



# EAP Newsletter

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# Staying on track through winter; coping strategies

As we move through the first couple of months of the new year, it can often feel like we are just going through the motions - and it can be hard to keep morale high. Even if the January Blues are now behind us, many people will find it difficult to stay on track through February and beyond, especially when the weather is still cold, and the prospect of a bank holiday feels like a far distant dream. In today's newsletter we focus on coping strategies to help you stay on track, techniques to reduce stress and worry, and share some ways to help you build up your resilience stores.



## Coping strategies: dealing with worry

There are 2 different types of worry:

1

### Hypothetical worries:

Worries that are usually future focused and start with 'what if'.

2

### Practical worries:

Worries that we can physically do something about.

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What if work gets so busy and I won't have time to take a holiday

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My car is making a knocking sound and I'm worried we might break down

These worries are in the future, and no matter how much we worry about them in this very moment, it will not change the outcome. We can manage this type of worry with a technique which is called Worry Time. This technique focuses on still worrying but worrying at a time that is controlled by us rather than the worry controlling our time. This technique helps us to gain back valuable time and energy that we would spend on worrying.

With these worries we're able to use a technique which is called problem solving, to put a plan into place to help. We problem solve every single day, but when we're feeling overwhelmed this can be difficult to do, therefore this technique allows us to take a step back and problem solve, step by step.

## Coping strategies: dealing with worry

Managing worry isn't easy. Often, we can be teaching our brain a whole new way to think, so don't beat yourself up if it takes a while to perfect. Here are 3 ways to manage worry:



### Set goals.

Set goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time based). Don't set yourself goals that are too difficult as this will only make things feel worse. Set goals and targets that you can achieve, and then allow yourself to feel a sense of achievement when you achieve them.



### Practice gratitude.

With the world around us feeling uncertain, focusing our attention on our constants, or even small positives can really help to re-shape our thoughts, which overall has a huge impact on how we're feeling. Take the time (daily if you can) to reflect on three key things that you're grateful for. It doesn't have to be anything super positive or exceptional, it could be taking a moment to be grateful for the air in your lungs or the coffee in your mug.



### Be mindful.

By practicing mindfulness, you can step away from all the thoughts and feelings you may be experiencing and concentrating on how you feel in this very moment. Mindfulness is a little like standing in a field staring up at the clouds passing you by. Your thoughts are those clouds, and you can let them come and go without the need to fight them or push them away.

### Try this: Here is a mindfulness technique that can be used anywhere, anytime.

Take a couple of minutes to reflect on:



Five things  
you see



Four things  
you can touch



Three things  
you hear



Two things  
you smell



One thing you  
taste

By taking the time to notice these things, it will bring you back into the present moment and allow you to feel grounded in the here and now.

## Coping strategies: Resilience

Since the pandemic began, anxiety and uncertainty about the future has been high. Our old world (pre-pandemic) thrived on efficiency and normality. And so too does our very own human nature; quite simply we love routine and predictability.

In our complex 'new normal' world, however, plans rarely go to plan and, let's face it, this situation may not change anytime soon.

Trying to eliminate uncertainty will be near on impossible, and as such, we will all need to make sure we adapt and adjust constantly. This is why building up our resilience stores will be so important as we move through 2022, not least throughout the cold days of February.

Resilience will encourage us all to embrace change in 2022, rather than focus our energy on restraining it. It will allow us all to be more aware of situations, and our own emotional reactions.

Life, this coming year, may well present challenges – doesn't it always! However, being resilient will help us to understand how to be open, flexible, and willing to adapt to change as required.

Here are 5 simple ways to build greater resilience this month. Why not give them a try?



### Search for a sense of purpose in your life.

Finding a sense of purpose can play a huge role helping people get over difficult times. This might mean becoming involved in your community, cultivating your spirituality, or participating in activities that are meaningful to you.



### Set goals and move towards them.

Feeling a sense of accomplishment is really important. It's great to set smaller achievable goals and then work from there. Ask yourself, "What is the one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?". Then set to it. Small steps like this can really add up.



### Have confidence in yourself.

Having confidence in your own ability to cope with the stresses of life can play an important part in resilience. Likewise, being more confident in your own abilities, including your ability to respond to and deal with a difficult situation, is a great way to build resilience for the future too. Listen for negative comments in your head. When you hear them, practice immediately replacing them with positive ones. Or try saying "stop" straight after having a negative thought. How you talk to yourself can greatly affect how you think, feel and behave, and help to put things into perspective.



### Know your strengths and use them.

Resilient people tend to - not only to be aware of the strengths they have - but also use them wisely to build more resilience too. Think about what makes you different and draw upon it. It may be your personality, your work ethic, your commitment to a hobby or a sport. Whatever it is, acknowledge it, celebrate it and draw up on it when times are hard.



