

STRESS-HARDINESS: QUALITIES THAT BOLSTER RESILIENCE

EVENT ID: 4611052

EVENT STARTED: 3/10/2021 1:00 PM ET

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Thank you for joining us for the presentation *Stress-Hardiness: Qualities that Bolster Resilience*. Before we get started, I would like to introduce our presenter. Brianne Oxenrider is a licensed clinical social worker in the state of Louisiana. She has over 15 years of clinical experience, counseling individuals, couples, groups, children, and families in a wide range of settings utilizing solution focused, mindfulness, and cognitive-behavioral interventions. She currently counsels federal employees and family members and enjoys helping people boost stress-hardiness. With that I will turn it over to Brianne to begin the presentation.

Hello! Good afternoon, good morning, depending on where you are. Thank you for the introduction. By Tammy. All right. So all too often Americans are confronted with extraordinary events that lead us into unknown territory. We learned that by experience this past year. Likewise, when we go through any traumatic situation or merely stressful event, they can have a strong impact on us immediately. And can leave us feeling overwhelmed and in the dark. Over the long run, these events have the ability to deplete us or leave us feeling helpless. However, there are qualities that we can build in our South to help us bounce back from stressful events and minimize their negative impact on our lives. Today we are going to talk about those qualities to build hours -- to build our stress-hardiness. These are our directives today, we will define stress and resilience and stress-hardiness. We will explore the three C's of stress-hardiness, the main feature of stress-hardiness. Lastly we will explore ways to strengthen resilience and stress-hardiness in our self. Stress is our body's physical and mental response to an internal or external event, force, or condition. There are basically two types of stress, physical, which looks like adrenaline rushes, fight or flight mode setting in, heart rate increases, pupils constrict, blood pressure elevates, muscles get tense, over time chronic stress can negatively affect the body through illness, sometimes chronic. And injury. Then there is mental stress. This is the rapid flooding of thoughts, perhaps, might look like nervousness, angst, temper flareups, or irritability. It can look differently from this list as well. And over time chronic stress can affect our brain by having a negative impact on our memory and increasing the risk of developing mood and anxiety disorders. There are also two types of stress triggers. And internal event, for example, physiological discomfort like maybe a headache or pain in a different part of the body. Or negative thoughts and beliefs, like fear or worry. Or it could be triggered by an external event such as a traffic jam, demanding boss, maybe learning new COVID-19 restrictions or the release of restrictions. We went ahead one side too quickly. As far as stress response goes, our bodies have a primitive site or flight response when confronted with a stressful situation. It was passed down from our ancestors who were protected by the biological response, which gave them the ability to quickly react when threatened or confronted by a predator. Imagine if you are a cave dweller, suddenly coming upon a bear. The cave dweller must react quickly or become the bear's

dinner. Nowadays without the bear right there in front of us, we still might have this type of reaction many times a day, without, like I said, the presence of an actual predator or threat. So now we are going to put it out to you to please answer this poll. What is your first response when faced with a work stressor? Is it physical? Like a stomach ache or heart beating faster, maybe tension in your muscles, headache. It could be behavioral. Such as yelling, slamming the door, leaving the room. Snapping at people. Perhaps it is emotional and you notice it, stress in your feelings, the very first line of stress may be anxious, worried, frustrated. Or maybe it is cognitive, that means your thoughts. Thinking I can't, what will I do, perhaps catastrophize in.

