



Strategies for Cultivating Mindfulness and Resilience

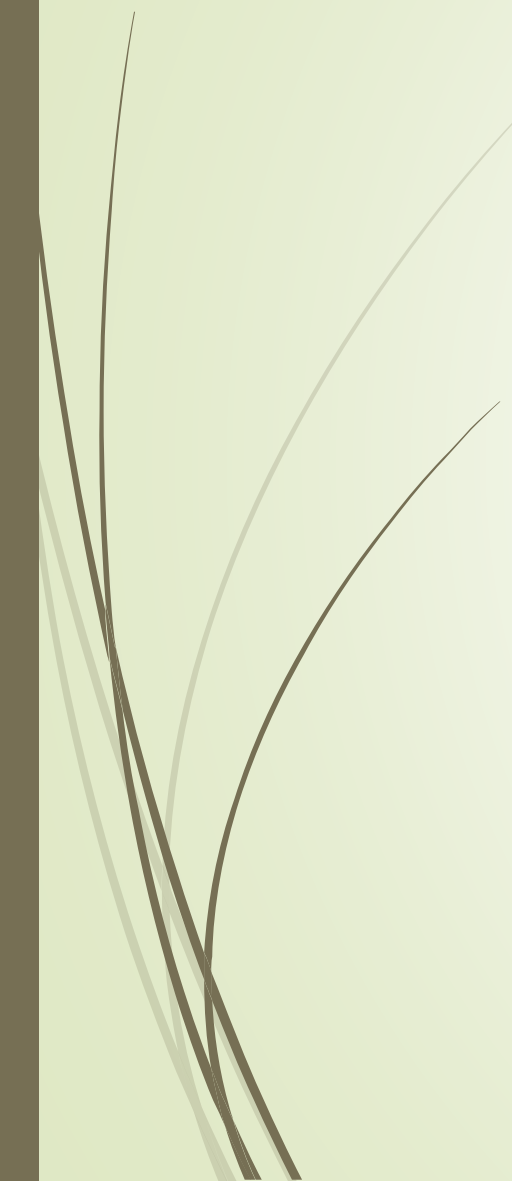
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UAB EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
AND COUNSELING CENTER



Objectives

- Define Stress
 - Define Mindfulness
 - Learn examples of mindful activities to reduce stress
 - Define Resilience
 - Learn examples of building resilience
- 



Stress vs. Stressor

➤ Stress

- Physical, mental, emotional responses to stressors

➤ Stressors

- Deadlines
- Relationship challenges
- Financial difficulties
- Health concerns
- Work environment

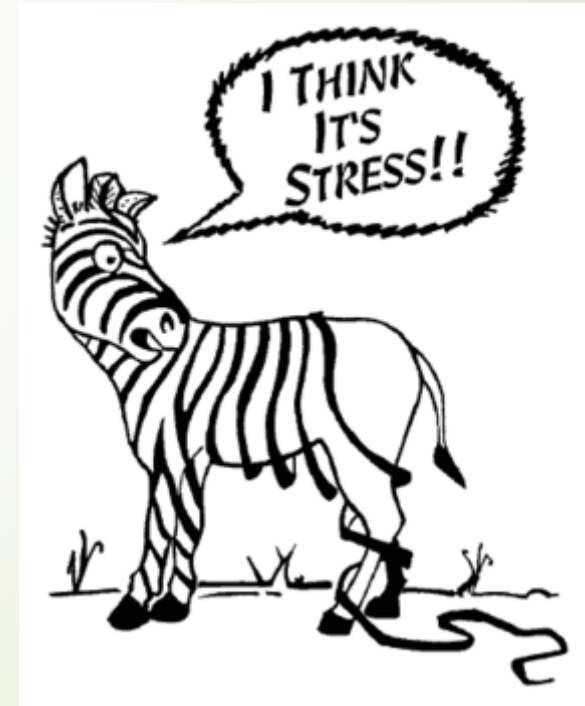


What is Stress?

