



The capacity to remain focused, motivated and level-headed in situations of stress and adversity.



Behavioural Indicators

- Able to work with feedback and constructive criticism without taking it personally
- Deals with criticism, frustrations, and stressors in a calm, positive and constructive manner
- Displays patience and tolerance with becoming frustrated or irritable (particularly when required to repeat things again and again)
- Demonstrates sound abilities to juggle priorities and handle own and/or team pressure effectively
- Persists with difficult assignments / people; follows through on own and team commitments despite obstacles and setbacks



Improving Resilience & Stress Management

Taking steps to look after your wellbeing can help you deal with pressure, and reduce the impact that stress has on your life. Many of us now work in constantly connected, always-on, highly demanding work cultures where stress and the risk of burnout are widespread. Since the pace and intensity of contemporary work culture are not likely to change, it's more important than ever to build resilience skills to effectively navigate your work life.



IDENTIFYING WITH STRESS

It's important to recognise the common causes of stress at work so that you can take steps to reduce stress levels where possible. Some common causes of stress include:

- Excessively high workloads, with unrealistic deadlines making people feel rushed, under pressure and overwhelmed.
- Insufficient workloads, making people feel that their skills are being underused.
- A lack of control over work activities.
- A lack of interpersonal support or poor working relationships leading to a sense of isolation.
- People being asked to do a job for which they have insufficient experience or training.
- Difficulty settling into a new promotion, both in terms of meeting the new role's requirements and adapting to possible changes in relationships with colleagues.
- Concerns about job security, lack of career opportunities, or level of pay.
- Bullying or harassment.
- A blame culture within your business where people are afraid to get things wrong or to admit to making mistakes.
- Weak or ineffective management which leaves employees feeling they don't have a sense of direction. Or over-management, which can leave employees feeling undervalued and affect their self-esteem.
- Multiple reporting lines for employees, with each manager asking for their work to be prioritised.
- Failure to keep employees informed about significant changes to the business, causing them uncertainty about their future.
- A poor physical working environment, eg excessive heat, cold or noise, inadequate lighting, uncomfortable seating, malfunctioning equipment, etc.

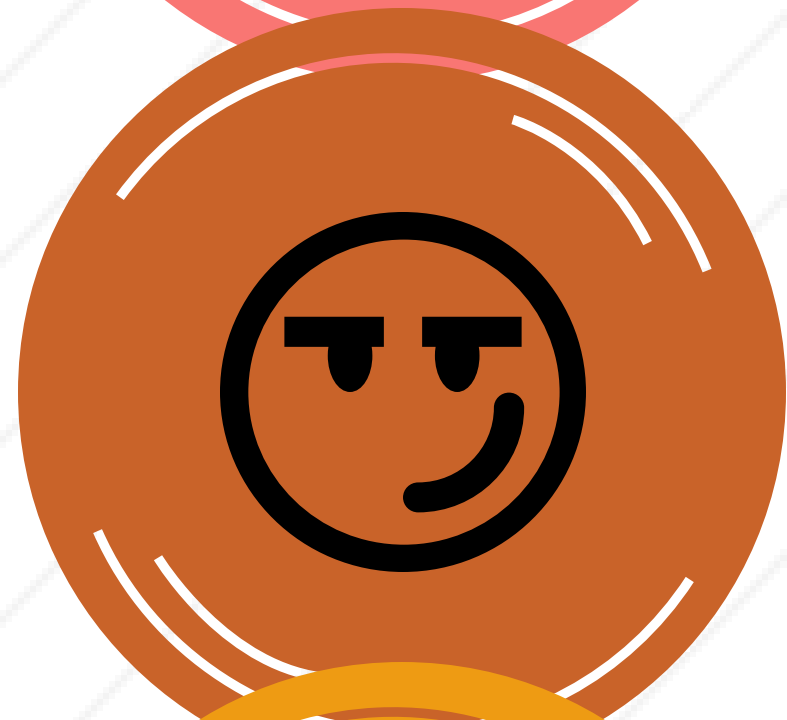
STEPS TO DEVELOP THE COMPETENCY

There are 10 steps in building resilience and managing stress:



