

READY-TO-USE WORKSHOP

Building Resilience in Young Children



best start
meilleur départ

by/par health **nexus** santé



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General Messages to Facilitators

- The content of this parent workshop is taken from the BSRC resource: **Building Resilience in Young Children – Booklet for parents of children from birth to six year.**
- The purpose of this workshop is to provide practical tips for parents on simple messages about how to build resilience from infancy to age 6.
- Distribution of a copy of the resource **Building Resilience in Young Children – Booklet for parents of children from birth to six year** to each set of parents is ideal.
- If you do not choose to provide this resource to the participants, inform them they can view it online and download it free of charge.



Prior to presenting a workshop, facilitators are encouraged to:

- Review the resource: **Building Resilience in Young Children – Booklet for parents of children from birth to six year.**
- Be familiar with their local community resources in case some parents feel they need additional supports. For example, there may be local children’s mental health services, social services, public health unit, recreational facilities, library services and childcare services. Ideally, have a list of community resources available for parents.
- Have a flipchart, as well as any material necessary for the activities (as per activity descriptions).
- Set up the room to facilitate group discussions (i.e., chairs in a horseshoe or circle).
- If possible, have volunteers to help out (to welcome parents, help out with activities and group dynamics).
- Offer childcare and healthy snacks, if feasible.
- Coordinate transportation or reimburse for transportation costs, if feasible.
- Have participant evaluation forms available (see page 23).

Workshop Objectives

- Participants learn about resilience and its importance for child development.
- Participants reflect on ways to be positive role models for their children.
- Participants learn ways to boost their children's ability to bounce back from life's challenges and thrive.

Key Messages

- Everyone has the capacity for resilience. Building resilience is something we work on throughout our lives.
- Parents are the most important people in their children's lives. They have the biggest role to play in helping their children develop strengths that support resilience.
- Together, with the support of other caring family and community members, you can boost your children's resilience through your everyday interactions and role modeling.
- All children are different – there are no magic solutions to build resilience in children. Being flexible with approaches and maintaining a caring relationship with children are the most promising ways to enhance children's capacity for resilience.
- Taking care of yourself makes you healthier, better equipped to parent and able to meet life's challenges. Children watch and learn positive self-care strategies from their parents.

Timelines

- One to four sessions of 90 minutes to 120 minutes can be offered.
- The ideal group size is 6-12 parents.
- This workshop is designed for the general population. Facilitators are encouraged to adapt the workshop to meet participant needs.
- Choose the icebreaker(s) and activity(ies) that suit the participants and your presentation style. Several icebreakers and activities are suggested.

Suggested Agenda

- Introduction of presenter and topic. (5 minutes)
- Introduction of participants. See suggested ice-breakers, page 4. (10 minutes)
- Definition of resilience. See page 6. (5 minutes)
- Activities. See pages 7-18. (30-45 minutes). For the first session, Activities #1 and #2 are strongly suggested. For subsequent sessions, you can choose from activities # 3 to #7.
- Conclusion and evaluation. See pages 19-23. (15 minutes)
- Additional resources and information. See pages 24. (5-10 minutes)

Suggested Ice-Breakers

Select 1 of the following ice-breakers to get the participants more comfortable with one another.

ICE-BREAKER #1:

- Brainstorm words that come to mind associated with resilience.
- Encourage parents to participate as there are no wrong answers.
- Record their words on a flip chart.
- Congratulate parents for participating. Circle or underline words that you will mention in your workshop.
- Reinforce that there are many ways to build resilience. Give the definition of resilience.

ICE-BREAKER #2:



- Ask the parents to introduce themselves:
 - Their name
 - Age of their child or children
 - Name one strength they have as a parent
- Record the strengths on a flip chart.
- Ask parents to think of one other strength that they recognize in themselves.
- Ask the parents why it can be so difficult to identify personal strengths (many people find it easier to name their faults).
- Inform parents that looking for strengths builds confidence in one's ability to handle stress and difficulties. Invite them to continue to think about their strengths throughout the workshop. Encourage them to identify more strengths – either strengths they already have or strengths they would like to develop to help their children build resilience. Let them know that they will have an opportunity to name more strengths at the end of the workshop.

ICE-BREAKER #3:

- Ask the parents to introduce themselves:
 - Their name
 - A reason why they came to the presentation
- Record answers on a flip chart.
- Circle or underline words and concepts that you will mention in your workshop.
- Inform the parents that as many of their reasons for coming will be addressed as possible. If not, some ideas may be found in the booklet (Building Resilience in Young Children).

ICE-BREAKER #4:

- Ask the parents to introduce themselves:
 - Their name
 - Name of child or children and age
 - Give one or two example(s) of their child's strengths
- Facilitate group replies and record responses on a flip chart.
- Facilitator points out all the remarkable qualities of the children.
- Stress that as parents it is important to look for children's strengths, especially in stressful times! When we look for children's strengths it helps keep us connected to them in a positive way. It gives children confidence in their abilities and motivation to keep trying as they develop new skills that may be challenging to them.
- Mention that during the workshop positive outlook will be identified as a technique that can change a challenging situation into a manageable one. Looking for the positives in life is one of the most important strengths for building resilience.



