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# *Welcome to the Building Resilience after Trauma Workshop*



## Objectives

- You will learn the six Resilience Training competencies: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Optimism, Mental Agility, Strengths of Character, and Connection.
- You will learn skills that make you a better person by building your mental toughness. These skills will also develop your ability to understand your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of others.
- You will identify your top Character Strengths and learn to use these Character Strengths to overcome challenges and build effective teams.
- You will master skills to strengthen your relationships through communication strategies. You will learn how to praise effectively, respond constructively to positive experiences, and discuss problems effectively.

## Resilience Definition

- Resiliency is defined as the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. It is the flexible adaptation to the changing demands of stressful experiences. Resilient people tend to be optimistic, energetic, curious, open to new experiences; show high positive emotionality; and elicit positive emotions through humor and relaxation. These characteristics are like those that define mental toughness. Some argue that resilient individuals maintain a relatively stable level of functioning with only transient experiences of distress after trauma (Bonnano, 2004).
- Posttraumatic growth is defined as a positive psychological change experienced because of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1996). It is important to note that posttraumatic growth and resiliency are distinct concepts. The presence of resiliency seems to be a predictor of posttraumatic growth.

## Signs of Resilience

Resilient people often have a few different characteristics that help them weather life's challenges. Some of the signs of resilience include:

- A survivor mentality: When people are resilient, they view themselves as survivors. They know that even when things are difficult, they can keep going until they make it through.
- Effective emotional regulation: Resilience is marked by an ability to manage emotions in the face of stress. This doesn't mean that resilient people don't experience strong emotions such as anger, sadness, or fear. It means that they recognize those feelings are temporary and can be managed until they pass.
- Feeling in control: Resilient people tend to have a strong internal locus of control and feel that their actions can play a part in determining the outcome of events.
- Problem-solving skills: When problems arise, resilient people look at the situation rationally and try to come up with solutions that will make a difference.
- Self-compassion: Another sign of resilience is showing self-acceptance and self-compassion. Resilient people treat themselves with kindness, especially when things are hard.
- Social support: Having a solid network of supportive people is another sign of resilience. Resilient people recognize the importance of support and knowing when they need to ask for help.

## Types of Resilience

There are different types of resilience that we need to develop in order to support ourselves during challenging times. These include physical resilience, mental resilience, emotional resilience, and social resilience.

- Physical Resilience  
Physical Resilience is our body's capacity to meet physical challenges when they arise, such as sickness or accidents, to heal or manage ongoing physical health conditions.
- Mental Resilience  
Mental resilience refers to our ability to meet challenging circumstances through problem solving, coming up with viable alternatives, being agile, creative and flexible with our ideas and thinking. The ability to handle change to develop solutions to issues as they arise.
- Emotional Resilience  
Emotional resilience is how we manage our emotional response to challenges and deal with our feelings and 'negative' emotions like anger, fear, vulnerability or sadness. It's important to accept the reality of our situation but have the emotional strength to sustain ourselves through it. Emotional awareness or intelligence is key here, understanding how we react to challenges so that we can minimize the impact on both ourselves and others.
- Social Resilience  
Is all about our connection to other and how we can support each other through difficult times. Community, family, and friendship supports are all essential when we are navigating personal or collective challenges.

## Common Questions & Answers

Why is resilience important?

Resilience is important because it's needed to process and overcome hardship. Those lacking resilience get easily overwhelmed and may turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Resilient people tap into their strengths and support systems to overcome challenges and work through problems.

How do I know if I'm resilient?

A survey conducted by Everyday Health, in partnership with The Ohio State University, found that 83 percent of Americans believe they have high levels and emotional and mental resilience. Meanwhile, only 57 percent scored as resilient. Take the Everyday Health Assessment to find out your resilience score and learn what skills you should work on to become more resilient.

What are examples of resilience?

There is emotional resilience, in which a person can tap into realistic optimism even when dealing with a crisis. Physical resilience refers to the body's ability to adapt to challenges and recover quickly. Community resilience refers to the ability of groups of people to respond to and recover from adverse situations, such as natural disasters, acts of violence, or economic hardship.

## **Video**

Question: How does Richard Schwartz help clients build resilience after trauma?

