Building Resiliency in Times of Crisis
You, our caregivers, have done amazing work in recent weeks to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. The work is far from over, and we wanted to acknowledge the commitment that you are all making to care for our community.

The objective of this toolkit is to promote well-being and resiliency amongst our caregivers during these difficult and uncertain times, as well as remind you of some of the well-being tools and programs available to you wherever you choose to reach out for help.

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Cup of Calm
Resilient people aren’t luckier—they make a practice of doing the things that keep them afloat. Learn some of the most common habits, actions, and responses of highly resilient people.

Resilience means having the grit to get through tough times, feeling confident in yourself and your abilities, bouncing back from adversity, and being in control of stress so that you can move forward and thrive.

It has big benefits, too. According to meQuilibrium research, resilient people have 46 percent less perceived stress, are five times more likely to have good or excellent health, and have a 66 percent higher quality of life overall.

Cup of Calm Series: March 16th - April 27th

This series will teach you the 7 superpowers of resilience. Each week we will present a topic and a power boost to practice for the week.

Access through your Choose Well account every Monday.
The 7 Super Powers of Resilience

1. Master Your Emotions
The ability to control your emotions under pressure is absolutely key to resilience. However, we’re born with a tendency to scan the world for “threats” that upend our emotions and compromise our behavior; some of us are quick to anger, anxiety, or frustration (say, blowing up if a car cuts us off in traffic); others look for threats to safety (health anxiety, fear of getting fired).

**Power boost:** Uncover your default emotion. The next time something stressful happens, tune into your thinking and start to recognize it. Awareness of our thoughts and emotions is the first, most powerful step toward resilience.

2. Defuse Super Stress
When we resort to those long-held emotional reactions, we act habitually and often impulsively—and become stressed in the process. Instead, when those stressful thoughts and emotions come up, defuse them.

**Power boost:** Reframe stressful thoughts. Let’s say you default to anxiety when upset. Catch that stressful thought and turn it around. For example, Did I really mess up in that meeting yesterday? No, it went fine; I even got assigned a new project. Nine times out of 10, we’ll overreact to a situation when it’s not warranted, which is the key driver of our stress.

3. Blast Through Problems
Become a more flexible thinker. When confronted with a problem, we’ll tend to get stuck and generalize, telling ourselves that something “always” happens and that “everything” always goes wrong.

**Power boost:** Instead of all-or-nothing generalizations, pinpoint a specific issue and a solution. For instance, instead of saying, “I always miss my deadlines and always feel overwhelmed”; try, “I have a heavy workload. Next time I’m offered a daunting project, I’ll talk to my manager about a reasonable timeframe.”

4. Defeat Self-Doubt
Be deliberate in recognizing what you do well; keep track of your successes, even the tiny ones. This boosts motivation and increases positive emotions such as pride.

**Power boost:** Jot down at least one success a day before leaving work or at bedtime, and refer to the list when you need a resilience power-up.

5. Radiate Good Vibes
Positivity breeds positivity. For instance, studies show that you get a 50 percent increase in the help people will offer you if you simply say “thank you.” “It has benefits for thankers and thankees.

**Power boost:** Go around the dinner table with your family each night and list the good things that happened that day. Find a similar good-vibes routine that works for you.

6. Connect Like a Champion
Adults with strong social networks are more confident, less prone to depression, and live longer.

**Power boost:** An easy way to connect with others, such as colleagues, is by finding common ground: favorite vacation places, favorite movies, a new restaurant you both love. Look for similarities, however small.

7. Kill it with Courage
Lastly, realize that you’re human. It’s natural to focus more on mistakes and regrets, but they’re part of life.
Staying Strong
Don’t blame yourself for everything. When life throws a curveball, resilient people don’t waste energy beating themselves up. Acknowledge what is within your control to fix—and what isn’t. Remember that you’re best served if you focus on moving forward.

Reach out. Seek out and surround yourself with supportive people. Anxiety, fear, and loneliness make stress more debilitating; resilient people fight the urge to isolate.

Accept help. Know that there is true strength in admitting you can’t handle it all alone. Don’t be afraid to ask for the support you need. When you feel overwhelmed, delegate. Most importantly, don’t feel guilty about it! Needing and receiving help is part of the human experience—and you’ll likely have a chance to pay it forward.

Make peace with the past. Past hurts can take a huge toll on your everyday existence if they are left unprocessed and unresolved. Take some time to sift through your list of grievances and find some peace. Forgiveness is not about the other person—it’s about you. You owe it to yourself to let go and move on.

Make sleep a top priority. Sleep has a huge impact on our mental state and coping abilities. Aim for seven or eight hours of sleep a night and practice good bedtime habits. As a result, you will tend to experience fewer stress-related physical complaints and are less likely to suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and obesity.

Get moving. Resilient people know that they think, behave, and function more effectively when they use their bodies for what they were to design to do: move. Whether it’s a regular brisk walk, a stretch every hour, or a fitness class, prioritize keeping your body in good shape.

Accept change. We often use up a lot of energy trying to plan and predict things we could never plan or predict. Highly resilient people are under no illusion that the world is predictable or within their control. Try to allow things to happen instead of making or forcing them to happen. Change is constant—and adaptability is key to living a happy and healthy life.

Resilient people aren’t luckier—they make a practice of doing the things that keep them afloat. How can you practice these daily habits?
The Upside of Negative Emotions
As kids, we’re often taught to bury our negative emotions or pretend they’re not there. But did you know that there’s an upside to negative emotions—to the anger, sadness, and anxiety that we all feel? They are powerful guides for growth and critical in getting your needs met.

