

Resilience

What can I do to build resilience

There may be times or situations in your life that are more difficult than others. The capacity to stay mentally well during those times is called “resilience”. Here are some ways that you might be able to develop and strengthen your resilience

Talk about the way you feel

If you are facing difficult times, talking about the way you feel with someone you know and trust, can often help. Your colleagues, friends or family may be able to offer you practical help or advice and give you another perspective on what is causing your problems. Even if they can’t help, often just talking something through and feeling there is someone to listen and understand you can make you feel much better.

Build healthy relationships with people

Building and maintaining constructive relationships with people is an important part of staying mentally well. If you spend time around positive and supportive people, you are more likely to have a better self-image, be more confident and feel able to face difficult times. If you do not have the social contact you feel you need, or experience feelings of loneliness because of your work patterns or for any other reason, this can also have a negative impact on your mental wellbeing.

Look after your physical health

If you have good physical health, you are more likely to have good mental health. Sleep patterns, diet and physical activity all have an impact on your mental wellbeing. Sometimes it can be difficult, or even impossible, to maintain regular sleep, diet and exercise patterns because of work. If this is the case, try to establish as much regularity as you can, or set aside to look after your physical health after busy or stressful periods.

Do something you enjoy

Doing something you enjoy can improve your confidence and help you stay well. Make time to do things you like, whether it’s cooking, seeing your friends or doing DIY. Learning something new or taking up a new hobby, can also boost your confidence and occupies your mind in a positive and active way. If you want to try a new hobby, think about what you are good at or things that you have always wanted to try. You can find information about volunteering organisations and local groups, clubs or classes at your local library, in local newspapers or magazines or on line.

Set yourself a challenge

Set yourself a challenge that you can realistically achieve. This doesn’t have to be anything particularly large, but should have meaning for you. For example, you might decide you are going to write a letter to your local paper or start going to a regular exercise class. You will feel satisfied and proud of yourself when you achieve your goal and feel more positive about yourself as a result.

Relax

It’s important to make time to relax, even if you don’t feel under stress. This may mean going away for the weekend, spending an evening doing something you like, or even just taking a five minute break to look out of the window. Learning a relaxation technique, such as breathing exercises, yoga or meditation, can also help you relax and reduce stress levels.

Identify mood triggers

Knowing what affects you moods can help you take steps to avoid or change the situations that have a negative impact on you. Even if you can’t change the situation, knowing your triggers can help you remember to take extra care of yourself during difficult times. For example, you may realise that eating certain foods or seeing a certain person has an effect on your mood. Or you may tend to experience a particular mood at a particular time, such as in winter. Keeping track of your moods in a mood diary can help you work out what affects your mental wellbeing and recognise changes in your mood that would be difficult to spot otherwise. You can create your own mood diary or there are lots to choose from on the internet.

Look after yourself during difficult times

Everyone has times when they face challenging situations and find it difficult to cope. If you are experiencing a difficult time, or are unwell, it's important to look after yourself and try to get through. Be careful not to put too much pressure on yourself to carry on as normal. You may need to take a break from your usual responsibilities, for example, reducing your social activities or workload. Take small steps and don't expect too much of yourself. Try to get enough sleep and eat regularly. If you are finding it difficult to cope on your own, don't be afraid to ask for help. For example, you may need time off work or help with day to day tasks such as a cleaning or childcare.

Stay safe

If your feelings become overwhelming and you have suicidal thoughts or you think you may self-harm remember that you can pick up the telephone at any time of the day or night and talk to the Samaritans

Learn to accept yourself

One of the most important steps in maintaining mental wellbeing is to learn to accept yourself. If you value yourself, you are more likely to have positive relationships with other people and find it easier to cope with difficult times in your life.

Here are some tips to increase your self esteem

1. Don't strive for perfection
2. Acknowledge your positive qualities and the things you are good at
3. Learn to identify and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns
4. Use self-help books and websites to help you challenge your beliefs
5. Spend time with supportive people
6. Be assertive - don't allow people to treat you with a lack of respect
7. Engage in hobbies that you enjoy

Here are some websites and contact numbers that may be of use to you and your friends:

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| Kooth | (Free anonymous on-line counselling and support) visit website www.kooth.com |
| Bromley Wellbeing Bromley Y | Tel: 0203 770 8848 or email: info@bromley-y.org.uk or visit website https://www.bromley-y-org.uk |
| Childline | Tel: 0800 1111 or visit the website https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support |
| Charlie Waller Memorial Trust | Tel: 01635 869754 or visit website https://www.cwmt.org.uk/ |
| Samaritans 24 hour hotline | Tel: 08457 909090 or email jo@samaritans.org |
| Bromley Bereavement Service | Tel: 0208 768 4591 |
| Young carers | Tel: 0800 015 7700 |
| Snap Metro Youth (LGBTQ) | Tel: 0208 801 0400 or visit website youth@metrocharity.org.uk |
| Mermaids (Gender diversity) | Tel: 0808 801 0400 or visit website http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk |
| Mind | Tel: 0300 123 3393 or visit website www.mind.org.uk |