

Resilience

We can bend, and not break!



What is Resilience, anyway?!

At its core, resilience is simply being “ok,” even when life throws us challenges. It is being able to move forward when things are hard, and it is being able to bounce back when we get knocked down. Of course we want this for our children (and ourselves!), and the good news is . . . it is something that can be worked on! It is something worth our time, now more than ever! This module has tools and ideas to work on our resilience so that we can become flexible enough to bend with the stresses of life, but never break. [Click here](#) to watch an introductory video for an overview of this module.

We have a ZONE, and so do our children.

The resilient zone is our “OK” zone. We are not too high (edgy, irritable) and we are not too low (exhausted, depressed)...we are “OK.” Once in a while, something can happen to bump us out of our “OK” zone, and then we have trouble! You probably have seen your child get bumped out of their zone. This module is meant to help develop some tools for all of us to use when we get bumped out of our “OK” zone. The trick is, we need to practice them when we are calmly in our “OK” zone, so that when the emotions of being bumped out take us over, we have some tools to pull from.

What is the Resilient Zone?

- ❖ A state of well-being in mind, body and spirit
- ❖ When in the Resilient Zone one is able to handle the stresses of life
 - ❖ You can be annoyed or even angry but do not feel like you will lose your head
 - ❖ You can be sad but not feel like you will be washed away by the river of sorrows





THINK: What's Good?

When we get bumped out of our “OK” zone, our nervous system goes into overdrive (fight, flight, or freeze), and we need something to help us return to our calmer “OK” zone. One strategy is called Resourcing, and it just means to call to mind something that makes us feel “happy, safe, or good.” It may be a grandparent, or an older sister, or even a special blanket. 😊 [Click here](#) to watch a video that takes your child (and you) through this process.

When your child finishes the exercise in the video, ask them to share what they chose as their special thing that makes them feel “safe, happy and good.” Share yours. Remind your child that they can always bring that special thing to mind to help calm their bodies, and hopefully get back to their “OK” zone.

Other thoughts:

- Research shows that simply having **ONE positive, trusted adult** in a child’s life builds resilience. Who is that adult for your child? Perhaps a grandparent, aunt/uncle, or even a teacher or coach. Talk to your child about who that trusted adult is and encourage them to touch base regularly with that trusted adult. This is one of the most protective factors a child can have!
- Looking for the *silver lining* in all situations is another powerful way to build resilience in your child. As things happen in their world, talk to them about the positives (there are always some, if you look hard enough!) For example, being at home for online schooling is VERY challenging, but you can talk about the GOOD things that have come of it, such as more family time, less travel time, etc.) This is called “reframing” and it is a powerful force in building your child’s resilience.
- To Try: **3 Good Things** 😊 Have your child write or draw a picture of 3 good things in their life that they are thankful for. Hang the picture/writing up in your home and point it out often, especially on tough days.

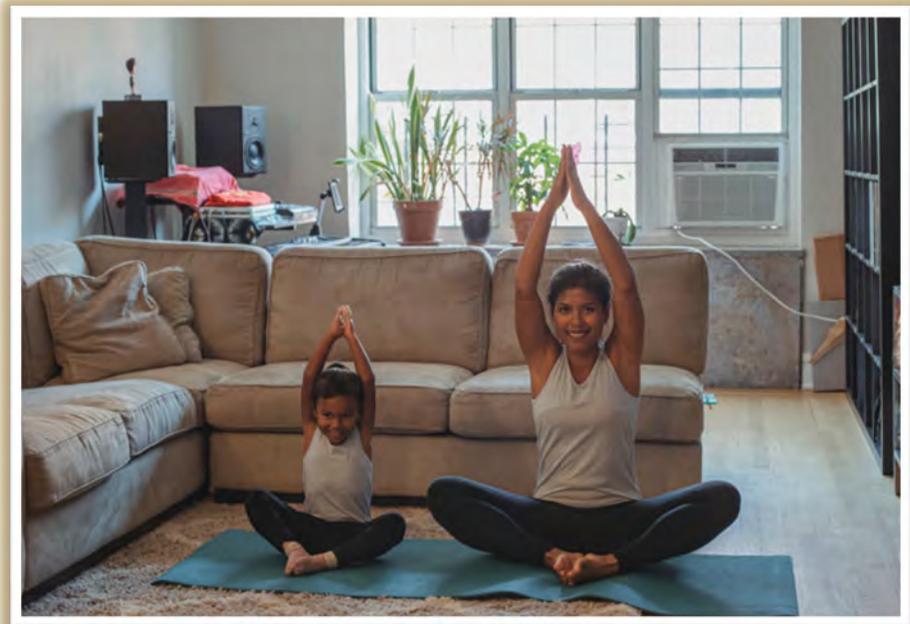


MOVE: Mindful Movement to bring us to NOW:

