

Tip sheet

Personal resilience

How do you maintain your professional and personal wellbeing at a times when events appear to be beyond your control? Pressures have increased, nerves are frayed and emotional reactions may be heightened. Your resilience (your capacity to recover quickly without being overwhelmed) may be lower.

While our bodies are programmed to reach homeostasis (normality) after stressful and traumatic events and situations, it is harder to make sure these systems do not become overwhelmed when we are under pressure.

Sit back, take a couple of deep breaths and read the following tips.



Maintaining personal resilience

Use relaxation

The response produces measurable decreases in heart rate, breathing, metabolism, blood pressure, electrical skin conductance AND releases oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine.

Be aware

Look out for each other, see things from different perspectives, focus on listening to others, offer support and encouragement, take care of yourself, remember to practise relaxation responses and be prepared for the slippery bits.

Manage your emotions

Avoid the 'amygdala hijack' — a flood of damaging emotion that can be triggered by events that create an immediate reaction of strong emotion followed by feelings of regret and remorse. Practice real-time relaxation (breathe out); respond calmly but firmly; and remain calm.

Stay focused in the here and now

Thinking about the past may lead to feeling sad or angry; a focus on the future to worry and/or fear.

To increase your willpower, Dr Hansen recommends:

- getting a good night's sleep;
- full breakfast and regular snacks;
- sitting up straight;
- exercising daily;
- reducing distractions;
- mindfulness and meditation.

This will help you maintain your sense of empathy and humour when times get tough.

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