

SESSION 4 COURSE NOTES STANDING STRONG TOGETHER – PRACTICAL RESILIENCE TOOLS FOR SELF, FAMILIES & TEAMS

Hi there,

Welcome to your easy-to-follow notes for Session 4. These are your friendly companion for today, whether you read them before we gather, keep them nearby during the session, or look back afterwards. They're written in a simple, conversational way, just like we're chatting together.

Over the past sessions we have learned to see clearly, step up safely, and respond with heart when someone discloses. Today we turn inward for a moment; not to dwell on problems, but to strengthen our own capacity to stay steady under pressure. When we are more resilient, we show up better for our colleagues, our families, and especially for the children in our lives.

Many of us in South Africa carry heavy loads; at work in factories, offices, schools, clinics or shops, and at home with family responsibilities. Economic pressures, long hours and daily stresses are real. These pressures can make us short-tempered, exhausted or quick to feel overwhelmed. When that happens, it often spills over to the people we care about most, including children.

The good news is that we already carry wisdom from our elders and communities. Today we are simply naming and practising two simple, practical tools that many of our grandmothers, grandfathers and community leaders have used for generations: a quick way to centre ourselves, and a gentle way to reframe unhelpful thoughts.

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Use simple reframing and grounding techniques under pressure.
- Apply empowering language in difficult conversations.
- Identify one personal or team resilience practice they will try.

These are small shifts that help you stay steady so you can show up for your teams, your families, and the children who need us to be present and strong.

BEFORE WE BEGIN – A QUICK PRIVATE REFLECTION (5 QUESTIONS)

Take two minutes now to answer these in your head or on a scrap of paper. There are no right or wrong answers, this is simply to help you see where your thinking is at and get the most from our time together.

1. When pressure builds at work or at home, do you usually notice it affecting how you speak to or treat the people around you?
2. What does “staying steady” mean to you when everything around you feels demanding?
3. Can you think of a small habit or pause that has helped you feel calmer before a difficult conversation?
4. How might one adult staying a little steadier under pressure help protect or support the children in that home or team?
5. Right now, how confident do you feel that you have simple, practical tools to stay clear when pressure rises? (Rate yourself 1–5, where 1 is “not confident at all” and 5 is “very confident”.)

Hold onto your thoughts. By the end of this session you'll have two simple tools you can use immediately in real South African life.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR SESSION TOGETHER

We keep everything interactive, emotionally safe, and hopeful. Participation is completely voluntary, you can observe or step out at any time. No one is required to share personal stories or experiences. These tools are presented as practical life skills rooted in South African communal wisdom, not as clinical techniques. Keep the tone calm, steady and empowering.

Here's how the session flows:

- We open with a short, powerful 5-minute introduction video that shows a relatable South African story of someone under real pressure who used simple, practical tools to stay grounded and make a positive difference.
- A brief pair reflection on what stood out.
- Clear input on two practical resilience tools - a quick centring pause and gentle reframing - with real South African examples.
- One hopeful story from a logistics company in Gauteng that shows how small internal shifts changed the atmosphere at work and at home.
- A short, voluntary centring practice together.
- Pair work on two realistic South African scenarios - one from a workplace and one from a family or team setting - practising gentle reframing.
- A structured group debrief where we share what reframes felt useful.
- Three quick verbal questions to lock in the learning.
- A warm close and transition to the next session.

Everything is designed to feel safe, practical and hopeful.

THE HEART OF SESSION 4: PRACTICAL RESILIENCE TOOLS ROOTED IN SOUTH AFRICAN WISDOM

We already carry wisdom from our elders and communities. Today we name and practise two simple tools.

Tool 1: Centring / Grounding (a steadying pause)

Before a difficult conversation, when you feel your chest tightening, or when you notice you are about to react sharply, pause for a moment. Feel your feet on the ground. Take three steady breaths - in through the nose, out through the mouth. This is not complicated. It is the same kind of steadying our elders used before important family or community talks. It helps us stay clear-headed instead of reacting from overwhelm.

Tool 2: Gentle Reframing (changing the story we tell ourselves)

We all have thoughts that make us feel stuck. Common ones in high-pressure South African life include: “This is too much - I can’t do anything.” “It’s not my place to get involved.” “I’m going to make it worse.”

A gentle reframe does not deny the difficulty. It simply opens a small door of possibility. For example: Instead of “I can’t do anything,” we might quietly say to ourselves, “What is one small step that is possible right now?” Instead of “It’s not my place,” we might remember, “In our communities, caring for one another’s children has always been part of who we are.”

This is not about positive thinking or ignoring reality. It is about giving ourselves just enough space to choose a helpful action instead of freezing or exploding.

A HOPEFUL SOUTH AFRICAN STORY

Let me share a story from a logistics company in Gauteng during a very busy season. Thabo, a shift supervisor, was under huge pressure. Deadlines were tight, staff were short, and he was receiving constant messages from home about problems with the children’s school fees and his wife’s stress. He found himself snapping at his team and then going home too exhausted and irritable to be present with his own family.

One afternoon, before walking into a difficult meeting, Thabo remembered something his grandmother used to do; she would pause, plant her feet, and take three slow breaths before speaking when tensions were high. He tried it. He also quietly reframed the thought racing in his head from “I have to fix everything or I’m failing everyone” to “I can be steady for the next ten minutes and listen to my team member who is struggling.”

