

Resilience

Most people seem to adapt well over time to very challenging and stressful life experiences, which can be termed 'resilience'.

Resilience is that quality that some people seem to have, more than others, to cope and be strong even when they go through difficult times or events.

Resilience is described as the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges (Luther, Cichetti & Becker, 2000).

Resilience can be learned

Research demonstrates that resilience is in fact 'ordinary' and not necessarily a trait possessed by so-called 'extraordinary' people.

Being resilient doesn't mean that you won't experience pain and emotional distress in a difficult or traumatic situation, but it does mean that you can regain your balance and strength and perhaps even be stronger afterwards than you before.

It involves learning certain attitudes, skills, behaviours and thoughts, which anyone can do.

Change the World

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Enquiries

**Student Counselling, Career and Development
Centre
Nelson Mandela University**

<http://counselling.mandela.ac.za>

counselling@mandela.ac.za



mandela.ac.za

Resilience

The building blocks of resilience

1. **Caring and supportive relationships**
(That involves love, trust, encouragement, security and positive role models)
2. **Coping skills** (Making, managing and executing plans, positive self-esteem, believing in yourself, good communication and problem-solving skills, regulate emotions and impulses)
3. **Understanding** (Yourself, others and the world around you)
4. **Meaning** (Spiritual beliefs, knowing your purpose)

Becoming more resilient

Look and develop your personal well-being
(For more information, please consult the 'Wellness' pamphlet)
Think of one area of your life you would like to change:

Build your happiness

Think of one activity you enjoy doing:

Think of one activity that you are good at:

Think of one thing you can do to create more meaning in your life:

★ Write down one good thing that happened today:

★ Write down one thing you are grateful for:

★ Write down one amazing thing about yourself:

Personal resilience builders

Get connected. Build good relationships with friends and family. Accept support when it is offered. Getting involved in community groups, faith-based groups and helping those who are in need.

Overwhelming obstacles. We sometimes cannot prevent the occurrence of stressful events, but we can decide how we will respond to them.

Acceptance. Those situations that you cannot change and focus on those you can change.

Keep your goals in sight. Try to do something regularly that brings you closer to achieving your goals.

Action. Problems and stresses won't generally disappear unless you take concrete action to address them.

Self-discovery. Experiencing difficulties often teaches us important things – like relationship skills, increased self-esteem and gratitude for blessings.

Build confidence. Have faith in your problem solving ability and your intuition.

Focus on the big picture. Even when things appear particularly distressing and difficult, maintain your perspective.

Stay optimistic. This enables you to attract the good things that you want in your life to you.

Nurture yourself. Your own needs and feelings are important. Do things you enjoy and keep physically and emotionally 'fit'.

Question yourself. How have you coped with stressful life events in the past? This may help you in your response to the present situation.

Be flexible. Work on achieving a balance between allowing yourself to experience the pain of a stressful situation and withdrawing to nurture yourself with rest and support from loved ones.

Create your own strategy. Writing about your thoughts and feelings, speaking to a counsellor, meditating and accessing your spirituality can bring hope and a sense of connectedness.

Inner strengths

Wisdom and Knowledge

(Creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning and perspective)

Courage

(Bravery, persistence, integrity and vitality)

Humanity

(Love, kindness and social intelligence)

Justice

(Citizenship, fairness and leadership)

Temperance

(Forgiveness/mercy, humility/modesty, prudence and self-control)

Transcendence

(Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality)

Research has shown that becoming aware of one's strengths is not enough to increase one's happiness in the longer term. One needs to deliberately look for and create opportunities to use one's strengths in one's daily life, consistently invent new ways of using one's strengths – this contributes significantly to building one's happiness and strengthening one's resilience.

Know and develop your inner strengths

★ Name 2 strengths you feel that you have within you:
(For example, courage, wisdom)

★ Name 2 ways you can improve on the strengths you have chosen:

Available Resources

NMU South Campus: **041 504 2511**

NMU North Campus: **041 504 3222**

NMU Missionvale Campus: **041 504 1106**

NMU Second Avenue Campus: **041 504 3854**

NMU George Campus: **044 801 5047**

In case of an emergency, please use the following numbers for assistance:

NMU Protection Services: **041 504 2009 or 041 504 3483**

Suicide Emergency Line: **0800 567 567 or SMS 31393 for a call back**

Life Line: **0861 322 322** (Counselling available 24/7)

SA Anxiety Group 24-hour helpline: **0800 12 13 14**

Note: Student Counselling services are confidential, free of charge to registered Mandela students and offered by qualified counsellors and psychologists.