

Seasons of Faith and Hope

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RESILIENCE

Psychological resilience is an individual's ability to adapt successfully to life tasks in the face of social disadvantage or highly adverse conditions. Adversity and stress can come in the shape of family or relational problems, health problems, or workplace and financial worries, among others. The ability to bounce back from a negative experience with "competent functioning" requires resilience, which is found in the average individual and it can be learned and developed by virtually everyone. Over time, resilient individuals have developed proper coping techniques that allow them to navigate effectively around or through crises. People who demonstrate resilience are people with optimistic attitudes and are able to balance effectively negative emotions with positive ones.

The American Psychological Association suggests "Ways to Build Resilience":

- Maintain good relationships with close family members, friends and others.
- Avoid seeing crises or stressful events as unbearable problems.
- Accept circumstances that cannot be changed.
- Develop realistic goals and move towards them.
- Take decisive actions in adverse situations.
- Look for opportunities of self-discovery after a struggle with loss
- Develop self-confidence.
- Keep a long-term perspective and consider the stressful event in a broader context.
- Maintain a hopeful outlook, expecting good things and visualizing what is wished.
- Take care of one's mind and body, paying attention to one's own needs and feelings.
- Get adequate restorative sleep. Poor sleep patterns and stress go hand-in-hand.

- Engage in adequate physical exercise daily. Exercise is a major buffer against stress, including stress from depression.
- Maintain a healthy diet and keep your weight within a desired range. You will have fewer health-related problems.
- Nourish your quality social support networks through reciprocally supporting others who support you. Quality social support correlates with higher levels of resiliency.
- Meet challenges as they occur and avoid procrastination and the stresses that come from it and crises that arise from delays.
- Build tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty and you are less likely to experience anxieties related to a need for certainty.
- Express higher-order values, such as responsibility and integrity. This gives you a compass for taking a sound direction.
- Work to build high frustration tolerance. High frustration tolerance, cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving actions are normally interconnected.
- Stretch to achieve realistic optimism. This is a belief that you can both self-improve and act to make things more workable for you. You exercise realistic optimism by acting to do and get better.
- Boost resilience with preventive actions where you reduce your risk for negative thinking and increase your chances for realistic thinking.

Source: Saint John Vianney Center Colloquia for Women Religious Leadership