

CLIMATE RESILIENCE BUILDING

Governments and businesses alike are planning now for the environment and economy they will face in the future. As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, climate change will continue to accelerate. Even if emissions were to stop today, the climate would continue to change for some time as the Earth's system responds to the warming already underway. It makes sense to anticipate changes and act now to minimize future economic and social risks. Climate resilience is often associated with acute events – like heat waves, heavy downpours, hurricanes etc that will become more frequent or intense as the climate changes. However, good resilience planning also accounts for chronic events, like rising sea levels, worsening air quality migration of populations.

Cities and local communities are responding by investing in infrastructure updates and climate-smart planning to mitigate the impacts of acute and chronic events. For example, a combination of nature-based solutions and building improvements, like planting street trees and installing green roofs, can help mitigate extreme heat. Actions like these are especially important in historically marginalized communities, where climate impacts can exacerbate existing inequalities. For their part, businesses increasingly recognize how supporting local governments and building their own climate resilience helps create competitive economies they can thrive in. While there is still much work to be done, there are many inspiring cases of resilience planning that can serve as models for future initiatives.

In this context, a climate resilient society is one that is: reflective (learns from experiences); robust (both people and infrastructure can withstand the impacts of extreme conditions); forward-thinking (with plans made to ensure systems function during extreme events); flexible (so systems and plans can change)

Tips to Build Resilience

1. 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 civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. 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 difficult situations.

3. Accept that change is a part of living. Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.
4. Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic 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?”
5. 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.
6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality, and heightened appreciation for life.
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
8. Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.
9. 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.
10. Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful. For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.