SBCI

School Boards' Co-operative Inc.

Building Resiliency

Participant Handbook

Building Resiliency Workshop Overview

Resilience is often described as a person's ability to bounce back from adversity. It is an important building block of individual wellbeing.

While everyone is born with a natural resilience, the degrees of this resilience can vary.

This session will teach participants that with self-awareness and practice, they can build on that natural resilience and strengthen their abilities to bounce back when faced with difficult or challenging situations.

At the end of the session, participants will be able to implement different strategies to thrive under pressure and face challenging situations, both personally and professionally.

Building Resiliency Workshop Agenda

- Understanding Resiliency
- Recognizing Stressors and Automatic Stress Responses
- Resiliency Self-Test
- Strategies to Build Resilience
  - Balance, Control, Internal Dialogue, Exploring Options, Goal Setting, Support Networks, Your Strengths, Commitment to Self
  - Other Potential Resources
- Mental Fitness Tips from the CMHA

Session Duration: **2 hours**

UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY

Resilience
Rooted in the Latin word ***"resilio"*** – meaning ***"to jump back"***

Resilience is the capacity to adapt to or recover from adversity, including but not limited to:

- Workplace Issues
- Trauma
- Tragedy/Loss
- Harassment
- Relationship/Family Issues
- Health Problems
- Financial Issues

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UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY

A high level of resilience does not mean you will **avoid stress**… you will be able to adapt to it and recover more effectively from it.

Stress is not always bad – can be positive

Good Stress motivates you. Also referred to as ***eustress***, it can provide a feeling of fulfillment.

Bad Stress, or ***distress***, is negative. Ongoing distress can lead to chronic health issues.

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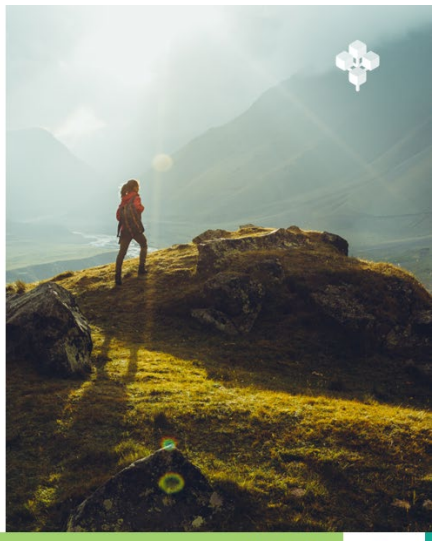
UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY

Resilience Factors

+ Attitude
+ Boundaries
+ Flexibility
+ Social Connection
+ Personal Strengths
+ Self-Care
+ Being Organized



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UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY

Resiliency Can Take You ...

FROM	TO
+ Being stressed	+ Recognizing automatic response to stress
+ Reacting in unhealthy ways	+ Choosing healthier responses
+ Constantly battling personal weakness	+ Identifying and using your strengths
+ Feeling unable to make change	+ Committing to growing, learning + thriving
+ Waiting for a crisis to find help	+ Ensuring you are aware of potential resources

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Exercise 1: Understanding Resiliency

1. What does the word ‘resilience’ mean to you?

2. Write down the name of 1 person in your life who has shown resiliency. What did they do to demonstrate this trait?

RECOGNIZING STRESSORS AND AUTOMATIC STRESS RESPONSES

- To help build resilience, it is important to be aware of the potential adverse events that could happen at any time and consider how we might cope
- Don't focus on what can go wrong, rather on how to move forward
- Significant illness, disability or loss can lead some to appreciate life, while others cannot let anger or sadness go from something that happened years ago
- We can't control what happens to us, but we can control our responses!

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Exercise 2: Recognizing Your Stressors

Instructions:

The items listed on the following pages can be significant life stressors. They could happen to you or someone you care about.

Some people have few current stressors, while others have many in this moment. Life is very fluid and can change at any time. We want to build resiliency to cope with any of life's stressors, but this is a lifelong learning activity. We will start with whatever is most relevant to you **NOW**.

