

A Resilience Checklist for Public Health Communicators



Public health communicators today are working under immense pressure. A polarized public discourse, online harassment, institutional uncertainty, and emotional fatigue can take a toll.

Drawing on lessons from public health, journalism, and emergency response, this checklist is a low-effort way to assess and implement practical strategies to strengthen your resilience as you continue serving your communities.

The guidance is not meant to replace recommendations from a healthcare professional or mental health professional.

How's your emotional literacy?

- I understand how stress and trauma affect my body, mind, and behavior.
- I can recognize different types of stress - acute, chronic, distress, and eustress (positive stress).
- I understand that resilience is our ability to integrate adverse experiences into our lives and identity over time.
- I know warning signs of stress and burnout to look out for: isolation, unusual irritability, persistent unwanted thoughts, feelings of meaninglessness, or self-medication.

How do you respect your needs and engage in self-care?

- I drink water before major meetings or crisis calls; hydration affects focus and mood.
- I use micro-breaks: two minutes of stretching or a slow walk after long digital sessions.
- I anchor my day with consistent start-up and wind-down rituals.
- I have set a "digital sunset": no checking messages after a chosen hour.
- I have identified 3-5 "steady people" I can be candid with about stress.
- I have a self-care sheet: activities that release positive emotions, like music, humor, sunlight, walks, or calling a friend.

Are you prepared to assess and respond to threats?

- ❑ I have searched for my name and my organization across social media platforms and search engines to determine if perceptions are positive and accurate.
- ❑ I have identified 3-5 people I can reach out to quickly if I receive threats or feel unsafe.
- ❑ I have reviewed and confirmed my privacy settings on personal social media accounts.
- ❑ I know my organization's existing policies: social media use, crisis communications, harassment reporting, and digital safety.
- ❑ If targeted: I know to keep evidence, strengthen digital security, inform my supervisor, and protect my mental health.



How are you building a supportive community?

- ❑ I model honesty by naming when I'm stressed or unsure – it gives others permission to be real.
- ❑ I start meetings with a moment of grounding: a deep breath, a stretch, or a check-in question.
- ❑ I check in privately if a colleague seems withdrawn or overwhelmed.
- ❑ I encourage curiosity over criticism – replace “Who missed this?” with “What made this difficult?”
- ❑ I celebrate milestones – even sending a quick “thank you” note boosts morale.



For more information, read [Resilience: A Practical Guide for Public Health Communicators](#), a resource co-created by the Information Futures Lab at Brown University and the Public Health Communications Collaborative.