

Managing Change – Building Resilience

Most of us struggle with change particularly if the direction of change is not clearly mapped out for us. This is because as human beings we like to know what's ahead of us. It gives us a sense that we can have some control over it. Unfortunately it is difficult to attain the certainty about the future that we are looking for because we can't see around corners and can never be sure what is coming next.



So how do we cope with or manage change and the uncertainty that goes with it? The truth is we are managing uncertainty all the time and we don't even realise it. We are all coping, maybe not in the way we might want to, or in the best way possible (whatever that is!) but we are coping.

The best way to deal with uncertainty is to build both our actual resilience and our belief or confidence in our own resilience. If we are confident in our own resilience, then it is easier to deal with not knowing what is ahead.

Resilience

The dictionary definition of resilience is that it is *"The ability of a substance to return to its usual shape after being bent, stretched, or pressed"* (Cambridge English Dictionary). It is the ability to adapt to stress and adversity, the ability to find a way through when life throws us challenges.

The good news is that we can develop resilience. It is not something that you are born with. Resilience is not a trait, it can be developed and nurtured over a lifetime and it takes work to maintain it.

People who are resilient have developed coping techniques that allow them to effectively navigate around and through challenges and/ or crises. They have a generally positive and optimistic attitude towards life and can balance difficult emotional experiences with positive ones. They are generally adaptable and take responsibility for their own lives and wellbeing.

Building Resilience

We build our resilience by overcoming adversity – we learn from experience and build our capacity to cope. It is hard to build resilience if we have never faced difficult times. The truth is that we are more resilient than we realise, and can become even more resilient if we work at it.



10 Tips for Building Resilience

1. Building a good support system and using it in times of challenge is important. Have a think about who you have around you who can provide support, family members, friends, work colleagues, members of the wider community. Reaching out and asking for support is key.
2. Learning to see difficult events as challenges rather than crises is really helpful. When we see difficult events or situations as catastrophes this 'end of the world' thinking increases our anxiety and stress can stop us from finding creative solutions. This stress drains us of the energy we may need to keep going and work our way through or around the situation.
3. Finding ways to adapt to what we cannot change helps to build resilience. Using supports to get different perspectives can really help here when we are not able to think of ways to work around something ourselves.
4. Developing realistic goals and working towards them even when the going gets tough really helps. Breaking things down into bite sized chunks, or smaller steps can help with this.
5. Taking decisive action in difficult situations builds our resilience. Gather information, use your supports, decide, and commit. This can help us manage

the stress of not knowing. It is about controlling what you can control and recognising that there will always be pieces that are beyond your control but that this does not have to stop you taking action.

6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery – the better you know yourself and how you react the more you can work to build your resilience. Take learning from each difficult situation.
7. Continually work on building your self-confidence. The more confident you are in your capacity to cope the more resilient you will be.
8. Keep a long term perspective. Consider difficult events in the broad context of life. This is part of, but not all of, your experience. Difficult times do pass.
9. Work on building hope. Hope is the belief that better things are possible even if we don't know exactly what these are or how this will happen at this moment in time.
10. Purposely take care of your physical and mental health. If we are looking after ourselves physically and mentally then we are better able to cope with any challenge that may come our way.



Being aware of our own resilience and having confidence in it helps us to manage uncertainty and challenge. Remember what appears safe and secure at this moment in time was once new and uncertain to you.

