

Resilience

What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to:

- Bounce back
- Take on difficult challenges and still find meaning in life
- Respond positively to difficult situations
- Rise above adversity
- Cope when things look bleak
- Tap into hope
- Transform unfavorable situations into wisdom, insight, and compassion
- Endure

Resilience refers to the ability of an individual, family, organization, or community to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change. It is an ongoing process that requires time and effort and engages people in taking a number of steps to enhance their response to adverse circumstances. Resilience implies that after an event, a person or community may be able to not only cope and recover, but also change to reflect different priorities arising from the experience and prepare for the next stressful situation.

- Resilience is the most important defense people have against stress.
- It is important to build and foster resilience to be ready for future challenges.
- Resilience will enable the development of a reservoir of internal resources to draw upon during stressful situations.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary, and that people regularly demonstrate this ability.

- Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have.
- Resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.
- Resilience is tremendously influenced by a person's environment.

Resilience changes over time. It fluctuates depending on how much a person nurtures internal resources or coping strategies. Some people are more resilient in work life, while others exhibit more resilience in their personal relationships. People can build resilience and promote the foundations of resilience in any aspect of life they choose.

Understanding Resilience

Resilience helps you through the challenges in life; it allows you to bounce back from stressful situations and also reduces the initial impact of stress. However, resilience is not something that you either "have" or "don't have." Resilience is about the way you approach situations from moment to moment and can be strengthened in the same way as you strengthen your muscles—through repetition and practice. As you do this, it is like developing personal protective equipment (PPE) that is with you at all times protecting you from the negative effects of stress. If you can develop and maintain relationships with others so you always have some support, if you are able to see the world clearly and respond appropriately, and if you can manage to live in a balanced way, you will have developed resilience. This in turn leads to a healthier, happier, and more successful life.

Developing Relationships

Maintaining good relationships with others is a basic resilience skill. When you are challenged or stressed, it is much easier to respond successfully if you have the support of your family or community of friends and coworkers. Poor communication skills can leave you feeling isolated, making it much more difficult to respond to life's challenges. You'll be more effective in your professional mission if you can gain the cooperation of others by learning to resolve conflicts when they arise. Assertiveness and conflict-resolution are skills that allow you to successfully navigate the normal interpersonal problems that are a part of life, whether in personal or professional relationships. Maintaining relationships so that you always have someone "watching your back" is one of the keys to overcoming the rough spots and bouncing back from difficulties.

**This month's
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Discussion:**

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE

A better understanding of what being resilient entails.

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Personal Qualities

Increased resilience occurs when skills are developed that allow you to feel more in control of your life. These skills include realistic thinking, optimism, and living personal values. Resilience is also supported by developing strong connections with others through gratitude, forgiveness, and generosity. Practicing these personal qualities on a daily basis reduces negative emotions such as anger and resentment, which themselves are internal stressors. Research has demonstrated that integrating these personal qualities into everyday life even improves immune functioning.

Skills

Skills that improve a sense of control over life are central elements of resilience. These are the skills that help to balance life and protect against feeling overwhelmed. Goal setting, time management, and problem-solving are areas of life that are sometimes taken for granted, but they often are the difference between success and failure. These qualities are what make a mission successful in the field. They can make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful effort at developing the kind of life you'd like to live.



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