



Building and Sustaining Resiliency

By Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, NAADAC Executive Director

Resiliency – becoming resilient – actions that evidence resiliency – these are the thoughts that occupied my mind in late summer as I prepared to speak at the *Resiliency 2021: Empowering Voices That Build Resilience* webinar on September 9, 2021. September also marked this year’s *Recovery Month*, which has been long-celebrated by NAADAC as part of our commitment to building the voices of recovery and sharing the message that “treatment works and recovery happens.” This message evidences the strength of recovery and the processes through which millions of people have achieved recovery and resilience.

Over the years as a counselor, administrator, and even as a parent, I have identified certain behaviors and skills that have helped me in building and sustaining resiliency. It starts with **connection**. Connection to self includes knowing myself and being aware of what I want compared to what I actually need, and connection to others includes connections that are purposeful and sustainable. Resiliency also requires **commitment**, including commitment to loved ones, to a purpose or mission, and to contributing to the communities in which I live and work. **Care**, including care for self and care for others, is the third piece of building resiliency. Creating, building, and thriving in a healthy **community** of people at home, at work, and at play is necessary for building and sustaining resiliency. Being **centered** or balanced is the fifth necessary piece. This one is perhaps my biggest challenge – it is easier for me to be centered in my sense of a spiritual world, however, being centered and balanced in all aspects of my life is not so easy. The final piece is being **conscious** – or thoughtful – of what I say and how I say it, of boundaries, and of what I allow into my life, from the positive to the negative. If a person is not conscious and careful in taking care of themselves, they can overload themselves to the point of an emotional, physical, or psychological breakdown. I think of it as what and how I allow myself to think, feel, speak, and act in a self-determined manner rather than being solely influenced by the things around me.

We know how so many of these behaviors and skills can be accomplished – we teach our clients every day – and yet, somehow, we do not always give ourselves the same **compassion**. Compassion, another “c” word, is a key element in our framework as a human. Lately we’ve been hearing about and perhaps experiencing compassion fatigue as we see so much tragedy around us, but it is imperative that we reflect and build upon our connections and relationships that “feed” us and cause feelings of community and connection. We must have compassion for ourselves. We can create or recreate what we have used in the past for coping skills, from mindfulness to meditation. And there are other activities, such as exercise, singing, dancing, playing music and talking to other positive people that can renew and rebuild a dwindling “compassion account.”

Of course, as a helping professional you know these things.....however, are you reminding yourself of these things as you work to help others? Are you healing and building resiliency within yourself? Now is the time that we should work toward greater insight and resiliency, and to build greater levels of **connection, commitment, care, community, centeredness, consciousness, and compassion**. Together, by supporting ourselves and each other, we can build and sustain resiliency. Together – WE CAN – and DO – make a difference!



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