

# Coffee with the Counselors

## Building Resilience

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# Defining Resilience

Merriam Webster Dictionary:

Parenting NI Family Wellness Project:

2 : an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.

Ability to cope in the face of adversity, trauma or **stress**

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# Why It's Important

There is significant evidence that resilience has declined in young people. Rates of anxiety and depression have increased and direct measures of resilience which have been used longitudinally are showing declines in this important psychological characteristic.

<https://sacsconsult.com.au/blog/are-young-people-less-resilient-than-they-used-to-be/#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20it%20turns%20out,in%20this%20important%20psychological%20characteristic.>

This article cites two main problems contributing to a lack of resilience:

Helicopter parenting and Screen Time

# Helicopter Parenting

Parenting these days is more risk averse, harm avoiding, and likely to intervene to solve problems for children than previously. When parents step in to solve the problems of their children they send a couple of very important messages:

- The world is a dangerous place, so you had better fear it.
- You are unable to solve this problem yourself so I had better do it.

Say things like “I know you can solve this problem. Come to me if you need help.” This encourages self-reliance and grit.

# Screen Time

“Focusing on an invented world of online experiences for hours per day, especially during the periods of rapid brain growth in late youth and adolescence change the structure of the brain. He cites evidence that traditional forms of addiction such as alcohol and drugs have declined markedly in recent years, being replaced by the newer addiction of screen time amongst young people.”

# Ted Talk

We feel this Ted Talk will be helpful for parents to see!

Disclaimer- There are two uses of profanity.

This is Lucy Hone, Director of New Zealand Institute of Well Being and Resilience:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy\\_hone\\_3\\_secrets\\_of\\_resilient\\_people?language=en#t-476968](https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_3_secrets_of_resilient_people?language=en#t-476968)

Length = 16 minutes, Value = priceless

**What Does This  
Mean?**

**Life is hard, but...**



## **Signs your teen is not bouncing back and needs to build Resilience**

They often feel helpless or that problems are someone else's fault

Frequent crying or yelling - not just once in awhile- out of frustration

They avoid tasks and make excuses

They give up easily

They don't have positive peer relationships

They don't have positive adult relationships outside the home

They don't self-advocate or utilize resources



# Resilience can be learned

It is not something that you have or do not have

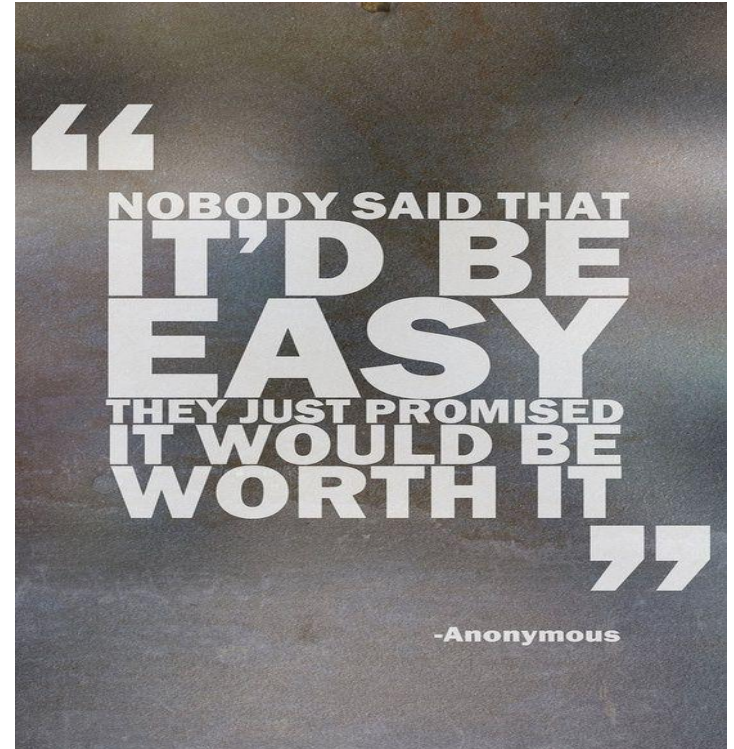
# Don'ts for Building Resilience in Your Home

- Dismiss the difficulty in something because you don't find it difficult
  - I.e. "It's not that hard," "It's really not that bad"
- Allow avoidance of stressful and anxiety inducing tasks or feelings
- Allow overuse of social media
- Focus on the negatives
- Do things for your kids that they CAN do
- Allow them to guilt you
- Rescue every time there's a problem



# Dos for Building Resilience in Your Home

- Acknowledge that it's okay when something is difficult to do or deal with
- Normalize unpleasant emotions as a part of living and discuss recognizing them and working through them (allow them to experience unpleasant emotions)
- Help provide the “hope”- tell stories or watch movies/read books with resilience, encourage positive social media use (such as following positive influences), reminders of previous situations where they overcame a difficulty
- Allow them to problem-solve and think through problems and choices
- Allow them to experience good and bad consequences of choices and actions



