



Staying Resilient Through Tough Economic Times

By Public Relations Staff

March 26, 2009 – As job losses soar and the media continues to report on falling stock prices and rising foreclosures, many people may react to the economic climate with a flood of strong emotions and a sense of uncertainty. Yet, people generally adapt well over time to life-changing situations and stressful conditions.

What helps some people “bounce back” while others continue to feel overwhelmed? Resilience, the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, which is vital in these high-stress times. Resilience is a learned skill that can help carry you through the current crisis as well as future relationship, family, or work problems you may encounter.

The current economic situation is a major stressor for eight out of ten Americans, according to a 2008 survey by the American Psychological Association (APA). With constant reminders from newspapers, television and the internet, it's hard to avoid the doom and gloom narrative about the economy. It's normal to feel overwhelmed when you seem to be surrounded by bad news that impacts your family situation or that you fear may do so in the future. However, you can handle stress in positive ways and implement tactics to help you better manage and develop your resilience. Seeing this difficult situation in a positive light can help you build and utilize your resilience.

APA offers the following tips to help foster your resilience in these tough economic times:

Accept that change is a part of life – You may have to adjust your goals, or make changes to your lifestyle as a result of the economic crisis. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Make connections – Good relationships with close family members, friends, or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with re-claiming hope.

Keep things in perspective – Try to avoid the Chicken Little attitude that the sky is falling. Remember the good things you have in your life and realize that this situation will pass. Visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear, will help you craft a hopeful outlook and reduce your everyday stressors.

Look for the opportunities - People often learn something about themselves when going through a difficult situation such as the current economic downturn. Use crisis as a chance to grow professionally or personally. Look into groups in your community or on the Internet that can help foster your interests and expand your opportunities to put your top skills to good use.



Be mindful of the good things in your life - Resilient people count their blessings. You might let the people in your life know what they mean to you by writing them a gratitude letter. Or, you might spend just five or ten minutes a day reflecting on one aspect of your life that you are grateful for. Such simple techniques can be powerful in their impact.

Maintain a hopeful outlook – No one can reverse what has happened. But by being resilient, you can change how you interpret and respond to events. Try looking beyond the bad news and into the future, where circumstances may be a little better and where you can take steps toward improving the situation.

Talk to a psychologist - Sometimes dealing with stress by yourself can be overwhelming and frightening. If you continue to feel overwhelmed, you may want to talk with a psychologist who can assist you in managing your stressors and addressing the emotions behind your concerns.

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Tip sheets and articles are available to download and distribute at apahelpcenter.org.

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