

# Resilience Rx:

*a prescription for resilience  
you can offer your families,  
one messy moment at a time!*

Gretchen Pianka MD, MPH, FAAP  
Maine AAP Spring Conference  
May 2, 2021

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## Resilience Rx

**Disclosures:** none

**Objectives:**

- Describe current understanding of positive childhood experiences & "stress busters"
- Describe current understanding of toxic stress and its impact on children in the context of COVID
- Review Bright Futures Social and Emotional guidelines for parents and providers
- Demonstrate how to integrate resilience building strategies such as breathing exercises, meditation and mindfulness into your anticipatory guidance and your day-to-day practice

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## "Tuning in: parents of young children speak up about what they think, know & need" (2016)

**Parents:**

- 91% say parenting is their greatest joy
- 73% say parenting is their greatest challenge
- 69% say they want more positive parenting strategies
- 54% which they had more information about how to be a better parent

**Pediatricians:**

- Highly useful and 62% Effective!
- 93% have a high degree of trust in our advice

Note: Usage of resources is based on parents who said they used these resources: occasionally, sometimes or frequently. Effectiveness scores are based on respondents who on a scale of 1 (not at all effective) to 5 (extremely helpful) rated the resource a 4 or 5.

	EFFECTIVENESS	USAGE
The way my parents raised me	64%	91%
Medical professionals like the pediatrician	62%	89%
My partner/my child's other parent	66%	89%
My mom	68%	88%
Other parents	46%	85%
Other family members or close friends	48%	85%
Articles specifically aimed at helping parents	49%	84%
Google searches (or other internet search engines)	47%	82%
Parenting websites	47%	82%
Teachers and other child care professionals	52%	82%
My in-laws	43%	74%
My dad	52%	73%
Parenting blogs	40%	71%
My faith or religious backgrounds	42%	69%
My cultural or ethnic background	39%	68%
My siblings	42%	67%

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## Zero to Three 2016 Survey




Photo by Arwan Suttanto on Unplash

- Parents want help with patience and discipline
- Pediatricians are poised to be helpful
  - Usefulness grade = B+
  - Effectiveness grade = D-

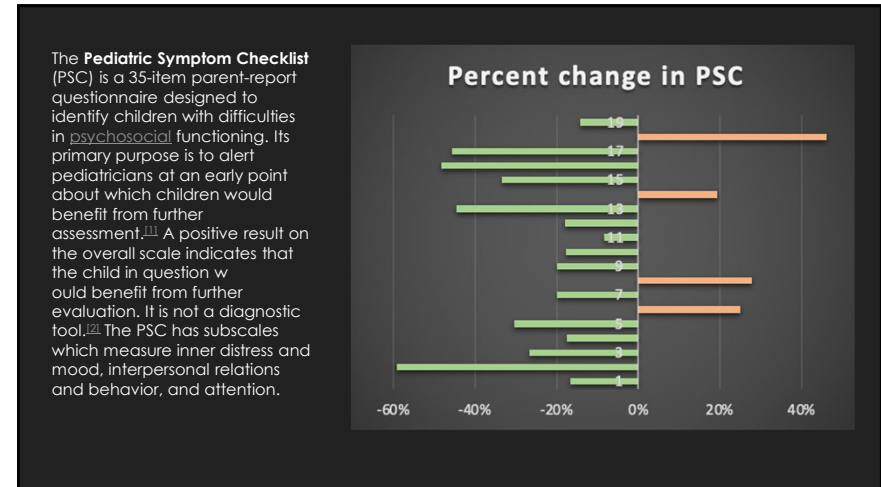
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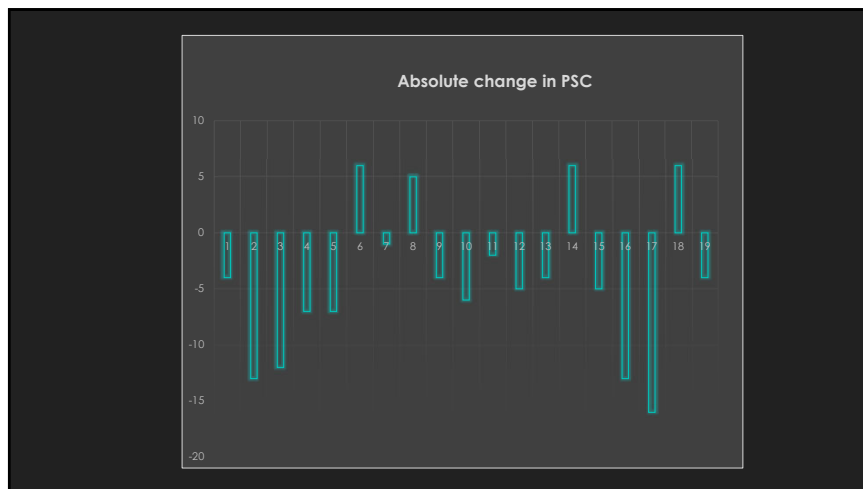
Resilience University	Exit Questionnaire	Percent answering agree or strongly agree
	I have changed the way I parent after this program.	94%
	This program provided our family with helpful skills.	94%
	This program changed the way I view my child's unwanted behaviors.	89%
	This program changed the way I discipline my child.	94%
	I now feel better equipped to help my child when they are having a big unpleasant emotion.	83%
	I would recommend this program to others.	94%

- Use behaviors as an opportunity to integrate protective factors
- 4 sessions, 30 min each, >1 week apart
- Preliminary raw data (19/41, ongoing enrollment)
- Applying principles in all patient interactions now
- Bridges the gap between what we know about resilience building and what we've been taught to offer to families.

