

Resilience



Emmy Werner was one of the early scientists to use the term *resilience* in the 1970s.

- The first research on resilience was published in 1973.
- The word **resilience**, meaning 'the act of rebounding', was derived from Latin word 'resiliens', which means 'to recoil or rebound'.

- The term “resilience” is reserved for unpredicted or markedly **successful** adaptations to negative life events, trauma, stress and other forms of risk.
- Personal resilience is the capacity to maintain **well-being** and work performance under pressure, including being able to bounce-back from setbacks effectively (Robertson Cooper Ltd., 2013)
- Our natural resilience is a combination of **personal characteristics** and **learned skills** .

- Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors.
- Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary.
- People commonly demonstrate resilience.



- Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty 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 and developed in anyone.



Factors in Resilience

- Many studies show that the primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family.
- Relationships that create love and trust, provide role models and offer encouragement and reassurance help bolster a person's resilience.

Several additional factors are associated with resilience, including:

- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out.
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Skills in communication and problem solving.
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.
- All of these are factors that people can develop in themselves.

Strategies For Building Resilience

- Developing resilience is a personal journey.
- People do not all react the same to traumatic and stressful life events.
- An approach to building resilience that works for one person might not work for another. People use varying strategies.

- Some variation may reflect cultural differences.
- A person's culture might have an impact on how he or she communicates feelings and deals with adversity.
- For example, whether and how a person connects with significant others, including extended family members and community resources.

- With growing cultural diversity, the public has greater access to a number of different approaches to building resilience.
- Some or many of the ways to build resilience in the following pages may be appropriate to consider in developing your personal strategy.



10 ways to build resilience

1. Make connections.

- Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important.
- Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience.
- Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

2. Avoid seeing crises as unbeatable problems.

- You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.
- Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better.





3. Accept that change is a part of living.

- Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations.
- Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

4. Move toward your goals.

- Develop some realistic goals.
- Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals.
- Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"





5. Take decisive actions.

- Act on adverse situations as much as you can.
- Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

6.Look for opportunities for self-discovery.

- Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

7.Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

8.Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

9.Maintain a hopeful outlook. An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

10. Take care of yourself.

- Pay attention to your own needs and feelings.
- Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Exercise regularly.
- Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.




Learning from your past:

- Focusing on past experiences and sources of personal strength can help you learn about what strategies for building resilience might work for you.
- By exploring answers to the following questions about yourself and your reactions to challenging life events, you may discover how you can respond effectively to difficult situations in your life.

- What kinds of events have been most stressful for me?
- How have those events typically affected me?
- Have I found it helpful to think of important people in my life when I am distressed?
- To whom have I reached out for support in working through a traumatic or stressful experience?
- What have I learned about myself and my interactions with others during difficult times?
- Has it been helpful for me to assist someone else going through a similar experience?
- Have I been able to overcome obstacles, and if so, how?
- What has helped make me feel more hopeful about the future?

Characteristics of Resilient People

Resilience

- 
- Ability to "bounce back" and "recover from almost anything"
 - Have a "where there's a will, there's a way" attitude
 - Tendency to see problems as opportunities
 - Ability to "hang tough" when things are difficult. That means being determined and do not give up.
 - Capacity for seeing small windows of opportunity and making the most of them

- Have deep-rooted faith in a system of meaning
- Have a healthy social support network
- Has the means/wherewithal to competently handle most different kinds of situations
- Has a wide comfort zone
- Able to recover from experiences in the panic zone or of a traumatic nature