Check any items that you are coping with right now or know you will in the very near future. You will be asked at the end of this activity to prioritize one of your stressors to explore further for potential solutions. Remember, when you check an item, consider if it is something you are coping with now or you foresee as a concern in the immediate future.

HEALTH

Injury or disability
Lack of emotional or physical well-being
Pregnancy
Your personal identity, including sexual identity
Stress related to the health of friends or family members
Vicarious trauma – impact on you when someone else is traumatized
An unexpected diagnosis, either physical or psychological
Inadequate access to care, support, or resources for self or others
Management of chronic or episodic health conditions
Overstimulation – no mental downtime due to work/life demands
Other:

SOCIAL

Coordination of schedules with spouse/significant other
Support of parents or other adult family members
Cultural expectations of family clash with other expectations
Loss of a loved one
Supporting others dealing with grief
Loss of a pet
Excessive exposure to negative, frustrated or angry people
Isolation or estrangement from family or friends
Unresolved conflict or difficulty maintaining relationships
Sexual harassment/violence
Aggression/violence/intimidation
Gossip/ridicule/humiliation/bullying
Social injustice
Stigma or discrimination
Lack of acceptance for who you are

Lack of acceptance of who I am (by me)
Identity-based marginalization
Being ignored or shunned
Unwelcome change in involvement in church, community or group
Parental responsibilities, including adult children
Management of children's school and extra-curricular activities
Supporting children with special needs or health concerns
Family breakdown – separation, divorce or custody issues
Breakdown of relationship with friends or co-workers
Empty nest syndrome – adjusting to life without children at home
Fear of disappointing your family or friends
Other:

FINANCIAL

Having enough money to pay for day-to-day expenses
Incurring unexpected expenses
Debt repayment
Incurring an investment loss
Ensuring enough money for retirement
Long-term care expenses for your parents, partner or other loved ones
Losses due to traumatic experiences – fire, accident, floods, storms, etc.
Health expenses – insurance, prescriptions, treatment
Other:

EMOTIONAL

Dealing with change
Lack of change / boredom
Fear of failure
Fear of missing out
Impact from criticism, judgement or accusations
Fear of being perceived as inadequate or incompetent
Humiliation
Chronic frustration or irritability
Ongoing feelings of guilt or shame
Continual disappointment, unmet expectations or feeling let down
Fear of the social, political or economic climate of the world
Fear of violence or terrorism
Inability to relax or take time out
Sense of hopelessness
Other:

WORK

Job insecurity – fear of dismissal or contract not being renewed
Lack of role clarity or shifting expectations
Major organizational shifts – merger, acquisition, reorganization, etc.
Conflict
Organizational or team culture – lack of respect or civility
Lack of time to plan, think or reflect leading to errors or poor decisions
Ethical dilemmas
Workplace bullying or harassment
Mobbing – where a group treats someone insensitively
Lack of job flexibility
Lack of wage equity
Lack of recognition or appreciation
Fear of being perceived as inadequate or incompetent
Stagnation – no opportunities for job growth or development
Work pressures/demands
Responsibility without reasonable authority
Inadequate training
Inadequate or ineffective resources
Quality or safety concerns affecting your products or workplace
Occupational health and safety concerns
Workplace psychological health and safety issues
Major traumatic events, including workplace injuries or death
Lack of control over opportunities at work
Return from vacation to a huge backlog
Survivor guilt – when others lose their job or are injured
Communication demands/expectations – immediate responses to email and cellphone
Other:

RECOGNIZING STRESSORS AND AUTOMATIC STRESS RESPONSES

Recognizing Your Automatic Response to Stressors

+ For most, stress is a daily occurrence and often our responses are automatic
+ If we identify some of our responses to stress, we are more likely to address them
+ Physical, behavioural and emotional responses
+ Once we understand our responses and know it is stress related, we can identify the source of stress and make changes sooner

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RECOGNIZING STRESSORS AND AUTOMATIC STRESS RESPONSES

Automatic Stress Response of Others

Understanding the automatic response in others can be helpful:

+ Less likely to take behaviour personally
+ By realizing responses are a defense mechanism to deal with stress, we are less likely to feel defensive
+ In fact, we can help!

