

Resilience and Mental Health

Overview



- What is resilience?
- What can affect resilience?
- What are the benefits of being resilient?
- How can we build and develop resilience?
- Resources and support
- Looking after yourself

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Activity: True or False?

1. Resilience is about ignoring emotions
2. Resilience is something that you have or don't
3. Resilient people never get stressed
4. Resilient people never fail
5. Resilient people can communicate effectively



What is resilience?

“the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress”

(American Psychological Association, The road to resilience 2014)

What are the Main Components of Resilience?

The factors that cultivate a young person's ability to be resilient also develop wellbeing, however, the main elements that must be present to develop resilience is adversity. **There is no resilience without adversity.**

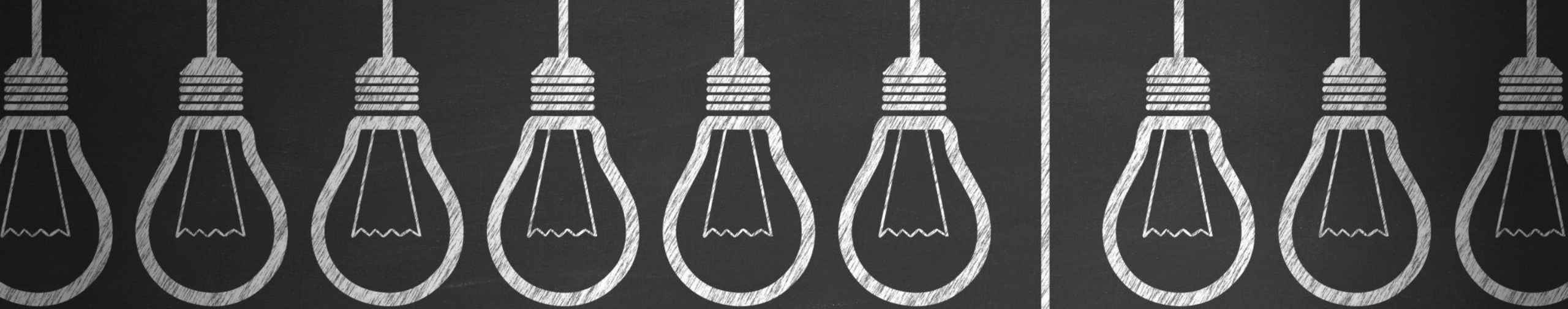


A close-up photograph of a chessboard with several dark wooden pieces standing upright and one light-colored piece lying on its side. The background is a blurred sunset or sunrise scene with a bright circular light source. The text "Activity: What Affects Resilience?" is overlaid in white on the chessboard.

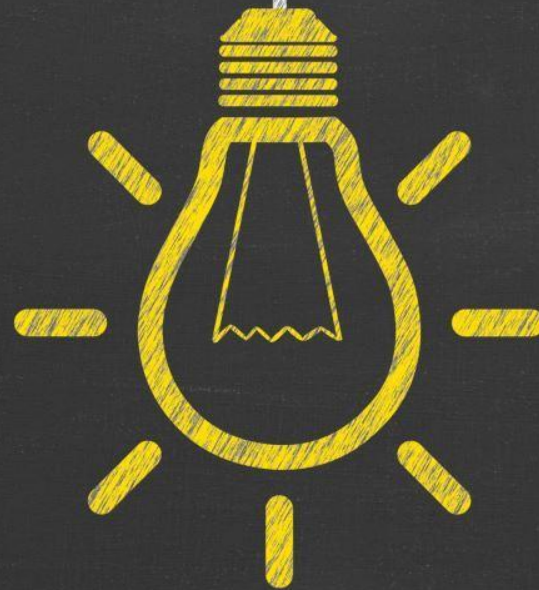
Activity: What Affects Resilience?

- Loss and bereavement
- Health
- Addiction
- Domestic Abuse
- Lack of connectedness

- Trauma
- Absence of supportive adult
- Homelessness
- Financial/poverty
- Criminal justice



Activity: What are
the benefits of
being resilient?



- Good communication skills
- Manage emotions effectively
- Connected to support systems
- Empathise with others
- Sense of happiness
- Develops mutually respectful relationships

- Good problem solver
- Asks for help when needed
- Sense of independence
- Learn from mistakes
- Set realistic goals
- Adapts to change

Activity: How do you develop
resilience?



