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# Becoming a Resilient Scientist

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# The Stages of Learning

	Enthusiastic beginner	Disillusioned learner	Cautious performer	High Achiever
Competence	Low/None	Some	Moderate	High
Confidence	High	Low	Variable	High





# What is Resilience?

- The ability to:
  - adapt and grow through adversity
  - navigate difficult challenges with awareness, intention, and skill
  - find a constructive way forward during challenging time
- A set of attitudes and behaviors that can be **learned and developed** through education, self-reflection, and practice

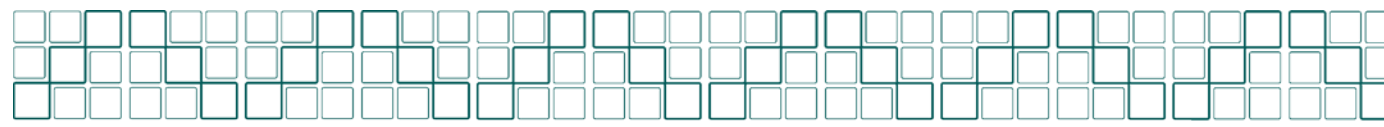


# Take-Aways

Resilience = People + Process

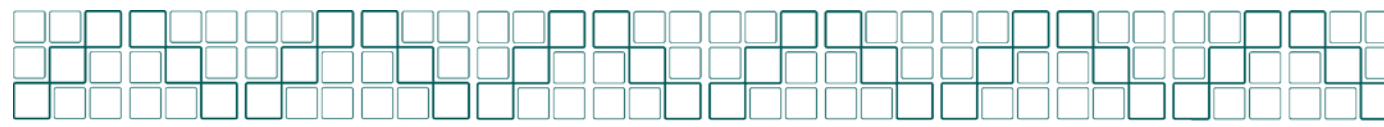
Those who are resilient prepare to be  
resilient

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/design-your-path/201305/10-traits-emotionally-resilient-people>



# To Be Resilient We Have To

- Learn from previous experiences, both good and bad
- Build strong positive relationships with peers and mentors
- Be proactive and use resources to thrive

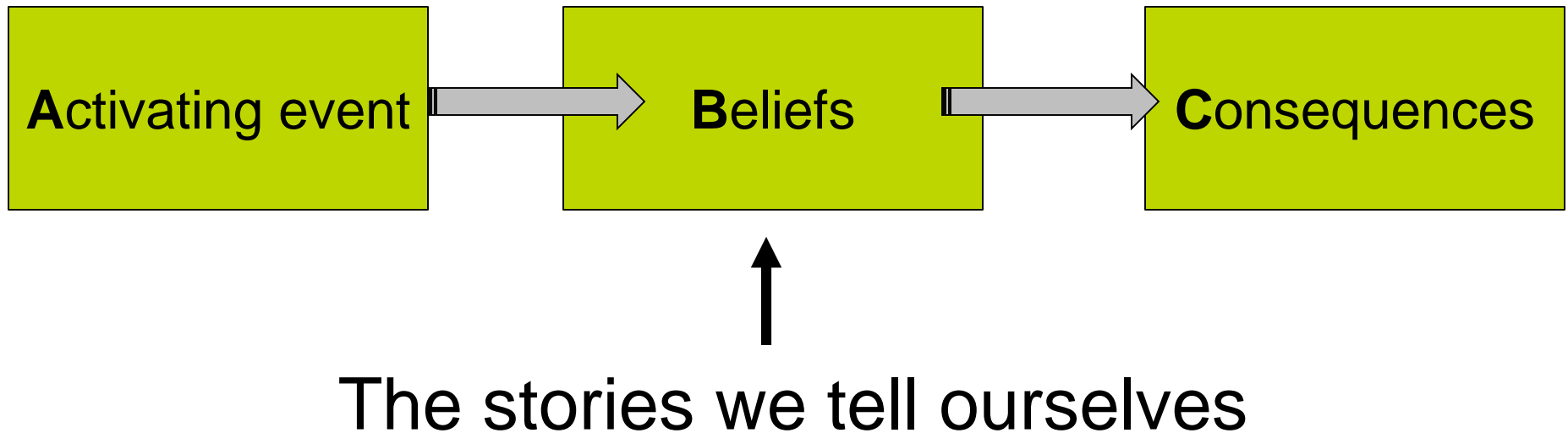


# To Be Resilient We Have To

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- Be thoughtful about how we approach setback and engage with our negative self-talk (our inner critic)



