

# Virtual Education Group



*Fostering Resiliency During Challenging Times*

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*Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2020*

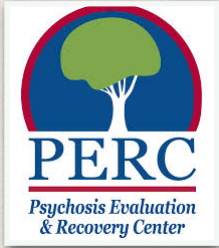
*5:00—6:30PM*



# What is Resilience?

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“Resilience is the ability to overcome obstacles, to bounce back from a failure or a setback. It’s the ability to steer through the everyday stressors that we... always face, so that no matter what life puts in your path, you’re still able to persist and go after your goals.”

*–Dr. Karen Reivich*



# Resilience

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- ❖ Resilience can be found in even the most unlikely of places.
- ❖ Survivors of extreme trauma often demonstrate remarkable resilience.
- ❖ Some of the photos in this presentation are intended to represent how resilience can be found and developed from even the most impoverished, or traumatic situations.





# Resilience

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- ❖ Did your definition of resilience differ from the one offered?
  - ❖ How did they differ?
  - ❖ Why were they different?
- ❖ If they weren't different, what might that say about our group members tonight?





# Why is resilience important?

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*“Being able to remain emotionally regulated in times of stress helps us function and reduces the chance we will be overwhelmed with anxiety and negative thoughts.”*

*– Ran Barzilay*



# How resilient are you?

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# How Resilient Are You?

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Consider whether the following statements about you are True or False:

- ❖ In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.
- ❖ I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.
- ❖ I can tolerate high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- ❖ I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
- ❖ I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary, expect to overcome them, and believe things will turn out well.





**RESILIENT INDIVIDUALS USE POSITIVE EMOTIONS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES. (TUGADE & FREDRICKSON 2004)**

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After responding to the previous statements, how resilient do you feel?

- ❖ **Contemplative Exercise**
- ❖ Now, think of a time when you overcame an obstacle.
  - ❖ At the time, did you believe you would succeed?
  - ❖ How might you have demonstrated resilience?
- ❖ How might resilience help us through our current challenges?





# Challenging Negative Beliefs & Thoughts

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- ❖ **Negative Beliefs**

- ❖ *“I’m not a resilient person”*

- ❖ **Negative Thoughts**

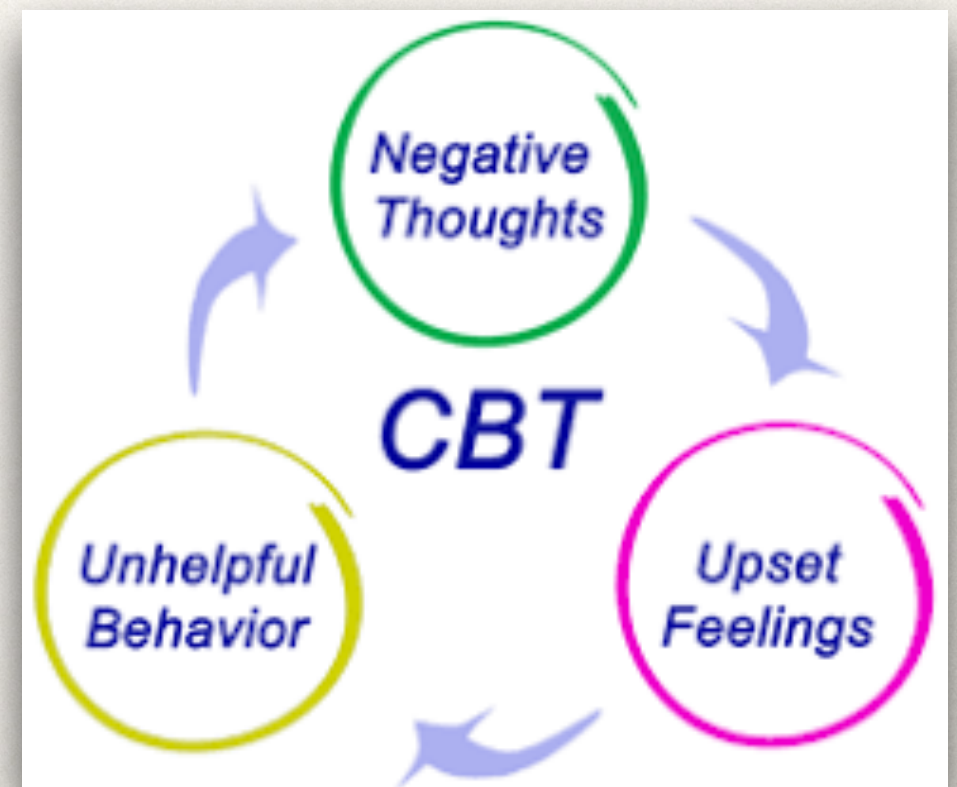
- ❖ *“I’ll never be able to get over this”*

