



Resilience and Recovery – Part 2 of 3

In last month's news brief, part one in this three-part series focused on strengthening the key attributes of having a positive outlook, fostering spirituality and establishing familial harmony.

This installation addresses the importance of having strong communication and financial management skills and the way they can affect a family's ability to overcome a crisis successfully.

Families possess multiple qualities that allow them to practice resiliency. Family resiliency is a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity".¹ During challenging times, such as losing a job, undergoing financial strain or facing health or housing challenges, it is vital that families continue to work on building their communication and financial management skills. Effective communication and financial management skills are evidence of healthy problem solving skills, one of the most important executive functions developed in childhood.

When children have a family who can positively role model this skill, they have the opportunity to see the skill in action and know how to utilize it effectively when necessary.

As a reminder, when working with families it is important to help them to focus on developing key attributes including: a positive outlook, spirituality, family member accord, flexibility, communication, financial management, time together, mutual recreational interests, routines and rituals and social support.

Communication – Resolving conflict heavily depends on the ability to communicate effectively. It is important that family members discuss with each other how they are affected, their perspective of the situation and clarity of each individual's role in the crisis or situation.

According to Froma Walsh, these components – clarity, open emotional expression and collaborative problem solving – are important dynamics of demonstrating effective communication. Families may utilize different methods of communication, including verbal and non-verbal. Regardless of their preferred technique, it is most important that positive communication exists in lieu of no communication, which leads to an increased risk and a vulnerability to experiencing negative situations.

Financial Management – When parents face a financial crisis, it sometimes makes it hard to focus on being effective in their role as a parent. That crisis overtakes

their mental capacity causing parental deficits in the areas of nurturing, guiding and discipline. It is helpful, when families lean on the other protective factors like concrete support and social connections. A family's prior experience with financial strain is also an important factor to consider. Through recall, a family may be able to identify both formal and informal networks of support, which may prove to be essential to surmounting the challenge of managing their finances.

As you continue to provide support, using a strength based approach through positive inquiry, it may help families to recall previous strategies they used to resolve and cope with the situation at hand. Helpful questions may include:

- Whom do you talk to when you experience challenging situations?
- Growing up, did your family openly discuss challenges? How has this influenced your ability to express your emotions?
- How has financial strain changed the role(s) of each family member?
- How has this affected your parenting behaviors?



