

What Do We Need to Know to Build Resilience in Children?

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Art Therapy & Sensory Play Workshops & Resources
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Resilience describes a person's capacity to cope with changes and challenges and to 'bounce back' during difficult times.

Children and young people who are resilient are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, to cope with change and uncertainty, and to recover faster and more completely from traumatic events or episodes.

However, research over the last 25 years has shown that **today's young people are much less resilient than previous generations.** They also have more emotional and behavioral problems. This is the case for males and females, and all social classes and family types. Work is underway to reverse this trend.

Resiliency involves COPING WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS. To manage life, it is essential to create a balance between negative stressors or feelings and positive experiences. Coping is the process of taking **deliberate action** to create that balance. Breathing exercises, mindful meditation, and expressive art are deliberate actions that children can easily learn and use when they experience stress or negative feelings.

Are you a POSITIVE ROLE MODEL for resiliency? How do YOU cope with negative feelings?

- I soothe my painful feelings in healthy and not self-destructive ways.
- I soothe my painful feelings in unhealthy ways.
- I don't soothe my painful feelings because I believe I should tough it out.

To help children develop resiliency, adults need to provide OUTSIDE SUPPORT and reinforce INNER STRENGTHS.

Outside supports include:

- caring relationships
- positive role models in families and communities
- community resources and support programs

Inner strengths include:

- self-control
- thinking skills
- confidence
- positive outlook
- responsibility and participation

Resilient children learn to develop:



Outside supports and inner strengths work together to develop our resilience.

"Fresh as a Flower" Mindful Meditation & Art

Objective - Develop self regulation skills through breathing exercises, mindful meditation, and watercolor art.



Fresh as a Flower combines Anna Reyner's Smart Art Lesson Plan, Georgia O'keeffe Flower with Pebble Meditation for Children by Thich Nhat Hanh. Relax and enjoy!

Georgia O'Keeffe Flower

MATERIALS

- ✓ Liquid Watercolor™
- ✓ Paint cups
- ✓ Watercolor brushes
- ✓ White paper, 12" x 18"
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Small water bowls
- ✓ Pencils
- ✓ Sponge
- ✓ Paper towels

✓ in Discount School Supply catalog

STEP 1: Draw a Flower
Make a pencil sketch of one flower, drawing large to fill the page. Look closely and draw details.

OUTCOMES

Art is good brain food! This art idea helps children develop:

Cognitive/Thinking Skills
Follows complex series of steps
Large scale planning and adapting

Emotional/Feeling Skills
Creative expression
Makes choices, individuality

Social/Relating Skills
Patience, impulse control
Respects work of others

Physical/Coordinating Skills
Manipulates fluid materials
Develops spatial relations

Literacy & Language Developments
Plans and develops content
Develops imagination

STEP 2: "Wash" with Water
Use a clean sponge or wide brush to create a "wash" of clear water over paper. Blot if very runny.

STEP 3: Add Color
Use Liquid Watercolor™ and a large brush to paint background colors into the water "wash." Watch the colors dilute and spread. Let dry.

STEP 4: Define the Flower
When dry, paint more Liquid Watercolor™ onto main image, adding contrast and layering colors. Use markers for details.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Extensions
Working from live flowers, use magnifying glasses to help children observe flower anatomy. Bring in as many different flower choices as possible, or ask children to bring in flowers from their garden. Introduce the artwork of Georgia O'Keeffe through library books on her work.

Vocabulary
Watercolor Wash, Dilute, Saturate, Enlarge, Amplify

Ages
4-12

45-60
Min.

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How to Use Guided Meditation Cards

1st Getting Ready

- ~ find a quiet spot
- ~ sit in comfy position for you (you can try lotus position if you like)
- ~ you can close or 1/2 close your eyes
- ~ have back straight shoulders relaxed

~ Become aware of your breath - in and out

~ When you feel settled enough you can start

Breathing In ~ I see myself as a a human flower

Breathing Out
~ I am beautiful just as I am and I feel very fresh

KEYWORDS - In Breath: flower Out Breath: fresh

Why Resilience Matters

Life doesn't always go the way we wish or expect. Problems arise in our families, workplaces, and communities. Relationships end, and children leave. We need to develop ways to get through the tough times in our lives. How do we do it?

Finding Your Resilience

Resilience: Resilience is not rare, and everyone is resilient in some ways. Whenever you recover from a setback and get better at coping with life's difficulties, you become even more resilient.

Overcoming Problems: Being resilient doesn't mean you no longer have problems or are not affected by difficulties. It doesn't mean you are not sad when a relationship ends or you are not worried about your family's physical and financial well-being. It doesn't mean having answers to all of life's problems. Being resilient means finding ways to cope.



Failure, Adversity &

Resilience: 25 years ago, Scott Peck began his landmark book, [The Road Less Traveled](#), with the sentence: “Life is difficult.” From Eastern spiritual practice we learned Buddha’s first truth: “Life is pain.”

If you are aged enough, you know these truths to be self-evident. The difficulty and pains of life can be seismic (death of a loved one, disease, divorce). They can also be smaller in scale, but still have the ability to rock us off our center and send us into fight, flight or freeze mode. The good news is that current medical research on the neuroscience of emotions teaches us: Resiliency can be learned at any age – we can become MORE RESILIENT with practice.

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” ~Confucius

Resources:

Finding Your Resilience: Reach In, Reach Out:

<http://www.victimsofcrime.org>

I Can Calm by Dr. Becky Bailey

<http://consciousdiscipline.com>

Mindful Meditation for Children by Thich Nhat Hanh

<http://mindfulkids.wordpress.com>

Building resilience in children of mothers who have Co-occurring Disorders and histories of Violence <http://link.springer.com/article>

Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development.

Masten, Ann S. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/56/3/227/>

Multi-Year Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a Resilience-Based Prevention Program for Young Children <http://link.springer.com>

Failure, Adversity, Resilience – What’s Your Explanatory Style?

<http://hollanderleadershipblog.wordpress.com/2011/03/30/>

Insight Timer: Free iPhone App with Meditation chime



Think of resilience as elasticity or flexibility.



Anna Reyner is a nationally recognized arts advocate who is dedicated to helping people get in touch with their own creativity. She has conducted over 500 national and international hands-on art workshops and is a registered art therapist and licensed marriage and family therapist. She received her MA in Art Therapy from the University of Louisville and her BA in Art and Psychology from Ohio Wesleyan. Anna is the Director of Training for Discount School Supply and maintains an active art studio in Los Angeles. She is the author of two celebrated books, [Smart Art with Learning Outcomes](#) and [More Smart Art](#), which both won the Director’s Choice Award for best new early childhood products at NAEYC in 2005 and 2006.

Check out her Art & Creativity Blog at

WWW.CREATIVEPLAYLA.COM