

Wellbeing for the Bush

RESILIENCE

Resilience is a necessary skill that helps us to manage the ups and downs of life, a skill that health workers draw on to navigate stressful situations that may arise throughout the day. This resource defines resilience and provides simple techniques to guide you to strengthen 'your resilience muscle'.

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. As much as resilience involves “bouncing back” from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.¹

Building resilience is like building a muscle; it takes time and intentionality through focusing on these 4 elements:

- **Build Your Connections** - Connecting with empathetic and understanding people can remind you that you're not alone in the midst of difficulties. Feeling overwhelmed and stressed can lead some people to isolate themselves, but it's important to accept help and support from those who care about you.
- **Foster Wellness** - Take care of your body (sleep, nutrition, physical activity); practise mindfulness; and avoid negative outlets like drugs and alcohol.
- **Embrace Healthy Thinking** - Try to keep things in perspective; accept that change is a part of life; maintain a hopeful outlook; and learn from past experiences.
- **Find Purpose** - Help others; move toward your goals; look for opportunities for self discovery.²

Being psychologically prepared for an adverse event is like a “stress inoculation” when it happens.

4 steps to psychological preparedness: The AIME approach

A

Anticipate that it will be stressful and that you will be feeling anxious or worried. If you understand how you usually react, you can manage stressors better when they occur (Q. How do you usually react to stress?).

I

Identify specific thoughts or feelings. Notice your physical symptoms of arousal such as racing heart, shortness of breath. Notice how those feelings can trigger stressful thoughts.

M

Manage your responses through self-talk (“I can handle this” etc.) and breathing.

E

Engage with a trusted person. By connecting you can feel supported and less alone.

Remember to reflect on what strengths you already have, how you have dealt with adversity in the past and what worked for you: draw on this in times of stress.²



Practice GEM every day to promote resilience:

- **Gratitude:** an appreciation for the good things that happen in life. (e.g. gratitude journal or jar, or telling someone you're glad they're in your life)
- **Empathy:** the ability to understand and share the feelings of another (curiosity about strangers, challenging prejudices, listening actively when someone is talking)
- **Mindfulness:** being present in the here and now, without judgement (mindfulness of the breath, in your morning routine, doing domestic chores).^{3,4}

Including self-care as a part of your daily routine helps build resilience

For a self-care plan template head to: crana.org.au/self-care-plan

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What do I do for self-care?

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Get plenty of sleep |  Tidy |
|  Enjoy sunshine |  Read |
|  Cook |  Read about people whose lives are more complicated |
|  Write or draw (think out loud) |  Garden |
|  Talk to myself |  Get a hug |
|  Cuddle cats |  Talk to select people |
|  Walk or bike (esp. in a park) | |

1. www.psychology.org.au/for-the-public/Psychology-topics/Stress

2. www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/stress

3. Cuylenburg, H. (2019). Finding Happiness Through Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness.

4. Voci, A., Veneziani, C. A., & Fucchi, G. (2019). Relating mindfulness, heartfulness, and psychological well-being: the role of selfcompassion and gratitude. *Mindfulness*, 10(2), 339-351.

5. healthpsych.com/kind-four-ways-practice-self-care/ and www.positivediscipline.com/articles/self-care-teachers