

Building Resiliency

All the world is full of suffering.
It is also full of overcoming.
-Helen Keller



Resilience

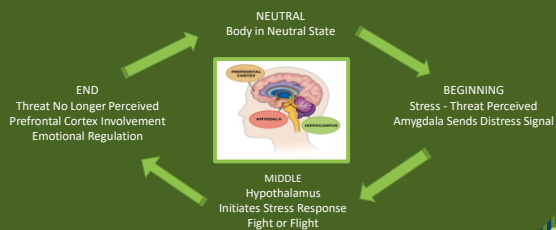
We may encounter many defeats,
but we must not be defeated.
- Maya Angelou

A universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity

*The International Resilience Project
A Guide to Promoting Resilience in Children: Strengthening the Human Spirit
Edith Grotberg Ph.D.*



Adversity and Brain Functioning



The Effects of Stress



Short Term

Brief periods of stress can increase:

- Speed
- Strength
- Alertness

It can focus your energy, motivate and enhance performance.

Long Term

Long term stress can decrease:

- Ability to pay attention
- Impulse control
- Ability to problem solve
- Regulation of emotions

It can shut down the pre-frontal cortex (control tower of the brain)

Children and Youth Stressors

- Trauma and Abuse
- Separation from family
- Social Isolation
- Multiple placements
- Disrupted education
- Identity questions



Resilience to the Rescue

Resilience is related to the ability to activate the prefrontal cortex and calm the brain. The physiological changes that are activated by stress are reversed, thus expanding the capacity to recover from, adapt to, or find a solution to stress challenges or adversity!



Resilience - Factors



- Resilience can be seen and measured.
- Some children demonstrate greater sensitivity to both negative and positive experiences.
- Resilience can be situation-specific.
- Extreme adversity generates problems that require treatment.
- **Resilience can be built upon.**
- **Resilience shapes outcomes.**
 - The more resilience children have, the better they will be able to deal with what life hands them. It will help them be healthier, better functioning adults.

What Makes You Resilient?

Activity

- Within your small group designate:
 - ✓ A **recorder** to take notes
 - ✓ A **speaker** to report out to the larger group
- **At your own comfort level**, share a difficulty/struggle that you have overcome and identify what got you through it.
- Report out.



Characteristics Found in Children Who are Resilient

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal Intelligence • Attractiveness to others • Good Fortune • Knack for seeking out people in an environment that are good for a child's development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationship with a competent adult • Feelings of hope and meaning in life • Faith or religious affiliations • Good schools • Connection to positive role models • Feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy |
|---|---|

Overcoming the Odds: High Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood
 Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith

Building Resilience Challenge

Children and youth in care have experienced many layers of adversity:

- Trauma
- Losses: people, places, familiar things
- Hardships, chronic stress
- Disruptions: placements, education

Resiliency = Better Outcomes

What decisions can you make and what actions can you take to:

- Decrease adversity?
- Promote building resilience?



Building Resilience

Forming supportive relationships with consistent, caring adults is the most important way to heal and build resilience.

Because brain development is such a highly interactive process, **every interaction with a young person has the potential to heal – or to hurt.**

The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice With Adolescent Brain Development, at www.aecf.org/resources/the-road-to-adulthood.



Three Sources of Resiliency for Children

- I HAVE (external supports and resources)
- I AM (internal, personal strengths)
- I CAN (social and interpersonal skills)



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Three Sources of Resiliency

I HAVE

- People around me who I trust and who love me
- People who set limits for me
- People who show me how to do things right by how they do them
- People who want me to learn to do things on my own
- People who help me when I'm sick, in danger or need leave



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Three Sources of Resiliency

I AM

- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be alright



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Three Sources of Resiliency

I CAN

- Talk to others about things that frighten me
- Find ways to solve problems that I face
- Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous
- Figure out when it is good to talk with someone or take action
- Find someone to help me when I need it



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Types of Plans

What About a Resiliency Plan?

Building Resilience Challenge



In your role, how can you or do you promote resiliency in the actions you take and the decisions you make?

- How can you or do you decrease adding layers of adversity (loss, stress, trauma)?
- How can you or do you expand the youth's capacity to recover from the layers of adversity already present?

Record and report out.

Ways to Build Resiliency in Children

- Resilience needs relationships, not uncompromising independence.
- Increase their exposure to people who care about them.
- Build their executive functions.
- Encourage regular mindfulness practices.
- Exercise
- Build feelings of competency.



Ways to Build Resiliency in Children

- Model Resiliency.
- Teach them how to reframe.
- Encourage them to take safe, considered risks.
- Don't rush to their rescue.
- Nurture a growth mindset.

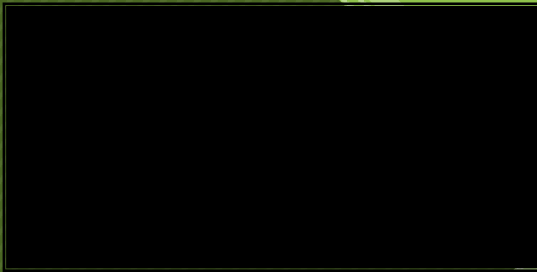


Ways to Build Resiliency in Children

- Let them know you trust their capacity to cope.
- Build their problem-solving toolkit.
- Make time for creativity and play.
- Try "how" not "why"
- Shhh....let them talk



Adolescent Brain Strains to Brain Gains



If we hope to develop socially competent people who are able to meet goals, make good decisions, connect with others and believe in their future, we must focus on positive youth development through building resiliency.



Additional Resources

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2015). *Supportive Relationships and Active Skill-Building Strengthen the Foundations of Resilience: Working Paper 13*. - Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiatives Issue Brief# 4 - *Promoting Development of Resilience Among Young People in Foster Care* - Retrieved from: <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resource/doc/JCYOI-PromotingDevelopmentofResilience-2012.pdf>

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative - *Aligning Child Welfare Practice With Adolescent Brain Development*- Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/the-road-to-adulthood>

Healing Comes First – *Building Resilience for Young People in Foster Care Retrieved – Retrieved from: https://assets.aecf.org/m/resource/doc/aecf-brainframes-resilience-2017.pdf*
