BUILDING RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to be flexible and healthy during constant change—the ability to maintain and develop energy while under pressure. Using the information in this Talking Point, you will explore how you can change your behaviors and activities to increase resilience. You will also explore which of your strengths need to be nourished and strengthened.

1. Consider the life of a rubber band. It is made resilient. As long as it is used as designed, and is not overstretched repeatedly, it will stay resilient for a long time. If the rubber band is not used, or is left in the same place for a long time, the rubber band will dry up, become brittle, and break.

Think of yourself as a rubber band. What do you currently look and feel like?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

2. It is easy to drain energy and damage your ability to be resilient. Reviewing your current behaviors can show you why your resilience is depleted and provide ideas on how to rebuild your energy reserve.

Here is an example:
• Energy draining behavior—I do not set good boundaries with mom. I do everything she wants right when she calls. I feel overwhelmed and I dread hearing the phone ring.
• Energy building behavior—I will put a notepad by mom’s phone. When she calls, I will have her write down what she needs. I will set aside Mondays and Thursdays from 6 to 8 pm to help her.

Which of your current behaviors is draining energy and damaging your ability to be resilient?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. Think about your answer to question 2. What energy building behavior could you use to replace the draining behavior? Review the example in question 2 if needed.
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Using a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you about using your new energy building behavior?

**Not confident** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Very confident**

If you rated your confidence level below 7, return to question 3 and adjust your answer. It is more important to make a small, serious change, than to use an idea that you can not do—or do not want to do. Write down a new energy building behavior you know you will use.

Another way to build resilience is to nurture your strengths. Strengths are the abilities and skills we use to get through tough times. Examples include humor, persistence, love of reading, or cooking.

List a few of your strengths:

1) 
2) 
3) 

How would you nurture a current strength?

Example: The strength is “reading”, but you have not read a book in 6 month. To nourish your ability to read, you would commit to checking out a book from the library and reading 15 minutes every day.

List three ways to nurture the strengths you listed in number 5:

1) 
2) 
3) 

List the name of at least one person who can encourage you to be more resilient. Ask them to check on you often—to see how you are doing. Encourage them to set resilience goals, so you can share results and achievements with each other.

Name: __________________________  Contact Information _________________________

Summary

Self-care is not an option. Staying healthy is an essential part of a good care environment. Energy building and nurturing activities need to be written into every caregiver’s task list.

This worksheet was provided by slco.org/aging. For more information and education, explore options available through your local Area Agency on Aging at eldercare.acl.gov or 1.800.677.1116.