

The REACH Model

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Welcome to this guide on "The REACH Model". In today's rapidly changing world, individuals, couples, families, and communities face unprecedented challenges that test their personal and collective resilience. Whether confronting economic hardships, environmental disasters, social conflicts, or health crises, people need practical tools to maintain their well-being while supporting the growth of their family and community.

This resource introduces a comprehensive framework—The REACH Model—designed by Dr. Roderick Logan. Drawing from established research in psychology, neuroscience, and human development, this framework provides actionable strategies for building toward resiliency.

Throughout this guide, you will find how Regulation, Engagement, Acceptance, Connection, and Harmony work together to create sustainable personal and collective practices. More importantly, you will find practical applications you can immediately implement in your daily life and social interactions.

By the end of this guide, you'll have a clear understanding of what resilience truly is (and isn't), along with specific tools to develop it in yourself and foster it in your family and community. Let's begin by challenging some common misconceptions about resilience.

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The REACH Model



Myths and Misconceptions About Resilience

Myth #1: Resiliency is bouncing back

 Reality: People are not like a ball that can be thrown against a wall and expected to come back unchanged, as if nothing had happened to them. Trauma, toxic stress, and personal adversities change a person.

Myth #2: Resiliency is a switch

 Reality: Resiliency is not a switch to be flipped, as if the dark spaces disappear because the light comes on. This kind of simplicity marginalizes the impact trauma has had on an individual and trivializes the healing process. Human beings are, by design, complex, interacting, multisystem beings. The effects of overwhelming events cannot be reversed by simple solutions.

Myth #3: Resiliency is a destination

 Reality: Resiliency is not a destination, as if a person only needs to achieve a particular plateau and then declare, "I have arrived." Growth, thriving, and improvement require a dynamic mindset that understands life is an ongoing journey. After one challenge is met, another awaits our attention.

Myth #4: Resiliency is returning to normal

 Reality: Resiliency is not about undoing what happened or recapturing what was lost. There is no going back to the way things were. Resiliency is less about regaining what was lost and more about being intentional in adapting, adjusting, and acquiring the new skills necessary to thrive in your changed circumstances.

Myth #5: Resiliency is automatic for certain people

 Reality: Resiliency should not be presumed. With presumptions come expectations, and expectations increase stress, which interferes with resiliency. While some people may have neuroplastic advantages or supportive environments, resilience still requires intentional development for everyone.

Myth #6: Resilience means never struggling

 Reality: Resilient people do struggle; they recover more effectively. They experience intense emotions, face challenges, and need time to process difficult experiences. The difference is that resilient individuals have developed effective strategies to navigate these struggles.

Myth #7: Being resilient means handling everything alone

 Reality: Seeking support is a key component of resilience. Research consistently shows that having supportive relationships is perhaps the single most crucial factor in developing resilience. These relationships serve as "buffers" against stress, providing emotional safety and models for healthy coping.

Understanding these misconceptions will help you better frame and apply the REACH model in your community life.



Portrait of Resilience

Image #1: Resiliency is a growth process

Resiliency starts small and slow, incrementally getting stronger. It involves changing
from vulnerable to less vulnerable, from reactive to less reactive. Resiliency affirms
small beginnings and accepts that being less today is temporary, with the expectation
of becoming more tomorrow.

Image #2: Resiliency is gleaning wisdom

 Resiliency is learning to find the beneficial among the difficult. This is NOT validating harm or injustice. Rather than being trapped by past painful experiences, resiliency seeks to look past them in search of meaning and growth.

Image #3: Resiliency is learning to take aim

 Resiliency is identifying your target and learning how to aim for it. Effective aiming requires steadiness—pausing, concentrating, and relaxing. Resiliency is less concerned with immediate perfection and more with getting closer to your goals through disciplined practice.

Image #4: Resiliency is rewriting your story

 Resiliency involves filtering—sifting, sorting, and separating essentials from nonessentials. It's how people redefine their world after significant events, identifying what truly matters and what no longer serves them. While trauma repeats the same story, resilience rewrites it with a new beginning.

Image #5: Resiliency gives permission to trust

 For those living in isolation, trust seems unnecessary. However, to live a fulfilling life and maintain meaningful relationships, one must learn to trust. Resiliency involves being appropriately vulnerable and developing confidence in yourself and those who genuinely care about you.



REACH Model



A bottom-up and top-down approach for living a meaningful resilient life



The REACH Model presents a comprehensive framework for developing physiological and psychological resilience through five interconnected components: Regulation, Engagement, Acceptance, Connection, and Harmony. This evidence-based approach integrates physiological, cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of resilience building.

Regulation focuses on mastering autonomic nervous system control through techniques like deep breathing and heart rate variability training. Engagement emphasizes strengthening executive functions through active cognitive exercises and problemsolving. Acceptance cultivates self-compassion and realistic self-assessment while releasing perfectionism and harsh self-judgment. Connection emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining meaningful relationships through effective communication and emotional intelligence. Harmony represents the integration of all components, creating a dynamic balance that enhances overall resilience and adaptability.

This model posits that resilience is not an innate trait but rather a set of skills that can be developed through consistent practice and intentional effort. *The REACH* framework provides practical strategies and techniques for building these skills, emphasizing that resilience development requires at least one stable, supportive relationship and a commitment to personal growth.

By systematically addressing both internal and external aspects of resilience, *The REACH Model* offers a holistic approach to developing the capacity to adapt to challenges, manage stress, and maintain well-being in the face of adversity.





Regulating

Bottom-up: Turning down body arousal by mastering self-regulation techniques for emotional balance. The autonomic nervous system plays a crucial role in our stress response and emotional regulation. Here are key techniques for regulation:

- Deep diaphragmatic breathing: Activates the parasympathetic nervous system to promote calm
- Progressive muscle relaxation: Systematically tensing and releasing muscle groups to reduce physical tension
- Heart rate variability training: Using breath work to create coherent heart rhythms
- Temperature regulation: Using cold exposure or warmth to influence autonomic state
- Mindful body scanning: Building awareness of physical sensations to detect and address stress signals

These regulation techniques help build physiological resilience by:

- Lowering cortisol levels and reducing stress hormones
- Improving vagal tone and nervous system flexibility
- Increasing awareness of body states and stress triggers
- Building capacity to return to baseline after activation

Regular practice of these techniques creates new neural pathways that support emotional regulation and stress management.





Engaging

Top-down: Turning up cortical activity by intentionally employing executive functions. The prefrontal cortex (PFC) is essential for executive functions, which include:

- Working memory holding and manipulating information in mind
- Cognitive flexibility adapting thinking and behavior to new situations
- Inhibitory control managing impulses and maintaining focus

To actively engage these executive functions, practice:

- Complex problem-solving tasks that require sustained attention
- Strategic planning and organization of multi-step activities
- Mindful decision-making by considering multiple perspectives
- Task-switching exercises to build cognitive flexibility

Regular engagement of executive functions strengthens PFC activity and improves:

- Emotional regulation through top-down control
- Goal-directed behavior and persistence
- Adaptive response to challenges and stress
- Integration of cognitive and emotional processes

Building these skills requires consistent practice and gradually increasing complexity of cognitive challenges.





Accepting

Bottom-up: Tossing guilt and shame by rewriting personal narratives. Develop a compassionate relationship with yourself through:

- Self-compassion practice treating oneself with the same kindness offered to others
- Mindful awareness observing thoughts and feelings without judgment
- Recognition of common humanity understanding that imperfection is part of being human

Key aspects of building self-acceptance include:

- Acknowledging personal limitations without harsh self-judgment
- Embracing both strengths and growth areas
- Letting go of unrealistic expectations and perfectionism
- Developing realistic self-assessment skills

Self-acceptance practices that support resilience:

- Daily self-compassion meditation or reflection
- Journaling about personal experiences without criticism
- Challenging negative self-talk with balanced perspectives
- Celebrating personal progress and small victories

Through consistent practice of self-acceptance, individuals can:

- Reduce anxiety and depression symptoms
- Build emotional resilience
- Improve relationship quality
- Increase motivation for personal growth

Remember that self-acceptance is an ongoing practice rather than a destination, requiring patience and persistent effort.





Connecting

Top-down: Taking hold of relational moments by strengthening social and communication skills. Strong social connections are fundamental to building resilience. Key aspects of social connection include:

- Active listening fully engaging with others' experiences and perspectives
- Emotional intelligence recognizing and responding appropriately to others' emotions
- Clear communication expressing needs, boundaries, and feelings effectively
- Building trust maintaining consistency and reliability in relationships

Strategies for strengthening social connections:

- Regular check-ins with family and friends
- Participating in group activities or community events
- Seeking and offering support during challenging times
- Creating meaningful shared experiences

Benefits of strong social connections for resilience:

- Access to emotional support during difficult times
- Diverse perspectives for problemsolving
- Increased sense of belonging and purpose
- Buffer against stress and adversity

Building social connections requires:

- Vulnerability and openness to new relationships
- Consistent effort to maintain existing relationships
- Balance between giving and receiving support
- Respect for boundaries and individual differences

Remember that quality of connections often matters more than quantity, and authentic relationships build stronger resilience than superficial ones.





Harmonizing

Central core: Tuning together in trust and truth by being authentic is a diverse world. Harmony represents the integration of the previous four components of resilience:

- Regulation provides the physiological foundation for harmony through emotional balance
- Engagement ensures cognitive clarity and purposeful action in alignment with values
- Acceptance creates internal peace through self-compassion and realistic selfassessment
- Connection facilitates external harmony through meaningful relationships and social support

Key aspects of achieving harmony include:

- Integration of mind-body awareness and regulation
- Balance between personal needs and social responsibilities
- Alignment of actions with core values and beliefs
- Flexibility in adapting to diverse perspectives and situations

Harmony manifests through:

- Consistent emotional stability across different life domains
- Authentic self-expression while respecting others' differences
- Balanced investment in personal growth and relationship building
- Integration of past experiences with present awareness





Harmonizing (continued)

Benefits of achieving harmony:

- Enhanced overall well-being and life satisfaction
- Improved ability to navigate complex challenges
- Greater capacity for meaningful connections
- Increased resilience in face of adversity

Maintaining harmony requires ongoing attention to:

- Regular practice of all REACH components
- Periodic assessment and adjustment of life balance
- Commitment to personal growth and authentic living
- Integration of new experiences and learning

Remember that harmony is not a static state but a dynamic process that requires continuous cultivation and refinement through the application of all REACH components.





The REACH Model is a comprehensive resilience-building framework combining physiological regulation, cognitive engagement, self-acceptance, social connection, and personal harmony.

Through both body-based and cognitive approaches, participants develop practical stress management and relationship-building techniques, with the understanding that resilience is a learnable skill requiring consistent practice.

A Neurobiological Approach to Resilience

The REACH model uniquely combines bottom-up and top-down neurological processes to build comprehensive resilience:

Bottom-Up Processing

Bottom-up approaches start at the level of the body and brainstem, working upward to influence higher cognitive functions:

- Regulation primarily works through bottom-up processes by directly affecting the autonomic nervous system through breathing techniques and body-based interventions
- The vagus nerve and brainstem structures are engaged first, creating a foundation of physiological safety
- This somatic regulation allows for improved emotional processing and stress management

Bottom-up techniques help stabilize the nervous system before engaging higher cognitive functions.

Top-Down Processing

Top-down approaches involve higher cortical regions influencing lower brain functions:

- Engagement specifically targets executive functions in the prefrontal cortex to enhance cognitive control
- Acceptance utilizes cortical regions involved in self-reflection and narrative processing
- Connection activates social cognition networks in the cortex to enhance interpersonal functioning

The integration of both approaches occurs through Harmony, where:

- Bottom-up regulation creates the neurophysiological foundation for resilience
- Top-down cognitive processes provide the framework for meaning-making and adaptive responses
- The combination creates a robust, flexible system for managing life's challenges

This dual-processing approach ensures that resilience is built on both biological and psychological foundations, making it more sustainable and effective.



Complementary Elements Achieve Harmonious Integration

The REACH model emphasizes that true resilience emerges when all five components work together in harmony. This integration creates a synergistic effect where:

- Physiological regulation provides the foundation for effective cognitive engagement
- Self-acceptance enhances the quality and depth of social connections
- Strong connections reinforce self-regulation during challenging situations
- Cognitive engagement improves one's ability to practice acceptance

When these elements function in concert, individuals experience:

- Greater emotional stability across varied situations
- Enhanced problem-solving capabilities under stress
- More authentic and supportive relationships
- Improved recovery after setbacks or trauma

This harmonious integration represents the fullest expression of resilience - not merely surviving challenges, but growing through them with greater wisdom and capacity.



