

What is Resilience?

Why it is some people can remain calm in the face of disaster, whilst others appear to fall apart? People that can keep their cool have what psychologists call resilience, or an ability to cope with problems and setbacks.

Resilient people are able to utilize their skills and strengths to cope and recover from problems and challenges.

These problems may include financial problems, illness, medical emergencies, natural disasters, divorce or the death of a loved one. Instead of falling into despair or hiding from problems with unhealthy coping strategies, resilient people face life's difficulties head on. This does not mean that they don't feel or experience grief, distress or anxiety; it means that they handle such difficulties in ways that develop strength and growth.

How to adapt to a stressful situation

What resilience provides

Resilience does not eliminate life's difficulties or everyday stresses, however people who have resilience understand that setbacks can happen and that life can be hard and painful at times. Resilience gives people the strength to tackle problems head-on, overcome adversity and move on with their lives. They still experience emotional pain, grief and sense of loss that comes after a tragedy, but their mental outlook allows them to work through such feelings and recover.

Reframe your thoughts

Resilience allows you to look at a negative situation realistically, and in a way that doesn't apportion blame. It allows you to focus on small ways to tackle the problem and make changes that will help. Focusing on the positive things you can do can help get you out of a negative mindset.

Seek Support

Having people you can trust and confide in is important for building resilience. Talking about the difficulties you are coping with doesn't make them go away, but sharing with a friend or loved one can make you feel like you have someone on your side. Discussing things with other people can also help you gain insight or even new ideas that might help you better manage the challenges you're dealing with.

Focus on what you can control

When faced with a crisis or problem, it can be easy to get overwhelmed by the things that feel far beyond your control. Instead of wishing there was some way you could go back in time or change things, try focusing only on the things that are in your control. Even when the situation seems difficult, taking realistic steps to help improve the situation, however small, can improve your sense of control and resilience.

Factors that contribute to resilience

Some individuals come by these abilities naturally, with personality traits that help them remain unflappable in the face of challenge. However, these behaviors are not just inborn traits found in a select few. According to many experts, resilience is quite common and people are very capable of learning the skills that it takes to become more resilient.

Factors associated with resilience include:

Having positive views of yourself and your abilities.

The capacity to make realistic plans and stick to them.

Communication

Seeing yourself as a fighter rather than a victim.

Emotional intelligence and managing emotions effectively.