



Growth Mindset & Resilience: Strategies to Incorporate into Your Practice

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Overview

The Significance of Mental Health

Understanding Growth Mindset

Activities

Understanding Resilience

Activities

The Significance of Mental Health

- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), mental health involves the interrelation of mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being.
- Poor mental health impacts all aspects of our lives, such as the relationships we have with family, friends, and community and our ability to work (Dattani et al., 2023).
- There is a relationship between mental conditions and cardiovascular disease; people who have mental diseases tend to be more likely to experience cardiovascular disease (De Hert et al., 2018).


The Significance of Mental Health

- The CDC reports that in 2022, 12.5% of adults 18 and older experienced regular feelings of worry, nervousness, or anxiety, and 4.7% experienced regular feelings of depression.
- The American College Association (ACHA) completed a study in 2022 that surveyed 54,000 undergraduate college students.
 - It was found that 77% of students experienced either moderate or severe psychological stress.
 - 54% experienced loneliness and 30% demonstrated suicidal behavior.
- The ACHA also reported that 35% of surveyed were diagnosed with anxiety and 27% were diagnosed with depression within the past 12 months.

Understanding Growth Mindset

- “Mindset” is a group of beliefs that affect an individual’s behaviors and perceptions.
- There are two mindsets: fixed and growth (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).
- An individual with a fixed mindset believes an attribute is not modifiable.
- An individual with a growth mindset believes an attribute can be changed through effort and action.
 - This individual will be more likely to persevere when challenging situations arise and view failures as opportunities for growth (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Understanding Growth Mindset

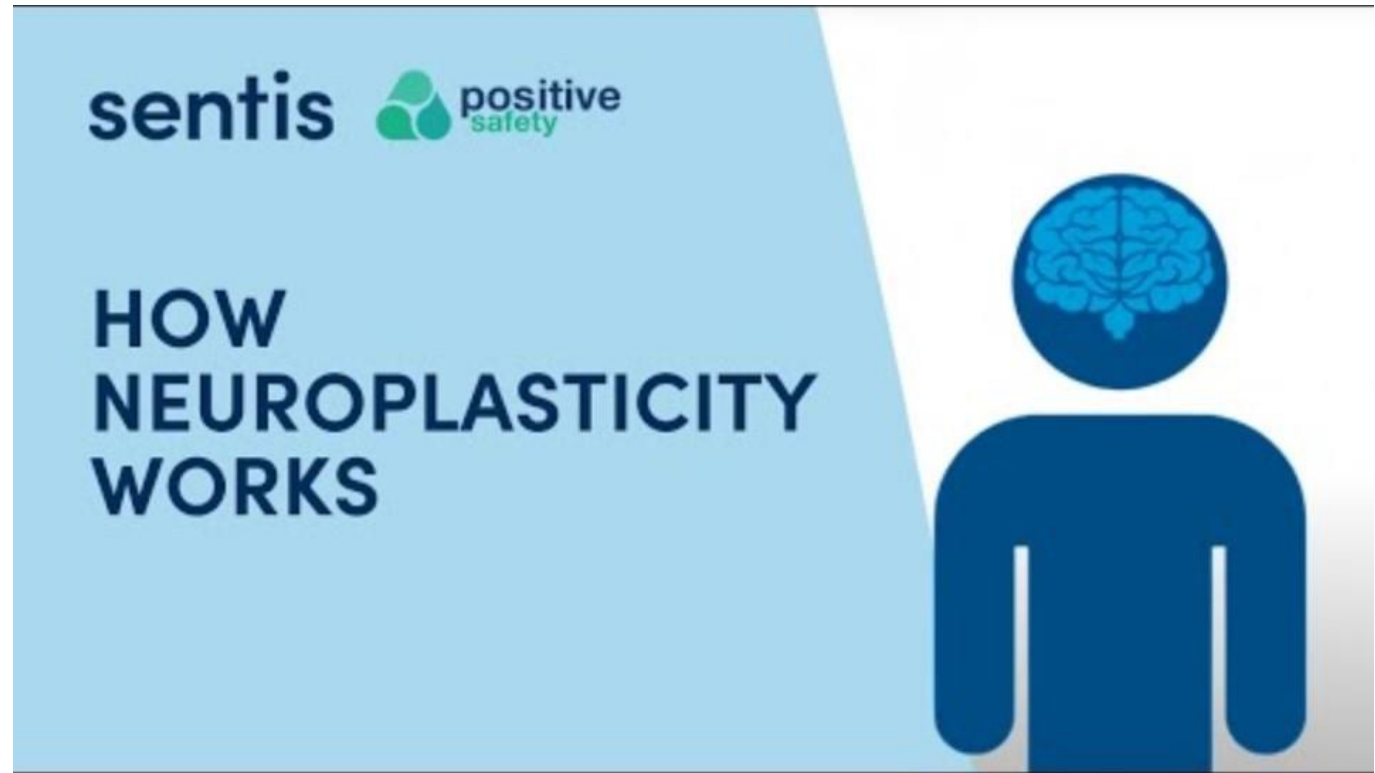
GROWTH MINDSET VERSUS FIXED MINDSET		
DEFINITION	 GROWTH Intelligence/ability can be developed	 FIXED Intelligence/ability is fixed
HOW IT WORKS	Focus on learning goals, like being able to apply a concept beyond class	Focus on performance goals, like passing a test
	Learn from mistakes by looking at what could be improved and making a plan to do so	Identify yourself as a failure when you make an error and give up
	Embrace challenges because they can provide new opportunities and/or help you improve	Avoid challenges because they might make you look less intelligent to others
	Believe that people can change	Believe that people can't change
SOURCE Dweck, Carol S. <i>Mindset: The New Psychology of Success</i> . Ballantine Books, 2006.		
ACUE <small>Association of Colleges and University Educators</small>		

