

Anticancer
LIFESTYLE PROGRAM®

My **Anticancer**

LIFESTYLE

Learning Circle



ORGANIZER'S MANUAL

Anticancer Learning Circle Organizer's Manual

People learn better when they **learn together**. They have more fun, too! That's why we launched the Learning Circle framework: to provide a way for people to gather in person or online to share ideas and support as they learn to create their Anticancer lifestyle.**

Learning Circles are organized around the 10-hour, self-paced **Anticancer Lifestyle Program (ACLP) free online course**, which is divided into five modules: Change, Diet, Mindset, Fitness, and Environment..

This manual provides the guidance and resources needed to create and manage a Learning Circle. Whether you're a medical provider, member of a cancer support group, or just interested in a healthier lifestyle, you can organize a Learning Circle.

Here are some ways Learning Circles can be used:

- Patients can join Learning Circles organized by their hospital or provider.
- Members of a support group can gather to learn how to make healthy lifestyle changes "stick."
- Individuals interested in prevention can join with friends and family for mutual support and education about wellness.

This Learning Circle Organizer's Manual gives specific instructions for how to convene weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly meetings, depending on the preference of the organizer and Circle members. The ACLP online course is broken up into appropriately-sized chunks, which are assigned to participants to be completed before the next meeting. Discussion questions and meeting format ideas are also provided.

Anticancer Learning Circle =



Online Course



Companion Study Guide



Participants

***An "Anticancer lifestyle" is one that can reduce inflammation, boost the immune system, and promote overall health. These healthy lifestyle behaviors can reduce the risk of cancer, cancer recurrence, and chronic illness. The lifestyle changes recommended in this course are meant to complement any necessary medical treatment, and to empower people to be active participants in their own well-being.*

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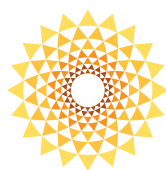


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INTRODUCTION

Role of the Organizer

The role of the Anticancer Learning Circle Organizer is to guide group members in purposeful discussion about making healthy lifestyle changes. As mentioned earlier, **organizers do not need any expertise in the material covered in the Anticancer Lifestyle Course.** You may even be going through the course for the first time yourself. This manual is designed to help you create a peer support group where all members are equal and share common experiences that allow them to connect on a personal level. **We encourage every Circle participant to have access to this manual and even share responsibilities as you move forward in building your Learning Circle.**

Key tasks of the Anticancer Learning Circle Organizer

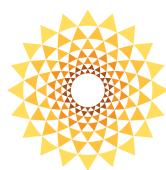
- Foster communication within the group and model effective interaction for members. (see [Tips For Guiding Conversation & Effective Communication](#) on page 36)
- Stimulate discussions designed to support and encourage progress for the group as a whole and for each member as an individual. (see [Discussion Topics](#) on page 15)
- Share appropriate and relevant resource information with group members. (see [Additional Resources](#) on page 41)

The Benefits of Learning Together

SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY Change is rarely easy and can be overwhelming. Being part of a community can provide members with support and accountability as they make positive lifestyle changes. It also provides you with the opportunity to encourage and help others. Along with being rewarding, supporting others has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and increase self-esteem and happiness. ***All members should bear in mind that the Circle is not designed to be a support group per se, and members may or may not share personal experiences, according to their level of comfort.***

SHARING IDEAS & RESOURCES Ideas breed new ideas. By sharing ideas and resources in a group you instantly open the door to fresh perspectives, and stimulate new ways of accomplishing your common goals. Not only does this maximize the group's knowledge, but exposure to new skills and information from peers can motivate and inspire everyone in the group to keep striving for positive change.

CONNECTION & EMPOWERMENT Building valuable connections with others through the common goal of creating an Anticancer Lifestyle can strengthen your social network and give you a deeper sense of belonging and purpose. The community can empower each individual to make the small incremental steps that, over time, will lead to big positive changes in overall health and in the body's natural capacity to fight disease.



BUILDING YOUR ANTICANCER LEARNING CIRCLE

Step 1: Define Your Learning Circle

Who will you invite?

By organizing an Anticancer Learning Circle, you are creating an opportunity to form strong and valuable peer support relationships. The best way for these relationships to form is to bring people together who share an experience in common. In the context of the Anticancer Lifestyle Program, group members may share common experiences of a personal cancer diagnosis or diagnosis of a loved one. This shared experience can help people connect with each other, *regardless of how openly they choose to discuss their experiences*. People who are not living with cancer or with a cancer survivor may want to gather to learn more about ways to live a healthy lifestyle.

Look through the suggestions below and consider what you want your community group members to have in common.

Experiences in Common

- Personal cancer diagnosis
- Diagnosis of a loved one
- Health concerns such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes
- Prevention of chronic illness
- Caregivers
- Cancer support group members
- Share a specific cancer diagnosis (ie. breast cancer)

Notes:

Group Size

Size can affect group dynamics. Consider how many people you should invite to develop strong relationships and have productive discussions. Think of this like a book club, with the ideal size being between 5 to 15 people.

Group Guidelines

In order to keep things running smoothly and work through challenges when they arise, it is important to establish guidelines for your group. Review the suggested guidelines below with your group members and adopt or modify them so that everyone is in agreement and has ownership of them.

Suggested Guidelines

Confidentiality:

- Don't share personal information that has been shared by others within the group without explicit permission. (What is said in the group, stays in the group)

Communication & Etiquette:

- Only share what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Everyone should be able to express how they feel without feeling judged.
- Respect other viewpoints (including social and cultural differences) and avoid dismissive and negative language.
- Try not to monopolize the discussion. Stay focused.
- Limit external distractions by silencing phones and muting your microphone (if virtual) when you are not speaking.
- Timekeeping – hold each other accountable for starting and ending the meeting on time to be respectful of everyone's time. The group may want to assign a timekeeper for this purpose.

Step 2: Choose Your Framework

The Anticancer Learning Circle discussions will be based on the material you learn in the Anticancer Lifestyle online course. Before each meeting, the organizer will assign participants segments of a course module to be completed individually in preparation for the discussions. Note that each module has a corresponding **Anticancer Companion Study Guide**. The corresponding sections of the guide should also be reviewed prior to the meeting.

There are two suggested frameworks for your Learning Circle, depending on how frequently you would like to meet. The first is a **weekly or bi-weekly schedule**, and the second is a **monthly schedule**. **Regardless of which framework you choose, you will need to schedule a brief introductory meeting.** As the organizer, it is important to consider how much time you can personally invest and commit to when making a decision to meet weekly versus monthly. If your time is flexible, you might consider saving this decision for your first meeting, when you can present the options and let your community group members weigh in on the decision. Read through the following proposed schedules and decide what might be the best framework for your Learning Circle. **(Note that the minutes listed in parentheses indicate the length of that course module segment.)**

