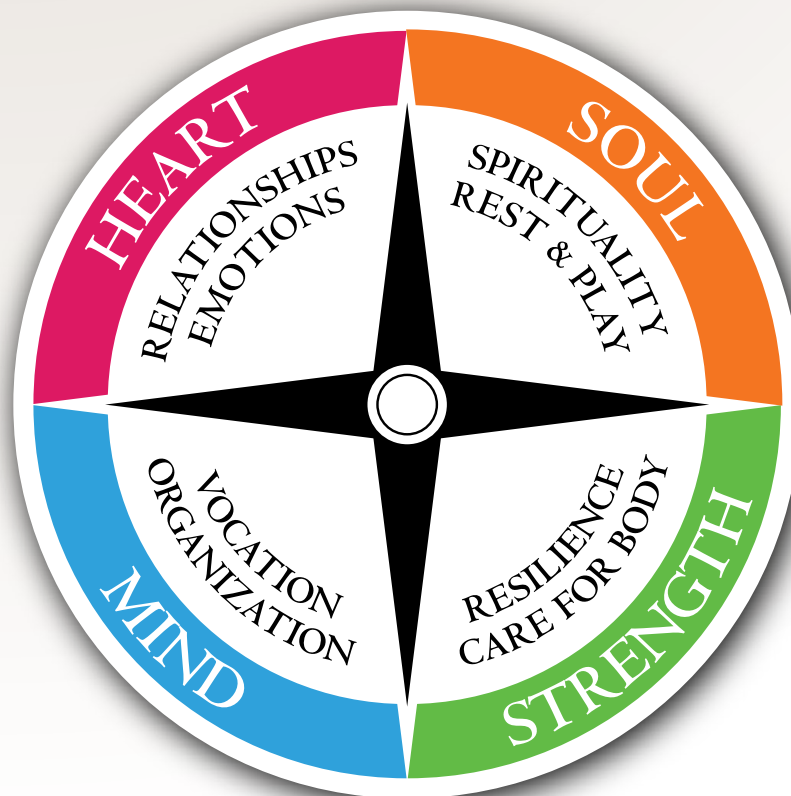


# Adult Wellness COMPASS



## Adult Wellness Circle *Program Workbook*

### Facilitator Guide



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

*The Samaritan Family Wellness Foundation—a foundation committed to supporting and enriching the well-being of individuals, youth, parents, and families—was created with a generous gift from Ab and Nancy Nicholas. While Ab passed away in 2016, their support continues to inspire us and make this resource possible.*

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# Welcome

Dear Adult Wellness Circle Facilitators,

Welcome! We are delighted to have you partake in a “whole new direction” in personal wellness.

As an **Adult Wellness Circle Facilitator**, you will be walking alongside people sharing their journey by offering compassionate listening, time-tested information, and gentle encouragement. This program is based on the belief that people innately know what is good for them yet, with all that pulls on their time and energy, they don't always do what they know is best and what they desire for themselves.

We find that many people frequently report feeling isolated, confused, and that they have no one to be totally honest with about their lives. The people we speak with often tell us that they feel alone and even embarrassed that things in their lives are not going smoothly. Social media can easily give the impression that others have it all together. This is not true, of course, but they do not know this because they rarely have the time or the level of trust with others to be real and share the truth. This also means that they seldom have authentic sources of support. This program reflects our commitment to help people come together, to be honest and vulnerable about life, and with the coaching of the facilitator and the support of others, make the changes they feel would benefit them.

At its core, an Adult Wellness Circle—which is what you will be facilitating—is a space you will help create for others where they can reflect upon their lives. The Adult Wellness Circle and the coaching you offer, as well as the tools and support you'll provide, will make a big difference in people's lives. As a facilitator, you will be coaching people as they generate and take intentional steps toward a happier, healthier life.

In this Facilitator Guide, you will learn the core concepts of the **Adult Wellness Compass**, as well as our approach to coaching, which is based on Motivational Interviewing. You will discover that as the folks in your circle become empowered to change their lives, you likely will also feel more empowered. While you are guiding others through this process, you will be learning and applying what you learn to your own life, as well.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to helping to create a safe place for people to be honest, to grow, and to enjoy the long-lasting benefits of a supportive community.

Thank you for doing your part,

*The Wellness Compass Team*

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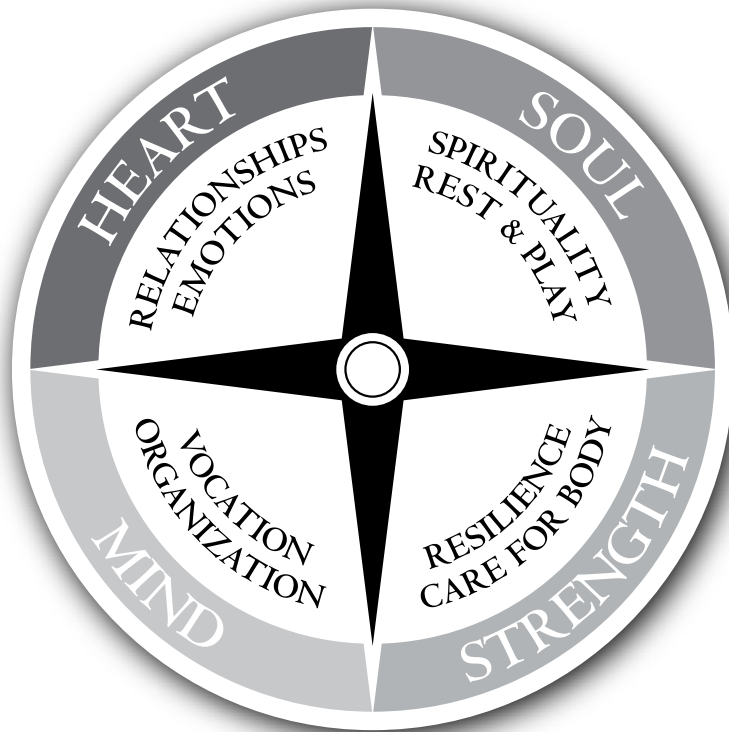
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**INTRODUCING**



**The Adult Wellness  
Compass & Adult Wellness  
Circle Program**



# I. Introduction

## A. What is the Adult Wellness Compass?

### The Four Compass Points

The “Compass” points toward the four dimensions of our being: *heart*, *soul*, *strength*, and *mind*. These dimensions are interconnected and our lives are intricately 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.

Within the four points of the Adult Wellness Compass, we will provide a set of maps for understanding the eight areas of wellness. These maps will help us to better understand ourselves.

### Eight Areas of Wellness

We are not compartmentalized people. The *Adult Wellness Compass* is based on the premise that wellness is a multidimensional phenomenon that requires us to take care of and nurture ourselves in all eight areas identified on the compass. Here are the eight areas of wellness:

- **Relationships.** The ability to create and maintain healthy, life-giving connections with others, as well as the ability to end unhealthy ones.
- **Handling Emotions.** The ability to process and express emotions, and to receive others’ emotions in a healthy way.
- **Spirituality.** The development and practice of a personal value system and a meaningful purpose in life.
- **Rest and Play.** The ability to balance work, rest, and play and to regularly renew ourselves.
- **Stress Resilience.** The ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.
- **Care for the Body.** The ability to build healthy habits and practices regarding our physical well-being.
- **Vocation.** The ability to get the most out of employment, educational, vocational, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Organization.** The ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and possessions.



## B. What is Whole-Person Wellness?

It is worth noting that words *whole*, *health*, and *healing* all come from the same root word *hal* or *haelen*, which in Old English means just that, whole or healthy. When applied to whole-person wellness, this means that we are addressing all the dimensions of our being: physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, intellectual, and vocational. This approach to wellness differs from the predominant practice in our culture of treating each aspect independently, as if they are separate from the others.

Wellness has become an increasingly important and popular focus. Yet, until very recently, most references to wellness focused primarily on the physical aspects of health. We know that when we spend time proactively working on our physical wellness, we experience a much lower rate of disease. Whole-person wellness simply extends this idea to all of the dimensions of our lives. The Adult Wellness Compass provides a way for us to address each of the dimensions, which results in much lower rates of disease, and “dis-ease.”

The greatest wisdom we have gained from the field of whole-person wellness is that each of the dimensions of our being are interconnected, meaning that each affects the other.

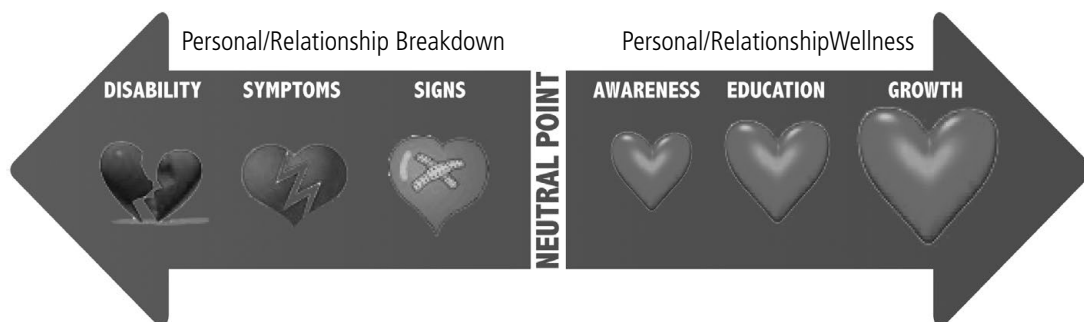
For example, difficulty sleeping may be connected to any, or all, of the following:

- stress at work
- stress at home
- a sense that life as it's currently being lived has lost its meaning
- a change in diet
- the recent loss of a loved one

The whole is truly greater than the sum of the parts, and when we are aware of, integrate, and support all of the dimensions of our wellness, we have a much better chance of thriving.

## C. Being “Well”

We don't have a health care system in our country; we have an “illness care” system. This is not just true for physical health but for psychological and emotional health, as well. Looking at the continuum below, we see that most people do not seek help until they are experiencing symptoms and/or disability. The goal of the health care provider is to relieve disability and symptoms in order to get patients back to the neutral point. At this point, when symptoms disappear, people may stop paying attention to their health until the next time they experience symptoms and/or disability and the cycle starts all over again.



—Reference based on the work of John Travis, MD

Too often, people are content to survive at the neutral point or below. By being part of an **Adult Compass Wellness Circle**, participants are making a proactive decision to grow by paying attention to all aspects of their health and wellness.

## D. What is an Adult Wellness Circle?

The central focus of an Adult Wellness Circle is to coach others toward creating healthy change. It is meant to help group members identify for themselves specific changes that they are ready to make, and then, over six sessions, get the support they need to make those changes.

An Adult Wellness Circle offers an opportunity for participants to pause and check their bearings, to check the direction in which they are heading in all eight areas of their lives. Then, they will ask themselves, “Am I heading in the direction that I want to be heading?” An Adult Wellness Circle will help participants explore these questions and make any needed adjustments.

It is important to remember that our core values, beliefs, and ideals act as a compass that guides our lives. They point us toward our own “true north.” Participation in an Adult Wellness Circle will help us to become more conscious of those and will provide support as we work to more fully align our choices with our values, beliefs, and ideals.

It is important to note that research shows that when people of any age are intentionally seeking to make changes in their lives, **there is only a 10% chance of change when they simply hear a “good idea.” There is an 85% chance of success in making a change when they generate the idea for such change themselves, create a plan for the change, speak the change “out loud” to others, and receive the accountability and support of others who are working toward making their own positive changes.** This is why we believe being a part of a wellness circles is such an important step for those who want to be healthier and more intentional about the quality of their lives.

## The Role of the Group in an Adult Wellness Circle

Adult Wellness Circles seek to foster authentic conversations, the type of conversations that are significantly different from the usual chats at work or while out dining or shopping. “Small talk” is the social lubricant for most of us—the weather, a favorite sports team, our activities—but these conversations will only go so far in creating the sense of community many of us crave. Through authentic conversations, Adult Wellness Circles will strengthen the connections already present within a community, as well as creating meaningful new friendships between people who have never met.

