

Building Resilience, Not Resumes

A counselor’s guide to helping students bounce back from setbacks

Today’s high school students are navigating an unprecedented mix of pressure, uncertainty, and performance anxiety—especially when it comes to the college admissions process. As a counselor, you’re in a powerful position to support not just their academic planning, but their emotional development as well. Helping students build resilience and develop healthy coping skills can make all the difference in how they manage stress, setbacks, and self-doubt.

This infographic offers 7 practical tips and strategies drawn from conversations with experienced mental health professionals and school counselors. For deeper insights and real-world examples, check out the **full article** in the Apply Counselor & Advisor Resource Hub.



Understand the **Real Stressors**

Look beyond deadlines. Many students feel overwhelmed by uncertainty, pressure to perform, and fear that their efforts may not matter.



Build **Resilience Early**

Embed resilience into daily interactions—not just during senior year. Help students view challenges as part of their growth.



Normalize **Setbacks**

Use reframing language such as “Rerouted, not rejected” or “You can be disappointed and still trust good things are coming.”



Connect **First, Then Plan**

Start conversations by checking in emotionally: “What surprised you this week?” or “How are you sleeping?”



Time Management = **Wellness**

Look beyond deadlines. Many students feel overwhelmed by uncertainty, pressure to perform, and fear that their efforts may not matter.



Spot the **Silent Struggles**

Use attendance, grades, and teacher feedback to identify students who may be silently struggling. Look beyond behavior to find the pain.



Promote a **Healthier School Culture**

Celebrate all postsecondary paths. Offer workshops and language that focus on effort, well-being, and fit—not just prestige.



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