



5 Resilience Factors



Individuals watching the news, reading content on-line and in newspapers, and overhearing others talk about the current coronavirus pandemic, may feel scared, confused, or anxious. Some may react right away, while others may show signs that they are having a difficult time later. Resiliency is our ability to respond to and cope with the difficult emotions that come up at times of crisis. Resiliency can be learned and practiced. Strategies to support resiliency include:

Sense of Safety

- **Establish a sense of safety;** It is more difficult to overcome adversity and achieve success when we are experiencing fear and feeling threatened. Safety is important in all areas of our lives – physical, emotional, environmental, and financial. When we feel that our loved ones are also threatened, then our sense of safety remains compromised. To the extent possible, reassure children that we are safe and healthy right now. Ground yourselves in the present moment, pointing out what is safe and secure right now.
- **Create or re-establish routines;** Disasters, forced isolation, and stressful situations often result in disrupted routines. Creating new routines or re-establishing usual, familiar routines can promote feelings of safety and predictability¹.
- **Encourage self-expression;** Children usually feel relief if they are able to express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Every person has their own way of expressing emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing, drawing, or journaling can facilitate this process².
- **Maintain a sensitive and caring environment;** Children may need more adult support and further attention during difficult or stressful times³. If you can, play with your child, read with (or to) your child, and spend time listening to your child or teen.
- **Provide and seek comfort, stability, and predictability** for children (and yourself) during times of crisis and uncertainty.

Ability to Calm

- **Be aware of your own reaction;** How adults react to crises is important, since children often take their emotional cues from the adults around them, so try to be aware of your own reactions to crises. It is important that adults in schools are aware of their reactions and beneficial to children when adults are able to manage their emotions well, remain calm, listen to students' children's concerns, speak with compassion, and offer reassurance⁴.
- **Model calmness and coping** by practicing and sharing strategies, such as mindfulness and breathing exercises with children.

Self-Efficacy and Community-Efficacy

- **Encourage help-seeking behaviors** by giving children opportunities to develop and use their skills to overcome difficult situations. It is also important to maintain open lines of communication, demonstrating support and caring, so that children feel that "if something unpredictable happens, I can count on my family and school community to support me and help me heal."
- **Avoid stigmatizing others;** Fear and anxiety about communicable diseases can lead to social stigma toward people, places, or things. Stopping stigma is important to helping communities and its members withstand and recover from stress⁵.

Connectedness

- **Cultivate and maintain healthy connection;** A positive relationship with a healthy adult at home and at school is one of the most important factors that helps build a child's resilience. Having a sense that children and adults care about each other, individually, and as a collective contributes to their social-emotional well-being.
- **Listen and be present** for children to support them in expressing their emotions.
- **Minimize exposure to media outlets** or social media that might promote fear or panic⁶.
- **Provide facts** about what is going on. Provide clear child-friendly information about how to reduce risk of infection and stay safe, using age appropriate language⁷.
- **Stay informed and updated** about the latest developments with the outbreak through credible sources (e.g., Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control).

Hope

- **Empower children to express themselves and to play a role in their own safety** (e.g., show them effective handwashing, covering their cough, social distancing)⁸.
- **Maintain calm and express optimism for the future.** While we should acknowledge feelings of fear and vulnerability that this situation may cause, it is critical that adults maintain calm and express optimism for the future. Remind children that, even though the current situation is very difficult, it is temporary. Reassure children and teens that social activities, including school attendance, will resume.

Visit LAUSD's Student Health and Human Services (SHHS) website for additional information and resources:

<https://achieve.lausd.net/shhscovid-19>

¹Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to CoronaVirus (COVID-19). Supporting Young Children Isolated Due to CoronaVirus (COVID-19), LSU Health New Orleans, 2020.

²https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/MHPSS_COVID19_Briefing_Note_2_March_2020-English.pdf.

³https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/MHPSS_COVID19_Briefing_Note_2_March_2020-English.pdf.

⁴https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/MHPSS_COVID19_Briefing_Note_2_March_2020-English.pdf.

⁵"Stigma and Resilience." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3 Mar. 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html.

⁶https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf.

⁷https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/MHPSS_COVID19_Briefing_Note_2_March_2020-English.pdf.

⁸https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/MHPSS_COVID19_Briefing_Note_2_March_2020-English.pdf.