



This month let's talk about..... Building Resiliency During These Trying Times

Never in our lives have we experienced anything like the Coronavirus and how it has altered our world. And frankly..., we're getting tired of it. The being careful and downright meticulous in doing the very simple things like shopping for groceries and being near others. The added strain that the stress of the unknown can bring. There are times we may feel that we are struggling with depression or anxiety or both. The "what ifs" can be overwhelming. Emotions are high and the normal just isn't "normal" anymore. I'm someone who likes to have friends and family over, for brunch, a movie night, a birthday celebration, or even have someone in to make a repair! It's so strange to talk to my sister on my driveway or spend time with my mother with a glass window between us. It hurts my heart to be so separate. And yet, I know that there are ways to build resilience in these times. Actually, it's especially important to look for ways to build what I call, "a reserve" to manage any difficult times such as these. Think for a minute. What puts life back into you? What helps you feel just a little bit better? Regular deep breathing and taking walks has become a way of life for me. Working in my garden, praying, being quiet with a good book or working with my cat in my lap helps to center me, to build resilience. Sometimes anxiety rises more days than others, yet the more we look to build that reserve, the better able we will be to handle the "what if's", the fear of a resurgence or the pressures of daily life. What feeds your soul? What warms your heart? What helps you feel just a little bit better? Do that. Build your reserve. It will offer you strength during these uncertain times. God bless. — Mary Frank

Libby's Place (From the Desk of Executive Director, Libby Traynor)

Dear Staff, The theme of our SPARK newsletter is Resiliency. Many people think that resiliency is like a trait you are born with—like your eye color. That isn't the case. Resiliency is something you can learn and develop. In our current times of upheaval and stress, now more than ever we all need to develop resiliency skills to weather the ongoing stress that COVID has burdened us with. There is no easy way through this crisis, but building coping skills and resilience will help you work through the emotional upheaval triggered by COVID-19.

Helpful Hints & Stuff (By Eileen Keegan, Director of Human Resources)

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause us strong emotions. Here are some thoughts during this anxiety-filled and unprecedented moment: KINDNESS-everyone is doing their best. No one has done this before, making much of our lives messy, glitchy and imperfect. And that's okay. Try to be kind and patient with one another. CHECK-INS- go the extra mile and check in with others asking, "Doing ok? Anything I can do?" via text, email or phone can make a disorienting season more enjoyable. GRATITUDE-Wrap others in gratitude. A simple, "I appreciate you", might be the extra push someone needs to make it through the day. WELLNESS-Stay informed but unplug often for your own mental wellness. It's ok to be nervous or sad or angry. We are human. Let's allow each other to be human. JOY-It's okay to seek joy and beauty during these dark times. Watch something funny on TV, enjoy some good music, take your time and savor a good book. Don't let it all get to you. Write in a journal, pray, meditate or exercise. FUTURE-Look around you in the present, look inward into your heart, look above for help and peace. There will be a future after the worst has passed, and we have healed as a world. Don't lose sight of that. At this time, more than ever, WE APPRECIATE EACH AND EVERY AABR STAFF MEMBER.



Libby's Place (Continued)

I recently read the article below offering practical suggestions to developing resiliency during this pandemic. I hope you find the information useful.

*Resilience is the process of adapting in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, or other significant sources of stress. Becoming resilient helps you work through difficult events, but it also helps you grow and improve your life even in the absence of adversity. Some people refer to resilience as “bouncing back,” but it’s more than that. Being resilient includes learning from past experiences and developing new coping strategies moving forward. Like building a muscle, increasing your resilience requires time and dedication. If you don’t put in the work, it might atrophy. **People are conditioned to think of resilience as a personality trait (either you have it or you don’t), but this isn’t the case. With intention and practice, you can become more resilient, no matter your age.***

There isn’t one specific strategy to use to build resilience. It’s a process of establishing connections, coping with stress, adjusting your thought process, and fostering physical wellness.

