Welcome to the ITRC Training Program on Building Community-Based Mental Wellness and Resilience

Introduction to Mental Wellness and Resilience Skills

February 16, 2021

Many Thanks To Our Co-Sponsors
Agenda

• Review of the purpose, goals, and flow of the training program

• Share a few simple resilience skills to plant seeds about how you can build and sustain your own resilience and help others do so.

Presenters

• Bob Doppelt, ITRC Coordinator

• Elaine Miller-Karas, The Trauma Resource Institute
Resilience Pause

You create your own calm.
Trauma and Relentless Toxic Stresses are Epidemic Today

Pandemic Health Impacts & Fears, Job & Income Losses, Social Disconnections, Altered Routines

Racist & Sexist Abuses
Fear of Violence
High Level of ACEs

Lack of Good Jobs & Income
Political Polarization
High Poverty

Many Other Chronic Traumatic Stressors

Even before the pandemic less than half of the tens of millions of people in U.S. with mental health problems could get help—now less than ¼ can.

A similar rise in mental health problems can be found in UK and other countries.
To These Problems Now **Add** the Accelerating Mental Health and Psychosocial Problems Generated by the Climate Emergency

- We can **no longer prevent** global temps from **exceeding the 2.7 F (1.5C)** temp. threshold that activates **irreversible impacts**—and it will happen **this decade**! (World Meteorological Association, July 2020; Australia National Climate Restoration Program 2021)

- Under current emission path abrupt **“collapses of ecosystems”** and **“catastrophic” biodiversity loss** begin **before 2030** starting in tropical oceans and then spreading to **northern latitudes**. (Nature, April 2020)

**Humanity is in the midst of a civilization-changing event:**

**The “Traumacene”**

**Precious Little Time Remains to Prepare** *People* for the Psychological, Emotional & Behavioral Impacts of the “Traumacene”!
Help Everyone Become “Trauma-Informed”
A Simple Description of the Neurobiology of Trauma and Toxic Stress

Amygdala: The "Fear and Alarm Center"

- Fear-based survival reaction occurs automatically when senses threat.
- Releases neurochemicals that activate the sympathetic nervous system and produce hyperarousal to prepare us to fight back, flee, or freeze.
- Works like smoke detector—a false alarm is better than mistake—but chronicity can produce dysregulation.

Prefrontal-cortex: The "Executive Center"

- Can direct, but not control, the Fear & Alarm Center.
- Meaning making center of brain that sorts out real from false threats, develops beliefs about the world and self, and can decide how to respond including ways to activate the parasympathetic nervous system.
- Memory of past trauma and mind racing about future threats can prevent discharge.
Without Building Universal Capacity for Resilience the “Traumacene” Will Generate a Tsunami of Individual and Collective Traumas That Threaten Everyone

**Mental Health Impacts**
- Anxiety and depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Complicated grief
- Vicarious trauma
- Compassion fatigue
- Increased suicidal ideation
- Individual hopelessness

**Psychosocial Impacts**
- Relationship problems/breakdown
- Spousal and child abuse and ACEs
- Drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse
- Racism and other systemic oppressions
- Crime, aggression, and violence
- Community and societal trauma
- Collective hopelessness

**Stress-Aggravated or Caused Physical Illnesses and Diseases**

**Rising Costs to Families, Businesses, and Governments**

**Fear-based Reactions That Threaten Society’s Ability to Reduce the Multiple Crises to Manageable Levels**
While They Will Remain Very Important

Clinical Treatment, Direct Service, & Disaster Mental Health Programs

Cannot Prevent or Heal

The Coming Tsunami of Traumacene Generated Problems
A Public Health and Prevention Science Approach

Is Urgently Needed
A Public Health Approach

• Addresses health and social problems by **strengthening protective factors** including the **capacity for mental wellness and resilience** that counters forces that undermine safety, health, and wellness.

• Takes a **population-level approach**, rather than merely treating high risk individuals.

• Prioritizes **preventing problems** through systems-based solutions, not merely reacting to problems after they appear.
Prevention Science Expands the Public Health Approach By

• Showing that mental health and psychosocial problems can be prevented and health, wellness, and resilience can be enhanced.

• Showing a growing consensus that the most effective way to achieve these goals is to:
  
  o establish the social infrastructure in communities that..
  
  o engages a broad and diverse array of grassroots, civic, neighborhood, non-profit, private & public local leaders...
  
  o in planning, implementing, and continually improving actions that build and sustain mental wellness and resilience among all adults and youth.

