



Practical Tips for Staying Emotionally Resilient

July 2020



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Agenda/Objectives

01 Pandemics, Stress & Resilience

03 Examples of Key Tips

02 About Tips

04 Take Home Messages

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Pandemics

Definition

A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that spreads across multiple continents

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Introduction: Pandemics

1. Estimated >100 pandemics
2. Many 'circle' back in waves over years
3. Different from other events – none of us are observers – we are all participants
4. Pandemics trigger uncertainty and fear in us, as well as those around us (friends, colleagues, public)
5. Few of us have experience dealing with pandemics (there is no rule book)
6. Pandemics often trigger multiple challenges (health, economy, political, social, etc) at all levels of society (individual, group, society)
- 7. Pandemics trigger excessive symptoms of stress ...**



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Stress

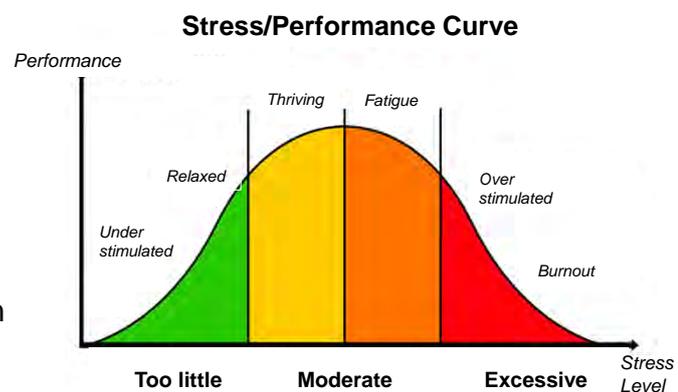
Definition

Stress is our response to physical or psychological demands (e.g., work, exercise, illness)

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Introduction: About Stress

1. Some stress is healthy – we need a minimum amount of stress in our lives to stay motivated, active, and to pursue goals
2. Most of us are resilient and thrive under a moderate amount of stress
3. Excessive stress can result in strain, exhaustion, and burnout
4. **Pandemics/disasters trigger excessive stress**



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Symptoms of Excessive Stress

1. **Physical (Body):** Tension; Fatigue; Headaches; Eating more/less; Sleeping more/less
2. **Psychological (Mind):** Fear; Worry; Sadness; Guilt; Euphoria; Confusion; Anger; Difficulty Concentrating; Feeling Overwhelmed
3. **Behaviour (Actions):** Avoiding people; Clinginess; Agitation/Outbursts; Substance Use

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Resilience

Definition

Resilience is our ability to tolerate and bounce back from adversity (stress)



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Introduction: About Resilience

1. People are naturally resilient
2. People who are resilient:
 - a) Stay calm when things are stressful
 - b) Accept life is not always fair or easy
 - c) Are flexible and adaptive
 - d) Remain (realistically) optimistic
 - e) Stay true to their values, even when times are tough



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Introduction: About Resilience

3. Resilience is something we can influence:
 - a) Healthy habits and routines
 - b) Clear, realistic thinking and keeping perspective
 - c) Social connections
 - d) Meaningful, fun activity
 - e) Hopes and plans for the future
4. **All of these are harder to maintain when under excessive stress**



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About Tips for Resilience

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Introduction: About Tips



Notes

1. Tips won't change your situation, but they can support you to cope
2. Tips often remind people of the skills they have, but may not be using
3. Some tips will apply to you, some won't
4. Identify 2-3 key tips, which resonate, and which you can see yourself doing, and start practicing each day
5. Adapt tips to your own situation and context

