

Title: Skill-Building Course: Personal Development

Description: This course will assist a Whole Health Coach or other educator working with Veterans who are interested in incorporating “Personal Development” into their Personal Health Plans. It reviews eight different “subtopics” related to this aspect of self-care, designed to give Veterans additional ideas, insight and resources to support them on their Whole Health journey.

Objectives and Key Points

- Define “Personal Development,” relating it to work life, personal life, and other aspects of who we are and how we want to learn and grow in our lives
- Discuss some of the health benefits of Personal Development approaches
- Practice a mindful awareness exercise related to gratitude
- Define resilience and list at least three ways to cultivate it
- Participate in a demonstration of a “Personal Development” activity, either Laughter Yoga or a demo by a mental health professional on “Working With Our Thought Patterns”
- Identify courses and professionals who can support Veterans locally with this aspect of self-care
- Working with a partner, set a Personal Development goal that can be incorporated into the Personal Health Plan

Sample Agenda (total time 60-75 minutes)

Note: There are many different ways to focus time in different directions in this module. Be cautious about time, especially if you only have an hour.

- Introductions and overview (2.5-5 minutes)
- Group Discussion: Brainstorming about what Personal Development is (5 minutes)
- Summary of research related to why personal development matters (2.5-5 minutes)
- Partner exercise: Discussion of when Personal Development has been an important part of your life (5 minutes)
- Two simple cases: 1) Gary and optimism and 2) Abby and improving work (5 minutes)
- Brainstorming about creativity, learning and volunteering with brief discussion (5 minutes)
- Intention mindful awareness practice (5 minutes)
- Defining burnout and resilience, discussion of ways to enhance resilience (5 minutes)
- Demonstration/discussion of either laughter yoga or working with our thinking (10 minutes)
- Partner discussion: Resilience (5-10 minutes)
- Partner activity: Setting a Personal Development goal, large group sharing (10-15 minutes)
- Wrap up, questions, and evaluations

Preparation

1. Pre-Reading for Instructors

- *Passport to Whole Health*, Chapter 7. Personal Development. Available at <https://wholehealth.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/414/2018/09/Passport-to-Whole-Health-3rd-Edition-2018.pdf>. (Pay particular attention to the research for each facet of personal development)
- See also the list of resources designed to accompany the course at the end of the *Passport* chapter

2. Prepare course materials and handouts

- Each participant will receive a copy of the Veteran Handout designed to accompany this course
- You may wish to provide some of the Veteran handouts related to Personal Development, available at <https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts/index.asp#personal-development>.
- It may be easiest to have handouts at their seats, or you can pass them around later. Review the handout in advance, so you can be ready for questions
- Be sure to have an evaluation form ready to give them at the end as well. You can use the general one created by the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

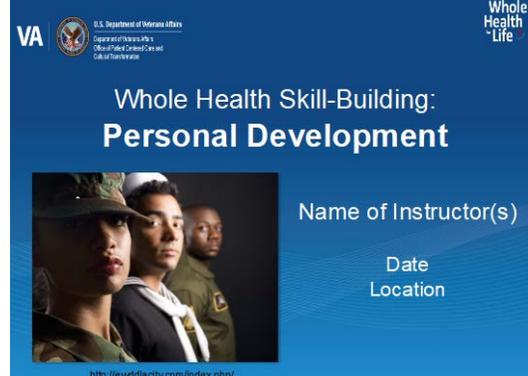
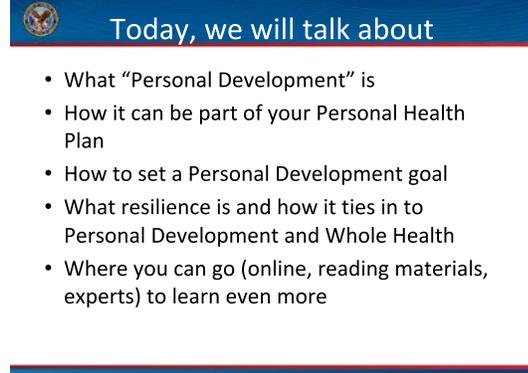
3. Set up AV and other equipment

