



You may think you're not very resilient.

The word "resilient" might bring to mind all of the struggles and setbacks that have plagued you in your life.

You might be thinking about how hard it is to recover from some of the worst ones. You may be thinking, *"I'm not resilient at all. Look at how often I've struggled to get back up!"*

If you're thinking any of these thoughts, then you are probably one of the most resilient people. You have suffered, you have struggled, you have waded through a seemingly unstoppable tide of difficulty – and you have survived.

The human capacity for burden is like bamboo – far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance.

Jodi Picoult

We tend to think of resilient people as those who are unaffected by the challenges of life, or who take a setback with a smile and laugh in the face of their obstacles. But this is not resilience.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, again and again, with every obstacle we face.

Before you read on, we thought you might like to [download our 3 Resilience Exercises for free](#). These engaging, science-based exercises will help you to effectively deal with difficult circumstances and give you the tools to improve the resilience of your clients, students, or employees.

This Article Contains:

- [4 Resilience Activities for Adults](#)
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- [4 Resilience Building Games for Kids in Primary School](#)
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The person showing little emotional distress in difficulty is not necessarily displaying resilience. The person who fails and feels intense negative emotions, yet tries again the next day, is displaying resilience.

Put simply, resilience is the ability to adapt and we can all demonstrate resilience. Granted, some people may be more resilient than others, but it is not an immutable trait or characteristic that you either do or don't have. Resilience is a learned ability and one that you can build.

Resilience is not the absence of distress or difficulty. Resilience is the ability to adapt and grow following adversity.

Some of these resilience activities and exercises may help you develop your resilience, while others might make you realize how resilient you already are.

Either way, the outcome is more confidence in your ability to bounce back.

Read on if you're ready to learn more about how to boost your resilience and meet challenges with confidence in yourself and your ability to succeed, even after failure.

4 Resilience Activities for Adults



We'll provide several resources for building resilience, but first, let's take a look at what the American Psychological Association has to say about building resilience.

According to the APA, there are [10 ways to build resilience](#), many of which will be applied in the training, exercises, and activities listed later:

- Making connections and building your social support network;
- Avoiding the tendency to view crises as insurmountable challenges;
- Accepting that change is a natural and unavoidable part of life;
- Moving towards your (realistic) goals;
- Taking decisive actions that will help you face your challenges;
- Looking for opportunities for self-discovery;
- Nurturing a positive view of yourself and your abilities;
- Keeping things in perspective and in context;
- Maintaining a hopeful outlook on life;
- And taking care of yourself (APA, "10 Ways").

These ten basic principles of improving resilience can be applied on your own, in a guided therapeutic relationship, or in training and courses on resilience.

PositivePsychology.com Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass

If you're a helping professional seeking a comprehensive resource to help your clients build resilience, take a look at our Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass.

In this course, you'll gain science-backed tools to show your clients how to navigate life's ups and downs with poise and resilience, enabling them to improve their overall well-being.

The course comprises six modules.

1. Positive Psychology 2.0

You'll begin by delving into the darker side of the human experience, often triggered by adverse events. In doing this, you'll gain the skills to teach and apply positive psychology principles in a holistic and balanced way.

2. Resiliences

Next, you will discover the characteristics that make up a resilient person and the four key elements of resilience. The modules that follow explore these four elements in more detail.

3. Attention

In Module 3, you will learn about the first element of resilience—attention. In this module, you'll develop an understanding of how resilient people direct their attention to positive and negative life events.

4. Thoughts

The second element of resilience you'll learn about regards thoughts. In this module, you'll gain a range of practical tools and exercises to help your clients direct their thoughts in constructive ways based on the best scientific practice and theory.

5. Action

Resilient people are quick to adopt adaptive coping strategies in the face of negative events. Module 5 will teach you to arm your clients with these strategies.

6. Motivation

What drives resilient people to persist and engage in positive coping in the face of adversity? This final module will answer this question and teach you about the last key element of resilience—motivation.

The [Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass®](#) includes a range of useful materials, including live recordings, a workbook for your clients, 19 PowerPoint presentations, and extended usage rights to save you time developing your own materials.

Adult Resilience Program

This program is intended for teenagers and adults over the age of 16. It is offered online and is especially helpful for older students dealing with stress or pressure from school, family, and upcoming transitions.

This program will help participants:

- Identify their feelings and develop empathy;
- Control and regulate difficult or intense emotions;
- Learn relaxation techniques;
- [Practice mindfulness](#);
- Prevent bullying, for both bullies and victims;
- Resist peer pressure and develop positive relationships;
- Compromise in difficult situations and avoid conflict;
- Choose appropriate role models;
- Set realistic and [achievable goals](#);
- Learn organizational and focus skills;
- And develop non-internet-based friendships and relationships.

This course is delivered through five sessions of 2 to 2.5 hours and guided by a facilitator.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this training endorsed by the World Health Organization.

Samaritans Resilience Training



The Samaritan's organization trains for adults in their "Building Resilience and Wellbeing" course.

This course helps participants:

- Explore the connection between [emotional health](#) and resilience, and understand how resilience can positively impact our lives;
- Assess their own resilience skills;
- Recognize the indicators of stress and identify sources of support;
- Learn the Keys of Resilience;
- Identify practical steps they can take to build resilience;

- And build a personalized action plan.

The course generally takes place over one day and can be delivered at locations throughout the UK.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this course.

Reaching In Reaching Out (RIRO)

If you're a parent, coach, therapist, or mental health professional seeking a more structured approach to helping clients or children build resilience, the Reaching In Reaching Out Resiliency Skills Training program can help.

It consists of 12 hours of training divided into two parts:

Part 1 helps adults build their own foundation in resilience and learn resiliency skills they can model and encourage in their children. These skills include:

1. Identifying and strengthening resilience abilities.
2. Using strategies to stay calm and focused when experiencing stress.
3. Recognizing how thoughts can affect [the ability to cope](#).
4. Challenging thinking patterns that hinder resilience.
5. Generating alternative ways to deal with conflict and stress.

Part 2 teaches participants how to apply these skill to children, through:

1. Modeling the skills and fostering resilience in children.
2. Using their own resiliency skills to help them understand their children's or clients' behavior.
3. Incorporating resiliency skills into their work by using child-friendly approaches.

This training can be completed in two full days, four half-days, six after-work sessions, or 10-12 brief sessions.

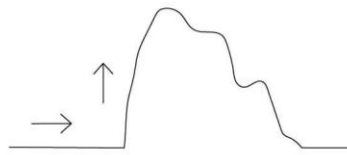
To access the RIRO skills training, click [here](#).