Workshop Content

Definition of Resilience:

- Resilience is the ability to steer through serious life challenges and find ways to bounce back and to thrive.
- Resilience helps people live happier, healthier, more successful lives and protects against depression.
- Building strengths that support resilience starts in infancy and is an ongoing process of development throughout our lives.
- We need both inner strengths and outside resources to build our resilience. [SHOW DIAGRAM and refer to throughout session.]
- Children learn how to respond with resilience in the context of caring relationships and positive role models at home and in the community (school, play groups, friends, church, neighborhood, etc.).
- Children build their resilience when they are given opportunities to learn skills and participate in meaningful activities at home and in their community.



Note: Permission to use this diagram was given by Reaching IN...Reaching OUT

Explanation:

Resilience is not something that some people have and others don't have. We are all born with the capacity for resilience, and it is something we work on throughout our lives. We can start building children's resilience very early in life by providing them with a secure, caring relationship that helps them get through life's inevitable challenges. Parents are the most important people to help build their children's resilience. When parents role model resilience in every day interactions, they are teaching their children positive ways to handle stress and recover from set-backs. In this workshop, you will learn how you can help your children develop strengths and gather supports that build resilience.

Suggested Activities

Select 2 to 3 activities from the list on following pages. The choice of activity will depend on the group, on your comfort level, time available and number of sessions being offered. If you are doing only one session, activities #1 and #2 are suggested.

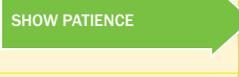
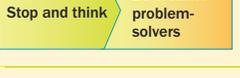
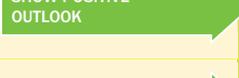
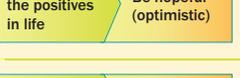
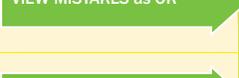
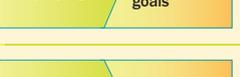
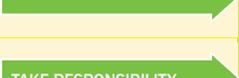
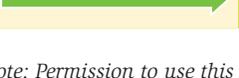
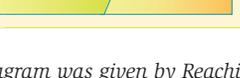
Activity #1

Modelling for Resilience

- Distribute Handout #1 *Role Modelling for Resilience*.
- Ask participants to write verbal and nonverbal communication examples for each line in the 3rd column.

Role Modelling for Resilience

Write verbal and nonverbal communication examples for each line in the 3rd column.

 When parents...	 Kids Learn to...	Examples of verbal and nonverbal communication
 SHOW AFFECTION & ATTENTION	 Feel love & connected → Have a sense of worth	Verbal: <i>I say "I love you" every day to my child</i> Non-verbal: <i>I give at least one hug every day to my child</i>
 LISTEN/UNDERSTAND	 Feel understood & accepted → Understand others	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 STAY CALM	 Calm themselves → Handle stressful situations	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 SHOW PATIENCE	 Wait → Develop patience	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 STOP & RE-THINK	 Stop and think → Be creative problem-solvers	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 SHOW POSITIVE OUTLOOK	 Appreciate the positives in life → Be hopeful (optimistic)	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 VIEW MISTAKES as OK	 See mistakes as part of learning → Try new things	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 KEEP TRYING	 Keep trying → Achieve goals	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 SEE STRENGTHS	 See their own strengths → Feel confidence	Verbal: Non-verbal:
 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY & BE INVOLVED	 Be responsible & involved → Feel they belong	Verbal: Non-verbal:

Note: Permission to use this diagram was given by Reaching IN... Reaching OUT

- The activity can be done by groups of parents or individually by parents.
- This activity can be done as homework if the parents are coming back for another session.
- Discuss the answers with the group.

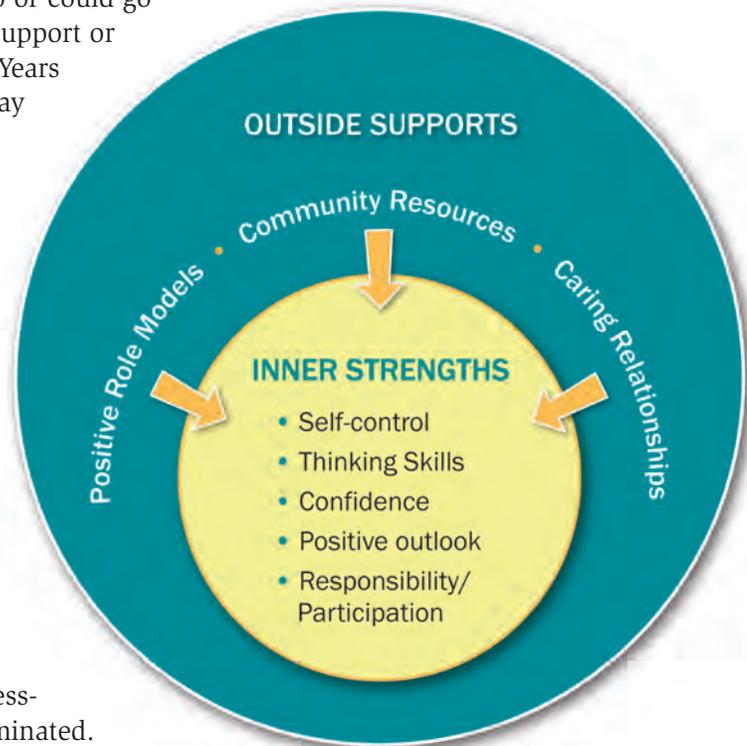
Reinforce the following:

- Parents and other adults can learn to be positive role models by handling difficult situations with resilience.
- Building a close, loving relationship with your children is the most important thing you can do to support their resilience.
- Positive daily interactions with parents teach children how to have caring relationships with other important people in their lives.
- Our day-to-day activities promote the development of inner strengths that support resilience.
- When parents cope well with everyday stress, they are showing their children how to do the same. Young children copy what others say and do. Ask: *“How do we want our child to react when something goes wrong?”*
- When parents stay calm and flexible in dealing with life’s challenges, they are teaching their children positive ways to handle stress.

