

BUILDING YOUTH RESILIENCE

FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Parenting is hard.

It takes a resilient person to accept a little extra support during times of high stress.⁷

What is Resilience?

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, or significant sources of stress.²



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THE FOUNDATION – TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF FIRST!

Building a self-care routine will help you to better support your youth.

- Connect with neighbors or those close to you.
- Watch movies with others using [Teleparty](#), or [Rave](#).
- Write letters or making a list of people to contact by text or phone at the start of the week.
- **Create family presentations** and present it to extended family members via Zoom with pictures and video clips from past holidays and vacations.
- **Spend time with friends**, in outdoor settings (walk around the neighborhood or a park)².
- **Build a self-care routine by paying attention to your needs.**
- **Take breaks from social media/news.**³
- **Reset and relax.** Take deep breaths and practice mindfulness through meditation or guided imagery using these free Apps: [Virtual Hope Box](#), [Healthy Minds Program](#), [Smiling Mind](#), [UCLA Mindful App](#), and [Stop Breathe Think: Meditation.](#)³
 - Choose an exercise that works for you, even if it's only for a few minutes- e.g., walking, stretching, or dancing.²
- **Eat balanced meals!** Getting enough homemade meals that contain a balance of fruits and vegetables can help keep your body AND mind healthy!⁴ If your meals consist mostly of processed/takeout food, start by slowly adding more nutrient rich foods like fruits and vegetables prepared at home to replace these items when you eat.
- **SLEEP!** Getting enough sleep keeps your body and mind healthy too, so take a 20-minute nap if you feel tired!³

By taking care of yourself first you can better support your youth.



THE FRAME – SUPPORT YOUTH SELF-COMPASSION!

Build support for yourself and others.

- **Remember:** our experiences reflect our current emotional experience and how we respond to it!⁶
- **The more you know.** Immigrant parents/guardians should know that their children are twice as likely as they are to exhibit symptoms of depression caused by stress and anxiety.¹²
- **Stress is normal.** It is part of everyday life and it affects us all in different ways and varying degrees, so remind them that they are NOT alone in feeling stressed.¹⁶
- **Foster youth resilience!** Help your youth share and express hard feelings appropriately. By helping them find ways to share, talk, & process it can really help their well-being.³
- **Make eye contact.** Look at your youth. It says “*I see you. I value you. You matter. You’re not alone.*”³
- **Give 20-second hugs.** Safe touch is healing. Longer hugs are most helpful.³
Say “I love you” every day.”
- **Build youth self-compassion .**
- **Identify sources of stress.** Help them look closely at their habits and attitude and remember to help them nurture a *positive* view of themselves.⁸
- **Hunt for the good:** When there’s pain or trauma, we look for danger. Practice looking for joy and good stuff, too.³
- **Listen to their needs.** If your youth is willing to share something – accept it for the precious and rare moment it is. *Rule of thumb:* listen twice as much as you speak and avoid lecturing, nagging, or guilt trips.¹¹
- **Connect with your youth.** Throughout the day talk and find things to share with them, by making them feel comfortable they may open up more often.
- **Be a source of safety and support.** It is hard to see our kids in pain. We can feel helpless. Simply being present with our kids is doing something. It shows them we are in their corner.³
- **Encourage youth.** Guide them in solving the problems they have control over to help them gain confidence.^{7,9}
- **Look out for signs and symptoms that your youth may be stressed or anxious:** loss of interest in hobbies or socializing with friends/family, changes in appetite and sleep due to physical symptoms (headaches, stomach aches), angry outbursts or self-criticism, and a drop in academic performance or motivation.¹³
 - *Note: If these changes happen more rapidly, more consistently, or are occurring all at once and include substance use reach out for help as this may be a signal that something more is going on.* ¹⁴



THE FRAME - SUPPORT YOUTH SELF-COMPASSION

- **Build youth emotional awareness.**
- **Youth learn by watching us.** so being self-aware of your body language and facial expressions can help you convey the behaviors you want your youth to model.
- **We all lose our patience and make mistakes.** Acknowledge it, apologize, and repair relationships. It is up to us to show our youth we're responsible for our moods and mistakes.³
- Listen respectfully to your youth and avoid lecturing, nagging, and guilt trips.¹¹
- **Actively listen and limit judgment to help validate their feelings.** Dismissing their feelings can make them defensive.¹⁰
- **Communication is key.** When you speak to your youth, keep your comments brief and focus on what they got right before offering constructive criticism.¹¹
- **Healthy conflict.** When conflict isn't seen as threatening or punishing, it fosters freedom, trust, and safety in relationships.⁶
- **Respect your youth's privacy.** If they see that you understand their need for privacy, they may be more willing to share some of their inner world with you.¹¹
- **Give them increasing autonomy.** If your youth believes that you trust their judgement and understand their need for growing independence, they are more likely to talk with you when real issues arise.¹¹



THE INTERIOR – TIME MANAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION!

