



TIMELESS EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit

FREE LEARNING RESOURCE

RISE ABOVE

An evidence informed youth resilience workbook for awareness, regulation, flexible thinking, support, confidence, and recovery



WELCOME AND PARTICIPANT CHOICE

Learning objective: Understand the purpose of the workbook and identify how to participate with privacy and choice.

Rise Above is an educational workbook for young people who want practical language and tools for responding to stress, solving problems, communicating needs, building support, and recovering after setbacks. The lessons are designed for personal use, guided programs, mentoring, and educational settings.

You control what you write and what you share. No activity requires you to describe trauma, violence, health information, family conflict, or another private experience. You may use an imagined situation, a low risk example, or a general description. You may pass on any prompt.

This workbook does not assume that individual effort solves every problem. Safety, access, discrimination, poverty, health, relationships, transportation, and available support can affect options. The goal is to identify useful choices while recognizing when adults, services, institutions, or community resources must also respond.

KEY IDEAS

- Choose examples that feel safe enough to review.
- Keep private information private unless you want qualified support.
- Ask for clarification when a lesson is confusing.
- Pause when an activity increases distress.
- Use trusted adult or professional help for needs beyond an educational workbook.

Remember: Participation should strengthen voice and choice, not pressure disclosure.



SAFETY AND SUPPORT

Learning objective: Distinguish educational skill practice from situations that require trusted adult, professional, or emergency support.

Some situations require more than a workbook. If you feel unsafe, are being harmed, may harm yourself or another person, cannot meet basic needs, or are experiencing severe or continuing distress, contact a trusted adult, qualified professional, or emergency service.

A trusted adult may be a caregiver, relative, teacher, counselor, coach, faith leader, program staff member, or another responsible adult who takes your concern seriously. If one person does not respond appropriately, tell another. You do not need perfect words. You can say, I do not feel safe, I need help, or I need you to stay with me while we contact support.

In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Call 911 for an immediate emergency. Outside the United States, use the emergency and crisis resources available in your location.

KEY IDEAS

- Immediate danger requires immediate help.
- You may ask someone to stay with you while help is contacted.
- One unhelpful response does not make the need less important.
- Private details should be shared only with an appropriate person when needed for support or safety.

Remember: Safety is more important than completing an activity.



GUIDED PRACTICE

STARTING POINT

Use a rating from one to five, where one means not yet and five means usually. Add a short note only if it is useful.

I can notice early stress signals
I have at least one safe way to pause
I can separate facts from assumptions
I can make a clear request
I know more than one source of support
I can name evidence of my strengths
I have a plan for returning after a setback



MODULE 1: RESILIENCE IS A PROCESS

Learning objective: Describe resilience as a process involving awareness, regulation, connection, action, and recovery.

Resilience is the process of responding to difficulty, using available support, learning, and continuing. It does not mean that pain is unimportant or that a person should handle everything alone. It also does not require an immediate positive attitude. A resilient response may begin with rest, safety, accurate information, or asking someone to stay nearby.

Resilience can look different across situations. During a school problem, it may involve asking for clarification and making a recovery plan. During conflict, it may involve pausing before responding and returning to the conversation later. During loss or crisis, it may involve receiving professional support and allowing recovery to take time.

Skills matter, but conditions matter too. Reliable adults, supportive peers, safe environments, access to services, sleep, food, transportation, and opportunity all influence a young person's ability to respond. This workbook treats support as part of resilience, not as evidence that resilience is missing.

KEY IDEAS

- Awareness helps you notice what is happening.
- Regulation creates enough steadiness to choose.
- Connection brings people and resources into the response.
- Action moves one useful step forward.
- Recovery allows learning and restoration after strain.

Remember: Awareness helps you notice what is happening.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 1: RESILIENCE IS A PROCESS

SCENARIO

Maya receives a lower grade than expected and immediately thinks she is not capable of completing the course. She wants to stop attending. A friend helps her separate the grade from her identity and encourages her to ask the instructor which skills need more practice.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What feeling and thought may be influencing Maya's first reaction?
- 2 Which part of the situation can Maya influence?
- 3 What support is available?
- 4 What would a resilient next step look like without pretending the grade does not matter?