Activity # 2

Outside supports

- Ask the group to identify where they go or could go in their respective communities to get support or help. A few suggestions: Ontario Early Years Centres, Community Health Centres, play groups in the community, parent-child drop-in centres, faith groups, support programs, school, libraries, telephone help lines, internet, friends, relatives, neighbours, etc. Identify with the group the advantage of seeking outside support. Show the diagram.
- Ask parents to put up their hand if they find it easy to ask for help.
- Brainstorm the barriers to seeking outside help. A few suggestions could be: shyness, never done it before, privacy issues, believing you’ll look weak or incompetent, lack of transportation, not knowing what to expect, financial issues, sense of hopelessness and fear of being judged or discriminated.



- Brainstorm and write on a flip chart ways to counter the barriers. A few suggestions could be: phone the centre to ask about carpooling or bus tickets; ask a friend to go with you; ask the centre and/or social worker about financial assistance; think of the advantages; visit the centre, etc.
- Distribute the handout #2 *Tips for teaching children how to reach out*

Tips for teaching children how to reach out

- **Tell your children it is OK to ask for help.** Sit with them and think of all of the people they could reach out to for help, if necessary.
- **Create a 'Help Signal' with your children.** Let them know that some problems need adult help. Choose a code word or signal that they can use to alert you (or another caring adult).
- **Read or tell stories** about how others reach out to give or get a helping hand.

Reinforce the following:

- Reaching out to community resources is important and reaching out for help is part of building resilience.
- It is important to build a network of people that you can count on.
- Community groups may offer programs to help parents learn to reduce stress, how to handle children's challenging behaviours, or support their special needs.
- Asking for help is a sign of strength and mental health.
- You can teach your children that everyone needs help sometimes. Children learn that it's OK to ask for help and learn how to do it.
- Reinforce that outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our capacity for resilience.



Activity #3

Tips for being a positive role model

- Ask the parents to take a minute to reflect on a stressful past event where they found it difficult to respond to their child's needs. Or you may give an example:

My 5-year's old son had his bicycle stolen. I was so mad at him. He came home crying and started to tell an unbelievable story that I knew made no sense. I just screamed at him and told him to go to his room.

OR

My 3 year old daughter spilled her milk again, all over herself and the kitchen floor. I told her so often not to play with toys when eating. I picked her up, brought her to her room, changed her without saying a word and told her to stay in her room. I went back downstairs to wipe the floor.

OR

I arrived late at home – traffic was awful and my day at work was even worse. I was stressed over a deadline I could not meet. My co-workers and supervisor do not seem able to accept that it's out of my control. Then, I got home and the kids were screaming over a toy. I told them to shut up.



- Ask the parents to remember how they handled the situation (ignore the situation, gave a hug, screamed, listened, punished, etc.). Parents can also write down their answers.
- Ask the parents to take a few minutes to remember and note how they felt. A few suggestions may be: mad, tired, exhausted, disappointed, stressed, dumbstruck, etc.
- Ask the parents to take a few minutes to think about how their child felt.
- Distribute Handout #3 *Tips for being a positive role model*. Ask the parent to choose (or circle) 1 or 2 tips that could have helped avoid or solve their conflict in a positive and constructive way.

Tips for being a positive role model

- **Take care of your health.** Show children that it is important to eat healthy foods, get enough sleep and exercise regularly. These reduce daily stress. They give us the mental and physical strength to deal with more serious challenges.
- **Show understanding, compassion and kindness.** Imagine what it is like to walk in other people's shoes.
- **Take three deep breaths when you're stressed.** *Breathe in slowly* to the count of three and then *breathe out slowly* to the count of three. *Repeat three times* to relax your body and get control of your emotions.
- **Be in charge of your emotions.** It is OK to have all kinds of feelings. It is healthy to express them in constructive ways.
- **Be patient.** Keep on trying even when things are frustrating. Show patience with your children when they are trying.
- **Let go of being perfect.** Remember mistakes are just part of learning.
- **Stop and re-think.** When things go wrong, try not to jump to conclusions. Ask yourself: "How else can I think about this?" "What parts can I control?" "What else can I do?" Take a moment before you respond.
- **Take responsibility for your own feelings and actions** in front of your children: "Oops, I just made a mistake on this, but I can make up for it by doing..." or "I'm sorry I yelled at you. Next time, I'm going to stop and calm down before I speak."
- **Use humour.** It reduces stress and helps us look at challenging situations with a positive outlook.
- **Stay positive.** Enjoy simple pleasures. Look for the upside to challenges. This encourages us to keep trying. It also helps us learn from these experiences.
- **Reach out for support.** Everyone needs help sometimes.
- **Reach out to help others** who are going through difficult times.

