



Welcome to 'Harbucks' Virtual Coffee House

**Maintaining Well-Being as
COVID-19 Continues
Jan. 8, 2021**



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Ask the Experts...



- **Yale University's Laurie Santos, Ph.D**
 - The science of well-being
 - The importance of social connections
- **Harvard University's Center for Developing Children**
 - Finding balance in your life



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Yale University's Laurie Santos, Ph.D.



- Positive psychology expert
- Simple ideas for sustaining mental well-being as COVID-19 continues
- “The Happiness Lab” podcast
- Teaches, *“The Science of Well-Being”*
 - Most popular course in Yale’s history
 - Now available online for free
 - <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>



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Yale University's Laurie Santos, Ph.D.



- **Resilience = Preventative medicine**
- **Approach to mental health/lead more fulfilling lives.**
- **Podcast on the mental toll of COVID-19**
- **Wrote: “Which Side of History: How Technology is Reshaping Democracy & our Lives” (the cognitive costs of our always-on relationship with devices.)**



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- Santos says:
 - We may have misconceptions about what makes us happy
- One study: simple interactions with strangers, positively affect our well-being
 - Santos calls this: “small exchanges”
- Even with introverts - *“A simple chat with a stranger can make people feel great.”*

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- Santos says:
 - During COVID, we have limited chances for these small exchanges
 - This has a huge affect on our sense of well-being
 - *“A simple chat with the local barista can start your day off great.”*
- How do we fulfill that need?



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- How do we bring back the positive effect of those interactions?
 - Tip #1:
 - Be intentional about interactions
 - Eye contact
 - No distractions
 - Do one thing at a time



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- How do we bring back the positive effect of those interactions?
 - Tip #2:
 - Double-down on what you do have (strengthen connections)
 - “I’ll be on zoom, join me beforehand to chat”
 - “Let’s zoom regularly”



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- How do we bring back the positive effect of those interactions?

- Tip #3:

- Reach out: send a text to someone just to say, *“Hi, I’m thinking of you.”*

- *“Remember that fun time”*
- A quick text to a friend to look in on them



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Please Notice This



- **Tip #4: The mere presence of tech can be detrimental to our relationships and in-person experiences**
 - Yet we rely on devices more than ever
 - Screens affect our attention
 - Shut off notifications when zooming
 - Be careful about attentional hygiene when zooming
 - FB/Insta steal away real life time
 - Fight the screens to recover your time



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- **Tip #5: Self-care: it isn't always about the "me-time" bubble bath**
 - According to the research, the right way to treat ourselves is to do nice things for other people.
 - *"We get more out of being more open, social, and other-oriented than from spending money on ourselves."*
 - But you can still take a bubble bath...



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Recap...



- **Use the tools we do have to really connect**
 - **Be intentional in your communication**
 - **Double Down with your contacts**
 - **Reach out in unexpected ways**
 - **Pay attention to one person at a time**
 - **Self-care means reaching out to others**
- **Sharing happy times, expressing gratitude and using the tools we do have to do nice things for others makes us feel more happy**





My Experimental Starbucks Run...



- Texted colleagues (reaching out)
- Double Down (by connecting with the people I already know)
- Offered coffee (small surprise)
- This is what I first saw...empty store
- The friendly barista w/ smiley face mask
 - Asked my name (no one else there)
 - Sang me a song!
 - I sang along!
 - I was left waving to other customers...



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And then I saw this...



- Feeling uplifted from the experience....



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More Good News...



- **Surprise presents - a letter, a random, tiny gift, a demonstration of gratitude, a post-it note, a text message**
 - **These are powerful ways to show we care**
 - **It feels good to receive and to give**
 - **The act in itself is boosting your own well-being.**



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Happiness During COVID: YES!



- We are seeing more negative emotions
 - Anxiety, depression
- Especially in more vulnerable populations such as people who are members of high risk health categories
- And in people who do not have child-care available



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Happiness During COVID: YES!



- Try not to run away from the negative emotions
- Don't pretend they don't exist or deny them
- When a child is expressing uncertainty, fear, frustration, anger, jealousy
 - Give these emotions space
 - Allow these emotions to come through
 - Use meditation and simple conversation to recognize and accept
 - Live with it, don't push it away



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Happiness During COVID: YES!