## How Does Change Happen in an Adult Wellness Circle?

Guided by their core values and beliefs, and supported by the community of their Wellness Circle, participants find that they can enhance their wellness and resilience by choosing an area of the Compass where they would like to make small, yet steady changes that they decide for themselves. Then each week, when the group gathers, everyone shares their success and/or challenges in making the chosen change, and determine what they will do in the coming week to keep making progress.



## Overview of a Six-Week Adult Wellness Circle

1. Choose one of the eight areas of wellness on which to focus based on your results from the **Adult Wellness Self-Assessment**.
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 Your Journey of Growth and Change**.
3. Select an inspiring quote to guide you.
4. Pick a centering/mindfulness practice that you will commit to doing during this program.
5. Invite others, as needed, to support you on your journey.
6. Harness hope from previous positive experiences of growth as you anticipate any challenges you may face 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 Adult Wellness Circle as you make progress with your goal and NEXT Steps.



### Adult Wellness Circles . . .

- focus on possibilities, not problems.
- help increase your confidence.
- never ask or require you to share if you are not comfortable.
- support you as you take concrete steps toward your goals.
- provide much-needed support when you are going through a transition of any kind.
- aid you in achieving greater balance in your life.
- encourage you to reduce and better manage stress in your life.
- assist you in making the positive changes you've wanted to make.
- are not a substitute for professional help; neither are they group therapy or a 12-step group.

## Expectations for Participants in an Adult 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 minimum commitment.
- Honor confidentiality of all that is shared in the group.
- Respect everyone’s journey and process, and never judge.
- Avoid giving advice to others and 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 deserves equal time to speak.
- Establish clear goals and NEXT Steps for yourself and commit to working on them between sessions.

## E. How Does the Adult Wellness Circle Program Work?

The **Adult Wellness Circle Program** is designed to assist you in making the changes you decide are right for you. The program is a combination of education and life coaching that will maximize success in making positive changes. Hearing or having a good idea about making a change seldom leads to change. However, change is much more likely to happen when we generate an idea for change for ourselves, create a plan for the change, speak the idea of change out loud to others, and receive the accountability and support of others who are working on their own positive changes.

**Adult Wellness Circles** are based on a four-step process: **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 Adult Wellness Self-Assessment in the first session. **Listening** involves deciding—based on what you discovered from your Self-Assessment 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 on page 37.)

The **Adult Wellness Circle** process, through the power of inspired, authentic conversations, will strengthen the connections already present within the group, and will foster a sturdy sense of community for those who participate in this program.

## Adult Wellness Circle Program Core Values and Beliefs

- We believe in the restorative power of authentic conversations. Through such conversations, we gain access to our own innate wisdom, and the wisdom of others. We also believe such authentic conversations are increasingly rare in most people’s present life experience.
- We long to be healthy, and yet too often we ignore that longing.
- Health and well-being begin with, and flow from, a deep connection to our beliefs, and a sense of purpose, meaning, and intention.
- Wellness is a decision, a choice. It is a positive, proactive response to our desire for well-being.

*The path to wellness becomes evident when we are willing to slow down, become centered, and listen to ourselves and to each other.*

We all have many “compasses” pulling us in many different directions. We can enhance our well-being when we are able to discern what direction true North is for us at any given time in our lives, and when we are intentional about heading in that direction.

Wellness is a journey and not a destination, and that journey requires flexibility and creative responses to life’s ebbs and flow. Times of transition (such as facing the challenge of a long-term illness, moving to a new community, losing a loved one through death or separation, a change in status at work, or living through a divorce) require us to pay special attention to our circumstances and to intentionally make choices that will lead us toward renewed wellness, and to seek the support of others.

## The Core Principles of Adult Wellness Circles

Resilience and wellness are rooted in **community**.

Resilience and wellness are rooted in identifying and acting in alignment with our **core values and beliefs**, or **spirituality**.

We grow resilience and wellness by remembering:

- “Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.” —John C. Maxwell, leadership expert, speaker, and author
- “Whatever we pay attention to is what will grow.” —Deepak Chopra, author
- “We have to *do* different to *get* different.” —Anonymous

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## II. Key Concepts

### A. Wellness

Wellness is a way of living, not a destination to be achieved. The aim is to be proactive and intentional so that our daily choices (no matter how great or small) create a healthy life for ourselves. The approach to wellness embedded in the Adult Wellness Compass grounds all wellness in our relationships with ourselves, with our families, with our communities, and with our connection to our core values and beliefs.

### B. Intentional

Refers to “how” people go about making decisions, and to a “determination to act a certain way” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). “Intentional” is the attention given to a specific course of action and way of living.

The **Adult Wellness Compass** process empowers us to become more “intentional” about how we live our lives. **Adult Wellness Circles** encourage a proactive approach to daily living, rather than the reactive life many people fall into when times are stressful.

### C. Inside Out

**Adult Wellness Circles** engage us in a process of making changes from the “inside out.” There are many “compasses” that are competing for our attention all the time, trying to direct us in different aspects of our lives, including the “compasses” of family of origin, culture, gender, work, family, and friends. Without realizing it, these compasses can guide us to live in ways that are not necessarily good for us, nor the ways we really want to be living.

Living “inside out” means we regularly check in with ourselves, our values and beliefs, and our gut feelings about what is good for us—our inner sense of knowing. We do this rather than simply following what is expected by the culture or someone else’s advice. When we learn to go inside deeply and consistently, we develop and grow a sense of inner direction. We can then live our lives with greater resonance as our outward life begins to match more fully our inner values.

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## III. Coaching Tools

### A. A Very Brief Overview of Motivational Interviewing (MI)

(Based on a handout: “Motivational Interviewing: How to Promote Success in Helping People Change,” by Kristin Bell, M.D., and Tomoko Tanabe, M.D.)

**Definition:** Motivational Interviewing is a person-centered coaching style for eliciting behavior change by helping people explore and resolve ambivalence.

**Basics:** Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, “expert-less” approach to coaching and facilitating change and growth. The spirit of motivational interviewing completely respects each person’s capacity for self-efficacy. The person is seen as the expert in knowing best what they need to do.

Motivational Interviewing reframes “resistance” and understands it as ambivalence. All people, relationships, and larger systems tend to be naturally ambivalent about change.

MI is a method of interacting with people to assess their readiness for change and to facilitate movement from one stage to the next. This is done by addressing a person’s ambivalence about change, examining their personal pros and cons for change, and facilitating exploration of their personal barriers to change.

The tone and demeanor adopted by MI is nonjudgmental, empathic, and encouraging.

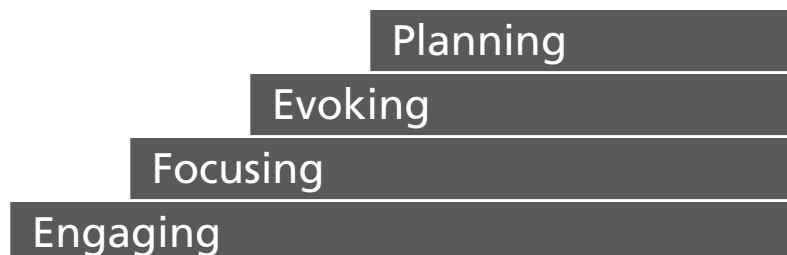
MI is used to selectively illuminate the discrepancy between a person’s desired goal and his or her current behaviors and choices.

Understanding change from the person’s point of view is an important aspect of the spirit of MI. As a facilitator, there are two particularly relevant points to keep in mind.

- Readiness to change is not a fixed personal trait, but a fluctuating state.
- The desire for change needs to be “elicited” not “imposed.”

### Basic Coaching Skills based on Motivational Interviewing

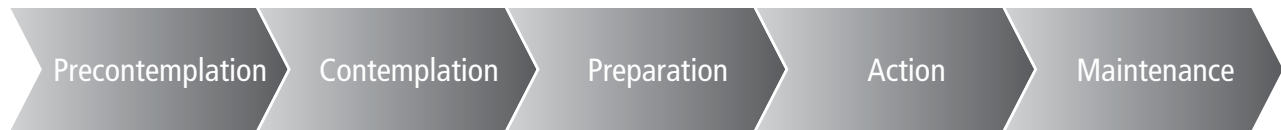
Four Steps to Coach Adults toward a NEXT Step: **Engaging, Focusing, Evoking, and Planning**



1. **Engaging.** This step—establishing and maintaining a genuine, empathetic connection—is essential for all steps of the coaching process. To paraphrase wisdom from Theodore Roosevelt, “Until they know that you care, they won’t care what you know.”
  - Use your **OARS!**
    - **O**pen-ended questions. These cannot be answered with a yes or no. For example, “How do you feel right now about the amount of stress in your life?”
    - **A**ffirm. For example: “I admire how open you are with sharing your fears about . . .”
    - **R**eflect. For example: You want to slow your life down but you believe that is not possible at this time. You know others forgive you, but you feel you cannot forgive yourself.
    - **S**ummarize. For example: You feel like your job is taking over your life. You are concerned about the negative effect it is having on your personal relationships. You notice that you are more irritable with those close to you, and that you are also getting sick more often. At the same time, you do not see any way to work less in your current job. You are just beginning to consider the possibility of looking for a different job.
2. **Focusing.** This step of the coaching process begins to narrow and sharpen the coachee’s focus regarding how they want to change and grow. Using the Adult Wellness Compass tools listed below, the coach helps funnel the person’s thoughts into a more specific focus.
  - The Adult Wellness Self-Assessment is the primary resource that begins the focusing process.
  - The “Mapping the NEXT Steps of your Journey” continues the focusing process.
3. **Evoking.** Here the coach elicits the underlying reason and motivation that the person has to change. When it comes to coaching change, clarifying the “why” is as important as clarifying the “what” and the “how.”
  - Questions to ask:
    - Where are your core values and beliefs in the midst of this change you wish to make?
    - How might friends and/or family support you in this change?
    - What comes to mind when you think of this change?
    - What spiritual practice can help ground this change for you?
  - Encourage the group by:
    - Evoking their passions, hopes, dreams, and ideals
    - “Blowing on the spark” of their desires, hopes, motivation, excitement, and reasons for change
4. **Planning.** As Benjamin Franklin said, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.” This last step in the four-step MI coaching process helps the person create specific action steps they will take within the next week. You will support each participant by:
  - Guiding them as they create NEXT Steps (*see page 37 for more information*)
  - Encouraging them to share their NEXT step with the group

## B. The Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing: *Change as A Process*

It is important to know that we all approach and move through change differently and at different speeds. We must honor that and be patient and nonjudgmental. Change is a process that occurs in predictable stages. Knowing what stage a person is in is essential to help discern the NEXT Step they wish to create for themselves.



—graphic adapted from *The Transtheoretical Model*, Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992

**Pre-contemplation.** This is the entry point into the change/growth process. They have not yet considered the prospect of a particular change and are unlikely to perceive a need for change. At this stage, they are not likely to respond positively to suggestions of change as they are not ready for change. The Adult Wellness Self-Assessment often serves to move from this stage to Contemplation.

**Contemplation.** Once we have some awareness or desire for a need to change, they then enter this stage. This is often a state of ambivalence, where they both consider change and reject it at the same time. In this stage, the talk is back and forth between the need for change/growth and the amount of work involved. They talk for it and against it at the same time. There is thought about changing, but no specific plans.

**Preparation.** In this stage the focus begins to change from the need/problem to possible solutions, from the past to the future. There is now a window of opportunity where they have resolved their ambivalence enough to consider making a change. Here they are now talking more and more about the change. They are also seeking resources and other like-minded people to help support their intended change and growth.