- Encourage the parents to reflect on how the scenario could have been different if they would have done the step(s) they chose from the list. Ask if there is anything else they could have done differently.
- Facilitate group brainstorming and record response.
- Encourage parents to share their stories and the tips they chose. Parents can also choose to write down their response and not share with the group.

Reinforce the following:

- When parents cope well with everyday stress, they are showing their children how to do the same. Young children copy what others say and do. Ask: "How do we want our children to react when something goes wrong?"
- Parents can learn to be positive role models by handling difficult situations with resilience.
- When parents stay calm and flexible in dealing with life's challenges, they are teaching their children positive ways to handle stress. On-the-other-hand, if a parent screams, this teaches their children to scream.
- Reinforce that outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our resilience.

Activity # 4

Tips for building caring relationships

- Distribute Handout #4 *Tips for building caring relationships*.

Tips for building caring relationships

- **Give attention and affection – lots of smiles and hugs.** This makes your children feel secure, loved and accepted.
- **Play with your children.** Playing together is a great way for you to connect, get to know them better and have fun. It's also a great way for children to develop physical, imagination and social skills.
- **Comfort your children.** When children are hurt or frightened, sad or angry, being comforted helps them feel as if they're not alone with their big feelings. They will feel closer to you and learn healthy ways to comfort themselves and others as they get older.
- **Listen with interest** to your children's feelings, thoughts and ideas. This lets them know you think what they have to say is important.
- **Show empathy.** Empathy means seeing things from other people's point of view. This doesn't mean you have to agree with them. It just means that you are letting them know you understand how they feel. When children feel understood, it's easier for them to try to understand others. Empathy is the foundation for developing caring relationships with other people.
- **Help your children identify and express their feelings** (glad, sad, mad, scared, etc.). Point out that other people have these feelings, too.
- **Reduce TV time.** Experts recommend that children under 2 years should not watch any TV. Children between 2-4 years should watch less than 1 hour per day. Instead, find things to do that build your relationship, like reading together or going to the park.
- **Read or tell your children stories** about people who show compassion, kindness and understanding for others.

- Distribute Handout #5 *Prioritizing Daily Interactions* Work Sheet.
- Ask parents to pick three tips that will be priorities in the following weeks with their children.
- Ask them to fill in the Examples of How To column by giving specific examples of how they plan to accomplish the tasks (frequency, where, when, etc.).

WORKSHEET – PRIORITIZING DAILY INTERACTIONS

Priorities	Tips for building caring relationships	Examples of How To (Frequency, where, when, etc.)
	Give attention and affection – lots of smiles and hugs	
	Play with my children	
	Comfort my children	
	Listen with interest	
	Show empathy	
	Help my children identify and express their feelings	
	Reduce TV time	
	Read or tell my children stories	

- Discuss parents' answers. If the group has not covered all sections, brainstorm with the group a few specific examples for the missing sections.

Reinforce the following:

- Building a close, loving relationship with your children is the most important thing you can do to support their resilience.
- Children do best when they feel loved, understood and accepted, and are protected from harm. Feeling wanted and loved helps us to get through the hard times in life. Children learn to feel safe and secure through a close attachment with at least one caring person. They also learn that their needs will be met. All of this gives them confidence to explore their world.
- Positive daily interactions with parents teach children how to have caring relationships with other important people in their lives. It also makes it easier for them to reach out to others when they need help.
- Developing our capacity for resilience happens through our day-to-day activities.
- Reinforce that outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our resilience.

Activity #5

Tips for encouraging children's responsibility and participation

To help build a child's resilience, a parent needs to encourage and support children to participate in family and community activities.

- Ask the parents to mention how they involve their children in helping at home.
- Next, on a flip chart, draw two columns with the title *Pros of your child helping and Disadvantages of your child helping*.
- Facilitate group brainstorming and record response.
- Distribute Handout #6 *Tips for encouraging children's responsibility and participation*

Tips for encouraging children's responsibility and participation

- **Encourage your children to take responsibility.** Expect them to help with daily chores. It's often easier to do things yourself, but children benefit when you let them help out. It gives them a chance to cooperate, learn new skills and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- **Encourage your children to think of small ways to help others.** Perhaps they could get a toy, or a diaper to help you with a younger child. Or they could make a card for someone who isn't feeling well.
- **Involve your children when you help others.** Let them pitch in when you help an elderly neighbour rake leaves or take out their garbage. This helps children practice kindness, compassion and empathy.
- **Participate in community projects.** Let your children help prepare a community meal or plant and harvest food in a community garden. This kind of participation can be another way for you and your children to meet people, help your community and stretch your food dollars.
- **Help your children learn about and value their own culture.** Involve them in family traditions to celebrate their heritage. Tell them stories about the people they came from. This helps your children feel good about their own identity and connects them to a larger community.
- **Encourage participation in community activities.** Choose activities that build your children's talents and interests (like sports, music, art, etc.). This helps identify their strengths and gives direction, purpose and enjoyment.
- **Read or tell children stories.** Choose stories about helping out and getting involved in community activities.

Reinforce the following:

- It can take longer to complete a chore if children help; however, there are many benefits for children.
- When young children have responsibility for small tasks, they contribute to family life and feel good about themselves.
- Encouraging children's responsibility and participation builds positive relationships, provides them with direction in their lives, and gives them opportunities to develop their strengths and talents.

