



*Making a meaningful, measurable difference.*

## THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

***Cultivating resilience is one of the most important things you could do for your mental health. Here's why, plus how to do it.***

What is resilience? It's an invaluable and cultivable quality that empowers us to navigate the unpredictable journey of life with grace and strength. It's not about pushing through adversity at any cost, but about responding and adapting to challenging life experiences in a way that safeguards your mental and physical well-being.

According to the American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology, there are a few factors that contribute to how resiliently someone handles adversity, including:

- The way you view and engage with the world
- The availability and quality of social resources in your community

- Specific, individual coping strategies.

The best part? Resilience is a trait that can be cultivated. So while you may not feel up to everything life throws at you right now, you can work on growing your resilience at each new challenge.

### **THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Your mental health and resilience are closely intertwined. The more resilient you are, the better you're equipped to handle times of stress.

Think of your mental health as a T-shirt in the wash. If the garment is made from a resilient material, it handles the agitation of the washing-machine drum and springs back to its original shape afterwards. The less resilient the fabric, the more likely it is to suffer damage after a few rounds with the spin cycle.



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There are cumulative mental-health benefits to practising resilience, too: the more you see your own resilience in action, the better you're able to view setbacks as temporary obstacles rather than overwhelming roadblocks, contributing to a more positive world view.

### **CULTIVATING RESILIENCE: PRACTICAL STEPS**

Now that we understand the importance of resilience, let's explore some practical ways to cultivate it.

1. **Develop a support system.** Being resilient doesn't mean going it alone. Surround yourself with friends, family and colleagues who you feel supported by when you're struggling.
2. **Practice self-care.** We're not talking about spa days and iced coffee. Take good care of your physical and mental health by exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet, getting adequate sleep, prioritising rest and scheduling your annual medical check-ups. You'll be better able to tackle life's curveballs if you're acting from a place of optimal health.
3. **Make a realistic game plan.** When a problem feels insurmountable, try breaking down the solution into manageable steps. With each completed task, your perception of your ability to manage the entire situation will grow.
4. **Maintain a positive outlook.** Try to mentally separate a difficult situation from the idea that your life is marred by difficulty in general. Optimism can be a powerful tool for building mental resilience. It's not about pretending everything is fine; it's about reminding yourself that this setback is temporary and that you are capable of navigating it.
5. **Learn from adversity.** Instead of dwelling on past failures, see them as learning opportunities. Reflect on what previous challenges have taught you, about both the world around you and your inner strengths. Embrace adversity as a teacher to emerge wiser and more resilient after each trial.
6. **Embrace change.** Life is a dynamic journey filled with changes. Resilience isn't just about enduring change; it's about thriving in it. Embrace transformation as an opportunity for growth. Whether it's a new chapter or an unexpected turn, approach it with an open heart. Change can be a powerful ally in building resilience.
7. **Seek professional help.** If you're struggling with your mental health, don't hesitate to reach out to a qualified counsellor or therapist.

### **References:**

Resilience [internet]. American Psychological Association. No date [cited 3 October 2023]. Available from: <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

10 Ways to Build Resilience [internet]. Verywell Mind. 2022. [20 September 2023]. Available from: <https://www.verywellmind.com/ways-to-become-more-resilient-2795063>

*The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a professional. E&OE.*



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