



Resilience Is the Ability to Respond and Grow From Challenges

Resilience is not a fixed trait and can always be increased through supports and skills that we practice regularly. We will always experience stress or challenges, but they also provide us with opportunities to grow during our lifetimes. The following factors can help us increase resilience, mitigate negative effects of distress, and return our bodies to baseline stress levels more efficiently so distress does not become prolonged.

To Increase Your Ability to Experience Stress Without Distress, Consider the Following:

1. **Social Support:** Several studies have found one of the biggest protective factors from distress is having a stable and supportive relationship with at least one other person or a beloved pet. It is easier to handle life's challenges and uncertainties when we know we have someone that will be there for us. Creating secure relationships and building social support can occur at any time; it's important to stay connected, especially during those times when we feel isolated.
2. **Small Steps Toward Health:** To help reduce your body's stress response, make sure you are engaging in healthy behaviors, like getting seven to nine hours of sleep, eating healthy foods, being active and staying hydrated. Try to avoid excessive caffeine intake or alcohol or substance use, which can increase the body's negative reaction to distress.
3. **Practicing Gratitude:** The more we are grateful for our blessings, the more we have to be grateful for. Practicing gratitude on a daily basis shifts our thinking from the negative to the positive, which is energizing and a buffer against distress.
4. **Focus on the Positive:** Often when we experience distress, it is because we don't feel like we have a sense of control. When a challenge arises, it can be helpful to think about what you can control, which is your attitude, your behavior and your response. Work toward solving a problem in small pieces and celebrate even small victories. Building this sense of control can help you respond to new challenges that arise in the future.
5. **Seeking Help:** Sometimes part of building resilience is realizing that sometimes you can't do it all on your own. Consider seeking help if you are feeling overwhelmed by accessing LRHS's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), consulting with Derry Gibson, hospital chaplain, or scheduling time with a trained mental health professional.