

# RESILIENCY & MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS QUICK TIPS #4

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## Resiliency & Mental Health Wellness Quick Tips #4

Each week, we will present an article here that will discuss a key component of resiliency, positive psychology, and mental health wellness!

The articles will briefly present a new topic, provide a skill and/or exercise to try, and will often include other available resources.

We hope that you find this material helpful and work to apply these concepts in your life.



### SOCIAL RESILIENCE

- Social resilience is "the capacity to foster, engage in, and sustain positive relationships and to endure and recover from life stressors and social isolation (Cacioppo, Reis, & Zautra, 2011)."
- The FBI National Academy Associates Comprehensive Officer Resiliency Program describes it as "the ability to engage in healthy and social networks that promote overall wellbeing and optimal performance... It is supported by positive "communication, connectedness, social support, and teamwork."

### COMMENTARY

With the restrictions placed on us all with social distancing, this becomes difficult to maintain. Think about this in the various social settings in which we normally interact: work, socializing with friends, family gatherings, birthday parties, sports, hobbies, school, church, organizations, meetings, weddings, funerals, etc.

None of these situations are "normal" right now, and that can create negative emotional states. Social connectivity is crucial as human beings and the better we are at it, the more resilient we usually are. Social connections help us thrive.

If anyone has had even a brief moment of human interaction/socializing with someone during these times, it becomes almost surreal, with a focus on maintaining distance and avoiding any close contact. Forget about handshaking, high-fiving, or hugging.

For me, the few times I have had such socially distanced interactions, it really made me reflect on how good it felt to just connect with someone else.

During normal life, we often take these social interactions for granted. A good lesson here is to pause and reflect on how important they are.

### **TIPS FOR MAINTAINING SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS DURING COVID-19**

It is important for us to maintain our social connectedness as best as possible for our resilience. If you have not done so, start making calls on Facetime or a similar application to friends and family. Use Zoom, Google Meet, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, and other apps and platforms to have group events and meetings with your friends and families, like a virtual birthday party! Or try the application House Party, which lets you play games with others in a group format. These apps are not hard to set-up and easy to utilize.

### **Key Resilience Research Finding**

As cited in Achor (2010), Psychologist George Vaillant has been lead investigator of a study on happiness and fulfillment that followed freshman from Harvard for over 70 years of their lives. He summarized the results in one word, love. He stated there are “70 years of evidence that our relationships with other people matter, and matter more than anything else in the world.”

### **Related Resilience Skill to Try**

One method of building resilience around the social domain to improve communication through good listening. This builds better relationships, which increases connectedness and social support. The below model comes from the FBI National Academy Associates Comprehensive Officer Resilience Program.

#### **ABCDEs of Good Listening**

**A - Attend with genuine interest.** This means be an active listener, which requires focus and is challenging at times. Challenge yourself to be totally focused on what the speaker is saying. Cease all distracting physical activities and mental activities (e.g., your own feelings, schedules, problems, etc.)

**B - Be Responsive.** Remember, this means just listening and understanding, which are more important than solving. Do this before asking if they want support or help fixing a problem.

**C- Care about the other person.** Many people can equate this to being a cheerleader or being a "rah-rah" person. But a little care goes a long way. See it from the person's perspective. Ask questions. Show some interest/excitement for the person.

**D- Don't Interrupt.** Remind yourself to be patient and wait. If you forget your thought, let it go. Slow it down and use active listening skills.

### **RESOURCES/REFERENCES**

Achor, S. (2011). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*. Random House.

Cacioppo, J. T., Reis, H. T., & Zautra, A. J. (2011). Social resilience: The value of social fitness with an application to the military. *American Psychologist*, 66(1), 43.

Vaillant, G. E. F. (2009). Yes, I Stand by My Words, “Happiness Equals Love. Full Stop”. *Positive Psychology News Daily*.

Preventing & Managing Stress – Helpful Tips from SAMHSA

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-and-Managing-Stress/sma14-4873>

“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention...A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words.”

– Rachel Naomi Remen