



Becoming More Resilient: A Guide for Adults

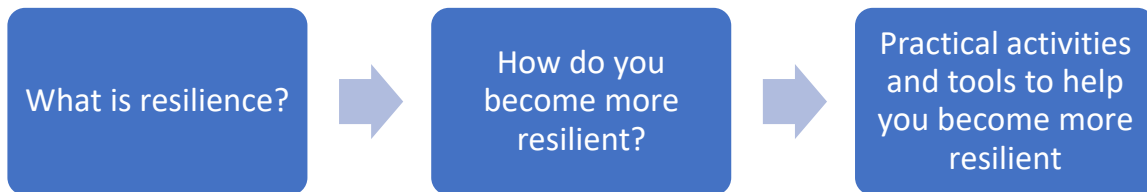
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Introduction

This document has been developed by NICRO at the request of our beneficiaries. It is being made available to the general public as part of our crime and violence prevention service. Individuals and organisations may make use of this document for non-profit and educational purposes.

This guide follows the below structure.



What is Resilience?

Being emotionally and psychologically resilient means having the ability to adapt and bounce back from difficult or challenging situations. It involves effectively coping with adversity, stress, trauma, or other emotional disturbances, and maintaining mental well-being.

Why is being Resilient Important?

If individuals lack resilience, they may encounter several challenges in various aspects of their lives. Here are some common challenges that people without resilience may face:

1. **Difficulty coping with stress:** Without resilience, individuals may struggle to effectively cope with stressors, such as work pressures, relationship issues, or major life changes. They may become overwhelmed, experience high levels of anxiety, and find it challenging to bounce back from setbacks.



2. **Inability to adapt to change:** Lack of resilience makes it difficult for individuals to adapt to change and uncertainty. They may resist or fear changes, becoming stuck in rigid thinking patterns and routines. This can lead to missed opportunities for personal and professional growth.
3. **Increased vulnerability to mental health issues:** Without resilience, individuals are more susceptible to mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. They may struggle to regulate their emotions, experience persistent negative thoughts, and find it challenging to recover from difficult life events.
4. **Lower self-confidence and self-esteem:** The absence of resilience can undermine self-confidence and self-esteem. Individuals may doubt their abilities, engage in negative self-talk, and feel defeated by setbacks. This lack of belief in oneself can hinder personal and professional development.
5. **Impaired problem-solving skills:** When faced with challenges, individuals without resilience may struggle to effectively problem solve and find solutions. They may become overwhelmed by obstacles, lack creative thinking, and feel helpless in the face of adversity.
6. **Strained relationships:** Resilience plays a crucial role in maintaining healthy relationships. Individuals lacking resilience may have difficulty managing conflicts, adapting to relationship dynamics, and bouncing back from relationship strains. This can lead to strained or fractured relationships.
7. **Limited ability to handle failure:** Without resilience, individuals may struggle to handle failures and setbacks. They may be consumed by self-blame, experience a fear of trying again, and have difficulty learning from their mistakes. This can hinder personal growth and inhibit future success.



8. **Reduced overall well-being:** Lack of resilience can contribute to decreased overall well-being. Individuals may experience chronic stress, lower life satisfaction, and a diminished sense of purpose and fulfillment. Without the ability to navigate challenges effectively, their quality of life may suffer.

It's important to note that resilience is a skill that can be developed and strengthened over time. By cultivating resilience, individuals can overcome these challenges, bounce back from adversity, and lead more fulfilling lives.

CASE STUDY: COPING WITH JOB LOSS

Person A (Lacking Resilience):

Person A recently lost their job due to company downsizing. They become overwhelmed by feelings of failure, hopelessness, and fear about their future. They withdraw from social activities, isolate themselves, and struggle to regain motivation. They find it challenging to bounce back, spending most of their time dwelling on negative thoughts and experiencing prolonged unemployment.

Person B (Resilient):

Person B also experiences job loss due to company downsizing. Initially, they feel disappointed but quickly shift their focus to exploring new opportunities. They update their resume, reach out to their professional network, and actively search for employment. They seek emotional support from friends and family, engaging in open discussions about their feelings. They view the setback as an opportunity for growth and use their free time to acquire new skills through online courses.

CASE STUDY: RELATIONSHIP BREAKUP

Person A (Lacking Resilience):

Person A goes through a difficult breakup. They become consumed by sadness, blame themselves for the end of the relationship, and develop low self-esteem. They isolate



themselves from friends, avoid socializing, and struggle with moving forward. They constantly dwell on the past, experiencing prolonged emotional distress that affects their overall well-being.

Person B (Resilient):

Person B experiences a breakup and initially feels sadness and disappointment. However, they recognize that relationships can end and accept the situation. They reach out to their support network for guidance and encouragement. Person B focuses on self-care, engaging in activities they enjoy, and seeking opportunities for personal growth. They eventually develop a stronger sense of self and use the experience to gain clarity about their needs and desires in future relationships.

CASE STUDY: ACADEMIC SETBACK

Person A (Lacking Resilience):

Person A receives a lower-than-expected grade on an important exam. They immediately feel defeated and doubt their academic abilities. They dwell on their mistakes, struggle to concentrate on studying, and fear future failures. Their self-confidence plummets, affecting their motivation and performance in other areas of their studies.

Person B (Resilient):

Person B receives a lower-than-expected grade on an important exam. They acknowledge their disappointment but view it as an opportunity to learn and grow. Person B analyzes their mistakes, seeks clarification from the instructor, and creates a study plan to improve their understanding of the subject. They seek support from classmates and establish a study group to foster collaboration. Their resilience and perseverance pay off as they achieve better results in subsequent exams.



CASE STUDY: DEALING WITH UNEXPECTED CHANGE

Person A (Lacking Mental Adaptability):

Person A faces an unexpected change in their workplace, such as a reorganization. They become overwhelmed by the uncertainty, resist the change, and struggle to accept the new structure. They cling to familiar routines and refuse to embrace new responsibilities, leading to increased stress and strained relationships with colleagues.

Person B (Resilient and Mentally Adaptable):

Person B also experiences the same unexpected workplace change. Although initially surprised, they quickly adapt to the new situation. They embrace the opportunity to learn and grow, seeking guidance from supervisors and colleagues. Person B adjusts their mindset, proactively seeks ways to contribute to the new structure, and takes on additional responsibilities. Their mental adaptability enables them to thrive in the new work environment.

CASE STUDY: COPING WITH A MAJOR LIFE TRANSITION

Person A (Lacking Mental Adaptability):

Person A faces a major life transition, such as moving to a new city for a job. They resist the change, constantly comparing their new surroundings to their previous home. They isolate themselves, struggle to make new connections, and feel overwhelmed by feelings of nostalgia and homesickness. Their lack of mental adaptability hinders their ability to embrace the new opportunities and fully immerse themselves in their new environment.

Person B (Resilient and Mentally Adaptable):

Person B also moves to a new city for a job. They approach the transition with an open mind and view it as an adventure. They actively seek opportunities to explore their new surroundings, join social groups, and meet new people. Person B focuses on building a support network, adapting to the local culture, and finding joy in the new experiences.



Their mental adaptability allows them to quickly settle in and create a fulfilling life in their new city.

CASE STUDY: FACING UNEXPECTED OBSTACLES

Person A (Lacking Mental Adaptability):

Person A encounters unexpected obstacles while pursuing their career goals. They become frustrated, dwell on the setbacks, and perceive the challenges as insurmountable. They lack the flexibility to adjust their plans and remain fixated on their original expectations. This rigid thinking prevents them from exploring alternative routes to achieve their objectives.