Encouraging children to take responsibility and actively participate makes them less likely to misbehave due to boredom or to gain attention. It builds self-regulation and increases their self-esteem and confidence. Self-regulation is the ability to adapt one's emotions, behaviours and attention to the demands of the situation. Reinforce that outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our resilience.

Activity # 6

Tips for helping children 3 years and older to develop thinking skills

Note: Activities #6 and #7 should be done only when the group understands the definition of resilience (Activities #1 and #2); the parents have a child 3 to 6 years of age and the group of parents are comfortable to discuss topics openly with one another.

- Distribute Handout #7 *Tips for helping children 3 years and older develop thinking skills*

Tips for helping children 3 years and older develop thinking skills

- **Help your children talk about their thoughts.** Often when we ask children to tell us what they are thinking, they shrug their shoulders and say, *“I don’t know.”* However, questions like, *“What are you saying to yourself inside your head?”* or *“What is your head telling you?”* often help children to express thoughts that cause their feelings and behaviours.
For example, a child who refuses to get dressed in the morning may be able to tell us what is actually causing this behaviour. *“I hate daycare! Everyone takes my toys. No one wants to play with me. I hate daycare!!!”*
- **Show empathy for your children’s thoughts and feelings.** *“I understand. You’re feeling sad and mad about what happens in daycare.”* Then, think together about ways to make the situation better.
*“Let’s talk with your teacher about helping you enjoy your time at daycare.
Yesterday, when I picked you up, you were eating snack and laughing with Sanjay. Maybe you and Sanjay could play together today.”*
- **Gently challenge your children’s negative thinking.**
 - **“Always”** thinking like *“Jack always wants to play with someone else”* can be turned around by pointing out the times your child played with Jack.
 - **“Everything”** thinking like *“Now everything is ruined”* can be changed by helping your child see that if one thing goes wrong, it doesn’t mean that everything is ruined. Or, if one person doesn’t want to play, it doesn’t mean that no one wants to play.
- **Play thinking games together.** Children can benefit from playing games that help them think about *“What would happen if...?”* Games like these help children think about their actions and how to handle situations in a positive way.
- **Encourage children to imagine another way to do something.** Talk together about a different way to join others at the playground, play with toys or tidy up. This helps them learn there is usually more than one way to do things.
- **Read or tell children stories.** Choose stories about how others overcome obstacles, get along with others or turn a difficult situation around. You could use puppets or stuffed animals to help bring the story alive.

Group the parents according to the age of their child (choose one if more than one child per family). Ask parents of children 3 years old and older to discuss one of the following:

- How the tips can be used in scenarios in which a child gets upset – for example, when a friend or sibling destroys their castle or when a friend or sibling refuses to play with them or says mean words.
- Discuss how the parents can use the tips for various scenarios.
- Or, you can discuss how the parents can use the tips when reading a story book with their child. In this activity, parents can role play, where one is a parent and the other one is a child. For example, the parent would ask the ‘child’ the questions from the tips:

“What are you saying to yourself inside your head?”

“What is your head telling you?”

“What would happen if...?”

Reinforce the following:

- Working on problem solving skills will help children learn how to overcome adversity.
- Practice the tips at home with their children.
- Outside supports and inner supports work together to develop our resilience.



Activity # 7

Thinking skills

Note: Activities #6 and #7 should be done only when the group understands the definition of resilience (Activities #1 and #2); the parents have a child 3 to 6 years of age and the group of parents are comfortable to discuss topics openly with one another.

- Introduce the importance of thinking skills. The way we react to things has a lot to do with the way we think about the situation. Give the following example:

Crystal, Katrina's two-year-old daughter, has a tantrum in the shopping mall. Katrina thinks to herself, "This is embarrassing. Everyone thinks I am a terrible mother. And it's all her father's fault for always giving in to her. He spoils her rotten."

- Ask the group: what went through Katrina's mind? Discuss Katrina's feelings in this situation. Continue with the example:

"I ground my teeth, grabbed Crystal's hand and pulled her out of the mall. She wailed even louder and everyone stared as we went by. I was so angry and I could not wait to yell at her father for spoiling Crystal."

- Ask the group: why do you think Crystal was crying?
- Discuss how Katrina's thinking interfered with a positive way to calmly diffuse the difficult situation and to be able to control her emotions and behaviours. In difficult situations, we often blame ourselves or others for our problems.
- Instead of jumping to conclusions, it is very useful to follow three easy steps. These steps help us respond to stressful situations effectively instead of simply reacting. Let's look at how these steps could have helped Katrina handle her daughter's tantrum differently.
- Distribute Handout #8 *Developing Thinking Skills Tips*.

Step 1: Stop and catch your thoughts

"This is embarrassing. Everyone thinks I am a terrible mother. And it's all her father's fault for always giving in to her. He spoils her rotten."

Step 2: Take three deep breaths

"Wait a minute, this isn't helpful. I need to take some deep breaths so I can be calm enough to calm her down."

Step 3: "Re-think" the situation by asking yourself – How else can I think about this?

"It's really hot and crowded in here. And it's almost nap time. Crystal is probably just trying to tell me this is too much for her. After all, she's only two."