Understanding Growth Mindset

- Neuroplasticity refers to the ability of the brain to change and adapt to new stimuli (Staneiu, 2023).
- It encompasses the ability of the brain to form and organize new neural networks to change the brain's structure and involves the growth of new neurons (Staneiu, 2023).
- A growth mindset relates to neuroplasticity since it conveys the idea that abilities can be learned and improved, supporting the concept of neuroplasticity (Staneiu, 2023).

Activity: “Brain & Neuroplasticity”

- Watch the following video:



<https://youtu.be/ELpfYCZa87g?si=TznkZBbPiHmAAiem>

Activity: “Brain & Neuroplasticity”

- After watching the video, answer the following:
 - What is neuroplasticity?
 - How does neuroplasticity work?
 - How can you implement the concept of neuroplasticity in your current life?

Activity: “Famous Failures”

- Watch the following video:



https://youtu.be/zLYECljmnQs?si=jRMQt337Bf3sle_2

Activity: “Famous Failures”

- After watching the video, answer the following:
 - Provide an aspect of your life that demonstrates a growth mindset
 - Provide an aspect of your life that shows a fixed mindset
 - How can you build a growth mindset?

Understanding Resilience

- Resilience relates to the ability to overcome adversity and failures while maintaining psychological and physical well-being (Russo et al., 2012).
- Resilient individuals demonstrate enhanced mental health by managing negative emotions and crises effectively (Bennett & Windell, 2015) with less psychological pain (Jaureguizar, 2018).
- Individuals reporting higher levels of resilience tend to have lower levels of anxiety, psychological distress, and both depression and anxiety (Connor & Davidson, 2003).
- Bitsika et al. (2013) found that when dealing with the stress of parenting a child with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), resilience acted as a safeguard against developing high levels of anxiety and depression.

