



# THE MENTAL HEALTH MENORAH



Hanukkah is a celebration of resilience, both physical and emotional, in the face of overwhelming odds.



**Resilience** is the psychological quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before. Rather than letting difficulties, traumatic events or failure overcome them and drain their resolve, **highly resilient people find a way to change course, emotionally heal and continue moving toward their goals.**  
(Psychology Today)

In the Hanukkah story, the Maccabees — the Jewish defenders of their faith and homeland — stood up against overwhelming odds and faced their Greek oppressors, who greatly outnumbered them. Following their victory, the Jewish people returned to the Temple and discovered that the oil for the holy menorah had apparently vanished. After desperately searching for some oil to light the menorah, they found just enough for one day. **Despite a seemingly hopeless predicament, they lit it. Miraculously, it burned for eight days.**



Throughout history, the Jewish people have faced adversity again and again. But with hope and resilience, we have refused to give up, and we have ultimately succeeded. Even the dreidel represents resilience, as it spins without knowing where it will land or what will happen when it does.

Now, as we light our menorahs, let's consider the ways we are building strength and resilience to be like the Maccabees. Only then can we persevere through the challenges that confront us.



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## Activity: Lighting My Flame

According to the Center for Creative Leadership, there are eight steps to building resilience. Try looking at each night of Hanukkah as another step toward building your more resilient self. Of course, everyone has different skills they need to work on. After reviewing the steps below, use the blank Mental Health Menorah to write down those you would like to focus on in the order you think best reflects your current emotional needs. You may try cutting the candles out and putting velcro on the backs of them to allow you to adjust the steps from year to year.



### Accept Change

Find ways to become more comfortable with change. Change is constant and inevitable, and you can only move forward if you accept it rather than resisting it.



### Learn Continuously

Learn new skills, gain new understandings, and apply them during times of change. Don't hold onto old behaviors and skills, especially when it's obvious they don't work anymore.



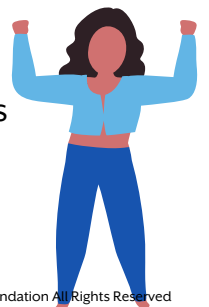
### Take Charge

Embrace self-empowerment. Take charge of your own life and growth. Don't expect someone else to guide the way.



### Define Purpose

Develop a "personal why" that gives your life and ambitions meaning or helps you put yourself into a larger context. A clear sense of purpose helps you to assess setbacks within the framework of a broader perspective.





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## Create Balance

Form your identity apart from your career. A job is just one facet of your identity, and a career is just one aspect of your life. Separate who you are from what you do.



## Cultivate Love

Develop and nurture a broad network of personal and professional relationships. Meaningful relationships create a strong base of support — a critical element in achieving goals, dealing with hardships and developing perspective.



## Reflect

Whether you're celebrating success or enduring a hardship, make time to reflect. Reflection fosters learning, new perspectives and a degree of self-awareness that can enhance your resiliency.



## Reframe Skills

Think about the way you define yourself. Is it time to reframe how you see your skills, talents and interests? By casting your skills in a new light, you can see how they might shift into new patterns of behavior.





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