

Bouncing Back & Resilience

There are four elements of resilience identified by Professor Cary Cooper (professor of organisational psychology and health at Manchester University), Jill Flint-Taylor and Michael Pearn. They published their model in the 2013 book 'Building Resilience for Success'. The four elements are:



- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Social support
- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Purposefulness

By addressing these four elements, you'll find that your resilience levels improve and you grow stronger. Let's look at each one in more detail and explore how they relate to your resilience.

Confidence

Confidence is doing the "right thing" despite opposition, being willing to take risks, admitting your mistakes and learning from them, and accepting praise graciously. It's an essential part of resilience, and it's related to positivity, self-efficacy and optimism.

Building self-confidence isn't easy, but it is achievable. Resilient people are confident that they will succeed, despite any setbacks that they experience. They have the self-belief to take risks, and they understand that failure is just another step toward success. One simple way to improve your confidence is to reframe issues more positively. Leading psychologist Martin Seligman says that the way we explain setbacks to ourselves is important.

Thought awareness and mindfulness are also essential for resilience. When you fear the future, put yourself down, criticise yourself, doubt your abilities, or expect failure, you're thinking negatively and you may not realise it. Thought awareness is where you observe your thinking patterns and become aware of this negativity. Once you've identified these thoughts, you can begin to challenge them and use positive thinking to counter them. Picking yourself up after a setback will soon become much easier.

Social Support

Professor Cary Cooper explains that social support is about building good relationships with others in the workplace, and seeking support and help from them in dealing with problems. You can't face every challenge alone, particularly when they are large or complex. Being able to approach people in a crisis can help to lower your stress levels and produce a more positive outcome.

The people you build these supportive relationships with become your allies and they can help you achieve your objectives. Anyone in your organisation can fill this role, from team members to your boss. You can even form bonds with people outside of your workplace, such as your family members, friends and community members. Any person you can call on when the going gets tough is a potential ally.

Adaptability

Being adaptable is important for building resilience, as strength rarely comes from inflexibility. Adaptability is understanding your failures, reflecting on them, being open to new ideas and situations, and finding ways to complete difficult tasks, rather than giving up. Learning to become adaptable means trying to identify and deal with any self-sabotaging personality traits, such as a fear of uncertainty or change.

Dr Cal Crow, co-founder and programme director of the Centre for Learning Connections, believes that resilient people are introspective. He says that they can reflect on their behaviour and thinking, and make positive changes where necessary. They are able to ask themselves whether something is working, take corrective action, and learn from their mistakes and failures. So, look carefully at your own behaviour, and ask yourself whether you need to make any changes.

Learning how to manage stress is also an important part of becoming more adaptable. When you're relaxed, you're able to withstand setbacks and focus more clearly. You're also less likely to "lose your cool" when things don't work out. Keeping stress in check starts with how you look after yourself outside of work. Make sure that you get a good night's sleep (roughly seven to eight uninterrupted hours), try to keep to a routine and add regular exercise to your schedule.

Purposefulness

You're more likely to demonstrate resilience if you enjoy your job, you're passionate about it, and it gives you a sense of purpose. Purposefulness implies having a fixed and clear goal, and focussing on it at all times, no matter what setbacks you experience.

Psychologists Susan Kobasa and Cal Crow say that resilient people are committed to their lives and to their goals, which gives them drive and a compelling sense of purpose. They say that these people also feel in control of their lives, and spend time and energy focusing on situations and events that they can influence, which makes them feel empowered and builds their confidence.

Setting and working toward goals is an important aspect of purposefulness. Goals provide long-term vision and short-term motivation, and reduce the likelihood of problems or setbacks knocking you off course. How you set your goals is important, regardless of their size or importance. Make sure that they're SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and that they match your personal values.

Actions I will take to boost my resilience