The Chiastic Structure of REACH

A chiasm (also spelled chiasmus) is a literary device where concepts or words are arranged in a cross-shaped pattern, typically following an A-B-C-B-A structure. This rhetorical technique creates a powerful symmetry where the first and last elements correspond, the second and second-to-last elements correspond, and so on.

Interestingly, the REACH model demonstrates a chiastic structure in its design:

- Regulation (physiological foundation) focuses on the body
- Engagement (cognitive processes) focuses on the mind
- Acceptance (self-compassion) forms the central turning point
- Connection (social relationships) returns to mind-oriented processes
- Harmony (integration) returns to the whole person/body

This chiastic arrangement is significant because:

- It begins and ends with holistic elements (Regulation and Harmony) that anchor the model
- It places Acceptance at the center, highlighting self-compassion as the pivotal point for resilience
- It creates a natural progression that moves inward toward the self and then outward toward others
- It reinforces the interconnected nature of all five components

This deliberate structure reflects the integrated nature of resilience building, where each component both stands alone and contributes to a greater whole.



10 Ways to Implement the REACH Model

For Individuals

- 1. **Practice Daily Interoception:** Set aside 5-10 minutes each day to tune into bodily sensations without judgment. Notice hunger, fullness, tension, and comfort to build your internal awareness.
- Complete the REACH Model Self-Assessment: Take time to honestly evaluate your current capacity in each domain of the REACH Model. Identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.
- 3. **Executive Functioning Exercises:** Engage in activities that strengthen planning, organization, and emotional regulation such as puzzles, meditation, or structured routines.

For Couples

- 1. **Body-Aware Communication:** Practice noticing physical sensations during difficult conversations. Share observations like "I notice my shoulders tensing" to increase mutual understanding without blame.
- 2. **Synchronized Regulation Activities:** Engage in shared breathing exercises, walks in nature, or gentle movement practices to co-regulate nervous systems.
- Collaborative REACH Assessment: Complete individual assessments, then share
 insights with each other. Discuss how to support one another's growth areas with
 compassion.

For Families

- 1. **Family Connection Rituals:** Establish regular activities that promote social connection like device-free meals, game nights, or outdoor adventures to strengthen family bonds.
- 2. **Finding Harmony in Chaos:** Create a family "calm down corner" with sensory tools and practice using it together during stressful moments, demonstrating that seeking peace amidst adversity is valued.
- Modeling Embodiment: Parents can demonstrate body awareness by verbalizing their own process: "I'm feeling frustrated, so I'm going to take deep breaths to help my body calm down."
- 4. **Inclusive REACH Planning:** Hold family meetings where each member identifies one REACH domain they want to develop, then create a supportive family plan to help each person grow in their chosen area.



Remember:

Implementing the REACH Model is a journey, not a destination. Small, consistent steps lead to meaningful growth over time.





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REACH Model Resiliency Assessment

Based on the REACH Model by Dr. Roderick Logan, DPTh, DAAETS

This self-assessment tool is designed to help you evaluate your current resilience levels across the five dimensions of the REACH Model. Rate each statement on a scale of 1-5 by drawing a circle around your response, where:

- 1 =Rarely true for me
- 2 = Occasionally true for me
- 3 =Sometimes true for me
- 4 = Often true for me
- 5 =Almost always true for me

Regulation

This dimension focuses on your ability to manage physical and emotional responses to stress.

	Question	Rate: 1,2,3,4,or 5
1	I can identify when my body is experiencing stress (e.g., tension, rapid breathing, racing heart).	
2	I practice techniques to calm my body when I feel stressed (e.g., deep breathing, muscle relaxation).	
3	I can recognize my emotional reactions before they become overwhelming.	
4	I have specific strategies I use to regulate my emotions during challenging situations.	
5	I create boundaries to protect my physical and emotional well-being.	
6	I prioritize activities that help me maintain my physical well-being (e.g., adequate sleep, a balanced diet, regular exercise).	
7	I can maintain my composure even when faced with unexpected challenges.	
	Total Score	

Engagement

This dimension addresses your cognitive skills for problem-solving and decision-making.

