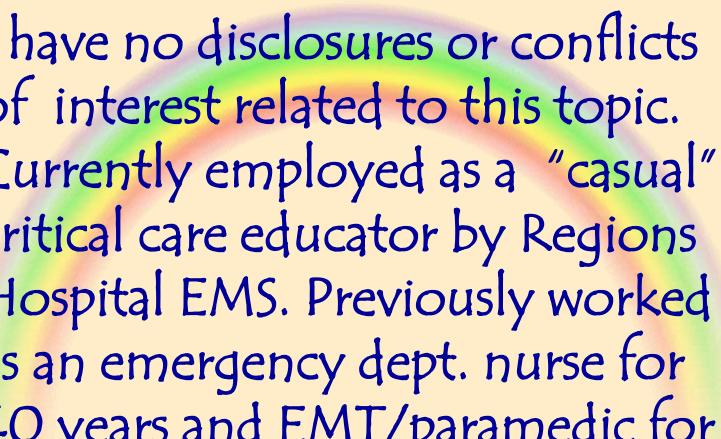




# Being, Bending, Bouncing Back – Becoming Resilient

Joan Somes PhD, RN-BC, CEN, CPEN, FAEN, NRP

1

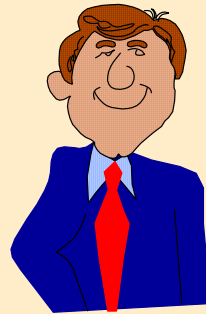


I have no disclosures or conflicts of interest related to this topic. Currently employed as a “casual” critical care educator by Regions Hospital EMS. Previously worked as an emergency dept. nurse for 40 years and EMT/paramedic for 12 years.

2

# Resilience

The ability to meet, review, learn from, and not be crushed by challenges and stresses of life



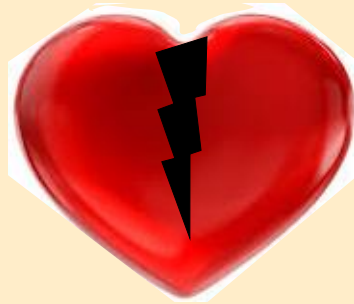
3

WHY does one need to develop resilience?



4

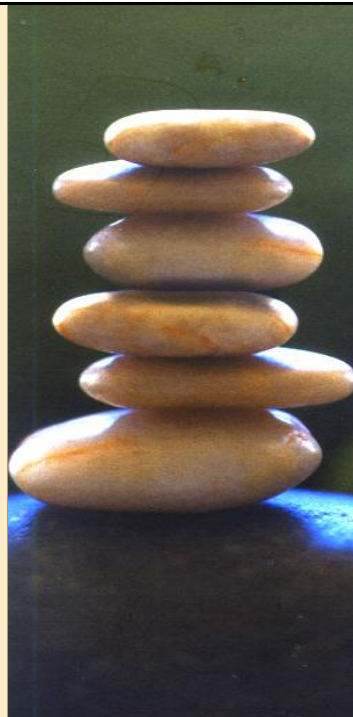
The caring heart of care – givers  
exposes them to suffering.  
Repeated exposures leads  
to stress and an impact on  
the physical,  
emotional, &  
psychological  
health of the  
care-giver



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Because of their  
compassionate nature,  
caregivers tend to say  
"yes", even when  
internal resources  
are low.  
This may lead to loss of  
balance between caring  
for others and adequate  
self-care.

