

# Simple exercises for practising mindfulness:

**Breathing Exercise:** Slowing down and taking deep meaningful breaths promotes relaxation and helps regulate your brain function. Sit quietly, then practice this: inhale to the count of 4, hold for 1, and exhale to the count of 6, hold for 2, then begin again to inhale for 4.

**Sensory Grounding Exercise:** The quickest way to bring yourself to the present moment is to engage your senses. Sitting where you are, notice: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

Or download one of the many apps available to guide your mindfulness practice



# Resilience Brings Many Benefits

Resilience strengthens our protection against experiences which could be overwhelming.

It is associated with living longer, better mental health, and greater satisfaction with life.

It helps us to maintain balance in our lives during difficult or stressful periods, and can also protect us from the development of some mental health problems.

Resilient people have a greater ability to cope with both everyday hassles and major stressors.

## The BCSARA Critical Incident Stress Management Program

A Service for SAR Volunteers in BC



Any SAR member can call the CISM team:

# 1-800-663-3456

For more information:  
[www.bcsara.com/cism](http://www.bcsara.com/cism)

# Cultivating Resilience in SAR

As emergency responders, we may experience tough calls. In order to function professionally in stressful situations, we train to the ability needed for the task. We also develop a protective mode, setting aside our emotions so that we can get the job done.

If we do not drop this protective mode when off the task, we may become at risk of keeping our emotional stress, unexpressed and unaddressed. Over time, this can be harmful to our health. This is why it is important to cultivate positive habits in our lifestyle that help mitigate the effects of stressful experiences.



# What is Resilience? —

Resilience is the ability to navigate through adversity and learn from it as we move forward.

**We are resilient by nature, we are here today because we were able to get through tough times and learn from those experiences. With practice, we can strengthen our capacity for resilience and expand it to all aspects of our lives.**

**Building Resilience** starts with a positive attitude and proactive approach.

**Recognize** the value of what we do, even when the outcome is less than ideal.

Maintain an **optimistic outlook**, focus on the positive aspect of the task.

**Keep things in perspective** – own what's yours and set aside what isn't yours.

**Prioritize training** – build your individual and group skills, strengthen the relationships in the team, develop confidence for when the tough calls come.



# How to Cultivate Resilience in SAR

## Things that will make a difference:

**Find Your Niche** – Do the SAR activities that energize you. Many tasks and diverse skills are required to maintain an effective SAR team. Choose your area of involvement thoughtfully.

**Helping Others – Giving Back** – SAR is all about helping others in their time of need. Together we build a stronger community – and support for all of us in our time of need.

**Take Advantage of Time Off** – These breaks give you time to recover physically and emotionally from both work and volunteer activities.

**Immerse Yourself in Healthy Activities** – Exercise and enjoying nature in an active way reinforces a positive outlook as well as enhancing physical health. Engage in hobbies you enjoy, do things that bring you satisfaction and joy.

**Practice Mindfulness or Relaxation Exercises** – When your stress bucket fills, focus on the present moment and engage in meditation or breathing exercises to calm your emotions.

**Foster a Supportive Network** – Cultivate networks with people who share your values. Enjoy social time, play games, have fun, share jokes, and laugh together.

**Seek Opportunities for Self Discovery** – Practice gratitude, keep a journal of positive experiences. Note your progress toward your life goals.

**Explore your spiritual side** – People who connect to something beyond themselves often draw strength in times of need.

**Take Care of Basics** – Eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, get adequate rest, avoid excess caffeine, alcohol or cannabis.

## You Are Our Most Valuable Asset