MODEL RESPONSE

Maya can acknowledge disappointment, take time to settle, review the feedback, and request a short meeting. Her next step is not to guarantee a perfect grade. It is to gather information and choose whether tutoring, revised study methods, or another support would help.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 1: RESILIENCE IS A PROCESS

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

A difficult situation I moved through without describing private details
What helped me continue
A person, place, routine, or service that supported me
A strength or skill I used
What I understand differently now



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 1: RESILIENCE IS A PROCESS

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why is resilience different from pretending everything is fine?
- 2 Name two parts of the resilience process.
- 3 Why is receiving support consistent with resilience?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A complete answer recognizes that resilience includes honest awareness, useful support, action, and recovery. It does not require silence, isolation, or immediate success.



MODULE 2: READ STRESS SIGNALS EARLY

Learning objective: Recognize personal stress signals in the body, thoughts, emotions, and actions before they become overwhelming.

Stress is a response to demand, uncertainty, change, threat, or pressure. It can prepare the body to act, but sustained or intense stress may make concentration, sleep, communication, and decision making more difficult. People do not all show stress in the same way.

Early signals may include tight muscles, a fast heartbeat, restlessness, headaches, stomach discomfort, low energy, racing thoughts, harsh self talk, irritability, fear, numbness, withdrawal, arguing, rushing, or avoiding. A signal is information. It is not proof that a person is weak or failing.

The goal is not to monitor every feeling. The goal is to notice enough information to choose support sooner. When you recognize a familiar pattern, you can pause, meet a basic need, change the environment, request help, or delay a nonurgent decision until you are steadier.

KEY IDEAS

- Body signals often appear before a person has words for the experience.
- Thoughts may become faster, narrower, or more extreme under stress.
- Actions can reveal a need for a pause.
- Patterns are more useful than judging one isolated reaction.

Remember: Body signals often appear before a person has words for the experience.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 2: READ STRESS SIGNALS EARLY

SCENARIO

Darius notices that before presentations he sleeps poorly, skips breakfast, becomes quiet, and assumes everyone will notice every mistake. He usually recognizes the pattern only after the presentation begins.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Which signals appear in Darius's body, thoughts, and actions?
- 2 Which signal may be easiest to notice early?
- 3 What could Darius prepare the night before?
- 4 What support could be requested from a teacher or trusted adult?

MODEL RESPONSE

Darius identifies poor sleep and skipping breakfast as early signals. He prepares materials and food the night before, practices the opening twice, and asks whether he may use a note card. Before presenting, he names the feeling as nervousness rather than danger and takes two slower breaths.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 2: READ STRESS SIGNALS EARLY

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

Signals I notice in my body
Thoughts that tend to appear
Emotions I may notice
Actions that tell me I need support or a pause
The earliest signal I can learn to recognize



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 2: READ STRESS SIGNALS EARLY

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why should a stress signal be treated as information rather than a verdict?
- 2 Name one body signal and one action signal.
- 3 What is one choice that becomes available when a signal is noticed early?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A strong answer identifies a specific signal and connects early awareness to a practical option such as pausing, meeting a basic need, changing the setting, or requesting support.



MODULE 3: CREATE A PAUSE

Learning objective: Use a brief regulation sequence to create space between a strong reaction and the next action.

A pause is not avoidance when it is used to return with greater control. It is a short interruption that helps the body settle and gives the thinking process more time. The most useful strategy depends on safety, location, personal preference, and what the moment allows.

A practical sequence is Notice, Name, Settle, Choose. Notice the signal. Name the feeling, need, or pressure without insulting yourself. Settle through slower breathing, movement, water, sensory grounding, quiet, or another safe strategy. Choose the next action that best protects safety, dignity, and the goal.

A pause may last ten seconds or several hours. If a situation is unsafe, the priority is reaching safety and contacting appropriate help. If the situation is not urgent, you may tell another person that you want to return to the conversation after you have had time to think.

KEY IDEAS

- Notice the signal.
- Name what is happening with neutral language.
- Settle enough to widen your options.
- Choose the next useful action.
- Return to the issue when a return is needed.

Remember: Notice the signal.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 3: CREATE A PAUSE

SCENARIO

Elena receives a message that feels disrespectful. She begins typing an angry public response. Her hands are tense and she is reading the message repeatedly.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What signals suggest that Elena may benefit from a pause?
- 2 What can she name without assuming the sender's intent?
- 3 Which settling actions are available before posting?
- 4 What response would protect both her dignity and her future options?