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Exercise 3: Resiliency Stress Test

Instructions:

1. Listen to each of the statements.
2. If the statement **describes you "most of the time",** mark it with a **"T" for true.**
3. If the statement **does not describe you,** mark it with an **"F" for false.**
4. There is no right or wrong answers here! The most accurate results come from making a quick judgment about the statement. Go with your initial gut response.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Scoring:

For Questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 10:

- Give yourself **1 point** for each **true answer**
- Give yourself **0 points** for each **false answer**

For Questions 2, 4, 7 and 9:

- Given yourself **0 points** for each **true answer**
- Give yourself **1 point** for each **false answer**

My total score is:

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

1. Explore Your Options *cont'd*

Accept

- The things and people you really can't change
- Don't try to control the uncontrollable
- Look at challenges for personal growth and learning
- Share your feelings to help reduce their power over your emotions
- Learn to forgive and move on

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

1. Explore Your Options *cont'd*

Avoid unnecessary stress by

- Learning how to say "no" and stick to your boundaries
- Avoiding people who may foster or create a stressful environment for you whenever possible
- Taking control of your environment
- Prioritizing your "to-do" list and dropping tasks that are not truly necessary

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

1. Explore Your Options *cont'd*

Alter

ways you communicate and operate in your daily life to minimize stressors

+ Express your feelings to a person you feel safe with instead of bottling them up
+ Be willing to compromise in ways that can help reduce stress
+ Be more assertive (open and honest) about your needs in ways others can support
+ Manage your time efficiently to provide you with opportunity for relaxation

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

1. Explore Your Options *cont'd*

Adapt

to the stressors by changing attitudes and behaviors

+ Reframe problems with a more positive and solution-focused perspective
+ Look at the big picture – consider potential consequences of taking various actions
+ Set reasonable and clear standards and expectations for yourself and others

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Exercise 4: Explore Your Options – Applying the 4 A's

Accept the things and people you really cannot change.

Avoid unnecessary stress.

Alter ways you communicate and operate in your daily life to minimize stressors.

Adapt to the stressors by changing attitudes and behaviours.

1. Reflecting on the stressors in your life right now, choose one for which you will explore your options (refer back to Exercise 2).

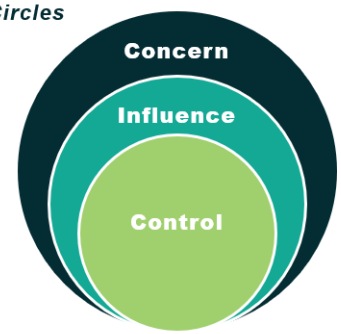
2. Briefly describe the stressor.

3. Consider how each of the 4 A's might make your stress better or worse.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

2. Focus on Control

3 Circles



Control
Belief in your ability to take charge of the ***controllable*** aspects of a situation and influence a more positive outcome (rather than believing you have no options available to you)

