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STRESS RESILIENCE



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Love to Nurture is a relationship-driven, grace-based, trauma-wise style of parenting that holds sacred the dignity of every child, the uniqueness of every child, the emotional safety of every child, and the developmental stage of every child.



STRESS RESILIENCE

VIDEO: HOW TO MAKE STRESS YOUR FRIEND

By Kelly McGonigal | To find this video Google “How to make stress your friend Ted Talk”

Stress. It makes your heart pound, your breathing quicken and your forehead sweat. But while stress has been made into a public health enemy, new research suggests that stress may only be bad for you if you believe that to be the case. Psychologist Kelly McGonigal urges us to see stress as a positive, and introduces us to an unsung mechanism for stress reduction: reaching out to others.

**WHEN YOU CHANGE
YOUR MIND ABOUT
STRESS, YOU CAN
CHANGE YOUR BODY'S
RESPONSE TO STRESS.**

SOCIAL SUPPORT

By CMHA BC and Anxiety Canada

Are there people in your life you can turn to when you need to talk to someone? Someone to help when your basement is flooded or when you need someone to watch the kids? Or maybe just someone you can call when something really great happens and you want to share the news?

Social support is the physical and emotional comfort given to you by your family, friends, co-workers and others. It's knowing that you are part of a community of people who love and care for you, value you and think well of you. Support can come in many different forms. There are four main types of social support:

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

This is what people often think of when they talk about social support. People are emotionally supportive when they tell you that they care about you. For example, if you separated from your partner or lost your job, a close friend might call every day for the first few weeks afterwards just to see how you are doing and to let you know that they care.

PRACTICAL HELP

People who care about you might give you practical help such as gifts of money or food, help with cooking or child care, or help moving house. This kind of support helps you complete tasks in your daily life.

SHARING POINTS OF VIEW

Some people help by sharing their point of view on a particular situation, or sharing how they might handle a situation. When you share points of view, you can develop a better understanding of a situation and the best way to handle it. For example, if you tell a friend about difficulties you are having with your teenage son, she may offer a point of view you hadn't considered. This may help you to better address the situation with your child.

SHARING INFORMATION

It can be very helpful when family, friends or even experts give factual information about a particular situation. For example, a friend who recently married might provide information on the cost of their wedding, or a cancer survivor might provide information on different types of cancer treatments.

GETTING YOUR SUPPORT NEEDS MET

Many of the people in your life can provide social support. These can include your parents, spouse or partner, children, siblings, other family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, health professionals and sometimes even strangers.

Different people in your life may provide different kinds of support, so it's unlikely that one person can provide all the support you need. For example, your parents may be great with childcare, and your best friend may give great relationship advice.

The best support often comes from the people you are closest to in your life. Receiving support from the people you are close to may be more beneficial to your physical and emotional health than support from people you don't know well.

WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT SOCIAL SUPPORT?

Research shows that social support provides important benefits to our physical and emotional health. Stress may be related to a number of health concerns, from mental health problems to chronic health problems like heart disease and migraines. However, social support can help protect people from the harmful effects of stress. When dealing with a stressful situation, people are less likely to report stress-related health problems when they feel like they have support from others.



WHEN MIGHT I WANT TO CHANGE MY SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK?

While some people maintain the same set of friends, co-workers and contact with family members over their entire adult lives, many others make shifts to their support networks. Here are some of the reasons why.

Not Enough Support

You may wish to bring new people into your support network if you find that you need more people in your life who can provide you with support, or if you're missing people in areas that are important to you. For example, you may have good emotional support, but you may want to meet more people who share your interests.

Change in Lifestyle

People often make changes to their support network when they experience important life changes. Here are just a few examples of changes that may require a shift in support:

- **Parenthood:** People often change their social life significantly when they become parents. They may spend more of their time with other parents.
- **Divorce or death of a spouse:** Married people often socialize with other married people. Following divorce or the death of a spouse, your usual social network may no longer be a good fit for your needs.
- **Change in behavior:** People who smoke, drink or use drugs on a regular basis may socialize with others who do the same. When you cut back or quit, you may decide to make a new friends to help you maintain your goals.
- **New hobby or activity:** When you take up a new activity, like running or painting, you may want to find others who share your interests.

