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CENTER *for* DEMENTIA CARE

# Reducing Caregiver Stress and Compassion Fatigue: How to Build Resilience

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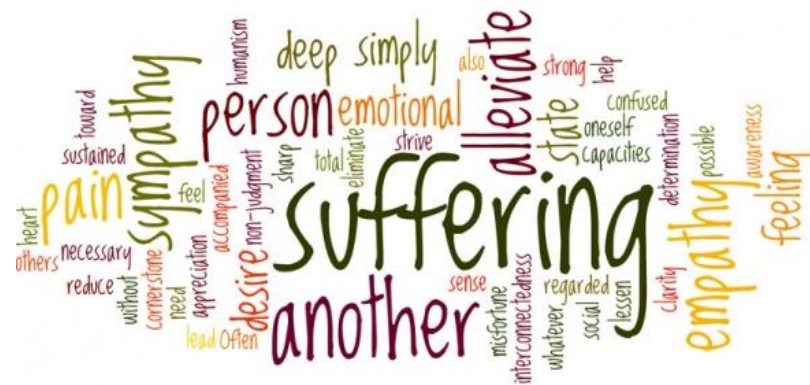
# Hollie Glover, MA, LPC, NCC

- ▶ Hollie Glover, is a Licensed Professional Counselor, who currently works for the James L. West Center for Dementia Care in Fort Worth. She is the Director of Education and Family Support Services. She facilitates the center's family support groups and is involved in many of the numerous education services provided by the center.
- ▶ Hollie is a Dementia Care Specialist and has over twenty- years of experience in education and working with people of all ages. She has degrees from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Sam Houston State University, and Dallas Baptist University. She also attended Southwestern Theological Seminary to obtain hours in theology.
- ▶ Hollie has been recognized as a national and statewide speaker on topics such as Dementia, Hospice, and Professional and Caregiver Stress. One of the highlights of her career includes getting to meet and speak before First Lady Rosalynn Carter and Senator Elizabeth Dole. She has also written a therapy to be used with patients at the end of life, that focuses on the individual needs of the person and their family.
- ▶ Her passion is educating the public and helping families who have a loved one diagnosed with dementia.
- ▶ Hollie is married and has one daughter who is following in her footsteps. Joanna graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington in August of 2020 with her Master's degree in Social Work, specializing in hospice care.



# What is Compassion Fatigue and Burnout?

- ▶ Compassion Fatigue: A combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion associated with caring for others.
- ▶ Burnout: A state of emotional and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet demands.
- ▶ Covid/Pandemic Fatigue: Complex emotions that include boredom, loneliness, sadness, frustration, anxiety, fear, anger, and resentment, all brought on by the loss of activities and social relations produced by pandemic restrictions. (psychologytoday.com)



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# Who develops Burnout and Compassion Fatigue?

- ▶ Anyone can, but professional and family caregivers are at high risk. Especially if the person/people they are caring of is terminal.
- ▶ We are taking care of people who are getting progressively worse and experiencing a steady decline.



# Are you suffering from Compassion Fatigue and/or Burnout?

- ▶ Do you feel unappreciated?
- ▶ Do you feel like your self-worth is determined by how others perceive you?
- ▶ Do you get anxious around conflict?
- ▶ Have you experienced feelings of hopelessness?
- ▶ Do you have problems separating your personal life from caregiving?
- ▶ Do you have problems sleeping?
- ▶ Do you often feel “used up” at the end of the day?
- ▶ Is your stress affecting your emotional and/or physical health?

*Did you answer yes to most of these questions?*

*If you sense that you are experiencing compassion fatigue, you probably are.*



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# Statistics

- ▶ 31% of all suicides in 2020 were healthcare workers.
- ▶ The US Department of Health & Human Services reports that **60%** of all professional healthcare workers are reporting compassion fatigue and burnout this year
- ▶ Healthcare worker emotional exhaustion has increased from **31% in 2019 to 82% in 2020** (Mental Health America)



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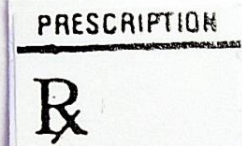
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## Stress Statistics

A UCLA Study found the following about caregivers:

- ▶ 41% of women caregivers and 54% of men caregivers are coping by using alcohol
- ▶ 51% of caregivers admit to “overusing” prescription medications
- ▶ 16% start to smoke again after sometimes years off of nicotine
- ▶ 72% are overweight



PRESCRIPTION  
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# Caregiver Stress

- ▶ Caregiver stress is defined as the emotional and physical strain of caring for someone in need of help.
- ▶ 75% of caregivers who report feeling very strained emotionally, physically or financially are women.
- ▶ The Surgeon General reports that, “COVID-19 has been a uniquely traumatic experience for the health workforce and for their families, pushing them past their breaking point.”





# Caregiving and Depression Are Common

- According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 80% of dementia caregivers (both professional and family) report that they frequently experience high levels of stress.
- Nearly half state that they suffer from depression.



# Emotions of Caregivers

Since 3/2020 Mental Health America has witnessed increasing numbers of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among professional healthcare workers.

Being overwhelmed with too much responsibility. Professional caregivers intimately care for others but turn off their own needs.

Feeling unappreciated and becoming cynical and mistrusting of others.

Isolation - feeling like no one else understands. Caring for others interferes with normal social life of the caregiver.

