

Building Resiliency During Challenging Times

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Saying that this year has not been easy on us is an understatement. Between a global pandemic, economic decline, job loss, financial distress, social isolation, racial injustice, political battles, and children forced to engage in remote learning while parents juggle careers, it is easy to see why so many of us are struggling mentally. Feeling overwhelmed, looking at an uncertain future, and a loss of control can lead to depression, anxiety, or even panic. Left unchecked, anxiety and depression can negatively affect our sleep, our relationships, our work, and our daily functioning.

Developing resiliency is an important factor in handling life's challenges. Resiliency is the ability to continue to function through tough times without getting derailed by stress and anxiety. Getting in the right mindset can help us navigate tough times. The way we think has a direct impact on our feelings and actions. We can choose to view our current situation with pessimism and negativity, but does that really help us feel better? You do not have to like nor agree with your current situation, but it is important to accept your current reality and move on.

Examine your surroundings and identify things that are within your control. Remember, the one thing you have 100% control of 100% of the time is how you react and respond to a situation. It is ok to give yourself some time to be upset, but do not lose yourself to the worry and fear. Times are tough, but so are you. Challenge yourself to find the silver lining. Practicing daily gratitude is one way to develop resiliency. Take the time each day to reflect on at least one thing you are grateful for; focus on the one thing that is going well.

Do not lose sight of your past experiences and successes in handling times of adversity. How did you handle challenges in the past? What did you learn about yourself? What strengths do you have? Instead of viewing your situation as a challenge, view it as a learning opportunity.

Although the following will sound cliché, make sure to hydrate, eat well balanced meals, get enough sleep, exercise as able, and engage in self-care. Lose yourself in a good book or carve out the time to take a bath. If you are a religious or spiritual person, your faith can be a great source of comfort and strength. Just because we are told to stay physically distant from others does not mean that we need to socially isolate.

It is important to maintain healthy relationships with family, friends, or other support groups. When we feel connected to others, we do not feel alone in our time of need. Knowing when to seek help is a true sign of strength. Physical symptoms of anxiety can include impaired sleep, rapid heartbeat, frequent headaches, dizziness, or digestive issues. Now, more than ever, it is important to reach out to others. And remember, you have made it through all your worst days so far and you can make it through this, too.