Sustaining Hope and Resilience in Individuals and Groups

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facebook.com/communityactivators
www.communityactivators.com
TEN evidence-based reasons to create and sustain a hopeful group:

Our cognitive problem solving abilities are stronger…we can actually THINK clearer and better.

Individuals who are hopeful both request help and offer help more readily than those who are not hopeful.

The more hopeful a person is, the more willing they are to forgive and let go of resentments.

We know that productivity—work output—increases when people are hopeful.

Hopeful individuals are more creative and have a greater quantity of ideas.

There is reduced incidence of unresolved long-term conflict in groups when individuals are hopeful.

Our immune systems and overall health are strengthened. For businesses in particular, this means less sick leave and reduced health-care costs.

Individuals stay with groups longer when they are hopeful. For businesses, this means less turnover, and reduced orientation and training costs. For community groups this means less recruitment of new members and a group who carries a longer mutual story together—a more solid group committed to the cause.

Groups who are hopeful are more willing to pursue collaborative strategies with other groups.

Finally, we know that hope in a work or community group spills over into a person’s home life. There is a contagion factor to hope.
Deck is stacked against us:

The “we have no time” rule
Contagion
Workforce characteristics
Systemic barriers
3:1
Gonna get worse
Most important job of a leader is to build a container for hope to thrive

- Shift responsibility for hope from you to whole group
- Create a boundary
- Get smart about hope and culture-change science
Common Mistakes: The Seven Hope Don’ts

A culture of hope and resilience can’t be built or sustained with these common “wishful thinking” strategies:

Waiting for things to “slow down” in order to have the time to pursue a healthy workplace culture.

Using your own hope to prop up others on a regular basis.

Making your hope conditional on someone else doing something.

Making your hope conditional on receiving adequate resources of time, money, goods, or services.

Believing that providing quality services will result in a hopeful, resilient employee culture.

Believing that “retreats” will be adequate to create sustained hope and resilience in a workgroup.

Believing you are responsible for another person’s hope.
The Story:

85 years old
Occasional fainting from exertion
Degenerative heart valve
Otherwise healthy
Do nothing: 3 years left/slow decline
Open heart surgery: 5 years left
One year to fully recover
Has spouse in reasonable health
Brain Change Rules

Neuroplasticity gives us the opportunity to build circuits of hope

Grassy Field Rule:
The neural path doesn’t just facilitate your thinking, it dictates your thinking.

Explicit and Implicit Rule:
We are driven not by the facts of the events but by our felt memory of the event.

Velcro and Teflon Rule:
The amygdala is hardwired to label experiences as negative. Negative thoughts are more easily accessible than positive thoughts.

Words Matter Rule:
Decide about what frame of thinking you want. Use that language. It WILL alter your emotion.

adapted from:
Rick Hanson, Ph.D. and Rick Mendius, MD
Positive Emotions and Taking in the Good
www.wisebrain.org
THREE HOPE TOOLS

- Future Forecasting
- Mystical Hope
- Psychological Hope
PSYCHOLOGICAL HOPE: THREE COMPONENTS

Specific Vision
Can Plan and Start
Access Resilience

• All three are necessary for hope
• Vision and Plan are cognitive thinking activities
  • Resilience is a feeling
• Resilience has an existing pool and also is built in the moment
Foundations of Resilience

What Is Resilience?
The maintenance of high levels of positive feelings and well-being in the face of significant adversity.

Why Is It Important?
Resilience is fuel. It is tapped at the beginning of a vision to get going and along the way to keep going. Without resilience, a person or group will stop working towards their vision.

How Is It Created and Maintained?
Resilience is created when meaning is made out of life events before, during, and after they happen. This meaning creates a positive feeling state which causes the person or group to decide it’s worth it to keep going. Meaning-making can also create a pool of residual strength that can be used for this or other visions. In individuals or groups, maintenance of a resiliency pool can be accomplished through “ritualized” activities.
The Flashlight Rule

When you are helping another person, the focus is on them and your resilience is DRAINING whether the interaction is positive or negative. When you make meaning out of that event for yourself, the focus is on you and your resilience INCREASES. “Meaning-making” consists of any thinking about the event or interaction that results in you believing you have an increased understanding of the event.