A.K.A. STRESS

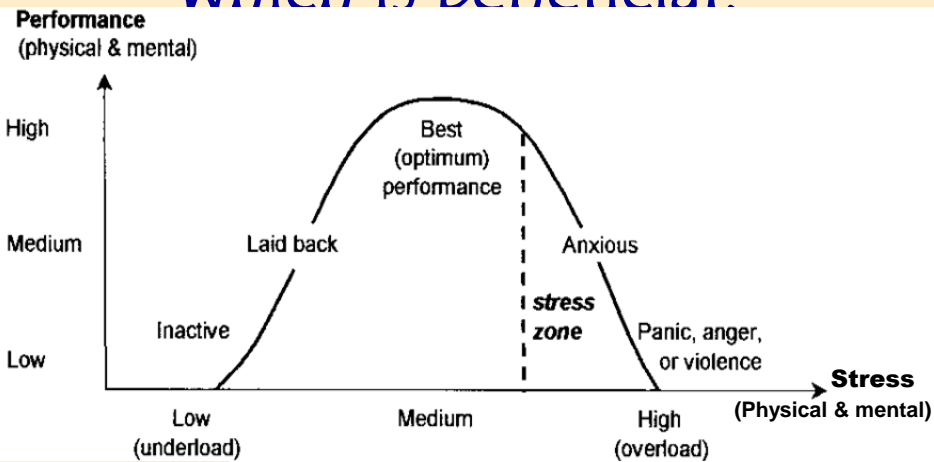


FYI - Care-givers were most likely this way even as children. It is part of their make up & they are at constant risk.



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Part of our focus will be on stress, some of which is beneficial!



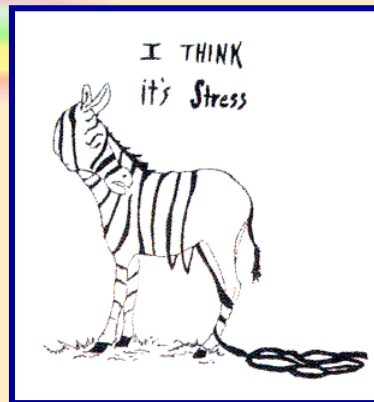
Repeated stressful incidents and internal struggles to make "right" choice can lead to feelings of unbalance

- ♥ Stories of, or actual violence being inflicted
- ♥ Witnessing traumatic events
- ♥ Fear of harm – physical, verbal, emotional
- ♥ Ill, or dying family, coworkers
- ♥ Lack of support – work, home, friends
- ♥ Overwhelming demands at work

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*Often one does not even realize they are experiencing stress.*

*Day to day decisions wear people down, out, and overwhelmed*



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# Decisions, Decisions!

Coke or Pepsi?  
What flavor jelly?  
Star Trek or Hogan's Heroes?  
Turn on the heat, or put on a sweater?  
Why is she saying that about me?  
Take a break or keep working?  
Spend the money or put it in IRA?  
Go faster on yellow or hit the brakes?  
Quit my job or put up with the boss?

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During stress the body is urged into a sense of readiness.

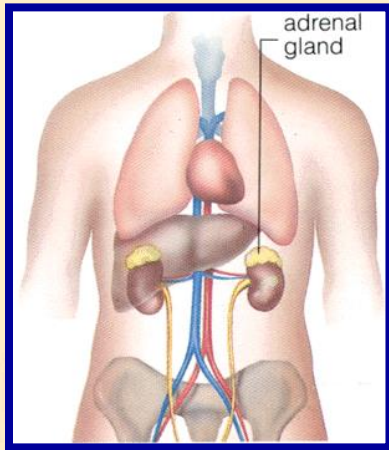


Channeled, this energy can be used to cope.

If unable to channel, it leads to destruction of body!

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## Readiness leads to release of stress hormones



- ◇ Epinephrine
- ◇ Norepinephrine
- ◇ Cortisol
- ◇ Aldosterone

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## These hormones lead to:

- ◇ Sympathetic response
- ◇ Flight or fight
- ◇ Distress
- ◇ Fragility

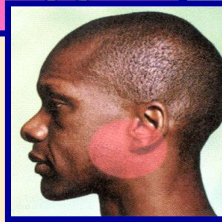
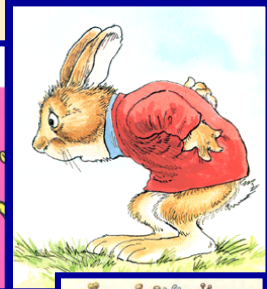


Ability to restore balance can be overwhelmed by constant arousal, thus one needs to have or develop resiliency

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## These affect the:

Heart  
Blood vessels  
Lungs  
Muscles  
Allergies  
Ability to sleep  
Immune system  
Inflammatory system



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## Certain behaviors should raise red flags!

