

Resources for Resilience

Final Evaluation Report

Presented to:
Resources for Resilience

Presented by:
Prevention Strategies

July 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resources for Resilience Hurricane Helene Response

Overview

Following Hurricane Helene, Resources for Resilience (RFR) provided free, trauma-responsive resiliency trainings to strengthen the well-being and resilience of residents, professionals, volunteers, and other helpers across Western North Carolina.

604
Trainings
Delivered

10,000+
Training
Participants

Prevention Strategies evaluated six types of RFR trainings delivered between January and June 2026 to understand their reach, participant experiences, and perceived outcomes.

Overall Program Impact

1

Participants feel more prepared and resilient

Training strengthened participants' knowledge, confidence, and ability to recognize and respond to stress in themselves and others.

2

Participants are ready to use and share the tools

Participants viewed the strategies as practical, relevant, and immediately applicable.

3

Participants feel better equipped to support others

Training increased participants' ability to recognize stress and promote resilience within their communities.

The evaluation demonstrates the value of investing in RFR's timely, accessible, and scalable approach—one that equips large numbers of people with practical resilience tools and strengthens communities' capacity for long-term recovery.

Recommendations

1. Sustain access throughout long-term recovery

Continue offering free or low-barrier training as communities experience ongoing stress, grief, burnout, and recovery demands beyond the immediate disaster-response period.

2. Expand capacity to meet continued demand

Explore additional funding, staffing, and delivery partnerships to respond to continued waitlists and extend training to more organizations, helpers, caregivers, families, and young people.

Introduction

Background

Hurricane Helene created widespread disruption across Western North Carolina, with effects that continued well beyond the immediate disaster response. As communities moved into longer-term recovery, residents and the professionals, volunteers, caregivers, and community leaders supporting them continued to experience chronic stress, grief, burnout, caregiver fatigue, and uncertainty. These challenges can affect people's ability to care for themselves and others, remain engaged in their work, connect with available resources, and participate fully in community recovery.

With support from several funders and in-kind contributions, Resources for Resilience (RFR) responded by providing free, trauma-informed resilience training to communities affected by the storm. As a locally based organization serving North Carolina communities since 2017, RFR was able to mobilize quickly and deliver training in flexible formats and settings—including workplaces, community organizations, healthcare settings, local governments, schools, and virtual gatherings. Training opportunities were designed for both formal and informal helpers and offered at multiple levels of intensity, allowing participants to engage in ways that matched their time, roles, and emotional capacity.

Since Hurricane Helene, RFR has delivered more than 1,000 hours of live, interactive programming, reaching more than 10,000 residents, professionals, and volunteers across 29 North Carolina counties and the Qualla Boundary. During the GROW NC funding period, RFR partnered with more than 70 organizations, including 50 new partners, and provided more than 600 offerings across Western North Carolina. Continued requests and growing waitlists demonstrate that the need for practical, accessible resilience support remains strong throughout the recovery process.

The Evaluation

As a part of the GROW NC project, Resources for Resilience contracted with Prevention Strategies in 2025 to evaluate the reach and impact of the Helene Response Project. This evaluation was conducted to understand how effectively the funded trainings supported participants and to inform RFR's ongoing response. It examined whether participants increased their understanding of stress and resilience, felt more prepared to recognize and respond to stress in themselves and others, and gained practical tools they could use and share in their workplaces, families, and communities. The evaluation also explored participants' experiences with the trainings and trainers, providing RFR and NCDHHS with information to strengthen future programming and guide continued investment in long-term community recovery.

Introduction

Measures & Survey Administration

Prevention Strategies worked in partnership with Resources for Resilience to create training specific pre- and post-surveys to assess the reach, quality, and perceived outcomes of Resources for Resilience programming. Although measures varied somewhat based on the content and objectives of each training, surveys included items addressing:

- participants' understanding of stress and resilience concepts
- confidence recognizing stress responses in themselves and others
- preparedness to respond to burnout, compassion fatigue, and toxic stress
- confidence using practical self-regulation strategies
- likelihood of applying the strategies in their daily lives
- using strategies to support others
- recommending or sharing RFR training with others

Surveys were administered from January - June 2026. Participants were invited to complete a pre-survey prior to the training and a post-survey immediately after the training.

Report Structure

This report presents findings in the following sections:

- **Evaluation Reach:** provides an overview of the evaluation's program reach & survey respondents
- **Overall Impacts & Experiences:** provides overall sentiment and suggestions
- **Training-Specific Outcomes:** details outcomes for each training in order of number of participants
- **Training and Trainer Feedback:** shares additional details on training and trainer impact
- **Appendix:** contains technical details and supporting documentation

Evaluation Specific Program Reach

Evaluation Reach



1,359
Training
Participants

29
Counties
Reached

19
Nonmetropolitan
Counties Reached

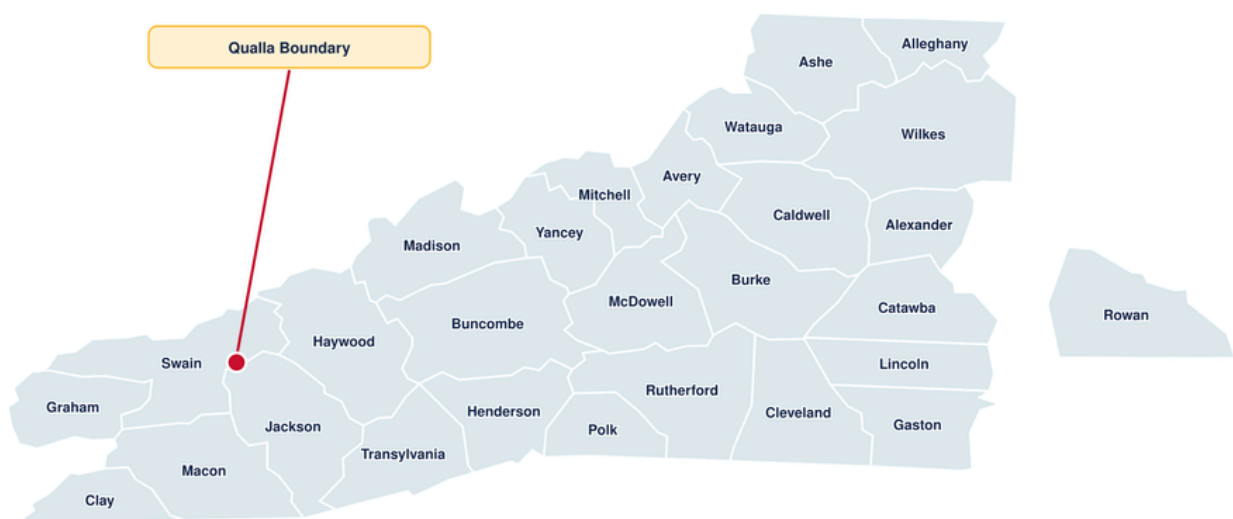
Training participants carried resilience knowledge and tools into communities across Western North Carolina.

Resources for Resilience delivered six types of trainings to 1,359 participants. Survey respondents reported serving people across 29 Western North Carolina counties and the Qualla Boundary. Counties include 19 nonmetropolitan counties and nearly all counties affected by Hurricane Helene.

This reach extended beyond participants' home communities. Through their professional and community roles, participants were positioned to carry resilience knowledge and practical tools to individuals, families, teams, and organizations throughout the region.

RFR's Reach Across Hurricane Helene–Impacted Counties

Counties affected by Hurricane Helene where RFR training participants reported serving individuals and communities



County boundaries: U.S. Census Bureau cartographic boundary data. Marker shows the approximate Qualla Boundary location.

Evaluation Reach

Breadth and depth of training reach

	Training participants
Leading Through Hard Times	213
Reconnect for Better Days	152
Reconnect for Resilience	100
Reconnecting Through Hard Times	682
Resiliency Champions	32
Recharging Resilience	180
Total across trainings	1,359

29 counties reached

Three trainings individually reached participants serving 29 counties.

52% were new to resiliency training

More than one-half of respondents reported that this was their first resiliency training.**

***A breakdown by training can be found in the Appendix*

Evaluation Reach

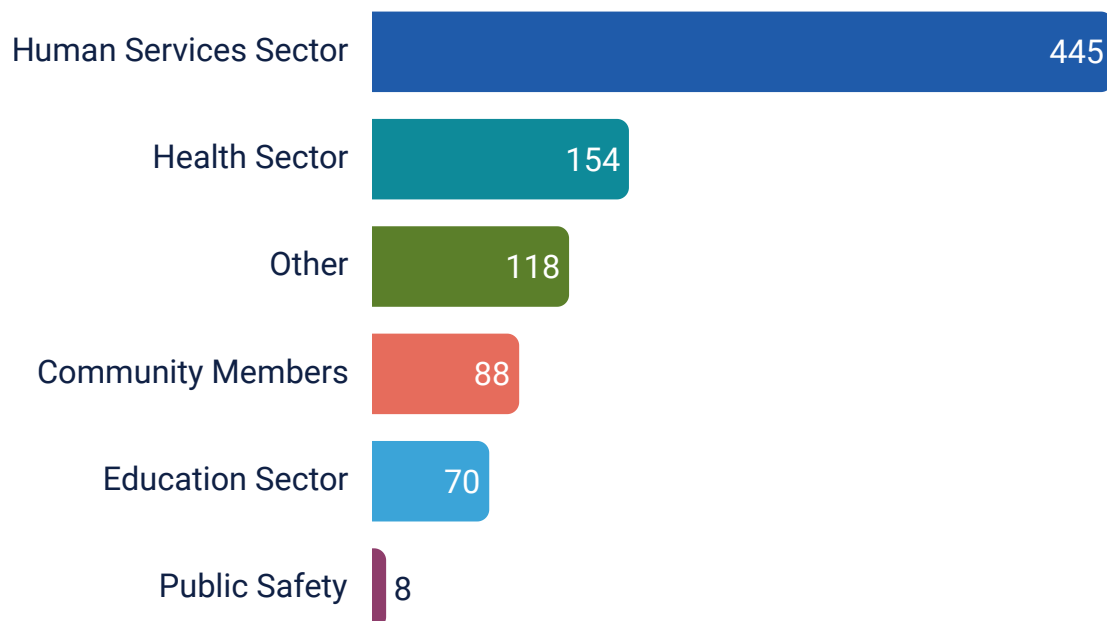
Survey completions by training

Leading Through Hard Times accounted for one-third of survey respondents (33%), while Reconnect for Better Days represented the smallest proportion (2%).

	Before training survey	After training survey
Leading Through Hard Times	194	158
Reconnect for Better Days	13	10
Reconnect for Resilience	91	73
Reconnecting Through Hard Times	114	83
Resiliency Champions	30	32
Recharging Resilience	147	139

589 participants completed the survey before the training

Roles represented by respondents

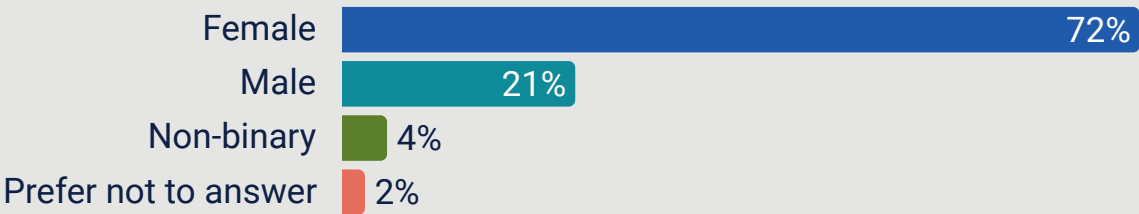
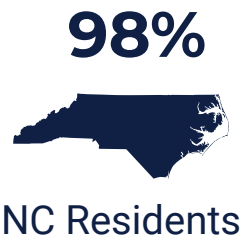


Specific roles identified by survey respondents within each category are further described in the Appendix of this report.

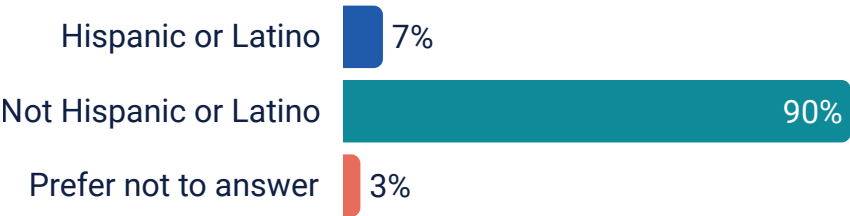
Evaluation Reach

Survey Participant Demographics

589
survey
respondents



Race	
American Indian or Alaska Native	5%
Asian or Asian American	2%
Black or African American	5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	<1%
White or Caucasian	82%
Prefer not to answer	4%



Overall Impacts & Experiences

Overall Program Impact

1

Participants feel more prepared and resilient

Training strengthened participants' knowledge, confidence, and ability to recognize and respond to stress in themselves and others.

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2

Participants are ready to use and share the tools

Participants viewed the strategies as practical, relevant, and immediately applicable.

page 13

3

Participants feel better equipped to support others

Training increased participants' ability to recognize stress and promote resilience within their communities.

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Why this matters

The live format offers more than access to information: it creates an engaging and supportive environment where participants can ask questions, practice resilience tools, learn from others, and receive support as they engage with emotionally challenging material.

Participants feel more prepared and resilient

98%

agreed that the training would help them respond to burnout, compassion fatigue, or toxic stress

Increased confidence recognizing stress responses contributed to participants feeling more informed and prepared.

	Before training	After training	Change
Understand the Resilient Zone (good or excellent)	37%	96%*	+ 59 pts
Recognizing when others are outside the Resilient Zone (<i>confident or very confident</i>)	28%	75%*	+ 47 pts

Participants described leaving the training feeling:

- More informed
- Understood and validated
- Prepared and equipped

“

This training made me feel seen and heard and understand myself better.

“

I have been operating in the Survival Brain for months and months at work... There are helpful tools to go to now thanks to this training.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Participants are ready to use and share the tools

86% - 99% felt confident using the Rapid Reset tools after training

78% - 92%

Likely to use key resilience strategies

- Connect with others
- Identify sources of support
- Notice positive physical sensations

99%

Likely to recommend Resources for Resilience trainings to colleagues

Participants valued strategies that were simple, memorable, and easy to incorporate into everyday life.

“

The training will not only help me but allow me to share the skills with the clients we serve.

“

As a new supervisor this will be greatly helpful to implement.

Participants feel better equipped to support others

78% - 84% were likely or very likely to use Rapid Reset tools to help others calm down

95% reported good or excellent understanding of how vulnerability and modeling resilience can positively influence a team

Why this matters

By strengthening the knowledge and confidence of community members and helping professionals, Resources for Resilience increased participants' readiness to support coping and recovery in communities affected by Hurricane Helene.

“

I am excited to use these tools in my professional and personal life. I already use some of the tools and I am glad to add more to my tool box.

“

It taught me how to help and support others while also taking care of myself.

Training-Specific Findings

Reconnecting Through Hard Times

Helps participants recognize survival responses during and after disasters and strengthens their ability to respond with empathy, supportive questions, and practical strategies that help others move toward calm and connection.

2,170 Training participants since Helene
682 Evaluation specific training participants
114 Before training survey participants
83 After training survey participants

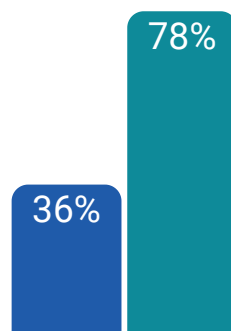
86%

felt confident in identifying survival responses that may emerge after a natural disaster*

Confidence in Ability to...

% reporting confident or very confident

● Before training ● After training



Take steps to help a person under stress shift back to a state of calm*

Key takeaway

The largest gain was in recognizing survival strategies after a disaster, increasing from 39% before training to 86% after training (+47 percentage points).

**represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.*

Reconnecting Through Hard Times

94% - 95%

were likely or very likely to use empathy and supportive questions when helping someone experiencing stress.

Supportive Response	Before training confidence	After training confidence	After training likely to use
Empathize by letting someone know their feelings make sense	72%	90%*	94%
Ask supportive questions	60%	88%*	95%
Help others identify who or what is helping	34%	83%*	86%

Personal application

Participants also intended to use self-regulation strategies following future stressful experiences: taking a walk (84%), heavy work (79%), and tapping (78%).

Participant Voices

“

I think this was so well explained. I feel like these are tools everyone should have. I hope to pass this information on to others.

“

*I've done similar trainings before but this one is so practical and useful. I really loved it! **Wish every human being could have this.***

“

This training excellently breaks down bigger scientific concepts and makes them understandable and actionable. What a fantastic resource!

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Leading Through Hard Times

Helps leaders understand how stress and adversity affect teams and strengthens their ability to model resilience, recognize when others are struggling, and offer them tools for support in the moment.

404 Training participants since Helene

213 Evaluation specific training participants

194 Before training survey participants

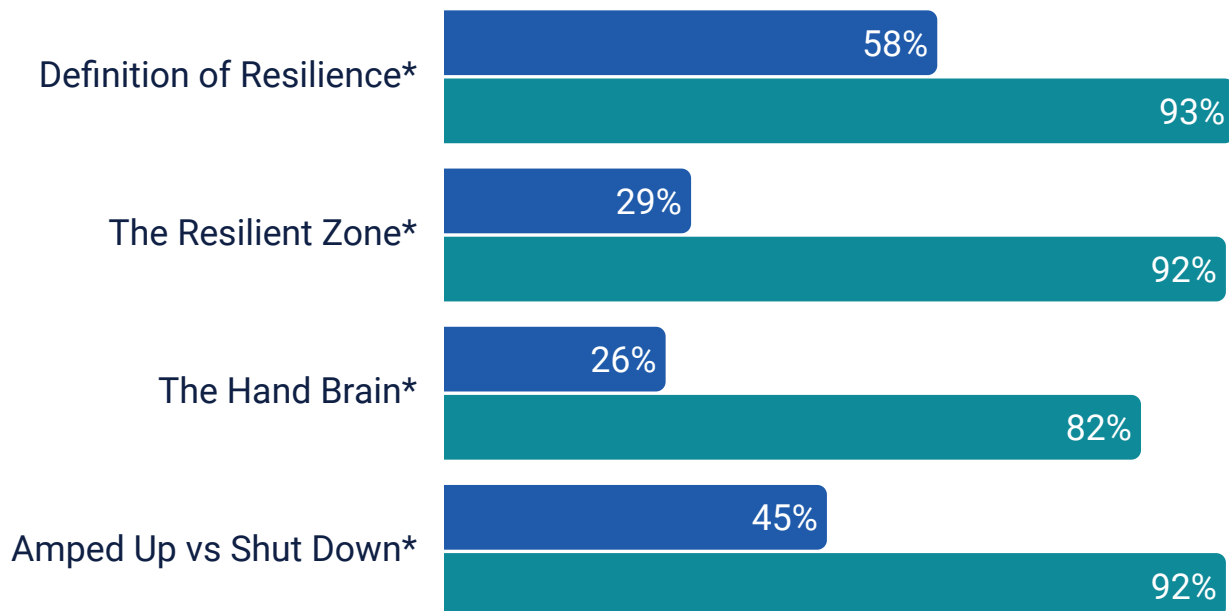
158 After training survey participants

82% - 93% reported good or excellent understanding of resiliency concepts after training*

