Hello from Anneliese! Thank you for your interest in the workbook. As you probably know, queer and trans folks have demonstrated resilience to discrimination for many years, but we now have research to support what specific types of resilience can be important for LGBTQ folks. Resilience is that ability our queer and trans clients need to have to bounce back from oppression and find ways to take care of themselves. Once we know how to support queer and trans clients’ resilience, then we can better tailor our helping techniques and interventions to support their resilience and help them identify a life trajectory of ultimately not only being resilient to discrimination but also thriving in their sexual orientation and gender identity. I am grateful to clinicians like you who are interested in supporting queer and trans client resilience in a variety of settings, because that means we are on our way to not only helping LGBTQ clients live their best lives but also transforming society for the better. So, many thanks for all of the work you do to improve the lives of queer and trans people—no matter their age or cultural background.

Aims of the Queer and Trans Resilience Workbook

As someone who has studied queer and trans resilience for nearly fifteen years, I have always been interested in how to translate these study findings to actual client work in the real world. I am a professor and associate dean at the University of Georgia, where I do a lot of research and advocacy based in resilience. I have also worked with diverse queer and trans clients across the life span in college counseling centers, community mental health centers, and my own private practice for nearly two decades.

So my desire to merge resilience research with client practice is a natural part of my everyday work. It is clear to me that the LGBTQ clients with whom I work face innumerable challenges, and that they tend to internalize those challenges as negative thoughts about what others think of them and what is possible for their life.

Yet it has also been clear to me that although these challenges largely are situated in societal discrimination, this discrimination often becomes invisible in mental health training and practice. For instance, in our mental health disciplines, we often have to rely on the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), which locates suffering and diagnosis in the individual. In the DSM, we don’t, for instance, have a trans oppression disorder, queer discrimination disorder, a racism disorder, and so on. Instead, we have diagnoses like gender dysphoria or generalized anxiety disorder. On top of diagnostic issues, then you also have the insurance maze and the lack of value that institutions and society place on mental health care in general. All of these mental health considerations become challenging for you to navigate as a clinician as you work with LGBTQ clients. And these issues become extraordinarily challenging for queer and trans folks to navigate in their own mental health—whether they are children and adolescents just coming to learn about themselves, or are married, have families, identify as polyamorous, and/or have to access hospice care and assisted living later in life.

Why does this matter to you and me? Well, we know that queer and trans clients can be resilient to discriminatory and oppressive experiences. But we also know that we wish our clients didn’t have to be resilient. We sit
with them after they’ve been fired for being trans, kicked out of the house for being gay, or rejected by a family member for being queer. We try to support them as they navigate a world in which a lesbian couple is denied adoption or custody rights; we struggle with knowing that LGBTQ youth are at more risk for suicidal ideation than any other group—not because there is something wrong with them, but because something is wrong with the world.

So I wrote the workbook both for you and for me—as well as for the awesome queer and trans clients with whom we work. I wanted to contribute something to the world that would give clinicians and LGBTQ folks a compass, a map, and a plan for how to intentionally increase queer and trans resilience. That way, LGBTQ people can be more prepared, more resourceful, and more certain of their inherent value and worth.

I distilled my research and clinical findings into the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel, which gives you that compass, map, and plan for increasing LGBTQ resilience. At the center of the wheel is fostering clients’ ability to define their own sexual orientation and gender identity for themselves—knowing that although they need other important influences, resources, mentors, and inspiration, ultimately we need to support them in their use of the words that fit best for them.

In the wheel’s spokes are ten resilience strategies that queer and trans folks can develop. These strategies range from exploring intersecting identities—like race/ethnicity, disability, social class, and immigrant background—to developing healthy communication skills and skills of self-esteem. There are also resilience strategies that focus on community empowerment and how to access important LGBTQ resources for queer and trans people from diverse backgrounds, as well as how to explore and build body-positive messages as LGBTQ people. The workbook ends with a focus on the resilience queer and trans people can develop when they feel hope, help others, get involved in community activism, and find ways to be inspired, grow, and thrive.

