

Resilience



This booklet has been developed under the banner of the **Emirates Center for Happiness Research** with the aim of promoting awareness on Resilience. The primary focus is to help individuals acquire this trait and incorporate it in their daily lives.

If you have any questions or comments do email us at Happiness@uaeu.ac.ae

We hope you are able to benefit with the information provided and we can play a pivotal role in increasing your knowledge.

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Introduction

Every person in their life goes through unpleasant experiences and difficult life situations. How one is able to survive despite these experiences, requires a trait called Resilience. "Resilience" is defined as a process by which an individual is able to bounce back from adversities, like traumatic experiences, family and relationship issues and severe financial crises. Just as Resilience helps an individual bounce back from these situations it also involves personal growth (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008).

Resilience is not something that you are born with nor is it a personality trait but it is something that builds with time. It is based on Science and is a teachable skill that evolves with time. It involves certain behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be built upon over time. Also, it does not mean that those who are resilient do not experience emotional distress instead, their emotional distress becomes a route for them to become more resilient (Joyce et al., 2018).



Resilience Definitions and Types

Here are some types of Resilience:



Physical Resilience: Physical resilience refers to the ability of the body to cope with arising challenges and return back to the healthy state. (Schorr, Carter & Ladiges, 2017).



Psychological Resilience: It refers to the ability to be able to cope up with stressful situations. According to the American Psychiatric Association (2014), it is defined as the ability to adapt well to adversities, traumatic experiences and tragedies in times of extreme stress ('O'Dowd et al., 2018).



Emotional Resilience: Emotional resilience refers to when you are able to calm your mind in times of frantic situations. It also refers to the power by which we are able to empower and consider our pain and adversity as temporary and keep ourselves strong (Hammond, 2007).



Social Resilience: Social resilience refers to the ability to adjust and cope up with the environmental and social threats (Kwok, Doyle, Becker, Johnston & Paton, 2016).

Exercise : What is the latest challenge you experienced and how did you deal with it? Do you think you were resilient? If so, which type will you categorize it into amongst the four mentioned above?

Steps and Strategies to build Resilience

- **Social Connectedness:** Increase your social networks by building and fostering more social relationships. In times of difficulties your connections with people can really help you stay strong and fight your problems and be more resilient.
- **Believe in your abilities:** Always have this impression that there is nothing impossible and no difficult situation is difficult enough for you to handle or deal with. When you start believing in your powers you become stronger to handle any crises situation.
- **Replace your negative thoughts with more positive one:** Whenever anything unfortunate happens most of the people start overthinking and engage in self-criticism and self-blame which makes it more difficult for them to resolve their problems. Thus, having a positive outlook helps them be more resilient.
- **Learn from your mistakes:** Always learn from your mistakes, dwell deeply on what went wrong and avoid repeating them in the future.
- **Set realistic goals and start working on achieving them:** When you have set goals in your life it helps divert your attention to focus on achieving them and you are able to deal better with the difficult situations you are experiencing.
- **Have a purpose or a meaning in your life:** Those who have a strong purpose in their life are more likely to recover from failures and disappointments in their lives.
- **Practice Mindfulness and Meditation:** Mindfulness and relaxation techniques can really help you relax and be calmer in life to be able to deal with the stressful situations in life.
- **Learn to accept and let go:** Some situations will never change therefore accept them and let go of unnecessary worries and strive for perfection.

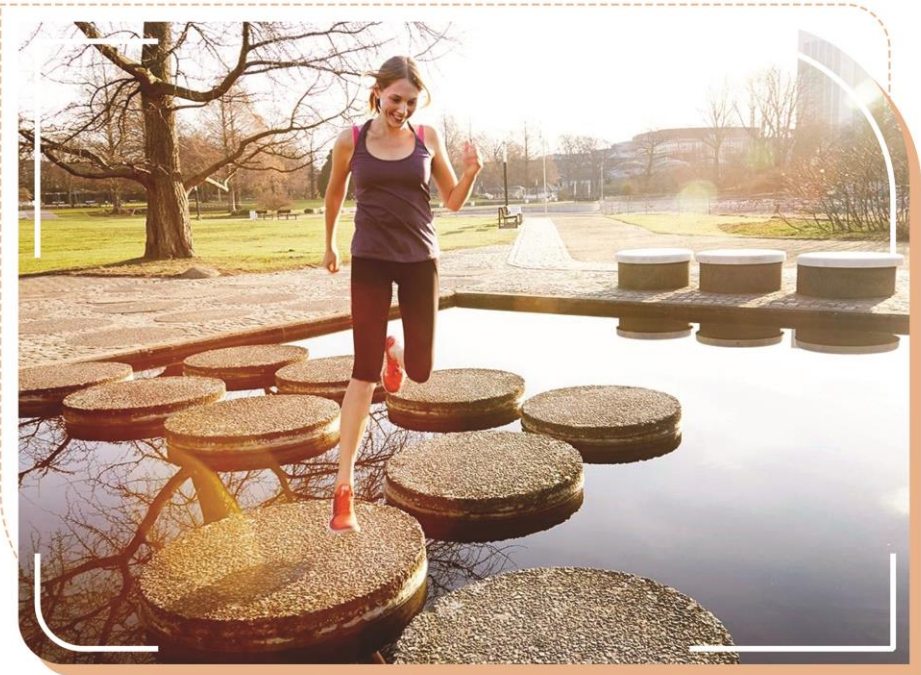


■ Practice the 4C's of Mental Toughness:

- **Control:** To be in control means that you have greater control over your thoughts and have a greater sense of purpose in your life.
 - **Commitment:** means to be able to set goals and be able to achieve them. When you are committed to achieving your goals it means that you are able to set fixed routines and standards to achieving them. Knowing that, to be able to bounce back from the adversities in your life requires a high commitment.
 - **Challenge:** This refers to the drive you possess to be able to achieve what you have to. To be challenging means that any set back in your life is taken as a challenge to bounce back and return to normal.
 - **Confidence:** This refers to the extent of belief that one holds in their abilities to be able to be more productive. To be more confident means that you will be able to see the challenges you are experiencing with more confidence and resolve them. (Turner, 2017).
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- **Practice Emotional Regulation Skills:** Help incorporate in your daily life skills how to handle and manage your emotions in a more effective way. Those who possess this skill are more likely to handle their emotions and responses to crises situations.
 - **Avoid engaging in self-blame:** What makes a person less resilient is when they engage in self-critical behaviors and blame themselves. Those who are more resilient are able to learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating them in the future.
 - **Be more emotionally aware:** People who are more emotionally aware are able to understand their feelings well and are able to deal with their emotions in a better way.
 - **Have resilient role models:** Try to read more about people who overcame their challenges and get inspired by them and try to follow their footsteps incorporating in your mindset that nothing is impossible (Eric Barker, 2016).

Steps to build Physical Resilience

- Make sure you are getting adequate sleep and resting everyday.
- Make time to eat, make sure you do not miss your meals especially breakfast as this is the most important meal of the day.
- Try to break from too many electronic gadgets. Put your mobile phone on airplane mode while sleeping.
- Compare your mood when you exercise well and sleep with when you do not.



Steps to be build Social Resilience

- **Support and empower communities:** To be more socially resilient it is very important that the communities need to be empowered and given the resources to able to deal with environmental challenges.
- **Create Awareness:** Create awareness amongst everyone on how to manage and deal with the disaster situations. How to deal with the global health crises and what precautions to take in order to ensure there is minimal transmission of viruses.
- **Improve livelihoods and health care services:** By having access to resources and information and having social protection approaches one can ensure to develop measures to enhance coping strategies, disaster management and climatic change adaption.

(Global facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2015)

 In light of the current Covid-19 Pandemic the **United Arab Emirates** has followed all three steps for their community to be more socially resilient.

Exercise: Do you have any other tip in mind that could be used to help build resilience in its types mentioned above? Also, mention the reason why the one you mentioned is important?

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Activity : How Resilient are you?

■ You failed your examination? What will be your response?

- a You will get disheartened and leave studying further.
- b You will blame the examiner and complain about the unfairness in the marks distribution.
- c You will stop eating your food and engage in self-blame.
- d You will look for the reason why you scored less and try to rectify your mistake and not repeat it in the future.
- e You will procrastinate studying for your future exams and miss out on properly preparing for your exams.

■ You have to shift in a new neighborhood? How will you respond?

- a You will resist the shifting and create problems for your parents.
- b You will cry all day and refuse to shift.
- c You will keep your spirits high and welcome the new change with a positive outlook .
- d You will refuse to interact with your new neighbors.

■ You have a misunderstanding with your friend who stops talking to you. How will you react?

- a You blame your friend for being at fault.
- b You also stop talking to your friend rather than clearing the misunderstanding.
- c You analyze what went wrong and go and talk to your friend and try to clear the misunderstanding.
- d You change your group of friends and start avoiding this friend of yours.

■ You are overworked with your tasks and your deadline is near? What will be your response?

- a You will give up and refuse to work as it is overwhelming for you.
- b You will refuse to take anyone's help and blame everyone for giving you so much work .
- c You will organize your tasks and start working on finishing them and ask for help from others if you feel you need it.
- d You will keep delaying doing your task till the deadline is near.

Key : How Resilient are you?

■ You failed your examination? What will be your response?

- **Option A, B, C and E** are more reflective of you having low resilience. This is reflected in you tending to give up more quickly and looking and blaming at external factors as possible reasons for your failure.
- **Option D** is reflective of you having more resilience as you tend to look at the actual cause as the possible reason rather than engaging in self-critical behaviors.

■ You have to shift in a new neighborhood? How will you respond?

- **Option A, B and D** highlight that you are not open and welcoming to new changes in your life.
- **Option C** is indicative of you not only welcoming new changes but being open to new experiences.

■ You have a misunderstanding with your friend who stops talking to you. How will you react?

- **Option A,B and D** indicate that you do not try to solve and sort out the problem being experienced.
- **Option C** indicates that you not only try to resolve the problem experiencing but you also tend to analyze it and look for the actual reason what went wrong.