- **Other tips:**
 - **Allow fear or worry to roll out and talk about it**
 - **Don't eat to suppress it**
 - **Don't run to social media to distract from it**
 - **Talk it over together**



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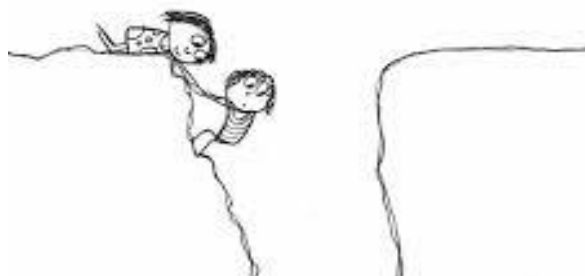
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So that's one Expert Opinion...

HAPPINESS IS

...being able to pull each other
out of the hole no matter
how deep it is.



- **How to follow up?**
 - Follow up by taking the course
 - Or tune in to the podcast
 - Use these tips
- **Next: another perspective on how to build a better resilience tool kit**

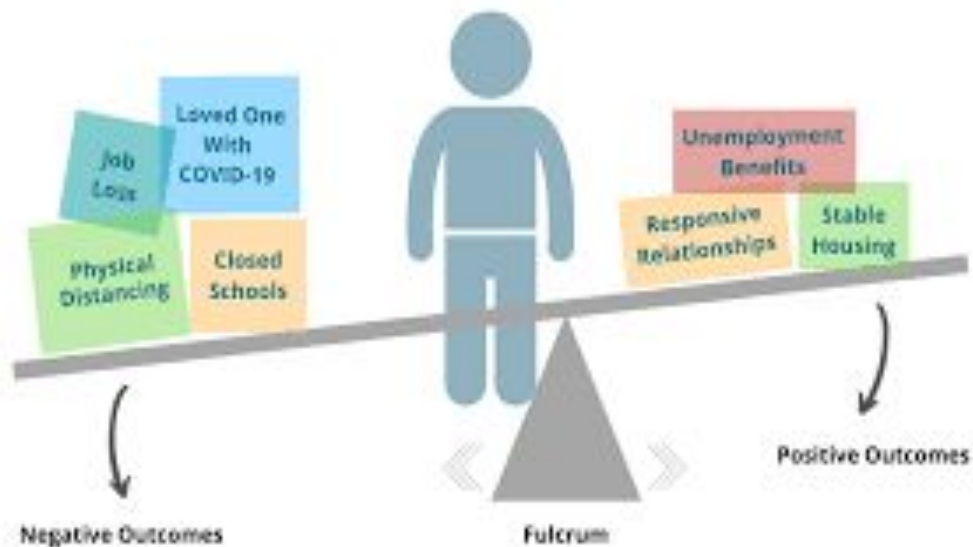


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Harvard's Center on the Developing Child

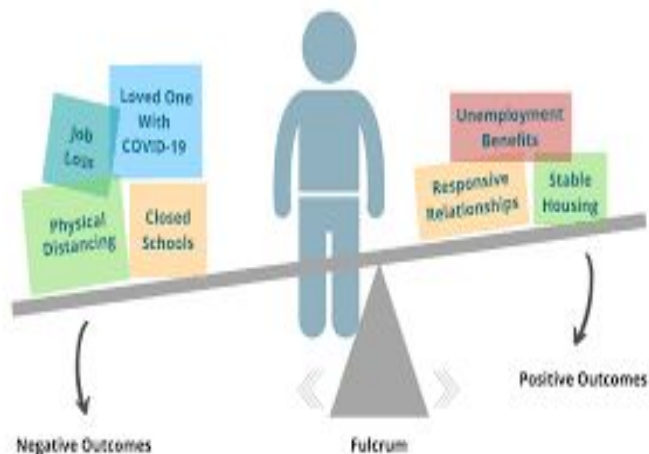


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- The way to help families, colleagues and children during the COVID-19 outbreak?
 - By helping to build resilience
 - How?
 - By building positive coping skills
 - Balance the see saw

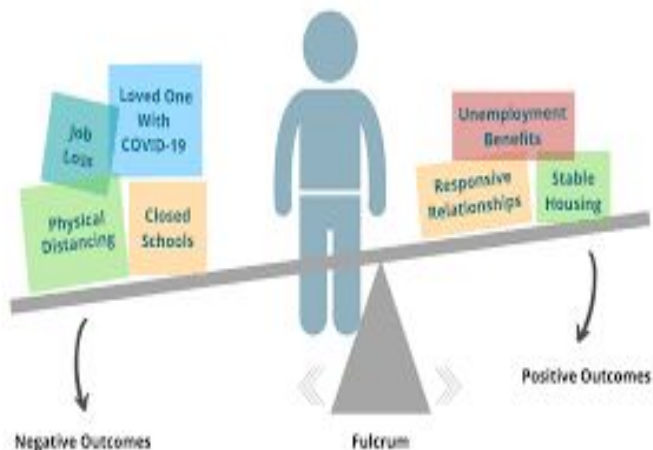


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But First, What is Resilience?



