

Hello, I'd like to welcome everyone to our online seminar on "Self-Care: Remaining Resilient." I know this is a very important and helpful topic. Before I introduce our presenter today, I'm going to mention just a couple of quick housekeeping items so you can get the most out of the session that you're listening to.

If you take a look on the left-hand side of your screen, you'll see a couple of different options. One of those is an "Event Resources" section. We've uploaded a copy of the slide deck that our presenter is using, and you can download that and have a copy for yourself or to share with someone.

We also have an FAQ or Frequently Asked Questions section. Maybe you have a question about getting a certificate, or something's not working and you're looking for a technical support number. That will be in the FAQ section as well.

Finally, you'll see a section entitled "Ask a Question." If you have any questions on this topic, you can send those to us using that feature; and I'll share a little bit more about that when we get to the end of our presentation.

For today's topic on self-care and remaining resilient, we're very pleased to have Larry Waxman presenting today's topic. He's a licensed professional counselor currently practicing in Raleigh, North Carolina; and he has been practicing counseling for about the last 15 years. He completed his undergrad degree at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and his master's degree at John F. Kennedy University in California. He holds a master's degree in counseling psychology with an emphasis on holistic studies, so it's certainly something that fits very well with our topic today.

Specifically, while completing his master's degree, Larry learned extensively about the mind–body connection; and he really specializes in that work and emphasizes utilizing relaxation techniques, meditation, mindfulness, and grounding exercises—some things that he's going to briefly touch on in today's session.

In his spare time, Larry enjoys spending quality time with his family and playing and watching sports, and was even a semiprofessional baseball player. He is also an avid reef keeper and has a saltwater coral reef aquarium. We're pleased to have Larry here and presenting this topic.

Larry, I'm going to go ahead and pass it to you to get us started.

Perfect. Thank you, Katie.

Welcome, everyone, and thank you for tuning in today and joining us. Today we're going to talk about one of the most important things to maintain a healthy system, as well as your mind and body. It is self-care. Self-care is the ability or the action of taking care of oneself: taking time for you, letting out that stress, and just knowing that you're important and making sure of that and that happens.

Some learning objectives we're going to discuss today include: recognize the physical and emotional signs of stress, assess your own life balance situation, reduce the stress of transitioning from home to work, create an effective family unit, implement time management skills, and become mindful of the benefits of self-care. We're also going to do an example of self-care, such as a relaxation method, and also talk about the importance of making sure you implement self-care in your daily lives.

We're going to start with a survey question. We want to know how you all are thinking, including this question: Which statement best describes your response to stress? A, "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 want to run and hide"; or, E, "I think about solutions to the problem."

Now Katie will explain how you submit your answers to the survey question. Katie?

Great, thank you, Larry. I've sent out the survey. Everyone should see that pop up automatically on your screen. You can select which of those responses best describes your response to stress currently. Then once you've closed that out, you'll see in a moment where all of the other participants have fallen and selected their options.

Thank you, Larry, I'll go ahead and pass it back to you now.

All right, perfect. Thank you, Katie.

So now we're going to talk about stress. Everyone has heard about stress. Everyone knows what stress is. But do we know that there is both good and bad stress?

The answer is both. There is both good and bad stress. Good stress contributes to productivity, makes you work harder, makes you care more, makes you put in that extra mile. It also contributes to success. Stress means we care. When we become overworked or our heart starts racing or we have pressure, that means we care about things and we want to try to make it happen—make the success an outcome. So it makes us work harder to achieve that success.

Unfortunately, it's how we handle that stress that determines the outcome of how it reacts and the productivity and success. Sometimes it turns to bad stress. Bad stress can drain productivity, and it negatively affects ability to focus. When we are stressed and we become overwhelmed, our agitation increases; let's just say our heart rate increases, sweaty palms, and we're just overwhelmed. And the more we're agitated, the more our arousal increases, the less our cognition happens, which means our ability to think and focus decreases tremendously.

Have you ever been flustered where a thousand things are happening at one time in our head? We have all these thoughts and racing and racing and racing, and we don't know what to do. We can't think straight. This is what happens. This is created by that bad stress. We're going to talk about the effects of stress on you. There are emotional effects, cognitive effects, behavioral effects, and physiological effects.