- ◇ Physical symptoms
- ◇ Mental signs
- ◇ Emotional behavior
- ◇ Exhaustion
- ◇ Helplessness
- ◇ Feelings of inadequacy
- ◇ Distancing from others
- ◇ Decreased sense of accomplishment



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## Physical Signs & Symptoms

- ◇ Headache
- ◇ Digestive problems
- ◇ Muscle tension
- ◇ Sleep disturbances
- ◇ Fatigue
- ◇ Cardiac symptoms (pain, pressure, palpitations, etc)



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## Emotional Signs & Symptoms

- ◇ Mood swings
- ◇ Lack of joyfulness
- ◇ Restlessness
- ◇ Irritability
- ◇ Oversensitivity
- ◇ Anxiety
- ◇ Depression
- ◇ Loss of objectivity
- ◇ Anger/resentment
- ◇ Memory issues
- ◇ Poor concentration, focus, judgment
- ◇ Excessive use of substances (drugs, alcohol, nicotine)



3

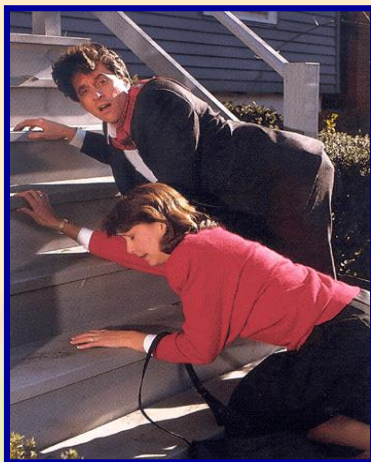
## Other Signs & Symptoms

- ◇ Emotional exhaustion –
- ◇ Depersonalization – ↑ irritability, sadness, hopeless, and sense of despair
- ◇ Personal accomplishments – ↑ absenteeism, frustration, inefficiency on job, decreased satisfaction, thoughts of quitting, and lack of dedication to job



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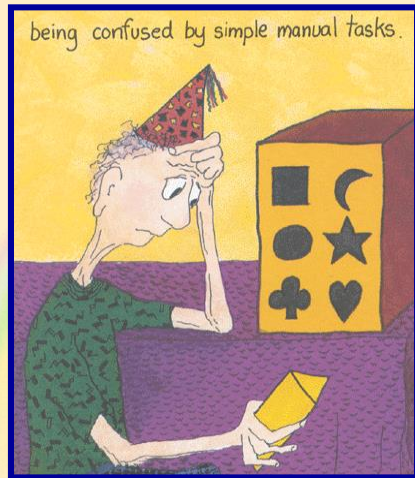
## Fatigue – (unmet body needs)



- ◇ Lack of adequate cellular nutrition leads to exhaustion:
  - physical
  - mental
  - emotional

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# Mind function



- ◇ Focus on work is compromised
- ◇ Attention span reduced
- ◇ Retention of info is limited
- ◇ Decision making is harder

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# Anger – (unmet expectations)



## Manifestations of anger

- somatizer
- self-punisher
- exploder
- underhander

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# Self-esteem – (unmet + feedback)



Develop psychosocial behaviors related to:

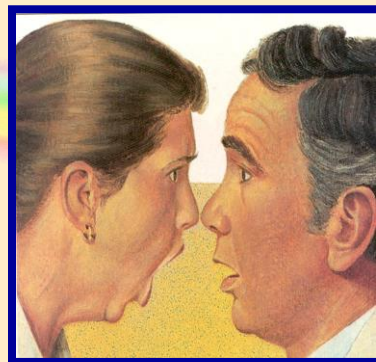
- Connectedness
- Uniqueness
- Empowerment
- Role models

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## Other signs

seen ...

