

HEALTH HUB
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ADAPTING TO ADVERSITY: THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF RESILIENCE





Adapting to Adversity

WITH RESILIENCE, A CRISIS CAN BECOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO EVOLVE, INNOVATE, AND IMPROVE.

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Throughout life, everyone is likely to face stressful events, including adversity and trauma. These challenges can potentially lead to impaired brain function, the development of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other mental health issues. However, not everyone experiences these negative outcomes, especially when they possess the ability to be resilient ([Wu et al., 2013](#)).



Despite the hardships they encounter, many individuals can move past these difficult experiences and continue leading fulfilling lives. One of the most important ways to enhance the ability to overcome adversity, stress, and trauma is by learning how to build resilience.

Resilience is the ability to adapt positively to challenges and stress, while preserving both mental and physical well-being ([Wu et al., 2013](#); [Herrman et al., 2011](#)). It is developed by actively building skills to cope with difficult situations and recover from setbacks, and become better. Resilience enables individuals to adapt and grow, even in the face of adversity. Resilience is not an innate trait but rather a dynamic process that can be strengthened over time with intention and effort ([Leys et al., 2020](#)).

Although various factors, including social, personal, and environmental influences, affect a person's ability to cope with life's stressors, resilience can serve as a tool to anticipate and respond to change and crisis, enabling growth and adaptation. Resilience is not merely about overcoming a challenge; it's about embracing the change and growth that emerge from facing life's adversities. Resilience provides the navigation on the journey. With resilience, a crisis can become an opportunity to evolve, innovate, and improve ([Folke, 2016](#)).



Resilient Characteristics

Resilience acts as a tool not just for recovery, but for anticipating and adapting to change and crisis. In this sense, resilience goes beyond simply “bouncing back” from adversity; it encompasses the ability to grow through hardship and to find meaning, strength, or new direction as a result of challenging experiences.

Resilience offers a framework for navigating life's inevitable disruptions. With resilience, crises can be reimagined as opportunities for transformation. It encourages flexibility in thinking, the courage to face uncertainty, and the capacity to innovate and adapt in the face of adversity (Folke, 2016). Rather than avoiding distress or pretending hardship does not exist, resilience empowers individuals to engage with their pain and struggles in a constructive and healing way.



While some individuals may appear naturally resilient, this capacity can be cultivated through supportive relationships, access to resources, and intentional practice. Building resilience protects mental health and fosters a deepened sense of purpose, even in the most trying circumstances.

**“RESILIENCE IS NEITHER
ETHICALLY GOOD NOR
BAD. IT IS MERELY THE
SKILL AND THE CAPACITY
TO BE ROBUST UNDER
CONDITIONS OF
ENORMOUS STRESS AND
CHANGE.”**

— DIANE CONTU, *ON EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE*

Building Personal Resilience

Developing resilience involves a combination of psychological, emotional, and social strategies. Practices such as fostering meaningful connections, maintaining a hopeful perspective, honing effective problem-solving abilities, and committing to consistent self-care routines all play a role. Additionally, professional support, such as therapy, coaching, or peer support groups, can be invaluable in equipping individuals with tools to navigate challenges more effectively.

Ultimately, resilience is a lifelong process. It evolves as individuals encounter new challenges and learn from them. As circumstances shift, so too must the strategies for managing them. Resilience grows with reflection, experience, and an ongoing commitment to mental and emotional well-being.



Values Alignment

While there are different methods for developing resilience, one strategy involves embracing values as a compass. Aligning personal values with actions and goals fosters resilience by providing a sense of purpose, direction, and meaning. This, in turn, can help individuals navigate challenges and setbacks with greater strength and optimism.

Embracing our values goes beyond simply stating what we believe; it requires consistent action. We strive to ensure our words, thoughts, intentions, and behaviors are in harmony with the principles we deem important ([Brown, 2025](#)).

Meaning in the Moment

Another strategy is finding meaning in the moment. Viktor Frankl, a Jewish Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, was imprisoned in several concentration camps over three years during World War II. To survive the camps, Frankl felt he had to find some purpose. He envisioned himself giving a lecture after the war on the psychology of the concentration camp to help outsiders understand what he had endured. By creating concrete goals for himself, he rose above the sufferings of the moment as best he could. Through his difficult life circumstances during the war, Frankl developed a theory centered on a fundamental human drive to find purpose and meaning in life. The search for meaning is



a fundamental human need and can support both resilience and emotional well-being ([Coutu, 2002](#)).

When facing difficult situations, instead of adopting a “Why me?” or victim mindset, work to create meaning for yourself. Establish connections between the current situation and a better vision for the future to make the present more manageable and less overwhelming ([Coutu, 2002](#)).

**“WHEN WE ARE NO
LONGER ABLE TO CHANGE
A SITUATION, WE ARE
CHALLENGED TO CHANGE
OURSELVES.”**

— VIKTOR FRANKL, *MAN’S SEARCH
FOR MEANING*

Building resilience isn't about removing stress or steering clear of discomfort—it's about moving through life's uncertainties with prioritized values and a defined purpose. Find support and resources on the next page.

RESILIENCE SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Skills & Techniques

- **Grounding:** Use tactile experiences (touch, texture, temperature) to activate sensory awareness, calming your nervous system and managing stress or anxiety.
- **Join an Employee Wellness Mindful Moments:** Mindful Moments offers you a personal sanctuary to pause, breathe, and reset. Join our live guided sessions, explore our ever-expanding meditation library, or immerse yourself in unique experiences like "Journey to Inner Peace" and seasonal sound baths. It's more than just practice – it's your path to reconnecting with yourself, one peaceful moment at a time.
- **Positive Self-Talk:** Change your internal dialogue from "I can't handle this" to the more resilient "I'll figure this out step by step."
- **Daily Willpower Strengthening:** Consciously do one small thing you'd rather avoid each day. This consistent effort builds your willpower like a muscle.
- **60 Second Box Breathing:** Calm your nervous system and regain focus with this simple 60-second breath practice. Inhale for 4 seconds through the nose, hold for 4 seconds, exhale through the mouth for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds. Repeat this cycle for one minute

VEST Employee Assistance Program

Strengthen your resilience with the VEST Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This free, confidential service offers comprehensive mental health and well-being support, including:

- **24/7 Access:** Get immediate help for any situation through text or phone, connecting with a live person who will listen.
- **Counseling Services:** Free, professional counseling to help you navigate challenges.
- **On-Demand Courses:** Learn at your own pace with expert-led courses covering various mental health topics.
- **Wellness Coaching:** Personalized guidance to support your overall well-being.
- **Mental Health Tips:** Receive weekly text tips to maintain mental wellness.

Resilient YOU Employee Wellness Program

Feeling overwhelmed or close to burnout? The Employee Wellness Resilient YOU Program is here to help you turn those challenges into strengths. Designed for your pace, it provides recorded workshops, practical activities, and valuable resources to help you build resilience, effectively manage stress, prevent burnout, and ultimately, thrive in your life and work.