

GRADE 9

SUGGESTED TIME

40 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- Students will become familiar with the definition of resiliency and how it relates to drug, alcohol, and gambling use.
- Students will become aware of characteristics of resiliency.
- Students will have a chance to explore their own personal resiliency.

ALBERTA LEARNING OUTCOME LINKS

- Grade 9 *Health and Life Skills, Wellness Choices*
- Safety and Responsibility: W-9.11
- Use personal resiliency skills

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Handout **Characteristics of resiliency** located on page 3 of this resource.
- *The Resilient Self, How Survivors of Troubled Families Rise Above Adversity* by Steven and Sybil Wolin.
- AADAC's resiliency campaign resources. Available from the AADAC office nearest you.
- AADAC's video *Walk the Walk: The Art of Building Resilience in Youth*. Available from the AADAC office nearest you.
- Web sites:

www.resiliency.com

This Web site provides an overview of the journal *Resiliency in Action*, which focuses on research and information, and on how to facilitate the practical application and evaluation of resiliency.

www.projectresilience.com

This Web site offers training and products for professionals in education, treatment and prevention, and promotes a strengths-based approach for both youth and adults struggling to overcome hardships.

We all have the same needs. We have physical needs like safety, food, and shelter. We need love and a sense of belonging. We need to be treated with respect, to have some power over our lives, to find life meaningful, and to feel that we have accomplished something worthwhile.

Not all kids get their needs fulfilled. They may grow up in abusive or neglectful families, or in life-threatening environments. They are labelled "at-risk" kids.

It's true that some of them will never get off the ground. They feel defeated when they fail at school, get involved in crime or substance abuse, become parents at an early age, or are just unable to keep a job or a home. They are unable to find the resources they need to live.

It's also true that most "at-risk" kids succeed in spite of setbacks. They become caring, capable, contributing members of society. Resiliency is the ability that we all have to overcome difficult life circumstances.

Resiliency is not rare. Every child has the potential to be resilient. They can learn to solve problems, understand their circumstances, have good relationships with other people, be responsible for their actions, find humour in their troubles, and seize opportunities to be creative and change the world around them. They can learn to believe in themselves, in a brighter future, and in the basic goodness of the world. The factors that help us become resilient people are:

- a) having caring and positive relationships in our lives,
- b) having high expectations placed on us, and
- c) having the opportunity to contribute and participate in our families, schools, and communities.

When children have these three conditions present in their lives, they are more likely to develop the traits that make them able to overcome adversity.

What has this got to do with addictions?

When people have hardship in their lives, they try to find some way of coping. Some choose unhealthy ways of coping, which may include

gambling or using alcohol and other drugs. If we can provide kids with a sense of confidence and self worth, we can help to prevent the onset of such problems.

People need to know that they can rely on their abilities and their strengths to see them through the good and bad times. The prevention of addictions includes strategies such as social support, challenging expectations, and chances for meaningful involvement.

These are the skills that you have, if you are resilient.

- 1. Perceptiveness** – You understand people and situations and are able to question what is happening in your family, school, or community.
- 2. Service** – You give of yourself to others, or to a cause that you believe in.
- 3. Independence** – You can separate yourself from your family troubles, and are confident that you can make your own way in the world.
- 4. Optimism** – You have hope for a bright future for yourself and the world.
- 5. Connection** – You can seek out support from others and form caring and positive relationships.
- 6. Self-motivation** – You have the drive to fulfill your dreams and goals.
- 7. Creativity** – You can express your experiences in a constructive and helpful way.
- 8. Spirituality** – You have faith in something greater than yourself.
- 9. Sense of humour** – You can see the funny side of the world and your circumstances, and use this ability to put things into perspective.
- 10. Morality** – When you make a decision, you use the information you have about the situation and you consult your own conscience (your sense of right and wrong).

Activity

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

This is a trust-building activity where a group, standing in a circle, supports a person who is in the middle as they fall backwards. The group, very carefully, passes the individual around the circle. In this variation, each of the people in the outside circle is labelled as a “resiliency” and as the person is passed from one resiliency to another they can see how they can be used as a support.

DEBRIEF

How did it feel to be supported?

How did it feel to support someone else?

What would have happened if someone had let go?

How do you use your innate strengths to handle problems in your lives?

Characteristics of resiliency

PERCEPTIVENESS

You understand people and situations and are able to question what is happening in your family, school, or community.

SERVICE

You give of yourself to others, or to a cause that you believe in.

INDEPENDENCE

You can separate yourself from your family troubles, and are confident that you can make your own way in the world.

OPTIMISM

You have hope for a bright future for yourself and the world.

CONNECTION

You can seek out support from others and form caring and positive relationships.

SELF-MOTIVATION

You have the drive to fulfill your dreams and goals.

CREATIVITY

You can express your experiences in a constructive and helpful way.

SPIRITUALITY

You have faith in something greater than yourself.

SENSE OF HUMOUR

You can see the funny side of the world and your circumstances, and use this ability to put things into perspective.

MORALITY

When you make a decision, you use the information you have about the situation and you consult your own conscience (your sense of right and wrong).