

Hang in There, Buddy!

Building Resilience in Children

Hot Topics 2015

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Objectives

- Describe three kinds of responses to stress – positive, tolerable, and toxic
- Describe what we can do to prevent damage from toxic stress response
- Understand how we can help build resilience in children
- Learn about the 7 “C”s of resilience
- Be able to apply strategies to support children building resilience

3 TYPES OF STRESS RESPONSES

- **POSITIVE**
 - Brief, infrequent, mild to moderate intensity
 - Most normative childhood stress
 - Buffered by nurturing adult(s) to return to baseline
 - Builds motivation and resiliency
- **TOLERABLE**
 - More severe and longer lasting adversities
 - Buffered by adult relationships that helps the child adapt
- **TOXIC**
 - Strong, frequent, prolonged adversities
 - Prolonged activation of the stress response can disrupt the architecture of the brain and other organs
 - Insufficient social-emotional buffering

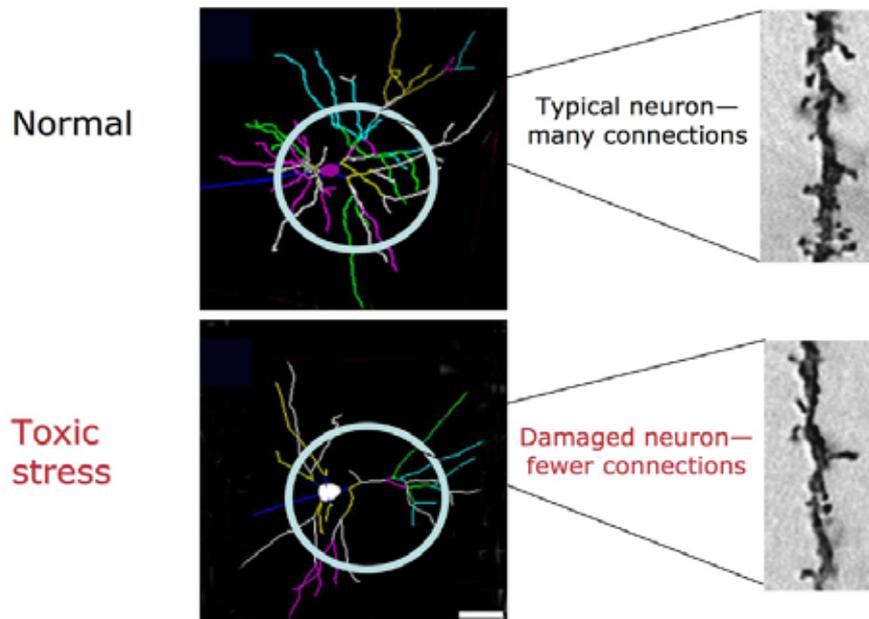
Toxic stress and brain

- The brain's capacity for change decreases with age.
- Cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course.
- Toxic stress damages developing brain architecture, which can lead to life-long problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health.

Brains subjected to toxic stress have underdeveloped neural connections in areas of the brain most important for successful learning and behavior in school and the workplace.



Persistent Stress Changes Brain Architecture



Prefrontal Cortex and Hippocampus

Sources: Radley et al. (2004)
Bock et al. (2005)

Toxic Stress

Chaotic or unstable circumstances

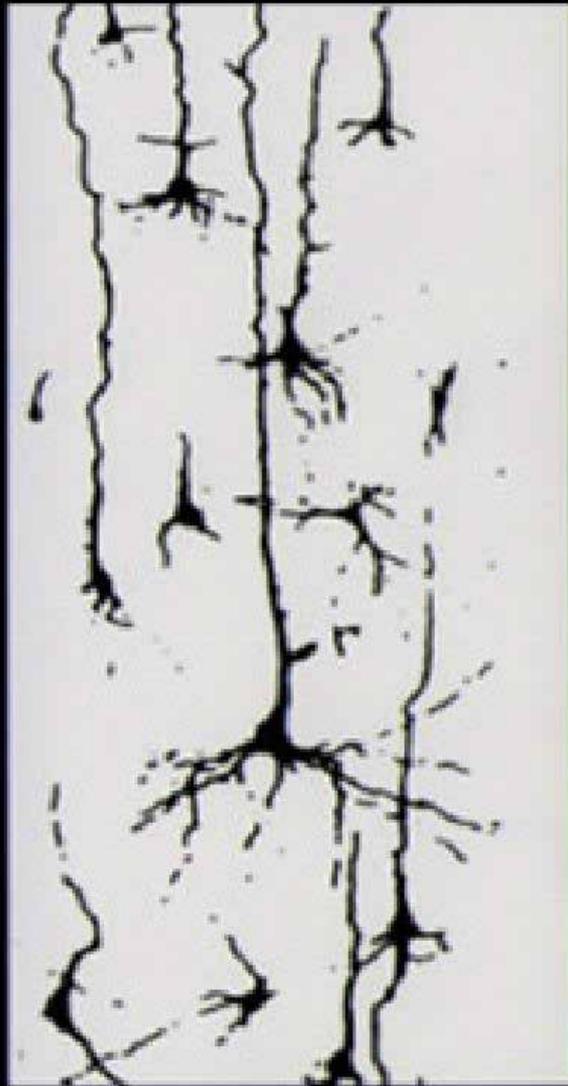
- placing children in many foster homes
- displacement due to economic reasons, natural disaster

