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>> OPERATOR: Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie and I will be your conference operator today. I would like to welcome everyone to the From Daunting to Doable: The Power of Caregiver Resilience conference call. All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. If you need assistance during the conference, please press * then zero and an operator will come on the line to assist you. I will turn the call over to Jed Johnson, Director of the Easter Seals National Veteran Caregiver Training Program.

>> JED JOHNSON: Thank you, Ms. Boyd. Greetings on behalf of the Dixon Center for military/veteran services as we are excited to kick off our webinar series with “From Daunting to Doable: The Power of Caregiver Resilience.”

We are pleased to launch this effort as a proud member of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's national coalition for military caregivers. I would like to give a shout out and thank Ms. Boyd for her support throughout the call. I would like to begin with some pragmatics. As Ms. Boyd mentioned the phone lines will be muted throughout today's webinar. Should you have any questions or concerns, please either use the online chat feature of the webinar software or you are also welcome to send an e-mail to militarycaregiver@easterseals.com. We have staff members available and awaiting to respond to any of your questions. We will address all content related questions once our speaker concludes her presentation. I want to note, this session is being recorded. Transcripts of the recording along with copies of handouts and other valuable resources are going to be posted to www.easterseals.com/carewebinar that will appear in approximately two weeks.

We are also very pleased to do live captioning for today's webinar. In order to access the live captioning feature, merely type in control F8.
Now I would like to review our agenda. I'll start with my introductory remarks. Then I will go on and highlight some of our wonderful partner organizations. Following that, Carol Harlow from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation will provide a brief overview of the Foundation. She will also introduce Cara Folkers, a military caregiver and Dole Fellow from my home state of Wisconsin. Deborah McKay from Atlas Research will introduce today's speaker, Jane Meier Hamilton. Following the presentation, we reserved time for Jane to respond to your online or e-mail questions. Then I'll return to wrap things up with the hopes that you'll again join us in July for the next webinar presentation.

For nearly 100 years, Easter Seals has provided life-changing solutions to the people of our country, from children and adults living with disabilities to military families like you. Easter Seals is committed to creating a world of inclusion, dignity, empowerment, and independence. It has been my pleasure and privilege to be affiliated with this fine organization for going on 14 years.

Today and our future webinars are being supported by an incredible group of organizations. I would like to highlight them. They include Atlas Research, the Caregiver Action Network, Family Caregiver Alliance, National Alliance for Caregiving, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving and USO. You'll learn a bit more about these organizations as we have future webinars as well as via the website www.easterseals.com/carewebinar, once the recording of today's session is posted.

Now, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce and turn the microphone over to Carol Harlow, the Executive Director of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. She is a passionate leader working tirelessly on behalf of military and veteran caregivers.

>> CAROL HARLOW: Thanks, Jed. That was a lovely introduction. I would like to thank you.

On behalf of the Senator Elizabeth Dole and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, we are excited that the Easter Seals Dixon Center, in partnership with some of our nation's most dedicated military and caregiver support organizations, is spearheading this very important project. The Elizabeth Dole Foundation was inspired by Senator Elizabeth Dole's own realization of the tremendous obstacles faced by today's military and veteran caregivers. Several years ago, Senator Bob Dole spent nearly a year at Walter Reed recovering from lingering issues from his World War II combat injuries. During his stay, Senator Elizabeth, now a veteran caregiver herself,
attentively listened to the overwhelming challenges her Fellow caregivers faced with little support.

She committed to establish the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to strengthen the support our nation offers military caregivers. One of the first steps taken by the Foundation was to commission a study by the RAND Corporation. It was to be the first nationwide, comprehensive look at America's military and veteran caregivers, their challenges, the resources available to them, and the support they still needed.

We announced the study's findings on April 1st, and the overarching message was clear: Our nation's military and veteran caregivers are providing a tremendous service for our nation and their loved ones, and they are doing so with little training and support. Senator Dole and the Foundation shared these findings widely with representatives of the public, private, nonprofit, and faith communities, with the goal in mind to fill the gaps in support through a holistic approach, where everyone chips in to do their part to support our caregivers.

Today's webinar is a direct result of the Foundation's call to action.

