

RBHS VPVA

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance Newsletter



Resilience in the Face of Adversity

Coping with Trauma and Beyond

When talking about healing from a difficult experience, we often hear the word resilience.

Resilience is the ability to adapt to and bounce back from overwhelming stress or trauma.

In practice, resilience often does not present itself equally among all areas of a person's life. Instead, resilience is dependent upon an individual's history and personal strengths. Therefore, you might see someone who is very resilient in the academic setting but struggles in their private relationships. Or someone who responds well to conflicts with friends, but has difficulty in recovering from issues with family.

Luckily, people can take time to identify where they might struggle most and practice skills to help develop stronger resilience. This does not mean that a resilient person will not face distress in difficult situations, but rather they are able to cope with and process it in a healthier way.

While some people may naturally present as more resilient, the good news is we all can work to enhance our resilience.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VPVA will be honoring the LGBTQA+ community throughout June in celebration of Pride Month by promoting a supportive environment for individuals of all backgrounds, identities, genders, and sexualities. Our focus is on promoting social and educational opportunities that address the intersectionality of violence and oppression within the LGBTQA+ community. Look for our virtual programming centering on resources, enhancing awareness and advocating for inclusion campus wide!

STAY IN TOUCH

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 RBHS VPVA



How to Build Resilience

Want to build your resilience skills? The truth is, what works for one person may not work for another. And what works for one situation may not work for the next. That's why it's helpful to explore multiple approaches for enhancing resilience to find what meets your individual needs.

Everyday Resilience

There are stressors that occur on a regular basis that we may grapple with, at times to an overwhelming degree. For these situations, try some of these techniques:

Stating the facts

- Talk about the distress without intensifying it
- Example: "I did not do well on an exam. I still have other assignments coming up that I can focus my effort on."

Placing ownership where it belongs

- Take responsibility where appropriate while also being mindful of outside causes.

- Example: "I did not study the way I usually do for this exam. I have been under a lot of stress lately and my study habits have changed now that we're virtual."

Reframing

- Change your way of thinking about the event or find something for which to be grateful.
- Example: "I did not do well on my exam, but I have the opportunity to study in a different way so my next exam can be different. One exam does not determine my worth!"

Giving yourself time

- Give yourself time to recover and permission to feel your emotions.
- Example: "I'm allowed to be disappointed about my performance. And I can look ahead at my next chance to try harder."



By practicing this four-step process when needed, you can train your brain to adapt to stressful events and strengthen your resilience.

Resilience through Trauma

Resilience can also help guide us through healing from the larger traumas in our lives. If you're looking to boost your resilience regarding an incident that had a long-lasting or major impact on your life, try some of these approaches:

Finding connection and seeking support

- Have meaningful and honest conversations with friends and loved ones
- Ask for help from your support system
- Reach out to mental health professionals or look into joining a support group

Fostering wellness and purpose

- Allow yourself to feel your emotions
- Use this as an opportunity for self-discovery
- Take care of your body through exercise or new healthy habits
- Unplug electronic devices and take time to rest and reflect
- Practice mindfulness
- When possible, move towards specific goals and celebrate when you make progress
- Help yourself by helping others

Embracing healthy thoughts

- Journal about your current strengths and ways you want to grow
- Be kind to yourself
- Accept that change is a part of life
- Maintain hope and recognize moments of joy
- Read affirmations out loud

If you've experienced trauma through neglect, harassment, or violence, RBHS VPVA is here to listen. Reach out if and when you're ready.

Join Our VPVA Team

The RBHS VPVA office is hiring student assistants! Do you want to join our efforts in addressing interpersonal violence on campus?

Here are the preferred qualifications:

- Student within the RBHS community
- Knowledge of sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, and stalking
- Experience working with diverse populations in a campus setting
- Strong organizational, presentation, and communication skills
- Experience with graphic design, social media and digital formatting
- Ability to travel between Newark and Piscataway RBHS locations
- Familiarity with prevention education or awareness programming
- Preferred training as a confidential victim advocate

The position is a part-time, 20 hour/week role at the \$15/hour graduate assistant wage. Email vpva@rbhs.rutgers.edu with any questions.

Interested? Apply directly through the Rutgers job portal:

<https://jobs.rutgers.edu/postings/115324>

Did you hear? We're hiring!



