

Resilience

A Brandeis University Resource Guide, Created March 2021

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What is Resilience?

A recent New York Times article¹ defines resilience as the ability to recover from difficult experiences and setbacks, to adapt, move forward and sometimes even experience growth.

Resilience is dictated by a combination of genetics, personal history, environment and situational context. So far, research has found the genetic part to be relatively small. You can think of resilience as a set of skills that can be, and often is, learned. Part of the skill-building comes from exposure to very difficult — but manageable — experiences.

We can think about resilience as a function of interrelated systems: individual; family; community; institutional (school/workplace); local (town/city); and so on. Most of the research is currently at the individual level, but many items can be extrapolated.

Resilient individuals share the following²:

- They have a positive, realistic outlook. They don't dwell on negative information; look for opportunities, strive to find the positive.
- They have a moral compass and a solid sense of what they consider right and wrong, and it tends to guide their decisions.
- They believe in something greater than themselves, often found through religious or spiritual practices. The community support that comes from being part of a religion also enhances resilience.
- They are altruistic; they have a concern for others and a degree of selflessness. They are often dedicated to causes they find meaningful and that give them a sense of purpose.

¹ Reference: Zimmerman, E. (2020, June 18). What Makes Some People More Resilient Than Others. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.newyorktimes.com>

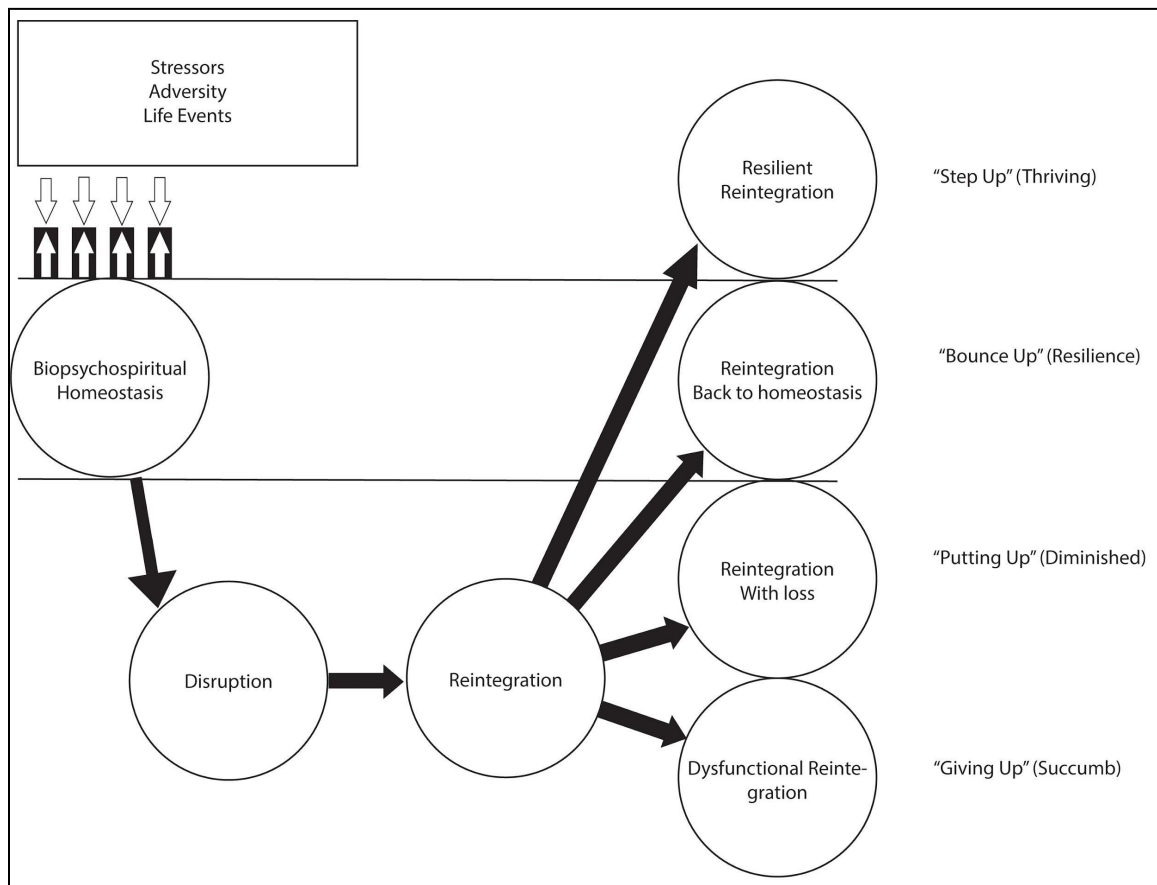
² *ibid*

- They accept what they cannot change and focus energy on what they can change.
- They have a mission, a meaning, a purpose. Feeling committed to a meaningful mission in life gives them courage and strength.
- They have a social support system, and they support others.

