



RESILIENT TEENS

# 7 C'S OF RESILIENCE

We cannot prevent adversity, but adversity can make us more resilient. As a parent, guardian, mentor, teacher, or other influential adult in a child's life, you can help them to become more resilient.

Resilience is the capacity of a system, be it an individual, a forest, a city or an economy, to deal with change and continue to develop. It is about how humans and nature can use shocks and disturbances like a financial crisis or climate change to spur renewal and innovative thinking.



## Competence

**Help a young person feel more competent by helping her identify how she is handling her challenges and already coping.**

Encouraging a child to ask questions or learn as much as possible about their feelings are all ways of fostering competence. When we notice what young people are doing right and give them opportunities to develop important skills, they feel competent. We undermine competence when we don't allow young people to recover themselves after a fall.

### HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

**Encourage children to focus and build on their strengths. When they handle a situation capably, acknowledge what they have done well and how that will affect others and themselves.**

2

**Let children make safe mistakes so they have the opportunity to right themselves. Avoid trying to protect them from every stumble.**

3

**Lectures are too complex for young children to understand and too stressful for teens to hear. Instead, break down ideas one step at a time so they can truly understand your points and feel ownership over the lesson they learn.**

# Confidence

**Help build confidence by praising the young person for overcoming obstacles and by attributing this to something the child has done, versus attributing it to good luck or chance.**

Provide opportunities to build confidence one step at a time, but help the young person recognize one success before moving on to the next challenge. Young people need confidence to be able to navigate the world, think outside the box, and recover from challenges.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

Instead of focusing only on achievements, encourage the development of personal qualities like fairness, integrity, persistence, and kindness.

2

Praise children honestly and specifically. Rather than “You’re a great artist!” say “I love the colors you used in that painting. Look at the bright red and blue birds!” Specific praise is more believable, and your feedback will have more impact.

3

Encourage children to strive for goals that you think they can achieve but are a bit beyond what they’ve already accomplished.

# Connection

**Give a child a strong sense of emotional security by encouraging him to express all of his feelings, and accept and support him, whatever emotions are expressed. Feeling heard helps strengthen emotional bonds.**

Connections with other people, schools, and communities offer young people the security that allows them to stand on their own and develop creative solutions.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

Allow children to have and express all types of emotions. Don’t encourage them to suppress unpleasant feelings.

2

Show that relationships matter by addressing conflict directly. Work to resolve problems rather than letting them fester.

3

Encourage children to develop close relationships with others. Set an example by fostering your own healthy relationships.



# Character

Strengthen a child's sense of character by helping her explore who she is, what her values are, and what wisdom and gifts she has that she can share with others. Young people need a clear sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

Talk to your children about how their behaviors affect other people in good and bad ways.

2

Encourage children to consider right versus wrong when making choices. Help them look beyond immediate satisfaction or selfish desires.

3

When you make decisions or take actions, express out loud how you think about others' needs.

4

Work with children to clarify and express their own values.

5

Be a role model. Your actions speak louder than your words.

# Contribution

Help a child or teen acknowledge that although he may be in a position of receiving more than he is able to give, the world is a better place because he is in it.

Explore situations where the young person can truly feel he is contributing and find ways to bring those situations into his life. Young people who contribute to the well-being of others will receive gratitude rather than condemnation. They will learn that contributing feels good and may therefore more easily turn to others and do so without shame.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

Communicate to children (at appropriate age levels) that many people in the world don't have as much money, freedom, and security as they need.

2

Create opportunities for children to contribute in a specific way, like volunteering.

3

Model generosity with your time, energy, and resources.

4

Teach the important value of serving others.



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# Coping

**Respect a young person's coping style, whatever it is: distraction, withdrawal, denial, positive reframing, etc.**

There are many ways to cope, and remember, coping is a healthy way of getting through a situation. At the same time, offer ideas for additional or perhaps healthier coping strategies, such as journal writing, emotional expression, art, or pet therapy. Young people who possess a variety of healthy coping strategies will be less likely to turn to dangerous quick fixes when stressed.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

**Assist children in understanding the difference between a real crisis and something that just feels like one in the moment.**

2

**Model step-by-step problem solving.  
Avoid reacting emotionally when you're overwhelmed.**

3

**Demonstrate the importance of caring for your body through exercise, good nutrition, and adequate sleep.  
Practice relaxation techniques.**

# Control

**Provide opportunities which lend a sense of control.**

Being sick can make a young person feel terribly out of control. Help a child or teen feel more in control by offering choices, letting him make decisions when appropriate, or help him realize that he can take an active role in his emotional health (Hint: Digging Deep can certainly help with that!) Young people who understand privileges and respect are earned through demonstrated responsibility will learn to make wise choices and feel a sense of control.

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1

**Encourage children to recognize even their small successes so they know they can succeed.**

2

**Reward demonstrated responsibility with increased freedom.**

3

**Remember that the word "discipline" means to teach, not to punish or control.**

*Source: Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook*

