

## RESILIENCE

Resilience is an important part of managing life with chronic pain is facing adversity and finding a way through. Resilience is not automatic but it can be learned. It grows as we overcome difficult challenges and can actually leave us with more strength than we started with.

Resilience is the process of adapting when faced with adversity, trauma, threats or significant sources of stress. Recognizing how or when you've already done this in life is a very good way to build more resilience and experience post-traumatic growth. Below are some tips that can help with building resilience.

### FOCUS ON THE UPSIDE

- Try reframing difficult experiences so the focus is on any positive aspects regardless of how negative the experience feels.

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- Learn from experience. People with chronic conditions are often more resilient than they give themselves credit for.
- Try to think about whether you've dealt with a challenge in the past that is similar to what you're facing now.

### BOOST YOUR BLISS

- Taking time out from your day gives your system space to build up its natural resilience levels and also allows you to sit back and see the bigger picture in your situation.
- A change in perspective and seeing the big picture are both strong tools for being resilient.

### USE YOUR PAIN SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Everything you do to manage your pain, including movement, self-care, good nutrition, relaxation and mood regulation, contributes to resilience.

### DON'T GO AT IT ALONE

- Support systems are key to resilience.
- Knowing when you're out of steam and asking for support so you can keep going is a sign of adaptability and strength.

## FIND YOUR OWN MEANING

- People who have a reason for getting through difficult times find it easier to keep going.
- People who show signs of post-traumatic growth report changes in five areas:
  - Appreciation of life
  - Relationships with others
  - New possibilities in life
  - Personal strength
  - Spiritual change
- Take a minute to imagine how it might feel or what your life might look like if what you're coping with right now resulted in you having more strength in future.

## GRATITUDE: IT CAN CHANGE YOUR BRAIN

- Consider writing a gratitude letter each week to a different person detailing what you are grateful to them for.
- Keep a gratitude journal where you privately write down five things you are grateful for at the beginning or end of each day.
- When you feel anxious or distressed, stop and take a minute to think of three things you are grateful for and list them in your mind while visualizing each one.

## RESOURCES

- <https://www.liveplanbc.ca/pain-education/emotional-well-being/the-psychology-of-resilience-and-the-associations-with-chronic-pain>
- <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/building-resilience>
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
- [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five\\_science\\_backed\\_strategies\\_to\\_build\\_resilience](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_to_build_resilience)