[Poll being conducted] So I am unable to see the answers to the polls. Okay, there they are. It looks like the majority of people first notice your stress response in emotions. But there is also a good number of physical, cognitive, and a tiny bit behavioral, which I find interesting. So frequently people do notice in their behavior. So now we are going to look at this poll call be stress in America poll. It is put on the American psychological Association and they have been doing it since 2007, it is called the stress in America survey. It pulls people all over the country about their source of stress and intensity, as well as how they respond both mentally and physically to stressors. In May of 2020 they found that eight in 10, or 78% of Americans said that the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant source of stress in their life. 7 in 10 Americans, or 72%, said they have experienced increase stress over the course of the pandemic. That was of course just waved back at me, in the beginning. The average reported stress level back in May 2020, for U.S. adults, related to the coronavirus pandemic was 5.9. When people were asked to rate stress levels in general, the average reported stress for U.S. adults was 5.4. So, for comparison sake, the average reported stress level in 2019 was 4.9. And the increase in stress level is the first significant increase in average reported stress in the history of this survey, that is 13 years. It was the very first increase from one survey to the next. Then, six months later, in October of 2020, 3 and five, or 60% of Americans, said the number of issues America faces is overwhelming to them. And nearly 1 in 5 adults said that their mental health was worse in that month in the previous year. Following the 2020 election, 81% of Americans point to the future of our nation as a significant source of stress. For comparison, only 66% said the same in January of 2017. The current political climate is a significant source of stress for 3 and 4 Americans. Compared to 87% of Americans who said the same in January of 2017. This uptick in stress, in the past year, is significant. And there is no doubt that we will be dealing with this impact and after effects for quite some time. So this makes it even more important for us to find ways to bolster our ability to withstand the stress, cope with what we encounter, and find a way to thrive through the challenges. Resilience is the process and results of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences. Especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. In other words, resilience is our ability to go through a tough time and then bounce back to our self again. Not be harmed by it in the long run. Or perhaps even be better off. The recent pandemic has provided ample stressors to individuals. Schools, be it in person or virtual, canceling at times, illness, or threat of illness, possible loss of a loved one, work challenges, financial distress, and more. Some people may feel overwhelmed by the stressors and over time they may show signs of depression, anxiety, or experience other challenges and continue to feel worse than they did pre-COVID. Others may have developed skills to cope and were resilient during the pandemic. And may not come out,

sorry, and may come out of the pandemic no worse for wear. Or perhaps even better than before. They may have activated and upped their use of coping mechanisms, including, for example, reaching out for support, making sure they get physical activity, engaging in a regular religious or spiritual practice. The fact is, human beings have great stores of resilience. Even as individuals vary in their ability to display resilience. Now we will shift to discussing stress-hardiness. In addition to resilience, we are going to talk about something called stress-hardiness. A companion piece to resilience. Together they can help protect you from the harmful effects of stress and strength in your skills in managing stress. Whether it is a storm of stressors or just a rain shower, stress-hardiness characteristics will be your emergency kit, your raincoats, or your umbrella, to protect you and your loved ones from the negative effect. You will still get damp or even soaked at times, but by activating three components of stress-hardiness, challenge, control, and commitment, you will get more waterproof. Or at least water resistance, and resilience over time. So now let's discuss each of these three qualities in more depth. Qualities that bolster resilience, challenge. This is seeing difficult life situations as a challenge to grow, rather than a threat to be avoided. Should eight stress-hardiness individuals do not spend their time worrying or avoiding a stressor. Instead they view life's paths as one that contains inevitable challenges and those challenges are opportunities for growth, learning, and adaptability. Control. This is sensing a high sense of control over outcome versus the feel of powerless over what happens in life. A stress-hardy person would not feel he is a powerless victim to life's circumstances. Instead, he would focus on the areas that he does have control over the outcomes of events in his life. And lastly, the third C is commitment. This is a commitment to work and life versus feeling of a different. 80 stress-hardy individual does not feel that they are floating adrift in the universe, just going through the motions of everyday life. Instead she focuses her attention on the areas of her life that she feels passionately about. Such as family, work, faith, or a hobby. Let's now discuss ways to be ready for life's stressful challenges, recognize where we can exert control, and commit to our values while making the best of a difficult situation. Working on our first C, challenge, to begin viewing difficult situations as challenges for growth involves grits, changing your perspective, and embracing optimal is him. Exhibit grit, according to the research by Angela Duckworth, natural abilities matter far less than effort when it comes to success. Effort in this sense refers to a person's determination, tenacity, perseverance and bravery. A set of characteristics commonly referred to as grit. People who exhibit grit traits. Interest, practice, purpose, and hope. Interest, people who have grit do not just know what their passion is. They put in the work to find an interest that they can stick with and understand that they may have to quit or let go of some things, to find the ideal one. In addition, people who have grit find ways to make their passion more thrilling, rather than seeking out new thrills. Practice, people who show grit not only practice and practice, they practice with intention. They do not avoid criticism, rather they use constructive feedback to improve specific techniques that ultimately improve performance. Purpose, purpose is the art of connecting your hobby or the work that you do, to the people other than yourself who are affected by it. It is not about making a grand gesture, it is more about connecting what you do to a larger purpose. For example, let's take a moment now, close your eyes if you are comfortable, and bring to mind what you do regularly. Whether it is your job or volunteering, or community work. And then see if you can imagine who is affected by what you do. What positive impact is your contribution making on others? It may be an individual effort or group effort. There may be an immediate or longer-range impact. Try and

