Building Resilience
Mind – Body Bridging © (MBB) © Workbook for the Community

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Introduction to the Building Resilience Program Workbook

Life can be pretty tough sometimes. Why is it that sometimes people can go through really rough times and still bounce back? The difference is that those who bounce back are using the skills of resilience.

The concept of resilience refers to our ability to adapt successfully in the face of acute stress, trauma, or adversity and then bounce back to our normal state of functioning and well-being. The good news is that resilience is not something you are born with or not - the skills of resilience can be learned. Resilience is what makes some people seem like they have "got bounce." Resilience can help you be one of the people who have "got bounce."

The aim of the Building Resilience Program Workbook is to provide you with skills to increase resilience during and after stressful life events, to enhance performance in academic, workplace, and other demanding contexts, and to improve productivity and well-being.

The skills presented in the workbook are derived from an evidence-based intervention, called Mind-Body Bridging, that increases foundational self-regulation skills, which leads to more robust psychological resilience (See Appendix A for a brief overview of research publications on Mind-Body Bridging). Mind-Body Bridging practices consist of awareness skills that cultivate present-focused awareness of one’s body, thoughts, and emotions, and metacognitive strategies (techniques that enhance awareness and understanding of one’s thought processes) that allow individuals to reevaluate non-productive and limiting expectations of self, others and the world that lead to maladaptive responses and behavior.

This workbook is composed of three parts, where each part serves as a building block for the next. Each part introduces various skills, called Resilient Mind Skills, that improve resilience and provides:

- An explanation of the Resilient Mind Skills presented in the lesson, indicated by the book icon.
- Instructions for various exercises which will help you learn the Resilient Mind Skills, indicated by the pen icon.

At the end of each part, there is a summary of the skills presented and instructions for how you can practice Resilient Mind Skills in your daily life to build resilience.
Part One

What Hinders Your Resilience?


The I-System

Exercise 1.1

In the following exercise, you are going to use a template called a Mind-Body Map (or Map for short). A Mind-Body Map aims to provide an opportunity to write down and become aware of thoughts, feelings, and body sensations related to a specific troubling situation. On the next page we provide an example of a completed Mind-Body Map.

Write down on the Map a situation from your life that is most troubling (stressful, has pressure, has anxiety) to you inside the oval.

Once you have the troubling situation in the oval, take the next several minutes to scatter your thoughts and feelings about that situation around the outside of the oval, but inside the larger circle. Don’t edit or second-guess, just put down whatever thoughts come to mind.

After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 0 – 10. Rate your body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) and description of the body tension in the space provided.

With your mind and body in this state how do you act?
Example Map for Exercise 1.1 (Map 1)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): 7
Rate your body tension (0-10): 8
Location of body tension: Knot in stomach, tight chest
How do you act in this mind-body state? I withdraw

Mind-Body Map (Example of Troubling Situation)

Stressing out my relationship
Don't know what to do
Financial trouble
Can't sleep
Anxiety
I need a better job
How can I pay all my bills?
Exercise 1.1 (Map 1)

Mind-Body Map (Troubling Situation)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): 
Rate your body tension (0-10):  Location of body tension: ____________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ____________________________
Mapping

- In the above exercise you have just learned your first Resilient Mind Skill called **Mapping**. When you Map you write down your thoughts and feelings related to a particular situation without editing.

Recognize Your I-System

- Mind clutter and body tension is often caused by what we call the **I-System (Identity System)**. It’s a system in your mind and body that underlies many of our dysfunctional states and behavior. The I-System becomes overactive when our sense of self or identity is threatened. You can recognize its presence whenever you experience mind clutter and body tension. Mind clutter and body tension are “red flags” that your I-System is overactive and is influencing your thoughts, feelings and behavior and restricting you to a limited and contracted state.

- Recognizing that your I-System is overactive is the first step towards improved functioning, as is a Resilient Mind Skills called **Recognize your I-System**. All other Resilient Mind skills build on the primary skill of recognizing that your I-System is overactive.

I-System Requirements

Exercise 1.2

- Go back to the Map on exercise 1.1.