Understanding of Foundational Resiliency Concepts

% reporting good or excellent understanding

● Before training ● After training



Participants demonstrated significant gains in their understanding of the foundational resilience concepts introduced during the training, and an increased understanding of how resilience can influence team dynamics, as shown on the next page.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Leading Through Hard Times

94%

understood how vulnerability and modeling resilience can positively influence teams*

% reporting good or excellent understanding

● Before training ● After training



70% - 75%

felt confident recognizing stress responses and helping others identify support after completing the training*

Confidence Supporting Others	Before training	After training	Change
Recognizing when others are outside the Resilient Zone	28%	75%*	+ 47 pts
Recognizing survival responses in team members	26%	75%*	+ 49 pts
Take steps to help a person under stress shift back to a state of calm	37%	70%*	+ 33 pts

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Reconnect for Resilience

Helps participants understand how trauma affects the brain and nervous system and strengthens their ability to recognize trauma responses, reduce shame, and use practical tools to support regulation and recovery.

350 Training participants since Helene

100 Evaluation specific training participants

91 Before training survey participants

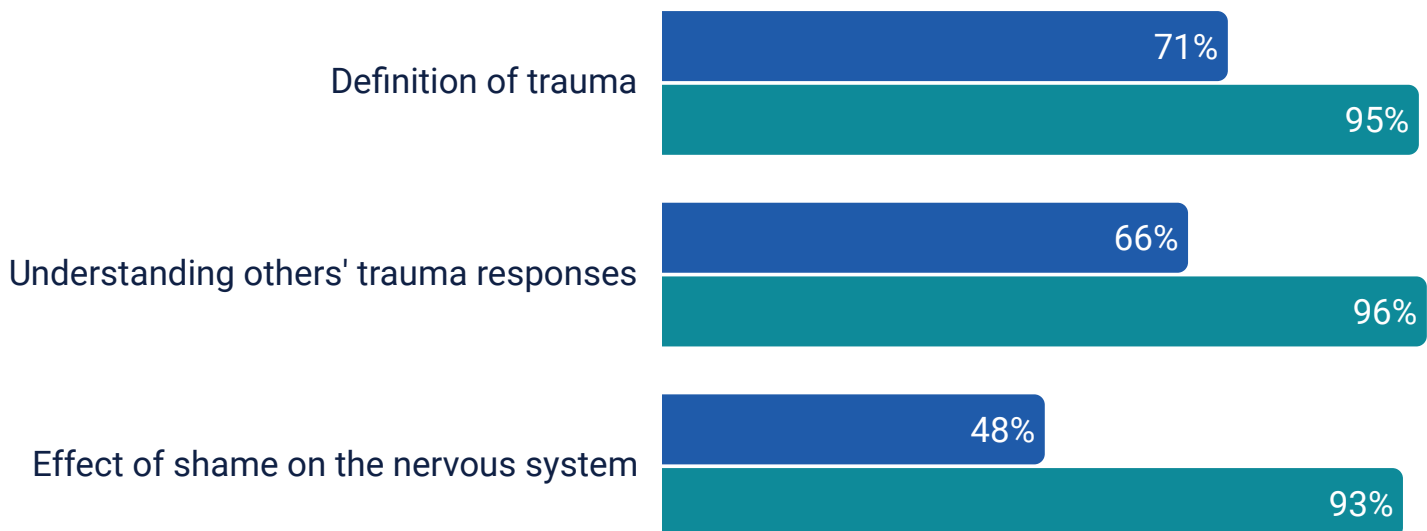
73 After training survey participants

93% - 96% reported good or excellent understanding of trauma and trauma response after training*

Understanding Trauma and Responses

% reporting good or excellent understanding

● Before training ● After training



Why this matters

Participants left the training with a stronger understanding of how trauma affects the brain and behavior, providing a foundation for recognizing trauma responses and responding with greater empathy and compassion.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Reconnect for Resilience

94% - 96% reported good or excellent understanding of how the brain responds to threat and how compassion can reduce shame*

Understanding How the Brain Responds

Percentage reporting good or excellent understanding

	Before training	After training	Change
Amygdala's role in appraisal of threats	49%	94%*	+ 45 pts
How compassion and empathy reduce shame	52%	96%*	+ 44 pts

After the training, **more than 86% of respondents felt confident or very confident to try each of the rapid reset tools**, and for almost all of those rapid reset tools, **more than 80% felt likely or very likely to use those in the future**.

Why this matters

This training paired knowledge-building with opportunities to practice tools participants could use for their own regulation and in supporting others.

Participant Voices

“

I appreciate this material, the opportunity to practice these tools, and the space to reflect on how it can be integrated into our worlds. Apart from my full-time job, I also work as a patient advocate volunteer for a non-profit organization, and can see value in applying these tools in both spaces.

“

I was impacted by several of the tools. One of the things that I found to be very valuable was that these can be tools to regulate myself in situations.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Reconnect for Better Days

Helps participants understand how stress affects the nervous system and strengthens their ability to recognize stress responses, practice self-regulation, and use practical tools to support better days.