Examples of increased understanding might include:
“I think I know why I reacted so strongly to Mark’s statement.”
“I see why my client got so upset.”
“If I intervene in a certain way with Steve, I’m likely to get better results.”
“I now understand why it’s important to save for retirement.”
“I know why I have such a hard time trusting people.”
Pivot Points in Understanding Hope

Busting the myths and facing the facts:

Hope and despair both have a contagion factor.

Increasing quality of services and creating hopeful work cultures are separate but parallel tasks.

Over time, employees will treat customers in the same way they feel treated by their organization.

Stress and pace are not deterrents to hope. The real enemy is the lack of disciplined, intermittent recovery periods.

Making hope conditional on someone else doing something, or the receipt of adequate resources are the two most common blockages to hope in an organization.

Hopeful organizations are built by focusing on increasing the third ingredient, which is called resiliency.
Part 2:
How Are You Doing?
“Does Anybody See Me?”
How Helping Organizations Create Hopeless Helpers

If the assumptions about the daily work are:
What I’m doing is for somebody else, not for me, and
What I’m doing right now is important and can’t be postponed, and
There are so many people to help that our work will never be done, and
I agree to sacrifice my own needs in the moment to serve another, and
Because we’re so busy there is little time during the day for me to recharge and reflect, then

Individual helpers may respond by:
Assuming this is how it’s going to be, and I have little power to change it.
Feeling increasingly unseen and unappreciated.
Making the choice to either leave or exhibit unhealthy behaviors in an attempt to get noticed.

Helpers who don’t leave often develop one or more of these typical behaviors in an attempt to be seen:

Hiding Out:
“If you’re not going to see what good work I am doing,
I’ll show you how I can disappear. You’re going to miss me!”

Working too much:
“Does anyone see how hard I am trying?”

Being overly compassionate:
“Look at how much I care. Doesn’t anybody care about me?”

Become rigid and authoritarian with customers and other helpers:
“Maybe they’ll start noticing me if I start becoming inflexible.”

Become excessively irritable and angry:
“If you aren’t going to appreciate me, I’ll show you how unpleasant I can be.”

Trying to be the smart one:
“If you people would listen to me, everything would be a lot better around here.”
“Most organizations hold employees accountable for maintaining their own workplace resiliency. When the employee shows signs of burnout, the organizational response is “You need to take better care of yourself.” This allows the organization to continue resilience draining activities and place the blame for burnout back on the individual.”
Personal Sources of Resiliency Checklist

Put a checkmark to the left of the items that are generally true:

**Physical**
I get enough sleep to feel rested while at work.
I take regular breaks at work throughout the day.
I eat my meals away from my desk.
My body feels energized at work.
I get adequate physical movement during the workday.
I pace myself so I do not feel unhealthy levels of stress.

**Emotional**
I express appreciation to co-workers often enough.
I enter my workplace with positive feelings on a daily basis.
I leave my workplace with positive feelings on a daily basis.
I have a healthy balance between time spent with work, family, and other interests.
I do not take work home with me.
I get deep satisfaction from many work tasks.

**Mind**
I focus on one task at a time.
I do not let email interrupt my tasks.
I have an organized task list.
I focus equally on short-term and long-term tasks.
I have adequate opportunity to use my creativity skills.
I have adequate time for long-term visioning.

**Spirit**
I spend considerable time at work doing the tasks I love to do.
I use the power of my own life difficulties as a source of strength.
I am aware of and have adequate opportunity to use my primary gifts and talents at work.
I believe my workgroup is making a substantial contribution to the world.
There is little difference between what I say is important about my work and what I do at work.
I have a regular spiritual practice.

Questions:
1. Which one of the four main areas is your strongest?
2. Which one of the four main areas is your weakest?
3. Which single item are you most proud of?
4. Which single item are you most concerned about?

Partial Source: Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time
Tony Schwartz
Harvard Business Review • October 2007
Part 3: Culture Determines Hope
Ritualized behavior is the universal device for establishing culture.
“Just having positive experiences is not enough. They pass through the brain like water through a sieve, while negative experiences are caught. We need to engage positive experiences to weave them into the brain.”

Rick Hanson, Ph.D
Wiring Happiness Into Your Brain
Stanford University, 2011
www.wisebrain.org
WHAT IS A RITUAL?
A process used by an individual or group which allows each participant to increase health through further understanding, celebrating, grieving, or taking action. Although the structure is planned, the outcome for each person can be different.