- Find the thought with the most associated body tension, draw a line from it to the outside of the larger circle and ask yourself the question, “How should that item be?” Write the answer outside the circle (i.e., “My partner should be more understanding”).

- Draw lines to the outside of the circle from each thought with associated body tension inside the circle, writing the answer to the question, “How should that item be?” What expectation did you have that was not met? See example map below.
Example Map for Exercise 1.2 (Map 1)

Mind-Body Map (Example of Troubling Situation)

I should know what to do

My finances shouldn’t stress my relationship

Stressing out my relationship

I should have enough money

Not enough money

How can I pay all my bills?

Financial trouble

Anxiety

I need a better job

I shouldn’t feel anxious

I should get paid more

Can’t sleep

Don’t know what to do

I should be able to sleep

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): 7

Rate your body tension (0-10): 8  Location of body tension: Knot in stomach, tight Chest

How do you act in this mind-body state? I withdraw
Each “Should/Must” that you have written on the outside of the circle are known as Requirements. These “Shoulds or Musts” are ideal pictures of how others and the world should be (for example, I shouldn’t make mistakes, I must be strong, School work should be easier, My teammates should be nice to me). When you have a “Should or Must” about something and it does not go the way you want it to, your I-System can become dominant and overactive.

We have a body system that regulates our temperature, keeping the body at around 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. If our temperature goes up, we sweat, and if it goes down, we shiver as our temperature system tries to get back to the body’s normal state. In the same way, our I-System works like our temperature regulation system. But, instead of working to maintain an ideal temperature, the I-System maintains an ‘ideal picture’ or ‘mental rule’ (Requirement) of how you, others and the world should be. When something happens that doesn’t fit the I-System Requirement, our I-System becomes overactive.

We classify the various types of Requirements under the categories of Requirements for Myself, Requirements for Others, and Requirements for the World.

Recognize and Defuse Requirements

Each Requirement (Should/Must) has an inherent logical fallacy, because it imposes expectations on us, others, and the world that are not logically and factually correct, in short unrealistic. For example, the Requirement “People should be nice to me” implies that you can always expect people to be nice to you, which is obviously not an accurate view of reality. Whereas, “I prefer people to be nice to me” expresses a personal preference that is not a logical fallacy. The logical version of this statement is then, “Sometimes people are nice to me and sometimes people are not nice to me. I prefer them to be nice.” This is sound logic because it is realistic. You can Defuse a Requirement by restating it as a personal preference that has less power to activate your I-System. An alternative highly effective strategy is to simply label the Requirement as a thought. This is done by saying to yourself, “I’m having the thought that people should be nice to me. It is just a thought.”

Recognizing and Defusing a Requirement allows you to deal with a troubling or distressing situation more optimally. It does not mean that you won’t be upset when a Requirement is violated, but it won’t be made worse by trying to deal with it with an overactive I-System.

I-System Requirements activate the I-System causing it to become overactive or dominant. To deactivate the I-System you must be able to Recognize and Defuse Requirements in the heat of the moment. Recognizing a Requirement in the heat of the moment means that whenever you are tense or not functioning at your best, you are able
to discover the Requirement about how you, others or the world should be that has been violated.

- The human experience includes various degrees of suffering, distress and trauma. These are unavoidable. However, a significant portion of this suffering is due to the Requirements you have concerning how you, others and the world should be. The I-System can either cause suffering where none is warranted or add unnecessary suffering to an already distressing situation. By Recognizing and Defusing your Requirements your ongoing distress will either melt away or be reduced.

- Think back to the Map you just did. Even though your initial distress was the result of an external situation, much of your ongoing distress is caused by experiencing it in an active I-System state, because it violated one or more of your Requirements. Frequently there is not much you can do about another person’s behavior or events in the world, but you do have a lot of control over how you react to it (viewing it through the lens of a Requirement or personal preference).

- In the exercise below restate the Should/Must on the Map to an “I would prefer…” (for example, “He should accept me as I am” to “I prefer that he accepts me as I am.” An Should/Must means that things must absolutely be a certain way. An “I would like/prefer…” means that it is something you prefer, which of course is okay, as we all have Requirements and personal preferences. An alternative highly effective strategy is to simply label the Requirement as a thought. This is done by saying to yourself, “I’m having the thought that _________________. It is just a thought.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement/Should/Must</th>
<th>I prefer/I’m having the thought that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>-&gt; ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>-&gt; ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>-&gt; ________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>-&gt; ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rest Your I-System

Exercise 1.3

❖ On the next Map write the same troubling situation used in the previous two Maps in the blank oval.

