



Staff Resiliency Toolkit

A Group Approach to Staff Resiliency

In this Kit

What is Resiliency?

Understand how resiliency is important in our work lives.

What Does the Research Have to Say?

See the connections between mental health and resiliency.

Enhancing Group Resiliency

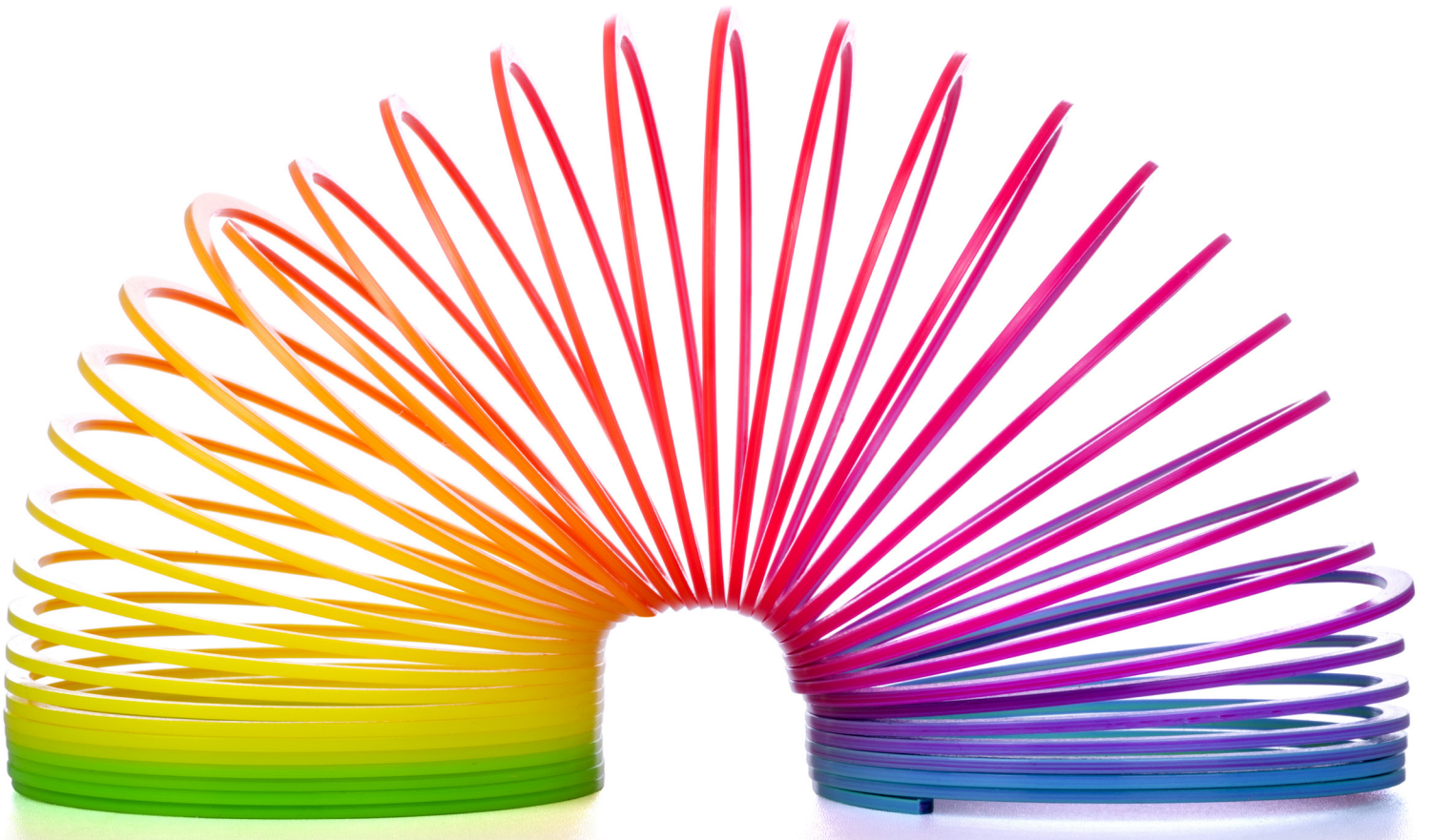
Learn how to build a solid model of resiliency for personal, team, and organizational use.

