

**TEEN**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
AND LIFE SKILLS  
WORKBOOK**



# Teen Resiliency- Building Workbook

Facilitator Reproducible  
Self-Assessments, Exercises  
& Educational Handouts

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**Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook**

Reproducible Self-Assessments, Exercises & Educational Handouts

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# Teen Resiliency

As they develop and mature, teens experience a great deal of stress in their lives. For teens, the stress they experience can be from physical changes to psychological, social and emotional stressors, and these changes can cause depression, confusion, low self-esteem, a lack of self-identity and a sense of uncertainty. Some of this stress can come from these situations . . .

- Arguments and fights at home
- Divorce of parents, caregivers, or other family members
- Pressure to get better grades
- Need to be more independent
- Wish to be better at sports, music, drama, etc.
- Pressure from peers to smoke, drink, etc.
- Victim / Target of bullying
- Career choice decisions
- Education choices decisions
- Body change
- Make friendships and community relationships
- Incentive to prove maturity
- Pressure to earn money
- Will to gain respect of teachers and other adults in the school and community
- Challenges to keep up with peers
- Pressure to do things against better judgment

Many teens face challenges stemming from stress they experience at home, school, volunteer or work settings, and with their friends. The good news is that teens who develop resilience can avoid feeling overwhelmed with the amount of stress they experience. They are able to bounce back and be strong, efficient managers of their stress and live more effective lives.

They accomplish this through building resiliency into their lives. Resiliency is a person's ability to cope with stress and hardship, bounce back to a normal state of functioning, and promote overall well-being.

*(Continued)*

# Facts about Resiliency

Building resiliency is critical in the life of teens. It is currently called a host of other names including hardiness, psychological resilience, emotional resourcefulness, and mental resiliency. Regardless of the name you choose, resiliency is the ability of a teen to interact with the environment, handle stresses that occur, and bounce back from these stressful events. It is the process by which well-being is promoted and protection factors are activated against overwhelming feelings of stress. Teens who have developed resiliency are able to bounce back from the negative impact of difficulties.

## **Resiliency can be thought of as a skill that allows teens to ...**

- manage life's challenges, stresses, changes, and pressures effectively.
- cope with and adapt successfully to adversity.
- bounce back to a balanced state after facing a major disruption in life or career planning.

Teens have an innate ability to demonstrate resiliency as they build resiliency skills into their lives. Resilient people are able to adapt successfully under adverse circumstances such as poverty, mental illness, disasters, terrorism, physical or psychological trauma, parents' divorce, parent's job loss and financial problems, family members in prison, loss of a loved one, peer pressure, physical or sexual abuse, self-induced pressure to achieve in school, or a lack of safety. Resiliency, or a positive behavioral adaptation, is critical when people encounter any type of trauma.

Research shows that resiliency offers protection from distress and illness in the face of change or adversity. The presence of high levels of resiliency is associated with these factors: high level of happiness, self-esteem, sense of energy and vitality, optimism, self-reported health, sense of meaning and direction, and a low level of depression.

## **Teens who are resilient ...**

- work hard at school work and study because they enjoy it and want to achieve
- react in optimistic ways
- see problems and difficult situations as challenges
- take positive risks and actions
- think of changes as natural
- go with the flow
- have a high self-esteem, self-confidence, self-concept and sense of self
- thrive under challenging situations
- believe that they can influence events and their reactions to events
- recognize that with good stress comes growth
- have hope for their future
- overcome obstacles with confidence
- create goals and work at accomplishing them
- possess a keen sense of control over their life
- bounce-back from disappointments

Research also indicates that resiliency can be built through skill development by enhancing communication, developing an optimistic outlook, building a greater sense of control, creating a more realistic sense of self, and learning how to effectively deal with change. The purpose of this workbook is to provide teens with the requisite skills they need to manage their emotions and to develop and maintain resiliency.

*(Continued)*

# Using This Book

The *Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook* contains five separate sections to help participants learn more about themselves and how to build the resiliency which will enable them to thrive in times of adversity, change and stress. They will learn about the importance of building resiliency skills to turn change and stress into opportunities and challenges, to live life zestfully, and to take positive actions in order to live their lives with less stress.

## Sections of this Book

- 1) OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE** helps teens identify how optimistically they view and live life.
- 2) SENSE OF CONTROL SCALE** helps teens explore the extent to which they believe they have control over what happens in their lives.
- 3) SENSE-OF-SELF SCALE** helps teens explore the strength of their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-concept.
- 4) ABILITY TO BOUNCE BACK SCALE** helps teens increase their ability to bounce back and recover from a setback.
- 5) TYPES OF CHANGE SCALE** helps teens to become aware of how well they deal with change, and to develop skills necessary to accept change.