Rituals build resiliency by:
- encouraging individual health to build group resiliency
- structure for working through difficult events
- bringing people “home” to their group
- planned time for gaining strength
- supporting various viewpoints on a topic or event
- release of emotion, tension, and reducing toxicity
- each person accurately seen by others

Ritual Criteria
1. Designed by participants
2. Stated purpose is health of group
3. Frequency determined by group
4. Everyone is involved
5. Not focused on customer issues/service
Examples of organizational rituals:

- story-sharing • conflict resolution between employees
- clarification of group’s vision • clarifying employee job descriptions
- discovering and using employee talents and gifts
- celebrating birthdays • welcoming new employees
- learning new things • mentoring new employees and tasks
- grieving employee/client deaths or serious illness
- creating continuous learning cultures • holiday celebrations
- learning visits to other organizations • vision dialogue
- new staff orientations • outcome celebrations
- grieving loss of contract or grant • team strength assessing
- historical values changes • operating principles
Please list the ritualized, regular activities in your organization which contribute to your group’s resiliency and hope. Criteria include:

1) everyone is involved
2) activity is designed by the employee group
3) has a stated purpose of increasing the health and healing of individual employees
4) is repeated on a regular basis according to the group’s needs
5) is not focused on solving day-to-day customer issues
Part 4: Hope-Building Model
Holistic Organizational Hope Building

Positive Psychology
RESILIENCE THROUGH MEANING-MAKING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Cultural Anthropology
RITUAL PATTERNS ARE MULTICULTURAL IN FOUR DOMAINS

Organizational Development
RITUALIZED ACTIVITY CREATES/SUSTAINS CULTURE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area One: Celebrating and Grieving</th>
<th>Focus Area Two: Community Engagement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities which acknowledge both accomplishment and loss for individual members of the workgroup, entire workgroup, or individuals being served.</td>
<td>Activities which reinforce purpose of group and clarify specific group and individual responsibilities, roles, and working agreements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th>Focus Area Three: Personal Identity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activities which result in individual employees becoming more well-known to their coworkers.</td>
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<th>Focus Area Four: Learning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities which increase knowledge and skill in carrying out the purpose of the group.</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Focus Area Five: Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities which increase physical health of individual members so they can further carry out the purpose of the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 5: Action Choice #1

Choose items from the Quick Assessment to work on.
Instructions:
Please complete this quick assessment according to the current condition of you and your organization. There is a summary box on the second page for you to compile your ratings. Please put a checkmark next to the two different items on the assessment which are most interesting and compelling for you to pursue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Staff meetings have regular, structured time for staff to tell stories of success and failure.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. We have systems in place to discover, acknowledge, and utilize employees' skills/talents/gifts.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know the specific outcomes for our workgroup.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We have a mentoring process for new employees.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We have established rituals for significant employee events (birthdays, funerals, graduations, etc.)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My supervisor has clarified and agreed with each employee their specific task assignments.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We recruit employees who have personal experience with the issues faced by people using our services.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My supervisor has presented a clear organizational vision and dialogued about it with employees.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Leaders regularly affirm employees for innovative ideas that have not worked.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My supervisor has shared the shadows of his/her leadership style and asked employees for help.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I tell stories of successful organizational change.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. We have regular opportunities to recognize the success individual employees have with customers.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am regularly acknowledged for success in meeting my target goals as an employee.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Our team has identified and has action plans for working on the systemic barriers to hope in our organization.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Our workgroup is regularly acknowledged for achieving our group goals.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Each employee has time-limited learning goals related to his/her job tasks.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Employees have structured opportunity to share stories of how/why they got into this work.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. The status of our progress towards outcomes is known by all employees. 
19. Our workgroup has learning objectives with measurable goals. 
20. Our workgroup has regular opportunities for sharing of personal stories of progress and setbacks. 
21. We have established rituals for welcoming new employees and acknowledging employees who are leaving. 
22. My supervisor has shared a strong and compelling vision for a healthy and productive workgroup. 
23. Our workgroup looks outside its own organization for innovative ideas. 

