

## What is emotional resilience?

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Emotional resilience refers to one's ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises. More resilient people are able to "roll with the punches" and adapt to adversity without lasting difficulties; less resilient people have a harder time with stress and life changes, both major and minor. It's been found that those who deal with minor stresses more easily can also manage major crises with greater ease, so resilience has its benefits for daily life as well as for the rare major catastrophe. What influences emotional resilience? Emotional and physical resilience is, to a degree, something you're born with.

Some people, by nature, are less upset by changes and surprises - this can be observed in infancy and tends to be stable throughout one's lifetime. Emotional resilience is also related to some factors that aren't under your control, such as age, gender, and exposure to trauma. However, resilience can be developed with a little effort. If you know what to do, you can become more resilient, even if you are naturally more sensitive to life's difficulties.

What are traits of emotional resilience?

Resilience is not a quality that you either do or do not possess; there are varying degrees of how well a person is able to handle stress.

Still, there are certain characteristics that resilient people tend to share. Some of the main characteristics are:

- Emotional awareness: They understand what they're feeling and why.

Perseverance: Whether they're working toward outward goals or on inner coping strategies, they're action-oriented - they trust in the process and don't give up.

Internal locus of control: They believe that they, rather than outside forces, are in control of their own lives.

Optimism: They see the positives in most situations and believe in their own strength.

Support: While they tend to be strong individuals, they know the value of social support and are able to surround themselves with supportive friends and family.

Sense of humor: They're able to laugh at life's difficulties.

Perspective: Resilient people are able to learn from their mistakes (rather than deny them), see obstacles as challenges, and allow adversity to make them stronger. They can also find meaning in life's challenges rather than seeing themselves as victims.

Spirituality: Being connected to your spiritual side has been connected with stronger emotional

resilience, especially if you're internally connected and not just going through the motions of attending services. (This doesn't mean that people who aren't spiritual can't be resilient, just that this connection has been found.) (As found at: <http://stress.about.com/od/understandingstress/a/resilience.htm>.) For more information about Thriving Youth: Connected **Community**, contact coordinator Martha Rhein, c/o The **Community Fund** of Darien, at 203-655-8775.