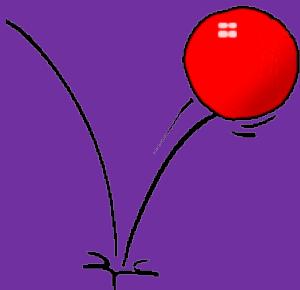




## *Building Bounce Back Families*



***It's All Relative!***

Chris W. Martin, MA in Ed. & Ed. Counseling, ITE

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## About the Author

Chris W. Martin, M.A. in Ed. & Ed. Counseling, ITE

Perhaps one of Chris Martin's greatest accomplishments in life has been his bounce back skills. He's rebounded from all kinds of adversity, including mental illness, financial woes, personal loss, and professional despair. Bouncing back is one thing, but bouncing forward into something greater is the stuff of real resilience.

Chris is the author and/or co-author of numerous training materials and workshops such as: *The Peer Support Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Advanced Peer Practices, Keeping the Recovery Skills Alive (KRSA), The Next 40 Days to a Resilient Journey of Meaning & Purpose, Resilient Culture Playbook, R & R Wellness Curriculum*, and much more.

Chris previously served as Director of the Recovery Opportunity Center in which he facilitated the Peer Employment Training and many other recovery-oriented courses throughout the United States, including New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom, and Singapore. He now serves as a Director of Learning & Performance I for Crestwood Behavioral Health.

## **What Is a Family?**

**One word for what family means to me is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is a family?** There are many answers and examples for that question. We think one universal answer is: *it's all relative*. We're not only talking here about a relative by blood, adoption, and/or marriage. A family might include some or all of those characteristics or perhaps none of those at all. We believe a family is *relative* to the persons who are its members. A family is a social unit consisting of two or more people who are connected by a bond of love and a commitment that "no matter what, we are there for each other." Just like individuals, a family can experience good times, bad times, growth, healing (reconciliation), and resilience.

**Resilient Family:** *A family who has the ability to bounce back, recover, and develop a stronger capacity to respond to adversities in the future. Resilient families also strive to spring forward to something greater than they were before.*



**Resilient Family Characteristics:** The word family actually originates from the Latin word meaning *famulus* for servant and *familia* for household servants. The original meaning of servant for family couldn't be better; a resilient family mutually serves each other. Take a look at the following 12 principles of servant leadership for families below.

### **12 Principles of Servant Leadership for Families <sup>1</sup>**

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Listening _____         | 7. Foresight _____                  |
| 2. Empathy _____           | 8. Stewardship _____                |
| 3. Healing _____           | 9. Growth _____                     |
| 4. Awareness _____         | 10. Building Community _____        |
| 5. Persuasion _____        | 11. Calling _____                   |
| 6. Conceptualization _____ | 12. Nurturing the Spirit- Joy _____ |

*To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must cultivate our personal life; and to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our hearts right. ~ Confucius*

## Family Resilience Planning

Building a bounce back family or as we'll call it... *Family Resilience Planning* is a dynamic relationship building process which can help a family become more hopeful and optimistic, increase their courage to face challenges and fears; develop a stronger sense of belonging to each other, enhance their family and community wellness; and develop a durable family spirit. This meaningful family self-help experience involves four separate and progressive activities which build upon each other. These activities are:

1. creating a Family Meeting Agreement.
2. developing the family mission statement and values.
3. completing the *Resilient Family Skills Survey*.
4. completing a *Family Resilience Action Plan*.



"Before we begin this family meeting, how about we go around and say our names and a little something about ourselves."

## Getting Started

Once all the family members understand the purpose and agree to participate in the *Family Resilience Planning* process, then it's just a matter of scheduling each successive session. The whole process is meant to be a family sharing activity which is best done over a period of four days or stretched out over several weeks. For example, your family may decide to create the *Family Meeting Agreement* in one session (very doable) but develop the *Family Mission Statement and Values* portion over two to three sessions. The important thing is to not rush the experience, ensuring all family members are present and can participate. It may be a good idea to arrange a special event around each of the four activities such as a special meal and/or place to gather.