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Evidence for Tips

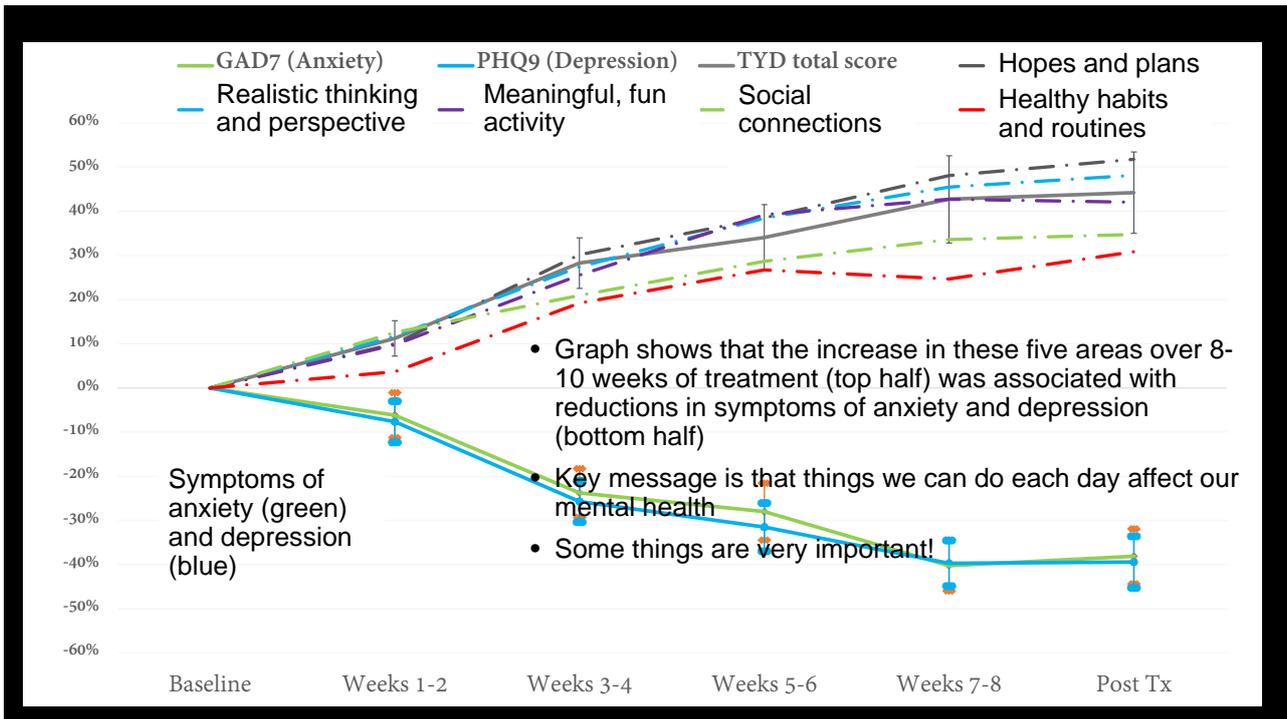
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Tip Sheets: Evidence

- Clinical research shows that there are things we can do, each day, which increase our psychological wellbeing and resilience
- Examples of these types (groups) of things, include:
 1. Healthy habits and routines
 2. Clear, realistic thinking and keeping perspective
 3. Social connections
 4. Meaningful, fun activity
 5. Hopes and plans for the future
- For example, we recently conducted a study with >400 people who received psychological treatment
- During treatment we measured the frequency of these five groups of activities
- We also measured symptoms (of anxiety and depression) ...

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MindSpot Tips on Social Media

- <https://www.facebook.com/MindSpotClinic/>
- https://www.instagram.com/mindspot_clinic/

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Tip **Take a news break**

News media attracts viewers by playing on our emotions. This can leave us feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.

Keep perspective and stay resilient - Take a break from the news.



Tip **Reach out to others**

When stressed and worried we can withdraw from others. But, connecting and engaging not only feels good, it also builds our resilience.

We all love to receive a call or message from someone we love. Be that someone.



Tip **Even heroes need a break.**

We all have limits. But, we are our best when we take regular breaks, do things we enjoy, connect with others, keep routines, and have something to look forward to.

The world needs you. Stay strong by taking regular breaks.



Tip **Turn off the devices, go to bed early.**

Sleep is essential for mental & physical recovery.

Rest will help you stay resilient.



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Tip **Celebrating Easter 2020**



We can still enjoy special occasions, albeit in a different way. Planning events builds our resilience by giving us things to look forward to.

How will you celebrate and/or connect with others this Easter?

Tip **Brush your teeth.**

Good routines and habits set us up for the day, they help us to achieve goals and they help us to maintain our wellbeing.

Remember: You don't have to brush all your teeth, only the ones you want to keep!



Tip **You are stronger than you think.**

Reflect on the skills you used to cope with past challenges, and build on those strengths.

You didn't get to where you are today by accident. Remember your resilience.



