

Resilience Self-Reflection

Resilience is the ability to navigate and recover from adversity with awareness, intention, and skill. Resilience develops naturally through healthy connections to others, balanced self-care, and an open, engaged mind.

Rate yourself on the items below, using the following scale:

In the past 3 months, how often has this statement been true for you?:

1 = Never or rarely

3 = Often

2 = Sometimes

4 = Always or almost always

Connections	I have close, supportive people in my life, whom I trust AND who know each other.	1	2	3	4
Benefiting Others	I strive to benefit others without depleting myself or imposing unwelcome efforts.	1	2	3	4
Physical Self-Care	I am physically active for 30-60 minutes daily, sleep consistently and adequately, spend at least an hour in outdoor daylight, and eat a balanced and moderate diet mostly of wholesome, minimally processed foods.	1	2	3	4
Stress Reduction Practice	I participate in at least one practice to quiet my mind and body. (<i>Examples: deep breathing, time in nature, prayer, journaling, sensory grounding, meditation, yoga, tai chi, qigong, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, biofeedback, imagery work.</i>) Other practice/s:	1	2	3	4
Flexible Thinking	When I am going through a difficult time, I consider multiple perspectives on it as well as multiple options for responding to it.	1	2	3	4
Self-confidence	I trust myself, my intuition, and my abilities.	1	2	3	4
Openness to Experience	I seek and enjoy experiences new to me.	1	2	3	4
Workability	I approach challenges as though I can work through them somehow.	1	2	3	4
Awareness	I notice the world around me, and I anticipate opportunities and challenges because of what I notice.	1	2	3	4
History of Adaptive Coping w/ Adversity	When I have faced adversities, I have found healthy and adaptive ways to work through them.	1	2	3	4
Willingness	When challenges arise, I face them and I <u>do not</u> deny them, ignore them, or use alcohol, other drugs, or self-harming behaviors to avoid or cope with them.	1	2	3	4
Engagement	I engage earnestly in one or more activities that offer a positive challenge, focus my attention, and deeply reward me. (<i>Examples: meaningful work, playing a musical instrument, dance, artistic expression, volunteering, sports, deep learning.</i>) Other activity/s:	1	2	3	4
Big Picture	I keep perspective on my challenges by considering the bigger picture. (<i>Examples: Looking beyond my challenges to consider my strengths, supports, resources, opportunities, and privilege. Considering my challenges in the context of the adversity that others face. Considering the humor in life's challenges and absurdities. Looking for what I can learn from current and past challenges.</i>)	1	2	3	4

Reviewing Your Overall Resilience

<u>Score</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
36 or higher	You are likely to view yourself as resilient. Assuming your view is accurate, you are likely to thrive in the face of challenges and could serve as a strong support and role model for others.
21 – 35	You are likely to view yourself as having adequate resilience, and you will likely do fine with most challenges. Unless you are selling yourself short on your assessment, you have some room for enhancing your resilience. Read below to learn more.
20 or lower	You are likely to view yourself as struggling or having limited options in the face of difficult challenges. Lower scores sometimes reflect having some strengths but limited options. Low scores across items are common among people who have had few challenges early in life or have been overwhelmed by challenges early in life. History is not destiny! Read below for ways to enhance your resilience.

Enhancing Your Resilience

1. Review the 13 items in the *Resilience Self-Reflection exercise*. The items are written to encourage self-reflection as well as relay enough information to help you begin to explore the many aspects of resilience. The lists of examples in some items are not meant to be exhaustive, so consider other current practices of yours that meet the defining criteria. This is an empirically-informed self-reflective exercise, for a validated measure, see #3 below.
2. Balance between maintaining existing strengths (scored 3 or 4) and building on the items you could most readily enhance (scored 2 or 3). While many people are inclined to focus first on addressing greatest vulnerabilities (scored 1), a more effective strategy is to make initial gains with less effort by focusing on middle scores. Note that items are not in any particular order, but generally our healthy connections best predict resilience. If scores were low on the first two items, *Connections* or *Benefitting Others*, efforts to build first on these aspects of resilience would likely show a greater return for effort, although poor sleep habits undermine most people’s resilience and energy for any effort. A highly resilient person tends to have close connections to at least a few other people, and those people communicate with each other to collectively support that mutually valued person.
3. Learn more about resilience. A basic resource is *The Road to Resilience*, a brochure published by the American Psychological Association and available free at...<http://www.apa.org/HELPCENTER/road-resilience.aspx> Also, this handout is just a self-reflection exercise: For an empirically validated measure of resilience, see Johnson, D. C, Polusny, M. A., Erbes, C.R., King, D., King, L., Litz, B. T. & Southwick, S. M. (2011). Development and initial validation of the Response to Stressful Experiences Scale. *Military Medicine*, 176(2), 161-169.
4. Ask for support in your efforts to enhance your resilience. Seek local counselors, advisors, or mentors. Personal resilience also is tied to community resilience. A resource to learn more about community resilience is provided by the Community and Regional Resilience Institute at ... <http://www.resilientus.org/>
5. Trust your approach to enhancing your resilience. Some people do best with making a plan first. Some people do best by jumping right in. Some people do best with one change at a time. Some people do best making multiple changes at once. Trust the approach to building resilience that feels right for you.
6. Make adjustments if your approach isn’t working for you. Consider shifting to one of the other approaches listed in item 5 above, *Trust your approach*. Or, try a different focus. Or, ask for different kinds of support or ask for support from others you might not have first considered asking.

References

Handbook of Adult Resilience (2010) by John Reich, Alex Zautra, & John Stuart Hall
The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure, and Bounce Back from Setbacks (2005) by Al Siebert