



## BUILDING RESILIENCE IN YOUR CHILD:

Resilience is the word we use to describe our ability as human beings to adapt in challenging circumstances, like the one we are facing now with COVID-19. Children are very resilient because they are learning new skills all the time as they grow; from learning to tie their shoe laces, to working out how relationships work. Although children are resilient, they cannot overcome stress or difficulty by relying on their resilience alone. All children need the care of their caregivers and wider social networks to support them, and to look after and keep up their resilience. By helping our children build resilience, we are helping them to better manage stress and feelings of anxiety and confusion. This doesn't mean that they won't experience hard feelings, it just means that they will be able to handle them better, using their internal abilities as well as your support.

Here are 7 tips to help build resilience in your children:

- **Keep connections** – help your child to keep up their friendships as much as possible during this time. Social connections build resilience.
- **Keep talking** – make time during the day, during a meal maybe, to talk with your child about things that are important or that interest them. Don't just talk about COVID-19. Encourage them to ask questions so that your child feels comfortable to ask you questions about COVID-19 or anything else that is making them worried or that they are just thinking about. Open, honest and caring communication builds resilience as it lays the foundation for your child to talk about their feelings, and to ask for help when they need it.
- **Encourage helpfulness** – encourage your child to help with chores in the home or with activities in the community, such as making up food parcels, or making cards for people in an old-age home. Helpfulness is an important part of building understanding and responsibility.
- **Help your child to build a positive view** of themselves – remind your child of how they have been able to overcome disappointments or difficulties in the past so that they begin to believe in their abilities to solve problems and overcome any difficult things they face during this time. Also, help your child see the funny side of things where appropriate. The ability to laugh at yourself is an important part of building a resilient character.
- **Maintain a regular routine** – structure helps children feel safe and contained, but don't schedule every second of every day. Free time to play and explore is important in developing creativity and learning. It also prepares your child for change, which is a normal part of life.
- **Help your child to accept that change is part of life** – help them to understand that change can be scary but it can also be an exciting part of life, an opportunity to learn and grow. Make sure your child knows that you are there to support them through change. Talk about any new things that you and your child have learnt since lockdown started; whether it is a new skill, or a new way of thinking about things.
- **Encourage them to do things they enjoy** – where possible, help your child continue to pursue a hobby they really enjoy. While it might not be possible to do large group activities or attend functions, there are still ways to enjoy hobbies during COVID-19. It might be fun to try to figure out how to make sure their hobbies are COVID-proof! It might also be a chance for you to find a new hobby that you can do together.

