



# Resilience and Its Relevance

*“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”*  
—Helen Keller

## What Is Resilience?

Resilience is the power to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change. Life doesn't always go as we wish or expect. In an instant, catastrophes can strike, permanently changing our lives. Especially in recent years, after September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, we no longer expect to always feel secure. Yet we all have knowledge, capacities, and beliefs that can help us move beyond trauma and tragedy. And we can learn to be more resilient—mobilizing our strengths to confront obstacles and emerge with greater wisdom and flexibility.

## Why Does Resilience Matter?

### *For Victims of Crime*

Each year, millions of once-peaceful lives are suddenly shattered by crime. Victims may suffer severe physical injuries and psychological damage, such as depression, shame, fear, or even posttraumatic stress disorder. The effects of victimization may linger for years, and the process of recovery demands strength, resourcefulness, and tenacity. Yet despite the challenges they face, most crime victims have the power to reclaim, strengthen, and transform their lives in unexpected ways.

### *For Victim Service Providers*

Victim service providers help victims unleash their untapped powers. In their everyday work, providers build resilience by helping victims find and draw on their own strengths. They affirm victims' decisions to seek help and make informed decisions that are right for them. They help victims safety plan, identify and draw on their support networks, and find and use community resources. And by helping victims to overcome obstacles, they share in their victories.

## Resilience Resources

The Resilience Project of the National Center for Victims of Crime, a public health initiative that promotes the resilience of crime victims, offers user-friendly resources for both victims and victim service providers. These resources include an overview booklet, a self-assessment tool, a bibliography of resources, and fact sheets on optimism, self-knowledge, healthy coping, and healthy relationships—characteristics of resilient people. These materials, available at [www.victimsofcrime.org](http://www.victimsofcrime.org), can help you strengthen your best practices and empower the victims who seek your help.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**Victims of Crime**