So the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel is your guide—and the workbook is chock-full of information about resilience and practices for developing it. You can use this workbook in a multitude of ways for your own learning:

- Understand the critical importance of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and community (or collective) resilience to LGBTQ client empowerment.
- Identify general instances of discrimination that queer and trans clients face, and understand what particular resilience strategy could help them.
- Consider how the risk and resilience experiences of queer and trans clients are often related to their multiple and intersecting identities in terms of race/ethnicity, class, ability, immigration status, and other salient groups with whom they identify.
- Use the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel to explore your own resilience in terms of sexual orientation and gender expression.
- Discuss the workbook in consultation groups to develop LGBTQ-affirming practice skills.
- Use the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel to consider different clinician roles you may have with queer and trans clients (such as writing letters for medical referral or working with family systems) to influence LGBTQ client resilience.
• Think about how LGBT advocacy as a clinician is an important role in supporting queer and trans resilience and reducing the barriers that they must face in your office or clinical setting, as well as out in the world.

You can also explore the workbook with your LGBTQ clients in a variety of ways:
• Explore one chapter at a time in client sessions to further develop overall client resilience.
• Ask clients to read chapters pertinent to their presenting issues, to more closely focus on a particular area of resilience.
• Use the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel to explore an overview of client resilience, to identify which resilience areas are well developed and which need more attention.
• Use role-playing to bring alive the components of the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel.
• Foster client self-advocacy skills related to different resilience strategies—like how to take care of themselves specifically when anti-LGBTQ legislation is proposed or passed, or when facing discriminatory environments.
• Integrate the Queer and Trans Resilience Wheel into group modalities, like queer and trans support groups and counseling groups.

As you can see, there are many possibilities for how you might use the workbook for yourself, and how you might use it with queer and trans clients specifically to increase their resilience. Chapter 1 explores the core component of queer and trans resilience—the ability to define their own sexual orientation and gender expression for themselves. The subsequent ten chapters, corresponding to the resilience components in the wheel, build on that self-definition and help LGBTQ people explore their diverse identities, become able to identify microaggressions and threats to their resilience when they are happening, and master self-advocacy tools they can use to increase their resilience. These subsequent chapters also explore how pursuing community activism and helping others can increase clients’ resilience, even at times when they feel powerless about what is going on in the world, with anti-LGBTQ attitudes, policies, and legislation. The workbook concludes with a chapter on growing and thriving as an integral part of queer and trans resilience.

Supporting LGBTQ Resilience in Session and Beyond

If you have picked up the workbook, you likely have already encountered the common challenges faced by clinicians working with LGBTQ clients. There are the discrimination experiences of queer and trans clients—like experiencing rejection when they share their identities with others, or being fired from a job for just being who they are. But there are also your reactions as a clinician to hearing these stories. It can be draining, even heart-breaking, to hear the same rejection and discrimination themes over and over.

As your clients work to increase their own resilience, the guidance in the workbook can help you give them a framework and a plan they can connect with between sessions. With this structure, both they and you can see how resilience is natural and also can be built step by step. The resilience strategies in the Queer and Trans
Resilience Wheel don’t have to be followed one at a time, so you can also bounce around the wheel as necessary based on the client’s presenting issues. There are simple ways to do this that can help guide your sessions with clients:

- Define resilience and why it is important for LGBTQ people.
- Give some examples of what resilience looks like in the real world for queer and trans people.
- Explore which aspects of resilience are stronger for clients and which are easier for them to build.
- Collaboratively explore how resilience can help queer and trans people move away from surviving and toward a thriving life.

Outside of session:

- Encourage clients to talk with supportive friends and family members about how they are building their resilience skills.
- Follow weekly or monthly strategies developed in sessions to strengthen a particular aspect of their resilience. Experiment with using their newly developed resilience skills in a multitude of situations, like being out in public or going on a date, and in various settings, such as at home, work, and school.