- ◇ Excessive blaming
- ◇ Bottled up emotions
- ◇ Compulsive behaviors
- ◇ Legal problems
- ◇ Apathy
- ◇ Pre-occupied
- ◇ Denial about problems
- ◇ Poor self care (hygiene)
- ◇ Voices/receives excessive complaints



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## When stress is related to work



### Intrusion

- Recurring thoughts about patients
- Dreams about work/patients
- Sense of reliving event over & over

### Avoidance

- Avoiding certain patients
- Staying away from crowds & people
- Inability to remember patient info
- Disconnected from others
- Lack of emotions
- Not wanting to do anything

### Arousal

- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability & Inability to focus
- Nervous and agitated

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## Other symptoms\*

- ◇ Breaking of rules
- ◇ Outbreaks of aggression
- ◇ Non-completion of tasks
- ◇ Lack of respect for deadlines
- ◇ Negativity toward management
- ◇ Strong reluctance toward change
- ◇ Belief that improvement is impossible
- ◇ Lack of vision for the future



\*May be individual  
Or the whole team!

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Symptoms that indicate one is so stressed that they are "burning out" include.

- Bored
- Cynical
- Isolated
- Depleted
- Conflicted
- Arrogant
- Helpless, or a workaholic



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## One Version of a Stress Check

~ How many do you check?

- \_ Head/backaches
- \_ Stomach problems
- \_ Palpitations
- \_ Fatigue
- \_ Frequent accidents
- \_ Nag others/self
- \_ Guilt
- \_ Frequent colds
- \_ Easily irritated
- \_ Overeat
- \_ Shop a lot
- \_ Canker sores

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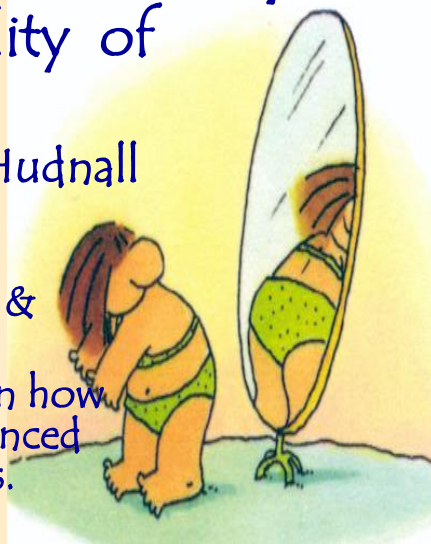
# If you want to check yourself

## Professional Quality of Life Scale

(ProQOL)\* B. Hudnall Stamm

(Compassion Satisfaction & Fatigue Version 5)

Score yourself based on how often you have experienced these in the last 30 days.



\*Found in 7<sup>th</sup> edition TNCC

## Stress can leave you



- ◇ Physically exhausted
- ◇ Mentally paralyzed
- ◇ Emotionally drained

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# resilience & potentially help from

- ◇ Avoidance or decreased interacting with other people
- ◇ Reduced ability to feel empathy
- ◇ Frequent use of sick days



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WHY does one need to develop resilience?



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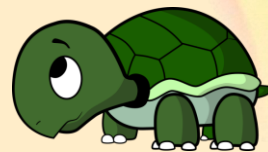


# Resilience Helps Deal with Stress

- ♥ Burn out
- ♥ Brown out
- ♥ Secondary stress
- ♥ Compassion fatigue
- ♥ Any of the  
"badness"  
from these  
syndromes

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Developing resilience  
Consider ~ how do you live life?



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# Developing resilience

## Consider ~ Is this you?

- ◇ Upset over many things?
- ◇ Look at change as disruptive?
- ◇ Stay stuck in a rut?
- ◇ Once I get this done?
- ◇ Reject all negative feedback?
- ◇ Use rare quiet moments to ruminate – worried and resentful, bored, lost....?
- ◇ Live in past or fantasize when finally able to do “big things”?



