

Parental Resilience

Parents who can cope with the stress of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Parents with resilience are generally able to cope on their own, but they also know how to seek help in times of trouble. Their ability to deal with life's ups and downs serves as a model of coping behavior for their children.

Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, and domestic or community violence – and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness – may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

All parents have inner strengths or resources that can serve as a foundation for building their resilience. These may include faith, flexibility, humor, communication skills, problem-solving skills, mutually supporting caring relationships, or the ability to identify and assess outside resources and service when needed. All of these strengthen the capacity to parent effectively. In addition, community services that help families in crisis include mental health programs, substance abuse treatment, family and marital counseling and special education and treatment programs for children with special needs.

Sharing Strategies and Resources to Promote Parental Resilience

When parents identify and communicate what worries them most, there is an opportunity to offer some coping strategies and resources to begin to deal with the stress. Parents are not always aware how their ability to cope with stress may impact their capacity to parent and their children's development. You can help parents recognize that they can model coping behaviors for their children, since children observe and imitate parents in many ways. Empowering parents to seek help and take steps to combat stress is part of building both resilience and hope.

Some needs are obvious to all family members and to providers. Other needs, such as marriage counseling or substance abuse treatment, may become apparent with one family member expresses concern about another. Partnering with the family includes helping all family members translate their concerns into specific needs that can be discussed and resolved. Many community resources and services are available to help families cope. Faith communities, community colleges, self-help groups, and social service agencies can help parents and caregivers develop problem-solving and communication skills that strengthen their ability to deal effectively with crisis, so that can continue to provide for their children.

Resources for building resilience may include information about:

Stress – causes and results

- How stress happens, including the “little things” that add up
- Ways to recognize stress and its triggers
- How stress affects health and coping
- How stress affects parenting, marriage, and family life

Finding ways to build resilience

- Stress management techniques, such as regular exercise, relaxation to music, and meditation or prayer
- How to prevent stress by planning ahead, anticipating difficulties, and having resources in place
- How to anticipate and minimize everyday stress
- How to handle major stressors, including assessing resources and supports from the family, friends, faith communities, and other community resources
- Family management techniques, such as effective ways of communicating needs and concerns
- Programs that offer family-to-family help or mentoring for personalized, intensive, sustained services or support, especially in times of crisis
- Community supports such as mental health and counseling services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence programs, and self-help support groups

**ChildHelp Pee Dee
24 Hour Toll-Free Helpline
1-866-867-9857
Parenting is tough. Asking for help doesn't have to be.**



Information brought to you by:
Keeping Pee Dee kids Safe at Home, sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse Pee Dee,
a program of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault.
Website: <http://www.peedeecoalition.org/safe>