285 Training participants since Helene

152 Evaluation specific training participants

13 Before training survey participants

10 After training survey participants

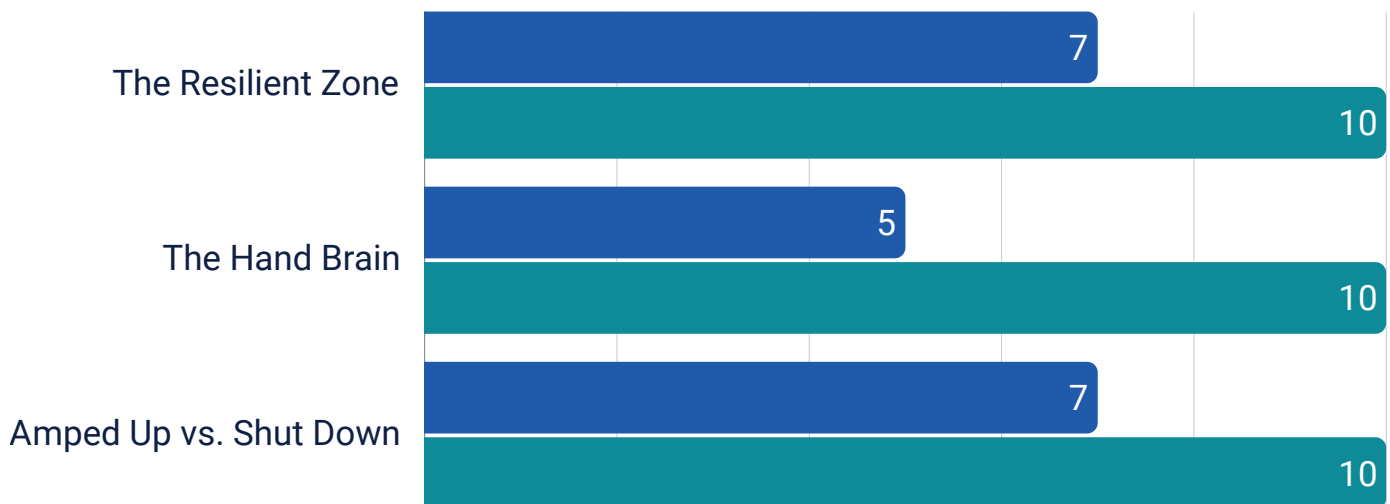
All 10 participants

reported good or excellent understanding of resiliency concepts after training

Understanding of Foundational Resiliency Concepts

reporting good or excellent understanding

● Before training ● After training



Even with a smaller group of participants, Reconnect for Better Days showed a strengthening of understanding of foundational resilience concepts while introducing practical strategies participants planned to use in their daily lives.

The training's brief format limited the time available for survey completion, resulting in a small number of responses. Findings are therefore presented as respondent counts rather than percentages.

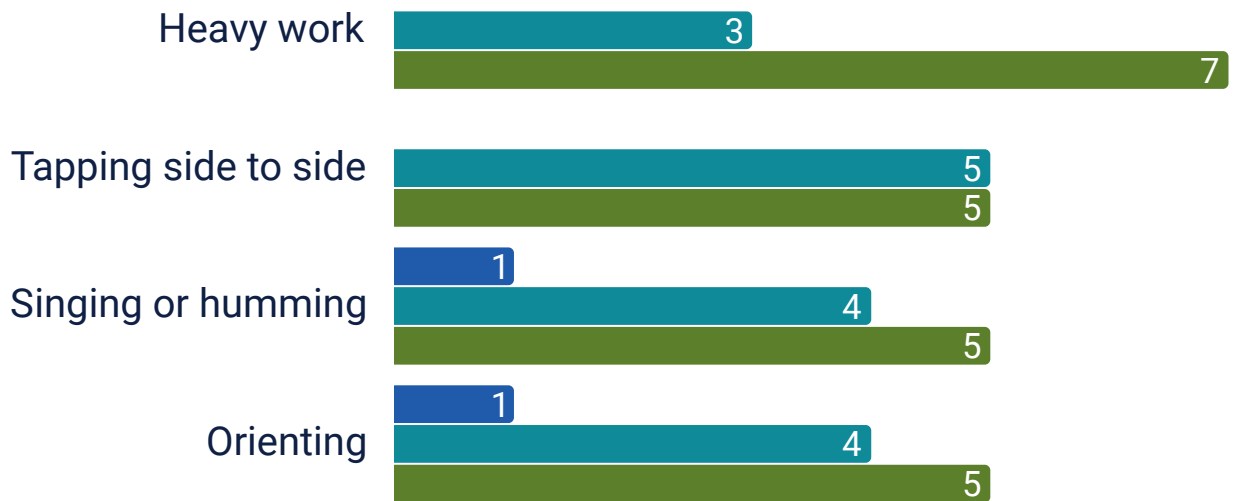
Reconnect for Better Days

All 10 participants

intended to use Rapid Reset strategies

% reporting likely or very likely to use strategy

● Slightly likely ● Likely ● Very likely



Participant Voices

“

Excellent training with very valuable tools and information.

“

Very insightful and useful in everyday situations.

Recharging Resilience

Builds participants' understanding of how stress affects the body and nervous system. The training introduces practical strategies for managing stress, strengthening self-care, and sustaining energy and resilience while supporting others. Participants leave with a plan to apply these tools in daily life.

221 Training participants since Helene

180 Evaluation specific training participants

147 Before training survey participants

139 After training survey participants

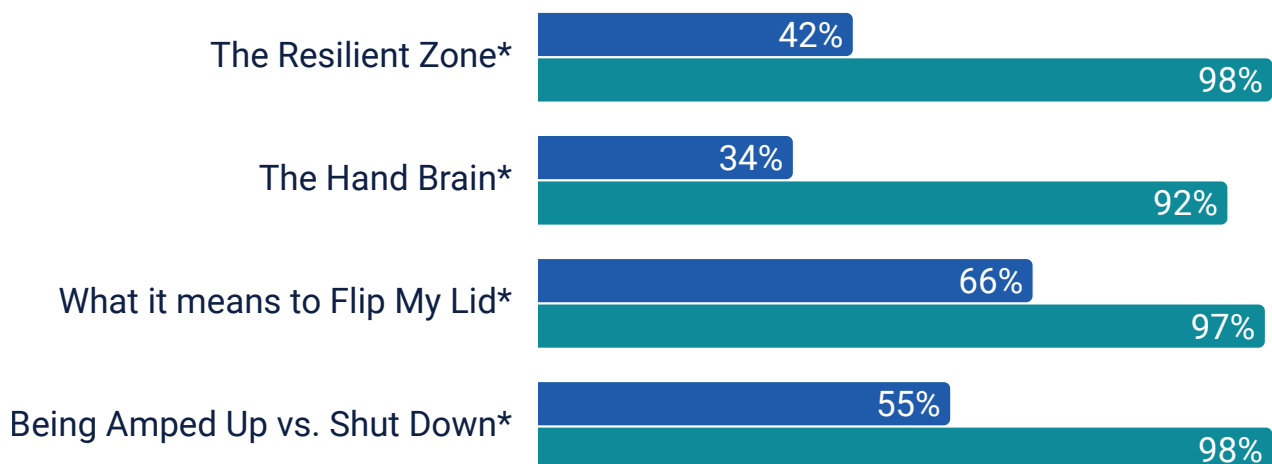
92% - 98%

reported good or excellent understanding of all four stress and resilience concepts after the training.*

Understanding the Brain during stress

% reporting good or excellent understanding

● Before training ● After training



*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Recharging Resilience

90%

agreed they can recognize signs of themselves or others being outside of the Resilient Zone after training, an increase from 63% before the training.*

Confidence to	Before training	After training	Change
Identify how stress impacts how you look, sound, and feel	61%	89%*	+ 28 pts

Why this matters

Understanding and recognizing stress in yourself and others is the first step to reducing burnout and increasing self-care.

