

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mental Health & Wellbeing

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Improving Resilience

Resilience is the process by which individual's, manage, cope and bounce-back from challenging life experiences.

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What is Improving Resilience?

College and university students, especially first-year students who are beginning their new chapter of independence, may feel overwhelmed in university. Students might experience difficulties, setbacks, and frustration if they are dealing with a variety of new stressors at once, including busy class schedules, extracurriculars, completing assessments, studying and social demands. This is why building resilience is crucial - it is the key to assisting students in developing the capacity to cope with stressful and challenging circumstances.

A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them:

- ▶ The ways in which individuals view and engage with the world
- ▶ The availability and quality of social resources
- ▶ Specific coping strategies

There may not be a fixed route through life, but everyone will encounter obstacles along the way, from everyday difficulties to more serious traumas events. Even though these adverse events can be painful and challenging, they don't determine the future of your life. Although resilience won't solve your problems, it can help you 'bounce back' from these difficult experiences, empowers you to grow and even improve your life along the way.

While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn't necessarily a personality trait that only some people possess. Resilience, on the other hand, involves attitudes, behaviours, and actions that everyone can learn and develop. And it's not always present; for example, you might show a lot of resilience when dealing with one obstacle, but have more

difficulty being resilient when coping with another adversity. If you think that your resilience isn't as great as you'd like it to be, you can practice improving it.

Strategies to Improve Resilience

The resilience process involves all stages of an event and equips you with the skills to deal with problems more effectively in the future.

Not sure where to start? Here are some tips and suggestions to improve your resilience.

- ▶ **Focus on the positive:** A positive outlook provides a better state of mind to tackle problems and manage anxiety and tension when facing fear, disappointment, and rejection. You might write down one thing that you are grateful for in your life, such as friends, family, health or more. This activity can boost happiness and inspires optimism in the place of negativity, try this exercise anytime if you are feeling negative.
- ▶ **Keep things in perspective:** How we think can have a significant impact on our feeling as well as how resilient we are in the face of challenges. A highly stressful experience may not be something you can change, but you can change **how you perceive it and react to it**. If you're feeling overwhelmed by a situation, remind yourself that what happened to you isn't an indicator of your future, and that you're not helpless.
- ▶ **Practice mindfulness:** One way to build resilience is through mindfulness practices that strengthen the logical and emotional centers of our brain. This improves our focus and awareness of the current moment, enabling us to feel our emotions without bias and control how we behave in reaction to them. Mindful writing, yoga, and other spiritual activities such as prayer or meditation can also help you connect with others and restore hope, preparing you to deal with situations that require resilience. Check this [site](#) for more information on mindfulness.
- ▶ **Connecting with others:** Talk with your friends or parents who are empathetic and understanding can remind you that you are not alone. Find someone who will listen to you with compassion and trust, since this will help you develop the resilience skill. Or you might be active in groups such as religious, sports, club or high school groups that can provide social support for you to reclaim hope.
- ▶ **Take good care of yourself:** Although it may be a popular buzzword, self-care is a useful practice for improving resilience and mental health. This is because stress affects both the

body and the mind. Promoting healthy lifestyle habits like balanced diet, enough sleep, water intake, and regular exercise will help your body become more resilient to stress and lessen the impact of negative emotions like anxiety or depression.

Improving Resilience and my studies

Resilience at university is a specific type of resilience that refers to one's ability to achieve academic success, despite the presence of stressful events and adversity. Academic resilience is also the ability to learn from mistakes and failures to bounce back when things may not have gone as planned.

- ▶ **Reflection:** Being rejected for an internship or graduate program, struggling at relationships, losing a campus election, or failure in academics is very common and normal. Through looking back at who or what was helpful in previous times of distress, you may discover how you can respond effectively to new difficult situations. Remind yourself of where you've been able to find strength and ask yourself what you've learned from those experiences.
- ▶ **Create and follow a manageable schedule and set daily tasks for yourself.** Using planner tools such as to-do list, calendars, notebooks or smartphone apps to keep yourself on track. Many students find it helpful to use a [Weekly Planner](#) and [Daily Planner](#) to assist in structuring their schedule and studies.
- ▶ **Goal setting:** Set concrete, achievable goals inside and outside of the classroom provides you with a motivating sense of purpose. Focusing on small steps and developing a manageable schedule of daily tasks will help you achieve your goals. This approach motivates you to think about your expectations and monitor your improvement, accomplishments, and progress, encouraging you that you are capable and in control.
- ▶ **Obtain Social Support:** Having supportive people in your life is the key to stress management. This may mean reaching out to your existing network or confiding in a family member or distant friend can provide you with the [social support](#) you need.

