

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

CRYSTAL HUTCHINSON, WORKPLACE WELLBEING PRACTICES AND
LEARNING CONSULTANT



HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

- If at any point you feel you need to or would like to stand, move or leave the computer, feel free to do so
- Let's work together to create a safe space for learning and engaging with the material and with one another. There will be opportunities for self-reflection, and sharing with the broader group. I invite you all to honour each other's contributions by listening actively, being respectful and suspending judgement



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Define resilience
- Identify core components of resilience and understand its relevance in navigating and engaging with stress, change and challenge
- Identify, apply and discuss evidence-informed strategies and practices to strengthen resilience; and
- Identify relevant resources and services that are available to support your resilience and wellbeing



MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL



HEALTHY

REACTING

INJURED

ILL

- Normal fluctuations in mood
- Normal sleep patterns
- Physically well, full of energy
- Consistent performance
- Socially active

- Nervousness, irritability, sadness
- Trouble sleeping
- Tired/low energy, muscle tension, headaches
- Procrastination
- Decreased social activity

- Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness
- Restless or disturbed sleep
- Fatigue, aches and pains
- Decreased performance, presenteeism
- Social avoidance or withdrawal

- Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed mood
- Unable to fall or stay asleep
- Exhaustion, physical illness
- Unable to perform duties, absenteeism
- Isolation, avoiding social events

Actions to Take at Each Phase of the Continuum

- Focus on task at hand
- Break problems into manageable chunks
- Identify and nurture support systems
- Maintain healthy lifestyle

- Recognize limits
- Get adequate rest, food, and exercise
- Engage in healthy coping strategies
- Identify and minimize stressors

- Identify and understand own signs of distress
- Talk with someone
- Seek help
- Seek social support instead of withdrawing

- Seek consultation as needed
- Follow health care provider recommendations
- Regain physical and mental health



MENTAL HEALTH: HOW ARE CANADIANS DOING?

- According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2016), stress plays a key role in all of our lives and contributes to the rise of mental illness
- Each year, 1 in 5 people experience a mental problem or illness. 5 in 5 experience mental health.
- By the time Canadians reach 40 years of age, 1 in 2 have - or have had - a mental illness



MENTAL HEALTH AMIDST COVID-19: HOW ARE CANADIANS DOING?

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) National COVID-19 and Mental Health Survey:
 - 19.50% reported moderate to severe anxiety (finances, infection risk, employment)
 - 21% felt lonely
 - 18.4% felt depressed
- Females are experiencing higher rates of anxiety (presumably due to a higher burden of care)



ENGAGING WITH STRESS RELATED TO CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

- Due to COVID-19, many of us are adjusting to remote work, sustained uncertainty, and disruptions to our personal lives
- Excessive and prolonged exposure to stress is predictive of burnout, a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion
- Resilience is a protective factor of burnout and an enabler of wellbeing. It is key in successfully navigating change.
- “There is a reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship between resilient people and resilient communities” (Hancock, 2016)



WHAT DO YOU CURRENTLY DO TO SUPPORT YOUR RESILIENCE?



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

The process of successfully adapting, coping and remaining effective in the face of adversity, change, stress, trauma or other challenges

- Not just about ‘bouncing back’ after a set-back but ‘bouncing forward’ to a new, better, stable state
- Be proactive and intentional

“As a developmental process, resilience primarily involves the agency, or inner capability of individuals of all ages, to call on their internal strengths, engage with others and look for external resources to successfully transform stressful situations or adversity into opportunities to learn and thrive.” (Liebenberg et al., 2017)



CORE COMPONENTS OF RESILIENCE

- Personal agency and individual assets (i.e. meaning, decision making and the capacity to act)
- Relational resources and an individual's ability to engage with others for social support (i.e. access to and use of positive relationships including parents, peers, mentors, etc.)
- Contextual resources (i.e. services, information and other external resources)

These components work together to support resilience



A FEW IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Being resilient does not mean an individual never experiences distress
- We all possess resilience. It develops as people face challenges, learn, grow and improve their self-management skills
- We can strengthen our resilience by intentionally and regularly practicing supportive behaviours, thoughts and actions
- There is no one-size fits all approach

Resilience can be learned and developed by anyone!



