

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CFS Strong

Building a Resilient Workforce

Peer Support Group Guidebook



QIC-WD

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER
FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This guide is intended for CFSS workers or supervisors facilitating a Peer Support Group (PSG) session. The PSG is part of CFS Strong, beginning in January 2020. CFS Strong is designed to address the cumulative effects of secondary traumatic stress (STS) that is part of the day-to-day work of CFSS. CFS Strong includes: (1) an adaptation of Resilience Alliance (RA) to teach skills and strategies to manage STS and build team cohesion, (2) Restoring Resiliency Response (RRR) to allow workers to debrief after an acute traumatic event, and (3) PSGs to reinforce the skills taught in RA and provide a positive peer group for CFSS to feel supported in their work. The PSG include the same team members who participated in the RA group (typically 2 supervisory units totaling 10-15 CFSS and supervisors).

The PSGs meet no less than once a month for 60 – 90 minutes for the six months following RA. Meetings are encouraged to be face-to-face but may be held via skype or zoom in rural locations where driving to meetings is burdensome. Each group will determine their plan for how often, how long, and where they will meet. The PSG will select its own facilitator(s). The peer facilitator will be selected by the group prior to each PSG meeting. One person can lead one or multiple PSG sessions.

This guide provides an outline and suggested activities for each PSG session; leaders can supplement this guide with their own activities and are encouraged to be creative and plan engaging sessions. There are six modules in this guide. If the group decides to meet more frequently than once/month they can use the additional activities in the guide or add their own activities. The guide is modeled after the RA sessions and reinforces the six core components of RA: Optimism, Collaboration, Self-Care, Mastery, Self-Reflection, and Self-Awareness. This document includes an outline for each session (in green), references to RA materials (in red with references to the RA facilitator manual), and ideas for activities (in purple). The CFS Strong budget includes \$25/month for the purchase of supplies and/or snacks. The peer facilitator is responsible for:

- Securing meeting space and notify the team via meeting invitation (copy Sharon Kruse)
- Organizing the procurement of supplies and/or snacks (\$25 limit, following local guidance on purchasing and reimbursement or P-card process)

- Planning the session including making copies of hand outs, activities, or other materials for the session
- Facilitating the session
- Reporting attendance (see Appendix 2 for sign in sheet, and email to Kate Stephenson kstephenson@unl.edu)
- Completing the peer facilitator survey and reminding participants to complete the participant survey (see Appendix 3 for participant questions). The following are the survey links

go.unl.edu/PSGparticipant

go.unl.edu/PSGfacilitator

What does it mean to be a facilitator? Your peers are the experts, but you, as a peer facilitator, are there to help guide the conversation and engage everyone in the group. Spend a few minutes reviewing the expectations for the session and what everyone has agreed to such as confidentiality, phone **use, respectful listening, positivity, respecting the time we're together, and not venting.** This guide is intended to structure your session and provide ideas, topics for discussion, and activities. Talk about relevant topics but keep the discussion positive and constructive.

This guide was developed by the Nebraska Workforce Project **Team's** (the implementation team guiding CFS Strong) Content Workgroup through its collaboration with the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD). The QIC-WD is **funded by the Children's Bureau** and does not necessary reflect their views.

Table of Contents

Contents

Introduction.....	2
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Optimism/Positivism	5
Group Activity (Option 1, Activity 1) - Language	8
Group Activity (Option 1, Activity 2) – Words Perceived as Positive & Negative	9
Group Activity (Option 2): Cup Half Full – Cup Half Empty	10
Group Activity (Option 3) - Five Best Things about Working at Our Agency	11
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Collaboration	12
Group Activity (Option 1) – Zone of Control.....	15
Group Activity (Option 2): Roll Play Collaboration.....	16
Group Activity (Option 3): Core Values.....	17
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Mastery	18
Group Activity (Option 1): Mastery	21
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Awareness.....	22
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Reflection.....	25
PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Efficacy/Self-Care	28
Acknowledgements.....	31
Appendix 1 – Relaxation Exercises	32
Appendix 2 – Sign in Sheet	53
Appendix 3 – Evaluation Questions.....	54
Appendix 4 – Resources	55
Appendix 5 – Rules of the Road	56

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Optimism/Positivism

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign-in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s** topic: Optimism/Positivism
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on” to improve your resilience?**
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

THE DAY'S
TOPIC

Optimism – **Being an optimist is more than looking on the bright side. It's a way of** viewing the world that allows you to maximize your strengths and accomplishments and minimizes your weaknesses and setbacks. Developing a more optimistic world view can help you become more resilient. You can look at the cup as half full or half empty. The optimist will see the cup as half full.

