



## REMEMBER

- The more healthy, supportive relationships surrounding a young person, the greater probability that they will develop resilience and resist at-risk behaviour. Teens need us to connect them to networks of care and support rather than imagining we can fill all their needs ourselves.
- We teach resilience by demonstrating what we rely on when things go wrong in life. Invite teens to observe when you are choosing helpful coping strategies, reaching for Jesus in the middle of the mess, and living in difficulties with genuine faith in God's good heart. In doing this we dare to say, "Pattern your life after mine." (Phil 3:17)
- Resilience often grows when a supportive adult helps a teen debrief mistakes and failures. We can help teens recognize that failure and difficulties aren't unacceptable - they are a pathway to growth. (James 1:2)



## RECOGNIZE

- Resilience is the ability to adapt to adversity - to "bounce back" from the tough things in life and not be pulled under by them. Although some people are naturally more resilient, anyone can develop protective factors for greater resiliency.
- Resilience and mental health are closely linked. Strengthening the ability to adapt in the face of adversity can help teens heal more quickly from trauma, depression, anxiety, and other difficult conditions and experiences. It can equip a teen to walk through stress without being pulled under by it.
- One stable and reliable relationship with a supportive adult is the single most commonly shared factor in the lives of young people who are resilient. But over 20% of youth report having no adult intentionally investing in their life.
- Resilience grows as a young person develops in these areas: confidence, competence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control.
- Intentionally building resilience acknowledges that difficulties are part of being human and we don't need to fear them. It is a tangible way of creating courage and hope in young people allowing them to walk through difficult times and become stronger as a result.



## RESPOND

This collection of protective factors are examples of what we can build into teens to make them more resilient:

### Internal Factors:

- **Relational abilities.** Being able to make and keep relationships is a skill. Model and build their flexibility, empathy, caring, sense of humour, listening and communication skills.
- **Problem solving skills.** Solve problems with them, not for them. Invite them to watch you navigate through tough stuff. Help them learn and use skills for emotional regulation.
- **Positive Values.** Self-discipline, responsibility, justice, compassion, honesty and restraint; point these out in the people they respect around them.

- **Sense of personal identity.** Everyone wears labels. Notice the ones that are lies and replace them with truth about who they are. They need to see themselves as unique, interesting and valued.
- **Hope for the future.** A sense of purpose in the world that goes beyond a vocation is vital. They need to know they have something to contribute to the world.
- **Spiritual identity.** According to research, youth who have found their value through a personal faith just do better.

### External Factors:

- **The environment.** The space we invite youth into can also make a huge difference in developing resiliency. Strengthening happens when there is connectedness, positive involvement, and positive expectations mixed with clear boundaries.



## RESOURCES

[www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs\\_professionals.php](http://www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs_professionals.php) - Use these reflection questions to consider how your program is doing at developing the 7 C's that youth need to be resilient.

[parentandteen.com/building-resilience-in-teens](http://parentandteen.com/building-resilience-in-teens) - A good overview for understanding resilience and how we can contribute to it.

[www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships](http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships) - A practical starting point for building the relational environment for resilience to develop.



# RESILIENCE

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