**Action.** In this stage they are ready to change/grow and have, in fact, begun concrete steps to make the change a reality. This is what NEXT Steps are all about. It is important that the actions taken are focused and achievable. The motto for this stage is, “nothing changes if nothing changes.” They are most vulnerable to stumbling at this stage, or even giving up, so there is a need for strong support and encouragement.

**Maintenance.** Once we have maintained the change and growth for an extended period of time (somewhere in the range of three to six months), there is strong evidence that the change will be a lasting change. At this point the change has become a new habit, something that doesn’t require a great deal of conscious thought and energy. Before they know it, group members might even find themselves saying, “Oh, that’s the way we’ve always done it!”

Motivational Interviewing is a way of speaking with someone who is thinking about making a change in their life. It comes out of the addiction field and follows the observation that people do not change because others want them to change, but instead when they want to change. Motivational Interviewing involves helping a person to identify for themselves the benefits of making a change and supporting them as they do the work of making the desired change.

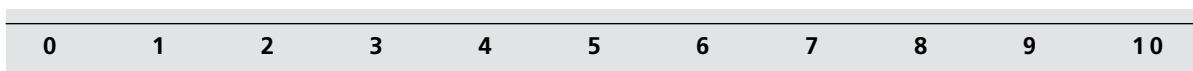
## What Stage of Change Do These Statements Represent?

1. I always stressed out, but what else is new? Everyone I know is stressed out, too.
2. I'm going to get to bed earlier so I can all wake up more rested.
3. I don't like feeling tired all the time. I'm wondering what, if anything, I can do about it?
4. I am going to start a gratitude journal tonight and write three things I am grateful for each day.
5. I can't believe how well things are going since I re-balanced my work schedule six months ago.
6. I worry about losing my job much of the time. I wish I could do something concrete to address my worry.
7. I have lived this long without watching what I eat or exercising, so I don't think I need to start now.
8. I'm going to walk on the treadmill three times for 30 minutes over the next week.
9. I heard about a new app that helps people budget and keep track of their finances. I'm going to download it and check it out.
10. My sister went on a retreat recently and it really helped her become more balanced. I'm going to ask her about the retreat and look into going myself.

PC 2. P 3. C 4. A 5. M 6. C 7. PC 8. A 9. P/A 10. P/A

## Readiness Ruler

Using this scale, you can help participants reflect on how ready they are to change their behavior or break an unhealthy habit. Ask them how ready they are to make such a change, and invite them to assign a number between 0 and 10. Depending on their answer you can adjust your questioning.



**0–1:** Not at all ready to change (Pre-contemplation)

**2–3:** Thinking about changing (Contemplation)

**4–6:** Planning and making a commitment (Preparation)

**8–10:** Actively changing (Ready for Action)

(For more information and resources go to: [motivationalinterviewing.org](http://motivationalinterviewing.org))



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## IV. Guidelines for Facilitating a Group

### A. Facilitating an Adult Wellness Circle

The following pages are meant to help support you as you facilitate your Wellness Circle over the six-week sessions. The potential for group members to make self-directed changes in their lives can be maximized by their experience in the group. Therefore, as a facilitator, you are charged with an exciting and rewarding role as you smooth the way for them to engage fully in the Wellness Circle process and become intentional about increasing their wellness. Thanks for being willing to engage in the process.

The role of the facilitator is to organize and support the group, to oversee the sessions, and then to get out of the way. You are very important and the group wouldn't happen without you, but you do not need to be an expert in any way to be a facilitator. Instead, **you are much like a midwife who helps guide the process and makes sure that the group is coming along in a safe and productive way.** You will be the one who makes sure that everyone has materials, understands the process, has enough time to speak, and follows the rules regarding such things as giving advice and not monopolizing the conversations. You will be in charge, but in no way are you expected to give advice or tell the participants how to make decisions or what NEXT Steps to take.

An Adult Wellness Circle is based on the belief that people are the “experts” in their own lives and that everyone of us is creative and resourceful and can determine what we want or need to do differently. You will guide and coach the group, rather than direct or teach. You create the space for others to experience what is happening within themselves and amongst themselves rather than creating the experience for them. The focus is on the group members, not the facilitator. Think of yourself as a “guide by their side,” not a “sage on the stage.”

We suggest that as the facilitator you limit your participation, sharing personal experiences only as an example, and so that others feel more comfortable sharing.

We encourage you to do whatever is most comfortable for you. And it is important to be gentle with other people's stories and be a positive presence for them. You have an opportunity to show kindness by embracing each as they are while they figure out where they are going.

### B. Understanding Facilitator Responsibilities

- Organize the group: arrange appropriate time and place, advertising the group and/or inviting participants, securing needed materials, and attending all six sessions.
- Ensure that the integrity and purpose of the Adult Wellness Circle is upheld.
- Set expectations and consistently follow and abide by those expectations.
- Provide and maintain a safe, judgment-free, and open environment where all participants feel welcomed, valued, and respected.
- Emphasize that participants should not share more than they will feel good about the next day, and that confidentiality is important to all.
- Gently coach everyone to make meaningful, helpful NEXT Steps.

## C. Facilitating is Not:

- **Therapy.** Therapy focuses on healing pains and dysfunctions. An Adult Wellness Circle concentrates on each individual generating growth that is strategic and action-focused.
- **Consulting.** Consultants help diagnose a problem and prescribe appropriate solutions as an expert. Adult Wellness Circle facilitators help participants find their own solutions and encourage them to be the expert in their own lives.
- **Training.** Trainers are instructors hoping to achieve specific objectives. Adults Wellness Circle facilitators, instead, guide participants to create their own goals and objectives.
- **Mentoring.** Mentors use their own experiences in specific areas to guide individuals. Adult Wellness Circle facilitators guide a process.

## D. Managing Group Dynamics

All groups take on their own personality and energy. As a facilitator, it is imperative that you tune in and align with the energy of your group. Building rapport and trust with group members is a continual process.

Here are some ways to build rapport and trust.

- Warmly greet each participant as they enter the room.
- Call on everyone by name.
- Remember key issues and concerns each person brings up and refer back to them throughout the six weeks. This lets everyone know that you are listening deeply to each of them.
- Encourage and empower everyone, thank each person for sharing, compliment when the opportunity arises, and ask them to repeat important thoughts they share for emphasis.
- Listen respectfully to the feelings and needs of group members.
- Reflect back what you hear the group members saying to ensure understanding.

## E. Managing Participants Who Require Special Attention

### 1. Person who talks more than others

- Affirm to the participant that you “hear” them and are listening by reflecting back or briefly summarizing what they are saying and then move on.
- Don’t look at this person when asking a question.
- Thank the person for their positive contribution, and then ask for others to share.
- If it continues, talk to the person privately outside of the session.

## **2. Quiet person**

- Watch for signs that the person wants to participate and engage them at that time.
- Respect their desire to not share much, but trust they may be benefiting from the session despite their silence.
- Connect with them before or after the group time.

## **3. Person who has difficulty coming up with ideas for NEXT Steps**

- Acknowledge their concerns and/or frustrations.
- Ask the person if they would like to resource the group for ideas.
- Ask them if this could mean that they need to consider focusing on another part of the Adult Wellness Compass.
- Ask them to observe their life during the coming week and see if they discover anything that they might want to be different.

## **4. Person who is not committed to the program**

- Ask the person privately what obstacles they may be facing in completing their homework or sharing in the process (refrain from judgment).
- Help the person create small NEXT steps toward making positive changes.
- Invite them to resource the group.
- Move on; don't offer too much time and attention to this person because it interferes with others who are prepared and committed to full participation.

## **5. Person in crisis**

- Require that the person work with a professional (physician, clergyperson, psychotherapist, etc.) if they wish to continue in the group. Remind them privately that this circle isn't group therapy.
- Help the person focus on one goal that encourages self-care while in crisis.
- In private, suggest that the Adult Wellness Circle may not be appropriate for them at this time if you believe that to be true, knowing the needs of the group. Offer resources that can help the person with their particular issues (community resources, websites, therapists, etc.).

## **6. Person who cries**

- Give them time to regain composure.
- Offer them some tissues.
- Invite them to excuse themselves if they need to.
- Don't draw attention to the fact that they are crying.
- Try to clarify what they have shared.
- Remind the group that crying is natural and is a healthy way of communicating, a response that lets us know that something is important and needs our attention.

## F. Using Important Facilitator Skills

1. **Active Listening.** Focus completely on what the person is saying and repeat back what was heard for clarity.

Ways to actively listen include: Summarizing, paraphrasing, and repeating back what was said. This helps clarify things for the facilitator and for the participant. Summarizing the basic truth that is being communicated is useful when a participant engages in long explanations/stories.

2. **Using open-ended questions.** These are not yes or no questions, but questions that invite and encourage honest answers. Begin these questions with who, what, when, where and why to help reveal information needed to build awareness for the participant.

If a person is stuck, asking a question about past successes can help them feel more confident. It will also help them get unstuck when having trouble coming up with an idea for change.

For example, a person wants to start exercising and states, “I hate to exercise so I have no clue what to do for exercise.” The facilitator could ask, “What are some things you have done in the past to exercise? When you were a kid, what kinds of physical activities did you enjoy?”

3. **Goal Setting.** Assist in setting and maintaining reasonable goals.

Participants in Adult Wellness Circles create their own goals and action steps. However, sometimes the goals or NEXT Steps (Needed, EXcited about, and Time-specific) appear unreasonable or unmanageable. (See page 37 for more information on NEXT Steps.)

For example, someone wants to get more organized at home and decides to take two hours every day for a week to do so. In theory, it sounds like a good action step, but the likelihood of success is small because it lacks the components of a NEXT Step. As a facilitator, you could help the participant make it more manageable by asking questions, such as, “What time of day do you plan to do your organizing?” “Do you have time to set aside two hours a day the way your day is currently organized?” “What area of the house could you focus on for this week?” If they are open, they can resource the group for ideas to make their NEXT Step more manageable and realistically doable.

4. **Resourcing the Group.** With the participant’s permission, ask group members for thoughts or suggestions.

When someone is stuck, asking the group for their comments or suggestions can help create awareness and help the person get unstuck. It is important to remind the group not to give advice unless it has been asked for.

5. **Providing Unconditional Positive Regard.** Facilitator skills are used in a judgment-free manner and focuses on everyone’s strengths.

Facilitators must keep the best interests of participants in mind at all times and communicate positively without judgment. Language should be friendly and supportive.

For example, if someone says, “I’m feeling bad about myself because I didn’t do any of the homework I wanted to complete.” The facilitator could say, “I hear your disappointment. What do you think got in the way of you completing your goal?” This is very important, as most people tend to be hard on themselves when they are not making the kind of progress that they would like to see.

6. **Celebrating.** Facilitators encourage participants to celebrate successes, especially the small ones.

Unfortunately, many people wrestle with shame. Unmet expectations can induce this shame. Shame is not productive and is a dangerous motivator. In this program, you will ask participants to set realistic expectations and celebrate the small changes they make.

You can encourage your group to celebrate completing NEXT Steps by changing a thought pattern or discovering new awarenesses about themselves. Celebrating can be expressed as a compliment, such as, “Congratulations on managing your emotions when your boss was rude to you. I know you have been working on that.”

List some skills you believe to be your strengths, ones that will help you as an Adult Wellness Circle facilitator.

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What aspects (biases, anger, personality traits, etc.) of yourself could potentially compromise the experience for a participant? It is important to be aware of these so you can work to prevent this. Writing them down here will help you become more aware of them.

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## G. Facilitator Checklist

### 1. Create a safe, supportive, friendly, and confidential environment.

- There is NO ROOM FOR JUDGMENT.
- Explain confidentiality. What is talked about in the group needs to stay in the group.
- Remain friendly and open and maintain a sense of humor.
- Ask participants to use discretion when sharing and to not share something they will regret or feel embarrassed about after the session. Encourage them to choose NEXT steps that they feel comfortable sharing with the group.
- Remind them that if they have a pressing issue that is too private to share, they may want to speak to a professional for assistance.