imagine the people who are positively impacted by the work you do. Imagine your contribution passing down through multiple people or groups and it having an effect on each person or group it has traveled to before. Perhaps reaching the intended party that is being helped. Sometimes it might really take thinking down the chain as your work tends to be paperwork or desk work. Imagine the people at the other end of the chain of events that are being helped by what you do. If you closed your eyes, you can open them again. When people consider how their passion benefits individuals or communities, they feel more driven to perform and also more fulfilled by that drive. The final trait of people who exhibit grit is hope. Hope provides the confidence to know that although there will always be detours and obstacles on the road to success, one has the ability to bounce back and continue down the path, rather than feeling beaten down and giving up when they hit obstacles. My slide advancement is not working. Sorry. Okay. There we go. Another way to build your stress-hardiness is to change your perspective. Specifically by learning how to reframe your thoughts. Reframing your thoughts involves thinking about a situation in a different way, usually toward a more positive and hopeful thought. So, for example, you may notice you are stressed and have the thought, this stress is bad for me. You can reframe it by thinking, how can I use this to make me stronger? Or perhaps you have the thought, I feel so anxious. I hope this anxious feeling does not follow over into my big presentation. You can reframe the thought by saying, this anxious feeling will help me focus and succeed in my presentation today. Or perhaps you may have the thought, between work and home responsibilities, I am exhausted! You can reframe that. I am going to take it one day at a time and only do what I have the energy to do. As another example, when I went to plan this webinar, I started feeling uneasy. I knew I had a large task ahead of me and it was something I had not done many times before. I started feeling anxious or antsy and I found myself having difficulty concentrating on other tasks. I started thinking, this is really stressing me out. Then I began to worry about the stress itself. Wasn't affecting my work? My sleep? Was the lack of sleep affecting my health? It all just spiraled. However, I then tried to shift my thoughts about stress and recalled how stress can be good for me and help me do a better job creating and presenting this webinar, by helping me to stay alert and driven. I began reminding myself that the stress will help keep focused on what needs to be accomplished and help keep me motivated to work hard. By reframing my stress I was able to use it to my advantage, rather than increasing my level of worry over it. Embrace optimal is him over perfectionism, as you deal with challenges. A world-renowned! In the psychology of -- in his book, he writes about the idea of optimalism, the practice of accepting failure. While optimism is being confident in successful outcomes, optimalism is a little different and its relation to the idea of perfectionism. A perfectionist expects a path to a goal to look like a straight line, like the arrow on your screen. No mistakes. No failures. No barriers. The optimal list expects the path to look like that squiggly line. Unexpected terms along the path towards a goal. The perfectionist may be an optimist, thinking it is completely in his or her power to succeed, where the optimalist is rooted in reality and understands many problems and mistakes may come up and there are learning opportunities on the way towards the goal. The optimalist will pursue a goal that they feel strongly about, they will have a purpose. The optimalist will feel hopeful about reaching a goal while still being realistic about the challenges that lie ahead. And will expect it to take time and frequently adjust expectations in their perseverance towards reaching the goal. Our second C, gaining a higher sense of control over outcomes involves connection, altruism, and managing your use of time.

