



## TAKING THE BULLY BY THE HORNS FOCUSING ON DEVELOPING RESILIENCY IN OUR CHILDREN

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### EMBRACING THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCY

**How does one go about creating a safe school environment for our families?**

**Do our children know how to resolve their own conflicts? Do we?**

**Do we make the time available for conflict resolution?**

**When we talk about mitigating risk factors in the environment, what do we really mean?**

Resiliency Research has told us that it does not take everyone a lot of time to make a difference in a child's life, sometimes it simply takes one person who believes in a child and supports or encourages that which they are good at.

If we are going to nurture healthy resilient children who have the capacity to shed destructive behaviours, we must consider the following:

#### **1. Increase Prosocial Bonding**

I believe this directive is aimed at the need to be proactive, to become involved. We need to create a sense of bonding and belonging for our children and our in positive ways. (I.e. Lunch time choir programs, intramurals, art club, etc.) What are we doing to support and encourage our children to be successful and excel at their own areas of excellence?

Prosocial Bonding can easily be linked to the conflict resolution guru term “Capacity Building” We know from other lectures that people don’t need capacity building, they simply want support and encouragement and to feel like they belong.

## 2. **Set Clear, Consistent Boundaries**

School policies need to be honoured. Parents, Teachers, Students and Staff need to be treated with respect (No more put-downs).

Policies, which honour the individual person, should be developed around:

Parent - Parent

Student – Student

Teacher – Student

Parents - Staff

Aim for Respect first in all interactions and assume positive intentions always (in spite of perceived dialogue).

Never engage in a conversation in the heat of the moment. Ask more questions and strive for increased clarity and objectivity in every circumstance possible. We don’t always like to hear that our children feel unsafe or are acting out, but that doesn’t change that it might be true.

### 3. Teach “Life Skills”

This directive deals with the emotional intelligence.

- a) Know and acknowledge Feelings
- b) Know how to manage those feelings appropriately (*Don't get hung up on feeling depressed or angry*)
- c) Re-direct into a positive future focus (*Promote optimism, moving forward not stuck in the past*)
- d) Help others work through feelings and experiences
- e) Effective problem solving, conflict resolution and relationship building

Help our children develop the language necessary to define their feelings and teach them how to move on in spite of them. If we know that bully behaviours are on the increase in our homes and places of work, why are we so surprised when we see it demonstrated at school?”

We need to teach our children how to be assertive; how to stand up for themselves in a positive way. A good way to do this is by demonstrating appropriate listening skills and turning down the thermostat on our own emotional reactions:

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#### HEAR – ACKNOWLEDGE – REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Don't forget to speak to children in their own language. Use examples from familiar television programs or movies to help get your point across.

#### 4. Provide Caring and Support

How can you teach the students to know how to ask for help in a safe and caring environment? Remember that most children are taught from an early age not to TATTLE and will avoid this label at all costs.

Support needs to be provided in a SAFE, SUCCESSFUL and AVAILABLE format.. Stop focusing on the WHO of the story and centre your attention on WHAT is being said and how to address the concerns.

Students need to know the difference between **TALK – TATTLE and TELL.**

#### 5. Set and Communicate High Expectations

We all know that there are multitudes of different intelligences.

IQ won't change much over time,

EQ is very changeable and is directly related to the time and energy we spend working on it.

Each child has their own special gifts and uniqueness that sets them apart from others – an area of excellence that needs to be acknowledged and celebrated.

How can we as parents help our students discover these strengths and interests and help support their continued growth?

As a parent or teacher, it is not a requirement to be an expert in all areas. Perhaps you have a child who dreams of becoming an Olympic luger and you just happen to know someone who can foster that dream. Your job would be to partner them up. By showing an interest and devotion to their area of excellence, you are helping to build that child's resiliency.

## **6. Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Participation**

Co-operative Learning is the key to this goal. Children should be given the opportunity to express themselves using their own unique talents. Avoid leaping in to solve your child's challenge – they grow more confidence from participating in the development of a workable strategy to their conflicts.