

# Top 10 Ways to Practice Resilience Skills During Challenging Times

April 6, 2020 @ 2:40 PM | 7 Min Read | 1437 Views

Uncertain times like these can present incredible challenges. Normal life has turned upside down because of [coronavirus disease 2019](#), and no one knows when things will be settled again. Military families are used to uncertainty and challenges and already have skills needed to remain resilient in challenging times. The current COVID-19 situation can be an opportunity to practice your resilience skills and share them with others.

Change and uncertainty can increase stress and anxiety. A healthy dose of concern can help solve problems, but paying too much attention to things we can't change can leave us feeling powerless and more stressed. Here are 10 things you can do to practice staying strong and build resilience skills to help yourself, your partner, your children and other loved ones:

- **Recognize the situation and validate your feelings.** It is normal to feel stressed and worried right now. There is a saying in psychology that 'what we resist, persists,' so the best way to begin to address an issue is to face it. Acknowledge that things are uncertain now and know that is OK. If you are not worried or anxious, that's fine too. Everyone deals with stress in different ways, and the most important thing is to validate whatever you are feeling. If you want to talk to a professional, [free, confidential non-medical counseling](#) is available through Military OneSource.
- **Talk to your children.** It's especially important to talk to children now, because even if they aren't saying anything, they may have questions and concerns they don't know how to voice. Talk to them in an [age-appropriate manner](#) about [COVID-19](#) and make sure to acknowledge their feelings.
- **Follow accurate information about the virus.** Make sure you are doing the things you can to [stay safe and healthy while staying at home](#) and explain those things to your family. Continue to check the [Coronavirus Information for Our Military Community](#) page for updates.
- **Try to view the current social situation as a challenge** rather than an insurmountable problem. Yes, times are difficult right now, but things will get better again. The situation in China has already improved, and with time, will improve in the rest of the world.
- **Maintain routines** as much as possible. Paying attention to things you can control helps to decrease anxiety and increase a sense of personal effectiveness.
- **Limit media exposure.** Stay updated on health and safety measures, but try not to tune in 24/7. Constant media viewing can increase stress and anxiety. Choose one or two reliable news sources and schedule regular times to check updates. Make time for positive input as well. Try searching online for good things that have come out of the current social situation. You might be surprised at what you find.

- **Stay connected.** Talk to your spouse, your children and extended family. **Military spouses** usually have a strong, established virtual support network. This could be a time where you help others develop similar connections.
- **Practice positive thinking.** When you find yourself dwelling on negative thoughts or worrying excessively, stop and count 10 things that make you feel grateful. Starting a gratitude journal can be a powerful daily practice, and is also something that is easy to do with children to get them to practice positive thinking skills. For more ideas, check out these **resilience resources** from Military OneSource, and suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for **managing stress during the outbreak**.
- **Help others.** Research shows that helping others decreases anxiety and builds resiliency. Search online for things people are doing during COVID-19 to help others. Have your kids draw pictures and text them to grandparents. Bring groceries to an elderly neighbor who can't get out. Have your teenager organize a video dance party or put together a playlist for family dance time. You can also search online for organizations that are helping deployed service members and veterans, and find some way to get involved.
- **Take care of yourself and seek help if you need it.** Make sure you are practicing good self-care, and addressing all **five pillars of wellness**. Turn off the TV. Listen to music. Get outside and take a walk. Check out these other **tips for managing stress**. Everyone needs a hand now and then, and the Department of Defense offers a variety of programs and services to keep service members and their families healthy and strong.

**Help for an unsafe or abusive relationship is available.** The military community has resources to support you if your partner's behavior makes you feel uncomfortable or anxious, and you are seeking ways to maintain your boundaries at home, or make a plan for safety. Call 911 if you are in immediate danger, or if your partner or spouse has threatened you, your children or someone you know. If you are on a military installation, call your military law enforcement office. Connect 24/7 with an advocate at the National

- **Domestic Violence Hotline** by calling 800-799-7233, or chat online at **thehotline.org**.
- **Parenting help** is available, and you can tap **MilParent Power** year-round.
- If you have financial stresses as a result of COVID-19, contact your **military service relief organizations**, or tap **other financial resources**.
- **Free, confidential non-medical counseling** is available for eligible individuals, and for immediate help you can call the **Military Crisis Line**.

This is an incredibly challenging time, but you have tools and resources to help you stay strong. Understanding of COVID-19 is rapidly changing. For updates and information specific to your location, visit your installation's official website. You can also follow your installation's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram platforms. For Department of Defense updates for the military community, visit **Defense.gov**, follow Military OneSource's **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram** platforms, and continue to check the **Coronavirus Information for Our Military Community** page for updates.