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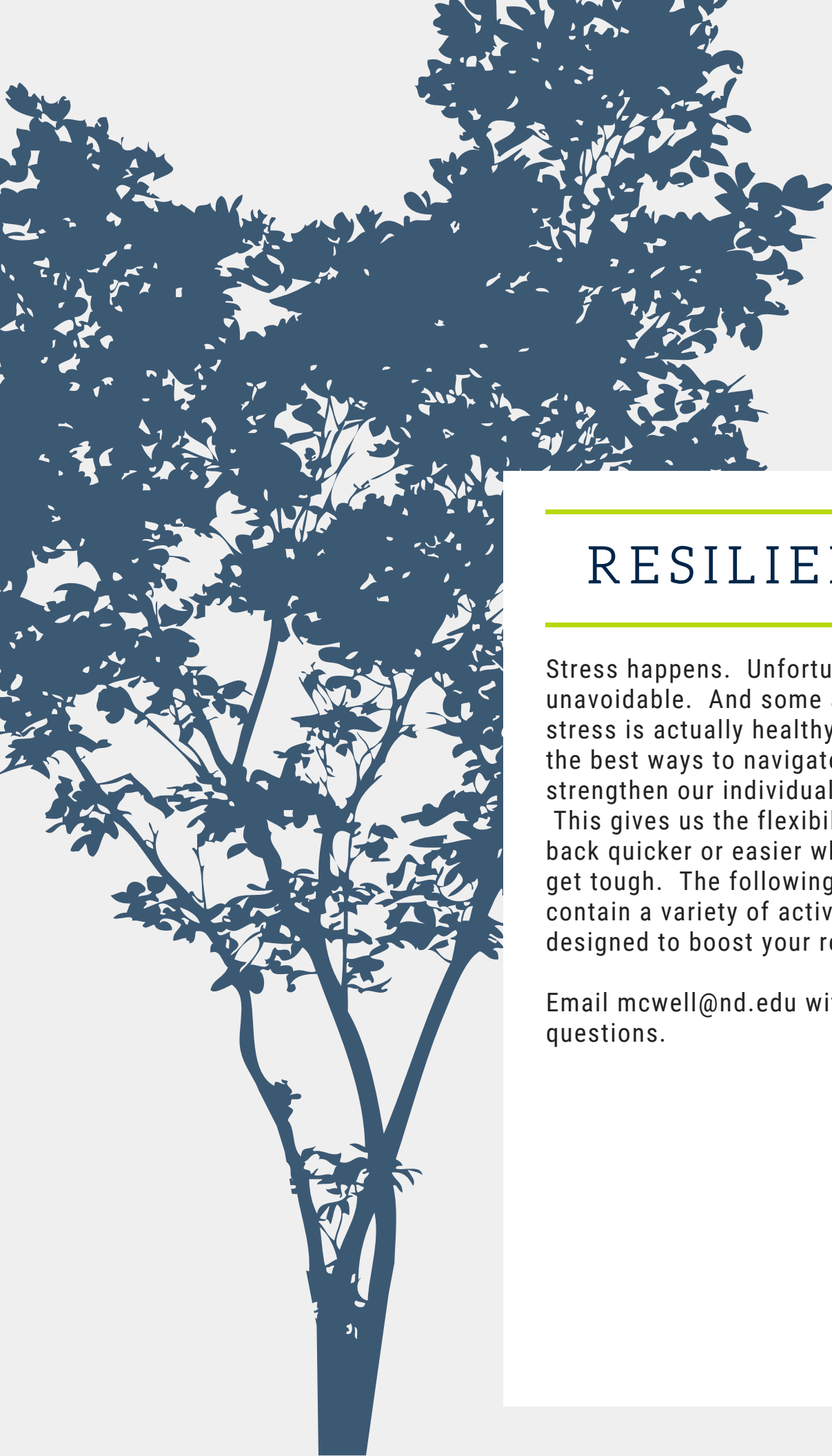
# GROWING THROUGH ADVERSITY

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ACTIVITIES TO BOOST RESILIENCE



**Student  
Well-Being**  
MCDONALD CENTER



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# RESILIENCE

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Stress happens. Unfortunately, it's unavoidable. And some amount of stress is actually healthy. But one of the best ways to navigate stress is to strengthen our individual resilience.

