

with hardship by sharing information, ideas, and emotions so that group members know they're not alone in experiencing difficulty.

- *Books and other publications by people who have survived a war:* These stories can motivate readers to find a strategy that might work for them personally.
- *Online resources:* The Web can be a helpful source of ideas, though the quality of the information can vary.

For many people, using their own resources and the kinds of help listed above may be sufficient for building resilience in a time of war. At times, however, an individual might get stuck or have difficulty making progress on the road to resilience.

A licensed mental health professional, such as a psychologist, can assist people in developing an appropriate strategy for moving forward. It's important to get professional help if you struggle through daily living.

To find any of the above resources, check out the APA Help Center, online at www.helping.apa.org, or call 1-800-964-2000.

Information contained in this brochure should not be used as a substitute for professional health and mental health care or consultation. Individuals who believe they may need or benefit from care should consult a psychologist or other licensed health/mental health professional.

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For additional copies of this brochure, call 1-800-964-2000 or go to the APA Web site, helping.apa.org.

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RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF WAR: adapting to wartime stress

*What does
war mean
to you?...*

...It may seem like the war has nothing to do with you. On the other hand, the news can seem overwhelming. You may have a friend in JROTC or ROTC, or you may have a relative in the military. And, with the threat of terrorism, the war can get close to home pretty quickly.

You keep hearing about being prepared for war—is there something you can do to prepare mentally?

The good news is that you can learn the skills of resilience—the ability to adapt well in the face of hard times and disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or fires; tragedy; threats; or even high stress.

What are some tips that can help you learn resilience? As you use these tips, keep in mind that each person's journey along the road to resilience will be different—what works for you may not work for your friends.

10 Tips in a Time of War

1. Talk About It. Talk with your friends and, yes, even with your parents. Understand that your parents may have more experience with war than you do, and they may be afraid as well. In fact, it may be harder for them to talk about it than it is for you! Don't be afraid to express your opinion, even if your parent or friend takes the opposite view. Ask questions and listen to the answers. And, understand that some people may express hatred for people from a certain country or religion—it doesn't mean that you have to. Get connected to your community, whether it's as part of a church group or of a high school group.

2. Turn It Off. You want to stay informed—you may even have homework that requires you to watch the news. But try to limit the amount of news you take in, whether it's from television, newspapers or magazines, or the

Internet. Watching a news report once informs you; watching it over and over again just adds to the stress and contributes no new knowledge.

3. Cut Yourself Some Slack. The stresses of war may heighten daily stresses. Your emotions might already be all over the map because of hormones and physical changes; the uncertainty during a time of war can make these shifts seem more extreme. Be prepared for this and go a little easy on yourself, and on your friends.

4. Create a No-War Zone. Make your room or apartment a “no war zone”—home should be a haven, free from the stress and anxieties associated with war. Understand that your parents and siblings are under wartime stresses as well and may want to spend a little more time than usual with you.

5. Stick to the Program. Spending time in high school or on a college campus means more choices; so let home be your constant. During a time of war, map out a routine and stick to it. You'll be doing all kinds of new things, but don't forget the routines that give you comfort, whether they are the things you do before class, going out to lunch, or having a nightly phone call with a friend.

6. Take Care of Yourself. Be sure to take care of yourself—physically, mentally, and spiritually. And get sleep. If you don't, you may be more grouchy and nervous at a time when you have to stay sharp. There's a lot going on, and it's going to be tough to face if you're falling asleep on your feet.

7. Take Control. Make sure you are included in any emergency planning at home, school, or work. Go over what each person will do in different scenarios, such as in a military emergency while you're at school versus at home. If you've got a family member or friend in the military, get as much information as you can about where that person will be, how long they'll be gone, and how often they'll be able to contact you.

8. Express Yourself. War can bring up a bunch of conflicting emotions, but sometimes, it's just too hard to talk to someone about what you're feeling. If talking isn't working, do something else to capture your emotions, such as starting a journal or creating art.

9. Help Somebody. Nothing gets your mind off your own problems like solving someone else's. Try volunteering in your community or at your school, cleaning up around the house or apartment, or helping a friend with his or her homework.

10. Put Things Into a Positive Perspective. War may be all anyone is talking about now. But, eventually, wars end. If you're worried about whether you've got what it takes to get through this, think back on a time when you faced up to your fears, whether it was asking someone on a date or applying for a job. Learn some relaxation techniques, whether that is thinking of a particular song in times of stress or just taking a deep breath to calm down. Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing. When you talk about bad times, make sure you talk about good times as well.

You can learn resilience. But just because you learn resilience doesn't mean you won't feel stressed or anxious. You might have times when you aren't happy—and that's OK. Resilience is a journey, and each person will take his or her own time along the way. You may benefit from some of the resilience tips above, while others may benefit from other tips. The skills of resilience you learn in a time of war will be useful even after war, and they are good skills to have every day.

Getting help when you need it is crucial in building resilience. Beyond caring family members and friends, people often find it helpful to turn to:

- **Self-help and support groups:** Such community groups can aid teens struggling