Metatheory

We all experience stressful life events, but protective factors (individual/environmental) often support how we deal with them. Think of a low-level example of a roommate leaving stinky socks all around your shared space. Does this cause a disruption in your functioning? Why or why not? Do you ignore/give up, put up, use strategies to deal with it, etc.? The theory described below helps to conceptualize a model of resilience. Can you think of a way to apply it to a stressful situation that happened to you or a friend?

The Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency, Glenn Richardson



Description: This model shows how people change from pre-adversity, during

the adversity, and then become resilient with the help of protective factors. Diagram shows how biopsychospiritual homeostasis is affected by disruptions (Stressors, Adversity, or Life

Events. Once the disruption has disturbed the homeostasis, with the help of protective factors or qualities that promote resilience, different types of reintegration (dysfunctional, with loss, back to homeostasis, or resilient) lead to different outcomes. Respectively, "Giving up" (succumb), "Putting up" (diminished), "Bounce up" (resilience), "Step up" (Thriving). The resilient reintegration in the model shows people as doing better than they were before.

Skills

Resilience is made up of skills, and like a muscle, we need to continually practice so the skills are available when we need it. The image below describes resilience skills: social engagement; self-awareness and self care; attention and focus; meaning and how they connect to opportunities for practice. In the section below on campus resources, read about Brandeis options and opportunities to develop and/or strengthen resilience skills.



Description: Model showing how to build skills to become a resilient individual. There are four qualities of a resilient individual and four pathways to strengthen resilience. Each pathway is

related to two qualities. Social Engagement (generosity, integrity, authenticity, humility) and Meaning (purpose, gratitude, hope, optimism) relate to Opportunities for Service. Social Engagement and Self-awareness & Self-care (self-regulation, adversity tolerance, cognitive (re)framing, healthy habits) relate to Opportunities for Connectedness to Others. Self-awareness & Self-care and Attention & Focus (curiosity, focus, persistence, love of learning) relate to Opportunities for Self-Reflection. Lastly, Meaning and Attention and Focus relate to opportunities for Self-Efficacy & Mastery.

Campus Resources

Resources for All Students

[Arts Engagement](#)

Connects campus and external community members to resources in the arts.

Contact Information:

- arts@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-5008

[Care Team](#)

Addresses concerning student behavior and non-emergency distress observed by staff, faculty, administrators, and students. Promotes safety, health, and well-being to support success. Assists struggling students, provides outreach, and connects them to resources. Provides support for student reporters as needed. The Care Team is not for emergencies (for emergencies call 781-736-3333 on-campus or 911 off-campus).

Contact Information:

- [Submit an I Care Form](#)
- careteam@brandeis.edu

[Brandeis Counseling Center \(BCC\)](#)

Meets the developmental, emotional & mental health needs of the students of the university. Multicultural treatment center committed to the values of diversity and inclusivity.

Contact Information:

- bcc@brandeis.edu (non-urgent)
- 781-736-3730 option 2 for 24/7 answering service

Community Service

Empowers Brandeis students to be lifelong engaged global citizens and reflective thinkers through predominantly co-curricular community engaged leadership programs that mirror the needs of our community.

Contact Information:

- communityservice@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3237

Dean of Students Office

Serve as an advocate for all Brandeis students, strives to ensure the quality of their overall co-curricular experience at the university & promotes opportunities for students to engage in leadership activities & to experience personal, social & emotional growth and development.

Contact Information:

- deanofstudentsoffice@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3600

Health and Wellness Promotion (HAWP)

Coordinates campus-wide health & wellness efforts through evidence-based promotion & prevention strategies, such as educational programs & events, health information & resources, & peer education.

Contact Information:

- hawp@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3678

Health Center

Provides medical assessment, diagnosis, treatment and specialty referral, as well as preventive and wellness health promotion.

Contact Information:

- brandeishealthcenter@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3677 (business hours) / 781-239-1948 (after-hours urgent)

Intercultural Center (ICC)

Dedicated to creating a haven of respect, education and celebration that aims to foster growth and awareness of the myriad cultures of Brandeis University. The ICC fosters a welcoming community, where diverse experiences and perspectives are valued and dedication to the

understanding of cultures and ethnicities is essential. The ICC serves as the umbrella office for 15 diverse student clubs and organizations.

Contact Information:

- interculturalcenter@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-8580

Center for Spiritual Life

Offers a safe space for students to explore their spirituality and find their place in the world, on their terms.

Contact Information:

- slife@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3570

Fitness

Provides opportunities to incorporate exercise into daily life. Includes access to group fitness classes, personal training, & exercise facilities including a weight & cardio area. Whatever your level, we can help you meet your fitness goals.

Contact Information:

- kpage@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3657

Food Resources

The Brandeis Food pantry (FRESH) is currently providing a GrabNGo system as well as working closely with Healthy Waltham. The FRESH GrabNGo provides access to non-perishable food options and hygiene products to students and to raise awareness about resources that are available both at Brandeis and within the greater Waltham community.

Contact Information:

- foodpantry@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3546

Gender and Sexuality Center

Provides leadership and expertise in creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive university; providing education and training on LGBTQ+ identities; and fostering community for LGBTQ+ individuals and allies.

