

## Resilience during the Pandemic

As the COVID-19 situation continues, individuals may be feeling anxious. Mental Health support during times like these are paramount, which is why Care first have worked tirelessly to ensure our services remain available 24/7 throughout the pandemic to provide emotional and practical support and ensure we have every aspect of your overall wellbeing covered.

Resilience is a term used to look at how well we may cope with different situations. Resilience is the body's natural defence against Stress. Developing our resilience to handle stress effectively can help manage the impacts of stress, allowing us to 'get back on our feet' and to 'bounce back' quicker.

To be emotionally resilient means to be able to adapt to stressful situations. More resilient people are more likely to adapt to stressful situations, taking events much more 'in their stride'. They are also less likely to suffer lasting difficulties. Less resilient people find it much more difficult to adapt to stressful situations and will find it harder to bounce back to their normal emotional state.

The idea being that if we can build our resilience up then we will be more able to handle situations that may be unfamiliar to us, or situations that we may struggle with. Resilience is also about knowing how to cope when we have setbacks, or barriers, or limited resources. This article looks at ways that may help you to build resilience.

### How can you build resilience?

**From experience** – The experiences that you may have already had in your life are likely to have an influence on how resilient you may be when a certain situation arises. For example if you think of the current situation with everyone being in lockdown, you may draw back on your experience from the first lockdown last year to help you this time around. It may be that you found a new hobby or something different that really helped you and you can now draw on that experience to help this time around. Another example could be, if you feel that presenting to a room of people is very stressful, but if you have already done this before then you may be able to draw back on that experience to help you if you are put in this situation again.

**From practice** – If you think about the example above around presenting to a room of people, this may make you feel under pressure but putting yourself in this situation more often by practicing may help to build your resilience in the future, as you will have more experience of presenting to people. Now of course there are events that none of us can prepare for but we may be able to try and practice for some things in our lives.

**Forgive yourself** – Everybody makes mistakes and gets things wrong in life. It is part of the way we learn and improve. It is really important to remember when you do make mistakes or get things wrong that you do not dwell on them and that you can forgive yourself. Try and focus on a positive outcome instead and reward yourself for your achievements.

**Expand your interests** – Making sure you find the time to enjoy your hobbies and to try new things can really help by distancing you from other stressful factors in your life. It is important to have balance in your life.

**Talking is good for you** – Talking about issues may help you to start dealing with them. By not talking about things, we tend to go over and over them in our mind which is not good for our mental wellbeing. By talking about the things that are worrying us can help us to learn from others about how they may have handled similar situations. Although we are all different in the way we handle different situations, it may be that by speaking to someone else could help you develop your resilience around a particular issue.

**Look after your physical health** – Try to have a good sleep routine, regular exercise and a healthy diet. There are proven intrinsic links between our physical and mental wellbeing, so by looking after your physical health it may help you to take emotional challenges in your stride.

**Change of scenery** – Make sure you take a lunch break whether you're at work, or working remotely from home. Try spending some time outside or exercising.

**Try to resolve conflicts** – This may be difficult but try talking to a manager, colleague or family member to diffuse the situation. It is important to work together to find a way forward.

**Be straightforward and assertive** – If somebody is making unrealistic demands of you, let them know and explain why. Try to do this in a polite and civil way. It is okay to say no.

**Find some time to relax** – It is vital to find some time for yourself to relax and unwind. This could be from having a soak in the bath to doing some yoga or maybe even just going for a walk.

## How can Care first help?

If you feel you may need some emotional or practical support, you can contact Care first on the Freephone number. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. Whilst our BACP accredited counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support with emotional issues, our expertly trained Information Specialists are available 8am-8pm Monday-Friday to provide advice on any practical issues that may be causing you a stress or worry and help you feel more in control of a situation.

All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on **'Resilience during the Pandemic'** this is being delivered live on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 12pm**, please use the below link to register for this session –

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2648046624583578383>

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.