

SIMPLE CONNECTIONS stronger families



Family resiliency is your family's ability to cope with life's challenges and to bounce forward from difficult times.

Our families are important to us. We look to our families for love, encouragement and fun and we rely on our families when times are tough. Our families shape us as we grow. They are who we spend our lives with.

There is no denying that our families have a huge impact on our lives. So why not make your family as strong and resilient as possible? Resilient families are better able to cope with life's challenges and provide the conditions people need to flourish and grow into healthy individuals.

Resiliency is a concept usually used to describe a person's ability to bounce back after experiencing something stressful. But families can also be resilient. Research has shown that families who have gone through hardships don't just survive, they grow – they are stronger, more loving, have a sense of purpose and are better able to cope with future challenges.

All families are unique, will face different challenges and rely on different strengths to cope with them. But there are some things all families can work on to be stronger like communicating in healthy ways, having a sense of togetherness, a positive parenting style, strong partner relationships and connections to your extended family and community.

It's important to remember that families come in all shapes and sizes. No matter your family's size, make-up, culture, or background, you can become more resilient.

Simple Connections, Stronger Families gives your family all the information and encouragement you need to take action. You have the power to become strong and healthy just by being a family.



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Family resiliency is your family's ability to cope with life's challenges and to bounce forward from difficult times.

Simple Connections, Stronger Families encourages families to explore ways they can build their resiliency. Take the journey through the "heart of community" and explore each of the messages along the pathway, these messages are "protective factors". You will discover 6 ideas around each factor that are examples of simple things you can do to build resilience.

Find all 8 messages and check out the simple ideas. Create your own ideas on ways your family will build resiliency or make a list of things you already do and help it grow.

- A family is two or more people who depend on one another. Pets count too!
- Families provide a source of comfort and security.
- All families are unique and will cope differently with challenges.
- Relationships with caring, supportive people are important for your family's well-being.
- Every family has problems. Getting through them together makes your family stronger.
- What are your family's strengths? Nurture them to help your family thrive.
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Connect with YllMyHome.com to check out all of the initiatives that support the vision of "Creating a community where kids can grow up great. Every Kid. Every Day."



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Community Connections build family resiliency.

Nowadays, families have become quite separate from society. They are seen as independent units and expected to take care of themselves. But forming and relying on connections outside your immediate and extended family will help you be even stronger.

Community connections provide practical assistance, emotional support and connection to others. Recognize when your family could use a helping hand and make use of your network and community resources. Then give back. By helping to make your community safe and satisfying for children, you are helping them develop resiliency.

Here are some more ideas for building your family's connections to your community:

Get involved. Volunteering for and participating in community events adds a sense of belonging and appreciation for your community. It also provides opportunities to make new friends. There are many benefits to your wellbeing to helping others and contributing to something outside yourself.

Get help when you need it. Many communities have a range of supports and resources to help for a range of situations and issues. Look up your local community centre and share what you discover with others. Fight the urge to withdraw when things get hard.

Connect with others. When you get out and about in your community, you meet people you may not have otherwise. You may find you have lots in common with others.

For tips on how to build your family's community connection and to learn more about resources in your community, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Community Connections build family resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that your family is already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Volunteer for an activity you like or service you care about.
- Attend or organize an event in your community.
- Call 811 for health information. Call 211 for community services and supports.
- Explore the programs in your community and share what you find out with others.
- Invite your neighbours to go to the park.
- Pass on toys or clothes that you've outgrown to others.

Our family ideas: Simple things we do:

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Simple things we plan to do:

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Healthy communication builds family resiliency.

Healthy communication sets a positive tone for family interactions. When you communicate with your family members openly and in a caring way, you are telling each other that you care and want to work together. Knowing how to talk to one another and solve problems together lowers stress and will help your family cope with conflict.

Healthy family communication means:

Being clear. If you are experiencing a crisis or other difficult situation, fill family members in on important information and what they can expect. This will help them avoid worries about the worst. Being open, rather than secretive or vague, promotes healing, closeness, trust and security.

Being open. Talk to each other regularly about what's happening in your lives. Express your feelings and concerns and invite others to do the same. Accept that others may have different feelings, beliefs and points of view from your own. It's important that everyone feels free to express their feelings being judged or feeling ashamed.

