



LiveWell

MAY 2020



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RAMP UP YOUR RESILIENCY:

Building Resiliency and Adaptability in Challenging Times

By Renee Moe

As the world deals with the ever-changing impacts of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, uncertainty and stress have become an unfortunate national pastime. Challenging times like these underscore the need to stay resilient. But what exactly does that mean?

“Resiliency is often described as the ability to resist, bounce back or recover from life’s adversities,” says Clinical Health Psychologist Michael Cofield, Ph.D. “Resiliency is important all the time, but particularly in times like these.”

Dr. Cofield and licensed professional counselor Mary Ann Zimmerman are experts in behavioral medicine and mind-body interventions. Through the Mindability Group, they have introduced successful interventions for behavioral health conditions used by hospitals, mental health centers, government agencies, senior adult organizations and primary care practices. Sun Health Wellness provides these resources for free under the “Resources” tab at SunhealthWellness.org.

“When facing unexpected challenges, our routines are upended, and we quite naturally become

stressed and anxious,” says Ms. Zimmerman. “It’s important to be flexible when change happens and to create new routines.”

Dr. Cofield says fear and anxiety about the pandemic can be overwhelming. “Learning resiliency tools and strategies can give folks a better sense of control and help reduce uncertainty.”

Benefits of Resiliency

There are many benefits to enhancing your baseline level of resiliency, according to the experts. These include:

- Decreased depression and anxiety.
- Increased life expectancy.
- Improved quality of life.
- Increased protection against heart disease.

Resiliency tools and strategies can also boost your immune system response. A study conducted by Harvard-affiliated researchers showed that 4,500 patients who received resiliency training were able to reduce their health care costs and use by 43% compared to 14,000 similar patients who did not receive resiliency training.

Social support also makes you more resilient.

“The single biggest predictor of one’s level of resiliency is the quality and quantity of your personal relationships,” says Dr. Cofield. “While we need to maintain physical distancing to avoid infection, the last thing we need right now is more social isolation.”

Ms. Zimmerman says seniors are particularly vulnerable to social isolation.

“The correlation between social isolation and many negative health consequences is actually stronger than that between cigarette smoking and cancer,” she says. “So maintaining and enhancing social connections is extremely important right now.”

Tools to Build Resiliency

Four simple strategies can help you learn or sharpen your resiliency skills:

- **Positive events journaling** – At bedtime write down three positive things (big or little) that happened to you during the day. Continue this for 21 days. This simple strategy has been shown to improve mood as well as sleep.
- **Mindful breathing** – Focus on inhaling and exhaling for one minute, working up to five to 10 minutes a day. Do this either sitting or lying down at the same time each day. You’ll notice positive benefits within 21 to 30 days.

- **Express gratitude** – Find gratitude or blessings in the face of challenges. Identify three things you are grateful for every day and write them down. This retrains your brain to refocus from our natural tendency toward negative scanning.
- **Reach out** – Make a list of five or 10 people you care about. Once a day briefly call, text or email one person on the list and leave a caring message. This simple act makes deposits in others’ “emotional bank accounts” and boosts your chances of receiving social connectivity.

Also, limit your exposure to the media.

“Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting,” says Dr. Cofield. “While we need accurate information, it’s best to set aside specific times during the day to watch, read or listen to trustworthy news updates.”

You can improve your resilience every day. “The more you practice resilience-boosting skills, the better you’ll become at coping and handling life’s inevitable challenges,” says Ms. Zimmerman. “And best of all, the tools are fun and easy to implement.”

Sun Health will be offering an online four-week Resiliency Series where you can learn more. See page 6 for information on how to join this series.

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Empowering people to enjoy living longer.

What began over 50 years ago as a desire of a group of individuals to improve the health and wellbeing of their community has since prospered into a legacy of passion and giving.

Today, the Sun Health team champions superior health and wellbeing through philanthropy, inspired living and wellness programs. Our commitment begins with the heart-felt generosity of people like you who support the Sun Health Foundation through your time, talent, treasure and testimony.



AGING GRACEFULLY:

Caring for Your Bones and Joints

By Renee Moe

For many, healthy aging means maintaining independence for as long as possible. Osteoporosis and arthritis are two common but different conditions that affect millions of Americans and pose a risk to living independently.

Aging can affect bone and joint health, says Rheumatologist Viji Mahadevan, M.D.

“Rheumatologists have special skills and training to diagnose and treat disorders of the joints, muscles, tendons, bones and other connective tissue,” she says. “We treat osteoporosis, arthritis, lupus, scleroderma and other conditions.

Osteoporosis

“Osteoporosis is a condition in which the bones become less dense and more likely to fracture,” Dr. Mahadevan says. “It is the leading underlying cause of fractures among older adults.”

According to the National Institutes of Health, more than 53 million people in the U.S. either already have osteoporosis or are at high risk for it because of low-bone mass, called osteopenia.