Optimism Skill-Building - From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 43

- Reframe situations to appraise them more positively (e.g., avoid all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization, jumping to conclusions).
- Normalize responses
- Manage avoidance behavior
- Control self-defeating statements.
- Encourage adaptive coping behaviors
- Replace automatic negative thoughts with positive ones.
- Positive self-talk expands your ability to achieve, to learn, and to accomplish.

OPTION 1: Review content in Option 1, Activity 1 and create a list of words perceived as negative and then a list of words perceived as positive.

- Use Group Activity (Option 1) – Words Perceived as Positive & Negative on p. 9
- See Option 1, Activity 1 Lori Harder's, Deputy Director of Protection and Safety, message about language and the use of various terms in the field of child welfare on p. 8

OPTION 2: Break into groups and come up with 4 situations you encountered this month. Describe the situation as both cup half full and cup half empty. Remember that your words matter.

- Use Group Activity (Option 2) – Cup Half Full – Cup Half Empty on p. 10

OPTION 3: Discuss ways to create a positive workplace environment; have participants give suggestions, pulling from the below list as needed:

- Learn and teach the power of positive self-talk
- Discourage whining at work

- Strive for “win-win” situations
- Teach and reward “time-out” stress management techniques
- Smile at each other
- Ask each **other how you’re doing**
- Start a **list of “5 Best Things about Working at Our Agency”**
 - Use Group Activity (Option 3) – Five Best Things about Working at Our Agency on p. 11

**TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY**

Over the next month as you find yourself thinking negative thoughts (cup half empty) reframe the thought to make it positive (cup half full). Think about how your words impact your own view of a situation.

WRAP UP

Get feedback from the group about what went well and what they’d like to see changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

Group Activity (Option 1, Activity 1) - Language

Message from Lori Harder, Deputy Director of Protection & Safety, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

This past week I had the opportunity to go to Washington DC to attend the NCCAN conference. It was great to **network with other professionals about what is working well and how to replicate each other's successes**. Building upon our strengths to improve our system nationwide!

We were fortunate to hear Jerry Milner D.S.W. who is the Associate Commissioner at the Children's Bureau and the Acting Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families speak at the conference. Jerry Milner has work in all levels of the child welfare system and he has a doctorate in Social Work from the University of Alabama. He is a strong advocate of prevention services, child safety, preservation of families, engaging child and family voice and choice. He spoke eloquently about the importance of language and how words affect us in our daily lives. At the plenary on the last day he asked us to stop using these five words and I am asking you to help fulfill that request.

Those words are:

Foster child – Foster is defined as **“to help grow or develop”** Children need to belong they already grow and develop.

Birth parent – We need to acknowledge that they are the parent and it is not a limited role.

Client – This word dehumanizes them.

Dysfunctional – They do function perhaps even very well given their circumstances. How would we function if we were in their shoes?

Foster parent – An outdated objective use, they will be resource families for children and their parents.

We must remember that *words* redefine our relationship and leads to systematic change. If we change our culture and we change our view.

In addition I am including a link that will provide access to handouts from the conference.

https://app.core-apps.com/nccan2019/events/view_by_day?day=Apr+26&tracks=&type=

Group Activity (Option 1, Activity 2) – Words Perceived as Positive & Negative

Words Perceived as Positive

Words Perceived as Negative

Group Activity (Option 2): Cup Half Full – Cup Half Empty

Cup Half Full

Cup Half Empty

Situation 1

Situation 2

Situation 3

Situation 4

Group Activity (Option 3) - Five Best Things about Working at Our Agency

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Collaboration

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s topic:** Collaboration
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on” to improve your resilience?**
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

**THE DAY'S
TOPIC**

Collaboration—recognize the value of collaboration and its ability to offset the impact of stress on relationships.

Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

Many effective ways to minimize or prevent conflict in the workplace. The following are ideas for the facilitator to share with the group:

- **Take a few** moments to breathe.
- **Do not become defensive; try to hear the other person's message.**
- **Be open to other viewpoints and other ways of doing things.**
- **Be aware of your body language.**
- **Look for “common ground.”**
- **Focus on the issue, not the person.**
- **If how you are communicating isn't working, do something else.**

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 106

Dealing with Workplace Conflict

1. **Be specific:**
Avoid statements like “s/he always does this...” or “I can never get anything right...”
2. **Be aware of your triggers:**
Identify what causes you to react.
3. **Maintain professionalism:**
 - **Take a “breather.”**
 - **Remain respectful of others and yourself no matter how upset you are.**
4. **Resist the temptation to involve yourself when you are in the “red” zone:**
Walk away from a situation when you feel out of control.
5. **Don't “personalize” the problem:**
Some criticism is to be expected — **it doesn't mean you're a bad person/worker.**
6. **Be open and listen:**
Try to understand and appreciate others' perspectives.
7. **Stay connected:**
Talk with your co-workers, supervisors and managers.
8. **Consider a mediator:**
Ask for help when you cannot solve the problem yourself.