• Research shows prevention is a smarter, more efficient and cost effective way to address mental health & psychosocial problems.
What Do We Mean By “Resilience”?  

Resilience is a protective factor that pushes back against psychological and emotional distresses resulting from relentless loss, stress, and trauma.  

“Beyond coping or problem solving, resilience involves positive transformation and growth.”  

---- Dr. Froma Walsh, 2006
The potential to use the pandemic, climate disruption, and other adversities as powerful catalysis for learning, growth, and constructive change is why we call the process “Transformational Resilience”
Training Sessions Will Follow the “Wheel of Change” for Building Community-Based, Culturally-Grounded, Population-Level Mental Wellness & Resilience
The Resilient Growth Model for Transformational Resilience

Is Framed Around The Knowledge That Humans Are

Pushed by drives

and

Pulled by meaning and purpose!

Quote by Viktor Frankl
Two Focuses of the Resilient Growth Model

Presencing Skills:
To manage the "Push" of our psychobiological drives (self-regulation skills)

The knowledge that we can manage our body, mind, and emotions in any situation provides tremendous confidence and peace of mind (builds self-efficacy).

Purposing Skills:
To find meaning, direction, and hope to intensify the “Pull” of purpose (adversity-based growth skills)

The ability to use adversities as catalysts to learn, grow, and find new meaning, direction, and hope increases our mental health and capacity to deal with future adversities.
THE TRAUMA INSTITUTE’S COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MODEL
PREVENTION AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RELIEF PROGRAM

PRESENTER: ELAINE MILLER
CO-FOUNDER
TRAUMA RESOURCE INSTITUTE
To share with children, teens and adults within communities the Community Resiliency Model wellness skills

To provide a structure for preparation to further strengthen resilience so communities can respond to events with strength and compassion and with a common language

To create a cadre of Community Resiliency Model Teachers made up of professional and natural leaders of communities

To link community members and survivors to community-based programs and governmental entities that support prevention, resiliency and reconstruction

GOALS
TRAUMA RESOURCE INSTITUTE organizes communities worldwide through natural leaders of communities to develop community resiliency model skills. Virtual trainings include first response organizations like fire departments, police, and the Red Cross. Faith-based coalitions, public health, mental health, schools, public, private, and NGOS ITRC are also part of the network.
Phase 1 - Community Preparation
Community Resiliency Model TT
Wellness Workshops - Common Language

Phase 2
• Phase 2 - Immediate Engagement: Community Emergency Response Organizations

Phase 3
• Phase 3 - Community Meetings
• Community Groups
• Faith-based Coalitions
• First Responders
• Families
• Survivors

Phase 4
• Phase 4 - Triage
• Referral for Mental Health and Medical Evaluations
• Referral to community-based organizations
Bringing the lens of the Community Resiliency Model to creating safer spaces for dialogue regarding our differences, honoring our lived experiences and remembering what binds us as a world community.
Phase 1
Creating a Common Language
The Resilient Zone- “OK” Zone

GOAL: TO WIDEN YOUR RESILIENCY ZONE

(c) Trauma Resource Institute
REMINDER or Stressful Event

Stuck in the High Zone

Edgy
Irritable
Hyper
Anxiety & Panic
Angry outbursts
Pain

RZ

Depression/Sadness
Isolated
Exhaustion/Fatigue
Numbness

Stuck in the Low Zone
ACTIVITY
WHAT ZONE ARE YOU IN?
Sharing the Skills
The Community Resiliency Model

- GROUNDING
- RESOURICING
- HELP NOW!
- GESTURING
- SHIFT & STAY
Learning the key concepts of CRM and the wellness skills helps community members realize:

Many reactions to stress and trauma cannot be “talked away” but they can be “sensed away.”

Community members learn their symptoms are about biology not pathology or mental weakness.

This concept can result in a sense of RELIEF and greater feeling of well being.
The Community Resiliency Model can be used:

- across the lifespan
- across cultures
- with different literacy abilities
The Community Resiliency Model - The Basic Three Plus

- GROUNDING
- RESOURCING
- HELP NOW!
- Tracking
- GESTURING
- SHIFT & STAY
SKILL 1: Tracking (Reading Sensations)
We all have *access* to the language of our biology and a framework to help understand the human experience.
DOORWAYS OF EXPANDING WELL BEING

THINKING

SENSING

FEELING
Tracking is the foundation for helping stabilize the nervous system

Tracking is noticing or paying attention to sensations - to what is happening inside the body in the present moment
What we pay attention to grows
Tracking is noticing or paying attention to what is happening inside your body at the present moment.

Determining if the sensation is **pleasant**, **unpleasant** or neutral.