Exercise is always good for helping us stay in our zone, as it releases those “feel good” endorphins! Certain “mindful movements” can challenge our balance and flexibility and can bring us to the “now” moment and give us a rest from worrying about the past or the future . . . all of which is good for working to stay in our “OK” zone! Have your child try the following four videos and better yet, join them! [Balance and](#)

[Strength](#); [Flexible in Mind and Body in an Uncertain World](#); [Animal Mindful Movements](#); and [Move and Freeze: Mind and Body](#).

Your child may need some mindful movement after sitting for long periods of time during online learning! The following two videos are designed to help on those days when they need a quick break... to help them stay in their zone! [Stuck in My Seat](#); [Energizing Mindful Movement](#).



Other Ideas for Mindful Movement:

- Take a walk with your child. Ask your child to notice what they see, smell, and hear. Ask your child to notice how their feet feel in their shoes, how their legs feel as they move. Notice everything. Talk about it.
- Try a free children’s yoga video on YouTube.





BE: In Stillness. The Power of Mindfulness

There is a time for movement and there is a time for stillness. Often we find ourselves on “autopilot,” powering through our day, or distracting ourselves with TV, games, or phones. We rarely take time to slow down and PAY ATTENTION. And *that is all mindfulness is: slowing down to pay attention to NOW.*

This can mean noticing what is happening right now INSIDE your body (do you feel any sensations: pain, tightness, warmth?), your mind (what are you thinking?), and your feelings (are you anxious, overwhelmed, content?).

It can also mean paying attention to what is happening OUTSIDE your body: what you see, hear, smell, and/or taste in this moment. At its core, it simply means slowing down and paying attention!

WHAT’S THE POINT of this?! Well, thousands of studies have shown the benefits of practicing mindfulness... *for adults and children!*

Mindfulness Benefits:

- Decreased stress and anxiety
- Improved health
- Improved working memory
- Better self-regulation and self-control
- Increased resilience
- Increased self-worth



The following videos can help you and your child find mindfulness in stillness: [All About the Breath](#); [Checking in With Myself](#); and [Tense and Relax for our Bodies and Minds](#).

Other ideas to encourage mindfulness:

- Encourage your child to take some time to sit in stillness and quiet. Ask your child to pay attention to what he/she notices inside themselves during the quiet time. Set a timer for two minutes. At the end, talk about how it felt to sit in stillness. What did they notice inside themselves? What did they feel? What did they think about? Did two minutes seem like a long time?
- Use a free guided meditation on YouTube or download a free meditation app such as Stop, Breathe, and Think Kids.

Mindful Living to help us stay in our “OK zone”:



Try to take everyday activities and bring mindfulness to them. For example, when eating dinner, encourage your child to notice the bite they are taking: how does it feel in their mouth? How does it taste? Is it warm or cold? How does it smell? When washing the dishes, ask your child how the water feels on their hands. Ask them to notice the temperature of the water, the suds, the feel of the cloth. In short, whatever you are doing, you can ask your child to *slow down* and *pay attention!* That is mindful living, and it can help us build our resilience!

*I AM NOT AFRAID OF STORMS, FOR I AM
LEARNING HOW TO SAIL MY SHIP.*

Louisa May Alcott



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Heather Lewis holds an MA in Psychology in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, as well as an MA in Child Development from Michigan State University. She is the K-12 Social Emotional and Mindfulness Coordinator for Williamston Community Schools and also teaches Kindergarten at Discovery Elementary in Williamston, Michigan. She specializes in Social-Emotional Learning, Mindfulness, and Student-Athlete Mental Health.