

RESILIENCY TOOLKIT

Healthy
Minds



Community Resources for Resilience, Support & Well-being

TOP TEN TIPS FOR RESILIENCE

1



Look toward the future;
think of what you want from life.



2



This helps give you focus.



3



Plan your coping strategies.
Don't be afraid to ask for help.



4



Identify your strengths
and be confident in yourself.



5



Learn from experience and move on. Meditate, pray and be mindful.



6



Introduce a positive way of thinking.
Focus on the good things in your life.
Keep a gratitude journal.



7



Make time to do the things you enjoy.



8



Take care of yourself. Keep healthy and fit. Get outside for 30 minutes a day.



9



Build healthy relationships with your family, friends and colleagues.



10



Don't dwell on the past. Put your energy into the present to shape your future.



Resilience describes a person's capacity to cope with changes and challenges and to bounce back during difficult times. The more resilient someone is, the better they are at getting through tough times, and the better their chances at recovering from the experiences of adversity and trauma (Gilligan 2004).

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Life may not come with a map, but everyone will experience twists and turns, from every-day challenges to traumatic events with more lasting impact, like the death of a loved one, a life-altering accident or a serious illness. Each change affects people differently, bringing a unique flood of thoughts, strong emotions and uncertainty. Yet people generally adapt well over time to life-changing situations and stressful situations — in part thanks to resilience.

Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.

While these adverse events are certainly painful and difficult, they don’t have to determine the outcome of your life. That’s the role of resilience. Becoming resilient empowers you to grow and improve your life along the way.

WHAT RESILIENCE ISN’T

Being resilient doesn’t mean that a person won’t experience difficulty or distress. People who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives commonly experience emotional pain and stress. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn’t necessarily a personality trait that only some people possess. **On the contrary, resilience involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that anyone can learn and develop, which means resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary.** One example is the response of many Americans to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and individuals’ efforts to rebuild their lives after tragedy.

Like building a muscle, increasing your resilience takes time and intentionality. Focusing on four core components — connection, well-being, healthy thinking and meaning — can empower you to withstand and learn from difficult and traumatic experiences. To increase your capacity for resilience to weather and grow from those difficulties, use these strategies.

BUILD YOUR CONNECTIONS

Prioritize relationships. Connecting with empathetic, understanding people can remind you that you’re not alone in the midst of difficulties. Focus on finding trustworthy and

compassionate individuals who validate your feelings, which will support the skill of resilience. The pain of traumatic events can lead some people to isolate themselves, but it’s important to accept help and support from those who care about you. Whether you go on a weekly date night with your spouse or plan a lunch out with a friend, try to prioritize genuinely connecting with people who care about you.

Join a group Along with one-on-one relationships, some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based communities, or other local organizations provides social support and can help you reclaim hope. Research groups in your area that could offer you support and a sense of purpose or joy when you need it.

FOSTER WELLNESS

Take care of your body. Self-care may be a popular buzzword, but it’s also a legitimate practice for mental health and building resilience. That’s because stress is just as much physical as it is emotional. Promoting positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, hydration and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of emotions like anxiety or depression.

Practice mindfulness. Mindful journaling, yoga and other spiritual practices like prayer or meditation can also help people build connections and restore hope, which can prime them to deal with situations that require resilience. When you journal, meditate or pray, ruminate on positive aspects of your life and recall the things you’re grateful for, even during personal trials.

Avoid negative outlets. It may be tempting to mask your pain with alcohol, drugs or other substances, but that’s like putting a bandage on a deep wound. Focus instead on giving your body resources to manage stress, rather than seeking to eliminate the feeling of stress altogether.

FIND PURPOSE

Help others. Whether you volunteer with a local homeless shelter or simply support a friend in their own time of need, you can garner a sense of purpose, foster self-worth, connect with other people and tangibly help others, all of which can empower you to grow in resilience.

Be proactive. It’s helpful to acknowledge and accept your emotions during hard times, but it’s also important to help you foster self-discovery by asking yourself, “What can I do about a problem in my life?” If the problems seem too big to tackle, break them down into manageable pieces. For example, if you got laid off at work, you may not be able to convince your boss it was a mistake to let you go. But you can spend an hour each day developing your

top strengths or working on your resume. Taking initiative will remind you that you can muster motivation and purpose even during stressful periods of your life, increasing the likelihood that you'll rise up during painful times again.

Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic goals and do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment. This enables you to move toward the things you want to accomplish. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, “What’s one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?” For example, if you are struggling with the loss of a loved one and you want to move forward, you could join a grief support group in your area.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often find that they have grown in some respect as a result of a struggle. For example, after a tragedy or hardship, people have reported better relationships and a greater sense of strength. Even while feeling vulnerable, that can increase their sense of self-worth and heighten their appreciation for life.

EMBRACE HEALTHY THOUGHTS

Keep things in perspective. How you think can play a significant part in how you feel — and how resilient you are when faced with obstacles. Try to identify areas of irrational thinking, such as a tendency to catastrophize difficulties or assuming the world is out to get you. Adopt a more balanced and realistic thinking pattern. For instance, if you feel overwhelmed by a challenge, remind yourself that what happened to you is not an indicator of how your future will go. You’re not helpless. You may not be able to change or control all aspects of a highly stressful event, but you can change how you interpret and respond to it.

Accept change. Accept that change is a part of life. Certain goals or ideals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations in your life. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Maintain a hopeful outlook. It’s hard to be positive when life isn’t going your way. An optimistic outlook empowers you to expect that good things will happen to you. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear. Along the way, note any subtle ways in which you start to feel better as you deal with difficult situations.

Learn from your past. By looking back at who and what were helpful in previous times of distress, you may discover how you respond effectively to new difficult situations. Remind yourself of where you’ve been able to find strength, and ask yourself what you’ve learned from those experiences. Finally, visualize yourself responding positively in the face of your next difficult experience.

RESOURCES

1. **CDC Resources: Tips for Managing Anxiety & Stress for Providers, Parents, First Responders & People Who Have Been Released from Quarantine.**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
2. **Tips for Caregivers, Parents, & Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreak.**
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Talking-With-Children-Tips-for-Caregivers-Parents-and-Teachers-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/PEP20-01-01-006>
3. Consider the **Insight Timer app** for free meditations, including those for sleep.
<https://insighttimer.com/>
4. This website offers a **free online class on mindfulness and includes many guided meditations.** <https://palousemindfulness.com/>

SAMHSA DISASTER DISTRESS HOTLINE

Toll Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English & Spanish)

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

SAMHSA NATIONAL HELPLINE

Toll Free: 1-800-662-HELP

(24/7 Treatment Referral Information Service in English & Spanish)

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

Toll Free: 1-800-273-TALK

TTY: 1-800-779-4TTY (4889)

DIAL UNITED WAY 2-1-1

<https://www.211unitedway.org/>

MOBILE CRISIS UNIT - CRISIS HOTLINE NUMBER

(844) 395-4432. There is no cost.

SOURCES

<https://www.seemescotland.org/media/8155/resilience-toolkit.pdf>

<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>



HealthyLee
CHOOSE.COMMIT.CHANGE!

Healthy Minds is a community initiative of Healthy Lee.
For a full list of resources and events please go
to HealthyLee.com/HealthyMinds.