



Protecting your Mental Health How can we practice being resilient?

The COVID-19 situation can be stressful for many of us. Images from media, changes to our routines and not seeing family and friends, can be challenging. It is normal to feel stress at times like these. Our resilience level is how we get through these challenges and recover afterwards. Being resilient is a skill that we can learn at any age. We can also improve our resilience throughout our life.

Here are some tips to help be more resilient:

1. Think of strategies that helped you cope with stress in the past.

Which of those strategies worked well for you? Can you use some of those strategies now? *“Music and exercise are the two activities that most consistently help us manage anxiety or depression so get out your playlist or build a new one. You can also find exercise websites online. For example, Yoga with Adriene at yogawithadriene.com.”* - Dr. Gail Beck, Clinical Director of The Royal's Youth Program.

2. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you respond to these events.

“We have an opportunity, on a scale never seen, together with the rest of humanity, to foster kindness, and bravery that will transform this tragic but temporary situation into something much more meaningful. Hope and the choice to adapt and improve, can be just as contagious, but more constructive and powerful. And it is something we all need to work on in these uncertain times. If we do, we will all be stronger afterwards.” - Dr. Tim Lau, psychiatrist and President of the Medical Staff at The Royal.

3. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings and stay connected with people you trust via phone, social media or video conferencing.

4. If you are not on [self-isolation](#), go for a walk.

Remember to practice [physical distancing](#) and stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from others.

5. Keep your routines as much as possible.

Make a schedule or timetable to help your children and family keep regular routines.

6. Practice positive self-talk and think of yourself in a positive way.

The way we think about things affects our feelings and actions. Thinking positively can help you overcome a challenge.

“Focus on the positive and what you can do. Honour people’s contributions to improving the situation. Look for the good; practice gratitude; discover meaningful activities; find ways to practice creativity; discover fun, enjoyable, uplifting distractions and activities; read inspirational material and affirmations.” – Juliet Haynes, MSW, RSW, Family Engagement and Experience Coordinator at The Royal.

7. Remember that it’s ok not to be ok.

“It would be somewhat odd not to have a certain degree of anxiety during a time of such uncertainty,” says Dr. Raj Bhatla, psychiatrist-in-chief and chief of staff at The Royal. “The anxiety piece is normal. The real question is, how do you cope with the anxiety, and how do you continue to do some of the things that help with anxiety?”

“It starts with acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic has landed us in uncharted territory. That requires us to do a bit of a check-in: ‘How am I? What are my emotions like today? What can I do with what I’ve got?’ Look at your day and put together a plan of how you can be most positive and constructive. What is within your control today? What do you have today that you know to be useful for yourself? Looking too far toward the future, meanwhile, is not such a great idea. It’s best to take things one day at a time.” – Ann-Marie O’Brien, Professional Practice Lead and Social Worker at The Royal

If you need support please call the [Distress Centre Ottawa and Region 24/7](#) - 613-238-3311 (Bilingual) or [Tel-Aide Outaouais](#) - 613-741-6433 (French).

[CounsellingConnect.org](#) provides quick access to a free phone or video counselling session. This service is for everyone: children, youth, adults and families in Ottawa and the surrounding area. There is no waiting list.

You can also call The Walk-in Counselling Clinic at 613-755-2277 or go to [walkincounselling.com](#). They have free counselling in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese and Mandarin. No appointment needed.

For more support and information visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth](#).

You are not alone.

We are all in this together!



Mental Health - Care & Research
Santé mentale - Soins et recherche