Stephen Covey –
7 Habits of Highly Effective People

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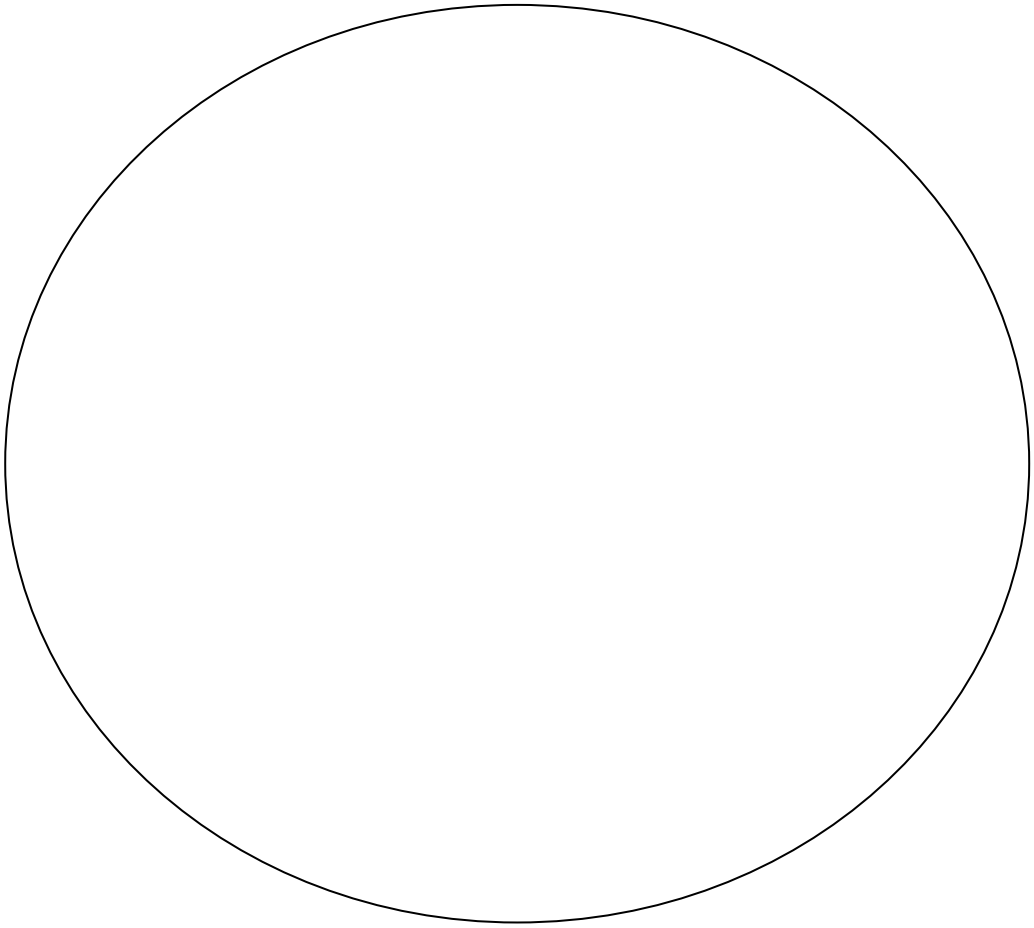
Exercise 5: Focus on Control

Instructions:

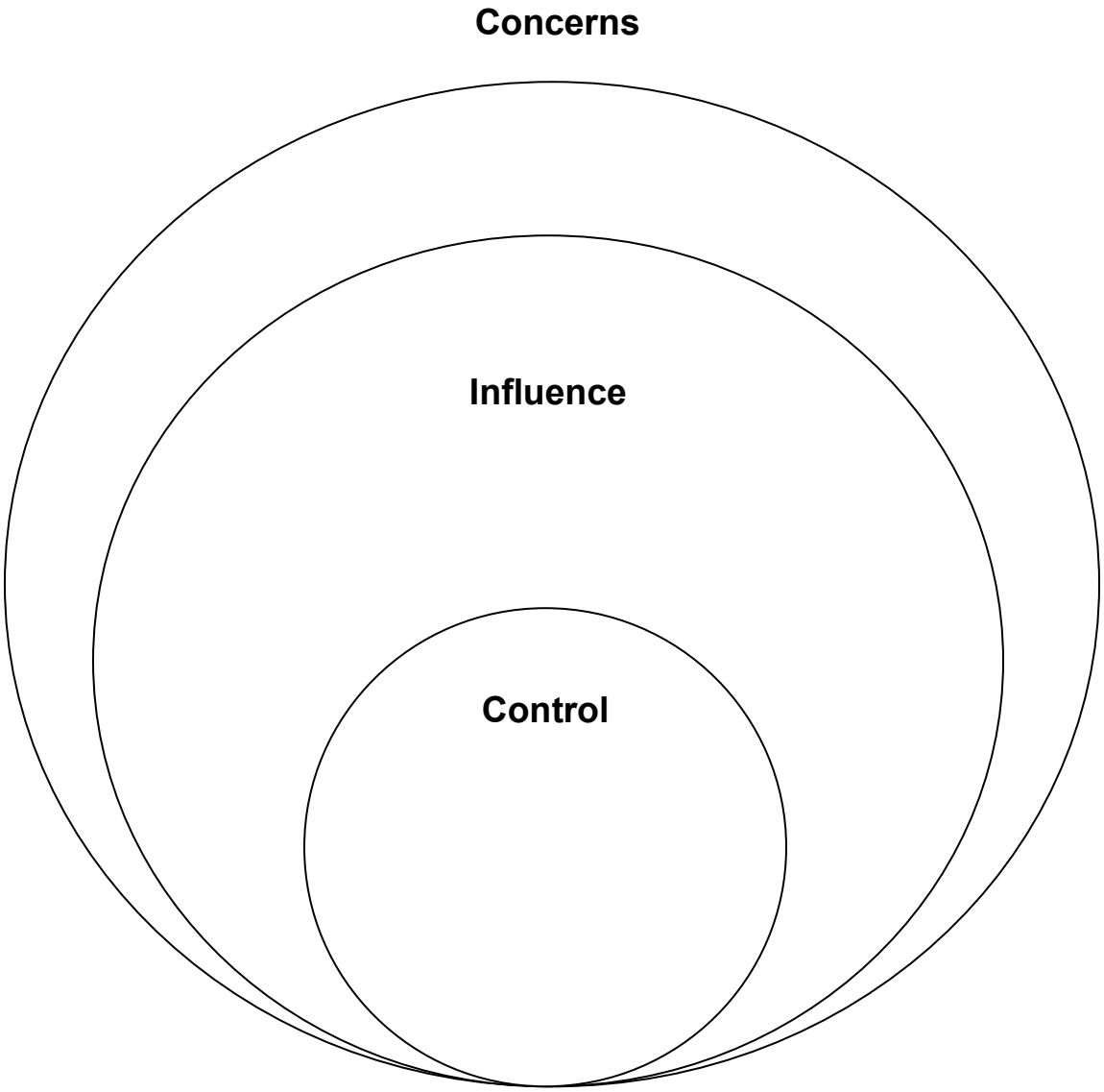
1. Think about your current life events – what do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? What are the things that lead you to feel angry, upset or frustrated?
2. List these items in the circle below.

Concerns



Instructions:

1. Look at the items in your circle of concern – which ones are you able to influence? **Which items can you affect the outcome by influencing the actions, behaviours or opinions of others?**
2. Look at the items in your circle of concern – which ones are you able to control? **Which items can you affect the outcome by commanding, directing or dominating circumstances or people?**



Focus on Balance

Healthy Mind Platter concept – 7 daily essential activities that we need to make room for on our plates to achieve a sense of balance and overall wellbeing.

- Healthy Mind Platter, David Rock and Daniel J. Siegel, MD, 2011

Focus Time	Time spent focusing on tasks in a goal-oriented way. Taking on challenges that move us closer to our goals.
Play Time	Time spent being spontaneous or creative, playfully engaged in experiences we enjoy.
Connecting Time	Time spent connecting with other people, ideally in person. Appreciating the connection and relationship we have with this person/these people.
Physical Time	Time spent moving our bodies and engaged in exercise.
Time In	Time spent quietly reflecting, focusing on our feelings and thoughts.
Down Time	Time spent relaxing and not focused on any specific goal.
Sleep Time	Time spent giving our brains and bodies the rest it needs. Gives us time to physically and mentally recover from our experiences of the day.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.
- Confucius

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.
- Henry David Thoreau

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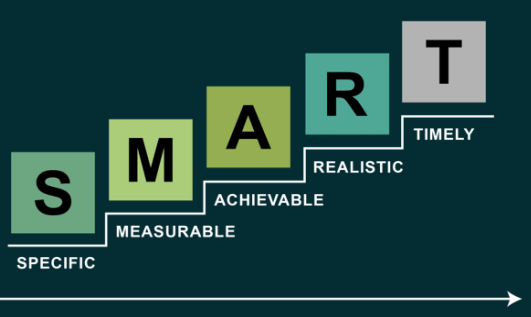
STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

4. Set SMART Goals



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Exercise 6: Set SMART Goals

Instructions:

Look back at the Healthy Mind Platter (7 daily essential activities to achieve a sense of balance and overall wellbeing)

Choose 1 essential activity that you feel you need to improve upon to achieve better balance.

