BIG FIVE Parenting Skill #5:

TEACHING KIDS COPING SKILLS

There are times when kids need to bounce back. But they do need the support of adults who can teach them how to cope when life throws them a curve ball. Helping kids cope is one of the Big Five skill sets parents need if they are to maintain kid’s mental health in this modern, sometimes difficult world.

Here are my favourite five coping skills.

1. **See the funny side of a situation.** Humour is THE great coping strategy. It reduces stress and heightens feelings of control.

2. **Park their bad thoughts somewhere.** The ability to compartmentalise your life and keep bad events from impacting on all areas is a powerful coping skill. “Don’t let this wreck your day” is an important message to get across to all kids.

3. **Let’s talk about it.** A problem shared is a problem halved. Resilient kids seek solace in the company of others, when they experience difficulty. That’s why social connection is so important for kids.

4. **Keep your prospective.** Some kids catastrophize (‘this is the worst thing to happen to me …..ever’) and others will personalise (‘it is my fault that I have no friends’) when bad things happen. These types of reactions exaggerate anxiety. One way kids can keep a sense of proportion is to ask them to identify their problem or difficulty on a disaster scale 1 to 10. Another is to wind back their language.

5. **Set a goal or two.** Help kids look ahead rather than backwards when bad stuff happens. “Let’s take the first step” can have a powerful impact on a child or young person when life doesn’t go their way.

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Courtesy of your Positive Behaviour Support Coach, Pamela Filer