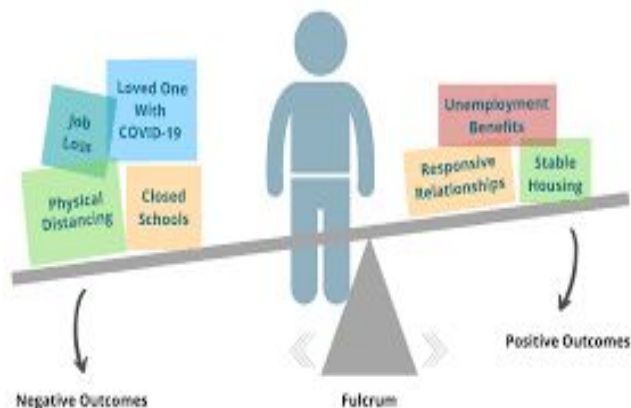
- Resilience is the ability to get back up/our reaction to setbacks
- Not born with resilience
 - Built over time
 - Our own experiences interact with our own uniqueness (temperament/personality)
 - This is why we all react to the COVID pandemic differently





Harvard's Center on the Developing Child

- **Resilience as a see saw**
 - “Glass half empty”
 - **Negative experiences tip the scale towards bad outcomes**
 - Physical distancing, closed schools, loved ones with COVID, job loss
 - Anxiety, social anxiety, fear, depression, guilt



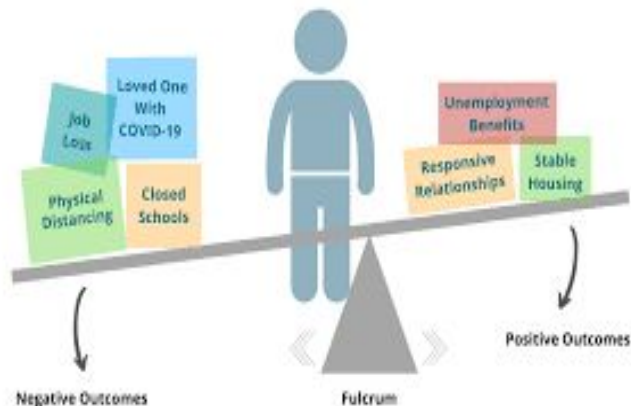
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- Resilience as a see saw
 - “Glass half full”
 - Positive experiences tip the scale towards good outcomes
 - Stable housing, unemployment benefits, responsive relationships
 - All lead to resilience, good coping skills, balanced viewpoints, freedom from fear
 - Reassures our kids they are safe

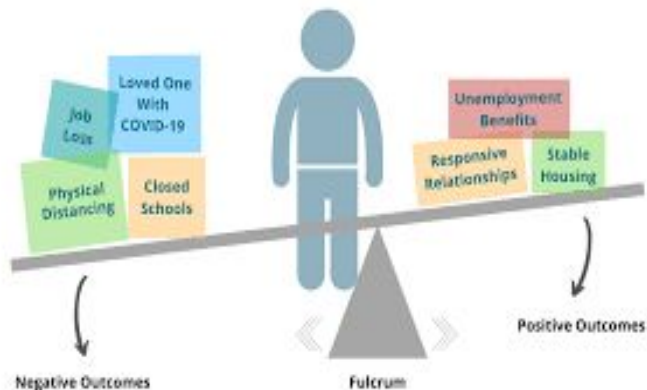


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- **Resilience as a see saw**
 - **The fulcrum is the centerpoint**
 - **Our perspective = the fulcrum**
 - **If the fulcrum is slightly further to one side, it can make resilience harder or easier to tip towards the positive**
 - **Move the fulcrum by developing a tool kit of skills**
 - **(Don't be an "Eyore")**