❖ Next, get comfortable in your chair. Take a few minutes to listen to the background sounds, feel your body on the chair and feet on the floor. Feel the table, clothing, or pen with your fingers. If a thought disturbs you, return to listening to the background sounds. Once you begin to feel settled write your thoughts and feelings about the situation around the outside of the oval, but inside the larger circle. As you write, feel the pen in your hand and watch the ink go onto the paper.

❖ After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 0 – 10. Rate your body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) and description of the body tension in the space provided.

❖ With your mind and body in this state how do you act?

❖ Indicate the level of I-System activity.

❖ Compare the first Map with the second. Ask yourself, is this Map the same (besides the same troubling situation) or different than the first Map? How is it the same? How is it different? Is the level of body tension and mind clutter experienced the same or different?
Exercise 1.3 (Map 2)

Mind-Body Map (Troubling Situation)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10):

Rate your body tension (0-10): Location of body tension:

How do you act in this mind-body state?

Indicate the level of your I-System activity:
The I-System Hijacks Your Natural Functioning

 motivo Natural Functioning refers to your natural and regular state when you are focused on
the present moment or an activity without distraction. In this state you are naturally
resourceful, creative, psychologically flexible and resilient. Natural Functioning is your
natural mind-body state.

 motivo Look at the Mind Body Map 1 (Exercises 1.1 and 1.2). In this Map the I-System hijacks
Natural Functioning, filling your mind full of clutter and your body full of tension.
When your I-System is dominant and in control it distorts how you perceive, think, feel
and act. This is often the cause of your poor decisions and suffering, and many of your
dysfunctional mind-body states.

 motivo Look at Map 2 (Exercise 1.3). In this Map, with the I-System less dominant, your
Natural Functioning is no longer hijacked. All parts of your mind and body are working
in greater harmony and you are more focused, freer of distraction and capable of
meeting the moment optimally.

Sensory Awareness Skills

 motivo When you did the first Map (Exercise 1.1 and 1.2), you experienced I-System
overactivity and how this hijacks Natural Functioning. In the second Map, you got to
see what it’s like to have your I-System become less dominant. You experienced what
happens when you come to your senses by focusing on your body sensations and the
sounds around you. The I-System automatically becomes less dominant, your body
tension eases, and your mind clutter decreases. Note that the situation written in the oval
did not change from one Map to the other.

 motivo When you did Map 2 you were practicing a Resilient Mind skill called Sensory
Awareness Skills. It’s as easy as listening to the sound of an air conditioner fan, traffic
outside, water going down the drain when you wash your hands, the sound of a clock
ticking or noticing your breath. It can also be experiencing the sensations on your feet
as you walk, feeling the texture and temperature of a cup or glass you are holding or
noticing the sweat as it streams down your face. Below is a list of various types of
Sensory Awareness skills. You can use these skills at practice or during a game, match,
or competition to maintain your focus on the moment and optimize your performance.

Awareness of Background Sounds

Your environment is full of sounds. During the day, pause and listen to background
sounds, like the white noise of the heating or air-conditioning system, the wind
blowing, traffic sounds, or the hum of the refrigerator. If your thoughts start to spin
or meander, simply note them and gently return your awareness to what you were doing/hearing.

**Awareness of What You Are Touching**
Tuning in to your sense of touch is another Sensory Awareness Skill that quiets your I-System. Be aware of what your fingers sense as you touch things like glasses, phones, pens, keys, computers, and other objects such as grass/turf. Are these surfaces smooth or rough, cold or warm, pleasant or unpleasant? Sense what it’s like to feel the sun’s warmth on your face or the breeze on your skin.

**Awareness of Colors and Shapes**
Pay attention today to what you see when you look at scenery and objects. Notice their colors, shapes, and forms.