Weekly or Bi-weekly	
<p>Change & Mindset Learning Circle (3 Sessions)</p>	<p>Session 1 (Total = 48 mins) Change Introduction (15 mins) Segment 1 (10 mins) - Barriers to Change Segment 2 (11 mins) - Planning for Change Segment 3 (12 minutes) - Social Network</p> <p>Session 2 (Total = 48 mins) Mindset Introduction (2 mins) Segment 1 (14 mins) - Stress & The Mind-Body Connection Segment 2 (8 mins) - Defining The Anticancer Mindset Segment 3 (12 mins) - How Do You Shape Your Mindset? Segment 4 (12 mins) - The Five Mindset Keys</p> <p>Session 3 (Total = 51 mins) Segment 5 (21 mins) - Mindfulness In Everyday Life Segment 6 (20 mins) - Managing Stress Through Mindfulness Segment 7 (10 mins) - Integrating Mindfulness Techniques</p>
<p>Diet Learning Circle (4 Sessions)</p>	<p>Session 1 (Total = 43 mins) Introduction (7 mins) - Anticancer Diet Segment 1 (11 mins) - Weight and Cancer Segment 2 (8 mins) - Eat Whole Foods Segment 3 (17 mins) - Eat Mostly Plants</p> <p>Session 2 (Total = 44 mins) Segment 4 (7 mins) - The Benefits Whole Grains Segment 5 (22 mins) - Why Eat Organic Foods? Segment 6 (15 mins) - Treat Meat as a Condiment</p> <p>Session 3 (Total = 45 mins) Segment 7 (7 mins) - Eat Safer Seafood Segment 8 (14 mins) - Not All Milk & Eggs Are Created Equal Segment 9 (10 mins) - Healthy Oils & Fats Segment 10 (14 mins) - Limit Sweets</p> <p>Session 4 (Total = 39 mins) Segment 11 (7 mins) - Spice It Up Segment 12 (14 mins) - Healthy Beverages Segment 13 (7 mins) - Think Local Segment 14 (11 mins) - Putting It All Together</p>

Weekly or Bi-weekly (Continued)	
Fitness Learning Circle (2 Sessions)	<p>Session 1 (Total = 53 mins) Introduction (4 mins) Segment 1 (13 mins) - Fitness and Health Segment 2 (10 mins) - Cardiovascular Exercise Segment 3 (26 mins) - Strength Training</p> <p>Session 2 (Total = 37 mins) Segment 4 (9 mins) - Flexibility and Balance Segment 5 (14 mins) - Creating a Plan Segment 6 (4 mins) - Implementing Your Plan Segment 7 (10 mins) - Anticancer Benefits of Sleep</p>
Environment Learning Circle (4 Sessions)	<p>Session 1 (Total = 41 mins) Introduction (4 mins) Segment 1 (13 mins) - The Problem Segment 2 (19 mins) - The Precautionary Principle Segment 3 (5 mins) - Five Keys to an Anticancer Environment</p> <p>Session 2 (Total = 38 mins) Segment 4 (17 mins) - The Toxin Dive Segment 5 (7 mins) - Routes of Exposure Segment 6 (14 mins) - Personal Care Products & Cosmetics</p> <p>Session 3 (Total = 34 mins) Segment 7 (8 mins) - Perfumes, Fragrance, & Air Quality Segment 8 (20 mins) - Plastics & Non-stick in the Kitchen Segment 9 (6 mins) - Dry Cleaning & Fabrics</p> <p>Session 4 (Total = 36 mins) Segment 10 (12 mins) - Household Cleaners Segment 11 (8 mins) - Cell Phones & Electromagnetic Fields Segment 12 (7 mins) - Household Pesticides Segment 13 (9 mins) - Conclusion & Review</p>

Monthly for 6 Months	
<p>Change & Mindset Learning Circle (1 Session)</p>	<p>Month 1 (Total = 2 hrs 17 mins)</p> <p>Change Introduction (15 mins) Segment 1 (10 mins) - Barriers to Change Segment 2 (11 mins) - Planning for Change Segment 3 (12 minutes) - Social Network</p> <p>Mindset Introduction (2 mins) Segment 1 (14 mins) - Stress & The Mind-Body Connection Segment 2 (8 mins) - Defining The Anticancer Mindset Segment 3 (12 mins) - How Do You Shape Your Mindset? Segment 4 (12 mins) - The Five Mindset Keys Segment 5 (21 mins) - Mindfulness In Everyday Life Segment 6 (20 mins) - Managing Stress Through Mindfulness Segment 7 (10 mins) - Integrating Mindfulness Techniques</p>
<p>Diet Learning Circle (2 Sessions)</p>	<p>Month 2 - Diet Part I (Total = 1 hrs 27 mins)</p> <p>Introduction (7 mins) - Anticancer Diet Segment 1 (11 mins) - Weight and Cancer Segment 2 (8 mins) - Eat Whole Foods Segment 3 (17 mins) - Eat Mostly Plants Segment 4 (7 mins) - The Benefits Whole Grains Segment 5 (22 mins) - Why Eat Organic Foods? Segment 6 (15 mins) - Treat Meat as a Condiment</p> <p>Month 3 - Diet Part II (Total = 1hr 24 mins) Segment 7 (7 mins) - Eat Safer Seafood Segment 8 (14 mins) - Not All Milk & Eggs Are Created Equal Segment 9 (10 mins) - Healthy Oils & Fats Segment 10 (14 mins) - Limit Sweets Segment 11 (7 mins) - Spice It Up Segment 12 (14 mins) - Healthy Beverages Segment 13 (7 mins) - Think Local Segment 14 (11 mins) - Putting It All Together</p>

Monthly for 6 Months (Continued)	
Fitness Learning Circle (1 Session)	Month 4 (Total = 1 hrs 30 mins) Introduction (4 mins) Segment 1 (13 mins) - Fitness and Health Segment 2 (10 mins) - Cardiovascular Exercise Segment 3 (26 mins) - Strength Training Segment 4 (9 mins) - Flexibility and Balance Segment 5 (14 mins) - Creating a Plan Segment 6 (4 mins) - Implementing Your Plan Segment 7 (10 mins) - Anticancer Benefits of Sleep
Environment Learning Circle (2 Sessions)	Month 5 - Environment (Part 1) (Total = 1 hrs 19 mins) Introduction (4 mins) Segment 1 (13 mins) - The Problem Segment 2 (19 mins) - The Precautionary Principle Segment 3 (5 mins) - Five Keys to an Anticancer Environment Segment 4 (17 mins) - The Toxin Dive Segment 5 (7 mins) - Routes of Exposure Segment 6 (14 mins) - Personal Care Products & Cosmetics Month 6 - Environment (Part 2) (Total = 1 hrs 10 mins) Segment 7 (8 mins) - Perfumes, Fragrance, & Air Quality Segment 8 (20 mins) - Plastics & Non-stick in the Kitchen Segment 9 (6 mins) - Dry Cleaning & Fabrics Segment 10 (12 mins) - Household Cleaners Segment 11 (8 mins) - Cell Phones & Electromagnetic Fields Segment 12 (7 mins) - Household Pesticides Segment 13 (9 mins) - Conclusion & Review

Step 3: Choose A Place Or Platform

In-person Meetings

In-person meetings offer more opportunities for interaction and connection, which can lead to a greater sense of trust, security and community. They tend to require more planning such as identifying a location to meet, providing directions and snacks, and so forth.

Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings may not provide as many opportunities to interact, but they can offer more flexibility and accessibility for people who might not be able to travel to an in-person meeting. Virtual meetings also tend to be simpler to plan and don't require as much prep time as in-person meetings. If you choose to meet virtually, you have many different options for platforms to use. Some of the more common options are:

- [Zoom](#)
- [Google Meet](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)

How will you share information?

As the organizer, you will need to communicate with participants to share meeting details and various resources. Think about how you would like to do that and what information you might need to collect from group members. You may choose more than one means of communication to improve your ability to reach people who may have limited resources or are not as tech-savvy.

- Phone numbers for calls or texts
- E-mail addresses
- Create a [Facebook Group](#)

Step 4: Schedule An Introductory Meeting

Purpose

The purpose of this first session is to **introduce** participants to the Anticancer Lifestyle Program, **familiarize** them with how to register for the online course, and **invite** them to participate in your Anticancer Learning Circle discussions.

Meeting Format (1 hour)

Introduce (15 mins)

- Introduce yourself, thank your participants for joining you and state the purpose of this first meeting.