Add-up each item you circled to get your total score: ________
Identify the two items MOST urgent in your group: _______ _______

Scoring Guide:
90 – 115 Your group can induce spontaneous recovery in wilting plants and sick puppies. Staff carry each other into the building on their shoulders, cheering all the way. You have successfully integrated hope-building practices into the regular routines of your organization. Hope building is one of your strongest organizational qualities.
75 – 89 Your group routinely and effectively integrate many of the habits of hope into your organization’s culture. The leaders are seen as hopeful, and concerned about fostering healthy relationships between co-workers. Their leadership style naturally gravitates towards empowerment of others. Asking co-workers to help fine-tune the hopefulness of the work culture, with specific action plans, is your next step. Creating hope is a natural ability in your group.
60 – 74 Your group believes creating hope is an important part of your work, but you are pulled in many different areas and haven’t been able to focus on this as much as you would like. The demands of service delivery at times consume everyone’s focus, and staff hopefulness has suffered because of it. Your group has an intermittent history of supporting hopeful activities. You do not have a structured plan for creating more hope and resilience, but would like to. The leaders are seen as caring, but not as leaders who see the health of the workforce as having the same level of importance as the service to the customer.
45 – 59 Your workgroup is hunkered down and just trying to get through the day. There are significant pockets of resentment, anger, and hopelessness in your workgroup. Staff generally see the condition of their workplace as resulting from a lack of resources, and blame both you and other leaders for their condition. There is strong resistance amongst staff to being hopeful, and there may be key leaders who promote an us-against-them attitude. Although you would like to change the work culture towards more hopefulness, it feels like a huge job and you may not be sure where to start. The condition of the workplace is affecting your own resilience.
23 – 44 Your workplace is not structured for employee health. The leadership team has no focused plan for creating hope and resilience. There is a culture of both enforcement and hiding that is pervasive within employees. Your resilience level is low. The level of desire for change is the first thing for you to acknowledge. Gathering co-workers who share your interest in hope, and are willing to talk about it, is the first place to start. Remember: any workplace can build a culture of hope and resilience.
Score reveals locus of responsibility for hope
Option One: Hope Assessment Action Planning

Overview: Use the Hope Quick Assessment to choose activities that will increase hope.

Goal: Develop and implement two items from the Hope Quick Assessment

Steps:
1. Meet with your team, do the Hope Quick Assessment on pages 23-24 and talk about it. Have each team member say his/her total score and identify the two top priorities for change on the assessment. Have one group member keep track of what each person identifies as the top two priorities, to see what patterns begin to develop as the choices are identified.

2. Come to an agreement as a team on the two top priorities on the assessment and decide how your team will begin working on those two things.


4. When these rituals are developed and successful, choose one or two other items on the Hope Quick Assessment to begin working on.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Describe Activity</th>
<th>Who Participates</th>
<th>Who Leads</th>
<th>How Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOPE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>Hope At Work: Creating Positive, Resilient Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part 6:
Action Choice #2
Choose Items From Ritual
Examples in each area
Focus Area One: Celebrating and Grieving
Activities that acknowledge both accomplishment and loss for individual Members of the workgroup, entire workgroup, or individuals being served.

**Individual Rituals**
- Pick a beautiful spot nearby, and go there when someone dies. Do a personal ritual for yourself.
- Start your day with breathing and feeling gratitude for the opportunity to do your work.
- Write a short meditation to yourself to reflect on when someone dies.
- “Sumo-Suit” to work out aggression.
- Do yoga
- Make a personal “Music for Hope” mix CD and play it once a week
- Have a few minutes of silence alone to reflect on a person who is gone.
- Get a life: engage in enjoyable activities for yourself.
- Bring a photo that represents a hard time in your life when you got through something, post that photo to remind yourself you will get through this.
- Find a fellow co-worker and dump.
- Rely on your faith tradition or spiritual practice when grieving or blessing.
- Move your body: walk, exercise, bike, boat, dance.
- Leave work acknowledging one thing to celebrate about the day.