- Remain positive
- Establish realistic and achievable goals
- Strategies
- Identify strengths
- Learn from experience
- Introduce
- Enjoy
- Needs
- Connect
- Embrace change

Personal attitudes for resilience

- Self-respect and self-compassion are great building blocks for resilience.
- If your child has self-respect, they believe that they matter and should be treated respectfully by others. Your child is also more likely to protect themselves by avoiding risky behaviour and situations. A strong sense of self-respect may also help your child be less vulnerable to bullies and bullying.
- Self-compassion is being kind to yourself even when things don't happen the way you expect. It's important for resilience because it helps teenagers deal more positively with failures, mistakes, setbacks and other tough times. For example, if your child isn't picked for a sports team, they might feel disappointed. But with self-compassion, your child might be able to say to themselves, 'It's OK, I've tried my best' or 'I'll keep practising and try again'.

Social Skills for Resilience

Social skills are another important building block for resilience. They include skills for making and keeping friends, sorting out conflict, and working well in teams or groups.

When your child has good relationships at school and gets involved in community groups, sports teams or arts activities, they have more chances to develop connections and a sense of belonging.

These social connections also mean that your child will probably have more people they trust when they want to talk about things that worry or upset them.

Positive thinking habits for resilience

Resilience is about being realistic, thinking rationally, looking on the bright side, finding the positives, expecting things to go well and moving forward, even when things seem bad. By helping your child practise positive thinking habits and strategies, you can help them build resilience too.

When your child is upset, you can help them keep things in perspective by focusing on facts and reality. For example, you could try gently asking, 'I know you must be feeling disappointed, but does this really matter as much as you think it does? On a scale from 1-10, how bad is it really?'

You can also help your child understand that a bad thing in one part of their life doesn't mean everything is bad. For example, if your child gets a poor exam result, you could point out that it won't stop them from playing weekend sport or going out with friends.

You're a role model for your child. Let your child see and hear you being positive and optimistic. You can do this by thanking other people for their support, saying 'Things will get better soon and I can cope with this', and expecting that good things are possible.

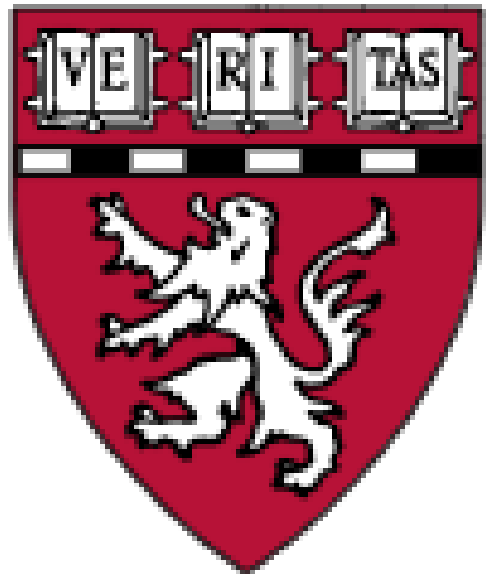
Positive thinking habits for resilience

- Working with your child on problem-solving strategies can help your child feel they have the power to deal with difficult situations and get through challenging times.
- It's also important for your child to feel, talk through and calm down after difficult emotions like anxiety, fear and anger. Working through difficult emotions will help your child realise that these feelings don't last forever.
- And it's good for your child to have simple strategies for turning low moods into better ones. Here are some ideas:
- Do things you enjoy or that help you relax, like watching something funny on YouTube or reading a good book.
- Spend time with friends or support people.
- Do something kind for someone else – for example, carrying the grocery shopping in from the car.
- Do some physical activity, like playing sport or going for a vigorous walk.

