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
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
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
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 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
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


• 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

THANK YOU