10 Ways to Develop Resilience

1. Make connections and building your social support network.



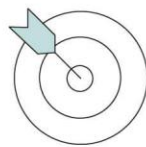
2. Avoid the tendency to view crises as insurmountable challenges.



3. Accept that change is a natural and unavoidable part of life.



4. Move towards your realistic goals.



5. Take decisive action that will help you face your challenges.



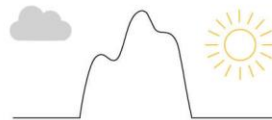
6. Look for opportunities that promote self-discovery.



7. Nurture a positive view of yourself and your abilities.



8. Keep things in perspective and in context.



9. Maintain a hopeful outlook on life.



10. Take care of yourself.



Four Themes of Resilience training:

Resilient Thinking



Effective Relationships



Managing Emotions



Building on Strengths



You can download the printable version of the infographic [here](#).

4 Resilience Worksheets for Youth and Students

There are many resources out there to help students and youth build resilience, including worksheets that they can work through on their own or with the guidance of a trusted adult. A few of these worksheets are listed below.

1. Coloring in for Emotional Clarity

The goal of this worksheet is to help children and students explore their feelings through color.

At the same time, it's a good way to help them gain some insight into the feelings they experience in different situations.



To guide students through this worksheet, ask students to recall a recent emotional experience. This could be positive, such as an exciting birthday party, or negative – like an argument with a friend.

The instructions are simple: have the students close their eyes and try to reconnect with their feelings during that situation, color in the Mandala in a way that represents how they feel.

They can use a variety of colors or just one color, as well as their own choice of materials – however it should best represent their feelings.

After they have colored each section in, discuss the color(s) with them. Ask them to reflect on why they chose the color or colors they used, and use questions and active listening to open up more dialogue if you feel it will help.

This [Coloring in for Emotional Clarity](#) worksheet can help students discover and express their own feelings, as well as help parents or teachers, learn about how the student or child is doing with each area of their life. Before issues can be addressed and learned from, they must first be discussed.

2. My Gifts – Traits and Talents

Completing this [exercise can help children](#) and students recognize and appreciate the talents, strengths, and positive traits they have. Encouraging kids to see them as “gifts” adds a fun twist to the whole activity as your child creates a creative “gift box”.

To guide you through this exercise, you will need:

1. Gift box template (find this in the worksheet)
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Markers
5. Craft items to decorate with (such as stickers, sequins, glitter, etc.)
6. Small pieces of paper with different gifts, traits, and strengths written on them.

Begin by explaining that this exercise will focus on who you are inside.

The first step is identifying the gifts, traits and talents that students feel they have. These include qualities like:

- Modest
- Considerate
- Patient
- Creative
- Calm
- Gentle
- Helpful
- Bubbly
- Kind

There is also space at the end of this page to write down a few qualities or characteristics not already listed, so encourage students to be creative if they think some of their “gifts” or good qualities are missing.

The second step is for students to share these traits and talents that they chose. Students should describe why they chose each gift or quality and give examples of how these qualities fit them.

Step Three is to give students the gift box cutout provided. Have them cut along the dotted lines and arrange the box, then decorate it with their name, their favorite color(s), or any of the craft items they would like to use.

Click the link to download [My Gifts – Traits and Talents](#).

3. Learning From My Work

This exercise helps students learn from how they did on a particular assignment or task and learn how to improve in the future.

In order to develop resilience, it's important to be realistic about setting and striving towards goals, learning from one's mistakes, and trying again.

This worksheet presents nine dichotomous pairs of statements with a scale in between. The student should be instructed to indicate on the scale how they feel in regards to these two opposite statements.

The statements include:

- *"I did better than I thought I would" vs. "I didn't do as well as I imagined"*
- *"I pushed myself and worked hard" vs. "I could have tried a bit harder"*
- *"I took a chance by trying out something new" vs. "I stuck to what I knew, because that's what I feel sure of."*
- *"I changed my work as I went along" vs. "I stuck to my approach throughout"*
- *"I listened to others' feedback" vs. "I kept going using my own approach"*
- *"My work and ideas were my own" vs. "I had help from other sources"*
- *"I was clear on the task" vs. "I was unsure what I was supposed to do"*
- *"I'm satisfied with my results" vs. "I'm not content with my results"*
- *"I was working on a deadline" vs. "It was a continuing project"*

Use the students' responses on this [Learning From My Work](#) exercise to help them discover where they are satisfied with their work and where they could devote more attention. Encourage them to do better next time, and emphasize that their performance is always a work in progress.

If they feel they have failed themselves or their teacher, help them to see that failure is a crucial part of life and not the end of the world when we learn from it.

4. What Is Hope?



This simple worksheet can help students learn to [develop hope](#) and build resiliency.

It will guide students through a thought exercise in what hope is, how they tend to think about and experience hope, and how to facilitate greater hope in their lives.

This worksheet includes a series of questions to help students explore this topic, including:

- Aristotle once said: *“Hope is a waking dream.”* What do you feel this means to you, personally?
- Have your own hopes changed throughout your life? How?
- What are three of your biggest aspirations right now?
- How has being hopeful, or feeling hopeless, influenced choices you’ve made?
- Has anything happened to you that caused you to lose hope?
- What kind of things, people, or activities give you hope? Where do you feel your hope, or your hopelessness, comes from in life?
- In what ways do your surroundings give you more or less hope? How have they given you more or less hope in the past?
- What kinds of things need to occur for you to feel more hopeful about your life?

You can find this worksheet [here](#).

4 Resilience Building Games for Kids in Primary School

Primary or elementary school is an excellent time to begin building resilience. Children are so adaptable already that introducing the idea of resilience is much easier than teaching resilience to adults.

There are many resources out there for helping build resilience in young children, but games are certainly one of the best ways. Listed below are some of the best games for teaching resilience in primary or elementary school.

1. I Love My Classmate



This is a great game for helping foster kindness in children. [Kindness](#) is important on its own, but learning kindness for others in addition to the self is also vital as a piece of resilience.

This game is played with a number of chairs formed into a circle. Make sure there is one less chair than the number of players.

The game is played in the following steps:

1. The person standing in the center of the circle begins by saying “I love my classmate, particularly my classmate who...”, completing the sentence with a piece of information that is true for him- or herself. For example, the player could say something like “... particularly

my classmate who has a cat” or “... especially my classmate who plays hockey.”

2. As soon as s/he is finished, everyone who this applies to (including the person in the center) moves from their chair to an empty one that is not right next to them.
3. The person who remains in the middle begins a second round of the game.

