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BOUNCIBILITY
Building resilience

Life is imperfect and crisis is guaranteed. There will always be setbacks and misfortunes. Resilience is the ability to adapt to the challenges of life. It's about bouncing back rather than falling apart. If you are strong in resilience you have this 'bouncibility' and can harness your inner strengths and coping mechanisms. Resilience is crucial! It's a lifeskill! We all need it and have to work on it.

If you are low in resilience, you will focus too much on your problems and deficits and be overwhelmed during challenges. You will be drawn towards unhealthy conclusions and become more vulnerable instead of stronger.

Becoming more resilient will not mean that problems disappear. It does not mean that you have to become 'as hard as nails'. Resilience is more about learning how to cope – tapping into your own resources and fostering more strengths in order to stay 'standing' after crisis. It's about coping better with stress and keeping health and crisis in the same room as each other. You can learn to be more resilient. Resilience is not about 'digging deep' and burying your feelings! It's not about 'weathering the storm'! It's not about 'keeping it all in'! Resilience is about experiencing natural emotions like anger, grief and pain but being able to go along with daily tasks and getting on with your life. It's about being your own best coach in crisis rather than your own worst enemy!!

SOME TIPS FOR RESILIENCE

Connect with people!

We are stronger by connecting with other people. We need this connectedness. Invest in positive relationships with family and friends. Accept their support. Reach out to them. They are a powerful resource during crisis. Get involved in your community. Surround yourself with people during tough times.

Harness your sense of spirituality

Try to see beyond the crisis. Do not let yourself be defined by the challenges you encounter. Have something meaningful to focus on. If you pray –pray more. Tap into your spiritual self and put your problems in context. No matter what you are going through there is someone going through much worse. It's hard to see it that way but try! Is there anything that you are grateful for? Focus on it too!

Have a laugh!

Seeing the funny side of things is not disrespectful or self-denial. Science has shown that laughter has mental and physical health benefits. If you cannot find humour during challenge, turn to other sources to create the sparkle. Dig out a funny book or movie. Buy tickets for a comedy show. Ring your good-humoured friend and tell him or her that you need a good laugh!

Tap into your own resources!

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You're not a total weakling! In the past you have tapped into strengths to carry you through other challenges. Build on these strategies. Look back on a previous challenge and focus on the things you did right during that period. Revisit the things that you did wrong and commit to learning from these mistakes this time! Don't repeat the same mistakes!

Harness hope!

It's never to late to get stronger. It's never too late to surprise yourself by how well you cope. But don't just 'wish' for more strength! Find something from each day that suggests that the situation is improving or that you are coping better. Try something tomorrow that will make you even stronger again. Start believing in yourself and expect yourself to cope better rather than waiting for yourself to fall apart!

Mind yourself!

Start daily exercise! Start doing the things that you love best and are best at! Start some new things as 'distraction' is very powerful. Get adequate rest and eat well. These are basic things but many people ignore them in crisis.

Keep a diary!

Sometimes we need to 'chat' to ourselves! We need to let the lid of the bottle rather than keep shaking it! Writing down how the day went, how we feel etc helps us unleash some thoughts/feelings that may be repressed. It can also help us see situations and a new way.

Embrace change and get ready for it!

Life will always means changes. It's a journey of twists and turns. Expecting change makes it easier to adapt when it happens. We have to learn to become more flexible and not become engulfed with anxiety when change beckons. Seek advice about pending change and how to make the best sense of it.

Set a new goal!

Set goals to accomplish for each day. These will help you get through each day and at night you can review these small successes and take strength from them.

Practise relaxation techniques!

Stressful situations are hard on us. We go through a lot of physiological changes when we are stressed. It's important that our bodies do not become too used to pumping adrenaline etc. We need to calm ourselves down and let our bodies know that we want 'calmness' as well as 'preparedness' during challenge. Deep breaths, visualisation, prayer, relaxation and yoga are good for us. Maybe join a relaxation class to help you through the crisis.

Becoming resilient takes time and practice. If you do not feel that you are making progress – or you just do not know where to start – consider talking to a counsellor/psychologist. Sometimes the best of us need this kind of help!