



Resilience Support Toolkit: Instructions for Community Use

Created by: Pandemic Resilience Support Plan Operations Team and the Ethics and Care Ecologies Program, Hamilton Health Sciences

Introduction:

The pandemic resilience support plan at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), including the Resilience Toolkit, is based on the premise that those who work in health care are resilient and resourceful. During times of uncertainty anyone's coping resources are challenged. We know from research that social support is essential to weather challenging times, thus a suite of services has been developed at HHS to support our staff, teams, leaders and physicians. These include a web-based Resilience Support Toolkit for anyone to access, along with specialized services for HHS staff, including: Leadership Coaching Support, a 24/7 COPE Peer Support Line, and on-site Resilience Support Teams. This suite of services is grounded in the science of stress and resilience and is designed to integrate resilience practices into the workflow of health care, and to foster post-traumatic growth through the stress presented by COVID-19.

The Resilience Support Toolkit is based on a framework called **Pause, Reset, and Nourish** or **PRN**, which is meant to be utilized "as needed." The PRN framework reminds us to engage in small practices, numerous times a day, throughout the flow of our work, to steady ourselves, replenish and stay connected with our team and our supports. This framework is meant to be flexible so that it can incorporate and honour the strategies that one already uses to manage stress and take care of self and others. PRN can be used on one's own, or with one's teams at work.

The Resilience Toolkit is available freely here: <https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/covid19/staff-physician/hhs-resources/resilience-support-toolkit/>

Mind, body, and social connection strategies designed to promote resilience can be found in separate tabs of the Toolkit. All practices are based on solid neuroscience and the idea of "neuroplasticity," the concept that our brains are constantly changing based on the focus of our attention. Actively engaging in the use of these tools helps to calm our nervous system, enhance our focus and facilitate our collective resilience.

The Resilience Support Toolkit promotes a different approach to fostering resilience. It recognizes that all who work in health care, from those at the bedside to those providing operational supports and leadership, do challenging work that is high stress and trauma-exposed. Traditionally the approach to managing these types of stressors has been to engage in self-care. While self-care is vital, it can lead to a subtle message that resilience is developed individually and privately, away from the workplace. This toolkit promotes a different approach, which is to engage in micro-practices "as needed" through the flow of our work. It emphasizes the importance of developing a habit of caring for ourselves throughout our days, so that it becomes intrinsic to how we work. It is hoped that the PRN strategy and Toolkit will remain long after the pandemic is past as a way to traverse the inherent challenges faced in doing the helping work of health care.

Values that Inform the Resilience Support Toolkit:

- Individual Autonomy - people know themselves best and what they need
- Safety and Wellbeing - creating a collective and personal sense of psychological safety, to promote the optimal wellbeing of the individual and the team.
- Community - the importance of collective support. We share a common humanity; we must take care of each other with integrity and thoughtfulness.
- Compassion - the recognition that being compassionate to self and others is energizing and inclusive, and has the ability to inspire our entire community.

How to Use the HHS Resilience Support Toolkit:

- Please feel free to adopt or adapt any of the resources to fit your individual or organizational needs; just acknowledge the source to express your gratitude for the good work done by our resilience support community, and to track the spread of these resources and tools.
- Recognizing that we will be learning as we grow, this on-line Toolkit allows us to update and add resources and tools to stay current and comprehensive. We suggest you check back often for new items available to you.
- Please share these resources freely with your colleagues and community.
- Any questions about the Resilience Support Toolkit can be directed by email to: resilience@hhs.ca.

In closing we want to express our deep appreciation for all those working in health care from the bedside to the boardroom, and to all those who support essential services and operations, not only during this time of pandemic but each and every day. Thank you! May you be safe and whole, may you be brave and kind, may you be wise and strong...now and always!

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