

Maintaining Resiliency

By Dr. Margaret Rea

We had a wonderful workshop this month on resiliency by Dr. Hendry Ton, the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Diversity. Dr. Ton offered important insight into how to develop and maintain resiliency. The workshop was additionally special in that it was an interdisciplinary wellness workshop that included students from the School of Medicine and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. It was wonderful to see such a large group of students from different backgrounds sharing experiences around how they maintain resiliency in the face of adversity.

Dr. Ton highlighted that a key factor in maintaining resiliency was holding onto a positive view of yourself which can be challenging and requires intention especially when you are facing disappointments. For example, the importance of finding a social support network of people who have shared experiences is key. Not only can they offer a safe space for processing your experiences, but they can also offer insight and wisdom into how to best cope with life's challenges. Dr. Ton emphasized how important it is to connect with others in order to promote the sense of belonging. He actually offered his model of the factors that foster happiness: feeling as if you belong, you are growing and you are contributing positively to the lives of others.

Dr. Ton also offered strategies for how to deal with the inevitable emotional challenges that life can bring. He presented the acronym of ACCEPTS as a tool.

A for Activities- It can be helpful to identify things you can do to distract from emotional distress such as sports or other hobbies.

C for Comparison- Don't compare your insides to some else's outsides. This is so important. We can spend so much time making assumptions about how others seem in a better place and that preoccupation works against our sense of resiliency. We get trapped in our cognitive errors and assumptions about others that are not helpful. Instead, we should be focusing on setting the short term goals we need to keep us moving forward to our larger goals.

C for Contributing- Find some way to make a difference in the life of someone else. Helping another can help you step away from your own struggles and add value to your life.

E for opposite Emotions- It can be helpful to watch movies, read books, or listen to music that has the opposite

emotional tone than you are experiencing. This technique can help put you in a different emotional place.

P for Pushing Away- It can be helpful to imagine the distressing situation you are in and placing it in a box or behind a wall or on a shelf for a while. This technique can allow you to take a break from the worry. You might need to revisit it later, but for now it is pushed away so you can take time to refuel emotionally.



T for Thoughts- Sometimes we simply need to distract ourselves with other thoughts as the distressing ones are unhealthy and interfering with the ability to stay focused. You might need to simply distract yourself by counting objects in a room or by doing a Sudoku puzzle or playing a game of solitaire. This technique is a quick option when you need a moment away from the emotions and thoughts that feel overwhelming.

S for Sensations- It can be helpful to distract yourself with other strong feelings or sensations. You might consider talking a very hot shower or even put a cold pack on your neck or do a quick burst of intense exercise.

The various strategies and approaches discussed by Dr. Ton left many of the students who participated in the workshop feeling hopeful. There is so much discussion of the importance of maintaining resiliency, but that goal in itself can feel overwhelming and unobtainable. In contrast, Dr. Ton's talk offered techniques and concepts the students felt they could take forward as they embrace challenges and work toward their goals. Maintaining resiliency is not a static process, but a dynamic one whereby you can utilize various tools to help feel balanced and energized.

Wellness Events

Heart Healthy Walk

2/3 12:00 pm
Ed Bldg Main Entrance
Join us for a 1 mile walk in recognition of Wear Red Day led by Beverly Schacherbauer

"Heart Disease: What Every Woman Should Know"

Dr. Amparo Villablanca
2/15 12:00 pm
Ed Bldg 1204

The Therapy Dogs Are Back To Celebrate Valentine's Day

2/16 12-2
Students Commons

For Our Second Year Medical Students: Emotionally Preparing for Step 1

Margaret Rea, Ph.D and Stephen Simonson, Psy.D.
2/6/17
Education Building 3225

Living Fit Forever Classes

http://intranet.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/clinops/resources/living_fit_forever.shtml

Work Life and Wellness Events

ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/hr/wellness/brownbags.html

UCDMC Yoga

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gz23GMJbZJDI-wzn9g8NxUnia4IFuVsHah4olav7Ow0/edit#>

Resilience

My wellness tip of the month is Resilience.

One of the concern students often face is procrastination. They are working hard to do well in school, be resilient, but are finding they avoid work, procrastinate and then feel more anxious about their ability to succeed. I came across this exercise that might be useful.

It could be another tool to interrupt the procrastination and maintain resiliency. It can be helpful to be intentional about facing your avoidance.

aa particular purpose.

6. Make a note of how it feels when you bring purpose to activity. How does the body feel?

Do you have more energy?

Overcome Procrastination with Purpose:

(Donald Altman, MA,LPC)

1. Identify the activity you are procrastinating with or delaying.
2. Write a purpose list. What do you care about? Who or what Matters?
3. Match a purpose with the activity you need to do. Think about the purpose that would motivate you enough to get engaged. Doing chores such as laundry may not be appealing, but if your purpose is to care for yourself and your family, that might help you to get started.
4. Start small. Set a time limit for your activity. Even one minute is enough time to get started working on your activity. You can always go for a longer period of time if you want. However, much you finish, you can consider it be a partial success.
5. If the purpose you assign doesn't initially help, try another one or recall a purpose that motivated you in the past. Don't feel stuck to



Monthly Recipe: Spaghetti

Needless to say I could not resist reading Dr. Oliveira's article about Celebrating Spaghetti. Who knew there was a national spaghetti day? And that Spaghetti is the plural form of the Italian word spaghetti, which is a diminutive of spago, meaning 'thin string' or 'twine.' Check out her delicious recipe for a healthy version of Spaghetti Pomodoro and feel transported to Italy.

<http://ucdintegrativemedicine.com/recipes/spaghetti-pomodoro/#gs.UQSIbr4>

Wellness App: Think Up

Think Up: Positive Affirmations- When it comes to Apps and maintaining resiliency, it seems like you need to tackle it through different avenues. For example, one step in building resiliency, is maintaining a healthy balanced mindset. This App helps you "Build your own self improvement program to develop the motivation and the positive mindset you need to succeed, using personal affirmations in the most professional and effective way."