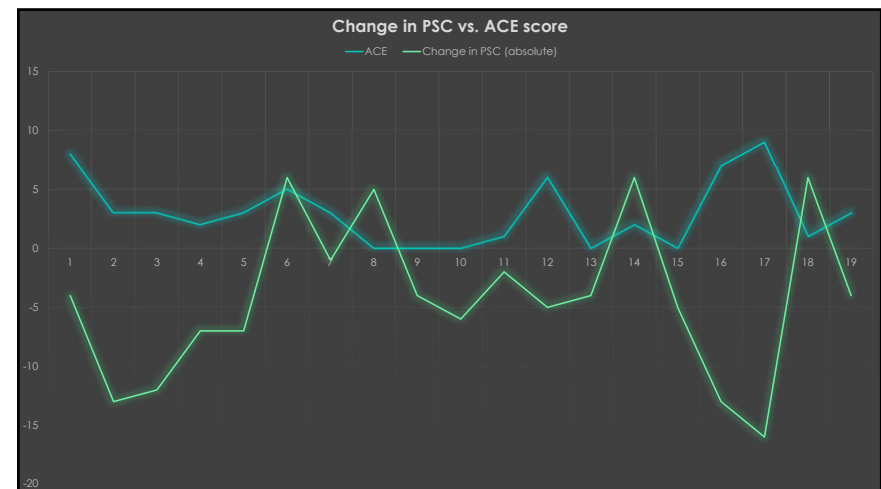
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### Pediatric Symptom Checklist

1. Complains of aches and pains
2. Spends more time alone
3. Tires easily, has little energy
4. Fidgety, unable to sit still
5. Has trouble with teacher
6. Less interested in school
7. Acts as if driven by a motor
8. Daydreams too much
9. Distracted easily
10. Is afraid of new situations
11. Feels sad, unhappy
12. Is irritable, angry
13. Feels hopeless
14. Has trouble concentrating
15. Less interested in friends
16. Frights with other children
17. Absent from school
18. School grades dropping
19. Is down on him or herself
20. Visits the doctor with doctor finding nothing wrong
21. Has trouble sleeping
22. Worries a lot
23. Wants to be with you more than before
24. Feels he or she is bad
25. Takes unnecessary risks
26. Gets hurt frequently
27. Seems to be having less fun
28. Acts younger than children his or her age
29. Does not listen to rules
30. Does not show feelings
31. Does not understand other people's feelings
32. Teases others
33. Blames others for his or her troubles
34. Takes things that do not belong to him or her
35. Refuses to share

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### Bright Futures Guidelines

The most potent tool for effective discipline is attention. By paying attention to desired behaviors and ignoring undesired ones, parents can use the following techniques to help foster good behavior in their child:

But what leads to the behavior?

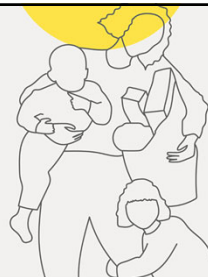
- Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents
- Remove or avoid the places and objects that contribute to unwanted behavior.
  - Use time-out or logical consequences to deal with undesirable behavior. Time-out is a structured method of avoiding paying attention to undesired behaviors.
  - Promote consistent discipline practices across caregivers, but recognize that complete agreement is not always possible, and most children can learn more than one set of rules that are reasonable and logical.
  - Ensure that the child understands the discipline is about his behavior and not about his worth as a person.
  - Avoid responding to the child's anger with anger. This reaction teaches the wrong lesson and may escalate the child's response.
  - Take time to reflect on their own physical and emotional response to the child's behavior so they can choose the most appropriate discipline technique.
- Conventional disciplinary methods do not work well with children with certain physical or developmental conditions. The following examples illustrate the point that "one size does not fit all" with respect to behavioral guidance:
- Children with poor communication skills and language delay often use behavior as a means of communication. Caregivers should make every effort to help them develop more effective communication skills.
  - Children who have hypersensitive responses to their sensory environment require proactive interventions.
- Because corporal punishment is no more effective than other approaches for managing undesired behavior in children, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents be encouraged and assisted in developing methods other than spanking in response to undesired behavior (Box 3).<sup>104</sup> Other forms of corporal punishment, such as shaking or striking a child with an object,

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### COVID Stress

#### Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Impact on Development (RAPID) - Early Childhood

Rapid-EC is an ongoing national survey of households with children ages 0-5, designed to gather essential information on the needs, health promoting behaviors, and well-being of children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.



FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL HARSHIP

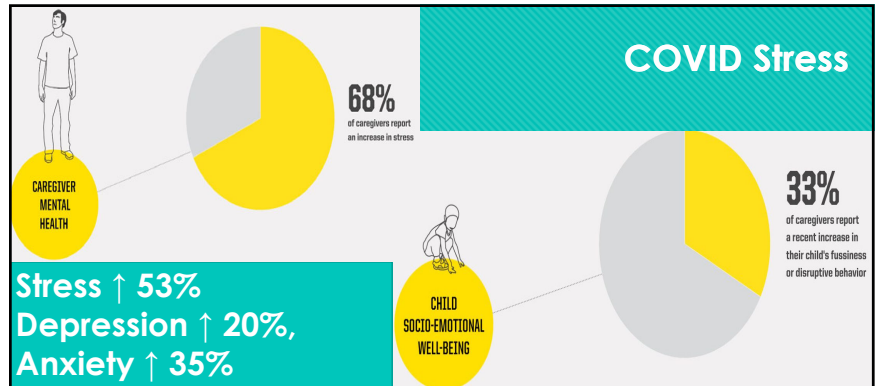
CAREGIVER DISTRESS

CHILD DISTRESS

Center for Translational Neuroscience (2020, July 30). A Hardship Chain Reaction: Financial Difficulties Are Stressing Families' and Young Children's Wellbeing during the Pandemic, and It Could Get a Lot Worse. *Medium*.