This game will help children get to know each other if they don't already know each other well, learn about what they have in common with others, and practice kindness towards one another by repeating the phrase “I love my classmate.”

Download the instructions for [I Love My Classmate](#).

2. It's Not a Secret...

This game can be played with only several pairs of children and some space. If there is an odd number of children, you can play with them to make an even number.

To play, separate students into pairs of two and designate one of them as student A and the other student B.

Instruct student A to listen to student B for a specified amount of time, perhaps 15 seconds for very young children or a minute for older children.

Instruct student B to finish the sentence “*It's not a secret that...*” They can finish this sentence with any information about themselves, whether it's their family structure, the classes they like best in school, their hobbies, their pets, their favorite or least favorite things or anything else they'd like to share.

Student B repeats this sentence several times, completing it with a new piece of information each time.

When the time is up, have students A and B switch roles, so A speaks while B listens.

This game is another good way for students to get to know each other and to practice active listening. It may even help strike up a few friendships! Having meaningful relationships and practicing kindness is a great way to build resilience.

Download the worksheet to read more about [It's Not a Secret](#).

3. Shuffle

Shuffle is played with a four-square court or four markers forming a square with an additional cone in the middle. Review rock-paper-scissors with the children before you begin.

The steps of the game are:

1. Five players can play at a time, with each player occupying either a corner or the middle. All other children should be in a line, ready to play when their turn comes.

2. The game begins when the person in the middle says “*Shuffle.*”
3. At this point, all players must find a new corner or cone to occupy, but no one can go to the center cone.
4. If two players arrive at a corner at the same time, they must play rock-paper-scissors for the corner. The winner stays in the corner, and the loser is “out.”
5. The next person in line becomes the person in the middle and begins the next round.

This game helps children learn how to deal with conflict. Meaningful connections are vital to developing resilience, but conflict arises in all relationships at some point. While most conflicts cannot be solved with only “rock-paper-scissors,” this teaches children that conflict can be solved. Although they may be disappointed by being “out” of the game, they will quickly learn that, in life as in the game, their turn will come again.

You can read about this game and its other variations at this link: [Shuffle](#).

4. Do The Hula



Do The Hula is played in a circle, with all children holding hands.

First, demonstrate how to get your body through a hula hoop without using your hands. Make sure that each child has a space in the circle.

Then, play the game as follows:

1. Place the hula hoop over two people’s interlocked hands so it cannot escape the circle.
2. Tell the children that the goal of the game is to get the hula hoop all the way around the circle without anyone letting go of their neighbors’ hands.
3. Start the game, and have everyone cheer on the children that are currently trying to move the hula hoop.

4. Once the game has been played for one round, discuss the group's successes and challenges and try it again.

This game is a great way to show children that when conflict or challenges arise, there are ways to deal with them. Even if they face seemingly insurmountable challenges, together they can find a way to overcome them.

Variations on this game include challenging the group to beat a chosen time, playing with eyes shut, or dividing the circle into two circles and having them compete against each other.

To see more about this game, click [Do The Hula](#).

5 Exercises for Developing Resilience

There are many resources for developing resilience in adults aside from courses. For example, there are several exercises that can help build resiliency skills. A few of these exercises are listed below.

1. The Brief Resilience Scale

The [Brief Resilience Scale](#) is an assessment for understanding your current resilience. While this may not build your resilience directly, it can give you a general overview of your current resiliency skills and abilities. In order to increase your resilience, it's important to know where you stand.

Designed to be compact, the scale itself includes only six questions. Each self-report item is answered on a five-point Likert scale, where 5 indicates "Strongly Agree," and 1 represents "Strongly Disagree."

Example items include:

- *It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event; and*
- *It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.*

Doing this exercise will help you to recognize where you are in terms of resilience and begin to identify where you can improve from your current state of resilience.

2. Exploring Past Resilience

This exercise focuses on your past experiences with resilience.

Start by thinking about a time in your life that was particularly challenging or demanding, especially one that was emotionally draining or difficult emotionally. Think about how you handled that situation and eventually came through on the other side.

Next, answer some questions to consider the different resilience skills and strategies you applied. For example:

- *What was your objective at the time?*
- *What challenges did you need to overcome?*
- *What difficult thoughts and emotions do you recall experiencing at the time?*

- *What skills were helpful to you in dealing with the situation? What perspectives or mindsets in particular?*

Going through [Exploring Past Resilience](#) and answering these questions will help you to realize the resilience skills you already possess, which can aid you in further building on those skills.

Use this exercise to remind yourself that you have already practiced resilience many times before and that you are fully capable of handling whatever comes your way.

3. The Resilience Plan (The 4 S's)

This exercise can help you set goals on improving your resiliency and making sure you keep your resilience-building on track.

First, identify a recent experience in which demonstrating resilience helped you overcome adversity. Working through the sheet, you'll then learn about the 4 S's of resilience and how they helped you cope at the time:

- *Supportive people* – People who gave you advice, or perhaps helped you develop a new, more helpful perspective
- *Strategies* – Methods and approaches you implemented to deal with difficult thoughts and feelings
- *Sagacity* – Wisdom and insights that may have been helpful
- *Solution-seeking behaviors* – Planning, for instance, or searching for useful information.

Next, identify a current challenge you'd like to deal with by applying your resilience plan. The exercise will guide you through the steps of crafting a plan, and the worksheet includes examples and templates to get you started.

Finally, you're invited to apply and evaluate your [4-S Plan](#) so that you can continue developing resilience for the future.

Resilience is like many other skills or abilities, in that you cannot put forth effort once and consider your learning done. To truly build meaningful resilience, it must be a practice rather than a crash course. Use this goal-setting exercise to facilitate your goal striving.

4. It Could Be Worse...

This is an exercise that you can use for yourself or guide your clients through when they are feeling down or excessively worried.

"It Could Be Worse" refers to thinking about three ways that their situation could be worse, specifically for yourself or your client).

For example, if a friend flaked on your plans, you might feel upset or disappointed, which could lead to feeling abandoned or even to feelings of worthlessness. Instead of focusing on what happened in this situation, think about three ways that it could be worse.

For instance, you could think *“I could have no friends at all,” “I could have no family members to talk to,”* or *“I could have nowhere to sleep tonight.”*

Spend a few minutes truly imagining each scenario. Think about what you would see, hear, and physically feel in each scenario.

It may seem counterintuitive to imagine things being worse, but thinking through these three ways can actually remind you of what you already have and instill gratitude for the good things in your life.

You can read more about this exercise here: [It Could Be Worse](#).

