Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Resilience: An important skill for all



Life is full of ups and downs. There are good times that bring us joy and bad times that can really affect us in negative ways. We can all learn something positive about ourselves even when things get tough – that we have the ability to bounce back from setbacks and carry on, stronger and wiser than ever. It's called resilience – and the more we have, the better we are at coping with setbacks, pressure and stress.

When bad times do occur, some people seem to easily maintain a positive outlook on life, pick themselves up and carry on, create solutions or cope; this is because they have greater resilience.

Resilience is about not letting a situation overwhelm you. This doesn't mean not feeling sad, angry, frustrated or fearful because of traumatic or difficult events, it just means you're able to deal with them with a positive attitude and fortitude and act in spite of these feelings. You adapt, learn and move on. In today's busy and stressful world, everyone needs as much resilience as possible.

While a few of us are naturally resilient thanks to a combination of temperament and upbringing, most of us have to build our resilience. You can do this in many ways, including:

- **Creating a support system.** Having people around you with whom you can share feelings, discuss problems and receive advice is an essential part of weathering life's storms. However, while women are more likely to seek the support of friends and family, men are more likely to hide or mask their emotions. Men are expected to tough things out, and that can be damaging to their mental health. Women can help the men in their lives by making them feel comfortable talking about their feelings and, more importantly, men need to feel comfortable sharing their problems with each other.
- **Having a sense of humour**. Being able to laugh at yourself or the situation you're in helps keep things in perspective.

- **Learning from experience.** Resilient people use failure to develop better coping or problem solving skills. They ask themselves what they would do differently next time and, in doing so, become wiser and more adaptable.
- **Taking care of ourselves.** A healthy diet, regular exercise, plenty of sleep and time for fun helps keep both our minds and bodies ready to deal with stressful situations and events.
- **Seeking assistance.** Men are far less likely than women to seek professional help for mental issues. The masculine ideal of strength, courage and confidence, the protector and provider, means many men consider asking for help as a sign of weakness or failure. Mental illnesses are treatable so if you are feeling overwhelmed by a problem or situation, contact your family doctor or Employee and Family Assistance Program and ask to speak to a counsellor.

Children and resilience

Unlike adults, young people don't have the life experience to help them understand or deal with setbacks or difficult situations. **Parents, teachers and coaches can help children and youth develop more resilience by:**

- **Nurturing a positive self-image.** Compliment kids on their accomplishments and talents. Remind them of times when they overcame a setback so they begin to have more confidence in their problem-solving abilities. Use inaccurate or stereotypical media depictions of masculinity or femininity as a platform for discussion.

- **Knowing that it's okay to cry.** Young boys especially need to know that crying is okay and it's healthy to admit they need help. It's also important that boys – and girls – have appropriate male role models who talk about how they feel, live by their own standards of masculinity, are engaged with their families and community and deal with crises in appropriate ways.
- **Watching for signs of fear and anxiety.** Children are often unable to articulate their feelings. Instead, they may become clingy, suck their thumbs or have tantrums or outbursts. Such signs allow adults to step in and help kids with challenges.

While men, women and children face different societal pressures and expectations that can negatively affect their mental health, building resilience can help all of us deal with whatever life throws our way.
© 2026 Morneau Shepell Ltd. Your program may not include all services described on this website, please refer to your benefit material for more information. For immediate assistance, call 1.844.880.9137.