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**WELLBEING &
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Real-Time Resilience Tips for Coping with Covid-19



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New Zealand Institute of Wellbeing & Resilience

We are in challenging times, requiring us all to consider **how our thoughts and actions might help or hinder** our own resilience and that of those around us.

Here is our brief guide to coping, based on the **best of science** but also our own (reasonably broad) lived experiences of working in **emergency management** and **resilience training** programmes over the past decade.

These are some of the practical strategies we've seen help.



Dr Denise Quinlan

Dr Lucy Hone

1

**Choose
where you
focus your
attention.**



Even when times are good, humans are hard-wired to focus more on threats and weakness.

When times are bad, it is even more important for our mental health to focus on:

What's still good in your world.

Psychologists call this 'benefit finding' and it is a key resilience skill.

- Start your days or meetings with a quick-fire round of sharing good stuff.
- This also builds connection between people.

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Do the things that make you happy. Talk to the people that make you happy.

Research shows **POSITIVE EMOTIONS** are very important for our resilience.



Negative emotions are contagious, and prolonged feelings of helplessness are strongly associated with depression.

Given negative emotions and experiences stick to us like Velcro, while positive emotions and experiences slide off like Teflon:

- Aim to do things that make you feel positive emotion **as often as possible** throughout the day and evening.
- Frequency, not intensity or longevity, is key.
- 10 positive emotions* to consider:
Love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, awe, amusement, inspiration.



3

Strong and supportive relationships are the number one predictor of wellbeing, across the lifespan.

Staying connected to people is more important than ever.

There is a strong link between feeling isolated from others and anxiety and other forms of mental distress.

Keep calling, texting or emailing the people who support you.

When using Zoom you can hide your self-view (click on the 3 dots in the blue box by your image) which makes a call more enjoyable.

Reach out. Connect.



4

Keep supportive daily routines or create new ones.

Keeping regular routines (meal times, bedtimes, exercise, work etc.) tells our brains it's safe – no need to feel stressed. It stops us from feeling more worried.

But be **flexible and open-minded** enough to think up or accept new and different ways of doing things.

“As normal as possible, as flexible as necessary.”

Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

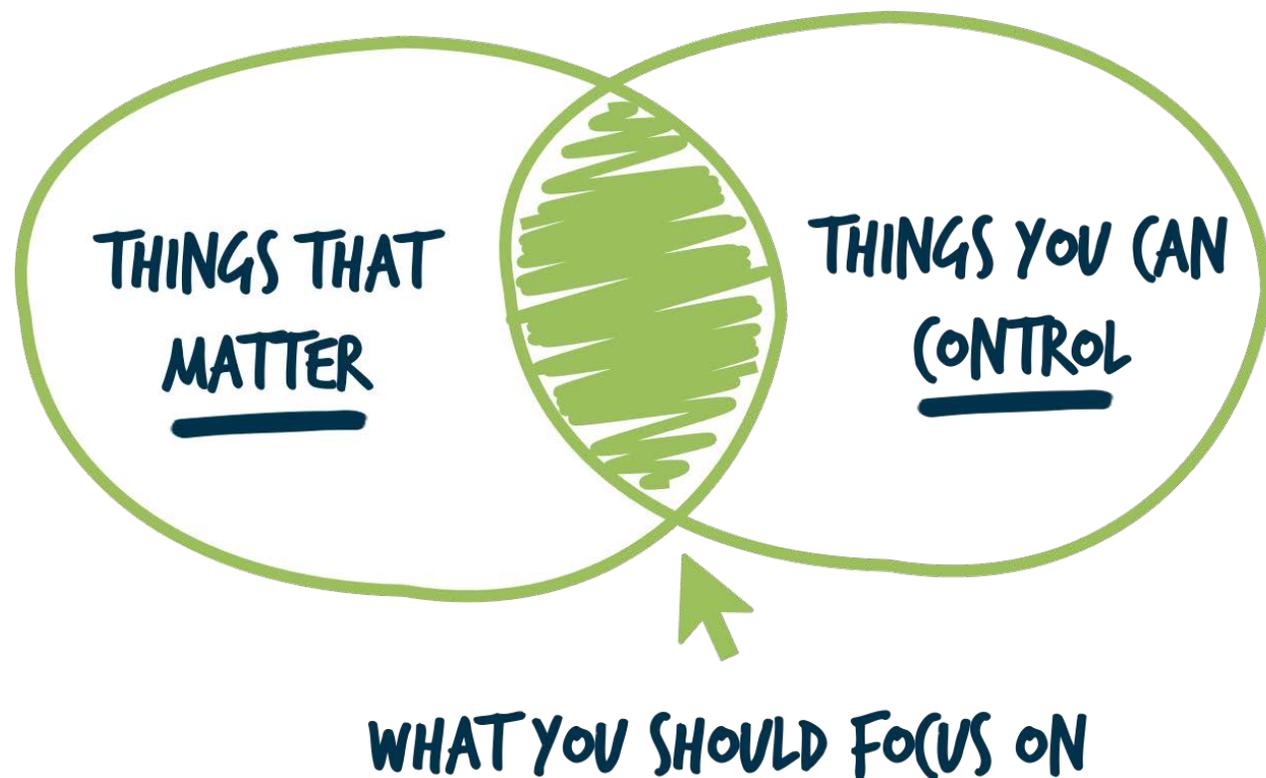


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5

Focus on what matters, and what you can control.



Let go of the things you can't control and focus on the **things that matter, and that you can actually influence.**

Ask yourself: What is really important? What can I control?

Easy to write, hard to do – we know! But worrying about things you can't change only makes us more frustrated and annoyed.



6

Watch your media diet – ask: is this ‘helping or harming me?’.

Take a good look at how much time you spend looking at the news and ask yourself:

“is reading or watching this helping or harming the way I’m feeling and functioning?”

Don’t let those images, videos and notifications invade your day, your head, or your world.

If the global news is making you feel overwhelmed, take a break from it.

Claim back some control by switching off.

Choose where you get your news updates from very carefully.

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7

Find the right people to talk to.

(Yes the helping or harming test applies to people in your life too.)

Share your thoughts and feelings, but don't get swept up in pointless speculation – stick to the facts.

Avoid people who might be telling you stories that make you worry when you don't need to.

Keep asking yourself:

“If I want to feel good and function as best I can, is this conversation helping or harming me?”

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Help yourself by helping others

The research is clear: being able to **give** as well as receive is hugely important for our life satisfaction and our resilience.

It stops us from thinking too much about ourselves.

How can you help vulnerable neighbours, colleagues, friends or strangers – emotionally, physically, practically?



9



Give your brain a holiday from Covid-19.

Give your mind a rest. Think less.

Do the activities that really occupy you, that you really enjoy.

Whether it's the crossword, Netflix, cooking, dancing, listening to music or a Podcast, reading, chatting on the phone, playing dress ups with the kids, drawing, or meditating, you'll know your thing.

This is the best way to turn off our over-thinking minds and help us worry less.

“Be kind to yourself.”