Stable, loving relationships can buffer against harmful effects by restoring stress response systems to “steady state.”

When the stressors are severe and long-lasting and adult relationships are unresponsive or inconsistent, it's important for families, friends, and communities to intervene with support, services, and programs that address the source of the stress and the lack of stabilizing relationships in order to protect the child from their damaging effects.

Prefrontal Cortex

- Controls behavior with other parts of the brain
 - More used connections strengthen
 - Less used connections are pruned
- Improves through early adulthood
 - matures ~24 yrs
- Executive function
 - Manages lots of information
 - This is how we work together
 - Develop this area: “better productivity for a better world!”



BIRTH



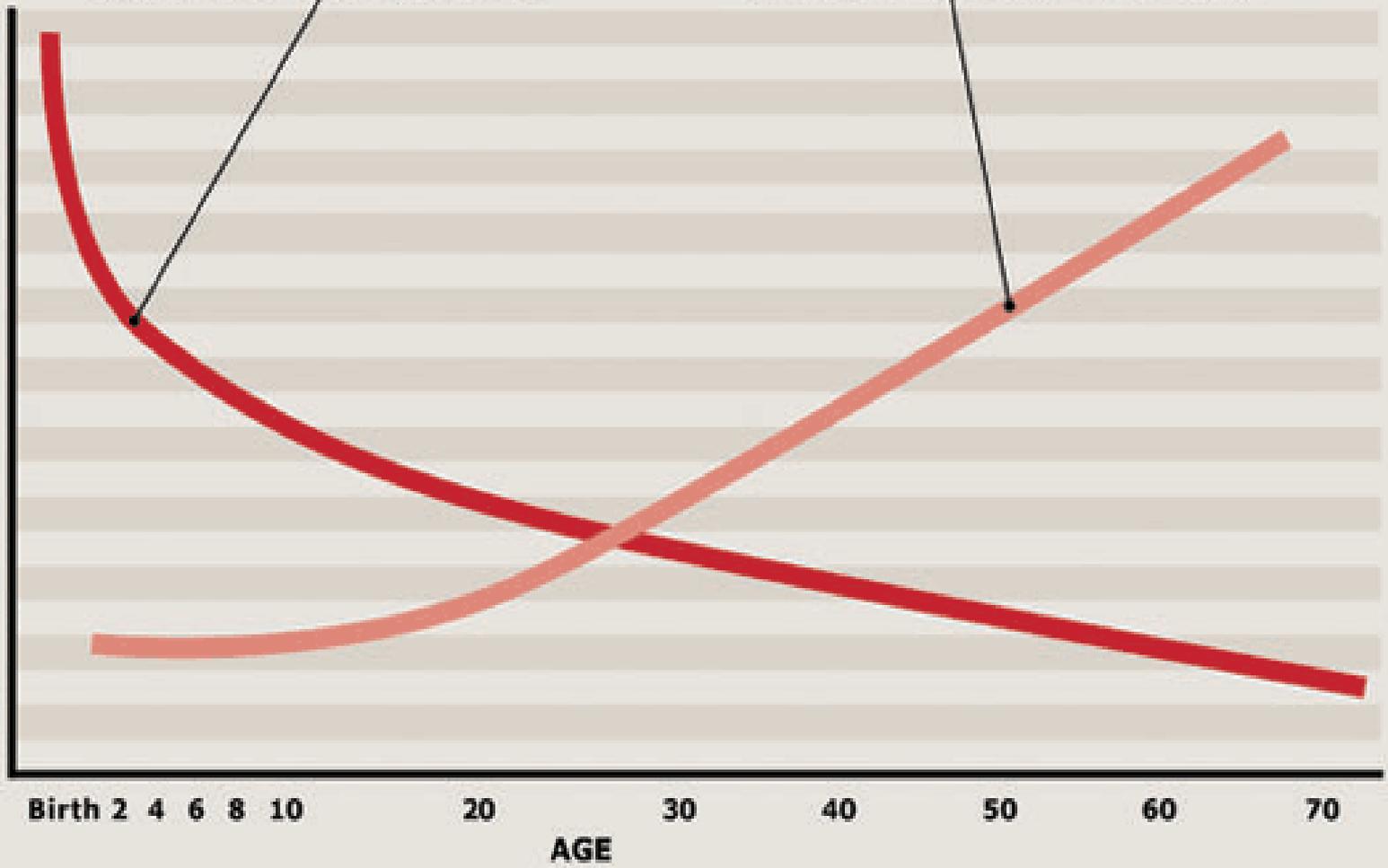
6 YEARS



14 YEARS

**Normal Brain Malleability
Influenced by Experiences**

**Physiological "Effort" Required
to Enhance Neural Connections**



Toxic Stress



- **Adverse Childhood Experiences**
 - Abuse (emotional, physical, sexual)
 - Neglect (emotional, physical)
 - Household dysfunction (mental health, substance abuse, domestic abuse, parental separation, incarcerated household member)
- **Insufficient social-emotional buffers**
 - Lacking: reassurance, support, consolation, helping to adapt
- **Potentially permanent changes with long-term consequences**
 - Epigenetic
 - DNA is the same but depends on which genes are turned on or off
 - Brain architecture
 - Brain development
 - Connectivity

When child is stressed out

- Slipping school performance Sleep problems Nightmares
Returning to less mature behaviors (thumb sucking, tantrums)
- Renewed separation anxiety
- New bedwetting
- Irritability, outbursts, or tantrums
- Hopelessness

When child is stressed out

- Change in eating habits
- Anger
- Isolation/withdrawal
- Loss of friends
- New circle of friends
- Radically new style of dress
- Physical symptoms—stomachaches, headaches fatigue chest pain