Person B (Resilient and Mentally Adaptable):

Person B also faces unexpected obstacles along their career path. They acknowledge the challenges but refuse to be deterred. Person B embraces a problem-solving mindset, adapts their strategies, and seeks advice from mentors and peers. They view the setbacks as opportunities for growth, learning from the experiences and using them to refine their goals. Their mental adaptability enables them to find creative solutions and ultimately succeed in their endeavors.

These case studies highlight the importance of mental adaptability in navigating life's challenges. Individuals who exhibit resilience and mental adaptability are better equipped to accept change, adjust their perspectives, and find innovative solutions. Developing this ability allows people to thrive in dynamic environments, seize opportunities, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity.

These case studies demonstrate the impact of resilience on individuals' ability to cope with challenges and bounce back from setbacks. Developing resilience allows people to maintain a positive outlook, seek support, adapt to change, and learn from difficult



experiences. It enables them to move forward, grow stronger, and achieve success in various areas of life.

What is Resilience Made of?



Here are some key aspects of emotional and psychological resilience:

1. **Emotional awareness:** Resilient individuals have a strong understanding of their emotions. They can identify and acknowledge their feelings, both positive and negative, without being overwhelmed by them. This self-awareness allows them to effectively manage their emotions in various situations.
2. **Adaptability:** Resilient people are flexible and can adjust their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions to changing circumstances. They are open to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences, which helps them navigate through challenges and find creative solutions.



3. **Positive mindset:** Resilience often involves maintaining a positive outlook even in the face of adversity. Resilient individuals tend to focus on their strengths, possibilities, and potential solutions rather than dwelling on the negative aspects of a situation. They believe in their ability to overcome difficulties and maintain hope for the future.
4. **Social support:** Building and maintaining strong relationships is an important aspect of resilience. Having a support network of family, friends, or other trusted individuals provides emotional and practical assistance during challenging times. Seeking support and connecting with others can help individuals regain their balance and perspective.
5. **Problem-solving skills:** Resilience involves the ability to effectively problem-solve and make decisions in difficult situations. Resilient individuals approach problems with a proactive mindset, break them down into manageable parts, and seek practical solutions. They are willing to take action to address challenges rather than feeling helpless or overwhelmed.
6. **Self-care:** Taking care of oneself physically, mentally, and emotionally is crucial for resilience. Engaging in activities that promote well-being, such as exercise, healthy eating, quality sleep, and relaxation techniques, can help build emotional and psychological resilience.
7. **Learning and growth:** Resilient individuals view challenges and setbacks as opportunities for learning and personal growth. They are open to self-reflection, gaining new insights, and developing new skills through adversity. This attitude helps them adapt and become stronger over time.

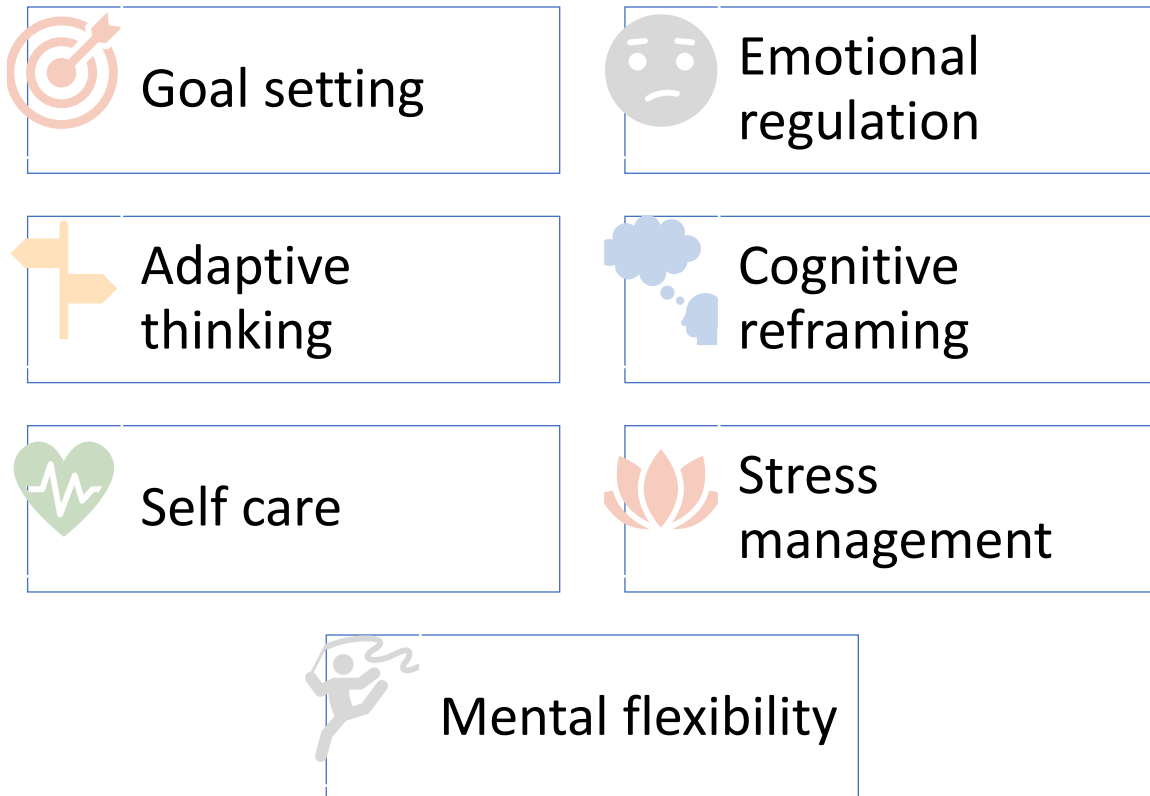
It's important to note that resilience is not about being invincible or unaffected by difficult circumstances. It is about developing and strengthening one's **ability to cope and thrive**



in the face of adversity, ultimately leading to improved mental and emotional well-being.

How do You Become More Resilient?