# Emotions of Professional Caregivers

93% report being stressed out and stretched too thin

86% report anxiety

77% report frustration

76% report exhaustion

75% report being overwhelmed

82% report emotional exhaustion

# Emotions of Professional Caregivers

70% report physical exhaustion

68% report work-related dread

57% changes in appetite

56% report medical problems such as high blood pressure, irritable bowel syndrome, and injuries due to caregiving.

55% question their career path

52% compassion fatigue

# Warning Signs of Family and Professional Care Partner Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

## Emotional

- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Exhaustion
- ▶ Feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Mood swings
- ▶ Emotional fatigue
- ▶ Social withdrawal
- ▶ Loss of interest in activities

## Physical

- ▶ Insomnia and poor sleep
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Muscle tension
- ▶ Physical fatigue
- ▶ Gastrointestinal problems (nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea, constipation)
- ▶ Short term memory issues
- ▶ Repeated actions
- ▶ Self-neglect
- ▶ Poor eating habits





# Emotional Support

45% of all healthcare workers surveyed said they did not have enough emotional support

# What is Trauma?

## CHCS: Center for Health Care Strategies

- ▶ Trauma results from exposure to an incident or series of events that is emotionally disturbing or life-threatening.
  - ▶ Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
  - ▶ Childhood neglect
  - ▶ Having a family member with a mental health or substance use disorder
  - ▶ Violence in the community
  - ▶ Natural or human-made disasters and forced displacement
  - ▶ Sudden, unexplained separation from a loved one
  - ▶ Poverty and discrimination



# Prevalence of Trauma

- ▶ A study done by the Philadelphia Urban ACE Study found that 83% of adults in the US have at least 1 Adverse Childhood Experience and that 37% have 4 or more.
- ▶ CDC statistics show that 1 in 4 children in the US will experience some sort of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional).
- ▶ 1 in 4 women has experienced domestic violence.
- ▶ 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have experience rape. 12% of women and 30% of men were less than 10 years old when the rape occurred.