Symptoms of stress: Stress can play such an important role on our health. It can have a positive effect on our health or also detrimental effect on our health:

Headaches: You know, sometimes we get headaches every day at a certain point in the day or at night when we're trying to wind down.

More frequent cold or flu: Your immune system is triggered by stress. The more stressed-out we are, the less our immune system is able to fight off the sicknesses and illnesses like the cold or flu.

Sleep problems: We have issues with sleep sometimes when we're very stressed out, either thinking about what happened today or tomorrow or in the future. Sometimes we wake up in the middle of the night thinking, or sometimes we have trouble getting to sleep. This is created by stress and how we handle stress.

General anxiety: General anxiety is worry, worry about outcomes, worry about what we did. This is caused by stress—what we think about stress and how we react to it.

Problems concentrating: This is again talking about when the arousal increases—or agitation—our stress levels increase. Our ability to focus and concentrate greatly diminishes.

Frustration: When we're stressed, we become frustrated. When we become frustrated, we can take it out on others. We react to our frustrations, and it doesn't look good for us. We can create situations in which it could be an embarrassment to us, all because of our stress throughout the whole day and maybe yesterday and the day before, or stress about what's coming in the future. It's how we handle the stress that plays a key role on our reactions.

Constant fatigue or low energy: Stress takes a toll on us. It takes a toll on our energy. It takes a lot of energy to be stressed. The feeling of having 20 pounds, 50 pounds on your shoulders—have you ever experienced that? We hold it in. It takes a toll on our bodies. It leads to constant fatigue and also just drained. Have you ever felt drained? It could be because of stress.

What we talked about earlier is when we become agitated and it increases stress, sometimes our heart starts racing; we get sweaty palms; and just overall arousal increases.

Some more symptoms of stress: It's how we react to stress that determines our health. *Our health* means internally and externally, and it could affect our relationship with others. It could lead to temper or outbursts. Sometimes we react to people that are most close to us or we're most comfortable with. We hold it in and hold it in and hold it in; and then when we get home, we explode and let out our stress. This causes severe tension in relations with others.

Moodiness and irritability: Again, this isn't as severe as temper, but it's still ways that we let out that we're stressed and not comfortable.

Hyperventilation: This is when we get the sweaty palms. If you've heard of panic attacks, this is when panic attacks happen. We become so overwhelmed where it's hard to breathe.

Inability to concentrate: Again, when the agitation increases, the cognition and thoughts and ability to concentrate really diminish.

Compulsive eating: Some people react to stress in different ways, and we'll talk about healthy ways and unhealthy ways to react to stress. One of the unhealthy ways is compulsive eating.

Inability to relax: Sometimes we're all stressed out, and it's so hard to relax, to calm down, because we had such a crazy and hectic workday where it's just really, really, really tough to let that energy go.

Increased defensiveness: Sometimes, again, with the temper outbursts, with the moodiness and irritability, we become defensive. This can lead to attacking others or not even listening to others and what they're saying, just thinking that they're just attacking us.

Constant inner tension: the struggle internally, a lot of agitation, a lot of thoughts—sometimes it leads to negative thinking about oneself. It's tough, the stress that we put on ourselves and the stress that we might not even be aware of that we put into ourselves, into our body.

The key to handling stress: Stress is going to happen—stress at work, stress at home. Stress is when things become overwhelmed and there's pressure—pressure in life, pressure to succeed at one's job. The key to handling this is finding a balance.

Right now what I want you all to do is take out a piece of paper. I want you to list all the activities and responsibilities that you're dealing with in both your personal and professional lives. These can include work; family time. Include taking care of the children, taking care of extended family—a lot of responsibilities. I want you to write down approximately how much time you spend per week on each one of these things. These can include work and career; home and family; spirituality; community service; time alone; time

with friends; time educating yourself; and exercise, nutrition; and also very important is sleep.

Just take a couple more minutes and write down the time you spend doing these activities. Remember it's important to remember that we only have a 24-hour day. Sometimes we need a 26-hour day to get everything done; but that's tough, and we have to learn how to manage our time. We'll talk about that in a little bit, but it's really managing our stress during the day. The more you handle your stress, the more productive you can be; and the more productive you can be, the calmer you are and thus healthier you are and have healthy relationships with others.