- By following the three steps, Katrina picks up Crystal, and in a soothing voice says, “It’s OK. I know you are hot and tired. Let’s go home and have a cuddle and a nap.” Although Crystal doesn’t stop crying immediately, she has calmed down by the time they leave the mall. Mother and daughter feel connected and Katrina decides she won’t take Crystal to the mall again so close to nap time.
- Explain that thinking skills play a big part in our ability to regulate our emotions and behaviour.
- Later on, Katrina realized blaming her daughter or partner did not help the situation. Instead, she wished she had:
 - Calmed herself down and calmed Crystal, too.
 - Realized Crystal was tired and hot, but too young to express this with words.
 - Planned for future trips to the mall.
 - Avoided an unnecessary argument with her partner.
- Ask the group to write down individually a time when using the three steps would have helped to diffuse a chaotic situation.
- Ask the group if they want to share how their child calms himself or herself.

Reinforce the following:

- To practice the 3 steps approach with their children when they are faced with a difficult situation.
- Use the 3 step approach to become more familiar with coming up with alternatives in order to respond more effectively to stressful situations.
- By working on our problem-solving skills we are helping our children learn how to overcome adversity. We are practicing to be a positive role model for our children.
- Reinforce that outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our resilience.



Conclusion

Step 1: Parents to summarize the key messages

- Distribute Handout #9 *My Action Plan*

MY ACTION PLAN

What are the 3 most interesting facts learned about building resiliency in children?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What will I do starting tomorrow in supporting my children's resilience?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Who can you share this information with?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Step 2: Follow up on the Ice-breaker #2:

- Flip back to the answers on the flip chart.
- Ask parents to name 3 strengths they have or would like to develop that will help their children develop their resilience.
- Reinforce that it is now easier to name their strengths. Ask the parents why it is easier.
- Encourage parents to continue to recognize their strengths. A positive outlook can change a challenging situation into a manageable one. Looking for the positives in life is one of the most important strengths for building resilience.

Step 3: Summarize the key messages of the workshop

- Everyone has the capacity for resilience. Building resilience is something we work on throughout our lives.
- Parents are the most important people in their children’s lives. They have the biggest role to play in helping their children develop resilience. Model resiliency for your children.
- Together, with the support of other caring family and community members, you can boost your children’s resilience through your everyday interactions and modeling.
- All children are different – there are no magic solutions to building resilience in children. Favourable ongoing solutions include being flexible with approaches and staying connected with your children.
- Taking care of yourself makes you a healthier and better-equipped parent, more able to meet life challenges. Children learn that it is okay to take care of one’s self.



Step 4: Distribute and discuss the following resource for parents.

Resources for parents

To find resources and services contact:

- Your health care provider
- Your community library
- Your public health unit
- Your Friendship Centre or Band Council
- Your Ontario Early Years Centre

Some free on line resources:

Best Start Resource Centre

- *Building Resilience in Young Children, Booklet for parents of children from birth to six years*
- *Learning to Play and Playing to Learn: What Families Can Do, Booklet for Parents*
http://en.beststart.org/for_parents

Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO)

- Child development information
- Tip sheets, posters, activities for building resilience
- Children's storybook lists related to five inner strengths associated with resilience
- Videos of parents and young children building resilience
- Organizations offering free online parenting resources
www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents.htm

The Psychology Foundation of Canada (2009)

- *Kids Can Cope: Parenting Resilient Children at Home and at School*
<http://psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/publications/ResilienceChildrenBooklet.pdf>

Edmonton: Alberta Health Services

- *The Bounce Back Book: Building Resiliency Skills in the Early School Years*
www.reachedmonton.ca/content/bounce-back-book-building-resiliency-skills-early-school-years-ages-5-9

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- *Raising Resilient Children and Youth*
www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/for_parents/Pages/raising_resilient_children.aspx

American Academy of Pediatrics

- *Children, Teens, and Resiliency*
www2.aap.org/stress/default.htm

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

- *Eyes on Resilience – The ability to bounce back from adversity*
www.child-encyclopedia.com/resilience/resources

Evaluation

Based on the procedures of the agency that is offering this workshop, an evaluation may be required. Evaluations measure the short and long-term impact of the training program. They help you learn about what went well and what could be improved.

You can measure participants' immediate responses formally or informally. One informal method is simply to collect their comments and responses after taking part in the training session. One formal method is to have them fill out an evaluation. There is a sample evaluation on the next page.

It may also be very useful to follow up, 3 to 6 months after the session, to see if there have been any changes in their parenting behaviours. This means you will need to collect participants' contact information and their written permission to contact them. These are the kinds of questions you could ask them in the follow up:

- Do you remember taking part in the session?
- Can you summarize the key message or messages of the session?
- Did you change your parenting behaviour after this session? If so, what are you doing differently? If not, why not?



Tell us what you think – Participant Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to complete this form. It will help us to improve the workshop.

Put an **X** in the box that describes what you think. Add comments if you wish.

1. “I understand resilience more than I did before attending the session”.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

2. “I think I will be able to use the suggestions provided in the session”.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

Please explain: _____

3. “I found the handouts helpful.”