"The purpose of this first session is to introduce all of you to the Anticancer Lifestyle Program, familiarize you with how to register for the online course and invite you to participate in our Anticancer Learning Circle discussions."

- Share a little bit about yourself and how you were introduced to the Anticancer Lifestyle Program.
- Ask each person to introduce themselves and share a few things about themselves (name, where they live, their diagnosis if they'd like to share it, and one fun/odd fact about themselves).
- Share an overview of the Anticancer Lifestyle Course. You might say the following:

"The Anticancer Lifestyle Online Course is a free, expert-led program that helps you make healthy and informed lifestyle choices to reduce your risk of cancer, cancer recurrence, and chronic illness. The course is filled with evidence-based tools, tips, and information to promote well-being in the areas of Diet, Fitness, Mindset, and Environment."

Familiarize (15 mins)

- Walk participants through how to register for the online course. If you are meeting in person, you may want to physically gather around a computer. If you are meeting online, you may want to share your screen.
- Explain that the course is divided into five modules: Change, Mindset, Diet, Fitness, and Environment.
- Choose a module to open up and show them how to access the Anticancer Companion Study Guide. Explain that this manual was designed to help them capture key concepts and begin implementing what they learn in order to create their own Anticancer Lifestyle.
- Review the meeting formats and decide which one is best for the group (monthly or weekly/bi-weekly).

Invite (15 mins)

- Share how beneficial community support can be when learning and making lifestyle changes. Then invite those in attendance to your Anticancer Learning Circle.
- Explain that the Learning Circle discussions will be based on the material you learn in the online course. Before each meeting, you will assign participants segments of a course module to review online and the corresponding sections of the Anticancer Companion Study Guide to complete individually in preparation for the discussions.
- Invite each person in attendance to share their contact information (name, phone #, e-mail) so you can send them resources and information about these community group meetings. This may be as simple as a notepad that you pass around during the meeting or have them email or text you their contact information (depending on how you all decide it's best to communicate).

Close & Questions (15 mins)

- Set the time and date for your next meeting
- Share any final resources and thank everyone for attending.
- Give those that may have other engagements permission to leave the meeting.
- Invite your participants to stay and ask questions for as long as your time allows.

Resources to Share

- Anticancer Lifestyle Website anticancerlifestyle.org
- Anticancer Learning Circle Organizer's Manual

Introductory Meeting Invitation Template

*Please join us for an Introduction to the Anticancer Lifestyle Program **(insert your meeting details (date, time and location)).***

The Anticancer Lifestyle Program is a free online course that provides evidence-based tools, tips, and information about how to lower your risk of cancer and cancer recurrence.

- *Give a short overview of the course*
- *Show you how to register and navigate through the online course materials*
- *Show you where to locate other Program resources (such as ebooks, webinars, and blogs)*
- *Share some resources*
- *Answer any questions you may have*

*I will also introduce you to, and invite you to join, an Anticancer Learning Circle group! This group will meet periodically **(weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, depending on the group's preference)** to discuss the modules in the Anticancer Lifestyle Program and support one another in making positive lifestyle changes.*

Step 5: Dive Into The Course

Prepare

Now it is time to start exploring the Anticancer Lifestyle Program Course!

- Have each person complete the assigned course modules and corresponding section of the Anticancer Companion Study Guide independently and prior to the meeting.
- Be sure to assign the sections you will cover well in advance so participants have ample time to prepare.
- We recommend that you send the link to this Organizer's Manual to each participant, so they can see the discussion topics and questions in advance.

Learning Circle Meeting Format

Weekly / Bi-weekly Meeting Format (60 mins)	Monthly Meeting Format (120 mins)
Grounding Activity (5 min)	Grounding Activity (5 min)
Welcome (10 min)	Welcome (10 min)
Discussion (35 min)	Discussion (45 min) Break (5 min) Discussion (45 min)
Close (10 min)	Close (10 min)

Grounding Activity

- Begin the meeting with a short Grounding Activity to get everyone focused (see examples of [Grounding Activities](#) on page 38)

Welcome

- Begin the meeting by welcoming participants. If you have a new participant who was unable to attend the introductory meeting, have everyone introduce themselves. Otherwise, you can begin by having everyone share a win or success they had in the past week or month related to positive lifestyle changes.
- Give an overview on what participants can expect for today's meeting (topics covered, time frames etc.)
- Establish/Review the Group Guidelines
- Share any important announcements

Discussion

- Guide participants in focused conversation about the course materials and discussion topics. For suggested discussion topics, see the [Discussion Topics and Resource section](#) on page 16.

Closing

- End the session by having participants share one small step they are going to take in the coming week or month to improve their lifestyle.
- Announce the date and time of the next meeting along with the course materials to cover in preparation for the next discussion.
- Share any final resources and thank everyone for attending.
- Be sure to formally end the meeting as scheduled to be respectful of everyone's time.

Learning Circle Meeting Invitation Template

*We invite you to join us for our Anticancer Learning Circle discussion on **(insert your meeting details (date, time and location)).***

We encourage you to prepare for our upcoming discussion by completing the following (module and/or segments) from the Anticancer Lifestyle Program course.

(List the module or segments to be covered in the meeting. This information can be copied and pasted from your chosen framework.) Example:

DIET

Introduction (7 mins) - Anticancer Diet

Segment 1 (6 mins) - Excess Weight and Cancer

Segment 2 (10 mins) - Eat Real Food

Segment 3 (18 mins) - Eat Plants, Especially Vegetables

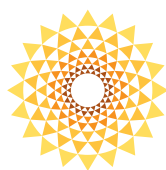
To participate:

1. Register for the Anticancer Lifestyle Program at anticancerlifestyle.org/anticancer-lifestyle-online-course/

The Anticancer Lifestyle online course is free for a renewable 90-day access. A \$20 donation covers their hosting costs and larger gifts allow them to offer the course to those who cannot afford to pay.

2. Before each meeting we will assign a portion of the course for you to explore on your own to prepare for the group discussion. Think of it as a book club!

3. Join us **(insert your meeting details: date, time and location).**



DISCUSSION TOPICS & RESOURCES

On the following pages you will find discussion topics and resources for each module and segment of the Anticancer Lifestyle Course. We recommend that everyone in your Learning Circle be given a copy of these topics and resources in advance of beginning the course. Keep in mind that you won't be able to cover all of the discussion topics, so take time to review them together and prioritize the ones you feel are most relevant for your group.

The resources provided will supplement what you are learning and should be shared with for further exploration and study. Notice the **"helpful suggestions"** throughout this section. These offer additional activities and ideas that can enhance your Learning Circle. We encourage you and your Learning Circle members to be creative and have fun in making these gatherings your own.

Small Steps lead to *Big Change*:

For encouragement and support, we invite you to join our community on social media (Facebook [@AnticancerLifestyleFoundation](#), Instagram [@AnticancerLifestyle](#), Twitter [@Anticancer](#)) and share the small steps you and your Learning Circle members are taking using the [#myanticancerlifestyle](#). Let us cheer you on and may your small steps inspire and help others to make positive lifestyle changes!

[#myanticancerlifestyle](#)



Our Anticancer Learning Circle went on a hike today and took a mindful moment to soak up these views! [#myanticancerlifestyle](#)



Tried this delicious salad recipe with a healthy variety of Anticancer ingredients! [#myanticancerlifestyle](#)



Reducing my exposure to toxins by using this beeswax wrap to cover my bowl instead of plastic. It's better for the environment too! [#myanticancerlifestyle](#)

CHANGE MODULE

Intro: Stages of Change

Discussion Topics

- Change is rarely easy and often requires a progression of small steps toward a larger goal. Review the stages of change you filled in on page 6 of the Anticancer Companion Study Guide. What stage of change best describes where you are at today when it comes to making Anticancer Lifestyle changes?
- What is one small step you can take this week to make forward progress in making Anticancer Lifestyle changes?

