

Pain Foundations

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to adapt and cope with difficulties. It is about how you navigate the ups and downs of life's challenges.

Having resiliency does not mean that you do not go through the difficulty or the distress - you still do. However, it means that you have the resources you need to cope with life's challenges.



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Coping with life challenges

Your childhood, culture, society, and the amount of stress you have in your life, as well as other things, influence the methods you use to cope with life challenges. By the time you are an adult, your coping methods have often become a habit and are automatic.

We all use both healthy and unhealthy coping methods. It is helpful to reflect on whether the coping methods you are choosing to use are helping you live well. Your coping methods should align with your values.

Healthy coping

- Exercise
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Talk therapy
- Relaxation techniques
- Healthy eating
- Supportive relationships
- Pleasant activities and hobbies
- Gratitude or mindset
- Compassionate self-talk
- Humour and creativity
- Goal setting and habit tracking

Unhealthy coping

- Alcohol
- Gambling
- Overeating
- Self-Medicating
- Isolating or withdrawing
- People pleasing
- Over scheduling
- Unhelpful thinking
- Numbing-out or distractions
- Avoiding or procrastinating
- Denial

You can build your resilience

Your brain is able to heal and grow. Neuroplasticity allows your brain to build new pathways that are resilient. Below are six ways to help build your resilience.



Mental space

Having mental space involves freeing your mind from being overloaded with thoughts, and creating time for the following.

- Self-awareness: thoughts, emotions, behaviours, needs.
- Reflection: dream, learn, plan, set goals. Being open minded and looking at things from multiple perspectives.

To build mental space:

- Practice mindfulness
- Write a journal
- Set aside time so you can be alone with your thoughts, to reflect on your values, needs, and goals
- Seek out different perspectives

Hope

Hope is the good feeling you have when you see – in your mind’s eye – a path to a better future.

Hope is a powerful helper to keep you going in difficult times.

To build hope:

- Spend time with people who have a positive attitude
- Read or watch inspirational media
- Think about the positive things you have achieved
- Do not define yourself by your setbacks

Balance

Being intentional with how you spend your time will help you to have balance.

Distractions such as social media and the internet have a sneaky way of stealing your time. Balance the time you spend on your physical, mental, social and spiritual needs.



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from the Noun Project

To build balance:

- Remember the principles of pacing
- Set some boundaries
- Identify your values. Think about where you are spending your time and energy. Adjust as needed.
- Have a weekly check-in.

Connection

Connection is a sense that you belong and you are accepted.

Having a connection is more than having a relationship. It means you feel seen, heard, and valued. The relationship makes you feel energized and stronger.

Resilience can come from authentic connections with yourself, others, a higher power, or even the universe.



To build connection:

- Connect socially with people
- Connect emotionally with yourself and others
- Connect physically with your body
- Connect spiritually with your purpose or meaning

Gratitude

Gratitude means being thankful, and having a readiness to show thanks and to return kindness.

There are two key parts to practicing gratitude:

- Affirm the good things you have received.
- Acknowledge the role other people play in providing your life with goodness.



To build gratitude:

- Keep a gratitude diary
- Practice gratitude meditation
- Write a gratitude letter or note to someone
- Use gratitude gestures
- Practice gratitude affirmations

Self-compassion

Self-compassion means having the same compassion towards yourself that you would give to a friend or loved one who is suffering or going through a difficult time.

Self-compassion involves treating yourself with understanding and kindness rather than judging yourself harshly.

Self-compassion also includes realizing that everyone goes through times of suffering, failure, and imperfection. These are all part of the shared human experience.

To build self-compassion:

- Practice self-kindness instead of self-judgement when you are suffering.
- Take a balanced approach to your negative emotions. Use mindfulness to observe your feelings without exaggerating or suppressing emotions.
- Remind yourself that suffering is part of the shared human experience.

What stood out to me in this section?

Questions I still have on this topic

Gratitude Activity

I'm grateful for...

Write down 5 things that you are grateful for.

I'm learning...

Write down a challenging situation, person or obstacle that you faced.

Write down what you are learning from it.

Sending good vibes...

List 3 people who brought joy to your life today. It could be friends, family or even strangers. Send them some good vibes!

Today was...

Choose one moment of your day that made you happy.

Focus on it for a few minutes before you go to sleep.

I am looking forward to...

Write down something you are looking forward to today. Write down something you are looking forward to this week.
