

# Professional and Personal Resilience

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Everyone Counts!  
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## Resilience: Definition

Ability to recoil or spring back into shape after bending, stretching, or being compressed.

Able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions.

*Oxford English Dictionary*



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## Resilience

Ability to rebound and adjust successfully to major life losses

Personality characteristic that moderates the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptation

*Wagnild and Young, 1993*



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### Resilience: Five Dimensions

- Self-reliance – a belief in one’s self and one’s capabilities
- Perseverance – the act of persistence despite adversity or discouragement
- Equanimity – a balanced perspective of one’s life and one’s experiences
- Meaningfulness - the realization that life has a purpose and the valuation of one’s contributions
- Existential aloneness - the realization that each person’s life path is unique; while some experiences are shared, other must be faced alone

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### The Resilience Scale

- Developed from qualitative study of older women successfully coping after a major loss
- Validated in a qualitative study of caregivers for spouses with Alzheimer’s Disease
- Validated in broader literature (philosophy, psychology)
- Verbatim statements were tested
- Psychometric testing in community sample

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### How Resilient are You?

- I usually manage one way or another
- I feel proud that I have accomplished things in life
- I usually take things in stride
- I am friends with myself
- I feel that I can handle many things at a time
- I am determined
- I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before
- I have self-discipline
- I keep interested in things
- I can usually find something to laugh about
- My belief in myself gets me through hard times
- In an emergency, I'm someone people can generally rely on
- My life has meaning
- When I'm in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it

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### Think of examples in your life

- Think about an example of one of the items you agreed with strongly
- Turn to the person next to you and share your experience

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### The Resilience Scale goes international

- |              |                        |
|--------------|------------------------|
| • Spanish    | • Swedish              |
| • German     | • Japanese             |
| • Chinese    | • Italian              |
| • Hebrew     | • Urdu                 |
| • Russian    | • Brazilian Portuguese |
| • Portuguese | • Korean               |
| • Finnish    | • Creole Haitian       |
| • Thai       | • Sinhala              |
| • Greek      | • Persian              |
| • Dutch      |                        |

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### Populations

- Persons with illness – cancer, transplants, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, diabetes, mental health
- Family caregivers (cardiac, Alzheimer’s Disease, parents of disabled kids)
- Ethnic groups – African American, Hispanic, Russian
- Ages – youth, middle age, old age
- Occupations – health, military, students
- Circumstances – immigration, Holocaust, post-traumatic stress, inner city youth

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## Resilience

- Negatively associated with:
  - Depression, emotional exhaustion, fatigue, depersonalization, stress of conscience, physical complaints
- Positively associated with:
  - Morale, life satisfaction, accomplishment, social support, sense of coherence, self-esteem, stress management, health promotion, well-being
- Increased with:
  - Experiential outdoor education program

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## Importance of personal and professional resilience

- Many of us are mission driven
- We face challenges every day – small and large
- We are working on teams that share challenging experiences
- Our world is full of uncertainty and change

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## Managing Transitions (W. Bridges)

Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation (internal, vs. change – external)

- Three phases:
  - Ending
  - Neutral zone
  - New beginning

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## What is the most significant change you have faced at work recently?

Think about that change:

- Ending – What have you and others lost?
- Neutral zone – What is uncertain/not settled about the change?
- New beginning – What are the new possibilities with the change?

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## Endings

- Identify who is losing what
- Recognize importance of the loss
- Expect signs of grieving
- Compensate for losses
- Communication
- Define what is over and what is not
- Mark the endings
- Treat the past with respect

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## Neutral Zone

- Normalize and redefine
- Create temporary systems
- Strengthen intragroup connections – conflict is normal
- Transition monitoring team
- Use phase to question status quo and nurture innovation – time of creative possibility
- Don't push closure prematurely

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### New Beginnings

- Clarify and communicate the purpose
- Picture the outcome
- Contribute to the plan
- Make sure each person understands his or her part in the plan
- Reinforce the new beginning (quick success, symbolize new identity, celebrate success)

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### Managing Constant Change

- Recognize that change is the norm
- Clarify and remember your mission
- Focus on relationships and trust
- Forecast as much as possible
- Postpone extra changes
- Contingency planning
- Shed old baggage
- Understand the reasons behind change

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### Take Care of Yourself

- Figure out what is actually changing
- Decide what is over for you, distinguish from old wounds
- Identify continuities
- Recognize symptoms of neutral zone
- Take time out
- Look at yourself creatively
- Draw on your inner strength and resilience

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**Strategies for Advancing Resilience on your Team**

- Self-reflection and conversation about your strengths
- Reflection on strategies you can take to cope with change
- Nurturing your personal and professional growth and health
- Expanding connections
- Promoting your successes to yourselves and beyond

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Thank you!

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