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### COVID Stress



Center for Translational Neuroscience (2020, July 30). A Hardship Chain Reaction: Financial Difficulties Are Stressing Families' and Young Children's Wellbeing during the Pandemic, and It Could Get a Lot Worse. *Medium*.

Lakhan R, Agrawal A, Sharma M. Prevalence of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress during COVID-19 Pandemic. *J Neurosci Rural Pract*. 2020 Oct;11(4):519-525. doi: 10.1055/s-0040-1716442.

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## ACEs Rising

> Psychol Trauma. 2020 Aug;12(5):S193-S194. doi: 10.1037/tra0000711. Epub 2020 Jun 18.

### The rise of adverse childhood experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

Daniel J Bryant <sup>1</sup>, May Oo <sup>1</sup>, April Joy Damian <sup>2</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 32551773 DOI: [10.1037/tra0000711](https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000711)

#### Abstract

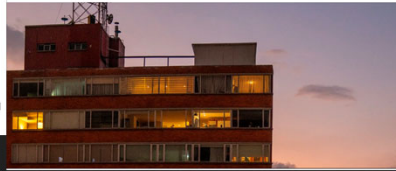
Adverse childhood experiences, which is defined by different forms of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction occurring before the age of 18 years, is a major public health problem in the United States that has the potential to worsen in the current COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the challenge is even greater for children and youth from low-income communities and communities of color. Thus, there is a greater need for investments in youth-serving systems within and beyond health care and public health to effectively address adverse childhood experiences and prevent its short- and long-term negative health and social sequelae well beyond the current public health crisis. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2020 APA, all rights reserved).

THE INTERPRETER

### A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide

Movement restrictions aimed to stop the spread of the coronavirus may be making violence in homes more frequent, more severe and more dangerous.

f d t v e 378



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### Families in the COVID-19 pandemic: parental stress, parent mental health and the occurrence of adverse childhood experiences—results of a representative survey in Germany

Claudia Calvano <sup>1</sup>, Lara Engelke <sup>2</sup>, Jessica Di Bella <sup>3</sup>, Jana Kindermann <sup>3</sup>, Babette Renneberg <sup>4,5</sup>, Stylije M Winter <sup>6</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 33646416 PMCID: PMC7917379 DOI: [10.1007/s00787-021-01739-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-021-01739-0)

Free PMC article

#### Abstract

Parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic is highly challenging, with parents having to meet various demands simultaneously. An increase in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has been widely predicted, but empirical evidence is still scarce. This study aimed to (1) generate representative data on pandemic-related stress, parental stress, general stress, parental subjective and mental health, and the occurrence of ACEs; (2) identify risk factors for an increase in ACEs, and (3) provide qualitative data on parents' experiences. A representative survey was conducted in Germany in August 2020 with 1024 parents of underage children ( $M_{age} = 41.70$ , 50.9% female). More than 50% of parents reported being stressed by social distancing and the closure of schools and childcare facilities. Parental stress increased significantly during the pandemic ( $d = 0.21$ ). Subgroups of parents also reported very high levels of depressive symptoms (12.3%) and anxiety (9.7%). Up to one-third of the sample reported ACEs in the child's lifetime. In this group, 29.1% reported an increase in children witnessing domestic violence during the pandemic, and 42.2% an increase verbal emotional abuse. These families were characterized by higher parental stress, job losses, and younger parent and child age. Positive aspects of the pandemic related primarily to personal or family life (e.g. slower pace of life, increase in family time). While some parents coped well, a particularly negative pattern was observed in a subgroup of families that experienced an increase in ACEs. Parental stress emerged as important target point for interventions addressing the negative sequelae of the pandemic.

## ACES rising with Parental Stress

Forbes

CORONAVIRUS | Jan 13, 2021, 08:14pm EST | 5,035 views

### For Some Kids, This Last Year Qualifies As An Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)



Leah Campbell Contributor @Health

I write about the intersection of parenting and health.



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## Protective Factors

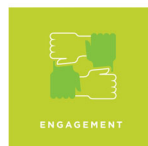
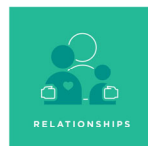
### The Four Building Blocks of HOPE

**Relationships** within the family and with other children and adults through interpersonal activities.

**Safe, equitable, stable environments** for living, playing, learning at home and in school.

**Social and civic engagement** to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness.

**Emotional growth** through playing and interacting with peers for self-awareness and self-regulation.



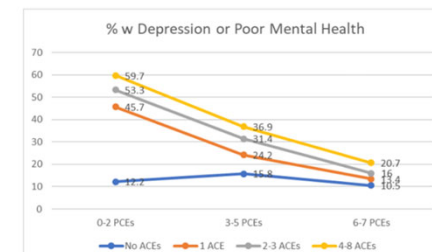
HOPE

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## Positive Childhood Experiences



### Positive Childhood Experiences Mitigate ACEs Effects



Bethell C, Jones J, Gombelje N, Linkenbach J, Segal R. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels. JAMA Pediatr. 2019;113(10):1007.