There is a great quote that goes, as we think about the definition of connection, and how easy it is to mistake technology for connecting, we also need to consider letting go of the myth of self-sufficiency. One of the greatest barriers to connection is the cultural importance we place on going it alone. Somehow we have come to equate success with no meeting anyone. Many of us are willing to extend a helping hand but we are reluctant to reach out for help when we need it ourselves. It is as if we have divided the world into those who offer help and those who need help. The truth is, we are both. Brown points out that when we attach judgment to receiving help, we are also actually attaching judgment when giving help. If we think that we will show weakness if we ask for help, it implies that when someone asks us for help, we believe that they are weak. If we believe it is wrong to share our personal business, we believe it is wrong for someone else to show a need by sharing their personal business. Ask yourself whether you are judging those individuals who are coming to you for help, acknowledging that it is human to make mistakes, to fail, to go through difficult times, allows for us to deepen our connection with others and to not see ourselves as somehow separate and never needing help or social support. Daniel, author of "social intelligence" talks about research of demonstrating our relationships and even routine encounters with others can change the way our brain grows and prime our brains to perform more optimally. Furthermore, he discusses research that demonstrates that when people amass accomplishments and wealth, they simply yearn for more wealth and accomplishment. Thus leading to a lack of satisfaction. But when people amass meaningful relationships, then the accomplishments and earnings are more satisfying and people report much higher levels of happiness. Additionally, meaningful relationships have a positive effect on our physical health. Our bodies release a hormone called oxytocin, when connecting with others. Oxytocin helps against stress and a myriad of ways. Reducing inflammation, increasing bone growth, decreasing pain, and even helping people reconcile in an argument. Some ways to enhance oxytocin in the body, is to make stronger connections with friends and family members, by reaching out for help when you are stressed. You can boost resilience by forming a reliable support system and reaching out during times of stress, to ensure that your oxytocin levels outrun the adrenaline. Consider the word "connections" as a broad term that ranges from family and friends, to community associations and faith-based communities. As well, furry friends can help, pets can boost oxytocin and help you manage your stress levels. Lastly, participating in the employee assistance program, which provides free counseling sessions, also offers a means for connection and can help boost your resilience. In modern times, it is easy for us to connect to others via social media and other online means. And in an, in the pandemic, that sometimes connecting online may be the only way to connect. It is important to remember that posting via social networks is not the most authentic connection. If we cannot have coffee with a friend or take a walk with a family member, our video chats are the next best thing to help us connect in a meaningful way. Despite the increase in stress from the current pandemic, it too may help people to be more stress-hardy, by helping people realize the power of connection. News outlets have put more focus on issues such as quality of relationships, and socialized relations. People have made more effort to reach out to close family and friends from all over the world. Individuals have gotten to know their neighbors and their neighborhoods better. There is really some irony in the fact that this disease that has isolated us has also shown us the importance of connection and provided us with new and different ways for us to be connected to one another. Speaking of connections, there is another element that can fortify your stress-hardiness. Let's

talk about altruism for a minute. Altruism involves taking action to benefit others without expectations of an award. It motivates many of us to make time to volunteer in our communities, maybe we coach a sports team or active in our faith community. Perhaps we volunteer at a school or food bank. We might regularly donate clothes and supplies to a local shelter. Or we may organize a fundraiser for a cause we value. Taking action on behalf of something we believe in is related to the sense of purpose that we discussed previously. Ironically, while the aim of altruism is to help others, we also reap the benefits of connecting to others in this way. According to a study called "giving to others and the association between stress and mortality" people that spend time helping others have a zero increase in mortality, even if they had a tremendous amount of stress and helping others reduces the harmful impact of stress. While too much giving can take a negative toll, the right balance of altruism contributes to a sense of well-being, can help us keep our lives in perspective, and of course will build our stress-hardiness. Research looked at how over 3000 people managed stress, looking at four stress management competencies. Source management, eliminating the source of stress, relaxation, like breathing techniques, or meditation, thought management, like correcting our distorted thoughts, and prevention, such as time management, list making, and other activities to plan daily life. The theory was that relaxation would be the most effective way for stress management with thought management coming in second. However, they were surprised to discover that prevention was the most helpful competency in managing stress with source management coming in second. As I mentioned, prevention includes those things that we do to manage our time. Which is a way for us to exert control on things that happened around us. So, in this category we can try and make daily checklists to control our time. Use a planner, calendar, or perhaps the calendar on your phone. We can delegate our tasks to others, to not have so much on our plate. And we can work to better organize our work and home spaces. Or perhaps work from home spaces these days. And finally, for our third C, strengthening commitment to work and life involves mindfulness, gratitude, and self compassion. Rather than fight against it, move towards acceptance of your stress. By being present with it. Doing so will allow you to take a step back and consider ways to use a stressful situation to your benefit. Using the example that I mentioned earlier, where I realized I was stressed about creating and delivering this webinar, I could then take a deep breath, remind myself that all that matters is the here and now and current moment. And redirect my focus from the past and future, back into the present moment. I could take a couple of minutes to focus on my breathing and the wonder of the present moment. By doing so I no longer would feel preoccupied by my thoughts about stress and would be able to come back to focus on the here and now. So now we are going to take a moment to practice a mindful breathing exercise. Please take a moment and look away from your computer monitor or phone screen. I promise to let you know when it is time to look back. Get yourself into a comfortable, seated position, un-cross your legs if they are crossed, and try to plant your feet firmly on the floor. If you are short like me, you may need to scoot forward in your chair until you can comfortably plant your feet on the floor. You may place your arms by your sides, or your hands on your sides or knees. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes. Or, you can focus your gaze on an unmoving spot in front of you. As we begin this meditation, I want to remind you that your thoughts may wander and that is okay. Be forgiving and nonjudgmental of yourself. Your mind may wander 1 million times and 1 million times you may bring your focus back to your breath. And that is okay. And even expected. So, let's turn to our breath. Breathe in

