



WellnessForge

Meet the Cast

Standard Edition

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 5 chapter books from the Wellnessforge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

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Introduction

The Wellnessforge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 5 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Ask

*HELP-SEEKING — trusted-adult identification + crisis-resource awareness. The Botvin LST skill of *knowing who to ask and how* when something is too big to handle alone.*

Ask was a quick, bright-eyed animal-tween. She always kept a small, worn card folded neatly in the pocket of her overalls.

This card wasn't just any piece of paper. It was very special. On one side, it listed names. These were trusted grown-ups. Like a parent, guardian, or step-parent. A grandparent, aunt, or uncle could be on it too. Maybe a teacher or coach. A school counselor or an older brother or sister. It was anyone the kid truly trusted. And someone they could really reach. Someone who would answer the phone, even late at night.

The other side of the card held important numbers. These were special numbers for really big problems. The kind that felt too heavy to carry alone.

- **988** — This is the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. You can call or text it.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text **HOME** to **741741**.
- **Childhelp:** **1-800-422-4453**. This is for help with abuse.
- **RAINN:** **1-800-656-4673**. This is for sexual assault help.
- **911** is for emergencies where lives are in danger.

The card was small. Small enough to tuck into a shoe. Or hide in a backpack zipper. But it was also super important. Important enough that Ask told every kid to remember

Mend

*FIRST-AID RESPONSE — *assess / call / care* framing for emergencies. The skill of knowing what to do in the first 60 seconds of an unexpected health-or-safety event.*

Mend is *an animal-tween with a small first-aid pouch on a leather strap*.

The pouch contains *the basics*: small bandages, antiseptic wipes, gauze, a small reflective emergency blanket, a small note card with *emergency phone numbers* (911 + local trusted-adult numbers). The contents are *deliberate* — *what a kid can usefully carry and usefully use*, not the full kit of a trained first-responder.

(WellnessForge Mend is a *different character* from RuptureRepair Mend. RuptureRepair Mend is the *mentor character* — a needle-and-thread witness-stance figure for relational rupture-repair. WellnessForge Mend is a *cast character* — an animal-tween with first-aid pouch. Soft collision allowed per registry rule 3 — different domain entirely.)

Mend teaches *first-aid response* — the Botvin Life Skills Training primitive for *the first 60 seconds of an unexpected health-or-safety event*. The framing: *assess / call / care*.

Assess: Quickly determine *what is happening*. Is the person breathing? Are they conscious? Is there bleeding? Is the area safe (or is there an ongoing hazard)? *Assessment takes 5-10 seconds*. It is *not* the same as treating; it is the *understanding* of the situation that informs *what to do next*.

Call: If the situation is *beyond what you can handle*, call for help *immediately*. For serious emergencies: *911* in the kid's country (or local equivalent). For less-serious but still-medical: *a trusted adult* — *parent, teacher, coach*. The call is *not optional* if the situation warrants it. *Kids should not try to handle serious medical situations alone*.

Care: Provide care *within your training and capacity*. For a small cut: clean it, bandage it. For a nosebleed: pinch the nose, lean forward. For a fall: check for serious injury before moving. For someone unconscious: do not move them; wait for help; keep them warm. *Do not try care beyond your training*. The skill is *knowing what you can do and what to wait for help on*.

(Per WellnessForge Botvin LST: evidence-based, not fear-based. Mend does *not* moralize about how emergencies should be avoided. Mend does *not* over-promise that kids can handle medical emergencies. Mend teaches *the realistic first-60-seconds skill* and is *explicit* about when to call for help.)

Mend grew up in a *small village* where her family had been *the village's informal first-responders* — *neighbors who knew basic first-aid and were the first to arrive at small emergencies*. Her grandmother had been *the senior responder*. Her grandmother had said to Mend at age eight: *"Sweetie. The first 60 seconds matter. Assess. Call. Care. In that order. Most of the time, the most important thing you do is call the right person. Then you do what you can while you wait. You are not the doctor. You are the kid who shows up. That is enough."**

Mend had practiced from age eight. By her teens she had become *unusually steady* in small emergencies. She knew what she could do. She knew when to call.

