

Resiliency

What is “resilience?”

“An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change” and keep going (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Essentially, this refers to your ability to adapt well in the face of adversity or significant problems and “bounce back” from them.

Why is resiliency important?

Change and loss is an inevitable part of life. We all experience varying degrees of setbacks in our lives, from relatively minor (e.g., not getting into a class you wanted) to more major or disastrous events (e.g., tragic loss of a loved one, major natural disaster). The way we cope/deal with these difficulties can play a major role in our short- and long-term psychological outcomes.

What role does resiliency play?

Resilience is the most important resource we have to deal with change and loss. Having resilience allows us to use our skills, strengths, and resources to better and more quickly recover from difficulties. Lacking resilience, on the other hand, often leads us to feel overwhelmed by difficult experiences, resulting in experiencing greater psychological distress and slower recovery from challenges.

Do resilient people experience fewer challenges?

No. We cannot control what or how many challenges we may face in life, but we can control how we respond to them. Having resilience allows people to better cope with those challenges and related emotions more effectively. Also, resilient individuals have more confidence in their ability to handle difficulties that may arise and are better able to cope with stressful situations.

What are some characteristics of resilience?

A variety of characteristics/factors are associated with resilience. Some of them include:

- Managing emotions;
- Having a positive attitude and optimism;
- Having healthy relationships and a strong support network;
- Maintaining personal wellness; and
- Keeping goals and aspirations in mind.

How can I improve my resilience?

Everyone can learn and obtain resilience! Building your resilience takes time and effort, but you will experience benefits from doing so as you will be able to respond to challenges and bounce back more effectively. Some tips and resources for improving your resilience are:

Manage your emotions.

- Identify situations that are stressful or are difficult for you to handle.
- Identify how you are affected by these situations (e.g., psychological distress, physical aches/pains, and change in your behavior).
- Make an effort to become more aware of these situations and your reactions in-the-moment.
- Make an effort to modify unhealthy/unproductive reactions.
- Take care of your wellness (see below).
- Visit the [Counseling Center](#) for personalized support with stress management.

Examine your thought patterns.

- Accept that change and loss is a part of life.
- Learn from the past and make adjustments for the future.
- Nurture a positive view of yourself.
- Pay attention to thoughts that automatically arise, as our thoughts influence our emotions and behaviors.
- Increase your awareness of how you typically think about situations.
- Challenge counterproductive thoughts in order to develop a more adaptive thought pattern.
- Visit the [Counseling Center](#) for personalized support with your thought patterns.

Build a support network for yourself.

- Strengthen the quality of existing relationships and/or form new, supportive relationships.
- Enhance your communication skills.
- Reach out to your support network when you need assistance, guidance, and/or emotional support.
- To expand your social support network, try becoming involved in your residence hall, a student organization, or a local community partner. You can also expand your campus support network through working with your faculty members and reaching out to student support departments, such as the [Academic Success](#), [Counseling Center](#), and [Career and Professional Development](#).

Take care of yourself and your wellness.

- Care for and strive for balance of your Dimensions of Wellness: spiritual, occupational, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social.
- A variety of campus resources are available to support your wellness: [Interfaith Initiatives](#); [Career and Professional Development](#); [Academic Success](#); [Center for Community Engagement](#); [WORLD: International Learning](#); [Wellness and Recreation](#); [Health Services](#); [Counseling Center](#); [Cross-Cultural Center](#); and [Student Development and Campus Vibrancy](#).

Pursue your goals and aspirations.

- Setting realistic personal goals/aspirations gives us purpose and helps us keep moving forward.
- Visit [Career and Professional Development](#) and/or the [Counseling Center](#) for support with your personal goals/aspirations.

How resilient are you?

[Take this quiz](#) to get a general idea of your resilience, and then refer back to the items listed above for improving your resiliency. You can do it!

References

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