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

4. Overall, how would you rate the session?

Poor Fair Good Excellent

Please explain: _____

5. How could the session be improved?

6. Would you recommend this session to friends and other parents?

Yes No Maybe

Please explain: _____

Comments:

Additional Information for Facilitators

If you want to learn more about resilience, we encourage you to visit the following websites:

Reaching IN...Reaching OUT

www.reachinginreachingout.com

- **Video** – *Building Resilience in Young Children & Families*
Content shows a range of parents and children demonstrating resilience in action. It can be used to ignite discussion about the content in the Ready-to-Use Workshop.
www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents-introresilience.htm
- **Resources** – *Building Resilience*
Resiliency Activity Modules; Tip Sheets and Posters on topics that help build inner strengths associated with resilience.
www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parentprofessionals.htm
- **Bounce Back & Thrive!**
Evidence-based resiliency skills training for parents with young children.
www.reachinginreachingout.com/programs-bb&t.htm

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

- *Resilience*
www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/child-resilience/according-to-experts.html

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- *Growing Up Resilient: Ways to Build Resilience in Children and Youth*
www.camh.ca/en/education/about/camh_publications/Pages/growing_resilient.aspx

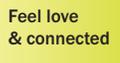
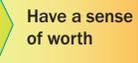
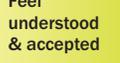
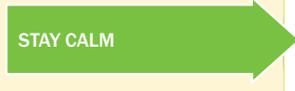
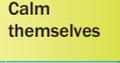
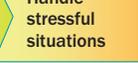
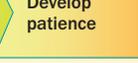
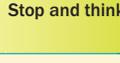
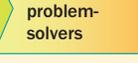
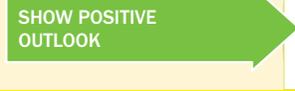
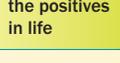
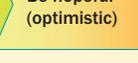
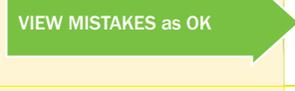
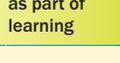
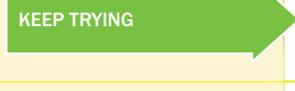
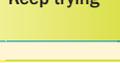
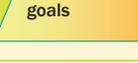
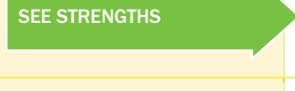
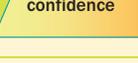
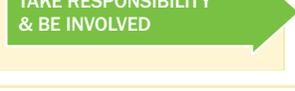
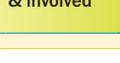
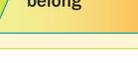
American Psychological Association

- *Resilience Guide for Parents and Teachers*
www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx

HANDOUTS

Handout #1 Modelling for Resilience

Write verbal and nonverbal communication examples for each line in the 3rd column.

 When parents...		 Kids Learn to...		Examples of verbal and nonverbal communication
			Verbal: <i>I say "I love you" every day to my child</i> Non-verbal: <i>I give at least one hug every day to my child</i>	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
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			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	
			Verbal: Non-verbal:	

Handout #2 Tips for teaching children how to reach out

Tips for teaching children how to reach out

- **Tell your children it is OK to ask for help.** Sit with them and think of all of the people they could reach out to for help, if necessary.
- **Create a ‘Help Signal’ with your children.** Let them know that some problems need adult help. Choose a code word or signal that they can use to alert you (or another caring adult).
- **Read or tell stories** about how others reach out to give or get a helping hand.

Handout #3 Tips for being a positive role model

Tips for being a positive role model

- **Take care of your health.** Show children that it is important to eat healthy foods, get enough sleep and exercise regularly. These reduce daily stress. They give us the mental and physical strength to deal with more serious challenges.
- **Show understanding, compassion and kindness.** Imagine what it is like to walk in other people’s shoes.
- **Take three deep breaths when you’re stressed.** *Breathe in slowly* to the count of three and then *breathe out slowly* to the count of three. *Repeat three times* to relax your body and get control of your emotions.
- **Be in charge of your emotions.** It is OK to have all kinds of feelings. It is healthy to express them in constructive ways.
- **Be patient.** Keep on trying even when things are frustrating. Show patience with your children when they are trying.
- **Let go of being perfect.** Remember mistakes are just part of learning.
- **Stop and re-think.** When things go wrong, try not to jump to conclusions. Ask yourself: “How else can I think about this?” “What parts can I control?” “What else can I do?” Take a moment before you respond.
- **Take responsibility for your own feelings and actions** in front of your children: “Oops, I just made a mistake on this, but I can make up for it by doing...” or “I’m sorry I yelled at you. Next time, I’m going to stop and calm down before I speak.”
- **Use humour.** It reduces stress and helps us look at challenging situations with a positive outlook.
- **Stay positive.** Enjoy simple pleasures. Look for the upside to challenges. This encourages us to keep trying. It also helps us learn from these experiences.
- **Reach out for support.** Everyone needs help sometimes.
- **Reach out to help others** who are going through difficult times.