MODEL RESPONSE

Elena notices tension and urgency. She names that the message felt disrespectful and that she is angry. She saves her response in notes, puts the phone down, drinks water, and speaks with a trusted person. Later she decides whether a private clarification, a boundary, no response, or adult support is most appropriate.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 3: CREATE A PAUSE

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

A signal that tells me to pause
Words I can use to name the situation
Two safe ways I can settle
A sentence I can use to request time
How I will know I am ready to choose



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 3: CREATE A PAUSE

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What are the four parts of the pause sequence?
- 2 When does a pause become avoidance?
- 3 What is the priority if the situation is unsafe?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A complete answer names Notice, Name, Settle, and Choose. It also recognizes that a pause should support a useful return when appropriate, while immediate safety takes priority in dangerous situations.



MODULE 4: THINK FLEXIBLY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

Learning objective: Separate facts from assumptions, generate options, and choose a next step based on likely consequences.

Stress can narrow thinking. A person may move quickly from one event to a permanent conclusion: one mistake means nothing will work, one disagreement means nobody cares, or one delay means the opportunity is gone. Flexible thinking does not deny real problems. It keeps the facts visible while allowing more than one interpretation or response.

Begin by separating what is known from what is assumed. Then define the problem in specific language. Generate several options before selecting one. Consider safety, values, short term effects, long term effects, and who may be affected. Finally, choose a step small enough to carry out and decide when you will review the result.

Some problems cannot be solved by one young person. A fair plan may include reporting harm, requesting accommodation, involving a trusted adult, or using a professional service. Responsibility includes knowing when the next step is to bring in more support.

KEY IDEAS

- Facts can be observed or verified.
- Assumptions may be possible without being confirmed.
- Options should be generated before they are judged.
- Consequences include effects on safety, relationships, goals, and future choices.
- A review point turns action into learning.

Remember: Facts can be observed or verified.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 4: THINK FLEXIBLY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

SCENARIO

Noah applies for a part time position and does not receive a reply. He assumes the employer rejected him because he lacks experience and decides not to apply anywhere else.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What is known and what is assumed?
- 2 How could the problem be stated more accurately?
- 3 What are three available options?
- 4 Which next step protects Noah's goal and future choices?

MODEL RESPONSE

The known fact is that Noah has not received a reply. The reason is unknown. Options include checking the application status, reviewing the application with a counselor, applying to additional positions, and building experience through volunteering or training. Noah chooses to follow up once and submit two additional applications.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 4: THINK FLEXIBLY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

The situation stated as observable facts
Assumptions I may be adding
At least three possible responses
Likely benefits and costs of each response
The option I choose and why
When I will review the result



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 4: THINK FLEXIBLY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What is the difference between a fact and an assumption?
- 2 Why generate options before choosing?
- 3 Name two consequences worth considering.

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A strong response separates verified information from interpretation, identifies more than one option, and selects a step using safety, values, and likely consequences.



MODULE 5: COMMUNICATE NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES

Learning objective: Use clear, respectful language to describe a situation, state a need, make a request, or set a boundary.

Clear communication reduces guessing. It does not guarantee that another person will agree, but it makes the message easier to understand. Begin with the observable situation, describe its effect, state the need or limit, and identify a realistic next step.

A request asks another person to participate. A boundary explains what you will do to protect safety, time, dignity, or responsibility. For example, a request may ask for a quieter study period. A boundary may state that you will leave a conversation if shouting continues and return when it is calmer.

Tone, timing, and setting matter. A public argument may make understanding harder. When possible, choose a calmer time and a safer setting. If there is intimidation, violence, exploitation, or another safety concern, do not rely only on communication skills. Seek trusted adult or professional support.

KEY IDEAS

- Describe the situation without exaggeration.
- Name the effect or need.
- Make one specific request when possible.
- State a boundary through your own action.
- Choose safety and support when direct communication is not appropriate.

Remember: Describe the situation without exaggeration.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 5: COMMUNICATE NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES

SCENARIO

Kiara shares a room and needs time to prepare for an exam. Music and conversations continue during the planned study period. She has been expressing frustration through short comments, but no clear request has been made.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What information does the other person need?
- 2 What specific request could Kiara make?
- 3 What compromise may be realistic?
- 4 What can Kiara do if the request cannot be met?