- ❖ **Negative Emotions**

- ❖ *“I feel depressed”*

- ❖ **Unhelpful Behaviors**

- ❖ *“I’m not even going to try”*





# Strengthening Resilience Beliefs

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- ❖ Pay attention to positive experiences
- ❖ Reflect on the impact these experiences had on you
- ❖ Reflect on the impact of these experiences on others
- ❖ Consider how these experience reflects your own qualities (e.g., strengths, talents)





# Resilience Beliefs: Examples

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- ❖ “I have done things that are meaningful to me in the past and at least I had the courage to try.”
- ❖ “I have overcome difficulties in my past, and it usually turns out better than I thought.”
- ❖ “If at first I don’t feel like it, I can push through, and I feel better.”
- ❖ “I got this.”
- ❖ “The strongest person doesn’t react to every bad thing that happens.”
- ❖ “I have overcome difficulties in my past, and it usually turns out better than I thought.”





# How is resilience developed?

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# Fostering Resilience

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- ❖ Research on individuals who exhibited resilience in the aftermath of severe trauma has helped to identify six psychosocial factors that promote resilience in individuals:
  - ❖ **1) Optimism**
  - ❖ **2) Cognitive Flexibility**
  - ❖ **3) Active Coping Skills**
  - ❖ **4) Maintaining a Supportive Social Network**
  - ❖ **5) Attending to one's Physical Well-Being**
  - ❖ **6) Embracing a Personal Moral Compass**





# Fostering Resilience: Challenging Negative Thoughts & Beliefs

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- ❖ **Use the “3 C’s”**
  - ❖ Catch it: Identify the thought that came before the emotion
  - ❖ Check it: Reflect on how accurate and useful the thought is
  - ❖ Change it: Change the thought to a more accurate or helpful one
  
- ❖ **STOP Skill**
  - ❖ **S**top and check-in with your mind & body
  - ❖ **T**ake a breath
  - ❖ **O**pen your awareness
  - ❖ **P**roceed with new possibilities
  
- ❖ **Practice Emotional Regulation & Distress Tolerance Skills:**
  - ❖ Perspective Taking
  - ❖ Empathy
  - ❖ Self-soothing



# Fostering Resilience

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## ❖ Exercise:

- ❖ Empirical evidence suggests that consistent physical activity (at least 30 minutes every day) helps to reduce stress and supports overall mental health.

## ❖ Sleep Hygiene:

- ❖ Research suggests that consistency is one of the most vital aspects of proper sleep hygiene. This means going to sleep and waking up at the same time everyday within a 30 minute window.

## ❖ Mindfulness:

- ❖ Neuroimaging studies of mindfulness training have demonstrated that mindfulness practice produces structural changes in the brain, which may help individuals move towards, rather than away, from challenging situations. This has been referred to as a “neurosignature” of resilience. (Germer & Siegel, 2012; Davidson & Kabat-Zinn, 2004; D.J. Siegel, 2010b)



# When is it difficult to be resilient?

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# When is it difficult to be resilient?

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## What gets in the way of being resilient?

- ❖ Potential Challenges:
  - ❖ Perceived or Real Rejection
  - ❖ Perceived or Real Failure
  - ❖ Disappointment
  - ❖ Feeling Overwhelmed





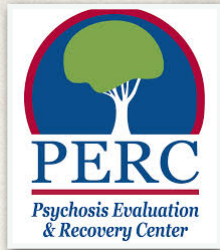
# Being Resilient When it Matters Most

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- ❖ Building up beliefs about ability to manage challenges and distressing experiences as they come up
- ❖ How can we use some of the strategies discussed to overcome challenges?
- ❖ Think of a time when you were *courageous* in the face of adversity?
- ❖ Was it worth doing even though it was challenging at first?







