

resiliency: ‘bouncing back’



Why Is Resiliency Important?

Adults can often think it's easy to be a kid or a teenager. Sure, maybe there might be homework to do, but there's also a lot of time for play, video games, connecting on social media, and hanging out with friends! The media can make life look easy for young people too. The 'good' teens on TV shows and in advertising have perfect skin and hair styled without a strand out of place. Their bodies always look good in the latest fashion trends, and they are always really popular with lots of friends on their telephone speed dial. But the reality is that it doesn't matter if you are 8 or 18 years old, life can be tough, and it takes a lot of self-confidence and resiliency skills to get through the bad time and bounce back.

Even when you are young, you can face many different sources of stress. It can come from starting a new school and not knowing anyone or from the pressure and expectation from parents to get the best grades or to excel at everything you do. Kids and teens experience stress if a parent loses their job or gets sick, if someone close to them has died, or if parents get divorced. It can also happen when someone you know has been sexually, emotionally or physically abused, and it can definitely happen if that person is you. Stress can bring about disordered eating and body image issues if kids and teens are unable to cope with their stress in healthy ways.

Whatever your challenge may be, whether it involves stress, emotional pain, trauma, tragedy or some kind of threat, *resiliency* is the ability to believe in yourself, to cope to the best of your abilities, and to adapt well in difficult circumstances. Resiliency isn't something that you're either lucky to be born with or not. Resiliency is taught and nurtured. It's what makes some young people seem like they can do anything and get through even the toughest times to survive, and maybe even thrive.

While others may feel worn down, depressed, or too anxious to see how they're going to be able to cope with the problems or stress that they have, children with resiliency skills have a stronger sense of self, which allows them to manage their stress and anxiety so that they can deal with all kinds of adversity.

If you are a parent, building resiliency and a "can do" attitude in your child can begin at an early age. Whenever a child takes on a new challenge, whether it's learning to tie a shoe, reading their first book on their own, or hitting their first baseball, they gain a huge sense of confidence in their abilities when they see that the effort they put forward achieves something - no matter how big or small. This increasing self-confidence is what children tap into when taking on future challenges. Over time, with each mistake or setback that they overcome, and each new skill that they learn, children come to understand the whole idea behind "I can do it!" and, "Where there's a will, there's a way!"

How Do I Know If I Am a Resilient Person?

- You have a positive outlook.
- You have goals and aspirations.
- You tend to view problems as fixable.
- You can live with uncertainty.
- You have the ability to persevere when things become difficult.
- You have the ability to 'bounce back' and overcome almost any kind of obstacle or problem.
- You feel connected to others including close friends and family.
- You know how to communicate how you feel.
- You feel comfortable in all kinds of different situations.
- You are assertive and able to resist various kinds of peer pressure.
- You are comfortable in your own body.
- Your self-worth does not depend on the way you look.
- You don't abuse alcohol or drugs.
- You are self-aware and have empathy for others.

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Parents can help by allowing their children to have lots of opportunities to take on and to master new skills and experiences. Be patient, allow your children to make mistakes without shaming them, and keep on encouraging them toward their goals. Over time, as challenges and setbacks present themselves and they use the tools you’ve taught them, these children will grow up to be resilient teens and adults with the kind of attitude and determination that will enable them to trust themselves to be able to handle difficult situations, no matter how tough the problem may appear to be.

What Can I Do?

Where do I go from here?

Jessie’s Legacy a program of Family Services of the North Shore provides web-based eating disorders prevention resources to support BC youth, families, educators and professionals. Family Services of the North Shore is one of the 7 BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information.

Visit www.jessieslegacy.com or www.heretohelp.bc.ca

To help prevent disordered eating issues and body image disturbances, we can all learn to develop resiliency skills to help deal with life stressors in a healthy way. These “top 5” tips involve behaviours, thoughts and actions which can be learned over time to help build resiliency.

1. Connect with people that you care about.

Building a strong network of social support strengthens resiliency. Your social network can include friends, family members, classmates, work colleagues etc. Get connected in your community by joining a group, by playing on a sports team, or by getting together with groups of people who share your interests and hobbies.

2. Maintain a daily routine

With so much stress in our daily lives, having some kind of routine and sticking to it provides constancy. Routine activities can be comforting, and can include taking time for a hot bath before bedtime, reading a book, talking to friends on the telephone etc.

3. Know the importance of self-care

Self-care means making sure that you take the time to eat properly, exercise, have fun, and get enough rest, so that you can stay balanced and able to deal with times of stress.

4. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook.

During times when you find yourself feeling stressed and overwhelmed, remember that eventually things will change and the difficult time you are going through will come to an end. Know that you have made it through tough times in the past, and that you have what it takes to get through your current challenges and move beyond them.

5. Set some goals and learn more about yourself!

Setting goals can just mean taking on new experiences, dealing well with change, and getting out of your comfort zone in order to accomplish something you want. Managing through situations like this helps to build resiliency and it is from these kinds of challenges that we often learn the most about ourselves and what we are capable of.

♥ Counselling

♥ Support

♥ Education

Family Services of the North Shore is an accredited not-for-profit community-based agency that offers education, support and counselling services. We also lead the provincial work in eating disorders prevention. Family Services of the North Shore has been caring for the community for over 60 years. Our high-profile, proactive presence throughout the province connects the community through a variety of programs that create an environment for all families and individuals to thrive.



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