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The following 4 exercises are for chronic stress identification and resilience building. These exercises are copyrighted and for your personal use only and may not be used or derived from for public presentation.

Instructions: Print out this page and use additional paper to record your answers. Work on this when you are in a quiet place and won't be interrupted.

Exercise 1: Chronic Stress Exercise (C) 2020

Review the symptoms (1-15) of chronic stress below. Place a check after each symptom you are experiencing. Next to each check mark, rate on a scale of 1-10 the intensity of each symptom. 1 (little to no impact) 10 (high, intense impact)

On completion, go back and write next to each check mark how long you've been experiencing this symptom. Then complete questions 16-23 below.

It is important to be completely honest with yourself to receive the full benefit of the exercise. If you find yourself wanting to minimize or change answers from your initial 'gut' (true) response, it's important to acknowledge that and ask yourself why.

1. Weight gain
2. 'Blank' brain
3. Brain 'fog'
4. Word retrieval issues
5. Irritability

6. Low tolerance for frustration
7. Concentration, retention and memory issues
8. Difficulty learning new information
9. Digestive issues
10. Hyper startle reflex (easily startled by unexpected sounds)
11. Sleep disturbances or insomnia
12. Musculoskeletal pain- achy in bone, joints, muscles not due to exercise
13. Anxiety, panic
14. Fatigue
15. Decision-making challenges
16. Are you surprised to see the number of checks marks?
17. Are you surprised to see how long this has been happening for you?
18. How have these symptoms impacted the quality of your:

Work life?

Personal Life?

Relationships?

19. How would the people you work with and live with answer these questions about you? Would you be willing to ask them and be open to hearing their responses?

If yes, arrange a time to ask them one-on-one and write down their responses or ask them to write their responses from reading this exercise and give you their answers.

20. Would you characterize your responses above as an indication changes need to happen?

21. Would what others might say (or have said) to you indicate changes need to happen?

22. What would those changes look like?

23. How would you go about making those changes? Do you need to engage the cooperation of others in making these changes (engaging cooperation does not mean asking permission but stating what you need and asking for cooperation).

## Resilience Building Exercise 2: What's Your Story? (C) 2020

1. What is the story you've been telling yourself around the pandemic and its impact on you?
2. What 'role' are you playing in this story?
3. Is the story entirely true?
4. Is the story primarily a 'negative self-talk' narrative?
5. Is this story holding you back?
6. Is this story representative of a prevailing theme for you over many years?
7. Does this narrative need revision, updating, correcting?
8. How do you want to transform this narrative?
9. What would the new story sound like?

## Resilience Building Exercise 3: What are your 'Confidence Builders' (C) 2020

1. Do you currently have 'confidence builders' you engage in?
2. List them. Now review and ask: "are they still effective for me?"
3. If you aren't aware of any, what are tasks & activities (work &/or personal) you can engage in that taps into a feeling of success when you do them that you can employ as a confidence builder? What are you good at doing?

## Resilience Building Exercise 4: Resourcefulness (C) 2020

1. Identify times in the past when you have been resourceful.
2. What was the outcome of your resourcefulness?
3. What is something you already have that you can repurpose for a different function? Now, do it. Take as many attempts as necessary to succeed.
4. What is something that has been broken (work or personal) that you can fix? Now, do it. Take as many attempts as necessary to succeed.
5. What is something that's been in need of your attention (work or personal) that you can address and cross off your list? Now, do it. Take as many attempts as necessary to succeed.

6. Review the outcomes of the above tasks 1-5 and allow yourself to feel successful.

Keep the responses to these exercises in a drawer for review, revision and updating. Read once a month. Remember, these answers are not to be used as a bat to beat your self with but as a platform for identifying chronic stress and resilience building.

I'm always interested in hearing feedback on how these exercises are working for people. Feel free to drop me a line with questions or comments.

**The golden rule of resilience building: it doesn't happen in the absence of stressors but during the large and small 'adaptive challenges' that life brings.**