This gives us the flexibility to bounce back quicker or easier when things get tough. The following pages contain a variety of activities designed to boost your resilience.

Email [mcwell@nd.edu](mailto:mcwell@nd.edu) with any questions.























# GRATITUDE LOG

## SHIFTING FOCUS TO THE POSITIVE

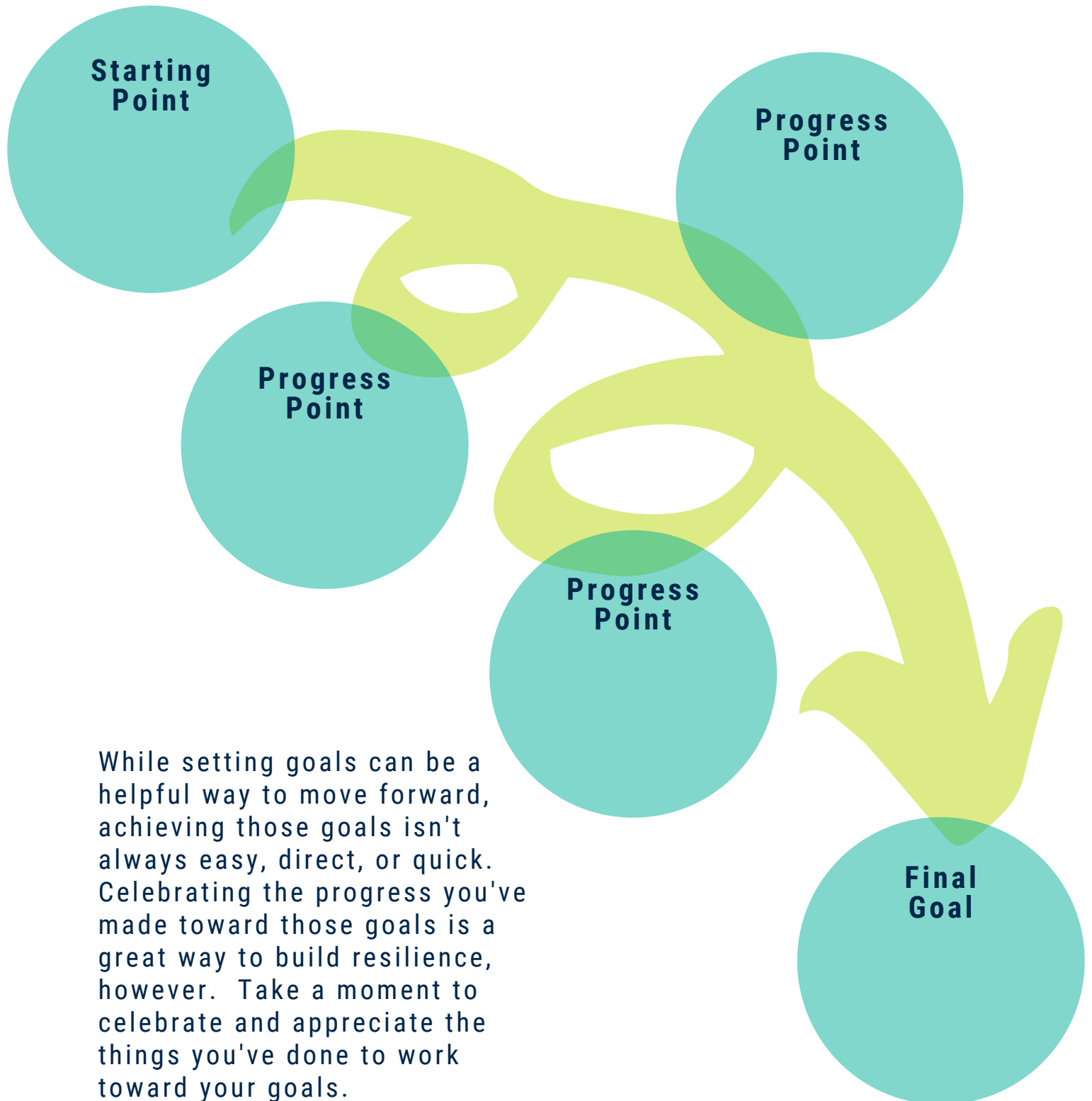


Gratitude is an incredibly powerful practice that can shift our mindsets and support our well-being. Put this sheet in a place you see regularly and add to it at least one time per day for the next few weeks. Notice how you feel before and after focusing on gratitude.

