

# Resilience

You may think you're not very resilient.

The word "resilient" might bring to mind all of the struggles and setbacks that have plagued you in your life.

You might be thinking about how hard it is to recover from some of the worst ones. You may be thinking, "*I'm not resilient at all. Look at how often I've struggled to get back up!*"

If you're thinking any of these thoughts, then you are probably one of the most resilient people. You have suffered, you have struggled, you have waded through a seemingly unstoppable tide of difficulty – and you have survived.

*The human capacity for burden is like bamboo – far more flexible than you'd ever believe at first glance.*

Jodi Picoult

We tend to think of resilient people as those who are unaffected by the challenges of life, or who take a setback with a smile and laugh in the face of their obstacles. But this is not resilience.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, again and again, with every obstacle we face.

Before you read on, we thought you might like to **[download our 3 Resilience Exercises for free](#)**. These engaging, science-based exercises will help you to effectively deal with difficult circumstances and give you the tools to improve the resilience of your clients, students, or employees.

## This Article Contains:

- [4 Resilience Activities for Adults](#)
- [4 Resilience Worksheets for Youth and Students](#)
- [4 Resilience Building Games for Kids in Primary School](#)
- [5 Exercises for Developing Resilience](#)
- [Integrating the Science of Resilience in Schools: 5 Lesson Plans](#)
- [Bonus: 5 Shame Resilience Theory \(SRT\) Exercises](#)
- [A Take-Home Message](#)
- [References](#)

The person showing little emotional distress in difficulty is not necessarily displaying resilience. The person who fails and feels intense negative emotions, yet tries again the next day, is displaying resilience.

Put simply, resilience is the ability to adapt and we can all demonstrate resilience. Granted, some people may be more resilient than others, but it is not an immutable trait or characteristic that you either do or don't have. Resilience is a learned ability and one that you can build.

*Resilience is not the absence of distress or difficulty. Resilience is the ability to adapt and grow following adversity.*

Some of these resilience activities and exercises may help you develop your resilience, while others might make you realize how resilient you already are.

Either way, the outcome is more confidence in your ability to bounce back.

Read on if you're ready to learn more about how to boost your resilience and meet challenges with confidence in yourself and your ability to succeed, even after failure.

## 4 Resilience Activities for Adults



We'll provide several resources for building resilience, but first, let's take a look at what the American Psychological Association has to say about building resilience.

According to the APA, there are **10 ways to build resilience**, many of which will be applied in the training, exercises, and activities listed later:

- Making connections and building your social support network;
- Avoiding the tendency to view crises as insurmountable challenges;
- Accepting that change is a natural and unavoidable part of life;
- Moving towards your (realistic) goals;
- Taking decisive actions that will help you face your challenges;
- Looking for opportunities for self-discovery;
- Nurturing a positive view of yourself and your abilities;
- Keeping things in perspective and in context;
- Maintaining a hopeful outlook on life;
- And taking care of yourself (APA, "10 Ways").

These ten basic principles of improving resilience can be applied on your own, in a guided therapeutic relationship, or in training and courses on resilience.

### **PositivePsychology.com Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass**

If you're a helping professional seeking a comprehensive resource to help your clients build resilience, take a look at our Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass.

In this course, you'll gain science-backed tools to show your clients how to navigate life's ups and downs with poise and resilience, enabling them to improve their overall well-being.

The course comprises six modules.

### **1. Positive Psychology 2.0**

You'll begin by delving into the darker side of the human experience, often triggered by adverse events. In doing this, you'll gain the skills to teach and apply positive psychology principles in a holistic and balanced way.

### **2. Resiliences**

Next, you will discover the characteristics that make up a resilient person and the four key elements of resilience. The modules that follow explore these four elements in more detail.

### **3. Attention**

In Module 3, you will learn about the first element of resilience—attention. In this module, you'll develop an understanding of how resilient people direct their attention to positive and negative life events.

### **4. Thoughts**

The second element of resilience you'll learn about regards thoughts. In this module, you'll gain a range of practical tools and exercises to help your clients direct their thoughts in constructive ways based on the best scientific practice and theory.

### **5. Action**

Resilient people are quick to adopt adaptive coping strategies in the face of negative events. Module 5 will teach you to arm your clients with these strategies.

## 6. Motivation

What drives resilient people to persist and engage in positive coping in the face of adversity? This final module will answer this question and teach you about the last key element of resilience—motivation.

The **Realizing Resilience Coaching Masterclass**© includes a range of useful materials, including live recordings, a workbook for your clients, 19 PowerPoint presentations, and extended usage rights to save you time developing your own materials.

### Adult Resilience Program

This program is intended for teenagers and adults over the age of 16. It is offered online and is especially helpful for older students dealing with stress or pressure from school, family, and upcoming transitions.

This program will help participants:

- Identify their feelings and develop empathy;
- Control and regulate difficult or intense emotions;
- Learn relaxation techniques;
- **Practice mindfulness**;
- Prevent bullying, for both bullies and victims;
- Resist peer pressure and develop positive relationships;
- Compromise in difficult situations and avoid conflict;
- Choose appropriate role models;
- Set realistic and **achievable goals**;
- Learn organizational and focus skills;
- And develop non-internet-based friendships and relationships.

This course is delivered through five sessions of 2 to 2.5 hours and guided by a facilitator. Click **here** to learn more about this training endorsed by the World Health Organization.

### Samaritans Resilience Training



The Samaritan's organization trains for adults in their “Building Resilience and Wellbeing” course.

