

The Building Resiliency Workbook

**Reproducible Self-Assessments,
Exercises & Educational Handouts**

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The Building Resiliency Workbook

Reproducible Self-Assessments, Exercises & Educational Handouts

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Using This Book *(For the professional)*

Resiliency has been defined as the ability to:

- manage life's challenges, stresses, changes, and pressures effectively.
- cope and adapt successfully to adversity.
- bounce back to a balanced state after facing a major disruption in life or career.

People have an innate ability to demonstrate resiliency when they have resiliency skills built into their lives. Resilient people are able to adapt successfully under adverse circumstances such as: poverty, mental illness, disasters, terrorism, physical or psychological trauma, divorce, job loss, prison, loss of a loved one, parent's divorce, prolonged stress, physical or sexual abuse, or a lack of safety. Resiliency, or a positive behavioral adaptation, is critical when people encounter any type of trauma.

Research shows that resiliency offers protection from distress and illness in the face of change or adversity. The presence of high levels of resiliency is associated with these factors:

- high level of happiness.
- high level of self-esteem.
- high sense of energy and vitality.
- high level of optimism.
- high level of self-reported health.
- high sense of meaning and direction.
- low level of depression.

People who are resilient . . .

- work because they enjoy it.
- react in an optimistic way.
- see problems as challenges.
- take positive action.
- think of change as natural and go with the flow.
- thrive under challenging situations.
- find it easy to be content in various situations.
- believe that they can influence events and their reactions to events.
- recognize that with stress comes growth.

Research also indicates that resiliency can be built. The purpose of this workbook is to provide participants with the requisite skills they need to manage their emotions and to develop and maintain resiliency.

(Continued)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The Building Resiliency Workbook contains five separate sections to help participants learn more about themselves and how to build resiliency which will enable them to thrive in times of adversity, change and stress. They will learn about the importance of building resiliency skills to turn change and stress into opportunities and challenge, to live life zestfully, and to take positive actions in order to live their lives with less stress.

The sections of this book:

- **OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE** helps participants identify how optimistically they view and live life.
- **LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE** helps participants explore the extent to which they believe they have control over what happens in their lives.
- **SENSE-OF-SELF SCALE** helps participants explore the strength of their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-concept.
- **ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK SCALE** helps participants increase their ability to bounce back and recover from a setback.
- **CHANGE MANAGEMENT SCALE** helps participants to become aware of how well they deal with change, and develop skills necessary to accept change.

These sections serve as avenues for individual self-reflection, as well as participating in group experiences revolving around identified topics of importance. Each assessment includes directions for easy administration, scoring and interpretation. Each section includes exploratory activities, reflective journaling activities and educational handouts to help participants discover their level of resiliency and provides reflective exercises and instruction to build personal and professional resiliency.

The art of self-reflection goes back many centuries and is rooted in many of the world's greatest spiritual and philosophical traditions. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, was known to walk the streets engaging the people he met in philosophical reflection and dialogue. He felt that this type of activity was so important in life that he went so far as to proclaim, "The unexamined life is not worth living!" The unexamined life is one in which the same routine is continually repeated without ever thinking about its meaning to one's life and how this life really could be lived. However, a structured reflection and examination of beliefs, assumptions, characteristics, and patterns can provide a better understanding, which can then lead to a more satisfying life. A greater level of self-understanding about important life skills is often necessary to make positive, self-directed changes. The assessments and

(Continued)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

exercises in this book can help promote this self-understanding. Through involvement in the in-depth activities, the participant claims ownership in the development of positive behavioral patterns.

Journaling is an extremely powerful tool for enhancing self-discovery, learning, transcending traditional problems, breaking ineffective life habits, and helping oneself to heal from psychological traumas of the past. From a physical point of view, writing reduces stress and lowers muscle tension, blood pressure and heart rate levels. Psychologically, writing reduces sadness, depression and general anxiety, and leads to a greater level of life satisfaction and optimism. Behaviorally, writing leads to enhanced social skills, emotional intelligence and creativity. It also leads to improved resiliency and the ability to deal effectively with adversity and stress in life.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, participants will be exposed to a powerful method of combining verbalizing and writing to reflect on and to solve problems. Participants will become more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their resiliency and find ways to build and enhance their hardiness.

Preparation for using the assessments and activities in this book is important. The authors suggest that prior to administering any of the assessments in this book, you complete them yourself. This will familiarize you with the format of the assessments, the scoring directions, the interpretation guides and the journaling activities. Although the assessments are designed to be self-administered, scored and interpreted. This familiarity will help facilitators prepare to answer questions about the assessments.

The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts

The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts in *The Building Resiliency Workbook* are reproducible and ready to be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported data and are similar to those used by psychologists, counselors, therapists and marriage and family therapists. Accuracy and usefulness of the information provided is dependent on the truthful information that each participant provides through self-examination. By being honest, participants help themselves to learn more about how they respond and react to stress, change, and adversity in their lives, and to uncover information that might be keeping them from being as happy and/or as successful as they might be.