MODEL RESPONSE

Kiara says, I have an exam tomorrow and need forty minutes of quiet from 7:00 to 7:40. Would you be willing to use headphones or take the call in another room during that time? If the room cannot be quiet, she plans to use the library or another approved space.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 5: COMMUNICATE NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

The situation I want to address
The effect on me or my responsibility
The need or limit I want to communicate
My specific request
My respectful boundary or alternate plan
The support I may need



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 5: COMMUNICATE NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 How is a request different from a boundary?
- 2 Why do timing and setting matter?
- 3 When should safety support replace direct communication?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A request asks for participation. A boundary describes the action you will take. Direct communication is not required when it would increase danger or when professional or adult support is needed.



MODULE 6: BUILD SUPPORT AND BELONGING

Learning objective: Create a layered support map and choose an appropriate support source for different needs.

Belonging means experiencing yourself as accepted, valued, and connected. Supportive connections can protect wellbeing and make it easier to seek help before a problem becomes a crisis. One person does not need to meet every need.

A layered support map includes peers, trusted adults, school or work contacts, family or chosen family, community organizations, faith communities when desired, health professionals, and emergency services. It also includes places and routines that support steadiness.

Match the need to the support. A friend may listen, while a teacher explains an assignment. A mentor may help with career planning, while a licensed professional addresses health needs. If the first person does not respond well, the need still matters. Try another appropriate source.

KEY IDEAS

- Connection is a protective resource.
- Different needs require different forms of support.
- A clear request helps the support person respond.
- One unhelpful response does not mean help is unavailable.
- Emergency concerns require immediate qualified help.

Remember: Connection is a protective resource.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 6: BUILD SUPPORT AND BELONGING

SCENARIO

Marcus has missed several assignments while caring for a family member. He has told friends that he is stressed but has not spoken with anyone who can adjust deadlines or connect him with school support.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What emotional support is Marcus already using?
- 2 What practical support may be needed?
- 3 Who has the authority or knowledge to help with school requirements?
- 4 What could Marcus say in a first conversation?

MODEL RESPONSE

Marcus may continue talking with friends, but he also contacts a counselor or teacher. He explains that family responsibilities have affected assignments and asks to review missing work, deadlines, and available student support. He does not need to disclose every private detail to make a clear request.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 6: BUILD SUPPORT AND BELONGING

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

People who listen and encourage me

Adults who can help with school, work, or practical needs

Programs, services, or professionals I can contact

Places where I feel safer or more focused

Words I can use when I need support



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 6: BUILD SUPPORT AND BELONGING

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why should one person not be expected to meet every need?
- 2 What is the value of matching the need to the support source?
- 3 What can you do after one unhelpful response?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A complete answer recognizes different support roles, chooses a source with the needed knowledge or authority, and keeps seeking appropriate help when the first response is not useful.



MODULE 7: BUILD CONFIDENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE

Learning objective: Strengthen self confidence by identifying preparation, practice, responsible choices, and recovery as evidence.

Confidence is not certainty that everything will go well. It is trust that you can prepare, act, learn, seek support, and respond to results. Feelings of confidence may grow after action rather than before it.

Evidence can include skills learned, responsibilities handled, questions asked, boundaries kept, mistakes repaired, and difficult moments survived. The evidence should be specific. Instead of saying I am good at everything, identify what you did, under what conditions, and what the result shows.

Comparison can hide progress because people begin with different access, experience, responsibilities, and support. Compare current evidence with your own earlier process when possible. Ask whether you are preparing more effectively, beginning sooner, communicating more clearly, or recovering more quickly.

KEY IDEAS

- Preparation is evidence.
- Practice is evidence.
- Asking for help is evidence of problem solving.
- Repairing a mistake is evidence of responsibility.
- Recovery is evidence even when the original outcome was disappointing.

Remember: Preparation is evidence.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 7: BUILD CONFIDENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE

SCENARIO

Tiana wants to apply for a leadership role but believes confident people never feel nervous. She has organized group projects, resolved scheduling problems, and supported classmates, yet she dismisses those experiences because they were not official titles.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What evidence of leadership is already present?
- 2 Which belief about confidence is inaccurate?
- 3 What preparation could increase readiness?
- 4 What would a fair statement of confidence sound like?