**Awareness of Your Body**
Because of the unpleasant body sensations associated with your overactive I-System, you may have developed a habit of trying to block out or get away from the feelings in your body. When you have unpleasant body sensations, expand your awareness to all parts of your body.

📚 When you practice your Sensory Awareness Skills you move from a limited and contracted state (I-System Functioning) to a more expanded state (Natural Functioning). See figure below.
Exercise 1.4

For exercise 1.4 select another troubling situation and write it in the oval on the Mind-Body Map. Complete the Map by scattering your thoughts and feelings regarding the situation around the oval.

After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 0 – 10. Rate your body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) and description of the body tension in the space provided.

Indicate the level of I-System activity.

With your mind and body in this state how do you act?

Now, Identify and write your Requirements that were violated or not met on the outside of the big circle and link them to the associated thoughts inside the circle.

Next, practice defusing these Requirements by restating each of them as a personal preference, replacing the “should/must” with the word, “prefer,” or simply label each Requirement as a thought. This is done by saying to yourself, “I’m having the thought that people should be nice to me. It is just a thought.”

On the second Map write the same troubling situation used in the previous Map in the blank oval.

Next, get comfortable in your chair. Take a few minutes to listen to the background sounds, feel your body on the chair and feet on the floor. Feel the table top or the fabric of your clothing with your finger tips. If a thought distracts you, simply return to listening to the background sounds. Once you begin to feel settled write the thoughts and feelings that come to your mind now about the situation around the outside of the oval, but inside the larger circle. As you write, feel the pen in your hand and watch the ink go onto the paper.

After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 0 – 10. Rate your body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) and description of the body tension in the space provided.

With your mind and body in this state how do you act?
Indicate the level of I-System activity by taking the average of the mind-clutter and body-tension scores (adding the two scores together and dividing by 2 = I-System activity level).
Exercise 1.4 (Map 1)

Mind-Body Map (Troubling Situation)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): □
Rate your body tension (0-10): □ Location of body tension: ______________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ____________________________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:

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Exercise 1.4 (Map 2)

Mind-Body Map with Sensory Awareness Skills (Troubling Situation)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): □
Rate your body tension (0-10): □ Location of body tension: __________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ____________________________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:

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Summary of Resilient Mind Skills (Part One)

Mapping

- When you Map you write down your thoughts and feelings related to a particular situation without editing.

Recognize Your I-System

- Each of us has an I-System, and it’s either dominant, or not dominant. You know the I-System is dominant when your mind is cluttered with spinning thoughts, your body is tense, and your mental and physical functioning is impaired.

Recognize and Defuse Requirements

- Recognizing and Defusing Requirements removes the fuse that ignites the I-System. Requirements can be defused in the heat of the moment by restating them as a personal preference (replace the words, “should/must” with the word, “prefer”) or simply label the Requirement as a thought. This is done by saying to yourself, “I’m having the thought that ____________. It is just a thought.”

Sensory Awareness Skills

- When you use Sensory Awareness Skills you rest your I-System, making it less dominant.

Resilient Mind Skills Practice (Part One)

- Practice your Sensory Awareness Skills when experiencing a troubling situation in your personal life. You can do this when you are distracted in class, at home, or any place, really. The more you practice using these skills the more natural it becomes.

- When experiencing a troubling situation do a Mind-Body Map about the situation. Then Recognize Your Requirements that you might have about the situation (Should/Must). Once you have identified a Requirement you can then restate your Should/Must as an I prefer, in order to Defuse Your Requirement.
Part Two

You can’t Fix what’s not Broken

This part introduces the concept of the **Depressor** which is a sub-system of the I-System which activates when a Requirement is violated. It also introduces the concept of the **Fixer** which is a sub-system of the I-System which attempts to rectify the unpleasant feelings caused by the Depressor. Both the Depressor and Fixer create **Storylines** which keep the I-System active.

The Depressor

Exercise 2.1

Negative self-talk is a natural phenomenon, yet it can negatively impact your well-being, and behavior. A good way to understand how to deal with negative self-talk is through the following exercise. Write them in the form of “I am...” statements (I am a loser, I am slow, I am not smart enough. I am stupid). Don’t edit.

