A message from Dr. Peter Yellowlees, Chief Wellness Officer

We are resilient

As we all know by now, COVID-19 is surging.

At UC Davis Health we continue to care for patients infected with the coronavirus, and to also protect ourselves and our families for an unknown amount of time going forward. What is sure is that this is not a short-term pandemic. Unfortunately, no one can be certain what the time horizon for our community to recover will be. It is such a frustrating feeling.

While we have these medical uncertainties, we also have a lot more knowledge about how to manage the virus and how to protect ourselves and our loved ones. And we need to use that knowledge.

As “essential workers” in the health care domain, we are an inherently resilient group. You have to be resilient to achieve the roles that we have in our unique and critical industry.

So today, I thought I would focus on the importance of our resilience, and how to enhance it as we practice masking, distancing and hygiene, all while staying home when we are not working.

Firstly, what is resilience?

It is the capacity to resume positive functioning following adversity. It is our ability to adapt successfully to acute or chronic stress or trauma, and the process we use to do this. This is what we must, individually and as a group, focus on in order to move through the pandemic,
however long this takes.

Secondly, resilience has been extensively studied. We know that certain habits can be used to enhance our own innate resilience. These habits include:

- Stay optimistic
- Practice altruism
- Cultivate a strong moral compass (i.e., a set of personal beliefs that cannot be shattered)
- Embrace faith and spirituality
- Use your sense of humor
- Find positive role models
- Identify positive social supports
- Don’t avoid anxiety-provoking situations (try leaving your comfort zone)
- Find meaning in life
- Make time to exercise when possible
- Listen to music you enjoy
- Embrace training of all the above (i.e., practice, practice, practice)

Thirdly, resilient self-care at work has also been studied. Here are some great habits to help yourself in the work environment:

- Self-monitor and pace yourself, using breaks and time-outs – hydrate, eat and relax when you can
- Make regular check-ins with colleagues, family, and friends
- Develop and work in supportive partnerships and teams
- Use regular peer consultation and supervision
- Incorporate brief relaxation/stress management strategies on the go – I like this YouTube video on “meditation in a moment.”
- Use music and humor at work

Perhaps the biggest stressor for many of us is looking after our families. Our children, our parents, our loved ones. Especially now that we know that regional schools are not going to be opening on time next semester.

Please bookmark this child care resources page, which has a large number of resources on child and family care that are constantly being updated by the UC Davis WorkLife program, as well as local resources and policies on COVID-19. Share your concerns and maybe suggestions on coping strategies with your families or friends. I hope you will find these resources useful for your children and your families.

Let’s practice looking after each other, as well as looking after our patients. That is how we will all get through the COVID-19 era and come out stronger and more resilient, whenever it ends. Here is a wonderful quote to guide us:

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

Nelson Mandela
T7 Medical Surgical ICU Gold
“Wonderful ICU! Your ICU is organized, clean, responsive.”

Same Day Surgery Center
“If you have to have surgery, that is the place to be. Amazing people took care of me.”

P3 PACU Boarding
“I was treated like a queen. My nurses were wonderful, attentive and caring. My anesthesiologist was awesome and made [me] feel at ease. I was made to feel like I mattered by Dr. Leiserowitz and his staff.”

Emergency Pavilion
“You guys rocked. I was in enormous pain when I arrived and was immediately taken care of.”

P2 Burn ICU
“I truly love all of the nurses I had. They were very attentive and kind.”