Resilient Mind | Athletics
Mind – Body Bridging © (MBB) © Workbook for the Community

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Introduction to the Resilient Mind Skills Workbook

Being a professional athlete can be pretty tough sometimes. Why is it that some athletes can go through really rough times and still bounce back? The difference is that those who bounce back are resilient. Resilience is what makes some people seem like they have "got bounce."

The concept of resilience refers to our ability to adapt successfully in the face of acute stress, trauma, or adversity in a manner that allows us to maintain or resume our normal state of functioning and well-being. The good news is that resilience is not something you are born with or not - resilience can be learned. Learning and using the skills of resilience can help you bounce back from adversity.

The exercises in this workbook focus on increasing foundational self-regulation skills that promote psychological resilience, and lead to improved athletic performance. This workbook is composed of three parts. Each part introduces various Resilient Mind Skills and provides:

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

At the end of the lesson, there is a summary of the skills presented in the lesson and instructions for how you can practice Resilient Mind Skills in your daily life to build resilience and improve athletics performance.

The workbook outlines The Resilient Mind for Athletics Program which provide skills to increase resilience during and after stressful life events, to enhance performance in your sport and other demanding contexts, and well-being. At the end of the workbook, you will develop a personalized resilience practice plan.

Before we introduce the various Resilience Mind Skills, we will provide a short overview of the theoretical foundation of which informs the Resilient Mind Skills for Athletics Program.
Overview of Resilient Mind for Athletes

The Resilient Mind for Athletics Program is an evidence-based psychological intervention that increases foundational self-regulation skills, through the practice of Resilient Mind Skills, which promotes psychological resilience. Psychological resilience is considered an important contributing factor for sporting excellence (Schinke & Jerome, 2002; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

The aim of Resilient Mind Skills is to provide individuals with psychosocial skills and coping strategies to increase their resilience. The concept of resilience refers to “the ability of individuals to adapt successfully in the face of acute stress, trauma, or chronic adversity, maintaining or rapidly regaining psychological well-being and physiological homeostasis” (Feder, Nestler, Westphal & Charney, 2010, p. 35). The notion of coping refers to specific processes in which a person engages expressly for the purpose of dealing with stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Studies have identified active coping strategies and cognitive reappraisal as some of the central psychosocial factors that promote successful adaptation to stress (Feder, Nestler, Westphal & Charney, 2010). Resilient Mind Skills coping strategies involve cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses to stressful events and circumstances as well as cognitive reappraisal techniques that allow individuals to re-evaluate or reframe adverse experiences with a growth mindset. Fletcher & Sarkar (2012) argue that skills that challenge appraisal and metacognitions protect athletes from the potential adverse effect of stressors.

More specifically, the therapeutic focus of Resilient Mind Skills is for the individual to develop skills to recognize and rest their overactive I-System (a mind-body metasystem that becomes active when certain assumptions of oneself, others and the world is violated), thereby

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1 Resilient Mind Skills is derived from Mind-Body Bridging (MBB) which practices consist of various skills for cultivating present-focused awareness of one’s body, thoughts, and emotions, and developing an understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind maladaptive mind-body states and behavior.

In studies with veterans 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).
removing the hindrance to the innate resilience of the ‘true self’ (natural functioning).\(^2\) In a state of natural functioning, adaptive skills and resilience emerge. Karen Horney (1950) described alienation from the ‘true self’ as the origin of most psychic distress and described the true self as “the ‘original’ force toward individual growth and fulfillment” (p. 158).\(^3\) According to Horney (1950), this true self is an “intrinsic potentiality” or “central inner force, common to all human beings” (p. 17) that is the core source of development. Similarly, Donald Winnicott contended that much of psychopathology is a “result of an inflation of the false self and a corresponding underdevelopment of a true self” (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p 59). In short, MBB focuses on restoring the “motivational force or tendency” of the true self, and thereby unleashing its inherent resilience and “health-promoting force” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 62).