Handout # 4 Tips for building caring relationships

Tips for building caring relationships

- **Give attention and affection – lots of smiles and hugs.** This makes your children feel secure, loved and accepted.
- **Play with your children.** Playing together is a great way for you to connect, get to know them better and have fun. It's also a great way for children to develop physical, imagination and social skills.
- **Comfort your children.** When children are hurt or frightened, sad or angry, being comforted helps them feel as if they're not alone with their big feelings. They will feel closer to you and learn healthy ways to comfort themselves and others as they get older.
- **Listen with interest** to your children's feelings, thoughts and ideas. This lets them know you think what they have to say is important.
- **Show empathy.** Empathy means seeing things from other people's point of view. This doesn't mean you have to agree with them. It just means that you are letting them know you understand how they feel. When children feel understood, it's easier for them to try to understand others. Empathy is the foundation for developing caring relationships with other people.
- **Help your children identify and express their feelings** (glad, sad, mad, scared, etc.). Point out that other people have these feelings, too.
- **Reduce TV time.** Experts recommend that children under 2 years should not watch any TV. Children between 2-4 years should watch less than 1 hour per day. Instead, find things to do that build your relationship, like reading together or going to the park.
- **Read or tell your children stories** about people who show compassion, kindness and understanding for others.

Handout # 5 Prioritizing Daily Interactions Work Sheet

- Pick 3 tips that will be prioritise in the following weeks with their children.
- Fill in the Examples of *How To* column by giving specific examples of how they plan to accomplish the tasks (frequency, where, when, etc.).

WORKSHEET – PRIORITIZING DAILY INTERACTIONS		
Priorities	Tips for building caring relationships	Examples of How To (Frequency, where, when, etc.)
	Give attention and affection – lots of smiles and hugs	
	Play with my children	
	Comfort my children	
	Listen with interest	
	Show empathy	
	Help my children identify and express their feelings	
	Reduce TV time	
	Read or tell my children stories	

Handout # 6 Tips for encouraging children's responsibility and participation

Tips for encouraging children's responsibility and participation

- **Encourage your children to take responsibility.** Expect them to help with daily chores. It's often easier to do things yourself, but children benefit when you let them help out. It gives them a chance to cooperate, learn new skills and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- **Encourage your children to think of small ways to help others.** Perhaps they could get a toy, or a diaper to help you with a younger child. Or they could make a card for someone who isn't feeling well.
- **Involve your children when you help others.** Let them pitch in when you help an elderly neighbour rake leaves or take out their garbage. This helps children practice kindness, compassion and empathy.
- **Participate in community projects.** Let your children help prepare a community meal or plant and harvest food in a community garden. This kind of participation can be another way for you and your children to meet people, help your community and stretch your food dollars.
- **Help your children learn about and value their own culture.** Involve them in family traditions to celebrate their heritage. Tell them stories about the people they came from. This helps your children feel good about their own identity and connects them to a larger community.
- **Encourage participation in community activities.** Choose activities that build your children's talents and interests (like sports, music, art, etc.). This helps identify their strengths and gives direction, purpose and enjoyment.
- **Read or tell children stories.** Choose stories about helping out and getting involved in community activities.

Handout # 7 Tips for helping children 3 years and older develop thinking skills

Tips for helping children 3 years and older develop thinking skills

- **Help your children talk about their thoughts.** Often when we ask children to tell us what they are thinking, they shrug their shoulders and say, “*I don’t know.*” However, questions like, “*What are you saying to yourself inside your head?*” or “*What is your head telling you?*” often help children to express thoughts that cause their feelings and behaviours.

For example, a child who refuses to get dressed in the morning may be able to tell us what is actually causing this behaviour. “*I hate daycare! Everyone takes my toys. No one wants to play with me. I hate daycare!!!*”

- **Show empathy for your children’s thoughts and feelings.** “*I understand. You’re feeling sad and mad about what happens in daycare.*” Then, think together about ways to make the situation better.

“*Let’s talk with your teacher about helping you enjoy your time at daycare.*”

“*Yesterday, when I picked you up, you were eating snack and laughing with Sanjay. Maybe you and Sanjay could play together today.*”

- **Gently challenge your children’s negative thinking.**

– “**Always**” thinking like “*Jack always wants to play with someone else*” can be turned around by pointing out the times your child played with Jack.

– “**Everything**” thinking like “*Now everything is ruined*” can be changed by helping your child see that if one thing goes wrong, it doesn’t mean that everything is ruined. Or, if one person doesn’t want to play, it doesn’t mean that no one wants to play.

- **Play thinking games together.** Children can benefit from playing games that help them think about “*What would happen if...?*” Games like these help children think about their actions and how to handle situations in a positive way.

- **Encourage children to imagine another way to do something.** Talk together about a different way to join others at the playground, play with toys or tidy up. This helps them learn there is usually more than one way to do things.

- **Read or tell children stories.** Choose stories about how others overcome obstacles, get along with others or turn a difficult situation around. You could use puppets or stuffed animals to help bring the story alive.

Handout #8 Developing Thinking Skills Tips

Step 1: Stop and catch your thoughts

"This is embarrassing. Everyone thinks I am a terrible mother. And it's all her father's fault for always giving in to her. He spoils her rotten."

Step 2: Take three deep breaths

"Wait a minute, this isn't helpful. I need to take some deep breaths so I can be calm enough to calm her down."

**Step 3: "Re-think" the situation by asking yourself –
How else can I think about this?**

"It's really hot and crowded in here. And it's almost nap time. Crystal is probably just trying to tell me this is too much for her. After all, she's only two."

Handout # 9 My Action Plan

MY ACTION PLAN

What are the 3 most interesting facts learned about building resiliency in children?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What will I do starting tomorrow in supporting my children's resilience?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Who can you share this information with?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Acknowledgements

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Best Start Resource Centre Lead: Marie Brisson

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