	Question	Rate: 1,2,3,4,or 5
8	I approach problems with a structured thinking process rather than reacting impulsively.	
9	I can identify multiple potential solutions when facing a challenge.	
10	I consider the potential consequences of my decisions before acting.	
11	I can adapt my approach when initial solutions don't work.	
12	I seek information from diverse sources when making important decisions.	
13	I actively look for opportunities to grow from difficult experiences.	
14	I regularly reflect on my experiences to extract meaningful lessons.	
	Total Score	

Acceptance

This dimension relates to self-compassion and realistic self-assessment.

	Question	Rate: 1,2,3,4,or 5
15	I can distinguish between situations I can control and those I cannot.	
16	I treat myself with kindness when I make mistakes or experience setbacks.	
17	I acknowledge my limitations without harsh self-judgment.	
18	I recognize and celebrate small victories and incremental progress.	
19	I can accept change, even when it's uncomfortable or unwanted.	
20	I view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as threats.	
21	I can acknowledge difficult emotions without being overwhelmed by them.	
	Total Score	

Connection

This dimension focuses on relationships and support networks.

	Question	Rate: 1,2,3,4,or 5
22	I have people in my life whom I can turn to when I need support.	
23	I actively maintain important relationships even during busy or difficult times.	
24	I can communicate my needs clearly to others.	
25	I am willing to ask for help when I need it.	
26	I make efforts to support others in my community or network.	
27	I feel a sense of belonging in at least one community or group.	
28	I can navigate conflicts in relationships in a constructive manner.	
	Total Score	

Harmony

This dimension addresses integration and balance across all aspects of resilience.

	Question	Rate: 1,2,3,4,or 5
29	My daily actions are generally aligned with my core values.	
30	I can balance my personal needs with my responsibilities to others.	
31	I adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining my sense of self.	
32	I find meaning and purpose even in the most challenging situations.	
33	I maintain important traditions while being open to new approaches.	
34	I nurture different aspects of my well-being (physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual).	
35	I can integrate seemingly contradictory aspects of myself or my experience.	
	Total Score	

Scoring and Interpretation

For each section, add your scores to determine your strength in that dimension:

Regulation (Questions 1-7) - Your Score:

- 7-15: This is an area for growth. Consider focusing on developing basic self-regulation skills.
- 16-27: You have moderate regulation skills. Continue practicing and refining these abilities.
- 28-35: This is an area of strength. You have developed effective self-regulation strategies.

Engagement (Questions 8-14) - Your Score:

- 7-15: This is an area for growth. Consider developing more structured approaches to problem-solving.
- 16-27: You have moderate engagement skills. Continue developing your cognitive flexibility.
- 28-35: This is an area of strength. You effectively engage with challenges using strong cognitive skills.

Acceptance (Questions 15-21) - Your Score: _____

- 7-15: This is an area for growth. Consider developing greater self-compassion and realistic assessment.
- 16-27: You have moderate acceptance skills. Continue cultivating self-compassion and realistic perspectives.
- 28-35: This is an area of strength. You demonstrate healthy self-acceptance and perspective-taking.

Connection (Questions 22-28) - Your Score: _____

- 7-15: This is an area for growth. Consider focusing on building and strengthening relationships.
- 16-27: You have moderate connection skills. Continue nurturing your support network.
- 28-35: This is an area of strength. You maintain effective, supportive relationships.

Harmony (Questions 29-35) - Your Score: ____

- 7-15: This is an area for growth. Consider focusing on integrating different aspects of resilience.
- 16-27: You have moderate harmony skills. Continue working on balance and integration.
- 28-35: This is an area of strength. You effectively maintain balance and integration across life domains.

Overall Resilience (Sum of all questions)

Your Total Score: ____

35-75: You're at the beginning of your resilience journey. Focus on developing foundational skills across all dimensions.

76-125: You have moderate resilience. Continue building on your strengths while developing areas for growth.

126-175: You demonstrate strong resilience across multiple dimensions. Continue refining and maintaining these skills.

Remember: Resilience is not a fixed trait but a set of skills that can be developed over time. Focus on gradual improvement rather than perfection, and be patient and kind with yourself as you strengthen these capacities.

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