# FOCUS ON PROGRESS

## CELEBRATING THE WINS



# MY GIFTS

## APPRECIATE YOUR TALENTS & STRENGTHS

Pause to appreciate all the gifts, talents, and strengths you possess by writing them in the boxes below. These unique and valuable aspects of yourself are a source of resilience.



# ENERGY TANK

## WHAT FILLS YOU UP?

Being aware of the activities, people, and places that drain you of energy or give you energy can be a useful starting point in caring for your well-being and supporting your resilience.

<b>ENERGY GIVING</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>ENERGY DRAINING</b>
<b>ENERGY GIVING</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>ENERGY DRAINING</b>
<b>ENERGY GIVING</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>ENERGY DRAINING</b>



# BOOST CREATIVITY

## STRENGTHEN YOUR CREATIVITY MUSCLE

.....  
.....  
.....

Contrary to popular belief, creativity is actually a learned skill that can be strengthened. Engaging in creative activities is a great way to support your well-being and resilience. Try one of the activities below, or make up your own.

**be  
curious**

**play  
chess**

**draw or  
doodle**

**notice  
patterns  
around  
you**

**go for a  
walk**

**journal**

**do  
nothing**

**listen  
to,  
learn,  
or play  
music**

**meditate**

**take  
photos**

# BUILDING OPTIMISM

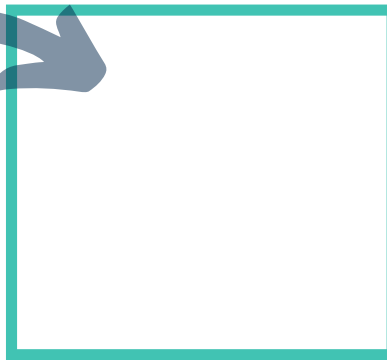
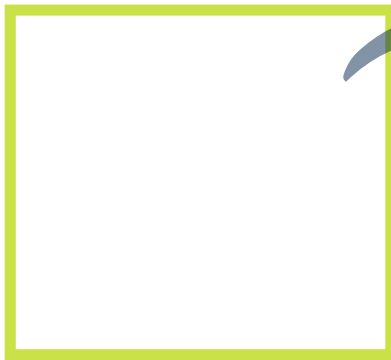
## OPENING DOORS

One way to build resilience is to cultivate a sense of optimism. It's natural for our brains to want to focus on things that didn't go the way we wanted or expected them to, but with a little training, we can shift into a more optimistic mindset. Take a moment to reflect on a time or two when a "door" closed on you as well as what door opened as a result.

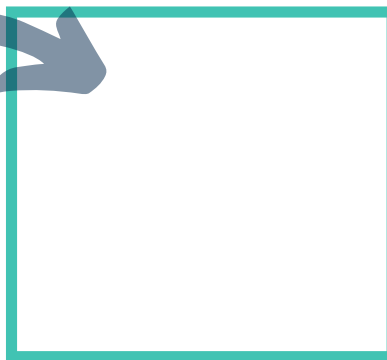
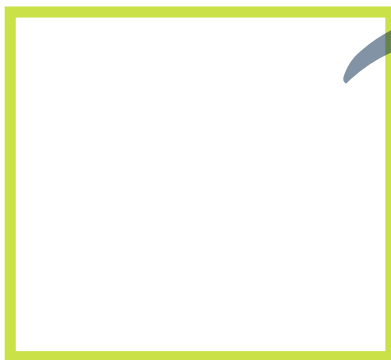
### DOOR THAT CLOSED

### NEW DOOR THAT OPENED

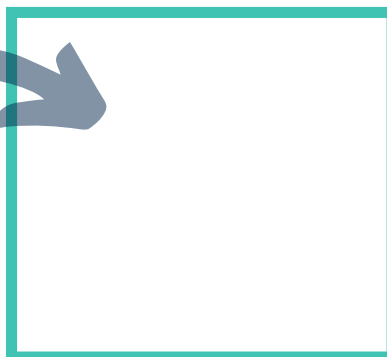
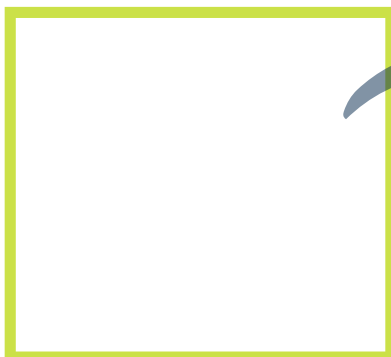
### REFLECT



Was it easy or hard to see the new door that opened?



