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Extemporaneous Writing

Resilience and Inclusion in the COVID-19 Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the world into chaos and turmoil. This is the first time that many young people are witnessing and experiencing such fear and hate. People are scared of each other and confused about how life has been turned upside down so quickly. The important aspect of this upheaval of normal life is maintaining our communities by staying resilient and strong in the face of conflict and suffering. Citizens are social distancing from each other, but this does not necessarily mean that they should distance themselves socially. A physical distance of at least six feet is required, but social lives should go on normally. Resiliency means communicating with loved ones and preventing communities from falling apart. Technologies such as Facetime have been remarkably important in maintaining relationships while physical distancing. In order to stay connected and resilient, people should stay productive and use this time wisely.

In this time of crisis, certain ethnicities have been singled out due to fear and placing blame. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the United States. After 9/11, many Muslim and brown people were targeted. After the Pearl Harbor incident, Japanese Americans were targeted. Today, Asian Americans are again being bullied and blamed for the pandemic when in reality this is just a show of bigotry and racism. It is important to educate ourselves on the coronavirus and learn to not blame each other, especially to not target one particular group of people who had nothing to do with the outcome of the disease. The stigma associated with the pandemic has instilled fear and anger towards people of Asian descent. In order to stay resilient in the midst of this crisis, it is important to make sure they feel included in their own communities and neighborhoods.

The pandemic has the power to push people apart or pull people together, so it is crucial to stay connected with our communities of friends and family. It is up to each individual to show resilience and keep their community alive and connected. In the wake of the pandemic, Asian people have been targeted so it is especially important to make an effort to make them feel included and not isolated from their communities. Showing resilience in the face of racism during COVID-19 means talking to neighbors, friends, and family to see how they are doing or feeling. It is important to reach out to those who may be feeling scared or isolated. Resilience can mean going against the bigotry and making it a point to reach out to Asians in our communities to see how they are doing. This can be as simple as using Facetime or other modes of video chat to check in on others and stay connected. It is the little things that people appreciate. Simply checking in on someone can make them feel loved and cared for. Just because people are not physically seeing each other, this does not mean that relationships should be distanced. Making sure to talk to people in our communities can keep relationships alive and healthy.

Many people have been using this time to learn new skills. This is something that can easily be done with others while still maintaining social distancing rules. For example, my friends and I have taken up the challenge of learning to write with our non-dominant hands. Using video chat programs, we catch up with each other and practice our writing skills. This is a

great time to keep our relationships strong while also learning a new skill. We have also used this time to include others in our friend group who may have been feeling scared because of the pandemic. Inclusion is a crucial aspect of resiliency since it keeps us from becoming compliant with those who are actively against certain groups of people. We have been resilient by keeping ourselves busy, and also by trying to include others and build a wider and stronger community.

The coronavirus has clearly caused a significant shift in normal life. However, social distancing policies do not have to cause the end of communities. Using this time to maintain relationships and build new ones is a healthy use of this new-found time. Checking in on loved ones and maintaining our communities is what resilience should be in the wake of this pandemic.