

Hello, I'd like to welcome everyone to our session on "A Personal Guide to Building Resiliency and Coping with Change."

My name is Katie Muhlhammer. I will be your behind-the-scenes technical facilitator. A couple of things I'd like to mention: Whenever it is that you're listening to this on-demand session, we're glad that you're here. We encourage you to take a look at the left-hand side of your screen. We have a "Frequently Asked Questions" section, if you have a question about "what about a certificate of attendance?" or anything like that. So we have some frequently asked questions with answers for you.

We also have a question box where you can type in a question and send. It comes within email, so it's not a live question, but it is a place for you to go to get a question answered if you have further questions on this topic. We'll tell you a little bit more about that at the end.

Then finally, you also should see an "Event Resources" section there on the left; and we have a copy of the slide deck uploaded for you—so a couple of things to help you make the most of your time today as you're listening to this.

We're very pleased to have Laurie Kovens presenting today's topic. She's a licensed clinical social worker, been in practice for a number of years or decades. She has served as a clinician in both medical and employee assistance settings, so today's topic is something that she's very familiar with and has helped a lot of individuals with. She's worked with clients, families, community members, and coworkers helping them adapt in the face of ongoing physical, emotional, as well as organizational change. She works with clients from a person-centered, strength-based approach. You can see some of the different treatment orientations that she's associated with.

She's also an NASW-certified clinical supervisor and is pursuing a master's degree in writing, with a focus on narrative health care. Laurie does a lot of presentations; and they're focusing on prevention and recovery from burnout; organizational management and development; resilience, which is why she's here today; and the use of writing and reflection for self-care and personal and professional growth.

We're very lucky to have Laurie with us today for this topic. I know it's a topic she's passionate about. I'm going to go ahead and pass it to Laurie to dive in and get us started.

Thanks so much, Katie.

Welcome, everyone. We're glad that you're here. It's not what happens to us but how we respond to what's happening to us that has the strongest impact on our lives. When we're resilient, we're able to adjust quickly to new conditions, change our personal direction if required, and incorporate life's events more smoothly into our lives. This session will empower you to become more resilient. You'll be able to adjust more easily to life's ups and downs.

Our learning objectives towards that goal today are for us to be able to recognize components of resiliency, from flexibility to a positive outlook; increase self-awareness about personal and work conditions that trigger stress; and learn new ways of thinking about change in our lives that will boost our resilience.

Let's start off with a little bit of a pretest and just get everybody's sense of your perception of resilience. These are all true or false questions, and just note them down. You may want to look at them again when we get to the end of the presentation today and see if your perceptions have changed.

True or false?

You either have resilience or you don't.

Resilience is the achievement of positive outcomes in spite of personal and environmental risk factors.

Pathways to recovery are highly personal and generally involve a redefinition of identity in the face of crisis or a process of progressive change.

Short-term settings are not useful in promoting/enhancing resilience.

Addressing resilience involves a specific set of specialized tools different from the tools often used in EAP counseling.

And just a very quick review of the responses:

No. 1 is false. Resilience comes and goes. It's different in different situations. We call on different kinds of strengths at different times and in different situations. We're going to walk our way through, actually, the principles behind each of these statements as we work together this morning.

No. 2, resilience is the achievement of positive outcomes in spite of personal and environmental risk factors: That is true, and we will talk about personal/environmental risk factors and the strengths that we call on in those situations.

Pathways to recovery are highly personal and generally involve a redefinition of identity in the face of crisis or a process of progressive change: true. And again, we'll be talking through that.

Short-term settings are not useful in promoting and enhancing resilience.

That is false. Resilience is something that we can access any time. As we move through the slides today, we'll be able to break that down into sort of short, manageable bits that we can all get our heads around and relate to.

The last statement—addressing resilience involves a specific set of specialized tools different from tools often used in EAP counseling—that is true. Actually, that is false—sorry. There are tools that are accessible to any of us at any time, and EAP counseling can be a great place to sharpen the tools that we already have and add some new tools to our toolbox.