An assessment instrument can provide participants with valuable information about themselves; however, it cannot measure or identify everything about them. The purpose of the assessments is not to pigeon-hole certain characteristics, but rather to allow participants to explore all of their characteristics. This book contains self-assessments, not tests. Tests measure knowledge or whether something is right or wrong. For the assessments in this book, there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask for personal opinions or attitudes about a topic of importance in the participant's career and life.

When administering assessments in this workbook, remember that the items are generically written so that they will be applicable to a wide variety of people. They will not account for every possible variable for every person. The assessments are not specifically tailored to one person. Use them to help participants identify possible negative themes in their lives and to find ways to break the hold that these patterns and their effects have.

Advise participants taking the assessments that they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; their initial response will most likely be true. Regardless of individual scores, encourage participants to talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what they have discovered about themselves. Resilient people are able to adapt successfully and cope with stress and catastrophe. They have the ability to bounce back to a balanced state after disruption or transition. These resiliency-building exercises can be used by facilitators working with any population who are experiencing disruptions in their lives.

A particular score on any assessment does not guarantee a participant's level of resiliency happiness. Use discretion when using any of the information or feedback provided in this workbook. The use of these assessments should not be substituted for consultation and/or counseling from a psychological or medical professional.

Thanks to the following professionals whose input in this book has been so valuable!

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Lucy Ritzic, OTR/L

Eileen Rotman

Layout of the Book

This book includes the following reproducibles in all 5 sections:

- **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- **Quotations** – Quotations are used in each chapter to provide insight and promote self-reflection and promote self-understanding. Participants will be asked to select one or more of the quotations and journal about what the quotations mean to them.
- **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to supplement instruction can be used individually or in groups. They can be distributed, converted into masters for overheads or transparencies, scanned for use as a presentation.

Who should use this program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool for helping professional therapists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using *The Building Resiliency Workbook* and the specific group's needs, these sections can be used individually, combined, or implemented as part of an integrated curriculum for a more comprehensive approach.

Why use self-assessments?

Self-assessments are important in teaching various life skills. Participants will . . .

- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide behavior.
- Explore and learn to identify potentially harmful situations.
- Explore the effects of messages received in childhood.
- Gain insight that will guide behavioral change.
- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for change.
- Uncover resources that can help to cope with problems and difficulties.
- Explore personal characteristics without judgment.
- Develop full awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses.

Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score, and interpret each assessment independently.

Introduction for the Participant

Resiliency is the ability to:

- deal effectively with stress and adversity.
- successfully handle changes in life.
- withstand grief and accept loss.
- creatively adapt to life challenges.

Psychologically hardy people tend to have less stress, anxiety and depression. They have more stable family lives and satisfying marriages. They progress further in their careers and live with more contentment.

Everyone has a share of stressors and challenges. You are no different. The most important factor is how you experience stress and face challenges. It is important to discover how you perceive them, how you think these experiences might affect your future, and how effectively you are able to cope. This is the true level of your personal resilience.

Research shows these factors of resiliency:

- Your thinking and your subsequent behavioral habits create either bridges or barriers to a better future. This workbook will help you to explore your thinking and develop positive behavioral habits that will help you to live better now as well as build a better future for yourself.
- Resiliency can be learned. You can use this workbook to help you grow personally and develop critical resiliency characteristics that will allow you to deal effectively with adversity, change, stress and any challenges that life throws at you.
- The struggle to bounce back and recover from setbacks can lead to the development of resources you did not know you had. This workbook will provide you with the opportunity to look at the stress and adversity in your life, explore how you have handled stress and adversity in the past, and learn new ways to more effectively and positively deal with setbacks in your life.

The Building Resiliency Workbook is designed to help you learn more about yourself; identify the stresses and challenges in your life; explore how you have dealt with adversity in the past; develop resiliency skills and a resiliency mindset; and find better ways to use these newfound skills to deal effectively with whatever setbacks you encounter in life. You will be encouraged to complete assessments, journaling activities and exercises. Because active involvement and “doing” is as important as learning theories, it is critical that you take the time to complete all of the skill-building exercises.

The Building Resiliency Workbook

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SECTION I:

Optimistic Outlook Scale



Name _____

Date _____



Optimistic Outlook Scale Directions

Some people see the glass half full, while others see it half empty. The first group of people are called optimists and the second group are called pessimists. As an optimist, regardless of transitions, setbacks, or disappointments, the person looks at the bright side and sees the possibilities life has to offer. Optimists expect good things to happen, expect to be able to solve problems efficiently, and plan to accomplish their life and work goals. They go through life with positive outlooks and are content most of the time.

