

Resilience can be an important part of your emergency preparedness kit. It is a psychological tool that can help us deal with anxiety, fear, and distressful events in a time of war.

Developing resilience is a personal journey. An approach to building resilience that works for you might not work for someone else. If you are feeling stuck or overwhelmed and unable to use the tips listed above, you may want to consider talking to someone who can help, such as a psychologist or other mental health professional. Turning to someone for guidance may help you strengthen your resilience and persevere in a time of war.

Information contained in this brochure should not be used as a substitute for professional health and mental health care or consultation. Individuals who believe they may need or benefit from care should consult a psychologist or other licensed health/mental health professional.

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For additional resources on resilience, visit the American Psychological Association consumer Web site at www.helping.apa.org. For additional copies of this brochure, call 1-800-964-2000 or go to the APA Web site, www.APAHelpCenter.org

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RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF WAR

*In times of war,
it is not unusual
for people
to have feelings
of uncertainty...*



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...No one knows how long a war will last or how it will affect our lives. We may feel uncertain about the future and anxious about events that are out of our control.

You may react differently to a war today because of the impact of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Terrorism creates fear and uncertainty about the future. Because terrorist acts are random and unpredictable, war today poses a new kind of threat, one with which Americans have had little experience. You may feel more afraid, insecure, and vulnerable as a result of concerns that the United States could be attacked again.

We do not all respond the same way to war. Someone with previous experience in war or other types of conflict may unexpectedly recall distressing thoughts and feelings from that previous experience. Those of us who have family and friends in the reserves or military may worry over their well-being.

War affects each of us differently, and we all have an individual and unique way of dealing with stressful situations in a time of war. Building resilience—the ability to adapt well to unexpected changes and events—can help us manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty related to war. However, being resilient does not mean that you won't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common when we have suffered major trauma or personal loss in a time of war or even when we hear of someone else's loss or trauma.

We all can develop resilience. It involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned over time. Following are tips to build resilience that can help you adapt to unexpected events and stressful situations in a time of war.

10 Tips for Resilience *in a Time of War*

1. Make connections.

Keep in touch with family, friends, and others. Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Some people find comfort in connecting with a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately.

2. Help yourself by helping others.

Assisting others in a time of need, such as doing volunteer work at a community organization or helping families of active reservists or military personnel serving in the war, can be empowering.

3. Maintain a daily routine.

Keeping up with your daily routine of work, errands, household chores, and hobbies provides you with a feeling of stability when the world around you seems chaotic. Sticking with a routine can be comforting to your children as well.

4. Take care of yourself.

Make time to eat properly, exercise, and rest. Schedule time for things you enjoy, such as hobbies and social activities. Caring for yourself and even having fun will help you stay balanced and enable you to better deal with stressful times.

5. Give yourself a “news” break.

Be sure to control the amount of time you and your family spend watching and reading war-related news coverage. Although it's natural to seek out the news to keep informed, too much news can make you more anxious. Consider limiting your news intake to no more than one hour a day, and try not to watch the news right before you go to bed, when you need to “wind down.” It's okay to turn off the TV or radio and allow yourself to focus on non-war-related things.

6. Have a plan.

Having an emergency plan in place will make you feel in control and prepared for the unexpected. Establish a clear plan for how you, your family, and friends will respond and connect in the event of a crisis. Have a family or neighborhood meeting to talk about whom to call in emergencies or designate a place to meet if you can't reach someone by phone. Make a plan for your pets and a list of items you will need to take in an emergency.

7. Prepare a security kit.

When pulling together an emergency kit, remember to include those things that give you comfort and security, such as a favorite book, a journal, or pictures of loved ones. Also include a list of your loved ones' phone numbers so that you can reestablish connections with them as soon as possible.

8. Nurture a positive view of yourself.

Recall the ways you have successfully handled hardships in the past, such as the loss of a loved one, a divorce, or a major illness. Draw on these skills to meet current challenges. Trust yourself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions.

9. 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. Remember that wars end, and circumstances can ultimately improve. Previous generations have faced war and gone on to prosper—use their examples to inspire you.

10. Maintain a hopeful outlook.

An optimistic and positive outlook enables you to see the good things in your life and can keep you going even in the hardest times. There are positive things in everyone's life, such as good health, a comfortable home, and strong friendships. Taking the time to identify and appreciate them will enhance your outlook and help you persevere.