_____

How do we turn that activity into a SMART GOAL?

Specific: What action will I implement?

Measurable: How will I know if I have been successful?

Achievable: What tools, resources or help do I need?

Realistic/Relevant: Why is this important to me?

Timely/Time-bound: When will I evaluate my progress?

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

5. Change Your Internal Dialogue

Your Thoughts Matter!

INSTEAD OF:		TRY:
+ "I'm a mess!"	→	+ "I'm human."
+ "I can't do this."	→	+ "I can do hard things."
+ "I'm a failure."	→	+ "I'm learning."
+ "Why is this happening?"	→	+ "What is this teaching me?"

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

5. Change Your Internal Dialogue

+ Quiet Your Mind
+ Count And Express Your Blessings (65 Per Day)
+ Reject Self-Defeating Thoughts

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

5. Change Your Internal Dialogue

+ Actively Affirm Yourself/Positive Traits
+ Hold Yourself Accountable/Monitor
+ Name It/Claim It
+ *BE DO HAVE* Method

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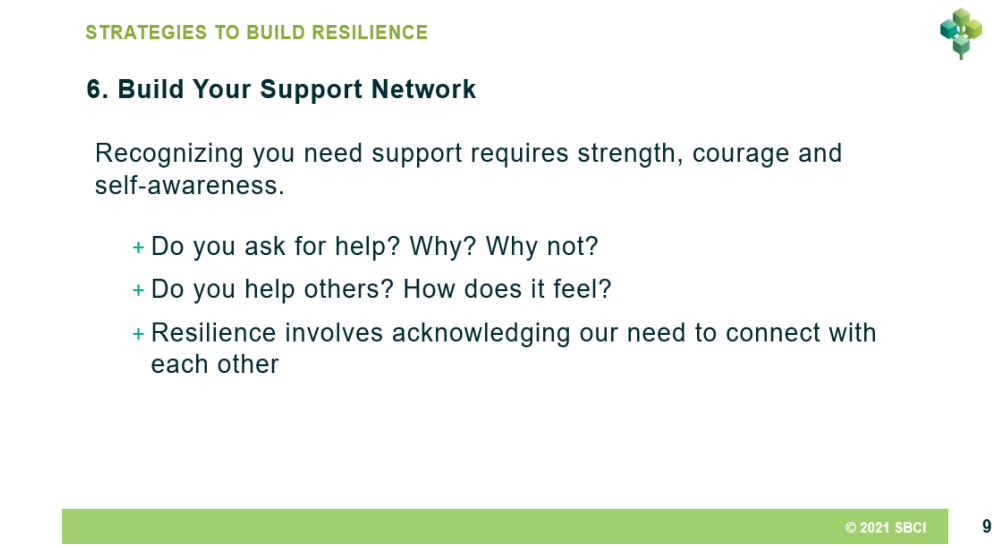

Exercise 7: Create Your Support Network

Instructions:

Think about your family, friends, associates, colleagues, neighbours and services around you. Create a list for yourself. On one side, people you can and do support. On the other side, make a list of people, resources or services that can support you.

People you Support	People/Resources/Services to Support You

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Be Aware of Potential Resources

THROUGH WORK:

+ Peers
+ Leaders
+ Human Resources
+ Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

OUTSIDE OF WORK:

+ Friends/family
+ Community supports
+ Family physician
+ Faith/Spiritual Community

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

7. Identify and Use Your Strengths

WISDOM	+ Judgment + Love of Learning + Perspective
+ Creativity + Curiosity	
COURAGE	+ Perseverance + Zest
+ Bravery + Honesty	
HUMANITY	+ Kindness + Love + Social Intelligence
JUSTICE	+ Fairness + Leadership + Teamwork
TEMPERANCE	+ Prudence + Self Regulation
+ Forgiveness + Humility	
TRANSCENDENCE	+ Hope + Humour + Spirituality
+ Appreciation of Beauty + Gratitude	

