

## PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

The mental health of some individuals might be negatively affected by unpleasant life experiences; it might take some time for them get healed, while others might tend to be more resilient against adversities. They can quickly overcome a negative state of mind, and go on with their lives. In positive psychology approach, the latter is referred to as psychological resilience (1). Psychological resilience is defined as one's ability to adapt vis-à-vis the sources of stress, successfully overcome tragic life events, and preserve their mental health against the impact of stress and trauma. Psychological resilience is the key factor in one's ability to gather its mental strength back in the face of stressful life situations. Individuals equipped with such resilience can recover quickly and get back to their normal lives. They can even turn a stressful life event into a life lesson. Psychological resilience has three key variables (2).

The first one involves, despite all adversities, an individual's belief that s/he has the necessary skills to survive by overcoming emotional life challenges and recover from these more quickly than expected.

The second important variable of psychological resilience refers to an individual's ability to quickly adapt and recover from a stressful life event.

The third one involves one's capability of overcoming traumatic experiences and recovering from their negative impacts.

When exploring the definitions about psychological resilience, it can be observed that psychological resilience occurs when a person adapts well to the negative effects of risky situations either through the help of protective factors after being exposed to several risk factors, or exists as a consequence of life situations in which a person has achieved normal developmental results. In the literature, these variables are called as risk factors, protective factors and positive/good outcomes (3).

Risk factors mostly refer to negative living conditions, which might be associated with the person himself/herself, his/her family or society. Personal risk factors involve low intelligence quotient, character, temperament, physical health problems, inability to use effective coping mechanisms or express himself/herself effectively; risk factors involving family are illness of parents, siblings or other family members, divorce, single-parent household, unhealthy relationship between child and parent, or among siblings, domestic violence, neglect and abuse;

and social risk factors can be listed as low socioeconomic status, inadequate social support, lack of positive social role models, immigration and unemployment.

The protective factors are situations or circumstances that reduce or eliminate the impact of risks or challenges, while enhancing personal improvement. Helping individuals cope with various sources of stress and adversity they might encounter throughout their lives, these factors also play a major role in regaining, improving and maintaining psychological resilience. Being equipped with protective factors as an individual, or having them in your life, on the one hand, prevents problems before they occur, on the other hand, encourages you to survive life challenges by reducing the impact of existing problems and helping you develop and strengthen behaviours, attitudes and knowledge that could contribute to your emotional and physical well-being. (4).

The positive or good outcomes refer to the competencies individuals have developed as a result of overcoming risk factors through your internal and external protective factors. These can include successful accomplishment of personal development tasks, good academic standing, positive social relations, avoiding criminal behaviour, total or near absence or nearly absence of emotional problems or symptoms, willingness to follow the rules, absence of any psychopathological manifestations, self-acceptance, harmonious personality, a state of well-being, and good life satisfaction.

Individuals with high psychological resilience tend to be more committed to daily tasks, activities and their jobs; they have control over their lives, and consider unexpected changes an opportunity for improvement. It is often highlighted that resilient individuals have more internal control and more self-confidence. Mostly equipped with positive personality traits, good problem-solving and interpersonal communication skills, they do not give up in the face of difficulties, they upgrade themselves internally and they tend to be highly empathic towards others; while individuals with low resilience have a more external locus of control in most situations and they are likely to be more resistant to changes (5).

Özgü Kübra HALİTOĞULLARI  
Clinical Psychologist

To get therapy or counselling, you may send an email to [psikolojikdestek@altinbas.edu.tr](mailto:psikolojikdestek@altinbas.edu.tr), indicating your first and last name, your department, or contact us from the link provided below.

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