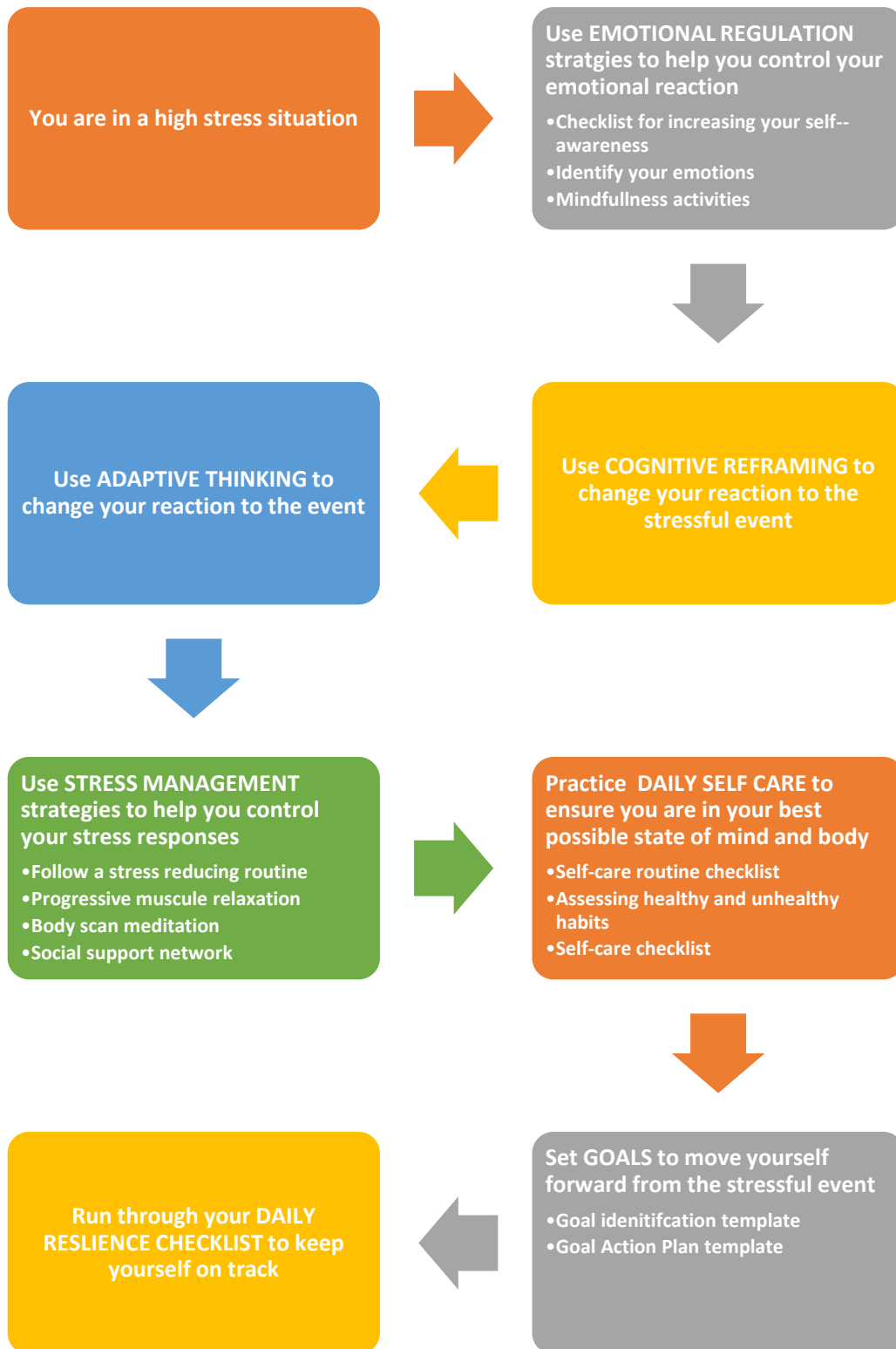
To become more resilient, you need to grow and develop the following skills:



The guide will now focus on each of these areas separately, providing guidance and activities that you can use. By integrating these strategies into your mindset and daily practices, you can develop enhanced resilience, improve your performance, and effectively navigate the challenges you encounter.



How to respond with resilience to traumatic or stressful events (one pager summary)



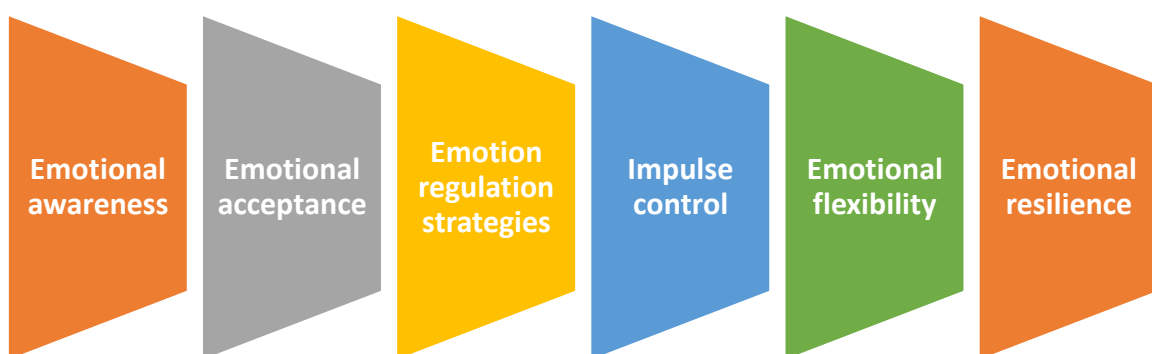
Emotional regulation

Resilient individuals have the ability to manage and regulate their emotions effectively. You can learn emotional regulation techniques, such as identifying and labeling emotions, practicing emotional awareness, and employing strategies like deep breathing, journaling, or seeking support to manage intense emotional reactions. By developing emotional intelligence and regulation skills, you can make better decisions and maintain your composure during high-stress situations.

Emotional regulation refers to the ability to effectively manage and control one's emotions in a healthy and adaptive manner. It involves recognizing, understanding, and modulating one's emotional responses to various situations and stimuli. Emotional regulation is a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence and plays a significant role in overall well-being and interpersonal relationships.

Emotional regulation encompasses a range of skills and strategies that individuals use to influence their emotional experiences and expressions. It involves both the conscious and unconscious processes that enable individuals to regulate their emotions, maintain emotional stability, and respond to emotional triggers in a balanced way.

Some key aspects of emotional regulation include:



1. **Emotional awareness:** Being able to identify and recognize one's own emotions as they arise, understanding their causes, and labeling them accurately.
2. **Emotional acceptance:** Accepting and validating one's emotions, even if they are unpleasant or uncomfortable, without judgment or suppression.
3. **Emotion regulation strategies:** Employing various techniques to modulate and manage emotions, such as deep breathing, mindfulness, cognitive reframing, seeking support from others, engaging in self-care activities, and problem-solving.
4. **Impulse control:** Regulating impulsive reactions and responses to emotional triggers, allowing for thoughtful and measured behavior instead of acting solely based on immediate emotional impulses.
5. **Emotional flexibility:** Being able to adapt and adjust emotional responses to different situations appropriately. This involves recognizing when certain emotions may not be serving one's well-being and actively choosing more adaptive emotional responses.
6. **Emotional resilience:** Developing the capacity to bounce back from emotional challenges, setbacks, and stressful situations, and to recover a state of emotional equilibrium.

Emotional regulation is a skill that can be learned and developed through self-awareness, practice, and the application of various strategies. By improving emotional regulation, individuals can enhance their emotional well-being, improve relationships, and effectively navigate the ups and downs of life.

CHECKLIST FOR INCREASING SELF-AWARENESS

1. Reflection:

- a. Set aside regular time for self-reflection.
- b. Create a quiet and comfortable space for introspection.



- c. Journal your thoughts, emotions, and experiences to gain insights.

2. Emotional Awareness:

- a. Pay attention to your emotions throughout the day.
- b. Identify and label your emotions accurately.
- c. Notice how your emotions affect your thoughts and behaviour.

3. Triggers and Patterns:

- a. Identify situations or people that trigger strong emotional reactions.
- b. Recognize recurring patterns in your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.
- c. Explore the root causes behind these triggers and patterns.

4. Mindfulness:

- a. Practice mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing.
- b. Observe your thoughts and emotions without judgment or attachment.
- c. Notice sensations in your body to tune into your emotional state.

5. Feedback:

- a. Seek feedback from trusted friends, family, or colleagues.
- b. Ask for honest opinions about your strengths and areas for improvement.
- c. Listen attentively and consider the feedback without defensiveness.

6. Values and Beliefs:

- a. Reflect on your core values and beliefs.
- b. Identify what truly matters to you in different aspects of life.
- c. Examine how your values and beliefs shape your choices and actions.

7. Strengths and Weaknesses:

- a. Identify your personal strengths and acknowledge them.
- b. Reflect on areas where you may have weaknesses or areas for growth.
- c. Explore ways to leverage your strengths and work on improving weaknesses.