Seg. 1 Making Lasting Change

Discussion Topics

- To make lasting change, it is important to become familiar with the common obstacles to change and learn the best strategies for overcoming potential setbacks. How have barriers to change such as past experiences, existing habits, emotions and personal environment affected your ability to make desired changes?
- Looking at your Anticancer Wheel of Life, which important aspects of your life have been neglected? Have you put too much focus in one area at the expense of other core values? What adjustments you can make to achieve a balance that better reflects all of your values? What do you feel is the most important change to focus on first?

Ask participants to complete the Anticancer Wheel of Life from the course toolkit, or the one found on page 8 of the Change Module Companion Guide, prior to the meeting, so you can share and discuss.

helpful suggestion

Resource

[Anticancer Wheel of Life Worksheet](#)

Seg. 2 Planning For Change

Discussion Topics

- Review the difference between making a values-driven decision (ie. deciding not to eat a bag of chips because it conflicts with your value of eating healthier) and an emotion-driven decision (ie. deciding to eat a bag of chips because you feel like it). Share an example of an emotion-driven decision you have struggled with or are currently struggling with that conflicts with your values/goals. Can you identify any barriers to achieving this goal? Remember to be gentle with yourself as you are on a journey toward making lasting change. **Setbacks are not failures, but rather opportunities to learn about your barriers, figure out strategies that might help, and/or change your goals to be more realistic in your current situation.**
- Review the SMART goal framework with the group. Refer to your Anticancer Wheel of Life and the core value you have decided to focus on first. Share a SMART goal for one of the changes you would like to make.

Resource

[S.M.A.R.T. Goal Framework Worksheet](#)

Seg. 3 Social Network

Discussion Topics

- Your social connections can provide you with three major types of support: emotional, logistical and informational. Who is a part of your support team? Can you share any local resources that provide you with support? This is a great opportunity to brainstorm with the group and create a master list of local support resources (ie. local support groups, community organizations, patient navigators, educational resources), strengthening everyone's social network.
- When you are trying to change your lifestyle, it's not uncommon to run into resistance from friends and family as they may not understand or appreciate why you are making these changes. Can you identify areas of resistance you might face? Are there ways you can manage these challenges while making the best decisions for yourself?

Resource

[The Five Change Keys](#)

MINDSET MODULE

Seg. 1 Stress And The Mind-Body Connection

Discussion Topics

- Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension caused by demanding circumstances. Your ability to make and maintain lifestyle choices that promote health and well-being starts with learning to manage your stress. Review the three different types of stress you wrote down on page 6 of the companion guide. Can you share an example of when you may have experienced each type of stress?
- The dialogue between the mind and body is a two-way conversation. How do your thoughts and emotions influence your physical health?

Resource

Webinar - [Mindfulness 101: Managing Stress Through Breath](#)

eBook - [Mindset 101: Learning to Manage Your Stress](#)

Seg. 2 Defining The Anticancer Mindset

Discussion Topics

- Think about a situation when you experienced great disappointment. How did you react? How could you have changed your outlook in the face of this disappointment?
- Learning to create health sometimes in spite of disease is what defines an Anticancer mindset. One way to begin is through gratitude practice. Research has shown that this practice reduces depression, improves sleep quality, reduces inflammation and lowers the stress hormone cortisol. Share three things you are grateful for. Make time to review, remember, and reflect on them throughout the week.

Resource

[Gratitude Practice Tip Sheet](#)

Seg. 3 How Do You Shape Your Mindset?

Discussion Topics

- Review the techniques for training your brain that you described in the table on page 10 of the Companion Guide. Do you currently practice any of these techniques? If so, what benefits have you experienced. Are there any techniques you would like to try or add to your mindfulness practice?

- In the Take Action section on page 11 of the Mindset Module Companion Study Guide, you were asked to research the mindfulness resources available in your local area (ie. yoga classes, nature walks, therapy centers). Share these resources with the group so you can all gain from your collective knowledge. Consider having one person create a list that can be shared with the group for reference after the meeting. Consider organizing a group outing to a local organic farm or for a nature walk.

Resource

Webinar - [Stress Less: Fostering Calm and Resilience in Everyday Life](#)

Seg. 4 The Five Mindset Keys

Discussion Topics

- Think about a time when you might have judged others instead of viewing them with compassion. How did your mindset color and affect your response to this situation? Do you feel your mindset affected you physically?
- Reflect back on a challenging situation you experienced. How could you apply the mindset keys to this situation? How could practicing mindfulness change how you experienced this event.

Resource

Tip Sheet - [The Benefits of Integrating Mindfulness into your work life, by Mark Lesser](#)

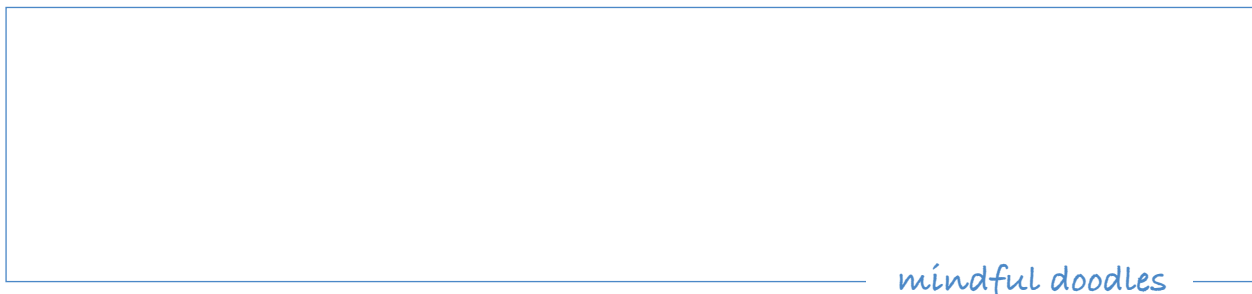
Seg. 5 Mindfulness In Everyday Life

Discussion Topics

- Reflect on each of the Mindset tools (Mindful Eating, Guided Imagery, Silent Walking Meditation, Five Senses Mindfulness Exercise) mentioned on pages 12 and 13 of the Mindset Module Companion Study Guide. Which mindful activities worked best for you? How do you see these practices fitting into your current lifestyle?

Resource

eBook - [Mindset 101: Learning to Manage Your Stress](#)



Seg. 6 Managing Stress Through Mindfulness

Discussion Topics

- Identify a situation in your life that has caused you stress. With curiosity and without judgment, reflect on your body responded to this stress. Was your initial reaction a flight-flight response or a mindful response?
- Are you allowing any of your stressors to consume the majority of your thoughts or attention? What other experiences in the here and now are you missing or unaware of as a result of focusing on your stressors? What mindfulness techniques have you learned that might help?

Resource

Worksheet - [Coping with Challenging Situations](#)

Seg. 7 Managing Stress Caused By Change

Discussion Topics

- Think about a time when you were faced with either a planned or emergent change. Can you identify any habits you had to overcome? In what ways can you use mindful awareness to recognize times when you are resisting change?
- Take some time to reflect on the changes you are currently experiencing in your life. How significant are they? Are they planned or emergent changes? What small mindful steps can you take to help shift away from a panicked or thoughtless reaction, to a more reasoned response?

Resource

Video - [You Have Cancer: What Now?](#)

ACLP co-founder Meg Cadoux Hirshberg shares her 12 "Rules of the Road" for how to handle a cancer diagnosis, both emotionally and practically.

