

Building Your Resilience with Self-care

Published 3/21/2023 by [Angela Marquez](#)

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Being a student can sometimes feel like the Taylor Swift lyric “We’re happy, free, confused and lonely at the same time; it’s miserable and magical.”

I too, as a student, have been in happy, free, lonely and confused states. However, after a few semesters of trial and error, I've learned a valuable lesson: self-care is the best way to build resilience as an international student.

Before you dismiss self-care as just another buzzword, hear me out!

Self-care isn't just about bubble baths and face masks (although those can be a part of it!). It's about taking care of your mind, body, and soul so you can handle whatever challenges come your way.

For me, self-care has taken many forms. Some days, it's as simple as watching my favourite show or going for a walk outside to clear my head. On other days, it means calling up my grandparents back home for a much-needed chat or indulging in my favourite comfort food. Anything that makes you feel relaxed and helps you recharge is considered self-care.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Think of resilience as a superpower that helps you bounce back from tough times, whether big or small. It's a skill that can be honed and developed just like learning how to juggle or speak a new language, and the key to mastery is practice, practice, practice!

According to Everyday Health, self-care is essential to daily life as it helps individuals overcome challenges, deal with stress and anxiety and maintain a positive outlook.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

Resilience means having the ability to withstand and recover from tough situations. It involves adapting to change, bouncing back from adversity, and maintaining a sense of well-being despite facing stress or trauma. Resilience is a dynamic process that can be strengthened by personal, social, and environmental factors. It is important in personal and professional contexts because it helps individuals cope with difficult situations, increase problem-solving skills, and manage stress effectively. Resilience also helps individuals build strong relationships and communities. Developing resilience helps individuals become more adaptable and better equipped to navigate the challenges of life.

Being a student with a hectic schedule can make self-care feel like a luxury, however, it doesn't need to be. Having hectic schedules, limited time, and financial constraints, can make it challenging to give self-care the attention it deserves. Nevertheless, the benefits of self-care are invaluable, making it a worthwhile investment.

According to LifeWorks, the key to building resilience through self-care is to make it a regular part of your routine, not just sometimes. Even when life gets crazy, taking a few minutes each day to prioritize your well-being can work wonders for your mental and physical health.

Learning how to prioritize self-care is like planting a seed in a garden. It takes time and effort to nurture and grow, but with patience and persistence, it can blossom into something beautiful and rewarding. Each person's journey is unique and may require different resources or strategies to achieve their goals, but the result can be a source of pride and satisfaction.

What works for one person may not work for another, and that's perfectly okay! It's important to recognize that each of us has our individual needs and preferences when it comes to taking care of ourselves.

For example, I love to sit in a quiet room drawing something, but my best friend finds peace in going out on a long run. Hence, engaging in self-care can be an enriching and fulfilling experience as it encourages us to value and embrace our individual preferences and differences.

TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE WITH SELF-CARE

So, here are some tips to make self-care a regular part of your routine:

1. **Schedule time for self-care:**
Treat yourself like a VIP by making self-care a top priority. Schedule it into your day like it's a much-awaited vacation on a beach!
2. **Start small:**
Don't sweat it if you're short on time or energy, start with small self-care activities like a quick stretch or a 10-minute dance break.
3. **Practice Discipline:**
Prioritize yourself and make it a non-negotiable part of your routine. Remember that self-care is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Be open to trying new things and stick to what works best for you.
4. **Find activities that you enjoy:**
You don't have to force yourself to do boring or tedious tasks. Choose activities that bring you joy and make you feel happy, like watching puppy videos or baking cookies.
5. **Be mindful:**

Being present and focused is key to getting the most out of self-care. Take a deep breath, centre yourself, and let the good vibes flow!

6. **Don't be overwhelmed:**

Turn to your trusty journal to vent and process your thoughts. Use it as a tool to organize and untangle your thoughts.

To create a personalized self-care plan, take some time to assess your needs, identify activities you enjoy, set goals, and plan to incorporate self-care into your daily routine.

Obstacles can sometimes get in the way of self-care. According to the Mayo Clinic, here are some common obstacles and how to overcome them:

1. **Lack of time:**

If time is tight, start with mini self-care activities that only take a few minutes. Sneak in a few quick stretches or a power nap during your lunch break!

2. **Guilt:**

You deserve to take care of yourself, so don't feel guilty about it! Let your hair down, take a bubble bath, and indulge in some guilty pleasures guilt-free.

3. **Lack of motivation:**

It can be tough to get motivated, especially when you're feeling down. Find activities that make you feel pumped up and ready to conquer the world, like jamming to your favourite tunes or doing a happy dance.

4. **Lack of resources:**

You don't need fancy equipment or expensive products to practice self-care. Get creative and find fun and affordable ways to take care of yourself, like making DIY face masks, using household items as workout props, and finding free meditation apps online.

Building resilience during your early academic years can have long-term advantages. Mastering the ability to overcome challenges can enhance problem-solving skills, promote a constructive outlook towards setbacks, boost self-assurance, and improve adaptability, all of which are necessary components for achieving success in both personal and professional endeavours.

The most important thing to remember is that resilience and self-care go hand in hand. By taking care of ourselves and engaging in activities that make us feel good, we can develop the resilience to face life's challenges with more ease and grace.

By prioritizing self-care practices, we can tap into our unique potential and cultivate a foundation of fortitude and resilience that will help us overcome any obstacles that we may encounter.

Remember, self-care is not a luxury, it's a necessity for building resilience and thriving in life.

You've got this!

REFERENCES

The content was adapted from the following resources:

[Everyday Health](#)

[LifeWorks](#)

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[University of New Hampshire](#)



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