Kenneth Ginsberg’s -- 7 C’s of Resilience

Competence
Competence is the ability or know-how to handle situations effectively. It's not a vague feeling or hunch that “I can do this.” Competence is acquired through actual experience. Children can't become competent without first developing a set of skills that allows them to trust their judgments, make responsible choices, and face difficult situations.

Confidence
True confidence, the solid belief in one's own abilities, is rooted in competence. Children gain confidence by demonstrating their competence in real situations. Children who experience their own competence and know they are safe and protected develop a deep-seated security that promotes the confidence to face and cope with challenges. When parents support children in finding their own islands of competence and building on them, they prepare kids to gain enough confidence to try new ventures and trust their abilities to make sound choices.

Connection
Children with close ties to family, friends, school, & community are more likely to have a solid sense of security that produces strong values and prevents them from seeking destructive alternatives. Family is the central force in any child’s life, but connections to civic, educational, religious, and athletic groups can also increase a person’s sense of belonging to a wider world and being safe within it.

Character
Children need a fundamental sense of right and wrong to ensure they are prepared to make wise choices, contribute to the world, and become stable adults. Children with character enjoy a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. They are more comfortable sticking to their own values and demonstrating a caring attitude toward others.

Contribution
When children realize that the world is a better place because they are in it, they understand the importance of personal contribution. They gain a sense of purpose that can motivate them. They will not only take actions and make choices that improve the world, but they will also enhance their own competence, character, and sense of connection. Teens who contribute to their communities will be surrounded by reinforcing thank yous instead of the low expectations and condemnation so many teens endure.

Coping
Children who learn to cope effectively with stress are better prepared to overcome life’s challenges. The best protection against unsafe, worrisome behaviors may be a wide repertoire of positive, adaptive coping strategies.

Control
When children realize that they can control the outcomes of their decisions and actions, they’re more likely to know that they have the ability to do what it takes to bounce back. On the other hand, if parents make all the decisions, children are denied opportunities to learn control.

Parents, what are you willing to do NOW with this information?

Attributions made to Kenneth Ginsberg, MD from his book, Building Resilience in Children and Teens.