



## Building Resilience

Emotional resilience is the ability to adapt and adjust to stressful situations. Stress can have the biggest impact on us when our emotional resilience is low. It's important to take care of ourselves to ensure that we have the resources to cope with difficult situations when they arise.

One of the most important factors which can affect how resilient we are is the relationships we have with others. If we have strong, positive and supportive relationships around us we are much more able to cope with difficult situations. Other factors which can impact on our resilience levels are:

- Our ability to make realistic plans and follow them through.
- Knowing your own strengths and believing in them.
- Being a good communicator, and having good problem solving skills.
- Being aware of your own feelings, and being able to manage strong feelings and reactions in healthy ways.

The good thing is, resilience is not something we inherit, it is a skill that can be learned and nurtured.

***Action Point: Fill out the skills and improvements list below***

**3 things I do well**

↓

↓

**3 things I would like to do better**

↓

↓

## Communication

As mentioned above, strong relationships are one of the key factors in how emotionally resilient we are. Being able to communicate our needs, and being able to ask for help when we need it can make stressful times more manageable.

One key element of communication is timing. If the topic you wish to discuss is a sensitive one, or one that has resulted in arguments previously, it may be more helpful to try and time the conversation when your loved one is relaxed and engaging with you. Take a moment to consider the last difficult conversation you had with your loved one – think of what their body language was like (were they still, or pacing around?) , what their tone sounded like (were they angry, upset, and annoyed?) What was there language like (were they swearing, or using sarcastic comments?) All of this information helps build up a bigger picture of how your loved one communicates in difficult situations. Try and look out for these signs when you next speak with them – if you notice any of them, consider stopping the conversation before it escalates into an argument.

There are some important points to consider when communicating with others, especially when it's likely to be a difficult conversation



***Action Point: Take some time to think about a difficult conversation you have been putting off – using the 7 steps above, map out what you would like to say using each of the points.***

## **Problem Solving**

Another important aspect of building resilience is the ability to problem solve – most of us tend to write off solutions before we have really tried them out. Here are 7 top tips to improve your problem solving abilities

**1. Define the Problem:**

Verbalise the problem, make sure you are specific and include as much detail as possible (i.e. rather than saying ‘I’m in so much debt’ try being more specific, so ‘I owe £3928’) This helps us be clear on what the problem really is, and be realistic about the scale of the problem. Finally, write it down somewhere safe.

**2. Brainstorm Possible Solution:**

Write down all of the possible solutions, no matter how wild or obscure they are – every idea is worthwhile. Get creative! Try and come up with at least 10 possible solutions.

**3. Eliminate Undesired Suggestions:**

Cross out any of the brain storming idea’s you are really not willing to try out.

**4. Select One Potential Solution:**

Go back to the list of possible solutions, and re-examine them. Pick the one you feel most comfortable with and commit to trying that out.

**5. Generate Possible Obstacles:**

‘Failing to plan, is planning to fail’ – try and list all of the possible obstacles you are likely to come up against in implementing your chosen solution. Again, list anything and everything you feel may get in your way.

**6. Determine How to Address Each Obstacle:**

Take each obstacle in turn, and think of possible ways to address them.

7. **Evaluate the effectiveness of the Solution:**

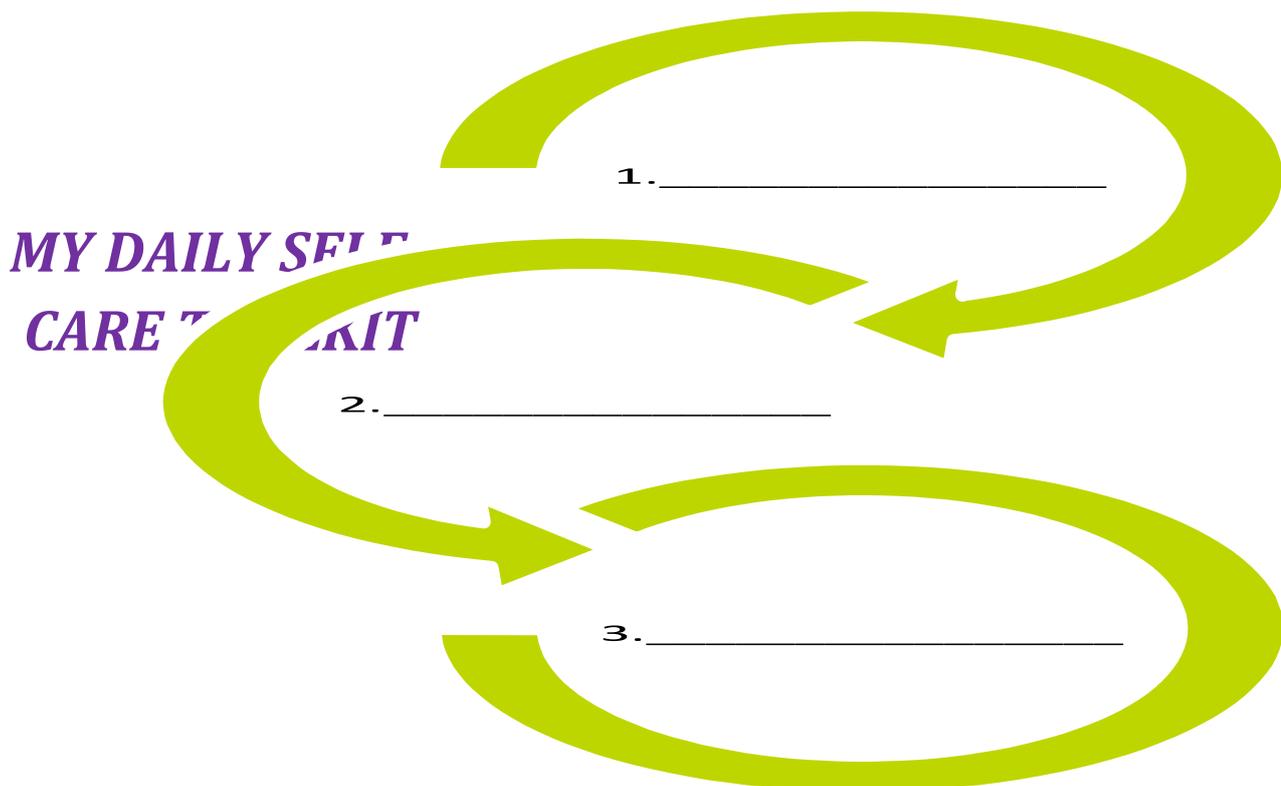
Once you've tried out your solution, take some time to reflect on what worked well, and what didn't. Were there obstacles you hadn't planned for, or did you get an unexpected reaction? If the problem is not yet solved, go back to the list of possible solutions at point 2, and select which one you want to try out next.

## Self-Care

It is important in amongst the routine of everyday life, that we take some quiet time for ourselves to check in and see how our stress levels are. Are we tense, anxious, relaxed... often we are too busy to pay attention to how our bodies are feeling.

If you have a planner or a diary – write some time in just for you each day. Alternatively, set a reminder on your phone to take some time out just to stop and see how you are doing.

***Action point:** In the diagram below, write three simple things you can do every day that help you feel good about yourself, these can be anything from wearing nice perfume/ aftershave, to reading a good book etc... have a think about what works for you...*



## Helpful Resources

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/feel-better-and-happy.aspx>