Resilient Researcher

Flex and adapt: Managing priorities in a changing environment

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Welcome to the Flex and Adapt webinar

In the drop down menu above where you type into chat, please select –
To: All panellists and attendees

• Then
  ■ Introduce yourself and your topic
  ■ What skill/piece of information are you hoping to gain during the webinar today?

• Housekeeping
  ■ Chat is for general discussion
  ■ Q & A is for questions for facilitator to answer
  ■ Recording and slides will be emailed

Today

- Impact of COVID-19
- Emotional management
- Adjusting to working at home
- Self-care and support
- Questions, discussion

Research, life and COVID …

COVID is testing our resilience

Resilience noun
1. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
2. the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

Bounceability ... Adaptability ... Flexibility

Chat

How has COVID-19 impacted on your work, life and emotional wellbeing?

Remember to select To: All panelists and attendees in the drop-down menu above where you type into chat
Stressors

- **External**
  - COVID-19
  - Institutional factors
  - Media
  - Working at home
  - Distractions

- **Internal**
  - Psychological response
  - Personal expectations
  - Isolation vs clustrophobia!
  - Adjustment style

Brain attack

**Physiological**
- Tingling
- Sweating
- Rapid Breathing
- Fast heart beat
- Nausea, or 'Butterflies in stomach'

**Behavioural**
- Talking, walking fast
- Anger outbursts

Cognitive
- Difficulty focussing
- Inability to make decisions
- Procrastination
- Feeling overwhelmed

Why?

- Brain is a warning system
- Alert to potential danger
  - Risk vs opportunity
  - Threat prevention
- Fight/Flight/Freeze

Emotional reactions ...

Allow for the emotional roller coaster ...

- Self-doubt
- Change resistant
- Loneliness
- Pride
- Frustration
- Distracted
- Achievement
- Uncertainty
- Anxiety ...
The first steps
- Self-monitoring
- Recognise your stress/emotional state
  - Physiological, behavioural or cognitive signs
- Acknowledge without judgement
- Identify impactful factors
  - External & internal
- What can I do now?

Emotional management

Harness the breath
Use breathing cues

Simple daily grounding
- What can I
  - See
  - Hear
  - Feel right now?

The power of thoughts …
- Stressed or ???
  - Often the same physiological response
  - What we think matters

Thoughts
- It shouldn’t be like this
- No-one understands what I’m going through
- It’s so overwhelming. I can’t cope
- My research is doomed
Steps to manage thoughts

- Identify the initial thoughts or belief
- Figure out your strategy
  - Evidence to support or challenge
  - Reality check and perspective taking
  - Acknowledge or neutralise
- Develop an alternate thought
- Practice using!!!
- Revise if necessary

Thought modification

- It shouldn't be like this
- No-one understands what I’m going through
- It’s so overwhelming. I can't cope.
- My research is doomed
- It would be nice if it was different
- This is a difficult time for everyone. Who can I talk to?
- It’s really tough. I’ve managed other times
- My research has been impacted by COVID. What adjustments can be made?

Focus on what you can control

Manage your information feed

- Pay attention to evidence not opinion
  - Quality information sources rather than alarmist social media feeds
- Consider what you can do rather than focusing on what you can’t do
  - Even though I can’t do xxx, I can do yyy
- Acknowledge the situation, make allowances, recognise what you are doing
  - I’m doing the best I can while working at home due to COVID-19.

Recognise your strengths

- Recognise your key strengths and when you use them
- Identify which strengths to apply for different situations

Understand your values

- Work
  - Income, challenge
- Family
  - Connectedness, love, care
- Friends
  - Support, fun
- Health
  - Wellbeing, vitality
- Spirituality
  - Connection, calm
- Service to others
  - Contribution, giving
Value/compromise analysis

• What do I value about my research/work?
  • What motivates/engages me?
• What costs/risks are associated with my research/work?
• Allow for the negatives as part of the package
• If I value XXX, then YYY will come along for the ride

Create your work conditions

都有自己需要

Have a routine

• Work hours
  - Adjust if necessary
• Environment
  - Office space
  - Equipment
• Leaving research/work ‘in the office’

Adjust your expectations

• Recognise external factors
• Re-scope/adjust/extend project
• Need to/can do vs want to do
• Learn new skills?
• I’m doing what I can in the situation …

The Matrix …

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Working at home</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Research project</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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Transition strategies

• From one environment/task to another (e.g., research to home)
  - Carry over list
  - What I’m leaving behind …
  - Reconnection time – music, coffee …
  - Expectations of the next environment
    • Who? What? How do I want to be?

• Changing hats

Chat – What skills/strategies/actions are you finding helpful?
Maintaining a positive balance

- Self-care leads to
  - Psychological wellbeing
  - Better health outcomes
  - Effective work performance
  - Life satisfaction
  - Positive relationships

What are your self-care activities? - chat

Managing demands

- Quarantine activities
- Permission giving
- Compromising
  - If ... then ...
- Being realistic
  - Cost/benefit
- Outsource/ seek help

Recognise the positives

- Take notice of your achievements
- Celebrate success frequently

Keep in touch with your connections

- Cheer/crying squad
- Whingeing/wonderful Wednesdays

When you need support

- Employee Assistance Program
- Counselling services/ Psychologist
- GP
- Peer support
- Beyondblue  https://www.beyondblue.org.au
- Mental Health First Aid  https://mhfa.com.au/
Flex and adapt toolkit

- Acknowledging the impact of COVID-19
- Emotional management
  - Breathing!
- Thought management
- Values and strengths
- Working at home
- Maintaining self-care and support

Your flex and adapt toolkit

What strategies from today will you implement to help you flex and adapt?

- Use positive language
- Will do ...

Resources

Peter Bregman 18 Minutes - Find Your Focus, Master Distraction, and Get the Right Things Done
Stephen Covey The 7 habits of highly effective people
Dr Adam Fraser The third space
Martin Seligman Learned optimism and Flourish
Sarah Edelman Change your thinking
Adrienne Green & John Humphrey Coaching for resilience

Mindtools https://www.mindtools.com/
Business balls https://www.businessballs.com/
https://positivypsychologyprogram.com/positive-psychology-websites-overview-topics-themes-tests/
https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/basics/resilience

Poll and Q & A?

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." — Nelson Mandela

Please complete poll before logging off

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