



Building Better Resilience



Let's face it – life is full of adversities. However, when confronted with everyday struggles or challenging events, why do some people seem to adapt and bounce back while others struggle to move forward?

It seems that psychologists are keen to find the answer, too. They believe that, when faced with a personal tragedy, natural disaster, health concern, relationship issue or professional problem, *resilience* is what defines our ability to cope. A person with good resilience has the ability to overcome these issues more quickly, and with less stress, than someone whose resilience is less developed.

That's not to say that resilience is about breezing through life unscathed by distressing events. Rather, it's about experiencing all of those negative or difficult

periods while staying on track and remaining optimistic about the future. In fact, developing resilience *requires* emotional distress – otherwise, how would we learn to deal with it?

While it's true that some of us are more resilient than others, we all display some pretty impressive levels of resilience. Most of us have dealt with feelings of defeat and despondency at some point in our lives, but we have persevered through and are still standing today – likely stronger than we were previously.

Developing Resilience

Now that we've established the importance of resilience, let's take a look at how we can develop it on a mental, emotional and physical level...

Be kind to your body - Because stress manifests physically as well as emotionally, practising regular self-care is vital for supporting mental health and building resilience. Promoting positive lifestyle factors such as proper nutrition, adequate sleep, hydration and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of anxiety or depression.

Practice mindfulness – Yoga, meditation or breathwork are effective (and free!) tools that can help you process and detach from difficult situations that require resilience. During meditation, the mind stays present and it becomes easier to focus on the positive aspects of your life - even during times of distress.

Avoid negative outlets – Some people may try to mask or suppress pain with alcohol, drugs, or other harmful substances, which is the equivalent of putting a bandage over a deep wound. Instead, concentrate on giving your body resources to manage stress, rather than trying to eliminate stressful feelings altogether.

Take a proactive approach - It's helpful to acknowledge and accept your emotions during hard times, but it's also important to foster self-discovery by asking yourself, "What can I do about a problem in my life?" If the problems seem

too big to deal with, try breaking them down into manageable pieces and tackle each one at a time.

Reach Out for Help

There's no shame in seeking help when you need it. In fact, it's crucial for building healthy resilience levels. Many people find that using their own resources and the kinds of strategies listed above may be enough for building their resilience, but there are times when an individual might have difficulty making progress on the road to resilience without external support.

If your employer offers Vivup's Employee Assistance Programme, there are lots of useful resources and downloadable workbooks to help you build resilience in a positive and proactive way. You can also access a 24-hour telephone helpline for responsive, confidential and totally independent advice should you or a colleague need mental health support.