

Resilience: Key Ideas

Resilience is a person's capacity to respond to periods of high demand by 'bouncing back'; maintaining morale and effectiveness in the face of challenge and unforeseen change is a key attribute in dealing with the rigours of today. Like the principle exercising for physical fitness and stamina, resilience is an acquired ability to skilfully manage cycles of stress and recovery.

Nine steps to resilience

1. Cherish social support and interaction. Good relationships with family and friends and others are vital. Being active in the wider community also helps.
2. Treat life as a learning process. Develop the habit of using challenges as opportunities to acquire or master skills and build achievement.
3. Avoid making a drama out of a crisis. Stress and change are part of life. How we interpret and respond to events has a big impact of how stressful we find them.
4. Celebrate your successes. Take time at the end of each day to review what went well and congratulate yourself. This trains the mind to look for success rather than dwelling on negativity and 'failure'.
5. Develop realistic life goals for guidance and a sense of purpose. Do something each day to move towards them. Again, small is beautiful; one small step amid the chaos of a busy day will help.
6. Take positive action. Doing something in the face of adversity brings a sense of control, even if it doesn't remove the difficulty.
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps to build resiliency.
8. Keep a realistic perspective. Place challenging or painful events in the broader context of lifelong personal development.
9. Practice optimism. Nothing is either wholly good or bad. If we allow our thinking to dictate how we view something it will take over. Make your thinking work for your benefit, rather than letting it stymie you with doubt or by seeing only the bad side.

"When people do not properly respect their needs and the recovery process, their daily demands can appear to become insurmountable. Insufficient emotional recovery breeds negativity, mood swings and irritability. Inadequate mental recovery breeds poor concentration, sloppy thinking and mistakes. Spiritual fatigue not balanced by recovery can open the door to a host of character lapses which conflict with your core values. (HPI 2010, *Building Resiliency: the New Workplace Imperative*, www.hpainstitute.com)

See also the separate downloads on Wellbeing and Burnout.

Holding the keys

Becoming more resilient requires a shift in thinking; the three areas of focus are aspiration, attitude and adaptability.

Aspiration

Create a Life Development Plan and derive a personal mission statement from that. It will inspire and guide and help you articulate your values and identity.

Attitude

Develop attitudes of Commitment, Care and Confidence towards the things you do and adopt a mindful approach to tasks.

Adaptability

Viewing a negative event as a challenge – an opportunity for learning and development rather than a crisis– helps build resilience.

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