In fact, negative emotions have to be heard: They don’t actually go away when you ignore them. Studies show that suppressing negative emotions just leads to them resurfacing in other ways, often causing serious emotional, social, and physical health problems, such as high blood pressure and even digestive issues.

The Upside of Negative Emotions Series: May 4th - May 18th
Learn the three steps in dealing with negative emotions and practice each week.
Access through your Choose Well account every Monday.
The key to handling your negative emotions? Use them as a guide, rather than giving them the final say. Here are three steps to dealing with your negative emotions, understanding what they’re trying to tell you, and leveraging their upsides for success:

1. Notice the Signs
How many times have you wished you had addressed annoyance before it reached full rage-status or recognized exhaustion before it became burnout? We don’t always recognize the signs of our negative emotions until they’ve escalated. Get ahead of these signals by practicing mindfulness.

**How to do it:** Set aside a few minutes a day to close your eyes and take a few deep breaths or practice meditation. The key is to stop for a moment and tune into what you’re feeling: Are you holding onto emotions physically? Let go of a tight jaw, shoulders, or clenched fists. Are you resisting or judging the emotion? Thoughts like, “I shouldn’t be angry right now” only elicit more discomfort. Just observe with a neutral mind. This awareness will enable you to trace patterns in your responses and recognize which situations typically trigger you.

2. Give Yourself Permission
Negative emotions are uncomfortable, but they aren’t meant to be ignored. When we send these messages straight to voicemail, we’re doing something that psychologists call “avoidance coping,” which sets off a snowball of stress. For negative emotions to pass, you have to give yourself permission to feel them and listen to what they’re trying to tell you.

**How to do it:** Tell yourself, “I’m angry that my ideas weren’t heard in that meeting,” for example. Rate the intensity of the emotion on a scale from one to ten. Then take a deep breath and give yourself permission to feel it, then let it go. Tell yourself, for example, “It’s okay to feel angry. I know my ideas are valuable and that it wasn’t personal. And now it’s okay to let that anger go.” Then rate the emotion again. Is it less intense than it was before? Keep doing this exercise until the emotion subsides.

3. Reroute Your Response
If there’s a valid reason you’re feeling upset (you’re angry because your boundaries were crossed or you’re frustrated because you don’t have enough time to complete a project, etc.) you don’t have to let go of the issue—just the stress it causes.

**How to do it:** Reframe the emotion to reroute your response. Your action plan will depend on the specifics of your situation, but here are some general guidelines:

- **Anger:** Try not to take others’ behavior personally (it’s usually not about us at all).
- **Frustration:** Scan your environment for resources you have available to you.
- **Sadness:** Replace or acknowledge something you’ve lost.
- **Anxiety:** Reset for the most realistic (rather than the worst) case scenario.
- **Embarrassment:** Congratulate yourself for leaving your comfort zone.
- **Guilt:** Check your actions against your own values (rather than others’).
- **Shame:** Make a list of pride points, forgive yourself, or make a plan to act with integrity.

When you manage your negative emotions, you no longer have to hide from what they have to say. On the contrary, you can use their messages as tools to boost self-awareness and reclaim control; acting—rather than reacting—in a way that fuels your success and lowers your stress.
Back-up Care

In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, many area schools have announced temporary closures. We have been working diligently to provide back-up care resources to support you and your family during this stressful time.

Effective immediately, all caregivers (full-time, part-time, per diem) now have access to low cost back-up child care and Crisis Care through Bright Horizons. To ease your way, annual use limits for back-up care have been removed. Crisis Care gives you the option to secure care using your own personal network – a family member, neighbor, friend, or babysitter – and receive a reimbursement of $100 per day. This option is available through April 30.

View this Bright Horizons flyer for details on how to register and find the care that is right for you. Please follow the directions on this flyer. For questions, please call the Bright Horizons back-up care support team at 877-BHCares (877-242-2737).

For the latest guidelines on back-up care use after exposure to COVID-19, visit www.brighthorizons.com/covid19. If you are unable to secure appropriate back-up care, please contact 877-242-2737 to discuss alternative care options.
Reflections:
Starting your meeting off with a reflection can be a powerful way to get your team centered and bring them to the present moment. Incorporate one of the provided slides into your team meetings. The slides are ready to be copied and pasted into your meeting presentation. Click here to download

Caregiver Assistance Program:
Sometimes, keeping our lives in balance is difficult and we need a little help to restore our equilibrium. That's why our Caregiver Assistance Program is there for you at no cost. Check out the free services offered.

Key Contact Numbers:
All caregivers except those in Alaska
Phone: 844-875-5716
Virtual Visits: Click here to get started
Website: liveandworkwell.com (use access code choosewell).

Alaska caregivers only
Phone: 844-311-6223
Website: https://psjh.lyrahealth.com/

Behavioral Health Concierge
WA and MT caregivers only
Phone: 833-724-9355
7am-9pm 7 days a week

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Free & Confidential, Available 24/7

Crisis Text Line:
Text HOME to 741741, 24/7 Crisis support in the US

Helpful Websites:
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org

Mental Health America:
http://mentalhealthamerica.net

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.name.org

National Institute of Mental Health:
www.nimh.nih.gov

Well Being Trust:
https://wellbeingtrust.org/

Mental Health Toolkit:
My Guide to Mental Health Resources: It's Ok to Not Be Ok

These resources can be used or mentioned in meetings or passed along to your team so they have them on hand. We encourage you to check out all tools and resources, so you know what is available.