

TIPS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND TEENS



We tend to idealize childhood as a carefree time, but youth alone offers no shield against the emotional hurts, challenges, and traumas many children face. Children can be asked to deal with problems ranging from adapting to a new classroom or online schooling to bullying by peers or even struggles at home. Add to that the uncertainties that are part of growing up in a complex world, and childhood can be anything but carefree. The ability to thrive despite these challenges arises from the skills of resilience. **The good news is that resilience skills can be learned.**

Building resilience—the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress—can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. However, being resilient does not mean that children won't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain, sadness, and anxiety are common when we have suffered major trauma or personal loss, or even when we hear of someone else's loss or trauma.

10 tips for building resilience in children and teens

1. **Make connections.** Teach your child the importance of engaging and connecting with others.
2. **Help your child by having them help others.** Children who may feel helpless can feel empowered by helping others.
3. **Maintain a daily routine.** Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children,; younger children often crave structure.
4. **Take a break.** While some anxiety can motivate us to take positive action, we also need to validate all feelings. Teach your child how to focus on something that they can control or can act on. Help by challenging unrealistic thinking.
5. **Teach your child self-care.** Teach your child the importance of basic self-care—eat well, exercise, and sleep.
6. **Move toward goals.** Teach your child to set reasonable goals and help them to move toward them one step at a time.
7. **Nurture a positive self-view.** Help your child remember how they have successfully handled hardships and help them understand that past challenges help build the strength to handle future challenges.
8. **Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook.** Even when your child is facing very painful events, help them look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.
9. **Look for opportunities for self-discovery.** Tough times are often when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever they're facing can teach them "what am I made of."
10. **Accept change.** Change can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/guide-parents-teachers>



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