

Family Resilience

Webinar
17 May 2021

**Always
connected**



Overview of Session

The Family Resilience Session focusses on:

- What is resilience?
- Characteristics of resilience
- How to build resilience

Once we know and are aware of our own resilience, we can look at the resilience of our family.

- What is family resilience?
- Characteristics of resilient families
- How to build resilience in families

What is resilience?

Resilience is our ability to manage difficult life situations.

We may still experience stress, anxiety, and other strong emotions; however, we are able to work through this, potentially coming out a stronger version of ourselves.

Characteristics of a resilient person

A resilient person may display the following characteristics:

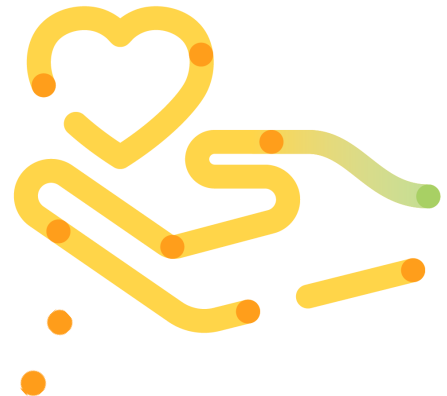
- Strong sense of self
 - Positive outlook
 - Confidence
 - Strong communication skills
 - Sense of humour
 - Problem solver
 - Can manage strong emotion
 - Has meaning and purpose
 - Calm and caring
- (Ackerman, 2019)

How to build resilience?

Resilience can be built! We all can develop areas of ourselves and our lives that will help build our resilience

- **Look after yourself!** – Self-care is a very important part of our lives. To be able to support others or manage difficult times, we must have the energy and patience to do so. We can't do that if we are not nourishing our mind, body, and soul
- **Build your support network** – We can't do things alone! Ensure you have supportive friends, family, or professionals around you. We may benefit from different people at different times or in different situations. Find people that 'lift' you up and support you
- **Identify goals and work towards them** – think about what you want to achieve – then break this down into smaller more achievable goals or steps. Don't forget to celebrate your achievements and be kind to yourself if you stumble
- **Learn from mistakes** – we all make mistakes, rather than dwelling on the failure, use it to guide you in improving next time
- **Look for positives in the situation** – it is usually easier to focus on what has gone wrong, take a deep breath and consider the positives. E.g. days of rain can be difficult; on reflection we can think of the life and growth occurring because of that rain
- **Keep trying** – learn from mistakes, look for positives, reach out for support and keep going
- **Reflect on how far you've come – even the smallest of steps** – sometimes what we are going through seems so big or continues for a longer period, that it isn't easy to see just how far we've come. Take time to reflect on where you began, and like we said before, celebrate the small achievements, in the end they aren't that small!
- **Find something you enjoy** – sometimes we need to find a new joy, something that is different, new, challenging, and exciting. It will open us up to build new connections, develop new skills and knowledge and hopefully build our confidence and self-esteem

("Building resilience: Bounce back after hard times!", 2021)



Family Resilience

The family's ability to "withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges, strengthened and more resourceful"
(Walsh, 2011, p 149)

Characteristics of a resilient family

Characteristics are like that of an individual, in a family setting, families can utilise the individual characteristics. Supporting each other with their individual strengths.

A resilient family may display the following characteristics:

- **Strong sense of each other** – recognise and values each other's strengths
- **Positive outlook** – supports each other to maintain a positive outlook
- **Routine & stability** – maintains a routine that works within the family and although it is important to be flexible, they stick to it even in challenging times, maintaining a level of stability and consistency
- **Strong communication skills** – honest & open – encourage open and honest communication between all family members, also ensuring a non-judgmental, empathetic, and understanding approach
- **Sense of humour** – remember to laugh together!
- **Problem solves together** – can problem solve positively, using each other's strengths and the open, honest communication to find solutions
- **Respectful relationships** – maintain healthy respectful relationships within the family
- **Family time** – allows time to connect and build on relationships
- **Look after each other** – like looking after yourself, looking after each other is important – this might be recognising when someone needs help and offering support

(Resilient Families, 2013)

How to build family resilience

We can also build resilience within our family!

- **Identify shared values and beliefs** – we all have our own individual values and beliefs; it is important to identify what is important as a family (see our family values webinar)
- **Keep the lines of communication open** – open honest communication assists in building trust, if we communicate in an empathetic understanding way, we can nurture that trust and deepen our relationships
- **Ensure there are regular opportunities to connect** – as we grow, we change. Keeping connected will ensure an ongoing relationship and understanding of who each other is (see our webinar on family connection)
- **Look after each other** – sometimes we get caught up in making sure we are supporting and looking after others that we can't see that we need support. Identify the signs in each other that might indicate self-care is needed and support each other to rest and refresh
- **Stay positive** – staying positive isn't always easy, and sometimes we need different things to stay positive, again the more you understand and relate to each other the better you'll know how to bring about the positivity
- **Keep boundaries & routine** – we thrive on boundaries and routine; it keeps our life structured and gives a sense of control. While it is important to be flexible, because as you know life doesn't always go to plan! Trying to keep a level of routine, will help keep a level of 'normalcy' in our lives

("Building family resilience | News | Every mind", 2018)

References

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Our Services.

CatholicCare is the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, covering the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Macarthur and Southern Highlands Regions. We support people to establish and build positive

relationships and connected lives. Our aim is to help people through difficult times to help them achieve self-reliance and realise their full potential. We also advocate for social equality and prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable.

CatholicCare is an inclusive organisation committed to helping anyone in need regardless of religious beliefs.

