

SANE AUSTRALIA

SANE Australia Online Peer Group

Date: 20/01/2022

Topic: Resilience

Description: Resilience can be a part of many people's recovery journey. However, resilience isn't always as easy as "you get knocked down, you get back up again". Let's come together to talk about resilience.

Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about resilience. We really value your thoughts on how these events go, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can find the survey here

now: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW

Tonight, peer support workers @Girasole and @LittleSteps will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of resilience. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, it's important for us all to think about how to get through life's challenges as best we can. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about mental health struggles. @Basil, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is

**Girasole
(PSW)**

working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (<https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support>) or message @Basil

Girasole (PSW) We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together and expand our ideas of resilience :relaxed:

LittleSteps (PSW) Hello @Snowie ! Welcome! :)

Snowie Hi LittleSteps

Girasole (PSW) Hey @Snowie ! Great to see you here :) We'll be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊

Girasole (PSW) How are you going today @Snowie ?

Snowie Having a rough time Girasole. Came on here looking for a distraction.

Girasole (PSW) @Snowie :blue_heart:

LittleSteps (PSW) Sorry to hear that @Snowie . Hopefully tonight will be a helpful distraction :)

Girasole (PSW) **Ok, let's start the conversation, shall we? How do you feel about the term “resilience?” What place does it have in recovery for you?**

LittleSteps (PSW) I have mixed feelings about the term “resilience”. On the one hand, I can find the term can be empowering when someone is given choice regarding actions in their own recovery. On the other hand, I find that the term can be dismissive of the hardships someone might be going through, and how difficult they can be to experience. I believe that resilience has a place in recovery, but that is not to negate or dismiss the benefits of also having external supports to back you up, which I have personally found very beneficial in my recovery process :)

Snowie To me resilience means being able to remain stable and function in everyday life. I find it very hard to have resilience. I try and develop it but things seem to get in the way of it

**LittleSteps
(PSW)** Thanks for sharing, Snowie

**Basil
(Moderator
)** resilience for me is a sign of holding hope, even if its just a glimmer

Snowie I believe it is something that needs to be worked on and develops over time.

**Girasole
(PSW)** So true @Snowie ! Like so many skills and things in mental health, it's probably unrealistic to expect ourselves to be great at it without much time, consideration, or practice

**Girasole
(PSW)** I really relate to it being something that I always learn how to do better, based on my experiences

**Girasole
(PSW)** **Ok, next question :) What do you think some of the benefits are of the concept of resilience, and how it applies to your recovery?**

**LittleSteps
(PSW)** I think resilience can be a key aspect of many people's recovery journey. Thinking about resilience can be empowering and can remind us that we can have autonomy and strengths in thinking about our own recovery. When I think of resilience in regard to my own recovery journey, it can remind me of my strengths which, as Snowie has pointed out, can develop over time. :)

Snowie Some of the benefits are having the strength to overcome difficulties in life. It means coming back stronger and being able to deal with things in a more positive way. In my own recovery I think I don't have much resilience.

**Girasole
(PSW)** @Snowie we'll be speaking later about some ways we can improve our resilience - I hope it can be helpful for you :purple_heart: I do like how the idea of resilience recognises or acknowledges that you have responsibility over your own wellbeing, and you have control and things you can actively do cope. I find that can be very empowering, and can give hope and agency in your life. I have some critical thoughts about the concept more broadly, which we'll also get into later in the conversation :)

**Girasole
(PSW)
LittleSteps
(PSW)** **Next question - some people aren't entirely comfortable with being praised as being resilient (or praising others for being resilient) - if this is you, what are the reasons why don't you like it?**

I find that, whilst intentions may be good, calling someone resilient can sometimes be underestimating of the hardships that someone may truly be going through. I also think that the term puts all the pressure on the individual, whereas I believe in my recovery that a more collaborative approach has been beneficial, with professional and personal supports :)

Snowie I guess I don't like being praised in general. I agree with LittleSteps that it underestimates the hardships someone might be going through.

