

Resiliency During COVID

**Troy Winters, CRSP
Senior Officer,
Health & Safety
CUPE National**

1



2


Resiliency

- The amount of stress you can absorb is called your resiliency.
- It is like a battery
 - you need to recharge to be healthy.
- Anything in your life that adds stress likewise drains the battery and make you less able to cope with the next (or ongoing) stress.

3

But what is stress

FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE	RESULTING SYMPTOMS
Mind and body set on high alert watching out for signs of danger.	Sense of danger, impending doom, Agitation - uneasiness - can't relax
Rapid breathing helps to divert blood to vital organs	Dizziness - Lightheadedness - Hyperventilation
"Tunnel Vision" - Peripheral vision is diminished so that sight is centrally focused (on any danger) Pupils of the eyes widen to let in more light.	Eye strain - Fear of going blind Blurred vision / spots in front of eyes - Sensitivity to light Feelings of unreality
Adrenaline increases heart rate sending blood to major muscle groups - to prepare for action.	Rapid heart beat - Palpitations - Flutters - Feeling of "skipped" or "missed" beats. Tight chest - Choking sensation
Increase in sweat so that the body does not overheat.	Sweating (even in cold) Hot and cold flushes
Stomach produces extra acid and digestive juices. Muscle action increases to quickly digest and eliminate food	Frequently needing toilet Nausea "Butterflies" Churning stomach Acidity Indigestion - Diarrhoea
Muscles tense to prepare you for a quick departure and to make the body more resilient to attack.	Muscle tension - Shaking - Stiffness Trembling - "Jelly legs" - Twitching Even severe pain at times.
Blood vessels to skin constricted reducing any potential blood loss especially in hands and feet	Cold clammy hands - "Pins and needles" - Tingling sensations or numbness in hands and feet



4

Coping

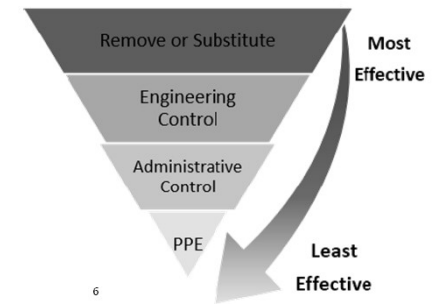
- **Two ways to increase your battery**
 - Reduce the loads
 - Increase your resiliency.

5

Occupational controls

- **Workplace psychosocial factors and working to remove them**
- **Remember the hierarchy of controls**

Best way is to eliminate... then engineer, then administrative controls



6

W/P Psychosocial Factors

1. Psychological and social support

Psychological and social support comprises all supportive social interactions available at work, either with co-workers or supervisors.

2. Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a mix of norms, values, beliefs, meanings, and expectations that group members hold in common and that they use as behavioural and problem-solving cues.

7

W/P Psychosocial Factors

3. Clear leadership and expectations

Clear leadership and expectations is present in an environment in which leadership is effective and provides sufficient support that helps workers know what they need to do, explains how their work contributes to the organization, and discusses the nature and expected outcomes of impending changes.

4. Civility and respect

Civility and respect is present in a work environment where workers are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients, and the public.

8

W/P Psychosocial Factors

5. Psychological demands

Psychological demands of any given job are documented and assessed in conjunction with the physical demands of the job.

6. Growth and development

Growth and development is present in a work environment where workers receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional, and job skills

9

W/P Psychosocial Factors

7. Recognition and reward

Recognition and reward is present in a work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers' efforts in a fair and timely manner.

8. Involvement and influence

Involvement and influence is present in a work environment where workers are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.

10

W/P Psychosocial Factors

9. Workload management

Workload management is present in a work environment where assigned tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.

10. Engagement

Engagement is present in a work environment where workers enjoy and feel connected to their work and where they feel motivated to do their job well.

11

W/P Psychosocial Factors

11. Work/life balance

Work/life balance is present in a work environment where there is acceptance of the need for a sense of harmony between the demands of personal life, family, and work.

12. Psychological protection

Psychological protection is present in a work environment where workers' psychological safety is ensured.

12

W/P Psychosocial Factors

13. Protection of physical safety

Protection of physical safety is present when a worker's psychological as well as physical safety is protected from hazards and risks related to the worker's physical environment.

14. Other chronic workplace stressors as identified by workers

Chronic stressors such as continuous time pressure or unwarranted alarms



13

13

W/P Psychosocial Factors

15. Cumulative exposure to critical or stressful events

16. Social interaction (lack thereof)

Loneliness



14

14

Personal Factors

- **Not all of the stress we are feeling is from work. This pandemic has really ramped all of life's other stressor for many people.**
- **We never advocate for people to build their mental resiliency so they can take more punishment at work.**
 - **Building personal mental resiliency is important for coping with the “stress of life”, whether at the best of times – or during a pandemic.**



15

15

Personal Factors – General

- During these times, we need to take stock of our own mental health and work to increase our resiliency, as best as we can.
- Start to take notice of the factors that affect you.
- Understanding your strengths and weaknesses can help guide you to take steps which increase your resiliency (or that at least don't drain your “battery”).



16

16

Improving your resiliency

- Building and maintaining energy reserves starts with awareness of what builds up and what draws your energy. The fuel that recharges resiliency levels comes from
 - good physical health practices (exercise, diet, rest),
 - good mental health practices (like coping skills),
 - family and social supports, and
 - work-life balance that allows you to do things you enjoy.



17

17

Practices to improve MR

Self-monitor

Acceptance

Build a schedule

Physical distance, don't social distance

Be optimistic

Remove toxic stressors from your life

Improve your physical health

Perform a positive social good

Give change time



¹⁸ <https://cupe.ca/improving-mental-resiliency-during-covid-19>

18

Crisis

If you are in a crisis

- If you find yourself near or “in crisis”, reach out for help.
- The stress from COVID-19 and the related upheaval may be too much for some, especially those with pre-existing mental health concerns or conditions.
- Now is the time to get better, not to work on resiliency.
- Visit cmha.ca <https://cmha.ca/find-your-cmha> to find resources in your province.
- If your workplace has an Employee Assistance Program, tap into it.



19

19