

MENTAL HEALTH

Current developments and ongoing conflicts in the world are having an impact on many people. Frightening things are happening, both close and less close to home. It's human to experience feelings of fear, sadness and anger. For some people, dealing with the constant confrontation with (negative) news can be overwhelming. In this infographic, you can find some tips to deal with these emotions and to stay mentally healthy during these intense times.



STAY CALM

Unrest in the world can cause a lot of individual **stress** and **anxiety**. These are **normal feelings**, but how do you deal with them when they persist?

- **Find balance and routine.** It's important to find a balance between things that require energy (e.g.: studying a difficult chapter) and things that give energy (e.g: sports). Try to look at what this balance looks like for you and what can help to maintain or restore it (see infographic [Stress](#)).
- **Build in relaxation and breathing exercises.** Try to do these daily so that it becomes a habit (see infographics [Abdominal Breathing](#) and [Panic Attack](#)). The meditation app "Calm" provides a free offering "[Coping with the weight of the world](#)".
- **Don't lose yourself in an abundance of information.** Through social media and other news channels, a lot is shared. It's okay to want to be informed, however, it's also okay to distance yourself from this. If necessary, take a break from social media.
- **Live in the present.** Think on what you can and cannot control. Do not get lost in overthinking about the past or the future. Focus on the present: today, in this moment.



CONNECTION

With the presence of ongoing conflicts in the world, opinions and people get divided. This causes stress and frustration, and sometimes even feelings of isolation. This is why it's important to maintain **social connection**.

- **Don't keep it to yourself.** Talk to others about your thoughts and feelings. This can provide relief and a sense of recognition.
- **Different ways of contact.** In addition to online contacts, make sure you have contact in real life. Meet up with friends, visit family, invite a dorm mate to cook together, ...
- **Reach out to others.** Check in with your loved ones if they need a chat or support. Show that you care about them and that you're here for them too.
- **Express gratitude.** Think about what you are grateful for in your life. And even better: thank the people you are grateful for.

Important foundation for mental health: Resilience

What is resilience?

Resilience is the result of a process of **adapting** to a **new situation** and how you deal with it. It's about **learning** new things and **becoming stronger**. In this process, setbacks are inevitable and valuable. These will encourage you to develop new strategies to deal with them so that your resilience can **grow**.

HOW DO YOU BUILD RESILIENCE?



Dare to reflect on a difficult moment you have experienced in the past and try to answer the following questions:

- How did you deal with this situation?
- What did you do to make this situation a little more bearable? E.g. you encouraged yourself ("Cheer up! You can do it! It's okay! You'll be fine! This will also pass! This is human!"), asked someone for help, allowed yourself some relaxation, ...
- What did you learn from those situations? What could also help in the future?

We invite you to give yourself some kind words while doing this exercise. What would you tell a friend who's going through a difficult time? Try to say these encouraging words to yourself too.

EXTRA: Healthy diet and balanced exercise also contribute to good mental health and your resilience. Take a look at our [infographics](#) on this.

WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT? STUDY GUIDANCE IS HERE FOR YOU!



- Need a chat? Do you have big or small questions about our support offer? You can drop by the Study Guidance **Meeting Point** every working day or give us a call.
- **Study Counsellors, Student Psychologists, Study Path Counsellors and Job Coaches** are here for you! **Guidance remains possible** from a **distance** or **on campus**.
- You can find all our contact details on our website: www.vub.be