



## Seven Keys to Resiliency

*Trauma is a very scary event or group of events that stress the body beyond the limits of healthy coping. We live in stressful times, with the pandemic, virtual schooling, presidential election, and weather events. Some people deal better with stress than others and that is because they were just born with better resiliency skills than others. The good news is that you can learn resiliency and teach it to your children. Start by practicing these seven keys.*

- 1. Take time to care for yourself.** Physical exercise and proper nutrition improves everyone's mood and health. So does proper sleep and having some alone time just for yourself. Taking care of ourselves is not selfish – it's essential. Modeling good self-care gives your kids the right idea about taking care of themselves.
- 2. Create and maintain a schedule.** The scary thing about unpredictable times is just that. You don't know what's going to happen next. Good news: you can build **predictability** into your family life by simply creating a schedule. Write out your schedule and post it around the house. Include wake-up and bedtimes; breakfast, lunch and dinner times, snack and exercise breaks, study and work times, chore time, story time, and brushing teeth times. Be flexible, but give yourself a roadmap for your days for a smoother family life. Kids feel safe and confident because they know what's expected of them and what's going to happen next.
- 3. Create a network of support.** Bette Midler sang, "You've got to have friends." And she was right. Healthy supportive friendship and family relationships are essential. So spend time nurturing them because they're good for you. Model that behavior for your children. Also, encourage and support your children's' friendships. Everyone needs close friends and family. They connect and ground us.
- 4. Be flexible.** Look for the good in adverse situations. Expect change and go with it. Stay calm when things don't go as expected. And remember, it's okay to let other people have their way too. Don't get stuck – stay flexible – and model this quality for your children.
- 5. Think positively.** Remember Bobby McFerrin's song, "Don't worry. Be happy." Keep that song running through your head. Up with positive. Down with pessimism. When you find yourself thinking negative thoughts about yourself, take a minute to write a list of your qualities. Help your children to turn around negative thinking into positive thinking the same way. Remember to praise your children when they do a good job and frequently remind them of their many wonderful qualities. Do that for your spouse and friends as well.
- 6. Actively cope with stress.** Don't deny or ignore current stress, or a stressful past. Identify your feelings – and help your kids identify theirs. Start figuring out ways back to being positive and happy. Start solving it. Seek information, support, professional help, change environments, plan activities to deal with it, or reframe it. Got a big project you don't think you can handle? Break it down into manageable parts and tackle it one part at a time. Teach your kids how to do this too! Be an activist family.
- 7. Think about your purpose and what you believe in.** What is important to you? Practicing mindfulness, praying, meditating can help us find meaning which we can channel into helping others in need. Develop and live by meaningful principles. Model this for your children and give them opportunities to help others in need. This gives everyone a sense of self-worth and helping others is powerful.