

Fostering Resilience During Times of Chronic Stress

Strengthening Coping and Protecting the Most Vulnerable

Trauma Recovery Innovations

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 - ✓ UW Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress

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Goals for today:

- ✓ **Define** resilience
- ✓ Explain **what you can do** to promote resilience
- ✓ Outline options for those who need **more support**

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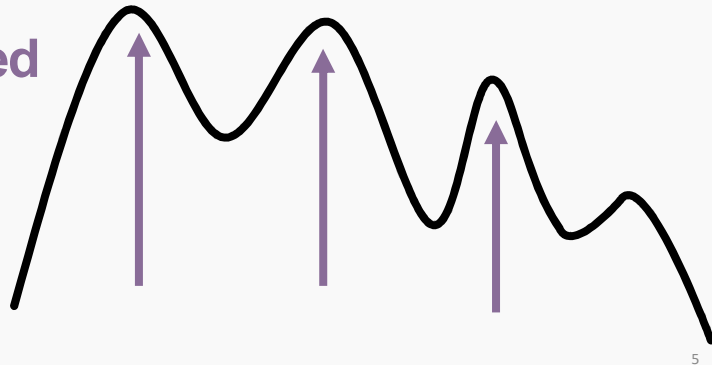
DEFINING RESILIENCE

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We are living in a time of elevated **acute AND chronic** stressors.

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Everyone is being exposed to **repeated periods of acute distress.**

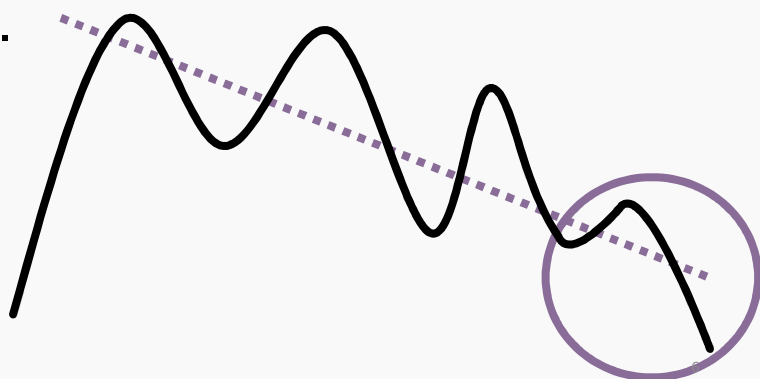


Resilience is the process of **adapting well** in the face of **adversity.**

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Resilience is the **most common outcome.**

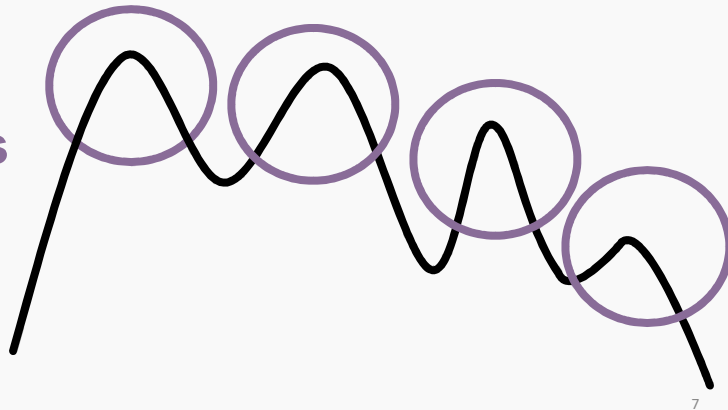
We expect **most people to be resilient** during & following disasters.



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But resilience is **variable** and **nonlinear**.

It **doesn't mean**
there's no distress
along the way.

