

Theories

There is a move away from defining resilience solely in terms of an internal quality or an outcome. Currently, resilience is being conceptualised as an *ongoing interactive process* that enables a person to make use of internal (personal attributes, such as coping skills) and external (such as family support) resources during times of adversity to function positively.

Robbie Gilligan uses the term *pathway* to summarise a child's functioning over time. *Turning points* represents times when a pathway alters direction, such as when a change in environment or an intervention allows someone to start on, or return to, a positive pathway. Turning points in a child's life present opportunities for positive adaption and development of the child's capacities.

The concept of *bouncing back* is inextricably linked to resilience. In essence, resilience is a personal journey towards coping and functioning positively in the face of life's challenges.

Definition

Resilience is a dynamic developmental process encompassing the attainment of positive adaptations within the context of significant adversity

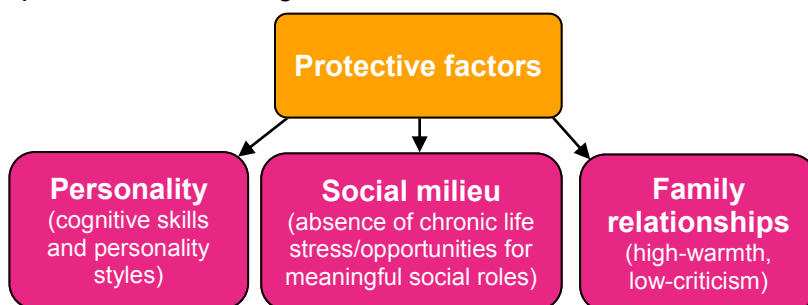
(Cicchetti, 2012)

The ordinary everyday magic, human resources in the minds, brains and bodies of children in their families and relationships in their community

Masten, 2011

Key Elements of Resilience

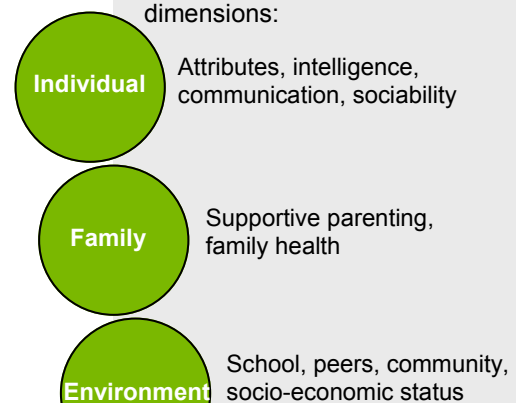
Children who experience a number of risk factors at the same time are more likely to have negative developmental outcomes. Three areas that are consistently identified with protecting children exposed to a wide range of stressors are:



The ability to make and sustain friendships, along with the availability of support networks of friends, family and other important social ties, have been associated with patterns of resilience, both in childhood and in later life.

Things to think about...

A wide range of factors have been identified, which, if present, seem to improve outcomes for children. These tend to involve three dimensions:



(Olsson et al., 2003; Rutter, 2000; Werner & Smith, 1992, 2001).

Key Researchers

Gilligan, R.

(2000, 2001, 2005)

Daniel, B. & Wassel, S.

(2002)

Masten, A.S. et al.

(1994)

Luthar, S.S.

(1991, 2006)

Resilience

Current Thinking

Resilience patterns are not extraordinary, they are a normative adaptation process. Children can be supported to develop resilience patterns.

Resilience can be situation-specific and, therefore, it is unlikely that an individual will demonstrate resilience across all situations. Researchers encourage using specific terms, such as emotional resilience and academic resilience.

Five Rs that nurture resilience:

- Relationships
- Responsiveness
- Reliability
- Routine
- Ritual

Further Reading

Glover, J. (2009) *Bouncing back: How can resilience be promoted in vulnerable children and young people?* Barking: Barnardos.

Grotberg, E. (1997) 'The international resilience project: findings from the research and effectiveness interventions', in B. Bain (ed.) *Psychology and Education in the 21st Century*: Edmonton: ICP Press.

Goldstein and Brooks (2012) *The Handbook of Resilience in Children*. New York: Springer

Online resources:

What works in building resilience?

Newman, T. (2004)

www.barnardos.org.uk/what-works-in-building-resilience

- summary 1 .pdf

Resilience.net

www.resilnet.uiuc.edu

Recent Research

A framework for assessing children's resilience was developed by Grotberg (1997). It is based on some aspects of resilience which are relevant, to varying degrees, in all cultures. This model can be used to help children consider their own resilience patterns and how to promote resilience:

I have

Trusting and loving relationships
Structure at home
Role models
Encouragement to be independent
Access to health, education and social care

I am

Loveable
Loving
Proud of myself
Responsible
Hopeful and trustful

I can

Communicate
Solve problems
Manage my feelings
Understand my temperament
Seek out trusting relationships

A resilient child is one who can say:

"I have" (reliable, predictable adults available to me to offer support)

"I am" (a person worthy of love and attention)

"I can" (do something about the problems and difficulties I face)

A very important question to ask is *"how has this child/young person (or family) done as well as they are doing?"* In other words, how are they not doing worse? It is vital to focus on strengths to create strategies to overcome challenges. Focus on how children self-correct rather than focusing only on what is wrong.

Practice Tips

Daniel & Wassell (2002) introduced domains of resilience, devised a framework for assessing and promoting resilience in vulnerable school-age children, and outlined principles to underpin the planning of interventions and possible strategies in each domain.

Interventions can be planned to promote resilience under each of these domains through:

- *strengthening the ability of individual children*
- *enhancing the involvement and encouragement of parents, and*
- *drawing upon opportunities in the wider community to nurture natural skills and abilities in children and young people*