Now we're going to talk about determining your work–life balance. Does a work–life balance mean a 50/50 balance, work and life? Is it achievement and enjoyment—is that what the other 50 is? How can you work with the parameters of your current situation to ensure that everyone, including yourself, is benefiting?

The key is looking at and analyzing what is around you and are we satisfying the needs of others; but also, very important, is satisfying yourself. What areas specifically need balancing? Are we spending too much time in one thing and not enough time in another? Are we doing so much where we're only sleeping four hours a night?

It's things to really pay attention to, and these characteristics of our daily lives we need to pay attention to and figure out, "OK, I need to take a little less of this and more of this to find that work balance."

In what ways is your strategy working well—your self-care? It's so important to actually think about it. What would you change? This is putting a plan into play. Without a plan, there's less action; and with less action, less health. Unbalanced people stress.

How to identify and accept that you are stressed: We have to first realize what is going on for us, inside and outside. There are three ways we deal with stress, or we deal with stress in three phases: short-term phases, medium-term phases, and long-term phases.

Short-term phases are quick-fix methods. They're help to relax, to calm the reaction to stress. I want to introduce you to one quick-fix method. It only

takes about a minute; and it's about calming the stress down, reducing the agitation, reducing the arousal, and overall feeling calmer and healthier.

I want you to close your eyes and put your feet firmly on the ground. Just put everything aside, and just notice you're sitting in the chair or wherever you're sitting or standing. And I want you to feel your feet touching the ground. Feel the connection your left foot is making to the ground; and switch your attention to your right foot, and notice the connection your right foot is making to the ground. Feel both feet touching the ground at the same time.

Bring your attention back to your left foot touching the ground, then your right foot touching the ground. Just feel that connection. Now feel both feet touching the ground at the same time. Feel your toes and your heels of both feet touching the ground at the same time. Take a deep breath in and out [breathing sound]. Bring your attention back to both feet touching the ground at the same time as you just notice and focus on the feeling your feet are to the ground. Notice that connection your feet are making to the ground.

Perfect. I want you to slowly open your eyes and come back to the awareness of the room. How do you feel? Just notice—a little calmer, a little more relaxed? It's quick fixes like these that help us when we're stressed out, we're unable to focus, our agitation is high. Just close your eyes and just feel your feet on the ground. Or if you're in an office setting and you can't just sit down and close your eyes, you can do this at your desk with your eyes open. Just pay attention to your feet touching the ground. Just notice that connection. Or if you're walking, just notice your feet touching the ground each step you take.

This helps you get in your body more, feeling in your body more. And when you feel more in your body, you're less in your head; and you're able to concentrate more and relax a little bit.

Other ways of quick-fix methods are increasing your use of the senses; for example, if we touch something or smell something or even look outside and look at a tree and really pay attention to the leaves. This helps us get out of our head and into the present moment, because our body and mind can only focus on one thing at a time. Despite us thinking that we can do many things at one time, we can only concentrate on one thing at a time.

Thus, if we bring our awareness to one specific thing using one of our senses, this will help us. And when we do this, it helps us relax and reduce our stress and overall calm our agitation levels.

This is about self-care, doing things to take care of yourself, because if you're stressed and overwhelmed and agitated, are you good to anybody? The key is being good to *you*.

Now we're going to talk about medium-term fixes. These are 10-minute methods. For example, go for a walk outside if you're very stressed out; read a magazine; grab a drink of water. It's taking yourself out of that current situation, taking a little break, and being more in present moment; and it relaxes you, and it puts you at ease more and reduces that stress. Self-care: It's key.

Now we're going to talk about long term. Long-term fixes are preventative and deal with future stresses. This is the plan. This is the plan, what we're going to do to balance our work–life situations and how we can really reduce that overall stress in our lives.

Now, stress will come up. This is when the quick-fix methods or the short-term or the medium-term come into play; but it's key to develop a long-term plan.

