Growing Up Resilient

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Overview

• What is resiliency
• How can we build resiliency in our children
• Examples of resiliency in action
• How can resiliency be destroyed

Growing Up Resilient
Fostering a Spirit of Confidence in our Children

Vickie Abel, LSW MS

• What is it?

“Resilience is a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome the damaging effects of adversity.”

The International Resilience Project
Therefore…..

Resilient children are those who resist adversity, manage to cope with uncertainty and are able to recover successfully from trauma.

The Language of Resilience

The vocabulary of resilience is more than a set of words that will allow us to talk about this emerging concept. It is a set of tools to use in promoting resilience.

Children who learn the vocabulary are better able to recognize resilience in themselves and others. They become increasingly aware of how to promote it.

There is NO magic to resilience but the skills can be learned and strengthened throughout life.

An accumulation of resilience factors is significant for positive outcomes.
The I HAVE, I AM and I CAN categories are drawn from the findings of the International Resilience Project which identified 36 qualitative factors that contribute to resilience.

**I HAVE**
- People around me I trust and who love me, no matter what
- People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- People who want me to learn to do things on my own
- People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn

Supports and resources outside of the child

**I AM**
- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be all right

Feelings, attitudes and beliefs. They can be strengthened by supports but not created. They remain with the child forever.
I CAN

• Talk to others about things that frighten me or bother 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 a good time to talk to someone or to take action
• Find someone to help me when I need it

Social and interpersonal skills children learn and acquire. These are tools that must be taught and learned.

3 intrinsic factors

1. A secure base – sense of belonging and security
2. Good self esteem – an internal sense of worth and accomplishment
3. A sense of self-efficacy - a sense of mastery and control, along with an accurate understanding of personal strengths and limitations

3 extrinsic factors

1. At least one secure attachment
2. Access to wider supports such as extended family and friends
3. Positive daycare, school and or community experiences

Processes that promote resilience

• Managed exposure to risk
• Opportunities to develop a sense of mastery
• Strong relationships with supportive parents or caregivers
• Positive school experiences
• Extra-curricular activities
• Capacity to re-frame adversities
Age specific strategies

• Infancy
  • Adequate parental income
  • Social support for mothers
  • Good quality housing
  • Parent education
  • Safe play areas and learning materials
  • Breastfeeding to 3 months
  • Support from male partners
  • Continuous healthcare

• Pre-school
  • High quality pre-school and day care
  • Preparation for home – school link
  • Pairing with resilient peers
  • Availability of alternative caregivers
  • Food supplements
  • Links with other parents, local community networks and faith groups

• 5 – 13 years
  • Range of cultural and community specific behaviors
  • Strong home-school link for at-risk children and their families which promotes parental confidence
  • Positive school experience: academic, sporting for friendship related
  • Trusting relationship with teachers
  • Opportunity for independence and mastery of tasks
  • Structured routines
  • Manageable contributions to the home that promote competence, self-esteem, problem solving and coping

• 13 – 19 years
  • Strong social support networks
  • At least one unconditional supportive parent
  • A committed friend, mentor or other person outside of the home
  • Positive school experiences
  • A belief that one’s efforts can make a difference
  • Participation in a range of extra-curricular activities
  • The capacity to re-frame adversity looking and benefits and consequences
  • Not to be sheltered from challenging situations that develop coping skills
Some examples….

As children grow, they increasingly shift their reliance from outside supports (I Have) to their own skills (I Can) while continually building and strengthening their personal attitudes and feelings (I Am).

Enhancing Resilience

“Kids can walk around trouble if there is some place to walk to and someone to walk with”

Tito, quoted in McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman, 1993

Thank You for Attending!

For further information for families, check us out on our new Pinterest Page: http://pinterest.com/UMNfamily/ and on our website: http://www1.extension.umn.edu/family/ or email me (Brianna) directly at: brouth@umn.edu