Write down your negative self-talk—what you say about yourself—in the circle around the oval on the Map below about a troubling situation. Don’t edit.

After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 0 – 10. Rate your body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) and description of the body tension in the space provided on the bottom of the Map.

Indicate the level of I-System activity.

With your mind and body in this state how do you act?

Then go back over the thoughts in the circle and mark each one with 1, 2 or 3 check marks based on the level of body tension associated with that thought (1 being the least and 3 being the highest level). See example map below.
Example Map for Exercise 2.1

Mind-Body Map (Example of Negative Self Talk)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): \[8\]
Rate your body tension (0-10): \[9\] Location of body tension: Tension in neck
How do you act in this mind-body state? Overeat and drink too much
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:
Exercise 2.1

Mind-Body Map (Negative Self Talk)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): □
Rate your body tension (0-10): □ Location of body tension: ________________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ________________________________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:

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All the thoughts in the circle of exercise 2.1 are just thoughts that happen to be negative. Some of these thoughts arise and pass, while others create mind clutter and body tension.

Most people have problems dealing with their troubling negative thoughts. The challenge is not what do we do with these troubling negative thoughts, but rather what do we do about the component of the I-System called the **Depressor** (which generates and drives these troubling negative thoughts when a Requirement has been violated). The Depressor is the component of the I-System that gets activated when Requirements are violated or unmet. It generates and drives negative thoughts that lead to dysfunctional mind-body states.

Naturally, some negative thoughts arise and pass without creating mind clutter and body tension, but negative thoughts generated and driven by your Depressor create mind-clutter and body tension.

**Depressor Storylines**

**Exercise 2.2**

 turno back to the Map from exercise 2.1 Select one thought in the circle that has the most body tension associated with it (3 check marks). Write down the story or stories you tell yourself about that thought in the space below.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What you have written is called a **Depressor Storyline**. The Depressor generates a negative thought and spins it into a Storyline. Storylines may play in our minds many times throughout the day, creating mental lapses, errors, misperceptions, misjudgments, procrastination, body tension, less than optimal performance, etc. Storylines pull you away from what you are doing in the moment. Storylines exist for every thought in the circle with associated body tension.
Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines

The Depressor has generated negative thoughts due to a Requirement being violated. The first step is to recognize that your Depressor has generated a negative thought and spun it into a story.

When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and storylines you can use a Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the troubling Depressor thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Depressor by saying: “______ is just a Depressor Thought and Storyline.” You don’t ignore or neglect the content of the thoughts; you are just preventing the Depressor from spinning the negative thought into a story that leads to dysfunctional and non-optimal behavior. You can then use your Sensory Awareness Skills to get back into Natural Functioning and you will then likely see the situation differently and behave differently.

The Fixer

Exercise 2.3

Go back to the circle in the Exercise 2.1 Map. For each thought in the circle with associated body tension, draw a line from the thought to the outside of the circle and write down, what do you feel like doing when you have that thought. For example:

- Thought: I am a loser. → *What will I do about it?* → I’ll work later or harder.
- Thought: I am not educated enough. → *What will I do about it?* → I will push myself to take more and more classes. See example below.
Example Map for Exercise 2.3

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): 8
Rate your body tension (0-10): 9 Location of body tension: Tension in neck
How do you act in this mind-body state? Overeat and drink too much
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:
Notice the energy level and feeling tone of the thoughts inside the circle then contrast it with the energy and feeling tone of the corresponding behavior outside the circle. All of the actions outside the circle are natural thoughts of how to take care of ourselves and our responsibilities. However, on this Map, the actions outside this circle are driven not by wanting to take care of yourself, but by what you are going to do to fix the unpleasant mind-body state described inside the circle that’s caused by your Depressor. We call these thoughts and actions outside the circle **Fixers**.

The Depressor works to make you believe that you are damaged and need fixing. The **Fixer** is the Depressor’s partner that drives overactive, never-ending thoughts and stories of how to fix yourself, others and your environment. In other words, the job of the Fixer is primarily to fix the bad feelings caused by the Depressor, and it can never do enough. The Fixer tries endlessly to meet the Requirement that will never be met.