Step 1: Build Your Connections

We all need support in life, not just in a crisis. Building a support network of empathetic and compassionate people helps you feel less alone in times of need. Different age groups may try different approaches.

Older adults: *Some older adults are comfortable with technology. If this is the case, many churches, synagogues, and other religious houses of worship are livestreaming services and creating groups on platforms like Zoom. Book groups or other social clubs can also move to Zoom or other online platforms. Video chats with friends and family can help with those connections. If older adults are not comfortable with technology, phone calls and letters are essential.*

Adults: *Juggling working from home, handling finances, parenting, and distance learning is difficult and doesn’t leave a lot of time for connecting with other adults. This is particularly true for first responders and other essential workers working long hours to combat this crisis. Make time for video chats to “see” other people and join virtual meetups when you can. While the exhaustion of stress might trick you into thinking that isolating yourself is best, feeling supported by your friends will help you through this difficult time.*

Children and teens: *Balance is always important, but now is the time to err on the side of allowing more digital connections so kids can maintain friendships. Some parental supervision may still be necessary, but all age groups can benefit from connecting with friends, family, and classmates they haven’t been able to see in person for a while.*



Step 2: Learn Coping Skills

We all need to hone our coping skills during this crisis so that we can work through the emotional shifts we are likely to experience in an adaptive way. There are a few coping strategies that tend to work across age groups.

Deep breathing -Deep breathing helps calm the central nervous system and works whether you're experiencing symptoms of panic or general discomfort. Try square breathing: Trace a square in your palm and count as you draw each line: Inhale, two, three, four; hold, two, three, four; exhale, two, three, four; hold, two, three, four.

Meditation and visualization- A number of apps can assist with getting into the habit of clearing your mind of stress and visualizing positive outcomes, such as **Calm** for adults and teens, and **MyLife: Stop, Breathe, Think** and **Kids** for little ones.

Exercise Daily- exercise is a natural stress reliever. Get out for walks or try a livestream exercise class.

Step 3: Adjust Your Thought Process

It's difficult to maintain an optimistic outlook when the future feels so uncertain, but positive thinking will help you focus on hope and visualize better times ahead. When you feel flooded with negative thoughts, own them. When you say your thoughts out loud and talk through them, they lose their power. State your negative thought, think about where it stems from, and offer three positive alternative thoughts. Everyone from older adults to young children can learn to do this.

Step 4: Focus on Physical Wellness

Stress can hobble your immune system and make you more susceptible to illness. This can, in turn, negatively affect your emotional state. Maintaining your physical wellness plays an important role in building resilience. When you take a whole-person approach to self-care, you care for both your body and your mind. Get back to basics to get into the habit of self-care:

Prioritize sleep- According to the National Sleep Foundation, people have different sleep needs at different ages, but sleep is universally affected when you're under stress, regardless of your age. Older adults tend to log fewer hours at night (7 to 8 hours), but may need a nap during the day. Adults need 7 to 9 hours, teens need 8 to 10, and children need 9 to 11. Be sure to maintain a consistent sleep schedule during this time.

Focus on healthy eating -If you crave salty or sweet foods when you're under stress, you're not alone. Many people want comfort food in times of crisis; but balanced, healthy eating is best for your physical health. Plan ahead for a steady rotation of nutritious meals.

Maintain hydration- Believe it or not, dehydration can exacerbate symptoms of stress. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

Remain active- In addition to daily exercise, do fun or mentally stimulating activities to enrich your mind and spirit. Play an online card game with a friend or family member, work on a puzzle, spend time gardening, or find another hobby /skill that engages your whole self.

You can take small steps each day to build your resilience muscles, and this will help you through this crisis as well as any future adversity.

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/coronavirus/how-to-build-your-resilience-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>



Education & Trainings'

HOT PIX of the MONTH

- Movie: Frozen II, Troop Zero
- Music/CD: Six Feet Apart (Luke Combs)
- Book: Becoming (Michelle Obama)
- Theater/Play: The Lion King
- Restaurant: TAKE OUT!!!
- Fragrance: Sugar Lychee (by Fresh)
- Food: Black Bean Soup over Brown Rice
- Stress Reliever: Walks in Nature, Jazz, Gardening, Deep breathing, Beach time!

