

resilience
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RESILIENCE FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with tips to help build your child's resilience and helpful links to websites.

TOP TIPS TO BUILD RESILIENCE:

1. **Have a daily routine with established boundaries:** older children need routine and structure too. It encourages them to manage their increasing independence. Reasonable boundaries and rules help teenagers feel secure and safe when a lot of things are changing around them. When setting rules negotiate them with your child then they may be more likely to agree to them, it shows that you respect their increasing maturity.
2. **Encourage your child to maintain good self-care:** be a role model, show and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest.
 - Aim for a balanced diet that is low in fat, sugar and salt and includes 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day (www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx). Ensure your child has breakfast each morning. Drinking 6-8 glasses of fluid daily is also important to maintain health. A good diet enables the brain and body to work well. Encouraging your child to help with making meals as it will give them some responsibility and a sense of achievement.
 - Children of all ages need 60 minutes of exercise daily to maintain good health. Regular exercise and being outdoors increases the endorphins (chemicals released by the brain) which has a positive effect on mood.
 - Teenagers need on average between 8-10 hours' sleep per night. Not enough, poor or interrupted sleep can affect school and home life. Good sleep hygiene and routine should be encouraged. Avoid stimulating electronic games 2 hours before bedtime and no TV, computers or phones in the bedroom.
 - Support your child to keep a balance between study, play and work. Although older children may be involved in work outside the family home, extra sports

activities and spending time with their friends it is important to have some family meals and time together to maintain good communication. Give praise when they have helped out around the home.

3. **Have fun together:** doing activities together provides an opportunity to try new things but that you are still there to support your child and have fun at the same time. You will also make and share good memories together.
4. **Connect:** children thrive when they feel loved, understood and safe. A child's close ties to family and community with at least one supportive caring person can help to create this comfort and safety. These connections can provide support to a child when they need to talk about their worries or upsets.
5. **Help others:** helping others can make a child feel valued as well as increase self-esteem. Encourage your child to volunteer for different activities at school such as peer mentor or buddy to younger children or to help out with a local charity. It will help them realise they are capable and give them a sense of responsibility and increase confidence.
6. **Teach problem solving skills and goal setting:** this is a learned skill, help your child to learn to solve their own problem. Help them to focus on one small problem at a time rather than the bigger picture to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Setting realistic goals that can be achieved through small steps will create a sense of purpose and help a child to see what they are capable of. Questions to consider asking, *what do they need to do? How might they do it? And who can help? Or what has worked before?* Use a list to write out the pros and cons for the problem as a visual aid to solving it. Praise and encouragement will support what they have achieved along the way. However it is also important to let a child know that it is still ok to ask for help. Support them towards doing what they can by themselves rather than doing it for them. Build ambition by encouraging your child to think to the future, about what they would like to do beyond school or as a career. Help your child see that change is a normal part of life and new goals can be swapped for goals that have become unachievable.
7. **Being brave and facing the fear:** this enables your child to face uncomfortable, scared feelings with support, instead of relying on others to sort it out. Remind your child they can do hard things, use examples of when they have been brave previously to acknowledge their bravery, strength and effort when facing their current difficulty. This will build confidence and a sense of being capable. They will then feel more able to deal with worries and challenges as they arise. Rather than avoiding a fear altogether it is better to have a gradual exposure to it which helps to a child to feel more at ease and have greater confidence with it. Let your child know how proud you are when they have tried to face something difficult regardless of the outcome.
8. **Try new activities:** find opportunities that encourage your child to take a risk and try something new. Support them to plan the activity then review it to help them see what worked well and not so well. This will encourage them to think about making decisions and



how to cope with things that go wrong. It can show that attempting to do something brave and difficult is more important than the outcome.

9. **Acknowledge that it is ok to make mistakes or fail:** rather than viewing an event such as a poor test result as a failure or a huge mistake, help your child to see it as a learning opportunity. *What have they learnt from the experience? What can they do differently next time?* Talking about failures they have overcome can make them a role model for others.
10. **Encourage optimism:** if your child tends to have a glass half empty view of a situation acknowledge their view but show them an alternative. In times of difficulty help your child to focus on what they have rather than what they may have lost, acknowledge the disappointment but move towards an opportunity it may have created. Avoid catastrophising a situation and keep a hopeful, positive outlook. Encourage your child to have more positive self-talk if they are being hard on themselves. If they feel stupid when something has gone wrong encourage them to tell themselves that everyone makes mistakes.
11. **Model resiliency:** be a positive role model, let them see how you deal with difficult situations and bring them into your emotional world when appropriate. It will help a child see they are all normal human experiences and that they are not abnormal in having difficulties in life.
12. **Let them talk:** Allow time to listen with interest to your child without judging. Try to resist solving their problems and help them explore their own solutions to a problem. Always answer questions truthfully but provide a level of information that is age-appropriate.
13. **Understanding and managing feelings and behaviours:** helping your child to recognise how they are feeling and behaving will increase their capacity to develop coping strategies. Let them see that all emotions are ok and when they are feeling distressed or sad that these feelings don't last forever, that they will pass; it's a normal response to a difficult situation. Talk about what activities might help improve how they are feeling such as going for a walk together, talking to a friend, or listening to their favourite music. Help a child understand and be aware of other people's feelings too. This helps them to be able to have empathy, get along with others, be happy and make friends. Remember also to have a laugh together, humour is useful to bond with others and everyone loves being silly.



VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://parentinfo.org/>

Information for parents and carers about their children's wellbeing and resilience

www.parenting.org.uk

Information for parents to help their child develop self-control and positive points for parents to manage behaviour.

www.nspcc.org.uk

Wide range of downloadable publications on keeping children safe with you or out alone.

www.kidscape.org.uk

Information for parents on keeping children safe and emotional wellbeing

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Bereavement website for children and their parents. Downloadable resources available.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Information for parents and young people on all aspects of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

www.sleepforkids.org

Website for parents and young people about sleep and how to get a good sleep routine.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/talkingtochildren.aspx>

NHS advice and information about talking to your child about feelings.

<http://understandingchildhood.net/documents/15CPTkeystages.pdf>

Leaflet for parents identifying key stages in your child's emotional development from The Child Psychotherapy Trust.