**Fixer Storylines**

**Exercise 2.4**

Turn back to the Map from exercise 2.3 and find one thought in the circle that has the most body tension associated with it (3 check marks) and then select the fixer thought or action on the outside of the circle. Write down the story or stories you tell yourself about that thought or action in the space below.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

• What you have written is called a **Fixer Storyline**. The Depressor generates a negative thought and spins it into a Storyline and the Fixer creates never-ending thoughts and stories of how to fix yourself, others and your environment.
Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines

ɐ Every activity we do is either driven by the Fixer or by our Natural Functioning.

ɐ The stories generated by the Depressor often lead to dysfunctional or non-optimal behavior, where you feel you absolutely must do something to get rid of any unpleasant feelings or resolve the situation.

ɐ The Depressor works to make you believe that you are damaged or broken and need fixing. The Fixer is the Depressor’s partner that drives never-ending thoughts of how to fix yourself, others and/or your environment. In other words, the job of the Fixer is primarily to fix the bad feelings caused by the Depressor. The truth is you are not broken or damaged and don’t need fixing. You—who you really are—is enough! And, the Fixer will never be able to meet the Requirement that has already been violated.

ɐ When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and your Fixer is generating thoughts and stories about how to fix the unpleasantness of the Depressor you can use the Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the Fixer thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Fixer by saying: “______ is just a Fixer Thought and Storyline.” You can then use your Sensory Awareness Skills to access your Natural Functioning. When you are in Natural Functioning you will see situations differently and behave in ways that are best suited for the moment.

ɐ If an action is being driven by the Fixer, nothing you do will ever be good enough because the Depressor is still there to disapprove or raise the bar. Fixer behavior/activity will never fix the Depressor no matter how hard you try. The Fixer traps you into thinking an I-System Requirement has to be met with Storylines of “I need to…; I have to….”

ɐ Recognize the following Fixer signs.

- Trying to fix the unpleasant state caused by your Depressor (Body tension and mind clutter)
- Trying to meet the I-System Requirement at all costs (ie…at the cost of your physical and mental health, and of relationships, etc.)
- No matter how much the fixer does ‘enough is never good enough’
- Excess mental pressure or urgency
- Sense of being driven
- Over preparation, perfectionism
- No sense of satisfaction, well-being or peace of mind with accomplishment
The Depressor-Fixer Cycle

- The Depressor and Fixer always come as a pair. The Depressor thoughts and associated unpleasant body sensations activate our Fixer to attempt to satisfy the Depressor. Fixer behavior/activity is always tied to a Depressor thought.

- Explore the **Depressor-Fixer Cycle** below:

![Depressor-Fixer Cycle Diagram]

*Depressor-Fixer Cycle*
Exercise 2.5

- In this exercise you will have the opportunity to explore in detail a situation that activated your Depressor-Fixer cycle.

- Write down a situation that really got your I-System going.

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- In each of the boxes below, describe the progression of your I-System activity related to this situation:

  **Depressor Thoughts and Storylines**

  __________________________________________

  **Mind Clutter and Body Tension**

  __________________________________________

  **Fixer Thoughts and Storylines**

  __________________________________________

  **Fixer Behavior**

  __________________________________________

  **Depressor Response**

  __________________________________________

- Notice that the Depressor response in the last box only promotes more Fixer storylines and behavior.

- Think back over your life. Do you recognize how pervasive your Depressor-Fixer cycle has been over the years? Do you see how central that cycle is to your daily distress?
Summary of Resilient Mind Skills (Part Two)

Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines

- When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and storylines you can use a Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the troubling Depressor thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Depressor by saying: “_______ is just a Depressor Thought and Storyline.”

Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines

- When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and your Fixer is generating thoughts and stories about how to fix the unpleasantness of the Depressor you can use the Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the Fixer thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Fixer by saying: “_______ is just a Fixer Thought and Storyline.”

