

Face Adversities with Perseverance Overcome Hurdles with Resilience

Parents

Introduction

Every individual is endowed with talents. Everyone is unique, important and precious. Yet, we all face adversities at different points in life. When children experience immense stress, parents should help them enhance their resilience and minimize their suicidal risks.

Enhance Children's Resilience

Some factors that could enhance children's resilience are as follows:

- Positive attitude and life values.
- Effective life skills (e.g. problem-solving, conflict resolution and effective communication abilities).
- Good endurance; low impulsivity level and good emotional control.
- Sense of self-worth.
- Good self-control.
- Possessing religious, cultural and ethnic beliefs.
- Healthy and harmonious family environment and relationships.
- Support from significant others (e.g. parents and best friends).
- Healthy social life (e.g. proper use of leisure time).
- Community involvement (e.g. opportunities to participate and contribute to the community).

Common Reactions in Face of Adversities

The following are some common reactions your children may exhibit when facing adversities:

I Common emotional reactions

- sadness; anxiety; worries
- anger; shock
- self-blame; guilt
- fears of being alone; worries about separating from family



II Behavioural signs

- drop in academic performance and failure to concentrate
- frequent physical complaints (e.g. headaches, stomach-aches, fatigue, body aches)
- change in sleep or eating patterns (e.g. having nightmares, eating disturbances)
- a sense of hatred towards others; easily irritable, moody and picky
- pervasive sadness; get tearful easily; apathetic
- loss of interest in the surroundings, friends or hobbies
- not joining activities; withdrawal from interest clubs
- repeated self-injuries, even expressing suicidal ideation

Help Children Face Adversities

If children exhibit negative reactions to adversities, parents may adopt the following strategies:

Parents should:

1 Be a role model

- Parents should remain calm when communicating with their children so as to let them feel safe and secure.
- Parents can share their personal feelings with their children to help them understand that people have different emotions. People do not need to be over worried about their negative reactions because usually these would be settled after some time.

2 Listen

- Do spend time talking with children and listen patiently to understand their feelings. Try your best to keep a caring, accepting and open attitude and avoid being judgmental or preaching.
- Pay attention to their health and psychological needs.
- Do encourage children who are unable to articulate their feelings to use other means of expressing themselves, such as story-telling, drawing or doing handicraft, etc.

3 Help children handle anxious emotions

- If your children have recurrent negative images in their mind, encourage them to replace these by images they like or episodes which make them feel relaxed, such as recollection of an enjoyable trip, a favourite movie or a beautiful scene, etc.
- When your children feel stressful, help them relax by doing suitable physical exercises, engaging in appropriate and relaxing activities such as listening to music, playing with pets, etc.



- Provide positive life experiences for your children, help them set and accomplish attainable short term goals.

4 Provide a safe environment

- Accompany your children, especially younger ones who need more hugs and care, so as to let them feel accepted and loved. If needed, stay with them when they go to bed, let them have the lights on or open the bedroom door to increase their sense of security.
- Provide a safe home environment.
- Try to maintain daily schedule and arrangements of family activities so as to quickly resume normal routine.

Parents should not:

- Parents should not avoid the problems or refuse to communicate with children.
- Parents should not reproach children because of their strange behaviours which have disrupted daily routine.
- Parents should not excessively and repeatedly discuss with others about the adverse event, making children feel disturbed and uneasy.
- Parents should not argue in front of children, especially when topics are related to them.

Seek Help

Parents should closely observe children's behavioural or emotional changes. If they exhibit negative or pessimistic emotions vigorously or persistently, parents might also turn to agencies which offer counselling services for help.

Reference

- **Education Bureau**
Some Tips on Parenting Leaflet 2009 (Chinese version only)
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/teacher/student-guidance-discipline-services/gd-resources/index.html>
- **24-hour-hotlines:**

The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong	2389 2222
Suicide Prevention Services	2382 0000
Caritas Family Crisis Support Centre — Caritas Crisis Hotline	18288
Social Welfare Department	2343 2255
- **The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, The University of Hong Kong**
<http://csr.p.hku.hk>
- **Hospital Authority Kwai Chung Hospital — Mental Health Education Information**
<http://www.ha.org.hk/kch/eng/index/eng-index.html>
- **Early Assessment Service for Young People with Psychosis (E.A.S.Y.)**
<http://www3.ha.org.hk/easy/eng/index.html>