Integrating the Science of Resilience in Schools: 5 Lesson Plans



As mentioned earlier, school is an excellent place to begin building resilience.

While parents can and should help their children develop resilience, a classroom setting with their peers and a qualified teacher guiding the way can be an excellent place to learn.

A few resources for resilience lesson planning are below.

Lesson Plans for Primary/Elementary and Middle School

Elementary or primary school is an excellent time to begin teaching resilience to children. The earlier children begin building resilience, the more likely it is to “stick.” However, resilience is not something that can only be built in young children; children in middle school can also benefit greatly from resilience building.

The PDF from Lynne Namka and Talk, Trust, and Feel Therapeutics in Tucson, Arizona is an excellent source for lesson plans for young students. To access the PDF click [here](#). It covers teaching a growth mindset, stress inoculation, giving effective praise, helping children deal with emotional trauma, and “bouncing back” after a setback.

There are tons of exercises, tools, and lesson plans in this PDF that teachers can use to help young students develop resilience.

Another great resource for lesson plans and suggestions for resilience building in young children comes from Professor Helen McGrath’s *Bounce Back!* program.

“Bounce Back!” is an acronym for some of the foundational principles of resilience, specifically:

B – Bad times don’t last, and things get better.

O – Other people can only help if you share with them.

U – Unhelpful thinking only makes you feel worse.

N – Nobody is perfect – not you, not your friends, not your family, not anybody!

C – Concentrate on the good things in life, no matter how small.

E – Everybody suffers, everybody feels pain and experiences setbacks; they are a normal part of life.

B – Blame fairly – negative events are often a combination of things you did, things others did, and plain bad luck.

A – Accept what you can’t change and try to change what you can.

C – Catastrophizing makes things worse – don’t fall prey to believing in the worst interpretation.

K – Keep things in perspective. Even the worst moment is but one moment in life.

McGrath applies these principles to building these components of resilience:

1. Courage
2. Managing feelings
3. Humor
4. Relationship skills
5. Self-knowledge
6. Goal setting skills
7. Optimistic thinking
8. Helpful thinking skills (avoiding cognitive distortions)

You can access a slideshow on the Bounce Back! program [here](#) to learn how to apply McGrath’s resilience building principles and activities to each of these areas.

Additionally, the PDF from Connect with Kids provides a lesson plan for children in grades 3 to 5 called “Resilient Voices.” It can be found on page 6 and guides students through listing problems they face in their lives, defining resilience, and building a foundation for resilience. To access the PDF click [here](#).

Another lesson plan that can help students develop resilience can be found in the previous PDF on page 8 or in the PDF from Connect With Kids and the Drug Abuse Prevention Program in New York. To access the PDF click [here](#). There is great information throughout this PDF, or skip to page 4 to see the Resilient Heroes lesson plan.

Lesson Plans for High School



While it's best to begin early, high school is still a time that is ripe for building foundational skills like resilience.

High school teachers should not be discouraged from incorporating resilience exercises and activities into their lesson plans, as high school students may be one of the groups that need resilience the most!

The website reachout.com provides excellent tools and lesson plans for teaching resilience to adolescents. These plans can be incorporated into classes to help high school students deal with difficult situations, including:

- Illness;
- Changing schools;
- Transitioning from primary/elementary to middle school/junior high, middle school to high school, and high school to life beyond;
- Difficult family situations like divorce;
- Changes in friendship groups;
- Conflict with peers;
- Conflict with family members;
- And a heavy student workload.

The lesson plans you can find [here](#) will help students to explore and build seven elements of resilience:

1. Emotional awareness and [self-regulation](#)
2. Impulse control
3. Optimism
4. Flexible and accurate thinking
5. Empathy
6. [Self-efficacy](#)
7. Connecting and reaching out

Exercises and activities are provided for each element, with tips for implementing resilience building and encouraging students along the way.

This lesson plan will help students learn about the Seven Resiliencies (insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality) and explore the life of a historical hero, as well as apply the Seven Resiliencies to their own life.

If you are a school counselor, therapist or teacher, you would appreciate this excellent resource which will teach you how to teach resilience to others. Aptly named the '[Realizing Resilience Masterclass®](#)', the course consists of 6 modules that cover positive psychology, resilience, attention, thoughts, action, and finally motivation.

Highly recommended, this online course will enable you to empower others and make an impactful difference in their lives.

Bonus: 5 Shame Resilience Theory (SRT) Exercises

Aside from the benefits and advantages we know resilience can bring, there is another type of resilience that can greatly enhance the quality of life.

The [Shame Resilience Theory](#) was developed by author and researcher Brené Brown. Brown noticed that the fear of being vulnerable hindered meaningful connection with others, and one of the many reasons we fear vulnerability is the feeling of shame.

Shame is an intense and negative feeling of being hopelessly flawed and unworthy of [love and acceptance](#), and it affects all of us at one point or another, but it can be especially gripping for some people.

Shame resilience is a specific kind of resilience to this intensely negative feeling, and building it can do wonderful things for our self-confidence, empathy, and human connection.

According to Dr. Brown, there are four elements of shame resilience:

1. Recognizing shame and understanding our shame triggers (physical sensations like elevated heart rate or shaking).
2. Practicing critical awareness, of ourselves and of our environment and the way things work.
3. Reaching out to others and sharing ourselves and our stories (building a social support network).
4. Speaking shame to keep it from flying under the radar (Graham & Graham, 2015).

When we recognize shame and understand our triggers, practice critical awareness, share with others, and keep shame out in the open, we lay the groundwork for a type of resilience that will greatly improve our connections with others, our [self-esteem](#), and our overall well-being.

There are a few exercises that can be especially helpful for building shame resilience. A few of these are listed below, but many more are out there if you're interested in learning more.

Self-Compassion Exercises



Developing [self-compassion](#) can be an excellent way to combat shame and build resilience to its effects.

Dr. Kristin Neff is the pioneer of self-compassion research, and her website offers several guided meditations and exercises to increase compassion for the self.

1. How Would You Treat a Friend?

For example, a simple exercise that can set you on the right path is “How would you treat a friend?” This is a quick and easy exercise that anyone can do. All you need is a piece of paper, a pen, and a willingness to answer honestly.

To give this exercise a try, use your paper and pen to answer these questions:

First, think about the times when a close friend feels really bad about him or herself or is really struggling in some way. How would you respond to your friend in this situation (especially when you’re at your best)? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you typically talk to your friends.

Now think about the times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you talk to yourself. Did you notice a difference? If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that leads you to treat yourself and others so differently?

Finally, respond to this prompt: Please write down how you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when you’re suffering.

To see this exercise on Dr. Neff’s self-compassion website, click [here](#).

