



# TEENS CAN

## **Be Resilient!**

**A Guide for Parents and Caregivers**



Parents and caregivers,  
you play a vital role in  
helping your teen become  
more resilient.

Resiliency is the ability  
to handle life's ups and  
downs in positive ways.

Resilient teens can:

- find solutions
- make good choices
- adapt to change
- cope with challenges



As your teen develops their resiliency, it supports their mental health.

**To become more resilient teens need:**

**S**

Supportive Relationships

**H**

Healthy Coping

**O**

Optimistic Thinking

**E**

Emotional Awareness

**S**

Skills for Living



## Supportive Relationships:

Teens benefit from positive connections with caring adults (e.g., family members, friends, teachers, program leaders) who challenge them, encourage them to participate in positive experiences, support them and respect them.

When your teen feels loved, valued and supported they are better able to handle life's ups and downs in positive ways.





## Things you can do:

- Have screen/device-free family meals together.
- Turn off distractions and give your teen your full attention.
- Before giving feedback or advice make a positive connection (e.g., say hello or ask about the best part of their day). Follow 'connection before direction.'
- Have routines and limits with fair consequences if rules are broken (e.g., if they break curfew by one hour, they have to be home one hour earlier next time.
- Find shared interests and do them together.
- Get to know their friends.
- Say encouraging things about their positive friendships and resist the urge to criticize those who seem negative.
- Accept your teen for who they are. Celebrate their uniqueness.



# Healthy Coping:



Good coping skills will help your teen better respond to stress.

To cope with the big physical, emotional and social changes, teens need:

- A good night sleep with consistent bed and wake-up times:
  - 5-13 year olds need 9-11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.
  - 14-17 year olds need 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night.
- Nutritious food to fuel the mind and body.
- 60 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Positive ways to deal with their feelings.
- Opportunities to express their feelings and share emotions.



## Things you can do:

- Help your teen make their bedroom a [better place to sleep](#).
- Have healthy snacks on hand.
- Do an activity together that you both enjoy.
- Help your teen identify the source of their stress and together find a way to reduce or manage it. 'Name it' in order to 'tame it'.
- Help them break a problem into smaller pieces and work on one piece at a time together.
- Be available and ready to listen when your teen is ready to talk.
- Let them know that you recognize it can be hard and you are there to help.



# Optimistic Thinking:



Looking for the hopeful side of things can help your teen see challenges as opportunities.

- Optimistic thinkers are shown to have better health.
- As part of a teen's normal development they often see problems as being worse than they are. They need to hear that you agree that things can be difficult but that you have confidence in them.
- Optimistic thinkers realize that things don't always come easily but are worth working for.
- Balancing positive thinking with hard work, practice and training can help your teen to achieve their goals.



## Things you can do:

- Write a positive thought on a sticky note and put it where your teen will see it.
- Help your teen find daily gratitude.
- Suggest to your teen that they reframe their thoughts from, “I can’t do it,” to, “I can’t do it, yet.”
- Teens learn and grow through failures and mistakes. Review with them what was learned with a mistake and explore how they might be able to do things differently next time.
- Be your teen’s cheering section and their biggest fan.
- Recognize your teen’s accomplishments- big and small. This helps to build their confidence so they can take on challenges.



## Emotional Awareness:



Until at least the age of 25, the teen brain goes through significant growth and development. The area associated with emotions, impulses, aggression and instinctive behaviour is more highly developed than the area responsible for planning, problem solving, controlling impulses and thinking through consequences.

Being aware of and understanding their emotions helps teens to:

- Respond better to their own feelings and to others.
- Use good judgment.
- Have empathy and practice kindness – caring about another person’s wellbeing has benefits for your teen. It can lower stress, increase optimism, improve self-esteem and build confidence.
- Resolve conflict – conflict is a normal part of life. Your teen can learn strategies to resolve it. Some tips to resolve conflict: stay calm and take a few deep breaths, focus on the problem and not on the person, give each side a chance to share their point of view, think together of win-win solutions for everyone.