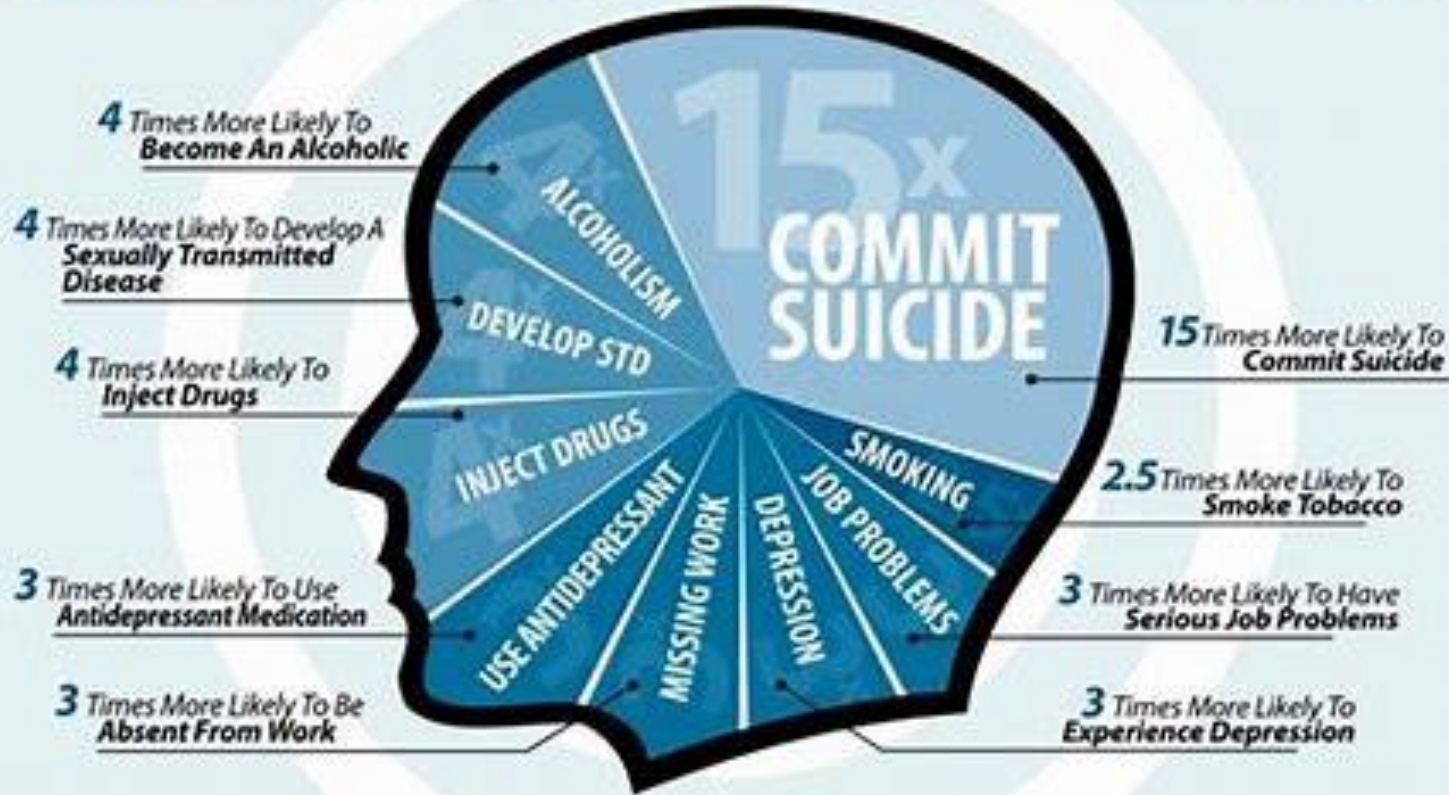


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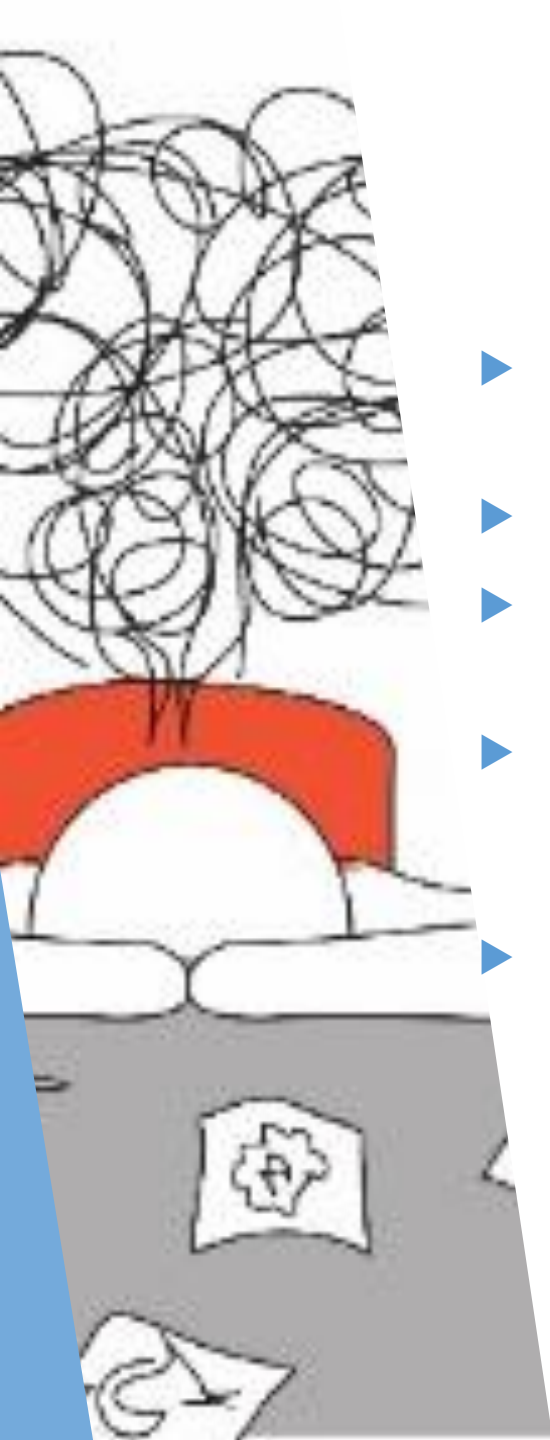


# PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA ARE:



# Dementia Affects Care Partners

- ▶ As the disease continues to destroy brain cells, patients increasingly depend on care partners for assistance.
- ▶ Dementia is not a typical disease model.
- ▶ Care partners for people with dementia are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to the long process of decline.
- ▶ Dementia is a progressively worsening terminal disease, but the rate of progression from mild to advanced dementia varies widely from 3 to 20 years.
- ▶ Care partners feel grief and loss, not unlike a death in the family; except that instead of being sudden, it's spread out over years with multiple losses. (Ambiguous Grief and Anticipatory Grief)



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# Increased Risk of Death for Care Partners

- ▶ Care partner spouses between the ages of 66 and 96, who are experiencing mental and emotional strain, have a 68% higher risk of dying than people the same age who are not caregivers.
- ▶ According to sharecare.com, adult children, have a 63% higher risk of dying over the course of caregiving for 4 or more years.



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# Listen to your friends and family

- ▶ Has anyone in your life mentioned or observed a change in your behavior or demeanor? Take a minute and think whether what they are saying might be true.
- ▶ The first step in resolving burnout and compassion fatigue is to recognize that you are suffering from it. Be open to what others are saying.
- ▶ No one person can do everything. (I can do anything, but I can't do everything.)

*Self-care is not about self-indulgence, it's about self-preservation.*

*- Audrey Lorde*

[www.facebook.com/twuhealthstudies](https://www.facebook.com/twuhealthstudies)



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# Spiritual Renewal

- ▶ Faith helps many people alleviate stress and develop perspective, strength, and inspiration.
- ▶ Try to stay centered in the positive aspects of caregiving.



# Positives



- ▶ When you are optimistic and anticipate successful encounters, you transmit a positive attitude and people usually respond favorably.
- ▶ When you are pessimistic and expect the worst, your attitude is often negative, and people may respond by avoiding you.
- ▶ It all starts in your head, with your thinking.
- ▶ Your attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behaviors result from your thoughts...messages you give yourself.
- ▶ Have you checked your attitudes, feelings, emotions, and behaviors recently?



# Positives



It is truly a matter of shifting your perceptions and opening yourself to another way of being.



Everyday you are surrounded by blessings and miracles in the process of being a caregiver.



Refuse to become angry or distraught.



Motivate yourself to assemble the facts, talk to others, determine your options, and then produce the best solution.

**You can't always  
control the  
issues that cause  
you stress, but  
you can learn to  
control how you  
respond to it.**





# Caregiver Support Tips

Accept

Accept your own limits: ask for and accept help

Create

Create your support team: friends, family, church, neighbors, doctor, pharmacist, therapy, support group, etc.

