

# **Building Resiliency: Loving Ourselves to Better Love Our Neighbors**

## **Trainer's Manual**

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Introduction for NACSW Online Proceedings

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Resiliency and self-care have been topics of interest to me for many years. As the research literature continues to grow, I have presented on the ideas to different populations of helping professionals including social workers, chaplains, probation officers, graduate students, and school nutrition workers. For continuing education purposes, I have encapsulated the concepts and worked to present practical information in an engaging, useful way. Physical movement to deepen concepts and add variety has been developed in consultation with my daughter, Morgann Hart, who is a certified personal trainer. For these online proceedings, I am submitting the material in a trainer's manual format that participants are welcome to use within their own community and adapt for different populations. My presentation during the convention will follow this format and include additional information, teaching narratives, and photos.

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## **Building Resiliency: Loving Ourselves to Better Love Our Neighbors**

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### **Trainer's Manual**

Time: 60 Minutes

**Purpose:** Better serve our “neighbors” with joy and endurance through building resiliency in a holistic manner.

**Objectives:** At the completion of training, participants will be able to...

- 1) Adopt a resiliency framework to better serve our “neighbors” with increased joy and endurance
- 2) Develop practical strategies to increase flexibility, strength, and stamina in personal and professional life
- 3) Apply Biblical narratives and spiritual metaphors to strengthen the resiliency framework

#### **Agenda:**

Introductory Stretch 10 minutes

Working Phase 40 minutes

Building Flexibility (Mental and Emotional Strategies)

Building Strength (Physical Strategies)

Building Stamina (Social Support Strategies)

Building Endurance (Spiritual Strategies)

Application/Closure 10 minutes

**Total 60 minutes**

#### **Key Concepts:**

- People who enter the helping professions such as social work tend to be highly compassionate and have a strong desire or felt calling to help others. Thus, the concept of *self-care* may seem self-centered which leads to cursory actions to care for self. However, if we change the framework to building resiliency, we

strengthen ourselves in order to better serve our “neighbors” with joy and endurance.

- Resiliency is a term used to describe a person’s ability to cope with adversity and adapt positively to change. Resilient workers are more engaged in the work place, more productive, and less likely to experience burnout.
- Resiliency can be developed and resiliency training can be helpful in mitigating the risk of secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue, decreasing health-care costs and increasing productivity, work engagement, and job satisfaction.
- This presentation examines healthy practices to build resiliency in a holistic manner through offering practical strategies in the following areas: mental/emotional (developing **flexibility** in orientation and outlook), physical (building **strength** for stress reduction), social (supporting **stamina** through relationships and engagement), and spiritual (increasing joy and **endurance** through application of Biblical narratives and spiritual metaphors).

### **Preparation:**

**For Activity “Stretch Body and Mind”** prepare one large paper with two column headings of “Self-Care” and “Resiliency” for each small group.

**For Activity “Optical Illusions or Hidden Pictures”** find, print, or prepare projector display of optical illusions or hidden picture puzzles. Free downloadable or computer/projector viewable Optical Illusions can be found at (<http://brainden.com/face-illusions.htm>) or other websites. Free downloads of Highlights Hidden Pictures can be found at [https://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/worksheets/Highlights/pdfs/highlights009a-download.pdf](https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/worksheets/Highlights/pdfs/highlights009a-download.pdf)

**For Activity “What is on Your Plate?”** bring a large white paper plate for each participant and markers.

**For Activity “House for Sale”** bring a blank index card for each person. If desired, bring a poster board and tape to post participants’ house description as if making a page in a “Real Estate Guide”.

**For Activity “Focusing on Your Spiritual Inspiration for This Season”** bring a blank paper and markers for each participant.

**For Activity “Reflecting and Prepare ‘Take-Aways’”** copy Participant Handout for each participant.

## Introductory Stretch: (10 minutes)

**Trainer:** Welcome participants as they arrive.

Once participants are seated, give basic information regarding title of course and objectives as well as logistical information (restrooms, time). Pass out **Participant Handout** to each person for note-taking ease during the presentation.

### Activity: Stretch Body and Mind

Trainer say: In the spirit of building resiliency in a holistic manner, we are engaging our bodies in this workshop. I encourage you to let go and have fun as we do these short exercises throughout this workshop. If physical challenges prevent you from participating in the exercises, please feel free to remain seated and engage in a meaningful way for you. We are going to start with a stretch to warm up our physical and mental selves.

Lead participants in a 2 minute full body, standing stretch with deep breathing such as:

Stand tall with arms reaching to the ceiling (Inhale).  
 Twist with left arm front and right arm back (Exhale).  
 Come to center (Inhale).  
 Twist with right arm front and left arm reaching back (Exhale).  
 Center (Inhale).  
 Fold forward at waist like a rag doll (Exhale).  
 Hands on shins and lift forward to straighten back (Inhale).  
 Fold forward again (Exhale).  
 Slowly roll up to stand tall with arms reaching to ceiling (Inhale).  
 Lean back slightly with cactus arms (Exhale).  
 Center and stand tall (Inhale).  
 Repeat sequence if time.

Trainer say: Now that we have stretched our bodies, we are going to stretch our minds. Divide into small groups (3-5 depending on size of whole group). The large paper in front of you has the headings, "Self-Care" and "Resiliency". Take two minutes to brainstorm descriptive words that come to mind when you think about each of these concepts. Go! (Time two minutes.)

Discuss: What words came to mind? How do the terms compare? Contrast? Trainer: refer to Key Concepts above to distinguish and process terms.

Option: On large paper, list headings "Flexibility", "Strength", "Stamina", "Endurance" and categorize participant words as discussion occurs.

For transition, Trainer say: Today we will focus on building "Resiliency" in a holistic manner which moves beyond "Self-Care" and looks toward endurance to better serve others with joy for the long-term.

**Working Phase: (40 minutes)**

**Building Flexibility (Mental and Emotional Strategies)**

## Activity: Optical Illusions or Hidden Pictures

### **Building Mental Flexibility:**

Trainer instruct participants to view different optical illusions and write down what they initially see. Option: view hidden objects pictures and find as many objects as possible. Give participants one to two minutes depending on illusion and/or hidden pictures.

Trainer say: Turn to a partner or your table. Talk about what you first saw in the optical illusion or the hidden pictures you were able to find. Share strategies you use to see things in a different way. (Ex. Looking at picture from a different angle, squint, turn page, ask someone to trace image or point out hidden picture, etc.)

Trainer ask large group: How do these strategies relate to things we can do at work and with clients to help us become more flexible? (Ex. Look at person through strengths-based lens, consider viewing a conflict in a different way, etc.)

### **Building Emotional Flexibility:**

Trainer ask for two or three volunteers to describe a time when they felt an initial strong emotional reaction but then the emotion changed when they found out more information. (Ex. In a traffic jam, you may feel irritated and frustrated, but then you find out there is a funeral procession going by; You feel annoyed because your contact in HR has not returned your calls for several days, but then you find out her son was jailed on drug charges.)

Discussion for Small Groups or Large Group as a whole: How would you rate your flexibility? Do you more often come in with your own agenda for the day, for a client or a class, and get frustrated when your plans are interrupted? Give examples from daily work life of flexibility. How can you increase flexibility?

Trainer summarize: Your initial reaction whether it be seeing, thinking, or feeling may not accurately capture what is really happening. Be open and flexible to change your mind. Flexibility is key to growing as a resilient person. Share Proverbs verses if helpful for discussion and setting:

Proverbs 16:9 “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.” (NIV)

Proverbs 19:21 “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” (NIV)

## Building Strength (Physical Strategies)

### Activity: What is on Your Plate?

Trainer say: How strong are you? Take the one minute challenge by doing a Wall or Floor Plank. If you do this regularly, modify to increase the challenge (ex. three pronged, side, etc.) Think about the alignment, solid hold, etc.

Trainer say: Strength is related to having an overall healthy physical body. Let's look at other areas of our lives that contribute in this area.

Trainer pass out a large white paper plate to each participant. Ask participants: What is on your plate? Instruct them to proportion the plate to depict a current typical day in their lives.

Discuss: What does your plate say about how you are choosing to spend your time? Do you have a healthy balance? What are you doing to maintain your physical strength and health? Health in other areas? Do you have time to cover the necessities (Breathe, Eat, Exercise, Sleep, Eliminate ☺)?

Now instruct participants to turn their plate over. Side 2 can depict your ideal plate—what you would like it to look like.

Discuss: Are there differences in your Side 1 and Side 2? What do you need to do to get from Side 1 to Side 2? Barriers?

