



For you, your career, and your life

RAP

Resident Assistance Program Newsletter
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Having a Life, Now: The Effort that Will Protect You Later

“David, Phoenix wonders where you are.”

“Ana, Memphis misses you.”

A major airline sends a personalized email messages like this when its customers haven’t booked a trip in awhile. It’s part “what’s up?” and part guilt trip, designed to get you to take action.

Friends and families of medical residents often have the same lament: “You used to spend time with us but now you don’t.” They may use guilt to get a response from you.

But your friends and family members inquire and persist because they actually know you and they really care about what’s going on in your life. They need to know there’s still a connection. They understand—perhaps more clearly than you do right now—that all work and no play isn’t healthy in the long run.

Outside Activities Build Resilience

“I don’t have a life,” is a common complaint during residency. When you feel like you don’t have a minute to spare, your family, friends and leisure activities get bumped off the schedule. Yet it’s strong ties to family, friends and activities outside of residency that contribute most to mental and physical health, studies show.

“It is always wise to surround ourselves with allies; people who like and accept us, who treat us with kindness and respect, and who encourage us to be our best selves,” write the authors of *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest*

Residency can challenge even the most positive, balanced person’s sense of control. It’s okay to admit that you need help to get over a rough spot. When the people you usually count on for support are far away or unavailable, remember you have a local resource through your Resident Assistance Program (RAP).
Contact RAP: 813-870-3344

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Challenges. “In good times, these people provide a framework for sharing goodwill and resources; when troubles arise, we can count on them to ‘be there’ for us—as we are for them.”¹

Even brief contact can go a long way toward keeping those connections strong. Some people manage this by pairing exercise with social activities to get the benefits of both at once. Schedule a session at the fitness center with a friend, or make a date with your partner for a short walk or bike ride around campus.

Smart Ways to Manage Time

For anyone whose schedule can be disrupted on a moment’s notice, a good, easy-to-access digital calendar is essential. The website Parents.com offers tips for finding a digital family scheduler, and TomsGuide.com



“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

- Albert Schweitzer

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Resources

Resilience Research Centre <http://resilience-research.org/>

The Art and Science of Mindfulness: Integrating Mindfulness into Psychology and the Helping Professions. Shapiro, S. & Carlson, L. (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

The Resilience Breakthrough: 27 Tools for Turning Adversity into Action. Moore, Christian (2014) Greenleaf Book Group Press, Austin, Texas.

Love in the Time of Medical School, TARAYN GRIZZARD, MS-III, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts Am Fam Physician. 2002 Sep 1;66(5):907-908. <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2002/0901/p907.html>

Scheduling apps:

<http://www.parents.com/parenting/work/life-balance/plan-family-calendar/#page=9>

<http://www.tomsguide.com/us/pictures-story/442-best-calendar-apps.html>

Your Resident Assistance Program

The RAP newsletter is provided as a benefit to medical residents at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and their dependents.

We welcome your comments on newsletter topics, however, we cannot provide RAP services by email.

Gary L. Wood & Associates, P.A.
4700 N. Habana Avenue Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33614
RAP Helpline: 813-870-3344
www.woodassociates.net

Editor: Patricia N. Alexander, Ph.D.
PAlexander@woodassociates.net

Writer: Susan H. Burnell, APR
SusanBurnellAPR@gmail.com

Having a Life During Residency Adds to Resiliency

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offers “10 Best Calendar Apps.” (See Resources, left.)

The Life Satisfaction Factor

When confronted with adverse situations such as the loss of a loved one, some people never fully recover from the pain. Others, the majority, pull through and find that the intensity of negative emotions grows dimmer with time until they adapt to the new situation. A third group is made up of individuals whose adversities have made them grow personally and whose life takes on new meaning, making them feel stronger than before.

Resilient people are more satisfied with life, researchers at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona found.

They analyzed responses of 254 students from the Faculty of Psychology in different questionnaires. The purpose was to evaluate the students’ level of satisfaction with life and find connections between their resilience and their capacity for emotional recovery.

The research showed that students who are more resilient—20% of those surveyed—are more satisfied with their lives and are also those who believe they have control over their emotions and their state of mind. Resilience has a positive prediction effect on the level of satisfaction with one’s life, the researchers concluded.

“Some of the characteristics of being resilient can be worked on and improved, such as self-esteem and being able to regulate one’s emotions. Learning these techniques can offer people the resources needed to help them adapt and improve their quality of life,” explains Dr. Joaquín T Limonero, professor of the UAB Research Group on Stress and Health at UAB and research coordinator.²

Enrich Your Life Beyond Work

“No matter how you define success, you will need to be resilient, empowered, authentic, and limber to get there,” writes Joanie B. Connell, Ph.D. in *Flying Without a Helicopter*.³

In the words of philanthropist David Rockefeller, “I am convinced that material things can contribute a lot to making one’s life pleasant, but, basically, if you do not have very good friends and relatives who matter to you, life will be really empty and sad and material things cease to be important.” Wise words.

1 Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges by Steven M. Southwick, M.D and Dennis S. Charney, M.D. Cambridge University Press (2012).

2 Resilient People More Satisfied with Life, UAB. news release accessed 8/28/2015 <http://www.uab.cat/web/latest-news/news-detail/resilient-people-more-satisfied-with-life-1096476786473.html?noticiaid=1337839893095>

3 Flying Without a Helicopter: How to Prepare Young People for Work and Life, by Joanie B. Connell. iUniverse (2014).