and out naturally. And notice what is happening to your breath. This may be noticing your chest rising and falling. It could be feeling the warm breath leaving and cool air entering through your nostrils or lips. It could be hearing the sound of your breath. See if you can count on your in and out breath, such as, as you breathe in count one, two, three, out. Two, three, four. Let's do this again and in your mind count slowly while you breathe in and out.

I am going to be quiet for a moment as you notice your breath.

[Silence]

As you continue to pay attention to your breath, see if you can notice the bottom of your feet in your shoe or perhaps no shoe. Resting on the floor. Making contact with the earth. As you continue noticing, embrace the properties of the earth, still, unmoving, solid, unwavering. Take note of any sensations in your feet and ankles as we slowly shift our attention upwards. From your feet, slowly moving your attention to your calves, notice any sensation. And then to your knees. And just notice, notice your thighs. Move upward to your lower back. Notice any sensations in your abdomen. Now scan your hands. Notice your arms. Notice any sensations in your upper back. And your chest as you continue breathing. Notice your shoulders, any sensations in the back of your neck. The front of your neck. Notice your head. And any sensations in your face. Relax the muscles in your face, and release your tongue in your mouth. Notice all the parts of your entire body connect did in working together from the tip of your head to the bottoms of your feet. Imagine the qualities of the air around you. Expansive. Flowing. Shifting. Allow the thoughts in your mind to dissolve into the air around you. Picture a scene of peaceful columnists and imagine the qualities of columnists filling your body. Your entire body is full of peacefulness and calmness. Then imagined the peaceful calmness filling up the entire room you are in. Imagine it expanding to your block, city, or town. Imagine the entire country and then the whole world bathed in a sense of peacefulness and calmness. Now breathe in and out, one more time, savoring the peaceful calmness you are experiencing. When you are ready, begin to feel your body on your seat, you may wiggle your fingers and your toes. Open your eyes and come back to the space that you are in. And when you are ready, focus back on the presentation. Let's take a moment to reflect on this exercise and whether it was calling or grounding to you. Different people have different responses in these kinds of exercises. And also it depends on the day and the time and how much is going on externally and internally in our world. So, go ahead and mark on the poll whether the exercise helped you feel more grounded, less grounded, or somewhere in the middle.

Okay. It looks like time is up. Let me go ahead and show the results.

