



38 Magdalen Road, London SW18 3NP

BUILDING RESILIENCE GUIDANCE

Clubs can play an important role in helping children and young people build emotional resilience.

This could be coping with and overcoming defeat in a tournament, coping with bullying or facing other difficulties. Resilient young people and adults could adapt to, handle and overcome difficult situations. However, keep in mind that being resilient doesn't mean that children or young people won't experience any difficulty, distress or emotional pain and sadness when bullied. It's how they deal with that emotional pain that matters. And when children and young people are resilient, they will cope with bullying, other challenges and disappointment much more effectively than those who are not resilient.

Top tips for building resilience:

- **Make** sure children and young people feel accepted at your club. If they consistently feel accepted and liked for who they are and their differences, individuality and skills are valued, they will be more able to cope with stress and adversity.
- **Address** any problems immediately, never pretend not to notice a problem. Ignoring the fact that a child or young person child is struggling or dealing with bullies will not encourage them to toughen up and move on. Instead, it leaves them feeling alone. Make sure if any child has an issue that you address it immediately.
- **Take** time to actively listen to a child or young person if they are distressed, thank them for having the confidence to talk to you – Don't underestimate the impact something is having on them and go through the different options for resolving an issue. Talk about the pros and cons of each option and allow the child to choose the best course of action. Saying things like "if you are being bullied online just close down your face book account" is neither realistic nor appropriate. Help the child take control of this situation.

- **Help** children see that there is a future beyond this current situation, whether that is getting over losing an important match or being bullied. The key is not to keep focusing on the negative, but to encourage positive thinking – what can they and the club do to help them discover what they can learn from the situation, what they could do differently next time and helping them to look forward.

- **Challenge** self-critical behaviours. When children have a critical inner voice, it's important that you challenge this type of thinking. Just as you build confidence when a child doubts their ability to play tennis the same applies when talking and listening to children talking about how they feel about themselves

- **Help** a child learn to calm down when they feel like they are falling apart emotionally or when they are aggressive and angry. This applies with coping with the emotional demands of playing competitive sport as well as coping with parental expectation or bullying. Help children to recognise what they are feeling and their reactions and talk about how they could handle things differently

- **Children** experiencing difficulties and bullying need to feel safe and find a space where they can experience pleasure and humour in life. Playing tennis, social activities and the club environment could be that safe space that helps an individual enjoy life.

Most importantly be a good role model. Telling children and young people what to do or how to behave in certain situations rarely has as much impact as leading by example. If the adult members of the club demonstrate that they can handle difficult situations, whether that is losing a tennis match or coping with other difficulties in life and be able to recover and bounce back, children and young people will learn by your example

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