

Well in the West

choose to live bravely.

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Stress Management

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Stress and Resiliency

Shawna Shidler, Hinsdale County

Every time you face a crisis, deal with a disappointment, lose someone or something you love, you use your resilience to help you recover and move on with your life. Resiliency means “bouncing back”, bending but not breaking, when you experience difficult life situations. People who have resilience are able to utilize their coping skills and strengths to cope and recover from problems and challenges.

Here are 6 ways to build your resiliency:

1. **Make connections.** Good relationships with close family members, friends, or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.
2. **Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
3. **Take decisive actions.** Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.
4. **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.
5. **Accept that change is a part of living.** Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.
6. **Take care of yourself.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.



Stress and Tobacco

Learn your stress triggers that can cause nicotine or tobacco cravings. Triggers can be internal such as personality, genetics, or emotional. External such as work, social, or financial pressures can act as triggers as well. By identifying what stress triggers your cravings you can learn to cope without relaying on tobacco or nicotine.

- [Take this quiz to learn the stress-or in your life.](#)
- [Know your cravings and triggers—support and tools.](#)



Wellness Program Save the Dates!



Stress and Your Heart

Tanner Kingery, Ouray County

The activity of the heart and blood vessels is coordinated in the body's response to stress. Acute stress — stress that is momentary or short-term such as meeting deadlines, being stuck in traffic or suddenly slamming on the brakes to avoid an accident — causes an increase in heart rate and stronger contractions of the heart muscle, with the stress hormones — adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol — acting as messengers for these effects. In addition, the blood vessels that direct blood to the large muscles and the heart dilate, thereby increasing the amount of blood pumped to these parts of the body and elevating blood pressure. This is also known as the fight or flight response.

Chronic stress, or a constant stress experienced over a prolonged period of time, can contribute to long-term problems for heart and blood vessels. The consistent and ongoing increase in heart rate, and the elevated levels of stress hormones and of blood pressure, can take a toll on the body. This long-term ongoing stress can increase the risk for hypertension, heart attack or stroke.

Repeated acute stress and persistent chronic stress may also contribute to inflammation in the circulatory system, particularly in the coronary arteries, and this is one pathway that is thought to tie stress to heart attack.

Benefits BOX!



Support for breastfeeding moms comes in many ways at work, at home, and in the community.



Mac N' Cheese with Butternut Squash

- 3 cups cubed peeled butternut squash (about 1 squash)
- 1 1/4 cups chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups fat-free milk
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 1/4 cups (5 ounces) shredded Gruyère cheese
- 1 cup (4 ounces) grated Romano cheese
- 1/4 cup (1 ounce) finely grated Parmigiano cheese, divided
- 1 pound uncooked pasta
- Cooking spray
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs or panko (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Combine cubed and peeled squash, broth, milk, and garlic in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat, and simmer until squash is tender when pierced with a fork, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat.
3. Place the hot squash mixture in a blender. Add salt, pepper, and Greek yogurt. Blend until smooth. Place blended squash mixture in a bowl; stir in Gruyère, Romano, and 2 tablespoons Parmigiano. Stir until combined.
4. Cook pasta according to package directions, and drain well. Add pasta to squash mixture, and stir until combined. Spread mixture evenly into a 13 x 9-inch glass or ceramic baking dish coated with cooking spray.
5. Heat oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add panko, and cook for 2 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from heat; stir in remaining 2 tablespoons Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Sprinkle evenly over the hot pasta mixture. Lightly coat topping with cooking spray. OR just sprinkle with cheese.
6. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes or until bubbly. Sprinkle

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Stressed at work? Try these three exercises to help.

Kaci Pinner, Montrose County

BREATHE

Your breath is the bridge between the mind and body. It is the only function that you can perform conscious and unconscious as either a voluntary or involuntary act. Because of your ability to control your breath, you can use it as a tool to quiet the mind and slow down your body.

Breath Counting Exercise:

Sit in a comfortable position with the spine straight and head inclined slightly forward. Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then let the breath come naturally without trying to influence it. Ideally it will be quiet and slow, but depth and rhythm may vary.

- To begin the exercise, count “one” to yourself as you exhale.
- The next time you exhale, count “two,” and so on up to “five”.
- Then begin a new cycle, counting “one” on the next exhalation.

*Never count higher than “five,” and count only when you exhale. You will know your attention has wandered when you find yourself up to “eight,” “12,” even “19.” Try to do 10 minutes of this form of meditation.

LAUGH

Laughter is a unique form of exercise in which your body does not physiologically know the difference between real or fake laughter, your body still receives the same health benefits. Among the many benefits, laughter increases oxygen to the brain and body, increases dopamine levels (your “feel good” hormone) and helps regulate the stress hormones- cortisol and epinephrine.

Silent Laughter Exercise:

- Begin with smiling and then begin silently voicing ‘ha, ha, ha...etc’ building up in speed and intensity.
- Slowly start building up until you are either laughing or encouraging yourself to laugh (silently) and continue this for 5 min.
- After 5 min. you may have honestly started laughing or started laughing out loud. If you have not started laughing, that’s okay. Repeat for another 5 min.

*It’s best if this exercise can be repeated for two 5 min sessions for a total of 10 min of real or “fake” laughter and the most important thing is to have fun with it.

MOVE

Getting up and moving releases endorphins which are our body’s natural painkillers. It is widely believed that when your body feels better so does your mind. . Even 5 minutes of aerobic activity can stimulate anti-anxiety effects.

10-minute Office Workout:

- 3 minutes of Stretching: Side Bend, Chest Opener, Quad Stretch, Hamstring Stretch.
- 5 minutes of Strength: Reverse lunge, Pulse lunge-15 sec., Incline Push-up, Pulse Incline Push-up-15 sec., Squat, Pulse Squat- 15 sec., Tricep Dip.
- 2 minutes Stretch: Tricep stretch, Seated hip stretch, Seated cat and cow, Shoulder row, Neck Stretch.

*For a complete demonstration of this workout watch the YouTube video by clicking on the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Dp2rL397jA> or by searching in the YouTube search bar: *Easy 10-Minute Workout You Can Do at Your Desk* by SELF Magazine (2:27).

Please contact your worksite wellness health educator with any questions or suggestions.

Name, phone, email