35

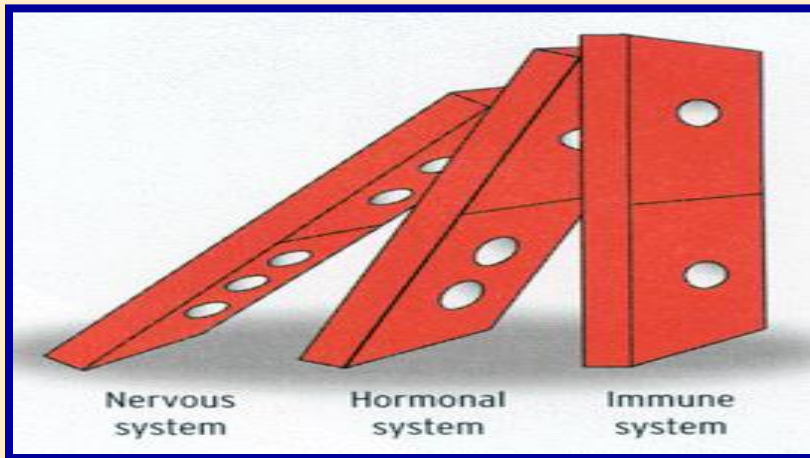
# Developing resilience

## Consider ~ do you do these things?

- ◇ Waste time on trivial?
- ◇ Replace passion with duty?
- ◇ Belittle our talents/strengths?
- ◇ Forgotten value of simplicity?
- ◇ Lost desire to be sincere & respectful?
- ◇ Fail to see quiet moments as time to reflect?
- ◇ Fail to see ghosts of past as teaching



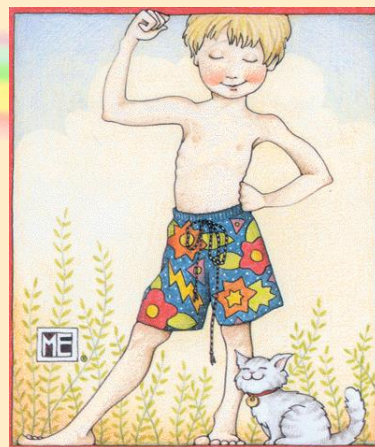
36



One's ability to restore balance can be overwhelmed by constant emotional arousal and stress, or.....

37

We can build muscle memory on how to be resilient



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Resilience is based on a conscious decision to maximize ways one responds to situations and openness to new experiences.

39

## Decisions, Decisions!

Coke or Pepsi?

What flavor jelly?

Star Trek or Hogan's Heroes?

What color & kind of new car?

Why is she saying that about me?

Take a break or keep working?

Spend the money, or put it in IRA?

Go on yellow, or hit the brakes?

Quit my job, or put up with the boss?

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# Resilience

Range of resiliency created  
by:

a. heredity & early life  
experiences

b. current knowledge

c. level of motivation to

\*what we have the most control over  
meet challenges

& live to fullest\*

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# Willingness to Develop Muscles

◇ Willing to take the  
steps to appreciate,  
limit, and learn  
from stressors?

◇ Have the energy,  
knowledge,  
& time to do this?

◇ Willing to take the  
time/energy to take



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burnout.

It takes work, specific steps, and repeated

practice to prevent stress from taking over. It is also takes:

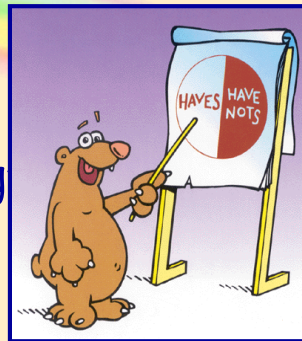
- ◇ Sufficient rest
- ◇ Good nutrition
- ◇ Good friends
- ◇ Quiet/reflective



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Stress cannot be prevented; but its effects can be limited & it does not have to impact us negatively if we practice the following!

