

# THE 'R' IN 'WELLNESS'

RESILIENCE KEY TO MENTAL HEALTH, WRITES MCGREGOR

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MELANIE MCGREGOR  
Column

There may not be an actual 'r' in wellness, but there is an r-word that is crucial to our overall health and wellness: 'resilience.'

Resilience is the ability to cope when faced with a challenge or stress and maintain or return to healthy functioning. It doesn't mean that we don't experience sadness, grief, anger, or other difficult emotions — it means that we can use our strengths to face challenges, cope in healthy ways, and ultimate-

ly learn from experiences. We may all strive for this, but what can trip us up? A psychologist named Martin Seligman cautions us about 3 P's: personalization, pervasiveness and permanence.

**Personalization** — "It's all my fault"

When bad things happen, we tend to look for a cause and may blame ourselves in the absence of anything else. But analyzing our role in difficulty isn't constructive if it's something over which we did not have control. Over time, we can shift our thoughts to focusing on recovery and coping rather than criticizing ourselves, or feeling bad about how others may be affected by something that was out of our hands.

**Pervasiveness** — "Everything is terrible"

Feelings of pervasiveness take time and effort to

manage, especially when the challenge is something that affects a number of areas in our life, such as the death of a loved one or the loss of a job. Resilience doesn't mean denying negative feelings and impacts — it means accepting them as normal and coping in ways that help us to also experience positive feelings and appreciate that though it may sometimes feel like it, not everything in our life is terrible.

**Permanence** — "It will always be like this"

Since we can't predict the future, it is tempting to assume that our present feelings will always be there. If we're sad or anxious, we feel like we will always be sad or anxious. What is often helpful is paying attention to the words we are using when thinking and talking about our feelings.

## COMMUNITY

### LET US SHARE YOUR COMMUNITY BAZAAR OR CRAFT SHOW

The cooler weather is right around the corner, and outdoor activity is slowly winding down for many of us.

But there's still plenty to keep Halton residents busy - namely all the bazaar and

craft shows that will be coming up this fall.

Metroland Halton aims to keep its readers in the know about all of these fall/winter events. So if your church, business or group is holding a craft show or bazaar, please let us know.

Send us all the pertinent details (the when, where, exact hours, a brief description, etc.) of your event in Burlington, Milton, Oakville or Halton Hills to either sleblanc@metroland.com (Burlington, Milton) or knagel@metroland.com (Oakville, Halton Hills).

For example, thinking "I will always feel stressed" will be more difficult to deal with than "I am feeling stressed today."

The first implies an overwhelming lifetime of stress to manage while the second suggests that things may change — maybe not right away or as soon as we would like, but healing can happen when we take the right steps and get the right support.

Resilience is not an in-born, you-have-it-or-you-don't quality. It's something we can develop over time and that we can all focus on for our lifelong wellness.

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