Seg. 8 Integrating Mindfulness Techniques Into An Anticancer Lifestyle

Discussion Topics

- Recognize and be conscious of the power you have to change your habits. Identify a change in your life that is causing you stress. What thoughts and behaviors can reduce your stress concerning this change?

Resource

Worksheet - [Mindfulness](#)

DIET MODULE

Seg. 1 Weight and Cancer

Discussion Topics

- A variety of factors play a role in weight gain and weight management. They include genetics, chronic stress, hormonal imbalances, medication side effects, changes in habits and mental health. Remember to give yourself grace, focus less on the scale and more on the changes you can make today to live a healthier tomorrow. What are possible barriers you face in achieving or maintaining your healthy weight range?
- Maintaining a normal body weight for your height is vitally important to your overall health. Share some small steps you can take that will help you in achieving or maintaining a healthy body weight. Then, choose one of these to implement this week.

Resources

eBook - [Bye-Bye Diets: A Guide to Intuitive Eating](#)

Webinar - [Food and You: Gaining Control Over Out-of-Control Eating](#)

Seg. 2 Eat Whole Food

Discussion Topics

- Highly processed foods comprise roughly 50% of the calories and 90% of the added sugars in the Standard American Diet. How does your diet compare to the Standard American Diet? Are there any changes you would like to make?
- On page 9 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide you were asked to check your pantry for common processed foods. What did you discover about the foods in your pantry? Was there anything that surprised you? Are there any changes you can make toward a healthier diet?

Resource

Video - [Food, Inc.](#)

Seg. 3 Eat Mostly Plants, Especially Vegetables

Discussion Topics

- Depending on the time of year and where you live, it can sometimes be a challenge to find fresh produce at an affordable price. Review the tips to save money on fresh produce found on page 11 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide and share any local resources or seasonal sources you have found for fresh produce.

You may want to have a participant record the local and seasonal food options suggested by the group and distribute it to everyone as a handy resource after the meeting.

helpful suggestion

- When eating a plant-based diet, it is important to choose a variety of vegetables and fruits. The ideal daily goal is 5 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit. Based on what you learned about eating fresh produce, what are a few small changes you can implement this week?

Resource

Video - [Forks Over Knives](#)

Seg. 4 The Benefits of Whole Grains

Discussion Topics

- Sometimes people worry that choosing only whole grains versus common refined grains, such as white rice, will restrict their food choices, but there is a rich variety of whole grains to choose from. Review the list of whole grains on page 13 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. How many on this list have you tried? Which are your favorites and how do you like to prepare them? Are there any you are interested in trying?

Invite participants to share and swap recipes! This is a great opportunity to learn from each other and discover new ways of preparing whole grains.

helpful suggestion

- To get the recommended amount of fiber in your diet, ideally you would consume 5-9 servings of vegetables and fruits per day along with whole grains, nuts, seeds and beans. Are you meeting your daily fiber goal? What are some small changes you can make to insure you are eating whole grains and getting enough fiber?

Resources

Tip sheet - [Beyond Quinoa: 7 “new” whole grains to try](#)

Website - [An encyclopedia of whole grains](#)

Seg. 5 Why Eat Organic Foods?

Discussion Topics

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) put in place a system of national standards to certify that specific practices are used to produce and process organic foods and ingredients. These foods carry the label “USDA Certified Organic. Review the chart you completed on page 15 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. What surprised you about the differences between Organic, Non-GMO, Natural and Conventional farming practices?
- In the United States, we are surrounded by cheap food at cheap prices. Organic foods are generally more expensive, but keep in mind that you are worth it! You are what you eat! What reasons do you feel make it important to eat organic food when possible? Have you discovered any tips, tricks or local resources to make them more affordable?

Resources

Tip Sheets - [Organic Foods: What you need to know](#)

Website - [EWG's Dirty Dozen & Clean 15](#)

Seg. 6 Treat Meat As A Condiment

Discussion Topics

- Adequate amounts of protein are essential to a healthy diet and for maintaining a healthy weight. What is your daily protein goal? Are you getting enough protein each day? What are some small changes you can make to ensure you are eating more plant-based proteins?
- Research studies have shown that the best diets for reducing cancer risk are those in which the majority of calories, including proteins, are plant-based, and derived from vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Review the sources of plant protein on page 17 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. How many on this list have you tried? Which are your favorites and how do you like to prepare them? Are there any you are interested in trying?

Invite participants to share and swap recipes! This is a great opportunity to learn from each other and discover new ways of preparing sources of plant protein.

helpful suggestion

Resources

eBook - [The Plant-Based Meats and Milks e-Book](#)

Webinar - [How Healthy Are Plant-Based Meats and Milk?](#)

Seg. 7 Eat Safer Seafood

Discussion Topics

- In the Take Action section on page 19 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide, you were invited to learn more about how to select healthy seafood by visiting ewg.org and reviewing the Environmental Working Group's **Good Seafood Guide**. What did you discover? Did you try the EWG's **Seafood Calculator** to get your custom seafood list? What are some small changes you can make when adding seafood to your diet?
- Build the collective knowledge of the group by sharing any insights you have on sourcing seafood locally. What are the best grocery stores, fish markets etc. for buying seafood in your area? Do you have healthy options available to you?

Resources

Website - [Good Seafood Guide](http://ewg.org)

Website - [Seafood Calculator](http://ewg.org)

Seg. 8 Not All Milk & Eggs Are Created Equal

Discussion Topics

- What did you learn about the benefits of choosing eggs from free-range hens that feed on pastures rather than other commercially-raised eggs? Do the eggs you consume have any of the following packaging labels: USDA Organic, American Humane Certified or Certified Humane Raised and Handled?
- How many different dairy products do you consume on a regular basis? What are some small changes you can make in order to add alternative sources of calcium and Vitamin D to your diet?

Resources

Website - [What does free range really mean?](http://www.wholefoodmarket.com)

eBook - [The Plant-Based Meats and Milks e-Book](http://www.wholefoodmarket.com)

Seg. 9 Healthy Oils and Fats

Discussion Topics

- What did you discover about the ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 fatty acids in the Standard American Diet? Which foods in the Standard American Diet (SAD) lead to excess Omega-6 fatty acids (review the list you made on page 22 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide)? Do you consume any of these fats? What are some small changes you can make to replace some of the unhealthier fats in your diet?

- Think about the source of fats in your diet. Read the food labels in your pantry or during your next visit to the grocery store, to see which types of fats they contain. Share what you discovered about the sources of fats in your diet. Are there any changes you would like to make? Have you found any healthier options you can share with the group?

You may want to ask people to bring a couple items from their pantry and go through the labels together.

helpful suggestion

Resources

eBook - [The Anti-Inflammatory Diet e-Book](#)

Webinar - [Anti-Inflammatory Diet and Chronic Illness: What You Need to Know](#)

Seg. 10 Limit Sweets

Discussion Topics

- On average, each adult in the U.S. now consumes more than 60 pounds of added sugar in a year, or 12 - 5 pound bags. What are some ways you can avoid added sugars?
- In the Take Action Section on page 25 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide, you were challenged to check the food labels on some of your favorite foods for added sugars. Share what you discovered. Were you surprised by how much sugar you found?

Ask people to bring some of their favorite foods to the meeting and go through the labels together. Also ask them to bring their favorite energy bar or health food shake. It is fascinating to learn how much sugar can be hiding in these items.

helpful suggestion

Resource

Video - [Fed Up](#)



Seg. 11 Spice It Up

Discussion Topics

- Review the Anticancer herbs and spices on page 26 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. What was the most interesting thing you learned about their Anticancer properties and the ways you can add them to your diet?
- On page 27 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide, you were challenged to take inventory of your herb and spice cabinet. Which of the important Anticancer herbs and spices were missing, if any? Share any small changes you can make to incorporate more herbs and spices into your diet.