A farmer who had a quarrelsome family called his sons and told them to lay a bunch of sticks before him. Then, after laying the sticks parallel to one another and binding them, he challenged his sons, one after one, to pick up the bundle and break it. They all tried, but in vain. Then, untying the bundle, he gave them the sticks to break one by one. This they did with the greatest ease. Then said the father, Thus, my sons, as long as you remain united, you are a match for anything, but differ and separate, and you are undone.

~ Aesop

## I. Family Meeting Agreement

Have you ever heard an orchestra warm up? Here's what usually happens: a lot of blaring instruments compete to be heard over the other. Because of all the loud and continued guitar strumming, drum pounding, horn blowing, and violin whining, some instruments are barely distinguishable at all. In fact, no clear rhythm or harmonious melody ever emerges from this clamoring blast of discordant noise. Sound familiar? This effect can sometimes be the experience in family meetings and discussions. If we're not careful, we can end up strumming on without hearing others. We can get so focused on tooting our own horns and pounding out our own points, we miss hearing and feeling what other family members are sharing. We can whine on so much about our victimhood that we totally miss our accountability or fail to show empathy for other family members. In meetings like this, feelings can get hurt while no one gets heard.

Now don't get us wrong, warm-ups are useful; they help get an orchestra started and ready to play beautiful music together. The purpose of drafting a Family Meeting Agreement is also to get the family warmed up and ready to complete Family Resilience Planning. By creating an agreement on how we want to be together in our family meetings will help everyone feel heard and lessen the chance of getting hurt. We thought you might like some examples of attitudes and actions which some families included on their Family Meeting Agreement. The idea is to agree upon attitudes and actions which will help your family have productive and harmonious meetings. Make sure everyone weighs in on the final agreement outcome. Some families actually frame their final draft of the Family Meeting Agreement and display it whenever they meet.

### Examples of a Family Meeting Agreement

- 🎵 Avoid judging and criticizing self and other family members.
- 🎵 Share the floor by balancing listening with sharing.
- 🎵 Keep an open heart and open mind; be willing to see things differently.
- 🎵 One person speaks at a time, avoiding side conversations and interrupting
- 🎵 Recognize, honor, and validate the strengths of others.
- 🎵 Be fully present; turn off cell phones, iPads, laptops, etc.
- 🎵 Use "I" Statements and speak from personal experience- avoid assuming all others see and do things the way you do.
- 🎵 Others?



## **Our Family Meeting Agreement**

As a family, we agree to have the following attitudes and demonstrate the following actions during our family meetings.



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*Family is like music: some high notes, some low notes but always a beautiful song!*

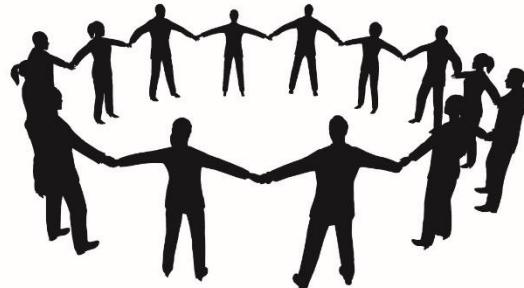
## **II. A Family Mission Statement and Family Values**

### *Tips for Drafting a Family Mission Statement and Identifying Family Values*

1. The ideal Family Mission statement is timeless and deals with the *why* and *how*.
2. Set aside some special family time to work on a Family Mission Statement. Make it a special event for the family by preparing a favorite meal or treat.
3. It's important for every member of the family to participate. For younger children, you can also use pictures to represent various concepts in the mission statement.
4. Remember, don't invent your family mission, but rather work together to uncover and discover it. Each family member possesses special gifts and strengths, and all of these gifts and strengths add to the special uniqueness of your family.
5. Use the following Family Mission and Value Discovery questions # 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 to help guide you in drafting your Family Mission Statement.
6. It would be good to post or frame your Family Mission statement where all family members can see it.