Build a routine for your youth to provide them with predictability and comfort.

- **Youth get more independent every day**, but they still want and need your guidance and love.¹¹
- **Guide your youth.** Help them create a daily schedule or to-do list and support them by keeping them accountable.
- **Set a bedtime.** Have a set time for your youth to go to sleep and wake up at roughly the same time on weeknights and weekends.¹¹
- **Schedule time to talk about unappealing topics.** Don't approach your youth randomly about not doing their homework.¹¹
- **It's in their biology.** Since it is hard for youth to fall asleep, help them figure out how to fall asleep more easily (*turn off all electronics at least 1 hour before sleep as blue light from electronics can make it hard to fall asleep*).¹¹
- **It's ok to be flexible.** If your youth needs a break from the schedule its ok to take a break from it and have fun with each other.
- **Build momentum for youth to tackle responsibilities.**
- **Provide positive praise for good work!** Celebrate special efforts and small or big accomplishments as it helps them gain confidence in reaching their goals.¹⁰
- **Motivation comes in degrees.** Involve your youth in problem-solving discussions and teach without punishing.¹⁰



THE EXTERIOR – BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE!

Build a routine for your youth to provide them with predictability and comfort.

- **Teach without punishment.** State your feelings and expectations: “I’m upset you’re not turning in your homework, I expect schoolwork to come before activities”.¹⁰
- **Show your youth how to make amends:** “*all of your assignments need to be made up.*”¹⁰
 - *If your youth doesn’t make amends, offer a choice: “1) give up soccer until you’re caught up or 2) find a way to fit in homework and soccer. I believe you can do it.”*¹⁰
 - *Take action if the behavior continues: “you need to take a break from soccer until you’re caught up with homework and can stick to a schedule.”*¹⁰
- **Build youth financial freedom.**
- **Support youth to attain financial freedom.** Help them set short term goals, like setting up a bank account and understanding how a savings account works. Once they’ve nailed this, have them set long-term goals like buying a car, or a deposit on an apartment! [Use these tips to help you guide your youth.](#)
- **Build youth life skills to prepare them for their future.**
- **Help youth explore and learn career readiness skill.** This includes: [interview](#), [communication](#) and [critical thinking skills](#), which are all helpful for any future goals.
- **Mentorship is important.** Encourage them to gain relationships with mentors (teachers, pastor, etc.) as it is important for networking and securing a letter of recommendation for all future goals.
- **Help youth become savvy adults.** Guide them on how to navigate the world. Ask them what career interests they have and help them navigate how to accomplish that goal.
 - **If their goal is COLLEGE:** [Help them search for college scholarship opportunities.](#)
 - **If their goal is a CAREER:** [Help them find legitimate vocational training programs.](#)



RESOURCES – FIND OUT MORE IN THE BELOW!

Please visit our [Strong Families Yolo Website](#) for up-to-date resources!

Click the links below to visit additional website and resources.

1. <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
2. <https://behavioralhealth.illu.edu/blog/supporting-your-teens-socialization-time-social-distancing>
3. <https://www.pacesconnection.com/g/mendocino/fileSendAction/fcType/0/fcOid/519101024495539967/filePointer/519101024495540013/fodoid/516426228450201763/Coping%20With%20Stress%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic%20One-Page-ADA%20Compliant-English.pdf>
4. <https://www.todaydietitian.com/newarchives/ND21p36.shtml>
5. <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/selfhelp/selfhelp/stressmanagement.html>
6. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/emotional-intelligence-eq.htm>
7. <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/selfhelp/selfhelp/mentalwellness.html>
8. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm>
9. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/building-better-mental-health.htm>
10. <https://www.yolokids.org/handling-your-childs-challenging-behaviors-every-age>
11. <https://www.yolokids.org/talkplayconnect-toolkit-families>
12. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/children-immigrants-and-their-mental-health-needs>
13. <https://mhanational.org/know-signs-recognizing-mental-health-concerns-kids-and-teens>
14. <https://nyulangone.org/news/checking-your-teenagers-mood-during-covid-19-pandemic>
15. <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/tips-for-managing-stress/>
16. <https://www.yolocounty.org/government/general-government-departments/health-human-services/mental-health/mental-health-services>
17. <https://www.teencounselingsd.com/blog/tips-for-building-resilience-in-teens-during-tough-times>