

# The Teen COMPASS



## Teen Wellness Circle *Program Workbook*



Holly Hughes Stoner, LMFT & D. Scott Stoner, LMFT



This Workbook belongs to:

---

Teen Wellness Circle Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for honoring my privacy by not reading what I have written. It is intended for my reflection alone.*

# Contents

---

An Invitation to the Journey . . . . .	1
Welcome to Your Teen Wellness Circle . . . . .	2
What is Whole-Person Wellness? . . . . .	2
Teen Wellness Circles . . . . .	3
Expectations for Participants in a Teen Wellness Circle . . . . .	3
An Overview of a Six-Week Teen Wellness Circle . . . . .	4
Ways to Engage during Your Six-Week Wellness Circle . . . . .	5
<b>SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything Is Connected . . . . .</b>	<b>6</b>
The Teen Compass: A Brief Overview . . . . .	7
Teen Wellness Compass Inventory . . . . .	8
Teen Wellness Compass Inventory Sample Responses . . . . .	9
Teen Wellness Compass Inventory Sample Results . . . . .	10
What is a NEXT Step? . . . . .	11
<b>SESSION 2: Whatever You Pay Attention to Is What Will Grow . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional. . . . .</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the “J” Curve . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SESSION 5: Systemic Dynamics and Change . . . . .</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SESSION 6: Where to From Here? . . . . .</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>The Teen Wellness Compass Inventory: Your Results . . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Heart</b> Healthy Relationships . . . . .	26
Handling Emotions . . . . .	28
<b>Soul</b> Spirituality . . . . .	30
Rest and Play . . . . .	32
<b>Strength</b> Stress Resilience . . . . .	34
Care for the Body . . . . .	36
<b>Mind</b> Organization . . . . .	38
School and Work . . . . .	40
Choosing a Mindfulness Practice . . . . .	42
About the Authors . . . . .	47

*We wish to express our deep gratitude to our friends Ab and Nancy Nicholas for their faithful and generous support. While Ab passed away in 2016, their generous support continues to make this program possible.*



## An Invitation to the Journey

---

Honest self-reflection and meaningful conversations have the power to change lives. **Teen Wellness Circles** provide opportunities for teens to experience both.

For more than thirty years, we have had the honor of walking with people of all ages on their journeys toward wellness and wholeness. We have walked with people in our professional lives as family therapists. We have also walked with people in our work in schools, YMCAs, community centers, and faith communities. Yet no matter the context, we have listened to people express a desire for more places where they can have real, open, trusted conversations, and a greater sense of meaningful, connected community.

The Teen Wellness Circle process has grown out of many years of conversations we have had the privilege of hosting with teens in our counseling offices. One of the things we've discovered along the way is that you long for these significant conversations, as well, but have few places where you are free to speak openly and honestly about the important things that are going on in your life. Wellness Circles are meant to fill that gap. They are meant to give you a safe place you need and deserve in this changing and often-challenging world.

Teen Wellness Circles engage a four-step process that is widely used in settings where growth and change are desired: "Stop, Look, Listen, and Proceed." **Stopping** involves simply making the commitment to create space in your busy life to participate in this program. **Looking** includes completing the **Teen Wellness Compass Inventory** in the first session. **Listening** involves deciding—based on what you discovered from your Wellness Inventory results—on any changes you want to make in your life. **Proceeding** involves actively working on the **NEXT Steps** that you choose for yourself. You'll learn more about NEXT Steps in Session 1.

This program also addresses eight dimensions of wellness: Healthy Relationships, Handling Emotions, Organization, School and Work, Spirituality, Rest and Play, Stress Resilience, and Care for the Body. You will learn about each of these dimensions of wellness and how they are interconnected. You will learn and practice how to be more intentional about how you live your life and the choices you make. And hopefully, you will connect with others and have fun along the way.

It is an honor to walk with you and support you on your journey toward greater wellness. Welcome to your Teen Wellness Circle!

*Holly Hughes Stoner, LMFT and D. Scott Stoner, LMFT*

Creators of *The Teen Compass Wellness Notebook* and  
the *Teen Wellness Circle* Program

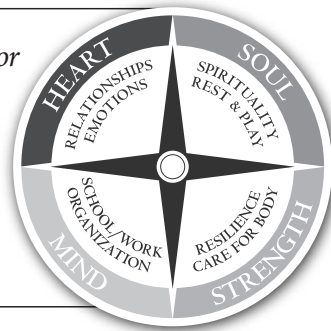
## Welcome to Your Teen Wellness Circle

---

Your **Teen Wellness Circle** will hopefully be a trusted place you can turn to for support when you feel overwhelmed or unsure of yourself, a place where you can share what's really going on in your life and what really matters to you.

These circles are also designed to be more than simply a source of support. The central focus of a Teen Wellness Circle is to coach you toward creating healthy change. It is meant to help you identify for yourself specific changes that you are ready to make and then, over six sessions, receive the support you need to make these changes. The resources in this workbook will help you check your bearings and then help you as you make any needed changes in order to point yourself in the direction you choose to go.

*Teen Wellness Circles create the opportunity for you to pause and check your bearings. First, you will check the direction in which you are heading in different areas of your life. Then you will ask yourself, "Am I heading in the direction that I desire for myself?"*



Your Teen Wellness Circle will help you explore these questions and, if necessary, make any needed adjustments.

## What is Whole-Person Wellness?

---

Whole-person wellness is based on the idea that each dimension of our lives is interconnected, meaning that each area affects the others. Difficulty sleeping may be connected to any, or all, of the following: stress at school or with friends, stress at home, a sense that life has lost its meaning, a move or change of school, or the illness or loss of a loved one. So it is important that we integrate and support all of the dimensions of our being as we seek to be healthy and well.

## Teen Wellness Circles ...

---

- focus on possibilities, not problems.
- will never require you to share if you are not comfortable.
- welcome you wherever you are on your journey toward greater wellness.
- will help you create personal goals and then support you in taking steps toward reaching those goals.
- are helpful when you are going through a transition in your life.
- will help you get yourself headed in the direction you desire.
- will help you reduce and better manage stress.
- are not a substitute for professional help; it is not group therapy or a 12-step group.
- will provide a present-moment snapshot of your current state of balance and wellness and support you in taking NEXT steps in reaching your wellness goals.

## Expectations for Participants in a Teen Wellness Circle

---

- Arrive 5–10 minutes early so that the group can start and end on time.
- Make a sincere effort to attend all six meetings. Four is the recommended minimum commitment.
- Honor confidentiality of all that is shared in the group.
- Understand that confidentiality will be waived if a facilitator believes a participant is being harmed, or is believed to be capable of harming themselves or others.
- Avoid giving advice to others. Instead, focus on listening deeply to them.
- “Resource” the group any time you want feedback or ideas from others.
- Do not monopolize “air time” in the group. Everyone needs equal time to speak.
- Establish clear goals and NEXT steps for yourself and commit to working on them between group meetings.

## An Overview of a Six-Week Teen Wellness Circle

---

A Teen Wellness Circle meets for six weeks to assist YOU in making the changes you decide are right for you. The program is a combination of education, guidance, and life coaching that maximizes your success in making positive changes.

**SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything Is Connected.** In this session you will reflect on your current whole-person wellness using the Teen Compass Wellness Inventory. You will also choose an inspirational quote to support yourself as you map the NEXT Steps of your Journey.

**SESSION 2: Whatever You Pay Attention to Is What Will Grow.** You will learn about the wellness continuum and how to pay attention to the “whispers” in your life, *before* they turn into “shouts.”

**SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional.** You will learn how to turn change into growth as you learn about the Comfort Zone, Growth Zone, and Panic Zone.

**SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the “J” Curve.** Here you will learn how to overcome the most common reason people are not successful in their attempts to grow and change. Participants receive continued support from the group.