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 54

GROUP
ACTIVITY
AND
DISCUSSION

OPTION 1: Come up with a list of issues that you have come across with others in the past week and discuss which of the 3 categories (control, influence, no control) apply to these issues. Discuss in small groups. Given the levels of control you have over these issues, what would be the most helpful and positive strategies you could use to deal with them?

- Use Group Activity (Option 1) on p. 15

OPTION 2: Develop a script (e.g., role play demonstrating poor collaboration between CFSS and service providers) and then talk about the ways we could collaborate more appropriately.

- Use Group Activity (Option 2) on p. 16

OPTION 3: **Pair up with someone you don't know very well. Come up with** four core values that you share and will commit to (e.g., protecting children, sharing assignments, supporting each other). Share with the larger group.

- Use Group Activity (Option 3) on p. 17

TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY

Think about ways that you currently collaborate with someone that you don't particularly like or agree with. Each time you collaborate with that person over the next month, pause and think of ways that you can collaborate better. Be prepared to come back and share moments that you are proud of and one that you know you could have handled better.

WRAP UP

Get feedback from the group about what went well and what they'd like to see changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

Group Activity (Option 1) – Zone of Control

Where do these fit inside Zone of Control?

What things do you find troublesome?

Full Control

Influence

No Control

Group Activity (Option 2): Roll Play Collaboration

Script

CFSS

Service Provider

Group Activity (Option 3): Core Values

1.

2.

3.

4.

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Mastery

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s topic:** Mastery
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on” to improve your resilience?**
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

THE DAY'S
TOPIC

Mastery—setting realistic expectations for yourself and others is a key part of mastery. Another element of mastery is the ability to regulate negative emotions **while doing one's job.**

Enhance the ability to self-regulate thoughts, emotions and behavior

Discussion of STS and Mastery:

By its very nature, child welfare work is crisis-driven. Caseworkers are constantly putting out one fire after another. This atmosphere can lead to a constant sense of urgency. It is extremely important to know the difference between what is urgent and what can stay on hold for a bit. It is also important to be able to manage work-related stress and regulate your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. If stress is not managed well, workers are susceptible to feeling overwhelmed.

- Mastery is a two-pronged concept.
 - **The first prong involves doing one's job efficiently and effectively.** This includes knowing when (and when not) to act with a sense of urgency.
 - **The second involves regulating one's negative emotional state.** This includes being able to manage stress and recognize when you've done a good job.
- Having mastery of job skills builds confidence and self-worth.
- **Having control over one's negative feelings fosters a sense of calmness and collectedness.**

Research indicates that people's belief in their ability to manage work-related stress — principally through regulation of thought, emotions, and behavior —is related to self-efficacy, or a belief in one's ability to succeed in a particular situation.

Gaining mastery helps an individual to:

- Recognize their efficacy and value to the mission of child welfare.
- Develop coping strategies to manage conflict and stress.
- Gain a sense of control over work-related stressors and regulate professional expectations and goals.
- Proactively problem-solve.
- Set achievable goals.
- Feel less overwhelmed and burnt out.
- Focus on work-related success, which in turn fosters a sense of control and increases confidence and self-esteem.

Encourage group members to recognize successes even in situations they **don't see as successful.**

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 19-20

GROUP
ACTIVITY
AND
DISCUSSION

OPTION 1: Each team member should identify one or two areas where they feel they have mastery and one area that they would like to continue to work on mastering. These areas will be shared with the group. As the group moves around the room, if someone has an area where they have noted mastery and another teammate has noted this same area as one having room for growth, this is an opportunity to collaborate and help each other. Also, when individuals are sharing, if you feel they have another area of mastery they haven't noted, **be sure to tell them - it's okay to give each other kudos!**

- Use Group Activity on p. 21

OPTION 2: Have teammates write or draw something with their dominant hand (e.g., write their name, draw a circle). Now do the same drawing with their other hand. Discuss the differences using both hands and how there is mastery with your dominant hand.

- Provide paper and pens for this activity.

OPTION 3: As a group, discuss examples **where you've achieved** mastery and no longer have to think about it critically (most of the time, anyway!). For example, driving a car used to be difficult when you were first learning, but **now you don't have to think about every little thing** – certain aspects have even become automated.

TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY

When you notice another member of this group has done a good job, has mastered something, stop and take a moment to share that with them. It will increase their self-awareness and improve your own sense of optimism!

WRAP UP

Get feedback from the group about what **went well and what they'd like to see** changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

Group Activity (Option 1): Mastery

Mastery

Who Can I
Help

Mastery in
Progress

Who Can
Help

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Awareness

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s topic:** Self-Awareness
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on”** to improve your resilience?
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

THE DAY'S
TOPIC

Self-Awareness—How fully we bounce back from an adverse situation depends on how well we understand what led to the adverse situation in the first place and how the situation impacted us. Self-awareness helps us figure out how to effectively recover from an adverse situation.

SELF-AWARENES

- Self-awareness includes recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes.
- Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or under pressure. It is a precursor of resilience.
- It is also often a prerequisite of effective communication, interpersonal relations, and developing empathy for others.
- Self-awareness and secondary traumatic stress:
 - **Being resilient means being able to “bounce back” after experiencing adversity.**
 - How fully we are able to bounce back depends on how well we understand what led to the adverse situation in the first place and how the situation impacted us.
 - Self-awareness also helps us figure out how to effectively recover from an adverse situation.
 - Secondary traumatic stress can make people either overly reactive to emotional stressors or, alternatively, numb to these stressors.
 - By actively working to identify your emotional triggers, you will be better able to understand them and come up with ways to deal with them.

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 67

The goal is to become aware of your reactions, and more effectively moderate them, before your reactions take over the situation. As you grow in self-**awareness**, you'll become better able to explain why you feel and behave as you do. That understanding gives you the ability to change the things you'd like to change about yourself and to create the work life that you want and deserve!

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 66

**GROUP
ACTIVITY
AND
DISCUSSION**

OPTION 1: Break into small groups, as group size allows, or do as a full group. Each member should provide an example of a stressful situation that you think could have been handled better. Share this example with the group and then talk through how this situation could have been handled differently and/or how group members have handled similar situations in the past.

OPTION 2: Your body posture and gestures **can communicate how you're feeling** and will impact how others perceive you. Your body language sets the tone for how others act around you. As a group, talk about different postures and gestures and how you interpret them.

OPTION 3: Write a personal narrative. Because this is a personal experience, it is usually written in the first person. Try to have an emotional impact on the end reader - include references to sensory perceptions and emotions, use vivid details and imagery. Ask if anyone would be willing to share their personal narrative with the group.

- Provide paper and pencils

**TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY**

Over the next month as situations similar to those discussed as a group arise, think about the coping mechanisms suggested and try to implement them. Note when you have issues that cause you to feel stressed or at a high yellow to red heat level and how you respond to those situations.

WRAP UP

Get feedback from the group about what went well and what they'd like to see changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Reflection

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s topic:** Self-Reflection
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on” to improve your resilience?**
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

THE DAY'S
TOPIC

Self-Reflection— In this field, as workers and supervisors, we have a habit of beating ourselves up and using negative self-talk. Self-reflection is the **development of one's** ability to reflect on past experiences. This can enhance decision making, foster responsibility, and improve collaboration and emotional regulation. Self-reflection helps to slow your reaction to stressful/traumatic events.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection helps us incorporate old and new experiences to gain a sense of perspective and continuity. The act of self-reflection can help us slow our reaction times to stressful events (i.e. think first, then respond appropriately).

It can help us develop caring, supportive relationships with our colleagues.

Self-reflection and secondary traumatic stress:

- Being resilient means being able to bounce back after adversity.
- One way to build resilience is to engage in self-reflection and learn to see experiences differently.
- Keeping a personal journal is one self-reflection strategy. Daily journal writing can open our eyes to how we cope and also can generate ideas for different ways of coping.
- Using the skill of reflection, ask the group for more suggestions about ways to build resilience.

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 76

GROUP
ACTIVITY
AND
DISCUSSION

OPTION 1: Partner into groups of two. Have one person talk about a recent situation where they “**beat themselves up**” over the way they **handled or didn't** handle a situation on the job. Then, have the second person reflect back a positive version of the negative self-talk. Come back as a group and share with the team what was discussed.

OPTION 2: Break into small groups, as size permits, or discuss as a full group. Each member should provide an example of a stressful situation that was

handled well. Share this example with the group and then talk through how this situation and why it went well.

OPTION 3: On one piece of paper, put your name at the top and write three positive strengths you have. Building on this, each group member will add one new **strength to each participants' piece of paper**. Then, each person reviews their piece of paper and reflects on anything that surprises them. Invite participants to share their reaction, if they so desire. Encourage participants to keep these pieces of paper as a reminder of their strengths.

- Provide paper and pens

**TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY**

Over the next month as you watch dramas play out (e.g., at work, in the movies, on television, within your family) think about how you would reframe the situation and reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive in the moment.

