

BUILDING ROUTINES

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Movement Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:



Safer and
More Stable
Conditions



Resilience
and a Growth
Mindset



Nurturing
Parent-Child
Interactions

PURPOSE

Routines help reduce stress, and increase a sense of control. They are especially important for children, as family routines can increase resilience in times of crisis, and strengthen nurturing adult-child interactions. Two common examples are morning and bedtime routines, though routines can be implemented at any time throughout the day. This exercise is built to help survivors develop and implement regular routines that fit their lifestyles. Reflecting on potential challenges and ways to move past them can increase routine implementation and adherence.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 45 MINUTES

5 minutes for instructions | 30 minutes for brainstorming | 10 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Paper or a journal (optional)

Items to write with, like pencils, pens, or a tablet or computer (optional)

Notes for the facilitator

- This exercise is intended to be a brainstorming session to develop lasting routines that can be implemented in survivors' daily lives.
- Some survivors may have very busy schedules that won't allow for long routines, and that's okay! Remind them that even short routines like washing your face before bed or having a cup of coffee in the morning can be a routine.
- Facilitators should encourage survivors to do what is helpful to remember ideas for routines- whether that's jotting things down on a sticky note or in a journal, keeping a notes app on their phone, or adding to a shared online document.
- If in a group, encourage open dialogue and brainstorming between survivors.



- If working individually with a survivor, be prepared to offer examples of routines.
- Overall, help survivors come up with routines that feel sustainable for their lifestyles and helpful for their goals.

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 2-18 years old)
- You can start building routines with your kids from an early age- make sure to include them in the process in ways that make sense!
- Leaves on a Stream meditation requires some sitting and listening skills that may be difficult for younger kids.
- Starting from around age 4, start brainstorming routines with them. You can do this by asking what things they noticed need to get done in the morning and nighttime (i.e. brush teeth, get dressed/ put on pjs, eat breakfast, etc.).
- Then make a "Morning Chart" or "Nighttime Chart" by either drawing those tasks or printing out pictures of them (i.e. a toothbrush, a t-shirt, a picture of what they typically like to eat for breakfast, cozy pjs, nightlight, etc.). Kids can decide what images to use based on what works for them!
- Tape the charts on their bedroom wall or somewhere else that is visible.
- Make them fun! Examples:
 - Pretend to be an animal as you brush your teeth.
 - Have a pick up from a school dance.
 - Sing a song in the morning together as they wake up.

(Instructions begin on next page)



HOW TO FACILITATE THIS EXERCISE

- 1 Provide information on the importance and benefits of daily routines.
- 2 Offer examples of helpful routines, especially ones that vary in length.
- 3 Brainstorm ideas for routines. Potential facilitation questions:
 - What are your current routines?
 - At what point in your day would a new routine be most helpful (right after school, in the mornings, etc.)?
 - How much time can you give to yourself for a new routine?
 - What are some ideas for new routines?

Examples of routines:

- Individual morning routine:
 - Drink coffee while listening to music
- After school family routine:
 - Short movement/mindfulness activity (e.g., yoga, walk, park playtime)
 - Family dinner
 - Clean up together
- Family bedtime routine:
 - Turn off screens 30 min before bed
 - Make [brushing teeth](#) into a game! Ask children to show their teeth and make a face like a giraffe while brushing.
 - Read a small book or chapter together
 - Turn on a nightlight and go to bed

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are some potential challenges that may come up when trying to implement a new routine? How can you overcome these challenges?
- How can you engage other family members in similar routines?
- How do you think this routine will help you and your family?