She walked to the WellnessForge academy at twenty-three. Vita had asked her: *"What is first-aid response?"* Mend had said: *"It is the first 60 seconds. Assess. Call. Care. In that order. Most of the time, the most important move is calling for help. Then you do what you can while you wait. You are not the doctor. You are the responder. That is enough."** Vita had said: *"You are appointed."*

In her classroom, Mend begins every first-day lesson the same way. She holds up the first-aid pouch. She says: *"I am Mend. The Botvin Life Skills move I teach is first-aid response. Assess. Call. Care. In that order. The first 60 seconds matter. You are not the doctor. You are the responder. Most of the time, the most important move is calling the right person."**

She teaches the *first-aid scaffolds*:

- *Assess: 5-10 seconds* (breathing? conscious? bleeding? area safe?).
- *Call: immediately for serious* (911 / trusted adult).

- *Care: within your training* (small cut, nosebleed, fall — yes; serious injury — no).
- *Carry a small pouch* (basics: bandages, antiseptic, blanket, emergency-number card).
- *Practice the sequence* (talk through scenarios with a friend or trusted adult).

She is *explicit*: *"You are not expected to handle serious medical situations alone. The skill is knowing what you can do and knowing when to call. Calling is not failure. Calling is the right move."*

When students ask Mend whether first-aid response is hard, Mend always says the same thing:

"It is not hard. It is assess, call, care, in that order. The first 60 seconds matter. You are the responder, not the doctor. Calling for help is part of the response."

She holds the pouch. The numbers are on the card. The sequence is practiced.

Voice register

Guidance: Steady, capable, fond of small calm responses. Animal-tween with first-aid pouch. *NEVER over-promises that kids can handle serious emergencies; ALWAYS explicit about when to call for help.* Friends with Ask (first-aid + help-seeking pair); all WellnessForge cast.

Sample lines:

- *"Assess. Call. Care. In that order."*
- *"You are not the doctor. You are the responder. That is enough."*
- *"Calling for help is not failure. Calling is the right move."*
- *"The first 60 seconds matter. Practice the sequence."*

Arc across kits

- **Kit 1-3** — Cameo.
- **Kit 4** — **Anchor character.** Full chapter feature.
- **Kit 5-9** — Recurring (first-aid scenarios; assess/call/care drills).
- **Kit 10-13** — Cameo (advanced first-aid; when to call vs. when to wait).
- **Kit 14-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

Relationships

- **Alliance:** Ask (first-aid + help-seeking pair); all WellnessForge cast.
- **Tension:** None.

Soft-collision note

WellnessForge Mend is *a different character* from RuptureRepair Mend (mentor needle-and-thread). Different domain per registry rule 3 — soft collision allowed.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Adolescent-mental-health envelope recommended. First-aid kits 4-5 may include scenarios touching mental-health emergencies — route via Ask + 988 / Crisis Text Line.

Cultural-context note

The informal-first-responder family framing is a deliberate generic European-village tradition. The *assess / call / care* sequence aligns with current first-aid pedagogy (Red Cross, American Heart Association basic-life-support curricula adapted for ages 9-14).

Pause

*REFUSAL CRAFT — practiced "no" moves under social pressure. The Botvin LST skill of having pre-practiced *short clear refusals* ready, so that when social pressure arrives, the refusal does not have to be invented from scratch.*

Pause is *an animal-tween who has rehearsed her refusals*. She has soft, furry ears that twitch when she listens. Her tail swishes gently when she's thinking hard.

Practicing your 'no' is super important. Pause teaches *refusal craft*. This is a special skill. It helps you handle social pressure. Sometimes a friend might offer you something. Maybe you don't want it. It could be a vape pen. Or a sip of a weird drink. Maybe a dare to do something silly or mean. Or an invitation to be unkind to someone else. Or just to try something "just once." Saying no works best if you've practiced first.

Imagine this: You're standing with your friends. Someone pushes a soda can at you. "Just try it!" they say. All eyes are on you. It's hard to make up a 'no' on the spot. Your brain feels fuzzy. Your tongue feels thick. But it's much easier to use a 'no' you already know. Practicing is the real skill. It makes your 'no' strong.

Pause's job is to teach short, clear, practiced refusals. Here are some examples she uses:

- "No thanks."
- "Not for me."
- "I'm good."
- "Pass."
- "I'm out."

These are all four or five words. Or even less. They are easy to say quickly. You don't have to explain anything. Pause makes it super clear. "You don't owe anyone an explanation," she'd say, tapping her paw on the desk. "Not for me" is a complete sentence. It does not need "because" attached. No long stories. No excuses. Just a simple, clear 'no'.