### **Tips for Identifying Family Values**

1. It's important for every member of the family to participate. For younger children, you can also use pictures to represent various concepts in the mission statement.
2. Family values may be included in the Family Mission statement or they could also be listed separately.
3. Use the following Family Mission and Value Discovery questions #1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 to help you identify your key family values.
4. It would be good to post or frame your family's list of values where all family members can see it.



*What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.*

~ Mother Theresa

## **Family Mission and Values Discovery Questions**

You can answer the following discovery questions as a family by selecting one family member volunteer to write in the answers.

1. What are some key strengths of each family member? (Ask each family member to identify their strengths and write them next to the family member's name below.)

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2. Collectively, we are at our best when we are...

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3. Collectively, we are at our worst when we are:

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*What greater thing is there for human souls than to feel that they are joined for life – to be with each other in silent unspeakable memories.” ~ George Eliot*

## **Family Mission and Values Discovery Questions cont'd.**

4. If we had a completely free day together as a family, how would we spend it?

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5. What are practical ways we can serve each other?

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6. What are practical ways we can serve others outside our family?

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7. Name three things that we could do better as a family.

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I sustain myself with the love of my family.

~ Maya Angelou

## **Family Mission and Values Discovery Questions cont'd.**

8. If our home could be filled with one emotion, what would it be?

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9. Name three adjectives we would like people to use to describe our home environment.

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10. What are the top four priorities we want our family to value?

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11. What is the individual life purpose of each family member?

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*Family is not an important thing. It's everything.* ~ Michael J. Fox

## **Family Mission and Values Discovery Questions cont'd.**

12. Describe our family goals for the next five years...

financially: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

intellectually: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

emotionally: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

relationally with each other: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

communally in our environment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

physically: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

spiritually: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Next Step: Drafting Our Family Mission Statement and Identifying Family Values**

You've done some wonderful work to get this far. Now you can use your family answers to the previous questions to help you draft a family mission statement and identify your family values. Remember that referring to your family's answers to questions # 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 will help guide in drafting your Family Mission Statement. And referring to the family's answers for questions # 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 will help you identify your Family Values. Before you begin, however, take a look at some examples of family mission statements on the following page.

*In dwelling, live close to the ground. In thinking, keep to the simple. In conflict, be fair and generous. In governing, don't try to control. In work, do what you enjoy. In family life, be completely present.*

~ Lao Tzu

## **Examples of Family Mission Statements**

*Our family mission is to:*

*Value honesty with ourselves and others.*

*Create an environment where each of us can find support and encouragement in achieving our life's goals.*

*Respect and accept each person's unique personality and talents.*

*Promote a loving, kind, and happy atmosphere.*

*Support family endeavors that better society.*

*Maintain patience through understanding.*

*Always resolve conflicts with each other rather than harboring anger.*

*Promote the realization of life's treasures.*

### **Our Family Mission**

To love each other...

To help each other...

To believe in each other...

To wisely use our time, talents, and resources to bless others....

To worship together...

Forever.

### **Our Family Mission**

The mission of our family is to create a nurturing place of faith, order, truth, love, happiness, and relaxation, and to provide opportunity for each individual to become responsibly independent, and effectively interdependent, in order to serve worthy purposes in society."

~ Stephen Covey Family

## **Family Mission Statement**

Remember that referring to your family's answers to questions # 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 will help guide in drafting your Family Mission Statement.

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## **Family Values**

Remember, referring to the family's answers for discovery questions # 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11, will help you identify your family values. You can also refer to your mission statement above to gain clues on your family's values. For example, if you look at the Stephen Covey Family's mission statement on Page 12, you will see some of their values are love, faith, nurturing, truthfulness, responsibility, independence, interdependence and community service.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## The Resilient Family Skills Survey

The following self-survey is not a rigorously validated scientific assessment. It is, however, based upon the five steps of resilience and five correlating characteristics of a resilient family. There are no right or wrong answers; there are only your answers. The family can do this rating exercise together or separately and then compare the scores. Do your best to circle the answer which most fits how you see your family now.

