

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

What is mental toughness?

It's being in control of your emotions, being poised when challenged and under pressure. It's the ability to maintain focus and to be resilient though intimidation and being able to bounce back from adversity. Mental toughness is being self-assured and learning how to deal with the fear of failure.

What can a parent do?

Don't demand or expect certain performance levels, condemn failure or equate love with performance. Stay away from undue or harsh criticism. DO encourage and support. Reward effort, not outcome. Realize that the consequences of failure are temporary and to learn and to help your athletes learn, enjoy the sport and have fun regardless of outcome.

Discourage statements (and never use them yourself) like: "What if I don't do well?", "I can't blow it now.", or "I don't do well under pressure."

Encourage statements (and use them yourself) like: "I'm going to do the best I can.", "I don't have to feel pressure. I'll just do my job.", and "I'm giving 100 percent and trusting my training."

An excerpt taken from USA Swimming's Swim Parents' Workshop