Resiliency – How To Thrive During Changing Times

Presented by: Jan Sturges, M.Ed., LPC  
Caregiving Coordinator  
UA Life & Work Connections

Adapting to Change

• Identify losses – allow time for grief
• Identify forces for/against change – people and resources
• Analyze impact and scope – people and resources
• Simplify life and practice “letting go” of old ideas and habits
• Identify improvements resulting from change
• Spend time with supportive people
  × Develop and maintain “intimate” relationships
  × Set aside quality time
  × Create a “family-like” environment
  × Talk out your problems
  × Stay close to familiar people and places while you adapt
• Give yourself time to change/allow for discomfort during change process
• Seek and establish a spiritual connection/sense of belonging
• Write a mission statement:
  × Personal values
  × Consider gaps between values and current reality/activities
  × Use gaps to identify solutions
  × Develop/implement a plan (who, what, where, when)

Being Resilient

• Maintain a balance between physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual self:
  × Practice moderation and ‘mindfulness’ (intentional activity)
  × Make relaxation and alone time a priority
• Maintain integrity, sense of self in relation to world around you (personal boundaries)
  × Be self aware/self accepting
  × Be confident with your personal assets, accept failures
• Communication skills – Use “I” statements or expressions that foster dialogue
• Be action-oriented
• Practice problem-solving skills, be creative:
  × Assess, brainstorm, plan, implement, evaluate
• Plan ahead, gather and organize your resources:
  × Personal – Intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual, time
  × Other – People, work, finances, environmental, community connections
• Be a survivor:
  × Assess and act quickly
  × Stay focused, centered, able to function amid confusion/chaos
  × Be self–reliant, but able to accept help when necessary
• Be open to new ideas, possibilities, opportunities:
  ✗ Integrate new concepts into current reality
  ✗ Be flexible
  ✗ Allow for diversity, co-existent but differing ideas
  ✗ Adjust and adapt
• Balance self help with helping others (altruism and volunteering)
• Practice serendipity – create a positive outcome out of unpleasant experiences
  ✗ Change adversity into inspiration
  ✗ Focus on a glass half full, not half empty
• Always have HOPE

Relieving Stress
• Health:
  ✗ Get plenty of: rest, exercise
  ✗ Eat a balanced diet
  ✗ Use alcohol and drugs in moderation, or not at all
  ✗ Have regular physical examinations
• Communications skills:
  ✗ Talk things out
  ✗ Be assertive (“I” statements), not blaming (“You” statements)
  ✗ Encourage and accept help from others
• Stay connected to family, friends, work colleagues, community projects
• Include a pet in your life
• Join a support group when necessary
• Enjoy and/or pursue artistic interests – music, theater, reading, photography
• Do something just for you: Take a class, get a massage, go out to dinner with a friend
• Learn to relax:
  ✗ Practice deep breathing/centering exercises, active/passive muscle relaxation/biofeedback
  ✗ Identify a safe place, or personal retreat spot that’s all your own
  ✗ Create positive affirmations or visualizations that make you feel safe, happy
  ✗ Realize that relaxation is a right, not a privilege – take a hot bath

Anger, Fear and Guilt
• Accept healthy anger and fear as emotions of survival
• Discuss feelings with others
• Confront your fears/speak your mind calmly
• Count to 10 or remove yourself from situations that cannot be improved or out of your control
• Resist “magical thinking” (things that are really out of your control), or “all or nothing” thoughts
• Don’t be a perfectionist/ have the courage to be imperfect
• Maintain integrity (balance between values and behaviors)
• Accept some guilt as a consequence of inappropriate behavior/restoration of appropriate behavior
  ✗ Integrity is an antidote for guilt
• Get professional help for extended feelings of depression (helpless, hopeless)

Compiled by Jan Sturges, M.Ed., LPC