Becoming a Resilient Scientist
SERIES

Workbook I:
An Introduction to Resilience & Wellness

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Fall 2021 Edition

This workbook is intended to accompany Becoming A Resilient Scientist Series Unit 1:
An Introduction to Resilience & Wellness

It is most effective when it is used after attending/watching the workshop lecture. The exercises in this workbook are to help you process and solidify what you’ve learned in the lecture and to provide you with additional resources. Although it is encouraged that you complete the exercises, it is not required.
Resilience: An Overview

What is Resilience?\(^1\)

The ability to:

- Adapt and grow through adversity
- Navigate difficult challenges with awareness, attention, and skill
- Find a constructive way forward through challenging times

It is a set of attitudes and behaviors that can be learned and developed through education, self-reflection, and practice.

Resilience = People + Process + Preparation\(^2\)

To be Resilient, We Have To

- Learn from previous experiences, both good & bad
- Build strong positive relationships with peers & mentors
- Be proactive & use resources to thrive
- Develop our growth mindset
- Be mindful about how we approach setback & engage with our distorted self-talk (our inner critic vs. our inner champion)
- Develop our emotional literacy & understand how strongly emotions can drive behavior & impact our responses (in helpful or unhelpful ways)
- Do things that bring meaning & happiness to our days, weeks, months


\(^2\) [http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/design-your-path/201305/10-traits-emotionally-resilient-people](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/design-your-path/201305/10-traits-emotionally-resilient-people)
REFLECTING ON YOUR RESILIENCE EXPERIENCE

Think about a time when you were resilient in the past: When you faced a difficult challenge, worked to get through it, and came out stronger from the experience. What behaviors and attitudes were helpful to you? Which ones were not helpful and how did you avoid/minimize them?

Don't worry about grammar or writing style – just write what comes to mind!

Now, think about a time when you faced a significant challenge and you were not as resilient as you had hoped. What behaviors & attitudes do you think got in the way of your resilience? What do you think made it hard for you to access elements of your resilience toolkit?
WHO IS IN YOUR SUPPORT GROUP?

To become resilient, we have to build **strong positive relationships** with our **peers and mentors**. Social connectedness and support can enhance our resiliency to stressful situations and help maintain **good physical and mental health**.

Who are the people in your life that you turn to in **difficult times**?

- Write about why these people are so important to you and give specific examples of **when and how** they have supported you.
- Spend some time reflecting on and writing about how you could **engage with them** during this difficult time.
- Are there people you have met who you sense could be people to turn to in the **future**? How might you turn to them now?

Want to have fun, make someone’s day AND build your resilience?  
*Use this journal prompt and answers as the starting point for a gratitude letter/email.*
# JOURNALING EXERCISE III

## USING RESOURCES

Make a list of **important resources** and what they are **potentially helpful for**: expand and add to your list by talking with **mentors, peers**, and conducting additional **research**.

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<th>CURRENT RESOURCES</th>
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<th>NEW RESOURCES</th>
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Reflect: What **barriers** are keeping me from using **potentially helpful** resources?
WHY EMOTIONS MATTER SO MUCH

If we are not aware of our emotions, attitudes, and behaviors, ultimately some of our decisions may be emotion-driven and not judgement-driven.

- **WORK EVENTS**
  - Daily hassles
  - Daily lift-ups

- **EMOTIONS**
  - Comfortable
  - Uncomfortable

- **ATTITUDES**
  - satisfied/unsatisfied
  - connected/disconnected
  - useful/useless

- **BEHAVIOR**
  - helpful/unhelpful
  - engage/withdraw
  - persist/give up

emotional awareness
accurate interpretation
emotional regulation

this is where our emotional intelligence can outwardly affect our attitudes and behaviors
We can work the model shown previously in reverse to learn more about what underlies our attitudes and behaviors.

**ATTITUDES**
- satisfied/unsatisfied
- connected/disconnected
- useful/useless

**BEHAVIOR**
- helpful/unhelpful
- engage/withdraw
- persist/give up

**EMOTIONS**
- Comfortable
- Uncomfortable

**WORK EVENTS**
- Daily hassles
- Daily lift-ups
To become resilient, we need to ask for help when we need it.

Question your beliefs around seeking help, using resources, and receiving feedback:

What beliefs do you currently have regarding seeking help?
Where do you think these beliefs come from?
Do you think these beliefs are helping or hurting?

REMEMBER: Asking for help is nearly always hard – and nearly always part of the solution.

REMEMBER: Scientists are LIFE-LONG LEARNERS!
Thinking about your school/work experience and other areas of your life, where can you see a growth mindset? Where can you see a fixed mindset?

Why do you think you get caught up in your fixed mindset? What strategies work to help you hold onto your growth mindset?
To build resilience, we need to develop a **stress management & wellness practice**. To **do well**, we have to **be well**.

Take the assessments by checking the boxes below to see how you score on wellness.

