



## Improving Resiliency

By Rebecca Brumm, MA, LLPC  
EAP Coordinator

Have you ever wondered how the same tragedy can send one person into a downward spiral and barely affect the other? This difference is a trait referred to as resiliency. Resilience is your ability to deal with everyday stressors, personal tragedies, and traumatic events in a way that maintains your mental and physical health. Being resilient does not mean that the situation does not evoke an emotional response in you. In fact, it is natural and healthy to express and work through the feelings you have surrounding the circumstances. Simply put, resiliency is the ability to bounce back from the hardships that life deals out to everyone.

Being resilient offers protection. Some researchers estimate that up to 75% of diseases can be traced back to out of control stress levels. Resiliency is your ability to manage stress in spite of critical or traumatic events. Stress management is a key factor in protecting against mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, as well as physical conditions like heart disease.

Resilience is determined by both the genes you inherit from your parents and by your environment. While you might feel that you are not a resilient person now, it is possible to make improvements in this area. Below you will find some methods to start building your resiliency.

### **Build a strong support network**

Identify the people who give you strength. Nurture your relationships with family and friends.

### **Laugh**

Humor is a good way to find relief in a stressful situation, if even for a moment. This will help you to start feeling back to normal.

### **Be flexible**

Accept change and begin to think of it as a normal part of life. Expecting change helps you feel more prepared and comfortable with it.

### **Acknowledge your feelings**

Understand that there is no right or wrong way to feel in a situation. Accept the way you feel and give yourself permission to experience those emotions.

### **Think about the past**

What have you learned from other difficulties in your life? Think about how you dealt with them, whether it was healthy or not and figure out the lesson you learned and how you will apply it in this situation.

### **Take action**

Determine what you would like to be different and devise a plan of action. Establish a goal. Think of the steps you will need to take to accomplish it and set them in motion.

Resiliency allows you to create a bank of emotional strength. While aiding in managing stress levels, offering protection against disease, and harnessing inner strength, it helps you embrace the lessons that are amidst the tragedies.