



Western Health Advantage

## Building Resilience for Well-Being & Stress Management

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## Objectives

- Define Stress
- Define Resilience
- 3 Steps to Improve Resilience
  - Mindfulness
  - Raising Awareness
  - Cognitive Restructuring
- Resilience through **Strength Building**




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## Stress Facts (pre-pandemic)

- 66% of Americans cited work as a significant source of stress
- 64% of Americans feel anxious or irritable at work
- 75-90% of all visits to the doctor are for stress-related health concerns
- Workplace stress is as bad for the heart as smoking or high cholesterol

APA, American Institute of Stress




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## Stress Facts (April 2021)

- 81% of Americans cited the future of our nation as a significant source of stress
- 80% of Americans report the coronavirus as another significant source of stress
- 74% report political unrest and dis-unity in our country as another source of stress.
- 77% report stress as affecting their physical health (Aug 21)

APA, American Institute of Stress




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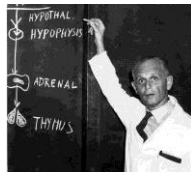
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## Stress Defined

- Your body's response to the demands placed on it
- Fight or flight response
- Everyday life hassles vs. major life trauma
- "Stress isn't so much what happens to you but how you take it."



Dr. Hans Selye




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## That was then....




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## ...this is now



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## AND...this is now

- Pandemic Stress
  - Masks, mandates, vaccines, illness, loss of lives, social distancing, unemployment, low employment, working from home
- Political Stress
  - Divided country, misinformation, contradicting information, lack of unity
- Social Stress
  - Social and racial injustice, inequality, unrest

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## Resilience Defined

- The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness
- An ability to adjust easily to misfortune or change
- Adapting to stressors with flexibility rather than rigidity
- Resilience is proactive, whereas stress management is reactive



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## Mindfulness

- Mindlessness
- History and Philosophy
- "Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally." ~Jon Kabat Zinn




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## Mindfulness Practice

- Observe your breathing
- Positive affirmations
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Journaling (gratitude)
- Time in nature
- Exercise (walking, yoga, tai chi)
- Pausing between actions




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## Benefits of Mindfulness

- Benefits
  - Enhanced flexibility, improved concentration and mental clarity, emotional intelligence, improved interpersonal relations, creativity, & reduction in stress
  - Lowers anxiety, alleviates depression, reduces anger, chronic pain, eating disorders, boosts the immune system, helps cancer patients cope better with treatment




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## Raising Awareness

Connect the dots.....

Who?

What?

Where do you feel the stress?

When?

How?

(can I change the situation)

(can I change my view of the situation)



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## Cognitive Restructuring

- Cognitive
  - Thinking ability, your knowing, perception
- Restructuring
  - Reframing or changing your perception
- Changing the way you think about a stressful situation & challenging your thoughts for a more positive outcome.



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## Historical Perceptions

- **Marcus Aurelis:** "If you are pained by any external thing, it is not the thing that disturbs you, but your own judgment about it."
- **Shakespeare:** "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."
- **Epicetetus:** "People are not disturbed by things but by the views they take of them."



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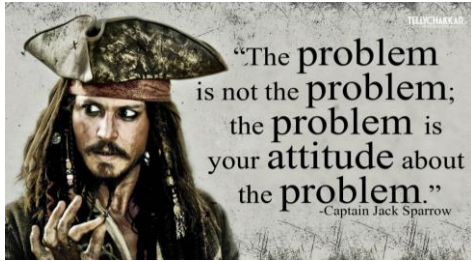
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## Captain Jack Sparrow



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## Cultivating Resilience

- ✓ Boundaries
- ✓ Good company
- ✓ Self-awareness
- ✓ Acceptance
- ✓ Let it unfold
- ✓ Self-care
- ✓ Seek support
- ✓ Consider possibilities
- ✓ Mindfulness

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## Character Strengths



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## 24 Character Strengths

- **Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence**
- Bravery
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Fairness
- Forgiveness
- **Gratitude**
- **Honesty**
- Hope
- **Humility**
- **Humor**
- Judgment
- Kindness
- Leadership
- Love
- Love of Learning
- Perseverance
- Perspective
- **Prudence**
- Self-Regulation
- Social Intelligence
- Spirituality
- **Teamwork**
- **Zest**




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## Signature Strengths

- Positive aspects of who you are
- Strong capacities & abilities within you
- Engaging, energizing and comfortable for you to use
- Two questions:
  - How has your signature strength(s) played a role in your life successes?
  - What effect does your signature strength(s) have on others?




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## Free VIA Assessment

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>




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## In Conclusion...

- Realize stress is not what is happening to us, but rather our reaction
- Practice using mindfulness and cognitive restructuring to reframe reaction to stressors
- Focus on personal strengths and strengths of others to maintain positive emotion and confidence




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## Bamboo




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## Cultivating resilience

**GRANT ME  
THE SERENITY**  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE,  
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE  
THE THINGS I CAN, AND  
THE WISDOM TO KNOW  
THE DIFFERENCE.




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## For more information

Western Health Advantage  
members can find more  
healthy living tips at

[mywha.org/healthyliving](https://mywha.org/healthyliving)

Check with your health plan's wellness page  
for healthy living resources.

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