

## Resilience part 1

So important/ challenging at times/ something we can help children and teens learn to do.

The Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Practical Review  
APRIL 2024, Friday 8.30-9.30AM  
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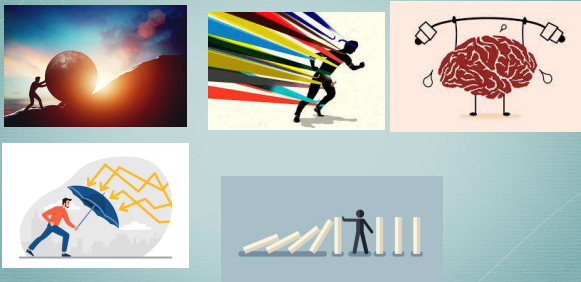
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## In this session

- Describe individual and shared adversity/ stressors.
- Explain resilience not as a set skill; instead a process, protection, sturdiness to keep learning, growing.
- Consider how parents, adults support children towards building resilience (or dilute this capacity).

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The many images....



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(Like the age of Aquarius...🎵🎵)

## THE AGE OF RESILIENCE

What is this seemingly magical capacity?

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## What are threats?



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### Individual risks

- Experiences where there is potential for bodily harm, emotional harm.
- Immediate or anticipated unexpected violence.
- Overwhelming demands that cannot be mastered.

### Collective risks

- Socioeconomic "scarcity".
- Societal endangerment to a group/ targeted violence
- Threats that overwhelm adults, so impair their availability to children.

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## Source of resilience

- “Ordinary magic” (Maston, 2015)/ how life unfolds.
- Protective factors mediate risk—and permit growth in spite of adversity (Garmezy)
- Individual responses matter; luck (resources); attitude (meet the world on their own terms)/ positive social orientation (Werner); evidence of ownership, relationships, reflection (Hauser).
- Never a constant— can be build up or dismantled depending on subsequent events.

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## Nature of resilience

- Stress response system:
  - temperamental sturdiness
  - early interpersonal experiences
- Mediating perceptions: “events are not traumatic unless we experience them as traumatic” and “exposure to potentially traumatic events does not predict later functioning; its only predictive if there is a negative response...if the adversity becomes traumatizing” (Bonanno).
- Positive construal: reframing experiences in terms that can become positive, or emotionally manageable (vs. hot, unregulated). (Ocher).
- Positive psychology/ maintaining locus of control (Seligman).

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## Threats to resilience

- Cumulative of risks: “we can become less resilient—and we can create or exaggerate stressors in our own minds”; children are especially prone/ limited perspective.
- ACES research
- Challenge vs. threat/ attitudes.
- Trivialization of term—and untethered skills (social emotional learning curriculum).

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## Name of the game: support

Resilience comes from how I manage— and support from others is a critical component.

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## Parenting and resilience

- Risks are experiences but also how the child/teen perceives experience.
- Parents and adults bring perspective, knowledge, wisdom (sometimes), resources that can be shared — to scaffold developmental capacities.
- They also bring company— cortisol reregulation in the stress system.



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## I'm not alone

- Threats that can be shared can also be tamed; collective / “we did it”.
- This is more than company, it is creating mastery as a group endeavor.



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## The importance of meaning making

- Meaning making— making sense of an experience—buffers negative interpretations and attributions.
- Purpose is NOT about why something happened— but about how to manage, to regain safety and wellbeing.



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## Advice has a place but...

- Resilience is not about doing the right thing— but about feeling in control again in the face of a threat or danger.
- You are doing it/ vs. let me fix it.
  - Ex. boy with bread sandwich (Garnezy)



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## There are skills to learn...



And with practice, skills work better.

- Importance of:
  - engagement, trust
  - context, meaning
  - understanding at the child's level
  - willingness, deal
  - feedback and re-negotiating
  - positive regard/ encouragement.

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# NOT



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## Resilience and development

- While children need parents (adults), they also need time and space to manage hard and challenging experiences that they have the resources to manage.
- Parents need to assess what their child can do— and let them.
- Helicopter parenting/snowplow parenting/ rescue parenting at a cost.
- Helping children and teens have adversity— and disappointment as part of their resilience building.

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Not every heart  
ache can be fixed,  
but most can be  
survived— .

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## ELEVEN, Sandra Cisneros

"What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are --underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three."

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Resilience, like development happens in back and forth ways. It is not static but with support, it can keep happening.

We all fall down but best when we can get back up.

Three underlying qualities:  
locus of control/ owning; competence.  
relationship value;  
reflection.

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Thanks...  
stay tuned for part 2.

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