

## SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION

# How to *Cultivate* Hope

In frightening and uncertain times, it's hard to feel hopeful. Yet studies show that having hope for the future builds resilience – the ability to get through tough times and recover quickly from setbacks. Moreover, hope can help reduce anxiety, trauma and depression. Hope isn't relief from fearfulness or sidelining anxiety, but the choice to see beyond current circumstances to something better. It's knowing that there can be a better future.

Hopelessness can leave a person highly vulnerable to self-harm impulses. At times it's common to experience thoughts of self-harm when feeling depressed and overwhelmed. In the moment, it may seem as though unhappiness will never end. But it's important to realize that with help, negative feelings can be overcome.

### Ways to cultivate hope in order to recover quickly from adversity and move toward positive action:

- **Set realistic goals:** Establishing achievable goals provides a sense of direction and purpose. Break larger goals into smaller, manageable steps, allowing for a sense of accomplishment along the way.
- **Find purpose:** Reflect on your values, passions, and what gives your life meaning. Connect with activities that align with these aspects, as they can provide a sense of purpose and contribute to a positive outlook.
- **Practice optimism:** Train your mind to seek out and focus on positive aspects of situations. Practice gratitude by acknowledging the good things in your life, no matter how small they may seem.
- **Surround yourself with supportive people:** Build a network of friends, family, or mentors who can provide encouragement, guidance, and support. Sharing experiences and seeking advice can foster hope.
- **Practice self-compassion:** Treat yourself with kindness and self-acceptance. Acknowledge that setbacks are a part of life, and learn from them rather than dwelling on self-criticism or negative self-talk.
- **Seek inspiration and role models:** Look for inspiring stories of individuals who have overcome adversity and achieved success. Learn from their experiences and use them as a source of inspiration.
- **Prioritize self-care:** Engage in activities that aid physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Exercise regularly, eat healthy, get adequate sleep, and engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation.
- **Develop problem-solving skills:** Focus on finding solutions rather than dwelling on challenges. Break down problems into smaller components, brainstorm solutions, and take proactive steps to resolve them.
- **Seek professional help:** If you're struggling with maintaining hope, consider seeking support from a professional. They can provide guidance, therapeutic techniques, and personalized strategies to help you.