

# What is Resilience?

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress.” – American Psychological Association



## There are many different ways to think about resilience – Is it a Trait? An Ability? Or an Outcome?

- We might think that being a resilient person can be in one’s DNA – an effortless aspect of someone’s personality.
- Other times we might see resiliency as a skill that needs honing through practice – that through enough effort a degree of mastery can be developed.
- Resiliency may be felt as the culmination of suffering and subsequent growth through it – the process of recovery leads to a stronger foundation.

## The 5 Steps to Building Resilience

### 1) Develop Self-Awareness

Remember to take a personal inventory from time to time. Ask yourself, “What am I feeling emotionally or physically at this moment?”, “What do I need right now?”, “Am I feeling grounded and present with those around me? With myself?”

### 2) Maintain Hope

Hope is a gift you give to yourself, in what ways can you stay hopeful? Finding the beauty in nature or enjoying a sense of humor can be valuable tools in maintaining an optimistic outlook.

### 3) Develop and Practice Healthy Coping Skills

Trying new activities, picking up a new hobby, or simply practicing breathing exercises are ways to develop mastery in coping. Finding something that you particularly enjoy spending time with can help distract you when emotions become difficult to manage.

### 4) Nurture Your Relationships

Friends and loved ones are critical resources in maintaining resilience. Practice giving support in addition to receiving support from others. Being consistent, reliable, and available is key in the maintenance of important relationships.

### 5) Remember the Big Picture

Give yourself a moment to take a step back. Staying grounded and focusing on what is truly important in your life can provide a balance on what you may be feeling now and how far you have come. The path to resiliency is lifelong and progress can always be made.

## Resilience Facts

- We are wired to focus on the negative (negativity bias), but we can train ourselves to focus on the positive and expect the positive
- Instead of “bouncing back,” we can bounce forward into a new normal
- Resiliency can be learned and practiced
- People who have been through the most trauma are often the most resilient
- Just 1 out of 10 trauma survivors develops PTSD

## Traumatic Stress Triggers

- Can be spontaneous/come out of the blue
- Are out of our control
- Can cause fear, anxiety, panic
- Can be caused by images, sounds, people, places

## Tips to Remember

- Focus on what you can control
- Set boundaries and be realistic
- Stay mindful – practice optimism, positivity, gratitude
- Expect positive instead of the negative
- Acknowledge your feelings – name your feelings
- Build positive connections and relationships

## Questions to Ask Yourself Every Day

- What am I grateful for?
- Who am I connecting with today?
- What expectations of normal am I letting go of today?
- How am I getting outside today?

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