**Resilient Mind Skills**

The Resilient Mind for Athletics Program consist of various skills, called Resilient Mind Skills, for cultivating present-focused awareness of one’s body, thoughts, and emotions, and developing an understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind maladaptive mind-body states and behavior. We propose that Resilient Mind Skills practice promotes psychological resilience by increasing *foundational self-regulation skills* by (1) enhancing *metacognition* through the application of metacognitive strategies (techniques that enhance awareness and understanding of one's thought processes), and (2) by promoting *psychological flexibility* that allows individuals to re-evaluate or reframe both negative and positive experiences, and adjust non-productive and limiting expectations of self, other and the world which lead to maladaptive responses.\(^4\)

\(^2\) The notion of the metapsychological construct of the ‘true self’, as articulated by the I-System model, shares many commonalities with several other theoretical perspectives that embrace the “tradition of self-as-process theorizing, namely those that posit a “true,” “real,” or “core” self, for example the works of Jourard (1968) in humanistic psychology, Rank (1932) and Fromm (1955) in psychodynamic psychology, and Laing (1960) and Frankl (1959) in existential psychology” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 62).

\(^3\) Although these perspectives differ from each other there are certain commonalities in how they articulate the construct of the true self. First, the true self is typically viewed as a natural endowment, as a potential that is present from birth....Second, the true self is not understood in these theories as merely a cognitive representation or concept but rather as a motivational force or tendency....Third, the true self is integrative in nature; it serves a synthetic function in the organism and represents a centering and health-promoting force in development. Finally, although the true self is innate to all human beings, it is not the only motivational force at work in development. Instead, it is a force that can be dissuaded, disrupted, or diminished in the dialectical interaction between developing persons and their social worlds (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 62).

\(^4\) Examples of self-regulations skills are: executive function (Zelazo and Muller 2002; Alvarez and Emory 2006), selective attention (Zelazo et al. 1997), metacognition (Flavell 1979), emotion understanding (Cole et al. 2009; Gross 2013; Murray et al. 2015), emotion regulation (Gross and Thompson 2007; Giuliani et al. 2008), motivation (Maslow 1943; Bandura 1986; Harackiewicz 2000; Ryan and Deci 2000), grit (Duckworth et al. 2007), and self-efficacy (Bandura 2012).
The Resilient Mind Skills program aims to provide individuals with psychosocial skills and coping strategies to increase their resilience. The concept of resilience refers to “the ability of individuals to adapt successfully in the face of acute stress, trauma, or chronic adversity, maintaining or rapidly regaining psychological well-being and physiological homeostasis” (Feder, Nestler, Westphal & Charney, 2010, p. 35). The notion of coping refers to specific processes in which a person engages expressly for the purpose of dealing with stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Studies have identified active coping strategies and cognitive reappraisal as some of the central psychosocial factors that promote successful adaptation to stress (Feder, Nestler, Westphal & Charney, 2010). Resilient Mind Skills coping strategies involve cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses to stressful events and circumstances as well as cognitive reappraisal techniques that allow individuals to re-evaluate or reframe adverse experiences with a growth mindset.

More specifically, the focus of Resilient Mind Skills is for the individual to develop skills to recognize and remove the hindrance to the innate resilience of the ‘true self,’ which we refer to natural functioning. In a state of natural functioning, adaptive skills and resilience emerge. Karen Horney (1950) described alienation from the ‘true self’ as the origin of most psychic distress and described the true self as “the ‘original’ force toward individual growth and fulfillment” (p. 158). According to Horney (1950), this true self is an “intrinsic potentiality” or “central inner force, common to all human beings” (p. 17) that is the core source of development. In short, Resilient Mind Skills focuses on restoring the “motivational force or tendency” of the true self and thereby unleashing its inherent resilience and “health-promoting force” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 62).

What Hinders Your Innate Resilience?