Sitting or staying with sensations that are pleasant or neutral.

Curiosity questions:
What do you notice on the inside?
Are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
A sensation is a physical experience in the body.

Sensation originates in billions of receptors distributed in every part of the body.

Life experiences, including our thoughts and feelings, have a corresponding sensation within the body.

Yellow shows regions of increased sensation while blue areas represent decreased feeling in these composite images. Image created by Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glerean, Riitta Hari, and Jari Hietanen.
The insula is a part of the brain that helps body and mind communicate to one another.

It reads physical states of the body (sensations) like pain, an itch, temperature

It communicates to the Medial Prefrontal cortex (thinking brain) to take action to keep the body in a state of internal balance

Body awareness can reduce impulsivity and promote emotion regulation and clearer thinking.

When we learn to discern the differences between sensations of distress and well-being

We begin to have CHOICE of what to pay attention to on the inside
WAYS TO READ SENSATIONS

**Observation:**
A person’s body/posture, muscle tension/relaxation, breathing, skin color

**Person self-report:**
Helping another person become aware of sensations by asking:
- What do you notice happening inside?
- Are the sensations inside pleasant, neutral or unpleasant?

**Internal Climate:**
Your internal “climate” — What you notice inside while talking to another person
A biological process that happens automatically when the body releases stress energy and comes back into balance.

Sensations can include trembling, tingling, yawning, stomach gurgling, burping, warmth, cooling down.

Paying attention to release sensations can help the body return to the Resilient Zone.
For some people, even sensing pleasant or neutral sensations can spark unpleasant, even painful sensations.

Learning and working with the CRM skills is a CHOICE. So if learning sensory language is too distressing, you have a choice to stop learning the skills.
Learning Sensation Words

- **Vibration**
  - Shaking
  - Twitching
  - Trembling
  - Fast/Slow

- **Size/Position**
  - Small
  - Medium
  - Large
  - Up/Down
  - Center

- **Temperature**
  - Cold
  - Hot
  - Warm
  - Neutral

- **Pain**
  - Intense
  - Medium
  - Mild
  - Throbbing
  - Stabbing

- **Muscles**
  - Tight
  - Loose
  - Calm
  - Rigid

- **Breathing**
  - Rapid
  - Deep
  - Shallow
  - Light

- **Heart**
  - Fast
  - Slow
  - Rhythmic
  - Flutters
  - Jittery

- **Taste**
  - Spicy
  - Sweet
  - Sour
  - Juicy
  - Bland

- **Density**
  - Rough
  - Smooth
  - Thick
  - Thin

- **Weight**
  - Heavy
  - Light
  - Firm
  - Gentle
CRM Activity
Place Palms together
Slowly rub hands together
Slowly increase the speed
Pause
What Sensations do you notice?
SKILL 2: Resourcing
One of the best ways to learn how to develop your sensory vocabulary is through identifying a personal resource and then noticing sensations on the inside.

What might be pleasant for the people in this photo?
Resourcing

A Resource is any person, place, thing, memory or part of yourself that makes you feel calm, pleasant, peaceful, strong or resilient.

A Resource can be real or imagined

A Resource can be internal or external
Ask 3 or 4 additional questions about the resource to expand the sensations connected to the resource.

Resource intensification strengthens the “felt sense” of the resource and overrides attention that automatically goes to unpleasant sensations.
ACTIVITY
Identify One Of Your Resources
Name 3 details of your resource
Notice Sensations Connected to your resource
Invitation to share resource in chat and Sensations
Breakout Room
(12 minutes)

Resource and Tracking Practice

You will have three people in your breakout group.

In 3 minutes each you are invited to take turns sharing your resource and adding details and noticing sensations.

Person Sharing Resource: You are invited to share your resource and describe it with detail.

Persons Listening: You can take turns asking the following questions:

What do you notice on the inside?

As you describe your resource, are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
SKILL 3: Grounding
Skill 3: Grounding

The direct contact of the body or part of the body with something that provides support in the present moment

- Gravitational security is the foundation upon which we build our interpersonal relationships.
- If our relationship to the earth is not safe, then all other relationships do not develop optimally.
- When we are grounded, we have a sense of self in relationship to present time and space.
- We are not worried about the past or the future.
YOU CAN GROUND IN MANY POSITIONS

Walking and paying attention to steps

Laying down on a surface or floating in water

Through a part of your body like your hands or feet

Standing against a wall

Sitting on a chair, sofa or ground
CRM Activity

Find a comfortable position

Notice your body making contact with a surface

Pause

What Sensations do you notice?

