



BUILDING RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN: A PARENT'S GUIDE

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- Characteristics of resilient children
- Methods for building resilience in children
- Methods for building resilience during deployment



AGENDA

- Introduction
- Definition
- Challenges of Life
- Characteristics of Resilient Children
- Strengthening Bonds with Your Child
- Making Connections
- Building Your Child's Character
- Helping Your Child Gain Control
- Teaching Coping Skills
- Teaching Optimism
- Encouraging Children to Ask for Support
- Building Resilience During Deployment



INTRODUCTION

- Children have many challenges and difficult situations in life just as adults do
- Some children seem to have a natural resilience in challenging situations while others do not
- Most any child can be taught to improve their resiliency
- This presentation will focus on how parents can help their children become more resilient



DEFINITION

Resilience is:

The capacity to rise above difficult circumstances; the ability to recover from setbacks; a quality of bouncing back.

Resilience is not:

Invulnerability or being perfect



CHALLENGES OF LIFE

Children face many challenges in life:

- Separation from parent during deployment
- Issues regarding return of the deployed parent
- Conflicts with parents and siblings
- Difficulties with friends
- Bullying
- School – grades, teachers, other children
- Loss of a loved one or pet
- Increased responsibilities: chores, homework, extra curricular activities



CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT CHILDREN

Resilient children have:

- Positive self-esteem
- Relationships with caring adults
- Ability to care for others
- Effective problem solving skills
- An acceptance that change is part of life



Building Resiliency in Children: What Parents Can Do

STRENGTHENING BONDS WITH YOUR CHILD

Strengthening bonds includes:

- Spending special time with them
- Listening to them – their feelings, problems, joys, ideas
- Giving them praise



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Making connections includes maintaining close ties to family, friends, school, and community

- Teach your child how to be a friend and make friends
- Build a strong family network which includes extended family members and friends
- Provide a sense of physical and emotional security at home



BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER



- Teach your values to your child and help them clarify their own values
- Get your child involved in volunteer work
- Teach empathy
- Encourage them to help at home



HELPING YOUR CHILD GAIN CONTROL

Teaching a sense of control includes:

- Helping your child see that change is part of life
- Teaching that not all circumstances are under their control
- Helping your child see that their actions can effect change



TEACHING COPING SKILLS

Learning coping skills builds confidence and competence

Coping skills should include:

- Problem solving skills
- Relaxation skills
- Healthy nutrition
- Exercise
- Rest
- Changing destructive thinking



TEACHING OPTIMISM

- When giving feedback, start with the positive
- Maintain a positive attitude yourself
- When they express distress about something, try to help them see something positive in the situation
- Help them understand in times of distress that things will get better



ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

- Tell them that everyone needs support from others at times
- Help them understand that asking for help is a sign of strength
- Let them know they can ask for help from you, a teacher, friend, other family member, coach or clergy
- Tell them about times when you have sought support from others and how it helped



BUILDING RESILIENCE DURING DEPLOYMENT

- Provide your children with accurate but age appropriate information
- Allow your children to help with duties in the home and take on additional chores if they are ready
- Let them have a role in making plans for staying in touch with the deployed parent
- Teach your children that their military parent is serving our country
- Talk to your children about their feelings and yours



SUMMARY

- Most any child can be taught to improve their resiliency
- Strengthening bonds with parents is a good way to start building resiliency
- Help your child maintain connections with family and friends
- Teach children coping skills
- Help them remain optimistic
- During deployment, give them information and help them express feelings





QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE: www.Tricare.mil
- Behavioral Health Services



REFERENCES

- *10 Tips for Building Resilience in Children and Teens*, Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center, <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- *Building Resiliency in Children*, Child Action, Inc. www.childaction.org
- *Backbone and Bounce: Building Resilience*, by Patty Wipflerl, Hand in Hand, Nurturing the Parent-Child Connection, www.handinhandparenting.org
- *Building Resilience in Children with Challenges*, National Center for Learning Disabilities, www.education.com
- *A Parent's Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Your Child Roots and Wings*, by Kenneth R. Ginsberg, c. 2006





THANK YOU