8. Self-Talk:

- a. Pay attention to your internal dialogue and self-talk.
- b. Notice if you tend to be self-critical or overly negative.
- c. Practice replacing negative self-talk with more positive and supportive thoughts.



9. Body Awareness:

- a. Tune into sensations in your body, such as tension, relaxation, or discomfort.
- b. Notice how your body reacts to different situations and emotions.
- c. Connect your physical sensations with your emotional experiences.

10. Life Goals and Alignment:

- a. Reflect on your long-term goals and aspirations.
- b. Assess if your current actions and choices align with your goals.
- c. Make adjustments and set intentions to align your life with your values and aspirations.

11. Seek Professional Help:

- a. Consider working with a therapist or counsellor for additional support.
- b. A professional can provide guidance and techniques tailored to your needs.
- c. They can help you navigate challenges and facilitate self-awareness.

IDENTIFY AND LABEL YOUR EMOTIONS

Part of emotional regulation and increasing your self-awareness is the ability to identify and name your emotions. Being able to name and acknowledge what you feel is crucial to managing what you feel.

Having a good emotional vocabulary is useful for several reasons:



SELF-AWARENESS:

1. A rich emotional vocabulary enables individuals to accurately identify and label their emotions.
2. This enhances self-awareness, allowing individuals to understand their own feelings and experiences more deeply.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION:

1. When individuals can identify and articulate their emotions, they are better equipped to regulate and manage them effectively.
2. They can develop strategies to cope with negative emotions and cultivate positive ones.

COMMUNICATION:

1. A robust emotional vocabulary facilitates effective communication with others.
2. It allows individuals to express their feelings more precisely, which helps others understand and empathize with their experiences.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:

1. Understanding and expressing emotions helps build stronger connections and empathy with others.
2. It allows individuals to validate and support the emotions of those around them, fostering healthier and more meaningful relationships.

PROBLEM SOLVING:

1. Emotions provide valuable information about our needs, desires, and concerns.
2. By having a diverse emotional vocabulary, individuals can articulate their emotions when problem-solving, leading to more effective solutions and decision-making.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

1. Developing an emotional vocabulary is a key component of emotional intelligence.
2. It enables individuals to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as understand and empathize with the emotions of others.



Overall, having a good emotional vocabulary enhances emotional intelligence, self-awareness, communication, and relationship skills, leading to greater emotional well-being and improved interactions with oneself and others.

IMPROVING YOUR EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY

Review the emotions wheel and look up the words that you are not familiar with. Practise using these words in your daily speech, and when you reflect on events and your reactions to those events.

Event	What Happened	How Did I feel? (Use the emotions wheel)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		



DEVELOPING MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a useful emotional regulation strategy. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of the present moment, without judgment. It involves paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the environment around us.

Mindfulness is important because it helps us to become more aware of our thoughts and emotions, allowing us to better manage stress and negative emotions. It helps us to slow down and appreciate the present moment, rather than constantly worrying about the past or future. Mindfulness can also improve our mental well-being by reducing anxiety and increasing self-acceptance.

Practicing mindfulness can improve our focus and concentration, making us more productive in our tasks. It can enhance our relationships by promoting active listening and empathy, allowing us to better connect and understand others. Mindfulness also enables us to make wiser decisions and respond to situations with greater clarity and composure.

Mindfulness is important because it helps us to be more aware, calm, and present in our daily lives, leading to greater well-being and a deeper appreciation of the world around us. Here are some activities to help you develop your mindfulness skills.

MINDFUL BREATHING:

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down. Set aside a few minutes for this activity.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to centre yourself and relax.
3. Bring your attention to your breath. Notice the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves your body.
4. Focus your attention on the physical sensations associated with breathing, such as the rising and falling of your abdomen or the feeling of air passing through your nostrils.



5. Whenever your mind starts to wander or get caught up in thoughts, gently bring your attention back to the breath, without judgment.
6. Continue observing your breath for a few minutes, maintaining a non-judgmental and accepting attitude towards any thoughts or distractions that arise.
7. Gradually bring your attention back to the present moment, and when you're ready, open your eyes.

MINDFUL WALKING:

1. Find a quiet and safe place where you can take a leisurely walk, such as a park or a peaceful neighbourhood.
2. Begin by standing still and taking a few deep breaths to centre yourself.
3. As you start walking, bring your attention to the physical sensations of walking—the feeling of your feet making contact with the ground, the movement of your legs, and the sway of your body.
4. Notice the sights and sounds around you—the colours, shapes, and textures of the environment, the sounds of nature or people passing by.
5. Stay present with each step, fully experiencing the movement and sensations of walking. If your mind starts to wander, gently bring your attention back to the physical experience of walking.
6. Engage your senses fully, paying attention to the smells, sounds, and sensations of the present moment.
7. Maintain this awareness throughout your walk, allowing yourself to be fully present and open to the experience.

MINDFUL EATING:

1. Choose a meal or a snack that you can consume without distractions. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit.
2. Take a moment to observe your food before taking a bite. Notice the colours, textures, and smells of the food in front of you.
3. Take a small bite and chew slowly and mindfully. Pay attention to the flavours and textures as you chew.
4. Notice the sensations in your mouth and throat as you swallow the food.



5. Put your utensils down between bites and fully experience the taste and texture of each bite before moving on to the next.
6. Be aware of your body's signals of hunger and fullness, allowing yourself to eat at a pace that feels comfortable and nourishing.
7. As you eat, bring your attention to the present moment and the experience of nourishing your body with each bite.

Engaging in these activities regularly can help you cultivate mindfulness and presence in your daily life. Remember to approach each activity with curiosity, non-judgment, and a gentle attitude toward your thoughts and experiences.

What is Adaptive Thinking?

Adaptive thinking involves the ability to adjust and modify one's thinking processes to effectively respond to changing circumstances and solve problems. It encompasses several components that contribute to flexible and agile thinking. Adaptive thinking involves being open-minded, flexible, and willing to consider different perspectives and approaches.

KEY COMPONENTS OF ADAPTIVE THINKING

Here are the key components of adaptive thinking:



1. **Open-mindedness:** Open-mindedness involves being receptive to new ideas, perspectives, and information. It means being willing to consider alternative viewpoints and challenging one's own beliefs or assumptions. Open-minded thinkers



are curious, adaptable, and value diversity of thought. They actively seek out different perspectives to broaden your understanding and make informed decisions.

2. **Flexibility:** Flexibility refers to the ability to adapt and adjust one's thinking when faced with unexpected or changing situations. It involves being comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Flexible thinkers can quickly shift their strategies or approaches as new information emerges. They are open to experimenting with different solutions and are not rigidly attached to a single way of thinking.
3. **Critical thinking:** Critical thinking involves analyzing information, evaluating its credibility and relevance, and making reasoned judgments. It includes skills such as logical reasoning, evidence evaluation, problem identification, and decision-making. Critical thinkers can objectively assess situations, identify underlying assumptions, and consider multiple factors before reaching conclusions.
4. **Creativity:** Creativity involves generating innovative and original ideas, approaches, and solutions. It is the ability to think outside the box and make connections between seemingly unrelated concepts. Creative thinkers are comfortable with exploring unconventional possibilities and taking risks. They use their imagination and divergent thinking skills to come up with novel solutions to problems.
5. **Problem-solving:** Problem-solving is the ability to identify, analyze, and find effective solutions to challenges or obstacles. Adaptive thinkers approach problems systematically, breaking them down into smaller components and considering multiple potential solutions. They are resourceful and persistent, seeking out relevant information and using it to develop and implement successful problem-solving strategies.
6. **Emotional intelligence:** Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing one's own emotions and recognizing and responding to the emotions of others. Adaptive thinkers are aware of their emotional reactions and can regulate



them effectively. They also demonstrate empathy and consider the emotional impact of decisions and actions on themselves and others. Emotional intelligence allows individuals to navigate complex social situations, build strong relationships, and make decisions that consider both logical and emotional factors.

