

Building personal resilience



everyone fit
for the future

What is emotional resilience?

Resilience can be described as an individual's ability to adapt to stress and adversity. Having resilience is about having inner strength – the ability to 'bounce back' from the stresses and challenges that life, family, work and the world throws at you. Having resilience allows an individual to maintain a healthy lifestyle in spite of experiencing risk, change and stress.

Why is it important?

“Nearly three in every ten employees will have a mental health problem in any one year, the great majority of which will be anxiety and depressive disorders.”

Stress and Mental Health in the Workplace
MIND week report, May 2005

“87% of people who suffer mental health problems report negative stigma and discrimination.”

Stigma Shout - Service user and carer experiences of stigma and discrimination, Time to Change, 2008

Five ways to improve mental wellbeing

Here are five quick tips to improve your mental wellbeing. These simple activities are things individuals can do in their everyday lives.

Be active...

It doesn't matter what type of exercise you do, it makes you feel good. Discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Connect...

With the people around you whether that is family, friends, colleagues or neighbours. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Take notice...

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning...

Try something new, rediscover an old interest, or take on a different responsibility at work. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving.

Give...

Do something nice for a friend or a stranger, thank someone, smile or volunteer your time.

Healthy lifestyle choices and resilience

Improving wellbeing through leading a healthy lifestyle can help you to become more resilient. Consider addressing one of the following five lifestyle factors and identify healthy habits that work for you:

Diet



What you eat has an impact on short and long-term mental health, as well as playing a role in the development, management and prevention of specific mental health problems.

- Eat at regular intervals throughout the day
- Include a variety of foods
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables

Stay hydrated



The amount and type of fluid we drink has significant implications for mental health. The early effects of even mild dehydration can affect our feelings and behaviour.

- Aim for 6–8 glasses of fluid per day
- Minimise caffeine and alcohol intake

Relaxation techniques



The most common method of managing stress or anxiety is through relaxation techniques.

- Control your breathing if you start to feel anxiety build
- Try popular relaxation techniques including; yoga, deep breathing, and meditation.

Exercise



Exercise leads to the release of endorphins – feel-good chemicals in the brain that help us to relax and to feel happy. Exercise is particularly important for people with depression as it also gives structure and purpose to the day. It may be the ‘magic bullet’ to relieve stress.

- Aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week
- Find an exercise group for that extra social support
- Set yourself attainable goals to keep yourself motivated

Sleep



Poor sleep is linked to physical problems such as a weakened immune system and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Ensure you are getting sufficient sleep to allow your body and mind to recuperate.

- Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep per day
- Avoid naps during the day
- Establish a regular bedtime routine

Where to find help and support

At Network Rail there are various resources and support mechanisms available to you if you are concerned about your mental wellbeing.

1. Health and Wellbeing Portal:
<http://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing>

2. Employee Assistance Programme:
Call: **0800 358 4858**
or **0330 332 9980**
www.validium.com/vclub

3. Occupational Health:
<https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/HelpingOthers/Supporting-wellbeing-at-work/Occupational-Health>