2. Self-Compassion Break

To practice the self-compassion break, you must first call to mind a situation in your life that is causing you stress or pain. Think about this situation and how it makes you feel, both emotionally and physically.

When you have it in mind and get a handle on the associated feelings, say the following things to yourself:

- *“This is a moment of suffering.”* This will activate mindfulness.
- *“Suffering is a part of life.”* Saying this helps you realize that you have this in common with all other human beings on the planet – suffering is an unavoidable part of life. You can follow this up by putting your hands over your heart or using whatever soothing self-touch feels right to you.

- *“May I be kind to myself.”* Alternatively, you can use other phrases that may apply better in your current situation, such as *“May I forgive myself.”* or *“May I be patient.”*

Here is the [Self-Compassion Break](#) exercise.

3. A Letter of Self-Compassion

Writing a self-directed letter can help you express your emotions and, recognize that you are your own most important source of support. It gives you a chance to exercise self-kindness and keep in touch with yourself in a more understanding, forgiving way.

All you need to start journaling is paper, a writing instrument, and a willingness to write honestly.

At the end of the week, or once a month, take a quiet moment to sit down and practice if you’re hoping to turn your letter-writing into a habit.

To help you along, this exercise suggests following a few steps:

1. Think of an aspect of yourself or your life that you often criticize, or dislike. This might be something that you feel self-conscious about, or which makes you feel inadequate. Examples include aspects of your job or your relationship. You’ll write about the feelings this evokes, as well as any thoughts or images that come to mind when you think about it.
2. Next, you’ll write a letter to yourself from the perspective of a good friend or loved one. Rather than writing about your own thoughts on the issue, try to imagine what they would say to you instead. Try to write from a place of genuine understanding, empathy, and unconditional acceptance. What are some of the ways they would show you compassion, support, and care?
3. When you’ve finished, set it aside for 15 minutes. Return to it after this, re-reading what you’ve written and really allowing yourself to absorb what you’ve written. It may not come naturally, but try to open yourself up to the kindness, support, and compassionate feelings throughout the letter.

The [Letter of Self-Compassion](#) exercise can be found in our Toolkit.

4. Taking Care of the Caregiver



This exercise is intended specifically for those in a healthcare profession or those who take care of a family member.

People who spend so much time providing care for others often have a greater need for self-compassion and self-care.

The beautiful thing about this exercise is that you can practice it, however works best for you – the only requirement is that you do something for yourself that will meet your needs and help you recharge. This could be getting a massage, taking a long and leisurely walk, going to a yoga class, or spending time relaxing and doing nothing at all.

If you just can't find the time to do any of these in a specific moment of need, practice "on the job" self-care. When you're feeling overly stressed or overwhelmed in your caregiving, use soothing words or touch, or take a quick self-compassion break. Only you know what will work for you in the moment, but above all, give yourself permission to be human—with all of the flaws and pain that come with being human.

To read more about taking care of the caregiver, click [here](#).

5. The Daring Way

This isn't so much an exercise as it is a program, one that requires committing time and energy in order to engage and reap the benefits. The Daring Way is an experiential methodology, facilitated by certified professionals and appropriate for individuals, couples, families, teams, and organizational leaders.

The focus of this training is on helping people build shame [resiliency](#) skills and become braver, more vulnerable individuals who accept their worthiness and live a fuller, more authentic life.

To learn more about The Daring Way, visit thedaringway.com.



Shame Resilience Theory: How to Overcome Shame

Four Elements of Shame Resilience:

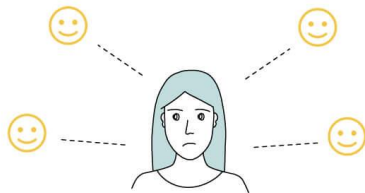
1. Recognizing shame and understanding your shame triggers.



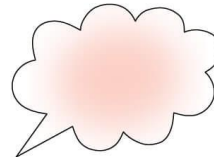
2. Practicing critical awareness of yourself, your environment, and the way things work.



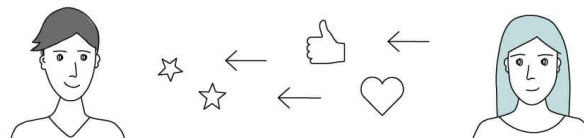
3. Reaching out to others and sharing yourself and your stories.



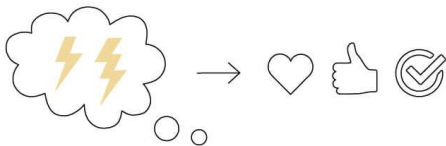
4. Speaking about shame to keep it from flying under the radar.



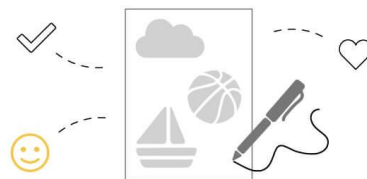
How would you treat a friend? An exercise that encourages you to consider treating yourself the way you would treat a beloved family member or friend.



Self-compassion break. Think of a situation causing you stress or pain, acknowledge your suffering, remind yourself that suffering is a part of life, and commit to being kind, forgiving, or patient with yourself.



Self-compassion journal. Take a few minutes to go over what happened each day, applying the principles of mindfulness, common humanity, and self-kindness.



Taking care of the caregiver. Practice meeting your own needs and allow yourself to relax and recharge.

The Daring Way. Try this new program to facilitate the development of your shame resiliency skills and enhance your quality of life.



POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM
YOUR ONE-STOP POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY RESOURCE

A Take-Home Message

This article covered several ways to help [build resilience](#) in adults, young adults, adolescents, and young children. There are many more ways to build resilience, so don't feel constrained to these resilience activities.

I hope you find these exercises useful. How do you think resilience can shape the mind and strength of yourself and those around you? Did you try any of the exercises? Please leave us a comment below and let us know how it went. We love hearing from you.

Thanks for reading, and happy resilience building!

We hope you enjoyed reading this article. Don't forget to [download our 3 Resilience Exercises for free](#).

If you wish to learn more, our [Realizing Resilience Masterclass©](#) is a complete, science-based, 6-module resilience training template for practitioners that contains all the materials you'll need to help your clients overcome adversity in a more resilient way

17 Science-Based Resilience Building Activities

Storytelling Activity

We can adjust our paradigms by re-creating narratives we tell ourselves. We can get stuck in re-playing the same stories, which may not be helpful or productive. By creating a healthier storyline, we foster our sense of control and how we interpret events.