10 Tips for Enhancing Group Resiliency

See our guide to strengthening a group's resiliency in 10 easy steps.

12 Steps for Managing a Wellness Program

Find out what a wellness program is and how to build a basic framework.





What is resiliency?

The maintenance of high levels of positive feelings and well-being in the face of significant adversity.¹

Why is resilience important?

Resilience is fuel. It is tapped at the beginning (if a vision is to keep going) and along the way (to keep going.) Without resilience, a person or group will stop working toward their vision.²

What's the difference between resilience and recovery?

Resilience is about the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium—to bounce back and return to wellness after a challenging event.

Recovery is about returning to pre-event levels of wellness after normal functioning has temporarily given way to symptoms for a period of time due to a challenging event.³

Resilience is a key
component of **HOPE!**

What does research have to say?

There is interesting and provocative news from the world of research on resilience. Early, ground-breaking studies of resilience were with children of persons with serious mental illness and showed us it is more powerful to focus on *how* to survive than it is to focus on reducing risk. What does this mean? Stress happens, but the less you fight against stress the more you can transform it to work for you.

The results of the research helped set the stage for a move away from a focus on “risk factors” to a focus on survival and adaptation.^{3,4} Much of this research resulted in recommendations about how individuals can take responsibility to enhance their resilience. Research also suggests how you **think** and **act** can transform your experience of stress.⁵

When you choose to see your stress response as helpful—leading to growth, learning, and creativity—your body experiences the stress as less challenging.⁶

Resiliency is linked to:

Optimism

Realistic facing down of reality

Having supportive social supports

Good self-care

Making and carrying out realistic plans

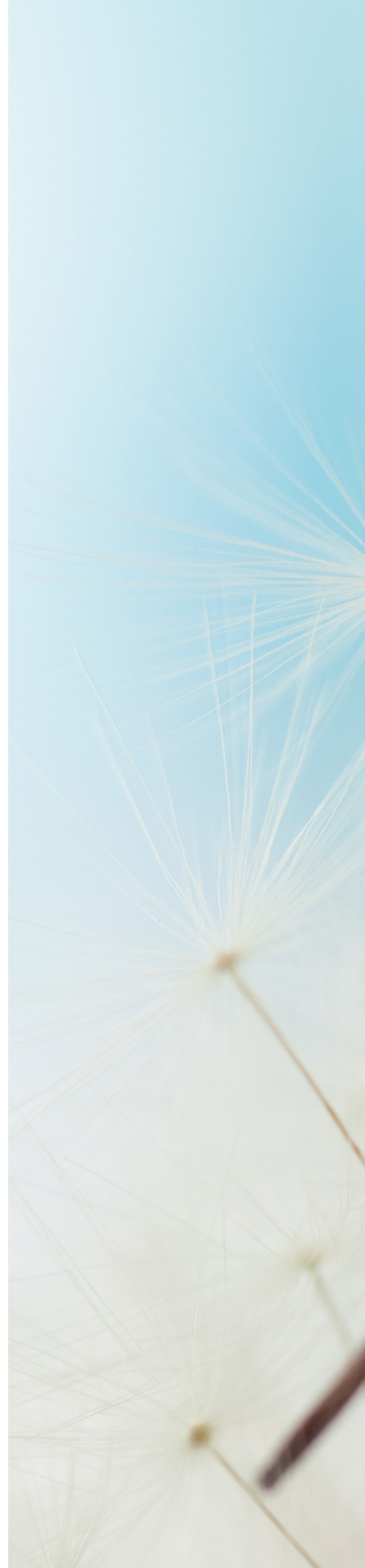
Having a positive view of yourself

Being able to manage strong feelings
and impulses

Giving to others⁷⁻¹⁰

Online Tools for You

1. [“How to Make Stress Your Friend,”](#) by Kelly McGonigal | TED talk
2. [“Hope at Work: Creating Positive, Resilient Organizations,”](#) by Bruce Anderson | Online Audio