MODEL RESPONSE

Tiana's evidence includes coordination, communication, problem solving, and peer support. A fair statement is: I feel nervous because the role matters, and I have already practiced several leadership skills. I can prepare examples, ask about expectations, and apply without requiring certainty about the outcome.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 7: BUILD CONFIDENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

A skill I learned through practice
A responsibility I handled
A problem I helped solve
A mistake or setback I repaired
Support I used responsibly
What this evidence allows me to believe about myself



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 7: BUILD CONFIDENCE THROUGH EVIDENCE

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 Why is confidence different from certainty?
- 2 Name three forms of confidence evidence.
- 3 Why can comparison hide progress?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A strong answer connects confidence to preparation, action, learning, support, and recovery rather than to never feeling nervous or never making mistakes.



MODULE 8: RECOVER AND CONTINUE

Learning objective: Create a recovery plan that supports return after disappointment, interruption, or a mistake.

A setback is an event that interrupts progress or produces an unwanted result. It may have real consequences. Recovery begins by addressing safety and immediate responsibilities, then allowing the nervous system and attention to settle enough for accurate review.

A useful recovery review asks what happened, what was within your influence, what was outside your control, what repair is needed, what support is available, and what the next useful action will be. Accountability and self respect can exist together.

Return does not always mean resuming the same plan. New information may show that the timing, strategy, environment, or goal should change. Continuing with wisdom may mean revising the pathway, seeking treatment or professional guidance, or choosing a safer option.

KEY IDEAS

- Stabilize safety and basic needs first.
- Describe the event accurately.
- Separate influence from control.
- Repair what can responsibly be repaired.
- Use support and choose the next useful action.
- Revise the pathway when the evidence supports change.

Remember: Stabilize safety and basic needs first.



WORKED EXAMPLE

SCENARIO 8: RECOVER AND CONTINUE

SCENARIO

Andre misses an important deadline after underestimating the time required and avoiding a confusing section. He is embarrassed and considers not contacting the program at all.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 What part of the situation can still be influenced?
- 2 What responsibility should Andre acknowledge?
- 3 What repair or request may be possible?
- 4 What system could reduce the same risk next time?

MODEL RESPONSE

Andre contacts the program promptly, takes responsibility for the missed deadline, asks whether a late submission or future cycle is possible, and requests clarification about the confusing section. For the next application, he creates an earlier internal deadline and schedules a review with a support person.



GUIDED PRACTICE

PRACTICE 8: RECOVER AND CONTINUE

Use a current, imagined, or low risk situation. Share only what you choose.

A setback I can review without private detail
What was within my influence
What was outside my control
Repair or responsibility that remains
Support or information I need
My next useful action
A change I will make to the plan



PROGRESS CHECK

CHECK 8: RECOVER AND CONTINUE

Answer in your own words. The purpose is to check understanding, not to produce a perfect sentence.

- 1 What should come first when safety or basic needs are affected?
- 2 How can accountability and self respect exist together?
- 3 When might continuing require a revised pathway?

APPLY THE SKILL

Where I can practice this skill

The first action I will take

Support I may use

Answer guidance: A complete answer prioritizes safety, accepts appropriate responsibility, uses support, and allows the plan to change when new evidence shows a safer or more effective route.



GUIDED PRACTICE

MY PERSONAL RESILIENCE PLAN

Bring the strongest ideas from the workbook into one page that can be reviewed when stress makes it harder to think clearly.

My early stress signals

Safe actions that help me settle

Words that help me think accurately

People and services I can contact

A clear support request I can use

A boundary that protects safety or wellbeing

My first recovery step after a setback



GUIDED PRACTICE

THIRTY DAY SKILL PRACTICE

Choose one skill rather than attempting to practice everything at once. Review progress weekly and revise the plan when needed.

The skill I will practice
Why this skill matters
When and where I will practice
The smallest version for a difficult day
Who can support or encourage me
Evidence I will collect
My weekly review dates



EVIDENCE AND FURTHER SUPPORT

This workbook uses principles consistent with public guidance on youth connection, stress awareness, emotion coaching, trauma informed choice, financial and practical capability, and help seeking.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health and Connectedness.

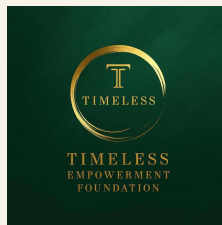
cdc.gov/healthy-youth/mental-health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tips for Coaching Teens to Recognize and Manage Emotions.

cdc.gov/parenting-teens/tips-coaching-emotions

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Trauma Informed Approaches and Programs. samhsa.gov

This resource is educational and nonclinical. It does not diagnose, treat, or replace professional care.



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