- Be prepared to share the PowerPoint slides related to this course. A guide to each of the individual slides is featured below.
- Connect with the AV support person at your site
- A flip chart and markers, or a dry erase board, may be helpful
- If you do not have a slide projector, you can simply take them through the Veteran handout after you give each person a copy. Alternatively, you can print out the slides and give them copies. Then, just take them through the slides, following the faculty guide

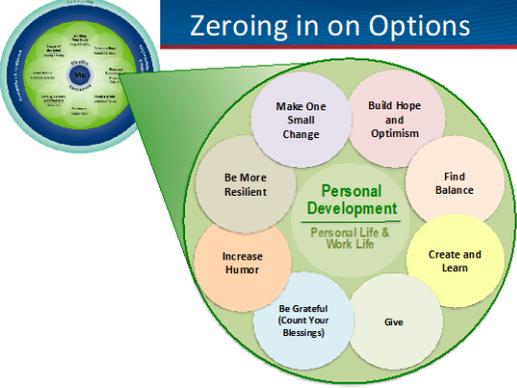
4. Identify local and other resources

- Decide who can help you with the demonstration section and invite them to help you out
- Add to the slide set (and/or Veteran Handout) to include local resources, including
 - Various skill-building opportunities at your facility – gardens, woodworking classes, library facilities, financial planning classes, etc.
 - Laughter yoga offerings, if you choose to cover that topic
 - Support groups
 - Volunteer opportunities at your facility or in the community in general
- Develop your own list of additional favorite resources

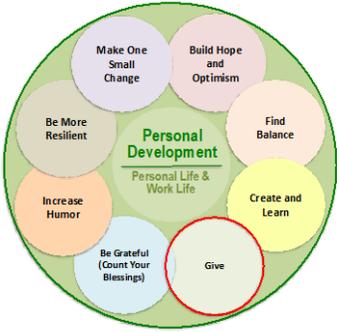
Slide-By-Slide Guide

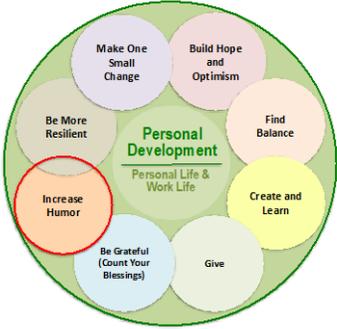
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change this slide to incorporate your name, as well as the date and location of the presentation • This is a good time to introduce yourself. Be sure to share your own title/role related to the VA and teaching • Might be worth it to have the participants do quick introductions of themselves as well • Note that “Personal Development” is one of the more confusing self-care circles, because it can include so many different topics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the list of learning objectives for the course. You may want to review these in detail, or go quickly over them to save time • As you move through, remember the subtitle for this circle is “Personal Life & Work Life.” Not everyone has an official job. This may include looking for a job. All the work a person does at home (e.g., child care, chores) is important and relevant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to them where Personal Development ties in on the Circle of Health • Make this a large group discussion. Give them time to reflect before answering. A flip chart to list these might be helpful. Aim for at least 8 items on the list. • Ask how their military experiences might have influenced their Personal Development. Can what they learned then carry into their lives as Veterans? • As the instructor, be sure to share some of your own experiences –and challenges – in this area as well • Can read the quote or not as you see fit – this tends to be a quotation people like • The next slide can give you some ideas of things you can add to the discussion.

