

## Toolkit 1 Pre intervention

### Learning Unit 10

#### Self evaluation: reconnect to yourself, keep in mind your resilience

#### 3 – Check your external resilience

3. *Am I connected to a strong external network?*



No

If you answered “No”, please read the following recommendations

#### Activity 4



List of  
recommendations

Please read the following recommendations to enhance personal resilience and supportive relationships:

- List of psychoeducational recommendations to improve relationships with your **family**
- List of psychoeducational recommendations to improve relationships with **peers**
- List of psychoeducational recommendations to improve relationships with your **colleagues**



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Resilience and Self evaluation are essential for you as a clinician or as a psychological emergency facilitator operating in psychological early interventions. Resilience is the ability to respond to sudden, unanticipated demands. Self-awareness is about maintaining sense of coherence and mindfulness, balance and stability. Several studies demonstrated that the primary factor in resilience is having caring and **supportive relationships**. Furthermore, feeling connected to others is one of the most important factors of intrinsic motivation for all humans beings.



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## Activity 4.1

### Family

The role of family and social support in mental health and wellbeing of first responders should not be underestimated. Everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging to a larger social group and feel socially connected to our family, friends and colleagues. Furthermore, in times of crisis we need people to turn to for advice and encouragement. To have a supportive network of family means building and fostering a network of people who you can trust and rely on in times of crisis.

A familial support system can be between immediate family members, or a mix between extended and immediate family members.

Here are some psychological recommendations to create and maintain healthier and supportive relationships with your family:

- 1. Show affection and appreciation when you can:** show your family that you care about them. It can help to strengthen family relations and cohesion. Try to encourage and support people in your family when they do something well or impressive. Create special times to be together, doing things that everyone enjoys.
- 2. Spend quality time with your family:** this means not just quantity time but a meaningful and effective time together, an opportunity to have sincere and authentic conversations and share what is happening in your lives without distractions such as tv or phones. Quality time may consist of occasional family meals, games or hobbies time.
- 3. Have positive communication:** Communication can be hard in a family context, especially when there are so many duties and tasks to be carried out during the day. Poor communication can increase family conflict and increase negative interactions, conversely effective communication helps you and your family to feel valued and understood, this means far-reaching benefits for your health and resilience. To improve communication in your family:
  - Be an active listener: use active listening techniques such as having good eye contact, Learning forward, and nodding. Focus on listening instead of thinking about your response or advice. Encourage family members to talk to each other and give everyone a chance to express how they feel. Turn off or ignore all electronic devices

- Have family meals together and create family routines. This can help to create a sense of stability and share what is happening in your lives.
- Learn how to deal with problems and concerns
- Focus on your nonverbal communication like smiles, eye contact and physical affection to strengthen your relationships.

**4. Share decisions:** shared decision making is recognised as a person-centred approach to improving the quality of health care and personal resilience. It helps to promote family harmony and provides a safe time and place to share information, ideas, options and preferences and recognise good things happening in the family. Share your common values as respect, caring, autonomy and pay attention to the coherence between them and your manners and behaviour. To improve family decision making:

- Listen to other's points of view and feelings and respect them
- Be respectful, value everyone's views, do not refuse to consider individual differences in personalities, aims, values and feelings
- Choose the appropriate time to discuss an issue, avoid debates when people are angry or tired
- Clarify your ideas and claims avoiding assumptions and misunderstandings

**5. Reinforce your family values:** for example, compassion, honesty, respect, acceptance, support for each other, perseverance. Family values define what you and your family consider right and wrong. These values can impact how you experience your life at work and can help you to maintain balance and stability in times of crisis or uncertainty, reinforcing personal resilience and coping strategies.

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# Am I connected to my inner resilience?

## 5 Recommendations for Family support

1

**Show affection and appreciation when you can:** Create special times to be together, doing things that everyone enjoys



2

**Spend quality time with your family:** this means not just quantity time but a meaningful and effective time together,



3

**Have a positive communication:** be an active listener, have family meals together and create family routines, learn how to deal with problems and concerns, focus on your nonverbal communication



4

**Share decisions :** listen and respect other's points of view and feelings, consider individual differences, clarify your ideas avoiding assumptions



5

**Reinforce your family values:** family values define what you and your family consider right and wrong. These values can impact how you experience your life at work and can help you to maintain balance and stability in time of crisis or uncertainty



## Activity 4.2

### Peers

Having solid relationships with friends as well as with your family members has far-reaching benefits for your health and resilience. A strong social support network can be critical to help you through stressful events and emergency situations, it may also help to prevent isolation and loneliness. Since supportive relationships with family, friends and colleagues are so important for your psychological health, it is essential to cultivate these important relationships.

Although peer support networks can play an important role in times of crisis, a strong connection with your external networks (such as with peers) needs to be developed and built not only during a crisis but every day in your daily life. Being able to rely on your friends and feeling that they are there for you if you need them will help you to improve personal resilience.

