



Know the FACTS of Resilience...
“Bounce Back and Adapt”

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from crisis or adversity, and to adapt well to changes in your life. Everyone has the capacity for resilience, and you can learn to develop your resilience skills at any age. Resilient ways of thinking and behaving, which result in successful coping and adaptation to challenging situations, are summarized by the acronym *FACTS*.

Foster hope

Focus on the positive: A positive and optimistic outlook gives you the needed energy to face difficult situations directly. You imagine where you want to be, and how the future might contain new possibilities. Even in difficult times, your life has some positive aspects. Instead of expecting continued negatives, look for positives. (Change the channel in your mind from negative to positive). Visualize a future in which things are going well.

Have confidence in yourself: You’ve overcome problems before and you’ve seen other people do so successfully too. Remember those times. You have survived! Recognize that you have the ability to learn and use resilience skills to deal more effectively with stressful circumstances. Trust your ability to cope successfully.

Put things in perspective: Put your current problems into context and maintain a long-term perspective. Things won’t always be like they are now! Change is a natural part of life. You cannot always prevent bad things from happening, but you can control your reactions to them. Turn your energies toward coping effectively and supporting others in their problems. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. Notice small improvements in yourself and in the situation over time.

Act with purpose

Make a plan: Begin by clearly identifying the problem and brainstorming solutions. Then evaluate and choose the best options, and create an action plan. Realize that changing circumstances may require you to abandon old goals and adopt new ones, or use different strategies to reach your goals.

Move toward goals: It’s not enough to have a plan, you need to take decisive steps to solve the problem and reach your goals. Rather than being overwhelmed by the magnitude of situation, try to focus on small, achievable steps you can take to move in the right direction. Avoid focusing on tasks that seem unachievable. Take time to reflect on your progress and celebrate your accomplishments.

Engage in active coping: A crisis will bring out strong emotions. That’s normal. You can cope with this in many ways, such as talking to someone you trust or writing your thoughts and feelings in a journal. Face problems directly. Some “strategies” don’t work, like avoiding doing anything or just wishing problems would go away. Coping with alcohol or drugs won’t help. And becoming angry with others or blaming other people isn’t helpful either. Actually, these are not effective methods for stress management and may contribute to prolonged distress.

Connect with others

Maintain relationships. Close, positive relationships with family and friends are a buffer against stress. Share your thoughts and feelings with someone who you can trust to listen without trying to “fix it”. Draw comfort and strength from the support of others who care about you. Remember: you need other people and they need you too!

Give and receive help: People come together in time of crisis. Accept the help that is offered to you. Do what you can to help others and serve your community. You are important and remember: helping others benefits the helper.

Spend time with others: Take time for social activities with friends and family. Come together with people who share your interests and beliefs. Being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope.

Take care of yourself

Take care of your body: When your body is working right, the rest of you feels well and you are better able to face difficult challenges. You do yourself and others a favor by eating nutritious foods, getting adequate sleep, and staying physically active. Healthy habits in addition to good hygiene will help protect you from a variety of illnesses.

Take time to relax: It’s easy to feel guilty for taking time to relax. But relaxing activities not only provide a restful break, but also helps you enjoy life. Then you are better able to face stressful situations.

Nurture your spirituality: What is important to you? How can you make a difference in the world? Find activities that bring clarity of purpose and a sense of connection, such as meditation, religious practices, or spending time in nature.

Search for meaning

Find positive meaning: We want a meaningful life which can bring us inner peace during difficult and stressful times. Search for positive meaning in the crisis or challenging situation you have experienced.

Learn about yourself: Think about the stressful experience. What you did to deal with it? What have you learned about coping and about yourself? Pay attention to what worked well, and what you would like to improve.

Look for personal growth: Our struggles with problems and adversity often give us positive growth. Look for changes such as renewed appreciation for life, closer relationships, deeper spirituality, and a greater perception of inner strength.

Additional Resources

For more information about developing resilience, go to www.apa.org/helpcenter and www.liveyourlifewell.org. If you want to talk to someone about fostering resilience in times of disaster, call American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health at 701-364-1800. *This information provided by Red River Resilience (March, 2010).*