Trainer say: Strength is having a healthy physical body overall—good nutrition, healthy sleep patterns, physical activity, and balance. Taking care of our bodies physically can increase strength and reduce the physical toll of stress on our body. Healthy eating, exercise, and sleep can reduce sickness and increase longevity. Often the first things we cut back on when short on time is sleep, exercise and healthy eating. This is counter-productive. Instead, we should actually step up our physical care when we are in times of greater stress. Examples of ways to do this include matching exercise to our personality and body type, etc.

## Building Stamina (Social Support Strategies)

## Activity: House for Sale

Trainer say: We can build stamina in our lives and work if we have strong social relationships and positive engagement. Our physical challenge for this section is taking a Warrior 3 Yoga pose. See if you can hold this pose for one minute. Now turn to a partner. Stand shoulder to shoulder facing the opposite way. Step out from each other far enough to put your hand on the others' shoulder. Now take the Warrior 3 pose with each of you supporting the other. How does this feel different? Can you balance longer?

Trainer say: We are able to withstand prolonged physical or mental effort if we have support. One of the concerning symptoms of compassion fatigue, burn out and secondary traumatic stress is social isolation. Engaging in supportive, meaningful relationships is critical to staying resilient.

Trainer say: For our stamina building activity, I would like you to think about yourself as a house. If you were a house, what would your description in a Real Estate paper read? Are you designing your "home" (i.e., your "self") to promote support, relationship and engagement with others? Or are you fencing in areas, posting no trespassing signs, etc.?

Pass out an index card to each participant. Instruct participants to write a short ad about the current "home" you present to others. Briefly write a headline, opening statement, description of features, special promotion (if any), and call to action (contact).

Discuss: Share descriptions with a partner, small group, or large group depending on group size and time. Are there pieces of your description you would like to change to make your home more inviting to meaningful, supportive relationships? (Note: For some people this may mean they need to be less inviting to relationships/activities that deplete energy; perhaps their home should have a sauna build just for two.)

If participants agree, post index card ads on a large poster board as if you all have just designed a page in a Real Estate magazine.

Optional Activity: Draw your personal ecomap. What supportive relationships/systems are in your life? What relationships do you need to strengthen, change, eliminate, etc.

## Building Endurance (Spiritual Strategies)



## Activity: Focusing on Your Spiritual Inspiration for This Season

Trainer invite participants to see how long they can stand on one leg with their eyes closed. Encourage fun competition by timing. Next, instruct participants to stand on one leg with their eyes open. Again, time for fun competition. For the third time, ask participants to find a focal point and then again stand on one leg and focus on focal point. Time how much they improved. Ask: What helped your balance? How does this relate to life?

Trainer say: When we have a focal point, we can endure. For us as Christian social workers, our spirituality is key to staying resilient. Our well will run dry if we do not allow Jesus to continually fill us and to have Him as our main focal point.

Trainer ask: What spiritual metaphor, narrative, parable, and/or verse encourages you to endure/persevere and get this...have joy in the process? Handout markers and paper. Give participants time to draw a picture, write, or somehow communicate their spiritual metaphor, narrative, parable or verse(s) which enables them to endure and persevere during difficult times.

Examples:

The narrative of Abraham's journey has helped me endure difficult times with my adult children—Abraham made the same mistake several times (telling kings that Sarah was his sister rather than his wife); however, God continued in His faithfulness and fulfilled His promises in Abraham's life, despite Abraham slipping.

Walking like Jesus: I visualize Jesus smoothly, peacefully, and joyfully walking through His day even though crowds clamored around Him, enemies told lies about Him, people begged to be healed, etc. Jesus clearly knew God's purpose for Him and waited for God's timing.

After giving participants time to complete their picture/writing, invite them to share with a partner, small group, or whole group depending on time. Encourage this as a way to strengthen your own focal point and encourage others.

**Application/Closure: (10 minutes)**

Trainer summarize: We have talked about the importance of resiliency in our personal and professional lives. Take a moment to reflect on each of the four areas of holistic health and resiliency:

- Flexibility (Mental and Emotional Strategies)
- Strength (Physical Strategies)
- Stamina (Social Support Strategies)
- Endurance (Spiritual Strategies)

Complete your “take-away” sheet by filling in at least one action item per area that you would like to begin working on tomorrow.



Invite questions and final “aha’s” that participants would like to share.