When Senator Dole announced the launch of Hidden Heroes: The National Coalition for Military Caregivers at the White House last month, alongside First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, she singled out the Easter Seals Dixon Center training series as one of the first examples of organizations teaming together to provide an innovative solution to one of the challenges facing caregivers. It will be the first of many commitments made with by our growing national coalition.

In attendance at the White House event, representing military and veteran caregivers across the nation, were more than 50 Elizabeth Dole Fellows. These Fellows are military and veteran caregivers who graciously donate their time and experience to the Foundation. These Fellows serve as advocates for all military caregivers, and as advisers and spokespeople for the Foundation. Their personal stories and experiences tell us volumes about what we have to learn about today's military and veteran caregivers. They also inspire countless ideas for how organizations and individuals can make a difference in addressing this important issue.

We are close to reaching our goal of selecting one Fellow in every state. In fact, if anyone out there is from New Jersey, Rhode Island, New Hampshire or Alaska, and would be interested in serving as an Elizabeth Dole Fellow, please e-mail your name, contact information, and a little about yourself to info@Elizabethdolefoundation.org. I consider myself lucky to work so closely with each of our Fellows. They are all
remarkable people, and are definitely my favorite part of my job.

And I am so grateful that one of our wonderful Fellows is able to join us today to share her personal story. Cara Folkers, our Fellow from Wisconsin, cares for her husband, Tim. She is also a mother of two small children. So there is always a chance we might hear some young voices in the background, as I'm sure many of you other busy caregivers can relate. I certainly can. I have a three and a half year old.

One of Cara's goals as a Fellow and advocate for caregivers is to raise awareness that veterans with invisible wounds need support too, and caregivers in their lives play an equally important role. Cara, I'll turn it over to you.

>> CARA FOLKERS: Thank you, Carol. I want to say a big thank you to all of the caregivers who are taking time out of their extremely busy lives to listen to and watch this webinar. As a caregiver myself, I understand how precious time is and I thank you for participating.

As Carol said, I am the wife and caregiver for my husband, Tim. We have been married a little over nine years, and have two small children. Our daughter is eight and our son is two and a half. My husband was active duty Army and served multiple deployments to Iraq. After the last deployment, we PCS’ed (Permanent Change of Station) to Ft. Carson, Colorado. It soon became obvious that something was not right. My happy, social, funny husband was often angry, bitter, and scared. He began experiencing nightmares, hallucinations, and angry uncontrollable outbursts. He was medically discharged and then later given retirement from the military due to the injuries he had received in combat. Those injuries include post-traumatic stress and a mild brain injury.

After leaving the service, we returned to the Midwest, where I had accepted a full-time teaching job. It was a horrible year. While there was not much support for him, there was even less for me. I was living far away from my family, working full-time, and trying to learn how to support and help my husband, all the while trying to raise a three-year-old. I often felt alone and overwhelmed. It felt like the whole world was resting on my shoulders. And most of the time, I felt like a failure.

I am happy to say that things have gotten better for us since that year. Looking back there were some things that really helped me make it through that year and in the years since. Finding people, searching out individuals with similar stories helped immensely. Finding time for myself was also important. That can be really hard to do as a caregiver. My
go-to alone time is driving through a Starbucks drive-through on the way home from groceries, and taking five minutes to sit in my driveway to listen to the radio and drink my Frappuccino. I also relied, and continue to rely, on my faith. Prayers have gotten me through many a dark time.

The most important advice I can give is to remember that you're not alone. Someone out there has a very similar story, and gets it. There's also organizations such as the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Easter Seals who are out there raising awareness and reaching out to you to help you. That's why it's so important to participate in calls like these, to get training and find support. I know I'm looking forward to hearing more about resiliency and care giving in today's presentation.

I would now like to turn it over to Deb McKay, Vice-President of Military Health Services for Atlas Research.

>> DEB McKay: Thank you, Cara. It's a very moving story. I'm also the Assistant Director of the Easter Seals National Veteran Caregiver Training Program. Just a note about Atlas Research, service disabled, veteran-owned small business consulting firm offering help to federal agencies. Atlas's role with the Easter Seals Veteran Caregiver Training Program has been the development of the curriculum and classroom trainings that are throughout the country and American territories including Puerto Rico, American Samoa and Guam.