Optimists maintain a positive world-view. Pessimists think negatively and cynically about the world. The Optimistic Outlook Scale is designed to help you assess your outlook when negative and positive things happen in your life.

This scale contains 40 statements that are divided into four resiliency categories. Read each of the statements and decide whether or not the statement describes you. For each of the statements listed, circle the number of your response on the line to the right of each statement.

In the following example, the circled 4 indicates the statement is very much like the person completing the assessment:

	Very Much Like Me	Usually Like Me	Not Usually Like Me	Not Like Me
1. When things go wrong, I remain hopeful	4	3	2	1

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time thinking about your answers. Your initial response will be the most true for you. Be sure to respond to every statement.

(Turn to the next page and begin)

SECTION I: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE

Optimistic Outlook Scale

	Very Much Like Me	Usually Like Me	Not Usually Like Me	Not Like Me
1. When things go wrong, I remain hopeful	4	3	2	1
2. A lot of situations do not have a “silver lining”	1	2	3	4
3. I can always see the light at the end of the tunnel.	4	3	2	1
4. I often feel hopeless	1	2	3	4
5. I look on the bright side of things.	4	3	2	1
6. I’m usually optimistic about my future	4	3	2	1
7. I am unhappy a lot of the time.	1	2	3	4
8. I rarely get depressed when I think about the future.	4	3	2	1
9. I do not wait for happiness to find me.	4	3	2	1
10. I often feel helpless when things change.	1	2	3	4

H - TOTAL = _____

11. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best	4	3	2	1
12. If something can go wrong, it will	1	2	3	4
13. I usually expect things to go my way	4	3	2	1
14. Things usually don’t work out the way I want them to	1	2	3	4
15. I am afraid to hope that good things will happen to me.	1	2	3	4
16. I often say “good things never happen to me”.	1	2	3	4
17. My problems seem to never end.	1	2	3	4
18. Even if I have failed in the past, I do not expect to fail again	4	3	2	
19. I usually maintain a positive attitude in life	4	3	2	1
20. I feel like I have no control over what happens in my life	1	2	3	4

L - TOTAL = _____

(Continued on the next page)

SECTION I: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE



(Optimistic Outlook Scale continued)

	Very Much Like Me	Usually Like Me	Not Usually Like Me	Not Like Me
21. I usually talk about positive things	4	3	2	1
22. I often do not look for the good things in people	1	2	3	4
23. I see the “glass as half full” not “half empty”	4	3	2	1
24. I have had a hard time seeing the possibilities of a situation	1	2	3	4
25. Every day holds numerous opportunities..	4	3	2	1
26. When faced with a challenge, my first thought is positive	4	3	2	1
27. I remain positive even when things do not go my way.	4	3	2	1
28. I see every day as a new opportunity at life.	4	3	2	1
29. I often find myself waiting for happiness to find me . . .	1	2	3	4
30. I believe that things will work out the way I want	4	3	2	1

A - TOTAL = _____

31. I set specific life goals and work toward them.	4	3	2	1
32. I often lack confidence in myself..	1	2	3	4
33. I believe I can do whatever I set my mind to	4	3	2	1
34. I am not a quitter..	4	3	2	1
35. I will take calculated chances even if I fail	4	3	2	1
36. I often blame my misfortune on others	1	2	3	4
37. I don’t let obstacles get in my way.	4	3	2	1
38. I rarely blame other when bad things happen to me. . .	4	3	2	1
39. When people say “it’s impossible,” I usually believe them	1	2	3	4
40. I will not let others keep me from being happy.	4	3	2	1

O - TOTAL = _____

(Go to the Scoring Directions on the next page)

Optimistic Outlook Scale Scoring Directions

Resilient people are able to maintain a positive outlook in life. They are able to remain hopeful about their current situation and their future possibilities, expect good things to happen from their own efforts, and retain a positive attitude even when times are challenging. Resilient people work to overcome obstacles. For each of the four sections on the previous pages, total the scores you circled. Put that total on the line marked TOTAL at the end of each section.

Then, transfer your totals to the spaces below:

H - HOPE **TOTAL = _____**

L - LIFE OUTLOOK **TOTAL = _____**

A - ATTITUDE **TOTAL = _____**

O - OVERCOMING OBSTACLES **TOTAL = _____**

Profile Interpretation

INDIVIDUAL SCALE SCORES	TOTAL SCALES SCORES	RESULT	INDICATIONS
Scores from 31 to 40	Scores from 123 to 180	High	You have developed and you use many skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.
Scores from 20 to 30	Scores from 79 to 122	Moderate	You have developed and you use some skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.
Scores from 10 to 19	Scores from 40 to 78	Low	You have not developed or used many skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.

For scales scored in the moderate or low range, find the descriptions on the pages that follow. Read the description and complete the exercises that are included. No matter how you scored, low, moderate or high, you will benefit from these exercises.