# Resources

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# If You're Struggling With Sleep

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- ❖ **Avoid screens/electronics for at least 1 hour before going to bed.**
- ❖ **Avoid napping, as it can be more difficult to fall asleep at night.**
- ❖ **Create a sleep schedule:**
- ❖ Consider the amount of sleep you need to feel rested and alert.
- ❖ Identify the earliest time you must wake up during the week,
- ❖ That is your consistent wake up time every day
- ❖ *Even if you don't have to wake up for anything in particular at that time.*
- ❖ **Method to calculate the time you should fall asleep by:**
- ❖ *[Wake-Up Time] – [# Hours Sleep Needed] = Time to be asleep.*
- ❖ **Finally, consider the length of time it takes to fall asleep**
- ❖ *[Time to Fall Asleep] – [Time Needed to Fall Asleep] = Daily Bed Time.*





# Mindfulness

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- ❖ Stress & Anxiety can be the result of a preoccupation on a negative future outcome
- ❖ Mindfulness is based in Awareness of the Present Moment
- ❖ When we shift our Awareness to the Present Moment
- ❖ We become disentangled from the past or future, and can see things more objectively

## Instructions for Basic Mindful Breathing Practice:

- ❖ Start by placing your attention on your breath.
- ❖ Notice the sensations of breathing:
  - ❖ The temperature of the air as it hits your lips or nostrils
  - ❖ Notice the rhythm of expansion & contraction
  - ❖ Track the movement of the breath throughout your body
- ❖ If/when you notice your mind wandering:
  - ❖ Practice *Non-judgement, Equanimity, and Self-Compassion*
  - ❖ There's no need to criticize or judge yourself for getting distracted, *this is the mind's natural tendency.*
  - ❖ Simply label this as "**thinking**", and gently shift your awareness back to your breath.
  - ❖ This will likely happen more than you think it should, or want it to. So, it can be easy to become self-critical or judgmental.
  - ❖ **In mindfulness practice, there is no right or wrong, good or bad.** It does not matter if you get distracted once or 10,000 times. If your mind wanders 10,000 times, *all that means is that you have to redirect your awareness 10,000 times.*
- ❖ With each act of shifting our awareness, we improve our ability to:
  - ❖ Notice when we become distracted,
  - ❖ Reorient our awareness to the present moment
  - ❖ Develop the ability to become less distractible and stay in the present moment longer.





## One-Minute Breathing Space

Haven't there been times when you just needed some "breathing space"?  
This practice provides a way to step out of automatic pilot mode and into the present moment.

*What we are doing is creating a space to reconnect with your natural resilience and wisdom.  
You are simply tuning in to what is happening right now, without expectation of any particular result.*

***If you remember nothing else, just remember the word "STOP".***

### **S – Stop and take Stock**                      ***Checking in to Head/Heart/Body***

Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately asking:

***What is my experience right now?***

***Thoughts...*** (what are you saying to yourself, what images are coming to mind.)

***Feelings...*** (enjoying, neutral, upset, excited, sad, mad, etc.)

***Sensations...*** (physical sensations, tightness, holding, lightness, etc.)

Acknowledge and register your experience, even if it is uncomfortable.

### **T – "Take" a Breath**                      ***Directing awareness to Breathing***

Gently direct full attention to breathing, to each inbreath and to each outbreath as they follow, one after the other.

Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.

### **O – Open and Observe**                      ***Expanding awareness outward***

Expand the field of your awareness around and beyond your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression, then further outward to what is happening around you: sights, sounds, smells, etc. As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next moments...

### **P – Proceed / new Possibilities**                      ***Continuing without expectation***

Let your attention now move into the world around you, sensing how things are ***right now***. Rather than react habitually/mechanically, you can be curious/open, responding naturally. You may even be surprised by what happens next after having created this pause...