### 2. Stay within the allotted group time.

- Be mindful of the time throughout the session. Show the group that you are aware of the time by glancing at the clock or your watch, etc.
- An Adult Wellness Circle is a GROUP coaching program. Express the importance for participants to monitor the amount of time they each take to share and not go beyond the allotted time for each person. Inform the group that as a facilitator, you will help the group be mindful of the time.
- Announce how much time each person has before beginning to share and honor that.
- Ask a member of the group to help keep track of the time.
- Maintain a flexible and focused agenda, keeping the group on track but being flexible within the structure.

### 3. Manage the expectations of the group.

- The group will meet for six weeks and they will get started on making changes during that time. However, significant changes will take more time and more intentionality. In six weeks, participants may make progress but should not expect radical changes.
- If they want to continue to work on making changes, they may want to join another Adult Wellness Circle when another one is offered or possibly get a personal coach for continued support.
- Getting headed in the right direction is the first step, and let them know that they are to be applauded for taking that first step.

### 4. Explain and review the six-week program for clarity and to strengthen the group process.

- An Adult Wellness Circle provides a process of self-awareness and growth. The six weeks are the beginning experience for this process where participants begin to live into a greater sense of wellness.

- Ask participants in the initial session what they are hoping to get from the program. Try to remember and refer back to their answers throughout the six weeks. This helps create awareness for the participant as well as build trust with the facilitator.
- Explain the agenda for each session at the beginning of the session.
- Explain, in detail, the “Mapping” section during the first session and as a review if needed.

#### **5. Go over the ground rules.**

- Be on time.
- Let everyone have a chance to speak without being interrupted.
- Keep discussions confidential.
- Invite participants to create additional ground rules as they may have ideas that are important to them.

#### **6. Monitor group dynamics.**

- Tune in to the energy and flow of the group. Sometimes, a group may spend more time on one section than another.
- Be inclusive, making sure everyone feels comfortable.
- Remember that the group members are responsible for their own achievements.
- Let group members support one another while avoiding giving advice.

#### **7. Identify and beware of the “inner critic.”**

- Help participants approach their changes and process with positive language and thoughts.
- Identify when the inner critic (shame, self-deprecating comments) shows itself and gently help the participant become aware of this.

#### **8. Guide the sessions, do not control them.**

- Let go of the outcome of each session and for each participant.

#### **9. Remember to get out of the way.**

- Set the tone and energy for the group.
- Explain your role as well as the role of the participants.
- Inform the group of any changes that could arise.
- Identify any changes in the direction of the group to normalize it.
- Set a positive tone to help ease any concerns that may arise during the six weeks.





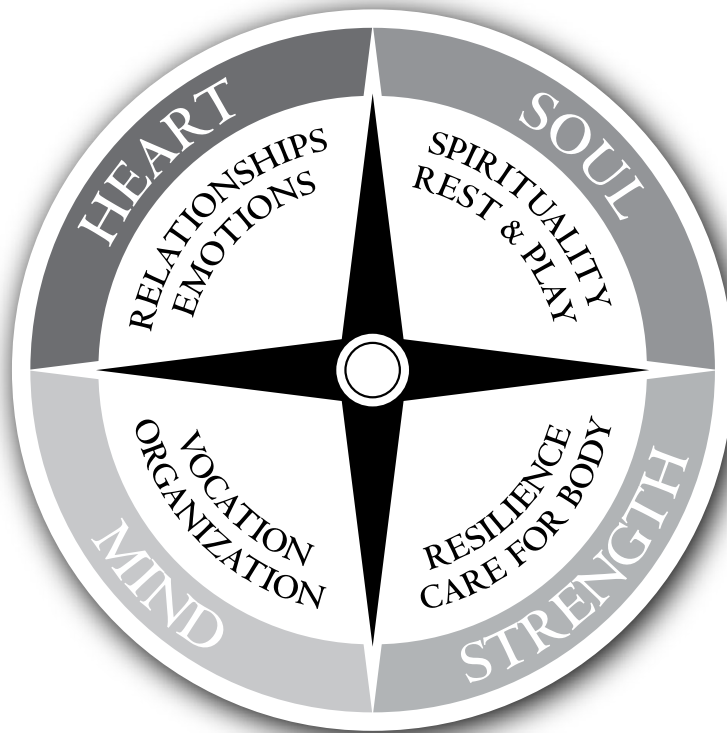
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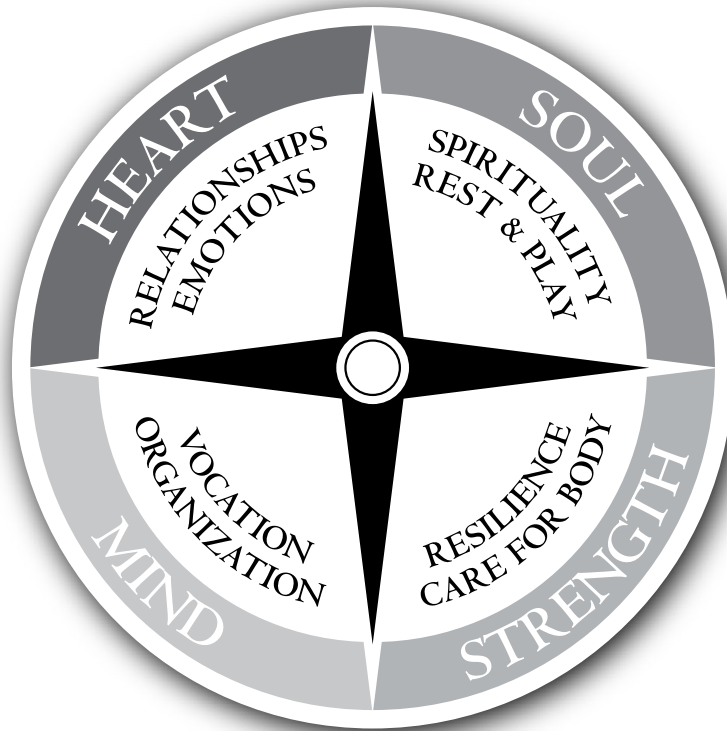
# EXPLORING



# Adult Wellness Circle Program Tools



## V. Adult Wellness Compass Questions & Quotes



As we shared on page 4, the Adult Wellness Compass used in an Adult Wellness Circle includes four dimensions of life: heart, soul, strength, and mind. These dimensions are interconnected, each one affecting the others. Whatever impacts one dimension of our lives, positively or negatively, has an impact on the other dimensions, as well.

Each of the four points on the Compass contains two areas of focus. The goal is to provide individuals with a dynamic tool that will assist them in their search for balance and wellness in their lives.

On the following pages you will find quotes, reflections, and questions, most of which are in the workbook participants will be using in their Wellness Circle. You will want to encourage group members to take time at home between sessions to reflect on these questions and quotes. These pages are in the back of their workbooks beginning on page 30.

**Heart:** **The emotional/relational dimensions of our lives.**  
The two areas of focus are *Relationships* and *Handling Emotions*.

**Relationships.** The ability to create and maintain healthy, life-giving connections with others, as well as the ability to end unhealthy ones.

*My friends are my estate.* —Emily Dickinson, poet

*Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me and just be my friend.* —Anonymous

*A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.* —Anonymous

*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

*If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of each of these people.* —Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and 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 other people all around us all the time. We can build healthy relationships with them and 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. 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 our lives, it is important to pause and take time to look at the relationships we have right now. Think about your relationships with your spouse, significant other, children, parents, extended family, colleagues, close friends, and others as you read over the following questions.

- How honest and transparent are you in your closest 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?
- Do you have any old, unresolved hurts from your family of origin that affect the quality of your life today?
- Do you help maintain and nurture the healthy relationships in your life?

**Heart:** **The emotional/relational dimensions of our lives.**  
The two areas of focus are *Relationships* and *Handling Emotions*.

**Handling Emotions.** The ability to process and express emotions, and to receive others' emotions in a healthy way.

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

—Jim Rohn, author

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

*If wisdom's way you wisely seek, these five things observe with care: to whom you speak, of whom you speak, and how and when and where.* —C.L. Ingalls, father of Laura Ingalls Wilder

*Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.*

—Dalai Lama, spiritual leader

*In reading the lives of great people, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves. Self-discipline with all of them came first.* —Harry S. Truman, U.S. President

**Feeling and Expressing the Full Range of Emotions.** Imagine your emotions existing 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?
- How well are you able to “accept the things you cannot change, [and] have the courage to change the things you can change?”

**Soul:** **The spiritual dimension of human existence.**  
The two areas of focus are *Spirituality* and *Rest and Play*.

**Spirituality.** The development and practice of a personal value system and a meaningful purpose in life.

*There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.* —Albert Einstein, scientist

*Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.* —Martin Luther King, civil rights leader

*The two best prayers I know are, “Help me, help me, help me” and, “Thank you, thank you, thank you.”* —Anne Lamott, author

*Something precious is lost if we rush headlong into the details of life without pausing for a moment to pay homage to the mystery of life and the gift of another day.*  
—Kent Nerburn, author

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 oneself to a particular religion is one way in which a person could express their 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 presents itself. In any number of ethical situations you face each day, your spirituality helps you decide about things such as caring for others, gossiping, lying, giving to charity, 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 weather storms, droughts, and other extreme conditions, they need to have strong root systems. Roots literally keep trees well-grounded.

You will be helping participants to reflect on the following topics related to their values and beliefs.

**Defining their values.** Have participants clearly identify their core values and beliefs. How are they similar or different from the values and beliefs that are reflected in the culture and community around them?

**Communicating values.** How do they express their values to others? Specific methods could include modeling, talking with them directly, and intentionally sharing experiences.

**Integrating values into daily life.** What concrete things do they do to practice these? These could include doing community service, being a part of a place of worship, or sitting down with a family member or friend in need.

**Soul:** **The spiritual dimension of human existence.**  
The two areas of focus are *Spirituality* and *Rest and Play*.

**Rest and Play.** The ability to balance work, rest, and play and to regularly renew ourselves.

*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

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

—Plato, philosopher

*People who cannot find time for recreation are obliged sooner or later to find time for illness.*

—John Wanamaker, merchant

*The time to relax is when you don't have time for it.* —Sydney J. Harris, journalist

*Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.* —Chinese Proverb

Telling people how busy we are seems to have become a badge of honor in our culture. Many of us 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 helps to strengthen our well-being so that when we do need to do hard work, 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 down time to renew ourselves. In this we are not much different than our phones or any of the other battery-dependent devices we use—our batteries wear down and need recharging on a regular basis.

Think about the word “recreation” ... it really means “re-creation.” True recreation re-creates us! What renews our batteries will be different for each of us. Getting some rest while mindlessly watching TV may be okay in moderation, but it won't renew us in the same way a walk, a good conversation, or reading a book that feeds our soul will. Find what works for you.

Reflect on the following questions related to rest and play.

- How often do you do things that are purely for fun?
- How do you like to have fun? Do you like to spend more time alone or with others?
- Do you truly re-create during your vacation time?
- Do you have hobbies that you enjoy and engage in regularly?
- Are you able to leave work at work and not bring it home with you?
- Do you get enough downtime?
- Do you have a winding down or bedtime routine?

**Strength:** **The physical dimension of our lives.**  
The two areas of focus are *Stress Resilience* and *Care for the Body*.