Let's talk a little bit about what resilience is exactly. These are some quotes from different resources that have done a lot of training and research into these qualities:

Resilience is the ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without "falling apart" by actively and positively coping with stress.

It's the ability to adapt to adversity, roll with the punches, and bounce back stronger, wiser, and more determined.

Resilience is a positive construct which enables individuals to overcome stressors or withstand negative life events and not only to recover from such experiences but to find personal meaning in them.

So looking at those definitions, thinking about how that relates to your own experience, what does resilience look and feel like for you? How do you know when you have achieved a healthy level of resilience? Based on this

initial overview, how would you rate your resilience at this time: not resilient, somewhat resilient, neutral, resilient, or very resilient?

Take a note of that, and we'll come back to that at the end of the presentation so you can check in and see if your perception or understanding of that has shifted at all.

So in those first definitions and goals and objectives, we talked about protective factors. Protective factors are processes that are predictive of successful life adaptation, which basically means the tools you have on board to cope with stress and change and the resources that are available to you and the elements in your environment that can influence how well you can manage change.

Another definition of protective factors—again, from the professional field—are those attributes of persons, environments, situations, and events that appear to temper or mediate predictions of pathology or disease based on an individual's at-risk status. Now, that's taken from the medical field and talks about what can make us more susceptible or more resilient to illness and disease; but these concepts really apply in every area of our lives.

We often talk about protective factors when we're assessing for risk in mental health: suicide or homicide risk, relapse of substance abuse, domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, or bullying. But the impact of protective factors plays out in more everyday situations, like the ones that we face in our work and personal lives: family and relationship issues, job loss or change, medical issues, moving house.

Employee assistance programs focus on helping clients adapt to changing circumstances. EAP support looks at the role of resilience and protective factors not just in managing imminent physical danger, but in helping us to identify and use our own strengths and support. This helps us build on our coping skills and discover or fine-tune our sense of meaning and perspective.

Looking at this chart, what are some of the protective factors *you* identify with when you view the diagram; and are there areas that feel like vulnerabilities to you?

[Pause for response]

Here's another way to look at resiliency. Now, in the previous slide you saw that there were sort of layers of things: the closest layer or the closest inner circle being personal well-being, and then the people closest to you, and then went out in layers and layers to our larger environment. Here, we're looking at specific personal resiliency builders. So we start with the idea of our sense of identity, and then branching out from there all of equal value are things like strength of mind, positive thinking, strength of character, confidence, ability to bounce back, and mental reassurance.

What are some of the internal or personal traits that allow you to adapt or bounce back? Which of these do you see in yourself, and which of these factors can you identify as areas you'd like to strengthen?

[Pause for response]

The Brief Resilience Scale that we're looking at now was developed by some physicians and mental health folks and is really commonly used in medical settings, but it's been demonstrated as a reliable means of assessing a patient's capacity to bounce back from health-related stressors such as cardiac events or diagnosis with a chronic illness, such as diabetes or fibromyalgia. The initial research on this Brief Resilience Scale, or BRS, demonstrates that it's an effective tool for discovering a client's sense of their own ability to bounce back.

So use this following scale and use one number for each statement to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements. We're ranging from 1, meaning "strongly disagree," all the way up to 5, "strongly agree."

I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.

I have a hard time making it through stressful events.

It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.

It's hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.

I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.

I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life.

Now add the responses varying 1 to 5 for all six items, giving you a range from 6 to 30; and divide the total sum by the total number of questions answered. So we're going to look at our scores being our item average divided by 6. And again, you might want to just mark this for yourself; and at the end of the presentation, go back and revisit and see if your answers have changed as you get a better understanding of what it means to be resilient.

We're going to look at the next few slides being one more opportunity to do some reflection and self-assessment on resiliency. We're not going to take the time to go through this, but I just wanted to point it out so that you have a chance to look at another set of factors and another opportunity to do an exercise to do your own assessment and reflection. The idea here is, again, looking at *all* of the different tools that we call on and all of the different resources that impact our ability—both in our world external to us and to our own internal setting, so to speak—that impact our ability to bounce back from challenges and change.