Baked Chicken Parmesan Dip

- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
 - salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
 - 1 pinch cayenne pepper, or to taste
 - 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 - 3 tablespoons cold water
 - 8 ounces grated mozzarella cheese
 - 1 ounce grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
 - 2 cups prepared marinara sauce
 - 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, or to taste
 - 2 tablespoons grated mozzarella cheese, or to taste
 - 2 tablespoons grated Monterey Jack cheese, or to taste
 - 1 teaspoon (packed) coarsely chopped fresh Italian parsley
1. Drain ricotta cheese in a mesh strainer set over a bowl in the refrigerator, 8 hours to overnight.
 2. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F (230 degrees C)
 3. Season chicken with salt, pepper, and cayenne.
 4. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Cook chicken breasts in the hot oil until browned and just barely cooked through, about 6 minutes per side. Turn off heat and splash in cold water, stirring to deglaze. Transfer chicken and pan drippings into a bowl to let cool, about 5 minutes.



Cocktails by Kathy

HAKKATINI

Ingredients:

- 1 oz. Vodka
- 1 oz. Orange liqueur
- 1/4 oz. Italian red bitter liqueur (such as Campari)
- 3/4 oz. Pressed apple juice

Directions: Combine all ingredients into a shaker with ice. Shake to mix ingredients and fine strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a twist of orange.



5. Combine drained ricotta cheese, salt, pepper, 8 ounces mozzarella cheese, 8 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, and 1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese in a bowl. Mix with a spoon to evenly distribute. Add chicken, the pan drippings, and marinara sauce. Mix with a fork until just combined.
6. Combine bread crumbs and remaining olive oil in the bowl used for the chicken and mix to coat.
7. Transfer chicken mixture to an ungreased baking dish. Top with oiled crumbs, 2 tablespoons Parmesan, 2 tablespoons mozzarella, and 2 tablespoons Monterey Jack cheese.
8. Bake in the center of the preheated oven until browned and bubbly, about 20 minutes.
9. Let rest for 10 minutes. Garnish with parsley and serve with a spoon or spreading knife.

Notes: While breasts are the classic cut to use for chicken Parmesan, this would also work beautifully with skinless, boneless thighs, or you can pick up a rotisserie chicken and pull the meat off.

You can use cream cheese instead of ricotta, if you like.



Heroes Work Here!

Hospital personnel have been hailed, and rightly so, as emerging Heroes during the Coronavirus Pandemic. At the same time, at AABR, we have seen our own employees step up to the plate, like never before, with the sole purpose of keeping the people we support healthy, well and ultimately, alive. So many performed heroic self-sacrificing, noble acts, even to the detriment of themselves. So many impressed those around them. So many made it their personal mission to battle this disease on behalf of those who needed them...and won. Not one soul, passed without a fight. Not one soul passed without those around them giving their all, every minute of every day. For this we are utterly grateful.

Early on as the Coronavirus Pandemic began, Residential Manager, Esan Torrington, selflessly dropped off a staff person first, on the way to the Emergency Room with an Individual who had the Virus, so that the employee would not contract the illness. Then after a number of weeks when he was cleared to return to work, he was raring to get back to the facility. In his absence Assistant Manager, KerryAnn Phinn, had been holding down the fort as staff and Individuals alike were ill. Not only was she present, but, she began teaching those she supported to practice social distancing, safety and patience while finding ways to restore good health to the residents in her care.

