

Challenge Reflections

Fear of Failure

One factor that continually holds children and young people back is the fear of failure. If they are afraid to fail, when faced with a challenge, they are likely to either give up before they even begin or become anxious because they do not achieve something the first time.

There will be times in their future where they face a goal that seems too big to be achievable. It is our role now as parents, youth leaders and role models to enable our children and young people to build the resilience they need to face these type of challenges head on. This is not an easy task; however, the following six healthy strategies can be explored:

1. Role model positive behaviour through changes in our own attitude about failure. For example, by accepting and even celebrating (where appropriate) any mistakes we make.
2. Emphasize effort instead of ability in your response to both success and failure. It is important to talk through tangible approaches that they can undertake to progress rather than just say 'well done for trying'.
3. Demonstrate that they are cared for unconditionally. Failure tends to be inherently linked to the notion of one's own value or self-worth, so it is important to reassure them that you will continue to care for them in the same way regardless of whether they succeed or not.
4. Discuss the worst-case scenario to help them understand that many of their fears and concerns are unwarranted. This can empower them by allowing everything to be put into perspective.
5. Allow them to fail and then, thoughtfully and kindly, help them focus on the solution. We should not allow ourselves to shield our children or young people from facing consequences, but instead allow them to form strategies and find their own solutions.
6. Have open conversations about success and failure. We should be open to sharing our own moments of doubt and feelings when things have not gone to plan. This helps children and young people to know they are not alone in their concerns. In what ways do you think you could serve/care for/ help those around in your family, street and wider community at this time?

This weekend why not encourage your children and young people to undertake a task that they find challenging. It could be a great way to introduce discussions on courage, optimism and growth. No child or young person should be held captive by self-doubt or prevented from becoming all they are designed to be.