



Building Resiliency Through Connection

How do people and communities deal with difficult life changing events and setbacks in life? How do some push on and recover, while others seem to have a more challenging time? Strong emotions and uncertainty are common reactions to serious illness, the death of a loved one, relationship problems, loss of a job and other traumatic events. They do this through resiliency. “Resilience is the process of adapting and moving forward after adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. It is the ability to “bounce back” after difficult experiences” (American Psychological Association).

One way to build resiliency is by creating a strong community. Research states that resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It includes learned behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be developed in anyone. Therefore, we have an ongoing opportunity within our communities to build resilience among those around us to live longer, healthier and happier lives. Strong, supportive relationships with close family, friends, and loved ones are a key element for a happier and healthier life.

What can we do as parents, caregivers, and teachers to support our children’s recovery?

- Allow them to ask questions – adults can ask youth what they are hearing about the event, without letting these conversations dominate classroom discussions for long periods of time.
- Let children know they are not to blame when bad things happen.
- Be a role model – teach youth the importance of self-care by setting routines, eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and exercising.

What can we do as adults to support our own recovery and mental health?

- Take care of yourself – make your own self-care a priority by paying attention to your needs and feelings. Eat healthy, exercise regularly, and engage in activities you enjoy.
- Make connections – accepting help and support from others who care about you will strengthen your resilience.
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery – people oftentimes grow and learn something about themselves as a result of their struggle with loss.



Turning to a variety of coping approaches and building a strong community of support are the tools for a happier and healthier road to recovery. This may vary from person to person and take the form of loving, close families; trusted friends; romantic relationships; active relationships with mentors, sponsors, and teachers; an ethnic or cultural identity group; a peer group at school, a place of worship, or in your neighborhood.

This May we encourage Californian communities to seek out the commonalities we have and collectively continue to build the latticework of resiliency.

- Share the [Each Mind Matters Mental Health Support Guide](#)
- Share one of the Each Mind Matters Affirmation Cards with a friend, family member, colleague, or even a stranger. You can download a printable version or share these via social media by visiting the [2019 Mental Health Matters Activation Kit](#).
- View and share stories of hope and recovery from the [Each Mind Matters Gallery](#).

Additional Resources:

Tips for talking with and helping children and youth cope after a disaster or traumatic event: A guide for parents, caregivers, and teachers. (2013). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence/publications-resources>

American Psychological Association. *The road to resilience*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>