

Arise2Live Perspectives

Resilience in the Midst of Survivorship

The Four Pillars of Health when Facing Medical Adversity

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When we are thrust into a medical crisis, it's hard to think past anything else. We go into fight or flight mode. We follow the doctor's instructions for what medical route to take with little thought that our bodies have an amazing ability to heal itself. Doctors are trained to focus only on their piece of the puzzle, whatever their specialty is - surgery, chemotherapy, medicines, etc. As a result, that is often all that we focus on. We need to develop a different mindset. We often think that the four pillars of health are just for healthy people, but they are even more important to those facing medical adversity and survivorship.

How do we follow the Four Pillars of Health?

The First Step is Knowing:

You can't help your body to heal if you don't know the right tools to give it. This is where the four pillars of health come in.

Eating - choose a healthy diet with lots of protein, vegetables, fruits, and healthy fats. Avoid processed foods and sugars.

Exercise - any movement will help, so do what you can. Even a little bit can go a long way.

Sleep - this is when our body works on healing. Aim for at least 8 hours a night, adding more when you are focusing on healing. Listen to what your body needs.

de-Stress - stress prevents healing. Find what helps you lower stress. Include praying and meditation, reading the Bible, journaling - these will help you process your emotions and de-stress.

The Second Step is Who:

The cheeky answer is everyone! We all need to follow the four pillars. However, in medical crises and adversity, these four pillars are very important to the four types (roles) of people. (see Four Key Relational Roles in Treatment and Survivorship article)

Patients - who need to do everything they can to help their bodies to heal.





Caregivers - who need to be healthy themselves and have the strength and patience for the long-haul.

Supporters - who need to understand what the patient is doing in the four pillars and offer encouragement.

Providers - we don't usually have much influence on our providers, but we can pray for them. You can pray they will be healthy too so they can help you. We can also share our success with them so that maybe they would pass that information along to help others.

The Third Step is Action:

It can be very overwhelming trying to find all the answers at once. And that can add stress. Focus instead on one or two things at a time. Ask your provider what is most important in your case. Most of the time it will be rest and sleep. So focus on that first and when you have a healthy sleep pattern, move on to healthy eating. Do baby steps to avoid adding more stress on yourself.

The Fourth Step is Prevention:

The four pillars of health prevent lifestyle diseases. When you make the four pillars a lifestyle, you build habits and routines that become second nature to us. You are giving our bodies the tools it needs to remain healthy.

Often the diseases are nasty, but following these steps demonstrates your resilience and gives you some control over your health. One of the biggest issues with medical crises is the feeling of no control, even over your own body. By working on the four pillars of health, you gain some control that truly will make a positive impact on your health. It also gives you something to focus your energy on, instead of focusing on the illness. This will reduce the stress on your body, allowing for more healing.

Our bodies are truly amazing. And given the right tools, they can heal themselves or have a significantly greater chance of a full recovery. Find something you can work on, one step at a time, and start building your health. Use the four pillars of health to Arise2Live.



Arise2Live invites you to information, perspective, and encouragement to help you navigate the journey of survivorship.

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