



PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

## PERSONAL RESILIENCE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

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Resilience in psychology is the **positive capacity of people to cope with stress and adversity**. COVID-19 presents as a major health, social, economic and personal challenge which will require us to demonstrate resilience at home and work. OPRA has pulled together some simple but effective strategies for you to use, share within your workforce or with your friends and family.

**Stress and anxiety during an infectious disease outbreak can lead us to be prone to:**

- Changes in sleep pattern, difficulty sleeping.
- Worry or fear over our health and for those around us.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Increased use of drugs and alcohol or other substances .
- Exacerbation of other physical illnesses or chronic health problems.

## PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

The most effective strategies are those that become a way of life that are done proactively in your day-to-day activities, rather than something done reactively.



**Thinking strategies** – One of the most effective ways of managing emotions is to think about emotions from different perspectives. For example, exploring the benefits and consequences of emotions; causes of them; and different ways of responding to them.



**Physiological strategies** – Our physiology can have an impact on the way we feel and manage stress. Changing our physiology through exercise, diet, sleep and other like activities can help us manage emotions more effectively and build our resilience..



**Relationship strategies** – Connecting and sharing with others provides us with the opportunity to express and explore our feelings and get someone else's input or support for them. Expressing how we feel can help us manage our emotions and feel differently about them.



**Environment strategies** – Factors external to us can impact how we feel at work, like deadlines, too much work, or simply the environment we are working in. Changing our conditions and/or our working environment can help improve the way we feel and our resilience.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? SEE THE NEXT PAGE.



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## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Be selective about what sources of media and news you follow so you can access good quality information. Try to avoid being exposed to ongoing, constant, negative information, as this can heighten anxiety unnecessarily.
- Talk to other people whom you trust, let them know any concerns you may have and tell them how you are feeling.
- Take breaks regularly, create space to try to relax and do things you enjoy.
- Try to keep to a schedule, eat well-balanced meals and exercise regularly. Try to avoid alcohol and drugs and focus on getting plenty of sleep.
- Understand what you actively can do to reduce risk in terms of personal hygiene and habits. Go to the World Health Organisation for more information. (See 'Resources')

For more information please email [contact@opragroup.com](mailto:contact@opragroup.com) or contact your local OPRA consultant.

## HEALTHY THINKING TIPS

1. Feel the emotion.
2. Identify trigger and thought it produced.
3. Test the thought (remember, thoughts are not always facts!)  
Use 'TWIG'.
  - Is it **True**?
  - Is it **Worth It**?
  - Does it help me achieve my **Goals**?
4. If a false alarm – change the thought.
5. Substitute new thoughts for old  
= **Positive action and beneficial outcomes!**

## WHERE TO ACCESS HELP

- Local GP or health care provider
- Ask if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Talk with friends and family
- See the 'Resources' section below for useful website links.

## RESOURCES

- [Australian Psychology Society - Tips for Coping with Coronavirus Anxiety](#)
- [Australian Government - Coronavirus Health Alert](#)
- [Beyond Blue - Looking After Your Mental Health During Coronavirus](#)
- [World Health Organisation - Information Page](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation NZ](#)
- [Ministry of Health New Zealand](#)
- [NY Times Article - A Brain Hack to Break the Coronavirus Anxiety Cycle, By Judson A. Brewer, M.D.](#)