

## Ways to Support Resilience in Youth

- 1) Be a healthy grounded adult that makes yourself available for the youth in your life.
- 2) Understand that the neurological connections between the animal brain and the neo-cortex are still “under construction” in the young brain until age 25.
- 3) Understand that teens have an especially active amygdala (highly involved with the processing of emotions, especially anger and fear), this makes them more vulnerable to reacting from their animal brain
- 4) Understand that traumatic events cause neurological damage in the brain. Trauma in general makes it very difficult not to be reacting from the animal brain and highly reactive to stress. Or it can make it so that a person’s norm is chaos and therefore calm is uncomfortable.
- 5) The brain goes through two ‘Spring’ seasons while developing, roughly between the ages of 3-5 and again from 13-15. During this time the brain needs bees to pollinate the flowers of their brain in order to produce fruit. As the old adage says “if you don’t use it, you lose it” and so it goes for the brain. They need opportunities to try new things, develop lifelong skills and practice things that build confidence and practical skills.
- 6) The building blocks of self-esteem are: having control in life, being good at something, belonging to a group, having a positive outlook on life and an ability to bounce back from challenges.
- 7) Listen empathetically, not sympathetically. Teens too often feel judged by adults and sympathy makes people feel judged.
- 8) Help them through his/her own thinking process, rather than telling what to do. Teach them that their intuition is their best friend.
- 9) Shame, guilt, name-calling, criticizing, nagging, and yelling create resentment in anyone and especially teens, who are already primarily reacting from their amygdala.
- 10) Give them time & space to process their own feelings and thoughts and draw own conclusions
- 11) Ask questions with curiosity, rather than make assumptions about a situation
- 12) Focus on what they did right in the situation and help them think about other options on ways to improve. Help them develop the attitude that every mistake or challenging moment is an opportunity for growth.
- 13) Teens are pushing the limits trying to understand why you have or we have as a culture come up with some of those rules. Some of those rules need to be questioned, as they are outdated. Some of those rules are important and need to be explained with compassion.
- 14) Youth need consistency.
- 15) Youth need boundaries. Not enough boundaries leave youth feeling lost in an endless space. Too many boundaries prevents youth from developing their own moral compass. These youth often become overly reliant on exterior punishments to guide their decisions, instead of developing intrinsic motivation and personalized values.
- 16) Youth need to be celebrated, even if they get embarrassed, they really do want it.
- 17) Help youth develop as attitude of gratitude