What does the closed door represent now?



What prevented you from seeing the new open door?



# SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

## WHAT WE CAN CONTROL



It's easy to be overwhelmed by "what if?" worries and thoughts. Shifting our attention to what we can control is one way to quiet those thoughts and build resilience. Use the circle below to map out what is - and is not - within your control.

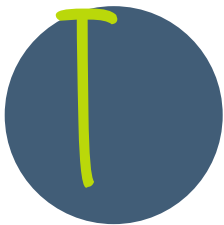
Outside  
My Control

within  
My Control

# CHALLENGE YOUR THOUGHTS

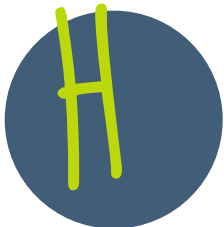
## WHAT WE CAN CONTROL

Often, our thoughts are the source of our stress and anxiety. Here are two techniques to challenge those worrisome and stressful thoughts when they arise.



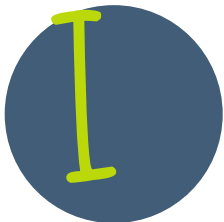
### **TRUE?**

Is this thought true?  
What are facts or opinions?



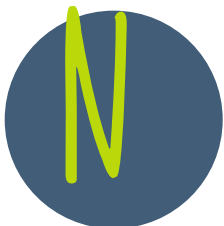
### **HELPFUL?**

Is paying attention to this thought helpful or useful?



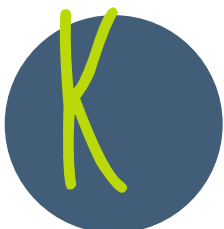
### **INSPIRING?**

Does this thought inspire me? Or have another effect?



### **NECESSARY?**

Is it important to focus on this? Is it necessary to act?



### **KIND?**

Is this a kind thought?  
What might be a kinder thought?

**REFLECT:** What did you notice with this activity?

# JOURNALING PROMPTS

## WRITE IT DOWN

Writing can be a grounding practice that allows you to process and understand thoughts and experiences. Below are some journaling prompts to get you started.

Write down  
3-5 things  
you're  
grateful for.

Write a letter  
to yourself 5  
years ago.

Write about  
how you're  
feeling right  
now.

Write a love  
letter to  
someone  
important to  
you.

Write about  
someone you  
admire and  
why.

Write down a  
favorite  
prayer or  
passage and  
reflect on it.

Write down  
3-5 things  
you're proud  
of.

Write a letter  
to yourself 5  
years from  
now.

# LOVING KINDNESS

A MEDITATION TO BOOST CONNECTION AND REDUCE SUFFERING

Take a moment to practice a meditation that boosts a sense of connectedness and decreases loneliness.

May you be happy.

May you be healthy.

May you be peaceful.

May you be safe.

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes if it feels right to you.
2. Focus on these loving kindness messages.
3. Imagine receiving these messages from those who love you.
4. Imagine sending these messages to people you love.
5. Imagine sending these messages to people who are neutral.
6. Imagine sending these messages to all living beings.



# SELF COMPASSION

## OFFER KINDNESS TO YOURSELF



This 5 minute exercise can quiet the critical voice in your mind and boost your resilience.

### Response to Loved One

Remember a time when a loved one was suffering or struggling. What did you say to that person? What tone of voice did you use?

### Response to Self

Think about a time when you were suffering or struggling. What did you say to yourself? What tone of voice did you use?

### Gratitude Practice

Your critical voice is the negative narrative that likely was apparent in the last step. Take a moment to thank your critical voice. Your gratitude doesn't suggest the voice is right or acceptable - it just acknowledges that it exists.

### Flip the Script

Take a moment to offer yourself the same kindness and compassion that you offered your loved one in the first step.



# **Student Well-Being**

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