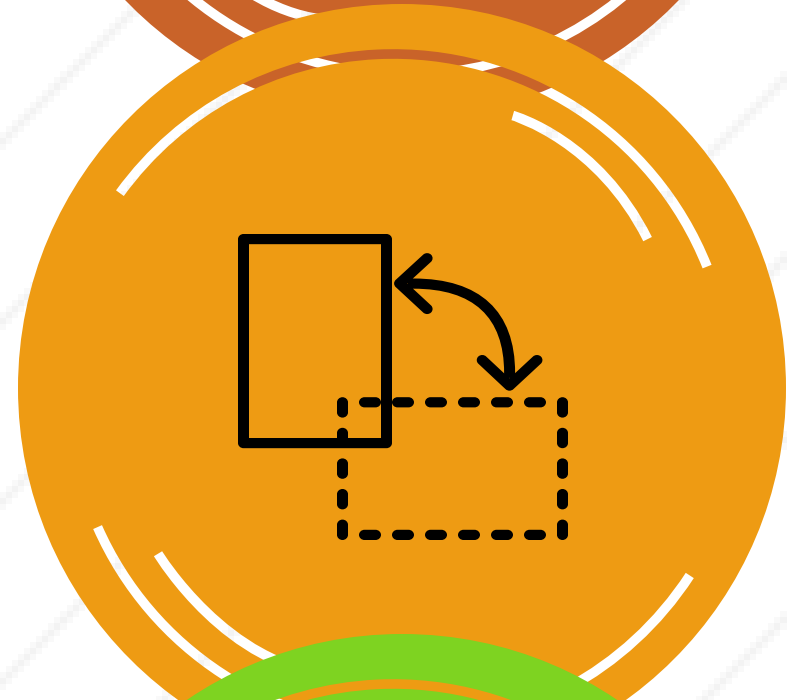
1. Make connections:

Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.



2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems:

You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.



3. Accept that change is a part of living:

Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.



4. Move toward your goals:

Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"



5. Take decisive actions:

Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.



6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery:

People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.



7. Nurture a positive view of yourself:

Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.



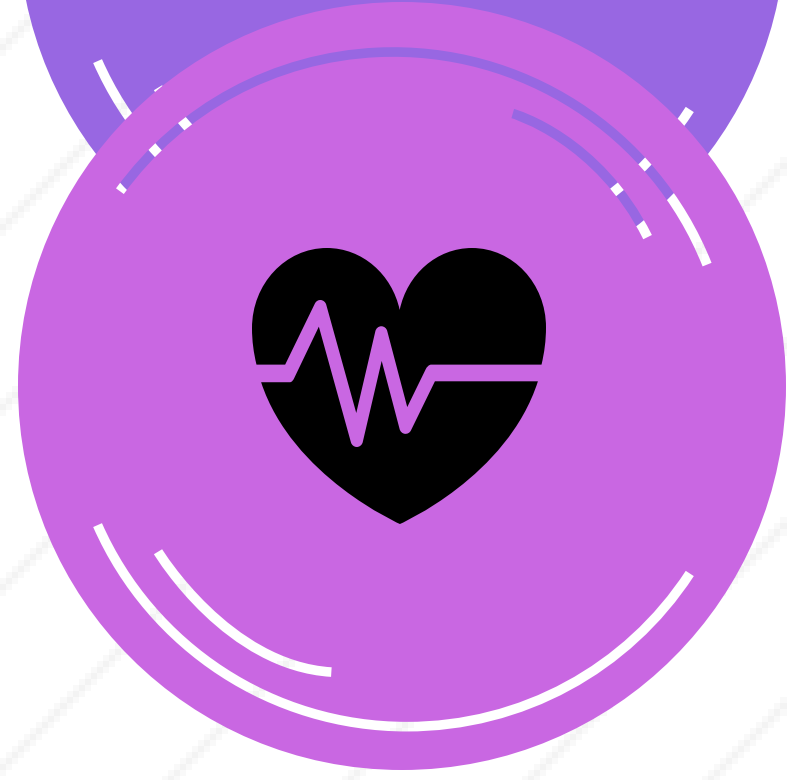
8. Keep things in perspective:

Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.



9. Maintain a hopeful outlook:

An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.



10. Take care of yourself:

Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.



