

## Surviving Difficult Times

All of us face difficult times in our lives. How we respond can make a big difference in how we fare. Here are some ideas to consider the next time you hit rough waters.

- 🕒 Perspective - Most of us tend to think in the short term: yesterday, today, and tomorrow only. When we do this, we cloud our ability to put matters into perspective. History is an excellent teacher, and that's one reason why we study history. Harry Truman never attended college, but he was an avid student of history. When he faced difficult problems in his presidency, he looked into history for similarities and precedents. That gave him the perspective he needed. Now, both Democrats and Republicans express their admiration for President Truman.
- 🕒 Social support - Having and maintaining solid friendships keeps us physically and psychologically healthy. Friends are there when we need them. They encourage us to be our best and bolster our confidence. But don't overlook the friendship you find in your own family. Our parents and siblings are often our best friends. When we genuinely care about others and support them, we often learn in the process that our own problems are not so big after all. Stay connected with your friends in good times and bad.
- 🕒 Hope - In bad times, it is easy for us to lose confidence in ourselves and in what the future may bring. Hope is what keeps us motivated. When times are at their worst, it is hope that carries the day. Successful people never give up despite life's adversities. Even when they can't imagine how things can improve, they persist in doing what it takes to make things better. Hope is more than passive, positive thinking. It means taking action and pursuing our dreams.
- 🕒 Faith – Alcoholics Anonymous advises its members to first admit their inability to handle the problem alone and to put themselves into the hands of a “Higher Power.” Spiritual beliefs sustain us in bad times. They reinforce our values and our resolve to do the right thing. When times get bad, people find solace in their faith. Find a local faith community or an organization that shares your beliefs and values. Take advantage of the friendship and sustenance you will find there.
- 🕒 Acceptance – Learning to accept the present as it is can bring peace and comfort. Take time each day in quiet reflection and acceptance of what is, without criticism or judgment. It is especially difficult when our hard work results in less than we would like. We can always take comfort in knowing we gave things our best shot. If we learn from our mistakes, we will do better next time.

If your situation gets beyond what you can manage, give UHCS a call at 262-472-1305 for a free, confidential appointment with a mental health professional.