

Session 7

RESILIENCE

Topic Overview

It's good to remind ourselves here that resilience isn't a one-time goal. Like mindfulness itself, resilience is a capacity *and* a continuous practice. We don't just become resilient one day and stay that way forever. We're not trying to become impervious to pain or distress. Rather, we live in a cycle: we build resilience, strengthen it, rely on it to withstand challenges, then strengthen it again.

The practices in this session are intended to explore resilience not as a "toughening up" to take on difficulty like a battle, but as a mindset that helps us maintain calm, balance, clarity, and kindness in the face of challenges. Strength and fortitude are inner resources that allow us to offer compassion.


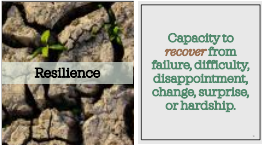



Student Goals

- Understand the definition of "resilience"; "emotional resilience"; "cognitive resilience"; and "inner calm."
- Reframe disappointment and setback as normal occurrences that can be met with compassion and loving kindness
- Understand the components of RAIN and practice applying the steps in a resilience meditation
- Acknowledge negative self-talk and meet it with empathy and compassion
- Strategically prepare phrases or mantras for anchor phrases



Teacher Goals

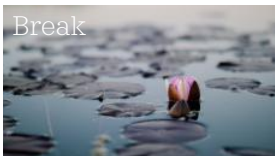

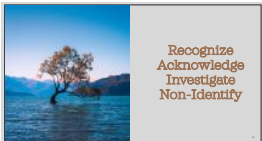
- Fully incorporate didactic presentation with practice and reflection
- Offer expanded space for students to cultivate their personal mindfulness grounding techniques
- Guide students toward independently formulating and trying out anchor phrases that work best for them
- Remain aware of trauma triggers, reactions, and appropriate responses


Lesson Script



Slide	Script	Min.
	Welcome students, fill out any necessary paperwork, answer questions.	0
	<p>Resilience is a common goal for mindfulness practitioners. We want to build up our ability to overcome obstacles, return from failure, grow in strength, and tolerate hardship in the future.</p> <p>Recovering from or adjusting to difficulty, disappointment, change, or the unexpected is part of what enables us to continue striving and pursuing goals in the face of setbacks.</p>	1
	<p>We can think of a few different levels or kinds of resilience.</p> <p>Emotional resilience helps us grow in awareness of our emotional responses, manage them with healthy choices and boundaries, and sit comfortably with our full range of emotions.</p> <p>Cognitive resilience is our intellectual understanding, awareness, acceptance, and ability to move forward in the face of challenges. We can use data, experience, and mental habits to grow in fortitude and respond to failure with optimism.</p> <p>And finally, inner calm is a state of being we can practice that helps us encounter difficulty without becoming overwhelmed by either or emotional or cognitive responses.</p>	5
	<p>For our first practice, we will explore emotional and cognitive resilience, explore our reactions to failure or setbacks, then reflect on our experiences and thoughts.</p> <p>Turn to a partner to prepare for the practice. Take turns sharing first a disappointing setback. It can be related to work, family, community. It can be something that caused self-doubt.</p> <p>Then, consider for a moment a current aspiration you hold. Something you want, are striving for, hoping for, working toward. Envision your goal. Talk with your partner about the kinds of setbacks that might possibly arise as you work toward your goal.</p> <p>[Allow 4 minutes total for sharing and discussion.]</p>	4
	<p>Now, let's enter the practice by bringing the attention to the body, sitting in a relaxed and alert position. Take a deep inhale and feel the air enter the body. Slowly exhale and feel the body empty of air. [Pause]</p> <p>Bring the attention to the feet on the floor, the hands resting. Invite a sense of groundedness and continue to breathe. [Pause for 3 breaths]</p>	12


