



HELPING HANDS



Resilience

What is Resilience? (excerpts from APA Resilience)



Resilience is 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. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience. One example is the response of many Americans to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and individuals' efforts to rebuild their lives.

Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

Build Your Flexibility

Let yourself experience strong emotions when you can and realize you may need to avoid experiencing them at times in order to continue functioning. Step forward and take action to deal with your problems and the demands of daily living; rest and reenergize. Spending time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement and nurturing yourself is important. Rely on others, and also rely on yourself.

Strategies for Building Resilience

Developing resilience is a personal journey. People do not all react the same to traumatic and stressful life events. An approach to building resilience that works for one person might not work for another. People use varying strategies. A person's culture might have an impact on how he or she communicates feelings and deals with adversity — for example, whether and how a person connects with significant others, including extended family members and community resources.

10 Ways to Build Resilience

Make connections. Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. People find that belonging to a group can provide social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper. Participating in social media groups (zoom, facetime, Facebook messenger, etc.) can alleviate feeling isolated.

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, you can change how you *interpret* and *respond* to these events. Try looking beyond the present to understand how future circumstances will get better. Note ways in which you might already feel better as you deal with difficult situations.

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

Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. 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?"

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Take decisive actions. Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and heightened appreciation for life.

Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Maintain a hopeful outlook. An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Visualize what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful. Some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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