GROWING THROUGH ADVERSITY

ACTIVITIES TO BOOST RESILIENCE
Stress happens. Unfortunately, it's unavoidable. And some amount of stress is actually healthy. But one of the best ways to navigate stress is to strengthen our individual resilience. This gives us the flexibility to bounce back quicker or easier when things get tough. The following pages contain a variety of activities designed to boost your resilience.

Email mcwell@nd.edu with any questions.
Gratitude is an incredibly powerful practice that can shift our mindsets and support our well-being. Put this sheet in a place you see regularly and add to it at least one time per day for the next few weeks. Notice how you feel before and after focusing on gratitude.

Content adapted from: thewellnesssociety.org
While setting goals can be a helpful way to move forward, achieving those goals isn't always easy, direct, or quick. Celebrating the progress you've made toward those goals is a great way to build resilience, however. Take a moment to celebrate and appreciate the things you've done to work toward your goals.
Pause to appreciate all the gifts, talents, and strengths you possess by writing them in the boxes below. These unique and valuable aspects of yourself are a source of resilience.
Being aware of the activities, people, and places that drain you of energy or give you energy can be a useful starting point in caring for your well-being and supporting your resilience.

**ENERGY TANK**

**WHAT FILLS YOU UP?**

Content adapted from: thewellnesssociety.org
Contrary to popular belief, creativity is actually a learned skill that can be strengthened. Engaging in creative activities is a great way to support your well-being and resilience. Try one of the activities below, or make up your own.

- be curious
- notice patterns around you
- do nothing
- play chess
- go for a walk
- listen to, learn, or play music
- draw or doodle
- journal
- meditate
- take photos

Content adapted from: thewellnesssociety.org
One way to build resilience is to cultivate a sense of optimism. It’s natural for our brains to want to focus on things that didn’t go the way we wanted or expected them to, but with a little training, we can shift into a more optimistic mindset. Take a moment to reflect on a time or two when a "door" closed on you as well as what door opened as a result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOOR THAT CLOSED</th>
<th>NEW DOOR THAT OPENED</th>
<th>REFLECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Was it easy or hard to see the new door that opened?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What does the closed door represent now?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What prevented you from seeing the new open door?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It's easy to be overwhelmed by "what if?" worries and thoughts. Shifting our attention to what we can control is one way to quiet those thoughts and build resilience. Use the circle below to map out what is - and is not - within your control.
Often, our thoughts are the source of our stress and anxiety. Here are two techniques to challenge those worrisome and stressful thoughts when they arise.

**CHALLENGE YOUR THOUGHTS**

**WHAT WE CAN CONTROL**

**T**RUE?
Is this thought true? What are facts or opinions?

**H**ELEFUL?
Is paying attention to this thought helpful or useful?

**I**NSPIRING?
Does this thought inspire me? Or have another effect?

**N**ECESSARY?
Is it important to focus on this? Is it necessary to act?

**K**IND?
Is this a kind thought? What might be a kinder thought?

**REFLECT:** What did you notice with this activity?

Content adapted from: thewellnesssociety.org
Writing can be a grounding practice that allows you to process and understand thoughts and experiences. Below are some journaling prompts to get you started.

**Write it down**

- Write down 3-5 things you're grateful for.
- Write a letter to yourself 5 years ago.
- Write about how you're feeling right now.
- Write a love letter to someone important to you.
- Write about someone you admire and why.
- Write down a favorite prayer or passage and reflect on it.
- Write down 3-5 things you're proud of.
- Write a letter to yourself 5 years from now.

Content adapted from: thewellnesssociety.org
Take a moment to practice a meditation that boosts a sense of connectedness and decreases loneliness.

May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you be peaceful.
May you be safe.

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes if it feels right to you.
2. Focus on these loving kindness messages.
3. Imagine receiving these messages from those who love you.
4. Imagine sending these messages to people you love.
5. Imagine sending these messages to people who are neutral.
6. Imagine sending these messages to all living beings.
SELF COMPASSION
OFFER KINDNESS TO YOURSELF

This 5 minute exercise can quiet the critical voice in your mind and boost your resilience.

Response to Loved One

Remember a time when a loved one was suffering or struggling. What did you say to that person? What tone of voice did you use?

Response to Self

Think about a time when you were suffering or struggling. What did you say to yourself? What tone of voice did you use?

Gratitude Practice

Your critical voice is the negative narrative that likely was apparent in the last step. Take a moment to thank your critical voice. Your gratitude doesn't suggest the voice is right or acceptable - it just acknowledges that it exists.

Flip the Script

Take a moment to offer yourself the same kindness and compassion that you offered your loved one in the first step.

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