A study conducted by Pennebaker, et. al (1988) indicated that individuals who engaged in therapeutic [writing](#) experienced more well-being and happiness (i.e. resilience) months later.

Consider an example in your life where you continue to repeat a story that produces worry or anxiety. Try writing out a new version with a more positive interpretation. Recognize how you feel in the process.

The Upside of Stress Activity

In her book, *The Upside of Stress*, Kelly McGonigal (2011) recognizes that seeing the upside of stress is not all about differentiating if it is all good or all bad. Rather, it is about how choosing to see the good in stress how you can use strengths to deal with challenges. She identifies tending and befriending as one of the best ways to do this and describes how helping others helps us develop [resilience](#).

“Tend and befriend,” was named by UCLA psychologist Shelley Taylor, PhD. Taylor et al. (2000) discovered that they were more pro-social rather than aggressive in stressful times. Transformation can come from tragedy, as people can turn personal crises into ways to help others. McGonigal reports,

“Helping others increases the chemistry of hope and courage and dampens fear and despair.”

Think of one of the most difficult events of your life. How you can use this story to help others. How can you leverage it to impact someone in a positive way?

Purpose Exercises

Finding meaning in one’s environment is an important aspect of resilience. In “Man’s Search for Meaning,” Psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl stated,

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of his human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances. To choose one’s way”

(1959).

Psychologists have found repeatedly that people with a strong sense of purpose experience more resilience, a stronger sense of well-being and even better cognitive functioning. Purpose in life fosters resilience in part by protecting the brain against the negative effects of stress. According to Patricia Doyle, Ph.D., a Neuropsychologist with the Alzheimer Disease Center,

“purpose somehow gives your brain resilience. It makes your brain stronger and more resistant to the effects of diseases like Alzheimers”

(Boyle et. al, 2012).

Other scientific studies support that having a strong purpose predicts health and longevity. Recent research suggests that finding meaning in life's experiences, especially when facing challenges, is a key [mechanism of resilience](#) (Schaefer, et. al, 2013).

Robert Butler with the National Institute of Health researched health and longevity and reported findings in his book "*Why Survive? Being Old in America.*" People who had a strong sense of purpose lived longer than those who didn't have a clear purpose.

Dan Buettner, who founded Blue Zones, also has done worldwide research. In studying women of Okinawa, Japan, it was discovered that one of key reasons for their longevity is their strong sense of purpose.

Okinawans are known for [pursuing their ikigai](#) which is a concept meaning "reason for being", or "reason for waking up in the morning." (Buettner, 2005).

Use these activities to help you discover, foster, and exercise your unique purpose:

Find your Ikigai Activity



The graphic and exercise in the [worksheet](#) can help you clarify your meaning, purpose, and mission in life while considering practical concerns of maintaining lifestyle, earning a living, etc.

Here is the [worksheet](#) and template to walk you through this reflective exercise.

Richard Leider is a subject matter expert and offers compelling and practical resources to tap into our power of purpose (Leider, 2015). Learn more about Leider's content [here](#).

Try one of his suggested activities to clarify your purpose:

Purpose Reflection Activity

1. Why are you?
2. Why do you get up in the morning?
3. What keeps you awake at night?
4. When are you most alive?
5. What does being successful mean to you?

6. How might you apply your gifts to a pursuit that is of deep interest to you and helps others?
7. What can you do to make a difference in one person's life, today?
8. What is your sentence (meaning, if you summarized your purpose in one 140 character sentence, what would it be)?
9. If you say yes to living purposefully, what do you say no to?
10. If you met an older version of yourself, what sage advice would they give you?

The Purpose Check-Up Activity

If you have already tapped into purpose, consider doing a short check-up exercise that allows for you to reflect, take inventory, and recharge.

The purpose checkup activity is available [here](#).

[Here](#) is his Manifesto for Purpose and 10 Questions for Unlocking the Power of your Purpose.

Here is a helpful [blog and activity form](#) on how to unlock the power of purpose.

Positive Psychology Activities

The framework for the foundation of positive psychology was established by Martin Seligman and Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (2000). The [Positive Psychology movement](#) has been focused on what processes and models can contribute to human beings flourishing and thriving.

Since the development of Positive Psychology, much research has supported the effectiveness of such interventions and the positive impact on well-being and resilience (Seligman et. al, 20015). Seligman (2011) developed the PERMA (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment) model for psychological well being. The following activities are around the key [PERMA](#) themes.

Strengths and Gifts Activities

Research proves that identifying and leveraging strengths enhances resilience. A study led by Sherry Hamby of the Life Paths Appalachian Research Center in Monteagle, Tennessee highlights the importance of a strengths-based approach in helping people recover from trauma (Hamby et. al, 2018).

A great place to start is to reflect on your individual talents and strengths and consider how you can make a difference using them.

- The Values in Action signature strengths survey measures 24 positive character traits, among them curiosity, creativity, bravery, persistence, integrity, fairness, leadership, and self-regulation. You can take the [test here](#).
- Take this [free survey](#) to capture your key character strengths.
- Ask 5 people close to you to send in writing what they see are your top strengths.

Perform Acts of Kindness Activities

Sonya Lyubomirsky research shows that one of the best ways to boost happiness and resilience is to perform acts of kindness, volunteering, mentoring, or even expressing gratitude toward others (Lyubomirsky, et. al, 2005).

- Consider a formal volunteering program in an area you are passionate about.
- Pick one person a day to show extra kindness to
- Display random acts of [kindness](#), i.e., paying for a stranger's coffee

Gratitude Activities

The practice of [gratitude](#) is one of the most time-tested and proven methods for enhancing resilience. One study published in the Clinical Psychology Review confirmed the benefits of habitually focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of life on resilience and well-being. (Wood, et. al, 2010). Researchers Robert Emmons and Mike McCullough found that people who kept gratitude journals experienced improved well-being (2003).

Select from the following:

- Every day for the next week, write down 3-5 things each day that you are grateful for.
- Start a gratitude blog/group text with friends
- Write a [letter of gratitude](#) to people who are special to you.
- Tell people you see everyday what you appreciate about them.

Three Good Things Activity

According to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory (2001), [positive emotions](#) can help broaden your momentary thoughts, actions, and attention to your surroundings. One example of this is to foster positive thoughts and emotions. Says Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, the author of Positivity (2009):

"In our research program, we found that the daily repertoire of emotions of people who are highly resilient is remarkably different from those who are not."

- Consider ending your day by reflecting on and writing down 3 good things that happened today.
- Be intentional about reflecting on the experiences, noting how you felt, and what was the best thing about the experience.