Here, we're looking at relationships; service, in other words giving of ourselves to help other people or causes; humor; inner direction or spirituality; perceptiveness, your understanding of people and situations; independence, distancing from unhealthy people, situations, and autonomy; positive view of personal future; and flexibility, the ability to adjust to change and bend as necessary to cope with different situations.

Take another moment to look at this last section. Make a note or two to yourself about any time these factors made a difference in *your* coping with a stressful situation or crisis. When you think about those sorts of instances, they don't have to be huge and dramatic. We do use a lot of these tools every day and might not even notice all the subtle ways we adapt without even thinking about it. Take a moment to reflect whether a personal practice or working with a professional might be a valuable tool to help you discover your strengths and build on them, as well as build new muscles of resilience.

Let's do a little survey now to see how our listeners reacted to this:
Can you identify at least three resiliency responses you use on a regular basis?

Can you identify one or two areas from this list you'd like to enhance?
For the items you identified for enhancement, can you identify at least one next step to take towards enhancing that aspect?

[Pause for response]

Experts agree that the most powerful survival skill of resilient people is their positive attitude. Our attitudes are a function of our perception, the way we interpret the world around us. We give ourselves messages about our view of the world. These messages are called "self-talk." They have a profound influence on our feelings about ourselves, on our moods, behaviors, et cetera; and these messages can be positive or create upbeat attitudes, or they can be negative and fan the fires of pessimism.

Here's an example of self-talk: Lisa passes her boss in the hall, and her boss doesn't smile at her or say hello. Lisa immediately thinks, "I must have done something wrong. I must be in trouble. She must be angry with me. I'm not a good enough employee."

Lisa has personalized this situation and assumed that *she* is the cause of her boss's unfriendly behavior. Like Lisa, our self-talk can result in feeling upset, angry, or depressed; and our behavior for the remainder of the day might reflect those feelings or moods. We might avoid interaction not just with the boss but with other people. We might feel distracted. We might feel irritable. We might lose some self-confidence.

But if Lisa looks at her boss's behavior another way, she might consider that her boss could be absorbed in her own concerns. It's important to listen to the types of messages that you're sending yourself. Are they critical? For example:

"I should have . . ."

"I'm too (fill in the blank)."

"I'm not (fill in the blank) enough."

Are your thoughts self-deprecating or putdowns? Are they encouraging? Are they realistic? Perception creates the context for our response in terms of how we deal with a situation. It guides our physical, emotional, and behavioral decision-making.

Now, there are two types of perceptions that impact the way that we react to stress. We can either see stress or challenge as a challenge that we can overcome, or we see it as a roadblock that we can't go around, through, or over. If you see a stressful situation as a challenge, you're more likely to have a positive reaction to it. You're likely to feel more in control and to have some options. If you see stress as only a problem, you'll be more likely to suffer negative outcomes.

It's important to remember that our perception can vary between these two, much like the optical illusion in the lower right-hand corner of your screen, where we can see either two faces or one vase. Depending on where we direct our attention, we see one image more than the other. Sometimes when we look at something right away, we'll automatically pick up on one image or another without thinking about it.

Now, we all have a hard time with stress every now and then, even if we tend to see stressful situations as challenges. A great way to combat negative ways of dealing with stress is to use positive reframing. This is when we take a situation and instead of looking at it from a negative perception, we switch and look at it from a positive standpoint.

There *are* some situations that are farther from our control, and it's really important to keep these in mind. We look at these exceptions, things like chronic medical or mental health issues, harassment or abuse, or dysfunctions in the systems around us. Whether it's close in, in our family or workplace situation, or institutionalized oppression, difficult stories in the news, political attitudes and trends, we're all going to find ourselves confronted with issues in the world around us that are not personal to us but do impact us profoundly in personal ways—emotionally, practically, or both. And in these situations, it's *really* important to remember not to beat ourselves up when either personal or systemic issues have an impact on us.