The Resilient Mind Skills are based on the premise that an overactive I-System is a common bio-psychological mechanism underlying many personal, organizational, social behavior patterns, emotional and behavioral dysfunction, and diminished individual resilience (Block, 2018). The I-System could be understood as a metasystem that when overactive, produces engrossment with self-referential thoughts, contraction of awareness, discord within systems, impaired mental and physical functioning, poor performance, and limited creativity. In short, the I-System colors or distorts our daily experience, giving rise to a parochial simulation of reality. An active I-System acts like a hindrance that impairs the utility of a system, while a rested I-System allows a systemic structure to operate naturally, optimally, and in congruence with its purpose. According to Greeson, Garland, & Black (2014), most emotional and
behavioral dysfunction “involve a fundamental problem with inflexibility, lack of insight, or narrowed perspective” (p. 534) - which we assert are a result of I-System overactivity. These inflexible psycho-behavioral processes span cognitive rigidities such as rumination and worry, and patterns of behavioral perseveration. Therefore, by resting the overactive I-System, an individual becomes more psychologically flexible and consequently better equipped to optimally handle life events and the imperative of the moment in resilient ways.

The I-System hinders optimal functioning when specific requirements held by the individual are violated. In essence, I-System requirements are mental rules about how we as individuals, others, events, and the world around us should be that maintain an overly rigid internalized self-image. In short, when the rigid internalized self-image is threatened (when requirements are violated) the I-System becomes overactive.

According to the I-System model, there are two primary states of being and functioning: I-System functioning and natural functioning. Natural functioning is our natural state of being with limited I-System activity. In I-System functioning our I-Systems become dominant, as a result of a violated requirement, and distorts/limits our view of the world in ways that limit or prevent resilient functioning and increases dysfunction (Block, 2018).

The I-System has two psychobiological sub-systems; the depressor which gives rise to the experience of shame and feelings of not being good enough, and the fixer which gives rise to energizing/euphoric fantasy (variety of feelings and sensations including euphoria, ecstasy, elation, and exhilaration). Depressor storylines are the thoughts and storylines generated by the depressor which revolve around the beliefs of not being ‘good enough’ and being ‘damaged’ (various feelings and sensations of embarrassment, humiliation, shame, and self-loathing) (for example, I am a loser, I will never amount to anything). Consequently, depressor storylines will point to what needs to be improved or ‘fixed.’ This is where the fixer storylines come online.

Fixer storylines are elaborate ‘schemas’ and ‘action plans’ regarding how this ‘improvement’ or ‘damage repair’ will happen (for example, I must get a promotion, I must lose weight). Fixer behavior is the implementation of these schemas or plans to secure the biopsychic homeostasis of the self-system.

In summary, when the I-System acts in concert with other mind-body systems, its effect is helpful, yet when it is overactive or dominant over other systems, its impact hinders optimal functioning. Resilient Mind Skills practice aims at loosening our rigid internalized self-images held in place by idealized standards of ourselves, others, and the world and facilitating awareness of and reliance on the true self.
How Resilient Mind Skills Promotes Psychological Resilience

Resilient Mind Skills practice fosters foundational self-regulation skills by improving *metacognition* (the ability to reflect on one’s thinking and actions) and *psychological flexibility* (the extent to which a person can cope with changes in circumstances and approach daily life problems and tasks in creative and novel ways). We will now briefly discuss how Resilient Mind Skills promote metacognition and psychological flexibility.

Psychological flexibility is a central factor in determining an individual’s psychological resilience (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). In an article, *Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health*, Tod Kashdan and Jonathan Rottenberg (2010) propose that the relationship between our executive functioning (‘top-down’ processing), and default mental states (‘bottom-up’ processing) is pivotal in developing and maintaining psychological flexibility. Executive functioning refers to the activity of brain circuits (particularly in the frontal lobes) that prioritize and integrate cognitive capacities that provide critical neuropsychological support for self-regulation (Baumeister, 2002).

Psychological flexibility reflects the capacity to tolerate a certain degree of distress and a receptive attitude toward emotions, thoughts, and sensations (Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette, & Strosahl, 1996). Automatically labeling and reacting to particular thoughts, feelings, and events as negative or harmful reflect a lack of openness and acceptance and overdominance automatic ‘bottom-up’ processes.

