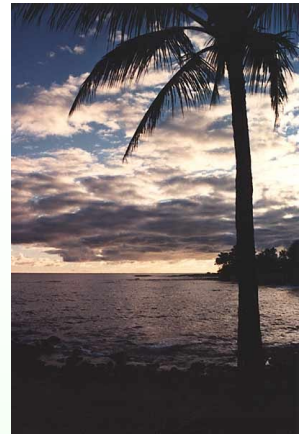


# Building Resiliency

One fourth of us see our jobs as the number one stressor in our lives.<sup>1</sup> It's gotten to the point where some have called stress the "global health epidemic of the 21st century."<sup>2</sup> Today's often hectic, intense, 24/7-connected work has contributed to more people using EAP services to help take care of their emotional health. That's the good news. The bad news is that more people are feeling stressed.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, burned out, or ready to snap, the other good news is that you don't have to stay that way. There's a reason that our palm trees don't (usually) snap despite our gusty tradewinds and occasional hurricanes. They bend. They're resilient.

Resilience is a skill that can be learned. Lots of research is going on that is beginning to show some great ways we can all increase our ability to cope, to avoid distress, and to stay resilient. Here are five tips we hope will help:



## 1. Practice mindfulness.



You're going to be seeing a lot more about this concept, especially since science is proving how well it impacts businesses when employees learn this skill. You'll see mindfulness adult coloring books in any bookstore (even Costco!), and articles about mindfulness in about every kind of magazine.

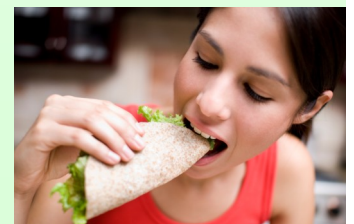
Mindfulness increases the accuracy of your judgment and ability to solve problems.<sup>3</sup> Mindfulness increases your flexibility in thinking.<sup>4</sup> Mindfulness facilitates job performance,<sup>5</sup> and decreases stress.<sup>6</sup>

One definition of mindfulness is "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and body sensations." Basically, we learn to become more aware of what's going on inside us and around us without judging what's going on, defining it as good or bad, or stressing out about it. This is a skill that takes practice, as well as a skill that anyone can learn. It's good for our bodies, minds, brains, memory, compassion, and relationships.

There are some great books,<sup>7,8</sup> trainings, websites, and mobile apps<sup>9</sup> that can help you learn this skill and practice it.

## 2. Avoid Multitasking, to the extent possible.

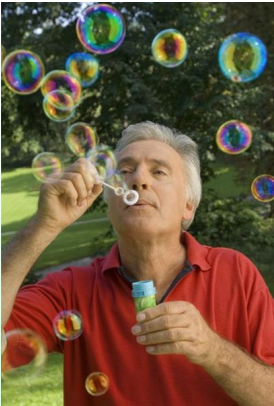
Just like driving while texting is not a safe thing to do, trying to talk on the phone while you're checking your emails and working on a spreadsheet is not a great idea either. All projects suffer more than you think, and more than if you dedicated uninterrupted time for each. How many of us eat while we're working? Our brains can only handle so much at a time, so don't fry your brain by responding to too much stimulation at once. Try doing one thing at a time — like eating mindfully — and see how it goes!



EAP is a short-term confidential counseling and work/life service, provided to you by your employer, that can assist in identifying and resolving issues that may be interfering with your job or personal life. Access to our experienced counselors and work/life services is available across the Islands and can be contacted by phoning or emailing our Honolulu office. **(808) 597-8222** **Toll-Free (877) 597-8222** **info@eapacific.com**



## 3. Take moments to “chill.”



Research shows that stepping away from your desk or workspace for just a few minutes every 90 to 120 minutes helps us refocus and get through the day more productively. Slogging through an entire day to accomplish an important task may be necessary every now and then, but it's not a great lifestyle choice for a long-term career without burning out or snapping.

## 4. Back away from the stress.

Like a surfer learns to quickly rebalance when hit by an unexpected wave, we can learn to rebalance ourselves when hit by a stressful situation. Rather than reacting emotionally, we can learn to respond — pause, back off a second, shift our perspectives (“Whoa, that’s a good one” rather than “OMG I’m gonna die/quit/snap”), and come up with better goals. Staying mentally agile and switching how we respond to stress can keep us on top of our career surfboard.



**5. Develop your compassion.** Learning to respond with compassion toward most customers, co-workers, or situations — rather than responding with anger, fear/anxiety, or stress — is a graduate level skill that you don’t need a college degree to master. Some would call that “aloha.” We might be better at this here than most places because the concept is familiar to us! Increasing positive emotions and work relationships can be a key to a long-term career.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2016/06/627-building-resilience-ic-5-ways-to-build-your-personal-resilience-at-work>

<sup>3</sup> <http://people.stfx.ca/x2010/x2010mie/mindfulness/mindfulness%20and%20emotional%20distress.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://psy.fgu.edu.tw/web/wlchou/general\\_psychology/class\\_pdf/Advanced%20Perceptual/2011/2011week7\\_HaoChen\\_paper.pdf](http://psy.fgu.edu.tw/web/wlchou/general_psychology/class_pdf/Advanced%20Perceptual/2011/2011week7_HaoChen_paper.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://hum.sagepub.com/content/67/1/105.abstract>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15256293>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Fully-Present-Science-Practice-Mindfulness/dp/0738213241#>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Mindfulness-Eight-Week-Finding-Peace-Frantic-ebook/dp/B005NJ2T1G>

<sup>9</sup> Apps include (but are not limited to) Headspace, Mindfulness Daily, Spire, The Now, Mental Workout, Calm, and iMindfulness. [A review.](#)

