

How to stay strong during these challenging times?

These times are undoubtedly stressful for many reasons besides the headlines. Many people are trying to figure out how to now work or learn at home and care for family who normally would be at school, daycare, or adult daycare. Others are trying to figure out how they will afford to pay their bills now that they are temporarily laid-off. It is easy for people to say not to worry, but we must first accept that each of us grieve and deal with a challenging situation in a different way. One way to cope or stay strong is through the term resilience.

Resilience is the positive and healthy means to adapting to life's adversity, traumas, stress, and challenges. Being resilient does not mean you ignore or are not facing the matter, but instead how we "bounce back" from the challenges we face. How do we strengthen and build resilience when in the trenches of a global crisis? Here are some simple things to try:

1. **Make or renew connections:** Just because we are being told to socially distance ourselves physically does not mean we cannot call or email someone. Social media is ok, but it might be worth changing the settings to limit the negative news headlines.
2. **Keep things in perspective:** As the news shows numbers increasing, we are testing more so just playing catch-up on seeing who has Covid-19. If we are looking a 2-3 weeks for the disease to run its course, which like a construction project we will need to plan for a little bit longer to be safe. Yet, look at the horizon, other countries where this started are seeing declines in cases as life is returning back to the new normal. For each negative statement or thought you come up with, write it down then re-write it to be positive. If you cannot re-write it, then toss that idea go.
3. **Take care of yourself:** Stress will only weaken your immune system. Gyms are closed or are closing, so why not workout at home. Walk in place, google home exercises to do with household items or body weight. Yoga is great and of course anything you choose make sure you work within your physical, mental, and spiritual means; and consult a medical provider as needed.
4. **Play catch-up or learn something new:** Being at home with or without kids, you can start to clean out those junk drawers or closets. Kids can help sort clothes by colors, sizes, or seasons. Catch-up on those books you wanted to read or movies to watch. If your place is all caught up, then read a new book on something you do not know or try to new home exercise/yoga pose.
5. **Stay Flexible:** To be resilient, you must be flexible with your daily routines, habits, and roles. A family of four, the parents and kids (depending on age) may

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have to take on and share each other's roles to allow others to complete work or homeschooling or just to have alone time.

Recognize the signs of negative stress verses positive stress which is different and healthy for you. This is important in order to cope and be resilient so you can normalize your daily routines.

Common signs of negative stress are:

1. Stomachaches, headaches, diarrhea, and other pains.
2. Losing your appetite or over eating.
3. Feelings of being anxious or fearful, depressed, guilty, angry, and overwhelming sadness.
4. Difficulty with remembering things more than normal for age, difficulty with making everyday decisions, and trouble with thinking clearly.

How to cope with stress:

1. Try meditation (can you tube, podcast, or read online about ways to do it.)
2. Pace and schedule your day to balance stressful/challenges tasks while at home with work and play for you alone and with family.
3. **R.A.T. (Recognize, Accept, and Talk)** about your emotions. The more you **Recognize** your emotions and **Accept** them for what they truly are, then you will be able to cope with the stressors and changes in perceptions they can have on you. If you still are struggling or thinking of harming yourself, **Talk** to a professional over the phone.
4. Eat health as you are what you eat!
5. Relax to your favorite music, book, take a bath, exercise, or talk with family and friends.
6. Try to keep to your everyday routines in a modified at home version. So if you went to work for 8 hours from 8am-4:30pm, but now you have to help care for kids or a loved one, then break your workday up as much as you can with your employer's permission. Keep life going with a new daily calendar and you might find things that took up time in your day you really can live without thus saving time, money, and energy for new and exciting opportunities to embrace new challenges and enhance your family's and your lives.



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