves in a place of uncertainty about their career trajectory. Mentors who share their history can give mentees a realistic model for the career process.

Review materials: Mentors often have little “nuggets” of knowledge that can help improve documents and instructional materials.

Read up: Select reading material for both mentor and mentee to read and discuss.

Identify strengths and focus on using those:

Both mentor and mentee should continually assess the mentee’s strengths and find ways to tailor projects and activities toward those strengths.

Identify weaknesses and support them:

Weaknesses are just a step away from being lesser strengths. Although it might not be effective to build activities that are high-stakes (e.g., administering anesthesia under emergency conditions) and require the use of a skill or knowledge area that the mentee is currently weak in, practice activities can be used to build up the weakness until the mentee can incorporate that knowledge or skill into “real world” practice.

Build in exposure to challenges:

In order to grow, mentees need to be faced with challenges that are just beyond their current skills, much like how muscles grow in response to exercise. These need to be purposefully built into a training experience.

Closing the relationship: Once the mentee has met their goals, the mentor and mentee should meet to close the relationship and decide in what way the relationship evolves.



Coals and Diamonds

Use this activity to help clarify from whom you should seek support for different needs. We can think of ineffective supports as coal. This is a form of support (carbon) that you can use but is not necessarily ideal. Effective supports are strong and reflective of our needs in the moment. We'll call these our diamond supports. This does not mean that those who provide you coal cannot, with refinement, begin providing diamond support. For now, we want to focus on immediate, effective supports. You might already implicitly know who is good for you for different needs, and this is an opportunity to clarify this knowledge. Or perhaps you have an area in life in which you feel you have no social support and need an outlet. Maybe you have supports you can seek out, but you are not sure how effective they are.

Review the common areas of life below. You may recognize these from the Life Values Inventory activity from the values module if you completed that activity.

Common Life Areas

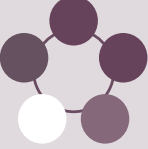



- Physical well-being
- Family relationships
- Intimate relationships
- Mental/emotional health
- Friends/social relationships
- Employment/career
- Education/personal growth
- Hobbies/recreation
- Spirituality
- Citizenship/community

Directions: Select four or five of these areas that recently have been more difficult than usual. Write the name of each area above on the right. Then identify more specifically what your needs are. For example, if it is intimate relationships, you might seek improvements to your connection with your partner.

Identify your coal supports—the statements, suggestions, or activities that people might offer that are not helpful for you in that area of life right now.

Next, identify your diamond supports—those statements, suggestions, or activities that your connections can offer that would be most helpful for you right now.

Finally, identify a person who can be your diamond supplier.

 LIFE AREA	 COAL SUPPORT	 DIAMOND SUPPORT	 DIAMOND SUPPLIER

Module 5: Connecting Meaningfully with Others

Use these discussion prompts to guide your reflection on the content of this module, the skills and strategies learned, the content's relevance to your own life, and your personal experiences with this module's content.

These prompts are intended to be completed **at least 1 week after** completing the information part of the module, and **after you have had some time to practice**. This should give you enough time to evaluate the usefulness of this module for you right now, in this moment of your life, to strengthen your well-being.

In addition, these discussions are intended to be done with your **practice partner** or **professional team** (depending on your organization's ARC implementation model). We encourage your partner and/or team to practice EOARS for good listening to help keep the discussion supportive:

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R = Reflection (repeat or rephrase to understand, e.g., so you feel..., it sounds like..., do you mean...)

S = Summary (special reflection that emphasizes change, e.g., so [brief summary] and that's helping you feel better, right?)

Knowledge Check Questions

(complete during/immediately after the module)



What is the difference between effective and ineffective social support?
Share a personal example/experience.

According to research by Sonja Lyubomirsky, why should we do things in the service of others?

What is the difference between a mentor and a role model? In what ways are they similar?

Post-Session Discussion Questions

(complete 1–4 weeks after module & before the next module)



Share an example of a time you connected with others in a meaningful way. How did it make you feel? How did your mood, emotions, and stress levels change?

How do you think connecting with others in meaningful ways helps enhance your well-being, presently and in the future?

What is challenging about meaningfully connecting with people? What strategies have you used to stay connected with people while physically distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic?



What are your plans to cultivate meaningful connections?



