

# FACING CHALLENGES

## A Self-Help Guide

*"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).*

During difficult times, part of being emotionally resilient is checking in with yourself. As you identify things you are struggling with, you can choose coping strategies to help you stay healthy. You can also help others. To learn more, see the discussion guide "How Can I Minister to Others During a Crisis?"

### ■ STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND ACCEPT

How do you respond to difficulties? The following list includes ways people commonly respond to challenges out of our control. Recognize that responding in different ways is natural and part of being human. You may struggle, and that's OK. You may also respond with resilience by using strengths and resources. Check all that apply to you.

#### Emotional

- Denial
- Depression, grief
- Anxiety, fear
- Anger, agitation
- Guilt

#### Physical

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sleep disturbance
- Change in appetite
- Muscle tension
- Shallow breathing

#### Mental

- Impaired judgment
- Forgetfulness
- Distractibility
- Distorted sense of time, reality
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks

#### Social

- Loneliness, withdrawal
- Clinginess
- Marital or relationship tension
- Parent/child conflict
- Protectiveness

#### Spiritual

- Increased reliance on God
- Feeling abandoned by God
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Finding it hard to engage in religious practices such as meditation, prayer, church attendance, etc.
- Decreased desire to live a good life
- Loss of hope

#### Resilience Responses

- Alertness/increased readiness to respond
- Increased focus on the present and future
- Enhanced appreciation of loved ones
- Feelings of determination, courage, optimism, creativity, faith
- Desire to connect with and help others
- Desire to meet challenges and address difficulties
- Finding a new definition of a "good day"
- Greater focus on quality time with family and friends
- Increased commitment to self, family, friends, and faith

### ■ STEP 2: FOCUS OUR THOUGHTS

In our lives, we will experience strenuous events or circumstances beyond our control. However, how we respond and adapt to these stressful circumstances is within our control. Pay attention to your thoughts and consider how you can lead your thoughts in a healthy direction.

### ■ STEP 3: ACT

Identify coping strategies that work for you. Practice using these strategies in everyday life. Check the strategies below that you currently use or would like to try.

#### Emotional

- Journal your thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- Listen to inspiring music
- Talk about your feelings
- Deep breathing, meditation, positive thinking
- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things that make you laugh
- Spend time with pets

#### Physical

- Drink water and eat healthy food
- Get enough sleep
- Physical activity
- Take necessary medications
- Follow a regular routine
- Reward yourself
- Hug/hold and show appropriate affection with family and friends
- Get regular medical care

#### Mental

- Read or listen to uplifting books
- Help children with schoolwork
- Write stories or poems
- Write a priorities and values list
- Set short- and long-term goals
- Seek accurate information from trustworthy sources
- Take a break from the news

#### Social

- Spend time with family and friends
- Play games with others
- Connect with important people
- Invite others to dinner
- Find ways to help and serve others
- Take a break from social media
- Join community organizations

#### Spiritual

- Ponder and meditate
- Be open to inspiration
- Focus on what is most important to you
- Identify what is meaningful and notice its place in your life
- Pray, sing
- Read inspirational literature (talks, music, scripture, etc.)
- Counsel with trusted Church leaders

### ■ STEP 4: DISCUSS AND SHARE

With your family, friends, or support system, share some of your responses and coping strategies. Discuss how you can support each other. Review and practice your coping strategies whenever you feel challenged or stressed.

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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS