

## Building Resilience

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### About the Presenter

Laura McShane is the Coordinator of Mental Health Promotion and Education Services with the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington.



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### Content

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- 1** **Aware**  
What is Resilience?
  - 2** **Explore**  
Why is resilience necessary for a happier life?
  - 3** **Act**  
How can you use strategies to build your bounce back factor?

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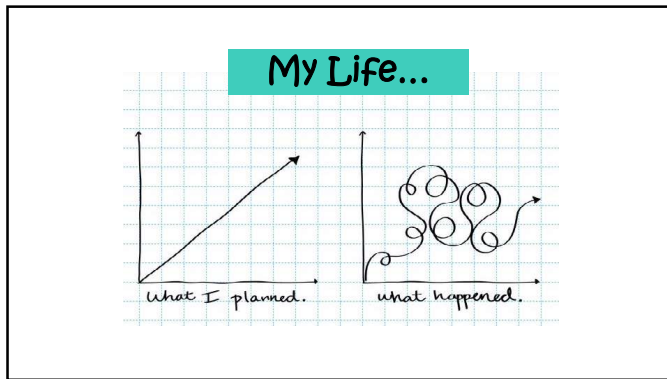
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**What is Mental Health?**

**How a person thinks, feels, and acts when faced with life's situations.**

This includes how people evaluate their challenges and problems, how they explore choices and make decisions, and how they handle stress.

**This includes how people view themselves, the world around them, and how they relate to other people.**

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**What is Resilience?**

Resilience is the ability based on skills, knowledge, experience, actions, and behaviour, to cope and realign from an adverse experience.

Canadian Red Cross Psychological First Aid Guide

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## Resilience defined...

In physics, resilience is the ability of an elastic material (rubber band) to absorb energy (stretched) and release that energy as it springs back to its original shape. The recovery that occurs in this phenomenon can be viewed as analogous to a person's ability to bounce back after a jarring setback

Merriam-Webster

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## Why is Resilience Important?

- Less personal suffering
- Less intensity during suffering
- Better able to support those we care about
- Bring peace and happiness into our own life

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## Resilience is not...

Grit

Tenacity

Resolve

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### How will I know I need to build my Resilience?

- Lack of day-to-day enjoyment
- Feel overwhelmed
- Dwell on problems
- Use unhealthy coping strategies like alcohol or drug use, sedentary lifestyle, risk taking, isolation
- Feel victimized / loss of control over life
- Feel unhappy

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"Bounce Back!" is an acronym for some of the foundational principles of resilience, specifically:

- B** – Bad times don't last, and things get better.
- O** – Other people can only help if you share with them.
- U** – Unhelpful thinking only makes you feel worse.
- N** – Nobody is perfect – not you, not your friends, not your family, not anybody!
- C** – Concentrate on the good things in life, no matter how small.
- E** – Everybody suffers, everybody feels pain and experiences setbacks; they are a normal part of life.
- B** – Blame fairly – negative events are often a combination of things you did, things others did, and plain bad luck.
- A** – Accept what you can't change and try to change what you can.
- C** – Catastrophizing makes things worse – don't fall prey to believing in the worst interpretation.
- K** – Keep things in perspective. Even the worst moment is but one moment in life.

Adapted from Professor Helen McGrath's Bounce Back! program

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"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

albert einstein

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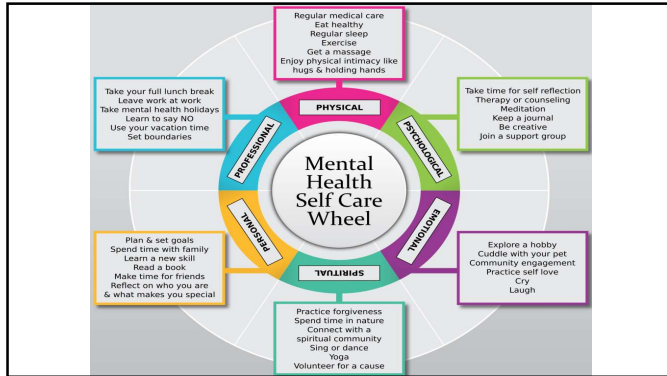
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## 10 Ways to Build Resilience

**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. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

**Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.** You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.

**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. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, “What’s one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?”

**Take decisive actions.** Act on adverse situations as much as you can. 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 their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and heightened appreciation for life.

**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.** Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. 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.

**Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.** For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.

American Psychological Association

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## Devereux Adult Resiliency

- Relationships - The mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives.
- Internal Beliefs - The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.
- Initiative - The ability to make positive choices and decisions, and act upon them
- Self-Control - The ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using the words and actions society considers appropriate.

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**OK...GREAT!!!!**

(but how do I do it?)

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**Let's make a plan!**

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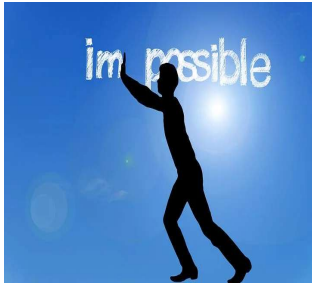
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**Resilience Building Plan**

1. Recognize Your Signs of Stress
2. Build Physical Hardiness
3. Strengthen Relaxation Response
4. Use Your Strengths
5. Increase Positive Emotions on a Daily Basis
6. Engage in Meaningful Activities
7. Counter Unhelpful Thinking
8. Create a Caring Community



Sydney Ey, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry Associate Director, OHSU Resident and Faculty Wellness Program and OHSU Peer Support

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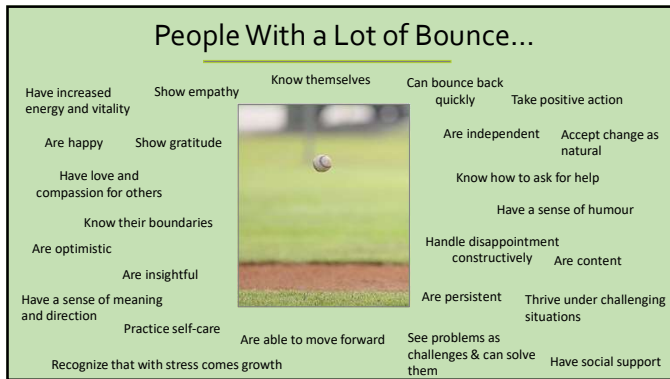
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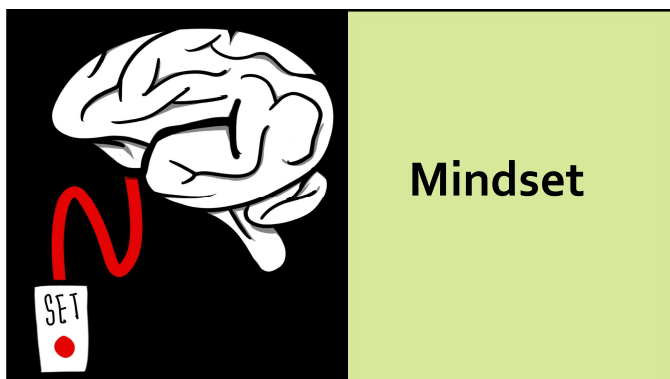
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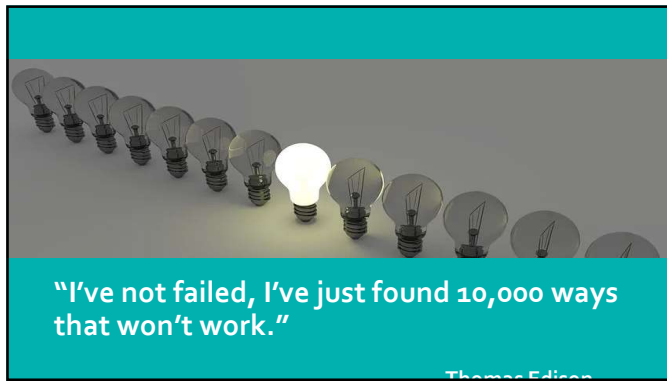
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**BounceBack**  
reclaim your health

Canadian Mental Health Association

- Free, guided, self-help program, grounded in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help adults and youth 18+ learn skills to better manage low mood, mild to moderate depression and anxiety, stress or worry
- Offers two forms of support:
  1. Telephone coaching using skill-building workbooks (referral needed by a primary care provider or self-referral with primary care information)
  2. Online videos provide practical tips at: [bouncebackvideo.ca](https://bouncebackvideo.ca) (access code: 1810dayen) (no referral needed)
- Participants are contacted within 5 business days of referral being submitted
- Telephone coaching available in multiple languages
- No travelling required. Participants receive support in the comfort of their home at a time that's convenient for them

For more information, visit: [bouncebackontario.ca](https://bouncebackontario.ca).  
If you're a healthcare professional seeking resources, email: [bounceback@ontario.cmha.ca](mailto:bounceback@ontario.cmha.ca).

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**HERE 24 SEVEN**

**1 844 437 3247**  
(HERE247)

Call anytime to access  
Addictions, Mental Health  
& Crisis Services  
Waterloo-Wellington

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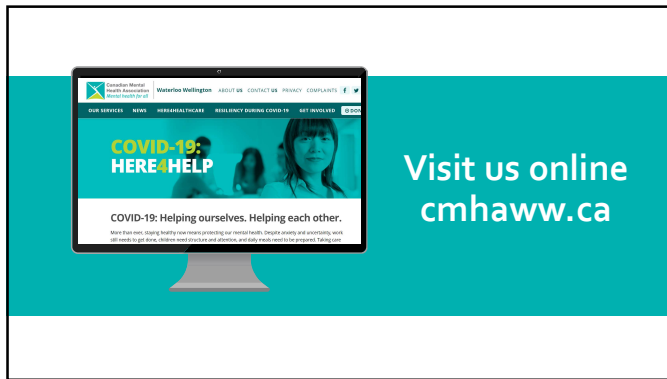
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## Promoting Wellness at Work

For additional Mental Health in the Workplace presentations, or for consultation on implementing Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standards contact:

[education@cmhaww.ca](mailto:education@cmhaww.ca)

If you have questions for me around the information presented today please contact me directly at:

[lmcschane@cmhaww.ca](mailto:lmcschane@cmhaww.ca)

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# References

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- Canadian Red Cross Psychological First Aid Guide
- The Building Resiliency Workbook- Lutenberg & Liptak
- Devereux Advanced Behavioural Health – Devereux Adult Resiliency Survey
- [www.KarenFitzpatrick.ca](http://www.KarenFitzpatrick.ca)
- [www.MayoClinic.com](http://www.MayoClinic.com)
- [www.PositivePsychology.com](http://www.PositivePsychology.com)
- [www.reading.ac.uk/Resilience](http://www.reading.ac.uk/Resilience) Handout

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