- ▶ Any change requiring you to adapt
- ▶ Unavoidable and Necessary
- ▶ Stress can be POSITIVE!
 - ▶ a source of high energy and increased awareness
 - ▶ Some stress actually improves performance, but too much stress impedes performance

Stress Effects on Our Body

- ▶ Activates Sympathetic Nervous System
 - ▶ Musculoskeletal System
 - ▶ Respiratory System
 - ▶ Cardiovascular System
 - ▶ Endocrine System
 - ▶ Gastrointestinal System





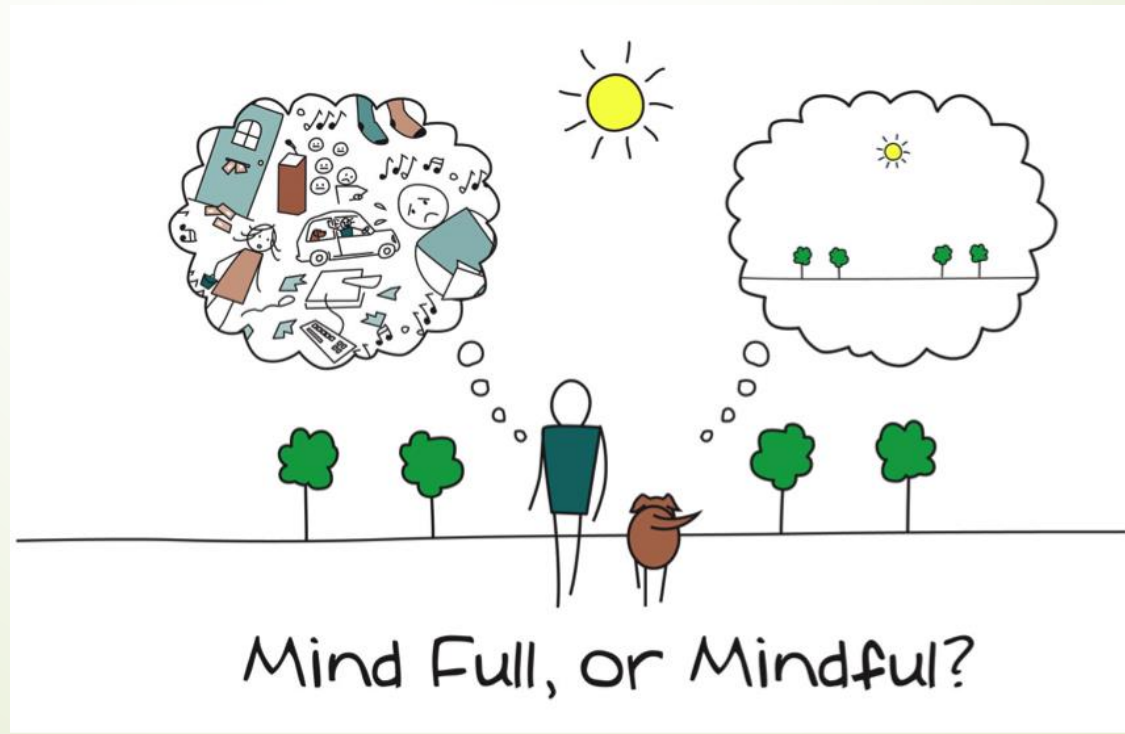
Chronic Stress

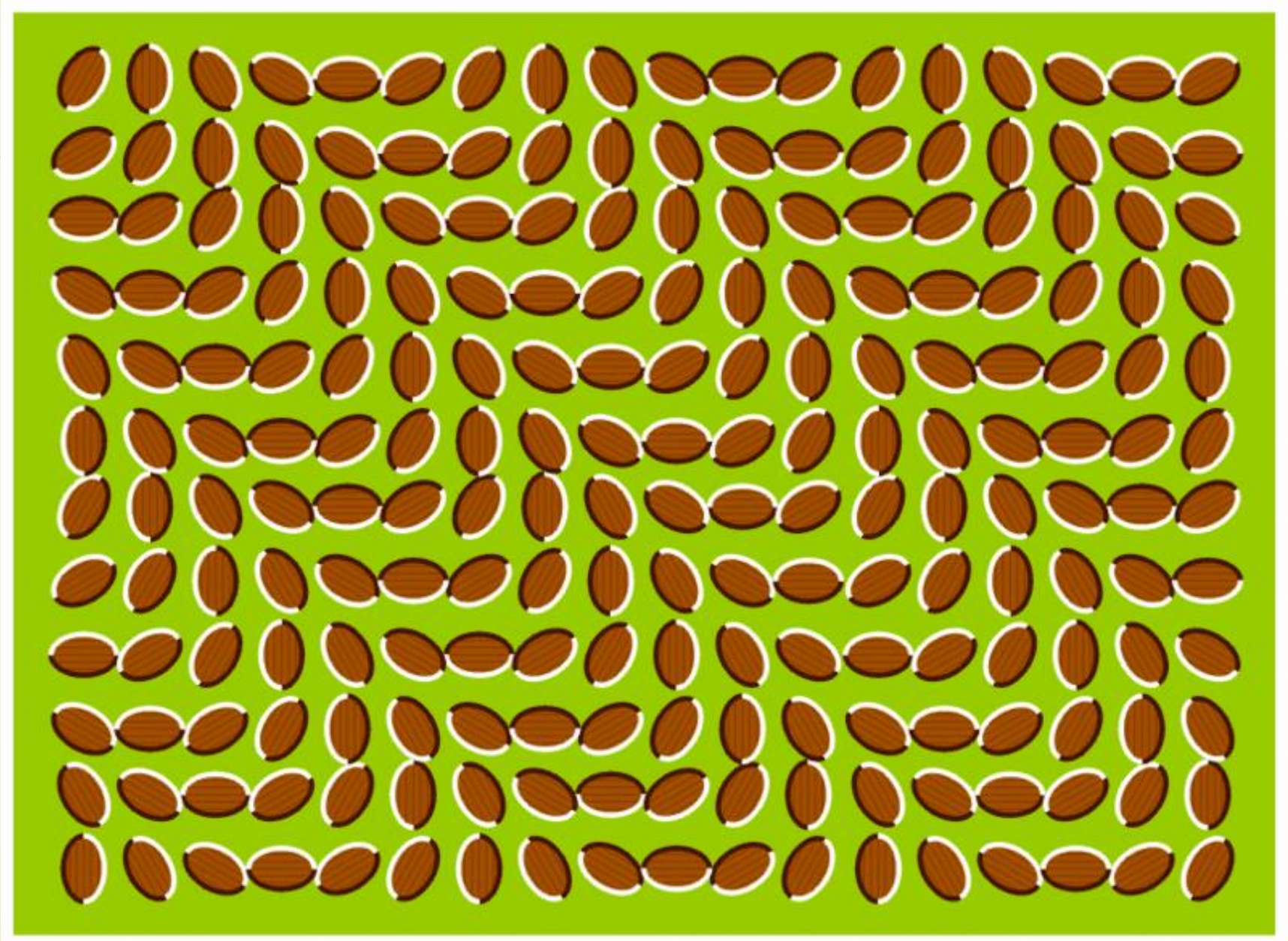
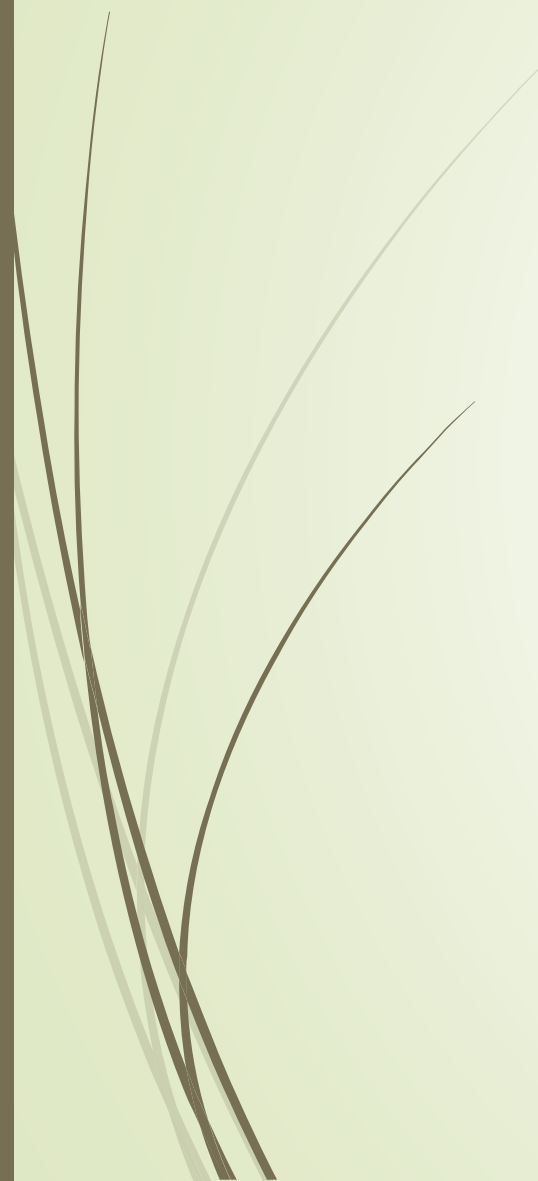


