



One Million Lives

by **Jacobs**

5 Top Tips: Building better mental health resiliency in 2021

2020 was a difficult year for many, and with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, political and civil unrest and other global and personal challenges, it's clear that 2021 will continue to test our mental health. The following tips can help you build resilience to strengthen your capacity to deal with difficult situations, better cope with stress and face an uncertain future with more confidence.

1 Learn about your mental health. One of the best ways to have a positive impact on your mental health is to understand it. Complete a One Million Lives Mental Health Check-In at www.oml.world to help identify your current mental health strengths and challenges, and explore suggestions for how to improve your mental health based on your score. Continue to complete a check-in on a regular basis – on the good days as well as the bad – to track and measure your mental health and enhance your coping strategies over time.

2 Connect with others. Feeling connected to others plays a key role in promoting good mental health. Necessary COVID-19 social distancing requirements have significantly changed our daily interactions with others, in some cases amplifying existing feelings of social isolation and loneliness. Prioritize relationships and build connections in 2021, even if face-to-face contact is not possible. Arrange group video sessions with friends, or schedule regular times each week to talk on the phone with family and loved ones. Build new connections by joining online communities with similar hobbies or interests or engaging with neighbors from a safe distance – even a smile and a wave can foster a genuine sense of connection.

3 Look after your mind and your body. To improve our mental health, we must also look after our physical health. Eating well, reducing your alcohol and coffee intake and maintaining a regular sleep schedule can increase your sense of wellbeing and improve energy levels. Exercise brings out the body's endorphins and natural painkillers, helping to ease tension in the body and counteract the physical symptoms of stress. Keep active through

daily activities that bring you enjoyment and give you a sense of achievement – this can be as simple as a short walk outside in the fresh air.

4 Switch off and take time for yourself. With offices and meetings remaining virtual in many parts of the world for the foreseeable future, the line between work and home will continue to be blurred in 2021. Set up a routine for your workday to create boundaries between your 'work life' and 'home life'. Switch off any work devices at the end of the day so your downtime is uninterrupted, allowing you to focus on the things you enjoy doing. Travel restrictions may make the idea of taking annual leave less appealing, however it's important to take time off throughout the year. Taking a break or holiday, even if it's spent at home, can help you relax and feel refreshed.

5 Reach out. Being able to call on support is a large factor for coping with anxiety. If you're nervous about what to say, try practicing before and choose a location that makes you feel relaxed. Even if the people you reach out to don't have the answers, human connection and naming what is bothering you can change brain activity for the better and help ease the burden. If someone you know is struggling, reach out to them to offer support. Not only could you make a big difference in someone else's life but reaching out to others can also help your own wellbeing.

If you are struggling or suspect you are suffering from any mental health or other medical conditions, please seek immediate help from your doctor, local health service or visit <https://www.oml.world/needhelpnow> to find services in your location, which are confidential, free to use and available 24/7.