

Week 5 – Lockdown

'She stood in the storm and when the wind did not blow her away – she adjusted her sails'

Elizabeth Edwards

Each week when I come to write this blog, a theme seems to emerge from both my own experiences and from those with whom I have had contact with both professionally and personally regarding their isolation journeys - for some folk, isolation = vulnerability & uncertainty, for others isolation = creativity & strength. We are all having our own battles and successes, our own highs and lows and creating our own isolation equations or maybe aspiring to what we would like them to look like going forward. **We** are in control of that, even when we may be fearful of the world outside our homes currently and the uncertainty that breeds or the disappointment/anger we have with it - when all the social, fun elements have been banished from that world we knew. (Temporarily).

Our thinking and actions are often driven by powerful emotions, fear for one, when confronted by the awful reality of this pandemic, often focusing on the worse case scenarios of becoming sick ourselves or tragically losing loved ones – hence being swept along then by a wave of hopelessness. Such emotions may flourish when there is a lack of knowledge or uncertainty, so we need our own vaccine if you like – resilience. Resilience is the ability to roll with the punches, to adapt to adversity. To experience anger, grief, pain, whatever emotion you may feel when trauma/ stressful times strike but most importantly be able to find a way to keep functioning – both physically and psychologically.

Yes we are in this, it would seem for the long haul but resilience is not just about toughing it out SAS style or stoically going it alone. The opposite in fact is true. One of the key components to being resilient is being able to reach out to others for support. Resilience can be our own vaccine to warding off various mental health conditions such as anxiety and focusing on inviting in new coping mechanisms of self-care, of learning from past experiences, staying connected, talking honestly, goal setting, routine and being hopeful, to name but a few.

For some of the young people that I have had contact with this week, whilst I have heard some levelling out of emotions as we almost complete week 5 of lockdown (YAY), there are some common themes emerging. There are overriding ones of struggles with concentration, (largely around schoolwork) and the online pull of being available now 24/7 because 'there is no legitimate reason for me not to be'. 2.00am... 'Where are you – it says you were on WhatsApp 3 minutes ago and you're not answering me?'

Isolation requires (if we had not developed this before now), a mastery of our own emotions. Of being our own internal teacher, our own sleep-time supervisor, our own online regulator. To experiment with being honest with each other, especially if we don't feel like having another 'house party' that day – to say no without fear that you won't be included in the next one, because it's ok to want to spend time with your

family or maybe even just take a break from electronics entirely. To let your friends know that you aren't feeling good and see how it feels to prop each other up.

Maybe for some of us, this prolonged isolation may prove a blessing on some levels, if we can use our resilience and take control of our hopes and fears and nourish our core selves, getting our basic needs met. But I am under no illusion either that whilst some of us may be in the enviable position to be able to eliminate unwanted distractions along the way and focus on being more mindful and more creative, others are less so. Untold money struggles and work worries, no access to the outside at their homes - only to be teased by the gorgeous weather others can relax and play and garden in, no Wi-Fi, loneliness, no social interaction..... distractions so great that it is not creativity at the forefront of their minds but survival that requires their resilience.

As we are faced with the possibility of many more weeks of lockdown and isolation, whatever situation we find ourselves in, it is vital now, more than ever, that we endeavour to access our resilient self, reach out for support and adjust our sails accordingly.

'I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning how to sail my ship.'

Mary Louise Alcott

Please continue to stay home and safe and access the support that is available. Please also enjoy the attached video of Mabel's continuing quarantine journey, 100% put together by SGHS's very own Mrs Zoe Hall - it is well worth a look!
<https://youtu.be/DDC-F7WnBC0>

Thank you for your time,

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Please contact time2talk@sghs.org.uk for info re. a session with Anna & don't forget to follow @mabels.tails on Instagram.