

Georgetown University Medical Center

Tips for Boosting your Resilience in this Time of Crisis

1. Manage your expectations

With disruptions to our routine: teaching classes, research activities, administrative responsibilities and, of course, clinical care, many of us desire to super-achieve, that is to use this time to be super-productive. However, the emotional toll and the cognitive strain that is present with this pandemic should not be underestimated. We worry not only about our work, but the health and safety of family, friends and colleagues, as well as ourselves. So, be easy on yourself and manage expectations for yourself and especially for others in your team, division, department. We need to be realistic in the goals we set, both for ourselves and others in our charge.

2. Work towards reducing your stress level

No matter how much we feel we are in control, our physiologic stress response is activated. It is prudent to develop a clear plan that prioritizes our self-care: 1. Practicing good sleep hygiene; 2. Eating well (some are fortunate to have some time to cook meals); 3. Setting aside time for daily exercise (a 30-minute walk outside is refreshing and will lower your stress level); and 4. Adopting a stress-reducing practice: either a short 3-minute breathing exercise, or listening to music, or simply being in nature for even 15 minutes

3. Be optimistic, in a realistic way

Balance the realistic view of the world, with a general positive outlook on the future. Yes, these are very serious times; however, in each person's day there is something that is a source of joy. Find a way to recognize it and ask others about theirs. Consider having students, trainees, peers take a moment and share one thing that provided them with joy in the previous day. Gratitude, even in adversity, promotes a sense of balance. Positivity heals.

4. If possible, establish a routine

Because most of us are working from home, the lines between work and personal time get blurred. It is important to establish clear distinctions between work and non-work time, in your physical space and in your mind. Creating a routine for your work and interspersing exercise, walking, other activities during the workday, will help you maintain your energy level and give you clarity of thought.

5. Be compassionate with yourself and with others

This pandemic is causing a lot of stress for many of us, and we cannot be our best selves all the time. But being aware of that can remind us to be kind and be more patient. Do not be afraid to ask for help and reach out when others ask you for help.

6. Maintain connections and relationships

We are in physical isolation, but need not be in social isolation. We can mitigate the feelings of loneliness and fear. While the virtual platforms have made it possible to connect with students and trainees and maintain instructional continuity, it is important to extend these platforms to staff and faculty. Create weekly check-ins to have team members share not only what is working, but also where there are barriers or challenges. Also, ask about how each is coping outside of continuing the work. Invite folks to sharing about joys as well as adversities.

7. Manage uncertainty by staying in the present

There are many things we cannot control, but by focusing on the present, we can control how we are in the present moment. Taking just a few minutes to 'Be', and not 'Do' can be therapeutic. A 5-minute mindfulness meditation can help reset our baseline. See the link below on the GUMC Resource page. It is only 5 minutes.

Try it! <https://gumc.georgetown.edu/general-information-and-gumc-updates-related-to-covid-19/>

Most of all: The University's greatest asset is its people, the faculty, staff and students. Protect the assets by caring for yourself. Self-care starts with you so...*lead by example.*

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