- Missing school because of frequent physical symptoms
- Drug, alcohol, or cigarette use

prevent damage from toxic stress response

- Tests measuring different forms of executive function skills indicate that they begin to develop shortly after birth, with ages 3 to 5 a window of opportunity for dramatic growth in these skills. Development continues throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

Baby Girl Sophia



Full term

Mom: 24 years old, poor prenatal care, smoker, urine drug screen positive for methamphetamine and marijuana in one of the prenatal visits but negative when she delivered, currently in rehab program, father of baby incarcerated

Baby Boy Ethan



Full term

Mother: 26 years old, 11 pregnancies and had 5 living children, 4 adopted to other families

foster care placement as a child and history of abuse by a foster father

history of depression, suicide attempt, homelessness,

history of marijuana, smoker

Noah's story

3 year male with speech delay, starting preschool. Both biological parents with substance abuse, but he was initially discharged with mother.

Noah started live with his Hanai family at 2yo, he only had a few words at that time. maternal grandmother and her partner (Tutu) for concerns if speech-language development.

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

- If children do not get what they need from their relationships with adults and the conditions in their environments, their skill development can be seriously delayed or impaired.
- Science shows that there are opportunities throughout development to provide children, adolescents, and the adults who care for them with the relationships, environments, and skill-building activities that will enhance their executive function capacities.

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

Relationships

Children develop in an environment of relationships.

home, caregivers, teachers, medical and human services professionals, foster parents, peers.