Design a Flow Activity



“Flow” is the term used by researchers for optimal states of consciousness, those peak moments of total absorption in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Research across various domains has shown the positive impact of experiencing a flow state on resilience.

Seek out a new [flow experience](#) that optimally engages your attention and leaves you with a sense of accomplishing a goal. As you explore new flow activities, consider the following criteria:

- A task requiring skill and concentration
- Involves intense focus
- Is goal-directed
- Provides ongoing feedback
- Can feel both challenging yet effortless
- You feel in control
- You lose track of time

Find Something Funny Activity

Laughter has been found to boost resilience. A study evaluating humor induced [positive psychology interventions](#) identified the benefits of incorporating daily humor activities to induce laughter reduced depression and increased joy for participants, even months later (Wellenzohn, et. al., 2016).

Spend 10 minutes each day for 7 days on the following exercise:

1. Write down the three of the funniest things you have experienced, seen, or heard that day. Provide detail and note how they made you feel. If you can't think of anything, do an online search for funny stories or anecdotes. Social media can be a good source for funny material.
2. Write down why you found it funny. The more specific you are, the more effective the exercise will be.
3. Write these three funny things at the end of your day. Doing so will foster a new [habit](#) and may help you absorb the emotion more as you are going to sleep.

Find the Silver Lining Activity

Looking at the [bright side](#) is scientifically proven to enhance our resilience. In a 2014 study, participants who went through such an exercise increased their resilience, were more engaged and experienced decreased negative thinking (Sergant & Mongrain, 2014). Other studies have also supported the positive impact this cognitive re-appraisal exercise can have on resilience (Troy et. al., 2010).

Think about an upsetting experience you have had recently. It could be a small example (i.e., my kids missed the bus this morning). Rather than focusing on the frustration of the experience, reflect on three positive things about it. Maybe it offered you time to have a special talk with your child on the way to school, or allowed you to see the sunrise from a different place, etc.

Engage in New Mindfulness Practice Activity

Mindfulness is defined as “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Scientific research has supported the [benefits of mindfulness](#) for many years. Recent studies indicate that psychological resilience is enhanced in mindful individuals (Bajaj & Pande, 2015). In other words, mindfulness can foster resilience.

Body Scan Activity

Body scan is one form of mindfulness meditation, focused on the physical experience of mindfulness. It is a technique that hones your attention on different areas of your body to gain awareness and optimize your sensation. Scientific research indicates that practicing [body scan](#) techniques is linked to greater well-being and increased resilience (Camody & Bear, 2008).

In [this](#) video, Dr. Elisha Goldstein will walk you through a brief 3-minute body scan.

Mindful Breath Activity

Dr. Andrew Weil developed what he calls the 4-7-8 breathing technique. Try this exercise:

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of eight.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Dr. Andrew Weil explains the 4-7-8 exercise [here](#).

Self-Compassion Activity

We are often most critical of ourselves and quicker to show compassion to those hurting around us. How we respond to our own stress and challenges is important. Research findings indicate that [self-compassion](#) skills promotes resilience and serves as a protective emotional mechanism (Trompetter, et. al., 2017).

Think of a difficult circumstance in your life that has been concerning you. Write down some details about the event. What would you tell a friend in that situation? What tone would you use? What actions would you take?

Assessing the Status Quo with a Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Mental toughness can be defined as how effectively individuals deal with [stress](#), pressure, and challenge. The Mental Toughness Questionnaire assessments are online psychometric measures developed used to assess Mental Toughness. They have been developed in collaboration between Professor Peter Clough of Huddersfield University and formerly of Manchester Metropolitan University, and Doug Strycharczyk, Managing Director of AQR.

Many psychometric tests measure behaviors and personality traits. The MTQ test developers propose that how we think is a key driver for the development of behaviors and attributes. Professor Peter Clough's research identifies four components of mental toughness: Control, Commitment, Challenge, and Confidence.

There are two tests designed here to measure Mental Toughness: the MTQ48 and MTQPlus. Both psychometric tests are normative, which allows users to compare their scores before and after a training or development program.

The differences between the MTQ48 and MTQPlus are noted here:

MTQ48

- 48 Questions
- Assessor, Development and Coaching Reports
- Provides scores for:
 - Overall MT
 - The Four C's
 - Subscale Scores for Control and Confidence

MTQPlus

- 74 Questions
- Assessor, Development and Coaching Reports
- Provides scores for:
 - Overall MT
 - The Four C's
 - Subscale Scores for Control and Confidence
 - Additional Subscale Scores for Commitment and Challenge

You can learn more about the Mental Toughness Questionnaires here at [this link](#).

8 More Exercises and Techniques for Increasing Mental Strength

Take your Resiliency Inventory

The late Al Siebert, PhD founded The Resiliency Center in Portland, Oregon. He developed a quick resilience test. Take this quiz, adapted from The Resilience Advantage (2015).

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree):

- I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.
- Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.
- I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.
- I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.
- I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.
- I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
- I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.
- I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.
- I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

Convert your scores with the following key:

Less than 20: Low Resilience — You may have trouble handling pressure or setbacks, and may feel deeply hurt by any criticism. When things don't go well, you may feel helpless and without hope. Consider seeking some professional counsel or support in developing your resiliency skills. Connect with others who share your developmental goals.

10-30: Some Resilience — You have some valuable pro-resiliency skills, but also plenty of room for improvement. Strive to strengthen the characteristics you already have and to cultivate the characteristics you lack. You may also wish to seek some outside coaching or support.

30-35: Adequate Resilience — You are a self-motivated learner who recovers well from most challenges. Learning more about resilience, and consciously building your resiliency skills, will empower you to find more joy in life, even in the face of adversity.

35-45: Highly Resilient — You bounce back well from life's setbacks and can thrive even under pressure. You could be of service to others who are trying to cope better with adversity.

Mental Toughness 2 Minute Hack Activity



This activity is a life hack to develop mental toughness in less than two minutes. Tempting, but is it too good to be true?

Jason Selk, a performance coach who has trained a range of Olympic and professional athletes, uses this exercise:

Try this 2-minute centering hack:

Start with a centering breath. Breathe in for six seconds. Hold it for two seconds. Breathe out for seven seconds.

Recite a personalized identity [statement](#) that emphasizes a positive quality and specifies something you want to become in five seconds, such as *“I am confident and passionate,”* or *“I’m consistently excellent every day as a leader, executive, and mother.”*

Visualize your personal highlight reel for 60 seconds—thinking of three things you’ve done well in the past day. Mentally rehearse three important things you need to do today. Repeat your identity statement for five seconds. Finish with another centering breath cycle—breathing in for six seconds, holding for two and then exhaling for seven.