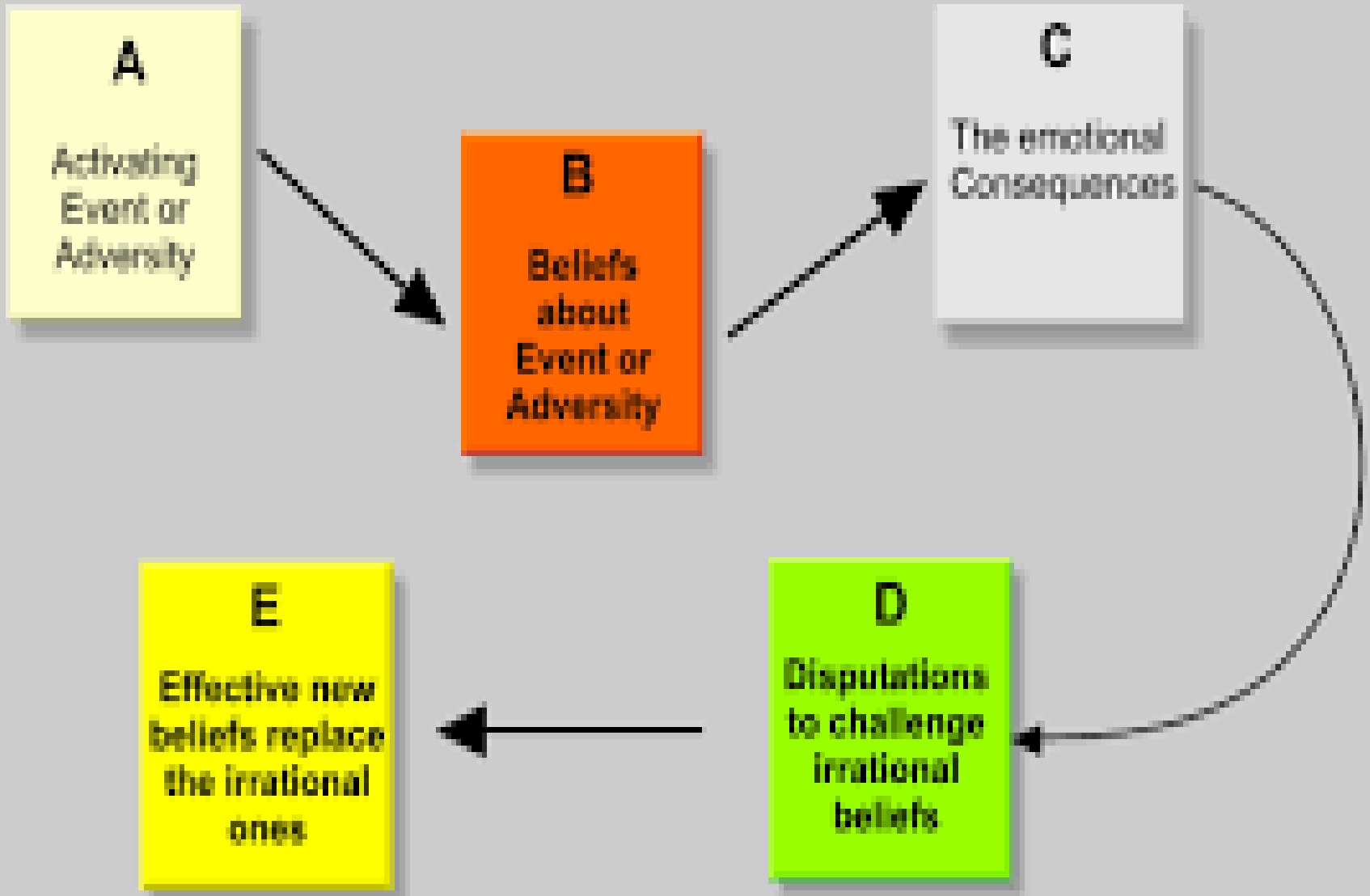
Practice Your ABC's

The ABCDE model is often used in different resilience programs and is particularly useful in breaking down a given adversity and seeing how it's our beliefs about what happened that is causing us to feel a certain way, not the event itself.

- This allows for a greater level of awareness about our own reactions and subsequently a more adjusted and healthy response to adversity.
- The model is composed of 5 steps:
 - **Adversity**
 - **Beliefs**
 - **Consequences**
 - **Disputation**
 - **Energization**

Where:

- A- Adversity (the issue or event);
- B -Beliefs(automatic pessimistic beliefs about the event);
- C -Consequences (of holding that belief);
- D -Disputation (your conscious arguments against your pessimistic belief);
- E -Energization (what you feel when you've disputed your Beliefs effectively),
- The above **ABCDE technique** can increase resilience and decrease depression levels



Example:

Adversity:

You gave a presentation and didn't use your allocated time and stumbled in a few places.