Kashdan and Rottenberg (2010) state that we require attentional control to recognize the unique demands of any task. The content of our consciousness is determined by the focus of our intention, which includes “awareness of the situation being confronted, and being able to sustain and shift attention to the most critical aspects of the situation. Without these skills, we are at the mercy of relatively passive bottom-up strategies, which will often recruit our dominant behavioral tendencies” (p. 871). To conserve mental energy, individuals often revert to stereotyping and habits. Information processing and behavior patterns that are driven by heuristics can become overly fluent, and when this happens, it can erode psychological flexibility.

Acceptance and awareness processes, in conjunction with an open attitude coupled with a negative or potentially negative experience appear to be a precursor to psychological flexibility.\(^5\) In short, “robust executive functioning is critical for modulating responses to suit

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\(^5\) Scientists have used functional neuroimaging to observe this process unfold. People that exhibit less openness and receptivity to ongoing thoughts and feelings exhibit activation in limbic system structures when they rapidly...
the circumstances and achieving desired outcomes—whether it is extracting rewards, reducing behavioral control, or some other situationally-bound strategy” (Kashdan and Rottenberg, 2010, p. 871).

To enhance our psychological flexibility, we need to find ways to shape our automatic processes (bottom-up) in more optimal directions. Automated responses are useful in conserving energy, otherwise our time and effort would be exhausted on small, relatively meaningless activities. The problem is that these automatic responses are easily activated and can lead one into a direction that is not optimal or even harmful for the situation at hand (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2000). Information processing and behavior patterns that are driven by heuristics become overly fluent, and this can erode psychological flexibility. Kashdan & Rottenberg (2010) state that, “Unfortunately, the default mindset of most adults is a relatively inactive state where the past unduly influences the present” (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010, p. 872).

In short, psychological flexibility reflects the ability to be aware of and open to what any particular situation requires as well as the capacity to arrange and prioritize strategies that are uniquely appropriate for the particular situation (using top-down strategies), rather than relying on dominant default strategies (Fleeson, 2001; Kashdan and Rottenberg, 2010). MBB practice promotes metacognition of dominant default strategies through the practice of various metacognitive strategies.

In the context of the above discussion, Resilient Mind Skills practice aims to provide enough access to our top-down processing, through metacognition, so that the individual has the maximum capacity to make informed decisions based on the unique necessities of each situation and be psychological flexible enough to not automatically respond according to well-worn heuristics (bottom-up processing).

Conclusion

In summary, we propose that Resilient Mind Skills practice promotes psychological resilience by increasing foundational self-regulation skills by (1) enhancing metacognition through the application of metacognitive strategies (techniques that enhance awareness and understanding of one's thought processes), and (2) by promoting psychological flexibility that allows label thoughts and feelings as either negative or positive (Creswell, Way, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2007). Conversely, people who observe their thoughts and feelings with openness and curiosity show a different activation pattern, with labeling linked to greater prefrontal cortex activity and a simultaneous inhibition of limbic responses.
individuals to re-evaluate or reframe both negative and positive experiences, and adjust non-productive and limiting expectations of self, other and the world which lead to maladaptive responses.

Through the promotion of psychological resilience, the objective of the Resilient Mind Skills for Athletes are to improve not merely athletic performance - but also increase social, emotional, and psychological well-being, and foundational self-regulation skills.
Part One

What Hinders Your Resilience?

Part One introduces the concepts of the I-System, Requirements and Natural Functioning, and the Resilient Mind Skills called Mapping, Recognize your I-System, Recognize and Defuse Requirements and Sensory Awareness Skills.

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). The aim of a Mind-Body Map is to provide an opportunity to write down and become aware of thoughts, feelings and body sensations that are related to a certain 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 body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 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) of the body tension in the space provided on the bottom of the Map.