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

- **Support** their efforts
- **Model** the skills
- **Engage** in activities in which they practice the skills
- **Provide** a consistent, reliable presence that young children can trust
- **Guide** them from complete dependence on adults to gradual independence
- **Protect** them from chaos, violence, chronic adversity

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

Activities

- **Reduce stress** in children's lives, both by addressing its source, helping them learn how to cope with it
- Foster social connection and open-ended **creative play**

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

- Incorporate vigorous **physical exercise** into daily activities, which has been shown to positively affect stress levels, social skills, and brain development
- Increase the **complexity of skills**— being challenged but not frustrated
- Include **repeated practice** of skills over time by setting up opportunities for children to learn in the presence of supportive mentors and peers

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

Places

the environments where children spend most of their time must:

- Feel and be **safe**
- Provide **space** for creativity, exploration, and exercise
- Be **stable** in order to reduce the anxiety

Prevent damage from toxic stress response

- Teachers are often the first to recognize serious problems with a child's ability to control impulses, focus attention, stay organized, and follow instructions.
- The consequences of mislabeling these problems as “bad behavior” can lead to a highly disrupted classroom, expulsions, or the inappropriate use of psychotropic medications.



Outcome

Impairment in mental health

a result of the interaction

- a child's genetic predispositions
- his/her exposure to significant adversity in the environment.

Toxic stress—can increase the likelihood of significant mental health problems that may emerge either quickly or years later.

Outcome

- Some individuals demonstrate remarkable capacities to overcome the severe challenges, yet there are limits to the ability of young children to recover psychologically from such adversity.
- Even when children have been removed from traumatizing circumstances and placed in exceptionally nurturing homes, developmental improvements are often accompanied by continuing problems in self-regulation, emotional adaptability, relating to others, and self-understanding.

Goals for children

- School achievement
- Positive behaviors
- Good health
- Successful work



Nurture Resilience



- Stress Happens
- Stress is an important tool in our survival
- Resilient people are more successful, because they push their limits and learn from their mistakes
- How we respond to stress
 - Positive
 - Tolerable
 - Toxic

Parents' dream

To raise children

who live happy lives free of physical pain, worries, and emotional hurt

who never break a bone, lose a ball game, or receive a grade lower than an A.

who never smoke a cigarette, use a drug, or wreck a car, never have sex until they're married, etc.

Ideal world

Children wouldn't have to be concerned about:

Peer pressure,

Trying out for a spot on an elite team or the lead role in a play,

Bullying,

Parents fighting or divorcing,

Lurking strangers,

Disease or death,

Poverty,

Crime,

Terrorism,

and War, etc.

But, don't we want our children

to experience the world as fully as possible?
with all its pain, and with all its joy



Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances, the trait that allows us to exist in this less-than-perfect world while moving forward with optimism and confidence even in the midst of adversity. (Ginsburg, Kenneth R. (2011-04-01). Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings (p. 2). American Academy of Pediatrics)

Resilient people see challenges as opportunities.

Resilience is not invulnerability, not perfection (it's being able to bounce back or recover from adversity)

Stress Allostasis:

- Some kids choose healthy, positive strategies –play, exercise, or talking, but others withdraw, sulk, or zone out.
- Others act aggressively —talk back, and toss tantrums. Peers' coping mechanisms —smoking, drugs, fighting, sexual activity, eating disorders, self-mutilation, and delinquency.
- These negative behaviors often attempts to relieve the discomfort.

How adults affect children's resilience

- 1) unconditional love –creates security (they need to know there is an adult in their life that believes in them and loves them unconditionally)
- 2) children meet adult expectations, for better or worse
- 3) children watch what we do more than they listen to what we say

7 “C”s of Resilience:

Competence

Confidence

Connection

Character

Contribution

Coping

Control



7Cs: Competence

Ability to handle situations effectively

Acquired through actual experience

We can help the development of competence by:

- Helping children focus on individual strengths

- Empowering children to make decisions

- Being careful that in trying to protect your child doesn't make he/she feel that he/she can't handle things

7Cs: Confidence

Solid belief in one's own abilities

Rooted in competence

Build confidence by:

- Recognizing when he/she has done well

- Praising honestly about specific achievements

- Not pushing the child to take on more than he/she can realistically handle

- Focusing on the best in each child so that he/she can see that as well

- Clearly expressing the best qualities (fairness, persistence, kindness)

7Cs: Connection

Children with close ties to family, friends, school, and community are more likely to have a solid sense of security that produces strong values and prevents them from seeking destructive alternatives.

You can help him/her connect with others by:

- Building a sense of physical safety and emotional security

- Allowing the expression of all emotions, so he/she will feel comfortable asking for help during difficult times

- Addressing conflict openly to resolve problems

- Fostering healthy relationships that will reinforce positive messages

7Cs: Character

Children with character enjoy a strong sense of self-worth and confidence.

Children need to develop a solid set of values and morals to determine right from wrong, and to demonstrate a caring attitude toward others.