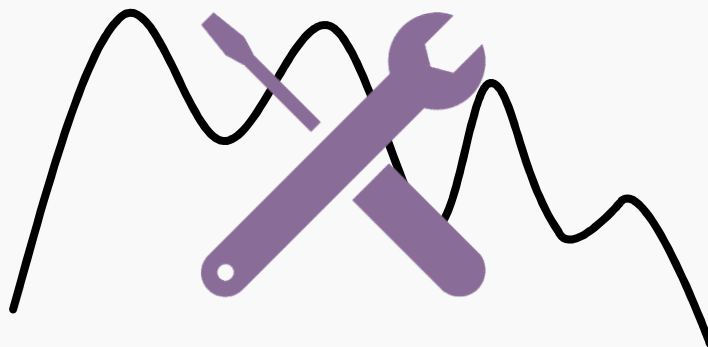


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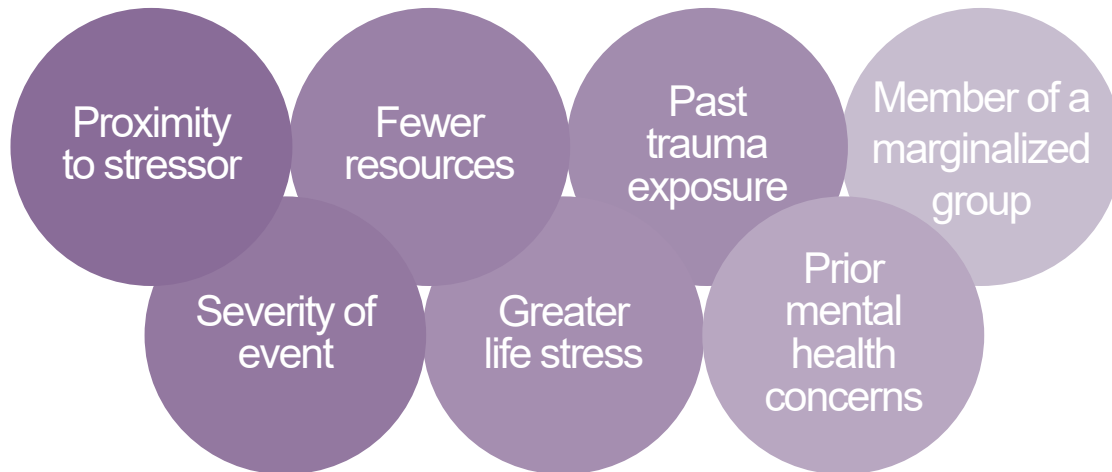
Resilience requires **effort**, **persistence**,
and **patience**.

It can be **acquired**
and **learned**.



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Those who are **most vulnerable** may need more support.



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Some of us are affected **more than others**.



Bolstering the
community helps
us all!



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What it means to be **resilient**.

“It’s to be adapting and accommodating, rather than resistant to, the suffering. I think that’s what it is to live through hardship for sustained periods of time.”

- Dipali Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

New York Times, April 21, 2020

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PROMOTING RESILIENCE

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Strategies to promote resilience focus on **3 A's**.



- ✓ Assessing
- ✓ Accepting
- ✓ Adapting

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Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial.

Do regular emotional and behavioral temperature checks.

Eating healthy?

Sleeping well?

Staying active?

Seeing friends/family?



Positive feelings?

Negative feelings?

Negative thoughts?

Substance use?

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Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial.

Ask yourself regularly:



In what ways are my needs being met?



In what ways are my needs NOT being met?

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Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial. W

Prioritize your needs.



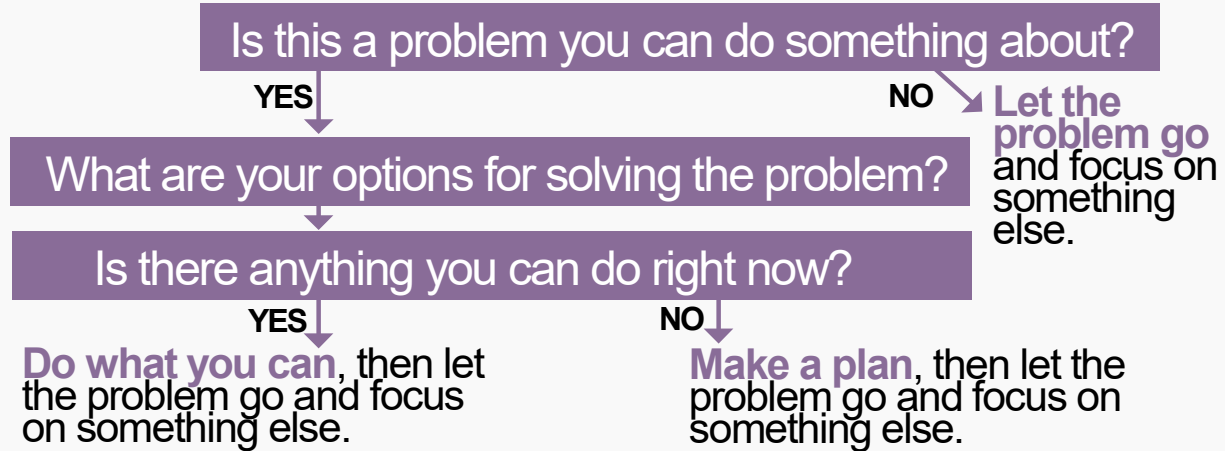
In what ways are my needs being met?



