

The Power of Mindsets: Nurturing Resilience in Children with Special Needs

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The power of mindsets

Mindsets: The assumptions and expectations we have for ourselves and others that guide our behavior

What is the mindset of adults who truly touch the hearts and minds of children with learning and attention problems?

What is the mindset of many youngsters with learning and attention problems?

Features of a positive mindset

To believe in the capacity of children with learning and attention problems to overcome adversity and become resilient:
The importance of a “charismatic adult”

“I want to be a charismatic adult. What do I do?”

Features of a positive mindset

Exercises to promote empathy: Some basic questions to consider

- Would I want anyone to say or do to me what I have said or done to this youngster?
- In anything I say or do with a youngster what do I hope to accomplish?
- Am I saying or doing it in a way where the youngster feels respected and can truly hear what I have to say and respond constructively?

Features of a positive mindset

To be empathic: To gather invaluable information from the stories of children and adolescents who are struggling in school. What are some of the main themes that capture the mindset of many of these students?

The negative mindset of many youth who are struggling in school

Helplessness: Lack of control or influence about events that happen in one's life

Hopelessness: Nothing will ever change

Others don't understand and can't help me

The negative mindset of many youth who are struggling in school

I make little difference in the world

General feeling that things are not fair

Features of a more positive mindset

To understand the main characteristics of the mindset of resilient children so that we can have guideposts for reinforcing this mindset in all of our interactions with youngsters with learning and attention problems: Let's look at several of the main features of this mindset, all of which are interrelated

The mindset of resilient children

To feel comfortable with and appreciate that others can be of support and help

To be able to define what one has control over and to focus one's time and energy on these areas of control

The mindset of resilient children

To believe that one can solve problems and make decisions, which promotes a sense of ownership

To define and reinforce one's strengths or "islands of competence" without denying or running from problematic areas

The mindset of resilient children

To believe that one can contribute to and make a positive difference in the world

To possess self-discipline and self-control

The mindset of resilient children

To believe that mistakes are experiences from which to learn

To possess a sense of humor that includes being able to laugh at but not ridicule oneself