VPVA is seeking a part-time graduate student assistant to support our work in addressing interpersonal violence.

JOIN OUR TEAM

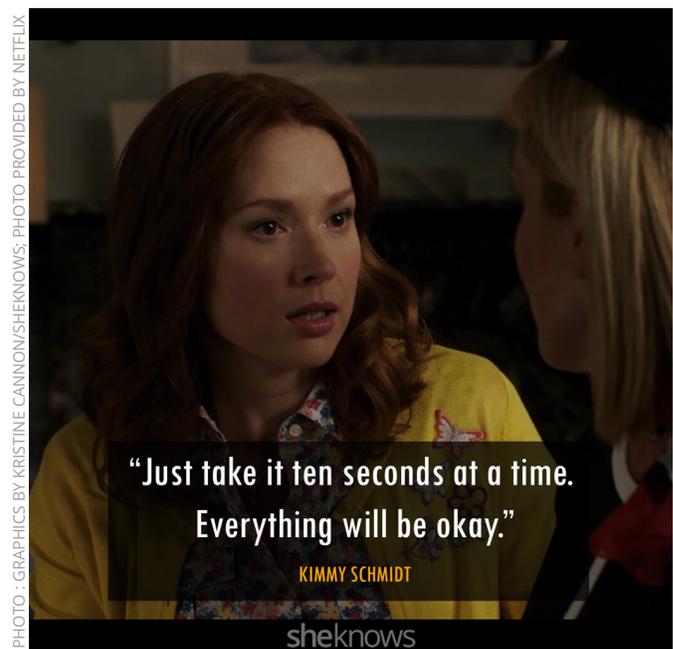
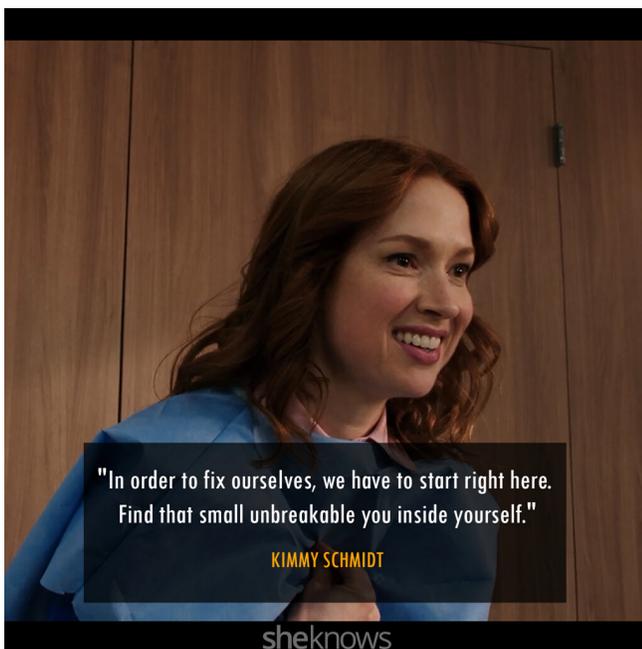


Spotlight on one of RBHS VPVA's Graduate Student Assistants: Brittany Sjaastad, MSW

Brittany recently graduated with her Master of Social Work (MSW) with Certification in Violence Against Women and Children from Rutgers University. Her background and bachelor's degree is in Forensic Psychology as she has always been fascinated by people's minds. She joined the RBHS VPVA team after hearing about the role during her time as Clinical Intern and Advocate at the New Brunswick VPVA. At RBHS, she helps maintain the VPVA Ambassador program and creates content for our newsletters, like the one you are currently reading! Brittany has a passion for serving survivors of interpersonal violence through counseling, advocacy, education, and prevention.

Representations of Resilience!

Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt is a Netflix series that tells the story of how lead character, Kimmy, adapts to the world after a traumatic experience. Kimmy represents resilience, looking to empower herself and those around her by seeking solutions and reframing situations in times of adversity.



References

American Psychological Association. (2020). Building your resilience. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

Riopel, L. (2020). Resilience skills, factors and strategies of the resilient person. Retrieved from <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-skills/>

Taylor, T. (2016, March 21). Eleven most inspiring Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt quotes. SHEKNOWS. Retrieved from <https://www.sheknows.com/entertainment/slideshow/5509/most-inspiring-unbreakable-kimmy-schmidt-quotes/1/>