Resilience

How can I become more resilient in the face of stress?

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. It means bouncing back from difficult experiences.

Common characteristics of resilient people

- Having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family
- A positive view of oneself and confidence in one's strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses
  - in Housing [1]: Talk to your RA about activities on your floor that can increase feelings of connection, reach out to someone on the floor who is shyer than you are. Practice problem solving when conflicts arise with your roommate or others on the floor, talk with your RA about how to approach sensitive interpersonal situations in the residence hall.
  - in Campus Recreation [2]: Participate in an intramural sport team, get a new buddy to go with you to work out. Establish a regular exercise routine. Take a yoga class, establish a workout program.
  - in classes you take: Say hello to someone in your class, participate in a study group, try to get to know one of your instructors better. Use your classes to notice emerging strengths, pay attention to what is going right for you in class on a regular basis, instead of focusing only on what might be going wrong.
  - at University Career Services [3]: Build the capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out, talk to a career counselor about your short-term and long term plans. Get help putting together your resume, plan on getting an internship.
  - in Academic Advising [4]: Talk about choosing a major or how the curriculum for your major is going, use the Learning Center [5] to help organize your academic work and prevent procrastination.
  - in Student Wellness [6]: Get information to help you understand a holistic perspective on health and wellness, and use this knowledge to make
healthier and safer decisions in areas that are important to college students like stress, sleep, alcohol and drugs, sexual health, and financial wellness. Become a peer advocate for an issue you feel strongly about.

- in Counseling and Psychological Services: Join a therapeutic group [7], resolve any personal issues that present a barrier to close connections. Talk to a therapist about negative feelings and mood before they become more troublesome. Learn about mindfulness [8] and other relaxation [9] skills; learn to meditate [8], develop emotional regulation skills.

How does one build resilience?

- **Build resilience by making connections**
  - Physical Self-Care
    - Dance, swim, walk, run, play
    - Connect physically in ways that feel safe: a hug, a kiss
    - Take vacations with family and friends
  - Psychological Self-Care
    - Let others know different aspects of you
    - Engage your intelligence in a new area? go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
    - Practice receiving from others
  - Emotional Self-Care
    - Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
    - Stay in contact with important people in your life
    - Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
  - Spiritual Self-Care
    - Spend time with nature
    - Find a spiritual connection or community
    - Spend time with children
  - School Self-Care
    - Take time to chat with classmates
    - Talk to your professors
    - Have a peer support group

- **Build resilience by learning to avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems, by accepting that change is part of living, by keeping things in perspective. Learn about yourself from the situation.**
  - Physical Self-Care
    - Take time off when you're sick
    - Get enough sleep [10]
    - Wear clothes that you like
  - Psychological Self-Care
    - Make time away from the computer
- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Notice your internal experience?thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes?non-judgmentally
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes

○ Emotional Self-Care
  - Do not blame yourself for events you cannot control
  - Make note everyday of three things you appreciate
  - Have a period of quiet, reflective, non-goal oriented time every day

○ Spiritual Self-Care
  - Be open to not knowing
  - Try at time not to be in charge or the expert
  - Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
  - Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
  - Meditate or pray
  - Sing, listen to music

○ School Self-Care
  - Make quiet time to complete tsks
  - Set limits with group projects
  - Balance your classes so that no one day is too much?

- Build resilience by moving towards your goals, even (or especially) in small steps, by taking action instead of wishing it would go away?. Maintain hope: visualize what you want, rather than worry about what you fear.

Nurture a positive view of yourself.

○ Physical Self-Care
  - Eat regularly (e.g., breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
  - Eat healthy
  - Exercise
  - Get regular medical care for prevention and when ill
  - Get massages

○ Psychological Self-Care
  - Take day trips, or mini-vacations
  - Focus and take action on matters that have the highest priority for you
  - Write down daily affirmations of yourself, i.e., what you like and value about yourself

○ Emotional Self-Care
  - Love yourself
  - Reread favorite books, review favorite movies
  - Allow yourself to cry
  - Find things that make you laugh
  - Express your outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
○ Spiritual Self-Care
  ■ Be open to inspiration and grace
  ■ Cherish your optimism and hope
  ■ Contribute to causes in which you believe
  ■ Read inspirational literature
○ Academic Self-Care
  ■ Identify aspects of class that are exciting and rewarding

(adapted from a document composed by the Northern Illinois University Counseling and Student Development Center)

Source URL: https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/academic-success/resilience

Links
[7] https://caps.unc.edu/services/group-therapy
[10] https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/sleep