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce Jane Hamilton, our speaker for today. Jane is a trainer for Easter Seals national veteran caregiver training program and has been a nurse for 40 years and a caregiver for 20.

She is an author and expert in managing caregiver stress and preventing compassion fatigue. In this webinar she'll share resilience, building strategies for all facets of your life including mental, emotional and physical strategies.

>> JANE MEIER HAMILTON: Thank you, Deb. I'm really honored to be talking with you and to be talking about this really important topic. As was said earlier, in April of this year at the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and the partners at RAND presented the report on "Hidden Heroes" and told of how military caregivers, five and a half million strong in the United States, support and help our vets to stay out of institutions, to live longer and healthier lives. Offering this kind of help for many, many years. This caregiving is important, but it always and often takes a toll on the body and mind, on the heart and soul. On the person's finances, family life and work life. During this webinar, we are going to talk with you as military
caregivers about the topic of resilience, something that can help you to deal with these challenges, to survive and maybe even thrive in the face of adversity. We are going to talk about what is resilience and why does it matter. What are the qualities of people who are resilient, and how can I build my own resilience?

So when you think of resilience, what comes to your mind? How would you define it? I think about inanimate objects like a Slinky or a rubber ball or plastic elbow straw that bends and comes back into shape. I think about living systems, a forest fire -- a forest after a fire, which comes back to life again. A garden that comes to life again in the spring. The United States following 9/11 sprung back to life after that horrible day.

The United States Air Force has defined resilience as one's ability to with stand, to recover from, and to even grow in the face of stressors and changing demands.

When you as military caregivers are resilient, you are not energizer bunnies, you are not invulnerable and breezing through so easily or competent every single moment of every single day. When you are resilient, you are bouncing forward to a new normal. Resilient is an active process of enduring, adapting, growing, and successfully coping with the challenges life throws at us. It is struggling well with what life sends your way.

So what is so important about adapting and struggling well for military caregivers? As Viktor Frankl says, we all have forces of fate that bear down on us, that threaten to make us or to break us. It's in our own hands. Will we be victims or victorious? What we choose, what we think, what we do, as we marshal our personal or family resources will determine our resilience, will determine our ability to with stand, recover from, and grow in the face of the adversity life throws at us. It is important also to remember that we don't face adversity alone. All of us are linked to other people who share our triumphs and tragedies. We are all members of a family. Some of our families are by birth. Our mother, our father, our siblings, but we also have families of choice. Our friends, our neighbors, people who are friends from our community.

And family is affected by what happens to other members of the family. Whether we live near or far, whether we see somebody often or just a couple times a year, we all experience some degree of stress when a service member or veteran that we care for needs our care.

So the stressor that we all experience as military caregivers is needing to provide care. And how the family responds will be determined to a certain degree by these other two factors: A family's resources and a family's
interpretations of the crisis. Now, families all have resources. (And I don't want you to think about resources as only being related to money.) Family resources have to do with the people we know, the knowledge we have, the skills, the attitude, the energy, the past life experiences that we can all bring to bear on solving the problems that we encounter. The things that help us to communicate, make decisions, take actions and tolerate the feelings that this stress has created within us.

Specifically, military caregivers and your families experience stress as a result of that service member or that veteran needing care as a result of a service-related illness or disability. The service member has lost some type of function or has experienced some impairment, either physical, mental or cognitive or behavioral. And those needs for care generate stress. So we pool our resources together. The other thing that helps us to provide a positive response to this stress is our interpretation. How we as a family view this situation. Remember, our thoughts create our reality and our minds are a very, very powerful tool to help all of us in a family to manage stress. So as you listen to the webinar, think about your own family. What are the things that have caused you stress as individuals and as a family unit? Be thinking about how you are going to tap into the resources that you have, and how you are going to develop a healthy outlook that will help you to get through.

So resilience is important for you as individuals, but resilience is also important for your family as a whole. When you work together as a family, when you use your resources and take a positive approach to respond to your loved one's need for care, you build a family unit that has strength and stamina. You learn how to cope successfully with challenges, and you teach your children those things, too. You develop the ability to bounce back and even grow from adversity.

