

Resilience for Educators.

Quick tips for staying in balance at work.

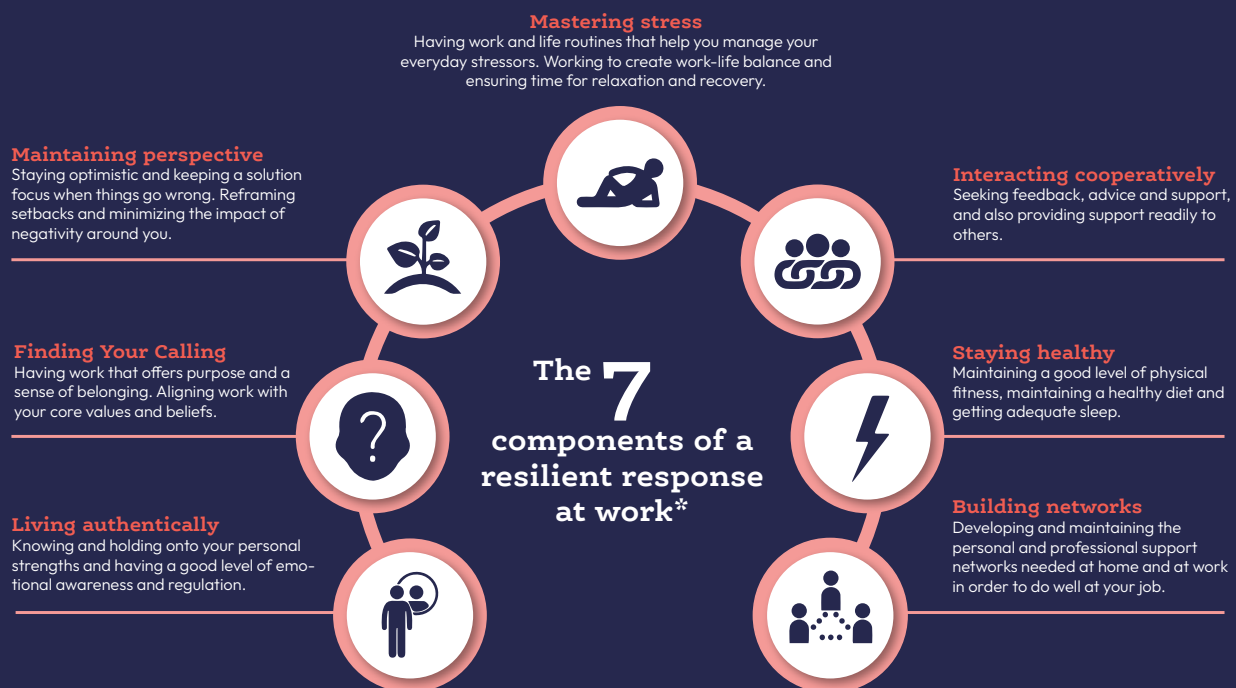
Resilience: the ability to withstand and overcome adversity and unpleasant or difficult events successfully and to be able to adapt to change and uncertainty (McEwen, 2011).

We are in unprecedented times. Educators routinely work in circumstances that are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous at the best of times, not to mention the impact of COVID-19 on school operations, families and communities across the world.

While it can be difficult to even know where to start in response to these enormous challenges, this is not the time for hand-wringing; it is the time for action. It is a time to boost and build our workforce resilience so we can continue to serve our students and communities, even though things are really tough.

At PeopleBench we strive every day to help educators build sustainable wellbeing and sustainable impact. We've developed this toolkit based on work our team has done with hundreds of schools and other not-for-profit organizations. It presents evidence-backed tips for boosting your own resilience at work and supporting those around you to do the same. We hope it helps educators everywhere, who continue to deliver essential learning experiences to students in spite of extraordinary challenges.

The Resilience at Work (R@W) model*



Important things to remember:

- Our levels of resilience are dynamic – they go up and down based on what’s happening for us at work and at home. It is normal to feel like you’re behind the eight-ball at times.
- We can actively boost our resilience by taking steps to build new skills and habits to deal with tough times
- Each of us has our own natural strengths but we should do our best to build a well-balanced skillset that covers each of the components above – this increases our chances of staying on-track when circumstances change
- We must “put on our own oxygen mask before helping others”: taking steps to support our own wellbeing is in itself a service to others– when we’re feeling well we’re much better-able to support those around us.

* Model developed by Kathryn McEwen
Visit www.workingwithresilience.com.au for more information about the model and its application.

Tips for boosting resilience in a time of crisis:



LIVING AUTHENTICALLY

- Think about your strengths – you definitely have plenty; make a list; ask a friend; know that they're needed right now.
- Remember what you value most – find ways to honor it today – it might be your health, spirituality, your family & friends or even a hobby or cause you're passionate about.



FINDING YOUR CALLING

- Remind yourself of what you love about education – tell someone about it, find others who love it too.
- Did you enter education to make a difference to children and families? In times like these, the work you do has a bigger impact than ever – even the seemingly small things.
- Be careful not to let your commitment to your profession overrule your need to look after your own health and wellbeing. Sacrificing yourself isn't finding your calling – it reduces your impact and your ability to keep going.



MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE

- Ask: What have I done to get through tough times at work before? What worked? What didn't? How can I apply that now? Who can help – can we team-up to solve some problems together?
- In every situation there are things within our control, things we can influence, and things that are completely beyond our control. Start with the things you can control, and move on to the things you can influence. There is nothing to be gained right now by spending time and effort on the things we can't control.
- When you become aware of the problem, move quickly to the solution. Dwelling on the problem feels worse.
- Set boundaries for yourself and your colleagues for how much airtime you want to give to negative discussion, then encourage each other to move on to find a solution together.



MASTERING STRESS

- Look for little things you can do regularly to help keep stress at bay: exercise, meditation, even starting your day with a few quiet moments over a nice cup of coffee can make a big difference.
- If you have a regular routine that helps you manage stress, stick to it no-matter-what—it will provide some much-needed certainty when so much around us is changing daily.
- Accept that you won't be able to go at 100 miles per hour all year and carve out time in your day or week for both rest and recovery.
- Accept that you won't have time to solve every problem and think critically about how you spend your time and attention. Ask yourself: What do I absolutely need to now? What do I need to do next? What can I do later?



INTERACTING COOPERATIVELY

- Keep dialogue open with colleagues, especially if you're no longer in the same physical space. Use videoconferencing to check in regularly.
- Keep feedback flowing in the interest of supporting one another through this tough time. Ask one another: What are the things I could be doing more of? What are the things I could be doing less of? What are the things I should keep doing about the same?



STAYING HEALTHY

- You can't support your students if you get sick. Stay home and rest if you're feeling unwell.
- Try extra-hard to maintain good sleep hygiene: create a wind-down routine at night and banish electronic devices from the bedroom.
- Protect time for exercise (you might need to get a bit creative) and prioritize healthy eating.



BUILDING NETWORKS

- Pick a "resilience buddy" at school and agree to look out for one another and check in regularly on how you're applying these and other strategies.
- Take opportunities to check in with both personal and professional support networks (remotely if necessary). We all come out of challenging times in much better shape if we stay connected.

Remember: if you need an extra hand during a stressful time, access appropriate mental health support services.

For more support with building resilience at your school, you can contact us at:
e: hello@peoplebench.com



Visit [Working With Resilience](#) to learn more about the R@W model.