Okay. So a number of you felt somewhat more grounded. That was the majority. And then a good number felt much more grounded. And a small percentage of you, 8%, said that you did not notice any change. And that is okay too. Sometimes finding a way for our self to feel more grounded takes practice. And sometimes, depending on the day and what is going on, it just may not be an attainable goal in that moment. And then of course with this type of exercise, helpful for some, it may not be helpful for others. But keep in mind it often takes regular practice to be

able to truly benefit from this kind of relaxation exercise. Gratitude. According to Jennifer with "prevention magazine," the practice of gratitude has been shown by numerous researchers to increase people's physiological and mental well-being. In one study a group of volunteers was asked to write down five things they were grateful for, just one time a week, for 10 weeks. And the people self reported a 25% increase in happiness. A 30% increase in time spent exercising. And a decrease in health complaints. Another study in 2015 demonstrated that people who kept gratitude journals for two weeks started sleeping better and had lower blood pressure rates. She gives tips on ways to increase gratitude practice. Appreciate the good. Practicing gratitude is not just saying thank you. It is appreciating for noticing the positive or good moments. People, things, etc., in a person's life. For example, you could think, I am grateful for the clouds clearing and allowing the sun to come out so I could go outside and take a walk around the neighborhood today. Walking makes me feel good. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do that today. Practice regularly. Choosing to practice gratitude on a regular basis will take effort at first, but over time it does become more natural. Don't just think it, write it down. Much of the research showing the positive effects of gratitude involve gratitude journaling. Focus more on the little things. It is easy to lift off list off being grateful for family and friends, being alive, a roof over one's head. Take time to notice little things to be grateful for, such as finding a fast checkout line at the grocery. Or the clouds clearing just in time for a barbecue. And lastly, there is an app for that. There are various apps available to assist with gratitude journaling and many of them are free. Some are listed in the resource handout and in the copy of the slides you will be receiving. Speaking of gratitude, and cultivating your appreciation for others, let's take a look at how to show your appreciation to yourself. Employee self compassion. Dr. Kristin Neff runs the self compassion research lab, composed of three elements, self kindness, common humanity, in mindfulness. Self kindness is being gentle and understanding with ourselves, rather than harshly critical and judgmental. Common humanity is recognizing that all humans feel pain and that to err is human. It is realizing that the pain you feel is the pain that others feel. And vice versa. It is part of how we are made. Mindfulness. As we discussed earlier, also ties in nicely to self compassion and holding our experience in a balanced awareness. For example, being mindfully compassionate with yourself can be about noticing our emotional pain and how we are thinking about it. What we feel emotionally and physically. And even how we are behaving. What we are not doing is ignoring it, pushing it away, or exaggerating it's. We are just noticing it. We are now going to practice and exercise in self compassion, to help you experience the practice firsthand. The exercise incorporates the three aspects of self compassion. Mindfulness, being human, and being kind to yourself. Just think of a situation in your life that is challenging. Something that is causing you stressed. Rather than picking the most difficult stressor, for today's activity, choose one that is causing only moderate or minimal stress. Called the situation to mind and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body. [Pause]

Then exhale and say to yourself, this is a moment of suffering. Other options include, this hurts, ouch, or this is stress. Say to your self, suffering is a part of life. Other options include, other people feel this way, I am not alone. And we all struggle in our lives. Now, put your hands over your heart. Feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands to your chest. Say to yourself, may I be kind to myself? You can also try other questions, for average, what do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself? Or perhaps there's something that speaks

to in a particular situation, such as, may I give myself the compassion I need? Or may I learn to accept myself as I am. May I forgive myself. May I be strong. May I be patient. Inhale what you need and breathe for a moment before coming back to the group. Sometimes when we start doing these types of exercises, we may feel awkward or doubtful of the purpose. But give them a try. At any time of day or night, asking your self questions like these, will help you revoke self kindness and compassion as you allow yourself and others the possibility of just being human. Which is what we are. By repeatedly bringing your attention to compassion for yourself and others, you are being mindful. And overtime with practice, excepting yourself and others as is. I can enhance your heartiness, and also help ward off stress. Life can come at us fast and when we least expected. Although we cannot control the events that can oh occur, we can prepare ourselves to be resilient to them. Sheryl Sandburg says in her book, "option B, " it is not about having a backbone, it is about strengthening the muscles around your back. The pandemic has been especially difficult and stressful for families. Often having to share how space for work and school work. Not being able to visit in person with our extended family. A lot of things have changed for families as a whole. And likely the demands have tested our resilience. This may be a great time to reflect on and use what we discussed here today, to strengthen stress-hardiness for you and your family. With dramatic changes of the past year, not to mention our everyday pressures, it is really up to us to step up our investments in our stress-hardy behaviors and practices, to help keep ourselves strong, make ourselves more resilient, and have a positive effect on others around us. Through facing the challenge, controlling what we can, and committing ourselves to our passion and purpose, we can strengthen our resilience muscles and stand strong to face whatever life may throw at us. And I am now going to throw the presentation, oh! I do not throw the presentation yet. Apologies. I want to mention some of the resources. You should receive the resources via email, if you haven't already. But if you are interested in further information on stress-hardiness and resilience, there are some great books out there. If you are interested in mindfulness and meditation, it is a thick book but a classic and very helpful. And also a great resource for learning to build resilience, to prepare and be resilient, rather than post challenging situations. There is also some really great apps for meditation, gratitude, the gratitude app is a great one for writing down gratitude and prompting you to think about gratitude and affirmations. Some of these other apps are great for meditation and other mindfulness resources. Now I will pass it to Tammy.