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

Mind-Body Map (Example of Troubling Situation)

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 ________________________
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?” See example map below.
Exercise 2.1 (Map 1)

Mind-Body Map (Example of Troubling Situation)

My Coach

He trains me too hard

He does not praise me enough

He ignores me

He should not train me so hard

He should be more understanding

He should not appreciate how hard I work

He should appreciate me more

He ignores me

Feeling sad

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
Exercise 1.2 (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? ____________________________
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 sister must 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 would 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.

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 personal preference 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 would prefer that he accepts me as I am”). An Should/Must means that things must absolutely be a certain way. An “I would like…” means that it is something you prefer, which of course is okay, as we all have personal preferences.

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<tr>
<th>Should/Must</th>
<th>I would prefer</th>
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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 distracts 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 body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 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) of the body tension in the space provided on the bottom of the Map.

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

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:

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The I-System Hijacks Your Natural Functioning

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.

Look at the Mind Body Maps is exercises 1.1 and 1.2. In these Maps 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 think, act, feel, and see the world. This is often the cause of your poor decisions and suffering, and many of your dysfunctional mind-body states.

Look at Map 2 in 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 and freer of distraction.

Sensory Awareness Skills

When you did the first Maps in 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.

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, or the sound of a clock ticking. 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. Below is a list of various types of Sensory Awareness skills.

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. 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.
An Overactive I-System Hinders Your Resilience

An overactive I-System can negatively influence all aspects of our lives. To improve the overall quality of your life, strengthen resilience and gain optimal benefit from your Resilient Mind Skills it is highly beneficial to develop Natural Functioning in all dimensions of your life. It is useful to be aware when your activities and goals are driven by Natural Functioning or your I-System.

An easy way to conceptualize the various aspects of your life is to view it through the following six life dimensions: **physical**, which refers to all aspects of physical health; **intellectual**, which describes the content of your thoughts and intellectual activities; **psychological**, which refers to your emotional life and general psychological well-being; **existential**, which entails your goals and all the aspects of your life you find meaningful, as well as spiritual and religious and existential elements; **social**, which captures all your interpersonal, social relationships and cultural influences; and **environmental**, which refers to all administrative, legal, monetary, and environmental aspects. These dimensions represent abstract interrelated and nonreducible aspects of our being-in-the-world.

At the end of each part of the workbook you will be asked to fill in an **I-System Functioning Matrix**, which will help you score (0-10) the activity of your I-System in each of your life dimensions. This will enable you to become aware of which areas of your life has significant I-System functioning, as well as measure the progress of your Resilient Mind Skills practice. The better your practice becomes, the less I-System activity there will be and the more your quality of life will increase.
Practice Maps

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 body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 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) 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?

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, clothing, or pen with your fingers. If a thought distracts 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 body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 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) of the body tension in the space provided on the bottom of the Map.

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

Indicate the level of I-System activity.
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:
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.

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. 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 would prefer*, in order to **Defuse Your Requirement**.

- On the next two pages please fill out the Quality of Life Scale and I-System Functioning Matrix and write down your scores. On the I-System Functioning Matrix write specific activities in each of your life dimensions where your I-System was dominant. These tools will provide a baseline measure to help you track your progress as you work through this manual. The same tools are included at the end of each part of the workbook.
# Quality of Life Scale

Date: _____________

Over the past week how did you do in these areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the number under your answer</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve had positive interest and pleasure in my activities.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colum Score: _______ _______ _______ _______

Total Score: _______
I-System Functioning Matrix

Date: ______________

Over the past week write down a score between 0 and 10 to indicate I-System activity in each of your life dimensions? Write down the total score for each day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score:</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 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 body tension on a scale of 0 – 10. Rate your mind clutter on a scale from 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) 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.
Exercise 2.1 (Example Map)

Mind-Body Map (Example of Negative Self Talk)

- I am a loser
- I am lazy
- I did not achieve my goal
- I am not fit enough
- I am not talented enough
- I am not driven enough
- I will never achieve my goals

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:

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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 these troubling negative thoughts). The Depressor is the component of the I-System that gets activated when Requirements are unmet. It generates troubling negative thoughts that lead to dysfunctional mind-body states.