WRAP UP

Get **feedback from the group about what went well and what they'd like to see** changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

PEER SUPPORT MODULE: Self-Efficacy/Self-Care

Participants CFS Specialists and Supervisors

Time 60 – 90 minutes

- Agenda**
1. Sign in/Attendance
 2. Transition period
 3. Review **the “Rules of the Road”/Team Agreement/Ground Rules** See Appendix 5 ([RA Facilitator Manual p. 27](#))
 4. **The day’s topic:** Self-Efficacy/Self-Care
 5. Group activity and discussion
 6. Take away activity
 7. Wrap up
 8. Evaluation

TRANSITION PERIOD

Check-in and get everyone talking. Ask your own question or ask the group one of the questions/prompts below:

- **What have you “tried on” to improve your resilience?**
- What have you done over the last month to promote your own self-care?
- **What relaxation exercises have you “tried on” in the past month?**
- Tell us about a time when you shared kudos with your co-workers or noticed another member of the group has done a good job
- Tell us about a time you reframed a negative situation into a positive
- What is your good news?
- Give an example of ways that you recently collaborated with someone **you don’t particularly like or agree with (don’t use names!)**
- Share an example of a show you watched (or a story you heard) and how you would reframe any negative self-talk to help the person be more positive

THE DAY'S
TOPIC

Self-Efficacy/Self-Care—Self-care is not just a matter of exercising and getting enough rest (although these are important!). Self-care involves being attuned to our own needs and having healthy boundaries with others. Self-care should be thought of as a preventative measure, not just something we do when we feel overwhelmed.

Self-Care:

- Stress affects many aspects of our lives — physical, emotional, personal, and professional. It affects the relationships we develop with others and have with ourselves.
- We believe that self-care strengthens resiliency, which in turn reduces reactivity and enhances self-efficacy.
- Self-care is not just a matter of exercising and getting enough rest, but also involves being attuned to your needs and having healthy boundaries.
- We need to view self-care as a preventive measure, not something we only begin to do because we feel overwhelmed.
- We cannot take care of others unless we first take care of ourselves.

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 61

IDEAS FOR SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Physical: Eat regularly, exercise, sleep well, take vacations, get regular medical care.

Emotional: Increase self-awareness, label your emotions, find a healthy outlet for your emotions.

Professional: Take a break during the day, have lunch away from your desk, seek supervision/ consultation, set limits with clients.

Spiritual: Self-reflection, “**knowing your why,**” meaning-making, prayer/meditation.

Social: Spend time with friends and family, participate in your community, become part of a team sport/activity.

Psychological: Seek a balanced life with work, family, relationships, play, and rest.

From Resilience Alliance Facilitator Manual, p. 62

**GROUP
ACTIVITY
AND
DISCUSSION**

OPTION 1: Consider different areas for practicing self-care: Physical, Emotional, Professional, Spiritual, Social, and Psychological. As a group, create a flip chart for each area and ask participants for their **top two “go to” self-care** activities? Once the list is complete, each group member is going to identify an activity from **the list that they don’t currently do. Plan to share** your experience with a group member when you try it on.

- Flip chart

OPTION 2: Chose a 30-minute self-care activity that you can do with the class (e.g., play a teambuilding game, do yoga/stretching/breathing exercises, go for a walk, play board or card games, a group card game, bring a book or coloring book).

OPTION 3: Have the group discuss different self-care activities that they are currently using/find helpful. Ask each person to provide 3 examples to the group. Compile the list and send it out by email to the group after the meeting.

**TAKE AWAY
ACTIVITY**

Come up with two self-care areas (physical, emotional, professional, spiritual, social, and psychological) **that you don’t typically use and utilize those over the next month.** Be prepared to discuss this with your peers and encourage them to practice their own self-care. Some participants may benefit from writing down their self-care plan.

WRAP UP

Get feedback from the group about what went well and what they’d like to see changed for the next meeting.

Relaxation exercise (see Appendix 1 for relaxation activity resources)

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RELAXATION EXERCISES

Note: It may be helpful for group members to have copies of this page and the various relaxation exercises for this reference and use outside of the groups. The facilitator should share these materials as is helpful.

RELAXATION

Our ability to relax is a key part of effectively managing stress. When we feel stressed, our bodies react with what is called the "fight or flight" response: our muscles become tense, our heart beat is more rapid, and our breathing rate increases. Unmanaged stress can lead to both physical and mental burnout, resulting in medical problems, anger, irritability, anxiety, depression, and other problems.

Learning to relax helps to counter the "fight or flight" response.

WHAT CAN HELP ME RELAX?

The following exercises use different techniques — relaxation, breathing, guided imagery, muscle relaxation, affirmation, mantra — to achieve the same goal, which is to move you from a state of stress to a state of calm. Different techniques will work for different people — be open to learning what will be the best match for you.

RELAXATION EXERCISES — DO THEY HELP?

Learning to relax has many benefits. Some include prevention of cumulative stress; reduced anxiety; increased energy, motivation and productivity; improved concentration and problem-solving skills; reduction of some physical problems; and increased self-efficacy.

Relaxation exercises can be viewed as a remedy for stress.

IT'S A SKILL — SO YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO DO IT!

Just like learning to play a musical instrument, learning to relax is a skill that takes time and practice to master! Do not expect to develop the skill after trying it only one or two times. The techniques may seem very easy at first, but the trick is to be able to use them when your stress level is high.

