



Build Your Resilience

Workbook



The Program

Welcome / Learning Points

Ask Yourself...

What Is Resilience?

It's About Attitude

What It Takes

Why It's Important

The Stress-Hardy Personality

Hone Your Skills

Make a Plan

About Professional Support / Closing

Learning Points

Participants will:

- Define resilience.
- Identify what it takes to be resilient.
- Determine personal resilience level.
- Find ways to be more stress-hardy.

Ask Yourself ...

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on the following: (1 = very little, 5 = very strong)

- _____ Adapt quickly; good at bouncing back from difficulties.
- _____ Optimistic; see difficulties as temporary; expect to overcome them and have things turn out well.
- _____ Calm myself in a crisis; focus on taking useful actions.
- _____ Solve problems logically.
- _____ Think up creative solutions to challenges; trust intuition.
- _____ Play; find the humor; laugh at self; chuckle.
- _____ Curious; ask questions; want to know how things work; experiment.
- _____ Learn from experience — mine and others.
- _____ Flexible; comfortable with inner dichotomy — trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, optimistic and pessimistic, etc.
- _____ Anticipate problems; expect the unexpected.
- _____ Tolerate ambiguity/uncertainty.
- _____ Self-confident; enjoy healthy self-esteem; have attitude of professionalism about work.
- _____ Good listener; empathic; read people well; adapt to various personality styles; non-judgmental, even with difficult people.
- _____ Recover emotionally from losses and setbacks; express feelings to others; let go of anger; overcome discouragement; ask for help.
- _____ Durable; keep on going during tough times; independent spirit.
- _____ Stronger/better through difficult experiences.
- _____ Convert misfortune into good fortune; discover the unexpected benefit.

Scoring: 70 or higher — very resilient! 60–70—better than most. 50–60 — slow, but adequate. 40–50 — you're struggling. 40 or under — seek help!

What Is Resilience?



Using the properties you just identified, how would you define resilience?

Who are some people that exemplify resilience?

It's About Attitude

Negative, painful, difficult and challenging things happen in our lives.
How is resilience reflected during those times?

What It Takes

- Demonstrate empathy.
- Feel confident and self-assured.
- Hold a generally positive outlook.
- Maintain good personal boundaries.
- Have competent interpersonal skills.
- Have solid relationships and support.
- Stay oriented toward solving problems.
- Attentive to health and stress management.
- Flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.
- View mistakes and failures as learning opportunities.
- Anticipate problems or changes and prepare for them.
- Use creativity to find new ways to solve problems or adapt to rapid changes.
- Have a good sense of humor, able to laugh at themselves and the situation.

An Example

“Look, I don’t mean to be rude, but there’s really nothing here for you. Nothing has changed since the last time we spoke!”

Laura was accustomed to hearing such things. After all, her life has been a virtual uphill climb. She grew up in a small town and attended the public school there. She was a bright child, but didn’t learn well in a traditional classroom setting. Unfortunately, there weren’t alternative learning centers available to her, so her grades did not reflect her actual learning ability. In spite of the fact that school was a struggle for her, she did like learning new things and found ways to help herself learn on her own. She was the oldest of four children in a single-parent home. Her mother and father divorced and, though her mom worked, she barely made enough money to support the family. There was little, if anything, left for extras. Her father was a practicing alcoholic who couldn’t hold a job because of the alcoholism, so child support was spotty at best, and he wasn’t a dependable presence in Laura’s life.

She learned early that if she wanted anything, she would need to find a way to get it on her own. She was expected to help out at home, but she also found time to earn money babysitting and doing odd jobs for the neighbors. In fact, those endeavors paid off so well, that it became her after school and summer income source.

Laura had a pleasant personality and was well-liked by others. She was aware that she faced obstacles in her life — perhaps even more than usual — but she didn’t dwell on them. She had learned that if she wanted something and worked to get it, she most often succeeded, and she reveled in that success. Her college career bore that out. She was determined to get a college degree; however, there was no family money to help with school, and her grades and test scores made her ineligible for any academic-based scholarships. She researched her options both in terms of nearby colleges and universities as well as grants, need-based scholarships and other forms of financial aid. She was able to put together a financial package that, combined with a part-time job, allowed her to attend school as a part-time day student and earn credits toward a bachelor’s degree in social work. She completed an associate’s degree at a nearby community college, which allowed her to continue to live at home. She then transferred to a public university located in the state’s largest metropolitan area. It took her longer than most, but when she walked up to receive her bachelor’s degree, she just beamed!

