The cover features four decorative mandala patterns in the corners. The top-left and bottom-right mandalas are star-shaped with orange, yellow, and pink colors. The top-right and bottom-left mandalas are circular with orange, pink, and blue colors. A yellow rectangular frame surrounds the title text.

THE ABC'S OF RESILIENCY

CURATED BY DR. MICHELE RUSINKO



OFFICE OF THE
CHAPLAINS

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

A NOTE FROM MICHELE

AS SOME OF YOU KNOW, I HAVE SPENT THE LAST FIVE YEARS STUDYING THE SCIENCE OF RESILIENCE. WHILE I DO NOT CONSIDER MYSELF AN EXPERT, I AM A GOOD STUDENT AND I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY WITH SOME OF THE TOP EXPERTS IN THIS FIELD. FOR THIS I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL.

I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND A WEBINAR WITH TAL BEN-SHAHAR ([HTTP://WWW.TALBENSHAHAR.COM](http://www.talbenshahar.com)) WHO IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE THOUGHT LEADERS IN THE FIELD. THE TITLE OF THE WEBINAR WAS RESILIENCE BOOSTERS, AND IN HIS VERY ACCESSIBLE AND ORGANIZED FASHION, TAL TALKED ABOUT THE ABCS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE AND IDENTIFIED TECHNIQUES FOR EACH OF THESE COMPONENTS.

WHILE THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DEFINE RESILIENCE, I THINK OF IT AS THE CAPACITY TO ADAPT WELL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, TRAUMA, TRAGEDY AND SIGNIFICANT OR CUMULATIVE SOURCES OF STRESS. IN YESTERDAY'S WEBINAR, TAL IDENTIFIED IT AS YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMUNE SYSTEM. RIGHT NOW WE ARE ALL LOOKING FOR WAYS TO KEEP BOTH OUR PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMUNE SYSTEMS STRONG. THIS IS MY OFFERING TO YOU.

PLEASE USE THIS FOR YOURSELF OR SHARE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



THE ABC'S

ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE IS
LOOKING AT:

A AFFECT (EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, HEART)

B BEHAVIOR (ACTIONS, DOING, BODY)

C COGNITION (THOUGHTS, REASON, MIND)



AFFECT

TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING RESILIENCY

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO BE HUMAN

Let emotions flow through you – feel what you feel.

When we allow ourselves to feel whatever emotion we are experiencing, it flows through us. If we try to block unpleasant emotions (fear, sadness) that emotion intensifies. Feeling difficult emotions also opens the pathway to feel pleasurable emotions. Golda Meir once said, “Those who don’t know how to weep with their whole heart don’t know how to laugh either.” Find a way to express, not suppress.

- Talk about who you are really feeling.
- Write about what you are feeling.
- Cry. Let yourself weep.



AFFECT

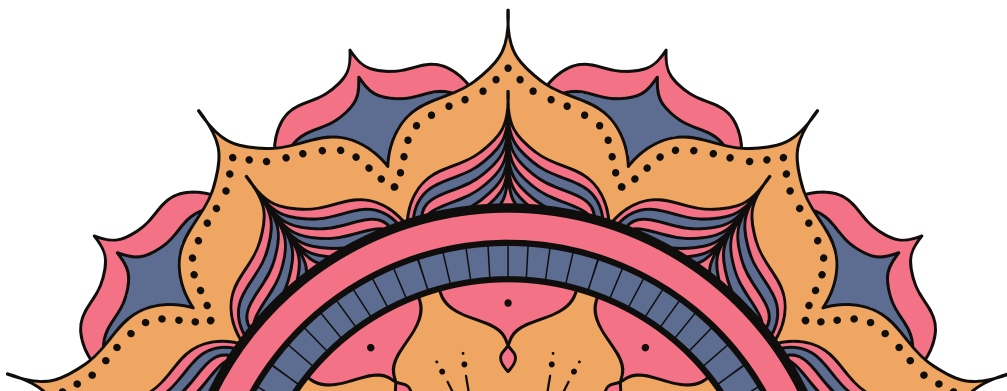
TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING RESILIENCY

EXPRESS GRATITUDE

There is now a huge body of research that demonstrates that those who express gratitude are happier and healthier.

- Each night before going to sleep identify three moments, people or things for which you are grateful and the best moment of the day. Even the most difficult days have a best moment.