Participant Voices

“

The training was a wonderful and calm experience, especially after a community tragedy. We are helpers and don't have access to these things.

“

The training will not only help me but allow me to share the skills with the clients we serve.

“

There have been so many tragedies in our community and it feels like people do something for a second and then move on. But offering these tools was like I could face another day helping others. I wish more people saw that we need help too. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Resiliency Champions

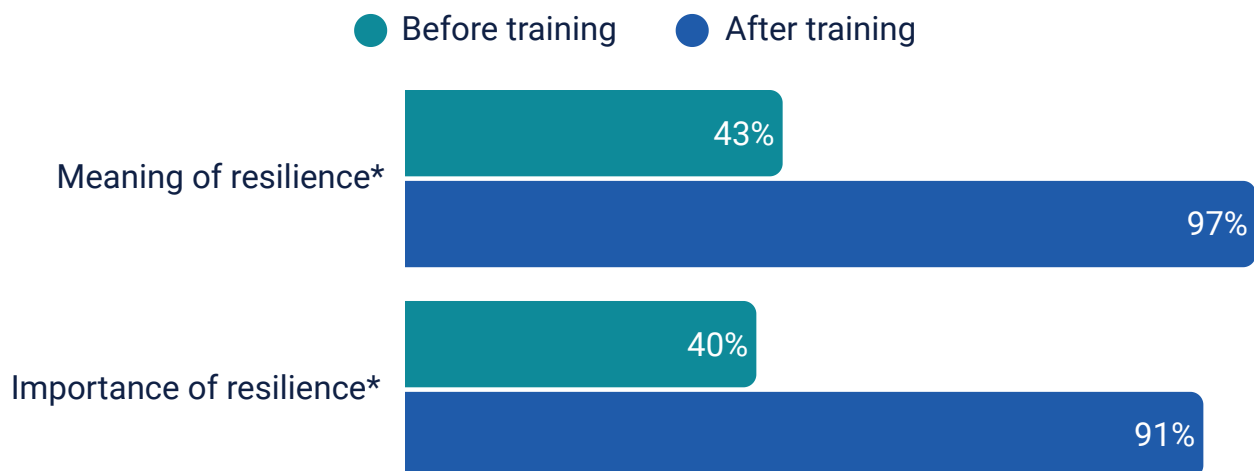
The training strengthens shared language and communication of core resiliency messages, and builds confidence to encourage peers and colleagues to use resilience tools both proactively and in response to significant or challenging events.

67	Training participants since Helene	32	Evaluation specific training participants	30	Before training survey participants	32	After training survey participants
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94%

felt confident communicating about resilience after training*

Participants with a way to explain to colleagues and peers the...



Why this matters

After training, nearly all participants could clearly describe both what resilience means and why it matters.

**represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.*

Resiliency Champions

91%

felt confident encouraging peers and colleagues to use the resiliency tools from this training*

Percentage of those likely or very likely to do the following after the training

integrate resiliency tools into policies

90%

have physical reminders of resiliency tools in the workplace

94%

Why this matters

Participants left prepared not only to discuss resilience themselves, but also to promote and implement practical resilience strategies among peers and colleagues.

Participant Voices

“

Loved the training and it built on the reconnect material and still deepened it more.

“

Great training. Practical. Engaging.

“

I had known of these concepts prior to the 2 day training, but since that training I've been able to equip staff with these skills and they were very, very [receptive]. Looking forward now to incorporating it even more into the environment.

*represents a statistically significant difference compared to before training.

Training and Trainer Feedback

Impact of Live, Trainer-led Learning

96% found their trainers supportive of their learning—an important benefit of live, interactive training.

Why live training matters

Live instruction allows participants to practice resilience tools in real time, ask questions, and receive guidance from a supportive trainer. This guided experience helps participants move beyond learning about the tools to feeling prepared to use them for themselves and others.

Engaging and Approachable

Trainers balanced emotionally challenging material with warmth, thoughtfulness, and humor.

Excellent presenter, was able to balance the seriousness of the training with well timed humor!

Very thoughtful when it comes to the nuance surrounding this kind of work and how different people might think about it/react to it.

Authentic and Vulnerable

Participants valued trainers' willingness to model the openness and presence encouraged by the training.

I appreciated the vulnerability [they] showed at times during the training. Training this content requires someone who is dedicated to the cause. You have to want to teach others this information because you have to demonstrate it. That means being present in the moment and sharing things that are a bit uncomfortable.

Practical and Supportive

Trainers used accessible examples, guided participants in practicing the tools, and created a safe and supportive environment for learning and connection.

I always appreciate your real life examples and how accessible the info is.

[They] also had a supportive and positive attitude and made the learning environment a safe space for connecting!.

Appendix

Survey Respondent Demographics

Age	Age range 18-78, 50% of the sample aged 40 and under, average age 41	
Gender	Female	398 (68%)
	Male	116 (20%)
	Non-binary	21 (4%)
	Prefer to self-describe or not answer	15 (3%)
	<i>Missing / did not answer</i>	39 (7%)
Race*	American Indian or Alaska Native	27 (5%)
	Asian	9 (2%)
	Black or African American	28 (5%)
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 (0%)
	White	481 (82%)
	Prefer not to answer	26 (4%)
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	37 (6%)
	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	491 (83%)
	Prefer not to answer	18 (3%)
	<i>Missing / did not answer</i>	43 (7%)
Home State	Georgia	2 (<1%)
	North Carolina	536 (91%)
	South Carolina	4 (1%)
	Tennessee	3 (1%)
	Other	2 (<1%)
	<i>Missing / did not answer</i>	42 (7%)
*Select all – will not add to 100%		

