Supporting Recovery & Resiliency - What do you need to know?

- Children and youth with mental health needs are more common than you might think. The MECA Study (Methodology for Epidemiology of Mental Disorders in Children and Adolescents) estimated that almost 8.4 million of U.S. children ages 9 to 17 had a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder associated with at least minimum impairment. This translates to a prevalence of almost 21% or 1 out of five children.¹

- Despite this prevalence many children and youth do not have access to supports and services that would help them develop resiliency and foster their recovery. It is estimated that 75% to 80% of children and youth in need of mental health services do not receive them.²

- Because of this unmet need we must do everything that we can to help support children, youth, and families develop resiliency and increase their chances for recovery. One of the best ways you can promote resiliency is through helping young people develop a better sense of self efficacy. A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided.³

- Peer to peer support and modeling is a great way to foster positive self efficacy. It is in peer relationships that youth broaden self-knowledge of their capabilities. Peers serve several important efficacy functions. Youth who are most experienced and competent provide models of successful styles of thinking and behavior. In addition, peers provide highly informative comparisons for judging and verifying one’s self-efficacy.⁴

- Another way to help promote self efficacy is by supporting youth’s participation in their case planning. According to recovery experts each recovering person must ultimately become the architect and engineer of his or her own recovery.⁵

- When children and youth can effectively participate in their case planning they have the opportunity to experience both setting and achieving their own goals. The most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences. Successes build a robust belief in one’s personal efficacy. After people become convinced they have what it takes to succeed, they persevere in the face of adversity and quickly rebound from setbacks.⁶

What can you do?

- Encourage your state, local and federal legislators to support legislation that creates and maintains peer to peer programs in your community.
- Help youth access trainings and resources that will help them become better advocates.
- Support youth participation in community youth groups, and become a mentor.


⁴ Ibid