HOPE

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## Positive Childhood Experiences

Positive Childhood Experiences questions asked how often the respondent:

1. Felt able to talk to their family about feelings
2. Felt their family stood by them during difficult times
3. Enjoyed participating in community traditions
4. Felt a sense of belonging in high school
5. Felt supported by friends
6. Had at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
7. Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home

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## Not just another list

The 10 ACEs measured in the research conducted by the Center for Disease Control are:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Verbal abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Emotional neglect
6. A family member who is depressed or diagnosed with other mental illness
7. A family member who is addicted to alcohol or another substance
8. A family member who is in prison
9. Witnessing a mother being abused
10. Losing a parent to separation, divorce or death

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DECEMBER 09, 2020

## Roadmap for Resilience

The California Surgeon General's Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Health

"[T]he cross-sector response is so critically important. Because that is where the cumulative dose of buffering that we deploy in our society is critically important.... Our educators, & our law enforcement, & our judges, & our early childcare workers & the guy at the grocery store understand how they can be part of the solution, how they can be a source of buffering for a child...."

—Nadine Burke Harris, MD California Surgeon General's Roadmap for Resilience

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## Evidence Based Strategies

### Evidenced-Based Buffering Interventions



Source: Adapted from Burke Harris, Nadine, The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018; Gilgoff et al. Adverse Childhood Experiences, outcomes, and interventions, Pediatric Clinics 2020; 67(2): 259-73.

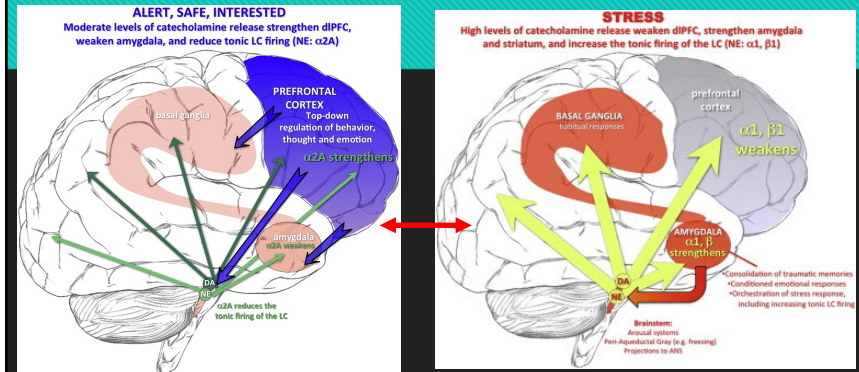
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## Emotional Agility



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## Stress & the Brain



Amsten A, Raskind M, Taylor F, Connor D. The effects of stress exposure on prefrontal cortex: Translating basic research into successful treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder. *Neurobiology of Stress*. 2015, 1 (89-99)

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## Toxic Stress

The Biology of Toxic Stress

STRESS RESPONSE		
POSITIVE	TOLERABLE	TOXIC
Physiological response to mild or moderate stressor	Adaptive response to time-limited stressor	Maladaptive response to intense and sustained stressor
Brief activation of stress response elevates heart rate, blood pressure, and hormonal levels	Time-limited activation of stress response results in short-term systemic changes	Prolonged activation of stress response in children disrupts brain architecture and increases risk of health disorders
Homeostasis recovers quickly through body's natural coping mechanisms	Homeostasis recovers through buffering effect of caring adult or other interventions	Prolonged allostasis establishes a chronic stress response
Tough test at school, playoff game	Immigration, natural disaster	Abuse, neglect, household dysfunction

California Surgeon General's Roadmap for Resilience, 12/9/20

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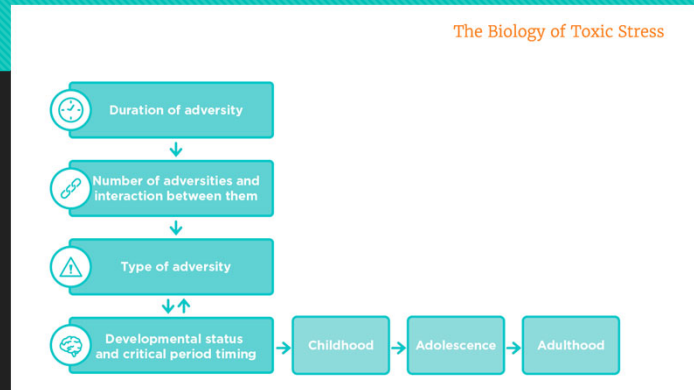
## TOXIC Stress



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## Toxic Stress



California Surgeon General's Roadmap for Resilience, 12/9/20

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## COVID & Parent Stress

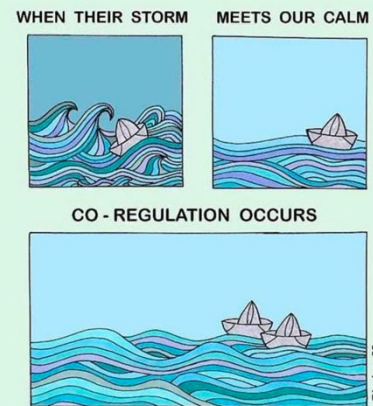


Center for Translational Neuroscience (2020, July 30). A Hardship Chain Reaction: Financial Difficulties Are Stressing Families' and Young Children's Wellbeing during the Pandemic, and It Could Get a Lot Worse. Medium.