So when we talk about stress, sometimes we have extreme stress where it overrules us, overruns us. The number 1 thing is don't let stress rule your life. Too many times I've heard about people getting severely sick, severely ill—even heart attacks—because of all the stress they put on their life and on themselves. Relationships have ended because of stress and tension in relationships. It's so important to do something about the stress.

Self-care: Concentrate on caring for yourself. A lot of times, we care about others. We pay attention to others, and we don't pay attention to ourselves. It's important to take time for yourself. *You* are important. Without *you* being relaxed, how can you take care of others the way they need to be taken care of? How can you do your job? How can you do other roles in your life as greatly as you can without you being at your best?

Sometimes we need to talk about it with others. We need to let it out. The more we hold stress in, the less we're caring about stress; and the less we're letting it out, thus it takes a toll on our health.

Keep your schedule as routine as possible. Some people don't like routines; they like spur-of-the-moment activities. Those are good as far as activities to reduce stress; but overall, the more you're organized, the more your schedule is routine, the less you're stressed and the more you're relaxed, because it's predictable. The more unpredictable things become, the more overwhelmed you become and the more stressed you become.

Allow time for hobbies. Hobbies are important self-care, because you're doing something for yourself. For me, like Katie said earlier, I enjoy saltwater reef keeping. I like going to the fish store; I like taking care of my fish tank; and also looking at the coral and examining the coral and also the fish as well. Yet certain things that we like to do, we forget about because life gets in the way. Remember, sometimes we need to be important; and sometimes we need to do things that we like to do. So don't be afraid to venture in a hobby and think about it.

Participate in physical fitness activities. Physical fitness is a great way—a short-term fix or even a 10-minute fix—to reduce that stress.

Utilize resources: To some, spiritual resources are a very excellent way to reduce stress.

Do not turn to alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, or sweet foods. These things are negative ways to deal with stress. In the short term, one might think that it's beneficial or feels good; but in the end, it's detrimental. We then think negatively about, oh, we drank alcohol last night and we have repercussions about that or tobacco with illnesses or even caffeine. Maybe we're drinking caffeine to feel good, so now we can't sleep; and then we're tired the next day. Or sweet foods: Maybe in the moment we have comfort foods that help us feel safer, feel relaxed; but in the end, they lead to unhealthy weight and also negative effects on the body, perhaps diabetes.

Think about positive ways. Sometimes these short-term fixes—the alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, or sweet foods—are very quick. They don't take time at all, but they're very harmful to you in the long term. Remember, long-term effects might be a little more difficult and challenging to do. Now they might

take a little more effort, but they're much more beneficial long-term. These short-term solutions might be easier to access in the short term, but are much harder on you in the long term. And think about yourself. What lasts longer, the short term or the long term?

If you can, postpone major life decisions. Major life decisions can be very, very stressful for oneself. Major life decisions take a lot of organization and planning. Make sure you have time for those.

Don't hesitate to accept help. There is help out there for you. Sometimes we can't do everything alone, and this is when we reach out for help. We'll talk about other resources, such as, your EAP is a great resource for help.

Tips to improve reduction of stress:

Even at work, improve time management and organizational skills.

Relax/breathe deeply. Take a few minutes to relax and take deep breaths. If you're around people, maybe go into the bathroom and take a couple deep breaths. It helps you get more grounded, reduce the agitation, and it also helps to relax.

Take frequent short breaks. Now, some work only allows you a couple breaks throughout the day; but make sure to take them. Make sure to take them for you. Sometimes we need to plan them, and then other times we need to just feel our stress and feel, hey, we need to get up and walk around a little bit, and it's time to take a break.

Lighten up. Don't be afraid to laugh and smile. It's so helpful.

Spend time with optimistic people. This will help *you* be optimistic. The more negative people are, the more they feel tension, the more they feel down. And it takes more energy to feel sad or feel angry than to feel happy. Think about that.

Learn to listen. Listen to yourself; listen to your body's needs; listen to others when they talk about what *they* do to handle and reduce their stress.

Change your environment. Sometimes our environments can be very toxic for us. Sometimes we really need to think about change. We get stuck. This

is about self-care: planning to be unstuck and what we need to do to do that.

Don't sweat the small stuff. In life, sometimes we pay a lot of attention to the small stuff: details, the drama between people. We need to really focus on what's important to us and in our lives.

