Building Resilience

What is resilience?

Resilience is an "inner strength" that helps you [bounce back](#) after stressful situations. When you are resilient, you may recover more quickly from setbacks or difficult changes, including illness.

Developing resilience begins with simple actions or thoughts that you practice, such as planning for what you'll do next and learning to accept change.

Being resilient doesn't mean that you find it easy to deal with difficult or stressful situations or that you won't feel angry, sad, or worried during tough times. But it does mean that you won't feel so overwhelmed. You'll be less likely to give up and more likely to cope with stressful situations in healthy ways.

Why is resilience important?

Part of resilience is how you think. Your mind can have a positive or negative effect on your body. This is called the [mind-body connection](#).

For example, [negative emotions](#), such as worry and stress, can cause tense muscles and pain, headaches, and stomach problems. But having a [positive outlook](#) on life might help you better handle pain or stress than someone who is less hopeful.

How can you build resilience?

People who are resilient often work to have a positive outlook on life. It may take gradual, small changes in your outlook on life and careful self-evaluation. You may be able to begin this shift on your own. A counselor or therapist can also help you.

Here are some tips to get started:

Change how you think

- Accept that things change.
    - Look at change as a challenge rather than a threat.
    - Examine how and why you feel the way you do when things change.
    - Expect things to work out. You can't change what happens, but you can change how you feel about it.
- See the big picture.
    - Find the positive in stressful situations and learn from the situation.
    - Look for things to learn. Difficult or emotional situations can teach you about yourself. Look to the future, and ask yourself how the stressful event might help you.
    - See the funny side of bad situations.

Change how you act

- Seek out interactions with people who make you feel better.
    - Build relationships that are solid and loving with your family and others. Help them, and don't be afraid to let them help you.
    - Develop a support network.
- Believe in yourself and the things you can do.
    - Solve problems. Look at all aspects of a problem, and brainstorm solutions. Ask friends for suggestions.
    - Do things to gain self confidence and build self-esteem. For example, list the things you've achieved in your life or those that make you proud.
- Take good care of yourself.
    - Do things that you enjoy. See a movie. Have a good meal. Laugh with your friends. Know what's important to you.
    - Relax your mind and body through techniques such as deep breathing and guided imagery.
    - Talk about how you are feeling, and manage your emotions.
    - Be thankful for the good you see around yourself.

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