

Resiliency



School
Mental Health
Ontario

Santé mentale
en milieu scolaire
Ontario



Well-being
St. Clair Catholic District School Board



Facts

- Resilience is being able to adapt to difficult circumstances in a positive way.
- Resilience is not a personality trait: it varies depending on the duration, nature and accumulation of risk factors and depending on the support the child gets.
- Some changes are expected and allow us to plan for them, such as transitioning from elementary school to high school.
- Other changes can be sudden, unexpected or extra challenging for a child/teen. These could include: a change in caregivers, parental divorce, a change in living situation or the death of a loved one.
- For some children, difficult circumstances (e.g., the death of a parent, living in poverty or being in a natural disaster) can affect their development. Yet most children can successfully deal with these difficulties because they are resilient.
- Some children who show resilience in one aspect (e.g., school) may struggle in another (e.g., getting along with peers).
- When a child has limited access to the resources in his environment, the capacity to show resilience may be compromised, although the impact may vary greatly from one child to another.

Tips

10 ways to help children learn skills needed to cope with challenges and bounce back from disappointments (building resilience)

- The most important thing you can do to support children to be resilient is to **build a warm, loving relationship with them**. Tell and show your child they are loved. Gives hugs, smiles, high fives and cuddles. Eye contact is important so put away your cell phone and spend quality time together.
- Show your child they are a valued member of your family**. Play with them. Ask about their day and really listen to them. Ask for their opinion.
- Give your child your attention when they seek it.** Stop what you are doing and really listen to them. Take time to play, read, sing and talk every day. These positive interactions nurture strong relationships that help to build resiliency.
- Help them with their emotions**. Accept their emotions - everyone has their ups and downs. Talk to your child about emotions and how to recognize them. Specifically describe how your face/body changes when you feel happy, angry, scared, excited, or frustrated. Reading books about emotions is a great way to do this. Ask your local librarian for books on emotions.
- Teach your child ways to cope with stress**. Discuss how talking to family and/or friends you trust can help you feel better. Show your child how taking three deep breaths can help them to calm down. Discuss other relaxation activities like reading, singing, listening to music, exercise (playing outside (being in nature is calming), going for a walk, yoga for kids), cuddle, laugh (joke or make silly faces)), colour, or practicing mindfulness exercises for kids.
- Teach your child how to problem solve**. Talk about how to break down a problem into small steps. Handle one step at a time. What is the problem? Come up with solutions together. What are some pros and cons of different solutions? Discuss if the solution worked and what to do differently next time. Help your child see that most problems are temporary.
- Be a positive role model**. Stay calm. Take three deep breaths. Children copy what adults say and do. Use positive self-talk out loud (e.g. "I am strong", "I can do this", "It's going to be ok"). Stop and ask yourself: Is there a more constructive or positive way I could react to this situation? When children see their parents cope well with everyday stress they are learning to do the same.
- Build your child's self-esteem**. Love them unconditionally. Respect and believe in their ideas and abilities. Help them recognize their strengths and achieve goals. Praise their efforts and accomplishments (example: hang art work where everyone can see it). Help them to learn new skills like reading, art, and helping around the house. Developing skills gives children confidence.
- Teach your child how to connect with others**. Get involved in community groups that encourage children to socialize such as play groups, sports and groups that develop specific talents (i.e. music, art, drama). Give them the words they need to communicate positively and effectively with others.
- Healthy body, healthy mind**. Provide a routine for your child that ensures they are getting enough sleep, provides time for physical activity/play, and limits sedentary behaviour like watching T.V., playing videos games or playing on a smart phone/pad. Offer a variety of healthy food options for healthy eating.

Resources

- <https://smh-assist.ca/blog/personal-resiliency/>
- <https://www.healthunit.com/building-resiliency>
- <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/resilience/resources>
- <https://www.camh.ca/en/camh-news-and-stories/building-resilience>

Sources

- School Mental Health-Assist
- Psychology Foundation
- Middlesex-London Health Unit