Get more sleep. This is so important. Sleep health helps us relax, reduce our agitation levels, calm our bodies, calm our systems, and is just overall so healthy for you. Make sure it's important. Make sure sleep is an important factor within you. Make sure you pay attention to it and even work to plan things. Pay attention to your caffeine use. If you're having trouble sleeping at night or waking up in the middle of the night, pay attention to even small things like caffeine use. When is the last time you're drinking caffeine?

Find a mentor. Find someone optimistic who has maybe even gone through similar things with stress and figured out a way to improve their self-care. Find someone that can help you. I like this quote by Peter Drucker. It talks about self-care—so important, so important.

Another survey we have is, I want to ask you the question about time management. It's so big in managing stress. The question is: My biggest issue with time management is A, planning; B, following a schedule; C, prioritizing; D, multitasking; E, all of the above; or, F, none of the above.

Now again I'm going to turn it over to Katie, who will instruct you how to answer and submit these answers.

Katie?

Thanks, Larry. I've gone ahead and sent that survey out to you, everyone. You should see that automatically pop up on your screen. Simply take a moment and select which of those is *your* biggest issue with time management, and then in a moment you'll see the results of where everyone has gone ahead and selected that. You can see where everybody else falls along those answers.

All right, I'll go ahead and pass us back to you to get us started on some time management tips.

Perfect. Thank you, Katie.

All right, we're going to talk about time management tips and time management process: plan, organize, staff, direct, and evaluate. This is the process to help you manage your time, reduce stress, an overall part of self-care:

Plan. Specify your goals. What do you want to accomplish? What do you want your self-care to look like?

Organize. Arrange activities to achieve your goals. What kind of things help you?

Staff. Ask for help. Take advantage of supportive programs; delegate tasks. This is huge. Reduce your agitation. You don't have to take the world on yourself.

Direct. Use positive reinforcement with others to help when you delegate tasks and even yourself. Reward yourself. Treat you to something when you *do* good. Treat you to something when you *are* relaxed, when you do this plan. Don't be afraid to pat yourself on the back.

Always evaluate. Monitor your attitude and behavior. Track your accomplishments. Track how your plan is going. Do you need to make tweaks to it, make some adjustments? It's all about care, and it's all about self-care.

One key thing that's very hard for some people is effectively delegating work. Some things that could help are:

Determining what tasks to delegate.

Choose the right person.

Request; ask. Don't order people around; you want the people to help you.

Give clear expectations and outcomes. Here's what you're looking for, and here's what it looks like when it's completed. This helps them know your expectations and what it looks like when they're done according to you.

Provide proper tools and training. Make sure they're prepared and they know how to do it and complete your tasks.

Give sincere recognition; give props to these people that are helping you. Positive reinforcement—people like that, people appreciate that, people want to be appreciated. Do you want to be appreciated?

Accept that it might be done differently. We all have different ways of doing things, but when you give the expectations and outcomes, it's all about the outcomes. Are the outcomes the same? That's what the key is.

Effective delegating at home: strategies for home, for example, getting chores done. We have a lot of responsibilities at home with children, with our spouses, and even the home itself. Some things to help are:

Call a family meeting, get organized, help each other know what they're doing.

Combine the tasks. Maybe someone can sweep the floor and take out the garbage at the same time.

Use incentives; it helps. Incentives help, especially with children. Incentives help with even yourself.

Rewards: Sometimes we do things, and we'd like rewards for it.

Use natural consequences. This is key if it doesn't happen.

Lower your standards. The key is it's done. If things aren't perfect, is it still OK? If there's one crumb, is it better than 100 crumbs that were on the table or on the floor?

Use the "10-minute" system. The 10-minute system is doing the chores—not spending all day doing the chores.

Consider hiring a cleaning service. If finances are OK and you might have room in the finances for it, it takes a *lot* more energy to clean, while maybe someone else can do the cleaning for you and maybe you guys can go play. Maybe your family can go play—or take time for you.

Effective strategies for work and play:

Use discretionary time; use time when you're not doing anything *to* play.

Set limits; boundaries are so important. Do you need to work 23 hours a day, or maybe you can put a boundary of "I'm only going to work 18 hours a day." That's taking care of you.