Resource

eBook - [The Power of Herbs and Spices: Cooking Your Way to Better Health](#)

Seg. 12 Healthy Beverages

Discussion Topics

- Share what you found most interesting about the potential health benefits of coffee and tea. Did you learn anything new about selecting and preparing these beverages in a healthier way?
- Evaluate your daily habits when it comes to drinking beverages. Share any small changes you can make to incorporate healthy beverages into your diet and prepare them in an healthier way.

Have everyone bring their favorite tea cup or mug and their favorite healthy beverage to drink and share with the group.

helpful suggestion

Resource

Article - [Green Tea: Ten proven health benefits](#)

Webinar - [A Clear Look At Tap Water: What's in it and what can you do about it?](#)

Seg. 13 Think Local

Discussion Topics

- There are many great reasons to eat locally-grown food whenever possible. What are some of the benefits of buying local food? What are some small changes you can make that will help you eat more locally-grown food?

- One of the many benefits of growing your own food is less food waste. Forty percent of all food in the U.S. does not get eaten and almost 70% of that food is actually still edible. What are some ways you can reduce your own food waste?
- Review the list of Tips for Eating Locally on page 30 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. Brainstorm together which options are available in your local community.

Have a group member record the ideas you generate, so you can distribute a resource list to everyone after the meeting.

helpful suggestion

Resources

Website - [USDA's Farmer's Market Directory](#)

Website - [Local Harvest website](#)

Seg. 14 Putting it all Together

Discussion Topics

- Reflect on what you have learned in the Diet Module of the Anticancer Lifestyle Course and share and celebrate some of the changes you have already made. It doesn't matter how tiny they are—over time, small steps lead to big change!
- Review the 5 Diet Keys on page 32 of the Diet Module Companion Study Guide. Share which of the 5 keys you would like to focus on next and one change you can make this week.

Resources

Tip sheet - [Grocery Shopping Guide](#)

Webinar - [Gut Health: What Is It & How to Improve It](#)

FITNESS MODULE

Seg. 1 Fitness and Health

Discussion Topics

- Fitness is not about being a marathon runner or a bodybuilder. It is about maintaining good cardiovascular health and adequate strength and flexibility in order to function well in daily life and enjoy your leisure activities. How would you rate your personal fitness? After familiarizing yourself with the Anticancer Activity Pyramid, what areas of your fitness would you like to improve?
- Sedentary activity is located at the top of the Anticancer Activity Pyramid, meaning that it should be the smallest component of your daily routine. Brainstorm as a group ways you can incorporate movement into your sedentary activities. Choose one of these small changes to implement this week.

Resources

Worksheet - [Anticancer Fitness Pyramid](#)

Webinar - [Mindful Movement Exercises](#)

Seg. 2 Cardiovascular Health

Discussion Topics

- Cardiovascular exercises involve moving your body to raise your heart rate. Share your favorite form of cardiovascular exercise. Which forms of cardiovascular exercise would you like to incorporate into your fitness routine?
- Share some examples of vigorous and moderate activities that you plan to incorporate into your fitness routine. Choose one of these activities to try this week. Which method (Talk Test, Perceived Exertion, Target Heart Rate) will you use to measure the intensity of your exercise?

Resource

Tip sheet - [Be Active Adults](#)

Webinar - [Fit After 50: Add Days to Your Life & Life to Your Days](#)

Seg. 3 Strength Training

Discussion Topics

- From the list of strength training examples you created on pages 11 & 12 of the Fitness Module Companion Study Guide, which ones would you like to add to your fitness routine? Share a small fitness goal you can accomplish this week.
- On average, most people lose 5 pounds of muscle mass each decade after age 30. Strength training produces many benefits such as maintaining muscle mass and minimizing the side effects of cancer treatment such as weight gain, osteoporosis, and lymphedema. Have you experienced any of these side effects of cancer treatment? Has your care team talked to you about the benefits of strength training? Are you aware of or have you experienced any additional benefits of strength training?

Resources

Video - [Resistance Bands](#)

Video - [Free Weights](#)

Seg. 4 Flexibility and Balance

Discussion Topics

- Which behaviors do you do on a daily basis that may contribute to stiffness and soreness (ie. sitting in front of a computer all day)? What parts of your body do you feel are most impacted? Share one flexibility exercise you can add to your fitness routine this week.
- Have everyone test their balance by trying a single leg lift. Stand with feet hip distance apart. Have a chair or table within reach if you need to stabilize yourself to regain balance. Raise the right knee to 90 degree angle. Hold for 3-5 seconds, then return foot to the floor and try again with the left knee. Did you notice a difference between the sides? Was it challenging or easy? Try closing your eyes (be sure to have that table or chair ready for bracing). What activities do you do to work on your functional fitness (balance, coordination, gait, agility, proprioceptive training)?

Resources

Tip sheet - [Flexibility exercises](#)

Webinar - [Change Your Posture, Change Your Life](#)

Video - [Excellent free yoga videos on youtube: Yoga With Adriene](#)

Video - [10- and 20-minute Qi Gong routines](#)

Seg. 5 Creating A Plan & Seg. 6 Implementing Your Plan

Discussion Topics

- Share your SMART fitness goal. Are there any barriers you have identified that might make it more challenging to meet this goal? What is a small step you can take this week to begin to break down that barrier?
- Share what you wrote down on your weekly exercise planner. What preparations do you need to make in advance to set yourself up for a successful week of exercise? How could this group support and encourage you?

Ask participants to complete the **Weekly Fitness and Physical Activity Planner** from the course toolkit or the one found on page 16 of the Fitness Companion Guide prior to the meeting, so you can share and discuss.

helpful suggestion

Resource

Worksheet - [Weekly Fitness and Physical Activity Planner](#)

Webinar - [Movement Matters: Standing Up to a Sedentary World](#)

Seg. 6 The Anticancer Benefits of Sleep

Discussion Topics

- Do you or your family members have any habits that negatively impact the quality of your sleep? What is a small change you can make to improve your sleep habits?
- What does your ideal bedtime routine look like? What are some of the challenges you face in establishing your ideal bedtime routine?

Resources

Video - [Short Guided Sleep Meditation](#)

Website - [Great resource about sleep](#)

ENVIRONMENT MODULE

Seg. 1 The Problem

Discussion Topics

- What are your perceptions regarding the safety of the items you purchase at the store? Do you consider the safety of the items before you buy them?
- In this segment, you watched a video by immunologist, Dr. Margaret Kripke. What were the preconceived notions she had about chemicals available on the market? Did you share any of these misconceptions before watching this video?

Resources

Video - [Unacceptable Risk: Dr. Margaret Kripke on Cancer and the Environment](#)

Video - [Unacceptable Levels](#)

Seg. 2 The Precautionary Principle

Discussion Topics

- In this segment, you watched the video “10 Americans” - Find out the shocking truth about toxins by the Environmental Working Group. What did you learn and/or find most concerning? Why do scientists believe that Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals are active at very low doses?
- Take a moment to reflect on the products you purchase frequently. How can you use the Precautionary Principle to evaluate those products the next time you buy? Share one small step you can take this week to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals from your environment?

Resource

Video - [10 Americans](#)

Seg. 3 The Five Keys to an Anticancer Environment

Discussion Topics

- Go through the Healthy Home Assessment together on page 9 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide and share what you discovered. Can you identify any changes you have already made or would like to make in your home environment?
- Based on the Five Keys found on page 9 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide, what are some simple steps you can take right now to reduce your exposure to harmful chemicals?