**Stress Resilience.** The ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.

*Is everything as urgent as your stress would imply?* —Carrie Latet, poet

*No one can get inner peace by pouncing on it.* —Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor

*Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.* —Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist

*When it rains, I let it.* —A one hundred and thirteen year-old-man when asked about his secret to growing old

*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

*You don't get ulcers from what you eat. You get them from what's eating you.*  
—Vicki Baum, writer

*Life is about 20% in what happens to us and 80% in the way we respond to the events.*  
—Ted Engstrom, author

Stress resilience has to do with how well we deal with two separate aspects of our lives. The first is how we emotionally and spiritually negotiate significant changes and transitions (planned and unplanned). The second is how well we manage stress in general in our lives. Being highly resilient, which means “to bounce back, or spring back to shape or form,” implies that we have taken the time and allowed ourselves to do the hard work of fully working through the stages of grief when we have experienced a significant change in our lives. Too often we try to avoid these feelings, which seems like a good idea in the short term, but will always limit our emotional and spiritual wellness in the long run.

As you assess your satisfaction with this dimension of your life, reflect on whether you have been through, or are currently dealing with, any of the stressful changes listed below. How fully have you addressed any transitions you have been through? How much do unresolved or frozen feelings of grief (sadness, loss, anger, fear) currently affect you? Are you being proactive in managing stress, or do you feel that it is burning you out?

- Divorce or break up
- New relationship
- Birth of a child
- New job, loss of job, or change of job
- Financial Stress
- Major health issue in yourself or a loved one
- Legal issues
- Death of a loved one
- Child leaving home
- Move to a new location
- Recent accident or injury
- Work stress, impossible boss
- Unemployment

You will also want to stop and reflect on whether you are a stress “junkie”—a person who thrives on having high levels of stress in their life most of the time. A person who seems to thrive on stress and intensity, getting a “high” from living in the “fight/flight” mode. It is indeed possible to live this way for a short time, but eventually the presence of chronic stress chemicals in your body will cause a decrease or breakdown in functioning across all dimensions of your life.

**Strength:** **The physical dimension of our lives.**  
The two areas of focus are *Stress Resilience* and *Care for the Body*.

**Care for the Body.** The ability to build healthy habits and practices regarding our physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits.

*We do not stop exercising because we grow old—we grow old because we stop exercising.*

—Kenneth Cooper, doctor

*Don't dig your grave with your knife and fork.* —English Proverb

*If I knew I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself.*

—Mickey Mantle, baseball player

*Being our best through generous self-care is the finest way to be of service to others.*

—Margaret Stortz, minister

*Our food is our medicine and our medicine is our food.* —Hippocrates, philosopher

Our culture puts a great deal of emphasis—some might say too much emphasis—on physical wellness and body image. The two extremes of either obsessing about our bodies, or neglecting them, are clearly something we want to avoid. It is essential for our long-term health to find a balanced approach to the care and nurturing of our physical wellness. The more intentional and proactive we are about caring for our bodies, the less time we will spend at the doctor's office. As you think about caring for your body, you might reflect on the following questions.

- Are you mindful about your nutrition and eating patterns?
- Are your eating choices primarily conscious or unconscious?
- Are you concerned that you too often eat for emotional reasons, as a way to comfort yourself?
- What role do alcohol or other drugs play in your life? Are you content with that role?
- Are you consistent about going to the doctor and dentist for regular checkups and care?
- Are you comfortable with your sexuality and your sexual needs?
- Do your eating, drinking, sleeping, exercise, and screen-time habits reflect the healthy choices you want to be making for yourself?
- Do you get the sleep you need to be effective?



**Mind:** The mental/vocational dimension of our lives.  
The two areas of focus are *Vocation* and *Organization*.

**Vocation.** The ability to get the most out of employment, vocational, educational, and volunteer opportunities.

*People for the sake of getting a living, forget to live.* —Margaret Fuller, author

*Three Rules of Work: Out of clutter find simplicity; from discord find harmony; in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.* —Albert Einstein, scientist

*Nothing will work unless you do.* —Maya Angelou, author

*Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.* —Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. President

Many people spend a majority of their waking hours each week at work. How we experience our work/vocation can have a major impact on our wholeness and wellness.

A story is told 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.” So ... what kind of work or service makes you feel most alive?

The questions below should help you assess your satisfaction with this aspect of your life. If you are retired or not working, you might reflect on volunteer/service work that you do. You might also reflect back on the work that you have done in your life.

\*Please note that when we talk about “work” we include paid employment and volunteer/service work.

- Is the work you do congruent with your values and beliefs?
- Do you have a sense of purpose in your work/service/vocation?
- Do you see how your work/vocation/service fits into the bigger purpose of your life?
- How do you relate to those with whom you work or serve?
- Are you comfortable expressing your needs and wants where you work or serve?
- Are you growing in your work/service/vocation?
- Do you intentionally seek opportunities for growth and learning?

**Mind:** The mental/vocational dimension of our lives.  
The two areas of focus are *Vocation* and *Organization*.

**Organization.** The ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and possessions.

*Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.* —Immanuel Kant, philosopher

*The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.*

—Stephen R. Covey, author

*Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you.* —Carl Sandburg, author

*A place for everything, and everything in its place.* —Isabella Mary Beeton, journalist

Being disorganized can be both a symptom and a cause of stress in our lives, whether it be disorganization of time, environment, finances, or planning. Everything becomes harder and requires more time when we are not organized. A vicious cycle is easily established as we become more stressed due to not being organized, which in turn causes us to be even less organized and more stressed.

That's the bad news. 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 and coaching of others. The patterns we have established around organizing our time, money, "stuff," etc., are simply learned habits and, like all habits, they can be changed. And while it may feel like it will take forever to make this kind of change, research has shown that on average it takes only 30 days to form a new habit. So where to begin?

In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes about what he calls the "tyranny of the urgent." By this he means that people often are so overwhelmed with all that they are trying to do in the now, that soon everything seems like it is urgent and they lose their ability to plan and prioritize. One of the symptoms of getting caught up in the "tyranny of the urgent" is that it feels like we are wasting time if we take time out to plan and prioritize. In the end, planning and prioritizing will save us time, and making our lives much calmer, but it can be difficult to remember this when we are caught up in our constant busyness.

Reflect on the following questions related to organization.

- Do you provide a designated work space and necessary tools they need to be successful in your vocation?
- Do you keep careful track of your money?
- Do you have resources readily available that anyone could access, such as emergency numbers, names of doctors, family members, etc.?
- Are your important documents, such as wills, titles, and birth certificates, filed and organized so you can retrieve them easily?
- Do you take steps to simplify your life, clearing clutter or things you don't need?
- Do you plan ahead for mealtimes, including time for grocery shopping, cooking, and clean-up?
- Are you intentional about planning what needs to get done around your house?

## VI. Adult Wellness Self-Assessment

Facilitators will benefit from taking the Adult Wellness Self-Assessment (starting on page 30 of the *Adult Wellness Circle Program Workbook*) before Session 1 to get a feel for what participants will be experiencing. Participants will be asked to take the Adult Wellness Self-Assessment during the first session. If you prefer a digital format, additional free Wellness Self-Assessments are available online at [samaritanfamilywellness.org](http://samaritanfamilywellness.org).

The Adult Wellness Self-Assessment is the core of the Adult Wellness Circle program. Many people report that the self-assessment is one of the most enlightening parts of the entire program. The overall results, or sometimes just one statement from the self-assessment, can open up a whole new level of awareness and desire for change in a person.

The Adult Wellness Self-Assessment offers a **present-moment “snapshot”** of a person’s current state of wellness and life balance. It simply reveals the areas of a person’s life to which they have been paying attention, and the areas to which they have not been paying as much attention. The self-assessment also reveals how the different areas of wellness are interconnected, and how one area can affect other areas.



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## VII. Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

Once the Adult Wellness Self-Assessment has been completed, participants will map out the changes they want to make, determine what steps are necessary, and then work for six weeks to make the desired changes. The process of doing this includes four specific steps:

### 1. Stop

Pausing their lives to make the time to participate in an Adult Wellness Circle. Each week group members will be invited to stop and reflect on their goals and NEXT Steps.

### 2. Look

Taking a deeper look at their lives as they are right now by using the self-assessment as a mirror to reflect back to them their current state of wellness and balance.

### 3. Listen

Taking the time to listen to themselves and each other as they discern the changes they feel ready and excited to make.

### 4. Proceed

Committing to the specific NEXT Steps that will lead to a greater sense of well-being in their lives.

### Note ... Note ... Note

The following three pages are taken directly from the Adult Wellness Circle Program Workbook in order to illustrate the Mapping Process as it takes group members from the Self-Assessment to NEXT Steps.

Suggestions for guiding participants through each element of mapping NEXT Steps are numbered and noted on each page.

## Tips for Helping Fill in the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change”

**1** Guide people away from talking about their “strengths and weaknesses” and instead talk about areas of higher or lower satisfaction and areas of the “garden that they have been watering and areas that are perhaps a bit wilted for lack of watering.” It is important to note and affirm the areas of higher satisfaction, the areas of the Compass that they have been “watering,” and to note that these will be different for each member of the group.

**2** Even though people may want to work on several areas of the Compass, explain that it is important to start by focusing on just one area. They can switch to a different area during the six-week program, but they must choose one to start with. It is helpful for them to choose an area that they feel ready and excited to work on, to “water.” The area they choose does not have to be the one with the lowest score.

**3** In terms of the four steps of coaching using the Motivational Interviewing model, this is the “Evoking” step. You are guiding participants to name how it will be different for them when they make the changes they feel ready to make. This evokes their motivations for wanting to do the hard work of growth and change.

## Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change

*To be completed between Sessions 1 and 2*

- 1** List 2-3 areas of high satisfaction from your Adult Wellness Compass Self-Assessment.

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- List 2-3 areas of low satisfaction from your Adult Wellness Compass Self-Assessment.

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*Give some intentional thought to the following questions and then pick the dimension of whole-person wellness that you would like to address 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 right now?
- What area do you feel most motivated to work on?
- What dimension do you feel a strong sense of urgency about?

- 2** Area of whole-person wellness you want to address in this program.

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“You Are Here” | Describe where you are right now in your life in this area of wellness.

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- 3** “Wish You Were Here!” | Describe what it will be like when you are where you want to be in this area of wellness.

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SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything is Connected

13

**1** Talking about possible centering practices can evoke some of their reasons for changing and growing, and it encourages participants to ground their growth with a regular practice. If a tree wants to grow new branches, it will also need to grow new and deeper roots to support that growth.

**2** They are now moving toward the “Planning” step of Motivational Interviewing coaching. Asking about the support of others alerts everyone that the changes they are seeking to make may directly affect others, and they are wise to be proactive in asking for help and support.

**3** When a person can predict the challenges they will face when making a change, there is a better chance they will overcome the challenges as they encounter them. If a challenge might come up with someone else in their lives, this reminds everyone that it is important to talk to the other person, proactively seeking their support.

**Inspiring Quote** | Choose an inspiring quote that will motivate you as you navigate the NEXT Steps in your journey of growth and change. This quote could be from a song, a poem, a famous author, a spiritual text, or other source.

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**1 Mindfulness/Centering Practice** | (see page 46 for help with this) Write down a centering practice you will commit to on a regular basis during this program.

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**2 Support from Others** | Are there others outside your Wellness Circle whose support you will want or need?

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**Previous Successes** | What previous successes do you have in making positive changes in your life that can serve as hope and inspiration for you?

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**3 Challenges** | What resistance within yourself or others might arise as you seek to make changes in yourself?

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**1** NEXT Steps. Creating a NEXT Step is the essential “Planning” step of the four-step Motivational Interviewing coaching process. This is what participants will share as they check in each week. It might be helpful to role-play several NEXT Steps with the group by asking them, “What would an example be of a possible NEXT Step for someone who wants to work on the “Organization,” or “Rest and Play,” or “Care for the Body” area of the Compass?”

This will give them several general examples of NEXT Steps. At the same time, though, make it clear that no one else can choose a NEXT Step for them. It must come from the inside out and must be something each person feels ready and excited to do. Three people in your group might all be working on the Rest and Play area of the Compass, but each will have their own unique, individual NEXT Step that is right for them.

