Resilience: A (Very) Short Course on How to Be Friends With Failures and Setbacks

Alia Mazhar and Simona Yakobov
Credits to Marc Wilchesky, PhD, CPsych
Executive Director, Counselling and Disability Services

Basic Peer Leadership Training
Bethune College Student Ombuds Services
Sunday, January 22, 2017
The Meaning of Stress

What is stress?
How do you perceive it?

There are only two times I feel stress: day and night.
Stress is:

- A natural response to any demand placed on you
- Stimulating and increases your level of alertness
- Inescapable, part of day-to-day living
- A motivator and energizer
Inverted-U Graph of Stress

Thoughts and Feelings of di/Stress

- Difficulty concentrating (forgetting)
- Excessive self-criticism

- Moody, worried, scared, irritable, depressed, reduced self-esteem, pessimistic, helpless, withdrawn, easily embarrassed
Di/Stress Prevention Strategies

How do you deal with your distress?

THAT MOMENT WHEN YOU HAVE SO MUCH STUFF TO DO

THAT YOU DECIDE TO TAKE A NAP INSTEAD
Tips on dealing with stress

• Good nutrition
• Regular exercise
• Enough sleep
• Breathing exercise
• Prayer
• Time management
• Assertiveness skills
What is Resilience?

How do you view your setbacks & failures?

“Resilience is the ability to know where, how and when to use your energies to improve things for yourself and how to recruit help in that endeavour”. - BRIGID DANIEL

Daniel, B. The Value of Resilience as a Concept for Practice in Residential Settings. *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, February/March 2003
Why is Resilience so Important?

Because it is rare for individuals never to be confronted with adversity or challenging circumstances during the course of their lifetime.
The good news is that resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have – it involves thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that can be learned and developed.

What are some strategies we can use to develop resilience?
Resilience in Toronto

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZEMRAWaVr8
How Can We Develop Resilience?

- Scenario: Becoming Martians
What are your stories of resilience?

"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”

- Khalil Gibran
Psychological and Environmental Factors that Contribute to Resilience

- Positive Self-Regard
- Internal Locus of Control/Evaluation
- Stress Management Strategies (e.g. “Parking”, laughter and social support)
Symptom Reduction and Adaptation Strategies

1) Park the problem!

• Parking a problem is not avoiding, denying or forgetting about it.

• It means that you have decided that you will attend to it later, allowing you to focus totally on the task(s) you presently have to do.
2) Thought Stopping

“Never finish the worry, always interrupt it”
STOP > RELAX > POSITIVE SELF-TALK

• Implement the “prevention strategies” such as: physical activity, relaxation, social support system, positive self-statements, vacation, etc.
3) **Reframe the problem** - turn crisis into challenge or opportunity.

- Try to see another perspective
- Lack of acceptance of things that cannot be changed creates great di/Stress, continued anxiety and inhibits resilience
Reframe The Problem - Scenario One

• You are playing jeopardy with Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking and you HAVE to win.
• In your first year of University, exactly two days before your very first mid-term, your partner tells you they no longer love you and dumps you.
Laughter is the Best Medicine

Gelotology

• The study of laughter and its effects on the human

Laughing is electrochemical

• It lowers levels of catecholamines, the “fight or flight” hormones, released by the adrenal glands in response to stress
A Little Humour Never Hurts…

WHEN I GET STRESSED

I STOP BEING STRESSED AND BE AWESOME INSTEAD
Resilience

J.K. Rowling on failures

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHGqp8lz36c
Final Thoughts

On your sticky notes…
What is your favourite way of becoming more resilient?