Resilient Mind Skills Practice (Part Two)

- When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and storylines you can use a Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the troubling Depressor thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Depressor by saying: “_______ is just a Depressor Thought and Storyline.” And when your Fixer is generating thoughts and stories about how to fix the unpleasantness of the Depressor you can use the Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines. This can be done by identifying the Fixer thoughts (and its accompanied storylines) on your Map and then Defuse your Fixer by saying: “_______ is just a Fixer Thought and Storyline.” You can then use your Sensory Awareness Skills to access your Natural Functioning. When you are in Natural Functioning you will see situations differently and behave in ways that are best suited for the moment.
Part Three

Resilient Mind Practice

This part of the workbook explores how your daily activities can either be driven by your overactive I-System or by Natural Functioning, and helps you recognize that you have the capacity to choose which state you want to be in. It will show you how to maintain an ongoing Resilient Mind Practice to enhance your psychological resilience and general well-being.

I-System and Natural Functioning Loops

The Two-Loop diagram provides a simplified representation for how the mind works. All thoughts naturally flow in the Natural Functioning loop when your I-System is not overactive or dominant.

Natural Functioning refers to your natural and regular state when you are focused on the present moment or an activity without distraction. In this state you are naturally resourceful, creative, psychologically flexible and resilient. Natural Functioning is your natural mind-body state - which is innate.

I-System Functioning hijacks your Natural Functioning, filling your mind full of clutter and your body full of tension. When your I-System is dominant it distorts how you think, feel, and act. It limits our innate creatively resourceful abilities, and ultimately our resilience. This is often the cause of our poor decisions, performance, and suffering, and many of our dysfunctional mind-body states.
Unmet Requirement Triggers the I-System Loop

Two-Part Mapping

Exercise 3.1

We will now show how to do a Two-Part Map about any distressing situation using all the Resilience Mind Skills presented thus far.

Map out the distressing situation using these steps. The various Resilient Mind Skills are indicated in bold text.

Step 1

- Write the troubling situation inside the oval of the Mind-Body Map template or blank piece of paper (Mapping).
- Then write any thoughts and feelings you have regarding the situation around the outside of the oval. It is important to note that there are no right or wrong answers. Write whatever comes to mind.
- After a couple of minutes, stop writing. Ask yourself, is your body tense or relaxed? Locate an area of your body that is tense or uncomfortable when you do the Map or face the troubling situation. Write down the location(s) of the body tension in the space provided on the bottom of the Map.
- Ask yourself, “Is my I-System overactive or am I in Natural Functioning?” If in Natural Functioning then there is no need to proceed with further Mapping. If your I-System is active (Recognize your I-System) proceed to Step 2.
Step 2

- Now notice any “Shoulds” or “Musts” (Recognize Requirements) on your Mind-Body Map, or find thoughts about the situation that you think should or must be in a certain way then draw a short line from each thought to outside the circle and write down how you think it should or absolutely must be. See the example Map provided for how this is to be done.

- Now restate each Should/Must (Requirements) on your Map to a personal preference in the form of an “I would prefer…” (Defuse Requirements) or simply label each Requirement as a thought. This is done by saying to yourself, “I’m having the thought that____________. It is just a thought.”

- Identify the troubling Depressor thoughts and its accompanied storylines on your Map and then Defuse your Depressor by saying: “_______ is just a Depressor Thought and Storyline” (Recognize and Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines). Do this for each of the Depressor thoughts and its accompanied storylines on your Map.

- Identify Fixer thoughts and its accompanied storylines on your Map and then Defuse your Fixer by saying: “_______ is just a Fixer Thought and Storyline” (Recognize and Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines). Do this for each of the Fixer thoughts and its accompanied storylines on your Map.

Step 3

- Now start the second Map.

- Write the same troubling situation in the middle of a new Map, but this time before writing anything else listen to back-ground sounds like a fan, refrigerator, wind, air conditioner, computer sounds, or traffic sounds (Sensory Awareness Skills).

- Sense your feet on the floor, notice your toes wiggle and feel the pen or pencil in your hand. Once you begin to feel settled, write the thoughts and feelings about the situation that now come to your mind. As you write watch the ink go on the paper and continue to listen to background sounds. Continue to feel the pen in your hand.