What are the qualities that are found in resilient people? I'm going to turn to the work of Southwick and Charney, two men who in 2012 published a book called Resilience, interestingly enough. What they did was they thoroughly examined all of the research that is available on resilience. They looked at medical research, brain information, information from the psychology and neurology and endocrinology literature. They also conducted research of their own in these fields.

The third thing they did which I found interesting, they interviewed in depth Vietnam prisoners of war, special forces instructors, and civilians who had experienced extreme trauma. And they found that these people's stories gave a fuller picture so that we could look at the literature and be able to identify
what people can do to build resilience. They came up with ten qualities.

The first quality is optimism. This is the way we view life. The way we explain what is happening to us. And an optimist views life as having a glass half full, not half empty. An optimist sees that we have good things in our life. If bad things happen, they are kind of a fluke. They are not the norm. We can expect that good things will continue to come and optimists believe that their actions can have a positive effect and bring good things to them.

What we know clearly is that optimists experience better health, better relationships, and they have a better ability to make decisions. And the good news for all of us on this call today is that optimism is a quality that can be learned and developed.

Secondly, resilient people link to a social support system. They connect with people. They actually seek out and they accept help that people offer. They don't go it alone and say oh, no, no, no, I can handle it on my own. But resilient people let others in to help them.

One of the stories from the book that Southwick and Charney wrote was about prisoners of war from Vietnam who were in solitary confinement, often times for many years. They developed something that they called the tap code, where they were able to use something like the Morse code to tap out messages and communicate back and forth with each other between the walls. Although they were separated they were not alone. And many cite the tap code as something that really helped them to survive the horrors of that confinement.

Resilient people face their fears and they use fear as an opportunity to grow and guide as to what they need to learn to become stronger. Resilient people focus on their goals despite being fearful and anxious and don't let anxiety stop them dead in their tracks. They often times use spiritual practices or a strong network of interpersonal support to help them get the courage to face and go beyond their fears.

The fourth quality of resilient people is religion and spirituality. We don't have to think about spirituality as only tied to religious practices. Even people who are atheists have a spiritual dimension. This is a universal quality that causes us to seek meaning in our lives. A relationship with God or religious practices is one way to feed our spirituality, but what the researchers found is that we can develop and link with our spirituality by creating and appreciating art, by communing with nature, by linking to a higher power. And what they found clearly is that there is a significant positive effect on our resilience when we nurture our spiritual dimension.
On the slide, we see a picture of World War II soldiers raising the flag at Iwo Jima. They had just fought, struggled, and seen their comrades die in the struggle for freedom.

In his book, *Man's Search For Meaning*, Viktor Frankl talked about others who struggled and died, in World War II those who struggled and survived were not necessarily the strongest, strongest or the most attractive. He told us those who survived were those who had something important yet to do. They had a purpose or meaning for which they were living. Resilient people have meaning, purpose and growth in their lives. They actively serve a purpose that is greater than their own self-interest.

Southwick and Charney talked about this with people who they interviewed after trauma. Often times these people developed a line of work that was a calling, that made some meaning about the difficulties that they had lived through. These people chose not to be victims, but to take their challenge, learn from it, pay it forward, and do some work that would help other people, that would help to make a difference in the world.

In a related way, the sixth quality of resilient people is having a strong moral compass or being altruistic, thinking of and serving others. That moral compass leads resilient people to engage in right actions and to avoid doing wrong.

Research has shown us that those who are altruistic and help each other actually have greater positive physical and mental health as a result of helping others. As compared with those who receive help. So they've shown that it is truly better to give than to receive.

The next qualities speak to the mind/body connection. When we strengthen one, we strengthen both. Number seven, focuses on the body. Resilient people train their bodies. Being physically fit improves general health. It also prevents or diminishes the effects of chronic illnesses like high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke or arthritis.

And mastering physical challenges has been shown to be able to improve our mood, the way we think, sleep, and our emotions.

The POWs in the book described rigorous physical exercise when they were in captivity. And they used this not only to keep their bodies healthy but to keep their minds tough enough to endure the situation. And they cited this as one of the important ways that they were able to save their lives.