For me, if I'm going through a hard time, or after I've gone through a hard time, it often means very little to me to just be commended as being resilient. I guess it can be nice to reflect on my ability to pull through hard times- that can be a strength. But after pushing through, I simply want to receive care and warmth on the other side. Like, I know I got through the hard time, but that's not the most important thing to me- what's important was that I suffered, and I want recognition and empathy

Girasole (PSW)

Snowie People might expect us to be able to show strength and be able to "get over" things

Girasole (PSW) If I'm in distress, or am exhausted from constant distress, being told that I'm resilient doesn't do much in the moment to actually help me

Girasole (PSW) If someone doesn't like being called resilient, what could be a more helpful thing to say to someone than "You're so resilient" after they've been through a hard time?

Girasole (PSW) What I want in those moments is to just be told, "I'm sorry you had to go through that." Or, "That's awful. I'm here for you however you need."

Girasole (PSW) Hey @Shaz51 ! Welcome :D

LittleSteps (PSW) I think first and foremost validating people's experiences is important. I know that I always feel heard and listened to when my emotions are validated. I think something that I would say is something along the lines of "that does sound like it was really difficult for you, is there anything we can do together to help make sure you don't have such tough times in the future?"

Snowie I would rather someone just say to me that I am doing the best I can under difficult circumstances

LittleSteps (PSW) @Shaz51 Welcome!

Shaz51 hello @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Shaz51 @LittleSteps (PSW)xxx

Girasole (PSW) **Okay, next question for us: Understanding some of the limitations or concerns we have with being called resilient, what are some things that could be really beneficial to consider in addition to individual coping? :)**

LittleSteps (PSW) I think that in my recovery, professional and personal supports have been important in addition to individual coping. After all, in my personal opinion, reaching out for help is an action we can take and empower ourselves through in our recovery. :)

Snowie I also think reaching out for assistance can help. I think it takes time and a lot of effort. It is more like a marathon

Girasole (PSW) Things I can think of that could be helpful to consider, beyond the individual: Are there any other support people or services out there that could be beneficial if something like this happened again? Is there anything we can actively do about this situation to prevent having a crisis or struggling like this in the future? Can anything be changed or improved? How can we do that? How can community care come into this?

Shaz51 interesting @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Girasole (PSW) Keep an eye out for our extra resources we'll share at the end - one of which inspired some of my thoughts above :)

Snowie I don't think there is anything we can do to prevent having a crisis in the future. I just think it is about the steps we put into place to try and overcome it. Like having people we can reach out to for help. Having supports in place that we can speak to. I think having confidence in our supports help

Shaz51 very true @Snowie

Girasole (PSW) Good point @Snowie , life can throw us unpredictable or overwhelming things so we may not have control over the presence of future crises - but great ideas on how we can respond in those times :)

Shaz51 but with support , it will help us quicker and better

Girasole (PSW) **This next question was submitted from the community: they would like to know how to get through periods of long (or even no) waitlists, and being turned away from doctors and mental health professionals?**

LittleSteps (PSW) hmmm ... If I were in that situation, I would try to reach out to peer groups or online forums to find some support in the meantime. I would also empathise with that person and let them know that they are not alone in that difficult situation.

Shaz51 right on @LittleSteps (PSW)

Snowie It is hard not to take that personally Girasole. I think that sometimes we need help now and then. That is when I think we need to reach out to helplines and forums.

Welcome @Tkaye ! :)

**LittleSteps
(PSW)**

Snowie Being turned away or put on a wait list can do more damage. I think that is why we are so affected when we lose a support. Sometimes it feels like we are back to step one and have to start all over again. It is also hard to trust people, especially if we have experienced distrust in the past.

**Girasole
(PSW)** **This next question was also submitted from the community. They are wondering: how can we deal with constant setbacks in life that challenge us when we're otherwise trying to improve our life?**

Shaz51 to keep on keeping on @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Snowie By focusing on things that we can control.

**LittleSteps
(PSW)** In my experience of recovery, recovery is not linear but rather more like a zig-zag line. So, it's totally understandable to have set backs in recovery and in life. How I sometimes deal with these issues is by having a really solid routine to have constants I can rely on when things get tough.