Both men and women lose bone mass after age 50. Women are particularly susceptible after menopause when levels of bone-protecting

hormones like estrogen and progesterone plummet. “Osteoporosis is known as the silent disease,” Dr. Mahadevan says. “It doesn’t cause pain and can progress undetected for many years without symptoms until a bone fracture occurs. It can only be detected with a bone-density screening.”

Dr. Mahadevan recommends getting regular bone density or DEXA scans.

“Post-menopausal women should get a DEXA scan every two years,” she says. “Men should begin getting DEXA scans after age 70 or earlier if they are on medications such as steroids or some cancer medications. Medicare and most insurance plans cover bone density scans every two years.”

Knowing your bone density number is important so you can tell if it’s getting better or worse. “It’s as important as knowing your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers,” says Dr. Mahadevan. “You should prioritize getting regular bone density screenings like you do for a mammogram or a colonoscopy.”

Most primary care physicians do bone density screenings and can often prescribe the first line of medications. If you can’t tolerate medications, or suffer a fracture, your doctor likely will refer you to a rheumatologist.

Dr. Mahadevan stresses that bone-building medications are an important part of treatment, as identified below. For additional information on this topic read “Improving Bone Health through Lifestyle Changes,” available at SunHealthWellness.org/Articles

“The benefits of taking these medications far outweigh the risk and fear of side effects,” she says. “Many people who should be taking these medications aren’t and are experiencing fractures and other issues that limit their independence.”

Arthritis

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in America and occurs more frequently as we age.

“Arthritis is a generic term for many types of disorders that involve joint inflammation,” Dr. Mahadevan says. “Different forms include rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and osteoarthritis (OA). RA is the most severe and can be debilitating. Most primary care physicians refer patients to a rheumatologist when they see signs of swelling that affects multiple joints.”

OA is gradual onset, most often involving knees and spine. “Most patients see a rheumatologist if they want to avoid surgery,” Dr. Mahadevan says. “We can offer symptomatic management with injections, medications and physical therapy.”

Strategies for Healthier Bones, Joints

It’s never too late to optimize bone and joint health. Dr. Mahadevan offers five strategies:

- **Remain active** — Weight-bearing exercises are good for osteoporosis and water-based exercises for osteoarthritis.
- **Maintain a healthy weight** — If overweight, lose the extra pounds.
- **Eat well** — Follow an anti-inflammatory diet; reduce processed foods and concentrated sugars.
- **Adequate calcium** — Take in 1,000 mg a day by eating green, leafy vegetables and dairy products like milk and yogurt or through supplements.
- **Vitamin D** — At least 50% of people are vitamin D deficient. Aim to get between 1,000-2,000 units per day.

To learn more about this topic, please attend our scheduled classes listed in the “Bone & Joint Health” class calendar on the next page.

Classes & Events

Sun Health Wellness has implemented alternative means of holding its regular classes via video conferencing technology at no cost. Registration is not required. To see a schedule of the upcoming online classes, go to SunHealthWellness.org and click on “Healthy Living Classes.” New classes are added regularly.

BONE & JOINT HEALTH

Being Active with Arthritis

Thursday, May 7 | 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Arthritis is a leading cause of pain and disability for nearly 53 million adults. Although people with arthritis tend to be less physically active, moving more is an important strategy for relieving pain and maintaining or improving function. Join Alex Stark, MS, to discover healthy and safe physical activity recommendations.

“Bone” Appetit!

Thursday, May 14 | 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Strong bones are important for our health and lifestyle. Did you know that more than 80% of fractures in people over age 50 are related to osteoporosis? Sun Health Wellness Specialist Alex Stark, MS, will address how exercise and nutrition can help feed your bones.

Hip and Knee Arthritis: comprehensive orthopedic care

Tuesday, May 19 | 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Dr. Roberto Calderon, orthopedic surgeon at Abrazo Health, will discuss causes, treatments and prevention strategies for hip and knee pain.

DIABETES

Diabetes Connection Support Group

Monday, May 18 | 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

This monthly group is for individuals with diabetes to share and learn in pursuit of healthy living.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mindability's 4-Week Resiliency Program

Thursdays, April 7 | 10 to 11 a.m. & 2 to 3 p.m.

This four-week Resiliency Program is a comprehensive, engaging, self-directed program. It is scientifically-based and systematically teaches participants a set of resiliency tools covering four key areas.

Meditation and Managing Anxiety

Every Monday | 2 to 3 p.m.

During uncertain times increased anxiety is common and it may be hard to find peace of mind. Join Barbara Mason in a weekly session focused on meditation, mindfulness and reducing anxiety. You will learn the signs and symptoms associated with anxiety and gain coping skills to manage stress. We will practice relaxation and mindfulness techniques and join in guided group meditations.

