

How to effectively cope and transition into “the new normal”

By Stacia Casillo, Psy.D.

It is important to acknowledge the universal psychological, physical, and cognitive impact from the chronic stress caused by this the pandemic. We are all reassessing and recalibrating our “new normal” whether it is for work, school, religious observation, or socialization to name only a few activities. Many of us are doing this with reduced resources, whether it’s financial or logistical, while unable to engage in our normal stress relieving outlets like the gym and social gatherings.

There are strategies we can implement on a daily basis to help us and our families regulate and stabilize our mood and decrease stress. These include creating daily structure, exercise, connecting with friends and family, and practicing mindfulness. Many of these activities are also the foundation for skills to build resilience.

Resilience is often defined as the ability to overcome and recover from adversity. A person who is resilient can “bounce back” from a hardship and is able to move forward and flourish. While genetics, early environment, and life factors all contribute to how resilient a person is, there are ways we can all augment our protective factors to boost resilience. Furthermore, by strengthening our resilience we improve our ability to manage the stress and anxiety many of us are feeling as we transition into the next phase of our “new normal”, whether that’s returning to work where there are new rules regulations, or precautions, or school and new modes of instruction, or engaging in more frequent social interactions.

So how do we strengthen our resilience? By building a strong support network with healthy and meaningful relationships; by engaging in a lifestyle that promotes physical and psychological well-being; by living a life that is aligned with our values and has purpose; and by utilizing healthy and active coping strategies that support self-efficacy and healthy thinking.

As many of us take steps to transition back into “real life”; we may feel overwhelmed and unsure how to cope with all the uncertainty. Please consider joining me for a webinar on June 18th where I will provide information and skills to help us strengthen resilience and feel more prepared to manage the new challenges we are all facing.