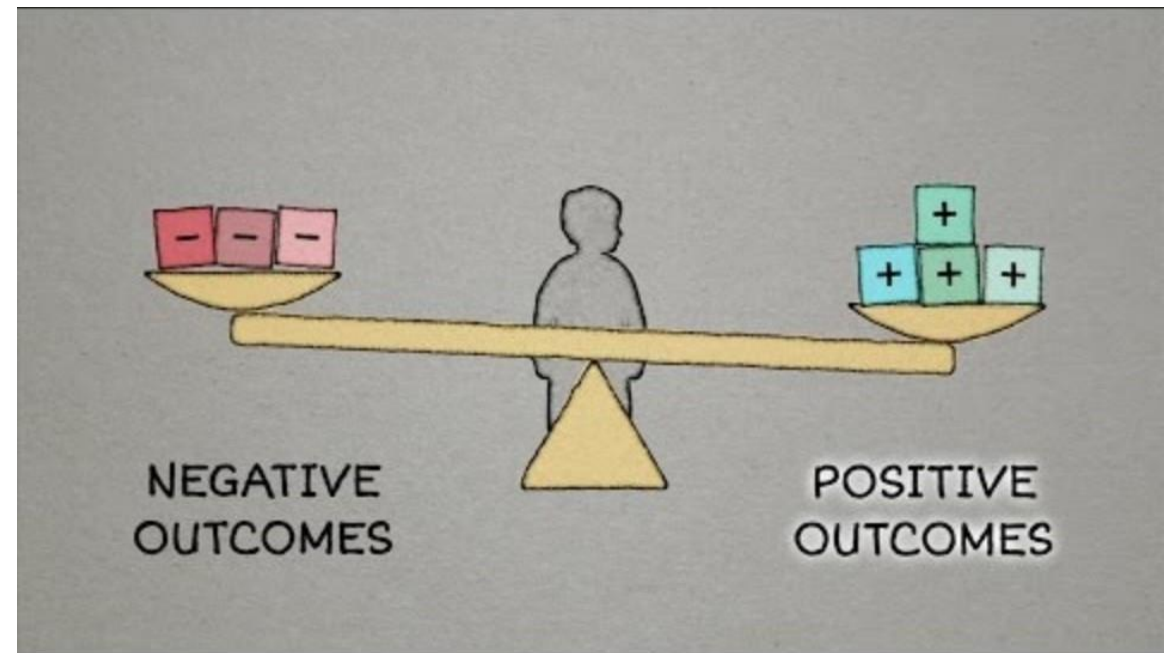


Understanding Resilience

- Resilience can decrease the stress response in mental disorders such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Russo et al. 2012).
- A study among survivors of a mega-earthquake and tsunami on the northeastern coast of Japan found that resilience was an important protective factor against depression and PTSD (Kukihara et al., 2014).
- Resilience can be cultivated through internal and external factors (Russo et al., 2012). The former relates to genetics, while the latter relates to family and social environment (Kumpfer, 2002).

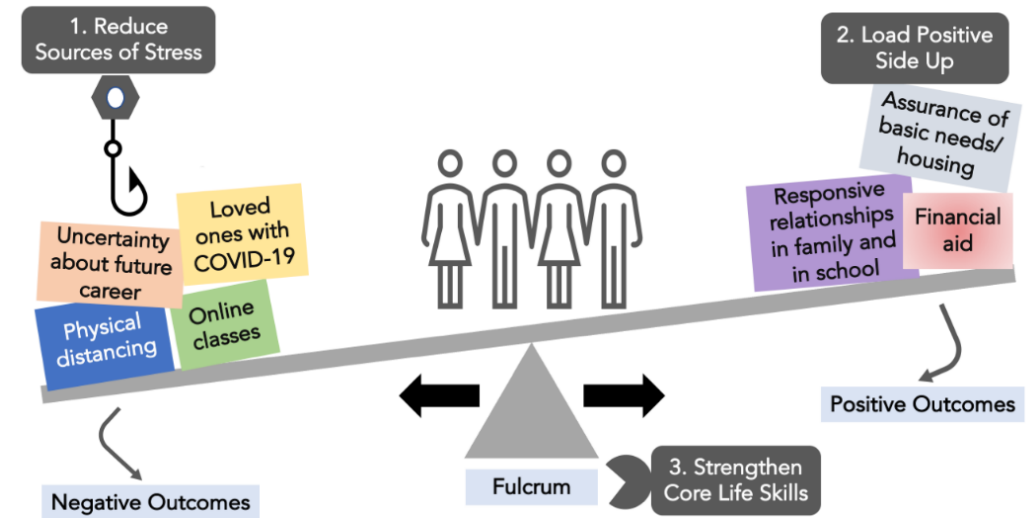
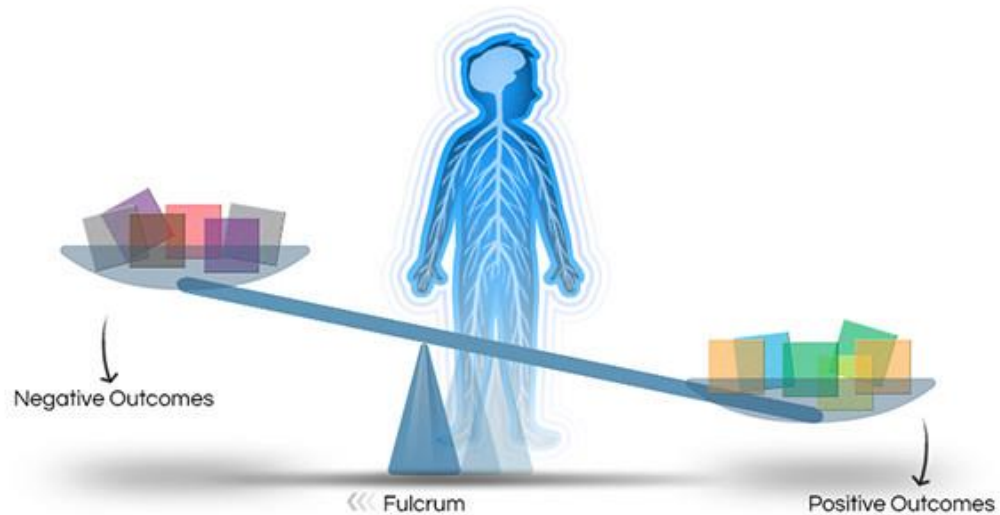
Understanding Resilience