How to Help Clients Build Resilience after Trauma with Richard Schwartz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7p5cTBduhY>

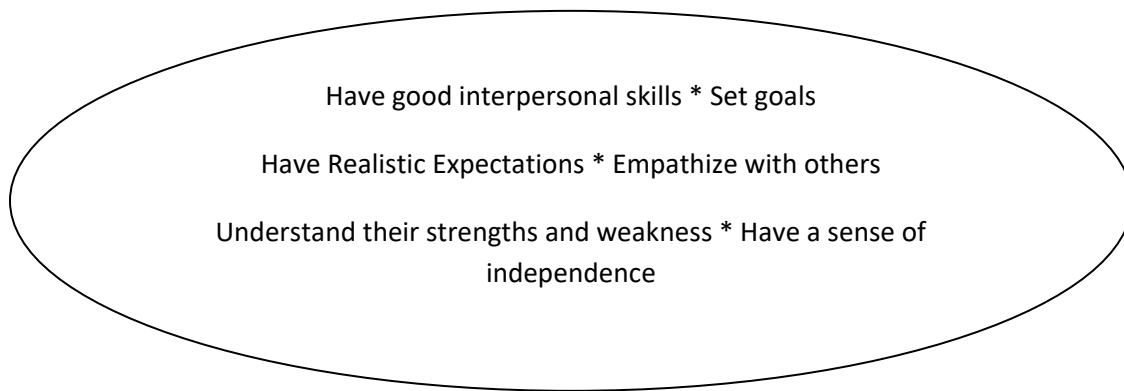
## **Quiz**

[Resiliency Quiz: "How Resilient Are You?" from the Resiliency Center](#)

## Benefits of Resilience

People who are resilient tend to be more hopeful, confident and possess higher self-worth during hard times. They are more likely to overcome challenges, recognize when they need support and develop coping strategies enabling them to handle difficulties more easily in the future.

Resilient people are also more likely to



## Steps to Build Resiliency

- Adopt an active coping style. Active coping, such as problem- focused coping and reinterpretation consistently appear as strong correlates to post-traumatic growth and seem to be more effective than passive coping styles. Cognitive processing that focuses on an individual's struggle to make sense of the trauma and the creation of a new worldview is an important part of active coping.
- Work toward acceptance. In the control-coping literature, it is generally believed that acceptance coping leads to better outcomes in situations where the person has no control over the event or environment. Those who can accept that the traumatic event happened and that it cannot be changed can then focus their energy on what they can control.
- Surround yourself with positive social support. This support can be from family, friends, and even strangers in a support network.

## **Building Resiliency with Self-Care**

### Physical self-care

- Get enough sleep - Release tension in healthy ways.
- Get regular physical activity - Take deep breaths.
- Eat regular, well-balanced meals - Balance work, play, and rest,

### Emotional self-care

- Know your vulnerabilities - Engage socially to avoid feeling isolated.
- Get help early on if you are feeling - Set limits, if necessary, when others are too.
- Reestablish a routine, if possible - Listen to music that soothes you

### Social self – care

- Be aware of withdrawal and isolation - Seek out others for social activities.
- Use friends, family, and community for support - Try to have fun.
- See how work can offer support.

### Spiritual self – care

- Use religious and/or spiritual resources
- Read inspirational works - Find creative ways to express yourself (i.e.,
- Practice gratitude

## **Resilience Training Competencies**

### Key Competencies that make you Resilient

#### Self-awareness

- Identify thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.
- Identify patterns in thinking and behavior, particularly counterproductive patterns.
- Be open and curious.

### Self-regulation

- Regulate impulses, emotions, physiology, and behaviors to achieve goals.
- Express emotions appropriately
- Stop counterproductive thinking.

### Optimism

- Hunt for what is good.
- Fight the Negativity Bias
- Remain realistic.
- Identify what is controllable.
- Maintain hope.
- Have confidence in self and team.

### Mental Agility

- Think flexibly, accurately, and thoroughly.
- Take other perspectives.
- Identify and understand problems.
- Be willing to try new strategies.

### Strengths of Character

- Know your top Character Strengths and how to use them to overcome challenges and meet goals.
- Have faith in your Character Strengths, talents, and abilities.
- Demonstrate “I am strong” attitude.



## Connection

- Build strong relationships.
- Use positive and effective communication.
- Develop empathy, tracking.