## 1 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 Adult Wellness Compass Self-Assessment. After taking the assessment, you may or may not feel the need to create a NEXT Step. You know better than anyone what you need. We are simply offering an invitation to make a change if you feel the desire 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 be better prepared for 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 set a screen curfew so I can relax and unwind before bed, a time each work night when all screens are turned off.”

### **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 time to truly relax, and also getting to bed earlier.”

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

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

**For example:** “I want to turn off the lights at 10p, so I will begin a screen curfew next Monday night at 9p.”

Sharing your NEXT Step with others in your Wellness Circle is one important NEXT Step you can take. You will inspire and learn from each other as you do this, plus you will become a built-in support system for each other as you put your NEXT Steps into practice.

Remember, advice-giving is never encouraged from group members, or the facilitator, but group members can choose to “resource the group” as they create their NEXT Step. For example, someone might decide they want to take an introductory yoga class but have no idea where to find such a class, and so they may choose to “resource the group” by asking if anyone has a recommendation for a good introductory yoga class in the area. That can be very helpful, yet is not advice giving.

Once participants have completed pages 13 and 14 and understand the concept of NEXT Steps, they can write their Goals and NEXT Steps on page 15 in their workbook.

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## VIII. Centering Practices

### Choosing a Practice

An essential step in “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” is to take on a centering or mindfulness practice for the duration of the time that your wellness circle is meeting. A practice like this is simply a way of intentionally creating time to “stop, look, and listen” to your deeper thoughts and feelings. This is not about just creating “down time” or time to relax, but to intentionally connect with your true self.

A centering or mindfulness practice is not about indulging in self-centeredness. There is a very important difference between being self-centered and having a centered self. It is from a centered self that we can best respond—as opposed to react—to the demands of life. When we are centered, our responses and actions will be more closely aligned with our core values and beliefs.

There is no “right” practice for everyone. Encourage participants to choose one that is right for them, meaning one that helps them to move beneath the surface clutter in their minds and connect with their deeper thoughts and feelings. You might want to point out that **journaling** is a popular practice choice because it is easy to do and it can be an important way for them to meditate on their NEXT Steps.

Here are two excerpts from one of our favorite books on the benefits of journaling, *Writing and Being: Embracing Your Life Through Creative Journaling*, by G. Lynn Nelson.

- *My journal is my place to let go of formal constraints, to be crazy and creative, to take off my masks, to be me, to find me.*
- *As you write, remember that your journal is a private place, a safe place, and that there you do not need to impress anyone with either your writing or your being. There is no need to pretend. You can make no ‘mistakes’ in your journal. Your journal is a personal and intimate tool, and each person’s journal, like each person, is unique in its ways and its unfolding.*

If they choose journaling as a centering practice, they may want to purchase a journal. Just as there is no right way to journal, there is no right kind of journal. Get whatever feels comfortable. If they don’t have a journal, they can begin by using the blank pages in their workbooks. It would be helpful for them to decide how many minutes each day they are going to journal and then make the commitment to stay with that. It’s best to start small, say five to ten minutes and, if they wish, add more time as they go along.

Another popular centering practice is some form of **meditation**. This can be as simple as setting aside five, ten, or fifteen minutes to sit quietly and breath slowly and deeply. It is often helpful to have a word or phrase to repeat in order to keep the mind from jumping from thought to thought.

**Walking** can also be a centering practice, as can **listening to quiet music**, or whatever provides rest and renewal and allows participants to access their deeper thoughts and feelings. If they practice a particular religious faith, there are likely specific spiritual practices from their faith tradition that they can do as a centering practice.



The first resistance most people face as they attempt to begin a regular centering practice is time. They will feel like they don't have enough time for this. And they will be right. They won't have time, so they will need to make time. Doing a centering practice on a regular basis will require discipline. If they struggle and fall away from it, yet want to continue with this effort, remind them to simply start again. Most people who do a centering or mindfulness practice regularly for thirty days will continue on with it because they find it to be beneficial. What at first may feel like work should soon feel like a gift.

Following is a sampling of some centering practices others have chosen. This is simply a list to help “prime the pump,” in case they are unfamiliar with these kinds of practices. There are many more that they can easily discover on their own. They may already have a practice that works well for them. If so, they might want to share it with the others in the Wellness Circle. This list is also found on page 46 of the *Program Workbook* that participants will be using.

- Keep a gratitude journal and write what you are thankful for each day.
- Play a musical instrument, sing, or dance, with others or alone.
- Sit quietly in silence or while listening to music you find calming.
- Meditate on a spiritual reading or inspirational quote by repeating it slowly in time with your breath.
- Spend time in nature.
- Read a book that inspires your soul.
- Choose a mantra and speak it silently or out loud throughout the day.
- Practice yoga, tai chi, or other forms of spiritual movement.
- Paint, draw, or participate in any form of artistic expression.
- Write a letter to someone you love (living or someone who has passed).
- Spend time with your dog, cat, or other pet.
- Create a meditation space in your home.
- Participate regularly in a community of faith.



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# FACILITATING



# Adult Wellness Circles



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## IX. Session-by-Session Guide for Facilitating an Adult Wellness Circle

This section contains detailed outlines for each of the six sessions of an Adult Wellness Circle. Feel free to adapt the outlines to what works best for you in your context. Please add your own ideas and your own style. For example, you may want to add different meditations or music that best reflect your group's traditions and practices. You are also free to mix and match different openings and closings from the sessions as you think best. Just as we invite each person in an Adult Wellness Circle to live their lives from the "inside out," we encourage facilitators to do the same.

### Large Groups

For groups larger than ten people, if you think it would help with time, break into a few small groups for sharing of progress with NEXT Steps. This way provides enough time for the important sharing component of the Adult Wellness Circle. Not everyone will hear each other's progress, but it assures that everyone has ample time to share.

### Six Session Outline

- ✓ **SESSION 1: Whole-Person Wellness: How Everything is Connected.** In this session participants reflect on their whole-person wellness using the Adult Wellness Self-Assessment. Participants also choose a centering practice and a wisdom quote to support them on their Journey of Growth and Change, and to help them accomplish their newly created NEXT Steps.
- ✓ **SESSION 2: Whatever You Pay Attention to is What Will Grow.** Research shows that 50%-70% of all doctor visits are rooted in non-medical causes. Learn about the wellness continuum and how to pay attention to what you need to pay attention to.
- ✓ **SESSION 3: Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional.** Learn how to turn change into growth. In this session participants report how their journey is going and receive support from the facilitators and the group.
- ✓ **SESSION 4: Trust the Wisdom of the "J" Curve.** 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.** Learn how your growth impacts all other systems in your life. Participants receive continued support from the group.
- ✓ **SESSION 6: All Shall Be Well.** Participants celebrate their gains and share plans for continued growth.

## Purpose:

- *To welcome* group members, introduce each other, and to create a safe, comfortable environment.
- *To introduce* group members to the concept of whole-person wellness and how the Adult Wellness Compass is based on this concept.
- *To ground* the program in the theory that wellness and being well as a person is a prerequisite for living the best life possible.
- *To review*, as a group, the entirety of pages 3-6 in the *Program Workbook*, which details the particulars of the program and the expectations of the program for participants.
- *To explain* the process of “Stop, Look, Listen and Proceed” on two levels:
  1. How the program works.
  2. How we speak and listen to one another in the group.
- *To provide* time for members of the group to complete the Adult Wellness Self-Assessment.
- *To give* group members a chance to share initial reactions and results from the Self-Assessment.
- *To introduce* group members to the importance of a centering practice and to invite them to choose a centering practice for themselves while in their Wellness Circle.
- *To introduce* group members to the centering practice of journaling as one possible centering practice they can try.
- *To explain* the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process and assign as homework for the upcoming week (found on pages 13-15 in their *Program Workbook*).

## Objectives:

***By the end of Session 1, group members will be able to:***

- Define the concept of whole-person wellness.
- Understand what a centering practice is and how/why such a practice is important for them.
- Understand some of the benefits to be gained from the centering practice of journaling.
- Understand how to complete the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” based on their Self-Assessment results. **Group members will do this as part of their homework after the first session.**

## Session 1: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adapting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

### Details for Each Segment

**Before the Wellness Circle Begins.** Bring name tags, pens, pencils, participant workbooks, crayons or markers, clock, device for music, and sign-in sheet.

Greet each participant as they arrive and invite them to make a name tag for themselves and complete the sign-in sheet with name, address, phone number, and email address.

**0–10** **Welcome.** “We’re excited to have you here.” The facilitator provides a brief introduction of him/herself. Each participant does a brief self-introduction, which includes answering the question: “Why have you chosen to take part in an Adult Wellness Circle?”

**10–20** **Centering Time.** Invite participants to sit with themselves in quiet meditation. Explain that it is simply sitting quietly breathing deeply and slowly. Ask participants to sit quietly doing this for several minutes. Play quiet music as they do this. Explain that this exercise allows them a time to transition into the space and to relax before class begins.

**20–25** **Journaling.** Now ask participants to turn to page 16 in their workbook and journal for a few minutes on how the centering time felt.

**25–35** **Teaching Segment.** Introduce the overall concept of the Adult Wellness Compass program. 1. It is a holistic wellness program. 2. The four points of the Adult Wellness Compass are: heart, soul, strength and mind; and the eight areas of wellness that emerge from those points are: relationships, handling emotions, spirituality, rest and play, stress resilience, care for the body, vocation, and organization. Everything is connected.

Emphasize the following: An Adult Wellness Circle is based on the belief that each of us already knows what we need to do to improve our well-being. This program simply provides a structure that’s supportive and nonjudgmental in order to do what needs to be done. It encourages participants to consider the resources they have in fellow participants. The Adult Wellness Compass program provides a key component that may be lacking in many of their lives: the opportunity to talk honestly with others about their lives and its joys and challenges. Adult Wellness Circles are a safe place to have authentic conversations around how we can create and nurture healthy lives.

Go over the Overview of a Six-Week Adult Wellness Circle, found on p. 6 in their workbooks.

**35–40** **Expectations for Participants.** Invite participants to refer to page 4 in their workbooks. Discuss. Ask them to keep in mind the expectations of being on time, respecting talking time, choosing to listen to others (as opposed to giving advice) and completing their homework each week. Completing the homework is really the only way participants will see their progress through the weeks ahead. (Refer to pages 15–21 in this guide for additional information.)

## Details for Each Segment

**40–45** **Teaching Segment.** Ask participants how their wellness affects their ability to be effective, at work, at home, or in the community. Invite them to reflect on how other areas of their lives affect their ability to be well. Remind them that with focus and intention they can move toward greater wellness. Discuss the reading in the first session in their workbook on page 7.

**45–55** Begin discussion of the Self-Assessment tool and “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process (review chapters VI and VII in this Facilitator Guide). **Please use your own words to explain these concepts rather than reading from the guide.**

You may want to introduce the Self-Assessment tool this way: “To start our journey, we need to see where we are now. So please turn to page 9. When we think of wellness, we need to keep in mind that there are several major categories for us to be aware of and to tune into routinely. In order to be balanced and whole, we want each category to be as strong as possible. As you look at the compass, you will decide honestly where you think you are right now.”

“Beginning on page 30, there is a description of each area of wellness, and a series of statements relating to that area. Begin taking the self-assessment for each of the eight areas of wellness. On page 29, shade in the appropriate number (0–100) in the wedge of each area as you complete each self-assessment. The center of the Compass is “0” and the outer rim is “100” on the scale. The Self-Assessment can be found on pages 30–45. (Some people like to use crayons to see different colors for each section.)

**55–65** **Begin the Self-Assessment.** Allow time—approximately 10 minutes for participants to complete the first few areas in the self-assessment beginning on page 30. Not everyone will finish this during this initial session, so have group members complete their self-assessment as homework. Stress the importance of **completing the self-assessment** by the next session. But they will have enough time during the session that if they have any questions, there will be time to ask questions. Play quiet instrumental music while participants are working. If you can see that group members are seriously focusing on taking the self-assessment you may decide to let them finish taking the assessment, but then remember you will have less time for discussion later. It is up to you.