### **Activity: Reflecting and Preparing “Take-Aways”**

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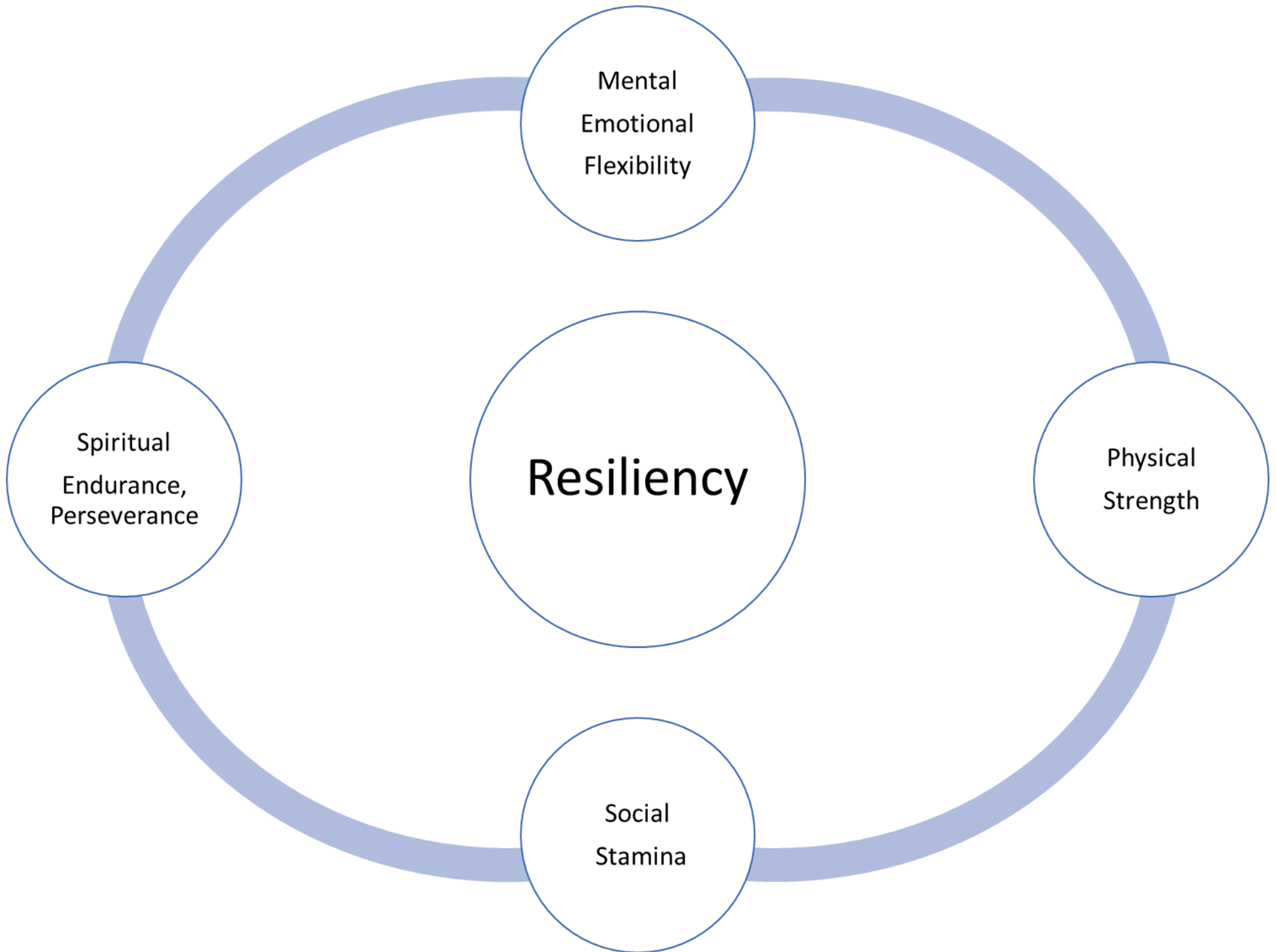
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# Notes, Doodles, Aha's, Questions, and Take-Aways

Participant Handout, p. 1 (+ Resiliency Graphic, p. 2)





Mental  
Emotional  
Flexibility

**Resiliency**

Physical  
Strength

Social  
Stamina

Spiritual  
Endurance,  
Perseverance