Caring about other family members. You can show you care by listening without judging, providing comfort and being kind and encouraging. Even when you are struggling with your own emotions or are disappointed in someone's behaviour, speak calmly, avoid swear words and abusive language, and focus on the positive rather than criticizing.

Problem solving together. Conflict and stressors are inevitable. When they happen, talk as a group, brainstorm solutions together and make decisions as a team. Then you can set goals everyone agrees with and is clear on. Working towards these goals will bring you closer and give your family a sense of accomplishment. Having a positive outlook can also be a great tool when problem solving.

Sharing information appropriately. Consider the age, values and beliefs of your family when sharing information. While it's important to be open and direct, young children should never feel burdened by secretive or highly personal information. With teenagers, it's important to be open and direct about things like sex, drugs and alcohol. Take the time to discuss the pros and cons together rather than simply telling them, "Don't do that".

For specific tips on developing healthy communication to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Healthy communication builds family resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that your family is already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Talk about problems and brainstorm solutions together.
- Laughing together is a great way to feel close.
- Listen with understanding and empathy.
- When times are busy, use a car ride to talk.
- Explain the situation so everyone understands and knows what to expect.
- A hug may be more powerful than words.

Our family ideas: Simple things we do:

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Simple things we plan to do:

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For specific tips on developing healthy communication to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Positive healthy relationships build family resiliency.

The most important source of support is your partner. You turn to each other in times of need, you help each other cope with the stresses of daily life and you share your lives together. If you have a healthy relationship with your partner, you have solid ground to stand on.

Families come in all shapes and sizes. In a family with children, the relationship between parents sets the tone for family interactions. Children learn from the love and affection they see between their parents whether your family is intact or not. If you are supportive, warm and caring towards each other, all family members will benefit by feeling more secure and have better self-esteem and confidence.

To build a healthy relationship with your partner, it's important to:

Address conflict openly but be respectful when you do. Avoiding discussions or being hurtful only makes things worse. If you have children in your home, handle intense conflict away from them unless you can model civil and respectful negotiating skills they can learn from.

Do things together. It's important to pursue your own interests but couples who spend time together are stronger for it. Be willing to try the things your partner enjoys or see if you can find a pastime you both enjoy.

Show you care. Do this in ways that feel right for you. Showing you care might be with words, a hug or touch, or other gesture like a writing a note or doing a favour. Your partner's way of showing love might be different from yours - be sure to acknowledge it nonetheless.

Be positive. Positivity (things like affection, humor, offering solutions, accepting suggestions, being optimistic) is powerful and contagious. Avoid criticizing whenever you can. Cut each other some slack. Choose to focus on the good in your spouse and in your relationship.

For tips on how to build a healthy relationship with your spouse/partner, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Positive healthy relationships build family resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that you and your partner are already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Work together as a team to make decisions.
- Celebrate good news together.
- Be honest about your feelings and listen openly to each other.
- Take interest in the things your partner enjoys or try something new together.
- It's ok to disagree. Be kind and respectful when you do.
- Show love and affection in the ways your partner likes.

Our healthy relationship ideas:

Simple things we do:

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Simple things we plan to do:

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For tips on how to build a healthy relationship with your spouse/partner, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on yllMyHome.com



SIMPLE CONNECTIONS stronger families



A sense of togetherness builds family resiliency.

Having a sense of togetherness means your family has close relationships, everyone feels they belong, you work as a team and know you can rely on one another. These things all keep your family strong and help you get through the tough times, bringing you closer than ever before.

You can increase your family's sense of togetherness by making a commitment to the following:

Make and practice rituals and routines. Routines can happen during every day events like mealtimes and bedtimes. Rituals can be spiritual, celebratory or traditions. Both routines and rituals establish a family's identity and place in the world. They provide stability and lower anxiety when times are tough because they provide a sense of normalcy.

Spend time together. It's important for families to share experiences and quality time together. Quality time is interactive rather than passive, like watching television. One great way to share quality time is to have regular meal times in the home where everyone participates in some way. Making time to spend together as a family might require cutting back on other activities. Leave some time in your schedule to just relax together or use household chores, errands or commute time to connect.

