

Building Resilience

Instructions:

Beliefs Exercises

Locus of control:

The term locus of control refers to where we feel the control lies in our lives.

- Someone with an *internal* locus of control believes that they have control over what happens to them, through their decisions and actions
- Someone with an *external* locus of control believes that most of what happens to them is controlled by fate, chance and other people and that they can have little or no influence on a situation

To be resilient, you need to have an internal locus of control. People with an external locus can create new habits of behaviour, modelled on someone with an internal locus, to move themselves to having an internal locus of control.

Step 1: Self-awareness Establish where you are on the locus of control continuum. Use the scale below to show how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you strongly agree with the statement circle 1 and if you strongly disagree then circle 4 etc.

	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Our society is run by a few people with a lot of power and there is not much the ordinary person can do about it	1	2	3	4
2	Success hinges on being at the right place at the right time	1	2	3	4
3	There will always be conflict in the world, however hard people work to stop it	1	2	3	4
4	There is no point in voting, it won't change anything	1	2	3	4
5	Everything which happens in life is predestined	1	2	3	4
6	It's a waste of time trying to change people, they will always stay the same	1	2	3	4
7	Whether I work hard or not it won't make any difference to how others assess my performance	1	2	3	4
8	Leaders are born not made	1	2	3	4
9	Luck and chance play a key role in life	1	2	3	4
10	Most of what happens in life controlled by forces that we do not understand and can't control	1	2	3	4

Step 2: Take note of the answers you scored as 1s or 2s as these are external biased. Do not get drawn into the truth behind the statement, use the statement to explore what impact this belief might be having on your influence.

Step 3: Explore new habits that you could undertake to move you one step nearer towards internal. Ask yourself:

- What is my ideal outcome in this situation?
- What needs to happen for me to feel more comfortable and moving towards success?
- What would someone I respect and has an internal locus of control do in this situation?

Building Resilience

- If I couldn't fail what could I do to influence the outcome?
- How can I overcome the obstacles that are stopping me from taking action?
- What support do I need to help me take action?
- Who could I speak to that could provide ideas on actions I could take to manage this situation?

Note: all these questions are based on the assumption that there is something that can be done. If you approach a situation with the belief that you can, you will be open & receptive to finding those solutions. Conversely if you believe you can't you will prove that to be true as this is how our brains work. To quote Henry Ford *"if you think you can or you think you can't, you are right and you will prove it"*

Step 4: Commit to taking action on some of the ideas that you have generated in step 3 and notice how you feel and the results. Doing something may not provide the perfect solution but it will provide you with more information and ideas as to what further options are open to you. Doing nothing will provide you with nothing.

Step 5: Each time you are faced with a situation that you feel unhappy about approach the situation using steps 3 & 4. This will embed new behaviour habits and move your locus of control towards internal.

Building Resilience

Thinking Errors:

We all make thinking errors from time to time that have an impact on our perception of a situation and the choices open to us. Some of the most common errors are detailed below:

All or nothing – thinking is black and white rather than shades of grey. *“I have got to get this 100% perfect.” “I always make this mistake.” “I’ll never get the hang of it.”*

Impact: Tendency towards perfectionism & sense of failure if not perfect. This error can lead to not trying or quitting as won’t try if it can’t be perfect.

Antidote: Change thinking to ‘good enough’

Labelling – This is when we attach negative labels to ourselves. *“I’m useless. I am a failure. I am not the sort of person who can cope with all of this. I am so unlucky.”*

Impact: This is the fastest route to depression.

Antidote: Separate behaviour from person such that worth is not measured by performance (see tool on self-regard)

I should/ I must/ I can’t – this is when we set unrealistic standards for ourselves. *“I should be able to cope with this work.” “I must do better this time.” “I can’t handle this.”*

Impact: Always fall short of expectations and have sense of being a failure

Antidote: Substitute must/should for preferences and rather than saying I can’t ask yourself ‘how can I?’ Work at source rather than focussing on outcomes.

Magnification – This involves blowing things up out of all proportion. *“I failed my promotion interview – my career is in ruins.” “I missed the train – this is terrible.” “We didn’t win the contract – it is the end of the world.”*

Impact: Perceived consequences are much higher than reality causing higher levels of stress

Antidote: Use 1 – 100 awfulness scale exercise to bring situation into perspective

Predicting – here we predict negative future outcomes. *“I am going to really embarrass myself in this meeting.” “If I make a mistake everyone will laugh at me.” “I bet that everyone is thinking I am an idiot.”*

Impact: Visualisation is a powerful technique that can help you achieve that vision. Therefore, if you believe something negative this provides the focus for your brain and it more likely to come true. The brain struggles with negative commands – if you ask someone *not* to think of a pink elephant they are likely to think of a pink elephant!

Antidote: Visualise the positive outcome you wish to achieve

Building Resilience

Discounting – Here we minimise the positive factors in favour of negative aspects. “He is only saying my work is good because he feels sorry for me. I was really lucky to make that sale. I can’t believe I passed the exam- the questions must have been easy.”

Impact: Positive feedback and comments builds our self- regard – refusing them stops this benefit. Refusing compliments can also be interpreted as rejection or being ungrateful by the other party.

Antidote: Accept compliments and feedback at face value. Choose to wear “your positive lens specs”.

Step 1: Reflect on the thinking errors – what patterns can you recognise? Raise your awareness, notice when these thinking patterns are not helpful and choose alternative behaviours for a better outcome.