- ◇ Self awareness
- ◇ Self care
- ◇ Compassion
- ◇ Positive psychology
- ◇ Self debriefing
- ◇ Mindfulness
- ◇ Create a resiliency profile



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Do an honest self assessment

45

## Assessing your stress risk

- ◇ Are you over involved?
- ◇ Using usual/have coping strategies?
- ◇ Having/managing of life crises
- ◇ Doing activities to replenish self physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?
- ◇ Open to learning new skills that enhance personal and professional well being
- ◇ Have work/life balance?



# Assess for Burn out Risk Factors

(these may be perceived or real areas of lacking)

- ◇ Workload (quantity, quality)
- ◇ Control (autonomy)
- ◇ Rewards (from others, internal satisfaction)
- ◇ Sense of community (engagement & supportive environment)
- ◇ Fairness (equitable to all)
- ◇ Values (purpose & enthusiasm)



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# Burnout & the rest

- ◇ Perception "something" is lacking

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ○ Knowledge           | ○ Meaningful tasks        |
| ○ Opportunity         | ○ Measurement criteria    |
| ○ Time                | ○ Coping mechanisms       |
| ○ Ability             | ○ Staff harmony           |
| ○ Chance to ventilate | ○ Recognition             |
| ○ Institutional power | ○ Insight into motivation |

◇ Causes frustration

◇ Hinders taking action



# Identify "triggers" that you *know* will cause you distress

- ◇ Challenges in past
- ◇ Bad experiences in past
- ◇ Fear of unknown
- ◇ What others have "fed you"
- ◇ Negative thoughts/feelings
- ◇ Just already a "bad day"



Next do positive self talk and use resiliency muscle memory

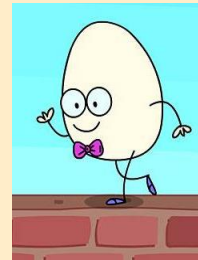
49

# Recognize it is what it is!

- ◇ You can't un-burn toast philosophy



- ◇ Humpty Dumpty  
- Mmm!  
Omelets!



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## Don't waste time/energy

### worrying about:

- ◇ what cannot be changed
- ◇ what you have no control over
- ◇ change that is
- ◇ things that do really affect you



## Not wasting time/energy

### worrying requires:

- ◇ Self – discipline
- ◇ Self – management
- ◇ Self – regulation
- ◇ Self – consciousness
- ◇ An understanding of what causes your stress and anxiety



Non-judgmental self awareness & putting things into truthful perspective helps create resilience  
As does recognizing things that make a difference for you

– sense of purpose



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## Actions to develop resilience

- ◇ Self-regulating – relax, deep breathing
- ◇ Intentionality – work to be calm
- ◇ Perceptual maturation – why am I here?
- ◇ Connection – develop
- ◇ Self care – rejuvenating activities: sleep, exercise, meditation, read, soak, journal, social activities



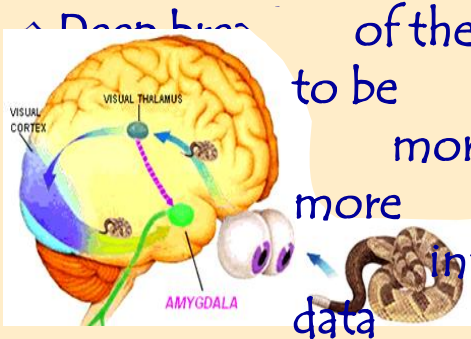


Breath in-  
 Breath out-  
 Breath in-  
 Breath out-  
 Breath in-  
 Breath out-

55

## Breathing is good!

- When stressed we often "react" with emotional side of brain – it is hard to take in data, process it, and respond rationally



of the path - allowing us to be more aware, take in more information, process data

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## During the deep breath...

- ◇ Goal setting (major and smaller)
- ◇ Visualize steps to take
- ◇ Do positive self talk
- ◇ Continue breath control



- ◇ Rely on experiences
- ◇ Identify thinking trap pitfalls
- ◇ Decrease fears of the "what if's?"