Get

Get organized, prioritize, make lists establish a routine

Schedule

Schedule time for yourself: social activities can help you feel connected

Make

Make your own health your priority

# Caregiver Support Tips

- ▶ Get plenty of rest
- ▶ Exercise regularly
- ▶ Relax and do something fun
- ▶ Laugh
- ▶ Take a break





# Caregiver Support Tips

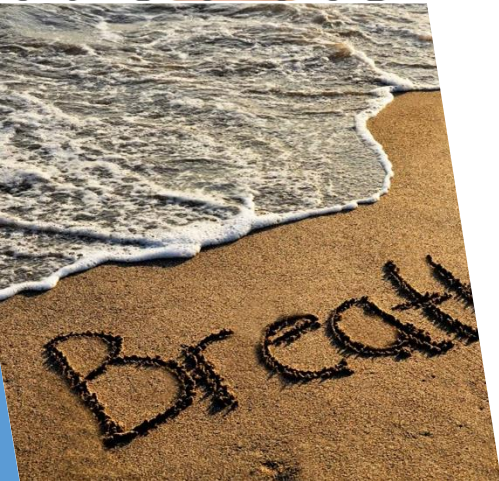
- Eat a balanced diet.
- See your doctor about health issues.
- Find out about community caregiver resources through [alz.org](http://alz.org), [jameslwest.org](http://jameslwest.org), [www.nctcog.org](http://www.nctcog.org) and [dementiafriendlyfw.org](http://dementiafriendlyfw.org).
- Look for a faith-based groups for support and help.
- Join a support group for caregivers in the same situation.





## Caregiver Tips and Helpful Hints

- ▶ **Breathe:** Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. We tend to shallow breathe in our chest. We need to belly breathe. This can lower blood pressure, slow heart rate, and help with digestion. Practice 4X4 breathing.
- ▶ **Relax:** This can reduce stress, decrease muscle tension, increase concentration, improve problem solving abilities, and smooth emotions.
- ▶ **Focus on the Present Moment:** This is sometimes called mindfulness. Stay in the here and now and stop fretting about yesterday (depression) and worrying about tomorrow (anxiety).



Attitude  
Changes  
Everything!



- ▶ **Physical Activity:** This improves mood, increasing sleep, and changes the chemicals within the body that increase anxiety, agitation, depression.
- ▶ **Stretching:** Sitting or standing, reach as high as you can overhead, while breathing deeply, then reach to each side and hold for 5 seconds. Shrug shoulders and roll forward and then backwards.
- ▶ **Positive Thinking:** What would you say to someone else in your situation? Say to yourself, out loud if necessary. “I can calm myself down.” “I am enough.” “I can do anything I put my mind to.” “If I fall, I will get back up.”



▶ Imagery: Think of your favorite place. Use all your senses. Go there in your mind for a few minutes. Example: Sitting in front of a fireplace, wrapped in a fluffy blanket. Eating pizza with friends and laughing. Sleeping in your favorite spot. Lounging on the beach.

▶ Music: Listen to music that relaxes you. Do not listen to anything that causes agitation or brings up bad memories.

▶ Aroma Therapy: Keep scented lotions in your desk drawer such as lavender, eucalyptus, pine, or orange spice

▶ Photographs: Surround yourself with photos of your why. Family, friends, pets, vacations, etc. Keep them on your phone, desk, wall, behind your badge, etc.

▶ Support system: have at least one go to person that will let you vent, regardless of what time it is.

▶ Water: Run water over your hands and face. Drink plenty of water. Stay hydrated. Watch your caffeine intake.







▶ **Spiritual Practices:** These increase clarity and focus, steadiness, and grounding. They elevate mood and improve perspective on the big picture.



▶ **Other things you can try:** start a craft, watch videos, take a ride, journal, take a nap, sit outside, get an ice cream cone, sit alone in a park. Find your center and hold on to your why.



▶ **Try to take care of yourself so you can take care of others.** Let go of the small stuff and set priorities. Learn to delegate and allow others to help you.

# What is Resilience in Health Care?

According to the National Library of Medicine: **Resilience is the intrinsic ability of a system to adjust its functioning prior to, during, or following changes and disturbances so that it can sustain required operations, even after a major mishap or in the presence of continuous stress.**



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# What is Resilience?

- ▶ The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties
- ▶ Toughness
- ▶ The ability to adjust easily to adversity or change
- ▶ The ability to return to its original shape and size after being compressed



## Personal Resilience: Family and Professional Care Partners

- ▶ The ability to maintain well-being and effective functioning in the face of high levels of disruption.
- ▶ Adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, threats, and stress.
- ▶ Bouncing back from difficulties with family, relationships, health, work, home, finances, etc.
- ▶ Professional Care Partners often perform their service in an environment filled with unexpected events from multiple residents, clients, patients, etc.



# It is a Choice:

We can become better:



Or We can become bitter:



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## **MENTAL**

AWARENESS  
ADAPTABILITY  
DECISION-MAKING  
POSITIVE THINKING



## **PHYSICAL**

ENDURANCE  
NUTRITION  
RECOVERY  
STRENGTH



## **SOCIAL**

FAMILY  
COMMUNICATIONS  
CONNECTEDNESS  
SOCIAL SUPPORT  
TEAMWORK



## **SPIRITUAL**

CORE VALUES  
PERSEVERANCE  
PERSPECTIVE  
PURPOSE

**Resilience Provides Balance to Life**





# Mental Resilience

- ▶ **Positivity:** Finding hope even in the darkest times is the foundation of resilience. Having a positive outlook can many times be the difference in your ability to keep going in the face of difficulties. It brings you a positive energy. Use the stressors to create resiliency.
- ▶ **Confidence:** Know your strengths and believe that you can use challenges as an opportunity to learn, grow, and develop
- ▶ **Structure:** Learning to prioritize allows us to wade through confusion. It also allows you to use your energy where it is needed.



