

[WORK & PURPOSE](#)  
[Home](#)

# The 3Cs of Psychological Hardiness



Written by [Nishtha Desai](#)  
Posted on [July 16, 2020](#) - 5 min read

BOOKMARK THIS ARTICLE



How often do we come across terms such as “resilience”, “hardiness”?

How often do we read on these topics?

More importantly, how often do we practice it?

**What is Hardiness?**

Hardiness is a personality construct composed of three traits – control, commitment, and challenge – that are theorized to make one resilient in the face of stress.

## Resilience & Hardiness

Resilience can be defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. Emotional hardiness contributes to resilience with regard to medical and mental illness. Thus, we can say that one of the pillars of resilience is hardiness. It not only refers to the “toughness” but also, it is observed by various researchers that people with hardiness, are less likely to perceive events as stressful and so are likely to experience lower levels of stress.

## Hardiness and its components

Suzanne Kobasa and Salvatore Maddi are known to be the pioneers of the psychological concept of Hardiness. It comprises three attitudes – the three Cs: *commitment, control, and challenge*. The three Cs not only offer a way to cope with the stress change but provide a set of principles to live by. Taken together, the three components of psychological hardiness provide motivation and confidence. We can also say that when these three components are brought into practicality it provides a perspective which helps us to build a future rather than looking back at the past. In simple words, it gives you the courage to look forward towards an uncertain future instead of the familiar yet traumatic past.

**Commitment:** The attitude of commitment. People who are determined, focused and have a sense of commitment tend to be better at strengthening hardiness in their personality. They possess a strong sense of commitment not only w.r.t work and professional life but even when it comes to interpersonal relationships. They do not believe in giving up no matter what kind of obstacle they face; they seem to believe in the purpose of life and also behind the bond with the people they care about.

**Control:** When it comes to controlling, these people always prefer to put their efforts and energy to the subjects that they believe to have control over. This means that what they can control in our situation and direct their energy and focus towards what lies within their control rather than those forces that are beyond our control. These kinds of people do not let the uncertainty factor of life cause anxiety and hamper productivity. It simply means that they act in a manner that life experiences are controllable. They can think clearly and problem-solve.

**Challenges:** In the face of adversity, when the majority of the people seem to panic and worry, the unique perspective of seeing everything as a challenge is the key to resilience. It can be described as, to view change in life as a challenge toward growth and development rather than as a threat to security. When situations are perceived as a threat rather than opportunities, they give rise to anxiety, worry, and stress.

The buffering effect of psychological hardiness on health and well-being has been well researched and has been demonstrated for a variety of groups. Hardiness predicts success, adaptive coping, and wellbeing. The outlook and coping approach of hardy individuals is consistent with these traits. Individuals ‘high in hardiness’ are more likely to put stressful life events into perspective and tend to perceive them less of a threat and more of a challenge and as opportunities for personal