



Emotional Resilience during a Health Crisis

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines individual resilience as having the ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity. (2015). Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives. In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress. (APA.2019). However, research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary; it is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

There is not a single accepted set of components of resilience, however, a guide can be these characteristics and contributing factors:

- **Sense of control** - believing that the actions one takes will affect the outcome of an event rather than blaming external causes
- **Optimism** - hopefulness and confidence about the future
- **Altruism** - selfless concern for the well-being of others through words and actions
- **Moral compass** - having an internalized set of values and objectives that guide one's ethical behavior and decision-making:
- **Spirituality** - a sense of finding meaning and purpose in something outside oneself
- **Social support** - those with strong social support networks are better equipped to bounce back from difficulties that are experienced
- **Problem-solving skills** - able to look at a problem and envision a successful solution
- **Courage to face fears** - being willing to leave their comfort zone and confront their challenges and fears
- **Meaning or purpose** - meaning is what is held as significant; purpose is an aim or goal
- **Survivor** - avoiding thinking like a victim
- **Able to ask for help** - finding and utilizing resources for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs
- **Tenacity** - being able to persevere
- **Composure** - having the ability to identify, understand, and act on one's own emotions and physical signs of stress