# Penn Resilience Survey

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- ❖ If you're interested in learning more about your own resilience, feel free to click the link below to take a survey developed by Dr. Ran Barzilay of University of Pennsylvania's Department of Psychiatry.

<https://covid19resilience.org>

- ❖ After you've completed the survey you'll get personalized recommendations based on your results.



## RESILIENCY ASSESSMENT SCORING

**Low score:** A self-rating score under 50 indicates that life is probably a struggle for you and you know it. You may not handle pressure well. You don't learn anything useful from bad experiences. You feel hurt when people criticize you. You may sometimes feel helpless and without hope.

If these statements fit you or your client, ask yourself, "Would I like to learn how to handle my difficulties better?" If so, use the exercises in this workbook and in the webinar series to build resilience.

**High score:** If you rated yourself high on most of these statements, you have a score over 90. This means you know you are already very good at bouncing back from life's setbacks. The exercises in this workbook will validate many things you already do right. Perhaps you can share your story with others and be a role model. As we are learning in this webinar, role models are a key factor in resilience.

**Middle scores:** If you agreed with many of the statements and scored in the 70-89 range, then that is very good! It means you can gain a lot from the workbook and become even more resilient.

If you scored in the 50-69 range, you appear to be fairly adequate, but you may be underrating yourself. A much larger percentage of people underrate themselves than overrate themselves on the assessment. Some people have a habit of being modest and automatically give themselves a 3 on every item for a total of 60.

One validity check is to ask two people who know you well to rate you on the items and see what scores they come up with. Have a discussion with them about each of the items where there is a discrepancy and listen to what they say.

A second way of checking the validity of your self-rating is to answer these bonus point questions:

- Has your sense of humor ever gotten you into trouble?
- Has asking questions ever gotten you into trouble?
- Has being unpredictable or too complex ever puzzled or bothered others?
- Has your effort to anticipate problems ever had someone accuse you of having a negative attitude?
- Are you such a good listener your ability to understand both sides of a conflict has confused others?

Give yourself a point for every yes to the bonus point questions above, plus an additional bonus point for the item in the quiz regarding self-confidence and self-esteem. These extra questions show that you may not see the connection between some of your strengths and resilience.

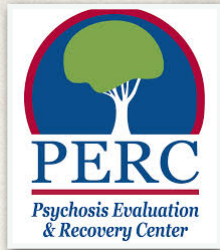
## RESILIENCY ASSESSMENT

Rate yourself on the following items: (1 = very little; 5 = very strong)

- \_\_\_ In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.
- \_\_\_ I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary, expect to overcome them, and believe things will turn out well.
- \_\_\_ I can tolerate high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- \_\_\_ I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.
- \_\_\_ I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, laugh at myself, and am easily amused.
- \_\_\_ I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and set-backs. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and ask for help.
- \_\_\_ I feel self-confident, appreciate myself, and have a healthy concept of who I am.
- \_\_\_ I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.
- \_\_\_ I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
- \_\_\_ I'm good at solving problems. I can think in analytical, creative or practical ways.
- \_\_\_ I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.
- \_\_\_ I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.
- \_\_\_ I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I'm different with different people and in different situations.
- \_\_\_ I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.
- \_\_\_ I "read" people well and trust my intuition.
- \_\_\_ I'm a good listener, and I have good empathy skills.
- \_\_\_ I'm nonjudgmental about others and am comfortable with many kinds of people.
- \_\_\_ I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.
- \_\_\_ I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.
- \_\_\_ I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

Total points:





# Links

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- ❖ <http://www.authentichappiness.com>
- ❖ *Dr. Seligman's free assessments*
- ❖ <http://www.resiliencycenter.com>
- ❖ *Dr. Siebert's resources on building resilience*
- ❖ <https://resiliencycenter.com/handle-the-emotional-side-of-job-loss-with-resiliency/>
- ❖ *How to Handle the Emotional Side of Job Loss and Job Search with Resiliency*
- ❖ <https://resiliencei.com/resilience-news/>
- ❖ *Resources from the The Resilience Institute*



# References

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**Thank You For Attending Our Virtual Education Group!**

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If you have any feedback, questions, or requests, feel free to contact me at:  
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