- ▶ Associated with numerous diseases and health issues
 - ▶ Cardiovascular issues, including heart attacks and strokes
 - ▶ Higher cholesterol
 - ▶ Hypertension
 - ▶ Tension headaches and migraines
 - ▶ Reproductive system issues in males and females
 - ▶ Digestive issues, including ulcers, diarrhea or constipation, heartburn
 - ▶ Increased risk of diabetes for those vulnerable to the disease
 - ▶ Increased risk for anxiety and depression

Mindfulness

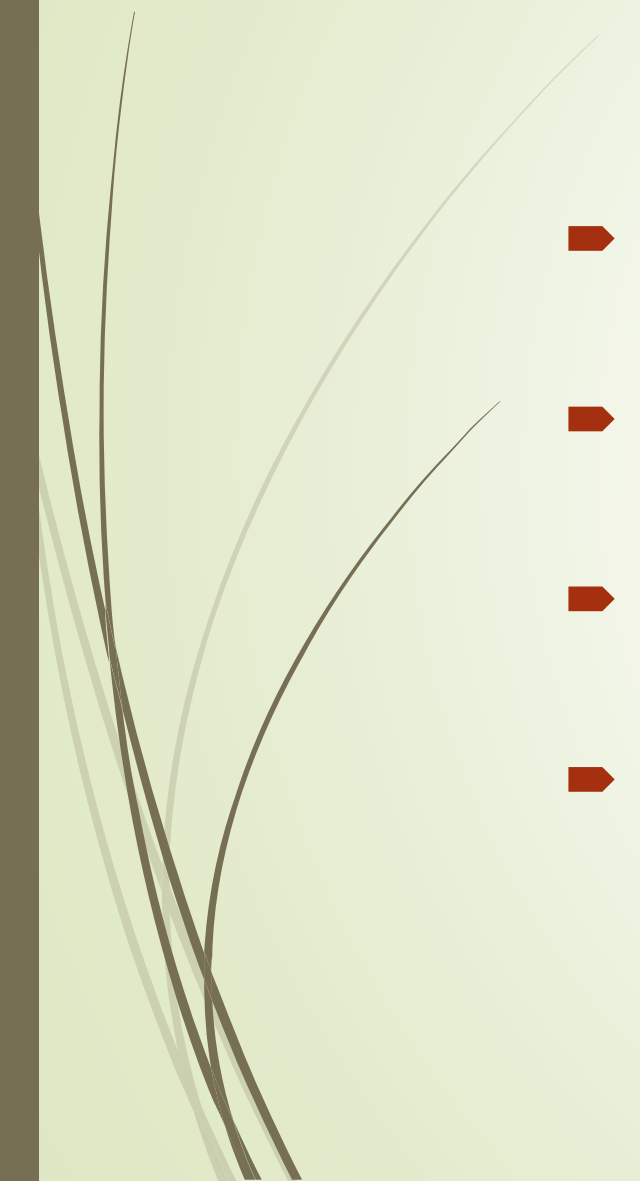
Intentionally bringing one's awareness to both the internal and external experience, in the present moment, without judgement.