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## Coregulation

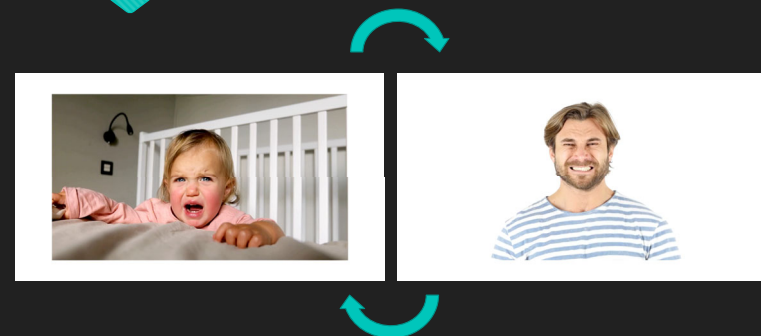
Self-regulation develops in a child who experiences their parent's or caregiver's calm repeatedly when the child becomes distressed or co-regulation.



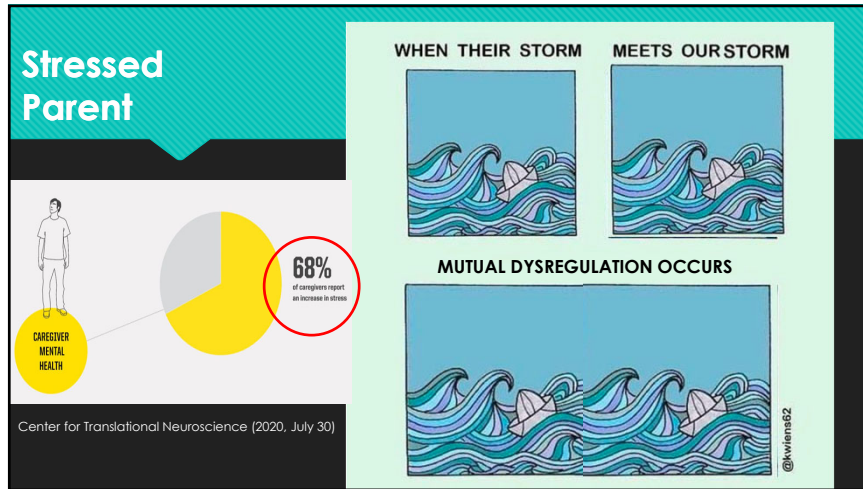
<https://www.beaconservices.org.uk/not-a-calm-parent-not-everyone-can-be/>

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## Mutual Dysregulation & Toxic Stress



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## THE RESILIENCE PROJECT

We can stop Toxic Stress.

GIVE YOUR PATIENTS WITH TOXIC STRESS SOMETHING REMARKABLE. A HEALTHY ADULTHOOD.

THE RESILIENCE PROJECT  
We can stop Toxic Stress.

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/resilience/Pages/Promoting-Resilience.aspx>

Increase protective factors!

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete help in times of need
- Parent knowledge of child development
- Social and emotional competence of children

Life supplies the challenges to test and strengthen the protective factors

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Center on the Developing Child  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

## Listening to a Baby's Brain: Changing the Pediatric Checkup to Reduce Toxic Stress

Listening to a baby's heartbeat. Examining a toddler's ears. Testing a preschooler for exposure to lead. These critical screenings have long been the hallmarks of early childhood checkups.

Now, leading pediatricians are recommending major changes to the checkups of the future. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) wants primary care doctors to screen their youngest patients for social and emotional difficulties that could be early signs of toxic stress.

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## Bridging the Gap

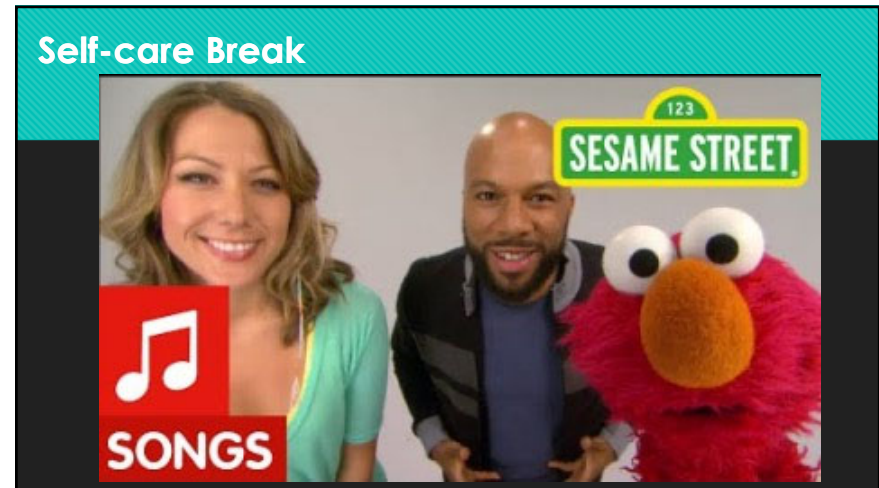
- Offer concrete help
- Foster parental resilience
- Facilitate social connectedness
- Enhance parent knowledge of child development and social emotional competence in children