Communicate your needs; let others know how you feel and what's going on for you. It helps *them* understand that you need to take care of you.

Get support. Reach out. Reach out when needed, reach out when you're feeling—remember what we talked about earlier. Talk about what's going on for you. Let out your stress or frustrations and even your plan. Talk about your plans.

Be supportive. Be supportive of others with self-care. Your spouse: Be supportive when your spouse wants self-care, maybe alone time maybe to do their hobby.

Communication is number 1.

Tips for maintaining balance:

Distinguish between what can be controlled and what cannot be controlled. We put a lot of attention on things—on things that cannot be controlled. Things that cannot be controlled stress us out tremendously. Can we do anything about that? The key and one phrase I like is, "Control what you can control; everything else let flow." And let that sink in, and think about what that really, really means and ways and stressors that *you* take on that are controlled and things that cause you stress that are out of your control.

Remember that maintaining balance is an ongoing process. That plan, that self-care plan, putting it into play, and continuing to monitor your self-care plan is so important. It's on an ongoing basis. It's not a week; it's not a month, but years. Your future is endless. That's where the self-care process needs to be.

Regularly discuss how effectively each party is balancing work and personal priorities. Talk about it; discuss it; monitor yours; talk about others' and listen to others, and maybe you can be support for others as well.

Again, keep your sense of humor, and keep it in perspective. Smile, laugh—it is so healing.

Balance in relationships is necessary. However, self-care is the most important thing. You have to take care of yourself. Let's pretend your system or your family or unit is a house, and you're the foundation. It's so important to take care of that foundation. What happens when the foundation crumbles? What happens to the house? It's so important to take care of you, the foundation.

Pay attention to stress reducers. We wrote down earlier, what kind of benefits or stress reducers you can have or want to have or what you used to have. Let's bring those back. Let's make life enjoyable: things to remember and things to put in play.

Some more stress reducers or examples of these are:

Schedule downtime; schedule *you* time.

Try to maintain routines.

Know your limits and set limits; set your boundaries.

Get support from others.

One great resource that you have for support is your Employee Assistance Program. And, Katie, I'm going to turn it over to you. Can you please explain to these folks how to access their Employee Assistance Program?

Certainly, thank you so much, Larry. Sure, a little bit about your Employee Assistance Program. If you do not have that contact number, you can always reach out to your Human Resources Department for that. Your Employee Assistance Program, or EAP you may hear it referred to, is a great resource. It's at no cost to you whether it's questions, maybe some assistance. Maybe you're not doing so well managing stress right now and this presentation brought that to light, and you'd like some assistance,

some resources, someone to talk to. Your Employee Assistance Program is a great place to start; and, again, it's at no cost to you.

Your EAP may also have practical resources. Maybe you're moving, and you're looking for some apartments in the new area and would like some assistance with that. Again, your EAP is a great resource to start with. So I wanted to mention that.

Before I pass us back to Larry to kind of close us out with any final words he may have, I do want to thank everyone for joining. And I want to thank Larry for sharing a lot of great information, as well as practical examples with us.

I do want to remind folks there will be a brief survey when you log off, and we'd appreciate you taking 30 seconds to do that.

Then one final reminder: On the left-hand side of your screen, we have two options that you'll want to notice. One is the "Event Resources," if you want to download a copy of the slide deck Larry used. And then second is "Ask a Question." If you have any questions on this topic, you can simply type those in and "Send." We will receive them via e-mail and will reply back to you usually within just a couple of days via e-mail. But again, just remember that 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, your Employee Assistance is available to assist you.

Larry, I'm just going to pass it back to you. Any final words that you'd like to share to close us out today?

Thank you, Katie.

Please pay attention to *you*. Notice the stress. Notice the stress on your body; notice the tension in your shoulders. Make *you* important. Make you and being happy, relaxed, comfortable, and cared for important. One key thing you can do is make sure your needs are met. Communicate your needs, but also plan for your needs to get met. Self-care is so important; pay attention to you.

Thank you all for joining today. We appreciate it. If you have any questions, like Katie said, please submit them. Thank you for doing the survey as well, and have a great rest of your day.