Be patient with yourself — don't let practicing relaxation techniques become yet another stressor!

BREATHING EXERCISES

“HEALFUL” TIP ONE

You can practice relaxation exercises anywhere you are at any time.
You will need to:

1. Find a place where you can relax.
2. Choose a relaxation exercise that you enjoy.
3. Get into a comfortable position and begin to practice.

HEALFUL TIP TWO

Many people prefer to close their eyes during these relaxation exercises. If this is not comfortable for you, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.

HEALFUL TIP THREE

As you breathe in, let your abdomen expand outward, rather than raising your shoulders. This is a more relaxed and natural way to breathe, and helps your lungs fill themselves more fully with fresh air, releasing more “old” air.

HEALFUL TIP FOUR

If during the breathing exercise you cannot stop thinking about your concerns and worries, come up with a word or a phrase that you find peaceful, such as “tranquility” or “I am relaxed.” Focus on this word or phrase as you breathe in and out. If other thoughts pop into your head, don’t get discouraged — just refocus and keep practicing!

1

BREATHING EXERCISE ONE

- Sit up comfortably in your chair. Try to have your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap.
- Close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Slowly relax your body.
- Begin to inhale through your nose if possible. Imagine the air filling in the lower part of your abdomen first, then the middle and top part of your chest. Do this slowly, over 5 to 7 seconds.
- Hold your breath for a second or two.
- Relax and let the air out.
- Wait a few seconds and repeat this cycle for 5–10 minutes.

2

BREATHING EXERCISE TWO

- Sit up comfortably in your chair. Try to have your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap.
- Close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Gradually relax your body.
- Slowly inhale through your nose, counting to 5 in your head.
- Let the air out from your mouth, counting to 8 in your head as it leaves your lungs.
- Repeat this cycle for 5–10 minutes.

3

BREATHING EXERCISE THREE "RE-LAX" OR "I AM RELAXED" BREATHING

- Sit up comfortably in your chair. Try to have your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap.
- Close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Gradually relax your body.
- As you inhale, silently say "re" or "I am."
- As you exhale, say "lax" or "relaxed."
- Repeat this cycle for 5–10 minutes.

4 BREATHING EXERCISE FOUR

3-5-7 BREATHING

- Sit up comfortably in your chair. Try to have your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap.
- Close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Gradually relax your body.
- Take three breaths, holding the third breath for several seconds before releasing it. You can do the same after 5 and 7 breaths.
- Resume normal breathing.
- Repeat this cycle for 5–10 minutes.

MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISES

"HEALFUL" TIP ONE

In this relaxation technique, focus on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. This helps you focus on the difference between muscle tension and relaxation, and learn to release your muscle tension at will.



MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE ONE SHAKE IT!

- Stand up comfortably.
- Shake your body for a minute or two. Start with your arms and hands, then your head and shoulders, followed by your upper body and end with your legs and feet.
- Loosen up — shaking and dancing.
- This exercise promotes a warm, relaxed, and energized feeling as it increases circulation to the arms and legs.

Adapted from: <http://www.family-stress-relief-guide.com/relaxation-exercises.html>

2

MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE TWO PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

- Sit up comfortably in your chair. Try to have your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap.
- Close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Feel your feet. Tighten them. Start with your toes and progress to your ankles then relax them.
- Feel your knees. Tighten them then relax them.
- Feel you upper legs and thighs. Tighten them then relax them.
- Feel your abdomen. Tighten it. Now, focus on your belly and chest. Feel your breathing. Relax both your belly and chest. Deepen your breathing slightly.
- Feel your buttocks. Squeeze them, then relax them.
- Feel your hands. Tighten them. Start with your fingers and progress to your wrists. Now relax them.
- Feel your lower arms. Tighten them then relax them.
- Feel your upper arms. Tighten them then relax them.
- Feel your shoulders. Tighten them then relax them.
- Feel your neck. Tighten it then relax it.
- Feel your mouth and jaw. Squeeze them then relax them. Unclench your jaw muscles if you need to.
- Feel if there is tension in your eyes. Now, relax your eyelids and feel the pressure trickle down your eyes.
- Feel your face and cheeks. Tighten them, now relax them.
- At last, feel relaxation engulfing every muscle in your body.
- Now, on the count of 3, slowly open your eyes and continue to feel relaxed and energetic.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Take a deep breath in and out and gently open your eyes.

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISES

"HEALFUL" TIP ONE With regular practice of relaxation imagery exercises, you will be able to evoke sense of peace, calm your mind, and relax your body.

HEALFUL TIP TWO Most techniques follow this guideline:

Close your eyes gently and concentrate on your breathing first.

Once you are relaxed, begin to visualize.

To bring reality to the imagery in your mind, engage all of your senses — sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch.