- Learn more about resilience by reading the following article from the Positive Psychology website:
<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-positive-psychology/>
- The following video discusses resilience



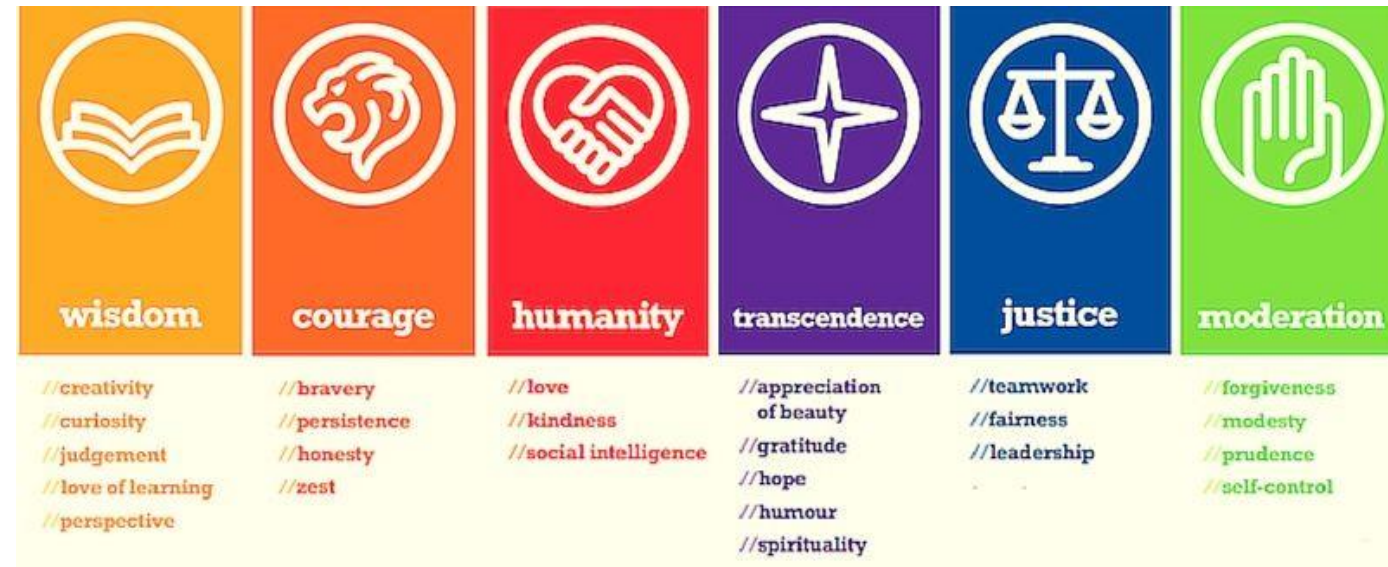
<https://youtu.be/1r8hj72bfGo?si=h2XVb0kr4FfBLwoY>

Nurturing Resilience



Activity: “Identify Your Strengths”

- Look over the following infographic, and on a piece of paper, identify two areas of strength and specify the skills/values you possess under each strength



Activity: The Resilience Plan

[The Resilience Plan Exercise.docx](#)

The Resilience Plan (The 4 S's)

Purpose

This exercise can help you set goals on improving your resiliency and making sure you keep your resilience-building on track.

