

Resilience

Living with neuroendocrine cancer (NETs) can bring uncertainty, unhelpful thoughts, anxiety and stress.

The ongoing or chronic nature of NETs, frequent medical appointments, changes in symptoms and the fear of what may happen next can all create additional challenges.

Building resilience can be a useful tool for navigating these experiences and may support your ability to cope with change and challenges over time.

Resilience can also play an important role in supporting good mental health.

There are many practical ways to build and maintain resilience.



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Develop a positive mindset

A positive mindset does not mean being happy all the time or ignoring difficult emotions. Rather, it can help you look for possibilities, consider what you want from your life and draw on your own inner strengths when facing change and challenges.

Developing realistic optimism and noticing the good things in your life can be powerful ways to reframe unhelpful thoughts, particularly on harder days. Sometimes, positivity may simply mean reminding yourself that you have choices, that difficult feelings will change, or that you can take things one day at a time.

Set goals

Establishing realistic and achievable goals can provide a sense of focus and purpose. Goals do not always need to relate to your cancer or treatment.

They can also be about the things that matter to you – your relationships, interests, work, travel, wellbeing or simply something you would like to experience or achieve.

Setting goals can be a powerful way to think about the life you want and identify the steps that can help you move towards it.



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Plan coping strategies

Consider developing coping strategies before you need them, particularly for times when life may feel a little tougher than usual. Acknowledging that some days will be harder than others can help you prepare for them without feeling that you have somehow failed.

Think about what has helped you cope in the past and what might support you on difficult days. This could include taking time for yourself, getting outside, practising relaxation or mindfulness, connecting with someone you trust, or doing something that brings you comfort or enjoyment.

And don't be afraid to ask for help. Talking with others can help you identify what you need, communicate those needs clearly and discover new strategies that might work for you.

Identify your strengths

Taking time to recognise your strengths can be a powerful reminder on difficult days. Think about the qualities, skills and personal strengths that have helped you through challenges in the past.

You might describe these strengths to yourself, write them down, or share them with someone you trust.

Having confidence in your own abilities can become an anchor during difficult times and remind you of the qualities you already possess.



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Stay connected

Healthy relationships can provide comfort, encouragement and practical support. Take time to build and maintain connections with family, friends, workmates, support groups, special interest groups or through volunteering.

Finding people who understand, listen or simply enjoy spending time with you can help create a support network to draw on during harder days.

Connection does not have to mean talking about cancer – sometimes doing something enjoyable or ordinary with others can be just as important.

Embrace change

Living with neuroendocrine cancer can mean that plans sometimes need to change. Where possible, consider placing your energy and attention on the present and on what remains within your control.

The past cannot be changed, although past experiences can provide opportunities to learn and adapt. Similarly, the future cannot always be predicted. Focusing on the present can help you make choices that support your current needs while continuing to shape your future goals and plans.

Sometimes even the best plans need to be changed, adapted or compromised. Recognising what you can control – and accepting what you cannot – may help you navigate change with greater flexibility.



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Reflect on past resilience

Take time to reflect on how you have coped with difficult situations in the past. What helped you get through? Who supported you? What strengths did you draw on? What did you learn about yourself?

Reflecting on previous experiences can help you recognise your own qualities and inner strength. It can also remind you that you may already have many of the skills and resources needed to face challenges when they arise.



Building resilience over time

Resilience is not something you either have or don't have. It can develop and change over time, particularly as you experience different challenges and discover what helps you cope.

There may be days when you feel strong and capable, and other days when simply getting through the day is enough. Both are part of living with uncertainty.

By becoming familiar with your own strengths, developing coping strategies, staying connected and knowing when to ask for help, you can build a range of strategies to draw on when life becomes challenging.

Resilience is not about facing everything alone – it is also about recognising when you need support and being willing to reach out.



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