7. **Learning agility:** Learning agility is the capacity to rapidly acquire and apply new knowledge and skills. Adaptive thinkers are continuous learners, embracing opportunities for growth and development. They seek feedback, reflect on experiences, and actively pursue self-improvement. Learning agility enables individuals to adapt to new situations, acquire new competencies, and respond effectively to changing demands.

By integrating these components into their thinking processes, individuals can become more adaptable, resilient, and effective problem solvers in various contexts. Adaptive thinking helps individuals navigate uncertainty, find innovative solutions, and make informed decisions that consider diverse perspectives.

EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE THINKING

Adapting to a change in work responsibilities

Adaptive thinking

Rather than resisting or being overwhelmed by a sudden change in work responsibilities, an individual with adaptive thinking would approach the situation with flexibility and open-mindedness. They would assess the new tasks, identify potential opportunities for growth or learning, and develop a plan to effectively manage the change. They would embrace the challenge, seek support or guidance if needed, and focus on finding creative solutions to succeed in the new role.



Example: Navigating a complex problem

Adaptive thinking

When faced with a complex problem, an individual with adaptive thinking would approach it by breaking it down into smaller, manageable components. They would consider multiple perspectives, seek out diverse sources of information, and think critically to evaluate potential solutions. They would remain open to adjusting their approach based on new information, feedback, or unexpected obstacles. They would demonstrate creativity by exploring alternative ideas and thinking outside the box to find innovative solutions.

Example: Responding to a crisis situation

Adaptive thinking

In a crisis situation, an individual with adaptive thinking would remain calm and composed. They would quickly gather information, assess the situation objectively, and think critically to make informed decisions. They would adapt their plans and strategies based on changing circumstances and unexpected developments. They would demonstrate resilience by remaining focused on the task at hand, effectively prioritizing actions, and considering the potential consequences of their decisions.

Example: Embracing feedback and constructive criticism

Adaptive thinking

When receiving feedback or constructive criticism, an individual with adaptive thinking would welcome it as an opportunity for growth and improvement. They would listen actively, demonstrate openness to different perspectives, and avoid becoming defensive or dismissive. They would reflect on the feedback, evaluate its validity, and identify specific areas for development. They would use the feedback to adjust their approach,



seek additional support or resources if necessary, and actively work on enhancing their performance.

Example: Managing interpersonal conflicts

Adaptive thinking

In interpersonal conflicts, an individual with adaptive thinking would approach the situation with empathy and understanding. They would strive to see the situation from the other person's perspective, actively listen to their concerns, and engage in effective communication to resolve differences. They would be willing to compromise, seek common ground, and focus on finding mutually beneficial solutions. They would be open to feedback, acknowledge their own role in the conflict, and make necessary adjustments to improve the relationship.

These examples demonstrate how adaptive thinking involves being flexible, open-minded, and responsive to changing circumstances. Adaptive thinkers demonstrate critical thinking skills, creativity, resilience, and a willingness to learn and grow in various situations.

PRACTICAL EXERCISES TO HELP YOU DEVELOP ADAPTIVE THINKING

1. **Journaling:** Set aside regular time for reflective journaling. Write about challenging situations or problems you've encountered and how you approached them. Reflect on your initial thoughts, emotions, and actions, and then explore alternative perspectives or reframed thoughts that could have led to more adaptive responses. This exercise helps enhance self-awareness and promotes the habit of cognitive reframing.
2. **Scenario analysis:** Choose a complex or ambiguous scenario from a book, movie, or real-life situation. Analyze the scenario and identify different perspectives and potential solutions. Consider how you would adapt your thinking and decision-



making process in response to changing information or unexpected obstacles. This exercise helps develop critical thinking and flexibility in problem-solving.

3. **Mindfulness practice:** Engage in mindfulness exercises, such as meditation or deep breathing. This practice helps cultivate present-moment awareness and reduces automatic reactions. When faced with challenging situations, practice mindfulness to observe your thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without judgment. This allows you to respond more deliberately and adaptively rather than reacting impulsively.
4. **Seek out diverse viewpoints:** Actively expose yourself to different perspectives and opinions through books, articles, podcasts, or documentaries. Choose topics that challenge your existing beliefs or expand your understanding of unfamiliar subjects. Engage in critical thinking as you evaluate and compare different viewpoints. This exercise promotes open-mindedness and expands your cognitive flexibility.
5. **Problem-solving games and puzzles:** Engage in problem-solving games or puzzles that require adaptive thinking. This could include crosswords, Sudoku, strategy-based video games, or escape room puzzles. These activities encourage you to think creatively, consider alternative approaches, and adapt your strategies based on feedback and new information.
6. **Self-reflection prompts:** Create a list of self-reflection prompts related to adaptive thinking. Examples include "Describe a recent situation where you had to adjust your thinking to overcome a challenge" or "Identify a time when you successfully reframed a negative thought into a positive or constructive one." Regularly engage with these prompts to encourage self-reflection and promote the development of adaptive thinking skills.



7. **Visualize different outcomes:** Choose a specific situation or goal you are working towards. Visualize different potential outcomes and consider how you would adapt your plans and responses in each scenario. This exercise helps you anticipate challenges, plan for contingencies, and develop flexibility in your thinking and approach.

Remember, consistent practice is key to developing adaptive thinking skills. Incorporate these exercises into your routine and be patient with yourself as you cultivate these abilities. Over time, you will become more adept at adapting your thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making in various aspects of your life. Certainly! Here are some practical exercises that individuals can do by themselves to develop cognitive reframing skills:

SELF-REFLECTION PROMPTS RELATED TO ADAPTIVE THINKING

You can use these prompts for journaling or self-reflection sessions.

1. How open am I to new ideas and perspectives?
2. How well do I handle change and uncertainty?
3. Do I actively seek out different viewpoints and opinions?
4. How do I respond when faced with unexpected challenges?
5. What strategies do I use to adapt to new situations?
6. Do I embrace or resist feedback and constructive criticism?
7. How comfortable am I with taking calculated risks?
8. How do I approach problem-solving when confronted with unfamiliar problems?
9. Do I actively seek opportunities for learning and growth?
10. How do I handle setbacks and failures? Do I learn from them?
11. How well do I adjust my plans and goals when circumstances change?
12. Am I willing to let go of outdated beliefs and assumptions?
13. How do I manage my emotions in stressful or rapidly changing situations?
14. Do I actively seek feedback from others to improve my thinking and decision-making?
15. How do I balance the need for stability with the need for flexibility?
16. Am I willing to experiment with new approaches and ideas?
17. How do I stay informed about changes and developments in my field or industry?
18. Am I proactive in seeking new opportunities and challenges?
19. How do I incorporate diverse perspectives into my decision-making process?



20. Do I actively reflect on my thinking and decision-making processes to identify areas for improvement?

These prompts can help you explore and evaluate your adaptive thinking skills, allowing you to develop a greater awareness of your strengths and areas for growth.

