STAYING STRONG

Fostering Emotional Well-Being & Resilience

Kirsti V. Thompson
Director of Operations
Give an Hour California
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

• What stressors are you currently experiencing?

• What stressors are ahead?

• What challenges do you face in managing your day to day life?
* ACADEMIC PRESSURE

* PEER PRESSURE

* MONEY

* FAMILY

* BALANCING SCHOOL, SPORTS, WORK

* RELATIONSHIP CONCERNS

* ETC……..
BOTTOM LINE: LIFE IS HARD

*Take advantage of resources available to you

*Learn skills that help you cope with current & future challenges

*While we are each unique with our own challenges, there are some universal skills that can help… regardless of the situation or problem
Our emotional well-being is just as important as our physical well-being.
GOAL: TO BE RESILIENT

What is resilience? How would you define it?
“Basically, resilience means the ability to bounce back after being stretched”

-American Psychological Association

Nature AND Nurture
FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RESILIENCE:

- Physical
- Social
- Cognitive
- Mindfulness/Meditation/Mind Quietting
PHYSICAL

Sleep

Eat

Exercise
SLEEP:

How many hours should we get?

Did you get that many hours last night?

Do you wake up feeling rested? (and if not, how does that affect your resilience?)
BUT I DON’T HAVE TIME TO SLEEP!:

- Do you have time to get sick?
- Did you have time to waste reading and studying information that you cannot remember?
- Do you have time for emotional distress, relational conflict, challenges that seem more overwhelming than they are?

MAYBE YOU DON’T HAVE TIME TO NOT SLEEP!?
WANT TO SLEEP BUT CAN’T?:

- Avoid caffeine late in the day
- Avoid heavy eating right before bed
- Exercise: But not right before bed
- Transition to sleep: avoid screens or stressful material
- Try to maintain the same basic sleep schedule
- If you can’t sleep, get up, don’t fight it, and make up for it later.
EXERCISE:

Exercise promotes resilience; 150 minutes per week recommended

Aerobic exercise is especially good for mood struggles

What about relaxation? Yoga, hiking…
HEALTHY EATING:

Reminders:

- Eat regularly
- Stay hydrated
- Balance the “junk”
- Limit caffeine
SOCIAL:

- **ENGAGE:** You can’t be healthy if your relationships are not…

- **CHECK IN WITH OTHERS:**
  * Friends
  * Family
  * Counselors
RESILIENCE.

This, too, shall pass.
Your plan

Reality
• *Expect* challenges as a part of life vs. being shocked that your life doesn’t go smoothly

• Learn to rally and have a “This too shall pass” perspective
AVOID RIGID THINKING

- Perfectionism
- All-or-nothing
- Catastrophic thinking
AVOID CRITICAL THINKING

• Don’t insult self

• Watch inner dialog

• Realize that thoughts are not always reality---Try “I’m having the thought that... [I’m going to fail]”
WHAT IS YOUR MINDSET

Fixed Mind Set:

• Life Sucks

• It’s never going to get better.

• I know I’m going to fail

• I just can’t take it anymore.

Growth mindset:

I CAN DO HARD THINGS
Simply choosing to write down 5 things a day that you are grateful for can improve:

- **Psychological well-being**: mood, energy, etc
- **Physical well-being**: sleep, fewer symptoms
- **Social well-being**: better relationships
MINDFULNESS:

• Intentional, purposeful
• Self-aware
• In the present
• Problem-solving

“I am feeling anxious about this situation. I am going to turn this off and go for a walk.”

On walk, take deep breaths, take in the surroundings.....
MINDFULNESS MEDITATION:

Discreet periods of meditation often focused on paying attention to breath, body, and the present moment.
MINDFULNESS RESEARCH:

• Positively affects brain patterns underlying day to day anxiety, stress, depression, and irritability.

• Regular meditators see doctors less often; spend fewer days in the hospital

• Memory improves, creativity increases, reaction times become faster.
MINDFULNESS APPS:

• Headspace
• Calm
• Buddhify
• Take A Chill
SO ASSESS YOURSELF...WHERE CAN YOU IMPROVE?

• Physical Health?

• Social Connectedness?

• How You Think?

• Living in the Present?
FINAL THOUGHTS:

• Your resilience is dynamic…things can get better.

• Do SOMETHING!!

• Remind yourself that these changes are connected to your goals

• Seek help if you’re struggling:
  • Parents & Family
  • Teachers
  • Counselors
  • Mentors
  • Therapists