

April 10, 2020

To All Residents and Staff:

I just read an article about how to be resilient during this time of crisis. I think I can sum it up, and maybe it will help you continue to face the realities of this day, with bright hope for our future together.

There are five key ingredients, according to many years of research (going all the way back to the **Venetians** and the **Black Death** of the mid 1300s), for building resiliency. Okay, it all started in Venice in the 1300s, but most of the actual research has been done from the time of World War II, forward.

How to be resilient and get safely through this crisis emotionally unharmed:

1. **Use Positive Self-Talk.** Most of us say between 300 and 1000 words to ourselves each minute. We all spend a lot of that time thinking about what we say to others. To stay strong during this challenging time, give a little more thought to what you say to YOURSELF and... say nice things to yourself, be positive. (The US Navy Seal program added this concept to their SEAL training, and their graduation percentage rate went up a full 10%. It works!)
2. **Get some physical exercise.** It is easier to be strong when you feel strong, and doing physical exercise tells your brain "I am strong!" Routinely stressing your body a little, will make it easier for your body, and your mind, to handle outlier stressors, like our present situation.
3. **Make it a "game."** Obstacles in life can make us want to quit or give up. Games drive us forward, we keep playing in order to win. Stop seeing the challenges of today as inconvenient obstacles, and see them as challenges to overcome on the way to the goal. The goal- COVID ends!
4. **Find humor and laugh a bit.** Whether combat veterans, or cancer patients are the subjects, humor and laughter are always named as a key element by the survivors. So... you just got permission to spend time on YouTube looking at goofy, stupid, funny, videos. Now, it's not a "waste of time." It is a part of your "*Neo-Venetian Scientific Resiliency Plan*"!
5. **Embrace Meaning in your life.** This one is the easiest for us, and it turns out to be the very most important one that researchers have found. We all need to be connected to a community. Common sense might tell you that those who survive best, put themselves first in a crisis. You would be wrong. The survivors of tragedy and crisis are the ones who, almost without exception, put OTHERS first. They stay connected. They cared about their community surviving.

Well, that is a lot to take in, but for today remember that the last one is the most important, so come out and pick up your meals, attend those exercise classes in the hallways. Play bingo in our social distanced settings, but do stay connected. You can do that with family by having them drive by and wave and "holler," or by getting on the phone or computer. Just do it. Connect with others and make it your "game" to help them have a better day. In the end, according to the research, it is YOU who will win when you focus on others more so than on yourself. (Still Hopes' secret sauce revealed here!)

I hope this is helpful, and as always, stay safe and "lock arms"... but from 6 feet away ☺

Grateful to be among you,

Danny

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