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## Resilience Rx

- Latest Bright Futures Guidelines (2017) expanding our ability to provide anticipatory guidance around self-care & stress management
- "Resilience Rx" aligns AAP's recommendations during COVID to help families talk about difficult feelings
- "Resilience Rx" aligns with CDC Recommendations

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## AAP Recommendations during COVID

- "For all ages and stages, **facilitating resilience is key**. Pediatricians can remind families about the strength they provide for their children by being present, empathic, and nurturing. Practicing techniques together such as mindfulness, relaxation, and focusing on the present moment can help the entire family build coping skills to deal with uncomfortable and frightening feelings. When practiced regularly, children and caregivers can build skills that promote self-regulation and greater awareness of their feelings and the feelings of others that last long beyond the duration of the pandemic."

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## CDC Recommendations during COVID

### Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- Take care of your body.
  - Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditate](#) .
  - [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.](#)
  - [Exercise regularly.](#)
  - [Get plenty of sleep.](#)
  - Avoid [excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.](#)
  - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
  - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. [Talk with people](#) you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

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## Resilience Rx



- Trained to focus on behaviors
- Talking about feelings? That's for a counselor...
- Shame factor
- We are perfectly poised to normalize the messy!
- "It's okay that things are hard."

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## Resilience Rx

What gets in the way of positive experiences?

**#1 = STRESS!**

Two step process:

- Notice each feeling
- Care for each feeling



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## Evidenced-Based Buffering Interventions



Source: Adapted from Burke Harris, Nadine, *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018; Gilgoff et al. Adverse Childhood Experiences, outcomes, and interventions. *Pediatric Clinics* 2020; 67(2): 259-73.

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## Resilience Rx

- Age Based Case Studies
- Anticipatory guidance model
- Using real examples from my practice
- The "Anatomy of a Meltdown"
  - How is the child feeling?
  - How is the parent feeling?
  - How do we restore tolerable stress and improve relational health?
  - How do we return to co-regulation (away from mutual dysregulation)?

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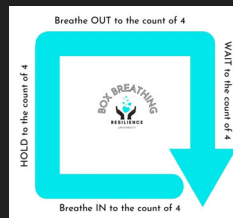
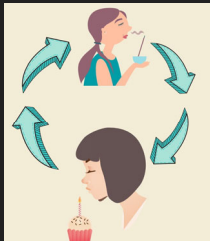
## Tool Kit

- Emotions > Behaviors
- Coaching parents in self-care (respond/don't react)
- Breathing Exercises
- Emotional awareness
- Meditation
- Mindfulness

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## Tool Kit: Breathing

- 5 big Deep Breaths
- Box Breathing
- 4:7:8 Breathing with Mantra



Breathe in and say to yourself: "I am okay."

Hold your breath and say to yourself: "This feeling will come and go."

Breathe out and say to yourself: "I am loved and I can do this."

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## Tool Kit: Emotional Awareness



Each emotion comes and goes like an ocean wave. Your job is to take care of yourself while it is there so it doesn't wash you out to sea!



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## Tool Kit: Meditation



### 1 MAKE A GLITTER JAR

- 1 Plastic Voss Still Water Bottle
- 2 Glitter Glue Tubes
- 1 Packet of Glitter

Mix together and shake!



### 2 SIT IN A QUIET SPOT

Shake the glitter jar.

Sit with the jar in front of you.

Allow your eyes to rest on the glitter as it settles.



### 3 BREATHE

Watch the glitter settle, breathe in through your nose like you are smelling something good all the way into your belly.

Then breathe out through your mouth like you are blowing out a birthday candle.



### 4 REPEAT

Still feeling yucky?

Shake the glitter jar and repeat

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## Tool Kit: Mindfulness



### 5 FIND 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE



### 4 FIND 4 THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH



### 3 FIND 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR



### 2 FIND 2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL



### 1 FIND 1 THING YOU CAN TASTE



### STEP 1: HOW ARE YOUR TOES?

Bring your attention to your toes. Notice your left toes, then your right. Lightly bring your attention to each toe, one at a time. How are they? Does anything hurt? Then go up to your foot. How is it feeling? Your ankles? If anything hurts or feels tight, thank it for all its hard work and keep moving on up your body.



### STEP 2: HOW ARE YOUR LEGS?

How are your calves feeling? Are they itchy? Itchy? Numb? Notice if they ache and thank them. Keep moving up to your knees. How are your knees? If your knees hurt, thank them for all their hard work carrying you around and move on. Move up. How are your thighs? Your hips? Does anything hurt? If so, notice it lightly and move on.



### STEP 3: CHECK IN WITH YOUR BELLY, CHEST & THEN YOUR ARMS

Check in with your belly. How does it feel? Is it tight? Or soft? Are you hungry? Move up to your chest. How does it feel? Are you breathing easily? How is your heart? Place your hand on your heart and feel it beating. Do you notice any tightness or heaviness? If you did just breathe deeply. Notice your breath moving in and out. Move on to your shoulders. Are they tight? Then down your arms. How are your elbows? Wrists? Hands? Fingers?



### STEP 4: MOVE UP TO YOUR NECK AND YOUR HEAD

Check in with your neck. Is it tight? Does it hurt? Thank it for holding your head on so well. Move up to your jaw. Are you clenching? Are your teeth sore? How is your nose? Your eyes? Are they itchy? Heavy? What about your forehead? Your ears? Just notice, lightly. If anything is bothering you and thank each part of your body for all its hard work.