If we're struggling, no matter how many resilient factors we're drawing on, no matter how many protective factors we have, no matter our familiarity or number of tools in our toolbox, it's really important to find support so we don't wind up losing confidence and giving up hope. Even in these

conditions, going back to the idea of looking at problems and challenges allows us to refocus on what *is* in our control and not to internalize blame for situations that are not of our making.

Let's talk a little bit about the effects of stress on us. Sometimes we don't even realize we're in a stressful situation until our reactions point in that direction. Stress can bring about a lot of different effects on the human mind and body. It can impact our emotions, cause mood swings, such as irritability, aggravation, depression, or feeling depleted. This can become really dangerous to us, because our emotions plan how we react physically.

Stress can impact our cognitive ability. It can cause us to lose concentration, forget things, become distracted from important tasks. At work, it can decrease our productivity.

Stress can also impact our behaviors. For example, stress could cause us to overeat, increase our consumption of caffeine or alcohol, decrease or stop our exercise routine, or disrupt our sleep habits.

Lastly, stress can also have a physiological effect on us. We might experience muscle tension, gastrointestinal concerns, headaches, or just simple fatigue.

Too much stress does cause physical and emotional symptoms. Think about how you feel when you're under stress. Knowing what your body reactions are in reaction to stress levels, you'll be better able to control it and alleviate it. Symptoms, again, of too much stress on yourself include headaches, more frequent colds or flu, sleep problems, anxiety, procrastination, problems concentrating, frustration, consistent fatigue or low energy, sweaty hands and feet, pounding heart, constant inner tension.

Now that we know the tremendous variety of ways that our minds and bodies and emotions can respond to stress, let's talk about some stress busters: some things that we can do in the moment, wherever we are, to decrease that tension, cope with it, and diffuse it a bit. These are some simple techniques that you can use to bust your stress. Depending on the

cause of your stress and what is comfortable for you, you'll be able to determine which of these techniques works best for you.

In an article posted on Medicine.com titled "Eight Immediate Stress Busters," Melissa Conrad Stoppler, an MD, suggests that there are eight quick and easy ways to reduce your stress while at work that will help provide some immediate relief. These are some of her suggestions: Practice letting go. Make the decision to not become angry or upset at something important; or just recognize your emotions for what they are; acknowledge them.

Breathe slowly and deeply. Before you outwardly react, take a couple of deep breaths—and we will discuss breathing techniques in more detail in a moment.

Try speaking more slowly than usual when you're overly stressed. This helps you think through your feelings more clearly and also react more rationally to the situation.

Use time management techniques. Taking care of just one small task you've been putting off can really energize you. This feeling of accomplishment can reduce your stress and give you momentum for what's next.

Go outside or step away from where you are for a quick break. Even a quick 5-minute trip outdoors can be rejuvenating and improve your overall attitude. It will also remove you from the stressful situation for some time to decompress.

Drink plenty of water, and eat small, healthful snacks. Hunger and dehydration can provoke aggressiveness and make the feelings of anxiety and stress exaggerated.

Check your posture. Hold your head and shoulders upright, and avoid slumping. Bad posture can lead to muscle tension, pain, and increased stress.

Lastly, plan some type of reward for yourself for the end of the day. Even if it's only a small reward, you need the time to recharge for the next day and decompress between work and home.

You may have noticed that behind all these stress-busting tips is self-awareness. Being aware of your feelings and tendencies will help you to avoid stress and even control it when it does occur.

Let's try to practice a little relaxation technique. When we do this, it helps us to avoid becoming overly stressed, helps us calm our thoughts and productively work through a stressful event, and enables you to end your day in a relaxing way. The next several slides are things that you will practice and find some really quick outcomes. Again, the issue of managing stress and becoming more resilient is something that you can start to work with right away. You can do it anywhere you are, as long as you're paying just a little bit of attention and pick up on those signs and symptoms that you experience.

