



Building Resilience to Prepare for Stress

Don't wait until you are on the skids with stress. Start beating it back before it arrives by building resilience. Building resilience is not a passing pop-psychology fad. The American Psychological Association has weighed in on the strategy and endorsed a 10-step approach. How many of these tips do you follow? Which ones would be good to work on more?

1. Build effective, supportive relationships with others.
2. Avoid "catastrophizing" (seeing crises as insurmountable).
3. View change as part of life, with new opportunities accompanying it.
4. Be proactive. Move toward your goals. Don't let things just happen to you.
5. When faced with problems, act decisively. Don't just go with the flow.
6. In the midst of a crisis (or sometime soon after), ask yourself, "Can this event change my life for the better in some way?"
7. Nurture a view of yourself that includes the ability to withstand adversity.
8. Practice not zeroing in on the worst part of a crisis or adverse experience.
9. During a tough time, practice looking forward to the hoped-for conclusion and resolution while avoiding the visualization of your worst fears.
10. Take care of yourself by maintaining your physical and mental health. This makes it easier to bounce back when adversity strikes.

Introducing "Freecycling"

You already know about recycling, but you may not have heard of a more recent Earth-friendly movement with big payoffs—freecycling. The Freecycle Network™ is made up of 4,751 groups in communities around the globe. It's a grassroots movement and an entirely nonprofit network of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free. It's all about reusing and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Each local group is moderated by a local volunteer. Chances are there's a freecycling group in your town. Have stuff in your garage or basement that you would like to discard but that is too good to throw away? Freecycling may be for you. Learn more at www.freecycle.org.

Heavy Smokers Can Quit

Research shows that the majority of smokers at any one time are interested in quitting. Your employer will love it if you decide to make another attempt. Fifty-one percent of smokers in the most recent national study tried quitting in the past year; only 20% succeeded—about one in five. Here's the kicker: If you are a heavy smoker—officially, more than 20 cigarettes a day—you are almost twice as likely to be successful if you decide to quit smoking! Go for it. . Source: Smoking in the U.S. Workforce, National Health Interview Survey [NHIS] and the Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey, 2003.

Water Safety Tips Worth Heeding

Summer is here—so be safe, especially when participating in water sports. Eighty percent of people who drown aren't wearing life jackets. Wear one if you need one. Here's a rarely reported safety tip: Stay out of the water when you are around boats using electricity at a dock to avoid the possibility of being shocked by an electrical current leaking into the water. Only a small current is needed to cause paralysis and possible drowning. If you feel tingling sensations while swimming toward a boat, a boat lift, or a dock—back away and get out of the water.

Save Money on Groceries: Shop Less Often!

How many times do you go to the grocery store in a week? Is it more than once? If so, here is a great way to save money over the next month: Stop this practice. Try shopping for groceries only once per week. You are less likely to put items in your shopping basket that you do not need. These expenditures can add up. So, make a list and stick to it for a once-per-week visit.

Payoffs for Not Sweating the Small Stuff

Just reported, a long-term study examined the health of seven-year-olds to see what kind of health problems they came to experience later in their mid-30s—and whether those participants with fewer health problems had exhibited attitude or behavioral differences from their peers at age seven. Results: Those in their mid-30s with fewer physical health problems had exhibited better skills at age seven when it came to staying focused and not sweating the small stuff. A superior attention span and a more positive outlook in youth seem to have had a positive effect on health in older subjects. Could the study provide evidence that behavior and emotions associated with certain temperaments play a crucial role in long-term health? Help children cope with frustrations and alter their way of responding to distressful events. It may influence positive health outcomes later in life. Source: Health Psychology, May 2009

Parents: Beware Eating Disorder Web Sites

You can find almost anything on the Internet, including Web sites that worsen deadly eating disorders. Called “pro-Ana” Web sites because they promote anorexia and similar illnesses, they have loyal followings. Evidence that your child may be visiting such Web sites can provide important early clues to the potential onset of an eating disorder or reveal an existing though well-hidden illness. Many of these Web sites focus on helping victims “do it right.” Some pro-Ana Web sites masquerade as helpful resources, weaving useful and accurate information into their mixed messages. Unfortunately, these home-built, privately run Web sites make eating disorders worse. Photos of glamorized models and famous ultra-thin people are used for inspiration. Discussion forums encourage inappropriate weight-loss goals. Web sites hook

The result is a normalization of these illnesses that can make it tougher to overcome them, to have effective relationships with parents or loved ones, and to maintain positive mental health. Pro-Ana sites usually contain images of overly thin people to inspire others with eating disorders to stay focused on their misguided weight-loss goals. With slogans like “You can control your life from the inside out” and “If it tastes good, it’s trying to kill you,” these Web sites have their own language. For example, the phrase “my ‘thinspo,’” is slang for “my thin inspiration.” It refers to anything—usually an image or a video—that inspires a person with an eating disorder to keep losing more weight.

Postponed Retirement

Millions of workers have seen their long-awaited plans for retirement placed on hold because of the current economic recession. Such an event can be so disturbing, it may contribute to depression. Although no one can replace a depleted nest egg, support for coping with this reality—and help in overcoming the anger and grief associated with it—might be necessary. Talk to CONCERN: EAP or qualified financial counseling advisor. Feel good again and renew your determination to meet retirement goals.

Remember: employees and eligible dependents can request CONCERN counseling and work/life services by phoning our 800 number, answered live 24/7. You can request CONCERN: EAP services on-line at: <https://www.concern-eap.com/Employees/bRequestforServicesb/tabid/87/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Here are some recent quotes from employees who used CONCERN: EAP explaining what they liked best about the services:

“My counselor was amazing. The best in the business”

“The response time...I was able to set up an appointment with a counselor almost immediately...no delays.”