# The ABCs



- <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/abc.htm>



# Some Philosophy At the Outset



From the work Marshall Rosenberg and colleagues,  
Nonviolent Communication; [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)





# Some Generalizations About the Stories We Tell

- They are often:
  - more negative than the situation warrants
  - delivered in jackal language
  - often making them demotivating and self-defeating



# Two Areas to Consider

- Cognitive distortions.... leading to pessimistic attitudes and feelings of hopelessness
- Imposter fears..... leading us to feel like we don't belong



# Cognitive Distortions (Automatic Negative Thoughts)

Characteristic ways that our mind convinces us of something that is really not true to reinforce negative thinking or emotions. Generally serve to keep us feeling bad about ourselves and can lead us to feel very anxious and pessimistic.

NOTE: Our brain has a built-in negativity bias



# Some ANT Examples (and a vote)

- **All-or-nothing thinking:** Your performance is either perfect or it is a complete failure
- **Catastrophizing:** You exaggerate the implications of a setback or mistake
- **Mind reading:** You make assumptions about what someone else is thinking
- **Fortune telling:** Predicting the outcome of an event before it happens
- **Minimizing:** You downplay the importance of your accomplishments or positive qualities
- **Over-generalization:** You take one negative event and see other similar events through that failure



# Tame the ANTS

- Explore your negative self-talk and recognize your “go to” ANTS; reflect on how these ANTs impact you
  - Use journaling for self-reflection and discovery
  - Talk about them with mentors and peers
  - Be open to counseling if they become a real issue for you
- Be mindful and recognize them when they happen
  - Take a deep breath
  - Acknowledge and talk back to them (giraffe language)
  - Use your science voice to question them
  - Find inspiration..... from a positive affirmation, a phrase, an image that makes you feel strong



# An Acronym To Help - HATS

**H**ear your negative self-talk/inner critic

**A**ppreciate you have a choice

**T**alk back – giraffe language

**S**eek help and access resources



# Imposter Fears

The feeling of phoniness in people who believe that they are not intelligent, capable or creative despite evidence of high achievement





# More on Imposter Fears

## ■ Four flavors:

- ❑ Feeling like a fake
- ❑ Attributing success to luck
- ❑ Discounting your successes
- ❑ Assuming you had to work hard and that the equivalent accomplishment was easy for everyone else

## ■ Often a result of:

- ❑ Fear of failure
- ❑ Perfectionist tendencies
- ❑ The tendency to compare ourselves to others

<http://paulineroseclance.com/>





# Causes of Imposter Fears

- Being a student
- Being in an environment that feels foreign to you
- Organizational culture and messaging
- Messages from family and childhood
- Stereotype threat
- Working in a creative field

YOU ARE NOT ALONE! 70+% of individuals experience imposter fears at some point in their educational and work journey.



# Impacts of Imposter Fears

- In small doses and put into perspective?
  - They can make us use resources and work hard
- Unchecked and unquestioned?
  - Increased stress, potentially leading to poor performance
  - Second guessing (in class, on exams, in our research group, etc)
  - Hesitating to ask for help
  - Not volunteering for assignments or applying for competitive positions
  - Maintaining a low profile in the group
  - Engaging in self-sabotaging behavior



# When You Feel Like an Imposter...

## ■ HATS

- Normalize them by reminding yourself that they are a common response to new experiences and learning environments
- Use your science voice to question and explore them
- Talk about your feelings with peers, mentors, friends, family, etc.