WHY IS RESILIENCE IMPORTANT?

Resilience contributes to our ability to:

- Regulate emotions
- Engage with stress
- Effectively communicate
- Problem solve
- Lead ourselves and others
- Remain adaptive and agile in the face of change
- Maintain a growth mindset





STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

1. Connect with others, seek out and receive social support
2. Take action towards your goals
3. Practice self-compassion
4. Reach out for and accept help
5. Pivot to a positive perspective
6. Exercise self-awareness
7. Support your mental health and wellbeing

1. CONNECT WITH OTHERS, SEEK OUT AND RECEIVE SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Physical distancing and remote work can lead to feelings of isolation
- Reach out to family members, friends, colleagues and professionals
- Speak to someone to seek out help, gain support or just to vent
- Having 5 or more meaningful connections indicates a strong social support network
- Evidence demonstrates that social support is linked to better health outcomes throughout one's life span



REFLECT ON YOUR SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK



2. TAKE ACTION TOWARD YOUR GOALS

- Practice acceptance (for what you can not control)
- Reflect on things you can control. Take personal responsibility for your thoughts, decisions and actions
- Develop realistic goals
- Identify a supportive action you can take and follow through
- Practice prioritizing





3. EXERCISE SELF-COMPASSION

- Honour and embrace your humanness by accepting and acknowledging difficult emotions
- Hardship is a part of the shared human experience
- Treat yourself with warmth, caring and understanding instead of self-blame, persecution and judgement
- Choose to be the compassionate observer (rather than ‘the criticizer’ and ‘the criticized’)



4. REACH OUT FOR AND ACCEPT HELP

- Check your self-stigma (shame, failure, pride, self-sufficiency)
- Practice asking for and accepting help
- Be resourceful. Familiarize yourself with information, services and supports that are available. Know how to access them and what works best for you. Use them when you need them.



5. PIVOT TO A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Flip the switch! (Moore, 2014)

- Acknowledge the problem
 - How can I use this challenge, pain, situation to make me more resilient? Where is the opportunity?
 - Reflect on any unproductive immediate reactions to a negative situation and consider doing the opposite
 - Pay attention to how you feel after you do the opposite
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- When reflecting on choices or decisions, think carefully about the questions you ask yourself. Focus on your hopes, not your fears. What could go right?
 - Nurture a positive view of yourself. Focus on your strengths. What went well?



**TEDX TALK: “THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE LINKING POSITIVE BRAINS TO
PERFORMANCE”
SHAWN ACHOR**

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=GXY_KBVQ1M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXY_KBVQ1M)



6. PRACTICE SELF-AWARENESS

Be mindful, not mindFULL

- Pay attention to your thoughts and emotions (without judgment)
- When you find your mind wandering to the future or past, re-focus your attention on the present
- Use tactical breathing (4-4-4) and senses as a grounding tool

Disclaimer: this takes practice



7. CARE FOR YOUR WELLBEING

5 evidence-informed ways to improve wellbeing if practiced regularly from NEF

1. Connect
2. Be Active
3. Take notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give



TAKING ACTION TOWARDS RESILIENCE:

Quietly reflect on the following questions and record your responses.

If you are willing and when you are ready, share through the chat function or by raising your hand:

- 1) What about today's session was most useful for you?
- 2) What is one thing you will commit to doing this week to strengthen your resilience and support your wellbeing?



RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING

HR Services and Resources:

[Supporting your mental health amidst COVID-19](#)

[Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) (One-to-one coaching for managers or leaders)

[30-Day Mindfulness Challenge](#)

[Psychological Services through Extended Health Benefits](#)

[Not Myself Today](#)

External Resources:

[CMHA's Bounce Back Program](#)

[Dr. Kristin Neff's Self-Compassion Online Resource](#)

Dr. Christopher K. Germer's book *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions*

Bessel Van Der Kolk, MD's book *The Body Keeps The Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma*



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THANK YOU!

Questions or comments? Let's connect!

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