Number 8, brain fitness (in mind and heart). It focuses on our thoughts and emotions. Resilient people train their brains to be mentally sharp. That concept of use it or lose it applies here. We now know from research that our brain grows and changes. The cells regenerate and reorganize throughout our lives. And when we challenge our minds, our intellects can actually expand. So resilient people focus on problems when
problems need to be solved. They develop stills to manage and keep their emotions in balance. And are life long learners, so they are continuing to expand the gray matter between their ears.

Our second to the last quality of resilient people is flexibility. Resilient people demonstrate both mental and emotional flexibility. They develop many different styles of coping with and finding ways to accept and handle adversity. Humor, gratitude, reframing, saying: “Hey, I've been dealt a bad hand, but I have to play the hand I'm dealt.” Or saying “Hey, this isn't the end of the world. This isn't going to get me down.” Many, many different approaches are used by people who are resilient.

Finally, the tenth quality is having role models. Resilient people identify with real folks who they know or people who they heard about, people from fictional characters from the movies or in books, famous people, historic people, people who are alive or dead. They find people whose lives they can emulate, who demonstrate qualities that helped them get through and resilient people imitate them. Southwick and Charney say that they focus on replicating small aspects of behavior that have a positive impact on the outcome that they are looking for.

So as you military caregivers are listening to these qualities, some priorities for you to focus on are the four universals which all of the study subjects in Southwick and Charney's book talked about. The four qualities that everybody had, the four mechanisms they all used. First of all, it was to maintain realistic optimism. Second, to seek and accept social support. Third of all, to confront fears. And fourth of all, to imitate sturdy role models. Think about these things as we move on to our next section, which is to talk about how can you build resilience in your life as a military caregiver.

In 2009, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff saw a severely strained military. And a need for a more holistic approach to building strength and resilience in the military. He introduced what is called the “Total Force Fitness” model. I'm going to incorporate this model as I make suggestions to you in terms of building your resilience. We can see from the diagram on the slide that there are eight elements: Social, physical, environmental, medical, spiritual, nutritional, psychological and behavioral. I will incorporate behavioral into the description of the other seven.

And there is an action plan which I've created. I am going to use this as I organize my presentation. When the webinar is posted on the website, this action plan will be there and you will be able to download it and use it to help you plan how to approach your own building of resilience.
It is important to remember that when building resilience, choice is very critical. It is the source of our resilient power and it is through our choices that we create our lives.

I heard Cara talking about some of the things that she did when her husband came home to help herself carry on and be resilient. So I want all who are listening to think about what are you doing now that works. Keep doing it. What are you doing that you could do more of? Think about how you can work those into your lives. Are there some new ideas that sound right to you? Think about what you could do to build your resilience.

Now, some physical ways to build resilience, including exercise. Do things that you like. Do you like to walk? You like to bike? You like to dance? Take yoga? What do you like to do? Make that a part of your life. Think about what is easy to do. Small things can get you moving. Park your car far away from the door and walk through the parking lot to get to the store. Or take the stairs when you are in a building.

And think about starting a cardio training or strength training or jogging that will help to strengthen your stamina.

Also get adequate sleep and rest. I know that there are lots and lots of things on your plate and it is easy to think that's, I don't need to sleep. But we know clearly from research that it is through rest and sleep that our body recharges its energy and stays healthy. So make sleep a priority and seek to get as close to seven or eight hours each night as you possibly can.

Also practice good hygiene and grooming. This doesn't cost you any money. It doesn't take a whole lot of time, but what it does, it starts a positive cycle. When we look good, we feel better. That helps us to lift ourselves up without having to do a whole lot.

If you have medications that you're on that have been prescribed, if you have any questions, ask your pharmacist, your physician, your health provider so that you know what the side effects are and how you are supposed to be using them so that you use them well. Limit your intake of alcohol. Avoid using drugs or tobacco. Those things are just plain destructive to our health.