## ■ And in the long-term

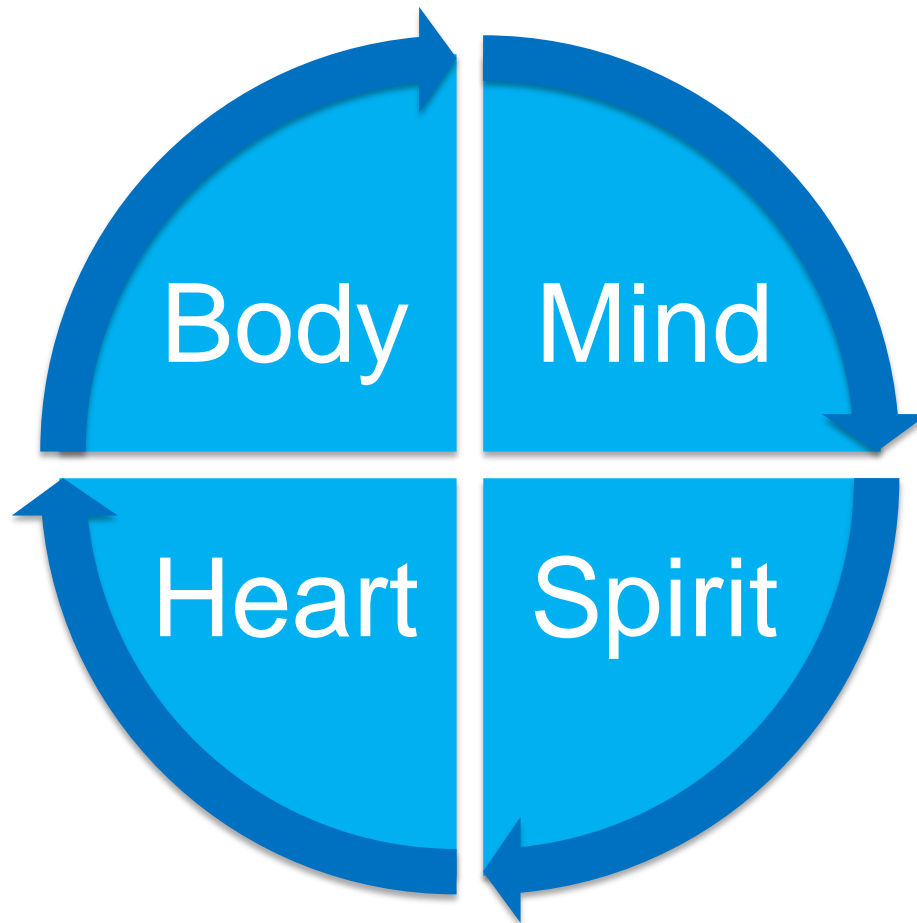
- Build confidence in developing new skills by practicing in low stress situations
- Learn to accept praise rather than rebutting it
- Use journaling and other resources to explore where they might come from and what their impact is
- Really getting in the way? Talk about them with a counselor so you can explore where they come from and how to deal with them

# Most Important Take Home Message

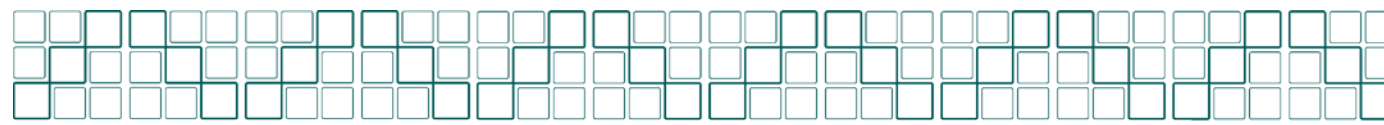
To do well, we have to be well



# Holistic Self-Care



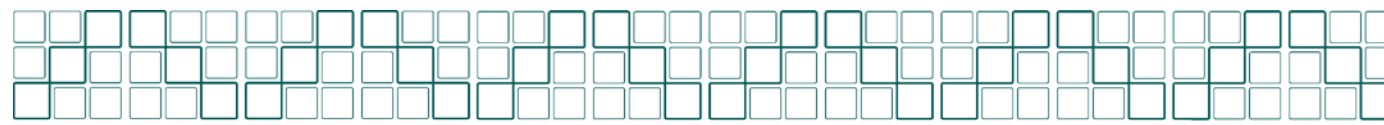
What we do..  
And  
What we don't do



# Wellness Assessment - BODY

**NEVER.....SOMETIMES.....ALWAYS**

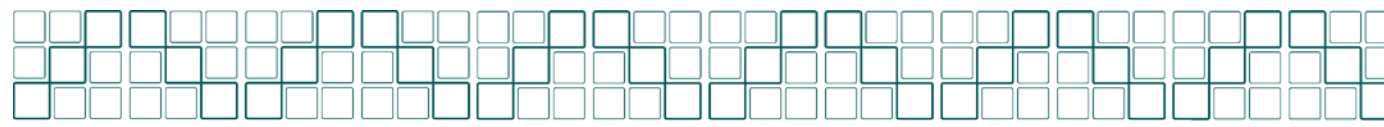
- I am getting enough sleep (7-9 hours)
- I am eating balanced, nutritional meals
- I avoid excessive use of caffeine, alcohol and other drugs of abuse
- I am getting regular exercise (3+ times per week)
- I am getting regular health care for myself
- I take care of myself when I am sick, tired or just need a break