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# Mental Resilience



- ▶ **Imagination:** Coming up with new, unusual, and different ways to address our issues improves our chances of having positive outcomes. Taking risks is part of being resilient.
- ▶ **Embrace the awful:** What choice do we have, but to power through the most challenging parts of being a caregiver? This is the time to shine. *It's one thing to be good when the conditions are favorable, but quite another when they are challenging.*



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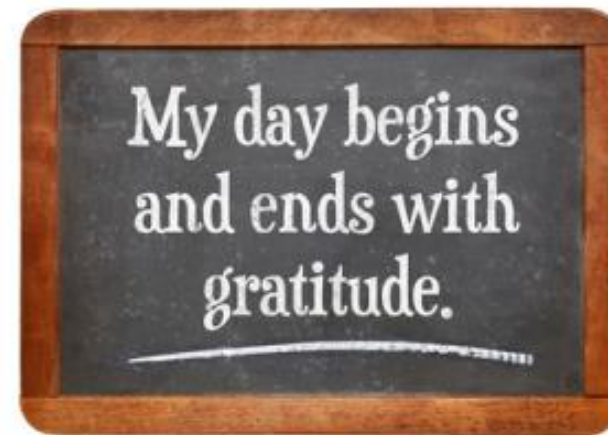
# Physical Resilience

- ▶ **Nutrition:** supports our immune system and reduces inflammation, reinforces our mental health and helps us process stress
- ▶ **Strength Exercise:** increases lifespan, oxygenates body, strengthens heart, boosts mood, boosts immune system, decreases stress
- ▶ **Rest/Recovery:** Quality rest improves concentration, memory, energy level and mood
- ▶ **Endurance:** You are not running a sprint. You are taking part in a marathon that you likely didn't train for. To develop your endurance, you must find sources of support.



# Spiritual Resilience

- ▶ **Find Meaning:** help others to help yourself and you can build your resiliency.
- ▶ **Shift your reference:** during challenges we can fall into the “why me?” trap, this can lead to anger and depression. Focus instead on solutions, not the problems.
- ▶ **Perspective:** Watch your language, we tend to exaggerate when something is wrong and use words like devastating and disaster. Take a moment and reflect. Look at it from the outside and see the impact your negative language may be making.
- ▶ **Gratitude:** Count your blessings.



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**YOU HAVE NEVER REALLY LIVED UNTIL  
YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING  
FOR SOMEONE  
WHO CAN NEVER REPAY YOU**





I CAN'T DO THIS...!

AFFIRMATIONS TO BUILD RESILIENCY + CONFIDENCE...

- I TRUST IN MY ABILITY TO DEAL WITH TRICKY SITUATIONS
- I HAVE BEEN THROUGH TOUGH TIMES BEFORE & SURVIVED
- I AM STRONG & CAPABLE
- THERE ARE NO 'FAILS', ONLY 'TRIAL RUNS'!
- I CAN DO THIS... OR I CAN AT LEAST TRY

@journey-to-wellness\_

## ★ ANXIETY COPING STATEMENTS ★



→ THIS FEELING IS UNCOMFORTABLE BUT NORMAL

→ I DON'T NEED TO FOCUS ON THIS FEELING OR TRY TO FIGURE IT OUT.

→ I CAN CHOOSE TO DISTRACT MYSELF.

→ ANXIETY IS NOT THE BOSS. I AM IN CONTROL.

→ THIS FEELING IS A USEFUL REMINDER TO SLOW DOWN & BREATHE

→ I ALLOW THIS FEELING TO BE HERE, KNOWING THAT IT WILL SOON PASS.

@journey-to-wellness\_

# How to Strengthen Your Resilience

- ▶ Just as you warm up your body before physical exercise, you should “warm up” to remain resilient
- ▶ Take deep breaths, to calm, center, and ground yourself. This also creates positive energy for you to pull from.
- ▶ Keep your mind active and engaged.
- ▶ Do things that bring you joy.
- ▶ Stay connected to your meaning and purpose.



# Strengthen Your Resilience

- ▶ Positive Self-Talk: negative talk comes naturally so you must focus and say positive things to yourself. You work better in crisis with positive talk.
- ▶ Be okay with leaving your comfort zone: dealing with challenges allows us a sense of control when we are facing rough times. Remember the famous words of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, “That which does not kill me, makes me stronger.” This suggests that adversity actually makes us stronger. Could it be? Can we find gratitude in our circumstances?