**62** Give a warning that time is about to expire for this part of the task, and then ask participants to stop taking the self-assessment. This is to allow enough time to complete the rest of what you need to accomplish in this session.

### Break-Out Session for Large Groups

**65–70** **Sharing.** Give time for each person, if they desire, to share one general comment about their experience of taking the self-assessment—don’t get into any details about their results. What was this like for them? What did they notice?

**70–80** **Teaching segment.** Explain the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process that begins on page 13. Request that everyone complete this before the next session.

“On pages 13, 14, and 15, we encourage you to answer each question—your homework between now and the time we meet again.”

## Details for Each Segment

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80–85

“I’d also like each of you to find a wisdom quote or inspiring lyric that you can write on page 14 and then share next week, something that will inspire you on your journey. You’ll find some examples throughout your workbook, but feel free to use whatever speaks to you.”

Explain that journaling can be a valuable tool for this journey. Encourage participants to choose at least one thing that will nurture them through these upcoming weeks and offer them the opportunity to experiment. “Not everything works for everyone. That’s why there are plenty of choices. Be gentle with yourself but stretch just a little.”

Point out the importance of the next three items in the workbook:

- Support from others—Whose support will participants need/want? Support helps us to be successful.
- Previous successes—What challenges have you successfully faced before? Achievements can provide hope for current goal setting.
- Challenges—What might be encountered? Within self? Within others? Recognizing challenges can help us plan ways to navigate around them.

**Define NEXT Steps.** “NEXT Steps are critical. By creating a specific NEXT Step, you will have a much higher chance of success. Does anyone want to give an example of a desired goal for the duration of this program and then let me help you craft it into a NEXT Step?”

**Discuss NEXT Steps.** “It’s great to have a goal, but a goal without action is not fruitful. What will you commit to do between now and the next session to help you achieve your goal? Again—be specific. When, What, and How will you do it? Also ask yourself, ‘Do I have the confidence, a “7+” on a scale of 0–10, that I will do this?’ If not, perhaps you should rethink your steps so you do not set yourself up for disappointment—an inch of progress is preferred over miles of steps not taken.”

85–90

**Closing.** “It’s time to wrap up our first session. Thanks for choosing to be here and please invest some time in YOU this week! Complete the Self-Assessment, read or review pages 7–12, complete your homework on pages 13–15, begin right away to act on your NEXT Step, and we’ll look forward to another great session next week.”

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Remember to send out a summary email to all participants within 48 hours with positive reinforcement for having taken the first step toward enhancing their wellness. Remind them of their homework and when Session 2 is scheduled.



**Purpose:**

- *To welcome* back group members and reintroduce everyone by name.
- *To give* group members additional experience with centering practices and journaling.
- *To introduce* participants to the Illness/Wellness Continuum.
- *To provide* participants an opportunity to personalize the Illness/Wellness Continuum.
- *To discuss* additional the importance of understanding “what we pay attention to.”
- *To share* participants’ Self-Assessment results.
- *To discuss* participants’ NEXT Steps; provide opportunity for sharing centering practices.
- *To choose, write and share* NEXT Steps for the upcoming week.

**Objectives:**

***By the end of Session 2, group members will be able to:***

- Have greater comfort with centering or mindfulness practices and journaling.
- Understand the Illness/Wellness Continuum and how it personally applies to their own life.
- Recognize the power of the “inner critic” and how its toxicity can affect how we feel about ourselves and others.
- Have increased familiarity and comfort with the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process and each of its steps.

## Session 2: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adapting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

### Details for Each Segment

**Before the Wellness Circle Begins.** Bring name tags and sign-in sheet.

**0–10** **Welcome.** As a check-in, invite volunteers to share one thing for which they are grateful from the past week.

**10–15** **Centering Time.** Focus this time on what the participants have just shared. Invite them to begin by making a mental list of what they are grateful for, and then focus and meditate on one thing from their list. Put on quiet music.

**15–35** **Teaching Segment.** Familiarize yourself with this so you can say it in your own words. Feel free to add insights from your own experience. For example, “Moving to our key topic today, please turn to page 17 in your workbook. Whatever you Pay Attention to is What Will Grow.

**“Our health care system can often be better described as an ‘illness care’ system.** Most people seek help at the point of noticing symptoms and disability. This can include pain, disease, degeneration, mental and emotional decline, etc. We go to medical providers to get ‘fixed’ or ‘cured’ and often we don’t think about our health or wellness until something goes wrong again.

**“You are being proactive by participating in an Adult Wellness Circle—paying attention on the front end.** Being aware of what is going well and trying to expand that is helpful. Focusing on problems is not so helpful. Have you ever heard the phrase, ‘What you resist persists?’

**“Be gentle in your self-talk.** We listen to messages, including those from ourselves, over and over—let’s make sure those messages are positive, life-giving ones.

**“When you focus on the positive—on possibilities, potential and opportunities—those are the things that will grow in your life.** This doesn’t mean all problems will magically vanish, but your new way of looking at the world can allow you to view issues in a calmer, more centered way and consider fresh options. You are better able to make good choices that keep you propelled toward your next goal, your next step.”

### Break-Out Session for Large Groups

**35–75** **Sharing.** “Now it’s time to share your NEXT Steps.”

Encourage each member to share their Self-Assessment results and their NEXT Steps, including their centering practice, wisdom quote, the area of wellness they will be focusing on for the upcoming weeks, and their NEXT Steps from the past week.

During their turn, invite each member to take a few minutes to reflect on NEXT Steps for the upcoming week and write them down in their workbook. Volunteers can share them out loud with the group.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

## Details for Each Segment

**75–85**      **Journaling.** Give people 10 minutes to reflect and/or journal on blank pages at the end of the workbook in response to these questions:

**85–90**      **Closing.** “It’s time to wrap up our second session. Thanks for choosing to be here and please invest some time in YOU this week! For next week, read or review page 17, complete your homework on page 18, and continue to act on your NEXT Step. We’ll look forward to another great session next week!”

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Remember to send out an e-mail for Session 2 to all participants within the next 48 hours to summarize this session, encourage them with their NEXT Steps, and remind them of their homework and when Session 3 is scheduled.

**Purpose:**

- *To welcome* back group members.
- *To give* group members additional experiences with centering practices and journaling.
- *To teach* about why growth is hard, using the concepts of the Comfort Zone, Growth Zone, and Panic Zone.
- *To give* group members the chance to discuss different activities and experiences, and in which “zone” each of these activities and experiences would place them.
- *To understand* that these “zones” exist for individuals, relationships/families, and organizations.
- *To give* group members an opportunity to identify the prevailing “zone” in their life experience “right now.”
- *To understand* the difference between intentionally moving out of the Comfort Zone vs. being forced or thrown out of the Comfort Zone unexpectedly.
- *To learn* what a person needs generally (and what each group member needs individually) to move out of the Comfort Zone or out of the Panic Zone.
- *To understand* the difference between change (always happening) and growth (an intentional choice).
- *To check in* regarding how the past week went in terms of NEXT Steps.
- *To choose, write and share* NEXT Steps for the coming week.

**Objectives:**

***By the end of Session 3, group members will be able to:***

- Understand the concepts of the comfort zone, the growth zone, and the panic zone and how each individual has unique comfort, growth, and panic zones.
- Recognize when they are in which “zone” and know how to move from one to another.
- Understand that while change is inevitable, growth is optional.
- Have increased familiarity and comfort with the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process and each of its steps.

### Session 3: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adapting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

#### Details for Each Segment

**Before the Wellness Circle Begins.** Bring quiet music for centering or journaling time, name tags, and sign-in sheet.

**0–10** **Welcome.** Have group members share something they are grateful for from sometime in the past week.

**10–15** **Journaling.** Have participants journal about their thoughts of gratitude. Journal space can be found at the end of the workbook.

**15–20** **Sharing.** Invitation to share anything from the Centering/Journaling Time

**20–35** **Teaching Segment.** Familiarize yourself with this so you can say it in your own words. Feel free to add insights from your own experience. You might want to reference a Comfort Zone/GZ/PZ that relates to your life, community, or place of work.

Refamiliarize participants with the graphic on page 19. “Over time, every individual, relationship, family and organization has a set of patterns and habits that become normal/normative for them. These patterns and habits become comfortable and familiar. This ‘comfort zone’ (CZ for short) is like a set of unwritten rules about how things should be done ‘around here.’ These habits determine what we think we can/cannot do—and sometimes, these habits become so ingrained, we follow them even though they are not serving the members of the group well, and sometimes we are seemingly unable to think about or do anything differently.

“Moving out of the CZ and into the growth zone (GZ) takes courage. In order to grow and change we must risk moving outside of our CZ. We must be discontent with our current Comfort Zone—it needs to be more important to risk the change of the new than the risk of staying in the old.

“People move into the GZ in two ways—either proactively or by necessity because of some sort of change in life circumstances. Going back to school to study in a new field or deciding to get married are choices; receiving a promotion at work and consequently having to learn an entirely new work process or having to step up when the head of an organization you are in resigns for health reasons and asks you to take over are examples of being thrown into the Growth Zone.

“All change is initially uncomfortable—if our brain decides the change is manageable, we work on how to move forward with the change, process the change, organize it and advance with it.

“If we perceive the changes to be too much, too fast, we may have moved ourselves into the panic zone (PZ).

## Details for Each Segment

20–35  
(*cont'd*) “If we rigidly defend our CZ, refusing to be proactive about growth, we will usually end up finding ourselves thrown from the CZ to PZ sooner or later.”

Take a minute and identify some examples of the things that fall into the CZ, GZ or PZ for group members. Read the following list of activities and invite people to share (by show of hands perhaps) what zone they would represent to them. *Calling someone to apologize? Tent camping overnight in the Rockies? Having a difficult but needed conversation with a colleague or family member? Standing near the edge of the Grand Canyon? Singing in front of others? Going back to school? Giving a presentation to 100 people? Moving to a new state? A new country? Abandoning a long-held routine? Turning off your TV for a month? Changing careers?* Invite people to share why an example falls into one zone and not another.

“Different events or items trigger comfort or panic in each of us. But one thing is true for all of us—those people and groups who intentionally stretch themselves into the GZ on a regular basis, not only minimize their chances of going into the PZ, but they also expand their CZ, giving them greater flexibility and freedom to take advantage of opportunities and enjoy life.

“Expanding your CZ benefits you by stimulating your brain activity to provide better mental health, increases your self-confidence, makes you more resilient, and helps prevent you from becoming stuck in a rut. It really challenges you to improve yourself.”

35–45 **Sharing.** Invite the group members to share how the “Zone” concept has been evident in their lives in the past and/or how it is evident right now.

Invite participants to share if or when they have been forced or thrown out of the Comfort Zone. How did they cope with that? What did they learn from the experience?

### Break-Out Session for Large Groups

45–80 **Sharing.** Each participant reports on how the past week went for them, including the area of whole-person wellness they are working on, and progress with their NEXT Steps.

75–85 **Journaling.** Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect on NEXT Steps for the upcoming week and to write them down in their workbook on page 20.

85–90 **Closing.** “It’s time to wrap up our third session. Thanks for choosing to be here and please invest some time in YOU this week! For next week, read or review page 19, complete homework on page 20, and continue to act on your NEXT Step.

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Remember to send out a summary email to all participants within 48 hours with positive reinforcement and affirmation. Remind them of their homework and when Session 4 is scheduled.

