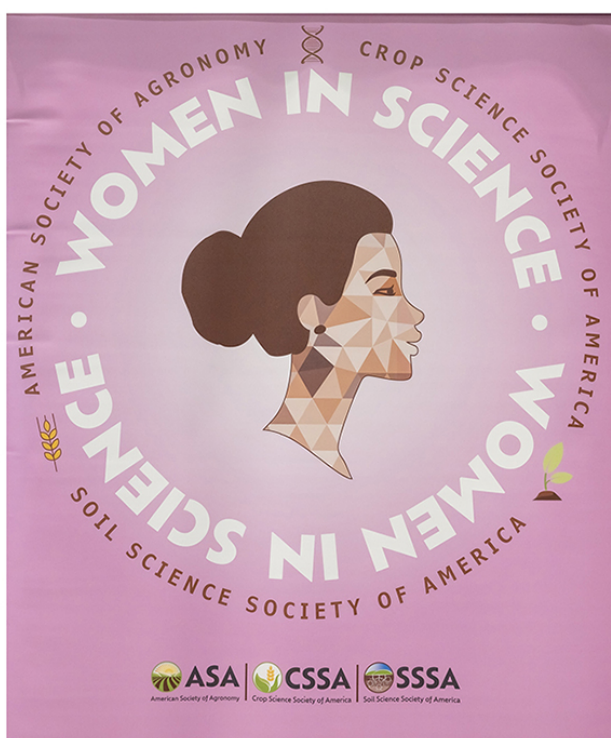


From grit to grace: A new perspective on resiliency in the workplace

By Pamela Aracena

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At the CANVAS conference in Salt Lake City, the Women in Science Committee led an interactive workshop that redefined resilience in science—from mere persistence and endurance to a more holistic focus on balance, rest, and support. Through shared reflections and expert insights, participants embraced resilience as a collective, sustainable practice rooted in grace, well-being, and community.

As I stepped into the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City for last fall's [CANVAS](#) conference, the energy was palpable. The air buzzed with conversations—old friends reconnecting, new introductions sparking, and the hum of ideas being exchanged. Everywhere I turned, there were warm greetings and animated discussions:

“So, how have you been since the last CANVAS?”

“What are you working on now?”

“Did you hear about so-and-so's research?”

These moments remind us that [conferences are more than sessions and presentations—they're about community.](#)

Yet, beneath the excitement lies the reality of our profession. The journey of a scientist—whether in academia, industry, or extension—is often marked by high

expectations, demanding workloads, and the constant pressure to secure funding, publish research, and navigate career transitions. For women in science, these challenges can be even more complex, layered with the demands of fieldwork, workplace dynamics, and balancing personal responsibilities.

"Conferences are more than sessions and presentations—they're about community."

That's why cultivating resilience matters. Resilience isn't just about enduring hardship—it's about equipping ourselves with tools to manage stress, recover from setbacks, and build sustainable careers. At CANVAS 2025, the **Women in Science Committee** hosted an interactive workshop on **Cultivating Resiliency: Thriving in Science Careers**, a topic that has become essential in today's fast-paced, ever-changing environment. Resilience—the ongoing process of adapting to and overcoming challenges—is no longer optional; it's a necessity.

Starting the conversation

Like any good scientist, we began by establishing a baseline. Before diving into presentations from our invited speakers, we asked participants:

“When you think of resilience in science, what single word or phrase comes to mind?”

The most frequent response? **Persistence.**

Other words included adaptability, challenges, consistency, determination, and flexibility. These reflect a traditional view of resilience: endurance and survival.

With that foundation set, our speakers—**Doris Mold** (Co-CEO, Annie’s Project and Co-Lead Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture), **Dr. Sindhu Jagadamma** (Associate Professor at the University of Tennessee), **Dr. Aaron Lee M. Daigh** (90th SSSA President and Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln), and **Dr. Cristine Morgan** (Chief Scientific Officer of the Soil Health Institute)—each shared their perspectives on resilience and strategies for cultivating it personally and professionally. As I watched from the sidelines, it was clear something was shifting. After each presentation, faces lit up with recognition, and conversations at the tables grew animated. It felt like light bulbs were turning on across the room.



Mentimeter word cloud responses from participants to the question: “When you think of resilience in science, what single word or phrase comes to mind?”



Mentimeter word cloud responses from participants to the question: "What new word, idea, or feeling now defines resilience for you after today's session?"

When our final panelist concluded, we returned to our audience with a second question:

"What new word, idea, or feeling now defines resilience for you after today's session?"

This time, the answers told a different story—one of balance and well-being:

- **Sleep** (most frequent)
- Values, rest, growth, patience, balance

Other responses included self-care, acceptance, community, gratitude, and support systems.

Doris added a powerful insight: a missing element—**grace**. Having grace for yourself and others allows you to withstand whatever may come. She reminded us that grace and empathy go hand in hand on the journey to resilience.

This transformation speaks volumes. Resilience is not just about pushing through challenges—it's about creating space for recovery, prioritizing mental health, and fostering supportive environments.

Key takeaways

Resiliency in the workplace is more than persistence; it's about **balance, adaptability, and collective support**. By integrating wellness practices and valuing rest, organizations

can help employees thrive—not just survive.

The shift in perspective highlights an important truth: resilience is a shared responsibility. It's about building cultures where employees feel supported, empowered, and equipped to navigate uncertainty together. As organizations face evolving challenges, investing in resilience-building strategies—such as open communication, professional development, and wellness initiatives—can make all the difference.

Resilient teams don't just survive change; **they thrive because of it.**

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