<p> Personal Development</p> <p>How do you learn, grow, and live more fully?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abilities - talents and skills • Gratitude • Learning and education • Creativity, hobbies • Service and volunteering • Healthy mood, humor • Hope and optimism • Balance • Achieving dreams and goals • Building resilience  <p><small>Photo:dailyherald.com</small></p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can be done as a large group discussion. It can also be done as a partner exercise if you have enough time • Key point: Remind them that everyone will answer the question on this slide differently, and that is great. They might give each other ideas. • Can they think of others that the slide is missing? • Can ask them to identify which ones are their top priorities at the moment (noting all of them are important)
<p> Why This Matters: Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism, reducing hostility, and focusing on what is going well can all increase health • Feeling good about the work you do improves health and prevents burnout • Happier people are more healthy, socially connected, and successful • Laughter and humor decrease anxiety, lower heart attack risk, and improve cholesterol <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This slide lists some of the research findings related to various ways to do Personal Development • Take your time going through this list – let it sink in. You might want to give examples of people whom you have seen be helped by these areas • Ask them to share their ideas too • Do any of these examples surprise them?
<p> Why This Matters: Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteering lengthens your life, helps people with depression and heart disease, and builds connections • Being more financially healthy is (to a point) linked to less stress • Educational level is one of the strongest predictors of good health we know of • Personal Development helps with resilience <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep moving through this list. To make this less like a lecture, you can ask the group questions. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How many of you do volunteer work? (Recognize that most of them “volunteered” to be in the military, so this can be a loaded term) ○ How many of you have worked with someone to help you understand your finances? ○ How many of you have thought about taking a class sometime soon? ○ Has anyone worked with vocational rehab? • Encourage them to start thinking about – maybe even jot down – some of ideas they have of what they want to do as we explore options
<p> Group Discussion:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Your Story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a partner • Pick someone to go first • Take a couple of minutes each to talk about ways Personal Development has been part of your life • We’ll let you know when to trade off being the speaker and listener <p style="text-align: right;">9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone understands this group exercise • The focus here is to talk about the past or present, not to try to set goals yet. As the listener, people shouldn’t offer suggestions of what they ‘should do.’ They should just generously listen • Take a little time after the exercise to facilitate a large group discussion about how it went

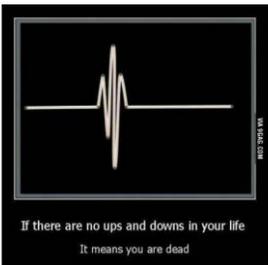
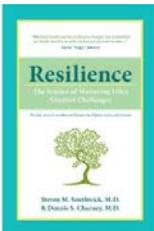
 <p>Zeroing in on Options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of all the self-care circles, Personal Development has the most subtopics. A few reminders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The <i>Passport</i> lists 14 different items – they are consolidated here to a lower number in the interest of time. ○ Review the content of the orange text box ○ “Make One Small Change” is a catch-all. This leaves room for creativity, and they are welcome to try anything else they can think of ○ Remind them to focus on just one thing for the purposes of this skill-building course
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first circle is hope and optimism • Optimistic people cope better, take better care of themselves in other ways, do better financially, and have better relationships. They are less sensitive to pain and handle chronic pain better. Hopeful people have more positive emotions and are more productive when they work • In contrast, we know hostile people have shorter lives and more chronic health problems. Mental health professionals can help a person learn how to be more optimistic
<p>Gary: “I learned to focus on the good”</p> <p>Gary is a 35 year old Navy Veteran</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep negative • Learning psychology can optimize • Start shifting • Set how • “It isn’t always perfect, but it is better!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To foster discussion, we feature Gary’s case. Read through his case, and feel free to add more detail • Does Gary remind you of anyone you know? • It can help to give an example of ways to be more optimistic. One is simply to watch your thought patterns (mindful awareness) and shift your inner dialog if it is becoming negative. We’ll discuss this more when we talk about resilience • Optimism does not mean being “fake.” Be practical, but think about what can go right, not just wrong. It is about “hunting the good stuff,” as they say in the military