Cognitive Reframing

Cognitive reframing, also known as cognitive restructuring, is a technique used to help individuals shift their thinking patterns and reinterpret situations in a more positive or realistic light. Cognitive reframing involves changing the way one perceives and interprets a situation. Service members learn to challenge negative or distorted thinking patterns and reframe them in a more positive or realistic light. By reframing their thoughts, you can cultivate a resilient mindset, maintain a broader perspective, and find constructive solutions to problems.

Through consistent practice and reinforcement, you can develop the skill of cognitive reframing. This skill enables them to approach challenges with a more constructive and resilient mindset, promoting better emotional well-being and problem-solving abilities.

EXAMPLES OF COGNITIVE REFRAMING

Situation	Original Thought	Reframed Thought	Observation
A challenging physical training exercise	"I can't do this. It's too difficult."	"This exercise is challenging, but it's an opportunity for me to push my limits and improve my physical fitness. I can take it one step at a time and give my best effort."	In this example, the individual reframes their initial negative thought of defeat into a more positive and motivating perspective that focuses on growth and personal improvement.
Receiving critical feedback on a project	"I'm a failure. I can never get anything right."	"This feedback highlights areas where I can improve. It's an	In this case, the individual reframes the feedback as an opportunity for



Situation	Original Thought	Reframed Thought	Observation
		opportunity for me to learn and grow. I will use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and produce better results in the future."	growth and emphasizes the potential for improvement rather than dwelling on feelings of failure.
Facing a difficult deployment or assignment	"This deployment is going to be unbearable. I'm going to be miserable the entire time."	"This deployment will be challenging, but it's an opportunity for me to develop resilience, strengthen bonds with my team, and gain valuable experiences. I can focus on the positive aspects and make the most out of this assignment."	Here, the individual reframes the deployment as an opportunity for personal growth, highlighting positive aspects and focusing on making the experience meaningful rather than dwelling on anticipated difficulties.
Dealing with a setback or failure	"I'm a complete failure. I'll never succeed."	"This setback is a temporary hurdle. It's an opportunity for me to learn from my mistakes, reassess my approach, and develop a stronger strategy for success. Failure is a part of the learning process."	In this example, the individual reframes the setback as a learning opportunity, emphasizing the potential for growth and highlighting the importance of resilience and perseverance.

These examples illustrate how cognitive reframing involves consciously shifting negative or unhelpful thoughts to more positive, realistic, and constructive perspectives. By



reframing thoughts, individuals can change their emotional responses, problem-solving approaches, and overall resilience in various challenging situations.

USING COGNITIVE REFRAMING

1. **Identify and reframe automatic thoughts:** Pay attention to your thoughts throughout the day, especially when you encounter challenging situations or negative emotions. Identify any automatic negative thoughts that arise, such as self-criticism or catastrophizing. Write down those thoughts and then consciously reframe them into more balanced or positive alternatives. Practice this exercise regularly to develop the habit of cognitive reframing.
2. **Evidence gathering:** When you catch yourself having a negative or unhelpful thought, challenge it by gathering evidence that supports or refutes the thought. Write down the evidence for and against your initial thought. This exercise helps you objectively evaluate the validity of your thoughts and allows you to develop more realistic and balanced perspectives.
3. **ABC technique:** Use the ABC technique, which stands for Activating Event, Beliefs, and Consequences. Identify an activating event that triggered a negative thought or emotion. Write down the beliefs or interpretations associated with that event, and then list the emotional and behavioral consequences of those beliefs. Finally, reframe the beliefs by generating alternative, more rational interpretations of the event. This exercise helps you break down and challenge the cognitive chain leading to negative outcomes.
4. **Best friend perspective:** Imagine a situation where a close friend is facing a similar challenge or negative thought. Reflect on how you would respond to your friend in a supportive and compassionate manner. Then, apply that same perspective and advice to yourself. This exercise helps you develop self-



compassion and promotes the ability to reframe negative thoughts with kindness and understanding.

5. **Alternative explanations:** Practice generating alternative explanations for events or behaviors that you initially interpret negatively. Write down at least three alternative explanations that are more rational or less self-critical. This exercise encourages you to consider different perspectives and helps you challenge and reframe negative thoughts.

6. **Visualize success:** When faced with a challenging situation or goal, visualize yourself succeeding and overcoming obstacles. Imagine the positive thoughts and emotions that would accompany that success. This exercise helps you reframe your mindset from a place of doubt or negativity to one of confidence and optimism.

Remember, cognitive reframing is a skill that develops with practice. Be patient and persistent in applying these exercises in your daily life. Over time, you will become more adept at recognizing and reframing negative thoughts, leading to a more resilient and positive mindset.

EXAMPLES OF COGNITIVE REFRAMING

Negative Thought	Cognitive Reframing
"I'm a failure."	"I may have experienced setbacks, but failure is not a reflection of my worth. Mistakes and challenges are opportunities for growth, and I can learn from them to improve and succeed."
"I'll never be good enough."	"I am constantly growing and developing. I have unique strengths and abilities that make me valuable. I will continue to learn, improve, and strive for progress rather than perfection."
"I always mess things up."	"Making mistakes is a normal part of life, and it doesn't define my abilities or worth. I can learn from my past mistakes and use them as stepping stones towards better outcomes in the future."



Negative Thought	Cognitive Reframing
"Nobody likes me."	"I have people in my life who care about me and appreciate my company. It's normal to encounter different opinions, but I focus on building meaningful connections and nurturing positive relationships."
"I'll never get over this."	"While it may feel difficult right now, I have overcome challenges in the past, and I have the strength to get through this. I can take it one step at a time, seek support if needed, and work towards healing and growth."
"I'm always the one to blame."	"It's important to take responsibility for my actions, but I also recognize that mistakes and conflicts involve multiple factors and individuals. I will focus on learning from the situation, making amends if necessary, and striving for positive change."
"I can't do it."	"While it may be challenging, I can break down the task into smaller, manageable steps. I have overcome difficulties in the past, and with effort, persistence, and seeking guidance if needed, I can achieve my goals."
"I'll never be happy."	"Happiness is a journey, and it comes from within. I can focus on cultivating gratitude, finding joy in small moments, and developing a positive mindset. By seeking and nurturing happiness in various aspects of my life, I can experience greater well-being."
"I'll never be successful."	"Success is subjective and can take different forms. I will define success based on my own values and aspirations. I will set achievable goals, work diligently, and celebrate my accomplishments, recognizing that success is a journey, not an end point."
"I always make bad decisions."	"I've made choices that didn't turn out as expected, but that doesn't mean I always make bad decisions. I can learn from my past experiences, gather information, weigh options, and make more informed choices in the future."



Remember, cognitive reframing is about challenging negative thoughts and finding more realistic and constructive perspectives. These reframing examples illustrate how to shift from self-criticism and hopelessness to self-compassion and a growth mindset.

Mental Flexibility

Becoming more mentally flexible involves developing the ability to adapt your thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors in response to changing circumstances.

Here are some strategies to help you become more mentally flexible:



1. **Practice self-awareness:** Cultivate self-awareness by paying attention to your thoughts, emotions, and reactions in different situations. Notice any rigid or inflexible patterns of thinking and identify areas where you struggle to adapt. This awareness is the first step toward making positive changes.
2. **Challenge your assumptions:** Identify your deeply held beliefs and assumptions about the world and yourself. Take the time to critically examine these beliefs and consider alternative perspectives. Challenge the rigidity of your thinking and be



open to the possibility that your beliefs may need adjustment based on new information or experiences.

