

Research Summary

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Stress and Resilience for Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Review of Key Factors and Recommendations for Practitioners

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■ A QUICK LOOK:

Stress in parenting can affect parents' health and ability to successfully meet the needs of their children. This can be especially true for parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who face unique challenges that parents of children without disabilities may not experience. Even with the challenges, many parents seem to show levels of resilience. This resilience should be supported by practitioners who work with these families. Conducting a systematic review of research article databases, researchers recently revealed key factors that support resilience in parents of children with IDD.

■ KEY FINDINGS:

The literature review revealed three key factors when it comes to parental resilience:

- **Coping style:** the most effective strategy for parents with children with IDD to cope with stress is a problem-focused approach, in which internal and external demands are altered to help prevent the stressful situation from happening again.
- **Optimism:** maintaining a positive outlook helps parents look past negative aspects of situations and restore and maintain the resources needed to effectively manage the stress of caring for and raising a child with IDD.
- **Social Support:** the availability of family, friends, and other resources such as support groups and professional practitioners help develop and maintain stability during stressful times or situations and allow the parents of a child with IDD a chance to alleviate the physical and emotional stress parenting can produce.

■ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:

- Using a questionnaire, assess and identify how parents cope with stress, what type of social support they have, and what level of optimism they have about current and future situations.
- Provide parents with skill training and educational materials based on the types of supports they need.
- When necessary, make suggestions or referrals to support groups and work with parents to integrate natural supports into daily routines to alleviate stressors.
- Highlight the parents' strengths and provide them with a sense of hope for the future.
- Focus on the parents' own interpretation of their situation and help normalize their experience.

■ MORE ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

The researchers conducted a comprehensive review of three major online databases: CINAHL, PubMed, and PsycINFO. Gathering peer-reviewed, relevant quantitative and qualitative studies, they analyzed previous findings related to parenting stress, IDD, resilience, optimism, coping style, positive emotions, and social supports to generate common factors that support parental resilience and overcoming stress.

- **LEARN MORE:** Read more details about the article at: <https://idd.vcurrvcu.org/resources/database/details.cfm?articleID=992>

- **QUESTIONS? FEEDBACK?** Do you have questions or feedback about putting this research into practice? We're waiting to hear from you! **Send us your questions or feedback: rrtcvcu@gmail.com**

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