1 GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE ONE

- Sit comfortably in your chair.
- Think of a favorite, peaceful place where you feel safe and relaxed. It may be on a sunny beach with the ocean breezes caressing you, or walking in a park when the flowers have started to bloom.
- Now close your eyes slowly and go to that place.
- Imagine yourself there.
- Walk slowly around your special place, and gradually become aware of the colors and textures in your surroundings.
- What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you taste? And what do you feel?
- Relax and enjoy the moment.
- Say to yourself: "I am relaxed," "I feel safe."
- Now, on the count of 3, you will return to the present moment relaxed and energized to resume your day.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Slowly open your eyes, take a deep breath in and out, and gently wiggle your fingers and toes.

You can return to this place any time you need to.

2

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE TWO

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes.
- Slowly inhale and exhale until you feel relaxed.
- Imagine yourself sitting in the center of a gigantic circle.
- Become aware of how you feel sitting in the midst of this grand structure. Notice your position, the way you look, and your surroundings.
- Imagine this circle gradually fills up with a warm blue light.
- Feel the energy of this light engulf your heart, your mind, and your body inch by inch.
- Immerse yourself in this experience as you absorb the calm, warm sensations radiating from this light.
- Now, slowly picture yourself returning here. Feel your relaxed head, arms, and feet.
- Gently open your eyes and wiggle your feet, your toes, your hands and your fingers.

Other Ideas for Guided Images:

- Take a mini-vacation as you are guided through the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of:
 - A pleasant walk along the beach
 - An adventurous hike on a mountain
 - A stroll in a breathtaking countryside
 - A peaceful walk through a beautiful, lush forest alongside a trickling brook.

3

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE THREE

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. If you do not wish to close your eyes, you can fix your eyes on a spot on the floor or wall.
- Imagine a blackboard placed in front of you. Focus on its color and shape.
- Imagine holding a piece of white chalk in your hand. Focus on its shape, color and the way it feels in your hand.
- Imagine writing all your worries on this blackboard.
- Now, I would like you to imagine a big eraser appearing in your hand. Focus on its color, shape, and texture.
- Lift your arm up with the eraser held comfortably in your hand and slowly and deliberately erase all your worries.
- Place your arms on your lap and stare at the blank blackboard.
- Imagine it gradually being filled with images that bring about positive thoughts and feelings.
- Now, relax your mind and body and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

4

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE FOUR

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breathing.
- Take one slow, deep breath, visualizing it entering and then leaving your relaxed body.
- Return to your normal breathing. Continue to pay attention to its rate and depth.
- Imagine that with each breath in, you're breathing in comfort and relaxation, and with each breath out, you're breathing out any worries.
- Calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

Adapted from: <http://www.howtocopewithpain.org/resources/basic-relaxation-exercise.html>

5

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE FIVE

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Now, imagine a sink filled up with clear water.
- Imagine pouring all your worries into this sink.
- Then imagine removing the plug. Observe the water as it spins round and round.
- Imagine the tainted water rushing down the drain, taking with it all your worries.
- Calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

6

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE SIX

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Now, imagine blowing up a balloon. See its color, size and texture.
- Imagine filling up this balloon with all your worries, tying it off and letting it go out of your hand.
- Imagine the balloon gradually rising.
- Watch it float up and away, getting smaller and smaller.
- Keep your eyes on it until it disappears from your sight carrying away all of your worries.
- Now, calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

Adapted from: <http://www.howtocopewithpain.org/resources/basic-relaxation-exercise.html>

7 GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE SEVEN

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Imagine a candle in front of you. Observe its color and shape. Notice its scent, and feel its texture.
- Imagine its flame. Note its temperature.
- Now, place all your worries into this flickering flame.
- Watch the candle slowly melt away with all your worries in it.
- Now, calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

8

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE EIGHT

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Imagine walking along side the river listening to the peaceful sounds of the current.
- Gather all your worries in your hands and toss them into this river.
- As you continue to stroll, listen to the sound of the rushing water.
- Watch all your worries being carried downstream until you can no longer see them.
- Now, calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

9

GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE NINE

This exercise works well after any module that addresses survival mode and reactivity.

- Sit comfortably in your chair and gently close your eyes. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Imagine yourself walking on a beach where you feel safe and relaxed.
- Watch the beautiful blue shades in the sky and the crystal clear water.
- It is a bright sunny day. Feel the warm sun on your body, and the silky sand under your bare feet and between your toes.
- Listen to the sound of gentle waves and calling seagulls.
- Now, take a deep breath and inhale the smell of fresh crisp ocean air. A sense of relaxation soaks your body.
- Imagine yourself lying down, and let your body sink into the warm soft sand. Feel the gentle breeze caressing your body. Immerse yourself in the calming shades of blue sky and water.
- Now, calm your mind and relax your body, and on the count of 3 slowly open your eyes.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

10 GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISE TEN

IMAGERY FOR STRESS RELIEF

This exercise works well after any module that addresses survival mode and reactivity.