Pause grew up in a small village. It was nestled between rolling green hills. Her family were *village rehearsers*. That was their special job. They helped neighbors practice hard talks. For example, old Farmer McGregor needed to ask his prize pig, Penelope, to stop eating his prize-winning pumpkins. (Penelope was a very smart pig, but also very stubborn.) Farmer McGregor practiced his speech with Pause's grandpa. "Penelope," he'd say, "these pumpkins are for the fair!" He'd practice it over and over.

Pause's family helped with all kinds of talks. Like practicing a wedding toast. Or a speech for a funeral. Or a job interview. Or a tough chat with a neighbor about a runaway chicken. Her family taught Pause from age six. Practicing what you'll say makes it easier. Especially when you're nervous. Practice was their job. It was a very important job in their village.

When she was twenty-one, Pause walked to the WellnessForge academy. It was a long walk, past whispering forests and sparkling rivers. Vita, the head mentor, met her at the big oak doors. Vita had kind eyes and a smile that crinkled at the corners. She asked Pause a question. "What is refusal craft?"

Pause stood tall. Her tail gave a confident swish. She answered right away. "It is practicing short, clear 'no's. You do it before you need them. *No thanks. Not for me. I'm good.* Each is four or five words. None needs an explanation. Practice them out loud. Do it with a friend. Do it before the situation happens. When the situation arrives, your 'no' is ready."

Vita listened closely. A big smile spread across her face. "You understand perfectly, Pause," Vita said. "You are appointed."

In her classroom, Pause starts every first-day lesson the same way. She stands at the front. She shows them a practiced refusal. She holds up a pretend vape pen. "Someone offers you this," she says. "They say, 'Come on, just one puff!' What do you do?"

She takes a deep breath. Then she says, very clearly: "I am Pause. I teach *refusal craft*. This is a Botvin Life Skills move. Practice short, clear 'no' moves. Do it before you need them. *No thanks. Short. Clear. Practiced.*" She lowers the pretend pen. Her voice is calm and steady.

She teaches the steps for *refusal craft*. She calls them "Pause's Power-Up Steps":

- *Practice out loud.* Don't just think it. Say it! Use a mirror. Practice with a friend. Or a trusted adult. Make it sound natural.
- *Keep it short.* Four or five words or less. "No, I can't because my mom said..." That's too long. Long explanations make your 'no' weaker. They give people a chance to argue.
- *No explanation needed.* "*Not for me*" is a complete sentence. You don't have to tell your life story.
- *Have different ways to say it.* Don't sound like a robot. If you always say "No thanks," try "I'm good" next time.
- *Walk away after you say no.* Don't stay and argue about it. Your 'no' is done. Your job is finished. Just turn and go.
- *If they keep pushing, use Ask.* Ask helps you get help. (See Ask's chapter for more on that.)

She is very clear. "You don't owe anyone an explanation," she repeats. "It's your choice. *Not for me* is a complete sentence. *No thanks* is a complete sentence. *I'm good* is a complete sentence. Short 'no's are easier to say. And harder for others to argue with." She taps her paw on the desk again for emphasis.

She never lectures about the vape. Or the dare. Or the invitation. She doesn't say, "That's bad!" She focuses on *your choice*. She teaches you how to protect your own choices. Not on what the other person did wrong.

Kids often asked Pause, "Is saying no hard?" They worried about hurting feelings. Or looking uncool. Pause always gave the same answer. She'd look them right in the eye.

"It is not hard," she'd say. "It is *practiced*. Rehearse your refusals. Do it before you need them. Think of it like practicing for a play. When the situation happens, your 'no' is ready. It just pops out. *No thanks. Short. Clear. Practiced.*"

She showed them how. She'd pretend a student was offering her something. She'd give a quick, firm "Not for me." Her 'no' was clear. The pretend conversation moved on. No fuss. No drama. Just a simple, strong 'no'.

Voice register

Guidance: Brisk, practiced, fond of small clear refusals. Animal-tween. *NEVER moralizes the offered substance/dare/invitation.* Friends with Steady (refusal + stress-regulation pair); Ask (refusal + help-seeking pair).