Are the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
Help Now! Strategies

- When stuck in the High Zone or Low Zone, a Help Now! Strategy
- Can help you get back to your Resilient Zone
Help Now!

- Listen to the sounds
- Count to 10
- Notice your surroundings
- Go for a walk
- Touch something in nature
- Push against a wall
- Touch the furniture
- Drink a glass of water
- Feel the temperature
- Focus your attention on something you see

Ayuda Ahora!

- Bebe un vaso de agua
- Cuenta hacia atrás desde 20
- Ve a caminar
- Observe los sonidos
- Nombra seis colores que ves
- Empuja contra una pared
- Observe algo a tu alrededor
- Toca algo en la naturaleza
- Observe la temperatura
HELP NOW! to RESET NOW!

Drink Water.  Touch Surface.  Look around space.  Push against Wall

What do you notice? Is the sensations pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
CRM ACTIVITY
Try Two Help Now!
Strategies
What do you notice?
Are the sensations Pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
Resilience Pause
**Other Simple Presencing Skills**

**Breath-Based Skills**
- Controlled breathing
- Six-Second breathing

**Awareness-Based Skills**
- Mindfulness of breath, thoughts, and emotions
- Mindful eating, walking, movement

**Culturally-Based Skills**
- Music
- Dance
- Eating together

**Faith-Based Skills**
- Prayer
- Conversations with others
- Reading sacred texts

**Combo Skills**
- Reset Button
CIRCLES OF SUPPORT
Help people identify the skills, social supports, and resources available to calm their body, mind, emotions when distressed

**Personal Skills**
Ability to use healthy methods to stay calm, get exercise, eat well, be assertive, reach out to others

**Internal Psychological Supports**
Images of experiences, places, role models that bring peace and calm

**Social Supports**
Friends and family who provide unconditional emotional support or practical assistance

**External Physical Supports**
Physical places like a room in the house, garden, place in town, emergency kit, that bring peace and calm

**Ecological Supports**
The sun’s rays, air you breathe, water you drink

Does your residence have a:
- Yard
- Trees
- Garden
- House plants
- Pets

Does your community have:
- Green space
- Trees
- Walkways/trails
- Plants
- Wildlife
- Streams
- Watershed

How aware are you of these & other ecological systems and species?
Can you find a way to connect with them?
# My Presencing Safety Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Will Watch For These Signs That I Am Outside of My Resilient Growth Zone</th>
<th>When I See These Signs I Will Take These Actions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Signs: rapid breathing, heart beat, or pulse; head or stomach ache; muscle tension.</td>
<td>Practice tracking, grounding, controlled breathing, mindfulness of breath, thoughts &amp; emotions, Circles of Support, ABC Model of Thinking Distortions, Self-Compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Signs: racing mind, anxiety, fear, excessive worry, sleep troubles.</td>
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Using adversities as catalysts to learn, grow, and find new meaning, direction and hope increases our mental health and capacity to deal with future adversities.
Purposing:

The Choices We Make In Midst of Adversity Determine Our Path

Enhancing our level of functioning above previous levels while holding the pain of trauma in different ways

Requires a Choice: Continue to suffer, or use the experience to honestly examine and learn about the world and self

and then

rise above self-interest to help others and/or nature to find new sources of meaning, purpose and hope in life

Slide Adapted from S. Joseph, What Doesn't Kill Us
Asking “What I can learn from the situation?” and “What doors are now open?” is a very powerful way to reframe our thinking about distressing events!
Living Out the Values We Hold Dear in Midst of Adversity Helps Us Learn, Grow, and Find New Sources of Meaning and Purpose

• Values refer to Actions— not ideals, morals, or goals.

• Values are about how you act during life, not what you accomplish.

• Acting out our values allows us to live with dignity, pride & purpose.
Go through the list and **identify the top 3 values** that would allow you to live with **dignity, pride, and purpose** in the midst of adversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal responsibility</th>
<th>Reverence for human life</th>
<th>Social equity</th>
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<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Honor</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
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<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Charity</td>
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<td>Patience</td>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
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<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>Respect for others</td>
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<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>Protection of nature/climate</td>
<td>Self-sufficiency</td>
<td>Brotherhood</td>
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<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
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<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Personal safety</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
<td>Rank and power</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Open mindedness</td>
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<td>Community</td>
<td>Diligence</td>
<td>Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional achievement</td>
<td>Public recognition</td>
<td>Insert other_____</td>
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The Traumacene Can Generate Profound Hopelessness

Hopelessness is a powerful emotion that can harm the way one perceives the self, others, and the world.