3. **Embrace uncertainty:** Recognize that uncertainty is a natural part of life. Practice tolerating ambiguity and be willing to step outside your comfort zone. Embracing uncertainty allows you to approach new situations with curiosity rather than fear, fostering mental flexibility.
4. **Seek out new experiences:** Actively expose yourself to new experiences, perspectives, and challenges. Engage in activities that are outside of your usual routine or comfort zone. This exposure helps broaden your mindset, expand your thinking, and increase your adaptability.
5. **Practice cognitive reframing:** Reframe negative or limiting thoughts into more positive and flexible ones. Challenge fixed ways of thinking and consider alternative explanations or possibilities. This process of cognitive reframing allows you to shift your mindset and develop greater mental flexibility.
6. **Engage in creative activities:** Engaging in creative pursuits, such as art, writing, or brainstorming, encourages flexible thinking. These activities stimulate your imagination, encourage divergent thinking, and foster the ability to generate multiple ideas or solutions.
7. **Learn from failures:** Embrace failures and setbacks as learning opportunities. When faced with adversity, reflect on the experience and extract lessons that can help you adapt and grow. Emphasize the process of learning and improvement rather than dwelling on the outcome.
8. **Practice mindfulness:** Engaging in mindfulness exercises, such as meditation or deep breathing, helps cultivate present-moment awareness and non-judgmental



acceptance. Mindfulness allows you to observe your thoughts without attachment, helping you let go of rigid thinking patterns.

9. **Build problem-solving skills:** Develop your problem-solving skills by actively seeking solutions to challenges. Break down problems into smaller steps, consider various alternatives, and experiment with different approaches. Flexibility in problem-solving translates into greater mental flexibility overall.
10. **Seek diverse perspectives:** Actively seek out and engage with people who hold different viewpoints and backgrounds. Engage in respectful dialogue, actively listen, and consider alternative perspectives. Exposure to diverse perspectives helps broaden your thinking and promotes mental flexibility.

Remember that developing mental flexibility is a gradual process. Be patient with yourself and practice these strategies consistently over time. As you become more mentally flexible, you'll find it easier to adapt to change, navigate challenges, and approach life with a more open and resilient mindset.

Stress Management Techniques

Effective stress management techniques are crucial for building resilience. You will be taught various strategies to manage stress, such as deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness meditation, and stress-reducing physical activities like exercise. These techniques help regulate emotions, reduce anxiety, and improve overall well-being.

DEVELOPING A STRESS-REDUCING ROUTINE

Creating a stress-reducing routine involves incorporating activities and practices that promote relaxation and well-being into your daily life. Reflect on the following questions and use the space provided to outline a stress-reducing routine that works for you.

1. What are some activities or practices that help you relax and reduce stress?



2. How much time can you allocate each day for stress reduction activities?
3. What specific actions or behaviors will you include in your routine? (e.g., exercise, meditation, hobbies)
4. How will you prioritize and commit to implementing your stress-reducing routine?
5. What potential obstacles or challenges might you encounter, and how can you overcome them?
6. How will you track and assess the effectiveness of your routine?

Write Your Stress-Reducing Routine Here

BODY SCAN MEDITATION

The body scan meditation is a practice that involves systematically bringing your attention to different parts of your body, noticing sensations, and cultivating body awareness. Find a quiet and comfortable space to practice the body scan meditation using the instructions below. Use the space provided to note any physical sensations, emotions, or insights that arise during the practice.

1. Lie down on your back or sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed.
2. Begin by bringing your attention to your breath and taking a few deep, relaxing breaths.
3. Slowly scan your body from head to toe, noticing any areas of tension, discomfort, or relaxation.
4. As you focus on each body part, observe any physical sensations without judgment or the need to change them.
5. If you notice tension or discomfort, consciously relax those muscles and release any tension.
6. Spend a few moments on each body part, allowing yourself to fully experience the sensations present.
7. Once you have completed the scan, take a few moments to observe your body as a whole and notice any shifts or changes.



Your Observations and Insights Here

MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful breathing is a powerful technique for reducing stress and cultivating a sense of calm. It involves bringing your attention to the present moment by focusing on your breath. Take a few minutes each day to practice mindful breathing using the instructions below. Use the space provided to jot down any observations or insights that arise during the practice.

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Begin to pay attention to your breath without trying to control it.
4. Place one hand on your chest and one hand at the top of your stomach (where your diaphragm is) Focus on trying to move only your hand that is on your diaphragm when you are breathing- as when you practice diaphragmatic breathing, it allows more air to enter your lungs.
5. Notice the sensation of your breath entering and leaving your body.
6. Focus your attention on the rise and fall of your abdomen or the sensation of air passing through your nostrils.
7. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath without judgment.
8. Continue this practice for 5-10 minutes, gradually increasing the duration as you become more comfortable.

Write Your Observations and Insights Here

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that involves tensing and then releasing different muscle groups to induce relaxation. Use the space provided to practice progressive muscle relaxation by following the steps below.

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax.
3. Begin with your toes. Squeeze them tightly for a few seconds, then release.
4. Move to your calves. Contract the muscles, hold for a few seconds, and release.
5. Continue moving through each muscle group, progressively tensing and relaxing. (e.g., thighs, buttocks, abdomen, shoulders, arms, hands, etc.)
6. Pay attention to the sensations of tension and relaxation in each muscle group.
7. Once you have completed the entire sequence, take a few moments to notice the overall sense of relaxation in your body.

Observations and Insights



SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Building and nurturing a social support network is crucial for managing stress. Reflect on the following questions and use the space provided to assess the quality of your social connections and plan strategies to strengthen your support network.

1. Who are the people in your life that provide support and understanding during stressful times?
2. How often do you connect with these individuals?
3. Are there any relationships that need strengthening or nurturing?
4. What specific actions can you take to enhance your social support network? (e.g., scheduling regular catch-ups, seeking professional support)
5. How can you reciprocate and support others within your network?
6. What challenges or barriers might you encounter, and how can you overcome them?

Assessment of Social Support Network



Daily Stress Log Template:

Date: _____

Remember to fill out this daily stress log at the end of each day, taking a few moments to reflect on your stressors, coping strategies, and overall well-being. Use this log as a tool to track your stress levels, identify triggers, and assess the effectiveness of your coping mechanisms. Over time, this log will provide valuable insights into your stress patterns and help guide your stress management efforts.

	STRESSOR			COPING STRATEGY	
	Description	Intensity (1-10)	Triggered By....	Coping Strategy	Effectiveness (1-10)
Stressor 1					
Stressor 2					
Stressor 3					
Stressor 4					

Self-Reflection:

1. How did today's stressors affect your physical, mental, and emotional well-being?
2. Are there any patterns or recurring themes in your stressors?
3. What insights or lessons have you gained from today's experience.



Self-Care

SELF-CARE ROUTINE CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to create a self-care routine that promotes your well-being and allows you to prioritize self-care in your daily life. Customize it to fit your preferences and needs.