You can find more [mental health exercises and interventions here](#).

Navy Seal Activities

“Much of mental toughness is simply attitude and self-esteem,” writes Stewart Smith, a former Navy SEAL and author of *The Complete Guide to Navy SEAL Fitness*. Several of his suggested activities are noted here.

– “It’s My Job” Reframe Activity

Smith proposes that often the simplest form of mental toughness is to simply tell yourself, “It’s my job.” Write down job descriptions for the roles you play and hats you wear (husband, mentor, daughter, brother, coach, etc.).

Review these descriptions weekly and consider treating them like duties, meaning non-negotiable. Consider the commitments you've made by taking on these roles, so that even when you are tired or unmotivated, you will keep your word. Knowing others are counting on you can foster your own sense of commitment.

– Foster Your Team Activity

Smith identifies the importance of having a strong team and support network around you in determining mental toughness. When faced with [challenges](#), this becomes even more critical. Write down the names of important supports in your life. Under each name, write down two things you can do to strengthen your connection with that person in the next week.

Perform Under Pressure Activity

The Mental Toughness Trainer website offers some activities or “drills” to enhance mental toughness.

– Imagination practice

Take time away from the daily grind of training to visualize what you want. Find an imagination/visualization practice that works for you. Get specific and detailed about envisioning yourself achieving success.

Watch this clip of a very famous athlete to help gain insight: From :19 to :47 seconds.

Think of your best performances, and tap into as many senses as you can. Consider, pictures, your inner voice, sounds, smells, thoughts or feelings in your mind to make it real.

Learn [more here](#).

Stoicism Activities

The philosophy of Stoicism endorses being resilient: strong, steadfast, and in control of ourselves. Ryan Holiday, author of *The Obstacle is the Way*, provides this helpful [summary](#) of stoicism and highlights key practices.

Here are a few activities featured:

– Practice a State of Misfortune Regularly Activity

According to a well known stoic, Seneca, we should prepare ourselves for difficult times even while we are enjoying the good ones. He identifies the importance of [building resilience](#) to prepare for obstacles. This exercise involves taking a few days every month to practice a state of poverty or greater need than what we are used to.

By doing so, we may experience less worry about what we fear. It is important to note that this is an actual exercise rather than a reflection. It is not suggested to “think about” misfortune, but to actually live it. Try removing some of your regular comforts and conveniences for 2 days.

This practice of what you fear can allow you to come to terms with “is this what I used to dread?”

– Turning the Obstacle Upside Down Activity

Choose not to be harmed and you won't feel harmed. Don't feel harmed and you haven't been.

Marcus Aurelius

The Stoics had an exercise called *Turning the Obstacle Upside Down* in order to train their perception. It involves turning a problem upside down, so that every “bad” can become a new source of good. If we have a difficult person in our life, the practice would tell us that they are a good learning partner who is teaching us patience, understanding, and tolerance, rather than focusing on the frustration.

Consider a challenge in your life. Reframe the obstacle so that you see it as an opportunity for growth.

Celebrate your Differences Exercise

This is an exercise to worry less about what others think of you. Consider this – what others think of you is actually none of your business. We all spend more time than necessary caring what others think. To address this concern, the Stoics endorse loving and appreciating yourself, fully embracing how unique and different you are.

Take time to reflect on your unique qualities. What sets you apart from others? What special value do you bring? How are you different? How can you celebrate other's uniqueness?

If we compare, we despair. So, separating our individuality and not being threatened by the strengths of others is freeing and in turn, builds our resilience.

Resilience Activities for Groups

What is Resilience Activity (25 minutes)

Discuss with the group what resiliency is (the ability to bounce back, bounce forward from tough times). Have each participant write down their own definition and provide an example of when they or someone they know has been resilient.

Form two large concentric circles. The participants in the inner ring circle share their definitions. Those in the outer circle share their example. Then, rotate back to the inner circle for them to share, and outer circle then shares their definition.

Rotate turns until everyone has shared. At the end of the exercise, draw a Y chart on a whiteboard or large paper for everyone to see. As a group, brainstorm the essence of what it looks like, feels like and sounds like to be resilient.

Buzz Idea Activity (20 minutes)

The [Reachout.com](https://reachout.com) website provides practical tools and lessons for enhancing resilience:

Here is a group activity designed to introduce, educate, and spark discussion on resilience.

- A picture tells a thousand words... A great way to introduce a topic.

- Spread miscellaneous pictures or magazine cut-outs on the floor. Ask participants to choose a picture card they think best relates to the word resiliency.
- Participants then share what their card means in relation to resiliency and what resilience means to them.

You can learn more about Reachout.com activities [here](#).

Horoscope Activity with Youth

Open the session by reading horoscopes from a newspaper or magazine and facilitate a short group discussion. Why do we think people read them? Are they true?

Explain that they are now age 25 and they are going to write their own horoscope for their lives at age 25. Areas to cover within their horoscope are: family, career, relationships, money and housing. Encourage them to include [hopes](#), dreams and ambitions, how they feel about themselves and how others will see them.

Once everyone has completed their horoscope invite them back as a group to share or discuss with the person next to them.

Make Time To Do The Things You Enjoy Activity

Discuss with the group what is important about making time to do things they enjoy. Highlight the replenishing benefits of engaging in activities we are passionate about. Have individuals write on a notecard what they love doing and why. Come together as a group to share what they love doing and what the benefits are of these activities.

You can learn more about this resource and additional activities [here](#).

Teaching Resilience Activities with Youth and Adults

Create a Personal Resilience Plan Activity

Utilize the following outline:

- Identify the [resilience skills](#) and strategy you currently use. What works well?
- Identify 2 resilience skills you would like to develop.
- Write 1 goal for each of the skills you identified.
- Identify potential obstacles in developing these skills.

Increase Confidence Activity

It can be helpful to recall past memories of times you have succeeded and felt effective. Remembering our positive performance and achievement can foster a sense of self-efficacy and in turn, build our confidence and resilience.

Write down 3 experiences when you overcame a tough situation, and were still able to perform at your best and be optimally effective. How were you able to do it? What worked well for you? What is important to keep in mind for next time?

Thought Stopping Activity

Cognitive reframing can be a helpful technique to adjust maladaptive thinking and improve resilience. Recognize when you have a negative or unhelpful thought when you are interpreting an event. When you have the unhelpful, re-direct quickly. STOP and interrupt the thought pattern by following literal techniques:

1. Picture or draw a big red stop sign or red flashing light
2. Immediately say “STOP” to yourself
3. Re-direct to a healthier thought immediately

Realizing Resilience Masterclass