

# Corona "Routine": Maintaining Psychological Resilience in Times of Constant Change

Dealing with the coronavirus brings with it uncertainty and requires us to adjust to major and constant changes in our daily routine. How can you keep yourself balanced when the reality around us is constantly changing?



## Developing psychological resilience

Psychological resilience is the ability to adjust to challenging circumstances and to keep developing despite the difficulties. It is also the ability to recover after a difficult time, to learn and to become stronger as a result of it, and to feel good again once it's over. Our ability to deal with challenges can change during different times, depending on our personality traits and on the type and number of challenges we are facing. In times like these, when the challenge we are facing is a long-term challenge, characterized by constant changes and for an unknown period of time, it's harder to adjust and cope. Still, these characteristics of the corona period provide a unique opportunity to develop our personal skills to build and promote our psychological resilience.

### Effective and positive thinking

Effective thinking allows us to be realistic and to think rationally, even when the situation looks bad. Reality is usually complex, and the ability to look at the glass half full, to find the advantages and to move forward, allows us to successfully cope with challenges. Even when reality is more bad than good, you can remember that difficulties are a part of life and that the bad things will also pass and things will get better over time. Keep a sense of humor, which helps keep a healthy perspective. Try examining the way you talk to yourself - do you think of the situation realistically? What areas of your life are safe havens for you today? What are you successful at and what do you enjoy, even when other things are uncertain? What abilities do you have to help you cope with the situation? What has helped you through difficult moments in the past? What worked for you today? How did you make it work?

Remember to give yourself positive reinforcement when it comes to unsuccessful attempts as well, and to focus on the ways to solve the problems that are available to you. Tell yourself that you can cope, move forward one step at a time, one day at a time. Compliment yourself on every day that goes by and show yourself compassion and a positive and respectful attitude - you're allowed to make mistakes, to experience difficulties, to get frustrated.

### Personal values

Values are ideas that give our lives meaning and make us care. They help us set our lives in a certain direction and set standards in light of which we examine our behavior. Personal values are an essential component in psychological resilience and support our feeling of self-worth. Examples of values are worrying about our children or showing them love or maintaining a level of professionalism and commitment at our work place. Examining your personal values allows you to define for yourself what's important to you during these times of dealing with the coronavirus. You might discover that to stay patient with your kids, you need to make sure to get a good night's sleep. You might choose to take on a lighter work load, even if there's a financial cost, so that you can maintain the level of professionalism you'd like to keep.

Try figuring out which of your behaviors and actions push you towards your personal values? What about your coping mechanism is inefficient? Values allow us to keep moving in a positive direction when you understand that they can never be fully attained, but that you can always move towards them. When you know that over time, you're doing things that promote your personal values, it's easier to maintain a feeling of self-worth and a positive attitude, even when you make a mistake or are dealing with difficult times.

### A healthy routine

A healthy routine is an essential part of maintaining psychological resilience, in general in life, but especially during challenging times. A healthy routine includes keeping a balanced diet, exercising and making sure to have a satisfying amount of quality sleep. Other than what it contributes to your physical health, it helps with your concentration, improving your mood and your feeling of self-worth and confidence. It isn't always easy to find the strength needed to prepare a salad to accompany your meal, or to choose to exercise instead of slouching down on the couch to watch a good TV show. But if you find that you're tired, tense and stressed all the time, feel like you react strongly to every-day difficulties and have a hard time staying balanced, you should think about making small changes to your daily routine to improve your situation. One small change a day can have a positive effect on your psychological resilience, and help you cope.

### Breathing space

We all need some room to breathe during the day, especially during times when we're overwhelmed with feelings of loss of control and uncertainty. To maintain psychological resilience throughout the nonstop stress and changes, we all need a moment for introspection and reorganization. Learn what helps you take a break from the madness, to stop and to focus on your ability to contain difficulties. Do you need to practice breathing exercises? To practice relaxation techniques before sleep? Maybe a relaxing bath or a coffee break with a good book?

### Support and receiving help

To get through challenging times like these, we all need support - someone to talk to, an empathetic look, the feeling that someone sees and appreciates the many efforts we're making. Take time for meaningful conversations with friends or relatives, nurture your relationships so that you'll be able to support each other. Don't be ashamed to ask for help. The reality of life isn't easy and no one needs to go through it alone. Tell others about your feelings. It's nicer to get through corona together. If the difficulties overwhelm you and you feel that you need professional help, don't hesitate to turn to your family doctor, to mental health centers or to social workers who work in the community, to receive the support you're entitled to.