Skills for getting things done

- Feeling confident, capable and ready to get things done are big parts of resilience. Important skills in this area are goal-setting, planning, being organised and self-disciplined, being prepared to work hard and being resourceful.
- You can foster these skills in your child by helping your child work out their specific strengths. Then you can encourage your child to set goals that put their strengths into action, and that help your child to focus on what they're good at.
- For example, if your child is good at singing or music, you could suggest they join the school band, or even start their own band. If your child is good with young children, you could suggest they look into some babysitting work or coaching junior sport.
- Supporting your child to take on new or extra responsibilities is a great way to build your child's confidence and sense of what they can do. Examples might be a leadership role at school or a part-time job as they get older.
- *Challenges are a normal part of life, and young people have to learn to cope with them by themselves. Let your child have a go at sorting out their own problems before you step in. Making mistakes is part of the learning process.*

Some final advice...



Harvard Health Publishing

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Aim for warm, non-judgmental connections

- Offer an empathic, non-judgmental, and open-minded ear. Make space for your kids to candidly share what's on their minds and how they're doing.
- Help them identify and name their emotions. Explore what brings those feelings up, then connect those feelings to specific coping skills.
- Acknowledge what we're all going through right now, and validate that it's okay to feel the way they do.
- Ask what questions they have, then offer facts in a developmentally appropriate way. If you don't have the answers, reassure them you will figure it out together.



Help practice skills for coping and emotional regulation

- Encourage problem-solving for issues big and small. Explain how you tackle problems in your own life and see if they can brainstorm solutions for theirs.
- Nurture calming skills with a self-soothing activity. Take four slow, deep breaths together, snuggle with a pet, list what they're grateful for, or watch a happy video.
- Shift their attention to the here and now, rather than the past (which can't be changed) or the future (which has many unknowns). This is the essence of practicing mindfulness, which can reduce the intensity and discomfort of negative thoughts and feelings.



Try to encourage healthy thinking patterns

- Help children accept uncertainty instead of fighting it. Acknowledging that uncertainty and change are an inherent (though stressful) part of life allows us to be more flexible, focus on what we can control, and move forward.
- Exercise control where you can. We may not be able to do everything we want right now, but that doesn't mean we can't do anything! Even when things are hard, kids can still choose to do something that feels good, such as a hobby they enjoy, taking a movement break, connecting with a friend, or helping out a family member.
- Recall with your child when they have gotten through difficult times in the past, and remind them that things will change: "This is really hard, and it won't be like this forever."



Make meaning together and find reasons for hope

- Reflect on your family values and try to draw strength and inspiration from them. Whether you prioritize being brave, giving back, or family time, your child can feel good about what they stand for.
- Participate in activities that connect your family to society and your cultural or religious communities. Knowing you are part of something larger feels comforting and safe.
- Cultivate joy. Celebrate important milestones, even in a modified form. Create new rituals with your kids that they will remember long after the pandemic is over.
- Highlight your child's strengths. Identify ways they've grown during this time and how they can use their strengths to carry on.



Try to model healthy coping habits



- In hard times, kids look to their caregivers for cues. When you use coping skills, you not only attend to your own needs, but you encourage them to try these skills out, too.
- Encourage consistent routines, which offer a reassuring sense of structure and normalcy for the whole family during turbulent times.
- Prioritize your physical health: try to get enough sleep, eat a healthy(ish) diet, and find ways to stay active.

Feeling overwhelmed? Take heart and take care

- Parents, remember you don't need to do this by yourselves. All of the important people in your child's life can nurture resilience and teach ways to cope. Leaning on your community of family, friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches, and cultural leaders can increase your own sense of connection and remind you you're not alone in the struggle.
- The boundless demands on parents have grown tremendously during the pandemic, and burnout is understandably high. While self-care may feel guilt-inducing or time-consuming (and who has the time?), your ability to be there for your kids relies on you having gas in the tank. Try mini stress breaks: something as simple as taking a few minutes to savour your morning coffee, enjoying music or talking to a friend during your commute, fitting in a brief walk, or journaling or praying before you fall into bed can help you recharge.
- Above all, practice self-compassion and treat yourself with the kindness and empathy that you offer to others. You can't and won't be the perfect parent, because no one is. Give yourself permission to feel overwhelmed or frustrated, to make mistakes, and to bend the rules a little.



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Registration for [@eSgoil](#) Easter study support is now open! Learners in the senior phase can find out more and register here for these free sessions –



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils is at the heart of our work at Hillhead High School.

There are a wide variety of supports available to pupils at all stages, ranging from wellbeing activities in school to more intensive supports from outside agencies.