



Dr Ruth MacConville and Paralympian Elizabeth Wright share their top tips for how parents and carers can help build Grit & Resilience in their children and young people (CYP) in order to cope better with feelings of anxiety.

Ruth's top tips to help build resilience in children:

- Help CYP **build positive beliefs in their abilities** and remind them of their strengths whilst **NOT comparing...**
- Sometimes the best thing that we can do to strengthen CYP's resilience is to **get out of their way**
- Help them find a sense of purpose to their life – **DO something for others?** An old fashioned mantra?
- Develop a strong **social network** with no blood suckers
- CYP live up or they live down to **adults' expectations** of them
- **Listening** attentively to CYP is more important than any words we say routinely or in a crisis
- Nothing is as important as what children see us doing on a daily basis – **we are their role model**
- **Embrace change** – learn how to adapt and thrive
- **Be optimistic** and understand that setbacks can be learnt from and remain hopeful even when the worst happens
- Teach them how to **nurture themselves** – in the right way
- Develop and **PRACTICE** their problem-solving skills
- **Set themselves goals**, making them realistic and breaking them down into manageable chunks



- Take steps to solve problems and **focus on the progress** that they have made thus far and then plan next steps, rather than becoming discouraged by the amount of work that still needs to be accomplished.
- **Give your children chores** – they are an essential contributor to success in life and are a powerful predictor of mental health in adulthood. Chores build can-do, want-to-do feelings that lead a CYP to feel industrious rather than incapable.
- Keep working on their skills! Remember that **building resilience and being 'happy' are both A JOURNEY.**

Elizabeth's top tips to help our children gain Grit:

- **Failure is simply an opportunity to learn** and grow and be even better next time.
- **No-one is perfect**, grit is sticking with something even when it doesn't look the way that you want it to look.
- **Let children try things without your help**, that's not to say you don't support them in any way, but let them lead on school projects, studying for exams, training for sport/music/theatre etc.
- **Have role models** - one way to engage with role models is to have your children pick someone they admire for being gritty and resilient, and whenever they are going through a tough time simply ask them "what would (insert role model) do in this situation?"



- **Be a role model yourself**, talk to your children when you are going through a tough time, let them know that you struggle too, but also let them in on how you overcome your problems.
- **Routine is a good** way to develop good habit, self regulation, and efficiency; let your children lead the way in how their routine will work best for them.
- Don't just congratulate on your child getting an A or winning the competition, congratulate them on what got them there, for being determined, focused, persevering, etc. This shows that **it is the effort that is important and not the result**.
- Discuss with your child about when it is appropriate to be gritty and when it isn't. **Overuse of character strengths is a problem to consider**.
- Grit is considered by some a character trait, and as a character trait it would be classed as a performance trait. Performance traits are good to develop, but are not the primary traits to focus on, instead, **remember to balance performance traits with moral traits, such as kindness, honesty, courage, and loyalty**.
- Make sure that when you are encouraging grit in your child it is in something that they are **genuinely interested and engaged in**. You wouldn't like to be forced to become a marathon runner if you hate running, so why would be force our children to play the piano when they would rather draw, or force them to work towards being a Doctor when they have a passion for social activism.