

## Community Institute for Psychotherapy

1330 Lincoln Ave #201, San Rafael, CA 94901-2141

Phone (415) 459-5999 Fax (415) 459-5602 [www.cipmarin.org](http://www.cipmarin.org)

### 2024-2025 News & Notes



## 2025 October News and Notes

### Building, Incorporating Resilience in Our Lives

By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

#### Building, Incorporating Resilience in Our Lives

In many ways, resilience can be said to represent a state of self-empowerment. As the website at [NAMI.org](http://NAMI.org) describes it, “Resilience includes a sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem, optimism, and the feeling of personal control and independence. Adding tools like social support, physical activity, and other wellness strategies helps counteract the harmful effects of stress and trauma and makes it easier to cope.”<sup>2</sup>

While resilience has long been recognized for its ability to enable individuals and communities to meet and overcome difficult challenges in life, resilience can benefit us on an ongoing basis in our daily lives.

According to integrative medicine author, Karolyn A. Gazella, “Resilience plays a fundamental role in promoting overall health and well-being. Beyond merely coping with challenges, cultivating resilience offers many benefits that extend across various aspects of life.”

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She notes, “Physically, resilience contributes to health by reducing the negative impacts of stress on the body. . . . [I]ndividuals with higher levels of resilience tend to have lower rates of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular conditions, and exhibit stronger immune system function.” In other words, resilience is not simply of value in times of great need, but a quality that will enhance our everyday lives, and offer protection against the future.<sup>3</sup>

Here are suggestions for ways to increase the thoughts, behaviors, and actions that can increase resilience, especially during times of need.

**Practice mindfulness:** Mindfulness increases awareness of our thoughts and feelings, and allows us to observe how our actions and environment affect us in positive or negative ways. It can give us the ability to determine what needs to be done. It helps to be able to pause and identify what you are feeling in the moment, and, especially, to acknowledge and express those feelings. Being aware of our thought processes and our ability to handle difficult emotions can protect us from becoming overwhelmed by them, and allow us to move on.

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**Engage your problem-solving skills:** We solve numerous problems on a daily basis, but remain mostly unaware of the skills we use in doing so. Understanding the processes of problem solving, including identifying the problem, breaking it down into its components, and brainstorming the resources and steps required for its solution, will help you recognize the skills you already possess to confront larger, major problems.

In charting a path forward, the Mayo Clinic suggests, “Learn from the past. Think of how you've coped with troubles in the past. Think about what has helped you through tough times. You can even write about past events in a journal to help you see the patterns of how you behave and to help guide you in the future.”

On a day to day basis, “Make every day have meaning. Do something that gives you a sense of success and purpose every day. Set clear goals that you can reach to help you look toward the future with meaning. . . . Stay hopeful. You can't change the past, but you can always look toward the future. Being open to change makes it easier to adapt and view new challenges with less worry.”<sup>4</sup>

**Find a larger purpose:** Look for opportunities to contribute your skills, expertise and involvement: volunteer at a local nonprofit; become a mentor; get together with a group of others sharing your

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interests. Participating toward the goals and activities of a larger community fosters physical and emotional well-being. Having a focus outside yourself can give you a positive distraction from your own challenges.

**Build strong social and family networks:** Spending time with friends and family, communicating openly and honestly, will increase trust as well as the support these relationships provide. Reaching out to others in times of need reinforces essential emotional bonds. It is reassuring to realize we are all interconnected and that our interdependence contributes to our lives in many ways.

**Engage regularly in what nourishes you.** What contributes to your quality of life? Engaging with what you love will enhance your life in good times and bad. Whether it is a spiritual practice, music, art, spending time in nature or with family, athletic activities, whatever your passion, finding time for it on a regular basis will enrich your life.

2. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Health-Care-Professionals/Building-Resilience/>

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3. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-healing-factor/202405/the-health-benefits-of-resilience-and-how-to-cultivate-more-of-it>

4. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/resilience-training/in-depth/resilience/art-20046311>