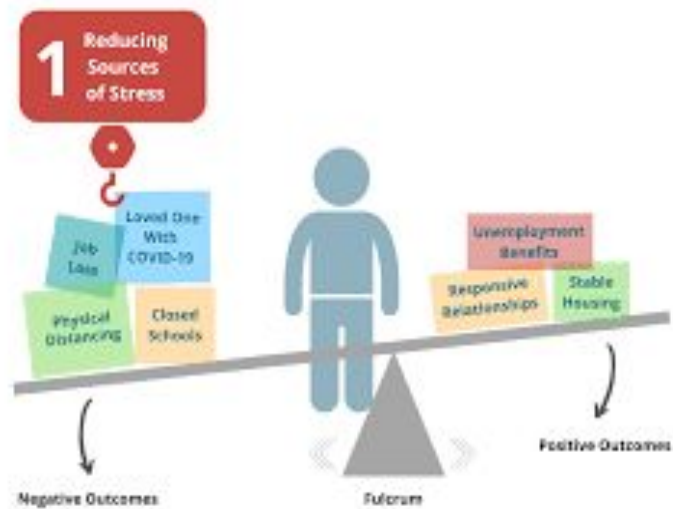
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How to Build Resilience:

- One way:
 - Unload the negative side by reducing sources of stress
 - Financial assistance, giving caregivers a break, encouraging self-care such as going for walks, exercise, sleep, eating well, paid leave, health counseling
 - Doing something nice for others
 - Demonstrating love for others





How to Build Resilience:

- Another way:
 - Load up on the positive side:
 - Be a supportive, responsive person in your relationships and with your child, family members, friends
 - Check in with family
 - Maintain connections, engage with others
 - See the humor/joy in life



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How to Build Resilience:

- A third way:
 - Move the fulcrum (strengthening core life skills, approaches, outlooks)
 - By working on:
 - executive functioning (get organized)
 - self-regulation (life management)
 - Text reminders, grocery list apps, daily schedules for the whole family, to-do lists





Finding the Humor and Joy...



- Crab Rave...
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE0wfjsybIQ>

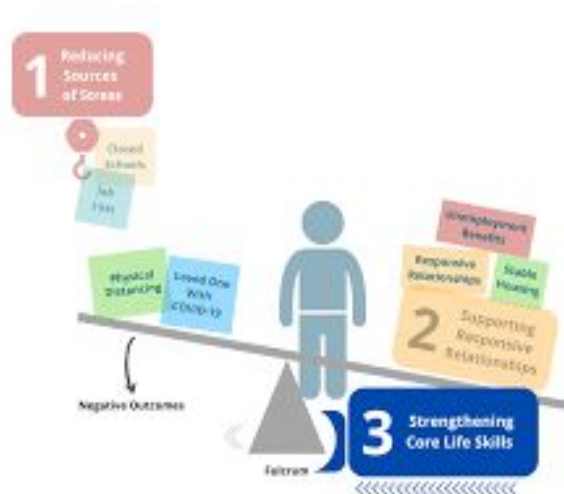


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Harvard: How to Balance the See Saw

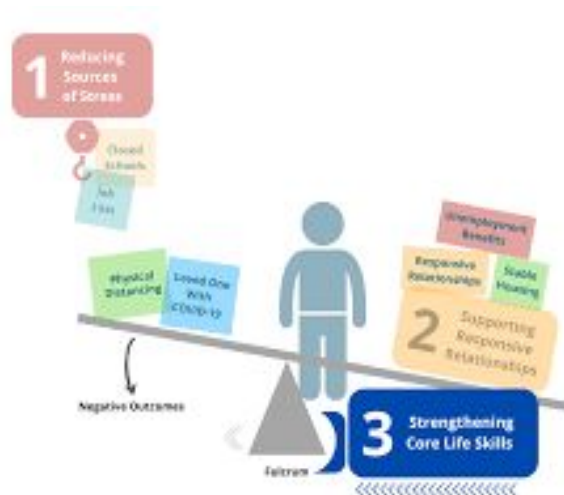


- Have you ever been around a cheerful, optimistic person?
 - Or someone kind and accepting
 - It feels good to be with them
 - Because things seem possible and upbeat
- Maslow calls this being “self-actualize”
- It’s always about how you look at things in the face of adversity...





Harvard: How to Balance the See Saw



- Perspective in the way you look at things is needed now.
- “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will change.”

-Dr. Wayne Dyer



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Overall...



- **Yale's Laurie Santos, PH.D.**
 - Is saying we need to maintain our social connections to find the joy in life, especially now
- **Harvard's Center on the Developing Child**
 - Is reminding us to find balance in our life like with a see saw
- **Harbor Country Day School: Join us for coffee!**



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Resources

- **Yale course on Happiness:**
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>
- **Association for Psychological Science:**
<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/laurie-santos-says-self-care-doesnt-have-to-be-selfish.html>
- **Harvard University:**
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/how-to-help-families-and-staff-build-resilience-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>





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**Sustaining Mental Well-being as
COVID-19 Continues
Questions & Discussion**



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**THANK YOU
FOR JOINING US!**



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