Get along. This may be easier said than done but it's important for family members to have positive feelings towards their family members. Help your family get along by participating in activities you all enjoy. Celebrate each other's successes and support each other's failures.

Strike a balance. A family is strengthened by its togetherness but that shouldn't come at a cost to each person's need for independence. A healthy family balances connectedness with separateness. It respects that each person has different emotions, thoughts and opinions and processes experiences differently.

For tips on building your family's sense of togetherness to make your family stronger, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



SIMPLE CONNECTIONS stronger families



A sense of togetherness builds family resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that your family is already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Eat together as a family whenever you can.
- Play a game together instead of watching a movie.
- Take turns planning a weekend family activity.
- Learn about your family's culture and traditions and practice them often.
- Daily rituals like bedtime stories are comforting.
- Take time to relax together.

Our family ideas: Simple things we do:

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Simple things we plan to do:

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For tips on building your family's sense of togetherness to make your family stronger, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YLLMyHome.com



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Taking care of yourself helps your family be resilient.

Each person in your family plays a role in keeping your family healthy and strong. When you are healthy, you are better able to cope with life's challenges, support each other and set a good example. These all have a positive impact on your family.

Here are some important things you can do for yourself that will also boost your family's resiliency:

Learn self-awareness and self-management. Being aware of your own emotions and how they impact others is important for your social and emotional wellbeing. The next step is learning to manage those emotions so they don't have a negative impact on your life and those around you.

Take care of yourself. Eating well, getting enough sleep and physical activity are all important for your health and wellbeing. When you are healthy, you are more likely to participate in family outings, have positive family interactions and contribute to family life. You are also setting a good example for those around you to be healthy too. Getting help if you are physically or mentally unwell is also not only important for your health but will help soften possible negative impacts on your family.

Nurture your sense of self. It is important for your own mental wellbeing to have a sense of who you are apart from your family. Make sure to pay attention to your own interests. Spend time alone when you need to unwind and recharge. Make time for things you like to do.

Have a positive attitude. It can be hard to stay positive when life gets tough but knowing that you ultimately have control over your destiny can help. And when you can't change your situation, remind yourself of the choices you do have. You can choose who and where you find help, how you cope and your attitude.

For specific tips on boosting your own personal wellness to help build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



SIMPLE CONNECTIONS stronger families



Taking care of yourself helps your family be resilient.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that you are already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Take 3 deep breaths to help manage strong emotions.
- Say hello to each person you pass today.
- Take a 10 minute walk every day.
- Write down 3 things you are grateful for.
- Do something for yourself today.
- Be kind to yourself.

My self-care ideas: Simple things I do:

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Simple things I plan to do:

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For specific tips on boosting your own personal wellness to help build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Positive parenting builds family resiliency.

The way you support and guide the children in your life has an impact on their wellbeing. A positive authoritative parenting style means being warm and nurturing while at the same time also having high expectations and clear rules and boundaries. When you parent in a positive authoritative way, you help children become psychologically healthy and confident and develop good social and emotional regulation, reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

An authoritative parenting style can be adopted by anyone who interacts with children.

Parenting in this way means you:

- **Are consistent, fair and clear.** Make sure your child knows consequences for behaviours in advance and is clear on what will happen when rules are broken. Follow through. A child is less confused, frustrated and anxious when he/she knows what is expected of him/her. When discipline is necessary, don't jump to punishment. Instead of time-outs, threats and lectures, focus on what has been learned and ask for your child's ideas of what to do.
- **Are a positive role model.** Learn to identify and manage your own emotions as a parent so you can teach these skills to your child. Hold the same expectations for your own behaviour as you do for children.
- **Communicate supportively.** Encouraging independence and the expression of opinions. Listen so your child feels understood and explain reasons for your decisions in a way that makes sense to your child.
- **Always show your child love and warmth,** even if you disagree with something they have done. Help your child calm down when they're upset. Then try talking about what happened, what's been learned and things to try next time.