In what ways are my needs NOT being met?

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Acceptance means changing what we can and letting go of the rest. W



From: Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf

Acceptance means acknowledging the new normal and your reactions to it. W



Notice where your reality has shifted and work to accept:

Unavoidable changes

Negative emotions

Loss of control

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Acceptance means acknowledging the new normal and your reactions to it.

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Also notice:

How you coped

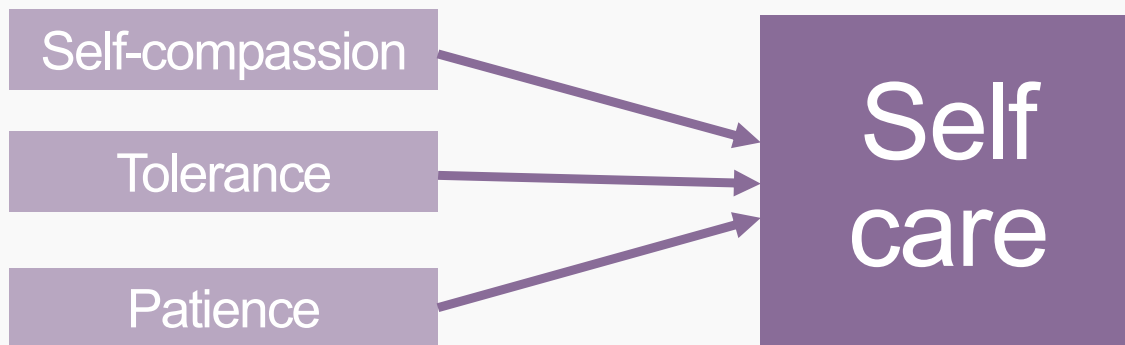
Your strengths

Your resources

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Acceptance means acknowledging that this is hard!

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Adapting to the new reality requires intention, planning, and flexibility.

Set a
routine

Stay
active

Don't
avoid

- Sleep, eat, work, school, social, self-care

- Exercise, get out, get engaged

- Don't isolate or withdraw, limit substance use

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Adapting involves promoting positive activities.

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Review a list of activities.



Create

Draw a picture
Paint a portrait
Take a photograph
Doodle / sketch
Organise photographs
Make a photograph album
Start a scrapbook
Finish a project
Do some sewing / knitting



Kindness

Help a friend / neighbor / stranger
Make a gift for someone
Try a random act of kindness
Do someone a favour
Teach somebody a skill
Do something nice for someone
Plan a surprise for someone
Make a list of your good points
Make a list of things or people you are grateful for



Plan

Set a goal
Create a budget
Make a 5 year plan
Make a 'to do' list
Make a 'bucket list'
Make a shopping list



Write

Write a letter with compliments
Write a letter to your politician
Write an angry letter
Write a grateful letter
Write a 'thank you' card
Write a journal / diary
Write your CV
Start writing a book



Self care

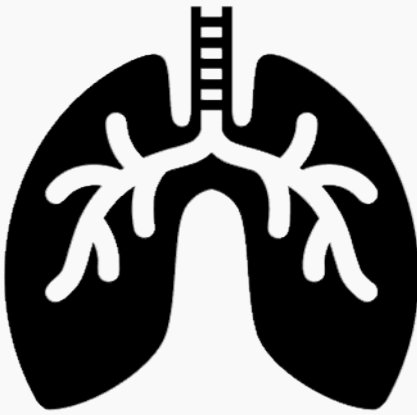
Take a bath
Take a shower
Wash your hair
Give yourself a facial
Trim your nails
Sunbathe (wear sunscreen!)
Take a nap

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From: Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf

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Adapting involves **managing distressing reactions** as they occur.



