

# THE NEUROSCIENCE OF RESILIENCE



Advances in the field of neuroscience have allowed us to understand the functions of the brain and how it responds to stress in our environment. Using this knowledge, we can learn to build a resilient brain.



## What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to positively respond to adversity. It is having the mindset to bounce back, and have perspective on ways to try again and achieve goals.

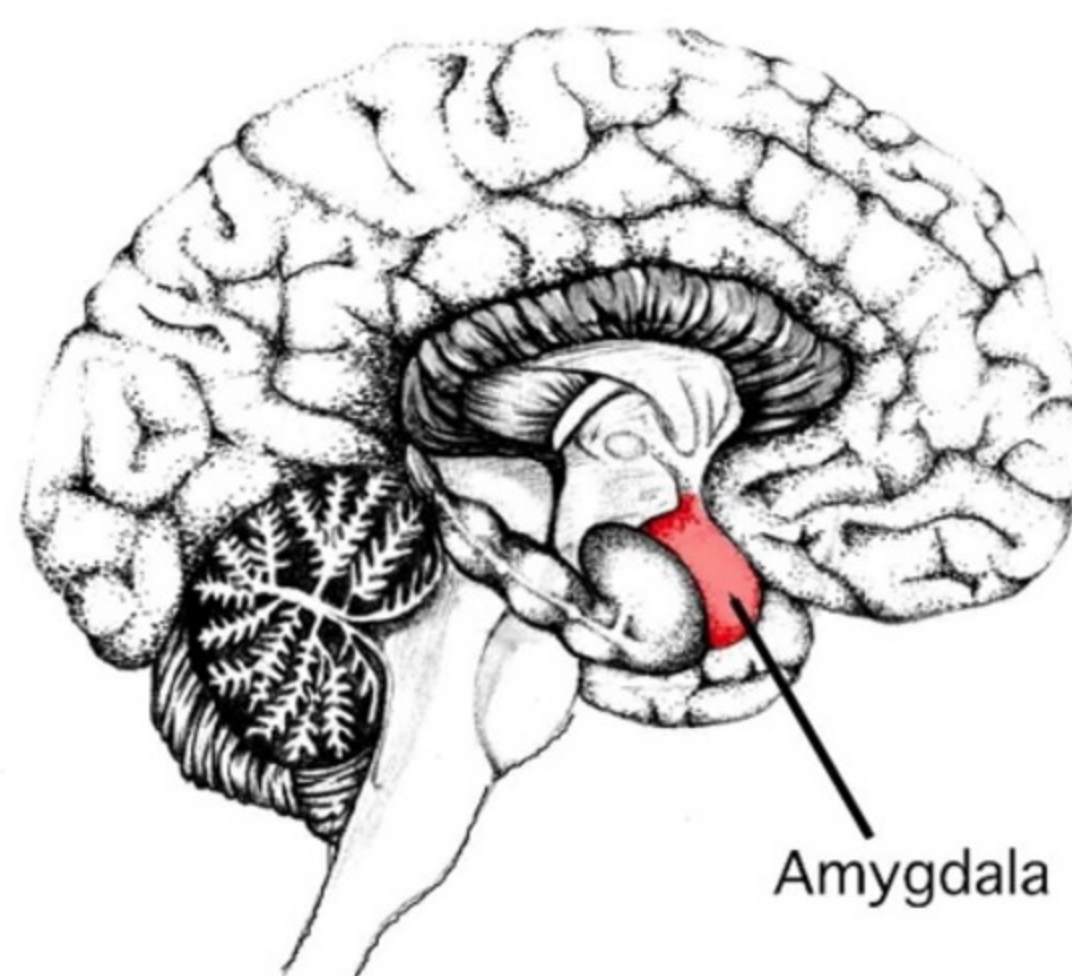
It is well researched that our experiences and environment have the potential to shape the neural pathways in the brain. Our brain has an amazing capacity to change and adapt. This is referred to as neuroplasticity.

One of the most important needs of the developing brain is safety. When we feel safe and secure in our environment, we can think clearly and problem solve effectively. If we feel unsafe in our environment, our brain is likely to detect potential threats and prepare us for a fight-or-flight response.

When we are faced with prolonged periods of stress, the brain may adapt to the unsafe environment by responding to situations with fear-based emotions. This means that the amygdala rules, inciting a stress response with increased levels of adrenaline and cortisol running through the body. The result could be an overly anxious brain.

Our brain responds to everyday stressors such as traffic, work demands, deadlines, conflict at work as well as pressures at home. These stressors may be perceived as potential threat which triggers the fight-or-flight response in the brain.

But it is not all bad news. The brain can adapt to modern day stress. With knowledge, self-awareness, and practice, we train the brain to calm the amygdala and override the stress response.





# HOW TO OVERRIDE THE STRESS RESPONSE & BUILD RESILIENCE

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## Physical Wellness

- Eat healthy - the Mediterranean diet has been shown to build resilience
- Sleep at least 8-9 hours per night
- Exercise at least 3 times per week



## Strong Relationships

- Connect with others - network, seek support and support others
- Develop empathy - listen to others
- Practice service and meaning - volunteering, charity, spirituality



## Emotional Regulation

- Practice mindfulness to be aware and manage your own emotions



## Resilient Thinking

- Develop and promote optimism
- Create rational thinking styles
- Adopt a growth mindset, where adversity is a learning opportunity to grow



### Want to know more?

Assure Programs can offer you confidential support on how to build resilience. Call us today on 1800 808 374.

