

DECREASE CHRONIC STRESS:

Build resilience

Barn's burnt down...

Now I can see the moon.

- Masahide

There is no way of avoiding change and loss in life. Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. People very commonly demonstrate resilience. Being resilient does not mean that one doesn't experience extreme difficulty, stress or distress. Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned, developed and practiced by anyone. Developing resilience is a skill that leads to a healthier and more balanced life.

How high is your resilience today? How are you coping with stress today? In which of the following areas would you benefit by developing a bit more support or skill? Circle the top three that you would like to increase. Take steps or seek resources to make this happen.

Markers of Resilience

- Create a strong connection with others – supportive and caring relationships both within and outside of the family. Relationships that create love, respect and trust and provide positive role models help bolster your ability to cope.
- Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how we interpret and respond to these events.
- Acknowledge change – change is a constant in life. To expect otherwise weakens your resilience.
- Make realistic plans and goals and take steps to carry them out.
- Develop a positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Become skilled in communication and problem solving.
- Learn to manage strong feelings and impulses.
- Choose to shift your perception – problems are most stressful when they seem insurmountable. Acknowledge that even disasters can bring individuals closer together and loss can help you find your inner strength and help you shift to more significant values.
- Create a daily practice of restful time or activity – minimum of 30 minutes per day. Spend time in activities that slow your nervous system and restore your body.