	<p>Bring to mind a setback that happened in the past. Call to attention what was shared with a partner or perhaps another one that wasn't ready to be shared with anyone at that time.</p> <p>Call to mind some details around the setback [Pause briefly after each]:</p> <p>Where does it happen? Who is involved? What emotions arise? What might be lost because of the setback? What might it cost?</p> <p>Bring in some curious and kind attention. Check in on the body, the mind, and the emotions. Name what arises. [Pause]</p> <p>Worry. Anxiety. Shame. Guilt. Fear. Panic. Hardness. Tension. Heat. Cold.</p> <p>Find words to name what is going on in the body and where. [Pause]</p> <p>Listen to the thoughts and self-talk that arise. Notice the tone, the language, the emotion behind the self-talk.</p> <p>"I'm not good enough." "I'll never get it right." I should have known." "Only I could let this happen." [Pause]</p> <p>What are the feelings behind the self-talk? Look behind the words and label the feelings. Guilt. Dread. Embarrassment. Frustration. Where are the feelings located in the body? [Pause]</p> <p>Take a moment and scan. Start with the head and face. Then neck and shoulders. Chest, arms, stomach, hips. Pelvis, legs, feet. [Pause]</p> <p>Tune in to what the body has to say. Don't turn away or avoid.</p> <p>Perhaps bring a sense of kindness to the emotions. Knowing that whatever emotions have come up for you have also been experienced by many others as well. [Pause]</p> <p>Knowing also the emotion is not us. It's an experience. It comes and goes like all experiences. [Pause]</p> <p>Begin to explore some possibilities for transformation. What might these emotions be trying to teach? Are they telling us we need more support, safety, help, feedback, or trust? [Pause]</p> <p>Spend a moment focused on learning from the emotion behind the self-talk. Focus on the need that lies at the heart of the emotion. Name the need. [Pause]</p>	
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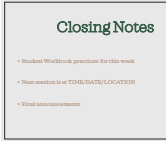


	<p>Consider a loving friend experiencing the same setback. What words would feel right to offer with loving kindness? Can we offer those words to ourselves now? [Pause]</p> <p>Remind the self that nothing lasts forever. Nothing is permanent, not even a setback. Things will follow afterwards. Events, work, relationships, ideas. They will endure after any setback. The journey is long. [Pause]</p> <p>Now, bring the attention to the possibility of a setback, perhaps the one discussed earlier with a partner or one that wasn't brought up. Call to mind the potential setback, the situation, the people involved, the possible consequences. [Pause]</p> <p>See the setback as possible but not guaranteed. See the possibility also of success. See the responses that are possible. The openness, acceptance, broader views. Approach the possibility of setback with a sense of inner strength. [Pause]</p> <p>Setbacks are normal and expected parts of striving. They are not always a result of failures. They are not always within our control. [Pause]</p> <p>Check in with the body again. Where does the strength feel gathered in the body? In the back, the legs, the shoulders, the chest? Where is the body holding strength and resilience? [Pause]</p> <p>Bring the attention now back to the breath, back to the body seated in the chair. Take an inhale, a deep focused breath that fills and invigorates the body. [Pause] Take a slow exhale as the spine lifts and the head lifts. When ready, open the eyes.</p>	
	<p>Thank you for that practice. Let's take a moment to reflect on the resilience meditation. Write your answers to the questions on the screen or just consider them.</p> <p>[Allow 2 minutes of writing or reflection, then up to 5 minutes for group discussion.]</p>	7
	<p>Let's do one more short exercise before the break. This is called the Anchor Phrase. It's a technique that brings out loving kindness in a challenging moment, when you may need it most. It helps us recall our capacity to be kind to ourselves and respond to challenges with gentle encouragement and empathy for the self.</p> <p>The idea is to choose a phrase to say to yourself in that moment. Choose the phrase now, so that when the challenging moment arises, we'll be ready to meet it with kindness.</p> <p>Imagine feeling overwhelmed, disheartened, or disappointed. Perhaps stress, tension, or conflict is causing distress. What words would be most helpful in that moment? What words could we offer ourselves as anchors in remembering that all things pass?</p>	6