**SESSION 5: Systemic Dynamics and Change.** You will learn how your growth impacts the all other systems in your life and will receive continued support from the group.

**SESSION 6: Where to From Here?** In this session, you celebrate your successes and share plans for how you will continue to grow and change.



## Ways to Engage during Your Six-Week Wellness Circle

---

1. Choose one of the eight areas of wellness on which to focus based on your results from the **Teen Wellness Compass Inventory**.
2. Describe where you are, and where you want to be, in this area of your life. This is the “You are Here” and “Wish You Were Here” part of the **Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey**.
3. Select an inspiring quote to guide you.
4. Pick a mindfulness practice that you will commit to doing during this program.
5. Invite others to support you on your journey.
6. Harness hope from previous positive experiences of growth as you consider any challenges you anticipate on this journey.
7. Set a specific goal for the change and growth you seek.
8. Determine a **NEXT Step** you will take each week toward your goal.
9. Continue to draw support and accountability from your Wellness Circle as you make progress with your goal and NEXT Steps.



## SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything Is Connected

Welcome to your Teen Wellness Circle. We are glad you are here. The fact that you are in this group says that you want to have a greater sense of balance and wellness in your life and are up for the work needed to better your life. This Circle will help you get started on this journey and help you along the way to better know the others from your group who will be walking this road with you. There are very few places in our culture where we can gather to have authentic conversations about life, its challenges, and its joys. Teen Wellness Circles are meant to be such places. They are not group therapy sessions, but places where you can have authentic conversations about your life and—with the guidance of a skilled facilitator and with the support of others—feel empowered to make positive, intentional changes.

One of the core principles of a Teen Wellness Circle is, “**Whatever we pay attention to is what will grow.**” At any given time we have areas of our lives we are happy about, and other areas where we are less so. Chances are pretty good that the areas we experience satisfaction are the areas where we have been focusing our attention. The opposite of this is also true. If we are less satisfied with some area of our lives, it may well be because we have not been giving it enough of our attention.

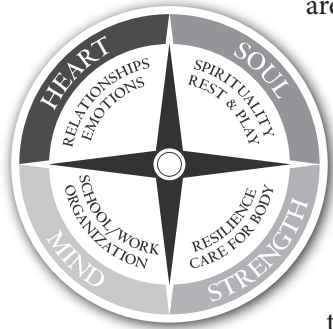
This can quickly become an ongoing cycle because we tend to prefer focusing our attention on the areas of our lives that are going well, while naturally tending to ignore or avoid the areas with which we are less satisfied. Let’s take a quick look at The Teen Compass, which will be your trusted compass and guide for the next six weeks in your Wellness Circle, and beyond.

# The Teen Compass: A Brief Overview

---

## The Four Compass Points

The “Compass” points toward the four dimensions of our being: *heart*, *soul*, *strength*, and *mind*. These dimensions are interconnected as the different parts of our lives are woven together. Much like an ecosystem, each area is affected by the other areas of the compass; therefore, whatever impacts one dimension of our lives (positively or negatively) impacts the other dimensions. A change in one area of our lives impacts the other areas.



The four points of The Teen Compass provide a guide for understanding eight areas of wellness. This will help you to better understand yourself while, at the same time, helping you to better understand others in your life.

## Eight Areas of Wellness

The **Teen Compass** is based on the idea that wellness depends on us taking care of and nurturing ourselves in all eight areas identified on the Compass. Here are the eight areas of wellness you will work from in your Wellness Circle.

1. **Healthy Relationships.** The ability to create and maintain healthy, life-giving connections with others.
2. **Handling Emotions.** The ability to process, express, and receive emotions in a healthy way.
3. **Spirituality.** The development and practice of a strong personal value system and a meaningful purpose in life.
4. **Rest and Play.** The ability to balance school, work, and play, and to renew oneself.
5. **Stress Resilience.** The ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.
6. **Care for the Body.** The ability to build healthy habits and practices around our physical well-being, and the ability to end unhealthy ones.
7. **Organization.** The ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and possessions.
8. **School and Work.** The ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities.

# Teen Wellness Compass Inventory

---

## Getting Started

The first step in the process is to look closely at your life as it is right now by using a tool we've created for you: **The Teen Wellness Compass Inventory**. This tool—like a mirror—will reflect back to you your current state of wellness. Your results may offer you a “whisper,” telling you that something in your life needs attention. The whisper is a sign, a call to you that you may need to do something different in order to begin heading in a healthy direction. The inventory is designed to help you listen to the whispers in your life, *before* they turn into “shouts.”

During the first session of your Wellness Circle, you will complete the Teen Wellness Compass Inventory for the eight areas of wellness. As you reflect on each dimension of your wellness, it may be helpful to read about each one, beginning on page 25. Each Teen Wellness Compass Inventory (on pages 26–41) contains ten statements related to that particular area of wellness.

Your results will provide you with a present-moment snapshot of your life, showing you the areas you have been paying attention to, and the areas where you might want to invest more of your time and attention.



# Teen Wellness Compass Inventory Sample Responses

## ► Organization

Being organized can be a challenge with all we have on our plates. This area of wellness can help us understand how we keep track of our time, money, possessions, and priorities. When we feel good about how we are staying organized, our stress levels are lower and we can enjoy a greater sense of balance and well-being in all other areas of our lives, too.

Never	Sometimes			Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I feel good about the way I spend, budget, and keep track of my money. 7

I am always on time for school, work, and other commitments. 6

I organize my time and plan ahead to make sure that I allow enough time to get everything done on time. 6

I am happy with the way I organize my priorities, ensuring that I have enough time to dedicate to all the different parts of my life. 7

I have a good method for remembering all of my assignments and other obligations and commitments. 4

## ► Handling Emotions

We all have a choice whether we respond or react to statements, questions, circumstances, and events that come up. When we work to become more centered and have greater control over our actions, we find we don't have to react mindlessly. Instead we can choose to respond, expressing our emotions in a healthy way.

Never	Sometimes			Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

People who know me would say I handle my emotions in a healthy way. 6

I avoid using alcohol, other drugs, and other possibly addictive behaviors to deal with my emotions. 5

The way I show my emotions demonstrates respect toward myself and others. 4

I feel good about the way I handle my emotions and how that impacts my relationships. 5

I have a solid and healthy sense of confidence in myself. 8

I know the early warning signs of depression or anxiety and would feel comfortable seeking help from a trusted person if I felt this way. 6

I am able to share my full range of emotions (including sadness, happiness, fear, pride, and worry) with people I trust. 7

I am able to communicate my emotions in a positive way without being irritable, critical, or angry. 3

When someone I care about is upset, I am comfortable listening and really being present to them. 5

When I am feeling emotionally overwhelmed, I turn to others for support and help. 8

TOTAL 57

Shade in the Handling Emotions "wedge" of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.

Area of Whole-Person Wellness: **Heart**

29

I am all organized, and I can find what I might need. 5

I take care of myself and my possessions so I don't have to rush at the last minute. 6

I balance my other obligations in a healthy way. 6

I manage my time and money, I think I am doing pretty well. 6

I have things I set out to do that day. 7

TOTAL 60

Shade in the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.

Area of Whole-Person Wellness: **Heart**

39

## Teen Wellness Compass Inventory Sample Results

---



Once you have added up the totals from each inventory, shade in that section of the compass on p. 25 (0 is at the center, 50 is halfway out, and 100 is at the outer edge). Your results are not “good” or “bad,” nor are they “strong” or “weak.” This inventory is simply a “snapshot” of your life at this very moment. It might be helpful to think of it as a garden. Your results show areas of the garden you have been watering and weeding, and which areas may be in need of some additional watering and weeding, thus more of your attention.

## What is a NEXT Step?

---

A NEXT Step is just that, the next step you feel ready to take based on a goal you set, inspired by what you learned by taking the Teen Wellness Compass Inventory. After taking the Wellness Inventory, you may or may not feel the need to create a NEXT Step. We are simply offering an invitation to make a change if you feel ready to do so.