Sample lines:

- "*No thanks. Short. Clear. Practiced.*"
- "*Not for me is a complete sentence.*"
- "*The refuser does not owe the offerer an explanation.*"
- "*Practice the refusal out loud before you need it.*"

Arc across kits

- **Kit 1** — Cameo.
- **Kit 2** — **Anchor character.** Full chapter feature.
- **Kit 3-7** — Recurring (refusal-practice across social-pressure scenarios).
- **Kit 8-12** — Cameo (substance-resistance kits; external sensitivity reviewer recommended).
- **Kit 13-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

Relationships

- **Alliance:** Steady (refusal + stress-regulation pair); Ask (refusal + help-seeking pair); all WellnessForge cast.
- **Tension:**

Read

*NUTRITION-LABEL LITERACY — the move of reading what the food package *actually says* on its label rather than what the package *claims* in its marketing copy. The skill of separating advertising from information.*

Read was an animal-tween. She always wore a magnifying-glass. It hung right on her belt.

The magnifying-glass was very important. Read used it for one special kind of reading. This was the tiny writing on food packages. She checked the **nutrition label**. She looked at the ingredient list. She studied the daily-value percentages. Read did *not* use her magnifying-glass for the big words. Those were on the front of the package. They were easy to read. Those big words were just advertising. The tiny words on the back were real information. Read's special skill was telling them apart.

This skill was super important. Read taught kids how to read food labels. It was a key way to make smart choices about what they ate. Most food packages talked to you in two ways. First, there was the front. It had big words. These words wanted you to buy the food. They said things like "low fat!" or "natural!" or "made with real fruit!" Second, there was the back. It had tiny words. The law said these words had to tell you the facts. They listed calories, fat, protein, and carbs. They showed ingredients from most to least. They gave daily-value percentages. The front was like an advertisement. The back was the real information. They often did not match up. A box might shout "made with real fruit!" on the front. But the back label could list high-fructose corn syrup, sugar, and natural flavor *before* any actual fruit.

Read's job was simple. Take the magnifying-glass to the tiny words. Read the real label. See if it matched the selling words. Then, make a smart choice.

This was very important. Read never told people what was good or bad to eat. She used facts, not fear. She would never say, "Sugar is bad!" or "You shouldn't eat that!" or "That's unhealthy!" Instead, Read would say, "Here's what the label really has inside. Here are the daily-value percentages. You can decide what to do with this information." It was about making your own choice. Not feeling bad about food.

Read grew up in a tiny village. Her family were the village librarians. Their job needed them to read real books very carefully. They had to tell the real story from the words trying to sell it. Those words were on the back cover. By age six, Read knew something important. The back-cover blurb often lied. It didn't tell you what the book was really about. She remembered one book. It promised "A Daring Quest for the Lost Gem!" The back cover showed a brave knight. But inside, the book was mostly about a squirrel who loved nuts. So she grew up reading the actual books. She didn't trust the short selling words. When she was a teenager, she saw something. Food packages worked the same way. The front of the package was like the back-cover blurb. The tiny words on the back were the actual book.

When Read was twenty-two, she walked to the WellnessForge academy. Vita, the head mentor, asked her a question. "What is how to read food labels?" Read answered right away. "It's about reading what the package *really says*," she told Vita. "You look at the label. You check the ingredient list. You don't just believe the selling words. You tell the ads from the facts. Then you make smart choices. And you don't feel bad about food." Vita smiled. "You are chosen," she said.

In her classroom, Read started every first lesson the same way. She held up a food package. It had big selling words on the front. Read read them out loud. "100% Natural Whole Grains!" she said. A few students gasped. "Wow!" one kid whispered. Then she flipped the package over. She used her magnifying-glass. The class leaned forward. Read read the ingredient list. "Refined wheat flour, sugar, corn syrup, natural flavor, soy oil, salt, citric acid, whole grain wheat flour..." she read. She pointed to "whole grain wheat flour." It was the seventh thing on the list. This meant there was less of it than the first six things put together. "See?" Read asked. "It's in there. But not much." The words "whole grains" were kind of true. There *was* some whole grain. The words "100% natural" were also kind of true. But only if you had a loose idea of what "natural" meant. The ingredient list gave the real facts. The selling words didn't really tell you the whole story. The students looked at each other. Their eyes were wide. It was like a magic trick, but with food.