	<p>Consider the words of kindness you would need. A simple, "It's okay." Or maybe:</p> <p>"One moment at a time."</p> <p>"This won't last forever."</p> <p>"This will pass."</p> <p>"Yes, this hurts. May I stay open. May I be kind to myself."</p> <p>Take a moment and write down the best words for your own anchor phrase. [Pause for 1 minute]</p> <p>[Allow for 3-4 minutes of sharing with the group, if desired. Announce the break, time to return, and location of water and bathrooms.]</p>	
	<p>Break/Transition</p> <p>5-10 minutes, <i>depending on the conditions of the class</i></p>	
	<p>Welcome back. Now that we've practiced some resilience meditations, let's dig a little more into the topic with a useful acronym: RAIN.</p> <p>RAIN stands for Recognize, Acknowledge, Investigate, and Non-Identify.</p> <p>Together, they offer a technique to call upon a loving kindness response to our emotions. We'll go through each step.</p>	1
	<p>Recognize is the stage where we become aware that we are experiencing strong emotions. The recognition is of our own feelings, sensations, and thoughts. Naming them and locating them in the body is especially helpful here.</p> <p>Acknowledge is a stage of acceptance in what we are experiencing. We don't need to like the experience or accept it, but simply acknowledge what is happening in the moment. By tuning into our experience instead of away, we are mindfully aware of our full range of human experience.</p> <p>Investigate is the stage of curiosity, where we meet our feelings with openness and a sense of interest. Our curiosity is about the feeling, not the external cause. (We're trying to understand our response and what we are feeling, not who or what is at fault.)</p> <p>The final part, Non-identify, reminds us that we are not our emotions. Our identity is not made of how we are feeling in any one moment. We can tell ourselves how we feel without becoming our feelings. We might move from saying, "I am anxious," to "I feel anxious," to "There is anxiety here now." The distance can feel open and spacious and freeing.</p>	12

	<p>All of these steps can take moments or days to work through, depending on the situation. Our goal is to engage in the practice and remember that the steps are here to refer to, that they can help pull us out of a moment of distress and help us see the moment and our options more clearly and compassionately.</p> <p>Questions to facilitate sharing and discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of these steps is most challenging? • What helps bring to mind the steps when feeling something strong? • What is the typical self-talk heard when experiencing strong emotions? 	
	<p>We can remember, too, that we possess strength within us and that we can draw upon it in challenging times. Let's enter into a practice called Drawing on Inner Strength.</p> <p>Find a comfortable seated position. Bring the attention to the breath. Allow the eyes to close or focus softly ahead. Spend a moment attentive to the breath. [Pause for 3 breaths]</p> <p>Allow the body to release any tension that is ready to be released. [Pause]</p> <p>Now letting go of the breath and trusting the body to breathe just right. [Pause]</p> <p>Remember a time in life that was challenging or hard. Perhaps a time in the past that was overwhelming. [Pause]</p> <p>Take a moment and reflect on what had been helpful back then. What resources were available? What was comforting? [Pause]</p> <p>Who was helpful? Family, friends, teachers, your own self? [Pause]</p> <p>Recall that the difficult period has passed. We've made it through and are here now. We had some resources to help us. Perhaps we wished for more. But there was inner strength. [Pause]</p> <p>Now sense into how mindfulness practices and compassion could have been a support too. How could they have helped in the past? [Pause] Offer compassion for what was missed.</p> <p>Going forward, inner strength can be met with mindfulness, loving kindness, compassion, and self-empathy to face future challenges. Don't forget about the well of strength inside. [Pause]</p> <p>Acknowledge the inner strength and capacity for resilience. Bring the attention back to the body seated in the chair. Bring the attention to the feet on the floor, the head lifting up. Take</p>	

	an invigorating breath in and release it. When ready, open the eyes.	
	<p>Thank you for that practice. Let's do some reflective journaling, then share in pairs. Freewrite for a few minutes about the questions on the screen. When finished, we'll discuss with a partner.</p> <p>[Allow 2 minutes for freewriting and up to 4 minutes for partner sharing.]</p>	4
	<p>Our final practice today reminds us that resilience requires balance, especially when someone we care about is going through something difficult.</p> <p>Our sense of resilience is usually associated with our personal challenges, but we can be of service to others with resilience as well. In any relationship, we balance an open heart with boundaries and limitations. We balance empathy without empathetic distress. This allows us to care without getting overwhelmed.</p> <p>Begin by choosing a phrase that is personally helpful and meaningful, that will allow loving kindness and compassion with boundaries.</p> <p>Options might sound like these:</p> <p>"May I offer my care and presence without conditions or expectations."</p> <p>"May I find the inner resources to be able to truly give."</p> <p>"May I remain in peace and let go of expectations."</p> <p>"May I offer love, knowing I can't control the course of life, suffering, or death."</p> <p>"I care about your pain yet cannot control it."</p> <p>"I wish you happiness and peace but cannot make your choices for you."</p> <p>"May I recognize my limits compassionately, just as I recognize the limitations of others."</p> <p>Take a moment to write out one or two that sound useful to you, that you can turn to for balance.</p> <p>[Allow for 2 minutes of writing and up to 4 minutes for group sharing or questions.]</p>	6