A NEXT Step is based on an acronym that stands for ***Needed, EXcited, and Time-specific***.

***Needed*** means that you have a felt need to take this step. It relates to something you have wanted to do, something you know would be good for you. ***EXcited*** means that you are positively motivated to take this step—you want to take this step, as opposed to being motivated by a feeling that you “should” or “have to” take this step. ***Time-specific*** means that you will take your step right away or within the next several days. It’s the difference between saying, “Someday I’m going to get my morning routine more organized,” and “Starting tomorrow, I’m going to get up fifteen minutes earlier than usual and prepare a simple breakfast so I’ll feel better during the day.”

### **N** **Needed ...**

*... means the step addresses a felt need that you have.*

For example: “For several months now I have been feeling the need to spend less time on my phone texting late at night. When I do, I wake up feeling groggy and have a hard time getting out of bed.”

### **EX** **EXcited ...**

*... means the motivation for doing the step is positive—I “want” to do this rather than I “should” or “have to.”*

For example: “I am looking forward to having more energy during the day while still connecting with my friends.”

### **T** **Time-specific ...**

*... means I will do my NEXT Step at this time, or within a specific time frame.*

For example: “I am going to tell my friends today that I’m going to start limiting the time I spend on my phone late at night.”

## NEXT Steps are:

- specific thoughts, words, and/or actions you will take to promote greater wellness in your life.
- based on the principles that “we have to do different in order to get different,” and “we become what we practice.”
- what turn your goals into reality.
- are things you want to do.
- things YOU feel confident you will be able to achieve.
- specific. For example, “I will spend 10 minutes a day alone quietly listening to my music,” as opposed to, “I will try to be more relaxed this week.”

And, remember, NEXT steps need to be shared out loud with others in order to maximize your success in doing them.



# Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey

---

*To be completed between Sessions 1 and 2*

List 2-3 areas of satisfaction from your Teen Wellness Compass Inventory results.

---

---

---

List 2-3 areas of the Compass you think need more of your attention.

---

---

---

*Give some intentional thought to the following questions and then pick the dimension of wellness that you would like to focus on in this program.*

- If you think of your shaded Compass as a garden, what area do you think is in need of some additional watering and weeding right now?
- What area do you feel most motivated to work on?
- What dimension do you feel a sense of urgency about?
- What area do you feel would most positively impact your life if it were tended to?

Which area of the Compass do you want to focus on in this program?

---

---

**“You Are Here”** | Describe where you are right now in this area of wellness. How would you describe the situation?

---

---

---

**“Wish You Were Here!”** | Describe what it would be like if you were more intentional about this area of wellness. How would you like things to be?

---

---

---

**Inspiring Quote** | Many people have found it helpful to choose a quote, a line from a song, a poem, or an inspiring saying to strengthen and inspire them on their journey of growth and change. If you wish, write something here that you believe will help inspire and support you as you work to make the changes you want to make.

---

---

---

**Mindfulness Practice** | (see page 42 for help with this) Write down a centering practice you will commit to on a regular basis during this program.

---

---

---

**Support from Others** | Are there others outside your Wellness Circle whose support you will want or need? Family members? Friends? Other adults? Name them here.

---

---

---

**Challenges** | What resistance or barriers within yourself or from others might arise as you strive to grow and change?

---

---

---

**Goals** | List one or two goals that you have for yourself. These can be long- or short-term goals.

---

---

---

**NEXT Steps** | In order to begin moving toward your goals, list one or two NEXT Steps you feel ready to take this week. Remember that NEXT steps are: Needed, you are EXcited to take them, and they are Time-specific (see pages 11–12 for a detailed description of NEXT Steps).

---

---

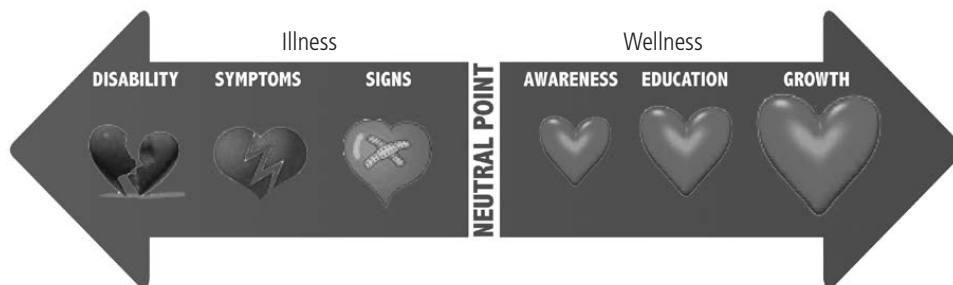
---

## SESSION 2: Whatever You Pay Attention to Is What Will Grow

By being a part of a Teen Wellness Circle, you are making a decision to pay attention to all aspects of your health and well-being. As you choose to work on a particular dimension of wellness, it is essential that you pay attention to the wellness you already have in that area, as well as how you would like to grow in that area. It won't be helpful to focus too much on your "problems" or "what is wrong." **Self-talk is very powerful. When you think about your goals and challenges, remember to talk to yourself like you would talk to someone else, someone you really care about.** You would offer encouragement to support them in their progress and decisions. You wouldn't discourage them, regardless of how negative the situation might seem. Pay attention to how often you focus on the negative in yourself and/or others. Then, as you work to gradually shift your attention toward the positives and the possibilities in yourself and others, you'll see that what you focus on is what will grow.

By now you have chosen one area of the Compass to focus on. By paying attention to this area of wellness and creating small steps (NEXT Steps) to "water and weed" this area of wellness, it can't help but grow. Sometimes when an area of our life is not going well, the temptation is to ignore it and try not to think about it. We might think that maybe it will get better on its own, but this is rarely true. By choosing **not** to pay attention to a part of our lives, we are inadvertently preventing growth from happening in that area. In the diagram of the illness-wellness continuum we can see that if we ignore the early warnings signs of distress or "dis-ease," it is possible that more serious problems will develop.

Your Wellness Circle provides a great opportunity for you to get the support you may need to pay attention to some part of your life that you have been minimizing or ignoring. As you can see from the illness-wellness continuum diagram, wellness requires awareness, education, and growth, and is a decision to proactively move to the wellness side of the "neutral point."



—Adapted from the original idea of John Travis, M.D.

# Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey

---

*For use between Sessions 2 and 3*

**Area of the Compass you want to focus on this week.**

---

**“You Are Here”** | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different from where you were before.

---

---

**“Wish You Were Here!”** | Restate or refine where you want to be.

---

---

**Inspiring Quote** | Have you chosen a quote, lyric, or saying to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your Wellness Circle? What is it? Or, do you want to choose a new one for this week?

---

---

**Mindfulness Practice** | Keep the same or choose a new one.

---

---

**Support from Others** | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to? Who is it, and when and how might you do that?

---

---

**Goals** | List one or two goals that you have for yourself, remembering that a goal can be long- or short-term.

---

---

**NEXT Steps** | Needed, you are EXcited about, and Time-specific. List at least one NEXT Step for the upcoming week that you will take to help you reach your goal.

---

---

---

## SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional.

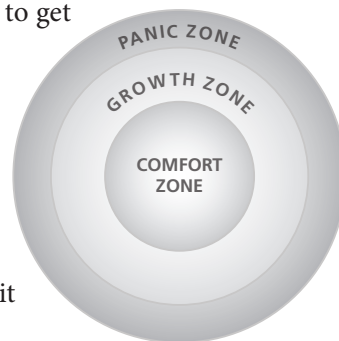
—JOHN C. MAXWELL

Every individual, relationship, family, group, and school functions within a set of patterns and norms. Over time, these patterns and routines, many that are necessary for our day-to-day functioning, become familiar and very comfortable. This Comfort Zone works like a set of unwritten rules about how things should be. Hopefully, for the people involved, most of these norms are helpful and promote well-being, but occasionally norms or habits can be harmful. For example, if a family or an individual has an unwritten norm that it's not okay to ask for help, in the long run, that will negatively affect the well-being of everyone in the family. This will especially be true if they try to pretend that they don't need help when they actually do.

