The Behavioral Health Administration, Child and Adolescent Resilience, Wellness and Prevention Committee has defined resilience as: “an innate capacity to rebound from adversity and change through a process of positive adaptation.” For youth, resilience is a fluid, dynamic process that is influenced over time by life events, temperament, and the capacity of caregivers and the social environment to nurture and provide them with a sense of safety, competency, and secure attachments. Resilience can be learned and practiced through using skills that lead to a sense of competency, optimism, and gratitude, and being balanced in one’s attitude toward life.

Parents, caregivers, extended family members and other adults in children’s lives have the opportunity to model ways for children to feel safe, connected, valued, capable and respected. Below are some suggestions that parents and caregivers can use to help children be more resilient, while also understanding the importance of taking care of themselves in ways that promote positive family interactions, relationships and personal growth.

**What are ways that parents and caregivers can support resilience in children?**

- Model ways to have everyday resilience and to manage stress and change
- Have high, but realistic expectations based on the child’s age and developmental stage
- Encourage exploration, self-reliance and healthy risk taking
- Provide comfort in times of distress
- Establish limits, rules and structure that are fair and consistent
- Promote a love of learning and curiosity
- Show by example how to admit mistakes
- Promote a sense of humor, playfulness and delight in their imagination
- Instill a sense of pride in your family as well as your cultural traditions and rituals
- Encourage, within limits, a child’s need for autonomy and expression of free will
- Try to have consistent meals and bedtimes
- Encourage good nutrition, exercise, diet and physical fitness
- Teach gratitude and a recognition of blessings in life
- Be optimistic and promote a sense of hope in your child for their future
- Provide opportunities for friendships

**What can parents or caregivers do for self-care?**

It is important to take care of you too!

- Find ways to take care of yourself based on what you enjoy doing
- Have a creative outlet/hobby for self-enrichment
- Develop and stay in touch with friends and a support system
- Be okay with asking for help and provide it to others when you can
- Find quiet moments every day that you can use for relaxation and reflection
- Be a lifelong learner
- Have realistic expectations of yourself and others
- Seek out resources needed to support family growth and development

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org
The Children’s Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with over 250 partners and schools across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children’s mental health. For more information, please visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.

Resource/Links

American Academy of Pediatrics - Building Resilience in Childrens
www.healthychildrens.org

Center for Child and Family Well-Being
www.depts.washington.edu

Changing Brains
www.changingbrains.uoregon.edu

National Resilience Resource Center
www.nationalresource.com

Strengthening Families: Center for Study of Social Policy
www.cssp.org

Resilience Research Center
www.resilienceresourcecenter.org

National Network for Family Resiliency
NNFR@mes.umn.edu

Neuroscience for Kids
www.facultywashington.edu

Science of Resilience: Harvard Graduate School of Education
www.gse.harvard.edu/new/uk/15/03/science-resilience