



A Practice: The Five R's of Resilience and Recovery

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How can we build resilience and recovery when trauma and uncertainty are present? Cynthia Eriksson, professor of psychology and chair of the Psy.D. program at Fuller Theological Seminary, points to five self-care practices.^[1]

Regulation

It is important to steward the body, heart and mind^[2] in order to strengthen our parasympathetic nervous system—the system that controls the body's ability to relax. Attend to and nurture yourself physically and emotionally by:

- Calming and grounding the body in the here and now, and allowing time to recover from any stress.
- Recognizing what you are feeling, labeling your emotions, staying connected to the present through relationships and goals, and acting with integrity in challenging emotional spaces.





Reflection and Right Thinking

When we regulate our emotions, we are then able to reframe our minds and live in truth.[3] Attend to your thoughts and beliefs by:

- Noticing the assumptions made about certain situations, and identifying the “lies believed” about yourself and others.
- Orienting yourself to the known and the present.
- Reflecting back on truth and grace to others.

Relationships

Social support—both for ourselves and others—is essential to our resilience and recovery.[4] Attend to caring relationships by:

- Spending time with people who know and love you.
- Reminding yourself and others that we are not alone in our pain.
- Being emotionally present for others in times of distress, and offering practical support.

Respite and Rest

We all need space where we can withdraw from stress and increase our physical rest.[5] Attend to your environment by:

- Intentionally limiting exposure to stress and trauma (e.g., consuming less media).
- Moving out of situations of high threat periodically when possible.
- Taking breaks from work in a sustainable rhythm and building it into your day, week, month, or even year.

Reason

As humans, we need a sense of purpose in what we are doing and stay connected to what is transcendent.[6] Attend to the “why” by:

- Reaffirming your vocational calling and commitment, as well as the Divine’s presence in community.
- Making meaning in times of crisis, disruption, and challenges.
- Identifying purpose in the actions taken.

