



Using your resilience



In difficult times we can use our inner resilience to find the strength we need to cope and deal with things as best we can. Most people find they are more resilient than they expect.

Being resilient does not mean you and your whānau won't experience stress, trauma, or grief. It means drawing on the inner strengths, skills and attitudes that can help you cope and be able to move forward.

The good news is that all of us – including children and young people – can build up our resilience. This is true even if you're feeling overwhelmed by things right now.

“At first I didn't think we could cope but now, looking back, we did get through it okay. We had to mostly go one moment or one day at a time, but we found more strength in us than we knew was there.”

Lily

10 ways for you and your whānau to use resilience



I. Connect with others

When we regularly spend time with others we can feel more supported and less alone. Our mental health and wellbeing improves. Connecting with others may include having a coffee with

a friend, sharing a meal with family, stopping to chat with your neighbour, calling someone you trust, or going along to a social event. Everyone needs time alone sometimes but try not to isolate yourself. Keep connected. You can draw strength from having others to lean on.

We can also benefit from others' kindness and help sometimes. It's okay to ask for support when you need it. You may find accepting others' help is hard, but it can be a game changer. Remember that the way a family, whānau, or community pulls together is by being there for each other. This is resilience in action.

You can be connected with a Victim Support Worker whenever you want some support or need to talk. Call us on 0800 842 846 (24/7).

Who can you connect with for support?

- family whānau good friends neighbours
- workmates team mates
- cultural or faith community
- hobby or interest friends
- doctor nurse other health providers
- Victim Support Worker (0800 842 846)
- counsellor social worker
- school (if you have children)
- budget advisor food bank
- community support agencies
- helplines, such as Lifeline, Youthline or 1737

*Waiho i te toipoto,
kaua i te toiroa
Let us keep close
together, not far apart*

CONTACT

Victim Support

Get Help: 0800 VICTIM (0800 842 846)
enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz
victimsupport.org.nz





2. Believe in yourself

How we think about and treat ourselves affects how we cope with things. Believing that you matter and have value gives you a sense of self-worth. A positive view of

yourself, and of your family and whānau, helps you realise that you are capable. Believing in yourself gives you confidence.

If how you see and talk to yourself is being affected negatively by what's happened to you, use some positive self-talk. It can help remind you that you have value and worth. It can also help reduce stress and bring out the best in you.

Here are some examples of positive self-talk you could use...

- *I can get through this, one day at a time.*
- *It's incredibly difficult right now, but I'll do the best I can today.*
- *I/we deserve support and it's okay to ask for some help.*
- *This is taking courage and I'm proud of myself for trying so hard.*

“Talk to yourself like you would to someone you love.”
Brené Brown



“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.”
Bob Marley

3. Use your natural strengths

We all have different natural strengths, sometimes without realising we have them. These are the qualities, attitudes, skills, and abilities that come easily to us.

It could be that you're a really good listener, or can organise things well, or you have a great sense of humour. You might be good at fixing things, cooking meals, helping others, being positive, or adapting well to change. Maybe you're good at seeing things from a different perspective, problem solving, or finding help when it's needed. Everyone's different. (If you're not sure what your natural strengths might be, ask someone who knows you well.)

Resilient people make the most of their natural strengths. They may also be able to help others, who have different strengths. Using your resilience whenever you can, will help you to feel more capable, confident, and better able to copy with challenges.





4. Learn helpful life skills

Learning some key skills can make our lives more manageable and our challenges a little easier to cope with. These are skills that help us in our everyday lives and in tough situations, like learning how to make decisions, budget our money, or look after ourselves.

We can learn life skills in different ways – from watching others, being taught, reading about them, or just giving them a go. The more we practise and use them, the better we get at them.

“Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will.”

Vernon Howard

All our life skills are resilience skills. They can be at the ready when we need them most. And we can keep improving them and learning more of them throughout our lives.

Key life skills include...

- Communicating well with others
- Building good relationships
- Showing empathy & respect
- Managing strong emotions
- Dealing with disagreements
- Analysing a situation
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Setting goals, planning the steps
- Managing money well
- Organising your time
- Learning new knowledge
- Looking after ourselves well
- Keeping ourselves safe
- Asking for help when it's needed



5. Be as flexible as you can

None of us can control everything that happens to us. Being flexible means understanding that things can change unexpectedly and adapting and adjusting to new situations.

Being flexible is like being a tree that can bend in the wind when storms come. It is a very helpful skill. It might mean feeling out of our comfort zone at times, but that's okay. Be open to doing things in a new way if the way you've done things before is no longer possible. Find a 'new normal' that works in your new situation.

“Adaptability cushions the impact of change or disappointment.”

Marvin J. Ashton





6. Think creatively

Thinking creatively means looking at a problem in a new way, from another angle. Creative thinkers stop and ask themselves “How can I think about this differently?”

This helps them to see around a problem and get closer to the best solution.

People who think creatively don’t just think about the worst-case scenario. They will think about all the possible outcomes or solutions available. This often helps them to solve difficult issues in ways others might not have thought of.

Thinking creatively can include being willing to trial ideas and experiment with different ways of doing things. If a creative thinker makes a mistake, it’ll be an opportunity to learn what not to do next time.

Creative thinking can help you to build confidence in your ability to face your challenges. Interestingly, research tells us it also builds up positive emotions.

Creative thinkers

- Ask questions
- Are curious
- Give something new a go
- Learn from any mistakes they make

“Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.”

Edward de Bono

“Laughing is a powerful weapon to help you punch back at adversity.”