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker), I think this will be a good thread to start on the forum

**Girasole
(PSW)** That's great @Shaz51 ! Feel free to make one if you like? There's certainly lots to talk about so there could be a lot of benefit there :)

Shaz51 will do @Girasole (Peer Worker)

**Girasole
(PSW)** And to answer the question- I can't stress enough the protective value of supportive connections- pets, friends, partners, therapists, support workers, support lines. When I think back to awful times of my own life where I couldn't believe how I got through them - I realised it was through keeping sane and supported with perspective and care from others

Shaz51 wow very true @Girasole (Peer Worker)

**LittleSteps
(PSW)** Welcome Tyme! :)

Shaz51 hello @tyme (PSW)

**Girasole
(PSW))** Also, practicing gratitude for the things that are good might be helpful. I know it's often suggested in a way that seems simplistic, but I think it's particularly valuable when times are hard. The world is never quite 100% black and white- things are unlikely to be all entirely terrible or all entirely good. I think gratitude can help remind us of that nuance and help us not fall into a trap of seeing everything as hopeless or awful

Girasole (PSW) Okay, next question :) What are some techniques or strategies we can have control over in our coping and recovery through tough times?

tyme (PSW) Hey @shaz51!

LittleSteps (PSW) I have mentioned this before but one thing that really helps me through tough times is having a routine to rely on – as I like predictability and routine. That’s just me – but I find that having routines for exercise and mindfulness/meditation can be really helpful. Other than that, reaching out for help is one way I cope, whether that be friends or personal and professional supports.

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker), having a coping toolbox to help us

Shaz51 yes @LittleSteps (PSW)

Snowie Having a plan in place like a safety plan to help us through those tough times.

Shaz51 Routine is very important to my mr shaz and I find it helps indeed

Snowie I think control is so important when things are happening. When I feel out of control is when things seem to go downhill. I think having steps in place and a written list of coping strategies help

Girasole (PSW) Something I can always have control over is my ability to learn from situations. I like, after going through a hard time, thinking about things I could do differently in the future to help prevent something like that from happening again (wherever I have control)

Girasole (PSW) To me, that's one of the biggest parts of resilience for me - I feel like I'm better able to handle difficult things in the future after having come out of, and learned from, hard times

LittleSteps (PSW) Welcome to the chat Bow! :)

Girasole (PSW) Okay, as we start to wind down for the night - have you learned anything helpful from others’ experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn? :)

LittleSteps (PSW) I have learnt the balance of resilience, meaning the balance between relying on your own strengths and reaching out to others or appreciating your own unique context. This has helped me to not think in polarities in regard to where I’m at, and to appreciate the little things I can do in recovery whilst reaching out for support when needed. :)

Girasole (PSW)

There have been so many great ideas that were brought up! I couldn't possibly quickly summarise them all - I think I'll have to come back to the transcript and re-read and appreciate them later :) But I did like @Snowie's comment (always a helpful reminder), to "[focus] on the things that we can control"

Girasole (PSW) **LittleSteps (PSW)** **Snowie** **Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavier feelings as we talked about struggling through crises and hard times. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊**

Welcome Ravi! :)

I will probably do some mindfulness and listen to some recordings from my psych.

Girasole (PSW) **LittleSteps (PSW)** I am going to have some delicious sticky date pudding which I baked last night :)

I think I am going to have an early night tonight and rest up for tomorrow! :)

[We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat :\) We'd love to hear any feedback you may have, and it will only take a few minutes to complete. Click this link](#)

Girasole (PSW) [here: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW](https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW)

Here are some interesting resources that we really recommend having a look at! -The science of resilience: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r8hj72bfGo> healing from and Oglala Lakota perspective <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2Re-KrQNa4> -Can we be too resilient? How too much resilience can make us overly tolerant of adversity or trauma: <https://www.thoughtfulleader.com/why-being-resilient-will-kill-you/> (scroll to halfway down; it focuses on workplaces but can be applicable generally to life)

Girasole (PSW)

Thanks for tonight. It has been a helpful distraction and given me some things to think about.

Snowie LittleSteps (PSW)

Thanks so much everybody! :)

[Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/online-mental-health-meet-up. You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!](#)

Girasole (PSW)