- Sit comfortably in your chair and close your eyes gently. You can focus on one spot in the room, if that is more comfortable for you.
- Begin to focus on your breath as it enters and leaves your body.
- Think about the color red, which in the resilience intervention symbolizes intense negative emotions related to stress.
- When you have your image, say to yourself: "I let go my stress."
- Now, imagine the color red gradually changing into something calming. Think what colors you can add to transform it into a beautiful shade of calming blue. Reflect on the shades of blue in our "blue zone," a place of tranquility, peace and coolness.
- When you complete the transformation, say to yourself: "My mind is calm and my body is relaxed."
- Slowly open your eyes on the count of 3.
- When you open your eyes, you will feel more relaxed and ready to resume your day.
- (1 – 2 – 3) Open your eyes.

Other ideas for stress-relief images:

- A strong musty smell can slowly turn into a sweet rich aroma.
- A startling loud noise can slowly become a calming sound of gentle ocean waves.
- Something rough to the touch can gradually change into soft silk or smooth velvet.

Adapted from: <http://www.selfesteem2go.com/guided-imagery-scripts.html>

The following is another way to conclude a relaxation or guided imagery exercise.

- TEN** Imagine a doorway leading back to your daily routine. When you cross this doorway, you will be relaxed.
- NINE** When you cross this doorway, you will be calm.
- EIGHT** When you cross this doorway, you will feel energized to resume your day.
- SEVEN** As you cross this doorway, you will enter the same world you left behind.
- SIX** However, you will now see this world through a new lens.
- FIVE** It is a more peaceful, respectful, and kinder world.
- FOUR** In this world you can manage everything, even the most difficult situations.
- THREE** You will have a better day as you are now in control of your thoughts and emotions.
- TWO** Are you ready?
- ONE** Cross this doorway and open your eyes.

Appendix 3 – Evaluation Questions

1. The information provided in this session was useful.
2. The content and activities were of interest to me.
3. This session was a good use of my time.
4. I felt comfortable sharing my insights and opinions with the group.
5. The session provided a good opportunity for me to continue with concepts I learned in CFS Strong.
6. I am confident that I can successfully apply what I learned in this session to my job.
7. Overall, I was satisfied with this session.
8. Please describe one or two examples of what went well for this session.
9. Please describe one or two examples of what could have been done differently for this session.

Appendix 4 – Resources

Resilience Alliance Facilitator Guide

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/training-curriculum/resilience_alliance_training_manual.pdf

Ice Breakers (40 Ice Breakers for Small Groups)

<http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/40-icebreakers-for-small-groups/>

Level of Awareness Tests

<https://www.higherawareness.com/awareness-level-test.php>

Professional Quality of Life Measure (ProQOL) – Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue Self-Measure (version 5 by B. Hudnall Stamm, 2009)

https://www.proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score.pdf

Circle of Control v. Circle of Concern

<http://www.inspire2aspire.org/single-post/2016/06/27/Circle-of-Control-vs-Circle-of-Concern>

The Starfish Story

<https://eventsforchange.wordpress.com/2011/06/05/the-starfish-story-one-step-towards-changing-the-world/>

Beyond the Cliff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOzDGrcvmus>

A Practical Guide to Reframing Your Thoughts And Making Yourself Happier

<http://feelhappiness.com/reframing-your-thoughts-make-yourself-happier/>

Appendix 5 – Rules of the Road

1 Confidentiality

Nothing said in this room will be repeated to anyone outside this room.

2 Situational Discussion

No names are mentioned, only the situations - our work is focused on problem-solving, not blaming or singling people out.

3 Attendance

One of the goals of this intervention is to develop group cohesion and trust, and to develop a common language among staff that promotes resilience and mutual support. This can only happen if everyone – staff, supervisors and managers – attends meetings regularly and on time.

4 Venting

Venting is not allowed during the meetings. It exacerbates negative emotions, which can have a negative impact on one's cognition (thinking), affect (emotions) and behavior. Instead, venting will be converted into a constructive discussion – we will learn the skills to do this as part of the intervention.

5 Focus on the Positive

All group members are encouraged to speak with each other in positive terms, and to work together in learning, problem-solving and mutual support. Unspoken issues and assumptions can be destructive.

6 Walk the Walk

The knowledge and skills learned during the Resilience Alliance have to be practiced and applied “on the floor” (i.e. in the office) and in the field (i.e., working with clients) for change to happen. It is human nature to fall back into old patterns, but saying one thing during group meetings and doing another thing with your clients, staff, supervisors and/or colleagues will only ensure that things stay the same. One goal of this intervention is to become more aware of your day-to-day actions and reactions and, with the support of your colleagues, develop a new and more successful way of managing difficult situations