An Example

Laura was eager to get started in her field and initiated the job hunt immediately. She continued to live in the metro area where she obtained her degree and got a job as a case worker in that county's social services department. Laura became very familiar with local resources and, after a couple of years as a case worker, decided she wanted to work for a particular agency in the city whose focus was low-income children from single-parent homes. She knows from her experience with the county that this agency has a well-deserved, great reputation both for the services it provides and as a place to work.

Laura has been relentless and persistent in her efforts to find something within this agency. She has tapped her contacts, developed a proposal that she sent with a letter and résumé, and has been trying to arrange a meeting with the agency director to discuss her proposal. The latest rebuff from the director's administrative assistant is where we entered this story.

In the meantime, Laura's brother Leo, two years younger, has traveled a very different path. Though Leo is also bright and started out doing well in school, he quickly became bored with school and lost interest in anything related to it, including learning of any kind. His grades reflected that. His friends were other boys who dropped out of school — which, eventually, Leo also did. He sought stimulation through drugs, alcohol and petty crimes. He ended up in the same metropolitan area as Laura, but having withdrawn from his family, did not seek contact with her. In Leo's mind, the city offered him anonymity and more opportunities to pursue the kind of stimulation he enjoyed. Leo was homeless and would stay outside or in shelters, when he wasn't in jail.

Why It's Important

Workplace uncertainty
& changes

Unpredictability

Rapid global &
technological changes



The Stress-Hardy Personality

Resistant to stress.

Meets challenges.

Finds opportunities.

Makes choices.

Gets involved.



Stress-hardiness has been defined as resistance to stress; rising up to meet the challenge of change as opposed to falling victim to it. It involves making a choice about how to respond to those things that happen in our lives. In addition, it means the ability to find opportunities in the midst of change or turmoil and staying completely involved and present in our life activities.

Hone Your Skills

Slide 9

- Laugh!
- Set goals.
- Be creative.
- Find balance.
- Attitude is a choice.
- Believe in yourself.
- Focus on your health.
- Focus on relationships.
- Remember, it's temporary.
- Be aware of your feelings.
- Expect what's coming next.
- Identify what you can control.

Hone Your Skills

- **Focus on your health.** Make wise eating decisions, exercise regularly, don't smoke, get adequate rest and use alcohol in moderation. Taking care of your health will give you the energy and internal resources necessary for resilience.
- **Focus on relationships.** Nurture your relationships with friends, family, co-workers and professional peers. Seek and accept their support and help when offered.
- **Remember, it's temporary.** Believe in a future that can be different from the present.
- **Expect what's coming next.** Look at patterns and trends. Try to anticipate what might be coming next. Develop a plan for dealing with change when it happens.
- **Be aware of your feelings.** Find healthy outlets for expression. Take what you can learn from any given situation and apply it as you move forward.
- **Identify what you can control.** those things in life we can control and manage those. Don't waste time trying to change what you can't.

Make a Plan

What ideas, behaviors, attitudes, feelings, techniques about building my resiliency did I gain from the training:

I will focus on applying these techniques by:

I will seek support for this from

(This could be a professional peer, friend, supervisor, group, books, audio or video files, or other resources that you may gather.)

I will review my progress one month from today: _____

I am satisfied that I have made sufficient progress.

I will choose another area of my professional behavior to address:

I want to continue to develop my skills and will review again one month from today

I commit to this action plan.

Signature _____ Date _____

About Professional Support

You may consider seeking professional support if you experience any of the following:

- Sleep problems.
- Performance issues at work.
- Relationship difficulties with family or friends.
- Loss of interest in hobbies you normally enjoy.
- Lack of care about normal everyday work tasks.
- Excessive anxiety or worrying more than normal.
- Feeling overwhelmed or sad for more than two weeks.
- A noticeable change in appetite, eating too little or too much.
- Behavior and coping methods have become harmful to yourself or others, whether that is through aggressive behavior or unhealthy habits, such as drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs.
- Thoughts of harm to self and/or others.

Keep in mind some of these conditions may warrant more urgent professional help and you should seek support if you are unsure.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees and their covered dependents and may include some free counseling sessions per issue, per year. Please check with your employer or your health plan for details.

Citations

American Psychological Association: How to choose a psychologist.

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/choose-therapist.aspx>.

Helpguide.org: Depression Symptoms and Warning Signs.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-symptoms-and-warning-signs.htm>.

Helpguide.org: Suicide Prevention.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention.htm>.