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Being aware of the impacts of stress, ways to build your resilience and the benefits of intentional self-care will help you to cope better on and off the court.



Building Resilience

Why is self-care important?

Prioritising our own self-care helps us to maintain our physical, social, emotional and mental health. Self-care prepares us to be the best version of ourselves so we can help others.

Ensuring we practise self-care regularly helps us:

- Think more clearly and focus more easily.
- Feel more calm and confident.
- Have more positive emotions.
- Make better decisions.
- Achieve our goals.
- Form positive relationships with others and ourselves.
- Build our levels of resilience.

The impact of self-care

How do you respond when faced with challenges or stress? Do you think you have good coping skills to handle those situations, or do you see some room for improvement? While fulfilling their duties on the court, umpires are often faced with high levels of stress and confrontation from teams, supporters and bystanders, making the need for heightened resilience and increased self-care strategies imperative.

Resilience is defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences. Being resilient does not mean that a person won’t ever experience difficulty or distress. While certain factors might make some individuals more resilient than others, resilience isn’t necessarily a personality trait that only some people possess. Instead, resilience involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that anyone can learn and develop.

Like building a muscle, increasing your resilience takes time and intention. Focusing on four core components – connection, wellness, healthy thinking and meaning – can empower you to withstand and learn from difficult and traumatic experiences.

Self-care is the deliberate application of positive techniques by an individual to maximise their wellbeing and happiness. It is the act of attending to our needs and refuelling ourselves. It may seem like a simple concept but it is easy to overlook when life gets busy.

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Tips for building resilience and practising self-care

Self-care will look different for everyone, but the positive impacts are consistent. Try the tips below to work out which strategies work best for you:

- **Prioritise relationships.** Connect with people that uplift you and leave you feeling positive.
- **Join a group.** Spending time with people that have similar interests can be great for blowing off steam.
- **Take care of your body.** Promoting positive lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, ample sleep, hydration and regular exercise can strengthen your body to adapt to stress and reduce the toll of emotions like anxiety or depression.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Mindful journaling, yoga, and other spiritual practices like meditation can help people build connections and restore hope, which can prime them to deal with situations that require resilience. Reflect on the positive aspects of your life and recall the things you're grateful for, even during personal trials.
- **Be proactive.** Identify the aspects within your control by asking yourself, "What can I do about a problem in my life?" If the problems seem too big to tackle, break them down into manageable pieces.
- **Keep things in perspective.** How you think impacts how resilient you are when faced with obstacles. Try to identify areas of irrational thinking, (e.g. catastrophising) and adopt a more realistic outlook. You may not be able to change a highly stressful event, but you can change how you interpret and respond to it.
- **Accept change.** Accept that change is a part of life. Certain goals or ideals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations in your life. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you to focus on circumstances that you can alter.
- **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** An optimistic outlook empowers you to expect that good things will happen to you. Try visualising what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear. Note any subtle ways in which you start to feel better as you deal with difficult situations.
- **Learn from your past.** By looking back at who or what was helpful in previous times of distress, you may discover how you can respond effectively to new difficult situations. Remind yourself of where you've been able to find strength and ask yourself what you've learned from those experiences.

Building positive self-talk

Did you know an average person has about 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts per day? Of those approximately 80% are negative. Learning to build positive self-talk can help us change our mindset and support us to learn and improve quickly. Positive self-talk is making our inner dialogue (the constant stream of thoughts in our heads) compassionate, forgiving and supportive.

The exciting thing is that YOU have the power to change the way you speak to yourself in your own mind and this can have a HUGE impact on the way you feel. When you don't play your best, make a mistake or just feel upset or down try:

1. Taking a few deep breaths and noticing your thoughts.
 2. Reminding yourself that thoughts are not fact.
 3. Thinking about what you would say to a friend going through the same thing as you.
 4. Placing a hand on your chest and repeating a positive affirmation to yourself. A positive affirmation is something kind, caring and supportive. Some people like to write positive affirmations down and place them on their bedrooms walls, mirrors or around their house as a reminder to use them regularly.
- **Thought.** I performed so badly today. I let the team down.
 - **Remind yourself.** This is not the truth. This is just a thought.
 - **What I would say to a friend.** It's hard when you make the wrong calls. But you tried your best. Plays happen so fast and you are human - we can't pick up on EVERYTHING.
 - **Positive affirmation.** I am strong and resilient and if I work hard I will improve.