For tips on how to practice positive parenting to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Positive parenting builds family resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas that support a positive and authoritative parenting style. Check off the things that you are already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Celebrate the small, good things that happen each day.
- Be part of your child's activities and school community.
- Making mistakes is ok. Talk with your child about what they have learned.
- Decide on rules and consequences and stick to them.
- Apologize when you are wrong.
- Help your child understand and express their emotions.

Our positive parenting ideas:

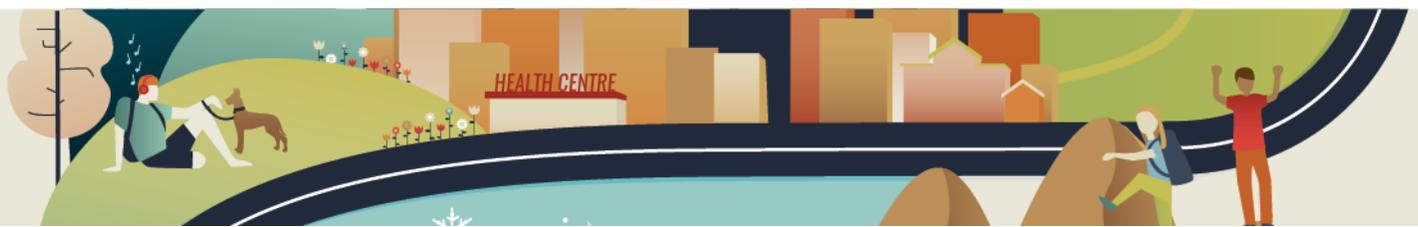
Simple things we do:

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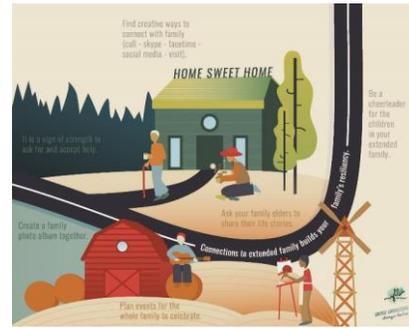
Simple things we plan to do:

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For tips on how to practice positive parenting to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



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Connections to extended family builds your family's resiliency.

Connecting with extended family is a great way to widen your family's network of support. Extended family members can be mentors for the children and youth in your family, can lend a helping hand when you're in a pinch and provide friendship.

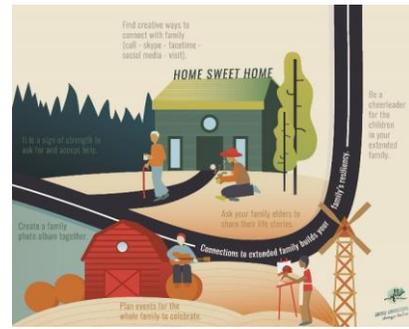
Build connections with your extended family by:

- **Being involved.** Supportive, caring relationships with adults help children and youth to be healthy and resilient. By supporting their efforts, believing in their potential and encouraging them to strive high, you can build a child's resiliency. Make a point of connecting with the children and youth in your extended family. You never know when they might need that extra support.
- **Helping out.** Extended family can come in handy when parents in a family are physically or emotionally absent or ill. They can be helpful during transitions like new parenthood or arrival in a new country. Offer to help your extended family where you can in big or small ways.
- **Reaching out.** Keep each other up to date on what's happening in your lives so you can provide support and encouragement when it's needed. If you live far away, make a point of recognizing each other's milestones. For only children, or isolated families, connecting with extended family is an important source of social support.

For tips on connecting with your extended family to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com



SIMPLE CONNECTIONS stronger families



Connections to extended family builds your family's resiliency.

Take a few minutes to explore the simple ideas and check off the things that your family is already doing; add your own ideas or make a list of things you would like to do.

Celebrate (✓) the simple things you already do to build resiliency:

- Find creative ways to connect with family (call – skype – facetime – social media – visit)
- Be a cheerleader for the children in your extended family.
- Ask your family elders to share their life stories.
- Plan events for the whole family to celebrate.
- Create a family photo album together
- It is a sign of strength to ask for and accept help.

Our family ideas: Simple things we do:

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Simple things we plan to do:

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For tips on connecting with your extended family to build your family's resiliency, check out the Simple Connections, Stronger Families resources on YllMyHome.com