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## Age Based Anticipatory Guidance Resilience Rx

- Infancy (<1 yr)
- Toddlers (1-2 yr)
- Pre-K (3-4 yr)
- Middle Childhood/Elementary (5-10 yr)
- Teens (11-21 yr)

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## Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance for Parents: Infancy

Every baby has his own unique personality or temperament that is unlike any other. You can begin to understand your baby's temperament by:

Watching how he responds to you and the other people around him

Noticing how he reacts to objects he sees, hears, and touches

Observing how active or quiet he seems to be

Becoming more aware of his moods and behaviors

Others who care for your baby should also understand his temperament. Help them by describing your baby's likes, dislikes, needs, and responses.

It is normal to feel frustrated when your baby is fussy and hard to console. No matter how frustrating it may be, never, never shake, hit, or slap your baby. Shaking can lead to blindness; can damage your baby's eyes, brain, or spinal cord; and can even cause seizures or death.

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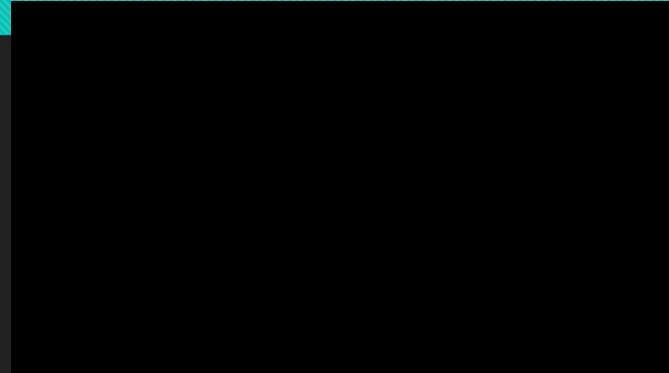
## Infancy

- Address parental stress
- Identify current self-care strategies
- Brain-storm around other options
- "Very few true parenting emergencies"
- "It's okay for things to not be okay"



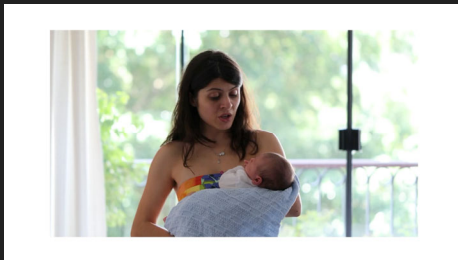
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## "Resilience Rx"



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## Infancy



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## Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance: "Managing Emotions" 2-5 years

### Discussion questions:

- Does your child have a will of her own? How and when does she show it?
- Is your child having frequent temper tantrums?
- What seems to trigger the tantrums? How do you respond to them?
- What kinds of things do you find yourself saying "no" to?
- Tell me how you set limits for your child. How do you discipline her?

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## Toddler



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## Toddler

- Can feel embarrassing
- Lack of perceived control
- Child having unpleasant feelings (?identify)
- Toddler needs coregulation
- Singing!



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## Goodnight Body with Elmo on Headspace



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## Match the energy

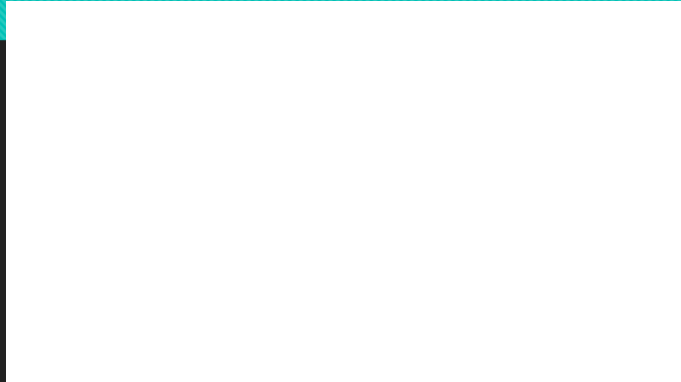
- High energy ↔ low energy "stress buster"
- Use existing parenting strategies intentionally to harness power of nervous system
- "Brain Aligned Parenting"
- Perfectly imperfect parenting
- Not going to ruin them for life



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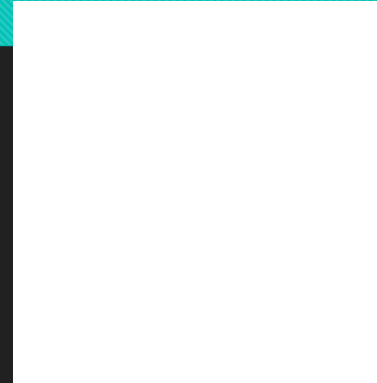


## Transitions



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## The Boy who Loved Frogs



- List of things for each "step"
- Parent notices energy level/feelings
- Addresses these needs rather than focusing on behaviors
- Parent practices self-care too

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## Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance: Middle Childhood/Elementary

### For the Parent

What does your child do when he feels stressed, angry, or frustrated?  
Has he had any recent stresses in the family or at school?  
What concerns or worries has your child shared with you?  
How do you try to help him handle his mistakes and disappointments?

### For the Child

What are some things that make you worried or mad? How do you handle those feelings?  
Who do you usually talk to about these things?  
How do your parents and other adults help you when you make mistakes? Are disappointed?  
Get upset or angry?

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## And then there was math....