University Support

WSU resources:

If you are experiencing barriers that may affect your study or you want support to optimise your study then the WSU [Counselling Service](#), [Disability Service](#), or [Student Welfare Service](#) may be able to help.

- ▶ **WSU [Counselling Service](#).**

Students can access free, short term, confidential counselling services. Face to face, Zoom or phone appointments can be made by telephoning 1300 668 370. Our office hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4:30pm. Alternatively, or email counselling@westernsydney.edu.au

- ▶ **WSU [Disability Service](#).**

The Disability Service is free to access with Disability Advisors assisting students to meet their full potential. If you have a diagnosed physical, psychological or medical condition that impacts on your studies, you may be eligible for an [Academic Integration Plan \(AIP\)](#), developed by the Disability Service. Contact the Disability Service on 1300 668 370, email disability@westernsydney.edu.au or make contact via [WesternNow](#).

- ▶ **WSU [Welfare Service](#).**

Academic, Personal and Financial Hardship, International Support and Accommodation: 1300 668 370 or via [WesternNow](#).

- ▶ **Multifaith [Chaplaincy](#)**

Multifaith Chaplaincy can provide confidential conversation and care, support for stress

management and anxiety with links to religious groups and faith communities. For more information, please call Daniel Jantos on 0402771543 or email d.jantos@westernsydney.edu.au.

- ▶ **WesternLife**

[WesternLife](#) - Join thousands of students at Your Virtual Community to share experiences, learn new things, connect with new friends, and engage with events or discussions that interest you!

▶ **Disruption to Studies**

Consider applying for [Disruption to Studies](#) and [Requests for Extension](#) if you feel as though your studies have been significantly impacted.

▶ **Deferred Exams**

[Deferred Exam](#) – You can apply for a Deferred Exam no later than 5.00 pm on the second working day after your scheduled exam if you are unable to attend a final exam due to serious illness, misadventure or other exceptional circumstances beyond your control. Submit a [Student Form](#) and attach supporting documents online for application.

▶ **Withdraw Without Academic Penalty**

[Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty](#) is an option available after the Census Date of the teaching term provided that you meet eligibility.

▶ **Leave of Absence**

A [Leave of Absence](#) is a temporary break from studying. Once you have completed one or more subjects in your enrolled program, you can apply for a Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence can be taken as either six or twelve months. The maximum amount of leave you can take during your program is twelve months. Please note, you must submit your application before the relevant census date

If you are considering any of these options, please reach out to the counselling service for support and guidance. If you are an international student, please make sure you seek

advice particularly if you are considering withdrawing without penalty or taking a leave of absence as these may have [implications for your visa conditions](#).

Community Support

Community resources:

▶ **[Lifeline](#)**.

If you are really struggling during the night when completing assessments or feel most alone, contact [Lifeline](#) (24 hours crisis counselling) - **13 11 14** or, Lifeline SMS Counselling Service - between 6pm- Midnight you can text **0477 13 11 14** and somebody will text you back!

▶ **Mental Health Telephone Access Line**

[Mental Health Telephone Access Line](#) - 1800 011 511

This Mental Health Line is staffed by mental health professionals that can help and provide you advice about your needs and discuss referrals to local mental health services. It is available to everyone in NSW and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

▶ **Beyond Blue**

[Be you – beyond blue](#): General information about building resilience and facing adversity.

▶ **This way up**

[THIS WAY UP](#) – Self-paced online programs that teach clinically-proven strategies to help you improve the way you feel.

▶ **Therapist Aid**

[Therapist Aid](#) – Free evidence-based education and therapy tools.

▶ **Reach out Australia**

[Reach Out](#) Australia helps young people to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health issues, understand mental health concepts, and get guidance on how to seek help or build skills for coping and resilience. Our trusted self-help information, peer-support program and

referral tools save lives by helping young people be well and stay well. Accessed by more than 2 million people in Australia each year, ReachOut is a free service that's available anytime and pretty much anywhere.

- ▶ **Fostering Resilience**

[Fostering resilience](#): Creating your own personal management plan.

- ▶ **[MyCompass](#)**

This free online treatment program has been developed by the Black Dog Institute to help people better self-manage mild-to-moderate symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.