In the diagram below, we can see that in order to grow, we need to risk moving out of our Comfort Zones. **We can move out of the Comfort Zone in one of two ways: either we move proactively and intentionally, or we can be forced to move because of life circumstances.** Either way, it is important to note that all growth is initially uncomfortable because it requires us to move out of our Comfort Zone. Someone who has never been assertive is going to be very uncomfortable as they begin to practice assertiveness. Signing up for a challenging class, talking with a friend or parent about something important, or trying a new extracurricular activity are just a few examples of things that can push us out of our Comfort Zones.

The Panic Zone is what we might slip into if we try to grow or change too much or too fast. We are also more likely to feel panic if we are forced out of our Comfort Zone against our will. For example, if we hide something we are struggling with (choosing the Comfort Zone over the Growth Zone), we may one day find ourselves in the Panic Zone when we can no longer hide our struggle. The lesson from this is that if we rigidly defend our Comfort Zones, refusing to be proactive about growth, we will usually end up finding ourselves thrown from the Comfort Zone into the Panic Zone sooner or later. For example, if you avoid talking to your parents or other adults about any worries, depression, or anxiety because it makes you uncomfortable, you are missing an opportunity to get the help and support you need.

When we intentionally and regularly stretch ourselves into the Growth Zone, we not only minimize our chances of getting thrown into the Panic Zone, we also expand our Comfort Zones, giving us greater flexibility, growth, and wellness. And as we spend more time in the Growth Zone, over time, it becomes our new Comfort Zone.



# Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey

---

*For use between Sessions 3 and 4*

**Area of the Compass you want to focus on this week.**

---

**“You Are Here”** | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different from where you were before.

---

---

**“Wish You Were Here!”** | Restate or refine where you want to be.

---

---

**Inspiring Quote** | Have you chosen a quote, lyric, or saying to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your Wellness Circle? What is it? Or, do you want to choose a new one for this week?

---

---

**Mindfulness Practice** | Keep the same or choose a new one.

---

---

**Support from Others** | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to? Who is it, and when and how might you do that?

---

---

**Goals** | List one or two goals that you have for yourself, remembering that a goal can be long- or short-term.

---

---

**NEXT Steps** | Needed, you are EXcited about, and Time-specific. List at least one NEXT Step for the upcoming week that you will take to help you reach your goal.

---

---

---

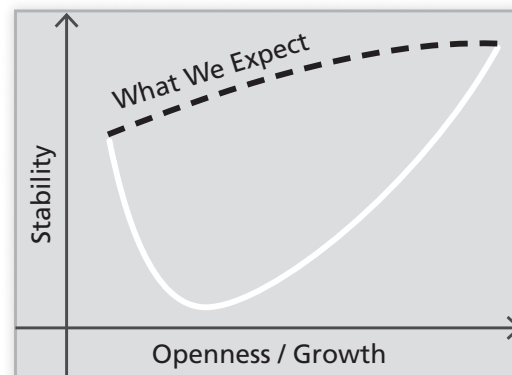
## SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the “J” Curve

Change is all around us. It can't be avoided. It is a given that unplanned and unwanted changes are stressful, such as having to switch to a new school, our parents deciding to separate, having to move, a sudden injury, the death of a friend or loved one, or changes in a relationship.

**Everyone knows that unplanned changes that come out of the blue are stressful. What is perhaps not as well understood is that even changes that are chosen, planned for, and eagerly anticipated can also be stressful.** Changes such as starting a new job, having a sport season or other activity start up, moving to a new community, blending a family, or graduating. Regardless of whether these changes are chosen and planned, or unwanted and unplanned, we have to make adjustments that can cause stress and throw us off balance. While we can't avoid this, we can better understand change and work to make the best of it.

The J Curve is a helpful concept to explain why and how both planned and unplanned change creates stress. Note that the J Curve has a vertical axis representing “Stability” and a horizontal axis showing “Openness/Growth.” The dotted line represents the trajectory we would all like to experience, adjusting quickly and easily when change happens. While we often expect positive, planned changes to follow this path, the reality is that all change initially creates a period of instability that can be unsettling. The J Curve illustrates that we will feel destabilized following a change, even when we are excited about it. During the initial phase of most change, because we are uncomfortable, we frequently want to return to the way things used to be. This is a very common reaction. Gradually though, if we stick with it and are open to the new reality and work to adjust to it, things will eventually get better and the new way of living will feel normal and comfortable. Growth will have happened. Knowing about the J Curve can help us see that with time, openness, and effort, we *can* grow into new realities.

It is important to note that not all change seems to follow the J Curve. For example, in a new relationship, our excitement can mask our natural discomfort associated with the instability of change. It is important to acknowledge this masking so that we don't miss an important opportunity for personal growth or lose ourselves in a new and exciting situation.



—Adapted from *The J Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall*, by Ian Bremmer, 2006

# Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey

---

*For use between Sessions 4 and 5*

**Area of the Compass you want to focus on this week.**

---

**“You Are Here”** | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different from where you were before.

---

---

**“Wish You Were Here!”** | Restate or refine where you want to be.

---

---

**Inspiring Quote** | Have you chosen a quote, lyric, or saying to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your Wellness Circle? What is it? Or, do you want to choose a new one for this week?

---

---

**Mindfulness Practice** | Keep the same or choose a new one.

---

---

**Support from Others** | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to? Who is it, and when and how might you do that?

---

---

**Goals** | List one or two goals that you have for yourself, remembering that a goal can be long- or short-term.

---

---

**NEXT Steps** | Needed, you are EXcited about, and Time-specific. List at least one NEXT Step for the upcoming week that you will take to help you reach your goal.

---

---

---



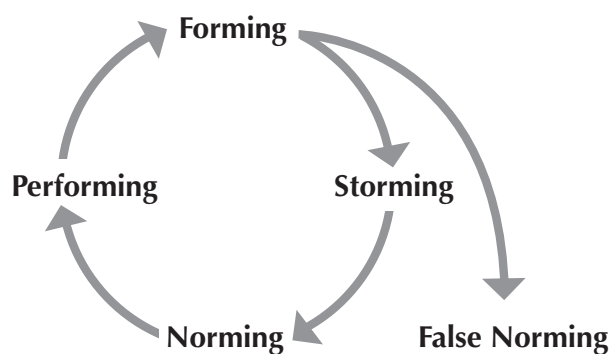
## SESSION 5: Systemic Dynamics and Change

Any group of people who interact regularly constitutes a **system**. Systems include families, friend groups, couples, students in a class, a team, or a club. Systems naturally like to find balance and then maintain that balance, and that becomes the foundation on which it functions, be it healthy or unhealthy. In any system, when a person makes an important change, it creates a **storm** because the change impacts everyone else in the system, who then have to adjust. If this **storming** phase—when everyone is being impacted and feeling off balance—is worked through patiently, honestly, with understanding and flexibility, it will lead to a new normal that allows the system to once again **perform** well. If not, the group may struggle to work together positively.

**Natural life transitions are one type of change that can create a storm in a system.** For example, let's say you are getting ready to graduate and leave home. You and your family will experience a big change in your former **norm** of what it looks and feels like to be a family. It is to be expected that there will be some level of storming before you achieve a new way of being a family.

Sometimes others in the systems in which we live resist our attempts to grow and change. If they do, it is often not conscious or purposeful on their part. One reason they may do this is that when we change, the old “normal” of the system is threatened and others in the system will also have to change, even if they don't want to. For example, a group of your friends starts doing things you know aren't good (cheating, bullying, or using drugs or alcohol) and you decide to change friends or groups and to no longer participate. The friends who continue the behavior are not likely to support you making a positive change. They may get mad or feel betrayed, and might even try to convince you to stick with the group and to not pull away. This can cause a lot of drama in a group of friends, and that drama is **storming** (see graphic).