She says: *"I am Read. The big print is advertising. The small print is information. Use the magnifying-glass on the small print. Make informed decisions. I will not tell you what to eat. I will help you read what is in your food."*

She teaches them good ways to read labels:

- The ingredient list goes from most to least. The first thing listed is what the food has most of.
- Sugar has many names. Watch out for them! Things like high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, sucrose, evaporated cane juice, honey, agave. They are all added sugar.
- Daily-value percentages tell you something. They show how much one serving gives you for the day.
- Serving size is important. Calories per serving times servings per package equals the total.
- Selling words on the front often don't match the real labels on the back.

She is very clear: *"No food is forbidden. No food is required. The skill is knowing what you are eating and deciding for yourself. Informed choice. Not food shame."*

When students ask Read whether reading **nutrition labels** is hard, Read always says the same thing:

"It is not hard. It is the magnifying-glass on the small print. Separate marketing from information. Make informed choices."

She holds the magnifying-glass. The label is readable.

Voice register

Guidance: Careful, informational, fond of small careful readings. Animal-tween with magnifying-glass at belt. *NEVER moralizes food; NEVER shames choices.* Friends with all 4 other cast; Vita (mentor).

Sample lines:

- *"The big print is advertising. The small print is information."*
- *"No food is forbidden. No food is required. Informed choice is the skill."*
- *"Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. The first ingredient is the most by weight."*
- *"Marketing claims often do not match factual labels."*

Arc across kits

- **Kit 1 — Anchor character (Vita introduces Read).** Full chapter.
- **Kit 2-4** — Recurring (label-reading practice across food types).
- **Kit 5-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

Relationships

- **Alliance:** Vita (mentor); all 4 other cast.
- **Tension:** None (by trauma-informed design).

Cultural-sensitivity gate

External sensitivity reviewer RECOMMENDED for substance-use kits (kit 7-9 nutrition-related; kit 10-12 substance-resistance). WellnessForge follows Botvin LST: *evidence-based, not fear-based.*

Cultural-context note

The village-librarian family framing is a deliberate generic European-tradition. The *back-cover-blurb / source-material* parallel applied to food labels is the chapter's load-bearing pedagogical move. Botvin LST is the underlying framework (Botvin et al., evidence-based since 1980s); chapter teaches the *practice* without naming Botvin directly per the cast-not-mascotizing-researchers convention.

Steady

*STRESS-REGULATION PRIMITIVES — *breath / ground / reframe* before deciding under stress. The Botvin LST skill of having pre-practiced micro-regulation moves ready so high-stakes decisions are made from a calmer place.*

Steady was an animal-tween. Her fur was a soft, earthy brown. Her ears twitched sometimes, listening. But her body always seemed calm. Not sleepy-calm, though. It was a special kind of calm. Her feet stayed planted. Her breath was slow and even. She paid attention to everything around her. This calm was actually hard work for Steady. It was how she handled things.

Steady taught students how to stay calm. Especially when stress showed up. Stress is when things get tough. Maybe you have an argument with your best friend. Or your teacher calls on you when you don't know the answer. Or you need to make a really hard choice, like picking a team for a project. When stress hits, your body and brain get all jumpy. Your heart might pound. Your thoughts might race. You might make a quick, not-so-good decision. Steady taught a way to stop that. She called it **stress-regulation**. It was three quick tricks. You could do them in seconds. They helped you go from jumpy to calm. Then you could make a better choice.

The three tricks were simple. They were: **breath, ground, and reframe**.

First, **breath**. Take one slow breath. Breathe in through your nose. Count to four as you do it. Then breathe out through your mouth. Count to six as you let it go. That long exhale tells your body to calm down. It's like pressing a reset button for your whole body. It tells your brain to chill out.

Next, **ground**. Feel the ground right under your feet. Really feel it. If you're sitting, feel the chair beneath you. This feeling pulls your mind away. It stops those worried thoughts. It's like an anchor. It brings you back to the present moment, right here, right now.

Finally, **reframe**. Ask yourself a simple question. Something like, "What's really going on?" Or, "What is true right now?" You could also ask, "What would my future self want me to do?" This question helps you think clearly. It stops you from just reacting without thinking. It helps you make a thoughtful choice, not a rushed one.

Each trick only takes a second or two. All three together take about five to ten seconds. That's super fast! You can do them in the middle of a heated talk. No one would even notice. If you practice them a lot, they become easy. You can do them without even thinking. It's like your body remembers.

