

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE?

AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OUR KIDS?

Resilience is a person's ability to recover and heal after tough times. For children, this could involve a range of experiences – from potentially stressful events, such as changing schools, moving house or welcoming a new sibling, through to traumatic events, such as family breakdown, natural disasters, illness or death.

For a long time, it was commonly believed that facing adversity would make a person stronger. The truth is, if we face repeated hard times without the right support, we become **less** resilient. This is especially true for children.

Through a variety of nurturing and responsive interactions, you can help your child to understand, express and manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Young people who are resilient not only cope better with the challenges presented in everyday life, but they also develop the skills and tools that will help them to deal with more complex challenges later in life.

Controlling our behaviours

→ Self-regulation:

The ability to remain calm in the face of stress. Self-regulation requires an awareness of how we are feeling and the ability to control the way we respond, rather than allowing our automatic and often reactive responses to take over. For example, instead of shouting at your boss when you are frustrated with them, you might go for a walk to calm down (regulate) and get on with your day. Self-regulation is a difficult skill that takes a long time to learn.

→ Co-regulation:

This is often done by one person helping another to feel safe using skills such as facial expression, vocal tone and body language. For example, do you remember how you felt much better after talking to a loved one about your frustrating boss? Over time, if adults co-regulate children when they get upset, children learn how to self-regulate.





Playing a therapeutic game or reading a story with a caring adult can help a young child work through their scary experiences or big feelings.



Did you know?

Research and experience has shown that developing a habit of regular daily physical activity for kids will support strong physical and mental health. It can also improve attention, strengthen social skills and even reduce tantrums.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD BUILD EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE BY PRACTISING THESE KEY SKILLS WITH THEM:

CONNECTION

Showing your child that they can feel safe in a strong, loving and consistent relationship, both with their parents and carers, as well as with their wider family and friends. This is the single-most important thing children need to build resilience.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Humans are designed to move; it gives us ways of expressing ourselves and releasing tension. Physical activity helps to release feel-good hormones that improve mood, focus and creativity, and it helps to strengthen the brain and make it more resilient to stress and adversity.

EMPATHY

Showing your child that you want to understand how they feel, and reassure them that all emotions are OK (positive or negative!). This helps them to feel safe and heard, and ultimately to be better able to recover from strong feelings more effectively.

PREDICTABILITY

Research has shown that children respond well to clear, consistent and predictable environments. This contributes to a child's sense of safety and helps them to feel more supported and able to respond calmly to changes or challenges that may arise throughout their day.