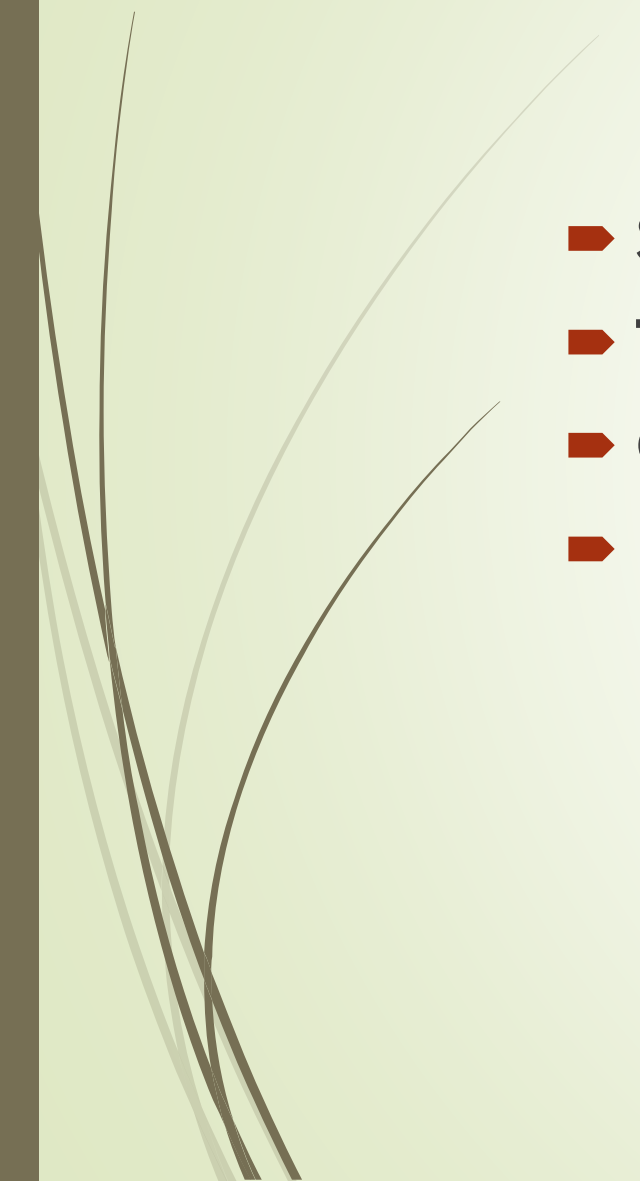


4 Skills of Mindfulness

- **Attending** – centering one’s attention in the “here and now” of immediate experiencing
 - **Knowing and noting** – “Tuning In” or “What is my experience now...can I name it?”
 - **Releasing** – Allowing experience to rise and pass freely without judgement
 - **Remembering and Returning** – A willingness to return again and again to this process of being here now.
- 



STOP – A Short Mindfulness Technique

- **S**top
 - **T**ake a breath
 - **O**bserve your thoughts and feelings
 - **P**roceed
- 