When we express gratitude we embody a positive emotion. Barbara Fredrickson, the leading scholar in this field, talks about how our vision and our thinking becomes more expansive when we are experiencing a positive emotion. We become more creative and better problem solvers. This is referred to as the “Broad and Build Theory of Positive Emotions.” (Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). Positive emotions broaden and build. In P. Devine & A. Plant (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 47, pp. 1–54). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.) When we are caught in our negative emotions our vision and thinking becomes narrower and more constricted. During these challenging days, when we are called on to adapt to so many changes, it is helpful to bring our most creative, problem solving selves to the task at hand.



BEHAVIOR

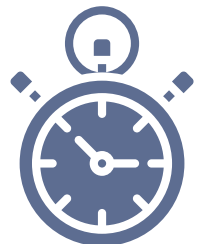
TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING RESILIENCY

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Often when life becomes stressful, our regularly exercise routines get thrown out the window. However, stressful times are the most important time to exercise. John Ratey, at Harvard Medical School, is one of the key researchers in this area. (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/can-exercise-help-treat-anxiety-2019102418096>) Researchers had long noticed that people who exercised regularly had lower rates of depression and anxiety, and that for some people who were depressed, or anxious, exercise was as effective as powerful medication. Researchers began to explore the idea that exercise worked as an anti-depressant.

Current research comes to a slightly different conclusion. Our bodies (and minds) have evolved to operate best when we are moving regularly throughout our days. Not exercising or moving regularly works as a depressant. Here is where I loop back to our drinking game. I like to compare this to drinking water. Our bodies operate best when they are hydrated, and the absence of proper hydration disrupts our physical (and mental) wellbeing. The same is true of exercise/movement.

- Go for a walk
- Take a free online fitness class
- find something you enjoy and get moving!



BEHAVIOR

TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING RESILIENCY

INVEST IN RELATIONSHIPS

Multiple researchers have been studying the role of social connection and wellbeing and there is a general consensus that the number one predictor of the psychological and physical wellbeing is the strength of social relationships. (https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/the-health-benefits-of-strong-relationships). While in person connection is wonderful, we can also take advantage of all the technology we have available to us.

- Send an e-mail, send a text, or pick up the phone and call someone.

The Most Important Thing- Merry Wahtola Trommer

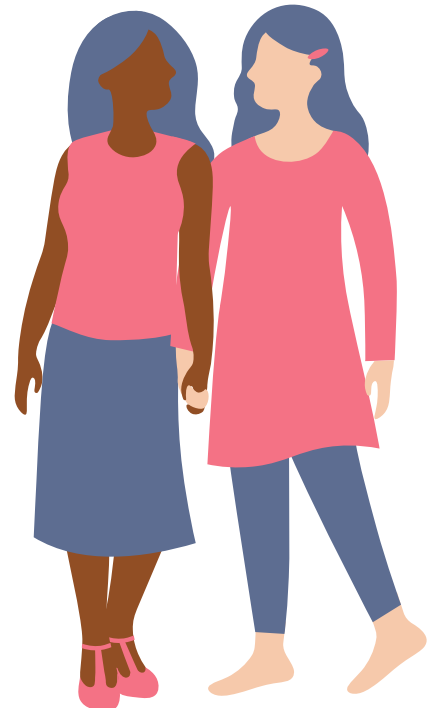
Just two weeks ago, it was sufficient to say, hello, good morning, good bye.

But now, in every text, every email, every phone call, I tell my friends and family how much I love them. I tell them life is better because they are in it.

I say it with the urgency of a woman who knows she could die, who knows this communication could be our last.

I slip bouquets into my voice. I weave love songs into the spaces between words. I infuse every letter, every comma, with prayers.

Sometimes it makes me cry, not out of fear, but because the love is so strong. How humbling to feel it undiluted shining, like rocks in the desert after a rain, to know love as the most important thing to remember this as I keep on living.



COGNITIVE

TECHNIQUES FOR BOOSTING RESILIENCY

DISTRACT YOURSELF

It is easy for the constant stream of news to tell our minds, "Everything is terrible!" And this simply is not true. Taking time to distract yourself from the constant barrage of bad news is not burying your head in the sand. It is trying to bring reality back into balance

- Watch a comedy
- Listen to music
- Read

PRACTICE BENEFIT FINDING

As Henry David Thoreau once said, "The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise." The opposite is also true – the benefit finder finds benefits in hell. Again, this is not burying your head in the sand – it is trying to bring a more balanced view to reality. While we can be overwhelmed with the escalating bad news, we can be equally overwhelmed with the generosity of so many people.

Try to embrace all of it.

"Here is the world. Terrible
and beautiful things will
happen. Do not be afraid."

Frederick Buechner