Lyda Hill
Institute for Human Resilience

POPULATION RESILIENCE

Excellence in Leadership Program
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The mission of the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience is to advance human resilience to adversity by designing evidence-based solutions through interdisciplinary research, healing therapies, and community training and empowerment. This is accomplished through the work of our three divisions: Research, Healing, and Community Training & Empowerment.
LEADING IN TIMES OF STRESS

01
Gain insight on the impact of stress and trauma exemplified by community disasters

02
Identify ways of coping with stress and burnout as an individual and as a team

03
Recognize strategies of supporting others as a leader
STRESS

Mind and body's reaction to an unusual demand such as a threat or challenge

The interaction between environmental conditions, perceived demands, and perceived capability for managing those demands
WALKING IN A FOREST

Fight
Flight
Freeze
TRYING TO SURVIVE

• Senses become more alert
• Muscles tighten and tense for action
• Heart and breathing rate increase so that more blood is provided for vital organs and diverted away from the digestive tract and skin
• Clotting agents, stored fat, and sugar supplies enter the bloodstream
• Normal processes of the digestive tract are shut down
AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM
AS HUMANS IN OUR MODERN SOCIETY...
WEAR AND TEAR

Short Term: Physiological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral challenges

Long Term:

- Loss of insulin during stress response (may contribute to the onset of adult diabetes)
- Suspension of tissue repair, decalcification of bones (may lead to osteoporosis)
- Inhibition of immune system (increased susceptibility to colds, flu, cancer, AIDS, etc.)
- Changes to the lungs (increases symptoms of asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions)
- Excess epinephrine (can lead to cardiovascular diseases, such as atherosclerosis, hypertension, etc.)
TRAUMATIC STRESS

Events that threaten the life, health, or safety of an individual, either directly or indirectly.

• Physical and sexual assaults
• War
• Child abuse
• Life-threatening illness
• Traumatic loss

• Natural and human-caused disasters

Distress and symptoms following exposure to such an extreme event may be more severe or persistent than general stress reactions.
COMMUNITY DISASTERS ARE STRESSFUL AND CAN BE TRAUMATIC

Suddenness of the disaster
Logistical challenges
  Working from home
  Changing guidelines
  Childcare
  Team dynamics
  PPE guidelines
  Mandates
Physical and mental health challenges
  Stress injury
  Depression and anxiety
  Delay in care for chronic health conditions
  Direct and indirect experiences with disease or illness

THE UNKNOWN
WE’RE IN AN ONGOING CRISIS

Compounding disasters

The unknown

Ongoing stress and burnout
Warning signs of burnout include:

- Declining motivation
- Reduced productivity
- Increasing cynicism
- Social withdrawal
- Lack of attention to detail
- Physical complaints
  - Headaches
  - Fatigue
  - Body aches and pains.
A DIFFERENT WAY TO LOOK AT STRESS

Stress Injury Continuum

- Occurs on a continuum, with PTSD one of many presentations
- Early and late changing vital signs
- Physical injuries
- Can be supported when they are recognized
- Are dynamic, can move in other direction
- Are more likely to occur in states of stress (Occupational exposure)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
<th>REACTING</th>
<th>INJURED</th>
<th>ILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal mood fluctuations</td>
<td>Irritable / impatient</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Angry outbursts / aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm &amp; takes things in stride</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Excessive anxiety / panic attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good sense of humour</td>
<td>Sadness / overwhelmed</td>
<td>Pervasively sad / hopeless</td>
<td>Depressed / suicidal thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing well</td>
<td>Displaced sarcasm</td>
<td>Negative attitude</td>
<td>Over insubordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In control mentally</td>
<td>Procrastination</td>
<td>Poor performance / workaholic</td>
<td>Can’t perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal sleep patterns</td>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
<td>Poor concentration / decisions</td>
<td>Can’t fall asleep or stay asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few sleep difficulties</td>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Restless disturbed sleep</td>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically well</td>
<td>Intrusive thoughts</td>
<td>Recurrent images / nightmares</td>
<td>Physical illnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good energy level</td>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>Increased aches and pains</td>
<td>Constant fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically and socially active</td>
<td>Muscle tension / headaches</td>
<td>Increased fatigue</td>
<td>Not going out or answering phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No or limited alcohol use / gambling</td>
<td>Low energy</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Alcohol or gambling addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased activity/socializing</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Other addictions</td>
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SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

• Cognitive reframe
  • We are resilient
• Self-compassion, coping, and self-care
  • New skills, different skills, realistic skills
• Supporting others around us
COGNITIVE REFRA M E

We will continue to experience disasters
• We will adapt
• We are resilient
• Thinking flexibly and positively without diminishing the reality of the stress
  • It’s an “and”
  • No “toxic-positivity”
SELF-COMPASSION

- Extending kindness to oneself, especially during difficult times
- A way of relating kindly to yourself
- Self-compassion is stable - it is not dependent on perceived success or failure
- Treating ourselves based off the values that also guide the way that we treat other people
- Growth mindset
SELF-CARE

Can be protective from stress injury.  
Is multifaceted.  
Can help prevent burnout and compassion fatigue.  
Can feel stressful.
WAIT, WHAT?
DON’T LET SELF-CARE BE STRESSFUL!

Self-care is simply choosing your own personal needs in times of stress.
Coping is simply an activity that distracts or soothes in the moment.
BE REALISTIC

• Self-care can be…
  • Taking an entire day off work
  • Taking a vacation
  • Indulging in a spa day or fancy dinner

• Self-care can ALSO be…
  • Taking lunch away from your desk
  • Taking a daily walk outside
  • Taking a bubble bath or eating a really good cookie (Sasquatch cookies anyone?)
BE FLEXIBLE IN YOUR COPING SKILLS

• What worked two years ago may be different than what worked last year which may be different from what works now
• Focus on different areas of coping
COPING WITH BURNOUT

• Prioritize self-care, both within and outside of work
• Focus on what you can control, try to let go of what you cannot control
• Seek social support and connections within and outside of work
• Create realistic goals for yourself
• Find a passion project/hobby not related to work
• Find your joy each day
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

- Leading during ongoing stress
- Acknowledging fear and resistance to change
- Supporting a hybrid workforce / environment
- Creating a culture of accountability and trust
- Dealing with the continuous unknown
- Communication challenges
# SUPPORTING AS A LEADER DURING STRESS

<table>
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<th>Recognize achievements</th>
<th>Show trust and provide motivation</th>
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<th>Have realistic expectations</th>
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<td>Recognize importance and commitment of others</td>
<td>Check in and ask what is needed</td>
<td>Ask about the good</td>
<td>Model good behaviors (and take care of yourself!)</td>
<td>Be patient</td>
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RESILIENT ORGANIZATIONS

Are effective at identifying what they can control and developing strategies to recognize and acknowledge success as they cope

Thrive on turning stressors into challenges, rather than viewing difficulties as threats

Have confidence in their abilities to manage what's coming at them

Are good at self-care and work to take care of emotional and physical health

Persevere when they hit roadblocks and, when they do fail, they turn that into a learning opportunity in order to succeed again

Help other people to cope, believing in the concept that collectively we will succeed, alone we will not
THOUGHT EXERCISE: CRISIS ANALYSIS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Initial Response</th>
<th>Organizational Change</th>
<th>Continuous Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was supposed to happen?</td>
<td>What practices can you keep?</td>
<td>What did you learn about your organization?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What did happen?</td>
<td>What is no longer working?</td>
<td>How will lessons learned in this crisis prepare you for future crises?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THANK YOU!

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