This course helps participants:

- Explore the connection between **emotional health** and resilience, and understand how resilience can positively impact our lives;
- Assess their own resilience skills;
- Recognize the indicators of stress and identify sources of support;
- Learn the Keys of Resilience;
- Identify practical steps they can take to build resilience;
- And build a personalized action plan.

The course generally takes place over one day and can be delivered at locations throughout the UK.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this course.

## **Reaching In Reaching Out (RIRO)**

If you're a parent, coach, therapist, or mental health professional seeking a more structured approach to helping clients or children build resilience, the Reaching In Reaching Out Resiliency Skills Training program can help.

It consists of 12 hours of training divided into two parts:

*Part 1* helps adults build their own foundation in resilience and learn resiliency skills they can model and encourage in their children. These skills include:

1. Identifying and strengthening resilience abilities.
2. Using strategies to stay calm and focused when experiencing stress.
3. Recognizing how thoughts can affect **the ability to cope**.
4. Challenging thinking patterns that hinder resilience.
5. Generating alternative ways to deal with conflict and stress.

Part 2 teaches participants how to apply these skill to children, through:

1. Modeling the skills and fostering resilience in children.
2. Using their own resiliency skills to help them understand their children's or clients' behavior.
3. Incorporating resiliency skills into their work by using child-friendly approaches.

This training can be completed in two full days, four half-days, six after-work sessions, or 10-12 brief sessions.

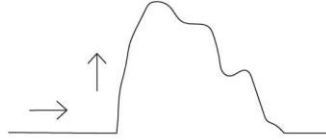
To access the RIRO skills training, click **here**.

# Ψ 10 Ways to Develop Resilience

1. Make connections and building your social support network.



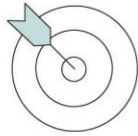
2. Avoid the tendency to view crises as insurmountable challenges.



3. Accept that change is a natural and unavoidable part of life.



4. Move towards your realistic goals.



5. Take decisive action that will help you face your challenges.



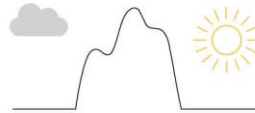
6. Look for opportunities that promote self-discovery.



7. Nurture a positive view of yourself and your abilities.



8. Keep things in perspective and in context.



9. Maintain a hopeful outlook on life.



10. Take care of yourself.

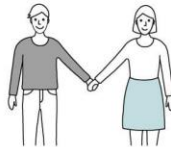


## Four Themes of Resilience training:

Resilient Thinking



Effective Relationships



Managing Emotions



Building on Strengths





You can download the printable version of the infographic [here](#).

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/adventures-at-home/mental-health-wellbeing-and-coronavirus/thinking-resilient-activities-for-wellbeing/>  
because of the changes we all need to make to protect against the spread of coronavirus, things can be a bit worrying or confusing – particularly for young people. We've pulled out some handy activities from our [Think Resilient peer education resource](#), which will help children and young people with their feelings during this time.

These activities explore resilience – they're all about building skills and resources to deal with the challenges in life.

Download these activities and use them to talk to young people about how they can develop their resilience and wellbeing during tough times.

They're written for different age groups, from Brownies (age 7-10) and upwards. If you have children of Rainbow age (4-7) you might find they can be useful as well.

They were originally planned for groups in unit meetings, so they might need to be adapted a little bit if you're doing them one to one or in an online group.

## Positive thinking and problem solving



What can I control? Recommended for age 7+

Look at what we can control, and what positive steps we can take, even when there are other things outside our control. You can do this as written in the book or using pens and paper. It's written for a group, so you could do it as a family or one-to-one with your child.

### DOWNLOAD WHAT CAN I CONTROL? ACTIVITY

Some specific examples to use in this activity could be:

- Cannot control: The fact I can't see Grandma and Grandad.
- Can control: Video call them! Or give them a phone call – they'd love it!
- Cannot control: I'm worried that someone I know or love might get ill.

- Can control: We can't stop this happening, but we can make sure we do our bit to protect everyone by washing our hands, staying inside when we're ill and staying at home as much as possible for now.
- Cannot control: Everyone is worrying about coronavirus and I'm scared.
- Can control: We can talk to our parents about why they're worried and how it's making us feel.

## Self-calming

Meditation and mindfulness are two examples of things we can use to comfort ourselves. It's best to repeat these activities every day for 5-10 minutes so everyone gets used to using these techniques.



### Breathing techniques

Practice breathing out for longer than you breathe in. This can help you calm down when feeling overwhelmed. Best to test this one out yourself first, because you need to make sure that whatever they're breathing out can float in the air.

[DOWNLOAD THE BREATHING TECHNIQUES ACTIVITY](#)



### Directed meditation

Go through a set meditation to feel calmer. This activity can be brilliant to do together at the end of the day.

[DOWNLOAD THE DIRECTED MEDITATION ACTIVITY](#)

## Identify support networks



### Building support networks

A simple activity where you draw out a map of all the people who are there for you. For younger girls, try drawing around their hand and making every finger someone else who can help and support them.

[DOWNLOAD THE BUILDING SUPPORT NETWORKS ACTIVITY](#)

## Recognise strengths and achievements



### Positive spinning

Do this activity as a whole family and use the time to celebrate how wonderful you all are. It might mean clearing space in a room, as it's quite energetic and fun. Not one to do just before bed!

[DOWNLOAD THE POSITIVE SPINNING ACTIVITY](#)

These activities were developed in 2016 with [YoungMinds](#), who also have some great resources for anxiety around coronavirus.

If you'd like to find out more about peer education at Girlguiding, [take a look at how it works](#). You might want to invite a peer educator to your unit meeting once in-person meetings start up again.