A Personal Guide to Building Resiliency and Coping with Change

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Objectives

- Recognize what defines resiliency, from flexibility to a positive outlook
- Increase self-awareness about personal and work conditions that trigger stress in you
- Learn new ways of thinking about changes in your life that will boost your resilience

Quote

"Stress is not what happens to us. It's our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose."
Maureen Killoran

"The ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without 'falling apart,' by actively and positively coping with stress."
Stein and Book

"Ability to adapt to adversity, roll with the punches and bounce back stronger, wiser and more determined."
Washington State Employee Assistance Program Resiliency Project

"Resilience is a positive construct which enables individuals to overcome stressors or withstand negative life events and, not only recover from such experiences, but also find personal meaning in them."
Grant and Kinman
Based on this initial overview, how would you rate your resilience at this time?

A. Not resilient  
B. Somewhat resilient  
C. Neutral  
D. Resilient  
E. Very Resilient

Components of Resilience

Resiliency Builders

- Ability to bounce back
- Strength of Mind
- Positive Thinking
  - Mental Reassurance
  - Strength of Character
  - Confidence

Our Perceptions Affect How We Cope
Reactions to Stress

See the situation as a challenge

You have more of an impact on stress than the stressor event

See the situation as a problem

Stressor event has more of an impact on you

The Effects of Stress on You

- **Emotional**—Often impacts our mood, causing us to be easily agitated, feel depressed or emotionally depleted
- **Cognitive**—Contributes to inability to concentrate on the task at hand, or forgetfulness
- **Behavioral**—May cause us to change our behaviors; overeating, increasing caffeine intake or alcohol consumption, or neglecting our exercise routine
- **Physiological**—May be associated with muscle tension, gastrointestinal concerns, or general fatigue

Stress Busters

- Practice letting go.
- Breathe slowly and deeply.
- Practice speaking more slowly than usual.
- Use a time management technique.
- Go outside for a quick break.
- Drink plenty of water and eat small, healthful snacks.
- Check your posture.
- Plan a reward for the end of your day.

Source: Stoppler, 2014
It’s Time to Try Relaxing!

- Helps you to avoid becoming overly stressed
- Helps you to calm your thoughts and productively work through a stressful event
- Enables you to end your day in a relaxing way

Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Changing your breathing will allow you to think more clearly.
- Changing your thinking will allow your breathing to slow and become deeper.
- Steps to take:
  1. Sit back in your seat.
  2. Make your hands comfortable.
  3. Close your eyes.
  4. Take a deep breath, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.
  5. Breathe again.
  6. Repeat until you feel calm and settled.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

1. Find a quiet place.
2. Find a comfortable position that supports your head and neck.
3. Close your eyes and take deep breaths.
4. Tighten the muscles in your hands (clench your fists) for 4 seconds, and then release.
5. Repeat this process with other muscles in your body.
6. Focus on letting go of the tension in that muscle area.
7. Finish with slow and even breathing.
Safe and Effective Stretching

Three Tips Before You Begin Stretching
• Take a general review of the area to be stretched.
• Do all stretches gently and slowly.
• Stretch only to the point of tension.

In Conjunction With Regular Stretching
• Move around.
• Drink plenty of water.
• Practice deep breathing.

Survey

Which statement best describes your reaction when you are faced with stress or a change?

A. I take a deep breath and move ahead.
B. I smile and think, “Oh well.”
C. I get angry and vent to anyone who will listen.
D. I cry and want to run and hide.

Why We Dislike Change

• Fear of the unknown
• Perceived risks
• Lack of control
• Loss of structure or schedule
• Perceived losses, such as a loss of
  – Security
  – Relationships
  – Trust
  – Competence
The Three Phases of Change

Initial Reaction (Emotional)
- Shock and disbelief
- Anger
- Sadness, grief, and loss
- Guilt
- Anxiety and uncertainty

Intermediate Reaction (Intellectual)
- Change in trust level
- Confused thoughts
- Fatigue
- Resistance

Final Healthy Reaction (Acceptance)
- Voicing your thoughts
- Making a conscious decision to let go of the past
- Seeking balance in your life
- Defining the new situation
- Continuing to learn
Healthy Reaction: Acceptance Phase

- Establishing clear objectives
- Being proactive
- Looking for opportunities
- Reframing the situation
- Focusing on the positive
- Taking care of yourself and others

Survey

Which statement best describes how you have adjusted during COVID-19 Pandemic?

A. I was initially really scared, but have adjusted and have made the best of it. I learned...
B. I was confused, didn't know what to believe, and I still have a lot of questions.
C. I am still angry at times, and still need to vent about how this effects so many.
D. I just want it to be over and get back to the way things were.

Tips for Responding to Change

- Seek support from friends and family.
- Take steps toward a more hopeful attitude.
- Try not to get caught up in rumors.
- Find opportunity in change.
- Learn about the new situation.
• **Acknowledge your feelings**—Stress and change are normal occurrences in life; how they affect you is determined by how you prepare for and respond to both.

• **Develop a plan**—Establishing goals and identifying the steps for goal achievement aids in keeping stress at bay and allows you to feel a sense of control over outcomes.

• **Reduce stress**—Take time out every day to engage in stress management; challenge mental barriers to successful stress management and embracing change.

• **Take steps to care for yourself**—A balanced lifestyle is essential to the successful navigation of both stress and change; remember, balance is key.

• **Seek professional help if needed**—Working with a mental health professional or a counselor through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may assist you in developing and sticking to a plan.

**Available Services through your EAP**

• EAP Services are available to employees and their household members

• Confidential

• EAP Counselors are available 24/7/365 via 844-243-4440

• Up to 4 in-person counseling sessions

• Management Consultations

• Financial/Legal Consultation & Referral Services

• Childcare/Eldercare Consultation & Referral Services

• Convenience Services

• [www.EAPHelplink.com](http://www.EAPHelplink.com) Company Code: USGCares