<b>Family Resilience Skills</b>					
Key: 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5=Always					
<b>Optimism</b>					
A.) In uncertain times, I usually expect things to turn out the best for our family.	1	2	3	4	5
B.) Overall, I expect more good things to happen to our family than bad things.	1	2	3	4	5
C.) If a family member points out an area in which I need to improve my performance, I don't take it personally. If it's a valid critique, I correct it.	1	2	3	4	5
D.) Our family has the right attitude and skills to overcome any challenge.	1	2	3	4	5
E.) I believe my fellow family members have positive intentions toward me and for the success of our team.	1	2	3	4	5
F.) Our family thrives well in high pressure situations and copes well with stress.	1	2	3	4	5
G.) Optimism is a strong characteristic of our family.	1	2	3	4	5
H.) Our family views failure as an opportunity for people to learn from mistakes and improve performance.	1	2	3	4	5
I) When confronted with a problem, our family looks for different options or solutions to resolve the problem or get around it.	1	2	3	4	5
J.) Other family members say I am optimistic and a positive team member.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Total:</b> ___ X 2 = ___ %				
<b>Facing Fears</b>					
K.) I am comfortable expressing my ideas or views even when I can see that some family members may not agree or value those ideas.	1	2	3	4	5

### Family Resilience Skills

Key: 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5=Always

L.) I share vulnerable areas about myself such as my mistakes and failures with members of my family.	1	2	3	4	5
M.) Sharing vulnerabilities such as admitting mistakes and failures is very much a part of our family culture	1	2	3	4	5
N.) My family demonstrates skill in addressing conflict while preserving relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
O.) If I think or feel I am not being valued or respected by a family member, I seek him or her out to share my thoughts, feelings, and concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
P.) Our family meetings are characterized by all family members having equal talk time.	1	2	3	4	5
Q.) I am good at asking for help or guidance from my family members when I am unsure of the answers.	1	2	3	4	5
R.) Our family deals well with change and views it as a growth opportunity.	1	2	3	4	5
S.) I am assertive when it comes to maintaining my personal values and boundaries with other family members.	1	2	3	4	5
T.) When disagreements or conflict arise within the family, our family practice is to go directly to the family member involved to address the issue.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Total:</b> ___ X 2 = ___ %				

### Belonging

U.) I think we have a great family whose members work exceptionally well together.	1	2	3	4	5
V.) All family members express appreciation for each other and validate each other's strengths as well as good performance when it occurs.	1	2	3	4	5
W.) Our family puts high value in family togetherness and invests time in making our family work well.	1	2	3	4	5
X.) I am successful in maintaining positive relationships with family members.	1	2	3	4	5
Y.) Our family members build and maintain strong positive relationships with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
Z.) All our family members have a strong sense of belonging to each other.	1	2	3	4	5

### Belonging

AA.) Our family ensures guests in our home feel welcome and valued when they come to visit.	1	2	3	4	5
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### Family Resilience Skills

Key: 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5=Always

BB.) Our family is sensitive and empathic to how various family members are feeling at meals and in family meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
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CC.) All family members demonstrate patience and good listening skills when various family members are sharing their feelings and ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
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DD.) Helping each other succeed with our mission and goals is a strong characteristic about our family.	1	2	3	4	5
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**Total:** \_\_\_ X 2 = \_\_\_ %