- Once completed your I-System is likely to be less active and you are more likely to have gained new insights or a different perspective about the troubling situation.
Example Map for Exercise 3.1 (Map 1)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): 8
Rate your body tension (0-10): 9 Location of body tension: **Pain in stomach**

How do you act in this mind-body state? **I withdraw**

Indicate the level of your I-System activity:
Exercise 3.1 (Practice Map 1)

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): [ ]
Rate your body tension (0-10): [ ] Location of body tension: __________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? __________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Exercise 3.1 (Practice Map 2)

Mind-Body Map with Sensory Awareness Skills

Rate your mind clutter (0-10): □

Rate your body tension (0-10): □ Location of body tension: ____________________________

How do you act in this mind-body state? ___________________________________________

Indicate the level of your I-System activity: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Your Resilient Mind Practice

When you incorporate Resilient Mind Skills into your daily activities, they will have a positive effect across various areas of your life including your performance at work. Yet, it is critical that your Resilient Mind Skills practice does not become another Fixer-driven activity. Remember you are not damaged or broken and don’t need to be fixed; that is what your Depressor leads you to believe. You are perfectly good enough, just as you are.

We suggest a simple two-fold approach to improve your resilience through Resilient Mind Skills practice. First, use Two-Part Mapping to deal with troubling situations as discussed in this workbook. When confronted by a troubling or distressing situation, Mapping exercises will assist you in dealing with the situation in Natural Functioning. In this Natural Functioning state you will be more capable of navigating the situation than you would be with an overactive I-System. Second, frequently use your Resilient Mind Skills throughout your day in the heat of the moment whenever your I-System becomes overactive, cluttering your mind and tensing your body. Strive to develop and maintain awareness of whether the driving force behind your activities and goals is Natural Functioning or I-System (Fixer) driven activity.

Conclusion

Well done for completing this workbook!

As previously mentioned, your Resilient Mind Skills practice should not become another Fixer-driven activity. Remember you are not damaged or broken and don’t need to be fixed. You are good enough as you are.

In conclusion, Resilient Mind Skills practice consist of

- **Mapping** to deal with troubling situations as they arise, and
- ongoing Resilient Mind Skills practices.

1. Mapping
2. Recognize Your I-System
3. Sensory Awareness Skills
4. Recognize & Defuse Requirements
5. Recognize & Defuse Depressor Thoughts and Storylines
6. Recognize & Defuse Fixer Thoughts and Storylines
Two-part Mind-Body Map Templates
Rate your mind clutter (0-10): □
Rate your body tension (0-10): □ Location of body tension: ___________________________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ___________________________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:
Rate your mind clutter (0-10):  
Rate your body tension (0-10):  Location of body tension: ____________________________
How do you act in this mind-body state? ____________________________________________
Indicate the level of your I-System activity:  

Mind-Body Map with Sensory Awareness Skills
Appendix A

Mind-Body Bridging Research

In studies with veterans Mind-Body Bridging (MBB) practice improved sleep by reducing sleep disturbance via reducing/improving PTSD symptoms, increasing mindfulness, reducing depression, fatigue, pain, and composite sleep/general co-occurring symptoms (Nakamura, Lipschitz, Landward, Kuhn, & West, 2011; Lipschitz, Olin, & Nakamura, 2016; Nakamura et al., 2017). MBB has proven to be an effective intervention in the management of insomnia in Active-duty Military Personnel suffering from insomnia (Lipschitz, Olin, Nakamura, 2016).

A study on cancer survivors showed that MBB reduced sleep disturbance symptoms and depression symptoms while improving overall levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, well-being, and attenuated waking salivary α-amylases levels, suggesting positive influences on sympathetic activity in cancer survivors with sleep disturbance (Lipschitz, Kuhn, Kinney, Donaldson, and Nakamura, 2013). Another study found MBB was associated with increased levels of oxytocin, a neuropeptide hormone associated with calmness and well-being (Lipschitz, Kuhn, Kinney, Grewen, Donaldson, and Nakamura, 2015).

A study that used a sample of addicted individuals found that MBB significantly reduced drug/alcohol cravings, trauma-related thinking, and disturbed sleep while increasing mindfulness, self-compassion, and well-being (Nakamura, et al., 2015).

Research with domestic violence perpetrators indicated that MBB reduced recidivism and increased treatment compliance (Tollefson et al., 2009; Tollefson & Phillips, 2015).
References