Resources

- ▶ [Podcasts](#)

- ▶ [Videos](#)

- ▶ [Apps](#)

Podcasts

'3 Strategies To Rapidly Improve Your Resilience and Mental Strength'

In this podcast episode, practical steps are offered to encourage insight on how hard times can bring strength and beauty.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/3-strategies-to-rapidly-improve-your-resilience-and/id1450994021?i=1000482307285>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4Mna25HpuFgASdpqjZzYo2>

'Let's Talk About...Resilience'

Let's Talk About Mental Health is a weekly podcast about improving your mental health. Episode 23, explores resilience and how to build your ability to bounce back from things that go wrong.

<https://letstalkaboutmentalhealth.com.au/2020/03/16/lets-talk-about-resilience/>

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2GMtnIrkbfWPe7PQEVbDL1>

'Boosting Resilience'

This podcast episode discusses ways to bounce forward when faced with adversity and challenging situations to boost resilience.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/64Uq9EwyspdmF9xGkH2Yj8>

<https://www.eqminds.com/podcasts/eq-minds-recharge-your-mental-health/episodes/2147650858>

Videos

[How to build resilience as your superpower](#)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzyZXdl0vok>

[The 3 Secrets of Resilient People](#)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-5SMpg7Q0k>

[How failure cultivates resilience](#)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7vYuKvpneM>

Apps

- ▶ **Talk Campus**: There is a 24/7 support app called TalkCampus, which is free and available to download on iOS devices (App Store) and android devices (Google Play). WSU students can connect and talk with other students about anything.
- ▶ **Smiling Mind**: Smiling Mind offers a free app to help you practice your daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device. There are dozens of exercises tailored to different demographics and desires. All the content and programs are free, which is the perfect apps for beginners to try mindfulness. Free and available on the app store and google play.
- ▶ **Headspace**: Learn to manage feelings and thoughts with the lifelong skill of everyday mindfulness, any time of the day. Free and available on the app store and google play.
- ▶ **My Compass**: myCompass is a free app that is available to download on iOS devices (App store) and android (Google play). Interactive self-help program designed to address mild to-moderate symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression through personalised treatments delivered entirely online.
- ▶ **Calm**: Available on *IOS, Android, Webs* Price: FREE for 7-day trial/ premium: \$79.99/ year or lifetime membership for 549.99 Calm is the app for sleep, meditation and relaxation. It provides resources and programs to help you with your mental health journey.
- ▶ **Todolist**: Available on *IOS, Android, Webs* Price: FREE/ RPO, \$3 a month. Todoist is a task management app designed to help you record and organize all your tasks and activities easily. The time

management + digital to-do list app allows you to add tasks fast, prioritize the most important ones, break them down into sub-tasks, and add them to *favorites* or make them *recurrent*.

- ▶ **Toggl**: Available on *IOS, Android, Webs* Price: FREE/RPO, \$9 a month. To manage time effectively, you need to determine how much time you spend on your projects or work and then work on using every available hour efficiently. Toggl is *the* time tracking app for that job.
- ▶ **Google Callendar**: Available on *IOS, Android, Webs* Price: FREE/PRO, \$6 a month. Google Calendar is perfect to manage your tasks and projects on a **daily, weekly, and monthly basis**. Google Calendar gives an overview of meetings, work, and more which helps to plan your tasks smartly and save time. ClickUp allows you to connect with your Google Calendar to give you a much clearer picture of your day.

Still struggling?

Asking for help is an important step in managing these feelings and realising your full potential!

If you are still struggling, reach out to the WSU counselling team for support and advice. If you prefer to seek support from a service outside of the university, it may be helpful to speak to your General Practitioner regarding a [Mental Health Care Plan](#) and referral to a psychologist, or you can speak to a counsellor or other health professional. Remember you are not alone and there will always be someone out there who is willing to stay with you through your hard times.

Please find the attached PDF document [here](#).

References:

[American Psychological Association - Resilience](#)

[Everyday Health – What is Resilience? Your guide to facing lifes challenges, adversities, and crises](#)

[Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: interdisciplinary perspectives](#)

[Student mental health and transitions into, through and out of university: student and staff perspectives](#)

[Resilience Examples: What Key Skills Make You Resilient?](#)

[The Academic Resilience Scale: A New Multidimensional Construct Measure](#)

[5 Ways to Build Resilience in Students](#)

[Campus Groups – 10 Ways to build Your Students’ Resilience and Involvement](#)

[Very Well Mind – Social Support for Stress Relief](#)