Okay, great. Thank you so much, Brianne. If you would like more information on this or other health and wellness topics, please give us a call or visit us online on FOH4You.com. The EAP is for you and your family don't work through personal and work related issues and support is available 24/7, and services are completely confidential. Before we get to questions, I want to remind everyone that the recording and transcript, also a copy of slides, the resource handout, and certificate of attendance will be emailed out to you within 24 hours. And all of today's content will be available on FOH4You.com in about one or two weeks. When you exit today's webinar, a satisfaction survey will appear. We would appreciate if you let us know how we did today and provide additional feedback you might have. We do have a little time for questions, so if you have any questions, please put them in the Q&A. Let's go ahead and kick these off, Brianne, the first question is, I worry for my children's ability to bounce back from the stressors of the current time we are living in. How do I apply this to parenting?

I will talk fast, we have three minutes. So, I would say that when it comes to parenting, obviously you can incorporate a lot of what was said in the presentation. Furthermore, providing structure in the seemingly unstructured times, can certainly give kids a sense of comfort and confidence through the challenging times or any challenging times. But of course validating their feelings, we are struggling, they are struggling and it is okay to feel like you are struggling in times that are difficult. And lastly, I would say that it is important to keep in mind that although we might feel like the stressful situations, life events, can be detrimental in the long run, to remember that going through stressful events, knowing that they are loved, seeing that they can come out at the other end and still be okay, actually gives them confidence to face further challenges later on in life. So, stressful events can actually be beneficial to children in the long-term. In knowing that they can get through difficult stuff.

Thanks, Brianne. The next question is, when I try to practice meditation in these presentations, I feel great afterward. But when I try to run through the script on my own, my mind wanders and I get frustrated. How can I fix this problem?

I am glad to hear that question because I forgot to mention when I was pointing out the research source page and the apps, there are many apps, there are YouTube videos, which are really just audio and pretty scenes, where you can choose guided meditation so you don't have to hear your own voice in your head or remember what to say or do. Somebody else will be speaking and guiding you through it.

And let's do one more question really quick. Regarding when you were talking about the three C's, specifically the first one, challenge, exhibit , grit, how can you maintain the interest? From time to time I just cannot get moving. I am stuck.

Wow, that is a really good question and I wish I was Angela Duckworth, because I would have an immediate great answer to access. One thing that you can do to maintain interest is to try and find a way that what you are doing, as far as your interest, be it, you know, the purpose exercise we talked about, imagining who is affected by what you do. It may be finding ways to keep it exciting. You know? While you are doing it. Maybe, I am not sure what it is that you are doing that you are feeling stuck, but maybe it is trying to learn something new in the way that you do it, expanding your knowledge of the subject. All kinds of things that you can do to maintain interest.

Okay. Great. It looks like we have reached the top of the hour, so we will go ahead and conclude the webinar for today. If we were not able to get to your question or you have additional concerns, please feel free to call the EAP and speak to a consultant that can help with your specific situation. I'd like to once again thank Brianne Oxenrider for presenting today, and I want to thank you for taking time to participate. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your day.

Thanks everyone. I hope you have a great day. [Event Concluded]