



Wellness & Safety

Parental Resilience: The Healthy Choice

Numerous researchers have concluded that **how** parents respond to stress is much more important than the source of stress in determining the outcomes for themselves and their children.

Parents are more likely to achieve healthy, favorable outcomes if they are resilient. Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma.

Coping

Healthy coping skills give parents strength to function well in difficult situations. Coping skills work to relieve stress, manage emotions and strengthen parental resilience.

Unhealthy coping skills often use ways to avoid problems, and cause more problems later. These types of coping skills tend to increase stress and anxiety, which can lead to harmful behavior and difficulty in parenting.

Choosing our Crutches

To get through a challenge, we must choose what to lean on as we carry the burden of stress—we must choose our crutches. Being resilient comes down to the **choice** to use a *crutch* for a short time and **awareness** that prevents the crutch from becoming a *dependency*.

Crutch can be used as a noun (thing) or a verb (action). Crutch, as a thing, is a device used in motion; it is something that supports. Crutch, as an action, is to support and prop up. Healthy coping skills support you in times of stress, adversity and trauma.

Dependency, on the other hand, can only be used as a noun (thing) and is defined as state of dependence; a refusal to take initiative. In other words, dependency gets you stuck in stress. To move through stress, you need a crutch. When you stop moving forward, you have created a dependency and it is time to reach out for help.

Here are some examples of Crutches (healthy coping skills) and coping skills that could create Dependency:

Healthy Coping Skills

Circle the healthy coping skills you want to use more. Underline the ones you already use. Feel free to add more!

- Meditation and relaxation techniques
- Time to yourself
- Doing things you enjoy, like exercise or reading
- Talking with trusted, supportive friends
- Going out with friends
- Getting out into nature
- Giving your pets love
- Creating art or music
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating healthy
- Seeing a therapist
- _____
- _____
- _____

Unhealthy Coping Skills

- Avoiding problems
- Denial
- Excessive working
- Excessive drinking
- Excessive smoking
- Unsafe sex
- Self-mutilation
- Ignoring or storing hurt feelings
- Sedatives
- Stimulants