## Things you can do:

- If your teen seems sad or angry, ask them how they are feeling and if there is anything you can do to help.
- Talk with your teen about volunteering and sharing their skills with others.
- Explore things like deep breathing, counting, meditation, being mindful, or arts/sports programs (e.g., martial arts). They can help your teen manage intense feelings.
- Help your teen build skills for clear communication (including apology and refusal skills), conflict resolution and decision making.
- Role play with your child different scenarios they could be faced with and how they might be able to respond.



## Skills for Living:



Solving problems, making decisions, and learning new skills will help your teen succeed in life. Teens feel more competent when they gain skills for living.

Competent teens:

- Think things through and find solutions.
- Adapt to change in positive ways.
- Assess risks and set limits.
- Know when to ask for help.
- Learn from experiences – remember, mistakes and difficult times can be positive learning experiences.



## Things you can do:

- Give your teen opportunities to show that they can be trusted.
- Help your teen develop life skills – have your teen help out around the home with chores like laundry, vacuuming, and cooking.
- Help plan a meal with your teen, shop, cook and eat it together.
- Help your teen become more comfortable talking to adults over the phone. Have them make the phone call to ask for information, order food or to make their own appointments.

Remember, learning new skills takes time and practice. Going through the steps to figure things out is as valuable as the outcome.





## Teens also need to learn skills for online living.

As a parent/caregiver you can:

- Stay informed about the internet and new technologies.
- Talk openly with your teen about the risks – such as sharing of personal information or bullying.
- Set limits – such as homework and chores need to be done first. Turn off electronics at 10 p.m.
- Help your child [manage digital technology](#) or get help for your teen if needed, such as a principal, school guidance counselor or the police.





Encourage your teen to “think before posting” – remind them often that what they share online can’t be taken back.

Consider questions like:

- Am I sharing too much?
- Am I hurting anybody?
- Am I being fair?
- Will this affect my future?
- Would I want my family to see this?



# Self-Care for Parents and Caregivers:

As a parent/caregiver, you manage many demands. These can be rewarding, challenging and also stressful.

- It's important to know that we all have limits.
- Looking after yourself will help you become more resilient and in turn, better respond to your teen's needs.
- Supportive relationships, healthy coping, optimistic thinking, emotional awareness and skills for living are as important for you as they are for your teen.





## Things you can do:

- Make time for yourself and do things you enjoy.
- Consider letting some things go when the demands on your time become a struggle to juggle.
- Spend time with the people you enjoy.
- Pick your battles with your teen (such as safety concern versus getting them to clean their room).
- Note something you are thankful for each day.



**Say, “I love you”**

Ask your teen, “What is the latest trend in social media?”

**Laugh**

**Turn off your phone and watch your teen’s game**

Turn off all electronics at bedtime

**Teach your teen to do the laundry**

**Celebrate your teen’s individuality**

Shoot some hoops or play catch

**Do something fun with your teen**

Bake muffins together

**Eat dinner together tonight**

**Have your teen put their activities & school projects on a family calendar**

Together, watch a YouTube clip on how to tune-up your bike

**Touch base with a text**

**Plan a family outing this weekend & invite your teen to bring a friend along**

**Say, “I’m proud of you”**

Admit when you’re wrong and make amends

**Ask to hear your teen’s favourite music**

**Listen**

**Give a hug**



# Where can I find more support for free?



**Triple P:** A positive parenting program for all families with children from 0–16. It offers a toolbox of ideas. You choose the strategies you need. You choose the way you want to use them. It's all about making Triple P work for you. For more information visit <https://www.triplep-parenting.ca/ont-en/triple-p/>.



**Pleo:** A non-profit family peer support organization for parents whose children are facing mental health challenges. Call the Parents' Helpline at 613-321-3211 or 1-855-775-7005. Visit <https://www.pleo.on.ca/> for more information or to make a referral.



**Kids Help Phone:** Offers free, 24/7 e-mental health services to young people in Canada. Call 1-800-668-6868, text 686868 or visit <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>.

Eastern Ontario Health Unit

1-800- 267-7120 [www.eohu.ca](http://www.eohu.ca)



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Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

1-800-660-5853 [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)



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