Negative thoughts can arise and pass without creating mind clutter and body tension, but negative thoughts generated by your Depressor create mind clutter and body tension.

**Depressor Storylines**

**Exercise 2.2**

Turn 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, 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 Storylines

The Depressor has generated negative thoughts due to a Requirement being unmet. 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 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 3.1 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 work harder to offset my lack of knowledge. See example below.
Exercise 3.3 (Example Map)

Mind-Body Map (Example of Negative Self Talk)

- I am a loser
- I am lazy
- I am not fit enough
- I am not talented enough
- I am not driven enough
- I will go to the gym even more
- I did not achieve my goal
- I will work harder and longer
- I will make up for my lack of talent with more practice
- I will never achieve my goals
- I will work harder and longer

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.

Fixer Storylines

Exercise 2.4

Turn back to the Map from exercise 3.3 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 Storylines

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

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.

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.

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 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.

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….”

Recognize the following Fixer signs.

- Trying to fix the unpleasant state caused by your Depressor (Body tension and mind clutter)
- 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 dance with each other. 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 (i.e., had a lot of mind clutter and body tension associated with it).

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 enhances the activity of the Depressor and further promotes Storylines and Fixer 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 Storylines
- When you realize your Depressor has generated negative thoughts and storylines you can use a Resilient Mind Skill called Recognize and Defuse Depressor 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 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 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 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 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.

- On the next two pages please fill out the Quality of Life Scale and I-System Functioning Matrix and write down your score. On the I-System Functioning Matrix write specific activities in each of your life dimensions where your I-System was dominant.
Quality of Life Scale

Date: ______________

Over the past seven days, how did you do in these areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the number under your answer</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colum Score: __________ __________ __________ __________

Total Score: __________
I-System Functioning Matrix

Date: _____________

Over the past week write down a score between 0 and 10 to indicate I-System activity in each of your life dimensions? Write down the total score for each day.

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</table>

**Total Score:** ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___
Part Three

Your Personal Resilience Plan

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 and to create a Personal Resilience Plan which will 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.

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. This is often the cause of our poor decisions and suffering, and many of our dysfunctional mind-body states.
Review all pieces of the Two-Loop diagram:

- **I-System Loop** – A limited mind-body state characterized by mind-body dysfunction.

- **I-System Requirements** – Mental rules about how you, others and the world should be at any moment.

- **Thoughts/Cognition** – Our thoughts are natural and run through the Natural Functioning Loop. They only go through the I-System Loop when a Requirement is unmet.

- **Depressor** – A part of the I-System that generates negative thoughts and spins it into a Storyline. The Depressor works to make you falsely believe you are damaged or broken and need fixing.

- **Storylines** – Thoughts spun into stories by the Depressor or Fixer that pull you away from what you are doing in the moment and energize the I-System.

- **Fixer** – The Depressor’s partner that drives you with thoughts and behavior about fixing the illusion of the damage created by your Depressor.

- **Natural Functioning Loop** – A unified and mind-body state characterized by psychological flexibility and resilience. This is our natural mind-body state.
The I-System Loop and the Natural Functioning Loop

I-System Loop

Impaired Mind-Body State

Fixer

I-System Storylines

Depressor

Violated Requirement

Unified Mind-Body State (True Self)

Event

Thoughts/ Cognition

Behavior

Free Thoughts

Free Function

Natural Functioning 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).

- 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 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 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 background 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.
Exercise 3.1 (Map 1)

Mind-Body Map (Example)

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
Are Your Actions Driven by your I-System or Natural Functioning?

Exercise 3.2

To gauge whether your behavior and daily activities are Fixer or Natural Functioning driven you can use a tool called the Resilience Wheel.

You can use this tool in two ways; (1) about a specific situation or (2) at the end of the day (like a daily dairy) when you reflect back over your day. In the outside circle of the Resilience Wheel you write down behaviors and activities that were Natural Functioning Driven, and on the inside of the circle the wheel you write down behaviors and activities that were I-System Functioning (Fixer) driven.

