

# Resilience in Education.

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).



At PeopleBench we strive every day to help build the very best workforces across the education sector. We've developed this toolkit based on work our team has done with hundreds of schools, school systems and other not-for-profit organisations. 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.

Our wish for you is that you show the same kindness to yourself that you do to your students and colleagues.

## 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 in times like these.
- 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](http://www.workingwithresilience.com.au) for more information about the model and its application.

## Tips for boosting resilience:



### 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 and find ways to honour 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 the sector to make a difference to children and families? In times like these, the work you do has a bigger impact than ever before—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, or 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.
- 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 prioritise healthy eating.



### BUILDING NETWORKS

- Pick a "resilience buddy" at work 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, your workplace may have an Employee Assistance Program you can tap into, and help is always available through [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) **Call: 1300 22 4636**

For more support with building resilience at your school or system, you can contact us at:  
**e:** [hello@peoplebench.com.au](mailto:hello@peoplebench.com.au)

To access education workforce resources, exclusive research and more, join our [Community of Practice](#).



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