Photo by BARBARA RIBEIRO from Pexels



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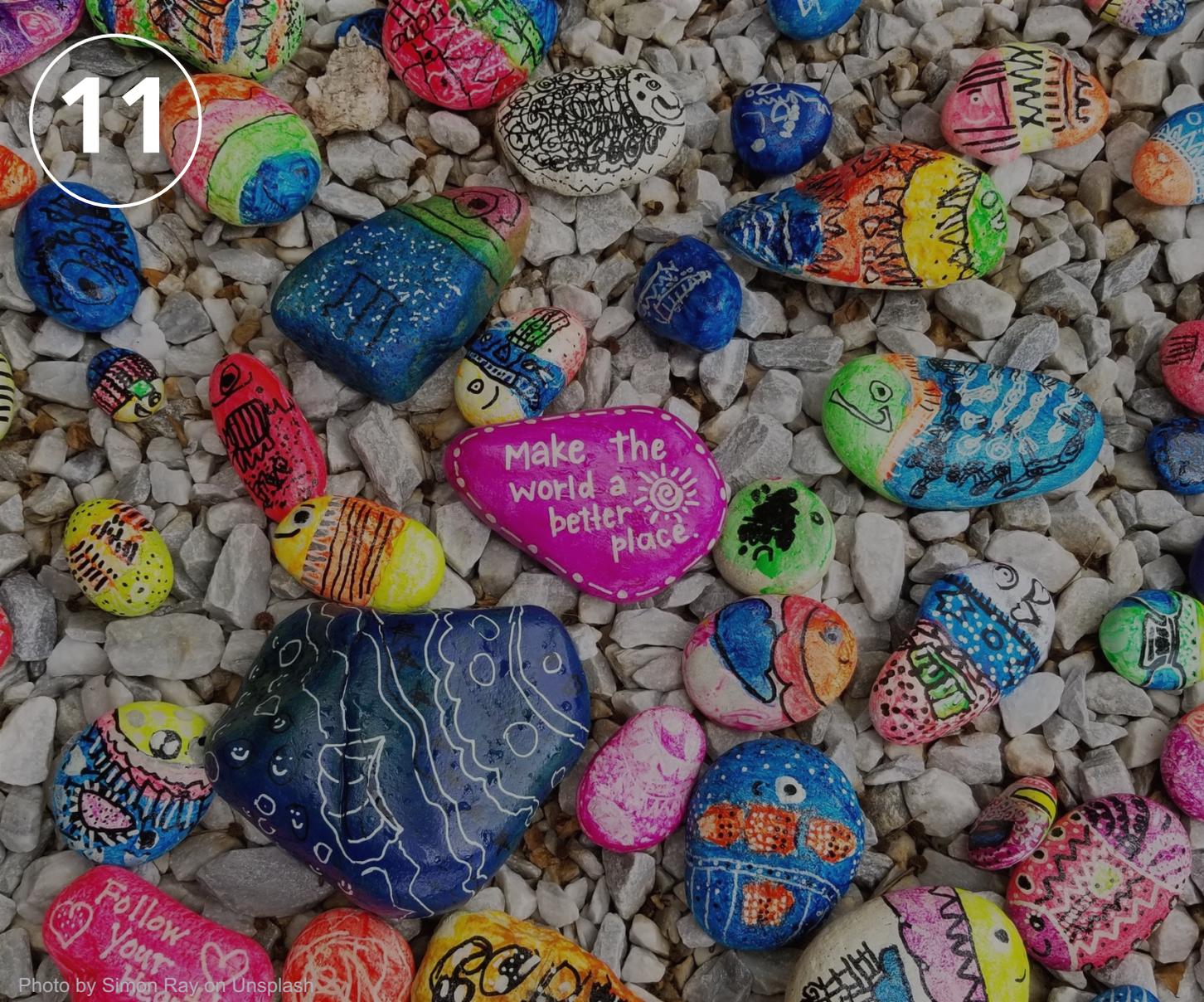
Have a 'timed wallow'.

No good ever comes from ruminating or wallowing in misery and self-pity for over a minute.

Put a timer on, and then phone a friend or find something really distracting to do (see #9).



11



Be kind to yourself and others.

Remember everyone is doing their best to navigate these uncertain times.

A little kindness will go a long way.

A lot of kindness is even better.

Photo by Simon Ray on Unsplash



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12



Keep safe and don't be reckless.

When we are stressed sometimes we do silly things or forget the simple things like wearing our seatbelts, stopping at red lights, using Personal Protective Equipment at work, turning off taps, and thinking it's helpful to drink ourselves into a stupor. It's not.

Try to stick to your usual routines – as you've no doubt been reminded by now...

“This is a marathon, not a sprint.”

Photo by Roly Vasquez from Pexels



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For more health information go to:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>

If you are in self-isolation call Healthline first (0800 611 116).

For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Further Resources:

WATCH Dr Lucy Hone's TED talk [Three Secrets of Resilient People](https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_3_secrets_of_resilient_people)
https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_3_secrets_of_resilient_people

READ Mental Fitness by Paul Wood
<https://www.harpercollins.co.nz/9781775541677/mental-fitness/>

LISTEN Staying Strong on the frontline, with Ruth Robertson
<https://nziwr.co.nz/real-time-resilience-staying-strong-on-the-frontline-with-ruth-robertson/>

The Seesaw of productivity in lockdown, with Adrienne Buckingham
<https://nziwr.co.nz/real-time-resilience-the-seesaw-of-productivity-and-other-lockdown-challenges/>

Leading teams who are WFH in challenging times, with Dr Lucy Hone
<https://nziwr.co.nz/real-time-resilience-leading-teams-who-are-working-from-home-during-challenging-times/>

[Calming the Anxious Brain](https://nziwr.co.nz/calming-the-anxious-brain-with-dr-emma-woodward/) with Dr Emma Woodward
<https://nziwr.co.nz/calming-the-anxious-brain-with-dr-emma-woodward/>



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