Breathing

Get **comfortable**

Breathe in through your nose for 5, expanding your belly

Hold for 5

Exhale slowly for 7 while you say a soothing word

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Adapting involves **feeling and tolerating** distress, not eliminating it.



Writing Exercise

Set aside **30 minutes**

Write about **whatever is distressing you**

Give yourself space to **feel your emotions**

Consider the **things you did to help** yourself or others

Repeat, building in **new helpful thoughts**

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Adapting involves noticing **negative thoughts**.

Situation → Distressing Emotions

Notice:

What thoughts go along with the situation & emotions?

Situation → **Thoughts** → Distressing Emotions

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Adapting involves **challenging negative thoughts**, not treating them as facts.

Ask yourself: What would be **more helpful** thoughts? What would I **say to a friend** in this situation?

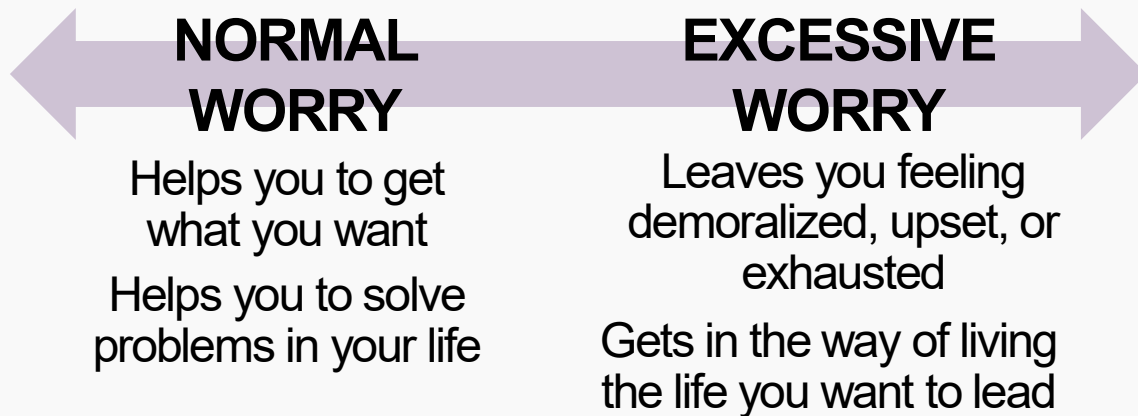
I might feel bad for a while, but I'll probably feel better with time.

Even if I don't feel better, I know I can get help if I need it.

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Adapting involves distinguishing between **normal** and **excessive** worry.



From: Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-us.pdf ²⁷

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Adapting involves increasing **social and community connections**.

- ✓ Who are your **most important connections**?
- ✓ With whom can you **share your feelings**?
- ✓ With whom do you **want to be in touch**?
- ✓ Who might need **your help or support** right now?
- ✓ Consider what is **missing** or **needs to be changed**.

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We can play a role in **helping those who depend on us adapt.**

- ✓ **Communicate** calm, compassion, and respect
- ✓ **Listen** to concerns while **maintaining** appropriate boundaries
- ✓ **Share** information openly and honestly
- ✓ **Help** troubleshoot challenges

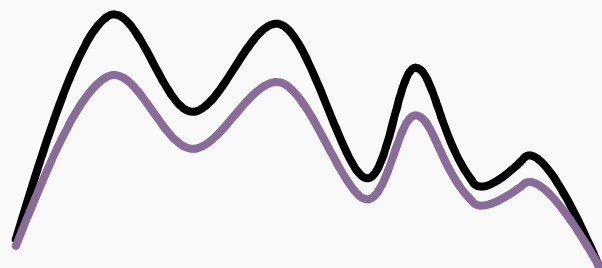
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Assessing, accepting, and adapting can **promote long-term resilience.**

Remember that **resilience** is the most common outcome.

