Resilience: it’s something we all want, it’s a skill we want to foster in our kids, and it’s something we already have. So what is it, exactly? Resilience is the ability to adapt to the challenges, failures, traumas, adversities, threats and other stressors that appear in our lives. When someone has high levels of resilience, they can overcome (bounce back from) the difficult situations that arise in their lives. Resilient people can achieve great professional success and personal growth.

Helping Kids Be More Resilient

1. Let them experience disappointment so they learn sadness doesn’t last forever.
2. Validate their fears and help them make plans to do things even if they’re scared.
3. Let them take (reasonable) risks and experience natural consequences.
4. Encourage them to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from them.
5. Give them opportunities to make their own decisions and help them problem solve.
6. Tell stories of people who faced hard times, persisted, and grew stronger as a result.
8. Remind them that although we can’t control everything that happens to us, we can control how we respond.

Build Resilience Skills

- Create a group of trusted friends, mentors, and family with whom you can share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- Make goals and work toward them daily. It can be a short-term goal, like walking 15 minutes every day, or it could be a long-term goal like getting your college degree. Either way, make sure you’re taking action each day to help you get there.
- Look at challenges and change as part of life. They will always be there. Focusing on choosing how you respond and take action builds self-confidence in any situation.
- Take care of yourself. Exercise, journaling, eating healthy, and reserving a few minutes of quiet for yourself are extremely important. The healthier you are physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, the more coping skills you will have to help you bounce back from difficult experiences.
- Keep things in perspective. Look at your situation in the grand scheme of things, how challenging does your issue seem now?
- Change the story. It’s easy to negatively self-talk and replay negative events over and over in your mind. Instead, you can change the story. When you hear that negative voice, try to replace it with a positive thought about yourself. In the case of a negative situation, when it replays, edit the story so you take action to change the ending to a more desired outcome.

Building resilience doesn’t mean that you won’t experience adversity, trauma, challenges, etc. It also doesn’t mean you won’t feel pain, sadness, or anger. It does mean you will have the tools and resources to overcome those experiences more quickly and smoothly than before.

Resources

- Building Personal Resilience
- STRIDE Behavioral Health Providers!
- Brains: Journey to Resilience