

Maintaining Personal Resilience



when *life* works better,
business works better

Pai ake te oranga, pai ake te pakihi

How do you maintain your professional and personal well-being at a times when you are driven by events that appear to be beyond your control? Pressures have increased, nerves are frayed, emotional reactions may be heightened. There may be an increase in the number of 'bad' days you are experiencing. Your resilience (the capacity to recover quickly from disruptive change or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or disruptive ways) may be lower than usual.

While our bodies are programmed to reach homeostasis (normality) after stressful and traumatic events and situations, it is harder to do this and protect our inbuilt mechanisms to make sure these systems do not become overwhelmed, especially when we are under pressure. Sit back, take a couple of deep diaphragmatic breaths, and read the following tips.

Use relaxation. The response produces measurable decreases in heart rate, breathing, metabolism, blood pressure, electrical skin conductance AND releases oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine. Dr Herbert Benson (CIMA conference 2013).

Become risk aware, look out for each other, see things from different perspectives, become a good listener, offer support and encouragement to others in your work group, take care of yourself, remember to practise relaxation response, AND be prepared for the slippery bits Jennifer McMahon (CIMA conference 2013).

Manage your emotions and avoid the "amygdala hijack" – a flood of damaging emotion that can be triggered by a minor or major event that creates an immediate reaction of strong emotion followed by feelings of regret and remorse. Dr Sven Hansen recommends learn to show restraint ('zip it'); practice real time relaxation (breathe out); respond calmly but firmly and directly; and remain calm even in a crisis.

Maintain your capacity to stay focussed and stay in the here and now. (Thinking about the past may lead to feeling sad or angry; a focus on the future to worry and/or fear).

To increase your will power to stay focussed Dr Hansen recommends

- Good night's sleep
- Sitting up straight
- Exercise daily
- Reduce distraction
- Purposeful practice – MINDFULNESS / MEDITATION

This will help you to maintain your sense of empathy and your sense of humour.

If you need some support or are feeling overwhelmed by anxiety you can contact a Vitae Clinician by phoning 0508 664 981 or email The Vitae Team