Survey Respondent Demographics

Role*	Behavioral health staff	70 (12%)
	Community health worker	20 (3%)
	Community partner	46 (8%)
	Early childhood educator/staff	31 (5%)
	Volunteer or caring neighbor	44 (8%)
	Faith leader	19 (3%)
	First responder	8 (1%)
	Healthcare worker	55 (9%)
	Managed care staff	9 (2%)
	Parent or caregiver	44 (8%)
	School staff	39 (7%)
	Social services staff	39 (7%)
	Other community-serving nonprofit staff	181 (31%)
	Other	118 (20%)
*Select all – will not add to 100%		

Note. Individual participant roles were combined into broader workforce sectors to improve readability and facilitate comparisons across trainings in the report. Categories presented in the report were based on respondents' primary sector of work or service and included:

- *Healthcare & Behavioral Health (behavioral health staff, healthcare workers, community health workers, managed care staff);*
- *Education (school staff, early childhood educators);*
- *Community & Social Services (community partners, social services staff, faith leaders, other community-serving nonprofit staff);*
- *Public Safety (first responders);*
- *Community Members (parents/caregivers, volunteers or caring neighbors); and*
- *Other.*

Survey Respondent Demographics

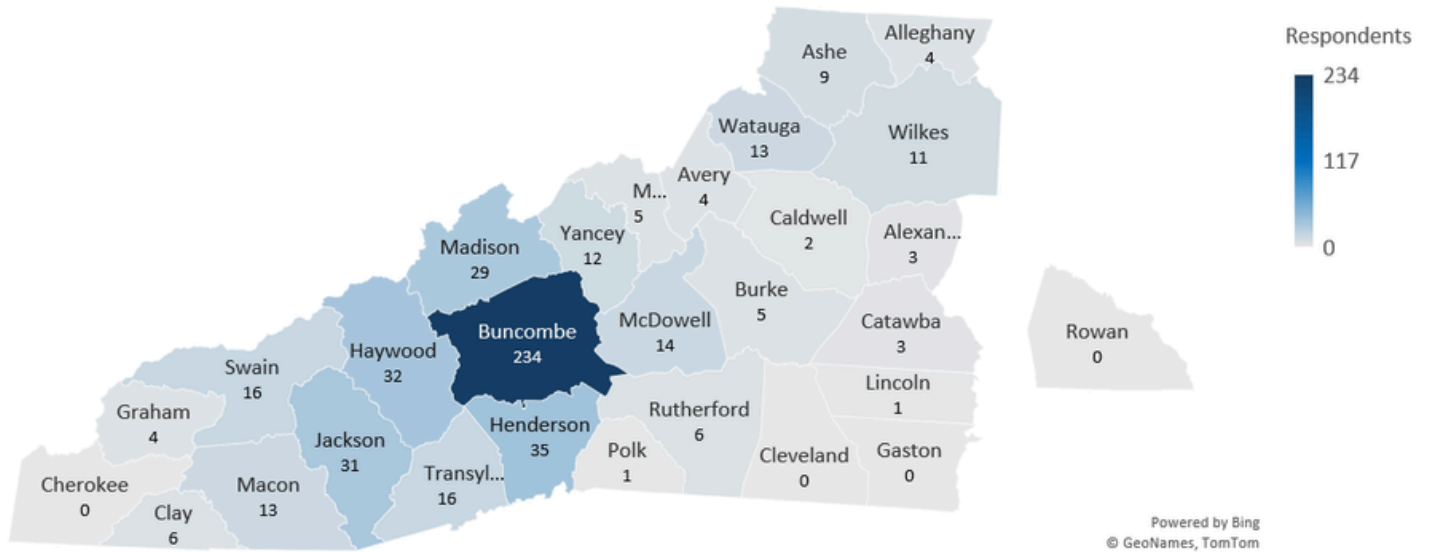
NC Counties	Lived in	Served in
Alexander	3	17
Alleghany	4	20
Ashe	9	39
Avery	4	60
Buncombe	234	293
Burke	5	20
Caldwell	2	18
Cherokee	0	0
Catawba	3	14
Clay	6	32
Cleveland	0	7
Gaston	0	4
Graham	4	35
Haywood	32	96
Henderson	35	105
Jackson	31	85
Lincoln	1	4
Macon	13	48
Madison	29	85
McDowell	14	66
Mitchell	5	56
Polk	1	55
Rowan	0	6
Rutherford	6	34
Swain	16	67
Transylvania	16	77
Watauga	13	40
Wilkes	11	23
Yancey	12	77

Note: The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians response option and Other were not included because they are not individual NC counties. Three respondents indicating living in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and 13 indicated Other. For counties served, 58 indicated serving the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and 7 answered Other for counties served.

