



# Talking to a troubled teenager to build resilience

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As a parent, you're in a unique position to provide support, give encouragement and be involved in their life – and that can make a huge difference. Finding their spark can help build resilience and overcome hard times.

## There will be tough times

All young people will face hardships of one form or another, but the support and guidance they are given during these times can make a world of difference. Children aren't born with the knowledge to face and overcome hard times, but each time they do, they are building important life skills. As a parent, you can help give them the tools and understanding to cope.

Having strong skills to deal with tough times can also help in managing feelings of aggression, social isolation,

depression, loneliness and feelings of anxiety or stress that can be associated with hard times. Your relationship with your child is unique to you, and there are many ways you can give support and help them to build resilience, from talking, spending time together, sharing stories from your own experiences, reminding them of how well they are doing in other areas, or looking at the bigger picture.

## Talk it out

Everyone needs someone to talk to. By listening to your child, and allowing them to express themselves openly, you can provide a safe place for them to talk about what's bothering them. Making yourself available for them to talk to is a great way to reach out and show your support, even if you don't know what's wrong.

Sometimes you won't be the person they want to talk to, and that's OK. Encourage them to talk to friends, family or other trusted adults (maybe there is someone at the school they connect with?) or elder siblings. The more support they have, the more likely they will have the chance to open up.

## Know when to reach out

Remember, you're not alone, there are many ways your school may be able to help provide support or options to help your child navigate school and education when times get rough. There might be someone at the school you can talk to as well, to understand their studies, how they cope at school and what support the school can offer them.

If things seem to be getting worse, or you're concerned and don't know what to do to help, it's OK to seek help. It's important for you and your child to be able to recognise if their resilience is at breaking point, and when to ask for help too. You can seek free, anonymous support from HeadSpace or Kids Help Line.



# Lead by example

Ever had the question ‘how would you know?’ thrown at you, while trying to give advice? It’s one thing to say this is how it’s done, but it’s another thing entirely to be able to demonstrate this in your own life. We all need good role models, someone to look up to- and by using the advice you give in your own life and actions, you are also showing your child respect.

# The school can help

You’re not alone in this, there are lots of ways your child’s school may be able to offer support to help you and your child to overcome some of the barriers they are facing. By getting in touch with the school, you’re also showing your child you value education and that there is a possibility to find support at school. It might be the first step in helping them also feel comfortable seeking help at school when they need.

# When to talk to your local regional office

If you’ve worked closely with your child’s school and things still aren’t working out, please contact your local Department of Education regional office to seek help.

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