



COVID-19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS GUIDE:
BUILDING RESILIENCE
Version 1, 7/29/2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many dramatic changes and induced high levels of stress. Resilience is often talked about as “bouncing back” and maybe even growing through the challenges we face. For some people this seems easy, but for the vast majority of us it takes effort to continue to grow and maintain our mental and physical health when faced with overwhelming events such as the pandemic. Social science has shown that there are three key ingredients to helping promote resilience after a large stressor: control (believing we have some level of choice and power), coherence (making some meaning out of the pain and suffering we experience), and connectedness (maintaining social connection and relationships). Here are some tips on how you can to effectively promote continued resilience and personal growth.

Control: Identify Things You Can and Cannot Control and Take Steps to Take More Control

- Make two lists, one of things that you can control and the other of things that you feel are out of your control
 - Reflect on this list of items to see if there is anything that can be moved from the uncontrollable list to the controllable list and vice versa
- Engage in activities that you have control over (e.g., wash your hands, keep a safe distance, learn to work virtually, and do things to improve your mental and physical wellness)
- Create a schedule of key events that you plan to complete for the day
 - Balance the schedule with “must do” items for home and/or work with things that are important for self-care.
 - Make the schedule realistic with added flexible time to allow for unplanned events
 - Incorporate established routines in this schedule to make it feel more familiar
- Accept the fact that there are things that you cannot control
- Enhance your ability to accept the things that you are not able to control by telling yourself, “it is what it is” or “this is the current situation and I will do the best with it that I can”



Coherence: Find meaning

- Begin writing in a journal to help you reflect on happenings during the day and gain greater perspective
 - Record details that you experienced during the day focusing on each of your five senses
 - Write about your memories and feelings
 - Document lessons that you have learned
- Reach out to help others
 - Think about the meaning and impact on others that you have helped, no matter the size of the offering
- Try changing your perspective
 - Think about how you will be able to grow during this time
 - Consider who you want to become in this period
- Do something new
 - Take an online course
 - Adopt a new hobby, take a yoga class, meditate, learn how to play a musical instrument, or try a new recipe
- Engage in spiritual activities
 - Participate in prayer, meditation, liturgical dance, etc.
 - Consider the meaning of life for oneself and others

Connectedness: Maintain and build relationships

- Prioritize relationships that are meaningful to you
 - Identify relationships that are important to you and reach out to these contacts on a regular basis
 - Connect with specific people for different types of support
 - Let these contacts know that they are important to you
- Explore methods to stay connected with others
 - Use modes of communication including phone calls, text messages, e-mails, video conferences, etc. Physical distancing does not have to limit social connectedness
 - Check in with others to agree on a preferred mode of communication



- Create goals with others and celebrate achievements when these goals are reached
- Plan new social outlets
 - Have “virtual meals” or “group hangouts” via videoconferencing
 - Schedule a “virtual happy hour” with friends or colleagues