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Achieving Resilient and Inspiring Families

IN THIS ISSUE

**The Pregnancy
Journey - Building
Family Resilience
Through Every
Season**



PAGE 2

**Family Resilience:
Staying Strong
Through Life's
Stretches and
Knots**



PAGE 6

**Resilience in
Islam**



PAGE 6



THE SEASONS OF FAMILY RESILIENCE

As we welcome 2026, Project ARIF celebrates five years since its initial pilot. Like many of you starting families, we've faced challenges, and you have been our constant motivation to pursue every possible good. We are honoured to step into the new year with your support — our mission continues.

Every family begins with a journey - quiet hopes, whispered prayers and dreams of tomorrow. From the season of preparing to embark on life together, to the wonder and change of pregnancy, to the tender first months after birth, each step shapes hearts, strengthens bonds, and grows resilience.

There is no perfect time to start a family, except the time chosen by Him. In every moment of planning, waiting, and embracing change, couples learn to lean on one another, trust in His wisdom and find barakah in the journey itself. Pregnancy is a season to discover the body, the heart, and the love that expands with every new life. Postnatally, resilience blossoms in the small victories, quiet patience, and sacred rhythms of family life.

Resilient families are not meant to be perfect. They are families who hold each other with kindness, seek guidance with humility and walk together with faith. At ARIF, we are here to walk beside you - nurturing hearts, strengthening bonds and building families rooted in compassion, love and the light of barakah.

With this bulletin, we thank you for journeying with us all these years. May our partnership continue and touch many of your lives in every way possible.

With love always, Project ARIF.

The Pregnancy Journey - Building Family Resilience Through Every Season

by A/Prof Dr Suzanna Sulaiman

Family resilience is the ability of a couple and their loved ones to adapt, stay strong and grow through life's challenges. In the journey from planning a marriage to forming a family, to welcoming a newborn, resilience is not just about coping - it is about building strong relationships, healthy habits and spiritual grounding.

1. Pre-Pregnancy: Laying a Strong Foundation

Preparing for a family begins long before pregnancy. This season focuses on strengthening the couple's relationship, aligning values, and nurturing physical, emotional, and spiritual readiness. Readiness often includes knowing about maternal and child health, yet there may never feel like a "perfect" time to start a family. If uncertain, seek guidance from Him. There is a blessing in every season, and it will come in His time.

Strengthen the Partnership

- Communicate openly about expectations, hopes and fears.
- Build habits of teamwork - shared decision-making, empathy and accountability.
- Discuss financial planning early (budgeting, savings responsibilities).



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Log on to <https://www.projectarif.sg> for other Project ARIF Resources.

Nurture Health & Wellbeing



- Adopt healthy routines: exercise, a balanced diet, enough sleep and rest.
- Manage stress through mindfulness and supportive conversations intentionally.
- Seek preconception health checks for both husband and wife.
- If you have an underlying medical problem, seek medical help early to optimise the medical condition and discuss the impact of pregnancy on the medical condition and vice versa.
- Once you are ready to embark on this blessed journey of pregnancy, start consuming folic acid.

Spiritual Anchoring

- Make *du'a* for righteous offspring and ease in your journey.
- Strengthen *ibadah* together - *solat* in *jama'ah*, attend classes and *dhikr*.
- View marriage as a trust (*amanah*) and partnership aimed toward *barakah*.

2. Pregnancy: Growing Through Change

Pregnancy transforms the body, mind and family dynamics. Resilience during this period is about adapting to new rhythms in self and people around, while staying connected as a couple.

Emotional & Mental Resilience

- Listen and validate each other's emotions - excitement, fatigue, and anxiety.
- Make time for one another.
- Maintain open, non-judgmental conversations.
- Build a support circle of family, friends and healthcare providers.
- Your elders are usually the best individuals for support and advice.
- Your healthcare providers are meant to provide guidance and advice on the progress of your pregnancy. Having a good relationship with your healthcare provider will give you confidence and trust in the pregnancy and also postnatally.
- Embrace the body changes positively.