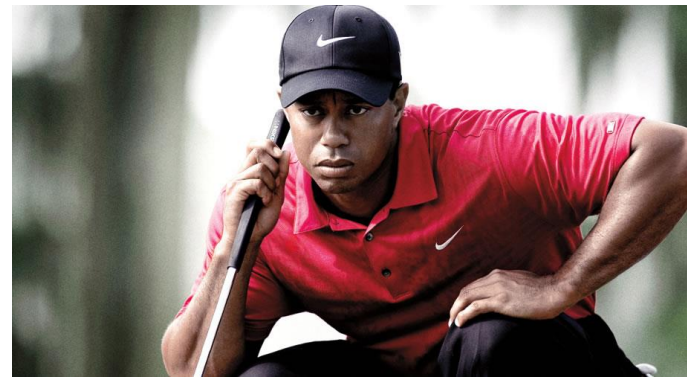
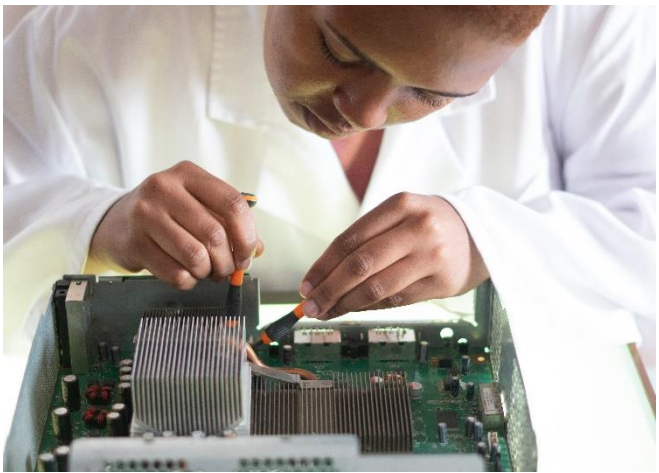




# Navy Seal Reframing Activity

- ▶ **Imagination practice**
- ▶ Take time away from the daily grind to visualize what you want. Find an visualization practice that works for you. Get specific and detailed about envisioning yourself achieving success.
- ▶ Think of your best performances and tap into as many senses as you can. Consider, pictures, your inner voice, sounds, smells, thoughts or feelings in your mind to make it real.







THE STRENGTH WE'RE  
TAUGHT TO ADMIRE



THE STRENGTH WE  
SHOULD ALSO ADMIRE



LIZ FOSSLIEN

# Resilience Building Activities

[www.positivepsychology.com](http://www.positivepsychology.com)

- ▶ **Storytelling Activity**
- ▶ We can adjust our paradigms by re-creating narratives we tell ourselves. We can get stuck in re-playing the same stories, which may not be helpful or productive. By **creating a healthier storyline, we foster our sense of control and how we interpret events.** A study conducted by Pennebaker, et. al (1988) indicated that individuals who engaged in therapeutic **writing** experienced more well-being and happiness (i.e. resilience) months later.
- ▶ Consider an example in your life where you continue to repeat a story that produces worry or anxiety. Try writing out a new version with a more positive interpretation. Recognize how you feel in the process.



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# purpose

(noun)

-the reason why something exists, is done or used  
-the aim or intention of something

## Purpose

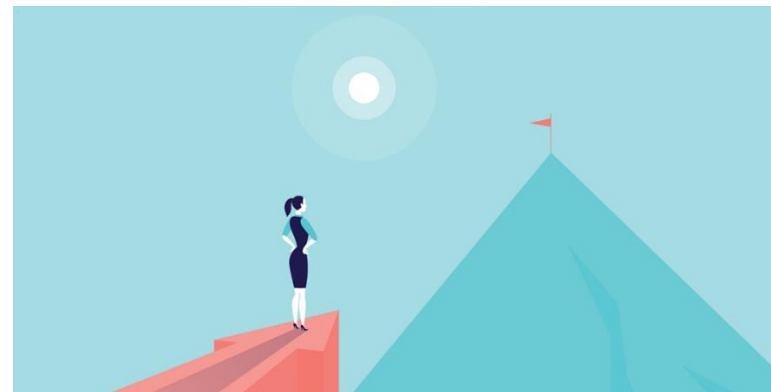
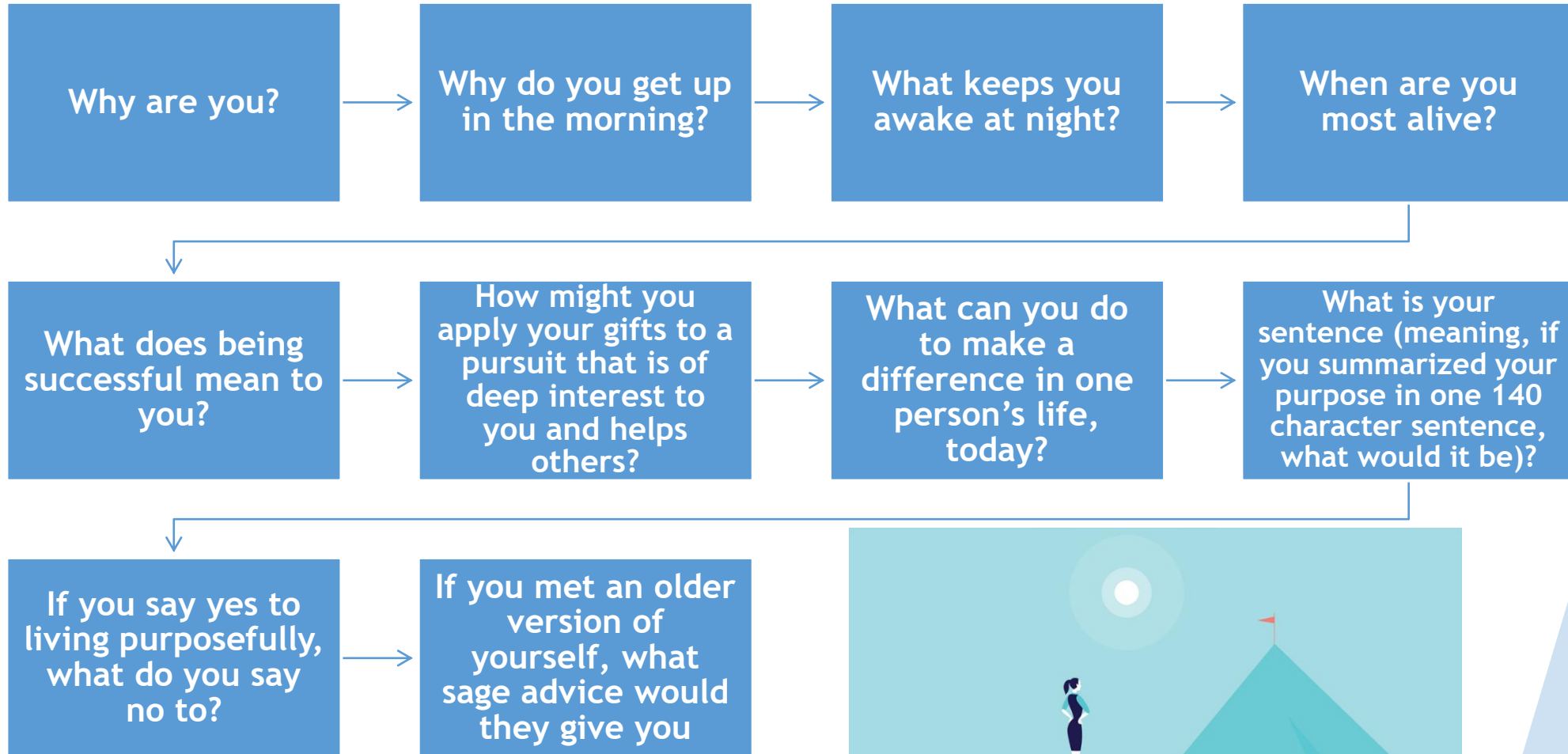
- ▶ Finding purpose in our environment is an important aspect of resilience.
- ▶ Psychologists have found repeatedly that people with a strong sense of purpose experience more resilience, a strong sense of well-being and even better cognitive functioning.
- ▶ Purpose in life fosters resilience by protecting the brain against the negative effects of stress.
- ▶ What is your reason for waking up in the morning? What is your reason for being?