Learning how to handle storms in a healthy way is important. Sometimes reaching out to a trusted adult is a good idea because storms can be dangerous.



—Adapted from “Tuckman’s Theories,” by Bruce Tuckman, 1965

# Mapping the NEXT Steps of Your Journey

---

*For use between Sessions 5 and 6*

**Area of the Compass you want to focus on this week.**

---

**“You Are Here”** | Describe where you are right now and note if this is different from where you were before.

---

---

**“Wish You Were Here!”** | Restate or refine where you want to be.

---

---

**Inspiring Quote** | Have you chosen a quote, lyric, or saying to inspire and strengthen you during your time in your Wellness Circle? What is it? Or, do you want to choose a new one for this week?

---

---

**Mindfulness Practice** | Keep the same or choose a new one.

---

---

**Support from Others** | Have you asked others for support? Do you need to? Who is it, and when and how might you do that?

---

---

**Goals** | List one or two goals that you have for yourself, remembering that a goal can be long- or short-term.

---

---

**NEXT Steps** | Needed, you are EXcited about, and Time-specific. List at least one NEXT Step for the upcoming week that you will take to help you reach your goal.

---

---

---

## SESSION 6: Where to From Here?

*You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.  
You're on your own.  
And you know what you know.  
You are the one who'll decide where to go.  
—Dr. Seuss, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!**

As your Wellness Circle comes to a close, you now know that your wellness is influenced by the choices you make every day. Achieving and maintaining wellness is a lifelong process, not a destination, and you will be working on it for the rest of your life. You will have setbacks and life experiences that will cause you to struggle to maintain wellness by forcing you to grow and establish new norms regularly. The advantage of paying attention to your well-being now is that you have the opportunity to set patterns proactively and build a solid foundation, rather than when you are older when it will be harder to change established behaviors. You can work to create a good life for yourself now by being intentional and by listening to your own inner thoughts and wishes. You can decide now to be intentional about taking time to look at your life. You can make it a habit to “stop, look, listen, and proceed,” making adjustments as needed to keep yourself on course. It is up to you.

You likely have some dreams of what you would like your future life to look like. The decisions you make each day are the building blocks of that life and will play a big part in determining which way your life will go.

As you gather for your last session, it is important to affirm and celebrate the choices each person in the circle has made to be well during this program. Begin by doing a final check-in with each other about how your NEXT Steps went this past week. Take time as a group to honor and mark what you have experienced together. And make a pledge to support each other on your journeys toward growth and wellness in the future.

**One of the most important things we hope you take away from this program is to remember to continue to pay attention to your life and to be proactive about your wellness.** Pay attention to the people you care about and to those who care for you. Pay attention to any signs that you are not heading where you want to be heading, or that your life is out of balance, and commit to doing something about it by remembering to stop, look, listen, and then proceed. Pay attention to your passions and consider how you might make the world a better place. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings and respect them as valuable. Pay attention to the good things about yourself and your life. Remember that what you commit time and energy to will grow.

# Closing Reflection and Celebration

---

*For use at part of Session 6*

**Celebrate!** | Write down one or two things you want to celebrate, things that happened for you in this six-week Wellness Circle.

---

---

---

Name the area of the Compass you want to continue to pay attention to and explain why:

---

---

---

How would your life look different if you continued to pay attention to that area for the next six months? Think around the Compass.

---

---

---

Name something inspirational you want to take forward with you, such as a quote, poem, or a mindfulness practice:

---

---

---

Name one thing you are grateful for as your Wellness Circle concludes:

---

---

---

Something you now know and something you can now affirm about

Yourself: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Friends/Others: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Teen Wellness Compass Inventory: Your Results



*To be filled out in Session 1*

After you've rated each statement, add the numbers together to arrive at your total for that area, and then shade in that area of wellness (a total of "0" is at the center, "50" halfway out, and a total number of "100" means you shade in the whole "wedge"). See pages 9 and 10 for an example. Once your Compass is shaded in, it might be helpful to think of it as a garden. Your results show areas of the garden you have been watering and weeding, and which areas may be a bit wilted and in need of some attention.

## HEART HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



*Hold a true friend with both of your hands.* —Nigerian Proverb

*Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.* —Dr. Seuss, author

*The best things in life are the people we love, the places we have been, and the memories we've made along the way.* —Marjolein Basdin, author and illustrator

*If you see something beautiful in someone, speak it.* —Ruthie Lindsey, speaker and designer

*Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.* —Ralph Waldo Emerson, author

Relationships are important. Relationships are how we interact with all the other people in our lives. While there are times we might feel alone, there are others all around us all the time. When we build healthy relationships with them, those relationships can have a very strong impact on our overall well-being.

**In fact, few things affect the quality of our lives more than the quality of our relationships.** Think about it. A fight with a good friend can ruin a day. A word of praise from a teacher, parent, or coach can make you feel confident. If a friend betrays you or a parent hurts you, it can make all the other parts of your life seem difficult. Relationships can give us energy or drain us of needed energy. They are very important, and we all need to be intentional about how we both build them and participate in them.

With relationships being such an important part of your life, it is important to pause and take time to look at the relationships you have right now.

Think about your relationships with your extended family, parents, siblings, close friends, and others as you read over the following questions.

- How honest and real are you in your relationships?
- Are you comfortable being vulnerable with those to whom you are closest?
- Are you able to turn to others for help and support when you need it?
- Is there at least one person in your life with whom you can be fully yourself?

*Please complete the **Healthy Relationships Inventory** on the following page.*

## ► Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships don't just "happen"; we co-create them with others. Remember, everyone can learn skills that will improve the quality of their relationships. The grass is always greener where we water it, and so it is helpful to reflect on whether there are any relationships in our lives that need "watering."

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I am satisfied with the amount of time I spend with the important people in my life. \_\_\_\_\_

I am satisfied with the honest conversations I am able to have with my family and others who are important to me. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the relationships I have with my family members. \_\_\_\_\_

I am happy with my friendships and other social connections. \_\_\_\_\_

My friends and others who know me well would say that I am a good and trusted friend. \_\_\_\_\_

My friends and I share the same positive values. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the impact my use/or non-use of alcohol and other drugs has on my relationships with friends and family. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel proud of the amount of trust, respect, and honesty that exists in my relationships, including my dating relationships, if applicable. \_\_\_\_\_

When conflict comes up with family or friends, I am able to talk about it and resolve it in a productive way. \_\_\_\_\_

I am able to identify and end unhealthy relationships when I need to. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Relationships "wedge" of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## HEART HANDLING EMOTIONS



*The walls we build around ourselves to keep sadness out, also keep out the joy.* —Jim Rohn, entrepreneur

*Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.*  
—Dalai Lama, spiritual leader

*People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget the way you made them feel.* —Bonnie Jean Wasmund, educator

*Honor the space between no longer and not yet.* —Nancy Levin, author, speaker, and coach

*Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.* —Aristotle, philosopher

**Feeling and Expressing the Full Range of Emotions.** Imagine that your emotions exist on a continuum, or a scale from zero to ten. Think of the emotions on the bottom end of the scale, zero to five, as the difficult or unpleasant emotions, such as fear, worry, anger, and sadness. Now think of the emotions at the top end of the scale, six to ten, as the pleasurable emotions, such as joy, laughter, love, and excitement. Right in the middle, at number five, is considered the neutral point, where we don't really feel much of anything, pleasant or unpleasant.

Here is an important insight: **There is a strong connection between the degree to which we are comfortable feeling and expressing unpleasant emotions and the degree to which we feel and express pleasurable emotions.** Difficulty feeling and/or appropriately expressing unpleasant feelings usually means we will have difficulty feeling and expressing positive feelings, as well. While we know that we all have the full range of emotions, it is when we either hide our feelings from view or let them explode that we get into trouble.