Spiritual Strength

- Recite and reflect on *du'a* for protection and ease.
- Read the Qur'an together; *Surah Maryam* is often comforting for expectant mothers.
- Cultivate *syukur* (gratitude) for each milestone, even small ones.

Strengthen Couple Bond

- Husbands play a crucial role - offer emotional support, accompany to check-ups, help with household tasks.
- Learning the process of pregnancy and labour together allows husbands to understand the changes in physical body, mental changes of their pregnant wives
- Prepare together for birth classes, breastfeeding education, financial preparations and birth plans.

3. Postnatal: Adjusting, Healing & Growing Stronger

The first weeks after birth can be overwhelming and challenging. This is the stage where resilience is truly tested - yet also the season where couples grow the closest.

Physical & Emotional Recovery

- Honour the mother's recovery: rest, nourishment and professional support when needed.
- Be attentive to signs of baby blues or postpartum depression.
- Share responsibilities realistically; ask for help without guilt.
- Planning for the next pregnancy is crucial as it allows some time for breastfeeding to establish better, allows wife to recover fully and allows financial to be sufficient for the next pregnancy. Contraception advice should be discussed with your healthcare provider if needed.

Support Each Other

- Maintain kindness in communication, even when tired.
- Celebrate small wins and progress: a successful feeding, a good nap, a peaceful moment.
- Revisit routines and adjust expectations - flexibility builds resilience.



Faith as a Source of Calm

- Begin the baby's life with sunnah practices (azan/iqamah).
- Maintain *dhikr* and *du'a* as grounding tools through sleepless nights
- Remember that parenting is a sacred *amanah*; every effort is rewardable.

Rebuilding Identity as a Family

- Spend time bonding as parents and as a couple.
- Create family rituals; bedtime routines, gratitude moments, shared meals.
- Strengthen trust, teamwork, and patience.



How does a Resilient Family Look Like?

Resilient families are not perfect families. They are families that:

- Communicate with respect
- Support one another through challenges
- Seek knowledge and guidance
- Prioritise emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Believe in growth - not perfection
- Place trust in Allah and take active steps toward healthier outcomes.



The journey from pre-pregnancy to parenting is filled with joys, uncertainties and countless new beginnings. With preparation, compassion, and spiritual grounding, couples can weather challenges together and emerge stronger. At ARIF, we walk with you in this journey - supporting families, nurturing resilience and building a community rooted in compassion and barakah.

Family Resilience: Staying Strong Through Life's Stretches and Knots

by Siti Munawarah bte Maaroof

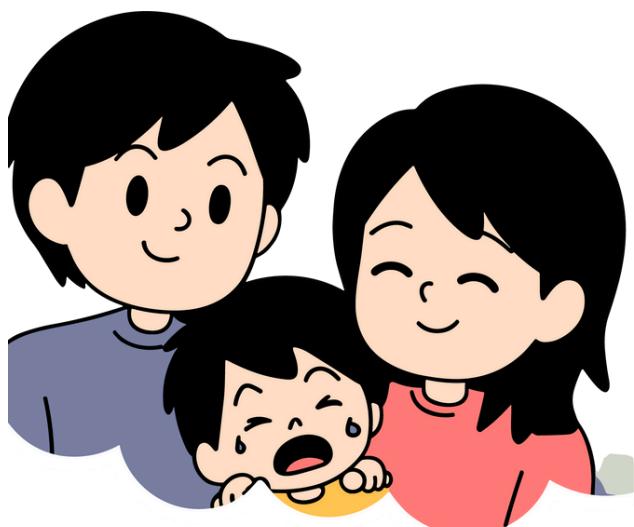


Family life is filled with seasons of growth, adjustment, and change. In the early years of marriage and parenthood especially, families often experience significant "stretch"- physically, emotionally, and relationally. These moments, while challenging, are also where resilience is built.