### Community of Wellness

EE.) It is our family's practice to share taking the lead on various work tasks and projects.	1	2	3	4	5
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FF.) Our family members regularly pay attention to who in the family may need help and then give it.	1	2	3	4	5
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GG.) Our family regularly shares feedback on how we are working together.	1	2	3	4	5
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HH.) We have an agreement on how we conduct our family meetings, such as sharing talk time, respecting everyone's ideas, actively listening, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
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II.) Our family finds it easy to collaborate. i.e., to lose some and win some of what each want while creating new ways of being and doing.	1	2	3	4	5
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JJ.) I hold my family members accountable if someone does not keep their word or perform a task they were assigned.	1	2	3	4	5
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KK.) I make it a consistent practice to validate the strengths and express appreciation for all my family members.	1	2	3	4	5
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LL.) Our family has no difficulty in maintaining open, honest communication with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
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MM.) Our family mostly makes decisions by consensus and collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
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NN.) All family members hold each other accountable for getting the results our family needs.	1	2	3	4	5
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**Total:** \_\_\_ X 2 = \_\_\_ %

### Family Spirit

OO.) I have ways to access internal peace in times of outer turmoil.	1	2	3	4	5
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PP.) My sense of meaning and purpose keeps me motivated.	1	2	3	4	5
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<b>Family Resilience Skills</b>						
Key: 1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5=Always						
QQ.) I know and have memorized the mission and values of my family, and I demonstrate these daily in our life together.	1	2	3	4	5	
RR.) Our family adapts to change well and proactively seeks ways to get the results we need when interferences or changes occur.	1	2	3	4	5	
SS.) All of our family members embrace the mission and values of our family.	1	2	3	4	5	
TT.) Our family regularly reviews the outcome of our time together to discuss what went well and what could be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	
UU.) Our family has a lot of enthusiasm and team spirit that keeps us going when times are difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	
VV.) Our family consistently celebrates when we achieve our goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
WW.) Our family members have regular, open discussions on mistakes or missteps we made and how to learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5	
YY.) Positive and enthusiastic energy are strong characteristics of our family.	1	2	3	4	5	
	<b>Total:</b> _____ X 2 = _____ %					

## Getting the Big Picture

Transfer the percentage score for each resilience skill area in the rating column below. Determine if you as a family member are presently satisfied with each score by circling either *yes* or *no*. Finally, because a family may not be able to work on everything at once, rank the resilience skill areas you would like the family to focus on first, second, etc.

## Family Resilience Action Plan

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Resilient Leadership Skill</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Strengthening Rank</b>
1	Optimism	%	Yes No	
2	Facing Fears	%	Yes No	
3	Belonging	%	Yes No	
4	Community of Wellness	%	Yes No	
5	Spiritual Connections	%	Yes No	

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To create our Family Resilience Action Plan, we'll be using the metaphor of a garden. Let's start with our Here and Now Garden, then move into the Meditation Garden, and on to create our Resilience Garden that will grow and thrive creating recovery and resilience opportunities for everyone. Let's begin.

### I. Here and Now Garden: *Pause*

Probably the most important place to begin when we engage in the process of resilience is to press the pause button. We need a clear head and a space to think clearly and objectively. During the *pause* we take time to look at our Here and Now Garden and see what's worth keeping. These questions may help mobilize your thoughts:



- A. What strengths have helped us get through as a family?

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- B. What things have we done that gave us satisfaction and a sense of purpose for us? What has made our hearts sing?

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As we examine our Here and Now Garden, we will undoubtedly find things that are weighing us down, slowing our progress and spending vital energy we need to build *resilience*. Here's some questions that may help mobilize your thoughts:

- C. What thoughts, feelings or circumstances make me feel heavy and exhausted?

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- 
- D. Do I have feelings and thoughts of bitterness or resentment? (We may think these are justified but they hurt us more than anyone else. They wear us out and rob us of the strength and energy we need for building resilience.)
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OK, time to nurture the strengths in our Here and Now Garden. They are the fertile soil we will use to grow our Resilience Garden.

#### **Here and Now Garden: *Letting Go***

Now that we have paused long enough to decide what we want to keep in our garden, we're ready to face change without too much blinking. It's time to let go of the unnecessary things we came across in our Here and Now Garden.