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Consider completing the free VIA Character Strengths Survey at www.viame.org.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

8. Commit to Self

Over the next 3 weeks I will commit to working on:

+ Reframe challenges as an opportunity for growth
+ Taking action to complete tasks I know are good for me
+ Brainstorming options to address stressors I encounter using the 4 A's
+ Use the 4 A's when dealing with stressors

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

8. Commit to Self *cont'd*

Over the next 3 weeks I will commit to working on:

+ Expressing appreciation to those who help me
+ Consciously learning from my mistakes
+ Accepting support when offered and reaching out when needed
+ Improving self-talk (what I say to myself about myself)

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STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Things You Can Do For You

+ Mindfulness/Meditation
+ Practicing Gratitude
+ Deep Breathing
+ Spirituality
+ Staying Hydrated/ Natural Light
+ Taking Breaks
+ Asking For Help / Getting Another Perspective
+ Laugh, Dance, Sing
+ Sports / Exercise
+ Volunteer
+ Prayer And Reflection

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Mental Fitness Tips from the CMHA

www.cmha.ca/resources/mental-fitness-tips

- **Daydream –** Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a dream location. Breathe slowly and deeply. Whether it's a beach, a mountaintop, a hushed forest or a favourite room from your past, let the comforting environment wrap you in a sensation of peace and tranquility.

- **"Collect" positive emotional moments –** Make it a point to recall times when you have experienced pleasure, comfort, tenderness, confidence, or other positive emotions.

- **Learn ways to cope with negative thoughts –** Negative thoughts can be insistent and loud. Learn to interrupt them. Don't try to block them (that never works), but don't let them take over. Try distracting yourself or comforting yourself, if you can't solve the problem right away.

- **Do one thing at a time –** For example, when you are out for a walk or spending time with friends, turn off your cell phone and stop making that mental "to do" list. Take in all the sights, sounds and smells you encounter.

- **Exercise –** Regular physical activity improves psychological well-being and can reduce depression and anxiety. Joining an exercise group or a gym can also reduce loneliness, since it connects you with a new set of people sharing a common goal.

- **Enjoy hobbies –** Taking up a hobby brings balance to your life by allowing you to do something you enjoy because you want to do it, free of the pressure of everyday tasks. It also keeps your brain active.

- **Set personal goals –** Goals don't have to be ambitious. You might decide to finish that book you started three years ago; to take a walk around the block every day; to learn to knit or play bridge; to call your friends instead of waiting for the phone to ring. Whatever goal you set, reaching it will build confidence and a sense of satisfaction.

- **Keep a journal –** Expressing yourself after a stressful day can help you gain perspective, release tension and even boost your body's resistance to illness.

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- **Keep a journal –** Expressing yourself after a stressful day can help you gain perspective, release tension and even boost your body's resistance to illness.

- **Share humour –** Life often gets too serious, so when you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh, share it with someone you know. A little humour can go a long way to keeping us mentally fit!

- **Volunteer –** Volunteering is called the "win-win" activity because helping others makes us feel good about ourselves. At the same time, it widens our social network, provides us with new learning experiences and can bring balance to our lives.

- **Treat yourself well –** Cook yourself a good meal. Have a bubble bath. See a movie. Call a friend or relative you haven't talked to in ages. Sit on a park bench and breathe in the fragrance of flowers and grass. Whatever it is, do it just for you.

Other Suggested Resources

Books:

The Little Book of Stress Relief – Dr. David Posen

Thriving in the Workplace All-in-One for Dummies – For Dummies Series

The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be – Jack Canfield and Janet Switzer

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity – David Allen

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Steven R. Covey

Websites:

https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/pdf/Plan_for_Resilience_Workplace_Edition_20180904.pdf

Weekly e-Newsletter sign up:

https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/newsletter/Healthy-Break-Activities

Identifying and Using Your Strengths Survey:

www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register