So let's try a little diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing deeply is a relaxation technique mentioned in most literature on managing stress. Diaphragmatic breathing is a special breathing technique that teaches us to expand the diaphragm fully when inhaling in order to allow the lungs to expand and reach the diaphragm fully when we exhale. That means breathing from the belly and not your chest and nose, and this process slows respiration, which triggers a relaxation response in our bodies.

The first thing to do is take a step back to restore some calmness to body and mind. Since we understand that if you could relax you probably would, we offer these directions. If you can control your breathing, you'll have an easier time controlling your thoughts, and vice versa.

So sit back in your seat in a relaxed way. Put both feet flat on the floor if you're able to do that. Make your hands comfortable and close your eyes. Take a deep breath, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth. Breathe again, and repeat until you feel calm and settled.

Now, if you're in a meeting or you're in a situation where you can't close your eyes, you can take any of these steps. Do the best you can to set yourself up with these six steps; but again, any attempt to stop, focus on your breathing for a moment, is going to have some good effect.

The process of practicing progressive muscle relaxation trains us to recognize muscle tension by contracting a particular muscle and then relaxing that muscle. This two-step process promotes muscle relaxation, calm, and eliminates tension. Not only will your muscle quickly relax back to its previous state; it often becomes even more relaxed than when you

started. Repeating this throughout your body will result in relaxation. This technique, again, is easy to do. You can use it for all types of stressors, even if you're having trouble falling asleep at night.

Now, you'll notice that the directions here make an assumption that we're at home where we can lie down and have a long stretch of time to go through our bodies from our toes to our head. But you can really do this anywhere, again, in sort of smaller bites. So for our purposes, we're short on time, but we still want to have an experience of this technique.

Just go ahead and again get yourself settled and comfortable in your chair, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. And go ahead and tighten the muscles in your hands. Clench your fists for the count of four, and then release slowly.

[Pause for response]

Again, you can repeat this process with other muscles in your body. Focus on letting go of the tension in that muscle area, and then again finish with another few rounds of slow and even breathing. You may want to think about when you're in a stressful situation, where you feel tension. Is it in your face, your neck, your shoulders? Some people clench their fists or grind their jaw. Again, when you notice where those particular tension points are for you, you can engage in this practice, and you'll find that the tension really does release.

Let's do another quick check-in about our own ways of handling stress. Which statement best describes your reaction when you are faced with stress or change:

- A. I take a deep breath and move ahead.
- B. I smile and think, "Oh, well."
- C. I get angry and vent to anyone who will listen.
- D. I cry, and I want to run and hide.

Let's talk a little bit about change. Whether good or bad, the change that we make deliberately, or change that happens to us or around us, change does have an impact on our physical and emotional well-being. I talk to people every day who are going through changes, either of their own

making or, again, change that has sought them out. And what they say to me almost across the board, almost as a reflex, is to say, "Ugh, I hate change." Why do we default to that? We all react differently to various kinds of change. Our reactions are based on our own genetic predisposition, our view of the situation, and our past experiences.

Change *does* create stress. Stress is the reaction to our perception or belief that we can't cope with an increased demand. When we face change head on, we experience many feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that are normal responses—*normal* responses—to the stress created by the change. Most people tend to respond in predictable ways: fear of the unknown, perceived risk—and those risks can include things like falling behind on bills or losing our job or creating distress in a relationship. There may be a sense that we're losing control, we're outside our comfort zone, or our routines are disrupted.

Feeling like we have inadequate or inaccurate information can also contribute to a sense of incompetence and self-doubt. And again, there's that risk of perceived loss, such as a loss of security, relationship, trust, or competence.

Change can trigger a sense of loss. We might feel as though we're losing part of ourselves: our image, our sense of our role, even our identity and sense of self-worth. Change can challenge our dreams, beliefs, and assumptions about the world. If we believe, for example, that the world is a safe place and suddenly there's a shooting in our town, it's easy to be shocked. Our vision of the world is turned upside down. If work is a place where we go every day and we count on its consistency, job loss or restructuring, the departure of a colleague or manager, or even a promotion can disrupt our sense of equilibrium.