**Purpose:**

- *To welcome* back group members.
- *To give* group members additional experiences with journaling.
- *To teach* the “J” Curve concept.
- *To understand* that J Curves exist for individuals, relationships, and organizations.
- *To help* group members recognize and share J Curves they have already passed through as well as those J Curves they may currently be experiencing.
- *To understand* the difference between intentionally moving into a J Curve vs. being forced into J Curve against our will.
- *To learn* what a person needs in general, and what each participant may need specifically when they are in the midst of a J Curve.
- *To check in* regarding how the past week went with centering practices and NEXT Steps.
- *To choose, write and share* NEXT Steps for the upcoming week.

**Objectives:**

***By the end of Session 4, group members will be able to:***

- Understand the concept of the “J” Curve.
- Understand that individuals, relationships, families and organizations all go through J Curves.
- Recognize when they are in a J Curve and how the choices they make can either help them move through it or cause them to remain “stuck.”
- Have increased familiarity and comfort with the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process and each of its steps.

## Session 4: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adapting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

### Details for Each Segment

**Before the Wellness Circle Begins.** Bring name tags, quiet centering music, and sign-in sheet.

**0–10** **Welcome.** Ask if anyone would like to share a time they were able to move from the panic zone to the growth zone over the last week.

**10–15** **Journaling.** Have participants respond to the following question in their journal time, “Has there ever been a time in your life when you worried things were never going to get better or were so challenging that you wanted to give up?”

**15–20** **Sharing.** Invite participants to share anything that came up for them in the Centering/Journaling time.

**20–35** **Teaching Segment.** Familiarize yourself with this so you can say it in your own words. Feel free to add insights from your own experience. You might want to reference a “J” Curve that relates to your world, but nothing too personal.

“In our workbook on page 21, we see that when we risk making a change, we often have two very different experiences; the experience that: 1. we are open to growth, new possibilities, and new learning and/or 2. this new territory can leave us feeling unstable or unsure.

“On the graph, as our openness to experiences and change increases, stability decreases. So initially, as we begin changes in our path to growth, it’s totally normal to feel unsettled, unsure and a little shaky about the whole thing. Notice on the graph, though, if we keep moving through the experience with openness, stability gradually improves, and continues to improve more and more as we become more open to additional growth experiences.

“A key factor in the successful navigation of a J Curve is asking for support from those around us while we’re in the initial phases of instability and uncertainty.

“Consider this example: An infant just learning to walk. Everyone around her expects her to fall down because she’s trying something totally new. Everyone knows she’ll need lots of attempts—that she will learn as she keeps trying. Everyone cheers her on. Even for the tiniest of steps. The baby never seems to mind that she doesn’t just start walking. She tries and falls. Tries and falls. Every day. Until she gets more stable on her feet, finds her footing, gets her rhythm and then ... she takes off and never looks back ... on to her next adventure!

“Most people understand the J Curve when they experience a loss or a negative situation. It’s more difficult to understand how the concept also applies when we experience a positive change—getting the job we have been dreaming of, the birth of a child, the acquisition of the latest gadget with an entirely different operating system. Can you think of a positive experience in your life that resulted in your passage through a J Curve?”



Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

## Details for Each Segment

35–45 **Sharing.** Invite group member to share J Curves they have been through in the past and/or any J Curves they are in right now. Remember: J Curves are both normal and natural.

### Break-Out Session for Large Group If Necessary

45–70 **Sharing.** Each participant reports on how the past week went for them—including the area of wellness they are working on, and their NEXT Steps.

### Remain in Break-Out Session for Large Groups

70–85 **Sharing.** Each participant now takes a few minutes to reflect on NEXT Steps for the upcoming week, writes them down in their workbook, and shares them out loud with the group.

85–90 **Closing.** “It’s time to wrap up our fourth session. Thanks for choosing to be here and please invest some time in YOU this week! For next week, read or review page 21, complete homework on page 22, and continue to act on your NEXT Steps.”

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Remember to send out a summary email to all participants within 48 hours with positive reinforcement and affirmation. Remind them of their homework and when Session 5 is scheduled.

**Purpose:**

- *To welcome* back group members.
- *To give* participants additional experiences with centering prayer and journaling.
- *To introduce* participants to the concepts of “systemic dynamics.”
- *To teach* the concept of “Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing” (F, S, N, & P) and how this concept illustrates what happens in a “system” when there is growth or change.
- *To assist* group members in recognizing that when one person in a system changes, others in the system may not support the change (or even block/sabotage) the change. All of this can happen without awareness.
- *To teach* about the very common phenomenon of “false norming”—in which an individual, relationship or organization is in denial about change and tries to pretend that everything is still the same.
- *To show* the process of “F, S, N, & P” is natural and normal and inevitable in every system.
- *To check in* regarding how the past week went with NEXT Steps.
- *To choose, write and share* NEXT Steps for the upcoming week.

**Objectives:**

***By the end of Session 5, group members will be able to:***

- Understand the concept of “systemic dynamics.”
- Understand the concept of “F, S, N, & P”
- Understand that individuals, relationships, families and organizations all go through the “F, S, N, & P” process.
- Recognize when they are in the midst of systemic change, whether the change is generated by themselves or someone else.
- Have increased familiarity and comfort with the “Mapping Your Journey of Growth and Change” process and each of its steps.

## Session 5: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adjusting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

### Details for Each Segment

**Before the Wellness Circle Begins.** Bring name tags, source of quiet music, paper for journaling, and sign-in sheet.

**0–5** **Welcome.** Ask group members to tell about a time this week when realized that they or someone they know were going through a “J” Curve.

**5–15** **Opening and Journaling Time.** Have participants spend some time journaling noting particularly feelings that may arise for them as they sit with the story for a few moments.

**15–20** **Sharing.** Invitation to share anything that came from the centering/journaling Time.

**20–30** **Teaching Segment.** “Systemic Dynamics.” Refer participants to the graphic on page 23. Familiarize yourself with this so you can say it in your own words. Feel free to add insights from your own experience.

“Any group who interacts regularly constitutes a system—families, friendships, work teams and couples. Systems like balance. When one person in a system changes, it creates a ‘storm,’ and the system looks to rebalance itself. When worked out well, this leads to a new ‘norm,’ which allows the system to ‘perform’ again. ‘False norming’ is when a system denies that an upset has occurred and tries to pretend everything is still the same.

“**Example:** Four co-workers at work are all at the same level and are good friends. One of them gets picked for a promotion and is now working with a new group of colleagues. A ‘storm’ is sure to happen within the original foursome and will have to be worked out if a new ‘norm’ is going to be achieved.

“**Example:** Someone in the family is diagnosed with a serious illness. The old ‘normal’ is gone and there will be considerable ‘storming’ and adjusting before a new ‘normal’ can be reached.

“**Example:** When a small business grows, there’s excitement, but it can soon feel different as many new employees join and the ‘norm’ changes. This can cause ‘storms’ as everyone learns to live into this new situation.

“Sometimes people in the systems in which we live and work might resist our attempts at growth and change. If they do, it’s often not even conscious. When one person in a system grows and changes, then the old ‘normal’ of the system will be impacted and others in the system may have to change, as well.

“The forming, storming, norming and performing process can be challenging, draining, and complicated, yet it is an inevitable part of change and is to be expected. And we should not let it scare us off making moves toward needed or wanted change.”

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

## Details for Each Segment

**30–50**      **Discussion.** Invite participants to share “F, S, N, & P” cycles they have been through in the past and/or any such cycles they are in right now. Remember “F, S, N, & P” cycles are normal and natural. Examples: getting married, a new child joins the family, a change of job, the death of a loved one, a move to a new community. Invite members to share what it’s like to be affected by someone else’s “storming.” Discuss if they know individuals, relationships, families or organizations that seem to be perpetually stuck in the “storming” phase. Why might this be?

### Break-Out Session for Large Groups

**50–80**      **Sharing.** Each participant shares/reports on how the past week went for them including, their centering practice, area of wellness they are working on, and their NEXT Steps. Each member also takes a few minutes to reflect on NEXT Steps for the upcoming week, writes them down in their workbook, and shares them out loud with the group.

**80–85**      **Journaling.** Work on mapping the NEXT Steps of your journey at the end of session 5 and write to yourself about why you want to make these changes for yourself.

**85–90**      **Closing.** “It’s time to wrap up our fifth session. Thanks for choosing to be here and please invest some time in YOU this week! For next week, read or review page 23, complete homework on page 24, and continue to act on your NEXT Steps.”

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Remember to send out a summary email to all participants within 48 hours with positive reinforcement and affirmation. Remind them of their homework and when Session 6 is scheduled.

**Purpose:**

- *To welcome* back group members.
- *To give* participants additional experiences with centering practices and journaling.
- *To celebrate* the work that group members have done during their time together.
- *To reinforce* the idea that wellness is a journey, a process, and not a destination.
- *To encourage* participants to enlist the help of their community to support their wellness goals.
- *To encourage* group members to keep the process they have started going, whether informally, with a group of people in their lives, or by joining another Adult Wellness Circle.
- *To check in* regarding how the past week went with their NEXT Steps.
- *To facilitate* a closing that honors and celebrates the work that group members have done.

**Objectives:**

***By the end of Session 6, group members will be able to:***

- Have increased comfort with centering/mindfulness practices and journaling.
- Understand the concept that wellness is a process and a journey, not a destination.
- Understand the need to continue the process of growth and change on an ongoing basis (which could include participation in another Adult Wellness Circle).
- See the interconnectedness of all areas of wellness.
- Appreciate the need for adults to be positive systems of support for one another.
- Experience the importance of celebrations to honor the growth and the connections that have been shared with one another.

## Session 6: A Step-by-Step Guide

This outline is for a 90-minute session—it can be broken into two sessions or shortened as needed by adjusting the group discussion or reflection segments.

Elapsed Time  
(in minutes)

### Details for Each Segment

	<b>Before the Wellness Circle Begins.</b> Bring quiet music for centering/journaling time.
0–10	<b>Welcome.</b> Share something that has brought you happiness in our time together.
10–15	<b>Journaling.</b> Invite participants to write down their thoughts/reflections related to what they have learned and how they have grown in the last six weeks.
15–20	<b>Sharing.</b> Invitation to share anything from the journaling time.
20–30	<b>Teaching Segment and Discussion.</b> Discuss the concept of wellness as a journey, “a process more than a destination.”  Discuss ideas for group members to continue to build upon the good work they have done in this program.  Talk about if and how participants in this group would like to stay in touch with each other.  Discuss ideas for getting support from the community going forward.  Discuss whether or not it would be beneficial to offer another Adult Wellness Circle at some point in the future.
30–60	<b>Sharing.</b> Each participant shares about how the past week went for them including their area of whole-person wellness they are working on, and their NEXT Steps.
60–70	<b>Journaling.</b> Each group member completes the “closing reflection” page in their book for Session 6, on. Play quiet music to set a reflective tone. Tell them they will have an opportunity to share their thoughts later if they choose to.
70–90	<b>Closing Options. Closing with personal affirmations.</b> In this Closing Ritual, each person reads out loud their “closing reflection.” You may stand in a circle, hold hands if you wish. As each person, who wishes to, shares their closing reflection, members of the group are invited to offer a positive affirmation about that person.



If you are so inclined, please email and let us know how your *Adult Wellness Circle* went. We love to hear how this program is being used and experienced in the world.

Email us:

Holly Hughes Stoner: [holly@samaritanfamilywellness.org](mailto:holly@samaritanfamilywellness.org)

Scott Stoner: [scott@samaritanfamilywellness.org](mailto:scott@samaritanfamilywellness.org)

Thank you.



## About the Authors

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**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. Scott, in addition to his coaching and psychotherapy work, leads wellness retreats for organizations and leadership teams. Holly has worked with many families and children as a teacher at the grade-school, middle-school, and high-school levels, and both Holly and Scott have worked with families from all walks of life in their family therapy practices.

Married for over 40 years, they are the creators of the *Parent Wellness Compass: Outfitting for the Journey*, *The Teen Compass Wellness Notebook*, and both the Parent Wellness Circle and the Teen Wellness Circle programs.

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