# Wellness Assessment - MIND

**NEVER.....SOMETIMES.....ALWAYS**

- I don't think I have to do everything perfectly
- I focus on the present rather than rehashing the past or worrying about the future
- I engage in negative or deceptive self-talk
- I practice self-affirmations and positive self-talk
- I frequently compare myself to others
- I give myself time to explore and learn new things
- I am open to counseling as a tool to maintain and improve my health and well-being

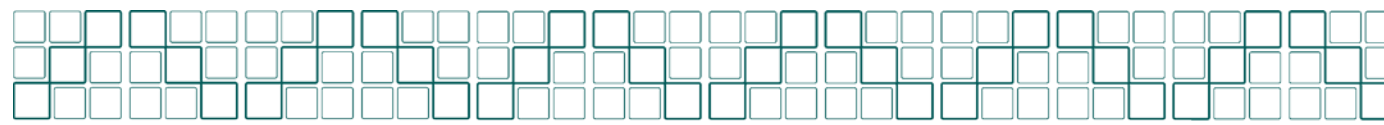


# Wellness Assessment - HEART

**NEVER.....SOMETIMES.....ALWAYS**

- I'm in touch with and let myself feel all of my emotions
- I reach out to others for support when I need it
- I communicate my needs and feelings directly and honestly
- I make time to spend with my friends and family
- I engage in activities that are fun and relaxing for me
- I demonstrate compassion for myself and others





# Wellness Assessment - SPIRIT

**NEVER.....SOMETIMES.....ALWAYS**

- I feel connected to something bigger than me – however I define that
- I seek out resources (practices, activities, people and places) that nurture my spirit
- I reflect on and invest in what is meaningful to me
- I read writings or watch media that are inspirational to me
- I allow time to just be (human *being* vs. human *doing*)
- I engage in activities that support my life's purpose



# Now Let's Talk About the.....

## Elephant(s) in the room





# Shame

“Intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging – [something we are] or something we’ve experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection.”

Dr. Brené Brown: <https://brenebrown.com/>  
Dr. Kristen Neff: <http://self-compassion.org/>



# Shame and Shame Resilience

- “An intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging.
- Is experienced by everyone and creates feelings of fear and disconnection.
- To develop shame resilience, we need to learn to
  - Recognize shame
  - Understand the context
  - Find community
  - Talk about it



# Take Home Message

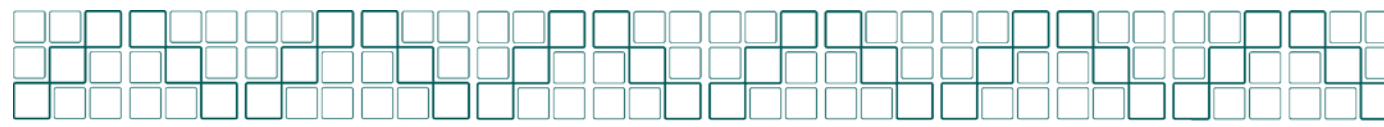
**WHERE WE ARE  
NOW**

**OUR OWN  
INTERNAL  
LANDSCAPE**

**MENTORS &  
LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES**



**WHERE WE WANT  
TO GO**



# To Be Resilient We Have To

- Learn from previous experiences, both good and bad
- Build strong positive relationships with peers and mentors
- Be proactive and use resources to thrive
- Develop our growth mindset
- Be thoughtful about how we approach setback and engage with our negative self-talk
- Do things that bring meaning to our day, week, month....

**Q for U – what brings meaning to your day, week, month?**



# QUESTIONS?

- Learn about NIH Intramural training opportunities and access our on-line career development resources at [www.training.nih.gov](http://www.training.nih.gov).
- All trainees are invited to join us at the NIH Career Symposium; May 10, 2019 on the NIH Bethesda Campus.