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# Purpose Reflection Activity



# Gratitude Activities

- ▶ The practice of **gratitude** is one of the most time-tested and proven methods for enhancing resilience. One study published in the Clinical Psychology Review confirmed the benefits of habitually focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of life on resilience and well-being. (Wood, et. al, 2010). Researchers Robert Emmons and Mike McCullough found that people who kept gratitude journals experienced improved well-being (2003).
- ▶ Select from the following:
  - Every day for the next week, write down 3-5 things each day that you are grateful for.
  - Start a gratitude blog/group text with friends
  - Write a **letter of gratitude** to people who are special to you.
  - Tell people you see everyday what you appreciate about them.



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# Find Something Funny Activity

- ▶ Laughter has been found to boost resilience. A study evaluating humor induced **positive psychology interventions** identified the benefits of incorporating daily humor activities to induce laughter reduced depression and increased joy for participants, even months later. (Wellenzohn, et. al., 2016).
- ▶ Spend 10 minutes each day for 7 days on the following exercise:
  1. Write down the three of the funniest things you have experienced, seen, or heard. Provide detail and note how they made you feel. If you can't think of anything, do an online search for funny stories or anecdotes. Social media can be a good source for funny material.
  2. Write down why you found it funny. The more specific you are, the more effective the exercise will be.
  3. Write these three funny things at the end of your day. Doing so will foster a new **habit** and may help you absorb the emotion more as you are going to sleep.

# Find the Silver Lining Activity

Looking at the [bright side](#) is scientifically proven to enhance our resilience. In a 2014 study, participants who went through such an exercise increased their resilience, were more engaged and experienced decreased negative thinking (*Sergant & Mongrain, 2014*).

Think about an upsetting experience you have had recently. Rather than focusing on the frustration of the experience, reflect on three positive things about it. Maybe it allowed you to see a sunrise or sunset or met someone new.

# Self-Compassion Activity



- ▶ We are often most critical of ourselves and quicker to show compassion to those hurting around us. How we respond to our own stress and challenges is important. Research findings indicate that **self-compassion** skills promote resilience and serves as a protective emotional mechanism (Trompeter, et. al., 2017).
- ▶ Think of a difficult circumstance in your life that has been concerning you. Write down some details about the event. What would you tell a friend in that situation? What tone would you use? What actions would you take?