**Group Rituals**
- Any activity in the Individual Rituals list that you can do as a group
- Post LARGE picture(s) of client(s) with house-keys at their door when they get housing
- Alter regular meeting format to focus on recent death. Develop a ritual for this.
- Creation of memorial spot in office for people who have passed.
- Create group “memorial quilt” out of paper squares to remember the person.
- Get our outcome data on the wall so everyone can see it all the time.
- Ritual for “best employee effort that really failed” to honor risk-taking
- “Cracks of Light” ritual: Go around the room having people tell small slivers of moments when they saw change in somebody they were helping.
- Acknowledge significant organizational goals accomplished
- Honoring birthdays, graduations, etc.
- Share a song with group that represents hope to you.
- Place symbols of importance for our organization all over the office.
- Guided meditations at beginning and end of group meetings.
• Team themed-potlucks
• Clear glass “let go of” vase: staff write down things they want to let go of and put it in the clear vase. When it is full, they either burn the contents or bury it with a ritual
• Padlock Ritual: a board on the wall that has a bunch of padlocks hanging on nails. Staff unlock their padlock when they get to work, and lock it when they go. A way to enter and exit work definitely. Could also use a small bell to ring when you come and go.
• Dissolving Paper ritual: Use magic dissolving paper. Write things you want to let go of and then put the paper in water and watch it dissolve/disappear. It’s magic! It’s fun!
• At end of workweek, staff (in pairs) each tell one story they want to forget about over the weekend so they can let it go.
• Daily morning meetings: tell one story of a hope you have for that day with one person.
• Have a Team Spirit week: each day at a scheduled time a short activity that builds teamwork
• Everyone wears blue one day and there is a group photo taken

Working agreements or tasks to do:
• Leaving early under pre-planned conditions when stress is high.
• Compassionate Leave: Having staff go home when a high-stress event happens.
• Investigate cultural rituals from different traditions and adapt some for our use.

Focus Area Two: Community Engagement
Activities that reinforce purpose/vision of group, roles, and working agreements.

Individual Rituals:
• Each person creates a visual reminder of why they do this work. Could be a paragraph, a collage, a poem, a photo...something that touches the core of why they do this work.
• Create an “informal” job description outlining what you really want to be doing during the workday. Review it periodically to see if you are doing what you want to be doing.
• Volunteer one day with an organization that you collaborate with that does different work than you do. (food bank, shelter, community policing, street clinic, etc.)

Group Rituals:
• Any activity in the Individual Rituals list that you can do as a group
• Always start meeting with a symbol of the purpose of our work in the middle of the meeting table.
• Short list of powerful group operating values displayed in numerous places in the workplace.
• “Take a hike”: Interrupt staff meeting to take a 10 minute walk around the block with one other person and share a story about your work from the day before.
• Force ourselves to make time for retreats twice per year, no matter what.
• Rituals to orient ourselves to other programs regularly.
• Regular discussions clarifying the tasks we do and the expected outcomes.
• Share our informal “what we really do” job descriptions with each other and discuss.
• Photograph of each staff person with a short statement underneath it about why this work is so important to him or her.
• Create a staff or staff/client gift wall with photo’s and gifts displayed.
• Create a Strategic Plan for where we want to be five years from now.
• Ritual to orient new staff to our mission.
• Ritual to acknowledge our organizations history.
• Adopt a conflict resolution process we all use when there is conflict in our group.
• Develop a wall pictorial showing the values changes in our work over the past twenty years.

Working agreements or tasks to do:
• Flexibility in the rules in order to get the job done. Calculate that the cost of breaking certain rules is worth it in order to do quality work.
• Have a daily cut-off time for seeing clients so we can catch up and get our notes done.
• Administrators allocate one day every six months for a learning/regrouping retreat
• Revise daily meeting agenda so it speaks to our real needs.
• Develop more ways for all employees to be involved in decision-making.

Focus Area Three: Personal Identity
Activities that result in individual employees becoming more well-known to their co-workers

Individual Rituals:
• Display photos representing life outside work in your workspace.
• Create small placard with your gifts listed on it and display in your workspace.
• Ritual for approaching a person you are helping: release need to control, see the person as gifted, come from a place of not-knowing, see their presence as a gift in your life.
• Symbols on your desk that represent your beliefs about the work you do.

Group Rituals:
• Any activity in the Individual Rituals list that you can do as a group
• Share stories about why we got into this work.
• Share stories about outside interests.
• “Spotlight on You”: a different staff person each meeting shares a story about “something they love.”
• Do the “3 truths and a lie” game with each other to discover unique experiences
• Identify our Core Gifts and display in our work area.
• Rotate staff bringing a “Get to know each other” icebreaker to staff meetings.
• “In Five Years”: staff discuss one thing that they would like different in their life in five years.
• “Food Like Me”: Staff brings food to share that they believe has attributes like them.
• Discuss at staff meeting how our unique gifts cause us difficulty at work.
• Discuss two ways that our unique gifts help us at work to get the job done.
• “Canary in the Coal Mine”: Staff share three personal behaviors they exhibit when they are getting burned out so other staff can be aware and compassionate.
• Complete the “3 Gift Buckets” with each staff member and share with each other
• Staff share stories of not belonging from their own life with each other to build common ground with people they work with and the people they serve.
• Create a story-theme jar and choose a story to tell at regular staff meetings.
• Do “Three things to know about me if you want to get along with me” discussion.
• Have a celebration for new employees that honors the gifts they are bringing to us.
• “Broken-Heart Wall”: Staff put personal statement on wall around an image of a broken heart that says something about the work that breaks their heart. Staff acknowledges this wall graphic regularly by standing silent around it or lighting a candle of hope near it.
• “Gifts on our Backs”: Staff tape a piece of paper on each persons back and all wander around in a room writing qualities they bring to the work on each persons back. Take off, place on wall, and honor in some way.
• Each staff member comes to regular meeting prepared to share something cool they saw a co-worker do during the previous week.