The workbook can be used outside of individual counseling sessions in groups and other community settings to support a variety of healing modalities:

- Creating resilience groups dedicated to exploring the eleven resilience strategies in the workbook, so that group members can get immediate feedback from fellow group members on their individual development of resilience skills and hear creative, innovative ways to put queer and trans resilience skills to work in their everyday lives
- Developing education and advocacy groups that highlight the important role of resilience for queer and trans people across the life span, and also the barriers to this resilience, to identify needed advocacy and policy changes to make community settings more affirming of queer and trans people

**Resilience Wrap-Up**

Each chapter in the workbook concludes with a resilience wrap-up that summarizes the main points of resilience just discussed. These summaries can serve as helpful reminders to both you and your clients as they are developing new resilience skills and beginning to see connections across various resilience strategies. For instance, the stronger a client feels their ability to define their own gender and sexual orientation is, the better able they will be to identify anti-LGBTQ messages when they hear them and understand how to externalize those negative messages more immediately. Developing resilience is a multilayered process, and like Teflon coating, each layer of resilience helps buffer queer and trans people from further self-doubt and questioning and steers them toward the life they want to create for themselves.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Setting Boundaries about Your Identities

The goal of this resilience practice is to explore how you can set boundaries about your own identities with others. Sometimes you experience situations in which you cannot assume someone’s good intentions when they ask questions about your identities. For instance, you might feel bullied or harassed, which can really decrease your resilience. You may have experienced so much oppression—or you may have been so conditioned to not stand up for yourself as a queer or trans person—that it is difficult to notice when you feel uncomfortable with something someone has said to you about your identities. Your gut is like your personal alarm system, signaling you when something may be wrong and you need to pay attention. Here are a few statements you can make in these situations—possible boundary-setting conversations for when your alarm system goes off.

- It is not OK for you to ask me that question. Please do not do that again.

- You used a wrong name and incorrect pronouns to refer to me. I expect you to use my correct name and pronouns.

- You assumed I had a man as a partner, and that is not OK to do.

- Being [insert your awesome identities] is important to me, and I expect you to treat me with respect in that regard.

Take time to think of an instance when you’ve experienced overt negativity and discrimination related to your gender and sexual orientation identities, when you needed to establish boundaries. Recall where this happened, or the person this has happened with, and remember how you felt. Now think of possible responses to protect yourself and your resilience. Write down a few boundary-setting conversations you could have with that person or in that situation:
How did it feel to write about boundary setting? Was it easy, challenging, or somewhere in between? No matter how it was for you, it is so important to practice these boundary-setting conversations in advance so they come naturally when the situation arises. With more practice and attention to your identities boundaries, your gut will then sound a louder alarm to take action because you are *paying attention* and tuned in to yourself. Some LGBTQ people and people of various diverse backgrounds and identities experience such consistent and repeated discrimination that they get used to hearing people say such things to them; they become numb to it, or even just laugh it off—“They don’t really mean what they said.”
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Internalizing LGBTQ-Affirming Messages

There are many wonderful messages you should have been hearing in relation to being queer and trans. Pay attention to how you feel when you read this list, and place a checkmark next to the messages you have heard and/or believe to be true. At the end of the list, there is space for you to write any further messages from the world you would have loved to hear about LGBTQ communities that are specific to you (like your multiple identities, cultural background, or anything else that is awesome about you as a queer or trans person!).

☐ Being LGBTQ is wonderful.

☐ There are multiple gender and sexual orientation identities—not just a few labels to be assigned by society.

☐ LGBTQ people come to know who they are in many different ways.

☐ LGBTQ people deserve respect, love, and understanding from their families, friends, and communities.

☐ LGBTQ people can create wonderful families of choice.

☐ LGBTQ people can be great parents if they choose to raise children.

☐ LGBTQ people have existed around the world across time and continents.

☐ LGBTQ people can have wonderful and healthy relationships.

☐ Being free to be yourself as an LGBTQ person can make you very happy.

☐ LGBTQ people deserve to have fulfilling and respectful sexual relationships if that is important to them.