Physical Self Care	
Get sufficient sleep (7-9 hours) every night	
Engage in regular exercise or physical activity	
Eat a balanced and nutritious diet	
Stay hydrated by drinking enough water throughout the day	
Practice good personal hygiene habits	
Take breaks and stretch regularly, especially if you have a sedentary lifestyle	
Schedule regular health check-ups and appointments	
Emotional and Mental Self Care	
Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation (e.g., hobbies, reading, listening to music)	
Practice mindfulness or meditation to calm your mind and reduce stress	
Express your emotions through journaling or talking with a trusted friend or therapist	
Set healthy boundaries in your relationships and prioritize your emotional wellbeing	
Engage in positive self-talk and practice self-compassion	
Limit exposure to negative news or triggers that impact your mental wellbeing	
Engage in activities that stimulate your creativity and imagination	
Social Self Care	
Nurture relationships with friends, family, and loved ones	
Plan and engage in social activities that bring you joy and connection	
Seek support and reach out to others when you need it	
Practice active listening and meaningful communication with others	
Surround yourself with positive and supportive people	
Engage in acts of kindness and contribute to your community	
Spiritual Self Care	
Engage in activities that align with your values and beliefs	
Spend time in nature and appreciate its beauty	
Practice meditation, prayer, or reflection to connect with your inner self	
Seek inspiration from books, podcasts, or spiritual teachings	
Engage in activities that promote gratitude and a sense of purpose	
Explore your spirituality and engage in rituals or practices that bring you peace	
Pampering and Relaxation	
Take warm baths or showers with soothing products	
Indulge in a spa day or pamper yourself with selfcare treatments	
Set aside time for relaxation activities such as reading, taking walks, or listening to calming music	
Treat yourself to a massage or other therapeutic bodywork	



Engage in hobbies or activities that help you unwind and recharge	
Create a cozy and inviting space at home where you can relax	

CHECKLIST: ASSESSING HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY HABITS

For each habit listed below, mark whether it is a healthy or unhealthy habit for you personally. Be honest with yourself and consider the impact of each habit on your overall well-being.

Physical Health:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Regular exercise		
- Sufficient sleep (7-9 hours per night)		
- Balanced and nutritious diet		
- Drinking enough water		
- Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption		
- Avoiding smoking or tobacco use		
- Regular medical check-ups		
Mental and Emotional Health:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Engaging in stress-reducing activities (e.g., mindfulness, meditation, hobbies)		
- Seeking support from friends, family, or professionals when needed		
- Setting and prioritizing realistic goals		
- Maintaining a positive mindset		
- Practicing self-care and self-compassion		
- Managing time effectively		
- Practicing relaxation techniques		
Social Health:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Maintaining supportive and positive relationships		
- Engaging in social activities and connecting with others		
- Communicating effectively and assertively		
- Respecting personal boundaries and the boundaries of others		
- Balancing time spent alone and time spent with others		
- Participating in community or volunteer activities		
Productivity and Time Management:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Prioritizing tasks and setting clear goals		
- Avoiding procrastination		
- Managing and minimizing distractions		
- Setting healthy work-life boundaries		



- Taking breaks and practicing self-care during work/study sessions		
- Seeking help or delegating tasks when necessary		
Screen Time and Digital Habits:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Limiting excessive screen time		
- Practicing healthy online boundaries		
- Avoiding excessive social media usage or comparing oneself to others		
- Balancing screen time with offline activities and face-to-face interactions		
- Using technology for productive purposes and personal growth		
Personal Hygiene:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Maintaining regular personal hygiene practices (e.g., showering, brushing teeth)		
- Washing hands regularly		
- Taking care of hair, nails, and skin		
- Wearing clean and appropriate clothing		
Financial Habits:	I Do This	I Don't Do This
- Budgeting and managing finances effectively		
- Saving money regularly		
- Avoiding excessive and impulsive spending		
- Paying bills on time		
- Planning and setting financial goals		

After assessing each habit, reflect on your checklist and identify areas where you can improve your habits for better overall health and well-being. Use this self-assessment as a starting point to make positive changes in your lifestyle and create healthy habits that support your well-being.



SELF-CARE CHECKLIST TEMPLATE

PHYSICAL		M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1								
2								
3								
4								
MENTAL		M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1								
2								
3								
4								
EMOTIONAL		M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1								
2								
3								
4								
SPIRITUAL		M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1								
2								
3								
4								



Goal setting

Setting clear and achievable goals is an important aspect of resilience. It helps individuals maintain focus, motivation, and a sense of purpose. Set both short-term and long-term goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART goals). By breaking down larger objectives into smaller, manageable tasks, you can track your progress and maintain a sense of accomplishment.

GOAL IDENTIFICATION TEMPLATE

What do I want to achieve?	How will I do this?	By when this must be done?	What will be the proof that I have achieved this goal?

GOAL ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Area	Next 30 days	Next 60 days	Next 90 days
Health			
Learning & Growth			
Professional			
Relationships			
Stress management			



Daily Resilience Checklist

Here's a checklist of daily activities that can help someone work on becoming more resilient:

1. **Practice gratitude:** Start or end your day by listing three things you are grateful for. This helps shift your focus to the positive aspects of your life, fostering resilience.
2. **Engage in self-reflection:** Take a few moments to reflect on your thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Consider what went well and what you can learn from challenges or setbacks.
3. **Set realistic goals:** Establish achievable goals for the day that align with your long-term aspirations. Break them down into smaller, manageable tasks to build momentum and confidence.
4. **Cultivate self-compassion:** Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, particularly during difficult times. Practice self-compassion by speaking to yourself as you would to a supportive friend.
5. **Practice mindfulness:** Engage in mindfulness exercises, such as deep breathing or meditation, to stay present and centered. This helps reduce stress and enhances your ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
6. **Challenge negative thoughts:** Recognize negative thoughts and actively challenge them with more realistic and positive alternatives. Reframe negative self-talk into more empowering and constructive perspectives.
7. **Seek social support:** Connect with supportive individuals who can offer encouragement, advice, or simply lend an empathetic ear. Engaging in meaningful relationships helps build resilience.
8. **Engage in physical activity:** Incorporate regular physical exercise into your routine. Physical activity releases endorphins, reduces stress, and boosts overall well-being, enhancing your resilience.
9. **Learn something new:** Engage in continuous learning and personal growth. Take time to read a book, listen to a podcast, or explore a subject of interest. Embracing new knowledge fosters adaptability and resilience.



10. **Celebrate small victories:** Acknowledge and celebrate even the smallest accomplishments throughout the day. This cultivates a positive mindset and reinforces your ability to overcome challenges.
11. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle:** Prioritize healthy habits such as balanced nutrition, sufficient sleep, and stress management. Taking care of your physical and mental well-being enhances your resilience.
12. **Practice problem-solving:** Approach challenges as opportunities for growth. Break down problems into manageable steps, brainstorm potential solutions, and take action to address them effectively.
13. **Embrace flexibility:** Embrace change and uncertainty as natural parts of life. Be open to adapting your plans and approaches when necessary, fostering resilience in the face of unexpected circumstances.
14. **Express gratitude:** Take time to express appreciation and gratitude to others. It strengthens relationships, builds social support, and enhances overall well-being.
15. **Engage in hobbies and relaxation:** Make time for activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Engaging in hobbies helps reduce stress and provides an outlet for self-expression and rejuvenation.

Remember, building resilience is a continuous process. Use this checklist as a guide to incorporate these activities into your daily routine and adjust them to fit your unique circumstances. Over time, you will develop greater resilience and the ability to navigate challenges with strength and adaptability.

List of South African Contact Numbers for Help with Stress and Anxiety

Adcock Ingram Depression & Anxiety Helpline	0800 70 80 90
Akeso Psychiatric Response Unit 24 Hour	0861 435 787
Cape Mental Health Society	(021) 447 9040
Cipla Mental Health Helpline	0800 456 789
Dr Reddy's Mental Health Helpline	0800 21 22 23
Healthcare Workers Care Network Helpline	0800 21 21 21
LifeLine	0861 322 322
South Africa Suicide Crisis Helpline	0800 12 13 14
South African Depression & Anxiety Group	011 234 4837
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0800 567 567





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