Children learn character by the values you teach, your words of praise, or the way you correct

Strengthen children's character by:

- Demonstrating how behaviors affect others

- Helping your child recognize he/she as a caring person

- Avoiding racist or hateful comments or stereotypes

- Demonstrating the importance of community

7Cs: Contribution

It is a powerful lesson when children realize that the world is a better place because they are in it

The importance of their contribution can serve as a source of purpose and motivation

Teach him/her how to contribute by:

- Stressing the importance of serving others by modeling generosity

- Creating opportunities for each child to contribute in some specific way

- Communicating to children that many people in the world do not have what they need

7Cs: Coping

How the child learns how to deal with stress, coping effectively will help your child to be better prepared to overcome life's challenges

Positive coping lessons include:

- Modeling positive coping strategies on a consistent basis

- Guiding your child to develop positive and effective coping strategies

- Understanding that many risky behaviors are attempts to alleviate the stress and pain in his/her daily life

- Not condemning your child for negative behaviors

7Cs: Control

Control the outcomes of their decisions and actions

à more likely to know that they have the ability to do what it takes to bounce back

She knows that she can make a difference by her choices and actions

Try to empower your child by:

Helping your child to understand that life's events are not random, most things happen are the result of another person's choices or actions

Learning that discipline is about teaching, not punishing or controlling, use discipline to help your child to understand that his actions produce certain consequences

Overview

- Children need unconditional love, absolute security, and a deep connection to at least one adult
- Children need some independence to accomplish task (not having parents hover over them)
- Listening to children attentively is more important than any words parents can say
- What children see their parents doing on a daily basis is more important than words
- Children can only take positive steps when they have the confidence to do so (believe they are competent)
- If children are to develop the strength to overcome challenges, they need to know they can control what happens to them
- Children with a wide range of coping skills will be prepared to overcome almost anything (less likely to try risky behaviors)

Overview

- Value of play (in a young child this may be the way they communicate)
- Success: Happiness Resilience Generosity Compassion
Desire to contribute The capacity to build and maintain meaningful relationships. Creativity, innovation
- Resilience building should be an ongoing, preventive practice of parenting—a routine that builds a child's strength and stores it for unusually critical times. divorce, death, terrorism, and natural disasters

Resources

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard Univ.

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu>

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.aap.org

Caring For Our Children, 3rd edition

<http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/>

Healthy Child Care Hawaii

<http://hawaii.gov/health/family-child-health/cshcn/hcchpage.html>

Healthy Child Care America (HCCA)

www.healthychildcare.org/eecc.html

A Parent's Guide to Building Resilience In Children and

Teens, Giving your Child Roots and Wings by: Kenneth

R. Ginsburg, MD, MS Ed, FAAP

Healthy Child Care America (HCCA)

Shared vision between Maternal and
Child Health Bureau (MCHB), Child Care Bureau
(CCB), AAP

www.healthychildcare.org/eecc.html

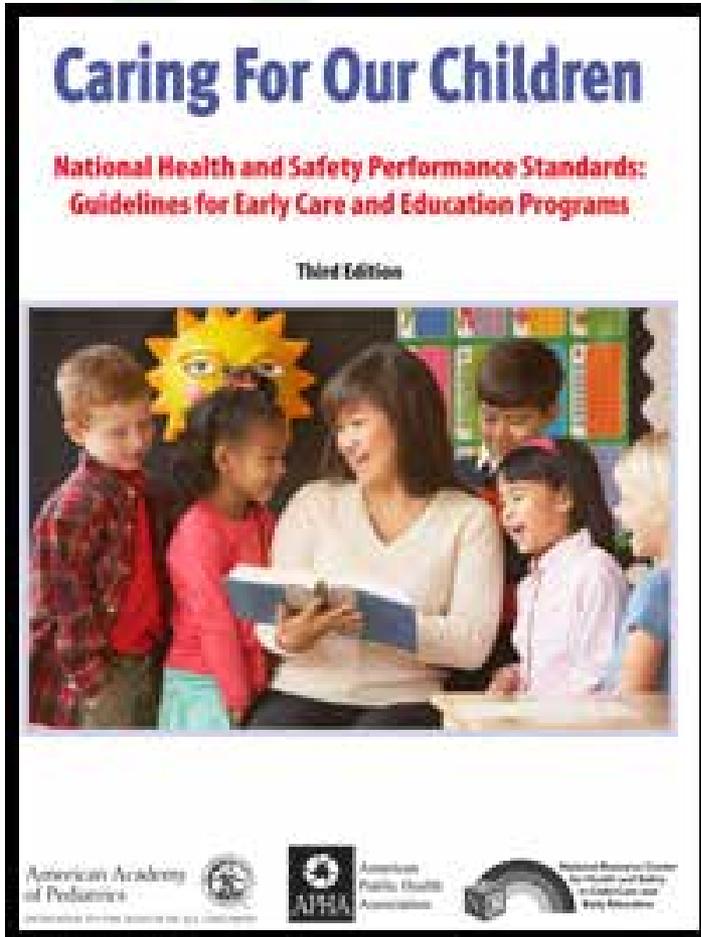
Healthy Child Care Hawaii (HCCH)