### Stay connected

It's ever so important to have people you can confide in and who you can call upon if things are feeling overwhelming. While talking about a situation with a friend or loved one won't make your troubles go away, it will allow you to share the load a little, get support, and also explore a range of possible solutions to your problems.

The important thing to remember is that you are never alone. While you may not be able to control all of the circumstances around you, and sometimes it may all feel overwhelming, you can grow by focusing on what these challenges can teach us. Leverage the support of loved ones, trusted professionals and of course, your own positive mindset.



## Coping strategies: Resilience

### Try this today: Find a new hobby

Having a hobby can help to provide a structure to your week and keep your mind focused. Not only will it give you something to look forward to, but it will also keep your mind active.

#### Top 10 hobbies you could try in 2022:



Flower  
arranging



Journaling



Blogging



Photography



Painting



Meditation



Baking



Running



Cross stitch



Hand lettering



## Coping strategies: The power of talking

This month (6th February) 2022 marks [Time to Talk Day](#).

You may be surprised to know that the simple act of talking actually has the power to make a big difference to someone's resilience levels and can help reduce stress and anxiety.

**Here are 3 small, but mighty ways to talk your way to a more resilient self:**



**Speak the language of acceptance.** The words 'should' or 'ought' have become a fixture in our everyday dialogue and

we often use them to keep ourselves in-check. However, these two words can be problematic because they are judgemental in nature and can make us feel inadequate. When you feel you 'should' or 'ought' to do something, question yourself on why you feel that way and look ahead towards the benefits that something may bring to you. Try to take a non-judgemental stance towards yourself and lower your expectations. Ultimately, this will help protect both your resilience levels.



**Ask yourself questions.** It is important in challenging times that you are pragmatic about what you can control and avoid

overburdening yourself or feeling bad if things do not go to plan. Ultimately when we are stressed, we lose the capacity to problem solve and this can become an issue. One way to avoid overwhelm is to ask yourself, "Is this in my control to do something about this?" If you can provide yourself with an answer, allow yourself to let the worry pass by, or act on what you can feasibly do. Turning your mind towards acceptance of the situation will help build resilience.



**Self-talk your way to confidence.** Having confidence in your own ability to cope with the stresses of life can play an important part in resilience. Likewise, being more confident in your own abilities, including your ability to respond to and deal with a difficult situation, is a great way to build resilience for the future too. Listen for negative comments in your head. When you hear them, practice immediately replacing them with positive ones. Or try saying "stop" straight after having a negative thought. How you talk to yourself can greatly affect how you think, feel and behave, and help to put things into perspective.


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Never  
underestimate the  
power of talking





## Coping strategies: children and young people


Don't forget it's not only adults who have to cope with stress, worry and anxiety. February marks Children's Mental Health Week (7th - 13th February 2022), a week which shines a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health.

If you're parent and have concerns about your child's mental health, here are some tactics to help and support them.

 **Start a conversation.** Talking to a child or young person about how they are feeling can be hard, but by taking 20 minutes to do an activity you both enjoy, you can create time and space when they feel relaxed and connected to you. This will encourage them to open up. Sending an email or a text can work better if this is the way your child likes to communicate. Normalise talking about feelings and remind them that a thought is not necessarily a fact.

 **Stay involved in their life.** Take an interest in their life, what's going on with them and the things that are important to them. It not only helps them value who they are, but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.


 **Encourage their hobbies.** Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team can help build confidence and help a child to connect with others. Encourage their hobbies and try to do it with them – this might be running, walking, listening to music, painting, drawing, writing in a journal, watching a favourite film or reading a favourite book. The important thing is that you show you are keen to do something with them that they have shown an interest in.


 **Listen and take what they have to say seriously.** Showing children that you are listening, and value what they say (without judgement) is paramount. Helping them to look at problem solving and alternative approaches teaches them excellent tools and coping strategies for the future. Don't forget to ask your child what they think would help - they often have good ideas about solving their own problems.




## Coping strategies: children and young people


**And if you need some extra help, don't be afraid to reach out...**

 **Young Minds** provides advice about mental health and behaviour problems in children and young people up to the age of 25. You can call the Parents' and Carers' Helpline on 0808 802 5544. Please be aware Young Minds do not provide any direct psychological services and cannot make referrals to the NHS or Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS).

 **Shout** provides free, confidential support, 24/7 via text for anyone at crisis anytime, anywhere. You can text

SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer.

 **ChildLine** provides a helpline for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects. You can call 0800 1111 any time for free, have an online chat with a counsellor or check out the message boards.

 **The Mix** provides a free confidential helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem. You can call 0808 808 4994 for free or access their online community.

**And finally, our tip of the month; the one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...**

**Remember a problem shared can often be a problem solved:** Turning a problem around and around in your head often leads to a dead end, or worse, increased feelings of stress and anxiety. You can help wrap your brain around a problem by sharing your story. This can either be by talking to someone or indeed just writing it down. Sharing the weight of your thoughts with someone else, will help you reflect on it in a clearer and more logical way.

