

Part 4 - Resilience

Everyone experiences challenges in life from those small daily events to larger events with more lasting impact. Each challenge



affects everyone differently. Generally, we adapt well to these situations, due mainly to our resilience. Thus, resilience is our way of adapting to stress and challenges. It doesn't mean that we won't experience difficulties or distress, it's about how we bounce back.



It has been shown that if we have greater resilience, we have a more positive outlook on life and greater satisfaction. At the moment it's our resilience that is helping us cope with the uncertainties of Covid-19.

To support us in managing difficult situations the following have been found to be important:

- ✓ Tolerating uncertainty and accepting what we can't change
- ✓ Using our strengths and asking for support
- ✓ Developing gratitude
- ✓ Looking after ourselves



1. Tolerating Uncertainty

Life is still uncertain at the moment and it's usual to feel unsettled during such strange times. There are lots of things that we are all uncertain about and we may get drawn in to worrying, with



our thoughts racing round and round. Not having answers as to how the future will look, may not feel good, but worrying doesn't help. We just need to be patient, see what happens and when the time comes, we'll handle it as best we can.



We tend to fight against distressing thoughts and feelings, but we can learn to notice them and give up that struggle. Some situations we just can't change. We can surf those waves rather than try to stop them. Allow those thoughts and sensations just to be – they will pass.

To help tolerate the uncertainty we can

- Notice when we are worrying
- Remind ourselves 'worrying doesn't help'
- Focus our attention on the present moment
- If the worries return gently bring ourselves back to what we are doing now

To learn more about Mindfulness techniques which you can use to focus on the present moment, read the DSAuk article **Mental Health & Well Being Part 3 – Mindfulness** which can be downloaded [here](#)

To determine the difference between worrying and problem solving ask yourself the questions:

'Is this something I can solve? Is there anything I can do right now?'

If so write down all the different ideas then try one. If it doesn't work, try another. If you can't do anything to solve the problem focus on something else that is important to you right now.



2. Using Our Strengths and Support

When life is challenging, we can use our strengths and positive qualities to help us get through.



- Note down all your positive qualities
 - What have you achieved in your life, however small?
 - Ask others what they like or value about you. Your skills, qualities, behaviour.
- What challenges have you faced and overcome?
 - a. How did you get through it?
 - b. What did you do?
 - c. What did you say to yourself?
 - d. Who supported you or was helpful?
 - e. Did you use any resources? Places, skills, organisations?
 - f. What did you learn about how to cope with challenges and can you use these again?



When we were in 'lockdown' what 'dormant' or new skills did you use? Such as creativity in baking, crafting, drawing, or learning to listen or to be patient.



Looking back at what and who was helpful in past challenges can help us to respond more effectively to new, difficult situations.



3. Developing Gratitude

When things are tough, we can sometimes focus on the negatives, but research has found that people who kept a diary of everything they were grateful for showed improved well-being and sleep. At times of uncertainty, developing gratitude can help us connect with moments of joy and pleasure.



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- Write down or say aloud three things that you are grateful for. These can be small such as the cup of tea you had today or bigger such as friends and family.
- Before going to bed reflect on what you are thankful for about the day. Notice new things each day and try and be specific. For example, I'm grateful the sun was out whilst I ate my lunch in the garden.



There is lots of research to show that helping others is good for everyone's well-being. Helping others releases neurochemicals in our brain: oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine, which have the effect of boosting our mood and counteracting the stress hormone of cortisol.



- What can you do today, tomorrow, next week, that would help your friends, family, neighbours, community?
- Write a list and start ticking it off and see how it feels!

4. Looking After Ourselves

Looking after our mental and physical well-being is an important way to support our resilience. Stay mentally and physically active, eat well, connect with others and be kind to yourself. For advice and to learn more about looking after yourself, read the DSAuk article, **Mental Health & Well Being Part 1: Routine & Daily Balance** which can be downloaded by clicking [here](#)



Be strong, be resilient!

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