These sections serve as avenues for individual self-reflection and participation in group experiences revolving around identified topics of importance. Each assessment includes directions for easy administration, scoring and interpretation. Each section includes exploratory activities, reflective journaling activities and educational handouts to help participants discover their own levels of resiliency. Reflective exercises and instruction also help participants to build personal and professional resiliency.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, participants will be exposed to a powerful method of combining verbalizing and writing to reflect on and to solve problems. Participants will become more aware of the strength and weaknesses of their resiliency and find ways to build and enhance their hardiness.

**Preparation for using the assessments and activities in this book is important. The authors suggest that prior to administering any of the assessments in this book, you complete them yourself. This will familiarize you with the format of the assessments, the scoring directions, the interpretation guides and the journaling activities. Although the assessments are designed to be self-administered, scored and interpreted, this familiarity will help facilitators prepare to answer questions about the assessments.**

## Use Codes for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a term for any action that preserves the privacy of other people. Because teens completing the activities in this workbook might be asked to answer assessment items and to journal about and explore their relationships, the group will need to discuss confidentiality before you begin using the materials in this workbook. Maintaining confidentiality is important because it shows respect for others and allows participants to explore their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings or fearing gossip, harm or retribution.

In order to maintain confidentiality, explain to the participants that they need to assign a name code for each person or each group of people they write about as they complete the various activities in the workbook. For example, a friend named Joey who enjoys going to hockey games might be titled JLHG (Joey Loves Hockey Games) for a particular exercise. In order to protect their friends' identities, they should not use people's or groups' actual names or initials, just name codes.

# **The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts**

The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts in the *Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook* are reproducible and ready to be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported data and are similar to those used by psychologists, counselors, therapists and marriage and family therapists. Accuracy and usefulness of the information provided is dependent on the truthful information that each participant provides through self-examination. By being honest, teens help themselves to learn more about how they respond and react to stress, change, and adversity in their lives, and to uncover information that might be keeping them from being as happy and/or as successful as they might be.

An assessment instrument can provide participants with valuable information about themselves; however, it cannot measure or identify everything about them. The purpose of the assessments is not to pigeon-hole certain characteristics, but rather to allow participants to explore all of their characteristics. This book contains self-assessments, not tests. Tests measure knowledge or whether something is right or wrong. For the assessments in this book, there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask for personal opinions or attitudes about a topic of importance in the participant's career and life.

When administering assessments in this workbook, remember that the items are generically written so that they will be applicable to a wide variety of people. They will not account for every possible variable for every person. The assessments are not specifically tailored to one person. Use them to help participants identify possible negative themes in their lives and to find ways to break the hold that these patterns and their effects have.

Advise teen participants taking the assessments they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; their initial response to each item will most likely be true. Regardless of individual scores, encourage participants to write and talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what they have discovered about themselves. Resilient teens are able to adapt successfully and cope with stress and catastrophe. They have the ability to bounce back to a balanced state after disruption or transition. Exploring resiliency-building exercises will be helpful to the teens now and as they mature into adulthood.

A particular score on any assessment does not guarantee a participant's level of happiness. Use discretion when using any of the information or feedback provided in this workbook. The use of these assessments should not be substituted for consultation and/or counseling from a psychological or medical professional.

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***Thanks to the following professionals whose input in this book has been so valuable!***

Kathy Khalsa, OTR/L  
Jay Leutenberg  
Kathy Liptak, Ed.D.  
Eileen Regen, M.Ed., CJE

# Layout of the Book

The *Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook* is designed to be used either independently or as part of an integrated curriculum. You may administer one of the assessments and the journaling exercises to an individual or a group with whom you are working, or you may administer a number of the assessments over one or more days.

**This book includes the following reproducible pages in the first five sections:**

- **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- **Quotations** – Quotations are used in each section to provide insight and promote reflection. Participants will be asked to select one or more of the quotations and journal about what the quotations mean to them.
- **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to enhance instruction can be used by individuals or in groups to promote a positive understanding of managing conflict. They can be distributed, scanned and converted into masters for overheads or transparencies, projected or written on boards and/or discussed.

## Who Should Use This Program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool for helping professional therapists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using the *Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook* and the specific group's needs, these sections can be used individually, combined, or implemented as part of an integrated curriculum for a more comprehensive approach.

## Why Use Self-Assessments?

- Self-assessments are important in teaching various anger management skills because they help participants to engage in these ways:
- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide their behavior
- Explore and learn to “let go” of troublesome habits and behavioral patterns learned in childhood
- Examine the effects of unconscious childhood messages
- Gain insight and “a wake-up call” for behavioral change
- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for change
- Uncover personal resources that can help them to cope better with problems and difficulties
- Explore personal characteristics without judgment  
Identify personal strengths and weaknesses

**Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score and interpret each assessment at their own pace.**

# Introduction for the Participant

The media sometimes portrays the teen years as easy, happy-go-lucky years in which you wear the right clothes, fit in well with all your friends, have a great home life and do well in school. As you know, life as a teen can be very different from that image. You may face problems at home, relationship issues, bullying, school situations and experience the loss of loved ones. Why are some people able to go through really rough times and bounce back, while others are unable to do so? **Resiliency!**

Resiliency is described as your ability to bounce back and cope with challenges in your life.

## **Resiliency is the ability to . . .**

- deal effectively with stress and adversity
- successfully handle changes in life
- withstand grief and accept loss
- creatively adapt to life challenges.

Psychologically resilient teens tend to have less stress, anxiety and depression. They tend to do better in school, home, work or volunteer jobs and with friends and in the community. Remember the building-resiliency process is a personal journey that can help you develop lifelong skills to strengthen your ability to adapt to change and cope with stress.

The *Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook* is designed to help you learn more about yourself; identify the stresses and challenges in your life; explore how you have dealt with adversity in the past; develop resiliency skills and a resiliency mindset; and find better ways to use these newfound skills to deal effectively with whatever setbacks you encounter in life. You will be encouraged to complete assessments, journaling activities and exercises. Because active involvement and “doing” is as important as learning theories, it is critical that you take the time to complete all of the skill-building exercises.

## **Confidentiality**

You will be asked to respond to assessments and exercises, and to journal about some experiences in your relationships. Everyone has the right to confidentiality, and you need to honor the right of privacy of the people you may be writing about. Think about it this way – you would not want someone writing things about you that other people could read. Your family, friends and anyone else you include in the exercises deserve this respect also.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of your friends and family members, assign code names to people or groups, based on things you know about them. For example, a friend named Sherry who loves to wear purple might be coded as SWP (Sherry Wears Purple).

**Do not use any person’s or group’s actual name when you are listing people or groups of people – use only name codes.**



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SECTION I:  
**Optimistic  
Outlook  
Scale**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





## Optimistic Outlook Scale Directions

Some people see the glass half full, while others see it half empty. Those who see the glass half full are optimists; those who see the glass half empty are pessimists. As an optimist, regardless of transitions, setbacks, or disappointments, the person looks at the bright side and sees the possibilities life has to offer. Optimists expect good things to happen, expect to be able to solve problems efficiently, and plan to accomplish their life and work goals. They go through life with positive outlooks and are content most of the time.

Optimists maintain a positive world-view. Pessimists think negatively and cynically about the world. The Optimistic Outlook Scale is designed to help you assess your outlook when negative and positive things happen in your life.

This scale contains 40 statements that are divided into four resiliency categories. Read each of the statements and decide whether or not the statement describes you. For each of the statements listed, circle the number of your response on the line to the right of each statement.

In the following example, the circled 4 indicates the statement is very much like the person completing the assessment:

	<b>Very Much Like Me</b>	<b>Usually Like Me</b>	<b>Not Usually Like Me</b>	<b>Not Like Me</b>
1. When things go wrong, I remain hopeful	4	3	2	1

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time thinking about your answers. Your initial response will be the most true for you. Be sure to respond to every statement.

*(Turn to the next page and begin)*

SECTION I: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE

## Optimistic Outlook Scale

	Very Much Like Me	Usually Like Me	Not Usually Like Me	Not Like Me
1. When things go wrong, I remain hopeful . . . . .	4	3	2	1
2. A lot of situations do not have a “silver lining” . . . . .	1	2	3	4
3. I can always see the light at the end of the tunnel. . . . .	4	3	2	1
4. I often feel hopeless. . . . .	1	2	3	4
5. I look on the bright side of things . . . . .	4	3	2	1
6. I’m usually optimistic about my future . . . . .	4	3	2	1
7. I am unhappy a lot of the time . . . . .	1	2	3	4
8. I rarely get depressed when I think about the future. . . . .	4	3	2	1
9. I do not wait for happiness to find me . . . . .	4	3	2	1
10. I often feel helpless when things change. . . . .	1	2	3	4

**H - TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

11. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best . . . . .	4	3	2	1
12. If something can go wrong, it will . . . . .	1	2	3	4
13. I usually expect things to go my way . . . . .	4	3	2	1
14. Things usually don’t work out the way I want them to. . . . .	1	2	3	4
15. I am afraid to hope that good things will happen to me. . . . .	1	2	3	4
16. I often say “good things never happen to me”. . . . .	1	2	3	4
17. My life is filled with problems . . . . .	1	2	3	4
18. Even if I have failed in the past, I do not expect to fail again. . . . .	4	3	2	
19. I usually maintain a positive attitude in life . . . . .	4	3	2	1
20. I feel like I have no control over what happens in my life . . . . .	1	2	3	4

**L - TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued on the next page)*



SECTION I: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE



*(Optimistic Outlook Scale continued)*

	Very Much Like Me	Usually Like Me	Not Usually Like Me	Not Like Me
21. I usually talk about positive things . . . . .	4	3	2	1
22. I often do not look for the good in people. . . . .	1	2	3	4
23. I see the “glass as half full” not “half empty” . . . . .	4	3	2	1
24. I have had a hard time seeing many possibilities in a situation . . . . .	1	2	3	4
25. Every day holds numerous opportunities.. . . . .	4	3	2	1
26. When faced with a challenge, my first thought is “I can do this!” . . . . .	4	3	2	1
27. I am able to be positive even when things do not go my way. . . . .	4	3	2	1
28. I see every day as a new opportunity at life. . . . .	4	3	2	1
29. I often find myself waiting for happiness to find me . . .				2
30. I believe that things will work out the way I want . . . .	4	3	2	1

**A - TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

31. I set goals and work toward them . . . . .	4	3	2	1
32. I often lack confidence in myself. . . . .	1	2	3	4
33. I believe I can do whatever I set my mind to . . . . .	4	3	2	1
34. I am not a quitter. . . . .	4	3	2	1
35. I will take positive risks even if I fail . . . . .	4	3	2	1
36. I often blame my unhappiness on others. . . . .	1	2	3	4
37. I don’t let obstacles get in my way. . . . .	4	3	2	1
38. I rarely blame others when bad things happen to me	4	3	2	1
39. When people say “it’s impossible,” I usually believe them . . . . .	1	2	3	4
40. I do not let others keep me from being happy. . . . .	4	3	2	1

**O - TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Go to the Scoring Directions on the next page)*

SECTION I: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK SCALE

## Optimistic Outlook Scale Scoring Directions

Resilient people are able to maintain a positive outlook. They are able to remain hopeful about their current situation and their future possibilities, expect good things to happen from their own efforts, and retain a positive attitude even when times are challenging. Resilient people work to overcome obstacles. For each of the four sections on the previous pages, total the scores you circled. Put that total on the line marked TOTAL at the end of each section.

Then, transfer your totals to the spaces below:

**H - HOPE** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

**L - LIFE OUTLOOK** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

**A - ATTITUDE** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

**O - OVERCOMING OBSTACLES** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_

## Profile Interpretation

INDIVIDUAL SCALE SCORES	TOTAL SCALES SCORES	RESULT	INDICATIONS
Scores from 31 to 40	Scores from 121 to 160	High	You have developed and you use many skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.
Scores from 20 to 30	Scores from 80 to 120	Moderate	You have developed and you use some skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.
Scores from 10 to 19	Scores from 40 to 79	Low	You have not developed or used many skills and attitudes that lead to a positive outlook and a resilient personality.

Read the descriptions on the following pages and complete the exercises that are included. No matter how you scored, low, moderate or high, you will benefit from these exercises.



# Hope

Hope can be described as a mindset consisting of a positive view of the future for yourself and others. Remaining hopeful over the course of your life is at the core of resiliency and the ability to bounce back while facing problems and the stress that goes along with those problems. Having hope will guide you with resiliency while you achieve your goals and dreams.

**Respond to the following questions to identify your hope patterns:**

What does this quote by Emily Dickinson mean to you?

***“Hope is the thing with feathers.”***

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What happened in your life that caused you to stop hoping?

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Where do you believe your sources of hope, or lack of hope, come from?

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How has your environment affected the amount of hope you currently have?

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*(Continued on the next page)*