Tip **What gives you purpose?**

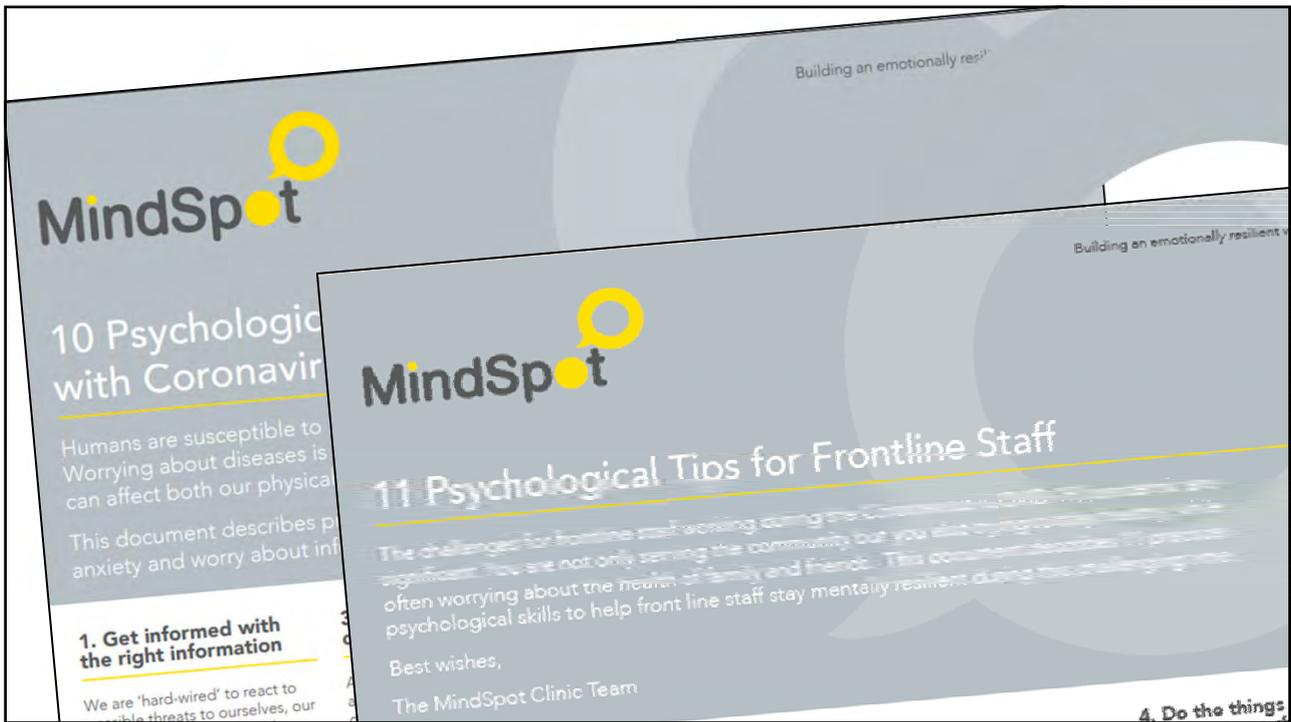
We remain strong when we do things that give us joy and meaning. You might call a friend, read a book, watch a show, learn a new skill, practice a hobby, or help someone.

Stay resilient by doing something meaningful each day.

Please share below what gives you purpose!



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Examples of Key Tips

Note
Designed for health professionals but can be modified for many other people

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Psychological Tips for Resilience

1. Be respectful and kind to yourself
2. Practice switching on and off
3. Practice psychological safety
4. Do the things that help you to re-charge
5. Stop the noise but choose your news
6. Keep your routine
7. Get good sleep
8. Permission to be human
9. Balance your thoughts
10. Lead by example
11. Keep looking forward



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Psychological Tips for Resilience

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1. Be respectful and kind to yourself

- **You are living under challenging circumstances.**
- Things may be uncertain, changing rapidly, and people around you might be anxious.
- You may also be worrying about your own health and that of your loved ones.
- All of these things make life difficult (you'll have bad days).
- One of the most important techniques for staying resilient at times of crisis is to treat yourself the way you would treat others; that is, with respect and with kindness.
- Being kind to yourself means recognising that you are human and can only do your best.
- Remember that stress is normal and no one is perfect.
- You are not weak, lazy or stupid; remember that you have successfully overcome other significant challenges.
- **Being respectful to yourself means treating yourself in the same way that you treat others.**



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Psychological Tips for Resilience

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2. Practice switching on and off

- Neurologically, we are all 'wired' to stay vigilant to threats; this important skill helps us to keep safe and stay alive.
- But, during crises our 'risk radar' become too sensitive and hard to 'switch off', which can make things worse.
- We can practice 'switching on and off'.



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2. Practice switching on and off

We developed this routine for ICU nurses and doctors ...

After Work Routine

- Write your to-do list for tomorrow
- Turn off news and social media
- Change your body state by either exercising for a few minutes or practice 2-3 minutes of slow controlled breathing to relax
- Listen to a piece of your favourite music
- Change out of your clothes
- Remind yourself to be 'present' in your daily life by focusing on what you are doing

Before Work Routine

- Put on your fresh work clothes
- Catch up on news and work messages
- Update your to-do list

Make switching on and off part of your daily routine

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3. Practice psychological safety

- This is particularly useful for people who might be exposed to distressing situations, but can also apply to others.
- Relevant when we see or hear things which are confronting.
- We naturally want to 'fix' things for people and 'make it right'.
- But we can't always do that, and we need to make sure that we don't become overwhelmed with distress.
- This means practicing psychological safety.