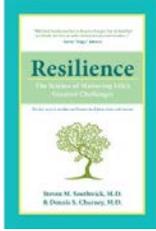
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest research discusses finding the right “work-life blend,” recognizing that it isn’t always clear cut, with technology, when is work time and when isn’t • You might mention that there are different types of balance (this is discussed in the <i>Passport</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time balance – how much time you spend on different parts of your life 2. Satisfaction balance – how much satisfaction each part gives you 3. Involvement balance – how committed you are to each part of your life <p>Looking at these options, where do you spend most of your time, and where do you want to make some shifts to create more balance?</p>
<p> Abby’s Work Life: “I hated my job.”</p> <p>Abby is a 57 year old Gulf War Veteran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She struggled with her job <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Limited control – Negative supervisor – Took a lot of work home • Talked with her supervisor, and with human resources • Asked for more responsibility • Wrote out a job description • Practiced saying no to working weekends and evenings • Found she is less burnt out • Taking classes to help with promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is our second case vignette. Read through Abby’s case, like you did with and feel free to add more detail • Encourage people to share about their experiences with blending the different parts of their lives, as time allows
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and Learn is pretty self-explanatory • It might be one of the easiest ones to add to a Personal Health Plan, because it can be as simple as learning to read better, picking up a book, or learning more about something online • Meditation and other forms of mindful awareness can help creativity
<p> What are some ways you like to learn and create?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s go around the room and have each person share ideas, if they wish • Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take a class, or go back to school – Do vocational rehab – Learn a new hobby or skill – Build on an old talent, like art or music – Write your life story – Build something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is another opportunity for classroom discussion • This can be as long or short an exercise as time allows, or you can just highlight some options without the discussion • Remind them that education level is tied in very closely with good health • VA tends to do well with vocational rehabilitation services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear that when we give, it helps us grow. It may even give us back a lot more than we invested • We can volunteer, give to charity, grow vegetables for a local food pantry – all sorts of possibilities • What are other ways you can give? Are there ways in which you are already giving?
<p>Giving: Volunteering and More</p> <p>People who volunteer...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to help others • Live longer • Feel a 'helper's high' • Feel more of a sense of accomplishment • Seem to do better with chronic illnesses • Find it helps with depression • Have lower heart disease risk  <p><i>Even if you can't volunteer, you can do random acts of kindness</i></p> <p>What would you like to do? Veterans love to work with other Veterans!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research for this is summarized in the <i>Passport to Whole Health</i> • This overlaps with Family, Friends, and Coworkers. Many of the green circles intersect and that is fine • Again, encourage discussion here if time allows • With the last bullet on the slide, might help to give some random act of kindness examples, like paying the toll for the person behind you, or carrying an extra umbrella to give away when it is raining, or tipping a little bit more than usual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude is another important piece of Personal Development. It is a little bit unique, because instead of thinking about things we can do, we are focusing on what we already have in our lives • The Gratitude Whole Health Clinical Tool in the <i>Passport to Whole Health</i> mentions benefits such as more happiness, pride, hope, social connection, and resilience. Sleep improves, and so does energy level. Depression, anxiety, and substance use problems improve. And it is safe to do
<p>Mindful Awareness- Gratitude</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude comes from the word <i>gratia</i>, which means <i>grace</i> • Can work with it in many ways • This will give you a sense of one way to focus on gratitude • Don't force it – just see what comes up • It can help to stop at the end of the day and list three things from the day you're grateful for <p>20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude practice can be very powerful • Remind them that working with gratitude is a <i>practice</i>. It is okay if it is hard to come up with things you are thankful for at first • It is fine, if needed, to focus very simple things, such as the sunset, being alive, green grass, etc. • Take them through the script that is included with the course materials • Be sure to leave time for a group discussion when finished

 <p><i>Gratitude</i> It's not happiness that brings us gratitude. It's gratitude that brings us happiness.</p> <p>21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read this quotation and pause with it before moving to the next topic
 <p>Personal Development Personal Life & Work Life</p> <p>Make One Small Change, Build Hope and Optimism, Find Balance, Create and Learn, Give, Be Grateful (Count Your Blessings), Increase Humor, Be More Resilient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a fun one – time to roll out any jokes you want to share!
<p>Laughter and Humor</p>  <p>MILITARY HUMOR You gotta love it...</p> <p>Answer three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does humor help your health? 2. What makes you laugh? 3. Is there a way for you to laugh more? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on group discussion here. Some nuggets to share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Humor turns down the fight or flight nervous system ○ 10-15 minutes of laughter will burn off 10-40 extra calories ○ Laughter decreases anxiety, reduces heart attacks, helps cholesterol, relaxes the airways, reduces allergic reactions, and increases pain tolerance
<p>Try it out!</p> <p>Demonstration: Laughter Yoga</p> <p>24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not an easy one to demonstrate, but if you have training or have someone in your facility who can offer laughter yoga, great. If not, just hide the slide • There are resources at the end of the Personal Development chapter in the <i>Passport</i> if you want to learn more

