longevity in action   
life’s curve balls

# Facilitator Preparation (What You’ll Need)

* Life’s Curve Balls worksheet
* Writing utensils
* A copy of Dr. Roger Landry’s *Live Long, Die Short: A Guide to Authentic Health and Successful Aging* (optional)

# Session Content:

Please read this aloud:

**Re-sil-ience** (noun): 1) the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity, 2) the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Welcome to ***Longevity in Action***, a program powered by Masterpiece that explores concepts that were introduced in Dr. Roger Landry’s dynamic book, *Live Long, Die Short: A Guide to Authentic Health and Successful Aging*. Longevity in Action is about building resilience. It is what allows us to bounce back after physically, mentally, and emotionally stressful situations and is developed by a lifestyle that builds up physical, mental, social, and spiritual strength. For some, this may be a new experience. For others, this can provide a tool to support your current lifestyle choices. Wherever you are on your journey, we are glad you’re here!

A few reminders before we begin …

* Please be respectful to one another. Everyone in this room comes from a different background that has formulated who they are as a person and contributed to their unique opinions. As a group, we will observe *respect* as a guiding principle as we interact with one another. It is our goal that all participants feel valued, respected, and heard.
* Share without imposing your beliefs on others. Please refrain from convincing others to adopt your opinions.
* Keep an open mind. Our discussions will be thought-provoking and insightful. You may not agree with everything you hear, but please be willing to consider opinions that may be different from your own.

# Today’s Objectives:

Please share these objectives with participants.

* To learn how to build resilience throughout all of life’s stages.
* To begin determining what physical, social and intellectual tools are needed for long-term health.
* To determine how we can overcome obstacles that may hinder our progress.

# Opening Passage: Curveballs

Read this excerpt from *Live Long, Die Short* aloud: Pages 83-84.

Life has curveballs in store for us: bunches of them. Even when we don’t realize we’re at bat. Having a pulse is being at bat all the time. How we age is a function of how we handle these curveballs, how we avoid at least some of them, and how we expect them without stressing over them. One of the ways we can avoid some of those “slings and arrows” or rebound when they hit us is to be in the best shape possible, at our “fighting weight.” When we experience a threat to our physical self, for instance, like I did when I had my leg injury, do we meet it head-on with a robust intellectual, social and spiritual strength that can get us back on track, or does it permanently derail us and begin us down a path to further decline? Of the threat to our aging comes in another dimension—the intellectual, social or even spiritual—will resilience in these other dimensions help us to prevail no matter what we encounter in our magnificent journey through our lives?

Perhaps the analogy of riding horses is more useful to our understanding of this concept. When we fall, or get knocked out of the saddle, being strong in *all areas of our lives* can allow us to get back on and live with whatever adjustments we need to make. Living a healthy lifestyle, then, is about more than just being leaner, or better looking, or smarter, or able to do things others may not be able to. It’s about *using and growing our skills, capabilities, and talents* so that we become as resilient as we can be in all areas of life, so that those threats we cannot avoid will not unseat us, will not take us out of the race. Rather, this resilience will allow us to be a survivor and to age successfully, to be as vital as we possibly be, for as long as possible.

# Group Discussion

Please read this aloud:

As a reminder, Resilience is what allows us to bounce back after situations and is developed by a lifestyle that builds up physical, mental, social, and spiritual strength.

With that in mind, I’d like to open up the discussion about what kinds of “curveballs” we experience in our lives.

(If necessary, please remind participants to be respectful by limiting answers to about a minute so that more people have time to share.)

* Question: What has a curveball looked like for you in your life?
* Question: What did resilience look like for you? How did you survive after your curveball?
* Question: What did you learn about yourself in that experience?

# Group Visualization:

Picture yourself on a special day (or doing something that brings you joy).

Please read this guided visualization for participants. Read each of the numbered instructions slowly, pausing for several seconds at the ellipses (…) and between each number.

1. Sitting comfortably, with your hands resting in your lap, take a few deep breaths in and out through your nose ... Close your eyes or gently gaze at the floor in front of you … Allow your breathing to be natural and effortless.
2. Take a moment to consider a time in the near future. It may be next week … six months … or even a year from now … Imagine that you are doing something that brings you joy. Or, imagine that you are spending time with someone you care about on a special day …
3. What are you doing? … Who is there with you? … Are you walking somewhere on a vacation? … Are you celebrating a grandchild’s birthday? … Perhaps you are playing a musical instrument on stage. … Whatever it is, I invite you to take a few moments to create a mental snapshot of what this future day looks like to you.
4. For the next two minutes, simply visualize this day as vividly as you possibly can, using all of your senses … For example, what do you see around you? … What do you hear? Are there any distinctive smells? … Can you taste a particular food or beverage? … How do you feel? I’m going to give you two minutes of silence to spend with your vision and will then bring your attention back to the room.

Pause here for two minutes.

1. Now, draw your attention back to your breathing. Take a few more relaxed breaths in and out through your nose. Wiggle your fingers and toes to become fully present and back in the room. Slowly, open your eyes.

# Group Discussion About Your Visualization

(If necessary, please remind participants to be respectful by limiting answers to about a minute so that more people have time to share.)

* Question: Would anyone like to share with us, briefly, a little about your special day or experience?
* Question: What physical, social, and intellectual skills did you discover that you would need to maintain or develop in order to enjoy the special day you envisioned?
* Question: What is one step you can take to ensure that you can continue participating in activities that you enjoy?

# Wrapping Up Today’s Session

Please read this aloud:

Thank you, everyone, for being here to share your time and your thoughts with each other. We look forward to many more insightful opportunities and discussions from *Live Long, Die Short* about building resilience. As a reminder, our next session is scheduled for [Day – Date – Time – Location]. Our topic is [Topic Name]. You are welcome and encouraged to bring a friend, but please RSVP for both of you. The sign-up sheet is located [Location]. Additionally, if you would like to assist with facilitating next week’s session or a future session, please let me know.

Before you go, please take a few minutes to write down a brief journal entry about today’s session. It can be anything from notes you’d like to remember or a personal initiative you might like to take. Before each entry, you’ll notice a couple of questions to think about, and you’ll have the opportunity to sum up this session in a simple word or phrase. Your journal is for your eyes only. Remember, I am always available to help answer any additional questions you may have about this journey.