Personal Growth and Resilience

Change is a constant in life, we are reminded of this each time we ring in a new year. A time we often set our new intentions and reflect on how we can improve ourselves, deepen our relationships and enhance our lives. This month, we would like to explore the area of personal growth and what it means to build resilience. Personal growth can have different meanings to different people, but in essence it is about developing greater self-awareness and understanding. People may develop personal growth through stretching themselves and trying new activities, such as meditation, tai chi or a personal development workshop or by expanding their capacity to see other people’s perspectives, by learning active listening skills.

Regardless of how you define personal growth for yourself, as Maslow reminded us in his hierarchy of needs, growth can only occur after basic needs are met. Food, shelter, a decent income, adequate access to healthcare, once these needs are met, human beings seek to thrive, not just survive. To flourish in the face of difficulty requires tapping into our inner sense of resilience.

When we think of resilience as the practice of adopting adaptive behaviours in the face of change, we can understand how resilience in overcoming hardship can contribute to personal growth. A variety of factors contribute to resilience, such as having trusting, supportive relationships and role models.

The process of developing resilience is as multifaceted as people are; there is no “one best way”. You just have to set the intention and take the steps toward your goal. According to Steven Covey, author of the book *7 Habits of High Effective People*, “if you are proactive, you don’t have to wait for circumstances or other people to create perspective expanding experiences. You can consciously create your own.” Proactive people understand that they choose the scripts by which to live their lives and that they are in charge of their personal growth.

Addressing change and difficulty directly can be daunting. By changing your perspective and changing how you interpret and respond to stressful events, personal growth in the face of hardship is entirely possible. May 2017 be your year to shine and grow, despite whatever difficulties or roadblocks may appear along the path!
Strategies for Fostering Growth and Resilience:

**Take Action:**
- Build and maintain good relationships with family members, friends and others. Reach out for help and learn to accept it in your time of need.
- Take decisive action in the face of adversity, rather than avoiding problems with the hope they will go away.
- Develop realistic goals that you regularly work towards.

**Take Reflection:**
- Reframe your perception of stressful situations. You cannot eliminate stressful situations from occurring, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.
- Accept that change is a constant. Recognizing that certain circumstances cannot be changed can enable you to redirect your energy to circumstances that you can alter, such as your emotions and reactions.
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery within struggle and loss by recognizing the positive effects of your resilience.
- Take a step back to keep things in perspective instead of blowing the event out of proportion.

**Take Care of Yourself:**
- Nurture a positive view of yourself by developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts.
- Be optimistic and expect good things to happen.
- Engage in self-care—eating well, sleeping properly, exercising, being mindful—will prepare your mind and body to deal with situations that require resilience.

**Food for Thought:**
- How do you stay grounded during stressful situations?
- Who can you turn to for support and guidance?
- What do you do already to engage in self-care? Are there any other activities that can be added to your practice of self-care?
- How do you process intense emotions?
- What can you do every day to work towards your goals?

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For further assistance please contact fseap at 1-877-433-0701.

We offer confidential individual, group, and family counselling to all ages. During business hours counselling is provided in-person. Qualified counsellors can also be reached for phone counselling at the above number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

REMINDER: Should you need to cancel or rebook your appointment, please provide at least 24 hours’ notice.

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