Stress does not only affect the mind; it shows up in the body. Fatigue, muscle tension, headaches, and disrupted sleep are common signals that families are under strain. Life transitions such as adjusting to shared routines, pregnancy and postnatal recovery, caring for a newborn, returning to work, or supporting elderly parents can place quiet but persistent demands on family health. Recognising these signs early allows families to respond with care rather than push through until exhaustion sets in.



Beyond physical symptoms, stress also shapes how family members relate to one another. When demands increase, communication may become strained, roles and expectations unclear, and emotional reserves depleted. Parents may feel alone in caregiving, weighed down by guilt, or stretched thin by financial and time pressures. Family resilience begins when these experiences are acknowledged as common - not personal shortcomings - and when families give themselves permission to slow down and check in with one another.



Resilient families practise small but intentional pauses. These may take the form of mindful breathing, brief moments of stillness, short walks to reset, or honest conversations about how each person is coping. Such micro-pauses help regulate emotions, reduce reactivity, and create space for understanding. Over time, these simple practices support both emotional well-being and healthier family dynamics.

Every family also encounters "knots"-challenges that change how life looks and feels. Becoming a parent, navigating feeding or sleep difficulties, managing fears about the unknown, adjusting marital relationships, or carrying the weight of parental guilt can all tighten these knots. Yet knots do not weaken a family's foundation. Instead, they remind us of the importance of self-care, help-seeking, flexibility in expectations, and working as a team. Resilience grows when families move away from perfection and towards adaptability.



Importantly, resilience is not built in isolation. Families are strongest when they are supported by one another and by their wider community. Connection - between spouses, extended family members, friends, and support networks - creates shared strength. When families link together, they reduce isolation, share burdens, and move forward with greater confidence and hope.



Family resilience is not about avoiding stress or hardship. It is about learning how to respond with compassion, balance, and unity. Through awareness, care, and connection, families can remain strong - even when life stretches them in unexpected ways.

Resilience in Islam: Persevering with Faith and Purpose

by Ustaz Tajuddin

Resilience is deeply embedded in Islam and is clearly reflected in the lives of the Prophets and the Sahabah (companions). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) endured rejection, persecution, loss of loved ones, and immense hardship, yet he remained steadfast, compassionate, and hopeful. Similarly, the Sahabah faced poverty, exile, and torture for their faith, but their resilience was anchored in strong *iman* (faith) and trust in Allah. Their lives show us that resilience is not about avoiding hardship, but about responding to it with faith and perseverance.

Allah (swt) reminds us that trials are an inevitable part of life:

"Do people think once they say, "We believe", that they will be left without being put to test?" (Qurán, 29:2).

Tests from Allah come in many forms be it personal struggles, workplace stresses, fluctuations in *iman* and many more. Each test requires resilience to persevere without losing faith.



A key foundation of resilience in Islam is *sabr* (patience). Without *sabr*, true resilience is not possible. The Prophet (pbuh) taught the real meaning of *sabr* when he said:

"The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity."
(Al-Bukhari)

This highlights that *sabr* is not delayed acceptance, but the ability to restrain harmful reactions at the moment of difficult.

Allah (swt) also reassures us:

"And be patient! Certainly, Allah does not discount the reward of the good-doers."
(Qurán 11:115)

Sabr requires reflection before reaction and processing the situation and choosing a response that pleases Allah (swt).

Islam also teaches that hardship is temporary. The stories of the Prophet remind us that trials do not last forever. Muslims are encouraged to turn to Allah in *duá* (prayer) as Prophet Ya'qub (AS) said, "I complain of my anguish and sorrow only to Allah." (Qurán, 12:86)

Alongside *duá*, believers must make effort and place their trust in Allah, knowing that His wisdom is perfect:

"Perhaps you dislike something which is good for you and like something which is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know." (Qurán, 2:216)

Ultimately, Islamic resilience is built on *sabr*, *duá*, effort, and *tawakkul*, that is trusting that Allah (SWT) knows best and that every test carries meaning, growth, and mercy.