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This circle, on resilience, deserves a little extra time • Ask them for a definition. One is “...being able to adapt to changing environments, identify opportunities, adapt to constraints, and bounce back after challenges and misfortunes.” You bounce back, but you are a different person in some ways after, because we learn and grow • You had to be resilient in the military, whether you knew you were doing it or not. Example: pulling overnight guard duty and coping with fatigue the next day. Enduring basic training. Other examples? • Veterans, like active service personnel, have to be very resilient. What can help you avoid burnout?
<p>Burnout and Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnout is the shadow side of resilience. People who are burnt out are at more risk for health problems, especially with mental health • Fortunately, we know that if you are more resilient, you are less likely to become burnt out • People who are burnt out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are more emotionally drained ○ Feel like they don't accomplish much, or that what they do doesn't matter ○ Tend to disconnect from people, to see them more as objects than as fellow human beings people
<p>What Contributes to Burnout?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perfectionism 2. Lack of coping skills for stress 3. Personal bad habits (smoking, drug use) 4. Lack of control 5. Lack of time for self care 6. Difficult and complicated situations 7. Not enough time in the day 8. Regret over choices 9. Poor relationships with colleagues <p><small>Eckleberry-Hunt et al. Acad Med 2009, 84:269-277.</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key here is to focus more on the positives than the negatives, but it is important to know what puts people into a state of burnout • These examples are tied into what we know about research on burnout in healthcare providers • Just highlight a few of these bullet points. You can ask if people have any other concerns • Can totally hid this and the previous slide if time is tight
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is usually good for a laugh – be sure to read it aloud as the text is fairly small • Most people will know, but remind them that it is an ECG tracing, which has its ups and downs

<p style="text-align: center;">Resilience</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Resilience Can Be Trained!</p> <p>1. Flexible thinking</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><i>This book has some a lot of stories of people being resilient, including several about Veterans</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a few ways to teach about resilience. The items on the list of 10 ways to enhance resilience are set up so you can start out with the demo featured in the next slide • If you don't have a psychologist or other mental health professional who can talk about this, there are still some slides that can still cover the basics
<p style="text-align: center;">Try it out!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Demonstration: Working With Our Thinking</p> <p style="text-align: right;">32</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would be a demo by a health psychologist or other mental health professional • One option would be to invite them to talk about CBT and how it helps to reframe old thought patterns • They may or may want to go over the next two slides as part of what they share
<p style="text-align: center;">Watching Our Thinking – Three Examples</p> <p>Some patterns to watch for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All-or-nothing thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Everything is either all good or all bad</i> – <i>Can some things be in between?</i> – <i>Catch yourself, and try to look at things in a new way</i> 2. Self-blame <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>"It's all my fault."</i> – <i>Is it? Can you look at it in other ways?</i> – <i>Can you be kind to yourself?</i> 3. Filters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Only seeing things one way (usually negative)</i> – <i>What if you try a different filter</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This optional slide has some basic ways to work with thinking patterns. • Take the examples one at a time, and give a lot of examples of what it looks like

