

# Resilience: A Strength-Based Approach to Good Mental Health

Sponsored by: Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration;  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene;  
Maryland Coalition of Families;  
Youth M.O.V.E. of Maryland Wicomico County;  
Lower Shore Early Intervention Program

*Resilience is an innate capacity to rebound from adversity and change through a process of positive adaptation. In youth, resilience is a fluid, dynamic process that is influenced over time by life events, temperament, insight, skill sets, and the primary ability of care givers and the social environment to nurture and provide them a sense of safety, competency and secure attachments.*

## Core Concepts:

### Sense of Competency

- Determination & persistence
- Takes pride in activities
- Develops/evaluates alternative solutions
- Task completion

0 to 5 years

- Engages in make-believe play
- Interested in new things
- Imitates behavior of others
- Tries to do things for him/herself
- Tries out new words / builds vocabulary

6 to 12 years

- Can begin to generalize learned skills
- Shows patience in meeting a goal
- Desires to be the best one can be
- Self-Efficacy; "I Can!" attitude
- Begins to be able to organize time



13 to 18 years

- Self motivated / sense of autonomy
- Has initiative; sees things through to completion
- Has integrity, high standards
- Incorporates new knowledge
- Forming coherent sense of self



*What can Families & Communities do to Promote Resilience?*

- Gather and unite around priority issues
- Value diversified leadership
- Cooperate in achieving goals
- Have high, but realistic expectations for youth

## Related Topics & Models

Resiliency Theory Pioneer – Norman Gramezy  
Attachment Theory – John Bowlby  
Erickson's Developmental Stages  
Neuroplasticity – Neuroscience– through Mindfulness and Repetition  
Social and Emotional Competency – Daniel Goleman  
Positive Psychology – Martin Seligmann  
Positive Youth Development  
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)  
Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) – Richard Tedeschi  
Strength Based Practice / Systems of Care (SOC)  
Transformational Coping  
Primary Mental Health Project – Emory Cowen  
Public Health Approach to Children's Mental Health – Georgetown Univ., Center for Child and Human Development  
Salutogenic Model of Health – Sense of Coherence (comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) – Aaron Antonovsky  
International Resilience Project – Resilience Research Center (across cultures)  
Reaching In...Reaching Out – Penn Resilience Program  
*Resiliency: What We Have Learned* by Bonnie Benard  
Stress Hardiness – Susan Kobasa

Family & Community Models that Support Resilience  
Building Bridges to Support Families and Schools Together (FAST)  
Nurse Family Partnerships  
Safe Schools / Healthy Children  
Healthy Communities / Healthy Youth  
Asset Based Community Development Center  
The Incredible Years  
Resiliency Ohio

Longitudinal Studies  
Project Competence – University of Minnesota – Ann Masten  
Kauai Study – Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith  
Project Human Development Chicago Neighborhoods

Some Assessment Tools  
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)  
40 Developmental Assets – Search Institute  
Connor – Davidson Resilience Scale  
CANS (Child & Adolescents Needs & Strengths)  
Post Traumatic Growth Inventory  
The Stress Vulnerability Scale – Sheehan  
Resilience Scale  
Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)  
Infant/Toddler, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales

### Caring & Respect of Self & Others

- Empathy
- Giving back; helping out
- Ability to compromise
- Giving others the benefit of the doubt

- Listens to others; shows patience
- Enjoys interacting with others
- Seeks comfort from familiar adults
- Tries to comfort others
- Acts happy when praised



- Beginning capacity for self sacrifice
- Can accept that life is not always fair
- Shows concern for a bullied classmates
- Completes chores for the benefit of the family
- Can recognize their own strengths

- Values win-win solutions
- Can show forgiveness
- Cares about what happens to others
- Has capacity for intimacy
- Shows gratitude for successes

- Have the ability to work with diversity
- Offer ample volunteer opportunities
- Treat all youth with consistency & fairness
- Promotion of Wellness and Prevention efforts

### Problem Solving & Coping Skills

- Seeks help when needed
- Ability to self soothe or self regulate
- Willingness to admit and learn from mistakes
- Can accept instruction and constructive criticism

- Willing to accept redirection
- Keeps trying when unsuccessful
- Early development of self control
- Can easily go from one activity to another
- Tries different ways to solve a problem

- Not afraid to ask for help with an assignment or task
- Can use positive self talk to feel better
- Healthy risk taking
- Can make change based on other's input
- Acts persistent; tries other ways to solve problems

- Seeks others' expertise
- Has self-management skills
- Takes ownership and responsibility
- Ability for abstract thinking
- Understands cause and effect

- Promote open communication around community satisfaction
- Seeks external resources for problems
- Law enforcement is seen as a vital part of the community
- Resilience is modeled in homes/communities

### Optimism and Hope for the Future

- Sense of humor
- Belief that things can get better
- Playful; Creativity; Exploration
- Joy in accomplishments



- Enjoys social play
- Accepts alternative choices
- Shows interest in his/her surroundings
- Says positive things about the future
- Trusts familiar adults and believes what they say

- Laughs and shares jokes with a friend
- Can give examples of positive outcomes
- Involved in clubs / sports / hobbies
- Likes to explore environment / nature
- Enjoys school and learning

- Able to laugh at oneself
- Future and goal oriented
- Has creative outlets for self expression
- Seeks out and can enjoy times of peace and quiet
- Sees life as basically good and positive

- Opportunities for modeling/peer mentoring
- Recreational outlets available for families
- Youth are integrated into the community
- There is a belief that all children can be successful

### Ability to Reframe Stress

- Tolerates frustration
- Understands how perception influences outcomes
- Flexibility; able to adapt to change
- Can improvise

- Uses imagination to build skills
- Cooperates with others
- Begins to accept rules for behavior
- Begins to identify patterns and routines
- Can calm self down when upset



- Open to new ideas
- Begins to learn to manage stress
- Able to identify alternative solutions
- Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing situations
- Doesn't give up even when disappointed

- Can accept ambiguity / uncertainty
- Connects attitude with behavior
- Deals with adversity and the unexpected
- Has positive outlets to reduce stress
- Puts things in perspective

- Able to provide comfort in times of distress
- Open communication without blaming
- Families encourage self reliance
- Communities engage in creative problem solving

### Sense of Purpose & Meaning

- Spirituality; higher purpose
- Feeling that you are loveable
- Self improvement
- Cultural heritage and traditions

- Enjoys imitating people in play
- Begins to show willful behavior
- Asks questions; tells stories
- Wants to please others and be with friends
- Displays joy and curiosity

- Shows understanding of the life cycle
- Feels loved and has secure relationships
- Wants to challenge self to do better
- Participates in and values family rituals
- Can decide between right and wrong

- Explores different belief systems
- Has a belief that one's life matters
- Wants to plan for a rewarding career
- Has a sense of belonging to a community
- Tries to live by their core values

- Local ownership and community pride
- Safe, healthy outdoor activities available
- Diverse opportunities for spiritual and cultural enrichment
- Families and communities support quality education