The meeting went better than expected. Afterwards he sent one supportive message to his wife instead of carrying the heaviness alone. Over the following weeks he started a simple two-minute team check-in at the start of each shift; nothing fancy, just “How are we holding up today?” His team felt more supported, his own stress decreased, and he arrived home with a little more patience for his children. One small pause and one small reframe began to change the atmosphere at work and at home.

Thabo did not become a different person overnight. He simply used tools that were already part of our cultural wisdom and made them practical for his real life.

BRIEF CENTRING PRACTICE

We’ll try the centring pause together for just one minute. You can keep your eyes open or gently closed, whatever feels comfortable. Feel your feet on the floor. Take three steady breaths... in through the nose... and out through the mouth. Notice how you feel afterwards. This is yours to use whenever you need it. Participation is voluntary.

YOUR PAIR REFRAMING PRACTICE

You’ll work in pairs on two short, realistic South African scenarios; one from a workplace and one from a family or team setting. In pairs, take turns. One person reads the scenario and shares the unhelpful thought that might come up. The other person helps explore a gentle reframe; a different way of seeing the situation that opens a small door for helpful action. After 4 minutes, swap roles.

Remember: Participation is voluntary. If you prefer to listen and observe, that is perfectly fine. We are practising skills that can help us stay steady and support others, including children.

STRUCTURED DEBRIEF & KEY TAKEAWAY

We'll come back together and hear from a few pairs what reframes felt useful or possible. You don't have to share the personal scenario, just the shift in thinking that opened a door.

We'll reflect on how using a quick centring pause or a gentle reframe might help reduce spillover to children or team members.

The key takeaway we'll emphasise together is this:

Resilience is not about never feeling pressure. It is about having small, practical tools that help us stay clear and choose helpful actions, for ourselves, our teams, and the children who look to us. When we take care of our own steadiness, we are better able to stand strong together for our families and teams. Small, consistent practices build resilience over time, and modelling steadiness is one of the most protective things adults can do for children.

AFTER SESSION 4 – WHAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU

You now have two simple, practical tools; a quick centring pause and a gentle reframe, that you can use immediately in real South African life. These are not extra things to add to your already full days. They are small shifts that help you stay steady so you can show up for your teams, your families, and the children who need us to be present and strong.

Remember: Your Certificate of Attendance and the full resource pack (with more examples and practice ideas) will be emailed to you after the entire workshop. Everything is created professionally and sent directly to the email address you provided. No printing is required from you.

You have taken another important step today. Thank you for your openness and care.

10 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SESSION 4

1. **I'm already so busy and exhausted - how can I possibly add another "tool" to my day?** These tools are not extra tasks. They are tiny pauses and small shifts in thinking that actually save energy in the long run. A 30-second centring breath before a difficult conversation can prevent an argument that would drain you for hours. They fit into the moments you already have.
2. **Is gentle reframing just "positive thinking" or pretending everything is fine?** Not at all. It does not deny the real difficulty or pressure. It simply opens a small door of possibility so you can choose one helpful action instead of freezing or exploding. It is practical and rooted in how many South Africans have quietly supported each other for generations.
3. **What if the pressure I'm under is genuinely overwhelming and not something a breath or reframe can fix?** That's completely valid. These tools are not magic solutions for structural problems like poverty, job insecurity or impossible workloads. They are small supports that help you stay clear enough to notice when you need bigger help - from colleagues, family, or professional support and to protect the children around you while you seek it.
4. **How does staying steadier at work actually help my children at home?** When we arrive home less exhausted and irritable, we have more emotional energy for our children. Modelling steadiness also teaches them how to handle pressure. Children feel safer and more secure when the adults around them are not constantly overwhelmed or reactive.

5. **Can I use these tools in team settings, not just for myself?** Yes. Many teams have started simple practices like a two-minute “How are we holding up today?” check-in at the start of a shift. It reduces isolation, builds mutual support, and creates a calmer atmosphere that benefits everyone, including the children those team members go home to.
6. **What if I try the centring breath and it doesn’t work for me?** That’s okay. The tool is offered as an option, not a requirement. Some people find it helpful to feel their feet on the ground or to quietly name one thing they can control in the next five minutes. You can adapt it to what works for your body and culture.
7. **How is this different from the 5 D’s or Listen & Believe from earlier sessions?** The earlier sessions focus on noticing and responding to others. This session focuses on strengthening your own steadiness so you can keep showing up for others without burning out. All the skills work together, you can use a centring breath before choosing which D to apply, or before listening to someone who discloses.
8. **What if my workplace or family doesn’t support these kinds of practices?** You can still use them quietly for yourself. A private three-breath pause before a meeting or a gentle reframe in your own mind doesn’t require anyone else’s permission. Over time, when people see the difference in how you show up, they often become curious and the culture can shift gently.
9. **Can children or teens also benefit from learning these simple tools?** Yes. Modelling is powerful, but you can also share age-appropriate versions with older children or teens, for example, “Before we talk about this tricky thing, let’s take three steady breaths together.” It gives them language and permission to manage their own pressure.
10. **Why is building small resilience practices for ourselves and our teams protective for children and families?** When adults are steadier, children experience less emotional spillover, more consistent warmth, and better modelling of how to handle difficulty. Teams that support each other reduce burnout and create calmer homes. Small, consistent practices build a protective net around children without requiring big programmes or extra resources.

Thank you for the care and openness you’re bringing to this session. You now have two simple, practical tools that you can use immediately in real South African life. Every time you choose to stay a little steadier, you help protect the children and families around you.

See you in the room. You’re already building quiet strength.