And some nutritional ways to build resilience starts with eating a healthy and balanced diet. I suggest that you go to the website www.myhealthyplate.gov. It gives you a lot of information about nutrition. The vision you should have in your mind in terms of what you eat on your plate is that half of it should be filled with brightly colored fruits and vegetables. You should choose proteins that are lean, not fatty. When you are choosing dairy, choose nonfat varieties or low fat. One
percent milk. And seek whole grains, not white flour or refined sugar. You don't want to choose things that all have had the nutrients processed out of them.

When you snack, look for things that are healthy and nutritious. Fruits, veggies, nuts, yogurts, low calorie options. Control your portion sizes. If you do go for a brownie or a huge treat one day, don't make it something you do all day every day.

Nutritionally, think about salt/sodium. Sodium is in canned goods and prepared foods in high quantities. It is recommended that we have less than or equal to a teaspoon of salt every day. That is not very much. Watch out for your sodium intake, particularly if you have blood pressure issues.

And seek the unsaturated fats, the vegetable oils, corn oil, olive oil, canola oil, rather than lard or bacon fat. Some of the medical ways to build resilience are of importance to caregivers.

The “Hidden Heroes” study showed that 20 percent of pre-9/11 caregivers and almost 40 percent of post-9/11 caregivers have no healthcare coverage. Access to quality care is absolutely critical for preserving your health, your wellbeing, your capacity to care. So seek out TRICARE, CHAMPVA, Medicare, Medicaid or one of the new healthcare exchanges. Do what you can to get covered. These will allow you to get preventive screening which is also very important. Get your blood pressure checked, your blood sugar, mammograms, PAP exams, pelvic exams. All of these things catch problems when they are small before they can become big problems for you.

Prevent injuries by thinking about safety. Make sure every time you and your family get into a car that everybody buckles their seat belt. Learn, if you have lifting as part of your role as a military caregiver, make sure you learn to lift properly so that you can prevent back injuries.

If you do have injuries or chronic health problems, it's important to manage them effectively so that you prevent further complications. Things like obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular illnesses and asthma are significant illnesses that can cause you to lose energy as a military caregiver. Take care of yourself so that you can take care of others.

Some actions that will help you to build resilience by addressing things in your environment are to recognize those stressors that are out there that cause you problems. When it's really hot, when it's really humid, when it's really cold or all that snow and ice, the noise and interruptions that come across in your day-to-day work, or your air quality. Pay attention to these and do what you are to be comfortable and safe.
Also in terms of your environment, assure that your home and workplace are safe. Things like having a first aid kit available. Knowing emergency phone numbers and having them posted where everybody can see them. Knowing where the emergency exit is in your household and helping your children to know about that. Do you have a fire extinguisher handy? Have a smoke alarm. Know how to turn off your power, your electric and gas in case of an emergency. And take measures to prevent injuries. Eliminate guns from your home if you possibly can. And if they are there, make sure they are not loaded and that they are locked away. And take care with knife and scissors, particularly if you have little children. Use them appropriately and keep them away from the kids.

And when you think about yourself, do what you can to limit your risks. You as a military caregiver are the heart and soul of your family. They rely on you for all of the care that will you give. If you become ill or injured, what will happen? So you have to think about safety are in terms of your own choices.

Finally in terms of the environment, this isn't about safety, but it is about beauty. It feels good to have something organized, a space that is attractive. Flowers or a place that is calm. To the extent that you can, find a place in your home or your workplace that looks good so that you can go there as an island of calm to settle yourself when you need it.

Some psychological acts that build resilience include thinking and doing things to boost your confidence. This is called self-talk. You want to whisper positive things in your head instead of the negative things. You want to say "I can do this! I'm going to make it through! I'm doing a great job".

Those things that affirm your strength. Think in optimistic ways. Recognize your blessings. You might even want to keep a blessings journal. If you tend to think negatively, actively seek to replace those negative thoughts. Hangout with people who are positive, not toxic people. Practice mindfulness. One example is focusing on your breathing. If you are tense or fearful, breathe in slowly, breathe out slowly. Deep breaths help to calm you. There are many other ways to practice mindfulness. That might be something for you to pursue.