Amy Dee



7. Use your sense of humour



Seeing the funny side of things and laughing, even in the middle of difficult times, doesn’t mean you’re ignoring your difficulties. It means you’re finding a way to cope with them.

A good sense of humour can help us put things into perspective. It also helps us release stress and tension. Laughter naturally unwinds and relaxes. It also strengthens our body’s immune system, increases our energy levels, and decreases pain.

Humour can help others around us to feel more positive too, even if it’s just for a few minutes. It also helps us make good connections with people.

Even in the harshest of life situations, resilient people say their sense of humour helped them get through. Look out for what seems funny to you. Regularly spend time with people who make you smile or laugh. Maybe watch a funny movie or read a funny book. Laughter is, as they say, the best medicine.





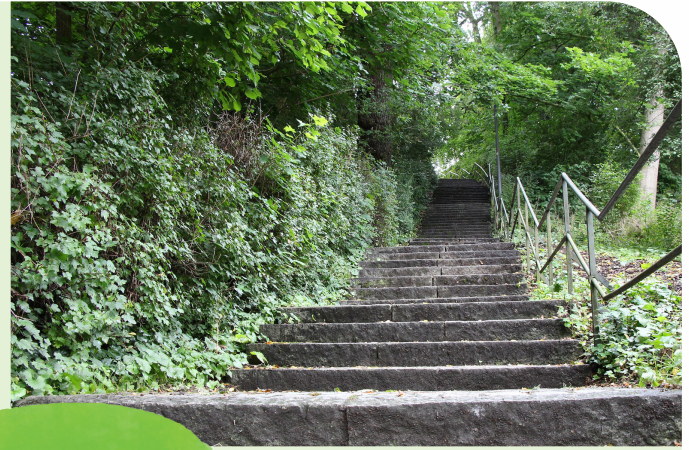
8. Practice perseverance

Persevering means not giving up on something when you experience frustrations, discouragement, delays, or setbacks.

Persevering isn't always easy. The effort of 'keeping on keeping on' can be exhausting at times. Taking things step-by-step, or day-by-day, helps to make persevering more possible.

Keep what you're aiming for in your mind. Perhaps set some small goals to work towards and focus on those. Use positive self-talk. (See some examples earlier in *Believe in yourself*.)

Make sure you get enough rest and sleep – after taking a break we often find we have more energy to put into things. If sleeping is difficult for you right now, talk with your doctor.



*O le upega tautau,
'ae fagota.*

*If at first you don't
succeed try, try
and try again.*

Use the support of others if you're finding it hard to get any breaks in a day. Everyone does better with help and ongoing encouragement from people they trust. (See examples of people who can support you in *Connect with others*.)



9. Stay positive

Resilient people choose to keep as positive as possible in tough situations. Having a positive attitude means we can look forward with hope. It doesn't mean we deny our difficulties, but we hope for the best, do what we can, and believe

we will get through this difficult time. Staying positive makes our challenges seem a little easier to manage. It can help encourage others around us too.

If you find being positive is too hard or you're feeling really low, you can call the free 1737 helpline 24/7 to speak to a counsellor. Or call 0800 842 846 to be connected with a Victim Support Worker who can support you.

See this link for other NZ helpline options:
<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines>

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along".

Eleanor Roosevelt

To think positively ...

- Look out for the good things you feel grateful for – even small things. Focusing regularly on gratitude helps our brains to start to automatically scan for positives instead of negatives.
- Use positive self-talk. Talk to yourself like you would to someone you really care about.
- Challenge your negative thoughts – catch them when they turn up, then try seeing them from a more positive perspective.
- Decide that when mistakes or setbacks happen, you will learn something from them and move on.
- Spend more time with hopeful and positive people.
- Draw on inspiring and reassuring beliefs you have.
- Plan things to look forward to that will raise your spirits and lift your wairua.





10. Look after yourself

How well you take care of yourself will affect how well you cope with difficult situations. Taking some everyday self-care actions helps you to be as resilient and ready as possible to deal with challenges.

However, in stressed times, or when you're looking after others, it's easy to forget how important looking after yourself is. Think of some choices you can make through the day to look after your own needs. What positive actions helped you to cope in difficult times before? Do those things. Be kind to yourself.

Looking after yourself isn't selfish. It's wise to keep as well and healthy as we can, both physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally.

Encourage your family, whānau, and friends to look after themselves too. Self-care is a resilient choice.

If you're struggling or feeling overwhelmed with your situation, connect with others for support. (See *Connect with others*, earlier.) If you have ongoing issues with sleeplessness, anxiety, flashbacks, depression, or other concerning matters, visit your doctor, or speak with a counsellor. They can support you to get through this time.

To look after yourself ...

- Eat healthy food, regularly.
- Drink water, regularly.
- Keep up your routines as much as possible.
- Get good rest and sleep, as best you can.
- Make time to relax and unwind – even for a few minutes.
- Get some exercise – go for a walk.
- Take some slow, deep breaths.
- Spend time with people you like being with, or with a pet.
- Talk with someone you trust.
- Give yourself permission to laugh and have fun.
- Express how you're feeling through music, writing things down, art, or creating something.
- Spend time outside, be close to nature.
- Draw on cultural or spiritual beliefs you have.
- If keeping busy helps you, find some useful tasks to do.
- See a doctor if you're unwell, extremely anxious, unable to cope, or have difficulty sleeping or regular flashbacks.
- Accept caring offers from others if that would help.
- Do things you enjoy – even small things.
- Notice the good things.

“Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths.”

Etty Hillesum

*Each day you have more choices than you realise.
Choose to use your resilience and to keep building up
resilience attitudes and skills.*



“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.”
Helen Keller

