

Momentum

Resilience in children newsletter



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Elements of a resilient family

- ✓ A resilient family views crisis as a shared challenge. Instead of trying to “tough it out” alone, individuals count on each other for support.
- ✓ They use creative brainstorming as a way to deal with adverse situations. They consider, respect and value everyone else’s ideas and suggestions.
- ✓ They show flexibility by accepting change and adapting with new, healthy outlooks.
- ✓ They take opportunities to use humor and shared activities to spark family rejuvenation.

Strengthening your family’s emotional muscles

If you’re a parent, one of your most important roles is to help your family members build the inner resources they’ll need to face life’s inevitable adversities. If you’re not already doing it, you can actively teach youngsters how to manage their emotions during tough times such as problems with peers, significant stress, trauma and even tragedy. Everyone can build their own resilience throughout life.

- Show children the value of maintaining mutually supportive connections with others and showing empathy for others’ challenges.
- Remind them of how they’ve gotten through difficult times in the past. Point out and build on prior successes.
- Promote a positive, forward-facing outlook by explaining how even though a current situation seems bleak, the future will be brighter.
- Help them understand the unavailability of change during all life stages.



Webinar—On Wednesday, August 14, join our webinar: *‘Emotional Muscle’: How to Grow Resilient Children and Become Stronger Parents*. Register [here](#).

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Mind Your Mental Health

Resilience skills can be learned; they're not necessarily innate. You can help your children adapt to stressors by encouraging a positive, flexible attitude. Plus, make sure they get adequate sleep, a well-balanced diet and plenty of exercise.

- Children have a surprising ability to problem solve independently when given the chance. [This tip sheet](#) reviews the common characteristics of children who have enhanced their inner strength.
- Tap into [these ideas](#) for teaching children how to process complex situations and emerge intact—to be resilient.
- While some peers can provide support and healthy examples to emulate, your children can also pick up risky behaviors from others. [This tip sheet](#) provides advice for parents who want to help their kids better handle unhealthy types of peer pressure.

Working on Wellness

There are a number of ways in which exercise supports your emotional resilience.

- Regular physical activity decreases baseline levels of stress hormones, enabling you to handle sudden, intense stress better. Workouts also help sustain a positive mood, and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Consistent vigorous exercise builds up your immune system (making you less vulnerable to disease) and increases your daytime energy.

Daily Diligence

As a supportive, engaged parent, you can instill the daily coping skills children need to handle troubling circumstances.

- Although it's tempting to solve children's problems for them, let them "think out loud" and devise solutions that are primarily their own.
- Encourage children to face fears that may be holding them back. Let them know that despite disappointments, you'll always be there for them.

Additional sources: American Psychological Association, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Motivation and Change, National Institutes of Health.

Family meals foster emotional balance

Family connection increases by:

50%

With at least 7 family meals per week

39%

With 5 family meals per week

25%

With 3 family meals per week

Source: Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health.