

Resilience Support Toolkit: Instruction for Community-Wide Use

Introduction:

The resilience support work at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), including the Toolkit, is based on the premise that those who work in health care are resilient and resourceful. During times of uncertainty, any one's coping resources are challenged. We know that historically what gets us through times of uncertainty is how we support each other thus a suite of services has been developed to support our staff, teams, leaders and physicians. These include a web based Resilience Support Toolkit for anyone to access, HHS Leadership Coaching Support, COPE Line HHS Peer Support including physicians, and HHS on-site Resilience Peer Support Teams. This suite of services is grounded in the science of stress and resilience and is meant to influence the integration of resilience practices into the workflow of health care as well as to foster our collective post-traumatic growth.

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. This framework is meant to be flexible so that it can incorporate and honour the strategies that one already uses to manage stress and attend to self and colleagues.

The intention of the Toolkit was also to provide concrete tools and resources to help shore up our resilience, therefore additional mind, body, and connections strategies can be found in separate tabs of the Toolkit. All practices are based on solid neuroscience and the notion 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. They can be used individually, or with others, including teams.

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, 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 belief that one can only engage in these activities on their own time separate from the workplace. This toolkit promotes a different approach, which is to engage in micro-practices "as needed" during the flow of our work. It emphasizes the importance of caring for ourselves throughout our work shift, making PRN an essential habit in how we do our work. It is hoped that the PRN framework and Toolkit will remain long after the pandemic has past as a way to traverse the inherent challenges faced in doing the helping work of health care that when not acknowledged and navigated can lead to burnout, moral distress, empathic strain and secondary trauma.

Values that inform the Resilience Support Toolkit:

- Individual Autonomy - that 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 others and yourself, is energizing and inclusive, and has the ability to inspire our entire community.

Acknowledgements:

The Resilience Support Toolkit was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders from many sectors within HHS including those who have an interest or specialize in the area of mental health, secondary trauma, care ecologies, resilience and wellness. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of, and express our gratitude to: The Ethics and Care Ecologies Program; Health, Safety, & Wellness; Interprofessional Practise; Social Work; Child & Youth Mental Health; Psychology; Organizational Development; and the many staff, leaders and physicians who have submitted ideas and offered enthusiastic support for the project.

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 health care 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@hhsc.ca.

In closing we want to express our deep appreciation for all those working in health care from the bedside, to the boardroom, to all those who support operations, and volunteer their time, not only during this period of pandemic but each and every day, thank you.