Psychologically, identify your feelings and share them with other people. Identify people who you are close to, who you trust. Friends, family, clergy, counselor, so that you don't feel so alone. Persist, keep going. When you're tired, it makes it hard to have that grit to carry on. So this is where the rest comes in. Mentally re-label negative things. Instead of saying "This is awful, this is terrible!" Say, "I can do this. This is a manageable situation."
Instead of saying "Oh, man, I really blew it" say, "Hey, that's an understandable reaction given the circumstances I'm living under."

Instead of saying "Oh, man, I'm terrible. I don't know what I'm really doing." Say, "I'm doing well, given the circumstances." Affirm your capabilities.

Finally in a psychological way, use physical activity to work off stressful emotions. Activity flushes the stress-related chemicals out of our bodies.

Socially, do things that are fun. Link to those support networks who will give you emotional help, information that you need or practical hands-on help. Reach out and initiate and ask for help.

If you don't have somebody who is there, join a cyber-community, an online or telephone support group or go to a support group where you can sit and talk with other people so that you don't feel so alone, and you can recognize that there others out there. You can learn from them ideas for handling the challenges you face.

Try to imitate the lives of people who are inspiring. Do what they do. And enjoy activities, hobbies, socializing, being with people that are fun. This isn't just a nicety. This is a necessity. Each of us needs time to relax and recharge. For those of you who are employed outside the home, to the extent that you possibly can, try to separate home and work worries. Leave the work worries at the door when you leave work. And focus on your family when you are with them. Flip it the other way. When you leave your home, leave your family concerns at the door. And bring as much of your full self to work as possible.

And finally, on a spiritual level, the acts that help us to build resilience are pretty clear. We need to reflect on and live in harmony with our values. We need to regularly connect with God or whatever gives our life meaning, especially when we are feeling stressed. We need to focus on our spiritual beliefs and religious practices. Praying, worshiping, meditating, communing with nature, appreciating the arts or even creating our own art by drawing, painting, dancing, or writing. And read texts, watch shows or listen to music that you find inspiring.

All of these have been ideas for building your own resilience. I would just like to add a few ideas and focus on building resilience in your family. I've gotten these ideas from Dr. Walsh. She suggested three keys to building family resilience: How you view things, how you are organized and how you are communicating.

Your views, your outlook and beliefs are really critical. One is to normalize the stress that you're feeling. Every
family has adversity, not just military families. If your kids feel like they are the only ones having a hard time, remind them that all families have difficulties. Also remind them that this has meaning. This is helping us as a family. We will use this to help us as a family grow and the meaning for this in future generations, they will look back at us and they will be impressed and proud of who we were and how we handled this. We will help them to grow. Talk about hope, that we can hope for a better, more positive future. And affirm the strength of the family. We can do this.

The second key is how we are organized or how we work together. Mutual respect and support, mobilizing our links to ourselves and to our family and community is an important way to organize. We recognize also as you come together that the way you did things before is not the way you are going to be doing them now. So we have to reorganize and do what's needed now. Recognizing based on those changes is what allows our family to continue to be strong. So reframe those changes as the thing that helps us to continue to be strong.

And finally, if you have children in your household, it is very, very important that you provide a nurturing, protective guiding hand to them. Strong, dependable leadership is really crucial to help them through the anxiety that they are facing.

Finally, I would like to close with some words from Sir Winston Churchill, who knew a whole lot about resilience. He said to his people in Britain during World War II: “If you're going through hell, keep going.” I think he had the idea well in mind.

If you want to know more about resilience, when this webinar is archived there will be a free downloadable list of things for you to read. Things to take from the Internet, and suggestions of some books. A few of them listed on the slide are the American Psychological Association’s A Road to Resilience, a book that I've written called The Caregiver's Guide to Self-Care. And some blog articles from Military OneSource, Psych Central, and WebMD, all on the Web. Also from the Web you will be able to download the action planning guide that will walk you through some of things that I've just talked about. And it will help you to think concretely about what actions you can take. This is very valuable as a concept, but unless you take what we talk about here today and put it into practice in your life we have not accomplished our goals. So think about application and real life use of some of these.

>> DEB McKay: Thank you very much, Jane. That was a wonderful presentation. I can see from the chat box that there's been lots of questions. And lots of wonderful
affirmations and a shout out to you, BeckyBoo who said
“Resilience is like gummy bears. Once they are run over, they
come right back up.”

