

Promoting positive mental health and well-being



A supportive network can be very helpful to a person suffering from poor mental health. If you are providing support to a person who is experiencing poor mental or physical health or who has been diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder, keep these general tips in mind.*

- Try to keep an open mind.
- Be patient.
- Don't judge.
- Listen if the person wants to talk.
- Show you care – and remind the person that many others do too.
- Be consistent in your actions and reactions related to the person.

Specific ways to help*

- **Partner in treatment.** Help your friend or family member make medical and health provider appointments, track medications or provide updates to health care professionals.
- **Find other resources.** Look for people who can help the person in specific ways, such as teachers, counsellors and therapists.
- **Learn about the condition.** The more you know, the more effectively you can help.
- **Bring in others.** With the person's permission, talk to other friends or family members about sharing responsibilities.
- **Share your feelings as a family.** Talk about issues and emotions and figure out what works and what isn't helpful.
- **Develop a crisis plan.** Make sure the person knows that there is a plan in place and what will happen in the event of a crisis.

If you are a caregiver*

- Don't underestimate the stress of caring for a person with a mental illness or other serious health problems. It can be exhausting and frustrating.
- Try not to shoulder all the responsibility yourself — find others to help.
- Don't blame yourself. Mental illness is a medical condition. Nothing you said or did caused your friend or family member to become ill.
- Remember that your reactions are normal. It's hard not to take the person's behavior personally. Most caregivers experience a range of feelings from compassion to anger.
- Take care of yourself. Set limits on how much you'll do. Take breaks from caregiving now and then. Make sure you schedule time to do the things you enjoy.
- Expand your social support network. Dealing with mental illness can be lonely. Consider support groups and other community resources.
- Don't give up hope. Most people can be successfully treated. Sometimes it takes time to find the right treatment, but improvement and recovery are possible.

Resilience: Everybody needs it¹

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity. It is often tested when stressful situations arise in everyday life and when trauma or tragedy strike. Stress is not the only factor that can test a person's resilience. However, how a person handles stress is a strong indicator of their ability to bounce back. Resilience is also a key element in well-being.

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves feelings, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Everyone could benefit from building resilience.

Employers are increasingly recognizing the need to provide programs, services and health resources that address mental health, well-being and resilience. Benefits of a resilient workforce include greater job satisfaction and work happiness, organizational commitment and employee engagement. Building resilience contributes to employees' improved self-esteem, greater sense of control over life events and improved interpersonal relationships with co-workers and others.

My plan to build resilience*

Mark ways to build resilience that you already do and those that you will try in the near future.

Ten ways to build resilience	I already do this	I will try this
1. Make connections with others. Be comfortable asking for and accepting help. Assist others and you will also benefit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Avoid seeing challenges or crises as insurmountable problems. Change how you interpret and respond to events. Look beyond the present to a better future. Note positive feelings when dealing with difficulties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Accept that change is stressful and that it is part of living. Accept what cannot be changed and focus on changes that are possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Establish realistic goals to move forward. Use tangible and non-tangible rewards to motivate yourself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Take decisive actions to meet the demands of daily life. Resist inertia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Practice good self-care and self-discovery. Learn something new about yourself. Recognize and appreciate your personal strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself. Develop confidence and trust your instincts. Practice self-reliance while also relying on others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Keep things in perspective. View stress in a broad context and try to keep a long-term perspective. Avoid exaggerating or making a catastrophe out of every stressful event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook. Be optimistic and expect good things to happen. Visualize what is wanted rather than what is feared. Concentrate on being grateful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Become stress hardy. Keep your body fit and healthy to deal with stress. Pay attention to personal needs and engage in enjoyable, relaxing activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What can you do?**

Be positive and hopeful. Take care of yourself so that you can support and care for others.

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic. Resilience: Build skills to endure hardship, 5-15-2020. Available from www.mayoclinic.org; accessed on 7-14-2020.

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