



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

The Medicine of Resilience

A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, Acting Chief Medical Officer

It's not surprising that many people say their mental health has deteriorated because of the pandemic. After all, we're dealing with a dangerous virus and we've been doing so for months. Needless to say, we could all use extra helpings of inner strength and resilience right now!



Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, change, threats or significant sources of stress. We as Indigenous people have many years of experience with using the medicine of resilience to not only survive adversity but to come out stronger.

HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CULTIVATING RESILIENCE DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES:

- Follow the FNHA's four wellness streams:
 - 1) Eat Healthy;
 - 2) Be Active;
 - 3) Nurture Spirit;
 - 4) Respect Tobacco.
- Maintain or establish a routine. Wherever possible, keep consistent times for meals, getting dressed, work, study, exercise, leisure, and sleep.

- Stay connected with others – at a safe distance! Try video calls, emails, text, phone, or check out virtual groups, such as the Facebook Social Distance Powwow.
- Focus on the positive things in your life. Cultivate gratitude and hope, and try to keep things in perspective, e.g., “This too shall pass.”
- We as Indigenous people have always used humour to get through tough times. Seek out funny stuff like humorous videos.
- Don't overwhelm yourself by creating a big list of things to achieve while you're at home. Instead, set reasonable goals and give yourself credit for even small steps.
- Avoid or cut down on alcohol or drugs, which can reduce your coping skills. Also limit caffeine, as it can aggravate stress.

It's normal to feel stress and worry during a crisis but if you feel pushed beyond your limit, please seek support. Call your primary care provider or mental health professional. Options include phone, video or online appointments.

If you need immediate assistance: call **9-1-1** or the BC Suicide Prevention & Crisis Centre: **1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)** or go to your nearest hospital.

For culturally safe support, call the KUU-US 24-hr crisis line.

- Adult/Elder Crisis Line: 250-723-4050
- Child/Youth Crisis Line: 250-723-2040