

# Building psychological resilience during times of stress

April 6 2020

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Handling emotion. Credit: pxhere.com

With the COVID-19 global pandemic disrupting almost every part of our regular lives, mental health experts are encouraging Australians to process the emotional toll.

Southern Cross University [mental health](#) expert Professor John Hurley said building resilience was particularly important during prolonged stressful events.

"When we talk about resilience it's about being able handle multiple adverse events, which is what is happening for people now balancing layers of economy, housing, relational and virus stress," Professor Hurley said.

"Someone's resilience is their ability to bounce back from that adversity, even though we all have to go through certain experiences.

"Emotional responses to the current pandemic may include people feeling highly anxious, depressed, fearful, worried, and that is a fairly normal human response, but then the trick is to be able to move on from there into the resilient space where you feel strong and can lend that emotional strength to others."

Professor Hurley specializes in youth and mental health, [emotional intelligence](#) and clinically works at a local headspace center to support [young people](#) through difficult times.

He said the best tip for moving into a resilient mindset is about drawing on available resources.

"That resource may be internal such as personal courage, commitment, determination, being able to regulate emotion so we don't allow ourselves to get carried away with fear," Professor Hurley said.

"There are also external resources such as reaching out to services, health professionals, family, friends, helpful books and websites and anything else that brings positivity into our worlds.

"In times like these when there is a tsunami of stressors for some people, it can be very easy to put all our focus on those. While it's important not to deny what's happening, there are strategies people can use so their current situation doesn't become all-consuming."

He said people should look back at times when they've overcome adversity and make note of previous victories, wins and successes to remember the strengths they have.

"Australians in particular tend to be self-deprecating and aren't particularly boastful, but in times like these we need to look at ourselves honestly and see the strengths and capabilities we bring into these challenging times," he said.

"That might be a sense of humor, integrity, intelligence, compassion to others and ourselves, friendship and connection, lateral thinking, determination, courage and any specialist knowledge or skills."

Provided by Southern Cross University

Citation: Building psychological resilience during times of stress (2020, April 6) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-psychological-resilience-stress.html>

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