Meanwhile Residential Manager of the Oscar Garcia Residence on Staten Island, Allison Bristol, worked endless hours when ALL of the residences Direct Support Professionals were out for two weeks as the Pandemic unfolded. Ms. Bristol was at the residence every single day offering nursing care to keep the people she supports as comfortable as possible when they were so very sick, caring for their every need to get them back to good health. Whether it was keeping them hydrated with orange juice, rubbing Vicks on their chests for comfort or keeping them entertained when they began to feel better, she was there. Assistant Manager, Ezimna Holder of the same residence also worked hard to care for the Individuals, side-by-side with Allison until she was no longer able. Then there's the Assistant Manager of the Grand Avenue Residence, Sonja Daniels. Associate Director of Residence, Learie Carrington reported to The Advance, that Ms. Daniels managed the responsibilities of two management positions while keeping up with the duties of her own role, for six weeks in their absence. Mr. Carrington added, "She never complained once. She just took it all in stride without missing a beat".

Agency Drivers, Peter Davilar, Mertland Nicholson and Anand Apana doubled their schedules and stepped in to transport day program staff to residences from borough to borough so that employees wouldn't have to endure long and unsafe rides on public transportation. Day program staff altered most everything about their day to work in residences. Throughout this crisis, Director of Maintenance, Luis Reynoso and Director of Nursing, Alina Akhsanov personally delivered the much needed PPE to each residence, time and time again. Nurse, Natalie Paul dropped everything to come right away to complete an assessment, to provide medical care or to go to nursing homes to advocate on behalf of Individuals recovering there.

Residential Manager, Christopher Jones escorted those entrusted in his care, who were ill with COVID-19 to emergency rooms. There he advocated for their ongoing medical treatment with hospital personnel until all of the all residents could come home and recover fully. Assistant Manager, Fayann James of Audrey Sachs Residence kept it positive as she taught people how to stay safe with PPE. Associate Director of Residence, Tania Moreta said it best when she stated, "Everyone at AABR is extraordinary. Their dedication is unwavering". Ms. Moreta covered shifts herself, instructing as she went, on how to remain safe and healthy. As she saw staff working shift after shift after shift. She added, "I really appreciate the staff that pulled through and worked not for the pay, but, for the love". To all who have and continue to provide the utmost of care and love during these times, we thank you.

AABR, Inc.

Where to go for HELP



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

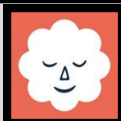
For Self-Care & Emotional Support-

The Best Free Meditation Apps you can Download



Insight Timer -#1 Free App for Sleep, Anxiety and Stress. 14 million people +

www.headspace.com/ny—Provides meditation and mindfulness resources to New Yorkers. Free guided meditations, at-home mindfulness exercises and additional resources to help with rising stress & anxiety.



My Life: Stop, Breathe and Think—a custom designed meditation app based on your feelings, state of mind and body to come up with a specific meditation for you.



Smiling Mind—Very short meditations to help adults and young people develop healthy coping skills, concentration & a sense of calm.

**New York
Mental Health
Hotline**

1-844-863-9314

Free emotional support,
consultations and/or
referrals to a provider
8AM-10PM
Every day.

Comprehensive Counseling Center –offering Tele-Therapy in areas including depression, anxiety, grief and bereavement (718) 830-0246, (516) 594-0247
Accepts United Health Care, Medicare, etc.



GriefShare.com—free Grief & Bereavement Groups
24/7 New York State HOPEline (OASAS)
Call 1-877-8-HOPENY or text 467369 Re:Addiction

PsychHub—A free resource hub to help people address their mental health needs during the COVID-19

Center for Suicide Awareness—
Free emotional support for ANY difficulty/struggle
Text HOPELINE (4673-5463) to 741741

United Health Care—Call the number on the back of your Insurance Card to get in touch with professionally trained mental health experts.

Safe Horizon Hotline: 1-800-621-4673 (HOPE) or www.safehorizon.org
For victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, emergency housing, etc.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)



**Just need to talk? Overwhelmed? Stressed out?
We're here for you.**

SPARK Employee Assistance Program
Mary Frank, LCSW (718) 517-0360
Caron Gelfand, LCSW, ACSW (516) 319-8618
Confidential, Short Term Counseling, Referral
For All AABR Employees