

Building Resilience

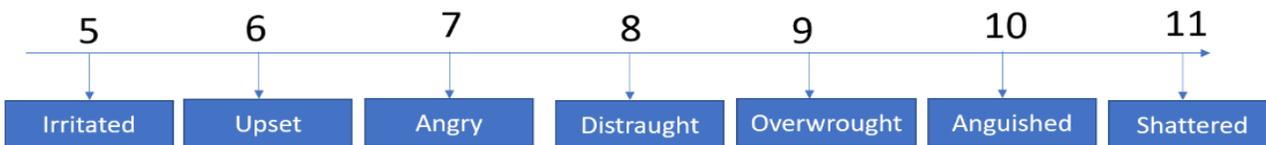
How does one build resilience?

1. Begin by asserting to yourself, “I am already resilient”.
2. I am resilient because,
 - a. I am excited about the future.
 - b. I plan ahead.
 - c. I think about the consequences of my and other’s actions.
 - d. I like to think about the pros and cons of a plan.
 - e. I make plans for the future and take concrete steps – for instance book travel six months ahead?
 - f. I look forward the next version of my personal device – phone/tablet/computer/video game?
 - g. I read a book that I know is in or will be a series and that’s why I chose it?
 - h. I get up and go about my day every morning no matter how bad the previous day was.
3. I can also add to my resilience by,
 - a. Knowing what stresses me.
 - i. Was it something that was said?
 - ii. Was it something that was not said?
 - iii. Was it a question that was unexpected?
 - iv. Was it something that was done?
 - v. Was it something that was not done?
 - vi. Is it a problem that recurs?
 - b. Figuring out what self-care activities help me the most.
 - i. What physical activities help me? – Exercise, Walk, Sitting on the grass
 - ii. What psychological activities help me? – Journaling
 - iii. What emotional activities help me? – Laughter, crying, screaming, silence
 - iv. What spiritual activities help me? – Prayer, Chanting, Faith-based
 - v. What relationships help me? – Specific family member, friend, spouse/partner, pet

- vi. What work activities help me? – Completing a task earlier than deadline, tacking pending email, taking on a challenge
- vii. What combination of above help me?
- viii. What doesn't help me?

Use the following scale to name or number the feeling:

Ask yourself: How good or bad is this feeling?



- c. If I feel between 8 and 11, my resilience is depleting, and I need to refuel:
 - i. Look at tomorrow's or even the next week's calendar.
 - ii. Take a deep breath (inhale four seconds by counting in my mind, hold and breath out).
 - iii. Squeeze a stress ball.
 - iv. Write or type a journal note.
 - v. Know and internalize that "This too shall pass" is not just a saying.

Additional Resources:

1. Building your resilience - <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
2. Five Science-Backed Strategies to Build Resilience - https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_to_build_resilience
3. Mental Health First Aid - <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/find-a-course/>
4. Find your Local Mental Health Authority (free MHFA provider where available)- <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/mental-health-substance-use-resources/find-your-local-mental-health-or-behavioral-health-authority>

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BREATHING

1. Close your eyes.
2. Inhale - deep breath while counting to 4 in your mind.
3. Hold for a second.
4. Exhale – elongated breath while counting to 8 in your mind.
5. Repeat for up to a minute.

COGNITIVE PROCESSING

S*T*O*P

S: Stop and take stock. What is my experience right now? Thoughts? Feelings? Physical sensations?

T: Take a breath. Use breathing technique above.

O: Observe your experience.

1. Examine thoughts, feelings and emotions. Remind yourself that these thoughts are not facts, they are not permanent.
2. Examine physical sensations. Tensions, body pains, slumped in chair, rigid shoulders, clenched jaw, shallow breathing.
3. Look around you again with fresh eyes. Observe without expectations of outcomes and with openness and curiosity to what might come next.

P: Proceed with something that further supports you. Walk around, drink a beverage, look outside the window, pet your dog.

MUSCLE RELAXATION

CLENCH AND UNCLENCH

1. Sit back in your chair or lie on a flat surface.
2. Notice all physical sensations.
3. Deliberately tighten your muscles – clench your fists, close your eyes, bring tension to your limbs, head, neck, torso, hold your breath – count to 10.
4. Now let go. Unclench everything.
5. Repeat twice.
6. Notice the difference between when you are clenched and when you unclench.

7. Are there some parts of your body that continue to stay tense?
8. Practice breathing as above to fully unclench.

ACCELERATE TO DECELERATE

- Practice this technique for when you feel most stress, anxiety or panic.
- Physical symptoms might include racing heart, quick shallow breaths, pounding in your ears.
 1. Get up.
 2. Run or quick jog in spot or across the room if possible.
 3. Try to make your heart accelerate faster.
 4. When you feel the pounding is louder – slow down your steps and stop.
 5. Now practice breathing to slow your heart rate and return to normal.

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