



## *The “Bounce-Back” Factor – Resiliency and Growth*

*As adults, most people have learned the tricks that help them get through a frustrating day – a favorite song on the radio while sitting in traffic, for example. Most of us have also figured out how important a long run, a warm bath or an intense yoga session can be to break up a stressful week. Major life stressors like a serious illness, accident, or loss of a loved one occur less frequently – but when they strike, they can disrupt one’s entire life. The people who tend to regain their footing more quickly are those who have learned to reach out to their support systems to help bolster their inner resiliency.*

A resilient child relies on the skills they have learned—problem-solving and rational thinking, emotional regulation and coping, knowing when to ask for help—to respond in a productive and healthy way to both day-to-day adversities and serious traumatic events in their lives. Resilience can be thought of as the “bounce-back” factor—it is the ability to recover from setbacks and to adapt to change, stress or problems of all kinds.

### THE POWER OF RESILIENCY

Resilient children feel special and appreciated. Through strong relationships with peers and caring adults, they have learned to feel comfortable with themselves and others. They see mistakes as new challenges, and believe that they can solve problems. Resilient children have learned to set realistic goals for themselves, and to focus on circumstances they

can influence and control rather than the things they cannot. They have been coached to see their weaknesses as areas to develop rather than flaws, and therefore they know it is okay to seek support appropriately when they need it.

### THE “7 Cs” OF RESILIENCY

Building resilience is a proactive process that requires a parent to be in tune with the needs of a child to grow, develop, take healthy risks, and achieve mastery over tasks. To foster resilience in children, keep the “7 Cs” of resiliency in mind:

- **Competence:** Give opportunities to develop important skills and notice what children do right. Allow them to recover after they fall down.
- **Confidence:** Allow children opportunities to navigate their communities and to problem-solve.



## WHAT DO WE DO?

*We work every day to strengthen lives.*

*(continued)*

- **Connection:** Foster connections to other people, school, and the community.
- **Character:** Help children to develop a clear sense of right and wrong and to understand their own values and moral compass.
- **Contribution:** Help children to find ways to contribute to family and to the community.
- **Coping:** Teach a variety of healthy ways to cope. Coach them when they are struggling, and prompt them to use strategies that you know work.
- **Control:** As children demonstrate responsibility, afford them respect and privileges. Allow them to take control of situations and scenarios they have successfully navigated in the past.

## DEVELOPING A CHILD'S RESILIENCY

Parents and caregivers can help a child to develop a resilient mindset by pushing them to grow. First, build strong emotional connections and create an environment of unconditional love and support. Remember to set clear expectations and firm limits. Label emotions, especially for young children, since emotions with names become normal and manageable. Let things be hard, and don't give them all the answers—but be a coach and teach problem-solving skills by inviting your children to think creatively about the challenges they are facing. Embrace mistakes—including your own—and help children find the lessons. Encourage your children to ask for help, because everyone has a point at which they need support. Promote healthy risk-taking and encourage your children to get outside of their comfort zones—even if that means getting outside of your own comfort zone.

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*As with any task of child-rearing, the idea of fostering resiliency in children can be daunting. Our team of knowledgeable and compassionate staff is here to help navigate the challenges of daily life together.*

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## VISIT THE BASE AT THE WEST HARTFORD TEEN CENTER

Located in the basement of the Elmwood Community Center, THE BASE is open Monday and Friday 2:30-5:00 p.m. and Wednesday 1:00-3:30 p.m. Teen Nights will be held this fall from 7:00-10:00 p.m. on November 22 and December 20. Any West Hartford resident in grades 9-12 is welcome to drop in. Admission is free.



## CHRISTOPHER DUTTON, LCSW JOINS THE BRIDGE

Christopher Dutton, LCSW joined the Bridge Family Center in August 2019 as Clinical Director of Community and School Services. In this role, he is responsible for the Bridge's Youth and Family Services

Department and will oversee all school-based services offered by the Bridge including case consultation and crisis intervention, counseling, support groups, and positive youth development programs. In addition, Dutton will lead the West Hartford Youth Service Bureau providing comprehensive prevention and intervention services, resource development, community involvement and advocacy.