Engage Your Senses

- ▶ Engaging one or more of your primary senses can help bring you back to the moment and ground you in your body, a key aspect of mindfulness
 - ▶ Sights
 - ▶ Sounds
 - ▶ Smells
 - ▶ Sensations
 - ▶ Tastes



Short 5 Senses Exercise

- Notice 5 things you can **see**
 - Notice 4 things you can **feel**
 - Notice 3 things you can **hear**
 - Notice 2 things you can **smell**
 - Notice 1 thing you can **taste**
- 



Five Senses Tools

➤ Sensations

- Breathe deep
- Stamp feet on ground
- Rub fingertips together
- Tap arms of chair
- Focus on temperature of air on skin
- Keep a smooth stone or piece of soft fabric in your pocket to touch when stressed
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Do a body scan and notice what your muscles feel like part by part



Five Senses Tools

▶ Sight

- ▶ Notice 3 new things around you and name the objects aloud or in your mind
- ▶ Find 5 things of the same color in the room
- ▶ Look at a picture of a loved one or soothing scene, like a beach or mountain stream
- ▶ Look out a window
- ▶ Practice an imagery exercise

Focus on noticing the colors, patterns, or textures you see



5 Senses Tools

➤ Sound

- Hum a favorite tune
- Listen to soothing music on breaks
- Keep a small fountain or sound machine in your workspace to focus on nature sounds or white noise

➤ Smell

- Keep a small bottle of a scent that is energizing (ginger, peppermint) and relaxing (lavender, chamomile) at work
- Focus on how your food smells when you break to eat your meal at work



5 Senses Tools

► Taste

- Stop. Take a moment to **SAVOR the FLAVOR** of your food/snack/drink
- Keep sugar free mints or gum close at hand at work
- Drink non-caffeinated hot tea (like chamomile or peppermint)
- Indulge in a small piece of dark chocolate on break
- Keep healthy crunchy snacks at work (celery, trail mix, carrots)
- Keep smooth snacks at work (jello, yogurt)



Mini-Mindfulness Exercise

- ▶ Bring awareness to what you are doing, thinking, sensing
 - ▶ turn off auto-pilot
- ▶ Bring awareness to breathing for 1 minute or 6 deep breaths
 - ▶ Focus on movement of body with breath, chest rise and fall, belly move in and out
- ▶ Expand awareness outward to body then environment
 - ▶ Notice sensations in body, such as tightness or lightness
 - ▶ Notice colors, patterns, shapes in environment around you



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.
- 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!



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?"





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
 - ▶ take action one step at a time