■ You are overworked with your tasks and your deadline is near? What will be your response?

- **Option A, B,D** states that that you tend to procrastinate and delay doing your work which leads to you getting overwhelmed when the deadline is near.
- **Option C** highlights that you finish your tasks in a more organized manner and you plan your activities well.in advance.

Can We Raise a Resilient Child?

One of the most interesting concept to explore in the context of Resilience is to see why some people are more resilient than the others. To understand this it is important that we take a developmental take on it which means we need to look for the answer in an individual's childhood. There are many protective factors that contribute to a child to be more resilient. During the development phase children are exposed to various adverse situations. Children exposed to poverty are more likely to report academic issues children with parental mental illness are more likely to develop the same mental illness (Masten & Barnes, 2018). However, despite these challenges there are many children who are able to overcome these challenges and achieve their normal developmental milestones. This is precisely because of the protective factors that help them be more resilient (Alvord & Grados,2005).

Therefore, it is very important that good parenting techniques should be used to raise a resilient child. You will find in this booklet some validated techniques that help you raise a resilient child.



■ Protective factors to build resilience in Children:

- ① Supportive parents can always act as a buffer that helps the child to remain balanced in times of difficulty.
- ② Adopting good parenting techniques.
- ③ Regular physical exercises.
- ④ Resilience Building Programmes.
Stable and positive environments.
- ⑤ Positive response and Coping Strategies .
- ⑥ Genetic predisposition.
- ⑦ Positive school environments free from
- ⑧ bullying and negative attitudes.
- ⑨ Safe neighborhoods and social support networks.

(Andriance & Shaw,2008)

Raising a Resilient Child : How to build Children's Resilience?

- **Use good parenting techniques:** Parenting can play a very important role in bringing up resilient children. Spend more time with your child. Avoid being thier problem solver instead help them explore solu- tions, then support them with their choinces and decisions.
- **Be a good listener to your child:** Try to listen to your child's prob- lems patiently which will not only help your child express themselves freely but also, will get a chance of opening up and they will not keep their emotions bottled up.
- **Help your child develop Optimistic thinking:** You cannot control what your child thinks but by helping your child develop an optimistic style of thinking you can help your child be more positive in their out- look towards their future life.
- **Be patient with your child:** As your child grows parents tend to be more critical and demanding not realizing that this puts additional pressure on the child. It is important that parents need to respect their child's voice and feelings.
- **Monitor your child's sleep pattern and diet:** Make sure your child is sleeping well and has a good healthy diet.
- **Identify your child's stress:** Any change in a child's life can be source of stress such as change of school, being bullied, academic pressure or conflict with friends or family.

(Parenting Resilient Children at Home and at School,The Psychology foundation of Canada)



Activities to build Resilience in Children:

- Sit with your child and hold a paper and pencil. Help your child list down their goals. Then discuss the steps to take to help them achieve those goals.
- Encourage your child to meet and listen to the elderly individuals in the family who can narrate their stories of resilience. How they managed to deal with tough circumstances.
- Take a chart paper and attach it to the wall. Encourage your child to note down on sticky note pads what they find hard and then attach to the chart paper. Then try to help them think about the resolution to their problems or what they find hard and attach it side by side to their challenges.
- Read stories of resilient individuals who overcame their setback in their lives and achieved their goals.



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GRATITUDE



Exercise 1: Once a week, express your gratitude to someone in your life who have made a positive difference in your life by being supportive. You may send your note via text or email. Notice the positive impact of your messages on them and on yourself as well.

Exercise 4: (Three Things) Write down 3 things you need to do on a daily basis. Three things you want to achieve, 3 traits you love in people around you and 3 things you want to focus on this current year.



Activities Designed for you

The below exercises are designed to cultivate gratitude and help you remain calmer and more focused during these tough times.



Exercise 2: Express gratitude toward yourself, you can note down anything which makes you feel proud of yourself.



Exercise 3: The “Maybe for good” exercise is a great way to look at your past and be more confident about your future, Any disappointment or failure in your past life which later turned out to be in your best interest. This will give you more confidence to face your failures and perceive them as a way to grow.

Exercises promoting De-Cluttering:

These exercises are aimed at helping you get more organized in life.

- **Exercise 1:** Rearrange your room. Add in more bright colors to your room. Collect photos of your family members and place them on the wall and recycle your home supplies and reuse them more creatively (you can make it a family gathering activity).



- **Exercise 2:** Follow your monthly calendar to get rid of unnecessary things (de-cluttering). Each month should be dedicated to de-cluttering specific items. One month should be dedicated to removing books, clothes and shoes. Donate them to people who are in need.

- **Exercise 3:** Make a note of the supplies to buy from the store and be careful not to buy extra. Make sure you stick to what's on the list. Compare your expenses on monthly basis. This will help you reduce purchasing unnecessary items and you will be able to have a better budgeting plan.



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Retrieved on 23rd March, 2020 from <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/how-can-we-help-children-become-more-resilient-0504184>
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