Loss is connected to feelings of grief. It's important to let yourself experience those feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that accompany grieving. It's not a comfortable place to be, but it *is* necessary in order to learn and let go and move on. We can often just try to keep calm and carry on at a moment of loss. That's a protective instinct. Again, it's a normal reaction. But it *is* important to let those feelings be expressed, because without addressing them directly, they can come knocking on our doors

later in the guise of physical symptoms, irritability, anger, or sadness that seem to come out of nowhere but really are just a delayed reaction to an event that we have tried to move past without processing those feelings.

The three phases of change: Again, they move in this direction. You see that there's an arrow here that covers all three of these stages, which means they don't happen neatly one after another in discrete chunks. They actually all sort of bleed and mix into each other and then move forward from there.

So our initial reactions are the emotional phase—and sometimes, again, we try to push those feelings away and continue to try and function as normal. So that red box may turn up in the middle of either of the other two parts of the process.

The intermediate reaction is our intellectual reaction, where we're trying to make sense and meaning of things.

And then the reaction of acceptance. This is where we have sort of integrated the change and our feelings and understandings about them into the way that we interact with the world.

Let's look a little bit at the range of emotions that we can have in an initial reaction to change. We might feel shock and disbelief; anger; sadness, grief, and loss; guilt; anxiety and uncertainty; change in the trust level of ourselves and the world around us; confused thoughts; fatigue; and resistance.

The behaviors that go along with anger and resentment can include blaming others, finger-pointing, or cynicism. For example, we can feel:
"Sure, it's OK for *you* to say that; you're not the one who'll be out of a job."
"How could they do this to me?"
"How could she die and leave me?"

Anger can be both directed inwardly or outwardly. Anger directed inwardly that's not addressed can turn into depression, and anger that's directed outwardly and not resolved may be projected onto coworkers, family members, friends, or even your household pet or your cell phone. As reality

sets in, a person can develop a sense of deep absorption and turning inward. You can ask a lot of questions that are tough to resolve on your own, and these thoughts can spiral to create an ongoing anxiety or sense of pervasive angst or worry.

Different circumstances can also bring about guilt. If someone loses his or her job, we can feel guilt about not being a good provider. Guilt can be present for the layoff survivor as well—for example, "I still have a job, but I feel terrible that my colleague doesn't." As survivors, we may feel that we're on the list for the next round of layoffs or restructuring, and there are concerns, of course, about increased workloads and the need to put in more time at work and whether we'll be able to rise to the challenge.

People going through change can beat themselves up for not trying hard enough or for disappointing the people around them. Guilt may also show up for someone who's lost a loved one—for example, thoughts like: "I didn't try hard enough to get along with this person."
"I wasn't good enough to him or her."
"I wish I had been able to spend more time."

Resistance to change can result in increased stress, reduced productivity, increased susceptibility to physical illness, less focus, and more accidents. Foggy thinking may be present as you learn new processes.

Following the initial shock and emotional impact of change, we start trying to make sense of new circumstances and move towards the next phase: the intellectual phase. During this part of the process, we're moving beyond that initial reactive emotional response. It doesn't mean that we stop feeling emotions, but alongside them, we begin to make a conscious decision to move forward. We're working to define the situation in terms of personal meaning, allowing our thoughts to begin to crystallize and take form.

We also may be seeking to learn more in an effort to adapt and work to integrate a sense of restored balance. The tasks involved in this part of the process include voicing your thoughts, whether that's speaking to a friend, a family member, a professional counselor, a pastor, or even just writing things down in a journal. We make a conscious decision to let go of the past. That does not mean pretending as though whatever has happened

hasn't happened. It just means not defining ourselves by that change. We seek balance in our lives in whatever way works for us. We define the new situation, and we continue to learn.

The acceptance phase—and notice that the header on this slide says "Final Healthy Reaction." I would really argue that this whole process is a healthy one. It's when we get bogged down that there is something to be concerned about. And again, moving through those first two phases may not be comfortable, may not be easy, it may not go smoothly, but they *are* a normal process of moving through loss and change.