☐ Because LGBTQ people have to deal with challenges related to being LGBTQ, they often have strengths and resilience that help them in other areas of their lives.

☐ The important contributions of LGBTQ people and communities should be taught in schools.

☐ LGBTQ people can be deeply religious and/or spiritual with no conflict between their identities, if that is important to them.
As you completed this resilience practice, you may have felt encouraged because you checked many LGBTQ-affirming messages. Or you may have felt discouraged because you had few checkmarks. However many you checked, keep working on the positive messages you still want to internalize to grow your resilience. Let any feeling of discouragement motivate you to get more support to grow your resilience.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

How Do Microaggressions Relate to My Life as an LGBTQ Person?

In this practice, you’ll write your own case scenarios related to your gender and sexual orientation—or any other identity, such as race/ethnicity or social class—using real-life situations in which you have experienced microaggressions.

Microaggression: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Naming: _________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Validating: ______________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Acting: _________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
How Do Microaggressions Relate to My Life as an LGBTQ Person?

Microaggression: ___________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Naming: ___________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Validating: __________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Acting: ___________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you feel your resilience muscle growing after writing your own scenarios? The more you prepare for your responses to microaggressions and remind yourself that you get to decide what actions to take, the more the self-questioning related to these negative messages will decrease and the more your resilience muscle develops!
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965): Taking a Pulse of Your General Self-Esteem

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) has been used for over fifty years to measure self-esteem; with it, you can easily get an idea of what your current self-esteem is.

Read the following list of statements concerning your general feelings about yourself.

If you strongly agree with the statement, circle SA.

If you agree, circle A.

If you disagree, circle D.

If you strongly disagree, circle SD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Feelings about Myself</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. At times I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Score your answers as follows:

For items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7:

Strongly agree = 3
Agree = 2
Disagree = 1
Strongly Disagree = 0

For items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 (which are reversed in score):

Strongly agree = 0
Agree = 1
Disagree = 2
Strongly Disagree = 3

Your Self-Esteem Score = __________.

The scale ranges from 0 to 30. Scores over 25 suggest high self-esteem; scores between 15 and 25 are within the average range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem.

Was your self-esteem score in the low, average, or high range? No matter what your score is, is it a surprise to you? Also, keep in mind that you are scoring yourself on this self-esteem scale to collect some data to begin exploring, with the ultimate goal of strengthening your self-esteem.

Next, respond to the following questions to reflect on your self-esteem score further and identify the areas to work on in developing your resilience.

What strengths do you think you have when it comes to your self-esteem?
The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965): Taking a Pulse of Your General Self-Esteem

What would you like to improve when it comes to your self-esteem?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What have you been told about your self-esteem?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What would you like to be able to say about your self-esteem?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

As you reflected more deeply on your self-esteem score, was it easy or hard to identify your strengths and areas to improve with your self-esteem? Do you feel pretty good about your self-esteem, or do you want to increase it and maybe do not know how to do so?
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Personal Feel-Good Mantras That Inspire You

After reading the preceding list of suggestions, what other encouragements can you think of that would motivate you to try new things, believe in yourself more, and feel more confident? You can think of this list as go-to personal mantras that keep you headed in a direction of feeling good about who you are and what you can do in the world. Think to yourself, “If I had a personal coach, what would that person say to me that would really make me feel good about myself and my capabilities?” Write your responses here:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Now read through these personal feel-good mantras. How does it feel to read these words of encouragement and affirmation? Write some of these mantras on index cards, and post them in places in your home, work, or school where you can see them regularly.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Using Reframing to Develop Your Inner Coach

The aim of this resilience practice is for you to practice strengthening that voice of your inner coach, who can help you reframe and challenge negative events and people that could decrease your resilience. Select another example of an event or a person's actions that presents an anti-LGBTQ message. Write your responses related to interactions at this event or with this person.

