



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 through demonstrating our own resilience when things go wrong in life. Invite teens to observe when you are stressed and 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 navigate and debrief mistakes and failures. We can help teens recognize that failure and difficulties aren't unacceptable - they are the 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 more naturally resilient, anyone can develop protective factors for resiliency.
- One stable and reliable relationship with a supportive adult is the single most common shared factor in the lives of young people who are resilient. Over 20% of youth report having no adult intentionally investing in their life.
- Resilient young people have a good grasp on what they have (external supports and resources), who they are (internal strengths, identity and values), and what they can do (interpersonal skills and tools).
- As youth workers we have the opportunity to help teens learn to flourish whatever the situation. Building resiliency isn't about positioning a shield in front of young people to protect them from difficulties; it's the development of internal and external strengths that equip them to walk through difficult times and become stronger as a result.



RESPOND

The following protective factors are things 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.
- **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, kids who have found their value through a personal faith just do better.

External Factors:

- The environment we offer kids can also make a huge difference in developing resiliency. Strengthening happens in spaces that provide connectedness, positive involvement, and positive expectations mixed with clear boundaries.



RESOURCES

www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework - A practical starting point for building the relational environment for resilience to develop.

parentandteen.com/building-resilience-in-teens - Excellent overview of the what and how of resilience.

www.newportacademy.com/resources/well-being/resilience-in-teens - Exploring the link between purpose and resilience in teens.



RESILIENCE

lifeteams
resources