The following questions might be helpful as you think about emotions.

- Are you handling your emotions, or are they handling you?
- Are you comfortable feeling and expressing the full range of emotions: sadness, fear, anger, joy, etc.?
- Do your emotions “get the best of you,” causing you to say or do things you later regret?
- Are you ever concerned that you might be suffering from depression or anxiety? Who would you feel comfortable talking to about these feelings?
- Are you comfortable listening and being present to someone who is hurting, upset, or very emotional?

Please complete the **Handling Emotions Inventory** on the following page.



## ► Handling Emotions

We all have a choice whether to respond or react to statements, questions, circumstances, and events that come up. When we work to become more centered and have greater control over our actions, we find we don't have to react mindlessly. Instead we can choose to respond, expressing our emotions in a healthy way.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

People who know me would say I handle my emotions in a healthy way. \_\_\_\_\_

I avoid using alcohol, other drugs, and other possibly addictive behaviors to deal with my emotions. \_\_\_\_\_

The way I show my emotions demonstrates respect toward myself and others. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the way I handle my emotions and how that impacts my relationships. \_\_\_\_\_

I have a solid and healthy sense of confidence in myself. \_\_\_\_\_

I know the early warning signs of depression or anxiety and would feel comfortable seeking help from a trusted person if I felt this way. \_\_\_\_\_

I am able to share my full range of emotions (including sadness, happiness, fear, pride, and worry) with people I trust. \_\_\_\_\_

I am able to communicate my emotions in a positive way without being irritable, critical, or angry. \_\_\_\_\_

When someone I care about is upset, I am comfortable listening and really being present to them. \_\_\_\_\_

When I am feeling emotionally overwhelmed, I turn to others for support and help. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Handling Emotions “wedge” of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## SOUL SPIRITUALITY



*I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness—it's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.* —Brené Brown, professor, author, and speaker

*You cannot kindle a fire in any other heart until it is burning in your own.*  
—Unknown

*The purpose of life is a life of purpose.* —Robert Byrne, author, engineer, and billiards champion

*Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.* —Howard Thurman, philosopher and educator

*We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.*  
—Martin Luther King, Jr., clergyman and civil rights activist

The word *spirituality* comes from the same root as the word *breath*. We see the root of the word *spirituality* in words like *respiration*, which means *to breathe*, and *inspire*, which means *to breathe new life into something*. In our metaphor of a compass, our spirituality is how we define “true north” for ourselves. **Our spirituality gives our life direction and purpose, inspires us, give us the energy to live, and guides our life choices.**

Spirituality then is not the same as religion, although devoting ourselves to a particular religion is one way in which we could express our spirituality. Spirituality, whatever that looks like for each of us, helps us to define our core values and beliefs, those we turn to to guide all the important decisions in our lives. If honesty, respect, and integrity, for example, are cores values for you, they will guide how you treat others, as well as provide guidance for you if an opportunity to be dishonest or disrespectful comes up. In any of the ethical situations that you face every day, your spirituality helps you as you decide about challenging issues, such as cheating, gossiping, bullying, lying, or stealing.

Another way to think about spirituality is to think of it as the root system of a tree. In order for trees to grow tall and to weather storms, droughts, and floods, they need to have strong root systems. Roots literally keep trees well-grounded. What is true for trees is also true for us. We all need a strong root system to sustain us through the many changes and challenges we will face in life, both now and in the future. It is during these times that our spirituality will give us meaning, hope, and grounding. Our spirituality identifies our purpose, forms ours values, and keeps us well-grounded.

*Please complete the **Spirituality Inventory** on the following page.*

## ► Spirituality

Just as a tree depends on a deep root system to be nurtured and supported when storms arise, our values, our “true north” depends on the support system we have in place. In whatever way we choose, our spirituality is that root system that keeps us well-grounded and supported, pointing the way toward our deepest values, purpose, and meaning.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I may not yet know what I want to do with my life, but I know my life has meaning and purpose. \_\_\_\_\_

I am pleased with what I give back to the world. \_\_\_\_\_

I am involved in an activity that really matters to me. \_\_\_\_\_

I forgive others and I forgive myself. \_\_\_\_\_

I seek forgiveness from family and friends when I have hurt them. \_\_\_\_\_

I have activities that I do regularly to renew my soul, to center myself, and to gain perspective. \_\_\_\_\_

I am a part of a community that enriches my spiritual life. \_\_\_\_\_

The way I am living my life is consistent with my spirituality and values. \_\_\_\_\_

I am thankful for the good things in my life. \_\_\_\_\_

My spirituality and values influence my behavior, thoughts, and daily decisions. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Spirituality “wedge” of the Self-Assessment Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## SOUL REST AND PLAY



*Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe. —Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States*

*Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. —Maya Angelou, author*

*You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. —Plato, philosopher*

*Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you. —Anne Lamott, author*

*'Promise me you'll always remember: You are braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.' Christopher Robin to Pooh. —A.A. Milne, author*

Telling others how busy we are seems to have become a badge of honor in our culture. We are involved in so many things and have so many responsibilities that we can easily lose track of how important rest and play are to our well-being.

The quote from President Lincoln talks about the importance of sharpening an axe before using it to chop down a tree. Rest and play help to strengthen our well-being so that when we do need to work hard, we are sharp enough to perform well. If we are having trouble performing well, it may be because we have become tired and dull and in need of some downtime to renew ourselves. In this we are not much different than our phones or any of the other battery-dependent devices we use—we both wear down and need recharging on a regular basis.

Here are some questions for you to think about.

- How often do you allow yourself to simply play?
- What are the attitudes about play in your family?
- How do you play? Is it healthy?
- Do you take time to renew yourself every week or weekend?
- Do you have hobbies that you enjoy?
- Do you get enough sleep most nights?

*Please complete the **Rest and Play** Inventory on the following page.*

## ► Rest and Play

While some people feel guilty when they take time to have fun, goof off, take a nap, or just play, it is important to remember that, just like our cell phones, we all need to be recharged regularly. Healthy sleep, fun time with family and friends, unscheduled and “unplugged” time, all help us lower the stress hormone cortisol and help us feel refreshed and ready to go.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I get enough rest to rejuvenate myself most of the time. \_\_\_\_\_

I am satisfied with the amount of time that I have set aside for healthy fun. \_\_\_\_\_

I have at least one hobby or interest that renews me, and I make time for it on a regular basis. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the kinds of activities I do during my free time and know they are good for my overall well-being. \_\_\_\_\_

I enjoy recreational involvement in activities at school, in my community, at my place of worship, or with other local organizations. \_\_\_\_\_

I actively take advantage of opportunities to try new activities and new ways to have fun. \_\_\_\_\_

I am confident that my connection to technology, such as video games, TV, computer, social media, and cell phone, is good for my overall well-being. \_\_\_\_\_

I frequently have fun where alcohol and other drugs are not present. \_\_\_\_\_

The people with whom I spend my free time are a good influence on me. \_\_\_\_\_

I use some of my free time to renew my relationship with myself. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Rest and Play “wedge” of the Inventory on page 25 with your total.*

## STRENGTH STRESS RESILIENCE



*Everything is hard before it is easy.* —J.W. Goethe, writer and statesman

*Stress is the trash of modern life—we all generate it, but if you don’t dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life.* —Danzae Pace, author

*There’s no such thing as ruining your life. Life’s a pretty resilient thing, it turns out.* —Sophie Kinsella, novelist

*No matter how you define success, you will need to be resilient, empowered, authentic, and limber to get there.* —Joanie Connell, organizational consultant and leadership coach

*Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.* —Unknown

Stress resilience has to do with how well we deal with the changes and transitions, planned and unplanned, in our lives and how well we manage stress in general. When we are resilient, which means “to bounce back, or spring back to shape or form,” we regularly take time and allow ourselves to do the hard work of confronting and growing through changes. Too often we try to avoid feelings of uncertainty and confusion during stressful times or times of change. This may seem like a good idea in the short term, but will always limit our emotional well-being in the long run. It is better to talk with others about our feelings and get support.

