

Healthy You: Resilience

Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Olympia (360) 407-9490 ■ Toll-free (877) 313-4455

When something goes wrong, do you bounce back or do you fall apart? Resilient people use inner strengths and tend to rebound more quickly from a setback or challenge. In contrast, those less resilient may dwell on the problem, feel victimized, become overwhelmed and turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Working on your mental well-being is just as important as working on your physical health. Resilience doesn't make your problems go away but can give you the ability to see past them, find enjoyment in life, and better handle future stressors. If you aren't as resilient as you'd like, you can teach yourself to become more resilient.

Tips to improve your resilience

- **Get connected:** Build strong, positive relationships with family and friends, who provide support and acceptance. Volunteer, get involved in your community, or join a faith or spiritual community.
- **Find meaning:** Develop a sense of purpose for your life. Having something meaningful to focus on can help you share emotions, feel gratitude, and experience an enhanced sense of well being.
- **Start laughing:** Finding humor in stressful situations does not mean you are in denial. Humor is a helpful coping mechanism.
- **Learn from experience:** Think back on how you have coped with hardships in the past. Build on skills and strategies that helped you through the rough times, and do not repeat those that did not help.
- **Remain hopeful:** You cannot change what has happened in the past, but you can always look towards the future. Find something in each day that signals a change for the better. Expect good results.
- **Take care of yourself:** Tend to your own needs and feelings both physically and emotionally. This includes participating in activities and hobbies you enjoy, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and eating well.
- **Keep a journal:** Write about your experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Journaling can help you experience strong emotions you may otherwise be afraid to unleash. It also can help you see situations in a new way and help you identify patterns in your behavior and reactions.
- **Accepting and anticipating change:** Expecting changes to occur makes it easier to adapt to them, tolerate, and even welcome them. With practice, you can learn to be more flexible and not view change with as much anxiety.

- **Work toward a goal:** Do something every day that gives you a sense of accomplishment. Even small, everyday goals are important. Having goals help you look toward the future.
- **Take action:** Wishing your problems would go away or ignoring them is not helpful. Instead, figure out what needs to be done, make a plan, and take action.
- **Maintain perspective:** Look at your situation in the larger context of your own life and of the world. Keep a long-term perspective and know that your situation can improve if you actively work at it.
- **Practice stress management and relaxation techniques:** Gain an inner sense of peace and calm by practicing such stress management and relaxation techniques as yoga, meditation, deep breathing, visualization, imagery, prayer, or muscle relaxation.