

Got Bounce? Ten Tips for Teens to Build Resilience

Building resilience — the ability to cope with the fears and realities of growing up in a world of uncertainty and terror — is the centerpiece of a new campaign by the American Psychological Association (APA) aimed at teens. One APA brochure, “The Guide for Parents and Teachers,” targets younger children through advice to the adults who care for them. The second, “Got Bounce?” is written for teens. Both are available online at apahelpcenter.org/resilience/kids_teens.html. Here are some tips, adapted from “Got Bounce?”

1. **Get together.** Talk with your friends and, yes, your parents. Connect to your community.
2. **Cut yourself some slack.** When something bad happens to you, it may heighten daily stresses. Go a little easy on yourself, and on your friends.
3. **Create a hassle-free zone.** Make your room or apartment a “hassle-free zone” — not that you keep everyone out, but home should be a haven free from stress and anxieties.
4. **Stick to the program.** During a time of major stress, map out a routine and stick to it.
5. **Take care of yourself.** Be sure to take care of yourself — physically, mentally, and spiritually. And get enough sleep.
6. **Take control.** Even in the midst of tragedy, you can move toward goals one small step at a time. Bad times make us feel out of control. Grab some of that control back by taking decisive action.
7. **Express yourself.** If talking doesn't work, do something else to capture your emotions — start a journal or create art.
8. **Help somebody.** Nothing gets your mind off your own problems like solving someone else's.
9. **Put things in perspective.** Learn some relaxation techniques, whether it's thinking of a particular song in times of stress, or taking a deep breath to calm down. Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing.
10. **Turn it off.** Stay informed — you may even have homework that requires you to watch the news. But try to limit the amount of news you take in, whether from television, newspapers, or magazines, or the Internet.