

March 2021: Hope and Resiliency

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A year ago this month, our schools closed due to Co-vid 19. It has been a year this month. The Pandemic is a perfect example of the importance of hope and resiliency. Stressful life events or crises have a way of coming out of nowhere. When we are living in a crisis, it feels like it might never end. It is easy to get lost in our feelings of hopelessness.

What has worked for me in the past to get through difficult times?

Experiencing difficult life events can actually increase our resiliency. Part of being resilient is feeling competent in our ability to navigate through a crisis. Each time we survive a crisis or a difficult life event, our confidence grows. The situation feels less dangerous because we have some previous experience with it. Each difficult experience in our lives prepares us for the next difficult thing that we may face. In my work with students, I often ask them to reflect on other times that they have faced difficult life events to help them identify coping skills or strengths that they have previously used that they may be able to use in their current situation.

Understand the stages of grief, and give yourself permission to grieve.

Because I work with teenagers, I often work with individuals that are experiencing a break up for the first time. There are a lot of emotions that you experience the first time you experience a break up that you don't necessarily experience in future break ups. When I work with teenagers that are going through a break up for the first time, I usually teach them about Elizabeth Kubler Ross's 5 stages of grief (Anger, Denial, Bargaining, depression, and acceptance). When we are going through a new experience it is important to allow ourselves to have our emotions, and remind ourselves that they are normal emotions that anyone that is experiencing a loss might experience. We are all currently living during a pandemic. We are all grieving the loss of what we once knew as "normal." We are all going to experience some of the 5 stages of grief.

A recipe for building resiliency: A dash of joy/humor, hopefulness, and connection.

When I am working with individuals that are struggling with symptoms of depression, I always start by working with them on identifying what makes them feel hopeful, what brings them joy/makes them laugh, and what makes them feel connected. I think that when we are in the middle of any crisis situation those are great questions to ask ourselves. These are important ingredients to building resiliency.

During quarantine, I watched the [Rise up video](#) over and over again because:

- It allowed me to **grieve** because I cried every time I watched it
- It reminded me that we are all in this together, and helped me feel **connected**
- I saw the "helpers" that Mister Rogers tells us to look for during difficult times which made me feel **hopeful**
- I love the song. The song and the video bring me **joy**