As you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life, reflect on whether you have been through any of the changes listed below. How fully have you addressed any transitions you have been through? Having a trusted person to talk through your feelings can do a world of good for your emotional well-being.

- Divorce or parents separating
- New relationship or ending a relationship
- New person in the family
- Blending families
- Financial stress
- Health issue in yourself or a loved one
- Death of a loved one
- Leaving home
- Moving
- Accident or injury
- Parent loses job
- New school or harder classes

Everyone has stress. There is no place we can go to get away from it. But we don’t have to let stress overwhelm us. We don’t have to let stress, “stress us out.” Stress is part of life for everyone. Like all aspects of life, we will be better off if we learn skills to help us work through stressful times so they don’t take over our lives.

*Please complete the **Stress Resilience Inventory** on the following page.*

## ► Stress Resilience

All lives are filled with frustrations and pressures, and we call that stress. Stress is a normal part of life, but if our stress levels are constantly elevated, we will be more vulnerable to health problems. The good news is that we can develop skills to become more resilient, to help us bounce back from the inevitable stress that life brings us.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I feel good that things going on in my personal life rarely interfere with my concentration at school or work. \_\_\_\_\_

I respond to changes in my life with a positive attitude. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the support I get from others when I have something big going on in my life. \_\_\_\_\_

When I face a life challenge, I feel confident that I handle the accompanying stress in a healthy way. \_\_\_\_\_

When I have problems, I am able to keep them in perspective. \_\_\_\_\_

I set realistic goals for myself. \_\_\_\_\_

When I have a problem, I turn to others for support rather than keeping it to myself. \_\_\_\_\_

I am satisfied with the way I handle stress, handling it in healthy ways rather than coping by engaging in self-destructive habits or behaviors that hurt others. \_\_\_\_\_

In the past month, I have been free from any symptoms of stress, such as trouble sleeping, headaches, outbursts of anger, or feelings of depression that may be related to stress. \_\_\_\_\_

I am dealing well with any major life changes, planned or unplanned, that have occurred over the last few years. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Stress Resilience “wedge” of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## STRENGTH CARE FOR THE BODY



*I think there's so much emphasis on body image and results and outcome, but really what you should be after is to be healthy and to feel good about yourself.* —Abby Wambach, professional soccer player

*My smile is my favorite part of my body. I think a smile can make your whole body.* —Serena Williams, professional tennis player

*The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are.* —Joseph Campbell, scholar and author

*To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don't need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.* —Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and peace activist

*Beauty is about being comfortable in your own skin. It's about knowing and accepting who you are.* —Ellen DeGeneres, TV personality and comedian

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis, often too much emphasis, on physical wellness and body image. Yet it is important to care for our bodies because they are the only ones we will ever get. It is essential for our long-term health to find a balanced approach to the care and nurturing of our physical wellness. How we care for our bodies, now and in the future, will have a significant impact on how our bodies function and serve us later on. As you think about caring for your body, you might reflect on the following questions.

- Are you thoughtful about your nutrition and eating patterns?
- Have you ever been concerned that you eat or drink for emotional reasons, as a way to comfort yourself?
- What role do alcohol and/or other drugs play in your life? Do you think you are creating healthy habits where these things are concerned?
- Do you go to the doctor and dentist for regular checkups and care when needed?
- Are you comfortable with your sexuality? Are you making healthy decisions in this part of your life?

*Please complete the **Care for the Body Inventory** on the following page.*



## ► Care for the Body

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis both on physical wellness and on body image, and sometimes the messages are contradictory. The two extremes of either obsessing about our bodies, or neglecting them, are something we want to avoid. It can be challenging, but essential for our long-term health, to find a balanced approach for the care and nurturing of our bodies.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The daily choices I make about what I eat and drink are healthy. \_\_\_\_\_

I have positive feelings about my relationship with food (what I eat, why I eat, and how often I eat). \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the amount of regular exercise I get. \_\_\_\_\_

I determine what is healthy and right for me in terms of weight and appearance, rather than letting my peers or the culture determine that for me. \_\_\_\_\_

I go to the doctor and dentist for regular checkups and talk to someone about a health problem as soon as it arises. \_\_\_\_\_

I am comfortable with my sexuality and know that my sexual decisions are healthy and safe for me, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. \_\_\_\_\_

I am proud of the amount of respect I show to my body. \_\_\_\_\_

My current weight is healthy for me. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel confident that my decisions regarding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are serving me well. \_\_\_\_\_

Most days I get at least eight hours of sleep during normal sleeping hours. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Care for the Body “wedge” of the Inventory Tool on page with your total.*

## MIND ORGANIZATION



*The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.* —Stephen Covey, educator and business author

*Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up.* —A. A. Milne, author

*Clutter is not just physical stuff, it's old ideas, toxic relationships and bad habits* —Eleanor Brown, novelist, editor, and teacher

*Most people overestimate what they can do in a month and underestimate what they can do in an hour.* —Anonymous

*Do. Or do not. There is no try.* —Yoda, Star Wars character

Do you think getting organized is boring? Many people do. Many of us think we are “too busy” to take time to get organized. Some people even make fun of people who are super organized. Let’s face it, most people think there are more interesting and fun things to do besides organizing their time or their “stuff.” But people who are organized will tell you that being organized contributes to their overall well-being and is well worth the time it takes.

**Being disorganized can be both a symptom and a cause of stress in our lives, whether it is disorganization of time, our environment, finances, or belongings.** Everything becomes harder and requires more time when we are not organized. A vicious cycle can easily be set in motion; we become more stressed if we are not organized, which in turn leads to us to being even less organized and more stressed.

The good news is that anyone can make immediate progress in becoming better organized once they set their intentions to do so, and once they ask for the support of others. Whatever patterns we have around organizing our time, money, and “stuff” are simply learned habits and—like all habits—they can be changed. It helps to remember that creating a new habit takes time and energy. Research shows that on average it takes at least thirty days of intentional change to form a new habit.

Many of us often find ourselves so busy that everything seems like it is urgent. When this happens, we lose our ability to plan and prioritize. One of the symptoms of getting caught up in the “tyranny of the urgent” is feeling like we are wasting time if we take time out to plan and prioritize. In the end however, as hard as it is to believe, planning and prioritizing will save us time and make our lives much calmer.

Take an honest look at your life and assess how well you are organizing all the important things in your life: calendar, money, personal spaces such as a bedroom, locker and backpack, your school work, and your priorities.

*Please complete the **Organization Inventory** on the following page.*

## ► Organization

Being organized can be a challenge with all we have on our plates. This area of wellness can help us understand how we keep track of our time, money, possessions, and priorities. When we feel good about how we are staying organized, our stress levels are lower and we can enjoy a greater sense of balance and well-being in all other areas of our lives, too.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I feel good about the way I spend, budget, and keep track of my money. \_\_\_\_\_

I am always on time for school, work, and other commitments. \_\_\_\_\_

I organize my time and plan ahead to make sure that I allow enough time to get everything done on time. \_\_\_\_\_

I am happy with the way I organize my priorities, ensuring that I have enough time to dedicate to all the different parts of my life. \_\_\_\_\_

I have a good method for remembering all of my assignments and other obligations and commitments. \_\_\_\_\_

My backpack, locker, and bedroom are all organized, and I can quickly get my hands on anything I might need. \_\_\_\_\_

I regularly take time to organize myself and my possessions so that I do not have to rush around at the last minute. \_\_\_\_\_

I juggle school, friends, family, and other obligations in a healthy way. \_\_\_\_\_

When thinking about how to spend my time and money, I think about others' needs as well as my own. \_\_\_\_\_

Most days I accomplish all of the things I set out to do that day. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the Organization “wedge” of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## MIND

### SCHOOL AND WORK



*Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.* —Malala Yousafzai, activist for female education and youngest Nobel Prize laureate

*It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.* —e. e. cummings, poet, painter, and playwright

*The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.* —Pablo Picasso, artist

*When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life.* —Jean Shinoda Bolen, psychiatrist

*We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light.* —Mary Dunbar, artist and teacher

Whether you love it, hate it, or are indifferent about it, school is one of the most important parts of your life. Some say going to school is like a job; it is what you have to do and where you need to do your best. Why? So you can get a job, go to college, be a well-educated member of society, or gain important tools so you can help solve some of the world's problems?

