UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE

PRESENTER

Laurie Kovens

Laurie R. Kovens, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in practice since 1993. She has served as a clinician in medical and employee assistance settings. She has worked with clients, families, community members, and co-workers to help them adapt in the face of ongoing physical, emotional, and organizational change. Laurie works with clients from a person-centered, strengths-based approach. Treatment orientation includes: short-term, solution-focused counseling, mindfulness, cognitive/behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, medical crisis counseling, narrative healthcare, and spiritual and psychodynamic counseling. Laurie is also an NASW-Certified Clinical Supervisor. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in writing with a focus on Narrative Healthcare. Laurie is a frequent presenter focusing on prevention and recovery from burnout, organizational management and development, resilience, and the use of writing and reflection for self-care and personal and professional growth.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Understand stress and the concept of resilience – What is it and how can we enhance resilience?
• Understand the protective factors and attributes of resilience
• Discuss emotional intelligence and its role in building resilience
• Identify effective coping strategies to lessen the effects of stress and to build resilience
“Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose.”
Maureen Killoran

Which statement best describes your response to stress?

A. “I take a deep breath and move ahead.”
B. “I smile and think, “Oh well…””
C. “I get angry and vent to anyone that will listen.”
D. “I cry and want to run and hide.”
E. “I think about solutions to the problem.”

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON YOU

- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Physiological
SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- Headaches
- More frequent cold or flu
- Sleep problems
- General anxiety
- Problems concentrating
- Frustration
- Constant fatigue or low energy
- Sweaty hands or feet
- Pounding heart

MORE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- Temper outbursts
- Moodiness and irritability
- Increased aggression
- Hyperventilation
- Inability to concentrate
- Compulsive eating
- Inability to relax
- Increased defensiveness
- Constant inner tension

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: WHAT IS IT?

The ability to recognize and manage emotions in ourselves and others through:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness (empathy)
- Relationship management
MANAGING EMOTIONS

- Label feelings
- Take personal responsibility for managing emotions
- Understand that emotional responses are unique

THE IMPACT OF PERCEPTION AND INTERPRETATION

**Neural Axes Response**

**Adverse Incident**
Event is experienced through a collection of information from our senses.
Information travels along our sensory pathways.

**INTERPRETATIONS**

- Sensory information gets interpreted cognitively via Neocortex.
- Effectively integrated via Limbic System.

- Interpretation → Threatening
- Interpretation → Non-Threatening

- Sympathetic activation
- Parasympathetic activation
- Release of Acetylcholine which creates calming, restorative functions (Evaluation)

**Resilience**

A mechanical characteristic defining the impact resistance of a material. Resilience is a special case of toughness (impact resistance) of a metal, corresponding (for its limit) to the energy needed to break it.

(The resilience of metals, which varies with temperature, is determined by causing the impact rupture of a standard test specimen.)

\[ W_r = \frac{E}{S} \]
RESILIENCE IS...

Based on this initial definition, how would you rate your resilience at this time?

1. Not resilient
2. Somewhat resilient
3. Neutral
4. Resilient
5. Very resilient

THE RESILIENCE CONTINUUM

Before  |   STRESSOR   | After

Building Resilience | Before | After | Restoring Normalcy
REAL TIME RESILIENCE

COGNITIVE APPROACH TO RESILIENCE: RECOGNIZING AND CHALLENGING OUR "THINKING TRAPS"

Mind reading trap
“Me” trap
“Them” trap
Catastrophizing trap
Helplessness trap

COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO RESILIENCE: REAL TIME RESILIENCE

1. Evidence
2. Positive Reframing
3. Plan
**ASSESSING OUR OWN RESILIENCY**

**Personal Resiliency Builders**

*Individual Qualities that Facilitate Resiliency*

Put a + by the top three or four resiliency builders you use most often. Ask yourself how you have used these in the past or currently use them. Think of how you can best apply these resiliency builders to current life problems, crises, or stressors.

(Optional) You can then put a * by one or two resiliency builders you think you should add to your personal repertoire.

- **Relationships** — Sociaility/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
- **Service** — Giving of yourself to help other people, animals, organizations, and/or social causes
- **Humor** — Having and using a good sense of humor
- **Inner Direction** — Basing choices/decisions on internal evaluation (internal locus of control)
- **Perceptiveness** — Insightful understanding of people and situations
- **Independence** — “Adapting” distancing from unhealthy people and situations/autonomy
- **Positive View of Personal Future** — Optimism; expecting a positive future
- **Flexibility** — Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations

Excerpted from [http://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-resiliency-quiz/](http://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-resiliency-quiz/)

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**CALM BREATHING**

- Shifts focus from outside to inside
- Controls stressful emotions and anxiety
- Increases energy and awareness
- Harmonizes the nervous system
- Diverts attention to a safe place
- Centers the mind and quiets mental chatter

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BREATHING TECHNIQUE

1. Begin with regular breathing
2. Focus on your breath
3. Observe inhalation and exhalation
4. Inhale for four (4) counts
5. Hold for seven (7) counts
6. Exhale for eight (8) counts
7. Breathe normally

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

• Schedule downtime
• Try to maintain routines
• Know your limits
• Get support
IN CLOSING

We all encounter stressful situations.

Our thinking can both negatively and positively impact our feelings and behaviors.

Resilience is a characteristic that can be developed over time.

Utilizing self-care practices and mindfulness techniques can assist us in more effectively coping with stress and building resilience.

FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

CONTACT YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

WORKS CITED