Need for a Like-Minded Community

You may wish to join a community or communities that you identify with, or make friends with people who share your values.

Need for Specialized Knowledge or Expert Opinion

You may wish to seek out extra help when you experience something that your existing support network isn't familiar with. People with lived experience may be better able to provide empathy, support and understanding. The knowledge that we aren't alone can also help you cope with feeling of blame or shame.

Formal support, like an education group or professional, may be helpful when you need highly specialized or technical information. For example, you may need specialized information if you or a loved one is diagnosed with a health problem.

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Social support plays an important role in mental health and substance use problems. For example, people living with depression report lower levels of social support than others. Specifically, people living with depression tend to report fewer supportive friends, less contact with their friends, less satisfaction with their friends and relatives, lower marital satisfaction and confide less in their partners.

It's likely that lack of social support and feelings of loneliness make people more vulnerable to mental health or substance use problems like depression. However, many people pull back from others when they're experiencing mental health or substance use problems. In this way, mental health or substance use problems can lead to problems with social support and aggravate feelings of loneliness.

Reconnecting with others in healthy, supportive ways is often an important component of managing most mental health or substance use problems.

HOW DO I IMPROVE MY SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK?

1. Don't be Afraid to Take Social Risks

Seeking out new people and introducing yourself to them may be a useful way to meet others. For example, you may decide to go to a party, even though you won't know anyone else at the event. Informal gatherings, community centers, recreational courses or clubs, volunteer positions, schools and workplaces are also common places to meet people.

2. Get More From the Support You Have

It's easy to assume that other people know what you need, but this usually isn't true. You may need to tell others what you need. Be as specific as possible in your requests. However, be careful not to overwhelm your support providers.

3. Reach Out

Ask the people you know to help you broaden your networks. If you have recently become single, ask your friends to introduce you to other single people your age.





4. Create New Opportunities

You may create new opportunities to meet others when you step outside of your usual activities. For example, you may meet new people when you join a club or group or get involved in an organization.

5. Let Go of Unhealthy Ties

Walking away from any relationship is painful—even when the relationship is causing harm—but it may be necessary. For example, if you're trying to quit drinking and your friends only ever want to spend time in bars and clubs, you may decide to let them go. Use your judgment, though. It may be possible to spend less time with certain people without fully abandoning the friendship.

6. Make a Plan

Figure out what supports you need and figure out how you might find it.

7. Be a Joiner

Sometimes, the best way to find the support you need is through a support group. If you need support for a highly specific problem, like managing a health problem, a formal support group may be the best option.

8. Be Patient

Making new friends can take time. You may need to meet many new people to make just one new friend. Building intimacy also takes time. It can take several months to feel close to someone and feel like you can count on their support.

9. Avoid Negative Relationships

Negative relationships are hard on your emotional health. Some negative aspects may be obvious, such as abuse. Other times, they may be more subtle, such as excessive dependence or control issues. You aren't responsible for the other person's behavior, but it can still take a toll on your own well-being. You may find yourself dealing with the problems in unhealthy ways. It can be hard to avoid certain negative relationships, especially when these relationships are with family members. In this case, it may be best to limit the amount of contact with these people (or buffer that contact with other helpful supporters), and avoid relying on them for support.

10. Take Care of Your Relationships

You're more likely to build strong friendships if you are a good friend, too. Keep in touch with your support network, offer support to others when they need it and let them know that you appreciate them.

SUPPORT SURVEY

How much support do you have in your life? Take the quiz here: <http://bit.ly/feb20sg> (scroll down until you see the survey)



HOW SELF-COMPASSION CAN HELP YOU COPE WITH ADVERSITY: 3 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR RESILIENCE

By Hanna Hart

Innovators talk about the importance of being willing to “fail fast and iterate.” Like coaches, they espouse a growth mindset that embraces failure as part of the learning process. I am a big proponent of the growth mindset, but I know that it’s easy to talk in intellectual terms about failure and it is a lot harder to actually fail. Moving on and learning from failures requires resilience—the capacity to recover quickly from or adapt to adversity, trauma or stress. One component of resilience is “grit,” a species of toughness, passion and perseverance in the face of adversity. It’s “the drive that keeps you on a difficult task over a sustained period of time.” Think of Mattie Ross in *True Grit*, a 14-year old girl who travels long distances on horseback and endures many trials along the way to avenge her father’s death.