The Resilience Wheel provides a simple tool to keep track of your ongoing Resilient Mind Skills practice by identifying activities that were either I-System or Natural Functioning driven in each of the six life dimensions. The less I-System driven (Fixer) activity there is in each of your life dimensions the more resilience you will have.

Now reflect about a specific situation that you find challenging and fill out the Resilience Wheel on the next page.
Resilience Wheel

Date: _____________

Indicate which of your behaviors and activities were I-System driven (inside circle) and which were Natural Functioning driven (outside circle) in each of your life dimensions.
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. 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 good enough as you are.

We suggest a simple **two-fold approach** to improve your resilience through Resilient Mind Skills practice:

1. **Two-Part Mapping** to deal with troubling situations as discussed in part four of the 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.

2. Ongoing resilience practice and maintenance by practicing your **Resilient Mind Skills** and using your **Resilience Wheel** tool in the various dimensions of your life to maintain awareness of when your activities and goals are driven by Natural Functioning or Fixer Driven I-System Functioning.

**Summary of Resilient Mind Skills:**

1. Mapping
2. Recognize Your I-System
3. Sensory Awareness Skills
4. Recognize & Defuse Requirements
5. Recognize & Defuse Depressor Storylines
6. Recognize & Defuse Fixer Storylines
Resilience I-System Analysis

Exercise 3.3

As you have experienced in this workbook any activity can either be I-System driven or be mediated through Natural Functioning. What is of primary important is not what you are doing, but who is doing it - your I-System driven False Self or your Natural Functioning True Self. The same applies to all your activities of daily living in all dimensions of your life. Are your daily activities and goals driven by your I-System in an attempt to fix yourself or is it driven by your natural functioning? When your activities and life goals are driven by your I-System you will continuously measure yourselves against unattainable and perfectionist requirements. Instead of improving your well-being, this adds to your distress and feelings of inadequacy. Your Fixer captured thoughts and goals will drive you relentlessly to prove to others and yourself that you are okay. Meanwhile, your Depressor will let you know that whatever you did was not good enough.

In short, when the I-System is in the driver’s seat, challenges become even more difficult to cope with and you are filled with a sense of powerlessness. By making your Resilience Mind Skills a part of your daily life, even when you face a full-blown stress-filled situation; you have the ability to do so in Natural Functioning, with your True Self making the best choices.

In this exercise you are going to perform an Resilience I-System Analysis for each of your Life Dimensions (physical, intellectual, psychological, existential, social, and environmental). An I-System Analysis is a systematic and comprehensive exploration of I-System activity in various areas of functioning. The aim of this I-System Analysis is to become aware of how your I-System manifest in each of your Life Dimensions and how this is influencing your daily activities and future goals.

To perform an Resilience I-System Analysis follow the instructions below for each of your Life Dimensions:

- Map the Life Dimension by writing your thoughts, fears, intentions and goals about the particular dimension situation inside the circle around the oval. Also note any body tension. Write whatever comes to mind (Map templates are provided on the next couple of pages).
- Now notice any “Shoulds” or “Musts” on your Mind-Body Map about the life dimension, 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.
Identify the troubling Depressor thoughts and its accompanied storylines on your Map.

Identify Fixer thoughts, intentions, goals and activity and its accompanied storylines on your Map. Remember that Fixer thoughts and activity can also manifest as inactivity and resistance like procrastination and avoidance of responsibility.

Complete the Resilience I-System Analysis Synopsis table (on page 61). Write down the I-System Requirements you have in each Life Dimension, Depressor thoughts (note its accompanied storylines), and Fixer thoughts, intentions, goals and activity. The focus here is on how I-System activity manifests in your daily life and how it influences your future goals.

