BUILD YOUR RESILIENCE

**10 WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE**

**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.

**Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** You cannot change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.

**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.

**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.

**Take decisive actions.** Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

**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 a struggle with loss or experiencing tragedy or hardship.

**Nurture a positive view of yourself.** Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

**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.

**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.

**Take care of yourself.** 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.

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**WEB RESOURCES**

**Children’s Hospital Boston**

[www.experiencejournal.com/depression](http://www.experiencejournal.com/depression)

**Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance**

[www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org)

**Families for Depression Awareness**

[www.familyaware.org](http://www.familyaware.org)

**National Alliance for the Mentally Ill**

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**National Mental Health Association**

[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

**Screening for Mental Health**

[www.mentalhealthscreening.org](http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org)

**The Road to Resilience Brochure**

Depression is a disease that affects the transmission of chemical messengers in the brain, which regulate sleep, appetite, mood and energy level. Today there are effective treatments including medications, called antidepressants, that target these chemical messengers to restore one’s normal sleep, appetite, mood and energy. A family history of depression and negative life experiences such as loss, trauma, serious illness and stress can also contribute to the onset of depression.

There are several types of Depression:

MAJOR DEPRESSION
Major depression is characterized by at least five of these symptoms that persist for two weeks or more:
- Persistent sad or empty mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Restlessness or sluggishness
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness, or worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

BIPOLAR DISORDER
Bipolar disorder is a form of depression that alternates between periods of low, depressive moods (see depression symptoms) and high moods, called mania.

- Symptoms of the “high” phase called mania include:
  - Extreme irritability and distractibility
  - Excessive “high” or euphoric feelings
  - Increased energy, activity and restlessness
  - Racing thoughts and rapid speech
  - Decreased need for sleep
  - Unrealistic beliefs in one’s abilities and powers
  - Abuse of drugs or alcohol
  - Reckless behavior such as spending sprees

DYSTHYMIA
Dysthymia is a milder, chronic form of depression that lasts two or more years undermining one’s energy, moods and work.

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER
Seasonal Affective Disorder produces depressive symptoms in the winter months and can occur in major depression or bipolar disorder.