RESILIENCE

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Presentation adapted from The Road to Resilience by the American Psychological Association
Objectives

- Define Resilience
- Identify Factors in Resilience
- Identify Strategies for Building Resilience
What is 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.
What is Resilience?

• 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.
• 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.
Factors in Resilience

- **Primary factor**: Having supportive and caring relationships within and outside of the family
- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses

All of these are factors that people can develop in themselves!
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.
• Some variation may reflect cultural differences. A person's culture might have an impact on how he or she communicates feelings and deals with adversity
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.

• Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope.

• Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.
Ways to Build Resilience

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems

• You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.
• Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better.
• Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.
Ways to Build Resilience

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.

“Change

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” – Frederick Douglass
Ways to Build Resilience

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?"

SET GOALS

1.
2.
3.
Ways to Build Resilience

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.
• Break down situations into smaller components… categorize info, sequence elements into a plan, attend to details, and take action one step at a time

A dream becomes a goal when action is taken toward achieving it...
Ways to Build Resilience

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
  • heightened appreciation for life.
Ways to 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.
Ways to Build Resilience

Nurture a positive view of yourself

- Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
- Focus on your successes and positive qualities
- Celebrate and reward achievements
- Work to eliminate negative self-talk and replace it with positive internal messages
Ways to Build Resilience

Maintain a hopeful outlook

• An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life.
• Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.
• Identify specific ways you can see opportunities in a current challenge
• See the value in new opportunities from the experience
• Learn useful lessons from setbacks
• Look for the good in bad situations
• Be generally upbeat about the future
Ways to Build Resilience

Take care of yourself

• Pay attention to your own needs and feelings.
• Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.
• Exercise regularly. Get enough sleep. Eat a balanced diet
• Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Self care is not self indulgence.
Self care is self respect.

– gateway-women.com

KEEP CALM AND PRACTICE SELF-CARE
Ways to Build Resilience

• Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.
• For example, 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.
SEEDS Activity Log

- Create an activity log to track/plan for factors to improve resilience
- **Social** activities for the week
- **Exercise** activities for the week
- **Education**: learning something new
- **Diet**
- **Sleep Hygiene**
Learn From Your Past

• Focusing on past experiences and sources of personal strength can help you learn about what strategies for building resilience might work for you.

Consider the following questions:

• What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
• How have those events typically affected me?
• Have I found it helpful to think of important people in my life when I am distressed?
Learn From Your Past

• To whom have I reached out for support in working through a traumatic or stressful experience?
• What have I learned about myself and my interactions with others during difficult times?
• Has it been helpful for me to assist someone else going through a similar experience?
• Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
• What has helped make me feel more hopeful about the future?
Stay Flexible

• Resilience involves maintaining flexibility and balance in your life as you deal with stressful circumstances and traumatic events.
• Letting yourself experience strong emotions, and also realizing when you may need to avoid experiencing them at times in order to continue functioning.
Stay Flexible

• Stepping forward and taking action to deal with your problems and meet the demands of daily living, and also stepping back to rest and reenergize yourself.
• Spending time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement, and also nurturing yourself.
• Relying on others, and also relying on yourself.
Getting Help

• Make an appointment at the EACC

• Self-help and support groups
  • By sharing information, ideas and emotions, group participants can assist one another and find comfort in knowing that they are not alone in experiencing difficulty.

• Books and other publications
  • Read about people who have successfully managed adverse situations, such as surviving cancer. These stories can motivate readers to find a strategy that might work for them personally

• Online resources
  • Be mindful of the source of online information as the quality varies among sources
“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

-Confucius
Questions?

Thank You!

UAB Employee Assistance and Counseling Center

www.uab.edu/eacc

205-934-2281

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