Working agreements or tasks to do:
• Update each persons Core Gift statement at the annual performance evaluation date.
• Revise regular meeting agenda to include some of above at each meeting.

Focus Area Four: Learning
Activities that increase knowledge and skill in carrying out the purpose of the group.

Individual Rituals:
• Identify individual learning goals every six months
• Individual staff write mantra to read when they are working harder than the client or taking responsibility for the client

Group Rituals:
• Any activity in the Individual Rituals list that you can do as a group.
• “Walk in My Shoes Wednesdays”: staff all put their shoes in a bag. You reach in the bag and whoever’s shoes you pull out you shadow the working for ½ a day.
• Create "Learning Challenges” wall chart showing what each staff person is trying to learn more about. Highlight progress/learning at each staff meeting for several staff.
• Learning Journey rituals: visit other programs to see what innovations they have created
• One staff brings article with some new learning for them and presents at staff meeting.
• “A Lotta Like” ritual: Pick a totally different occupation and list four ways it's similar and what we could learn from them. Example: “How are car salesperson’s like us?”
• Create dialogue highlighting how what skill sets within our workplace could learn from each other
• Sign on the exit door: “What did you learn today?”
• Roundtable brainstorming and learning discussions
• Have an official “Open Space” learning event every six months
• Use “Four-Directions” problem-solving methods (or other indigenous techniques.)
• Use Basic Five operating principles as the foundation for solving client issues.
• Administrators shadowing staff on a regular basis and reporting at meetings what they observed and learned.
• Display graphic of tree limb showing issues on the branches and how, if staff take too much responsibility the limbs, they can break off and fall to the ground. (Use tree limb story)

**Working agreements or tasks to do:**
• Create structured mentoring activities for new employees
• One personal choice training for every three that are mandated
• Re-format regular meetings with more time for learning.

**Focus Area Five: Physical**
Activities that increase physical health of individual members so they can further carry out the purpose of the group.

**Individual Rituals:**
• Start each morning with stretching.
• Create a “personal wellness” goals chart for your workspace
• Tape a personal health mantra on your laptop or desk.
• “No Elevators” workday: walk stairs if three floors or less.
• Personal agreement not to work during lunch.
• Personal agreement not to talk about work during lunch.
• Personal agreement to eat lunch away from your desk.
• Wear pedometer: 10,000 Steps Per Day club

**Group Rituals:**
• Any activity in the Individual Rituals list that you can do as a group.
• Do group stretching, yoga, or other low-impact exercise.
• Take a neighborhood hike during lunch with co-workers.
• “Crab-Walk Tuesday”: Walk sideways the first hour of work in the office.
• Use stand-up meetings instead of sit-down meetings sometimes.
• Cooks demonstrate healthy cooking techniques during lunch.
• Staff bring healthy snacks from other cultures once a month to staff meeting.
• Weekend hikes or camping as a group.
• Staff participate in sport that one staff person really likes.

**Working agreements or tasks to do:**
• Invite a personal trainer to give a talk at our workplace.
• Join a group exercise/weight-loss competition in our town.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Describe Activity</th>
<th>Who Participates</th>
<th>Who Leads</th>
<th>How Often</th>
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*Hope At Work: Creating Positive, Resilient Organizations* • Community Activators • www.communityactivators.com
Part 6: Action Choice #3

Invent Your Own Rituals
Rituals for Resiliency Action Model

Focus Area One: Celebrating and Grieving
Activities which acknowledge both accomplishment and loss for individual members of the workgroup, entire workgroup, or individuals being served.