Moving into this phase of acceptance is when we start to integrate the work of the two previous phases into day-to-day life. That involves establishing clear objectives, being proactive, looking for opportunities, reframing the situation, focusing on the positive, and, again, being able to take care of yourself and others.

There are a few notes about this that I just want to touch base on so that we can really wrap our heads around what all this looks like and how to get there. In this acceptance phase, the kinds of things we'll be working on include clarifying goals, and this can really help us to adapt to change. By knowing what you want and what you value, you can begin to create a vision of the kind of future you desire and integrate the meaning of the change that you're going through into what happens next in life and where you want to head.

For example, if you are worried about losing your job or leaving your job because for one reason or another it's not a good fit anymore, your goal might be one of the following:

Change careers

Seek another position if a field you are currently in isn't working for you anymore

Start your own business

Go back to school to get more training

During the first phase of the change process, it might not be feasible to set goals. You may really need to deal with your feelings and reactions to change *before* you can objectively think about the future. As we mentioned

earlier, during times of change we often lose a sense of ourselves—that is, the role and our self-image—our sense of ourselves. If a person has lost a job, failed at a major endeavor, become critically ill, or experienced the end of a relationship, that individual might suffer from a loss of self-esteem. Sometimes we can overidentify one aspect of life with whole being.

For instance, the suffering of a woman facing divorce might be particularly acute if she considered her role as wife the cornerstone of her identity. Likewise, job loss is most agonizing for someone who feels that he or she *is* the job. It may be helpful in situations like this not only to strive to take care of ourselves in a healthy fashion, but to reach out and assist others attempting to cope as well. Again, the timing of this is really important. Any time that you've been on a plane, you know that when they go over the safety instructions and they get to the part where we're talking about a change in air pressure where we might need an oxygen mask, what does everyone say in those instructions? "Put your own mask on first."

If you get to a point in this process where you feel like, literally and figuratively, your breathing has come back to normal, that's the time to consider whether reaching out to someone else to be of assistance can be a good next step for us.

Another useful strategy is to identify core values. Rather than looking at yourself as an employee or a spouse or a child, see yourself as a mixture of abilities: creative, logical, good with people, analytical, generous, and so forth. These traits are the ones you value about yourself, and they don't go away no matter what role we are or aren't playing at any particular point in our day or in our lives. Then, no matter what external changes occur, you can always hold on to those core values; go back to center. They comprise who we are.

Some additional tips for responding to change: There are a lot of things, again, that we can do proactively to manage this process. First, seek support from friends and family as you're coping with the emotional changes and corresponding stress. Again, it can take a little bit of stepping back and deliberation to make sure that you find the right people. Not everyone feels able to cope with emotions. Not everyone feels like they can

respond. People will feel worried about saying the wrong thing. So there's a little bit of risk inherent in this, and think about the people who you trust.

Also, give yourself and them a little leeway if you're having a conversation about your emotions and your distress for the first time with someone. It can be a little awkward; the road can be a little bumpy. But if you keep at it and remember that being emotional is a difficult place to be in—and trying to figure out how those conversations work the best for you and for the person you're asking for support can smooth those bumps out considerably.

Focus on the positive. Remember to think about what you *can* do, not just what you can't do. If change is work-related, avoid getting caught up in rumors and rehashing the unfairness of it all over and over. It will only make you feel worse and less capable of successfully managing the change. That doesn't mean not talking about it. It does mean having the intention when you're talking about it of finding solutions, finding ways to address the problems, and not just sort of digging yourself into a rut of rehashing those concerns over and over again without being in the service of change.

Look at all your options. It's important to understand the full range of choices you have. Brainstorming your options can help. You and a trusted friend can sit together and jot down ideas, probable or improbable, that might enable you to reach your goals. Then try to find one useful aspect of each idea that you've generated. Decide which ideas make the best sense for your situation. When you sit down to do this brainstorming, *everything* is allowed on the table. The only rule here is you don't get to "yes, but" anything that comes to mind. Write it all down, because you never know where something might take you.