# Dos (cont.)

- Help find the things that they CAN control and strive for small steps not perfection
- Display quotes that promote resilience
- Encourage asking for help or using resources available (school counselor, tutoring hours)
- Model other resilience strategies
  - Ex: This week at work will be really stressful, let's have game night Friday & order pizza
  - Ex: Go for a walk to get out of your house/head



# Remember, this is normal teenage behavior:

Me: hey can you do this completely reasonable simple task for me

My kid:



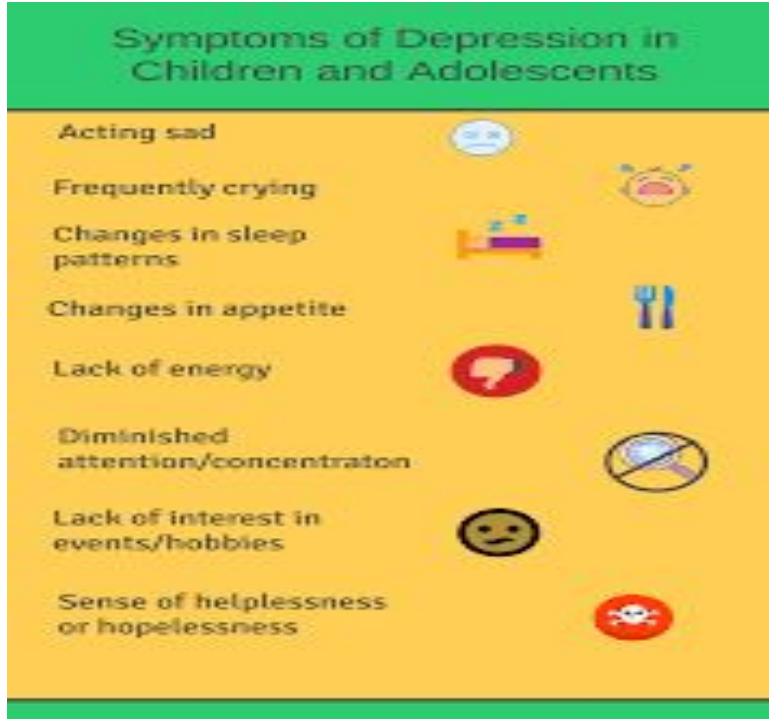
Teens do not have a fully developed frontal lobe, and may have trouble making rational decisions, expressing their feelings and why they feel that way.

They may go to extremes with “solutions” to their problem (i.e. this class is hard, so I want to drop out).

Building resiliency and modeling resiliency skills will help them learn to regulate thoughts and emotions.

Remember: Validate that something is hard for them, encourage working through it. Break it down into smaller goals/tasks.

# Lack of Resilience could lead to Anxiety and/or Depression



Should your teen exhibit these symptoms, please make their school counselor aware.

Should they persist for more than two weeks, your school counselor might recommend a therapy appointment.

# Other Recommendations

For Building Resilience

One of the best techniques for dealing with anxiety and depression is Mindfulness – focusing on the here and now and practicing being in the current moment. Screen time is, of course, the exact opposite of mindfulness and so we should not be surprised that it gives rise to high levels of psychological distress.

Limit Screen Time

Practice Mindfulness

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# **Social skills, positive thinking habits and skills for getting things done are important to resilience too.**

Strategies to use when feeling sad about something:

- Do things that bring joy or are relaxing, like watching a family movie or reading a good book.
- Spend time with friends or support people.
- Do something kind for someone else – for example, baking together or volunteering at a homeless shelter.
- Do some physical activity, like playing sport or going for a vigorous walk in the woods

\*From raisingchildren.net.au

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/development/social-emotional-development/resilience-in-teens#:~:text=Pre%20Dteens%20and%20teenagers%20can,are%20important%20to%20resilience%20too.>



# From ParentingNI:

<https://www.parentingni.org/family-wellness-project/family-resources/building-resilience/>

Normalize mistakes and setbacks - this is how we learn

Encourage problem-solving on their own and taking responsibility for their actions

## BUILDING RESILIENCE



Resilience is our ability to cope in the face of adversity, trauma or stress. This is something we begin to learn in childhood.

### TOP TIPS

Here are some top tips for helping children build resilience.

- ✓ Remember, bad feelings don't last, have a purpose and prompt us to do things differently.
- ✓ Try to normalise setbacks. Help your child to see that it is not unusual to have difficulties in life.
- ✓ Help them to see that problems can be solved.
- ✓ Encourage young people to keep things in perspective – the problem is usually confined to only one part of their lives.
- ✓ Remember the value of humour – laughing can be a great release (but only if it is well-intentioned).
- ✓ Encourage children/ young people to accept responsibility for their actions.
- ✓ When reading stories, or discussing events, point out how people manage to overcome difficulties.
- ✓ Remember that learning is often frustrating. Encourage children/ young people to persist and believe they can get there.
- ✓ Provide support. Help them to see there are people who care about them and can give them help and advice when needed.
- ✓ Create a positive environment emphasising the importance of relationships and having a sense of purpose.

For more resources on mental health visit  
[www.parentingni.org/family-wellness-project](http://www.parentingni.org/family-wellness-project)

**We know parenting  
is not for the faint of  
heart. Thank you for  
all you do to support  
your students and  
our community!**

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