Resilience: Everyone Has It—What Will You Do With Yours?

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Take Away Points

• Explain the concept of psychological resilience
• Summarize components of resilience
• Select a technique to increase positive affect/mood
• Identify a strategy to improve social support

Take action to enhance your resilience and the resilience of others!

Why Resilience?
Everyone has the potential to be more resilient to the effects of stress
• We can all use these strategies with patients
• We can promote resilient healthcare/rehab teams
• We can model resilience at home with family and friends

What Is Stress?
• Psychological reaction to events that one is unable to deal with
• A subjective appraisal of a situation as overly taxing
• A perception that varies according to one’s recent life events
• Physical response to excessive demands on oneself

What Stress Does:
Acute stress increases:
• Cortisol levels
• Heart rate
• Respiratory rate
• Blood pressure
• Blood glucose
(Fight or Flight Response)


Chronic stress causes:
• Damage to arteries
• Increased cholesterol
• Dysrhythmias
• Increased blood clotting
• Decreased blood flow to heart & brain (MI, stroke)
• Damage to cells (shortened telomeres)

Stress
• Individuals differ in perception of stress
• Stress is cumulative, from all aspects of life

Stress and Physical Therapists

- Stress and burnout in physical therapists
  - High emotional exhaustion identified in multiple studies
  - Less experienced orthopedic PTs at risk of burnout
- Stress in physical therapy students
  - Increased stress compared to other students and young adults
  - Higher levels of stress associated with more illness


How Do You React To Stress?

Resilience Is:

- ...the ability to bounce back to baseline when confronted with a difficult situation
- ...maintaining equilibrium under stress
- ...successful adaptation to chronic adversity


Model of Resilience

Components of Resilience

- Positive Affect
- Effective Coping
- Purpose for Living
- Social Support

Positive Affect

- Our brains change when we have positive feelings
- Positive feelings leave less room for negative feelings
- Doing good for others enhances positive emotions
- Positive affect does not come naturally to everyone—it must be practiced
- Optimism and humor are related to positive affect

**Optimism**

- In the face of challenges, optimism has been shown to diminish negative moods
- Helps to achieve active coping strategies instead of denial
- Optimism is future-oriented; helps one move forward

*Riolli L & Savicki V. Psychological reports. 2003.*

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**Practice Optimism**

- Catch yourself being negative and insert positive thoughts about a person or situation (another driver cuts you off in traffic)
- Don’t dwell on the negative aspects of life (limit exposure to negative online posts)

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**Humor**

- Humor causing a positive mood can:
  - Increase attention span
  - Promote active problem solving
  - Increase socializing
  - May improve psychological and physical wellbeing


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**Strengthen Your Funny Bone**

- Watch a comedy show before bed instead of reading negative posts online
- When choosing a movie or program, select more comedies
- Identify people who make you laugh

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**Positive Affect: Get Good Vibrations**

- Find ways to “pay it forward”
- Practice gratitude—keep a journal
- Recite the Loving Kindness Meditation:
  “May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe.
  May I be peaceful and at ease.”

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**Effective Coping**

“Grant me the ability to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

- Can you change the stressor?
- If not... It is What It is
  Is your current coping strategy working, or do you need to change it up?

*Carver and Scheier, 1981; Katz T. Roid One. 2015.*
Physical Activity: Part Of An Effective Coping Strategy

- Vigorous physical activity is related to lower stress levels
- Physical activity releases BDNF, a substance that improves brain health
- Physical activity has numerous physical and emotional benefits

Build Activity Into Your Day

- Use a bathroom on a different floor, or in another building
- Look for the stairs instead of taking the elevator
- Wear a pedometer or fitness tracker, or use an app, to encourage more movement
- Have walking meetings

Purpose For Living

- Finding meaning in life increases resilience
- Having a purpose in life increases the chances that you will make changes in your life
- Having a purpose can increase your ability to avoid illness

Find Your Purpose

- Identify your core values—what means the most in your life?
- Write a personal “Mission Statement”
- Be more present each day
- Are your actions aligned with your purpose?

Social Support

- Social support, both perceived and actual, has been shown to be protective against stress
- Social support decreases the chance of developing depression
- Helps to recover from emotional trauma
- Lower rates of morbidity from heart disease among the socially connected

Strengthen Social Support

- Think about people—friends, family, co-workers—who make you feel good
- Communicate with them more often (text/email/chat/pics/in person)
- Build and care for those relationships
Components of Resilience

Positive Affect
Effective Coping
Purpose for Living
Social Support

How Do We Know You Can Enhance Resilience?

RCTs of resilience-training programs in a variety of populations demonstrate significant:

- Decreases in stress and anxiety
- Improved positive mood and effective coping
- Improved resilience


Resilience Training For PT Students

- Developed an evidence-based resilience curriculum
- DPT students (1st, 2nd, or 3rd years) randomly assigned to 4-week curriculum (n=22) or waitlist control (n=21)
- Measures assessed at baseline and post-intervention: stress, resilience, optimism, coping flexibility, positive/negative emotions, social support, and illness symptoms
- Delivered a 2-hour session each week for 4 weeks (8-hour curriculum in total)

Results: Significant increases in the intervention group, both in resilience and positive affect

Resilience Training For PT Students

- The curriculum led to improvement even in the 3rd year students, who you might have assumed were already somewhat resilient
- Both the intervention and control groups had significant increases in social support
- Significant independent predictors of resilience

How Do You React To Stress Now?
The Importance of Resilience: Transforming Society

The best way to help your:

- Family
- Students
- Patients
- Colleagues

is to help them build resilience!

References


Lay Resources For Resilience


References

- Roos L, Saviki V. Optimism and coping as moderators of the relationship between chronic stress and burnout. Psychological reports. 2003;92(3 Pt 1):1215-1226.