Perhaps there is another reason. There is a story of a student who asked her wise teacher, "I want to make a difference in the world. What does the world need me to do?" The teacher responded, "Do what makes you feel most alive, because the world needs more people who are fully alive." Maybe the reason you go to school is to help you find and begin to explore what makes you feel fully alive, equip you to live into that passion, and then use it to enjoy life and to make the world a better place.

As you think about the role of school and work in your life, the following questions may be helpful.

- Can you see a sense of purpose in your schooling?
- Do you see how your schooling fits into the bigger purpose of your life?
- How do you relate to those with whom you go to school, work, or serve?
- Are you comfortable expressing your needs and wants where you go to school?
- Are you learning and growing at school?
- If you work, or have other extracurriculars, do they ever interfere with your schooling?

*Please complete the **School and Work Inventory** on the following page.*

## ► School and Work

It is up to us how much we will get out of our education, volunteer work, or employment. We can choose to use the hours we spend at school, extracurricular activities, volunteering, or at work as opportunities to better prepare us for the future, to grow into who we are meant to become, and to identify the purpose and values we will express in the world.

Never		Sometimes		Half of the Time		Most of the Time		Always		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

I feel good about my overall involvement in school, knowing I'm doing my best. \_\_\_\_\_

I am personally satisfied with my grades. \_\_\_\_\_

I am pleased with the connections I have with the teachers and staff at school. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the relationships I have with other students and how those relationships impact my all-around success at school. \_\_\_\_\_

I am comfortable expressing my needs and wants at school or work. \_\_\_\_\_

I am satisfied that my use of social media, the internet, and video games has no negative impact on my school, volunteer, or work performance. \_\_\_\_\_

I am confident that my school/volunteer/sports/job performance is helping guide my future in a positive way. \_\_\_\_\_

I feel good about the way my decisions regarding alcohol and/or other drugs impact my learning, volunteer, sports, and/or job performance. \_\_\_\_\_

I am beginning to see an area of study, or am developing an interest, that may influence what I will want to do for work as an adult. \_\_\_\_\_

I am satisfied with the way I pay attention, participate, and prepare homework for my classes, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, or job. \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

*Shade in the School and Work “wedge” of the Inventory Tool on page 25 with your total.*

## Choosing a Mindfulness Practice

---

An important step in “Mapping the NEXT Steps of your Journey” is choosing a mindfulness practice because we make our best choices and decisions when we are not stressed. In fact, we may say something like the following when we are stressed: “That wasn’t like me to say or do that,” or, “I certainly wasn’t my best self yesterday.” Statements like these acknowledge that when we don’t act from a place of centeredness, our actions are less likely to be in alignment with our core values.

A mindfulness practice is simply a commitment to do something on a regular basis that connects us with our “best self.” A centering practice calms us and recharges our spirits. By definition, our spirit is unique and what reduces our stress will be different for each of us, so adopting a few of these practices is a good habit to get into. And, while each of us is unique, we all share the universal need to have our spirits regularly tended to and nurtured.

Following are some examples of practices others have used in their Wellness Circle. This is simply a list to help get you started in case you are unfamiliar with mindfulness practices. There are many more that you can discover by searching online or other sources. You may already have something healthy that you do to reduce stress. If so, you might want to share it with others in your Wellness Circle.

- Keeping a gratitude journal and writing in it what you are thankful for each day.
- Sitting quietly in silence or while listening to music you find calming.
- Meditating on an inspirational reading or quote by repeating it slowly in time with your breath.
- Spending time in nature.
- Reading a book that inspires you.
- Choosing a mantra and speaking it silently or out loud throughout the day.
- Practicing yoga, tai chi, or other forms of spiritual movement.
- Playing a musical instrument, singing, or dancing, with others or alone.
- Painting, drawing, or participating in any form of artistic expression.
- Writing a letter to someone you love (living or someone who has passed).
- Spending time with your dog, cat, or other pet.
- Creating a comfortable, relaxing place in your home.
- Participating in a community of faith.











## About the Authors

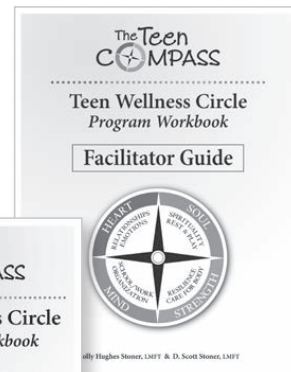
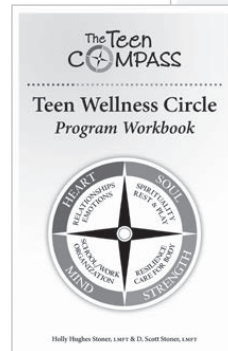
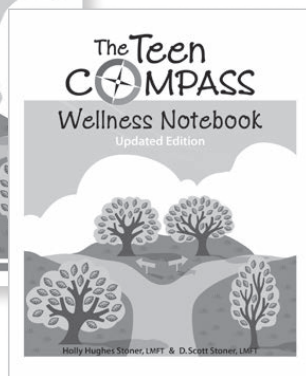
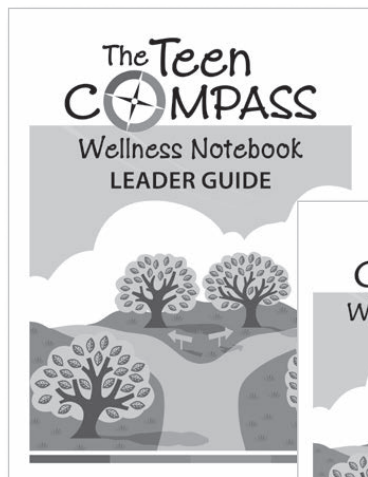
**Scott and Holly Stoner** are the Co-Executive Directors of the Samaritan Family Wellness Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They are both Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFTs) with a combined sixty-five+ years of experience helping parents and families. They are the creators of the *Parent Wellness Compass*, *The Teen Compass Wellness Notebook*, and both the *Parent Wellness Circle* and the *Teen Wellness Circle* programs.

Holly has worked with many families and children as a teacher at grade-school, middle-school, and high-school levels. Both Holly and Scott have also worked with families of all kinds in their family therapy practices.



### To Order (SamaritanFamilyWellness.org):

- *Teen Wellness Circle Program Workbook Facilitator Guide (for this Workbook)*
- *The Teen Compass Wellness Notebook*
- *The Teen Compass Wellness Notebook Leader Guide*
- *Teen Wellness Circle Program Workbook (this workbook)*



Questions? Email us: [holly@samaritanfamilywellness.org](mailto:holly@samaritanfamilywellness.org)

In this program, teens gather with a skilled facilitator in a **Teen Wellness Circle** to set goals, share thoughts, and offer support to each other as they journey through the program.

The program includes the **Teen Wellness Compass Inventory**, a signature resource in this program. It is completed during the first session, and then serves as a guide to help teens identify and create their NEXT Steps on their journey toward whole-person wellness.

We regularly offer facilitator trainings for leading **Teen Wellness Circles**. If you have an interest in becoming a trained facilitator for this program, please contact us to learn more about online and in-person trainings. You can stay up to date on this program and our trainings through our website.