	<p>Now, let's enter the practice. Find a comfortable seated position that is attentive but relaxed. [Pause]</p> <p>Bring to attention the most comfortable and effective way of relaxing and entering a space of mindfulness. It may be sustained attention on the breath. It may be a quick body scan. It may be a mantra, focusing on a body part, thinking about a grounding object. [Pause]</p> <p>Find for the self what feels right in this moment, what will be most helpful for settling into the practice. Everyone can choose what feels good.</p> <p>[Pause for approximately 3 minutes, allowing all participants space for their own practice.]</p> <p>Now bring the attention fully to the breath, the body, and the heart. Call to mind a person in life who may be distressed, conflicted, or in a challenging position. [Pause]</p> <p>Note the details of their situation. What is happening, who is involved, what the risks, consequences, feelings and needs may be. [Pause]</p> <p>Note our own feelings and sensations that arise when thinking about the situation. Bring them to full recognition. (Step R in RAIN) [Pause]</p> <p>Locate the sensations and emotions. Name them carefully. Bring them to full awareness. (Step A in RAIN) [Pause]</p> <p>Allow for curiosity about the emotions and sensations. What are they? Where exactly are they? (Step I in RAIN) [Pause]</p> <p>Find language to describe the situation and the emotions without identifying with them. It can be:</p> <p>"There is much suffering/pain/anxiety/stress here."</p> <p>"May I offer my care and presence without conditions or expectations."</p> <p>"May I find the inner resources to be able to truly give."</p> <p>"May I remain in peace and let go of expectations."</p> <p>"May I offer love, knowing I can't control the course of life, suffering, or death."</p> <p>"I care about your pain yet cannot control it."</p> <p>"I wish you happiness and peace but cannot make your choices for you."</p> <p>"May I recognize my limits compassionately, just as I recognize the limitations of others."</p>	12
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	<p>Find language that feels right for the situation and the emotions. [Pause for 5-10 seconds]</p> <p>Repeat any phrases that feel helpful. [Pause]</p> <p>Say them in rhythm with the breath. [Pause]</p> <p>Feel their meaning without trying to force anything. Let the practice carry you. [Pause]</p> <p>Slowly bring the attention back to the present moment, back to the body in the chair, the feet on the floor. Take an energizing, deep inhale. Feel the spine lengthen, the shoulders lift. [Pause]</p> <p>When ready, open the eyes.</p>	
 	<p>Thank you for that final practice. Let's reflect together for a few moments.</p> <p>[Allow the group to choose their reflection method: journaling, partner sharing, private thoughts, etc.]</p>	4
 	<p>[Answer any last questions, announce the next session date/time, offer contact information.]</p>	1
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Assessment

Student	P	D	NI
Demonstrates understanding of RAIN components and steps. <i>Notes:</i>			
Took independent steps toward writing their own anchor phrases.			
Attempted to self-guide the beginning of one mindfulness practice.			
Teacher	P	D	NI
Balanced didactic presentation, practice, and guided inquiry.			
Displayed trauma sensitivity to triggers and other signs of distress.			
Provided support for developing independent practices.			

P = Proficient. Attempted and completed with demonstrated mastery, success, ability, or required skill.

D = Developing. Attempted with strong effort and partially demonstrated mastery or success. The basic concept is understood, and the individual requires minimal/some additional coaching or practice to enhance ability, develop skill, and achieve mastery.

NI = Needs Improvement. Attempted with partial or incomplete understanding of the basic concept. Additional instruction, repetition, research, discussion, coaching, and/or practice is required to strengthen understanding, promote ability, confer skills, and/or approach mastery.

Journal

Session 7 reflections, questions, and thoughts.

Teaching

Students

Practice

Other