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3. Practice psychological safety

You can still be kind and gentle with people, but stay psychologically safe by:

- a) Remember that you are not your job; you have a life outside of work.
- b) Remember your role at work and stay within that role. If someone needs more help than you can provide, then take steps to refer them to a more appropriate service.
- c) Avoid assuming that you know what other people are going through.
- d) Regularly de-brief with friends and colleagues.
- e) Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can in difficult circumstances and that you can't 'fix' everything.
- f) Take regular breaks, so that you clear and refresh your 'head'.
- g) Practice switching on and off (see above).

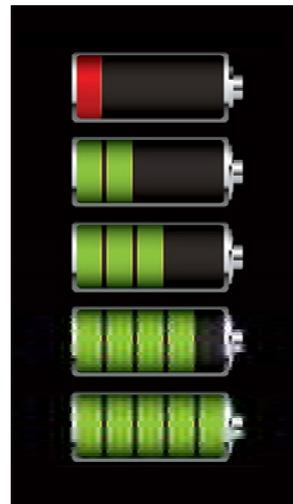
Remember you are not your role; stay resilient by staying psychologically safe.

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4. Do the things which help you recharge

- We all have activities and hobbies which we enjoy, and which give us pleasure.
- When stressed we tend to avoid doing things that help us to re-charge (we may feel too stressed, tired, or guilty)
- Even if we can't do those things in the same way it is essential you make time and effort to do things that you find valuable, meaningful and fun.
- If possible, try and do these with others.



Plan to do at least one enjoyable and relaxing thing each day. This will give you joy, something to look forward to, and will help you to re-charge

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9. Balance your thoughts



- When stressed it is normal to have more negative thoughts than positive or balanced thoughts.
 - Thoughts like, “How will I cope if I get sick?”, “I can’t deal with this”, are normal.
 - These thoughts reflect our worries and are usually temporary. But, these thoughts can stop you doing things that can help.
 - **Remember, our thoughts are not always true or helpful.**
- To balance your thoughts: 1) Recognise a negative thought.
 - 2) Challenge your thought by asking yourself, “what would a friend say in the same situation?”, or, “am I exaggerating?”
 - 3) Change your negative thought to a more realistic thought.

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11. Keep looking forward



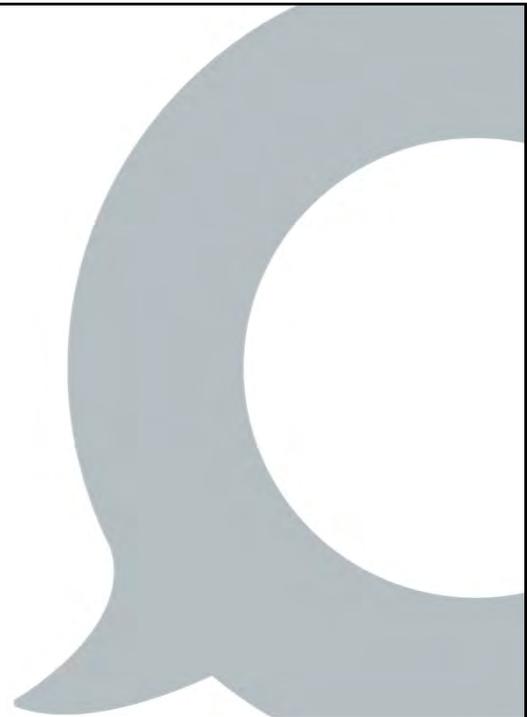
- Remember the famous saying, 'this too shall pass'.
- It may not feel like it, but things will return to normal (or to a new normal).
- In the meantime, it is important to have confidence that things will improve, that people will recover, and things will get back to normal.
- Maintain your long-term goals but also think about things that you will look forward to each day.

Remember to keep looking forward

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Key Take Home Messages



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Key Take Home Messages

1. Stress is normal
2. Pandemics are not normal
3. Practice being resilient
 1. Stay calm
 2. Accept things aren't always fair
 3. Stay flexible
 4. Be kind to yourself
 5. Keep healthy routines
 6. Keep your thinking clear
 7. Stay socially engaged
 8. Do something you believe in
 9. **Keep looking forward**



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Questions and Answers



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Want to find out more?

To download our Tip sheets, or for more information, visit our website.



www.mindspot.org.au

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THANK YOU



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