Contact Information:

- gsc@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-8583

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)

Determines visa eligibility, prepares and issues the visa documents needed for non-immigrant students, scholars and their dependents to obtain visas in order to come to Brandeis University to study, teach and/or conduct research.

Contact Information:

- ISSO@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3480

Library

Impacts our community by fostering research, teaching, and discovery, and by providing professional services, resources, experience, & expertise.

Contact Information:

- library@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-5626

Ombuds

Confidential, independent, impartial & informal resource for all members of the Brandeis Community (including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, alumni & anyone engaged with Brandeis University).

Contact Information:

- brandeisombuds@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-2265

Prevention, Advocacy & Resource Center (PARC)

Provides education, empowerment and confidential support to members of the Brandeis community who have been impacted by violence and those who want to contribute to the anti-violence movement.

Contact Information:

- parc@brandeis.edu
- 24/7 hotline 781-736-3370

Resources for Undergraduate Students

Academic Services

Build a balanced schedule, access accommodations for documented disabilities, pursue special research opportunities and connect with peers for group study and advising. Brainstorm and provide feedback on academic plans.

Contact Information:

- acserv@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3470

Community Living

Works to establish a quality living environment, facilitate strong leadership development of community members, and foster the development of the individual.

Contact Information:

- dcl@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-5060

Hiatt Career Center

Collaborate with us to develop career skills & strategies that develop & harness your adaptability, creativity, entrepreneurship, & resiliency to be successful in an ever-changing professional world.

Contact Information:

- hiattcenter@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3618

Student Activities

Plan and support campus-wide programs and events to enhance student experiences outside the classroom.

Contact Information:

- studentactivities@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-5065

Resources for Graduate Students

[Career Development Center \(CDC\) at Heller](#)

Seeks to educate, advise, and connect students and alumni with the goal of helping Heller Students navigate entering the workforce upon graduation. The CDC provides comprehensive services such as workshops on a variety of topics including resume writing, networking, interviewing techniques. The CDC also connects students with NGOs, research and policy institutes, state and local governments, etc. and run several experiential treks to major cities.

Contact Information:

- bbelvin@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3362

[Career Strategies and Engagement Center at the International Business School](#)

Offers comprehensive career development resources to its students. From Industry treks, to coaching on interviewing, and assistance in writing resumes, graduate students have ample opportunities to engage with the professional world while receiving mentoring to prepare them to enter today's job market.

Contact Information:

- globalcareers@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-8502

[Center for Career and Professional Development \(CCPD\) at GSAS](#)

Recognizes the holistic career development needs of graduate students. These include support for a variety of diverse career paths, continued development of professional skills, and access to employers seeking graduate-level candidates.

Staff members in CCPD support students by:

- Providing one-on-one specialized appointments to MA and PhD students; assisting in researching possible career paths; creating application materials; to providing mock interview sessions; and assistance with salary negotiation
- Connecting students with prospective employers and GSAS alumni through information sessions, career fairs and webinars.

Contact Information:

- gsascareers@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3414

Graduate Student Affairs

Seeks to foster community and help graduate students navigate life during graduate school. The office provides resources as well as hosts a series of academic programming and social events for the community. The office works with campus partners to ensure the graduate community is aware of all of the offices/resources available to them.

Contact Information:

- graduatestudentaffairs@brandeis.edu
- 781-736-3546

Closing Thoughts

In this document, information on a conceptual framework for resilience and campus resources that support resilience are provided. How can Brandeis “put it all together” as a campus community? What are the roles of the institution, faculty, staff and students? Below are some thoughts, through the lens of living through a year of the COVID-19 pandemic/political change/social unrest:

- Life has stressors; this is normative, but living through our past year is anything but normal and brings about different forms of (often completely unexpected) stress. How has this impacted resilience in how the university as a whole, departments, staff, faculty, and students function? Below are some thoughts to consider:
 - Policies and procedures to “slow the spread:” adherence to federal, state, and local mandates regarding COVID-19 and how these apply to the physical campus
 - Changes to classes: impacts of synchronous/asynchronous, fully online/hybrid, syllabus flexibility, decisions about deadlines to support engagement but also allow for grace when needed
 - Extracurricular activities: impacts of clubs, athletics, community
 - Social relationships: impacts of social distance, technology/screen use, bandwidth of friends, family, colleagues, administration
 - Internships and jobs: financial impact, career planning, professional development
 - Overall wellness (eating, sleeping, physical activity, safety, mental health): experience of exposure to trauma/violence, access to food, recreation opportunities, Zoom fatigue, cold winter/less daylight, isolation, housing
- It may take some time until we are able to “bounce up” and embrace resilience at a holistic level, but there are things we can do intentionally in the meantime. Some ideas:
 - Adjust the “internal bar” of achievement: What does this look like systemically at Brandeis, not just individually? It’s ok to “do less and rest”; how best to communicate this?

- Advocacy: How does Brandeis as an institution support community members to speak up about a concern/ask for help, and what does response to advocacy look like?
- Tune into your needs as well. As advocates, supporters, and connectors, it is important that we also check-in with ourselves about our own bandwidth and ability to be present for others.