The event or person is: ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What are your typical thoughts about this event or person?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What are your typical feelings as a result of these thoughts?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
What thoughts can you use to reframe this situation or interaction with this person and shift your feelings?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Digging deeper, what feelings would you like to have in this situation or in interactions with this person? What thoughts could shift you to these feelings?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

In completing this exercise, did you see how powerful it is to shift a negative thought and reframe it so you are more grounded and feeling good about yourself? Did you understand how you can work backward from feelings you know you should have as an LGBTQ person, like feeling empowered, valued, and confident? Did you notice you want to stand up for yourself more in this situation? Was it easier to see why you should stand up for yourself as an LGBTQ person? It takes some practice, but the more you do this, the more resilient you will feel when facing LGBTQ-negative situations and people.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

How Positive Is My Inner Self-Talk?

The goal of this resilience practice is to rate how positively you communicate with yourself. What does that inner voice “sound like” in your head? In the first part of this resilience practice, you'll explore what positive self-talk you already have, as well as areas for your future growth. Then you'll reflect on which people can be models of positive self-talk for you.

**Intrapersonal**

Consider how often you think you use the following actions to get through hard times as an LGBTQ person, then check the column for your response for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on how you feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel good about yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use positive self-talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage your emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind yourself of your self-worth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember your strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel OK about making mistakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel hopeful about your life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from your past</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt to change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan ahead for the future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put your plans into action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach out for support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate how you are feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you notice about your use of positive self-talk? What are the places where you are really strong, or need to grow, on the list? Take four different color highlighters to distinguish the items you assigned the four different frequencies. How can you use your strengths in intrapersonal resilience to help grow the actions that you never or rarely take? For example, if you often manage your emotions but rarely communicate how you are feeling, then you could start working on using your emotional management to help you more readily share how you are feeling.

This activity is meant to spark awareness of internal self-talk that you can change. Next, you'll explore your interpersonal resilience when you are communicating with others.

Models of Self-Talk

List the family, friends, teachers, mentors, online communities, and other people in your life who model positive LGBTQ self-talk to you. It's OK to list people you may not know personally or those you see only in the media.

What are the specific positive self-talk statements you hear these people making?

Did you find it relatively easy or more challenging to identify people who communicate positive self-talk? What specific things do they say about themselves and others? Part of growing your resilience in terms of your self-talk is paying attention to how others communicate positively about themselves. These people can be positive reinforcers and reminders to speak to yourself with kindness, love, and appreciation. And remember, when you have positive self-talk, you are more skilled at standing up for yourself as an LGBTQ person.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Applying Decision-Making Skills to Your Life

The goal of this resilience practice is for you to apply decision-making skills to some practical need in your life. Think about the last time you faced a hard decision as an LGBTQ person. With that example in mind, respond to the following questions related to each decision-making step:

What was the decision you needed to make?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

What information did you research that helped you make this decision?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

How did you assess the possible alternatives to this decision?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
What were the pros and cons of these alternatives?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you act on the decision with the most pros and the fewest cons?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you step back and look at the alternative you selected, assessing whether it was the right one for you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How did you feel thinking about this decision you made? Did you see different possibilities? Were there steps you did not take, but would take if you had another opportunity to decide? Can you see how a decision can be composed of multiple steps? Practice using these steps to help slow down in situations where you feel pressured to make a decision as an LGBTQ person, or you experience threats to your resilience. This can offer you time to get support and remind yourself that as an LGBTQ person you are a valuable and important part of society and are deserving of a thoughtful decision-making process.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:
Building Body-Positive Resilience

In this resilience practice, you will identify how to shift body-negative messages you have internalized to intentionally building more body-positive messages as an LGBTQ person. You will list three body-negative thoughts and then identify a body-positive message you would like to begin using as a more affirming alternative.

List one body-negative thought you have as a queer or trans person.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

What have been the major influences on this body-negative thought in terms of people, media, or something else?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

What is a body-positive thought you would like to develop to replace this body-negative thought?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Who can support you in developing this more affirming body-positive thought?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
Now identify a second body-negative thought and answer the same questions:

List one body-negative thought you have as a queer or trans person.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What have been the major influences on this body-negative thought in terms of people, media, or something else?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What is a body-positive thought you would like to develop to replace this body-negative thought?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Who can support you in developing this more affirming body-positive thought?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Identify a third body-negative thought and respond to the following prompts:

List one body-negative thought you have as a queer or trans person.