<http://hawaii.gov/health/family-child-health/cshcn/hcchpage.html>

- The Hawaii Department of Health/Family Health Services Division
- The Hawaii State Department of Human Services
- University of Hawaii Department of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter



Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards



- 686 standards
- <http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/>

Questions?





HANG IN THERE, BUDDY!

Building Resilience in Children

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2015 Hot Topics

OBJECTIVES

- ž Discuss how stress can affect lifelong impairments in physical and mental health
- ž Explain 7 Crucial Cs of resilience—
competence, confidence, connection,
character, contribution, coping, and control.
- ž **Apply strategies to support children building resilience.**

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE

What can we as teachers do to support children
and their families?



- ž Building caring relationships
- ž Be positive role models
- ž Calling on community resources

Source: Hall, DK, Pearson, J. (2012) Building Resilience in Young Child. Best Start: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE

1. Building caring relationships



- ; Give attention and affection – lots of smiles and hugs
- ; Listen with interest
- ; Show empathy
- ; Read or tell children stories about how we take care of each other

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE

2. Be positive role models

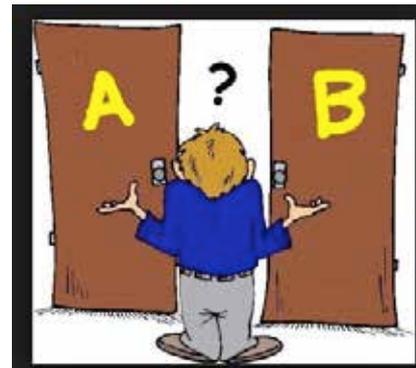
- Take care of your health
- Take three deep breaths when you're stressed
- Show understanding, compassion and kindness.
- Be in charge of your emotions
- Use humor
- Let go of being perfect
- Take responsibility for your own feelings and actions



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE.

3. Calling on community resources—

- ‡ When you are concerned about a child's development, call child care health consultant.
- ‡ When you're in the classroom, let children know it is OK to ask for help.
- ‡ Create a 'Help Signal' with children



LOOK FORN SHOUT OUT!!



Can you give us examples of helping children
COPE with frustration?

- ž **Example:** Encourage children to keep on trying even when it is hard or frustrating.
- ž "It's ok to make a mistake".
- ž "Try once more, then ask for help."
- ž ... it gets easier with practice."

LOOK FOR SHOUT OUT!!



Can you give us examples of children who **CONTRIBUTE** to the class?

- ž **Example: ASK 3 friends for help strategy... Encourage children to help each other by asking one another for help before seeking an adult's assistance**

Source: Pawlina, S & Stanford C. (2011) Preschoolers grow their brains, Shifting mind sets for greater resiliency and better problem solving. Young Children

LOOK UP! SMALL GROUPS



Can you give examples of keiki making
CONNECTION?

Examples:

- ǔ **Show affection for familiar adults**
- ǔ **Ask adults to play with or read to him**
- ǔ **Trust familiar adults and believe what they say**
- ǔ **Appear happy when playing with others**
- ǔ **Show a preference for a certain adult, teacher or parent**

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE.

ž When teachers and parents

LISTEN & UNDERSTAND

VIEW MISTAKES as OK

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY &
BE INVOLVED

ž Children learn to

Feel understood
& accepted then
Understand others

See mistakes as
part of learning then
Try new things

Be responsible
& involved then
Feel they belong

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN BUILDING RESILIENCE

When you get to the end of your rope,
tie a knot and hang on!

- Franklin Roosevelt





MAHALO!!

HEALTHY CHILD CARE HAWAII

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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