Once completed you are more likely to have gained new insights or a different perspective about the particular life dimension. An I-System Analysis will help you identify in which areas of your life your Resilient Mind Skills are the most needed to remove the hindrance to your innate resilience.
Mind-Body Map

Physical Dimension
Mind-Body Map

Psychological Dimension
Mind-Body Map

Existential Dimension
Mind-Body Map

Social Dimension
Mind-Body Map

Environmental Dimension
### Resilience I-System Analysis Synopsis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Depressor</th>
<th>Fixer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Environmental</td>
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</table>
Create Your Personal Resilience Plan

Exercise 3.4

Now that you have completed your I-System Analysis of each of your Life Dimensions you are likely to have gained new insights of how your I-System is influencing your daily activities and future plans and goals. As mentioned already the aim of your Resilient Mind practice is to remove the hindrances to your innate resilience. When you remove or lessen the hindrance (I-System activity) in each of your Life Dimensions your Natural Functioning automatically emerges in each of these dimensions.

Complete your Resilience Plan Template on the next page. In the space provided for each Life Dimension write down the Natural Functioning activities that will support your resilience in that dimension (for example, jogging three times a week in the physical dimension, spending time with family and friends in social dimension). Also write down (based on your I-System Analysis) which Resilient Mind Skills are needed for that dimension to remove the hindrance of I-System activity (for example Recognizing and Defusing Requirements for my partner in the social dimension, Recognizing and Defusing Fixer Storylines for my finances in environmental dimension).

In addition to the activities you listed on your Resilience Plan Template, a sustainable resilience plan will include ongoing daily practice of your Resilient Mind Skills, as new Requirements (which trigger I-System Activity) are continuously generated when you enter into new life stages, explore new activities, form new relationships and develop new life goals.
Resilience Plan Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
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<th>Existential</th>
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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.

Resilient Mind Skills Practice

In this part of the workbook we provided a simple two-fold approach in developing a personal Resilient Mind Practice:

- **Mapping** to deal with troubling situations as they arise, and
- **Ongoing Resilient Mind Skills** practices (including the I-System Functioning Matrix and Resilience Wheel).

1. Mapping
2. Recognize Your I-System
3. Sensory Awareness Skills
4. Recognize & Defuse Requirements
5. Recognize & Defuse Depressor Storylines
6. Recognize & Defuse Fixer Storylines

✍ On the next three pages please fill out the Quality of Life Scale, I-System Functioning Matrix and Resilience Wheel.
Quality of Life Scale

Date: _____________

Over the past seven days, how did you do in these areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle the number under your answer</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Several days</th>
<th>More than half the days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve had positive interest and pleasure in my activities.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve felt optimistic, excited, and hopeful.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve slept well and woken up feeling refreshed.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve had lots of energy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to focus on tasks and use self-discipline.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve stayed healthy, eaten well, exercised, and had fun.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve felt good about my relationships with my family and friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve been satisfied with my results at home/work/school.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve been comfortable with my financial situation.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve felt good about the spiritual/existential base of my life.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been satisfied with the direction of my life.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve felt fulfilled, with a sense of well-being and peace of mind.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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Colum Score: _________ _________ _________ _________

Total Score: ________
I-System Functioning Matrix

Date: ______________

Over the past week write down a score between 0 and 10 to indicate I-System activity in each of your life dimensions? Write down the total score for each day.

<table>
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**Total Score:** ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____
Resilience Wheel

Date: ______________

Indicate which of your behaviors and activities were I-System driven (inside circle) and which were Natural Functioning driven (outside circle) in each of your life dimensions?
Resilient Mind Skills Templates
Two-Part Mind-Body Map Template

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
Quality of Life Scale

Date: ______________

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<td>5</td>
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Colum Score: _______ _______ _______ _______

Total Score: _______
### I-System Functioning Matrix

Date: ______________

Over the past week write down a score between 0 and 10 to indicate I-System activity in each of your life dimensions? Write down the total score for each day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
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<th>Thurs</th>
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</table>
Resilience Wheel

Date: _______________

Indicate which of your behaviors and activities were I-System driven (inside circle) and which were Natural Functioning driven (outside circle) in each of your life dimensions?
# I-System Analysis Synopsis

Date: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Depressor</th>
<th>Fixer</th>
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# Resilience Plan Template

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References