What have been the major influences on this body-negative thought in terms of people, media, or something else?

What is a body-positive thought you would like to develop to replace this body-negative thought?

Who can support you in developing this more affirming body-positive thought?

Was it hard to shift your body-negative thoughts to be more body positive? When you started to revise those thoughts, did you feel an emotional resistance or a feeling of hopelessness? Or was it relatively straightforward and easy for you to identify new, more affirming thoughts? Lastly, were your body-negative thoughts more related to your LGBTQ identity alone, several of your identities, or something else? These questions, again, are so important to your body positivity, which contributes to your overall resilience. This may seem like a simple activity, but consider what it would be like to really commit to building these new body-positive thoughts.

It takes some practice, for sure, but when you hear those body-negative thoughts in your head and catch them when they happen, be kind to yourself. Simply acknowledge the thoughts, then use some of your energy to say the new thought to yourself, even if you don’t believe it now. As you practice this shift over time, you will come to feel committed to treating your body well. After a day, week, month, or longer of shifting your thoughts, you can see how your resilience naturally develops over time.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:
Take a Relationship Inventory

In this resilience practice, inventory your current relationships to see the range of relationship types. For each type, place a check on the left and write the name(s) on the right. There are some spaces to add any types of current relationships not listed.

- Family relationships
- Extended family relationships
- Acquaintance relationships
- Friendship relationships
- School relationships
- Work relationships
- Sports relationships
- Religious/spiritual relationships
- Dating relationships
- Monogamous relationships
- Polyamorous relationships
- Romantic friendship relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships
- _____________________ relationships

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In taking this inventory of your relationships, what did you notice? Did you have many or few of the relationship types that were listed? Did you write in additional types of relationships? Did you need additional space, because there were so many? Again note that some relationships have to do with things we can choose, like friendships and dating, while others we may not have choices about, such as family. Still others—at school and work, for example—may fall somewhere in between your having a complete choice whether to develop them or not. How did you feel overall about your inventory? Did you see areas you feel happy about and have worked hard to develop? Were there some gaps or types of relationships you would like to develop? Hold on to those thoughts as you explore how to develop relationships.
RESILIENCE PRACTICE:

Exploring How You Can Thrive as an LGBTQ Person

Think about your life without any constraints as an LGBTQ person. In this world of no restraints, what do you see yourself feeling, thinking, and doing? Respond to the following prompts from this point of view—experiencing complete freedom to manifest your visions, goals, and dreams for your life.

When I think of my purpose in life, I feel

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

The visions, dreams, and goals for my life include

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If someone asked me about what my dharma—or purpose in life—is, I would say the following:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

As an LGBTQ person, my purpose in life has been influenced negatively by

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
As an LGBTQ person, my purpose in life has been influenced positively by


When I imagine realizing my visions, dreams, and goals for my life as an LGBTQ person, I feel


When I imagine bringing to life my visions, dreams, and goals as an LGBTQ person, these additional identities matter to me:


How do you feel after making a little time for your own self-growth and reflection on your dharma? As you wrote about your purpose, was it easy, hard, or somewhere in between? When you explored your purpose in life as an LGBTQ person, did responding feel simple or more difficult? There are no wrong responses, of course, in this or any other resilience practice. And it’s certainly understandable, if you haven’t thought about your dharma before as an LGBTQ person, that you felt a bit stressed as you completed your responses. With this activity, there is good stress (“Oh wow—I am exploring something that I don’t yet know about myself!”) and bad stress (“Oh no—I should already know this about myself!”)—and you are going for the good stress that can accompany the excitement of learning something new about yourself. It is important, however, to consider how your answers might change if you were to respond again in a week, month, or year. Making it a regular practice to come back to explore your visions, dreams, and goals for your life will help you increase your resilience and your thriving.