



Mental self-care: Building resilience

Sometimes we cannot control what goes on around us, but we can control the way we react to them. Resilience is the ability to adapt or positively respond to adversity. This mental flexibility and ability to persevere can help us face long-term and short-term difficulties, even daily annoyances. The good news: You can learn resilience. To help you bounce back and move forward in a positive way, the CDC and Mayo Clinic recommend the following skills to boost your resilience:

- **Recognize stress.** It is important to recognize what stress looks like for you so that you can appropriately cope with it and take care of yourself (CDC, 2020; Mayo Clinic, 2020). According to the CDC (2020), signs of stress include irritation, anger, denial, uncertainty, nervousness, anxiety, feeling helpless or powerless, trouble sleeping, over or under eating, feeling overwhelmed, sad or depressed, lack of motivation, trouble concentrating.
- **Maintain control with self-care and a consistent routine.** The CDC (2020) recommends eating healthy, going to bed and getting up at the same time, finding joy daily, spending time in nature, staying physically active, practicing stress management, and relaxation.
- **Connect with others and the community.** Strong, positive, and meaningful relationships provide a sense of purpose and acceptance (Mayo Clinic, 2020).
- **Find meaning in every day.** Set goals to provide purpose, meaning, and a sense of accomplishment (Mayo Clinic, 2020).
- **Learn from the past and from others.** Think about how you or someone else dealt with a challenge, and learn from it. What did you do that was helpful or not helpful? What could you have done differently? Use this as a guide for current and future behavior (Mayo Clinic, 2020).
- **Identify and accept things for which you have no control.** You may not be able to change the circumstance, but you can change your reaction to it. That includes acceptance and trust in your ability to adapt to the new challenge with less worry (Mayo Clinic, 2020).
- **Take initiative.** To help address a challenge, make a plan and take action. Don't just ignore the situation. Trust that situations can improve over time and with effort (Mayo Clinic, 2020).
- **Ask for help.** Being resilient is not about being a hero and solving life's challenges on your own. According to the Mayo Clinic (2020), a key factor in resilience is being able to reach out for help.

It is easy to dwell on a problem, feel like a victim, or become overwhelmed and anxious. As a result, people may turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as overeating, becoming physically inactive, or turning to substance use. While a setback or feelings associated with a difficult situation will not disappear, being resilient will help you reframe the event, keep functioning, and move forward in adversity. Resilience can take time and practice. But the effort is worth it as it can help improve your ability to cope and protect you from various mental health conditions including depression and anxiety.

References

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