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



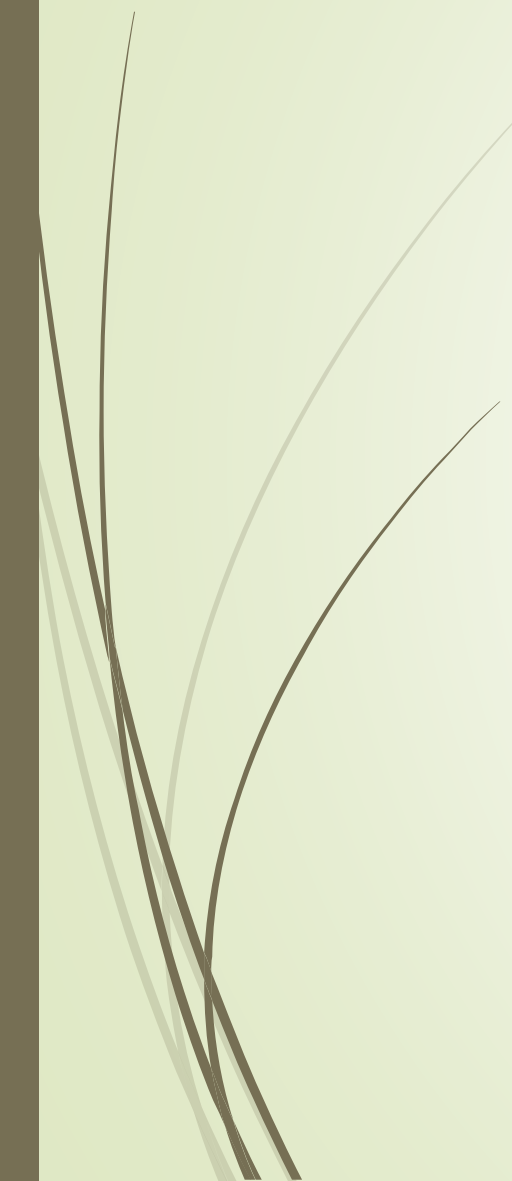
Ways to Build Resilience

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



Gratitude

- Identify 3 things/people/interactions you liked, appreciated, or were grateful for
 - Spend about 60 seconds savoring each memory/moment in your mind
 - Share your gratitude with others as appropriate
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Ways to Build Resilience

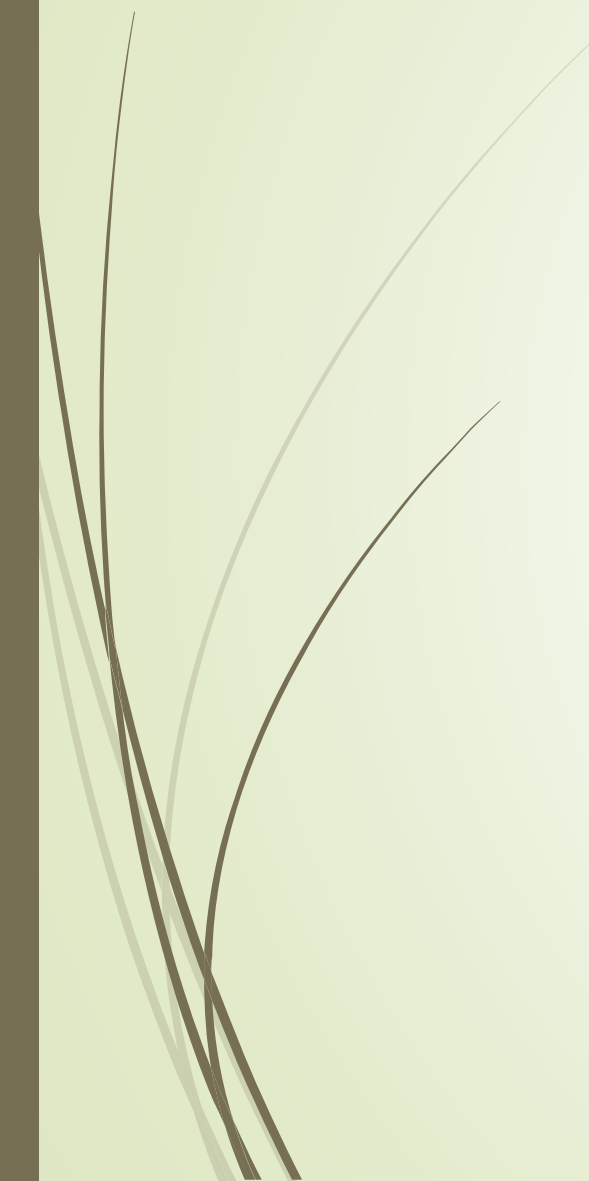

Take care of yourself

- ▶ 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*



“Our greatest glory is not in never falling,
but in rising every time we fall.”

-Confucius



Questions?

- ▶ Information adapted from:
 - ▶ Alabama Mental Health Counselors Association
 - ▶ American Psychological Association, The Road to Resilience
 - ▶ Khoury, B., Knäuper, B., Pagnini, F., Trent, N., Chiesa, A., & Carrière, K. (2017). Embodied Mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, 1-12.