



This week I would like to continue with the theme of building resilience in our children.

Resilience can be described as the following:

A holistic sense of wellbeing – Emotional and Spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It is a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own and others' dignity and worth.

Resilience is the capacity to deal constructively with change or challenge, allowing the person to maintain or re-establish their social and emotional wellbeing in the face of difficult events.

It involves thoughts, feelings and actions.

It is important to help our children to identify the intensity of their emotional reactions to different negative events. It's important not to sweat the small stuff. We need to teach our children that because they think something is true, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is true.

#### HELPFUL THINKING AND SELF-TALK

We can help our children to change the way they feel about events if they change the way they interpret and think about themselves and the world around them. A critical factor that affects this is the way we speak to ourselves in our own minds: self-talk.

Helpful or positive self-talk has a vital role, building and strengthening emotional and mental wellbeing; unhelpful or negative self-talk can increase the risk of emotional or mental problems.

Helpful internal comments encourage us to try new things, and to assist to put things in perspective, if they don't turn out as we'd like. Raising your children's awareness about the role that self-talk plays in all aspects of their lives can be truly valuable. Encourage your children to practice helpful self-talk and challenge unhelpful self-talk.

#### SOME COMMON THINKING ERRORS:

- **All-or-nothing** – This is when you see everything as black or white, with no in between. If something isn't 100% perfect, then it's a total failure. Clearly, this is a very unrealistic way to think.
- **Over-generalisation** – This is when you see one event that didn't turn out so well as part of a never-ending pattern of failure or disappointment. The truth may well be that the incident was an isolated event, and if you put it into perspective, it probably isn't that bad at all.
- **Mind-reading** – This is really just bad guessing. This is when you decide in your mind what other people must be thinking, without checking the facts, and then you act on that (quite probably incorrect) assumption. The reality is, you simply cannot know what other people are thinking without them telling you.
- **Fortune-telling** – Maybe this should be called 'misfortune telling'. It is predicting that things will turn out badly, even if you have absolutely no proof that this will be the case. This thinking error can lead to real problems, because if you think things are going to go wrong, then you may act in a way that allows them to go wrong.
- **Magnification** – This is when you make one little mistake, and it becomes so huge in your mind that it spoils everything else in your day. This is also called 'blowing things out of proportion', or 'making mountains out of molehills'.

- **Minimisation** – This is the opposite of magnification, but not in a good way! This is when you downplay anything good that might have happened to you because you are too focused on any aspect of the event that went wrong. It is possible to acknowledge where things might not have been perfect without allowing them to ruin the overall event.
- **Catastrophising** – This is a very common thinking error. It is when you make extreme judgements and imagine the very worst outcomes will occur, even if there isn't a scrap of evidence they will. In this way, it's a lot like fortune-telling – the difference is that fortune-telling has you thinking things won't turn out. Catastrophising has you imagining the very worst will occur.

**When you find you or your child thinking in any of these seven ways, you need to tell yourself to stop, and practice some thinking strategies that will allow you to challenge these unhelpful ways of thinking.**

Next week I'll write about emotion recognition and regulation. We will examine the importance of recognising emotions in ourselves and helping our children to recognise the emotions in themselves and others; some are easy to spot, some are more complex. We will explore ways to challenge unhelpful self-talk associated with certain errors.

This information is taken from a program called SenseAbility designed by Beyondblue as a means of helping young people to increase their resilience and self-worth.

WATCH THIS SPACE.