<p> Resilience Can Be Trained!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexible thinking 2. Positive attitude 3. Develop “active coping skills” 4. Moral compass –sense of what’s right 5. Role models  <p><i>This book has some a lot of stories of people being resilient, including several about Veterans</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of these items can be given a lot of attention or just a little. If you get a chance to look at this book, that can be helpful • The items on the list are pretty self-explanatory. A few highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flexible thinking ties into the thought patterns we tend to get stuck in ○ Active coping means not just tolerating, but doing something about a challenge – taking action ○ Moral compass is about knowing your values and beliefs before a challenge comes ○ When you discuss role models, it may be helpful to have a few people share theirs, if time allows
<p> Resilience Can Be Trained!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Face fears 7. Social support 8. Physical well-being 9. Train regularly (plan ahead) 10. Recognize and foster strengths  <p><small>Photo: HdFlowerWallpaper.com</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be realistic about how to face fears. Especially in PTSD, it may mean working with a mental health professional ○ Social support – close ties to others matter too ○ Physical well-being makes resilience easier, just like mental, emotional and spiritual well-being do ○ Training regularly means thinking through and anticipating situations and practicing acting on them in advance. Not just situations related to physical health - mental and emotional too)
<p> Small Group Discussion</p> <p>Get in to groups of three or four. Each person is invited to share for a minute or two. Talk about one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of someone who you admire for their resilience. <i>Why?</i> 2. Describe a situation in your own life when you noticed strength and resilience. 3. Share an example of when a friend or coworker demonstrated strength and resilience. <i>How?</i> 4. How can you be more resilient in your life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As one Veteran, who helped with designing this course, put it, “Embrace the SUCK.... Resilience is understanding the situation may or may not be optimal but you know your training, skill, ability and you rely on your training. You can keep developing those skills so you can ‘embrace the suck’ and keep moving in a positive direction” • This small group discussion tends to be very popular with clinicians in the Whole Health in Your Practice course • When you describe the small group exercise, read the whole slide through before they start • Be clear on how much time there should be for each person. You can time them if needed • Remind them to focus on only one question first – they can cover others if there is extra time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even the smallest changes can make a difference. We've talked about many options, but there are others as well • How much time and energy do you have to invest right now? Make sure you set a reachable and realistic goal
 <h3 style="text-align: center;">Set a Goal!</h3> <h4 style="text-align: center;">Make One Small Change</h4> <p>All the topics so far can guide you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope and optimism • Balance • Create and Learn • Give and Volunteer • Be grateful • Humor • Resilience <p>Or set a different small goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop self-compassion • Increase happiness • Work on your finances • Set a new goal • List your strengths • Do a simple kindness for someone <p style="text-align: right;">35</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This slide recaps what has already been discussed and then lists some other examples of simple, reachable goals they can consider • Ask them if they have other thoughts, beyond this list
 <h3 style="text-align: center;">Your Turn</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with a partner • Take turns • Each person will come up with a Personal Development Goal • You will be invited to share your plan with the group <p style="text-align: right;">36</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temptation is always to spend more time on lecture and less on experiential activities or skill-building. Give this last exercise at least 10-15 minutes • Some people may be hesitant, but encourage them to work with someone else if at all possible. If not, they can still set a goal on their own, and you can check in with them while others are working in pairs • If there is an odd number of people, you can always jump into the mix and pair with someone yourself • Be sure to set a timer to remind them to switch who is doing the talking/planning • Take time for a large group discussion, and invite people to share • ***Be sure to focus on accountability – how can they check in with their partner (text, coffee, email, etc.)? When? Can you as the instructor check in with them at some point? Be sure to talk about their next steps with all of this work

<div data-bbox="203 199 240 235" data-label="Image"> </div> <h2 data-bbox="365 210 539 241">Setting Goals</h2> <p data-bbox="207 275 435 298">Seven steps in goal setting</p> <ol data-bbox="207 302 440 527" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the goal 2. Know the benefits 3. Know obstacles 4. List skills and knowledge needed 5. Identify who can help 6. Develop a plan (SMART) 7. Set a timeline and next steps <div data-bbox="505 283 667 489" data-label="Complex-Block"> <p>SMART Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Action-based • Realistic • Time-bound </div> <p data-bbox="685 567 703 581">33</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can leave this slide up while they are talking to their partner. It can help them create stronger goals • Up to you if you want to read through this slide or simply have them read to themselves • Can also just hide this if preferred
<div data-bbox="203 596 240 632" data-label="Image"> </div> <h2 data-bbox="245 604 691 636">Personal Development – Summing Up</h2> <ol data-bbox="220 657 678 953" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are a LOT of options 2. Keep asking where you want to grow or learn right now 3. Tailor the plan to YOU! 4. Know resources, community programs, and other options 5. Build your skills, like gratitude, humor, and noticing your thought patterns 6. Build resilience. Pick a way to do that and go for it! <p data-bbox="685 961 703 976">36</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel free to modify this based on which points you choose to emphasize
<div data-bbox="203 993 240 1029" data-label="Image"> </div> <h2 data-bbox="347 993 545 1024">Thank You!</h2> <div data-bbox="256 1052 667 1318" data-label="Image"> <p data-bbox="391 1320 508 1333">Photo: bostonherald.com</p> </div> <p data-bbox="685 1354 703 1369">39</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you finish, be sure to leave time for questions and comments • There is a simple one-page evaluation available for this course you can have them complete