



# Recovery and Resiliency

When an unexpected event occurs such as a tragedy or a natural disaster people tend to focus on the immediate aftermath of the situation. Although time can heal emotional stress, some may never fully recover from an event. There are usually triggers that set off a memory about an event, such as an anniversary of the event, a news story covering a similar topic or a song that acts as a reminder.

The recovery process begins soon after the event happens and depending on how someone is impacted, it can take days, months or years to heal.

Some seem to be more resilient than others. Resiliency or the ability to survive under tremendous stress can be summarized by seven characteristics. Resiliency is developed over time and usually is determined by different life experiences. This usually impacts how resilient someone is. Parents should look for these characteristics within their children to help them develop resiliency skills.

## Seven characteristics of a resilient personality

1. **Self-aware.** A resilient person is more aware of a situation and their own emotional reaction than others around them. This type of person understands what is causing their reaction or behavior and can usually maintain control of a situation and their emotions.
2. **Flexible to change.** People react differently to change and trauma. Someone who is more likely to be flexible to change understands that life is unpredictable and can be difficult. Some problems can be controlled and avoided, and other problems cannot. Being open and flexible allows a person to be adaptable and more resilient.
3. **Internal control.** People look at situations differently. Some feel that something happened because of someone else's wrong doing. Others may perceive a situation as having direct impact to an outcome. A resilient person can identify their role in a situation.
4. **Strong problem-solver.** A resilient person usually can identify a solution when a crisis occurs. This type of person has the ability to stay calm and collected during and after a crisis. Sometimes the solution is not in impacting the traumatic event, but in impacting the recovery of those around them.
5. **Strong social connections.** Dealing with a crisis usually requires a strong support system. Talking about the challenges and gaining a perspective from others can help someone be more resilient.
6. **Is a survivor not a victim.** When dealing with a potentially dangerous or crisis situation a resilient person will usually view themselves as a survivor and not a victim. It's ok if this takes time after a difficult event as emotional healing needs to occur first.



7. **Asks for help when necessary.** Resiliency cannot be successfully achieved alone. At some point, a resilient person will know when to reach out and seek additional help or support during a situation. Knowing when to ask for help is a great characteristic of someone who is resilient.

### How to help you and your family become more resilient.

- **Be positive.** It's proven that the more positive you are the more likely you are to overcome and cope with stress and recovery. Remind yourself of your strengths and accomplishments and recognize the good things that can come out of a tragedy.
- **Find your purpose.** After any event occurs it takes time for someone to heal and overcome the trauma. In the face of a crisis or tragedy, finding a sense of purpose can help recovery. Seek out different community groups or volunteer to help others. Find something that is meaning full to you and that will help you heal.
- **Embrace change.** As mentioned in the characteristics, resilient people are more flexible to change. After a period of grieving or adjustment, you can start to become more flexible by understanding that something happened or has changed. Seek out positives and adapt it to your day life.
- **Nurture yourself.** When a stressful situation occurs people usually neglect their own needs. Be sure to get enough sleep, eat a well balance diet and take a break from the things causing you stress. Anticipate stress that can occur during an anniversary of a traumatic event or when other events trigger a memory of the trauma. You may need additional nurturing during these times.
- **Find ways to solve for a problem.** People who can solve for a problem more quickly are usually the ones that can cope with a problem. When encountering change, make a quick list of ways that you can solve for the problem.
- **Set a goal.** After something has occurred, or during a stressful period, set a few short-term internal goals for yourself. When you find yourself becoming overwhelmed, step back and re-asses your goals and what your plan is.
- **Don't give up.** It takes time to build resiliency. When something occurs, make a list of things you can work on to help yourself become more adaptable and resilient to the situation.

Recovery and resiliency can take a tremendous amount of time, energy, and emotion. It can take years to build a strong level of resiliency. Try to stay in control and be aware of your own personal reaction to a situation. Over time, you may find that you react differently than how you did before.



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