WHPC — Building Resiliency
Personal Reflection Worksheet

These questions are for your own personal reflection about the skills and abilities you need to be resilient. As you answer these questions, think about times in your life where you were or weren't resilient.

1. What are your main triggers?

2. Are there any patterns or common themes?

3. What have you done up to now to manage and overcome these?

Before you answer these questions, review the strategies listed in the companion handout.

1. Which of these strategies looks helpful?

2. What difference could it make to you?

3. When will you try this out?

Strategies for Building Resiliency

Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic, motivating goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

Accept that change is a part of living. Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Ask for help. Don't be afraid to ask. Our jobs sometimes make us feel like we are on our own, but a colleague may be able to help you solve a problem quickly without 'reinventing the wheel'.

Take decisive actions. Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Build an community and make connections. Reducing your isolation is at the core of much of the research into building well being a community. Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Community can come from working collaboratively, to friends and family. Your contacts in WHPC can also act as a virtual network. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

Take proper breaks. Everything from taking time away from your desk regularly during the day to using your full vacation/holiday will improve your productivity. It may seem counter-intuitive, but breaks actually mean you get more done. Switch off your technology whenever you step away from the desk whenever possible. Set alarms to take regular breaks during the day. Work with your manager to help ensure you can properly disconnect when you are on holiday.

Find perspective. Be objective and put things into context. Work on avoiding comparing yourselves to others. Remind yourself of your successes. Write down concerns and look at them one week later: if they no longer seem as significant, this should help you in the future. If they still are concerning, work with colleagues and friends on managing them.

Develop coping strategies. Figure out your triggers and develop a set of actions to help you handle common situations. For example, actions to undertake when a proposal gets rejected, or plan a reward for at the end of a difficult project.

Focus on what you can do. Keep things in perspective: avoid focusing on what you can't do. Review the situation: what can you do to approach it differently. Can you develop your skills to help address the situation (e.g. review grants/papers to help build an understanding of why yours are rejected).

Look at failure differently. You don't have to have the answer to everything. Research requires failure to find out new things. Accept that it is part of your work. Build failure into your planning, and make it part of your day-to-day work to have plans for handling failure. Take the time to reflect and ask for feedback.