Program Reach

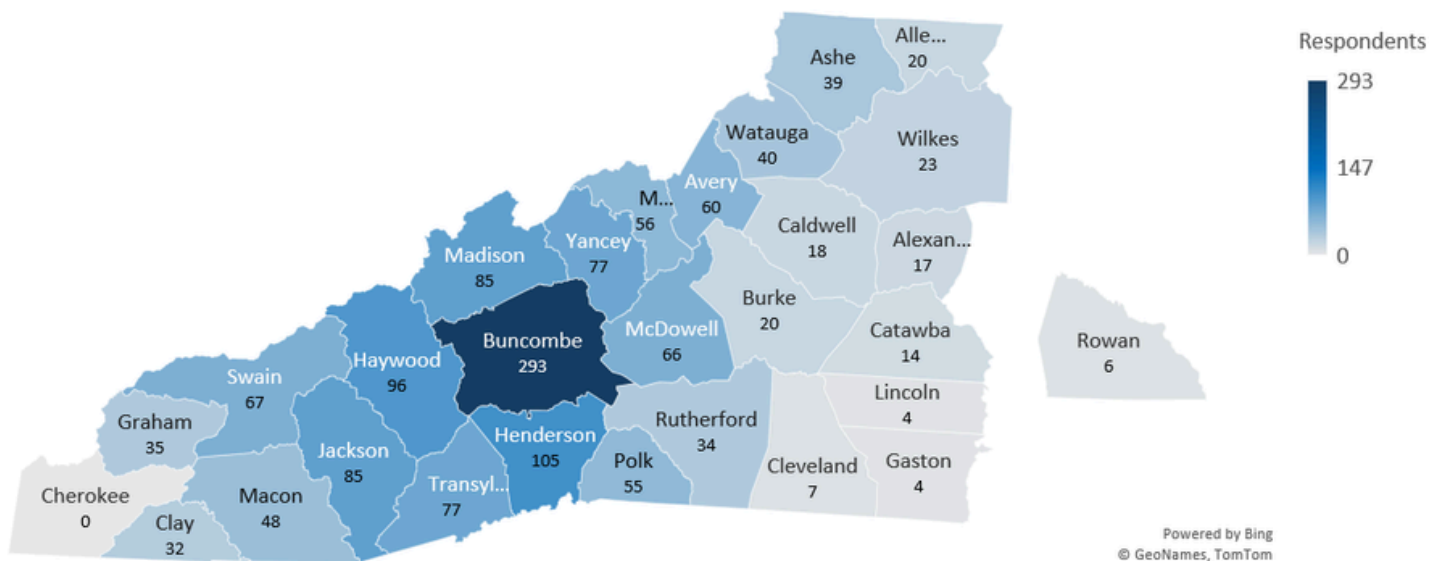
County of residence

This map shows the counties in which survey respondents live. Two percent of survey participants lived outside North Carolina.



Helene counties served

This map shows the counties survey respondents indicate serving in their current roles.



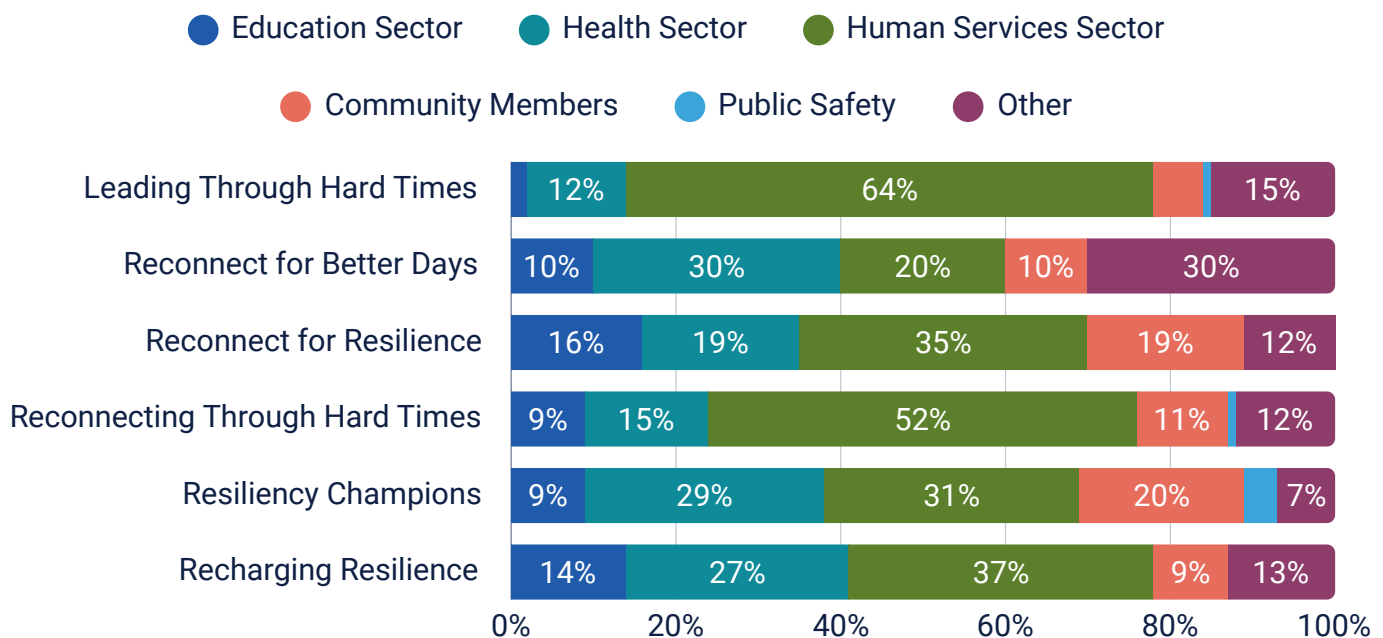
**Not represented in the map are the 58 respondents who reported having served the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI).*

Program Reach

Participants in Reconnecting Through Hard Times (72%) and Recharging Resilience (62%) were most likely to report that this was their first resiliency training.

	% First resiliency training
Leading Through Hard Times	48%
Reconnect for Better Days	42%
Reconnect for Resilience	56%
Reconnecting Through Hard Times	72%
Resiliency Champions	3%
Recharging Resilience	62%

Role breakdown by training



The role breakdown provides helpful context for understanding who participated in each training and, in turn, who may be carrying the knowledge and skills gained through these trainings into their organizations and communities across North Carolina. Human services professionals represented the largest share of participants in most trainings, suggesting particularly strong reach within that sector. Still, the variations across trainings could help situate findings for each training by showing the types of participants represented and may also help the program identify patterns of sector engagement, potential areas of interest, and opportunities for future outreach to sectors that are less represented.

Opportunities for Growth

Participants' recommendations generally focused on enhancing an already positive training experience rather than suggesting major changes to the training content. Common recommendations included increasing opportunities for practice, providing additional take-home resources, tailoring examples to participants' work settings, and making minor refinements to pacing and logistics.

More opportunities for practice and discussion

Participants expressed interest in additional opportunities to practice resilience strategies, engage in discussion, and learn from peers.

"Even more experiential learning."

"More interaction toward the beginning of day one."

"More group/class conversations - advice from peers."

Additional resources for continued learning

Several participants requested supplemental resources that could reinforce learning after the training, including quick-reference guides, presentation materials, and additional resource lists.

"Having printouts of the specific Rapid Resets as a reference would be helpful."

"I would have appreciated the skills we learned displayed on one quick facts/cheat sheet."

"I'd love to get access to the deck afterwards."

Opportunities for Growth

More tailored examples and application

Participants suggested incorporating additional examples and scenarios tailored to different professional roles and settings to further strengthen application of the material.

"More work-specific examples for nurses."

"Even more application when working with children/youth."

"More work-related examples."

Refinements to pacing and logistics

Participants also offered practical suggestions related to pacing, scheduling, room logistics, and maintaining engagement throughout the day.

"A little more interactivity, especially right after lunch!"

"Afternoon break would have been nice."

"Bathroom breaks built in."

Accommodations

Although nearly all participants (98%) indicated that accommodations met their needs, some respondents felt adding page numbers would be helpful, and one respondent suggested considering accessibility enhancements, such as amplification and improved sightlines for participants who rely on lip reading.