

**BUILDING RESILIENCY IN CHILDREN;  
A Guide to Helping Children Cope with Trauma in Today's World**  
Linda Mei Lin Koh, GC Children's Ministries  
(Handouts)

**What is Resilience?**

"The resources one uses to cope with difficult times and the ability to bounce back from these hard situations."

"Triumphing over pain, overcoming challenges, accomplishing through adversity, and developing strength through suffering."

Linda Goldman: *Raising Our Children to Be Resilient*

**Adults as Models**

- Providing interactions and modeling skills of meeting challenges.
- Teaching coping skills, stress management, and decision making.
- Providing ways for young people to share with others and enhance friendships.

**Keys to Resilient Children**

**1. CHOICE**

- Choosing to thrive in difficult, intolerable situations creates freedom and power.
- Choosing to hold on to images of love and joy gives hope.

*"The last of human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances."* Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

**2. OPTIMISM**

- Have hope for the future
- Willingness to let others hold that hope for them
- Understand they can create a happy attitude by looking for the good and creating positive outcomes—saying a kind word or noticing a kind deed

**3. COURAGE**

- They act even when they are afraid or unhappy.

- They often overcome their fears to work for a helpful cause.

#### **4. REALISTIC GOALS**

- Facing goals realistically
- Choosing options that coincide with self-knowing of strengths and weaknesses.

#### **5. HUMOR**

- See humor in themselves and sometimes in difficult situations surrounding them.
- Their ability to laugh during challenging times can help lighten them.

#### **6. SELF-CONFIDENCE**

- Willing to experiment with new ideas
- Allow new experiences into their life that breed self-confidence

#### **7. APPRECIATION OF SELF**

- Draw from good self-concept to create change in their lives.
- Learn from their mistakes to develop new coping strategies.

#### **8. ACCEPTANCE AND COMFORT**

- Recognize their strengths and talents as well as their vulnerabilities.
- Feel comfortable with themselves and peers.
- Feel comfortable to ask adults for help.

#### **9. PROCESSING LIFE THROUGH PRODUCTIVE ACTION**

- Resilient children learn from processing past experiences and building on them.
- They take productive action to realize their goals .
- They are self-assured in creating ways to work through adversity.

#### **10. CREATIVITY**

- Is a self-esteem booster for children.
- Encourages children to explore parts of themselves in appealing ways.
- Is a healing outlet for troubling areas and a means of self-expression that is as unique as each individual.

### **Pair and Share**

Form into groups of 5

- Select one individual from the Bible or from history.
- Identify the difficult situation the person has gone through.
- Identify the strengths and ways that kept this person going during very hard times.

### **Activities to Promote Resiliency in Children**

## **1. Define Resiliency**

- \* Talk to children about strength, leadership, courage and stamina.
- \* Define resilience as the ability to keep going during very hard times.
- \* Then ask them to make their own definition and explain why.

## **2. Create a Dialogue**

- \* Young children can read “The Little Engine That Could” or “Courage” and have them draw what that story means to them.
- \* Use Martin Luther King’s quote: “Courage is the power of the mind to overcome fear.”
- \* Have students respond as to what this quote means to them.

## **3. Share a Role Model**

- \* Help children choose a family member or famous celebrity that represents a special quality of resilience to them.
- \* They can draw a picture and explain what that quality is.
- \* Ask them to identify that quality in themselves by asking, “Tell me about a time when you displayed that quality in your life.”

## **4. Survive/Thrive Chart**

- \* Ask children to think of a time that was hard for them in their life.
- \* Make a chart with *Survive* as one title and *Thrive* as the other.
- \* Have children list what things they did to survive or make it through.
- \* List what things they did to grow and learn that brought new meaning to their life.

## **5. Resilience Inventory**

- \* Present a resiliency inventory for preschool and elementary children.
- \* Have them identify a difficult time in their life where they used strength and courage to make it through.
- \* Explain that is resiliency.
- \* Help them identify these attributes and relate them to present and future uses.

### ***Inventory questions:***

- a. Tell me about a time in your life you felt you were courageous.
- b. How did people respond? What did they say?
- c. How did that make you feel?
- d. How does it feel now?
- e. Is there anything you wish others had done?
- f. Can you use what you learned from this experience now?

## **6. Community Resources and Guest Speakers**

- \* Invite guest speakers to share ways that they used the qualities associated with resilience to overcome challenges in their lives.
- \* Help children identify those qualities.
- \* Examples can range from the school principal to a TV anchor, or home team sports celebrity.

## 7. “My Hero” Contest

- \* Teachers can have a “my hero” contest in the school.
- \* Children become the person they emulate, dressing like them, using their mannerisms to present a dialogue representative of their hero to other students.
- \* The class votes on the winner.

## 8. “Resiliency Awards”

- \* Children can list all the attributes they understand as resilient.
- \* The students choose a classmate they feel exemplifies this quality.
- \* That classmate is given the award for that attribute.
- \* Every child receives an award for some positive attribute, even if it is for the attribute of “patience” for the last child.

## 9. Trust in God for Strength

Romans 8:28, 31

*“If God can be for us, who can be against us?”*  
*“All things work together for good to them that love God.”*

Philippines 4:13

*“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

## The Daily Gift: Poem

**You know what?  
 Tomorrow is a new day.  
 Today is a new day.  
 Actually,  
 Every day is a new day.  
 Thank you, God,  
 For all of these  
 Special and new days**

**(From Heartsongs by Mattie J. T. Stepanek)**