- E. What might we have to give up or change in order to let go?
- 
- 
- 

- F. How will our lives together change if we dig deeper beyond our established identities?
- 
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## **II. Green House to Prepare for Planting in Our Resilience Garden**

When we first step into the Green House space, the first thing we notice is that there is nothing there. No stuff. Even our identities are missing. It is still. We may feel helpless and abandoned. If we can contemplate in the Green House for a little while, we will experience a sense of freedom and healing.

Listed below are the five resilience steps. Choose one resilience step to grow that will become your Family Resilience Action Plan.



### Select Your Family's Resilience Action Goal

Listed below are *Five Resilience Steps* which your family rated on the *Resilient Family Skills Survey*. Based upon family consensus, choose one or more of these to prepare in your Greenhouse to grow into your *Family Resilience Action Plan*.

- Optimism:** Holding an expectation that things will turn out good in the end; an attitude of positivity, creative problem solving, and a solution focus.
- Facing Fears:** Having a wholehearted courage to take risks, be vulnerable with other family members, admit mistakes, ask for help, directly address conflict, and tackle change head on.
- Belonging:** Having a strong sense of belonging to the family, helping other family members feel that they also belong and really matter; maintaining positive relationships with other family members, staying sensitive and empathic to the feelings and needs of other family members,
- Community of Wellness:** Demonstrating strong collaboration and consensus decision making as part of our family culture; staying fully accountable to each other and the family; and practicing open and honest communication.
- Family Spirit:** Sharing a positive energy and enthusiasm for the mission and values of our family; staying equally committed to the family's goals and keeping track of how we're doing; focusing on areas to improve and celebrating successes.

#### B. The resilience step we choose to strengthen for our Family Resilience is:

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### **III. Resilience Garden – Let's rise and Shine**

Working as a team, complete the following *Family Resilience Action Plan*. What action steps will be required? Who will be the Family Gardener(s) responsible to completing each action? What is target date for completing each action (by when)? How will we know (measure) the outcomes of the actions taken? Let's rise, shine and get started with some action!

\* **To determine action steps, please review your *Resilient Family Skills Survey* to consider which steps you may make as part of your plan such as.**

1. Transform how we have family meetings to optimize resilience.
2. Improve how we listen and support each other during our family meal times.
3. Improve our overall family communication.
4. Develop an agreement for sharing work around the home.
5. Promote family member accountability.
6. Increase positive relationships and sense of belonging among family members.
7. Others? (See below.)

\* Please refer to how your family rated the questions on the *Resilient Family Skills Survey*. *The questions which will be most helpful for guiding your action steps will be the ones related to the resilience step you chose to improve.*

## Family Resilience Action Plan

1. What family resilience goal do we want to transform or grow? How does this goal relate to our family mission statement? (Be specific.)	2. What is the status quo of this area now?	3. What will be the result of the new outcomes or status to achieve success? (Set a quantified target here by being specific.)
<p>4. What are the action steps we will need to take to make this happen? *</p> <p>A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I.</p>	<p>5. Who will be the “gardeners” accountable to implement and oversee each action step.</p> <p>A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I.</p>	<p>6. What are the weeds or interferences which might get in the way of our action steps?</p> <p>A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H.. I.</p>

## **Family Resilience Action Plan**

7. Who will be the gardeners who can support clearing away the weeds or interferences? (Make sure to include what our part in this is.)  A. B. C. D. E. F.	8. By when do we want to have this new resilience goal implemented?	9. What are our agreements to implement this family resilience action plan?  A. B. C. D. E. F.
10. How will we stay accountable to our agreements?	11. What measurements will we use to track the outcome of our plan?	12. How will we celebrate our success?

## Family Resilience Planning

What will change as a result of our Plan? (What will the outcome be?)

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What measurements will we use to track the outcome of our Plan?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Resilience Garden Weeds:** What are some things that may interfere with our action plan or thwart our progress?

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**Pulling the Weeds:** How can we get around potential interferences?

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**Tending Our Resilience Garden:** How will we stay accountable for our commitments?

What are our agreements?

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**Celebrating our flourishing Resilience Garden:** How will we tell our success story and celebrate?

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## Family Resilience Planning

