

# Helping employees cope

## Personal supports

While workplace support and psychological safety are very important to resilience support, there are some things individuals can do to help themselves become more resilient.

### Improve resilience in your daily life

- Good self-care – knowing your limits, like when you need to take a break
- Eating well – choosing to eat healthy can make you feel better
- Physical activity – relieves stress and improves sleep, leading to better health
- Fostering positive relationships – spending time with those who are important to you
- Finding your purpose/establish personal goals
- Embracing change - adaptation is key to resilience.



How do you carry on through life's hardships and adapt to cope with them? Being able to do that effectively is called resilience. Employers can promote resilience in the workplace by providing support and spearheading programs to increase wellness and psychological safety.

## Benefits of resiliency

Being resilient doesn't mean that you never experience bad events; it just means you are better able to handle it when they do happen. It means you have the skills and resources to work through setbacks or traumatic events. People who are less resilient often feel helpless and unable to cope with everyday stress.

## Establishing psychological safety

If your workplace doesn't provide basic psychological safety, your employees may find it difficult to be resilient. Timothy R. Clark describes the Four Stages of Psychological Safety ([bit.ly/3k0Reku](https://bit.ly/3k0Reku)) as:

### Inclusion safety | People need to feel that they belong

By honoring individual differences, leaders can help their employees feel involved. Inclusion safety is about our basic human need to feel accepted by everyone, without having to prove our value.

### Learner safety | People need to be able to learn

An employee needs to feel included and accepted in their environment before feeling safe enough to learn. Accepting or giving feedback, asking questions, making mistakes, and growing all feel safer to do when employees feel accepted. A large part of learner safety is ensuring that employees aren't concerned that they will be judged or punished.

### Contributor safety | People need to be able to share their ideas

Everyone wants to feel like they've made a difference, and contributor safety is all about giving employees the chance to do that. Supporting employees' contributions to discussions gives them

the chance to speak their mind, resulting in new ideas. Combine the freedom to share ideas with direction so they build confidence in the things they do.

### **Challenger safety | People need to be able to question the way things are done**

Speaking up puts feelings, ideas, and reputation at risk. However, it can result in more engagement, happiness, and fulfillment in your employees.

### **Psychosocial risks**

Psychosocial hazards are work-related stressors that can negatively affect an individual's resilience, as well as an organization's effectiveness ([bit.ly/3k2Cb9N](https://bit.ly/3k2Cb9N)). Examples could be:

- Large workload with little or no support
- Lack of role clarity
- Lack of independence, indirect communication
- Restructuring, job insecurity
- Harassment, bullying, violence

This matters because it can negatively impact productivity and increase an individual's risk for physical, mental, and emotional health issues.

### **How to support your employees**

By maintaining an inclusive environment that is open to positive change, your workplace can support employee resiliency. Here are a few ideas for employers looking to reinforce this effort:

First, construct a plan of what you want to do before you ask employees what they can do. Messaging matters! By valuing individual employee contributions and listening to their concerns, you are sending the message that they matter. That is beneficial to your organization and can make it easier for employees to be resilient.

Second, foster a culture of well-being in your workplace. This is an overarching plan that could include many options for support. A few examples of well-being culture could be more flexible scheduling options, open communication between the worker and their supervisor so they don't take on too much, and clear expectations that ensure the worker knows what to do. Supporting worker well-being in their work and personal life will reinforce their resilience.

Organizational-level actions to support this effort will be much more sustainable and effective when asking, "What are you doing to support employee resilience?"

### **Summary**

These are just a few ideas – everyone will be a little different when it comes to their own needs and workplace needs. Here are resources for more information on resilience:

#### **Workplace Strategies for Mental Health** ([bit.ly/3ggtJ6V](https://bit.ly/3ggtJ6V))

Includes free assessments and resources to promote resilience and psychological safety

#### **Bounce Back Project – The Five Pillars of Resilience** ([bit.ly/2XrshH4](https://bit.ly/2XrshH4))

This site describes five elements that support resilience: self-awareness, mindfulness, self-care, positive relationships, and purpose.

#### **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**

Mental Health - Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace : OSH Answers ([bit.ly/3CYwRNc](https://bit.ly/3CYwRNc))

Goes over the psychosocial risk factors in more detail; workplace culture; how leaders can make a difference; and things that can affect mental health

### **What does it mean to be a cultural architect?**

A cultural architect is an agent of change in an organization. They model and reinforce positive social norms and practice self-awareness. The goal is to shift behavior and to establish a high level of psychological safety in your workplace.

- You have the power to transform the environment you work in and the way you connect with others.
- Take big steps in self-awareness
- Bring humility to the task
- If you don't succeed the first time, don't be afraid to keep trying.