

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

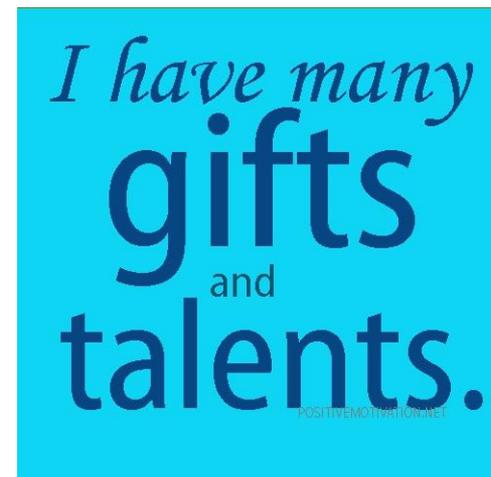
- Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.
- Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.



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

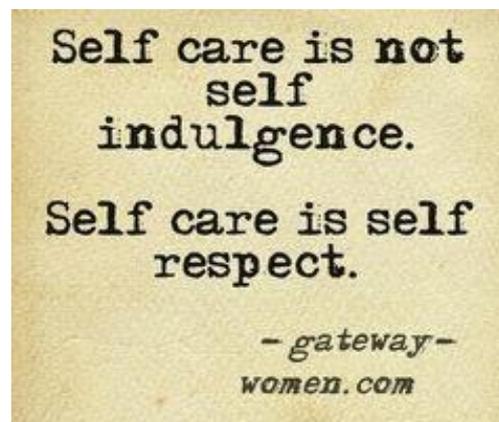
- An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life.
- Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.
- Identify specific ways you can see opportunities in a current challenge
- See the value in new opportunities from the experience
- Learn 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.



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

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<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>