

10 Ways to Build Resilience*

Make connections: Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in support groups, like SISTAAH Talk, can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also helps.

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems:

You can't change the fact that you have been diagnosed with breast cancer, but you can change how you interpret and respond to it. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with your situation.

Accept that change is a part of life: Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of your diagnosis. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Move toward your goal: Develop some realistic (SMART) goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

Take decisive actions: Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery: Women often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their breast cancer diagnosis. Many have reported better relationships, a greater sense of personal strength even while feeling vulnerable, an increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and a heightened appreciation for life.

Nurture a positive view of yourself: Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts will help build resilience.

Keep things in perspective: Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Maintain a hopeful outlook: An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

Take care of yourself: Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly; eat healthy. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

*Adapted from the American Psychological Association.

More Information:

Resilience is your ability to recover quickly from difficulties. For breast cancer survivors, it is the ability to recover from the shock after an initial diagnosis, during recovery from treatment, or later with news of a recurrence. Think of resilience as the thing—the elastic part within you—that allows you to bounce back to your original shape after being stretched to deal with the realities of breast cancer.

Every woman brings her own resilience to breast cancer. Resilience is not a rare ability; it can be learned by virtually anyone. It is a process, developed through proper coping techniques, that allows you to effectively navigate the breast cancer journey.

To join the SISTAAH Circle,
Contact:

SISTAAH Talk, Inc.
PO Box 692998
Miami, FL 33269
(305) 333-3495
sistahtalk95@gmail.com
www.sistahtalk.net



SISTAAH Circle

Resilience



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Women of Color Breast Cancer Support Group