## Resilience Training Skills

1. Goal Setting: Understand the key components of the 7-step goal setting process and practice the skill so it can be used independently to plan for achieving personal and career goals.
2. Hunt the Good Stuff: Counter the Negativity Bias, create positive emotion, and notice and analyze what is good.
3. ATC: Identify your Thoughts about an Activating Event and the Consequences of those Thoughts.
4. Energy Management: Modulate energy to a level that is appropriate for the task-at-hand and that allows optimal performance.
5. Avoid Thinking Traps:
  - Catch yourself: Notice when you are spiraling into a trap. You might start feeling sad, panicky, or hopeless.
  - Be more realistic or holistic about your thoughts: Ask yourself, or talk with a trusted friend or family member, what's real and not real about your thoughts. What are the gray areas? Are you missing "in-between" possibilities that are more realistic?
  - Use a coping mantra: Come up with a phrase to help you answer your worries. You might try, "I'm doing the best I can, and I'm going to be OK."
6. Detect Icebergs: Identify and evaluate core beliefs and core values that fuel out-of-proportion emotions and reactions.
7. Problem Solving: Accurately identify what caused the problem and identify solution strategies.
8. Put It In Perspective: Stop catastrophic thinking, reduce anxiety, and improve problem solving by identifying the Worst, Best, and Most Likely outcomes of a situation.

9. Mental Games: Change the focus from, or compartmentalize, counterproductive thinking to enable greater concentration and focus on the task at hand.
10. Real-Time Resilience: Shut down counterproductive thinking to enable greater concentration and focus on the task at hand.
11. Identify Character Strengths in Self and Others: Identify Character Strengths in yourself and in others to recognize the best of yourself and the best of others.
12. Challenges and Leadership: Identify Character Strengths in yourself and in others to improve teamwork, overcome challenges, and to be the most effective leader you can be.
13. Assertive Communication: Communicate clearly and with respect. Use the IDEAL model to communicate in a Confident, Clear, and Controlled manner.
14. Effective Praise and Active Constructive Responding: Praise effectively to build mastery and winning streaks and respond to others to build strong relationships.

## **Goal Setting**

- Goal Setting, when done correctly, produces motivation, directs attention, increases effort and persistence, and promotes the development of new strategies.
- This 7-step Goal Setting process includes key components known to make goals more effective.

Step 1: Define your goal. Identify and commit to a goal and determine how your personal values support the pursuit of your goal.

Step 2: Know where you are right now Identify the benefits of achieving this goal, then reflect on the obstacles that presently stand in the way.

Step 3: Decide what you need to develop.

Based on the inventory from Step 2, determine what Priority Areas you must address in order to achieve your goal.

Step 4: Plan for steady improvement.

Within each of the Priority Areas from Step 3, determine the work you need to start doing and how you need to think to move towards your goal.

Step 5: Pursue regular action.

Once your plan is complete, develop strategies to start getting the work done and thinking in ways that will help you achieve the goal.

Step 6: Commit yourself completely.

Develop strategies to ensure you maintain sight of your goal and don't forget what it is you set out to achieve.

Step 7: Consistently monitor your progress.

## **Elements Necessary for Bouncing Back from Trauma**

Maturity of mind is the capacity to endure uncertainty.

–John Finley

Never give in—never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

–Winston Churchill

Life is not easy for any of us. But what about that? We must have perseverance.

and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted at something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.

–Marie Curie

Like the body that is made up of different limbs and organs, all mortal creatures exist depending upon one another.

–Hindu proverb

We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are.

–Anais Nin

If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress.

–Barack Obama

A life of reaction is a life of slavery, intellectually and spiritually. One must fight for a life of action, not reaction.

–Rita Mae Brown

When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot, and hang on.

–Franklin D. Roosevelt

## **Key Principles of Goal Setting**

Goal Setting can produce motivation, direct attention, increase effort and persistence, and promote new strategies.

You are more likely to achieve goals when the motivation comes from within you and is tied to your personal values.

Self-regulation: Self-regulation is a primary target of Goal Setting.

## **The ATC Model**

The ATC Model, originally developed by Dr. Albert Ellis, highlights the link between Thoughts and Emotions or Reactions. You use the ATC model to identify the Activating Event (A), your Heat-of-the-Moment Thoughts (T), and the Consequences (C) your Thoughts generate.