Resources

Webinar - [The Non-Toxic Home: A Room-by-Room Guide](#)

eBook - [The Healthy Kitchen: Reducing Toxins and Chemical Exposures](#)

eBook - [The Healthy, Non-Toxic Nursery](#)

Seg. 4 The Toxin Dive

Discussion Topics

- Review the list of “The Terrible Twelve” most dangerous common categories of toxins on page 12 and 13 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide. Were you surprised by any of these and can you identify any examples of these in your home?
- Read through the list of suggestions on where to begin when “weeding out” toxins from your home on page 13 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide. Share one small step you can take this week to start creating your own Anticancer environment.

Resource

Website - [EWG's Guide to Avoiding PFAS Chemicals](#)

Seg. 5 Routes of Exposure

Discussion Topics

- Your greatest exposure to toxins is through inhalation. Review the hazardous airborne toxins in the table on page 14 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide. Then, discuss some ways you can reduce your exposure to hazardous airborne toxins in your home.
- Share one small step you can take this week to reduce your exposure to chemicals through inhalation, ingestion or absorption.

Resources

Webinar - [Breast Cancer and the Environment: What We Know & What You Can Do](#)

Seg. 6 Personal Care Products and Cosmetics

Discussion Topics

- According to the Environmental Working Group, the average American adult uses 9 personal care products each day containing a total of 126 unique chemical ingredients. How many personal care products do you use on a daily basis? Are there any products you can eliminate or find safer options for?

- As a group, investigate some personal care products on the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Database at ewg.org/skindeep. What is the rating of each product and did you find any safer options? Share a few changes you can make to the personal care products you currently use.

If meeting in person, you may want to break into smaller groups for this activity. Have at least one person in each group download the [EWG's Healthy Living App](#) on their phone. Give the groups 5 minutes or so to research a few personal care products and then report their findings to the Learning Circle.

helpful suggestion

Resources

Webinar - [Is Makeup Bad for You? Choosing Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products](#)

Video - [The Story of Cosmetics](#)

Seg. 7 Perfumes, Fragrances, and Air Quality

Discussion Topics

- Share the list you made (page 18 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide) of products in your household that contain fragrance. Are there ways you can reduce your exposure?
- Review the Tips For Improving Air Quality (page 19 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide) and share some small changes you plan to make to improve your indoor air quality.

Resources

Tip Sheet - [Get the Facts on Fragrance](#)

Video - [Stink](#)

Seg. 8 Plastics and Non-stick in the Kitchen

Discussion Topics

- Think through your daily routine. What plastics do you use when storing food at home or eating fast food? Do you already use any safer alternatives to plastic? What are they? Were there challenges in making the switch? Do you have any favorite plastic-free products that you recommend?

Have everyone bring their favorite plastic-free food storage items to the meeting for show-and-tell.

helpful suggestion

- Review the list of safer alternatives to plastics and non-stick cookware (page 21 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide). What strategies for safer cooking and food storage do you currently use or plan to implement? Do you have a favorite product or strategy you can share with the group?

Resources

Webinar - [The Healthy Kitchen: Reducing Toxins and Chemical Exposures](#)

Blog post - [Q&A With Deborah Demoulied, Green Living Expert](#)

Seg. 9 Dry Cleaning and Fabrics

Discussion Topics

- Share an examples of clothing or home furnishings you own that may have been treated with chemicals during the manufacturing process. What about them makes you think they may have been treated?

Resources

Tip sheet - [EWG's guide to avoiding PFAS chemicals](#)

Seg. 10 Household Cleaners

Discussion Topics

- Review your list of household cleaning products (page 25 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide). Did you check any of these products for warning labels as well as signal words that seem to indicate that the product is “safe” or at least safer than others, and did you check them on EWG’s Guide to Healthy Cleaners? If so, what did you discover? Are there safer or natural alternatives to the cleaning products you use?

Have everyone bring a few of their cleaning products or take photos of their products packaging and labeling so you can share and look at the labels together.

helpful suggestion

- In the Take Action section (page 27 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide) you were challenged to use the Environmental Working Group’s Guide to Healthy Cleaning and the Consumer Product Information Database to evaluate a few of the cleaning products in your home. What did you discover and what are a few small changes you can make?

Resources

Website and App: [EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaners](#)

Website: [Consumer Product Information Database](#)

Seg. 11 Cell Phones and Electromagnetic Fields

Discussion Topics

- How many electronic devices and appliances do you use on a daily basis that emit EMFs?
- Review the tips for safe use of electronics (page 28 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide). What small changes can you make to reduce your exposure to EMFs?

Resources

Tip Sheet - [EMF Levels Emitted From Common Household Appliances](#)

Blog Post - [Are Microwaves Safe?](#)

Seg. 12 Household Pesticides

Discussion Topics

- Do you currently use any pesticides in and around your home? If so, how and where do you store them? Do you know what the potential harmful effects are from exposure? Have you researched any natural alternatives available that you would like to share with the group?

Resources

Tip sheet - [Simple Actions You Can Take for Cleaner Air in Your Home](#)

Website - [List of the best air-cleaning household plants, from NASA](#)

Seg. 13 Conclusion and Review

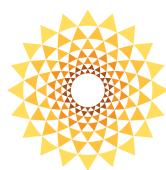
Discussion Topics

- Creating your Anticancer environment will take time. There are many ways to prioritize your changes. Some people find it easiest to start with a room in their house. Which room would you like to start with first? Which items will you “weed” out or replace to create an Anticancer environment in that space?
- Review the Top 10 Environment Action Steps (page 31 of the Environment Module Companion Study Guide) and share one small change you can make this week.

Resources

Tip sheet - [Your Anticancer Environment: Top 10 Action Items \(With Helpful Links\)](#)

Webinar - [A Clear Look at Tap Water: What's In It and What Can You Do About It?](#)



ORGANIZER TOOL KIT

Guiding the Flow of the Conversation

Organizers should guide the conversation and make sure it stays focused. The discussion should have a natural, conversational flow. Keep these following tips in mind to maximize the group experience.

Tips For Guiding Conversation Flow

- Invite participants to share and respond to other members.
- Encourage participants to listen to one another.
- Emphasize to participants how helpful it is to offer support to one another.
- Encourage members to talk about themselves but only to the extent they feel comfortable.

Clear and effective communication

Reflect back words, thoughts and feelings – The organizer reflects back the words, thoughts and feelings of the group, while subtly emphasizing their own words (e.g. “It sounds as if you’re saying you want to change the way you’ve been handling this issue.?” or “You sound like you are very disappointed.”)

Respond with affirmations – Validate the speaker by responding with affirmations. Not only does this boost the speaker’s self-esteem, but it also helps them feel understood and encourages them to stay positive. (e.g. “It seems like you handled that well.” or “It sounds like you were effectively assertive. I remember you’ve previously said that was something you found difficult.”)

Clarify – It may be useful to help the speaker clarify their thoughts and messages by reiterating what they said and asking clarifying questions using their own words. (e.g. “I think you mentioned earlier that you ‘don’t want to work in this field anymore’, now you have said that you are ‘hoping to take on more responsibilities at work’. Which most accurately reflects your current wishes?”)

Summarize – Every so often, organizers should paraphrase what the speaker has said to ensure there is a clear understanding of their message. This also helps other members of the group follow along.

Use positive facial expressions – Judgmental expressions like head-shaking and frowning need to be avoided. Instead, encouraging and empathetic facial expressions like smiling and looks of empathy are helpful.

