

Speaker Notes

Building Resiliency in Children – A Parent’s Guide

Page 1 – Title Slide

None

Page 2 – Objectives

None

Page 3 – Agenda

None

Page 4 – Introduction

None

Page 5 – Definition

None

Page 6 – Challenges of Life

None

Page 7 – Characteristics of Resilient Children

- Positive self-esteem: Children who feel good about themselves tend to have more confidence in their abilities to deal with difficulties.
- Relationships with caring adults: Even one adult in a child’s life can make a huge difference in how they feel about themselves and react to adversity.
- Ability to care for others: If a child is feeling helpless, the ability to care for and help others can be very empowering.
- Effective problem solving skills: Part of being resilient is being able to look at a difficult situation and find solutions.
- An acceptance that change is part of life: Understanding that there will always be change gives the child perspective and the ability to see that the immediate situation will pass.

Page 8 – Subtitle Slide

None

Page 9 – Strengthening Bonds with Your Child

- Studies have shown that if a child has just one person in their lives who gives them unconditional acceptance and support, they are much more likely to have positive self-esteem and resiliency during difficult circumstances.
- Spend special time with them: This is a very simple way to demonstrate to your child that they are loved. The special times can be something as simple as going to a park together, reading a book together, playing hide and seek in the back yard, playing catch, or making cookies together. Ask them what they would like to do with you during your special time together and choose one of their ideas.

- Listen to them: Listen to their feelings, problems, joys, and ideas. Listening to a child's problems, fears and feelings allows the child to let go of some of what worries them instead of keeping it locked inside. You don't need to try to fix their problems necessarily; you just need to listen to them.
- Give them praise: Acknowledge them for what they accomplish. Catch them doing something good. Giving praise builds self-esteem, which also builds confidence and resilience.

Page 10 – Making Connections

- Children with strong support systems tend to be more resilient just as adults do. The support system provides additional help during challenging situations and can help provide perspective and solutions.

Page 11 – Building Your Child's Character

- Teach your values to your child and help them clarify their own values: It's important to have discussions with your child about right and wrong and what you and your family consider to be good values. Your child (especially as they get older) may have ideas of their own as well. Help them clarify their values through discussion.
- Get your child involved in volunteer work: Have them work with you to collect clothing for a homeless shelter or thrift shop. Have them work with you at a soup kitchen. During holidays, ask them to help you pick out toys for less fortunate children.
- Teach empathy: Teach your children to be considerate of others. Teach them that bullying is wrong and that they can stand up for a child who is being bullied or tell an adult about the bullying.
- Encourage them to help at home: Give them chores to do. Even toddlers can do simple chores like picking up their toys.

Page 12 – Helping Your Child Gain Control

- Helping your child see that change is part of life: Knowing that change is to be expected helps to normalize change. It also lets them know that whatever unpleasant situation they may be in, it won't last forever; things will change again.
- Teaching that not all circumstances are under their control: To think we can control situations that are out of our control leads to feeling a loss of control. Children need to understand that they are not responsible for certain situations such as divorce or the death of a loved one and that they can't fix or change these situations.
- Helping your child see that their actions can effect change: Even if there is a situation which we can't control, we always have control over our choices and actions. It is empowering to know that our choices and actions can have an effect on a situation.

Page 13 – Teaching Coping Skills

- Problem solving skills: Help children find solutions by asking, "What is the problem?" "What options are there?" "How can you break these options down into steps?"
- Relaxation skills: Relaxation is the opposite of the stress response. Learning relaxation skills helps reduce the affects of stress and gives the child a sense of control. Have your child practice deep breathing, help them learn to relax their muscles by tensing and releasing them, or have them focus on a word or phrase which is peaceful and comforting.
- Healthy nutrition: Provide healthy meals and minimize fast food and unhealthy snacks (candy, chips, soft drinks, etc).

- Exercise: Exercise is a great way to release stress chemicals and promote relaxation. Join a gym, and have your child get involved in competitive sports, dance, gymnastics, bicycling, jogging, brisk walking, etc.
- Rest: Many children don't get enough rest. Make sure they are not over scheduled with extracurricular and social activities.
- Changing destructive thinking: Help them learn to replace destructive thinking with more positive thinking. For example, replace "This is the worst thing that could ever happen" with "This is unfortunate and I don't like it, but things will get better."

Page 14 – Teaching Optimism

- Keeping a positive attitude is important in maintaining resilience. People with a positive attitude tend to fare better in times of crisis, because they are able to see beyond the immediate situation, see possible solutions, and know that things will get better.

Page 15 – Encouraging Children to Ask for Support

- Creating a support system is one of the most important parts of resilience. Other people can provide perspective and help think of solutions. They can also provide comfort when things are stressful.

Page 16 – Building Resilience During Deployment

- Deployment is a difficult time for children. In addition to what we have learned so far, there are some other things you can do to help build your child's resilience during deployment.
- Provide your children with accurate, but age appropriate information: Children know when something is wrong. Don't lie to your child and break his trust. At the same time, it's important that you gauge what your child is ready to understand. Let them know where the deployed parent is going and what their job will be. Give as much information as you can with respect to the child's age and emotional maturity level.
- Allow your children to help with duties in the home and take on additional chores if they are ready: Taking on additional duties can give children a sense of responsibility and build their sense of their own competence.
- Let them have a role in making plans for staying in touch with the deployed parent: Let them decide how they want to stay in touch—e-mails, letters, videos, tape recordings, etc.
- Teach your children that their military parent is serving our country: Let them know this is an important and honorable job. Help the children understand that they, too, are serving their country.
- Talk to your children about their feelings and yours: Let them know that you miss the service member too and ask them how they are feeling. Let them know all of their feelings are ok—even sad, angry or scared feelings.

Page 17 – Summary

None

Page 18 – Questions

None

Page 19 – Resources

None

Page 20 – References
None

Page 21 – Thank You
None

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