Focus Area Two: Community Engagement
Activities which reinforce purpose of group and clarify specific group and individual responsibilities, roles, and working agreements.

Focus Area Three: Personal Identity
Activities which result in individual employees becoming more well-known to their coworkers.

Focus Area Four: Learning
Activities which increase knowledge and skill in carrying out the purpose of the group.

Focus Area Five: Physical
Activities which increase physical health of individual members so they can further carry out the purpose of the group.
Basic Steps to Ritual Design

1. Choose one of the five Rituals for Resiliency focus areas you would like to develop ritual(s) in.

2. Using that Focus Area, brainstorm 3-4 responses to the following question: “What beliefs or values in this Focus area lift us up and energize us?”

3. Using that same Focus Area, brainstorm 3-4 responses to the following question: “What beliefs or values are we currently engaged in that drag us down in this focus area?”

4. Choose one of the items from Question Two or Three that your group agrees would be useful to focus on right now.

5. Create a CLEAR one-sentence purpose statement for the ritual. (Examples: “To help each other understand why we chose this work”, “to provide a safe space for us to resolve conflicts”, “To clarify and agree on our vision”, “To grieve the loss of a co-worker”. Make sure the purpose statement is very clear and only has one purpose to it.

6. Using the purpose statement, choose 3-6 materials from Ritual Materials sheet that can be symbolically connect to your ritual purpose.

7. Before you design your ritual, be sure to clarify:
   - What elements will we use?
   - Who will be invited?
   - Where will it be held?
   - When will we do this, and how often?
   - Who will facilitate/lead the ritual?

8. Using the basic steps on the next page, design your ritual. You may or may not use all the steps, depending on the complexity of the activity and the amount of time you have.
Step Two: Choosing Ritual Materials
What are the symbols associated with this ritual purpose? Would any of these traditional ritual materials be helpful for you to use? What other materials might be useful?

Environmental
- Time of day
- Physical location
- Inside/Outside
- Threshold/exit & entry points

People
- Types of people present
- Touch
- Dance
- Arrangement of people at the ritual
- Bowing
- Hands on heart
- Kneeling
- Clothes (colors/types/designs)

Language
- Poems
- Writing
- Personal readings
- Stories
- Quotes
- Ideas
- Songs

Earth elements
- Fire/candles, smoke, fireplaces or pits, ash
- Water/lakes, rivers, sea, fountains, libation bowls
- Stones/small stones, boulders
- Earth/dirt, sand, mud
- Plants/Vegetation/Seeds
- Wind
- Sun

Other Materials
- Cloth
- Tables
- Chairs
- Animals
- Paint
- Bells
- Musical instruments
- Personal ancestral/spiritual/token objects
- Offerings
- Hair
- Boxes, containers, vases
- Items unique to this situation

Art
- Photographs
- Drawings
- Impromptu graphics/art

Spiritual
- Readings
- Breathing
- Imagery
- Prayers
- Chants
- Silence

Food
- Symbolic food
- Water
- Wine

Other important symbols:
- 
-
The Steps in Our Ritual

Purpose Statement (From Step Five on previous page):

Step One: Entering
How will people enter this ritual? (Examples: Announcement, show up at a certain location, walk thru a door.)

Step Two: Aligning
What will you do to get everyone focused and ready? (Examples: Ring a bell, ask for silence, invite everyone to begin, poem, reading.)

Step Three: Purpose
How will you remind people of the purpose of this ritual? (Example: Read purpose statement)

Step Four: Primary Activity
What is the core ritual activity you will do?

Step Five: Aligning
Repeat what you did in Step Two as a way to bring people out of the ritual activity and back into the group.

Step Six: Observations
Ask for reflections participants have on the meaning of the ritual for them

Step Seven: Leaving
How will people leave the ritual? (Examples: Ritual leader announces the end, participants walk out of the room, people stand and move.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area (1-5)</th>
<th>Name and Brief Description</th>
<th>Who Participates</th>
<th>Who Leads</th>
<th>How Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Keeping Track of Rituals...
Part 8: Sustaining Rituals and working with resistance
Keeping It Going

Key things that will increase ritual success in your organization:

• A ritual has started at the moment you begin to design it. Immerse yourself in the pleasure and meaning of the entire ritual experience, including the design.

• Don’t create a lot more meeting time for rituals! Most rituals can be done before or after already scheduled meetings and don’t require a lot of extra time.

• The first couple times you do a new ritual, be sure to allow time at the end for a short feedback discussion. Remember, rituals will sometimes seem silly, sometimes not work, and sometimes produce unexpected results. Keep at it until you find what works. Was it meaningful? Was it interesting? How could you change it to make it more meaningful or interesting? Rituals often need to be altered slightly, or sometimes abandoned in favor of new ideas. Be open to change.

• Don’t postpone a ritual. We’re all busy, and the tendency is to say, “We’ll do this next week when we’re not so busy.” The pattern of postponing rituals leads to the end of rituals in an organization.

• Have a designated leader for each ritual. Rituals won’t sustain themselves without somebody being in charge and making sure it happens.

• Everyone participates. Everybody who can be there should be there. Be sure to have group agreements that outline the conditions under which a person may be absent. If you don’t, eventually everybody will just be too busy and no-one will show up to participate. Remember, rituals are the glue that holds your group together, so the whole group needs to participate.

• Don’t continue rituals that have lost their meaningfulness. There is nothing worse than a boring ritual. Redesign it, abandon it for something else, but don’t keep doing it. Rituals can lose their effectiveness over time. NOTE: Many groups get to a “hump” phase a few months after their initial kick-off of rituals, and have to recommit to the idea of rituals and their usefulness in the group.

• Periodically, review your rituals. Groups often review their rituals each year, offering the opportunity for old rituals to be altered or abandoned, and new rituals to be added.

• How many rituals is enough? It’s helpful to have a ritual or two in each of the five areas, but you don’t have to start them all at one time. Each group will come up with the “right” amount depending on their unique culture.
Responses to Resistance

Some participants are likely to respond with these typical types of resistance when you begin establishment of rituals in your group. The “resisters” are not “wrong”, and often have very important contributions to make. They are important to listen to, keep including, and also to put in charge of designing and leading rituals. Most resisters will become advocates for ritualized activity if they have the opportunity to repeatedly witness the positive effects of rituals on other members of their group.

No Time
Everyone is busy, and almost everyone wonders where they will get the time to participate in what may be seen as a non-essential activity. The leader(s) must designate the time, sponsor it, mandate attendance, and talk directly about why it is an essential activity. If necessary, the leader must figure out other activities taking place during staff meetings which can be efficiently reduced in order to allow time for these activities. Workgroup health must be valued as importantly as delivery of quality services.

Don’t believe it will help
Just as with people receiving services, staff members may have to temporarily carry the hope for other staff that have none. These members must be required to attend, but should not be mandated to participate if they choose not to. Over time, they may become involved if they are not shut out from witnessing the experience happening to others. In addition, the specific purpose of each ritual must be clearly known by all participants.

Associating rituals with spiritual/religious activity
The leaders need to make a distinction between the common practice of spiritual rituals and the equally common practice of community rituals. Team rituals are not spiritual activities designed to deepen faith, they are community-building rituals designed to promote group cohesion, identify, and strength.

Fear of overexposing facts or feelings
Participants need to be clearly told that their participation can be at whatever level they are comfortable with. By their design, ritual activities should not promote excessive personal story-telling or sharing of deep emotions at unsafe levels.

Not businesslike or professional enough
Since it is the mission of all helping organizations to support people they serve to be more integrated in their community, it is in the business interests of social service organizations to be familiar with how to design community events which sponsor the inclusion of all citizens and promote health and healing. Also, increased trust is built between co-workers when they get to know each other in more ways than solely by the tasks each completes during their workday. Rituals deepen each employee’s commitment to both their co-workers and also to the mission of the organization.
For Leaders:
What is your commitment to building hope in your workplace?

“…research suggests that entire organizations can take on the personality of the executive and be influenced by his or her behavior.”

Anne Wilson Schaef and Diane Fassel
The Addictive Organization

☐ I believe the health of the workforce is as important as the services we provide.

☐ My current understanding of hope/resiliency concepts is sufficient for committing and defending the allocation of staff-time and resources to activities which will build a hopeful work culture.

☐ I possess a significant enough pool of personal resiliency to commit to the tasks of creating a more hopeful workplace.

☐ I can design my own workday in a way that supports personal resiliency.

☐ I am modeling the hope and resilience behaviors that I expect from the people I supervise.

☐ I believe I have the authority to design, with other employees, a workplace culture that supports hope and resiliency.

☐ I have the leadership skills necessary to support staff in creating and implementing these activities.
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