



Building Resilience

Resilience is the ability to respond to life with a sense of control and to tolerate surprises or unexpected life events. Resilience goes beyond the capacity just to deal with life's problems, it is the ability to embrace and fully enjoy life with all its ups and downs. We only really know how resilient we are when life throws us a curve ball - like coping with a mood disorder.

The good news is our capacity for resilience grows from managing stressful events.

Resilient people share common qualities

- They seek ways to become independent.
- Take charge and make changes when life makes them unhappy.
- Learn from their experiences - good and bad.
- See new situations as a challenge rather than something to be feared or avoided.
- Find opportunity in a crisis and focus on solving problems.
- Are able to find meaning and purpose in the problems they face.
- Seek out people who support them and provide them with a good example of how to cope.
- Are able to laugh at themselves and find humour in their situation.
- Have the moral courage to do the right thing even if it makes them unpopular.

Restoring Balance and Self-Care

Families who focus only on illness lose a sense of overall balance in life. Over time the family can feel depleted and without hope. Healing and health comes from restoring normal routines for you, the person with the illness and your family. Here are some ideas to consider:

Restore healthy routines

- Eat regular well-balanced meals, even if you are not hungry.
- Make mealtime - family time. Find out how things are going for each member of the family.
- Exercise regularly - take walks or go swimming. Focus on the beauty around you and not the concerns and worries of life.
- Restore good sleep routines. Build in a consistent bedtime routine. Avoid stimulants like coffee and tea. Alcohol can cause sleep interruption.
- Get a check up from your doctor and share what is happening in your life.
- Make a weekly date to have fun and keep it!

Build your Supports and Self-Esteem

- Share your worries with trusted friends and family. Ask for their support - not advice.
- Make a list of people you care about - call a friend and go out to play.
- See a counsellor to help you cope and rebuild your confidence.
- Attend self-help groups - accept and give support.
- Get involved- volunteer to help others in your community.

Manage stress positively

- Avoid alcohol and drugs - they will only make problems worse.
- Limit your worrying - give yourself permission to take a break from problems.
- Practice recognizing and communicating all your feelings.
- Learn to express your needs directly.
- Develop ways to reduce stress by learning yoga or practicing meditation.
- Meet your spiritual needs.
- Create a "Things I Enjoy" - list and post it. Do one a week.