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## Actions to develop resilience

- ◇ Self-regulating – relax, deep breathing
- ◇ Intentionality – work to be calm
- ◇ Perceptual maturation – where am I here?
- ◇ Connection – develop support system
- ◇ Self care – rejuvenating activities



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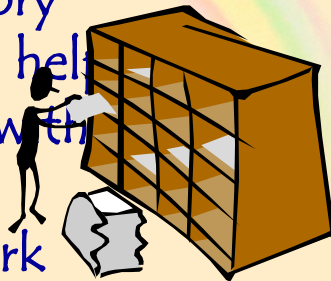
## Developing resilience

- ◇ Recognize danger of toxic situations & unhelpful attitudes
- ◇ Appreciate value of reaching out, without being pulled down
- ◇ Close, balance circle of friends
- ◇ Avail yourself of silence, solitude, & mindfulness
- ◇ Be able to debrief yourself



## Developing resilience

- ◇ Be fully conscious and immersed in the present moment to take in all the information being presented
- ◇ Be in tuned to all sensory information which will help make a solid decision with all the data and not one based on a knee jerk
- ◇ Practice data gathering/sorting



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## Developing Resilience

- ◇ Make connections
- ◇ Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable
- ◇ Keep things in perspective
- ◇ Accept change
- ◇ Maintain hopeful outlook



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## Developing resilience

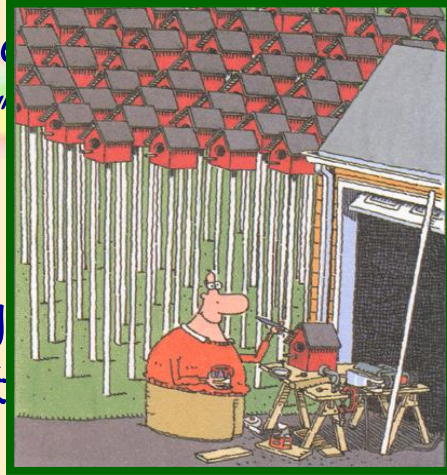
- ◇ Look for self discovery options
- ◇ Nurture positive view of self
- ◇ Take care of self
- ◇ Move toward goals
- ◇ Take decisive actions



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# Things YOU can do for you

- ◇ Work – life balance
- ◇ Learn to say “NO!”
- ◇ Have place/way to recharge & do it!
- ◇ Watch for warning
- ◇ Talk things out with supportive person
- ◇ Develop “resilience” muscles



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# Be “elastic” & willing to bounce!

- ◇ Attitude
- ◇ Perspective
- ◇ Fighter, not victim
- ◇ Look for + outcomes
- ◇ Be willing to fail, learn, grow!
- ◇ Recall how you have coped in past



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## Work to develop

- ◇ Hardiness
- ◇ Self-efficiency
- ◇ Self-esteem
- ◇ Optimism
- ◇ Patience
- ◇ Tolerance
- ◇ Faith
- ◇ Adaptability
- ◇ Humor



Do what you can to increase/use these as they lead to resilience!

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## Tactics to build resilience

- ◇ Talk it out
- ◇ Allow time to recharge
- ◇ Have a stress free zone
- ◇ Allow saying "no"
- ◇ Nurture relationships
- ◇ Have a goal
- ◇ Humor
- ◇ Foster confidence
- ◇ Focus on positive
- ◇ Use kinesthetic/tactile/visual reminders to bring back to self/purpose



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# Strengthening resilience

- ◇ Recognize when denying psychological distress
- ◇ Be aware challenges of toxic situations & negative attitudes
- ◇ Have a balance of friends – see next slide
- ◇ Internalize concepts of resilience
- ◇ Improve quality of self care &



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## More on Friends

A "balance of friends" includes those who:

- Challenge
- Tease
- Support



Who can I be myself with and make/help me look into myself? Who has helped me grow?