Steady grew up in a small village. Her family were all long-distance runners. They ran in the kingdom's big cross-country races every year. These races were famous. People came from all over to watch. Running those long races was tough. It needed a special way to handle stress. In the last mile, your body screams, "Stop!" Your legs burn. Your lungs ache. But your mind tells you to keep going. Smart runners learned three quick tricks. They learned them by the time they were teenagers. These tricks helped them manage that fight. It was the fight between their body and their mind. Steady had practiced these tricks since she was six years old. She knew them better than her own name.

When Steady was twenty-two, she walked to the WellnessForge academy. Vita, the head of the academy, asked her a question. "What is **stress-regulation**?" Vita asked.

Steady looked Vita right in the eye. "It's three quick tricks," Steady said. "You do them before a really important choice. Especially when things are tough." She paused. "It's **breath. Ground. Reframe**. Then you decide."

Steady explained more. "Each trick takes a second or two," she said. "The whole thing takes five to ten seconds. Practice them now. Then, when stress hits, you'll be ready."

Vita smiled. "You're hired," she told Steady.

In her classroom, Steady always started the first day the same way. She stood at the front, calm as a still pond. She showed everyone the three tricks. First, she breathed in slowly. Her chest rose just a little. Then she let it out slowly, a soft whoosh. Next, she pressed her feet onto the floor. She really felt the ground, wiggling her toes inside her shoes. Finally, she asked herself out loud, "What's really happening here?" Her voice was quiet but clear.

The whole thing took about eight seconds. A few students blinked. One kid, a squirrel-tween named Squeaky, looked confused. Steady just smiled.

Then Steady looked at her students. "I am Steady," she said. "I teach you how to handle stress. It's called **stress-regulation**. Remember the tricks: **Breath. Ground. Reframe**. Then you decide." She nodded. "Three quick tricks. Five to ten seconds total. Practice them now. Don't wait until you need them." Squeaky still looked confused, but a rabbit-tween next to him nodded slowly.

Steady taught the different parts of **stress-regulation**:

- **Breath:** Breathe in for four counts. Breathe out for six counts. This helps your body calm down.
- **Ground:** Feel your feet on the floor. Or your hands on the table. This feeling helps you focus on now.
- **Reframe:** Ask one short question. Like, "What's really happening?"
- Practice the tricks when things are easy. That way, they'll be ready for tough times.
- Use the tricks *before* you decide. They help you calm down. They don't make the decision for you.

Steady was very clear about one thing. "Stress will show up," she told her students. "That doesn't mean you messed up. The skill is what you do *after* stress arrives. In those first few seconds." She looked around the room. "Three quick tricks. Then you decide. The choice is always yours. But these tricks help you make a calmer choice."

When students ask Steady whether **stress-regulation** is hard, Steady always says the same thing:

"It is not hard. It is *three quick moves*. Breath. Ground. Reframe. Then decide. Practice the sequence. Five to ten seconds. The decision is calmer."

She breathes. She grounds. She reframes. The next moment arrives differently.

Voice register

Guidance: Settled, fond of small quick regulation-moves. Animal-tween from long-distance-runner family. *NEVER frames stress as failure*. Friends with Pause (refusal + stress-regulation pair); all WellnessForge cast.

Sample lines:

- "Breath. Ground. Reframe. Then decide."
- "Stress will arrive. The skill is what you do in the seconds after."
- "Five to ten seconds. The decision is calmer."
- "Regulation precedes deliberation."

Arc across kits

- **Kit 1-2** — Cameo.
- **Kit 3** — **Anchor character**. Full chapter feature.
- **Kit 4-12** — Recurring (stress-regulation across health-decision scenarios).
- **Kit 13-16** — Recurring ensemble member.

Relationships

- **Alliance:** Pause (refusal + stress-regulation pair); all WellnessForge cast.

- **Tension:** None.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Adolescent-mental-health envelope recommended. Botvin LST evidence-based framing maintained.

Cultural-context note

The long-distance-runner family framing is a deliberate generic European-village tradition. The *breath / ground / reframe* sequence aligns with current evidence-based stress-regulation pedagogy and is consistent with Botvin LST + CBT skill-building practices.

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- **GambitTales** — chess tactics through Sir Pinwell, Lady Skewer, Queen Vesper, and the Twin Knights of Fork Hill
- **ProofQuest** — formal proof techniques through Direct-Proof Dora and the Lemma Library
- **CuriosityQuest** — Texas geography exploration through Linger, Notice, and the Lantern in the Dark
- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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