



Building Resilience & Boosting Mood

Keith Chadwick

Building on your strengths and resilience

Resilience is a quality we can all develop. It has been suggested that there are certain skills, behaviours, strategies, thoughts and feelings which we can develop from birth. Whenever we are faced with challenges or adversity in our life it is important to reflect and reconnect to our resilient qualities.

When we experience depression/anxiety we may 'forget' about these qualities of resilience or ignore our strengths because we are more tuned into depression or anxious type thoughts and behaviours.

A good starting point is to begin to reflect on previous experiences you have had where you had to face adversity or a challenge and consider what helped you to get through that period in your life. This may help you to see if there is anything from a previous time or experience in your life that may help you in tackling your depression/anxiety now.

Some useful examples of questions to ask yourself:

Question: If you have been depressed/anxious for some time then what helps you manage?

Your answer:

Question: Sometimes after a challenging time has passed in our life we can look back and notice some good thing or things that came out of that experience – what good thing or things have come from your previous difficult or challenging periods in your life?

Your answer:

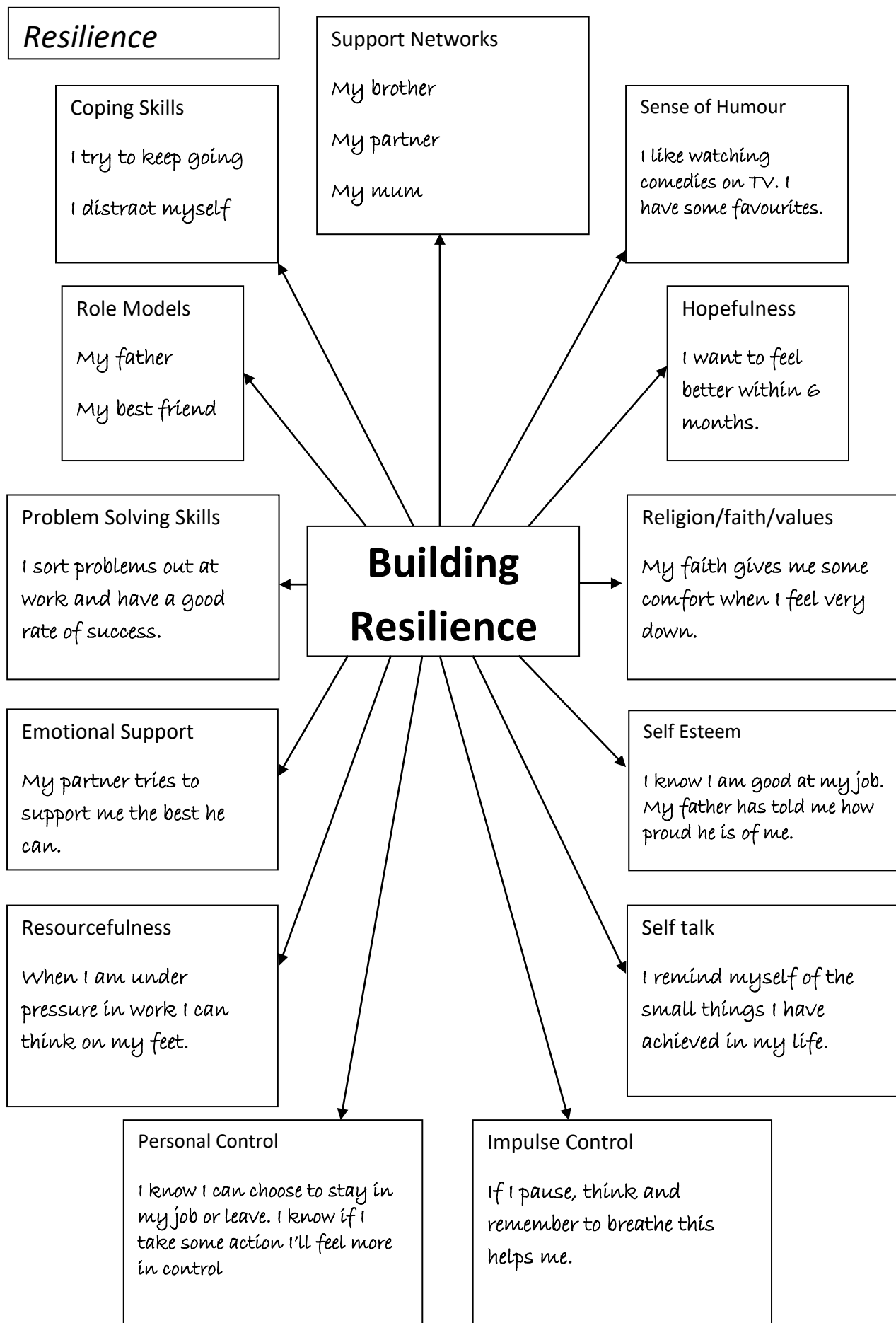
Question: In reflecting on your current difficulties and what you are still managing to do in your life – for example get out of bed, get ready for the day, undertake domestic chores etcetera – what makes this possible to achieve these things – how do you do that?