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Quiet time in this day and age requires practice and especially muscle memory !

1. Daily debriefing  
or
2. Questioning of self to determine if you are having signs/symptoms of



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## Daily

### debriefing/assessment

- ◇ Start with 2-5 minutes each day
- ◇ Close eyes, deep breath, and clear mind
- ◇ The things "bothering" you will intrude
- ◇ Sort them, put them into perspective,
- ◇ Determine the emotion associated with them
- ◇ Be non-judgmental on these emotions
- Put them away or
- ◇ Determine if action is needed based on all information using frontal cortex

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# Practice Time



## Mindfulness

Do this each day

Maybe do it twice a day

Practice, Practice, Practice!

Expand time as you become  
comfortable with idea

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## When practicing mindfulness

- ◇ Don't "expect" - just see what happens
- ◇ Don't strain or force
- ◇ Don't rush, cling, reject, fight
- ◇ Let go! Be gentle
- ◇ Investigate and question self
- ◇ View all problems as challenges
- ◇ Don't ponder
- ◇ Don't dwell on differences



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## Other Action Options

- ◇ Adjust workload & environment
- ◇ Take training to increase self assurance  
(I am efficient & can cope with.....)
- ◇ Dedicate time for relaxation & wellness
- ◇ Create culture of open communication



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## And yet some more!

- ◇ Take time to appreciate what you have been
- ◇ Involved, not over-involved
- ◇ Support group
- ◇ Escape
- ◇ Be spontaneous
- ◇ Monitor for negativity
- ◇ Check your "balance"



"Wait a minute, this isn't my book those aren't my hands."

75

Don't be afraid to do a self assessment looking at your good points and "own" them!



- ◇ Talents, joys, motivations, broadening experiences, how you help others, your goals, growth, strengths, virtues, values, etc, etc, etc.

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## Self talk when dealing with angst

- ◇ Understand your unique
- ◇ Be true to yourself
- ◇ Look for clarity
- ◇ Be aware of your agenda
- ◇ Face failure productively
- ◇ Critically think
- ◇ Appreciate that resistance to change
- ◇ Continue to work on "self talk"



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## Defuse vs. Debrief vs.

- ◇ Get out of situation **Remove**
- ◇ Defuse ~ informal  
Spontaneous  
Within hours
- ◇ Debrief ~ form  
Within 24-72 hours  
Review situation  
No blaming, what was learned



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## Consider Resources

- ◇ Mentor/co-worker who understands norms & expectations of 
- ◇ Employee Assistance Program
- ◇ A class on time/money management, caring for older parents, effective communication ways to reduce stress
- ◇ Strategies: change shift work, avoid appointment, reducing overwork, take time off, attend a conference, get involved in project of interest



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## Developing Resilience Muscles

One can be compassionate in response to stressors if:

- ◇ We are aware of basic practices to contain and understand stress
- ◇ Mindful, reasonably self-aware
- ◇ Learn to maintain sense of perspective and resilience

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# Developing Resilience Muscles

One can be compassionate in response to stressors if:

- ◇ We understand our limits
- ◇ Learn from experience
- ◇ Relate to others
- ◇ Cultivate new ways of thinking
- ◇ React vs. respond

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The same seeds that can grow into a stressor, can also grow into passionate involvement & self fulfillment !



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In process of building  
muscle memories to  
be resilient – don't  
make it more  
stressful for  
your self!



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## Suggested resources

- ◇ Bounce Living the Resilient Life by Robert J. Wicks Oxford Press
- ◇ Perspective The Calm Within the Storm by Robert J. Wicks Oxford Press
- ◇ Night Call Embracing Compassion and Hope in a Troubled World by RJ Wicks Oxford Press
- ◇ "How to Harness Stress and Build Resilience in the Workplace" Veronica Ryl EMSWorld April 2018 p 39-45 EMSworld.com

Thanks  
someswasblackhole@gmail.com

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