

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic, winter, and other struggles? You're not alone. But many older adults have lived through tough times and shown remarkable resilience by focusing on what they can control. Here are 5 tips to regain resilience and boost your mood this winter.



For some this continues to be a lonely and difficult time of year. If you are worried about your own mental health, talk to your family doctor.

If you need urgent support, please call 911 or reach out to these local crisis lines:

Distress Centre	613-238-3311	dcottawa.on.ca
Mental Health Crisis Line	613-722-6914 or 1-866-996-0991	crisisline.ca

Read more on the [Geriatric Psychiatry Community Services](http://www.gpcso.org) website: www.gpcso.org


Tip 1: Make a routine and stick with it

Having a consistent routine has great physical and mental health benefits. Try to wake up, eat meals, take medications and go to bed around the same time every day. Start your day by washing your face, shaving, brushing your teeth, and changing into day clothes. Book time for learning and creativity: read, do puzzles and crafts, bake, or try a new recipe. Posting your schedule and setting reminder alarms can help you on those harder days!



Connection Tip: Ask a friend or a family member to call you at the same time every day or every week. You'll welcome the contact.

My Plan:



Below the box are four icons: a heart with a pulse line, a snowflake, a sun, and a telephone handset.

Tip 2: Stay active to boost your mood

Being active can be extra challenging for older adults, with colder weather, fear of falling, changes in balance, low energy, and pain. But getting your blood flowing, especially during winter and isolation, decreases anxiety and improves mood, memory and learning. Make movement part of your daily routine. Why not walk for 5 minutes a day, then 10 minutes next week?



Connection Tip: Commit to staying active with a friend. Phone each other every day and do leg lifts and other exercises together while you chat.

My Plan:



Tip 3: Be mindful of stress and worry

This is a hard time for many. Feeling anxious or alone is uncomfortable, but completely normal. Take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings. A mantra like “I’m resilient,” “I’m not alone” or “I’m helping the community” can be comforting on really hard days. Use your daily schedule to limit the news you consume to avoid feeling overwhelmed.



Connection Tip: Reach out to loved ones to talk about how you'll safely spend time together in the new year. Accept your feelings & be kind to yourself.

My Plan:



Tip 4: Bring light into your life!

Vitamin D protects us from Seasonal Affective Disorder. But seniors are less able to produce it from food and the sun. Try to go outside every day, even on cloudy days, or open your curtains and sit by a window. Eat Vitamin D-rich foods like beef liver, egg yolks, cheeses, fatty fish like salmon, and certain kinds of yogurt, cereals and juice. Talk to your doctor if you have questions about your diet or supplements.



Connection Tip: Bright homes boost mood and energy levels. Clean windows, move furniture or trim shrubs to let light in. Connect with nature and others experiencing the same sun as you right now.

My Plan:



Tip 5: The power of small changes

People like quick fixes with big results. But making small, realistic and sustainable everyday changes can add up like coins in a jar. What about doing more of what you already enjoy, like baking, whittling or walking? Fit it into your routine and share it with a loved one. Instead of big, vague goals like “be more active,” commit to a specific activity: walk outside for 10 minutes 3X a week, or do a lap around your home every hour.



Connection Tip: Write down the small changes you want to make. Talk with a friend about potential barriers and how you'll get over them.

My Plan:

