

Stress, meet resilience.

You know the feeling.

You're late. Traffic holds you captive. Your boss texts you, angrily. In your haste, coffee spills on your new pants.

The scenarios from everyday life are seemingly endless, and we've all experienced it.

Stress.

It's difficult to define the word (is it a cause or an effect?), but we know how it feels and are aware that it impacts our well being. The word originates from Middle English "destresse," from the Latin "stringere – to draw tight," according to the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. Long used in physics to refer to the internal distribution of a force exerted on a material body that results in strain, in the early 20th century biological and psychological circles began using the term to refer to mental strain or a cause of illness. Stress, physiologist Walter Cannon said in 1926, referred to external factors that disrupt homeostasis, a steady state of equilibrium in the body.

Today we know the biological mechanisms related to stress. The body redistributes energy to areas that need it most—the heart and the brain—assisting in overcoming the challenge at hand. It's a healthy stress mechanism that can turn harmful if the challenge or threat is chronic. Under continued stress, the body's immune system is severely weakened.

We know the negative impact stress can have, but it's near impossible to live stress-free. If you're part of The Salvation Army, you're familiar with stress, often working in areas of disaster, extreme poverty or addiction. It's not something we can avoid, but it can be overcome.

We need resilience.

According to the American Psychological Association, resilience is the process of adapting while facing adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or other sources of stress. By strengthening resilience, we are better able to persevere through challenges.

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Psychologists say resilient people have awareness, an understanding that setbacks are part of life, an “internal locus of control,” strong problem-solving skills, strong social connections, identify as a survivor not a victim, and are able to ask for help.

For some, it’s a natural quality, but resilience can be learned. Try a few of these ways to be more resilient:

Build positive beliefs in your abilities; take Gallup’s StrengthsFinder test to know your top five areas of strength and build upon them.

Find a sense of purpose in your life; focus your energy into an area of passion.

Develop a strong social network; surround yourself with supportive people who you can confide in and who will be there in times of crisis.

Embrace change; learn how to be more flexible.

Be optimistic; understand that setbacks are temporary and that you have the skills to combat challenges.

Nurture yourself; eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, maintain your spirituality and make time for activities you enjoy.

Develop problem-solving skills; with any challenge, make a list of ways to solve the problem and experiment with different strategies of working through it.

Establish goals; assess, brainstorm possible solutions, and set manageable steps.

Take steps to solve problems; focus on progress, rather than what still needs to be accomplished.

Keep working on your skills; build resilience.

In this issue of *Caring*, we explore ways to “strike out your stress.” The articles range from ways to deal with stress and live healthy by Dr. Kathleen Hall, founder and CEO of The Stress Institute; to the story of Dianne Callister, given up for adoption at a Salvation Army Booth Home and in recent years named National Mother of the Year; an Australian home committed to the renewal of people in Salvation Army ministry; and ways The Salvation Army partners with therapy dogs to counteract tensions.

It’s an issue dedicated to building your resilience and striking out stress.