INTRODUCTION

These are trying times. Most Americans are living under social distancing restrictions. At the request of the Chief of Chaplains, this wellness exercise will be offered instead of a character development lesson in May 2020. Because this is not a character development lesson and all members should cultivate wellness, this exercise may be facilitated by chaplains, CDIs, commanders, and health services, CISM, and safety officers. Moreover, the exercise is suitable for all members; senior member participation is encouraged. The primary purpose of this exercise is to invite every CAP member to assess and reinforce his or her individual wellness by using the Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience.

Cadets who need character development participation credit to promote may submit a copy of a completed worksheet to the squadron commander, deputy commander for cadets, chaplain, or character development instructor for promotional credit.

PRECLASS CHECKLIST

Prior preparation is essential to success. Please prepare the following well ahead of time:

☐ Be familiar with and test the online software platform you will use for the meeting

☐ Download the following:


2. The letter from our national commander, Maj. Gen. Mark Smith, which addresses the importance of wellness and resilience in the present health crisis.

ATTENTION GETTER

PRESENTED BY THE FACILITATOR (5-10 MINUTES.)

Option 1: Maj Gen Mark Smith’s letter to all CAP members

Read the National Commander’s letter, dated 02 April 2020, which discusses CAP’s activity during the COVID-19 pandemic, his request for engagement, and his experience with self-care or wellness. Emphasize the commander’s suggestion that “perhaps these five pillars can be helpful for you, too.”

Option 2: Multimedia
If you are using virtual meeting software, share this link with your participants and give them a few minutes to watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjQpsWEdrE.

Option 3: Personal Story

Share a story about how you are practicing self-care during this time of “isolation.” Explain your personal story by referring to one or more of the Five Pillars.

UNDERSTANDING THE FIVE PILLARS

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (10 MINUTES.)

The following questions have short answers, some of which will be obvious to participants. They are placed at the beginning of the lesson to encourage participation. Facilitators may choose to pose questions verbally and ask all participants to answer by typing a response into the meeting chat box. As appropriate, the facilitator may comment on the responses, ask follow-up questions, and point out trends or common answers.

- Please share one thing that has changed for you during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- What word do the Learn to Lead textbooks define as “the body’s response to change?” (the correct answer is “stress”)
- Is stress always a bad thing?
- How can you tell when someone is handling stress poorly?
- How can you tell when someone is handling stress well?
- CAP has recently adopted an approach to handling stress called “The Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience.” Can you name the five pillars? (Body, Mind, Relationships, Spirit, Family)
- Once you have identified the Five Pillars, ask the group to identify at least three specific behaviors that reinforce or support each pillar. This may be the most important part of the lesson and will be reinforced in the activity later, so give the participants extra time if they are responding enthusiastically.
- Which pillar has supported you the most during this time of change and isolation?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH STRANGERS

GROUP DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

The following questions focus on the Pillar of Relationships and require more thoughtful responses. The goal is to explore our relationships with strangers and the role of those relationships in both our personal and community wellness. Facilitators may ask for volunteers or call on specific cadets participating in the virtual meeting.

- How We have seen that one of the Five Pillars is “relationships.” Can we have “relationships” with people that we do not know? Why or why not?
- How can strangers help us live the Core Values?
- How does the pillar of “relationships” apply to strangers?
- How are we serving our communities by practicing social distancing?

ACTIVITY
Five Pillars Worksheet

In this activity, cadets will reinforce their knowledge of the Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience model by identifying special activities that they will do during the next month to promote their own personal resilience during the stresses imposed by the national responses to the pandemic.

We have prepared a worksheet to help you through this exercise which is found at the end of this lesson. Participants can download a copy at https://capchaplain.com/downloads/Wellness-Worksheet.pdf.

**Note to Facilitators:** Allow the cadets a few minutes to start their worksheets but encourage them to spend time on the worksheet after the meeting thinking more deeply about their plans for personal resilience.

After giving them a few minutes, ask for volunteers to identify some of the specific activities they will do during the next month to cultivate wellness.

Ask the participants to keep their worksheets visible during the remainder of the COVID-19 response period. Remind them that they, like the national commander of the Civil Air Patrol, may benefit from using the Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience to remind themselves of positive ways to cope with stress.

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LESSON SUMMARY AND WRAP-UP

**LARGE GROUP LED BY FACILITATOR (2 MINUTES)**

In this lesson, we discussed the importance of self-care or wellness, especially in times of crisis. We reviewed CAP’s Five Pillars of Wellness and Resilience and some of the habits associated with each of them. In exploring the Pillar of Relationships, we considered our relationships with strangers. Our decision to serve as CAP members means we must be mindful of how everything we do impacts our fellow citizens. By attending to these relationships and the other pillars of resilience, you will prepare yourselves to use stress productively in service to our communities and nation.

**QUOTABLE QUOTES**

“Upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all.” – Alexander The Great

“Solidarity is based on the principle that we are willing to put ourselves at risk to protect each other.” – Starhawk

“The purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others.”
  – Albert Schweitzer

Resiliency Exercise—Wellness During Crisis
“We must indeed all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.”
– Benjamin Franklin

“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”
– Pope John Paul II