### ASSESSMENT I – BODY

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<tr>
<td>I am getting enough sleep (7-9 hours per night)</td>
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<td>I am eating balanced, nutritious meals</td>
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<td>I avoid excessive use of caffeine</td>
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<td>I avoid excessive use of alcohol &amp; other drugs of abuse</td>
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<td>I am getting regular exercise (at least 3x per week)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am getting regular health care for myself</td>
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<td>I take care of myself when I’m sick, need rest, or just need a break</td>
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### ASSESSMENT II – MIND

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<td>I avoid getting caught up in perfectionism</td>
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<td>I focus on the present vs. rehashing the past or worrying about the future</td>
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<td>I avoid negative or deceptive self-talk</td>
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<td>I practice self-affirmations and positive self-talk</td>
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<td>I avoid judging myself compared to others</td>
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<td>I give myself time to explore and learn about new things</td>
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<td>I am open to counseling as a tool to maintain and improve my health &amp; wellbeing</td>
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### ASSESSMENT III – HEART

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<tr>
<td>I am in touch with myself and let myself feel all of my emotions</td>
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<td>I reach out to others for support when I need it</td>
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<td>I communicate my needs and feelings directly and honestly</td>
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<td>I make time to spend with my friends and family</td>
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<td>I engage in activities that are fun and relaxing</td>
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<td>I avoid extreme use of my phone as a coping tool/avoidance strategy</td>
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<td>I demonstrate compassion for myself and others</td>
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### ASSESSMENT IV – SPIRIT

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<tr>
<td>I feel connected to something that is bigger than me – however I define that</td>
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<td>I seek out resources (practices, activities, people, places) that nurture me spiritually</td>
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<td>I reflect on and invest in what is meaningful to me</td>
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<td>I read writings or watch media that are inspirational to me</td>
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<td>I think of and care about the lives of others who are different than me</td>
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<td>I allow time to just be (human <strong>being</strong> vs human <strong>doing</strong>)</td>
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<td>I engage in activities that support my life's purpose</td>
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TO DO WELL, WE HAVE TO BE WELL

What is my current wellness/self-care practice?

Where am I doing well?
Where would I like to improve?

What is something I can do now to improve my wellness/self-care practice?

REMEMBER: This is not a one-time thing!
Re-take this assessment and see how you are doing every few months.
What messages about wellness and self-care am I receiving from my culture, the culture of my current research group, and the culture of science in general?
To gain resilience, we need to do things that bring meaning to our lives. What brings you meaning to your day, week, or month?

Making a wellness collage is a way to identify and talk about things that bring happiness and meaning into our lives. Create a collage below (or on a separate sheet).

While working on the collage, remember:
Never under-estimate the things in your life that bring you happiness and meaning
Never under-estimate the power of doing for others

Feel free to share what makes you happy and/or brings you meaning! Post a picture from your wellness collage or of your entire collage on Twitter and tag @NIH_OITE or @SharonMilgram #OITEWellnessChallenge
FOUR POWERFUL TOOLS TO INCREASE RESILIENCE:

**JOURNALING**

*What's All This About Journaling?* (New York Times article)

*How to Journal*

To learn more:

https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/

**MINDFULNESS**

Other useful resources

https://www.tenpercent.com/
https://www.tarabrach.com/
https://insighttimer.com/

**COMMUNITY**

Small groups for this series

*The Importance of Community and How to Find Community*

**THERAPY**

Helpful resources (beyond your campus)

https://www.justdavia.com/blog/directories-for-therapists-of-color
https://www.goodtherapy.org/
https://support.therapytribe.com/
https://www.inclusivetherapists.com/
OITE MENTAL HEALTH SEMINAR SERIES* (2020–2021)

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Biomedical Researchers
(Nov. 2, 2020–July 12, 2021)

Series of webinars and small group discussions focused on providing participants with tools to cope with stress, as well as discuss ways institutions can develop programs that support wellness and resilience within scientific careers. Open to trainees at all educational levels and administrative staff, faculty, and other research supervisors at universities, the NIH, and other research institutions.

For more information, visit:
https://www.training.nih.gov/new_seminar_series_mental_health_and_well-being

*These and other previous wellness presentations are posted on the OITE YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQQHo_QnuBxdfcsRy4INGGw

NIH WELLNESS RESOURCES

NIH “Wellness Toolkits”
Online resources related to physical, emotional, interpersonal, and environmental wellness and disease prevention.

https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits
HELPFUL WEBSITES

The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley.
Evidence-based articles and videos on a wide range of wellness topics.
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/

Stanford Well for Life at Stanford Prevention Research Center, Stanford University.
Resources for wellness strategies and interventions, including opportunity to participate in global study.
http://med.stanford.edu/wellforlife.html

Purdue University Global Resource Center.
Listing of links to 25 top 2020 health and wellness blogs.
https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/student-life/valuable-health-wellness-blogs/

Dr. Kristen Neff’s website on self-compassion.
Research articles, videos, practices, and other resources on mindful self-compassion.
https://self-compassion.org/

Global Wellness Institute.
Provides research, information about roundtables and initiatives, and evidence regarding a wide range of wellness strategies.
https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/
HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS


HELPFUL PUBLICATIONS (CONTINUED)