Hopelessness can lead people to harm themselves, others, and the natural environment.
Harvesting Hope
for new possibilities allows us to

Overcome despair and helplessness
and

Realize that how we respond is up to us!
Research has found that Hope emerges most readily when 3 closely related factors are present:

1. People have a **vision** of a **place they want to arrive at** or **condition they want to achieve**.

2. A sense of the **initial steps they can take** and an **overall approach** to move toward their vision.

3. A **commitment** to work with others to move toward that vision even when **obstacles arise**.

Hope Theory, Snyder 1994
Identify a recent time when you did something helpful for another person— or nature without a sense of obligation or expected payoff.

How did you feel afterwards?

When we do good things for others—or help the world be a better place—without obligation (engage in selfless pro-social behaviors) 

We Enhance Our Self-Esteem!
Selfless pro-social actions **feel good** ... which activates the **release of oxytocin**... which feels good... which drives **more selfless behaviors** ... which releases **more oxytocin** ... which drives **more selfless behaviors** .... producing a **virtuous cycle!**

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**Engaging in Pro-Social Activities**

- Is not just about **being nice** or **moralism**
- It is an **expanded notion of self-interest**
- **Helping others and/or the natural environment benefit us** as much or more than others.

*From The Moral Molecule: How Trust Works, Paul Zak*
Help People Craft a “Purposing” Action Plan!

1. Create a **vision** of a **place they want to arrive at** or **condition they want to achieve** that gives them hope.

2. Identify the **initial steps they can take** and an **overall approach** to move toward their vision.

3. Make a **commitment** to move toward that vision even when **obstacles** arise—including **who they can join with** in the journey.
My Purposing Action Plan

My Strengths and Passions:

My Core Values:

Goals To Enhance My Personal Wellbeing:

Goals to Enhance the Wellbeing of Other People and The Natural Environment:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Immediate Actions (within 30 days) to Achieve My Goals</th>
<th>* Barriers I Will Experience</th>
<th>Strategies For Barriers</th>
<th># Benefits of Action</th>
<th>Date(s) Done</th>
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<tr>
<th>Mid-Term Actions (within 3 Months) To Achieve My Goals</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Strategies for Barriers</th>
<th>Benefits of Action</th>
<th>Date(s) Done</th>
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* Barriers include internal challenges as well as external barriers.
Resilience Pause
Suggestions for Teaching Resilience Skills to Others

• **Always ask what skills or resources people already have to calm themselves.**

As they share one ask for more details to help them go deeper into it; if none emerge ask about a past event, or if they would like to learn about a skill you have learned.

• **Don’t start with a mindset that you are “fixing” others.**

Instead, share your own experience in learning/using a resilience skills as a way to offer information and skills they might also find useful, if they so choose, to enhance their resilience.

• **Explain what you learned and experienced—not what they will.**

e.g. “I find that when I realize my brain’s “fear and alarm” system has been triggered I can more easily take steps to correct the situation” or “When I take the time to practice this skills my body becomes calmer---and perhaps will might experience something similar?”
**Suggestions for Teaching Resilience Skills to Others**

- **Use “invitational” language that leaves people with the choice to engage or not.**
  
  e.g. “If you are willing...”, “Something you might consider is...”

- **Gently point out the sense of relief or relaxation you observe in others when they practice a skill or tap into a resource**
  
  “I notice that you smiled when you realized your brain’s ‘fear and alarm system’ was triggered”; “It looked like your shoulders dropped when you practiced that skill.”

- **Use humor, laugh, and have fun.**
  
  People will be put at ease and be more open to learning a new skills and growth when it is light and fun.
Some Suggested Resources


• Other Trauma Resource Institute materials: https://www.traumaresourceinstitute.com/materials


• From Me to We. (2012). Bob Doppelt, Greenleaf Publishing.


• Between the World and Me. (2015). Ta-Nehisi Coates, Random House


• Trauma and Resilience in the Lives of Contemporary Native Americans. (2019) Hilary Weaver, Routledge


• Full Catastrophe Living. (2013). John Kabat-Zinn, Bantam Books
First Voluntary Drop-In Session is *This Thursday, Feb 18* from 12 noon to 1 pm Eastern Time (9-10 am PT)

Zoom Invitation will be sent after this session ends.

**Suggested Homework**

Practice 1 of the resilience skills learned today once a day.

Talk with someone about what you experience.

**Next Regular Session: Next Tuesday Feb. 23, Same Time**

Laura Porter and Bob Doppelt on organizing, facilitating & continually improving community-based mental wellness and resilience initiatives.