Bringing It All Together: A Wellness Plan for the Future

- Review learned wellness concepts, skills, and strategies
- Identify most useful concepts, skills, and strategies for your own personal wellness
- Create and commit to an ongoing plan for wellness

Module 10: Wellness Plan

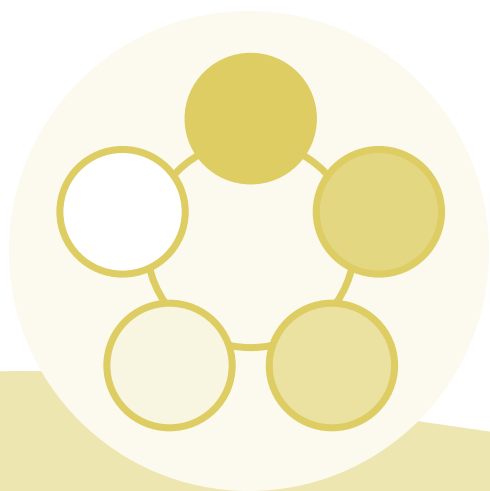
ACTIVITY	KEY POINTS	TIME TO COMPLETE
 <p>Wellness Activity</p>	<p>Review and summarize why it is important for you to focus on your well-being.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
 <p>Wellness Plan</p>	<p>Make a plan for which concepts, practices, or skills you want to emphasize first; list your goals for improving your well-being; and identify specific barriers to the process.</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>

MODULE 10: ACTIVITY 1

Wellness Activity

Module 10's activities are intended to get you to reflect on all the well-being concepts, practices, and skills covered in this course. It is entirely up to you to construct your own plan for the future. Activity 1 will have you go through each of the modules and complete reflective ratings that indicate whether you plan on continuing to use that module's concepts, practices, or skills. Specifically, you will mark yes, maybe, or no as to whether you plan on continuing to focus on the particular concept, practice, or skill.

Activity 2 will help you craft a summary that clarifies why your well-being is important to you; identifies the concepts, practices, or skills you wish to prioritize; lists your goals for improving your well-being; and considers what barriers may get in your way. Ultimately, this plan will provide you with a road map of the concepts, practices, and skills that you can continue to integrate in your life.



Activity 1: Wellness Activity

MODULE 2: CREATING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Implementation Climate—Prioritizing my well-being			
Implementation Climate—Rewarding and recognizing well-being efforts in others			
Psychological Safety—Taking risks in my profession			
Psychological Safety—Seeking and practicing giving effective feedback (see activity)			
Psychological Effort—Participate and/or help plan for team building exercises and events			
Psychological Safety—Share and encourage others to share failures and lessons learned (fallibility)			
Overload—Regular review of full plate vs. ideal plate and make adjustments to priorities (see activity)			

MODULE 3: CLARIFYING, ALIGNING WITH, AND COMMITTING TO ONE'S VALUES	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Regular clarification of values in different life domains			
Regular reflection upon the consistency or inconsistency of behaviors and values (see activity)			
Identifying barriers to values-based actions and removing said barriers			
Affirming commitment to values in the face of difficult emotions, thoughts, and experiences			

MODULE 4: CULTIVATING AWARENESS THROUGH MINDFULNESS-BASED PRACTICES	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Develop a habit of stepping into a non-judgmental, present-moment, gentle attitude to my experiences			
Becoming aware of my automatic responses to specific situations and creating space between me and my behaviors (both thoughts and physical actions)			
Regularly practice mindfulness-building traditional exercises including:			
Mindful STOP			
Regular meditation			
Regularly practice active mindfulness-building exercises including:			
Mindful breathing			
Mindful eating			
Mindful walking			
Mindful showers			
Mindful commute			
Mindful play			
Use mindfulness-based coping strategies when in distress including:			
Dropping an Anchor			
Mindful Breathing (Box breathing)			
Soles of the Feet			



MODULE 5: CONNECTING MEANINGFULLY WITH OTHERS	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Devote time to establishing and maintaining relationships with others			
Identifying and skilfully using effective social supports, and provide effective social supports to others (see Coals and Diamonds activity)			
Engage in community-building acts that help serve others such as:			
Random acts of kindness			
Volunteering for community organizations			
Establishing school—or neighborhood—serving organizations			
Identify a mentor that can help me develop in key areas of my life and enter a mentor-mentee relationship			
Identify role models and clarify exactly what values and behaviors they emulate that I can adopt			
Use research-backed strategies for establishing, maintaining, and restoring relationships with students			

MODULE 6: FOSTERING POSITIVE EMOTIONS & EXPERIENCES	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Notice the brain's automatic tendency to attend to negative experiences and commit to intentionally building and broadening my positive experiences			
Using several feasible daily practices to “spark” joy in my life including:			
Attention training by focusing on silver linings			
Attention training by balancing our negative perceptions of others by attuning to their positives			
Attention training by having positive examples/memories when needing a mental boost			
Practice gratitude through weekly journaling, leaving notes for others, mental gratitude checks, and/or as a team in school			
Doing feasible acts of kindness, particularly those that build community			
Cultivate my humor and play as an adult			
Set up my environment (work, personal, recreational) to induce psychological flow			

