

# Build Resilience in times of Stress

Stress can come into our lives in many ways. Some we can anticipate and others take us by surprise. Because we may not be able to avoid stress, it's important to have strategies for managing it. Building your resilience can help you manage on a day-to-day basis. Resilience is the ability to adapt well to difficulty, change, or other sources of stress. Being resilient doesn't mean that you will not feel stress or anxiety. It does make it more likely that you'll be able to manage that stress and feelings of anxiety or uncertainty.

## How can you adjust the way you think to encourage resilience?

**Focus on what you can control.** There are many things you can't control in difficult situations. Thinking too much about those things can weigh you down. Focus on the things you can control – thoughts and actions – you can reclaim a sense of power over what happens next. Taking active steps to manage the challenges can also help you'll feel more resilient.

**Seek out the positive.** When faced with difficulties, push yourself to see what remains good and manageable in your world. You may still struggle, but this balanced perspective can help you feel stronger.

**Learn from experience.** Identify what has worked in the past when you have faced challenges. Remind yourself of your strengths. You may want to keep a list of your strengths or success nearby. Turn to them when you need a reminder.

**Be mindful and aware.** Focusing on the present moment without judging what you're experiencing as good or bad can help build resilience. Take brief opportunities during the day to stop and take a few deep breaths. As you do, bring your attention to the present. Notice and appreciate the world around you using all your senses. Let stressful thoughts of the past or future pass like clouds moving across the sky.

**Improve your self-control.** Managing your emotions can help stress or change feel less overwhelming. Get in the habit of checking in with yourself when you start feeling overwhelmed. Try rethinking your worries when this happens. Ask yourself, "What is the worst that could happen?" Think through the possibilities. Then imagine how you might prepare for them or perhaps make changes to avoid these outcomes. It may help to set aside time in your day to focus on what is worrying you, instead of letting those thoughts take over your day.

## Action steps to prepare for change and practice resilience:

**Build a support network.** Staying connected to others can help you feel more resilient. Having a strong support network is like a safety net that helps to cushion the extreme effects of stress. The encouragement of friends and family can also make you feel stronger and more prepared when stress hits.

**Focus on healthy self-care.** This means eating nutritious foods regularly throughout the day. It includes staying hydrated, exercising regularly, and getting restful sleep on a regular basis. Make time for activities that are enjoyable.

**Explore your options.** Challenges can open a door to a world of opportunities, but it doesn't always feel like that. Try to see all the options in front of you. Push yourself to identify and explore different options. This can help you develop short and long term plans, which can give you a way forward instead of feeling stuck.



New Leaf wellness center 

(915) 313 - 4114

10921 Pellicano Suite 110, El Paso Texas 79935

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