Exercise Tips



MAKE LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Practise being straightforward and assertive in communicating with others. If people are making unreasonable or unrealistic demands on you, be prepared to tell them how you feel and say no. (The organisation Mind Tools provides tips on assertiveness on their website.)
- Use relaxation techniques. You may already know what helps you relax, like having a bath, listening to music or taking your dog for a walk. If you know that a certain activity helps you feel more relaxed, make sure you set aside time to do it. (See our pages on relaxation for lots more ideas.)
- Develop your interests and hobbies. Finding an activity that's completely different from the things causing you stress is a great way to get away from everyday pressures. If stress is making you feel lonely or isolated, shared hobbies can also be a good way to meet new people.
- Make time for your friends. When you've got a lot on this might seem hard, but it can help you feel more positive and less isolated. Chatting to friends about the things you find difficult can help you keep things in perspective – and you can do the same for them. Laughing and smiling with them will also produce hormones that help you to relax.
- Find balance in your life. You may find that one part of your life, such as your job or taking care of young children, is taking up almost all of your time and energy. Try making a decision to focus some of your energy on other parts of your life, like family, friends or hobbies. It's not easy, but this can help spread the weight of pressures in your life, and make everything feel lighter.



GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

- Reward yourself for achievements – even small things like finishing a piece of work or making a decision. You could take a walk, read a book, treat yourself to food you enjoy, or simply tell yourself "well done".
- Get a change of scenery. You might want to go outside, go to a friend's house or go to a café for a break – even if it's just for a short time.
- Take a break or holiday. Time away from your normal routine can help you relax and feel refreshed. Even spending a day in a different place can help you feel more able to face stress.
- Resolve conflicts, if you can. Although this can sometimes be hard, speaking to a manager, colleague or family member about problems in your relationship with them can help you find ways to move forward.
- Forgive yourself when you make a mistake, or don't achieve something you hoped for. Try to remember that nobody's perfect, and putting extra pressure on yourself doesn't help.



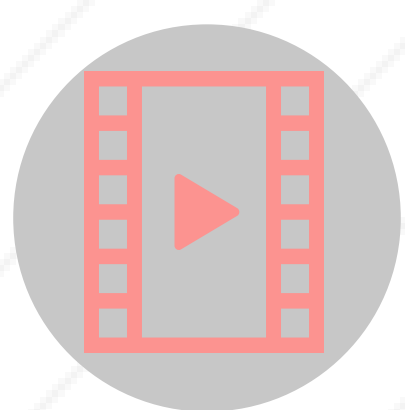
LOOK AFTER YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Get good sleep. Stress can make it difficult for you to sleep, and you may develop sleep problems. Being well-rested can increase your ability to deal with difficult situations.
- Be more physically active. Physical activity is important for reducing stress levels and preventing some of its damaging effects on the body (so long as you don't overdo it).
- Eat healthily. When you're stressed, it can be tempting to eat too much of the wrong kinds of food or to eat too little. But what you eat, and when you eat, can make a big difference to how well you feel. See our pages on food and mood for more tips.



USE YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

- Friends and family. Sometimes just telling the people close to you how you're feeling can make a big difference – and they might be able to help you out in other ways too.
- Support at work, such as your line manager, human resources (HR) department, union representatives, or employee assistance schemes. Try not to worry that talking to your manager or colleagues about stress will be seen as a sign of weakness – your wellbeing is important and responsible employers will take it seriously.
- Peer support. Sometimes sharing your experiences with people who've been through something similar can help you feel less alone.
- Specialist websites and organisations. For example: The South African Depression And Anxiety Group
- Your GP. If you feel like you need some professional support, you can speak to your doctor. They can check your overall health, and help you access treatments. They could also recommend that you take some time off work, and sign a medical note for you.



Videos

Meditation - Stress Relief In 10 Minutes Flat
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhqU531xSN0>

How To Relieve Stress - Scientifically Proven Stress Relief Techniques
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I7qR4NO8Ag>



Suggested Reading

- 10 Best books for Depression and Anxiety
- <https://www.livehappy.com/practice/reading/10-best-books-depression-and-anxiety>
- The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living
- Stress Management: How to Remain Calm in a Crisis- Donna F Francis



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