MODULE 7: COPING WITH DIFFICULT THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND EXPERIENCES	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Develop a greater awareness of my emotional reactions and identify situations that are more likely to be difficult			
Use acceptance-based skills with difficult experiences:			
Riding the wave (visual and relaxation practice)			
Accurate labeling of experience (e.g., “I am experiencing anger” vs. “I am angry”)			
Use strategies to help with intense emotions:			
Self-soothing with the 5 senses			
IMPROVE the moment			
TIPP exercises			
Use cognitive strategies to respond to unhelpful thoughts:			
Thought reframing (creating theories about the world and being objective while looking for evidence)			
Thought defusion (recognizing that I am not my thoughts and use language-based strategies to separate from them)			
Orientation toward values in the face of difficult experiences			

MODULE 8: FEELING GOOD PHYSICALLY THROUGH NUTRITION, MOVEMENT, AND QUALITY SLEEP	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Focus on nurturing my body so I feel good physically, which in turn helps me feel perform better mentally and reduces the impact of stress			
Practice mindful eating so that I am more aware of my cravings, eat intuitively (rather than adhering to a specific plan), be more adventurous and flexible with my food choices, and enjoying the pleasure			
Have regular meal times while also adopting a flexible approach			
Try my version of meal planning—I can try new cuisines, prep ingredients beforehand and get creative, or prep entire meals			
Be aware of “clean eating” marketing tactics and also work to increase the overall nutritional quality of my food choices			
Increase or maintain physical activity to reap the benefits			
Be mindful and intentional with whatever action I choose (does not have to be gym-based activities)			

MODULE 8: FEELING GOOD PHYSICALLY THROUGH NUTRITION, MOVEMENT, AND QUALITY SLEEP	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Engaging in beneficial sleep hygiene practices including:			
Limit screen access before bed			
Maintain a regular sleep schedule on most days			
Relax before bedtime (~30 minutes, read a light book or stretch)			
Limit light stimulation before bed			
Improve sleep environment (keep room cool, no light, minimal sound)			
Avoid letting the brain associate the bed with other activities that will keep it up and going (e.g., watching TV, reading news, listening to some types of music, etc.)			
Quiet my mind before bed via mindfulness			

MODULE 9: REJUVENATING THROUGH RELAXATION, RECREATION, AND ROUTINES	REFLECTIVE RATING		
	Yes	Maybe	No
Concepts, Practices, or Skills I Can Choose to Apply in My Life			
Commitment to incorporating some balance between recreational, relaxation, and leisure activities in my life			
Identifying and engaging in specific recreational activities that I want to pursue that give me a sense of accomplishment			
Identifying and engaging in specific leisure activities that I enjoy guilt-free			
Identifying and engaging in specific relaxation activities that allow my mind and body to rest, heal, and process from the day			
Incorporating my work, life, recreational, relaxation, and leisure activities into a regular routine that provides a foundation for my life that I can fall back on when stressed or feeling unmotivated			

Wellness Plan

Use the following prompts to clarify why your well-being is important to you; identify the concepts, practices, or skills you wish to prioritize; list your goals for improving your well-being; and identify what barriers may get in your way. Be honest with and true to yourself as you reflect on each of the lessons to develop your personalized well-being plan. At any point, you can come back to this plan to remind yourself of your chosen essential ingredients for well-being. Don't base your responses on what you think other people want you to say.

Part 1: Creating my wellness plan

List any values of yours that relate to well-being and why they are important to you:

Looking at your list from the Wellness Activity exercise, list which concepts, practices, or skills you want to focus on first:

Thinking of your values and your chosen practices to focus on, create a list of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely) goals that will let you know you are making progress:

For each SMART goal—or thinking broadly about your overall well-being—what are the biggest obstacles you face? List barriers both within your control (internal) and obstacles that seem beyond your control (external):

For these barriers, identify a strategy you can use to overcome those barriers when they arise.

Tip: Remember the story of Viktor Frankl, who observed concentration camp captives still finding joy in their days. They focused on what was in their control. Internal barriers are often under our control, and in some ways our environment is also under our control (e.g., helping change organizational culture and climate, building new relationships).

Finally, below, write a summary statement that brings together all of these considerations: why you care about your own well-being, what you will focus on, your awareness of your barriers and your strategies for overcoming them, and then your ultimate goals. This is your personal declaration.

Take care!



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



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