If only we could just pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and move on! But the truth is that failure hurts. When you don’t get the job or the promotion or when something you worked on fails, you are likely to feel disappointed, frustrated, sad, embarrassed and maybe scared. And if you are like many driven professionals, you are probably pretty hard on yourself—self-critical, focusing on your flaws and mistakes. You may even have found that this self-critique helps you to push yourself to excel. But maybe you are paying a price inside. Perhaps your inner voice is judgmental and harsh: “How could I have done/said that?” Your confidence and self-esteem get bruised. Your thoughts spiral around what you should have done differently or you may beat yourself up about your mistakes. When you are in such a state of self-judgment, it is hard to learn or move on. Grit alone may not be enough.

Self-compassion offers another path to resilience and to finding your growth mindset.

Self-compassion is an antidote to self-judgment, just as curiosity is an antidote to fear. According to psychologist and researcher Kristin Neff, it involves “treating ourselves kindly, like we would a close friend we cared about. Rather than making global evaluations of ourselves as ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ self-compassion involves generating kindness toward ourselves as imperfect humans, and learning to be present with the inevitable struggles of life with greater ease. It motivates us to make needed changes in our lives not because we’re worthless or inadequate, but because we care about ourselves and want to lessen our suffering.”

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Neff’s early research compared self-compassion to self-esteem as a source of resilience. Self-esteem relates to one’s feeling of self-worth and is often built upon accomplishment or comparison to others. Unfortunately, because self-esteem is based on an external assessment of our worth, it can desert us when we most need it—when we fail. We are left with feelings of inadequacy and self-judgment. Self-compassion is there for us. As director of the Stanford Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and

Education, Emma Seppälä notes, “With self-compassion, you value yourself not because you’ve judged yourself positively and others negatively but because you’re intrinsically deserving of care and concern like everyone else. Where self-esteem leaves us powerless and distraught, self-compassion is at the heart of empowerment, learning, and inner strength.” Self-compassion has also been linked to resilience in adolescents and young adults and to reduced effects of trauma among Iraq war veterans.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN ELEMENTS TO SELF-COMPASSION

- **Self-kindness instead of self-judgment.**
Rather than judging ourselves to be less inadequate and beating ourselves up inside, we treat ourselves with kindness.
- **Common humanity instead of isolation.**
When we suffer, it is easy to feel alone, but through self-compassion, we connect to the fact that all people suffer, and all people are imperfect.
- **Mindfulness instead of over-identification.**
It is easy to get so caught in the grip of our emotions that we over-identify with them and become overwhelmed by our suffering. Mindfulness invites us to observe our emotions and thoughts with curiosity and non-judgment.

Self-compassion is not self-pity or self-indulgence. It is a mindful practice that acknowledges experience and supports individuals in moving through suffering to healthy change.



HOW TO PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

- 1 Step 1: Observe and acknowledge your experience. You might say something like, “This is a moment of suffering” or “I am having a hard time.” Being able to observe your experience offers you the ability to step back slightly from it, even just momentarily and not be caught up in it.
- 2 Step 2: Connect to our common humanity. Remind yourself that you are not alone by saying, “Suffering is part of life” or “This is not abnormal, everybody suffers” or “other people face similar problems.” You are human and imperfect like all the rest of us.
- 3 Step 3: Offer yourself kindness. Imagine you are speaking to a beloved friend and adopt a gentle tone with yourself: “May I be kind to myself” or “I wish myself well.” Try placing your hand on your heart, chest or cheek if you find it soothing or grounding. After offering kindness, you might ask, “What can I do for myself now? What would help me move on?”

These three simple steps will help you navigate the suffering that can accompany failure or disappointment. People often say, “I’m my own worst critic.” Instead, try self-compassion practice as a way of being your own friend.



Stress Resilience Training: Volume 7 Tags: 7.708.65.C.3. Administrative Procedures and Program Goals, 7.708.65.C.6. Positive Methods/De-Escalation



Hope & Home | hopeandhome.org
4945 N 30th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80919
719-575-9887 office | 719-237-5739 on-call