Managing Disruptive Members

Sometimes, participants may dominate a group or raise issues in a manner that is disruptive to the overall group. It is important for organizers to address behavior that is disruptive and counterproductive. Initially, organizers may want to simply pose the correction to the entire group without singling out a specific participant. Referring to the pre-established group guidelines can be helpful. However, if a participant's disruptive behavior continues, the facilitator may need to directly address the issue in the group setting. Below are a few common scenarios that may occur, and some language that may help you manage those situations.

Tips For Managing Disruptive Behavior

- A member monopolizes the discussion or frequently interrupts others. Your response might be to give the floor back to the original speaker. (e.g. "I'd like to go back to Yasmina for a minute. I don't think she was finished talking. We want everyone to have equal opportunity to share.")
- A member broaches inappropriate subjects or ones that may be offensive in nature. An effective response might be to redirect the discussion (e.g. "It doesn't seem like this an appropriate discussion for this group, so we are going to move on.")
- A member continuously digresses to irrelevant topics. Your response would be to redirect the focus to the purpose of the meeting. (e.g. "How does that relate to what we've been talking about today?")

Organizers must be able to determine if disruptions can effectively be addressed to the entire group or if speaking to the member in private outside of the meeting is better. Individuals who become argumentative or unresponsive to feedback and correction may need to be excused from the group.

Handling Situations Beyond The Scope of the Group

Members may raise questions or have concerns that need to be redirected to outside resources. Here is a list of resources you may want to share.

National Resources

- American Cancer Society [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)
- Cancer Support Community [cancersupportcommunity.org](https://www.cancersupportcommunity.org)
- Live Strong [livestrong.org](https://www.livestrong.org)
- The National Children's Cancer Society [thenccs.org](https://www.thenccs.org)
- Stupid Cancer [stupidcancer.org](https://www.stupidcancer.org)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- National Council for Mental Wellbeing [thenationalcouncil.org](https://www.thenationalcouncil.org)

Local Resources (Research the following resources to have on hand)

- Nearest cancer center and patient navigator
- Support groups
- Crisis hotline

Grounding Activities

Gratitude Practice

The practice of gratitude is a tool for making positive mindset changes and has been shown to decrease depression, increase sleep quality, decrease inflammation and decrease levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Each day, take a few moments to think about what you are grateful for. Try zeroing in on these categories and/or using the prompts in the file below:

1. Relationships: An old relationship that really helped you
2. An opportunity that you have today
3. Something great that happened or that you saw recently
4. Something simple near you (clouds outside, pen you are holding, etc)

Additional resources:

[Gratitude Practice Worksheet](#)

[The Ultimate Gratitude Journal Guide](#)

Three Conscious Breaths

Have everyone pause and take three conscious breaths bringing everyone into the present moment. Place your hand on your belly and let your attention rest on your breath entering and leaving the body.

[The Pause Mindset](#)

4-7-8 breathing

This exercise also uses belly breathing to help you relax. You can do this exercise either sitting or lying down.

1. To start, put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest as in the belly breathing exercise.
2. Take a deep, slow breath from your belly, and silently count to 4 as you inhale.
3. Hold your breath, and silently count from 1 to 7.
4. Breathe out completely as you silently count from 1 to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to 8.
5. Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

Guided Imagery Exercise

Watch this guided imagery exercise together.

[Guided Imagery Exercise](#)

Guided Meditation

Play this guided meditation video for the group or create your own.

[Guided Meditation](#)

Five Senses Exercise

- Describe 5 things you see in the room
- Name 4 things you can feel
- Name 3 things you hear right now
- Name 2 things you can smell right now
- Name 1 good thing about yourself

Watch this 5 Senses video together.

[Five Senses Exercise](#)

Practice “Self-Kindness”

Repeat kind, compassionate phrases to yourself:

1. “You’re having a rough time, but you’ll make it through.”
2. “You’re strong, and you can move through this pain.”
3. “You’re trying hard, and you’re doing your best.”

Practice Progressive Relaxation

This involves working with different muscle groups of the body one at a time, first tensing, then relaxing them to create awareness of what both tension and relaxation feel like in your body. Begin with the muscles in your face, squeezing them gently for one to two seconds before you relax. Repeat several times, then use the same technique for other muscle groups, in the following sequence (working your way down the body).

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| • Jaw | • Chest |
| • Neck | • Abdomen |
| • Shoulders | • Buttocks |
| • Upper Arms | • Thigh |
| • Lower Arms | • Calves |
| • Fingers | • Feet |

Seated Yoga

Review these seated yoga techniques on your own and teach a few to the group.

[Seated Yoga](#)

Face Yoga

Learn a few of these face yoga techniques or watch this video together and try them as a group. This activity is particularly fun/funny to do when meeting virtually.

[Face Yoga](#)

Manifesting Joy

Take a few minutes to write down 10 things that make you happy. Then have everyone share two or three things from their list.

Special Announcement Game

Play can cultivate mindfulness, because it forces us to be in the moment and focus on ourselves and the people around us. In this game, individuals will announce that they have something important to say before they actually know what they are going to say and then make something up on the fly. This game is intended to be playful and help participants to become more comfortable with taking small social risks and being vulnerable with each other.

Give Yourself Some Praise

Ask the group one of the following questions and have each person share a trait of theirs that they find admirable. Then reflect on how you felt when giving yourself praise. Was it difficult, if so, why might it be difficult to give ourselves praise?

- What is your best quality? How has it helped make your life better?
- What is your healthiest habit? Why is it important to you? How does it make you feel?
- What is your most treasured relationship? What makes you such a good friend/partner/parent?

Visualize Your Favorite Place

Think of your favorite place, whether it's the home of a loved one or a foreign country. Use all of your senses to create a mental image. Think of the colors you see, sounds you hear, and sensations you feel on your skin.

Remember the last time you were there. Who were you with, if anyone? What did you do there? How did you feel?

Cited Resources

CHANGE MODULE

Worksheets

[Anticancer Wheel of Life Worksheet](#)

[S.M.A.R.T. Goal Framework Worksheet](#)

[The Five Keys Of Change](#)

MINDSET MODULE

eBook

[Mindset 101: Learning to Manage Your Stress](#)

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[The Benefits of Integrating Mindfulness into your work life, by Mark Lesser](#)

[Gratitude Practice Tip Sheet](#)

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DIET MODULE

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[What does free range really mean?](#)
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[Some seed companies we recommen](#)

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Tip sheets

[Be Active Adults](#)
[Flexibility exercises](#)

Videos

[Resistance Bands](#)
[Free Weights](#)
[Short Guided Sleep Meditation](#)
[Excellent free yoga videos on youtube: Yoga With Adriene](#)
[10- and 20-minute Qi Gong routines](#)

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[Mindful Movement Exercises](#)
[Great resource about sleep](#)
[Fit After 50: Add Days to Your Life & Life to Your Days](#)
[Change Your Posture, Change Your Life](#)
[Movement Matters: Standing Up to a Sedentary World](#)

Worksheets

[Weekly Fitness and Physical Activity Planner](#)
[Anticancer Fitness Pyramid](#)

ENVIRONMENT MODULE

Blog Post

[Are Microwaves Safe?](#)

[Q&A With Deborah Demoulied, Green Living Expert](#)

eBook

[The Healthy Kitchen: Reducing Toxins and Chemical Exposures](#)

[The Healthy, Non-Toxic Nursery](#)

Mobile app

[Clearya](#) for online shopping for safe personal care products

[EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaners](#)

Tip Sheet

[Get the Facts on Fragrance](#)

[EWG's guide to avoiding PFAS chemicals](#)

[EMF Levels Emitted From Common Household Appliances](#)

[Simple Actions You Can Take for Cleaner Air in Your Home](#)

[Your Anticancer Environment: Top 10 Action Items \(With Helpful Links\)](#)

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