Tasks

1. First, identify **a recent experience in which demonstrating resilience helped you overcome adversity**. Working through the sheet, you'll then learn about the 4 S's of resilience and how they helped you cope at the time. For each section, you don't need to complete each bullet.

- *Supportive people* – People who gave you advice, or perhaps helped you develop a new, more helpful perspective
- *Strategies* – Methods and approaches you implemented to deal with difficult thoughts and feelings
- *Sagacity* – Wisdom and insights that may have been helpful
- *Solution-seeking behaviors* – Planning, for instance, or searching for useful information.

Past Experience or Challenge	• Unable to exercise 3 days per week consistently. Not having the motivation
Supportive People	• My friend helped me to stay motivated because she would remind me to exercise with her
Strategies Used	• Having a workout buddy • Setting an alarm to remind me to go to the gym • Adding the workouts on my schedule
Sagacity	• Anything is possible • I just have to do it and I will feel better •
Solution-Seeking Behaviors	• Planning ahead of time • Sharing my goal with my friend •

2. Next, **identify a current challenge you'd like to deal with by applying your resilience plan**. The exercise will guide you through the steps of crafting a plan. For each section, you don't need to complete each bullet.

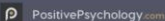
Current Experience or Challenge	•
Supportive People	• • •
Strategies Used	• • •
Sagacity	• • •
Solution-Seeking Behaviors	• • •

3. Then, identify **a current challenge related to health and fitness you'd like to deal with by applying your resilience plan**. The exercise will guide you through the steps of crafting a plan. For each section, you don't need to complete each bullet.

Current Experience or Challenge	•
Supportive People	• • •
Strategies Used	• • •
Sagacity	• • •
Solution-Seeking Behaviors	• • •

Activity: It Could be Worse

It Could be Worse



It Could Be Worse...

Whether it's an emotional, practical or mental challenge that we find ourselves facing, practicing gratitude can often seem incredibly difficult.

Often, this comes down to unhelpful thought patterns or processes. For example: "Things would be easier if I had a different job," or "It would all be better if I wasn't alone."

Challenging these thoughts and reframing difficult situations can often be useful in helping us overcome setbacks.

It Could Be Worse... is an exercise to help you apply this approach.

Complete this exercise by filling in the boxes at your own pace. As you work through the activity, try to imagine yourself in the situation you're writing about, as vividly as you can.

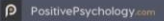
Step One:

Describe a situation that you're currently struggling with.

What is most challenging about this situation, in your opinion? What aspects of this situation are hardest for you to deal with right now?

Can you identify any particular thoughts that are bothering you? E.g. "If only..."

1



Step Two:

Now, try to shift your focus away from the specifics of the situation. Instead, try to brainstorm three ways the situation could be worse.

Write your responses in the box below, trying your best to fully imagine yourself in that scenario as you write.

How could it be worse? Identify three ways this situation could be more difficult.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2

Activity: Exploring Past Resilience

Exploring Past Resilience

Part One:

Recall a difficult time, or a particular challenge in your life that you struggled with. This may have been an isolated or ongoing event, but do try to choose one that was especially taxing, emotionally.

Consider your approach to handling that situation at the time, writing your answers in the box provided.

What was the most difficult aspect of that situation? How did you cope at the time? How did you overcome the situation and emerge successfully on the other side?

Part Two:

Reflecting on your answer to Part One, answer the following questions.

What was your objective at the time?

What was the result?

What challenges did you need to overcome?

What difficult thoughts and emotions do you recall experiencing at the time?

Was there someone you successfully turned to for outside support? Who?

What skills were helpful to you in dealing with the situation? What perspectives or mindsets in particular?

Rate your resilience in that situation on a scale of 1-100% (where 100% is highest):

Why do you feel it wasn't 0%? What, in particular, makes you think that?

What character strengths, skills, or qualities do you believe were helpful to you?

If you rated your resilience below 100%, how do you feel you could improve it when you encounter similar future challenges?

Based on the past experience you just worked through, what is some advice you might give to someone who is dealing with a similar situation?

