

RESILIENCY

GALLERY GUIDE: SIX SKILLS FOR FINDING AND MAINTAINING BALANCE

People are resilient. And individuals and communities have the capacity to become more resilient by identifying personal and collective strengths and expanding upon them. To do this, it is helpful to recognize a person's *resilient zone*, or state of well being. In the resilient zone, people are able to handle the stresses of life. Understanding resilient zones can help to shift perspectives and gain patience with ourselves and empathy for others. The more often we practice resiliency skills, the wider our resilient zone will become.

We invite you to practice and reflect on these six simple skills that help you identify common human reactions to stressful or traumatic situations and maintain balance in body, mind, and spirit.



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BEFORE YOU START

These skills are everyday resources that can promote well being. They are not psychotherapy or substitutes for psychotherapy. For some people, sensing pleasant or neutral sensations can trigger unpleasant, even painful sensations. If you find yourself sensing uncomfortable sensations while practicing any of these skills, you can try to bring your attention to pleasant or neutral sensations. If this is too difficult, you can stop or try another skill.

TRACKING

The reaction of the body's nervous system to traumatic events is a biological process. In times of stress, you might notice physical sensations: maybe your heart rate increases or your breathing gets faster. Tracking is the ability to read your nervous system so that you can identify between unbalanced sensations and sensations of well being. When you are able to track your nervous system, you can notice all sensations and choose to focus on the positive ones.

RESOURCING

Resourcing focuses on pleasant or neutral activities, environments, or memories to intentionally experience positive sensations. You might already use resources in your daily life, such as spiritual groups, family, pets, or hobbies. What is something that keeps you balanced? Pay attention to the pleasant sensations you feel when you think about your resource. By focusing on these sensations, you can help to stabilize your nervous system and stay balanced in times of stress.

GROUNDING

Grounding is making contact with the body on a supportive surface in the present moment. Like resourcing, grounding helps to shift focus away from unpleasant sensations to sensations of well being. Standing against a wall, placing the palm of your hand against a table or wall, or lying down can all be grounding. As you make contact, pay attention to the way the surface supports each part of the body and note the sensations you feel.

GESTURING

Have you ever been so excited that you jumped up and down or rubbed your hands together? Gesturing is any body movement that expresses an emotion or idea. Gestures can help us to calm down, to release energy, to focus, and to communicate with others. Think about a gesture you might make when you are happy, confident, or calm. What sensations do you feel?

RESET NOW!

At times when stress or trauma is frequently pushing a person out of the resiliency zone, it can be challenging to practice resiliency skills. If you are stuck outside of your zone and need to come back into balance quickly, try these quick strategies to help reset right now:

- Drink a glass of water.
- Name six colors you see in the room.
- Count backwards from 100.
- Identify three sounds you hear right now.
- Walk, and pay attention to how your feet touch the ground.

SHIFT & STAY

Shift and Stay means taking your attention away from unpleasant sensations to focus on positive or neutral sensations. It uses tracking to choose the skill that is most helpful in the current moment. Which skill did you find most helpful today? When might it not work, and which skill could you use instead?