

Building personal resilience

Resilience is one of the key personal attributes professionals will require in the next decade. The great news is that we can by our own efforts, and how we interact with our environment, influence our level of resilience.

It may help you to get a sense of your current level of resilience as a starting point. There is a good 50-item resilience questionnaire devised by The Psychometric Project (a collaborative project between UK universities and research students). Go to: <https://www.psychometrictest.org.uk/resilience-test/>.

Here are some useful hints and tips for building and maintaining your resilience capability:

- **It's not just about 'bouncing back'**

Bouncing back is an important part of being resilient, but it is not enough. We need to reflect on each situation that challenges our resilience and take the learning forward to develop a greater sense of purpose in overcoming adversity. This will enable us over time to reduce the number and intensity of dips and leads to a higher tolerance for risk and anxiety.

- **Maintain perspective**

When faced with challenges, step back from the situation, try not to catastrophize, and ask yourself how important the issue is on a scale of 1-10, and how important will it be in six months' time. Look for the opportunities and meaning in the situation and focus on the things that you can change or influence.

- **Manage your emotions**

When faced with challenges, allow the time you need to recognize, own and process your emotions without being swamped by them. It is not the situation itself that causes stress, it is how we react to a situation. Acknowledge others' emotional responses by showing support and understanding.

- **Focus on your purpose**

Congruence between our work and our personal values is an important element of resilience. Finding meaning and purpose at work depends on whether our work makes sense to us and we believe it to benefit some greater good. If this is not the case, question whether you are in the right role/environment and decide what to do about it (or make a conscious choice not to do anything).

- **Stay connected**

Having support networks in place at work and in our personal lives enables us to develop strategies for dealing with stress. Build wide networks both to provide tangible help and to provide two-way support.

- **Channel your physical energy positively**

Maintain a healthy life balance, take regular exercise, get enough sleep and engage in enjoyable leisure activities that help you relax. We all need something that helps us 'switch off'. It's important to find what works for you.

- **Be kind to yourself**

We are all human; resilience does not mean we are invulnerable. Develop your self-compassion (I recommend Paul Gilbert's *The Compassionate Mind*) and explore whether Mindfulness could help you stay grounded.