Learn about the new situation. The more you know about the new circumstances, the better equipped you are to handle it successfully. Find and read information relevant to the change, and talk with others who have experienced similar situations.

Now go ahead and take a look at your responses to the surveys that we've spent some time with today, taking all of this in and seeing if any of your

responses have changed. Just a quick reminder, that included slides 4, 6, 12, and 21. You can also go back and take a look at this after. These are all really working documents. Our attitudes may change from time to time and stressor to stressor, and it's interesting to go back and take our temperatures every once in a while and just see what comes to mind. This can help us, again, refocus in any set of circumstances, see what kind of strengths we can draw on, see where our perceptions lie; and this gives us again those options for ways to manage stress and change a little better.

In conclusion, we acknowledge our feelings; know that stress and change are normal occurrences in life. How they affect you is determined by how you prepare for and respond to both.

Develop a plan. Establish goals and identify the steps for goal achievement. Aids in keeping stress at bay, and that allows you to feel a sense of control over outcomes.

Reduce stress. Take time out every day to engage in stress management, challenge mental barriers to successful stress management, and embrace change.

Take steps to care for yourself. A balanced lifestyle is essential to the successful navigation of both stress and change. Remember, balance is key.

Lastly, seek professional help if needed. Working with a mental health professional or a counselor through the Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, may assist you in developing and sticking to a plan.

Thanks, everybody, for joining us today.

Thank you so much, Laurie.

Before Laurie wraps us up in just a moment, I do want to mention a couple quick things. As Laurie mentioned, it's important to know that you do have—at no cost to you—your Employee Assistance Program, or your EAP you may hear it referred to. We're here for you 24/7, so feel free to reach out. If you do not have or do not know your contact information for your EAP, your Human Resources Department would have that.

There a lot of things we can assist with, whether it be stress management techniques and things that can build resilience or coping with change, or even some more practical needs. Maybe you need a doggy day care or some child care or elder care resources. So feel free to reach out to us. We're here 24/7.

Additionally, I do want to remind folks that we do have a copy of the slide deck. I know Laurie mentioned some of those resilience ratings and scales that you can go back to and reflect on and move through. Feel free to download the PDF copy of the slide deck; we have that in the "Event Resources" section on the left.

We do also have a section titled "Questions: Ask a Question." If you have any questions on this topic, of course your EAP is there 24/7; but you're also welcome to type in a question and send it to us. We'll receive it via email, and we'll reply via email typically within a couple days depending on the nature of your questions. So just wanted to let you know that.

Thank you, everyone for joining.

Laurie, thank you so much for sharing a lot of great information and strategies with us today. I will pass it back to you to wrap us up then.

Thanks so much, Katie.

Again, I would really recommend a couple of quick takeaways to keep in mind in addition to everything we've talked about today. The last two slides in the deck that you'll be able to download are some resources. All of the things that I went over and mentioned from other research and other people's work are noted here in the works cited. There are a lot of websites here; so if you want to look into any of this information and learn more—including all the stuff about quizzes and reflective tools—those are all available by link here, and, again, continued on the second page.

You may also want to do a little looking around for stress management or change management apps on your phone. There are lots and lots of those available, and they incorporate a lot of the relaxation stuff that we talked about today, as well as things like gratitude journals and mood trackers—all

things, again, that take very little time but have a really powerful and quick effect on changing our moods and perceptions.

Lastly, again, if you have any questions, feel free to email us. We'll be happy to respond. Or reach out to your Employee Assistance Program. Even if you're not quite sure where to start, the people on the receiving end on the phone are really well equipped to help you talk through and think through the things that are on your mind and the places that you may need some assistance. They can walk you through some options that are personalized to you.

Again, thanks, everybody, for joining us today. Go take a little walk; take a few deep breaths; do a little stretching; and I hope you have a really easy rest of your day. Thanks, and bye-bye.