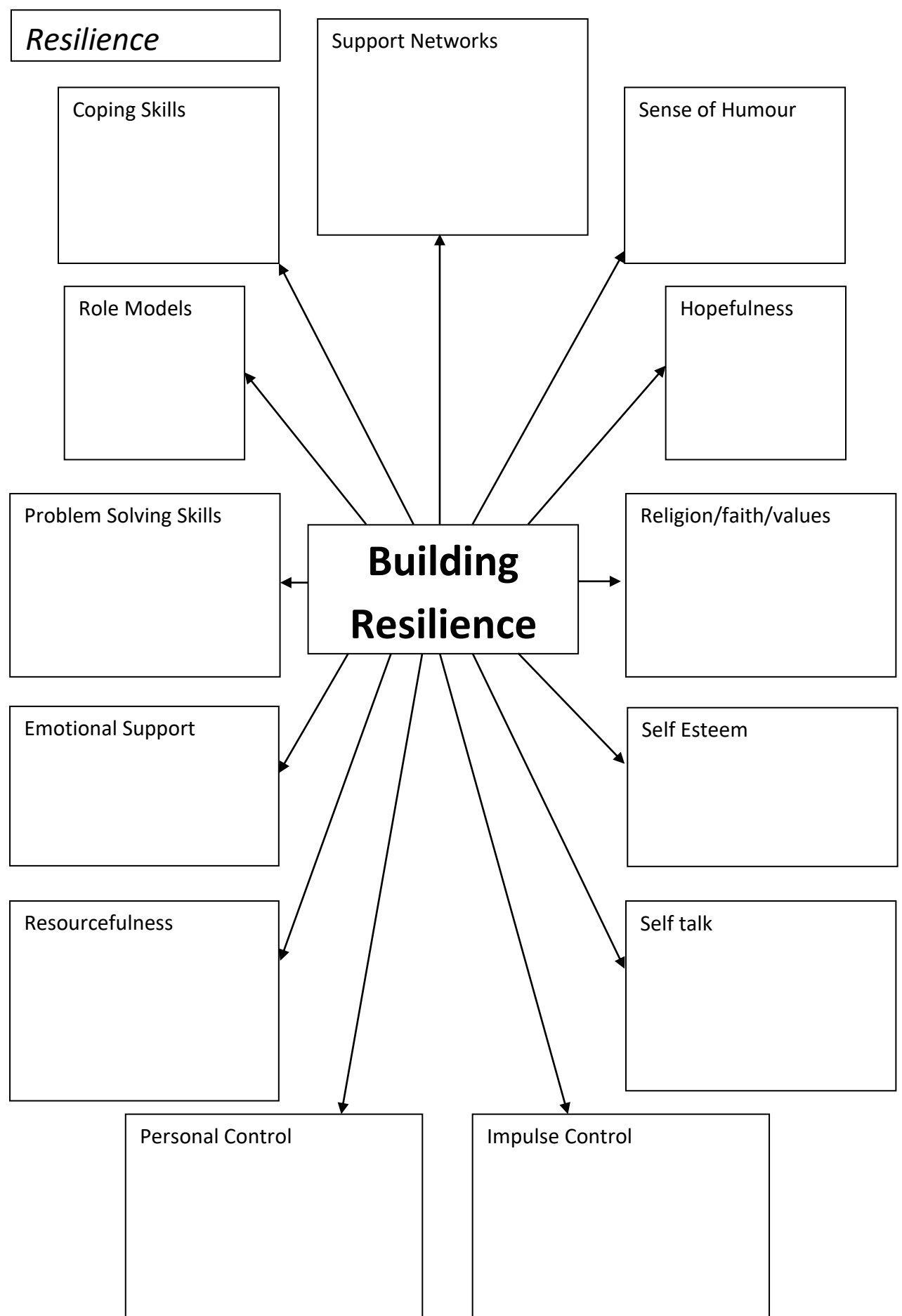
Your answer:

Question: When you have experienced difficulties or challenges in the past what helped you to get through these times?

Your answer:

On the following page is an example of 'mapping' your resilience:





Now have a go completing the blank Resilience Mapping task form – do not worry if you do not fill in all of the boxes – perhaps start and then come back to this task to add things as they occur to you.

Use the blank Resilience Mapping form above. Once completed:

Resilience Building Action Plan

Once you have begun to reflect on what has helped you manage difficulties in the past then consider completing this:

What I plan to do to increase my resilience to help myself currently:
1. 2. 3.
Experiences of resilience I can remind myself of to help manage my current problems:
1. 2. 3.
Which role models I can remind myself of to help manage my current problems:
1. 2. 3.

How to begin to take a small step towards improving your mood: start keeping a Daily Gratitude Journal:

Start to keep a daily Gratitude Journal – this is a brief note of up to 5 good things that you have noticed during each day. This will help you to shift your focus away from only the negative – typically when we are depressed/anxious our attention is drawn to only those things which are negative or fearful – in our past, in the present, in our predictions about the future, in ourselves, in others.....

As you practice to purposely switch your attention for a few minutes each day to more positive things – they can be small things from your day – this is a way of developing new habits around your thinking and encouraging you to feel better.

Try not to worry if you struggle to think of anything or you cannot find 5 things to write about – it takes practice each day! These questions might help you:

- What good things have I experienced today which made me feel a little better – even for a few minutes?
- What small thing did I achieve doing today despite feeling low or anxious?
- Is there anything to do with nature I noticed?
- Did I do anything to help someone else today?
- Did someone do something for you, for example, letting you out on the road or greeting you in a friendly way in a shop?

Here is an example of someone's Gratitude Journal:

Gratitude Journal Example

#	Reflect on your day – try to identify up to 5 good things that you have noticed about today and list them below – they only have to be small items!
1	My friend phoned me to ask how I was.
2	I noticed how green the leaves on the trees outside look.
3	I managed to pay one of my bills online.
4	I went for a short walk to get some air.
5	My cat sat next to me for awhile and liked being stroked.

MY GRATITUDE JOURNAL FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY	1 2 3 4 5
TUESDAY	1 2 3 4 5
WEDNESDAY	1 2 3 4 5
THURSDAY	1 2 3 4 5
FRIDAY	1 2 3 4 5
SATURDAY	1 2 3 4 5
SUNDAY	1 2 3 4 5

Where to Go for Further Help:

- **Contact your Doctor for more help**

- **Find a Private Therapist:**

British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies

www.babcp.com (BABCP)

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

www.bacp.co.uk (BACP)

- **Contact The Samaritans**

Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Address: Chris, P.O. Box 9090. Stirling, FK8 2SA

Website: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

- **Contact MIND Mental Health Organisation**

Website: www.mind.org.uk