

# Community Institute for Psychotherapy

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## 2019-2020 News & Notes



### November 2020 News and Notes Incorporating Resilience in Our Lives By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

Each of us has a powerful ability to affect our own outlook on life. We can choose to focus on positive emotions and experiences and draw on our strengths, rather than dwelling on negative events and disappointments. This focus is key to resilience.

**Practice mindfulness:** Mindfulness increases awareness of our thoughts and feelings, and allows us to observe how our actions and environment affect us in positive or negative ways. It can give us the ability to determine what needs to be done in the present moment.

It helps to be able to pause and identify what you are feeling in the moment, and acknowledge and express those feelings. Being aware of our thought processes and our ability to handle difficult emotions can protect us from becoming overwhelmed, and help us move on from them.

**Engage your problem-solving skills:** We solve numerous problems on a daily basis, mostly unaware of the skills we use in doing so. Understanding the processes of problem solving, including identifying the problem, breaking it down into its components, and brainstorming the resources and steps required for its solution, will help you recognize the skills you already possess to confront larger, major problems.

In moments of crisis, it is important to recognize our personal strengths as well as past successes in overcoming challenges. Concentrating on our ability to prevail builds confidence and allows us to take action when facing a challenge. Creating and undertaking a manageable plan of action will provide a sense of control when everything seems most out of control.

**Build strong social and family networks:** Spending time with family and friends, communicating openly and honestly, will increase trust as well as the support these

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relationships provide. Reaching out to others in times of need reinforces our essential emotional bonds. It is reassuring to realize we are all interconnected and that our interdependence contributes to our lives in many ways.

**Find a sense of purpose:** Look for opportunities to contribute your skills, expertise and involvement: volunteer at a local nonprofit; become a mentor; get together with a group of others sharing your interests. Participating toward the goals and activities of a larger community fosters physical and emotional well-being. Having a focus outside yourself can give you a positive distraction from your own challenges.

**Caring for body, mind and spirit:** How we feel emotionally and how well we function is strongly influenced by our diet, exercise, and adequate rest. Especially in difficult times, be sure to maintain a healthy lifestyle to minimize emotional overwhelm and illness.

**Identify what nourishes you.** What contributes to your quality of life? Engaging with what you love will enhance your life in good times and bad. Whether it is a spiritual practice, music, art, spending time in nature, athletic activities, what is your passion?