- Not wanting to do school work
- Only wants to play video games
- Parents get frustrated
- Fear Of Ruining Them For Life (#FORTFL)
- Time for self-care

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## And then there was math....



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## Elementary



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### Bright Futures Guidance for Parents: Middle Childhood

Children with loving and supportive parents generally have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves. You can help your child feel good about herself by:

- Giving her lots of hugs and showing her you love her
- Spending individual time with her doing things she enjoys
- Taking part in activities together (at home, at school, and in your community)
- Talking with her, listening, and encouraging her to express her feelings

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### Bright Futures Guidance for Parents: Middle Childhood

Let your child try different types of activities such as sports, art, and music. This will help her to find things that she is good at and will give her a chance to challenge herself in a positive way.

If your child doesn't succeed at something right away, encourage her to try again. You may be tempted to do things for her if they are hard, but she will feel better about herself if you help her to do things for herself. Praise her for trying and for making progress toward a goal, not just for succeeding.

Age-appropriate chores will teach your child responsibility and help her to feel that she has a valuable role to play in the family. Include her in decisions about the chores she will do, when she will do them, and how. Even if she complains about doing her chores, she will feel good about what she is able to do.

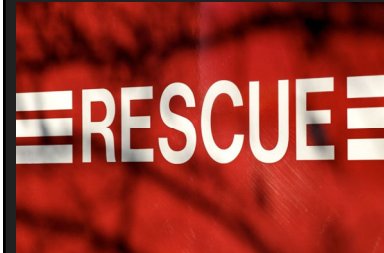
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## Extracting from video games



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## Extracting from video games



- Rescue mission
- Empower both parents and tweens to practice breathing/self-care
- Safe-word
- Go into video games

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## Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidelines: Parents of Teens

Let your teen know that you love him just the way he is. Point out the things that make him special—his great smile, sense of humor, or concern for others. Knowing that he is loved, valued, and supported will help protect him from negative feelings and self-doubt.

Praise the things your teen does right and recognize his efforts as well as his achievements. Correct him when it's necessary, but don't be overly critical. Avoid insulting comments and belittling messages that can lead to his having feeling bad about himself.

It's not easy being a teen. There are pressures to do well in so many aspects of life. Make sure that your goals for your teen are realistic. Never make him feel that he is not "living up" to your expectations. When he doesn't do as well as you or he would hope, praise his efforts and encourage him to work harder next time.

Your teen is more likely to avoid risky behaviors if he is involved in activities that interest him and make him feel good about himself. Attend as many of these events as possible. He may not say so, but he really wants you to be there!

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## Bright Futures Guidelines for the Teen

There is no one else exactly like you. Accept and appreciate yourself for who you are—both inside and out. Try not to compare yourself with others. Value yourself instead and be the best "you" that you can be.

We each have our own set of talents and strengths. Think about the things that you do well and how you'd like to improve. Try harder at the things you already do and try new things that interest you.

Step out of your "comfort zone" and take on new challenges to increase your self-confidence. Join a club or take part in an activity you've never tried before—sports, volunteering, music. This will help you discover new interests you can develop and could even lead to friendships with others who have the same interests as you.

Spend time with friends who listen to you, respect you, understand you, and share your beliefs and values

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## Teens

- More challenging choices
- Parents feel fear, frustration, anger
- Can't just do shock and awe
- Have to integrate resilience



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## Teens



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## Teens

### Key Strategies:

- Parents need to be aware of their own stress level & take care of themselves
- Parents need to not take away teens emerging coping skills (work to extinguish unhealthy ones one at a time but only once teen has a new one in place)
- "What helps you when...?" Ask them!
- Can't do school work or think logically when prefrontal cortex offline
- Can't expect high energy behavior if sad/lonely/depressed
- Matching expectations for behavior with emotional health/state

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### RESOURCES

**Building Belonging & Mattering in Teens**  
Through Outdoor Activities

**What We Do at Teens to Trails**

**Mission:**  
Connect high school students to life-changing outdoor experiences

**Vision:**  
All teens have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, together.

[www.teentotrails.org](http://www.teentotrails.org) | [info@teentotrails.org](mailto:info@teentotrails.org)

**Youth Connection**

**20 years of mattering**

**About Apex**

- Our Mission (newly revised): Apex actively and intentionally connects Southern Maine youth with their communities.
- Our youth: primarily Whitehead-based area, 1-10 grades, any youth welcome through our majority low-income, working-class background, with multiple AIG.
- Our values/priorities:
  - Relationship orientation with and to others
  - Respect for individual choice
  - Authenticity
  - Openness to opportunity
  - Outdoor and experiential education
  - High quality, responsive youth programming
  - Support for youth and working from where they are

**Long-range outcomes (reaching "the Apex")**

- At least 2 established mentor relationships in the community beyond school and family
- A written post-secondary plan
- A complete framework for readiness, developed and demonstrated
- A personal plan including housing, financial wellness, mental & physical health, social and civic engagement
- Demonstrate active participation and stewardship in the natural world

Maine Resilience Building Network

**ACCELERATE YOUTH**

**Powerful Enjoyable**

**Essential**

**Leadership education to accelerate individual, community and global success.**

**Save The Dates For AY Leadership Camp**

July 12-16th (ages 12 and 13)

July 19th-23rd (ages 14-17)

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## THANK YOU!

Questions?

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[www.gretchenpianka.com](http://www.gretchenpianka.com)

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