**MARFORRES Force Preservation Message to the Force**

During this time of uncertainty we are facing many unique challenges. We are balancing our work responsibilities with family and the changes to our daily routines. Gyms are closed, restaurants are closed, and your social network has been drastically reduced. Even if you’re not on restricted movement or in quarantine, you may be struggling with the limitations imposed by the shelter-in-place order. Some of the potential stressors during this time include: financial troubles caused by some family members unable to work, additional time assisting children with school assignments, uncertainty regarding the duration, fear of contracting the virus, and boredom.

Leaders are also adjusting to the new challenges of managing the work force and prioritizing the tasks required for your organization to ensure overall mission success of the Marine Corps Reserve. The challenge to leaders at all levels involves the intricate balance of ensuring the Marine Corps remains mission capable while taking all necessary precautions to ensure the Marines, Sailors, civilians and their families remain safe and healthy. We must take this opportunity to provide support, information flow, use each level of leadership to ensure Marines have basic necessities and are aware of the resources available to them. Information is key; as a leader there is nothing more important than the manner in which information is passed. Ensure you are getting the most trustworthy information possible by relying on your command medical team, the World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>) and the Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>).

It is important during this time to practice positive resilience and coping strategies. Resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face significant sources of stress. The more we are able to remain resilient the better we will be able to bounce back even stronger after this experience. Let’s use this as an opportunity to grow as individuals, with friends and families, and as a stronger Marine Corps. Positive coping strategies include the following:

Stay connected and maintain caring relationships with friends and family. Reaching out and communicating with friends and family will help reduce feelings of boredom and loneliness. Let them know how you are doing and make sure they are doing okay as well. Fortunately there are many different communication platforms available.

Recognize your physical and emotional signs of stress and develop activities that help you relax. Activities that can help you relax include going for a walk outdoors, writing down stressors and also jotting down for what you are grateful, find something that makes you laugh, listen to music, or practice deep breathing.

Set a routine and goals. Maintain a regular sleep schedule and in your daily work schedule include time to help children with their school work as well. You could learn a new skill, start a journal, or study for a qualification or exam.  Goals will give you a sense of purpose in the present moment and will help remind you this situation won’t last forever.

Enjoy physical exercise. Exercise is one of the best things you can do to combat stress, especially when conducted regularly. Some things you can do include jogging, riding a bicycle, or following online workouts; MCCS has a website with a couple HIIT routines specifically designed for Marines

Be careful not to compare your situation with someone else’s. Each person and family have their own unique challenges during this time. It’s okay to struggle. It’s okay to be angry, sad, anxious or disappointed.  It’s alright if you don’t succeed at maintaining a schedule every day.  Just do your best to feel your healthiest with the resources you have available right now.

Seek spiritual guidance or counseling support. You can reach out to the Chaplain’s office or your local religious leaders and family. Maintaining your religious practices will lead to greater hopefulness and resilience in your life. Attending worship, personal prayer life, study of scriptures, etc., crafted by religious ministry professionals (and their religious organizations) for growth as religious persons with distinct worldviews, personalities, etc., can provide balance and resilience both for the individual and families.  Religious activity, per se, is to be a protective factor to assist with a person on multiple levels to be holistically healthy.

Non-religious forms of counseling available include *Give an Hour* (www.giveanhour.org) which is a Program encouraging mental wellbeing by providing access to no cost face to face, telephonic, and tele-health services; the D-Stress Line provides anonymous counseling services to Marine Corps members and their families (<https://usmc-mccs.org/services/support/dstress-line/>) or call 1-877-476-7734.

One major factor contributing to resilience is harnessing positive emotions, even in the midst of an especially trying or stressful time. Positive emotions help you build up social, psychological, and physical resources over time, which could help you develop coping skills during future times of stress. Concentrate on your strengths, identify positive daily activities, experiences and sources of joy or humor.

These are challenging time, but Marines are known for overcoming challenges and carrying on the mission. No matter how tough the battles, Marines always come out on top by grit, determination, and working together as a team. This will be no different. Semper Fidelis.

 

 M. J. ROBERSON

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SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

**Apps/websites for mental wellness**

ACT Coach (imagery)
Calm
Insight Timer

10% Happier

Headspace for mindfulness (good for beginners)

<https://thewellnesssociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-Anxiety-Workbook.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2nw2avprRvaNLR7tT80Rqk2ubBvIQ3LjgdObzUaeaUsNZuFiMBeqtzEWI>

Oprah and Deepak app

<https://medium.com/modern-health/expanding-our-offerings-in-a-time-of-need-community-support-sessions-e169b6f7bb44>

**Apps/websites for physical wellness/movement**
[https://www.downdogapp.com/](https://www.downdogapp.com/?fbclid=IwAR1kRLEwidpnj9cvFrwf62UjK1tyW3YUXojv8UgzISV9FQcvoghoU8iss0Q)

Garmin Connect

[https://www.onepeloton.com/app](https://www.onepeloton.com/app?fbclid=IwAR2HiNE1AJ4D1gybYnA7DkOg64PS94TlIalmOJoAKNgi9Tzx3X22sBbBw-s)

[www.fitnessblender.com](http://www.fitnessblender.com/?fbclid=IwAR1684O6epNTyRK6lta72RtwEfIg8TdzLZIrRbFLfXVO9tUZBzUiO4Dp3qQ)

FitOn

Yoga with Adriene, Yoga with Kassandra on Youtube.com

Ymca360.org

**Apps/websites for connection:**

Zoom

Skype

Evil Apples: You Against Humanity

HouseParty

Marco Polo

**Apps/websites for solo entertainment:**

Free Reading:  <https://archive.org/details/nationalemergencylibrary?&sort=date&page=3>

COVID Time Capsule:

<https://www.nbc4i.com/community/health/coronavirus/in-this-together/covid-19-time-capsule-worksheets-great-way-for-kids-to-keep-busy-record-their-experiences/>

[Free Online Courses:  https://www.eventbrite.com/e/no-cost-on-line-professional-development-courses-for-active-duty-veterans-reservists-and-military-tickets-91049697095?fbclid=IwAR3xt8t1rhqpHYNYHEUaQ3Q0XoP5wUBuBqNsI2zm4x3qekk2ct-NdKR-1p8](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/no-cost-on-line-professional-development-courses-for-active-duty-veterans-reservists-and-military-tickets-91049697095?fbclid=IwAR3xt8t1rhqpHYNYHEUaQ3Q0XoP5wUBuBqNsI2zm4x3qekk2ct-NdKR-1p8)

Free Photography Classes During April:  <https://www.nikonevents.com/us/live/nikon-school-online/>