Belief:

I'm really bad at public speaking. I always make a mess of it. I really ought not to do it again because I'll just be as bad. My boss must think I'm not up to the job.

Consequences:

You turn down appointments to speak and therefore let your fear get the better of you. If you speak again you are very nervous and apprehensive and therefore much more likely to make mistakes.

Disputation:

I haven't had much experience of giving presentations. That was only my third. The head of department spoke for less time as well and no-one was bothering about it. A number of people asked me questions and were interested in what I was saying. Kevin even said he liked my slides and he isn't one to say positive things to people. I might not have been that fluent but I was ok and if I can conquer my nerves I should be better next time.

Energization :

E for the energization that occurs when you dispute it successfully (this simply means to pay attention to how you feel (e.g. lighter, more energized) as a result of disputing your negative thoughts)

- These steps offer the keys to building resilience which involves recognizing any unfavorable thought patterns, finding the true reason behind the emotions, recognizing the negative impact of these emotions, learning to challenge them with varied ideas and thus begin choosing new more effective courses of action.

Padesky (2009) –**4 stage model** for Resilience building:

- Stage 1 -Identify strengths
- Stage 2 – Construct a map of your resilience strengths
- Stage 3 – Apply to other areas
- Stage 4- Practice using them

The Resilience Theory

The Resilience Theory states that resiliency is determined by both risk and protective factors (Greff, Vansteenwegen & Ide, 2006; Zauszniewski, Bekhet & Suresky, 2009). Let's have a deeper look at these conditions.


- **The Risk Factors:** These are the factors that pose a threat to caregiver resilience and **mental health**, examples of these include elements such as stigma, isolation and occupational restrictions (Zauszniewski, Bekhet & Suresky, 2009).
- In relation to cognition, an example of a risk factor could be if a caregiver chooses to appraise their situation as life threatening, burdensome and stressful (Zauszniewski, Bekhet & Suresky, 2010).
- **The Protective Factors:** These are factors that facilitate and foster resiliency. They tend to focus predominantly on positive cognitions.
These factors improve a caregiver's response to stress and strain, producing a positive outcome (Zauszniewski, Bekhet & Suresky, 2010). There are said to be 7 main determinants for conquering adversity in order to become resilient, stronger, more flexible and healthier (Zauszniewski, Bekhet & Suresky, 2010, Marsh et al., 1996):
- **Acceptance:** Refers to tolerating what is perceived to be undesirable behavior from a relative with mental illness, and the ability to understand the deeper role of that behavior, its importance and value. Acceptance that you cannot change another's behavior, but that you can change the way you perceive it.

The Resilience Theory Continues...

- **Hardiness:** This refers to internal strengths such as cognitive and behavioral flexibility, endurance, control and commitment. Resilience flourishes from the ability to accept the challenge, and use active problem solving techniques when looking after a loved one with a mental illness.
- **Mastery:** Is when family members believe they have a sense of control over the situation, or that perhaps they hold the belief that they are the masters of their outcome. It is a form of coping that facilitates adaptation and a sense of competence.
- **Hope/Optimism:** This has been said to be an integral component of coping. It is produced through positive memories and interpersonal relationships, which facilitate fresh insights and a sense of purpose.
- **Self-efficacy:** A caregiver's belief that they are both competent and confident in dealing with stressful events is important. It has been said that higher levels of self-efficacy are related to more effective management of problems.
- **Sense of coherence:** Is when an individual believes that the world is manageable and meaningful. It refers to a global perspective and orientation towards life. It is the way in which all family members come together and combine their strengths and shared values to manage the tension and strain in a given challenging situation.
- **Resourcefulness:** Being 'thrifty' when it comes to utilizing positive cognitions to cope effectively through positive thoughts, feelings and behaviors. It also refers to being willing to seek help from others when needed.

A 'resilient survivor' is an individual with a combination of damages and strengths, however they predominantly hold positive insights, independence, positive interpersonal relationships, initiative and humor (Marsh et al., 1996).

Examples of Resilient People

- Who can you think of as examples of resilient people? I m thinking here of people such as
- **Helen Keller**
(blind and deaf from birth, demonstrated remarkable resilience in learning how to communicate and live with passion)

“Life doesn’t get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient.”

– Dr. Steve Maraboli