Continue to Practice Growth Mindset & Resilience

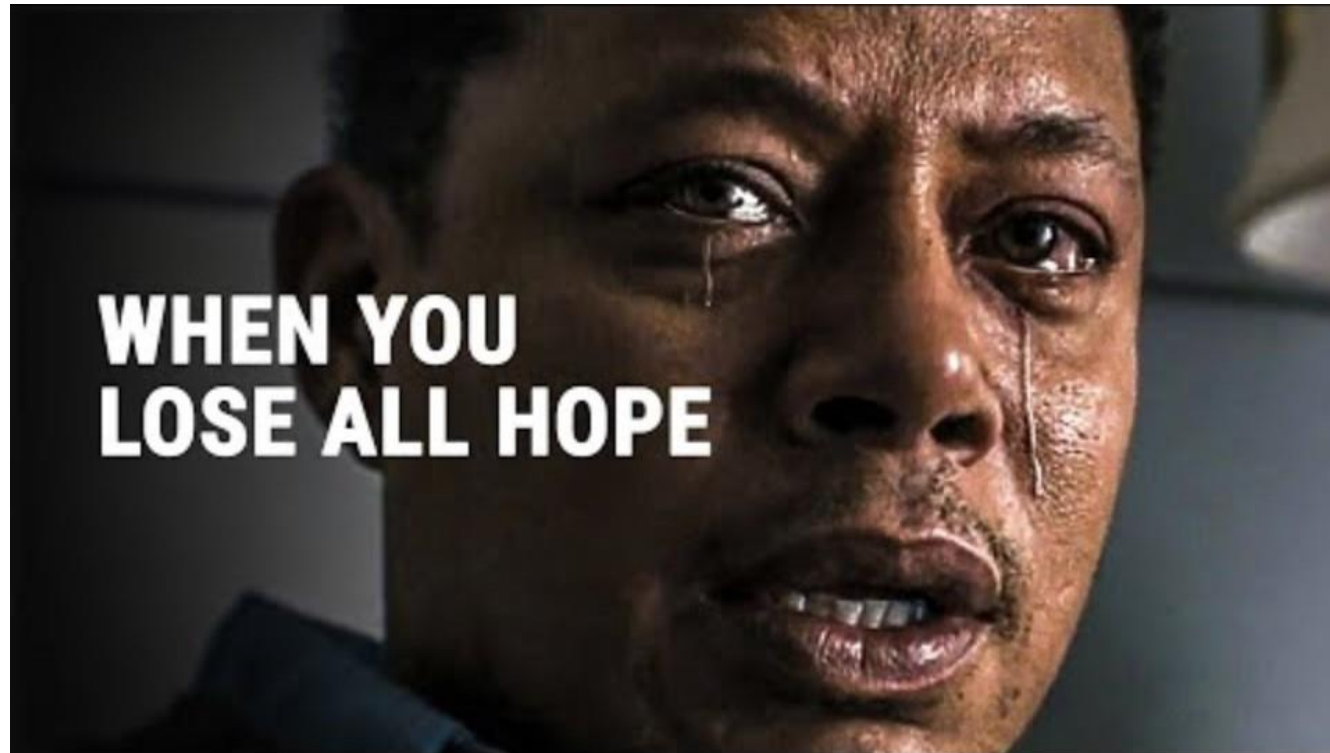
- Learn more about growth mindset by watching the following video:
<https://youtu.be/5Jr3vqojN-A?si=CKsGm4G6zh-NtB7P>
- Embrace a growth mindset by pushing yourself to new challenges and opportunities/activities.
- Embrace mistakes. If you made a mistake or failed an exam/assignment, look for the lesson and reflect on how this circumstance can help you grow as a student/individual.

Continue to Practice Growth Mindset & Resilience

- Focus on learning instead of memorizing. Reflect on what you are learning and how it can be applied to other areas of your life.
- Continue to reflect on the resilience plan and keep a journal.
- When experiencing challenges or adversities, you can review the resilience plan activity and your top strengths to help you overcome the situations.

Additional Resources: Resilience Activity

“Adversity as an Opportunity for Growth”



<https://youtu.be/nYlXlpg5Bdl?si=jd6HcE6qdzolwrLM>

Activity: “Adversity as an Opportunity for Growth”

- After watching the video, answer the following:
 - What is resilience to you?
 - Think about one challenging event you overcame or are currently overcoming. Identify two positive outcomes that helped you overcome or can help you overcome this adversity
 - How can you use the two strengths you previously identified to overcome this adversity
 - List two ways this video can help you become more resilient.



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