### **Activating Event**

- The trigger: a challenge, adversity, or positive event.

## Thoughts

- Your interpretations of the Activating Event, what you say to yourself in the heat of the moment.

## Consequences: ER

- E: Emotions
- R: Reactions

## Learn More About Resilience

### Books on Resilience

- Freedom From Anxious Thoughts and Feelings: A Two-Step Mindfulness Approach for Moving Beyond Fear and Worry, by Scott Symington, PhD
- Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy, by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant
- How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence, by Michael Pollan
- Resilient: How to Grow an Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength, and Happiness, by Rick Hanson, PhD
- Beauty in the Broken Places: A Memoir of Love, Faith, and Resilience, by Allison Pataki

## Examples of Resilience

Stories of public figures, celebrities, and other personalities who have overcome challenges in life can help others feel less alone.

- **Jennifer Hudson** The singer's mother, brother, and nephew were murdered by her sister's estranged ex-husband. In the wake of the tragedy, Hudson worked through her pain by creating the Julian D. King Gift Foundation. Named after her late nephew, the charity provides support and positive experiences to help children from all backgrounds grow into productive and happy adults.
- **Eminem** In his youth, the hip-hop star witnessed domestic violence, was bullied, and endured a rocky relationship with his mother. He also had to overcome addiction troubles. But he was able to channel his resilience through his music.

## Understanding Resilience

1. Write down three words that capture resilience:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. With your group, discuss resilience using examples from your personal experiences. What are the strengths, skills, and abilities you believe are critical for resilience?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Resilience Activities

### Thought Stopping Activity

Cognitive reframing can be a helpful technique to adjust maladaptive thinking and improve resilience. Recognize when you have a negative or unhelpful thought when you are interpreting an event. When you have the unhelpful, re-direct quickly. STOP and interrupt the thought pattern by following literal techniques:

- Picture or draw a big red stop sign or red flashing light
- Immediately say “STOP” to yourself
- Re-direct to a healthier thought immediately

### Gratitude Activities

The practice of gratitude is one of the most time-tested and proven methods for enhancing resilience. One study published in the Clinical Psychology Review confirmed the benefits of habitually focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of life on resilience and wellbeing. (Wood, et. al, 2010). Researchers Robert Emmons and Mike McCullough found that people who kept gratitude journals experienced improved wellbeing (2003). Select from the following:

- Every day for the next week, write down 3-5 things each day that you are grateful for.
- Start a gratitude blog/group text with friends.
- Write a letter of gratitude to people who are special to you.
- Tell people you see every day what you appreciate about them.

### Purpose Reflection Activity

Why are you?

Why do you get up in the morning?

What keeps you awake at night?

When are you most alive?

What does being successful mean to you?

How might you apply your gifts to a pursuit that is of deep interest to you and helps others?

What can you do to make a difference in one person's life, today?

What is your sentence (meaning, if you summarized your purpose in one 140 character sentence, what would it be)?

If you say yes to living purposefully, what do you say no to?

If you met an older version of yourself, what sage advice would they give you?

## Resiliency Plan

<b>SUPPORTS</b> that keep you upright	<b>STRATEGIES</b> that keep you moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Called my spouse/partner – 04xx xxx xxx</li> <li>• Called Mum – 04xx xxx xxx</li> <li>• Prayed/ drew upon my spiritual resources/faith</li> <li>• Conversation with trustworthy friend</li> <li>• Booked an appointment with a therapist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Went for a walk</li> <li>• Smiling Mind meditation app</li> <li>• Calming breathing technique</li> <li>• Played with/ walked my dog</li> <li>• Did some gardening</li> <li>• Wrote in my gratitude journal</li> <li>• Expressive writing</li> </ul>
<b>SAGACITY</b> that gives you comfort and hope	<b>SOLUTION-SEEKING</b> behaviours you can show
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remembered that growth comes from mistakes</li> <li>• “This too shall pass” - sticky note on the fridge</li> <li>• “Don’t worry about anything etc ...” Philippians 4:6</li> <li>• Thought about what I could do differently next time and wrote it down on paper</li> <li>• Believe that there is something better waiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked for feedback from job interviewers</li> <li>• Applied for 3 x new jobs</li> <li>• Sought professional coaching for job interviewing</li> </ul>

Sources:

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