

Strategies to Build Resilience

It's you who determines your post-treatment lifestyle.

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to recover from difficulty. It's an essential life skill and key coping mechanism to help us when frightening, challenging or unpleasant events occur. Tapping into resilience can bring confidence, connection and a sense of control as we continue to navigate our journey.

Tips for Creating the Future You Want

Focus on what can you control:

- Know your strengths and play to them. Pay attention to what's helpful and positive.
- You have a choice – make it your own choice and remember, it doesn't have to be the perfect choice every time. You can change your mind if you want to.
- It can be helpful to practice acceptance and commitment therapy, where you determine what you can control and what you can't, with the aim of increasing your psychological flexibility. Your mental health professional can assist with implementation if required.
- Rather than taking individual incidents or issues out of context, focus on the bigger picture.
- Forgive yourself if you have a bad day – it's just one day, then you can reset for tomorrow.

Simple Strategies for a Healthy Mind

Detached Mindfulness

Helps you develop awareness of a thought, then simply observe it rather than engaging with it. Like watching passing clouds – seeing them but doing nothing about them. This technique can be very helpful in releasing worries.



Self-Reflection

Try meditation, or perhaps some journaling. It can be very helpful to get those thoughts out of your head and onto paper or in digital format. Don't worry if this doesn't suit you – different things work for different people.

Worry Postponement

Allocate a specific time of the day, and a limited *timeframe*, to think about what's worrying you. Each time a worrying thought arises, you put it aside for later. Allocate 20-30 minutes towards the end of the day as your intensive "worrying time". Do this at least 2 hours before bedtime.

Talking it Through

Be sure your loved ones are aware that it's important for you to talk about your feelings. Talking will help you make sense of those feelings and emotions.



Fear of Cancer Returning

This is a common fear amongst melanoma patients. Managing the fear and have realistic expectations of yourself is the key. Remember to be kind to yourself. What encouragement would you offer a friend in this situation? If your anxiety is high, talk to your health professional about treatments/strategies that can assist.

Reaching out for Help

A sense of connection is important. Reach out to friends and family and let them know what you're feeling and thinking. Let them know how best to support you. Support groups, such as MPA, can also be invaluable.

If you're struggling emotionally, be proactive in raising the issue with your health professional.

- **Cancer Council Website** – cancer.org.au
- **Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre Website** – petermac.org