

Fostering Resilience



What is resilience?

Resilience is the positive way in which we recover and adapt to challenges we face in life. It's more than just 'bouncing back' when down but being able to adapt to hardship and build a collection of tools to compensate for any risks we might face. Resilience building applies to individuals, families, relationships, and the wider system, such as schools or communities.



What does resilience look like?

In individuals, resilience might include: developing a range of positive ways of thinking, including a 'give it a go' attitude and being prepared to change the way of thinking; the ability to identify, regulate and express emotions; the ability to learn from failure and other setbacks; and developing perseverance and a passion for long term goals. Some family resilience might include: providing stability and safety; provision of positive attachments; positive regard and recognition; and adapting to shared loss or adversity. Resilience in the community include: a strong sense of connection through acceptance and unity and focus on safety.

We can all develop resilience, and we can help children develop it as well. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned over time. Following are suggestions to help build resilience.

1. Make Connections

- Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Encourage children to make friends and how to be a friend to others, including how to empathise. It is important to find ways to keep connections strong when children cannot be with their friends.

2. Help others

- Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage children in age-appropriate volunteer work or ask for assistance yourself with some task that they can master.



3. Maintain a daily routine

- Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives. Encourage children to develop their own routines.

4. Take a break

- Although it is important to stick to routines, worrying about them can be counterproductive. Teach children how to focus on something other than what it is that is worrying them by finding relaxing hobbies or activities to do.

5. Self-care



Caring for oneself and even having fun will help them stay balanced and deal with stressful times better. Teach children the importance of eating properly, exercising and rest. Make sure children have time to have fun and time to relax.

6. Move towards goals

- Encourage children to set reasonable goals and move towards them one step at a time. Help children see what they have managed to accomplish with every small step.

7. Nurture a positive self-view

- Remind children of the ways they have successfully coped with hardships in the past and help them understand how these will help them cope with future difficulties. Show children how to trust themselves to solve problems and make appropriate decisions. Encourage children to see the humour in life and be able to laugh at themselves.



8. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook

- Even when children may be facing very painful events, help them look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although some children may be too young to consider a long-term look on their own, help them see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook enables children to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times.

9. Look for opportunities for self-discovery



Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help children take a look at how whatever they are facing can teach them 'what they are made of'.

10. Accept that change is part of living

- Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help children see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

As a way to help parents and carers implement these please look at the activities we have on our website:

<https://www.fosteringcompassion.org/resources/coronavirus-support>.

Sources used to create this document include:
American Psychological Association. (2012). Resilience guide for parents and teachers. <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience>
Stem4. (2020) Resilience. <https://stem4.org.uk/resilience/>