>> JANE MEIER HAMILTON: I love it!

>> DEB McKay: I think that was my favorite line. Now, we
do have some questions for Jane. And I will take them in order
that they were written. Cara, actually this one is for you.
“Cara, thank you for sharing your story. Is there a way to
contact you later for more information on how you particularly
found support? We have similar stories.”

>> CARA FOLKERS: Note: Cara’s response has been edited, as
she would prefer to receive email contact through the Elizabeth
Dole Foundation at caregivers@elizabethdolefoundation.org.

>> DEB McKay: Okay. The next question comes from Jen V.
“Do you find that the people that you constantly lean on get
burned out?”

>> JANE MEIER HAMILTON: Oh, yes! That can easily happen.
And so that's really one of the reasons why it's important to
expand and extend your support network to people who are not
just your usual suspects. Think about folks from your faith
community, from your community, other military caregivers. Think
about friends who are maybe not your closest friends, but whose
children are also going to soccer and maybe you can ask them for
a little bit of help that way. So think very, very broadly and
cast a wide net. Because if we go back to the same people over
and over again for support, they tend to get very tired and
cranky.

>> DEB McKay: Thank you. This one is from Trish. Can we
share these slides with other caregivers?

>> JED JOHNSON: Absolutely. So what will happen is, we
will post this webinar on the website
easterseals.com/carewebinar following this presentation. You
will be able to not only download the PowerPoint of these
slides, but there also will be a transcript. Please encourage
others to visit there. They can listen to this entire
presentation as it is archived. We hope you share it broadly.

>> DEB McKay: Yes indeed. The more people who hear this,
the better it will be for all of us.
>> DEB McKay: And we have a question from Relin M. Is there a support group for siblings of people with PTSD and TBI, traumatic brain injury?

>> Jane Meier Hamilton: I do not know the specific answer to that question. I am sorry to say. But I think we could probably talk to some of the organizations that are sponsoring this program.

>> Jed Johnson: We do know that is going to vary at different locations across the country as well as there are some online support groups as well. I would encourage you to reach out to the VA caregiver support line, caregiver.VA.gov and encourage you to connect there. They in turn can refer you to what is going on at the local level as well.

The VA has a wonderful 800 number that you can call in as well as their website. (1-855-260-3274) They are well resourced and able to direct you not only to resources that are available at the national level, but also available at your local level.

>> Deb McKay: And we had one more question. And that was regarding what resources exist for children, the kids of the veterans. I will share with you that I know of one wonderful resource that is the website veteranparenting.org. As Jane has said, while we are not sure of what else exists other than that, we can surely find out.

>> Jane Meier Hamilton: And when we post the list of references that will go up along with the slides, I'll do some research to find out answers to this question. I'll include that on the list of references.

>> Jed Johnson: Thank you both Deb and Jane. I would encourage you, if you have additional questions, we will compile those questions. Jane has graciously agreed to research those and we'll post those answers. If questions come up to you in the next day or so, you're welcome to send an e-mail to militarycaregiver@easterseals.com. Again, we will compile those questions. Jane will respond to those in writing and we will post those on the website so that you can listen to the session, see the transcripts, as well as see the answers to any additional questions that you might have.

I do want to be thoughtful about individuals' time. I want to thank Jane, Deb, others... Cara in particular, Carol, and others that have participated in the call. There are many people behind the scenes to help turn this webinar into a reality. I want to thank them as well.
I'm hopeful that you have been able to gather one or two insights, one or two inspirations. We look forward to your joining us again in July as we launch the remainder of our webinar series. Thanks go out to the Dole Foundation, our partners: USO, Caregiver Action Network, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, National Alliance for Caregiving, Family Caregiver Alliance and Atlas Research. They are all rich with resources. I encourage you to visit their websites as well. More than anything else I want to thank those of you who joined us on today's call. You really are the true heros. I hope you acknowledge that, and that fact, in and of itself, will enhance your resilience moving forward.

With that, I would like to bring our webinar to a close. Have a great remainder of the day.

>> OPERATOR: Thank you. That concludes today's conference. You may now disconnect.
(The webinar concluded at 2:01 p.m. CDT.)

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