Here some examples of ways to develop and foster lasting relationships with peers:

- coffee breaks with a friend
- phone calls
- visiting a friend
- chatting with neighbours

Here some psychological recommendations to create and maintain healthier and supportive relationships with peers:

1. Surround yourself with at least a few good friends and confidants.
2. Stay in touch: answering phone calls, returning emails and reciprocating invitations let people know that you care.
3. Listen actively, openly and non-judgmentally, demonstrating empathy, active listening and flexibility.
4. Encourage constructive interactions and recognise when to share experiences and when to listen.
5. Do not compete with your friends, be happy when your peers succeed.
6. Do not exceed: be careful not to overwhelm friends and family with phone calls and emails.
7. Show appreciation to your friends: take time to thank and express how important they are to you.
8. Be available: for your friends or peers when they need support, suggest a time and space to meet, listen and talk if needed.





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9. Avoid spending too much time with someone who is constantly negative and critical.
10. Enhance communication and avoid pitfalls when not meeting in person.

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## Am I connected to my inner resilience?

# 10 Recommendations for Peer support

1

Surround yourself with at least a few good friends and confidants.

2

Stay in touch: answer phone calls, return emails and invitations to let people know you care.

3

Listen actively, openly and non-judgmentally, demonstrating empathy, active listening and flexibility.

4

Encourage constructive interactions, and recognises when to share experiences and when to listen.

5

Don't compete with your friends: be happy when your peers succeed.

6

Don't exceed: be careful not to overwhelm friends and family with phone calls and e-mail.

7

Show appreciation to your friends: take time to thank and express how important they are to you.

8

Be available: for your friends or peers when they need support, suggest a time and space to meet, listen and talk if needed.

9

Avoid spending too much time with someone who is constantly negative and critical.

10

Enhance communication and avoid pitfalls when not meeting in person.



## Activity 4.3

### Colleagues

Maintaining healthy and cooperative relations with colleagues and team members is important for you as a professional in an emergency. It helps to build mutual trust, teamwork and to create a positive work environment. A healthier and more supportive work environment can reduce stress and improve your personal resilience.

Here are some psychological recommendations to create and maintain healthier and supportive relationships with your colleagues:

- 1. Have healthy and regular communication:** open and honest communication is the foundation of a successful team, it leads to better working conditions, and you might find a whole array of benefits to getting to know people better. To improve communication:
  - Always greet your team members: it gives the impression of a more equal workplace where everyone is valued.
  - Ask how your colleagues are feeling and how their day is going.
  - Use active listening techniques and reformulating.
  - Maintain eye contact to show trust and respect.
- 2. Receive and give effective feedback:** we constantly receive and give feedback (explicitly through oral or written language, or implicitly in gestures or tone of voice). Effective feedback can reinforce strengths, personal resilience and a connection with your work environment:
  - Provide people with a safe zone to express their thoughts.
  - Listen without interrupting in order to absorb more information.
  - Do not be defensive or too focused on your response.
  - Be receptive to new ideas and different opinions.
  - Ask before offering your feedback or advice.
  - When you give feedback be specific, timely and realistic.
  - Offer your support, help and collaboration.
- 3. Be inclusive:** being friendly and doing something kind or unexpected for your colleagues (for example, bringing everyone coffee or donuts, giving positive feedback, having lunch together) can improve the quality of relations and enhance social support.  
Being aware of professional boundaries by trying to learn more about your colleagues' interests, since these can be topics to talk about when establishing daily communication.



**4. Be assertive:** share professional opinions, information, ideas, decisions, and expertise effectively. Assertive communication can help you control stress and anger and improve resilience. This is also a basic part of workplace teamwork, it promotes brainstorming, generates new ideas and increases cohesion in the team. Remember that everyone has the right to express his or her own views, and yours deserves no more or less weight than any other.

- Do not forget to use "I statements" this kind of sentence lets people know what you are thinking or feeling without sounding accusatory (for example, "I disagree" rather than "You're wrong.").
- Remember to be simple and specific. Use direct and specific language expressing your thoughts and feelings about a specific aspect. Make constructive statements such as "This aspect is bothering me; can we discuss it?"
- Stay on one topic and focus on the here and now to avoid bringing up old issues or past behaviours. Do not be general and avoid vague statements using general adverbs and negative questions such as "Why do you always do that?". Instead, you can say "I do not understand this behaviour. I think it is not very functional and constructive. It puts me in difficulty. Shall we find another way?"
- Express feelings to others appropriately and do not use put downs or name calling.

**5. Take breaks together:** Breaks are an important part of everyone's workplace routine. Taking some breaks with members of your team can help to build stronger relationships and create a sense of community encouraging informal discussions and openness between team members.

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## Am I connected to my inner resilience?

# 5 Recommendations to improve relationships with Colleagues

1

**Have a healthy and regular communication:** greet your team members, ask how they feel, use active listening, maintain eye contact



2

**Receive and give effective feedback:** it can reinforce strengths, personal resilience and connection with your work environment



3

**Be inclusive:** being friendly and doing something kind or unexpected for your colleagues



4

**Be assertive:** use "I statements", remember to be simple and specific, stay on one topic and focus on, express feelings to others appropriately.



5

**Take breaks together:** it can help to build stronger relationships and create a sense of community encouraging informal discussions and openness between team members.