Working to cope effectively with crises will **promote future resilience.**



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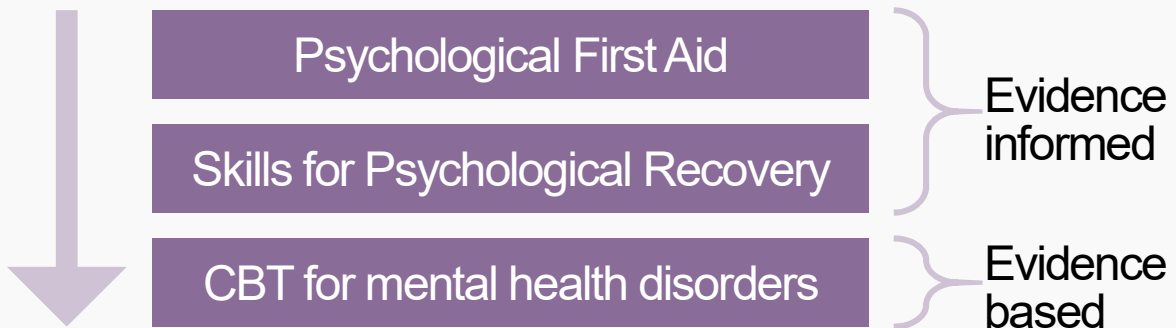


FOR THOSE WHO NEED MORE SUPPORT

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Specific approaches delivered by a support person can help the **more heavily impacted**.



Psychological First Aid

Skills for Psychological Recovery

CBT for mental health disorders

Evidence informed

Evidence based

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Psychological First Aid (PFA) is used to respond to initial distress.

PFA's **goals** include increasing...

Sense of safety,
connection,
calm, & hope

Access to social,
physical, and
emotional
support

Self-efficacy

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Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)
is a more intensive approach.

SPR's **goals** include...

Protecting
mental health

Enhancing
ability to
address one's
own needs

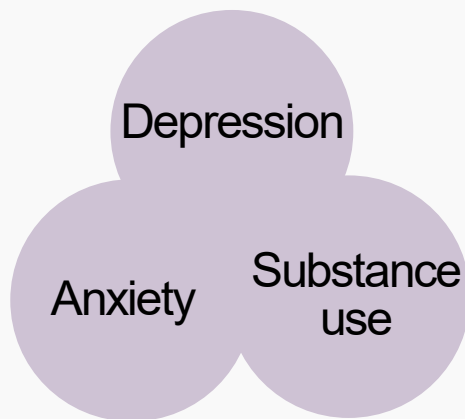
Teaching
skills to
promote
recovery

Preventing
maladaptive
behaviors

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CBT for **mental health disorders** following trauma is **effective at reducing symptoms.**

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- ✓ Time limited
- ✓ Present focused
- ✓ Structured and skills oriented
- ✓ Practice outside session
- ✓ Delivered by a trained professional

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We can play a role in **connecting those who depend on us to resources** as appropriate.

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- ✓ **Normalize** the need for support
- ✓ Know your **limits**
- ✓ Respect personal **boundaries**
- ✓ Know **what's available** and **who to ask** for help

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LAST THOUGHTS...

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To increase resilience in your community,
look for the helpers and be a helper.

- ✓ What you do for yourself and those around you **makes a difference.**
- ✓ Finding ways to **make meaning, engage others,** and **foster compassion** is important.

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RESOURCES

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COVID Support Program (page includes handouts and guides)
[https://psychiatry.uw.edu/clinical-care-consultation/
covid-19-resources-for-mental-well-being/](https://psychiatry.uw.edu/clinical-care-consultation/covid-19-resources-for-mental-well-being/)

Peer to Peer Program: <https://faculty.uwmedicine.org/p2p/>

UW Care Link (EAP): <https://hr.uw.edu/benefits/uw-carelink/>

COVID Coach App:
https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/COVID_coach_app.asp

WA Listens (online resources & non-clinical support line):
www.walistens.org 1-833-681-0211

Contact Michele & Kristen: TRIHEAL@uw.edu

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