ALTCS 101

Thursday, May 21 | 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Haleigh Collins, MSW, from JacksonWhite Law, will give an overview of the Arizona Long-Term Care System (ALTCS), the state's Medicaid program for long-term care. This presentation covers medical and financial eligibility requirements, services covered by ALTCS and more.

Heart Health 101

Monday, May 18 | 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Keeping your heart healthy is one of the most important ways to make sure you are feeling your very best. Join cardiologist Rajeev Garg, MD, to learn about our cardiovascular system, common dysfunctions and how to prevent or treat these issues.

MEMORY CARE

Memory Café – Call-In Sessions

Tuesdays, May 12 & 26 | 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Memory Cafés provide a resource for people living with memory loss and their care partners. Caregivers participate in an educational and/or support sessions. The in-person sessions have been paused due to COVID-19. There is a dial-in caregiver support group on the second and fourth Tuesdays until further notice. To join, call (480) 378-7231, wait for the prompt, then enter the Conference Call ID number: 9848087.

Dementia Friends Training

Tuesday, May 19 | 10 to 11 a.m.

Arizona will experience the largest increase in persons developing Alzheimer's and related dementias over the next five years. People with dementia need to be understood and supported. You can help by becoming a "Dementia Friend." Join Sun Health's Barbara Mason and learn the tools to implement YOUR dementia friendly community.

Dementia Caregivers: Tips & Resources

Thursday, May 28 | 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

It is easy to become overwhelmed as a new caregiver, join Sun Health's Memory Care Navigator, Marty Finley, MEd, to discuss tips for caregivers and share area resources for those who are caring for a loved one with dementia.

Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Wednesdays, May 6 & 20 | 3 to 4 p.m.

Sun Health's Memory Care Navigator Marty Finley, MEd, leads this support group.

NUTRITION

Deciphering Food Labels

Friday, May 15 | 10 to 11 a.m.

Have you ever looked at a food package or nutrition label and wondered what it means? The front is designed to sell you the product, but there also is important information on the back. Join Teri Elkins, MPH, CHES, Health & Wellness Coordinator at Sun Health, to empower you to make healthy decision while learning how to read food nutrition labels and not be deceived.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Let's Try Exercise: HIIT

Friday, May 22 | 1 to 2 p.m.

Join Sun Health's Damian Plues RDN, CPT, for a High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workout. This class will focus on increasing your heart rate and giving your whole body a workout in under 45 minutes. **Note: Participants must be able to stand independently and to safely get up and down from the floor unassisted.**

ON DEMAND CLASSES

In addition to this month's cases, Sun Health has classes you can watch anytime. To access, go to SunHealthWellness.org, click on "Healthy Living Classes" then Online Classes, then On Demand Classes.

Nutrition & Kidney Health

You are what you eat. This program addresses chronic kidney disease and how what you put in your mouth impacts this vital organ.

Understanding Memory Loss & Healthy Hearing

When it comes to memory and hearing loss, early intervention is key. This session provides guidance on how to keep both sharp.

Fall Prevention and Healthy Hearing

Learning the connection between hearing and balance could keep you from falling. We'll teach you how to improve both.

Train Your Brain!

Exercise and healthy foods are not just for your body on the outside. What about working out your brain? Friends and family can also benefit from this fun class that trains your brain.

The Relationship Between Heart and Kidneys

Our heart and our kidneys need a good, healthy relationship to work properly. Learn more and importantly how to avoid Cardiorenal Syndrome.

The Core to Strength

Our core is the key to keeping strong. This low-intensity class focuses on core strength, balance and flexibility exercises using a chair as support.

Participants must be able to stand independently.

Facts About High Blood Pressure

Over 1.5 billion people have it, we want to teach you how to avoid it. Get the latest guidelines from the American Heart Association on avoiding high blood pressure.





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Your Wellbeing. Your Plan. Your Home.

We at Sun Health At Home (SHAH) hope you and your family are staying well in these uncertain times.

Our hearts go out to those who are impacted by COVID-19 and its impact on our community. For everyone's health and safety, we acknowledge the need for social distancing, while at the same time we want you to know we are open for business. For those who would still like to get information about SHAH, we have a couple of options for you.

We would be very happy to do a virtual online meeting with you to answer specific questions you may have about our program.



SUN HEALTH AT HOME

Attend our online webinars
at SunHealthAtHome.org or
call (623) 227-4663

SunHealthWellness.org



HEALTHY LIVING CLASSES

Online

At Sun Health, we envision a world where people live longer, healthier more purposeful lives.

One way to do that is by maintaining and enhancing social connections and staying active mentally and physically. Our Healthy Living Classes are a perfect way to stay connected and learn about important health topics from experts in their field.

Sun Health Wellness has implemented alternative means of holding its regular classes via video conferencing technology at no cost.

Registration is not required.

View upcoming online classes at SunHealthWellness.org. Click on **Healthy Living Classes**.