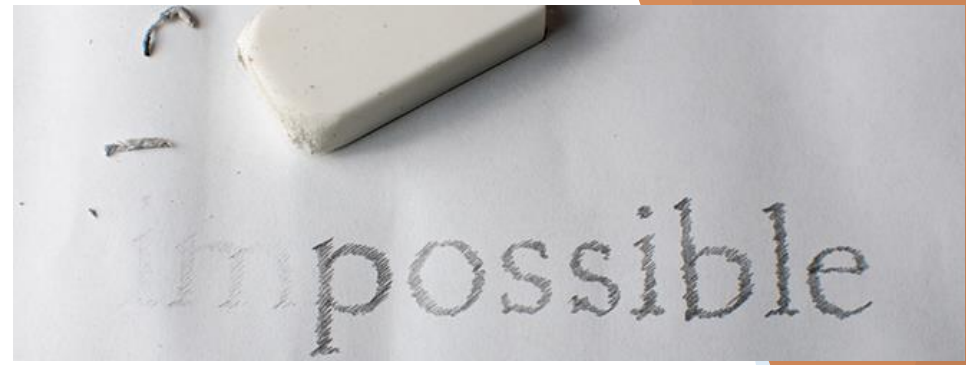


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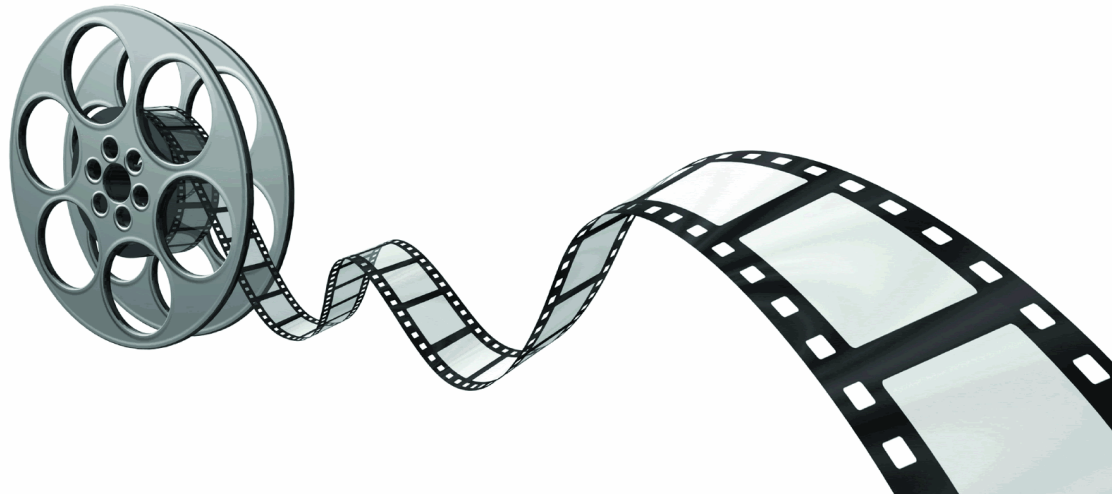
# Mantra/Identity Statement



- ▶ Recite a personalized identity **statement** that emphasizes a positive quality and specifies something you want to become in five seconds, such as “*I am confident and passionate,*” or “*I’m consistently excellent every day as a caregiver, wife, and mother.*”
- ▶ **“A hard moment does not mean a hard rest of the day”**
- ▶ “This will not last forever.”
- ▶ “I am resilient!”
- ▶ “This, too, shall pass.”
- ▶ “I can ride this out and not let it get me down.”
- ▶ “May there be joy in this day, may I bring joy to others.”
- ▶ “I am choosing grace in this moment.”
- ▶ “God will wreck your plans when He sees your plans are about to wreck you.”

# Highlight Reel

- Visualize your personal **highlight reel** for 60 seconds—thinking of three things you've done well. Repeat your identity statement for five seconds. Finish with another centering breath cycle—breathing in for six seconds, holding for two and then exhaling for seven.



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# Helping Others Be Resilient

- ▶ **Affirmation:** Notice and point out another's resilience. They may not even realize it. It will help them build their own awareness so they can continue to develop it.
- ▶ **Environment:** ensure reminders and reinforcements by encouraging others rather than pointing out errors, encourage rather than discourage
- ▶ **Support:** provide assistance in areas where others may be lacking
- ▶ **Role Model:** others see how you deal with challenges, bring a positive attitude and strong set of problem-solving skills to help others do the same



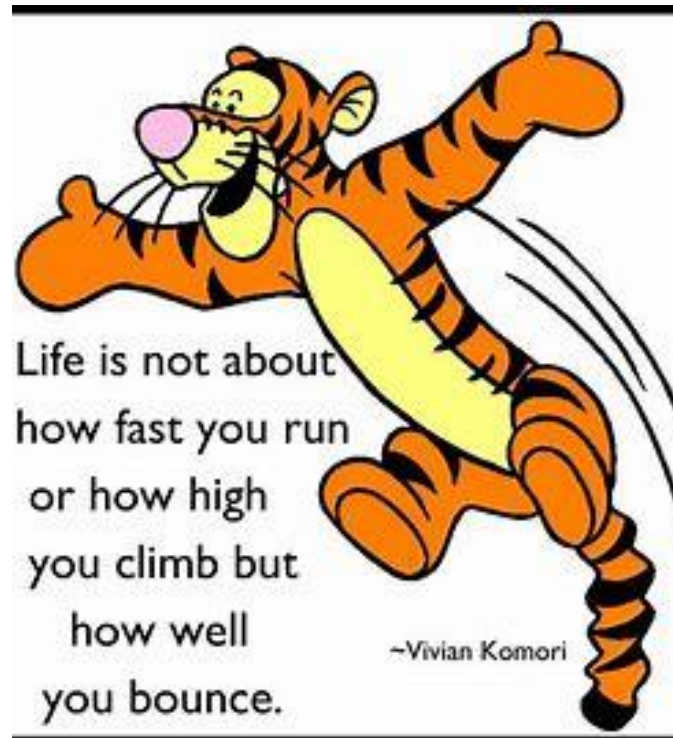
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# Summary

The stress of caregiving (burnout and fatigue) is well documented and is very serious. When you are taking care of others it is important to identify what stressors are affecting your life and make necessary changes to decrease the stress.

Finding support whether from a group, family or friends is critical for you to be able to care for others.



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James L. West is a faith inspired, not-for-profit organization serving persons impacted by dementia. As a trusted expert, we provide personalized, innovative care and support for families, as well as specialized education for caregivers, healthcare professionals and the community at large.

Residential & Respite Care

West Center Day Program

Dementia & Caregiver Education

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