



Use this space for your own notes and thoughts.

2.4 Having 'emotional resilience'

Emotional resilience is about your ability to 'bounce back', adapt, change and to calm your distressed mind after a challenging experience.

We all face challenges and negative experiences but people who provide support to someone living with mental ill health and those who use AOD often deal with additional stressful events, some of which they may never have experienced before.

Emotional resilience goes hand-in-hand with self-compassion. Some families and friends have told us that over time their emotional resilience becomes stronger.



You can build emotional resilience throughout your life by:

- **Accepting yourself** – allow yourself to feel your emotions and welcome what you notice. Forgive yourself. Allow yourself to be imperfect. Know what's in your power to change and what isn't. Remind yourself that challenges do pass. Practice turning negative thoughts into positive ones. And remember the good skills and qualities unique to you.
- **Finding ways to manage stress** – learn to say 'no'. Maintain your boundaries. Look after yourself. Practice self-care and balance in your life. Try to keep things in perspective and remind yourself what you're grateful for. **Note:** sometimes it's during the resilience stage (of the Support Continuum) - when you're out of 'survival mode' – that you finally feel your emotions. Know that it's normal. This can be the time you'll feel the effects of vicarious trauma, empathy, burnout, and compassion fatigue.
- **Expressing emotions in an effective way** – ask yourself if you're making assumptions or having thoughts about a situation that you don't have evidence for (what narratives are you running in your mind?). Consider your options for expressing your emotions and the potential consequences. Ask yourself what result you're hoping for. Look for meaningful ways to connect with others. Express your own emotions (don't mirror the other person's emotions; if you're not angry don't get angry to match their anger).
- **Notice your warning signs** – and know the strategies that work to help keep you strong and healthy.

"Having realistic expectations of my loved one is crucial to my own emotional resilience. I can't cure him of his mental illness so I choose to accept and love him as he is rather than wishing for who he used to be or who I hoped he could become. We all change and grow overtime so I choose to see the changes in my loved one as part of his personal journey. My loved one is not less because he is ill, he is simply different –and that is ok." - Sunita, 38.

Take a moment to assess your current level of emotional resilience. Consider using a pencil for this exercise so you can use it more than once. Rate each statement from 1: Strongly Disagree to 5: Strongly Agree. Then add up the total. That's your score.

Statement	Rating 1: Strong Disagree 5: Strongly Agree				
I trust myself	1	2	3	4	5
I'm proud of my achievements	1	2	3	4	5
I have the power to overcome difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
I have people who love me	1	2	3	4	5
I can handle criticisms	1	2	3	4	5
I'm respectful towards myself and others	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy being part of a community	1	2	3	4	5
I'm aware of my strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
I focus on solutions more than problems	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy my life	1	2	3	4	5

Score	Interpretation
1-15 Low	Low resilience (sensitive to stress, poor coping skills). Talk to your GP, peer group, mental health professional
16-30 Average	Average resilience (ability to combat stress/bounce back but can still be improved with training and practice)
31-50 High	High resilience (well-balanced emotional reactivity and perception of stress)