Enhancing Group Resiliency

We all know that good self-care is essential for those who work in behavioral health! And many people feel they just never do “enough” and then feel bad about it.¹¹

Bruce Anderson [promotes the idea of an organizational approach to resiliency](#)—one that shifts some of the responsibility to work on wellness from the individual to the larger “group.” This approach encourages the “group” to hold the vision and process of staying resilient. When the organization provides a structure for wellness and resiliency activities and they are experienced as a “given,” staff feel more support and less guilt and shame.¹²

What might this look like? Here are three main components:

3 Steps for Building Personal and Group Resiliency:

1. Doing personal AND organizational assessments of hope
2. Create rituals in four different areas:
 - a. Celebrating and Grieving** (honoring significant passages). For example: recognize a success of a client, employee, or group, with a special event.
 - b. Community Engagement** (clarifying purpose, roles, responsibilities). For example: create a vision statement for your program or department.
 - c. Personal Identity** (Individuals are welcomed for who they are). For example: hold an event for staff to “show off” talents and gifts.
 - d. Learning** (Increased knowledge and skill are used to carry out the program’s purpose). For example: create a staff mentor program.
3. Tell stories in a safe, contained environment that help the storytellers find meaning to their work. Why? **Bruce Anderson** states that one source of individual hopelessness in organizations is the experience of “story-stacking”—hearing story after story of tragedy, loss, suffering, and trauma. He suggests that having a safe, contained place and time to share stories and discover meaning in them has healing results, which build resilience. When we feel increased resilience, we feel more hopeful.¹³⁻¹⁵

10 Tips for Enhancing Group Resiliency

1. Have a special event on a regular basis to get to know family members of clients. Listen to their appreciation for the work you do.
2. A monthly potluck for staff. How about a pot-luck for two departments that don't know each other well?
3. Encourage staff to show off a bit by having rotating employees present at a program-wide staff meeting: "What I Really Do Here."
4. Tell an inspired history of the organization by asking a long-term employee to give new hires a welcome talk from the perspective of history.
5. Develop and carry out a thoughtful, respectful, conflict resolution process by having a trusted leader learn and use a [mediation model of conflict resolution](#).
6. Gather thought-leaders from all departments to develop new ideas by having an occasional brain-storming session. Then, pick one or two to develop.
7. Coach employees to create priority lists of workload and tasks to be done one-at-a-time. Avoid multi-tasking!
8. Create wellness activity groups. Organize T'ai Chi at lunchtime, or yoga on the patio.
9. Invite guest speakers or graduates from the program who have inspiring messages.
10. Take field trips to other programs so employees can learn about other programs unfamiliar to them.





What is a Wellness Program?

Wellness Programs are usually designed by a workplace to help staff achieve a state of well-being by providing services focused on the promotion or maintenance of good health rather than the treatment of symptoms. Wellness activities often target physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development.

12 Steps for Managing a Wellness Program

1. Build strong management support for wellness efforts.
2. Assess employees' wellness needs.
3. Decide on the scope of your work site wellness program.
4. Build a strong program infrastructure for the wellness program.
5. Build an effective administrative structure for the wellness program.
6. Design a communications and promotion effort.
7. Design an effective health management process.
8. Design an effective group activities component.
9. Create a supportive environment.
10. Utilize a Health Risk Assessment (HRA).
11. Plan basic on-site components.
12. Perform periodic evaluations.¹⁶⁻¹⁹

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