



Becoming Resilient During Times of Adversity

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Resiliency, or finding ways to properly adapt to challenges or stress in your life, is a process, not a character trait. Research has revealed several key elements in fostering resilience and by considering the following, you will find you are not only helping your child but yourself and your entire family.

Connectedness: One of the strongest pillars in resilience is having positive relationships or feeling connected to others. While the diagnosis of autism may be extraordinary at first, it no longer is synonymous with being alone or having few places to turn for help. This tool kit is only one example of the ways in which Autism Speaks can lend support. Regional chapters of Autism Speaks all across the country can open up doors to other parents, families and communities who have experience with navigating the autism diagnosis. When relationships with friends, neighbors and family are based on mutual, reciprocal support and care, they can bolster resiliency.

Competence: Whenever a challenge presents itself, individuals can feel a loss of control over the situation and their lives. Competence or at this early stage learning about autism and then taking action on realistic goals will help you gain a sense of control.

Having trustworthy information and feeling more competent (not only about autism but in other aspects of your life) can be critical in maintaining a hopeful outlook.

Care: Eventually, your journey will lead to a place where you can balance negative emotions with positive ones. Taking care to avoid seeing an event as unbearable or unchangeable versus looking for opportunities and considering the event in a broader context can be an important factor to resilience. Positive attitudes such as encouraging yourself to try, being determined to persevere until success is attained, applying a problem solving approach to difficult situations and fostering feelings of determination or grit are critical. Care also refers to parents attending to their own mind and body, exercising regularly, as well paying attention to basic needs and feelings.

Resilience is the result of individuals being able to interact with their environments and the processes that either promote wellbeing or protect them against overwhelming influence of risk factors. In many cases, adversity can act as a spring board for growth and success, not only in our children, but in ourselves as well.