

Resilience for Kids and Teens:

A Guide for Parents and Teachers

We tend to idealize childhood as a carefree time, but youth alone offers no shield against the emotional hurts and traumas many children face. Children can be asked to deal with problems ranging from adapting to a new classroom to bullying by classmates or even abuse at home. Add to that the uncertainties that are part of growing up, and childhood can be anything but carefree. The ability to thrive despite these challenges arises from the skills of resilience.

The good news is that resilience skills can be learned.

Building resilience — the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress — can help our children manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. However, being resilient does not mean that children won't experience difficulty or distress. Emotional pain and sadness are common when we have suffered major trauma or personal loss, or even when we hear of someone else's loss or trauma.

We all can develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned over time. Following are tips to building resilience.