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THE ROAD TO RESILIENCE

Overcoming Challenges and Building Inner Strength

BRIEFING BOOKS

edited by
Rita Hitching



ABCT

ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE THERAPIES

ABCT is a multidisciplinary organization committed to the enhancement of health and well-being by advancing the scientific understanding, assessment, prevention, and treatment of human problems through the global application of behavioral, cognitive, and biological evidence-based principles.

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Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)

For 65 years, ABCT and its members have strived to alleviate human suffering through the application of scientific principles.



PEMD

PUBLIC EDUCATION and MEDIA DISSEMINATION

The PEMD is dedicated to bridging communication between scientific and clinical members and the media as well as the public. We do that by

- responding to media inquiries about CBT-related topics by connecting interested journalists, writers, and producers with relevant ABCT experts.
- developing initiatives to assist ABCT members in communicating with the public about science and evidence-based practice.
- developing resources to help communicate with the media for ABCT members, journalists, and the public at large if we offered compendiums of relevant resources ("Briefing Books") that provide information about the current science presented in layman's terms.



A vibrant red watercolor background with soft, blended washes of color, ranging from deep red to lighter, almost white, areas, creating a textured and artistic feel.

“ RESILIENCE

the capacity to recover quickly
from difficulties; toughness.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the 2025 edition of Briefing Books. As we navigate the challenges of modern life, fostering resilience has never been more important.

In this issue, we explore the journey towards lifelong resilience by providing practical strategies to both develop and



support children and young people in developing the mental and emotional fortitude needed to thrive despite adversity.

We provide insights into the important role that exposure to manageable levels of stress can play in strengthening resilience.

We also highlight the critical role of sleep in resilience, offering guidance on how restorative rest can fortify both the body and mind. We explore the potential for good that technology and social media can have by fostering connection particularly for LGBTQ+ communities.

Finally, we offer hope to everyone with lived experience by showing that resilience can emerge and even increase after trauma.

I hope this issue leaves you with a sense of renewed optimism for the future. Together, we can build a more resilient world.

Rita Hitching

Rita Hitching - Editor





ERIN KANG, PHD

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Thank you to Erin Kang, PhD, for her invaluable contribution to ABCT and Briefing Books. Your efforts in finding contributors, reading drafts, and providing thoughtful guidance were essential in shaping "Road to Resilience."

SPECIAL THANK YOU

David Teisler, CAE

ABCT
Director of Communications

A special thank you to David Teisler, CAE, for his incredible 30 years of dedication to ABCT. Briefing Books was David's idea, and without him, this edition and the two prior books on Suicide Across the Lifespan and Gun Violence would not have been published. David has left an indelible mark, and will be greatly missed. David's kindness, warmth, and good humor have been a guiding light for all of us.





**DON'T BE AFRAID
OF FAILURE.**

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SUCCEED.

THANK YOU CONTRIBUTORS

ABCT and the PEMD would like to thank our dedicated contributors without whom this project could not have happened. ABCT is strengthened by your contribution and commitment to supporting our mission and vision. The wider community benefits daily from your efforts to support evidence based research and your commitment to those in your care.

ABCT AND PEMD





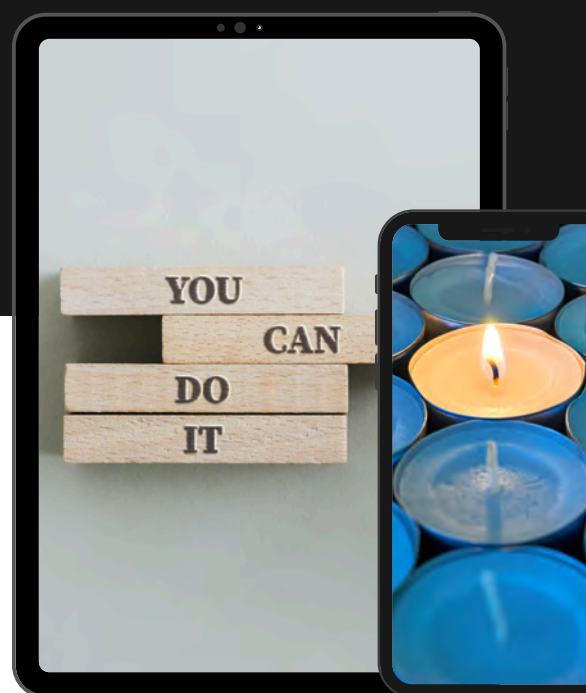
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BRIEFING BOOKS
RESILIENCE EDITION

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Key insights into fostering resilience at every life stage.

Our contributing writers bring a wealth of expertise and experience in the field of resilience. Explore their wisdom and learn from their diverse perspectives on how to build strength in the face of adversity.





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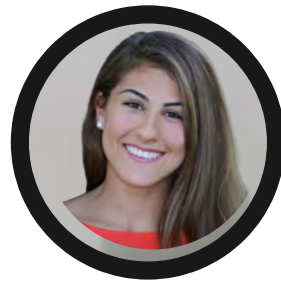
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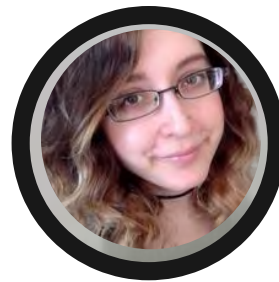
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If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far,

GO TOGETHER.



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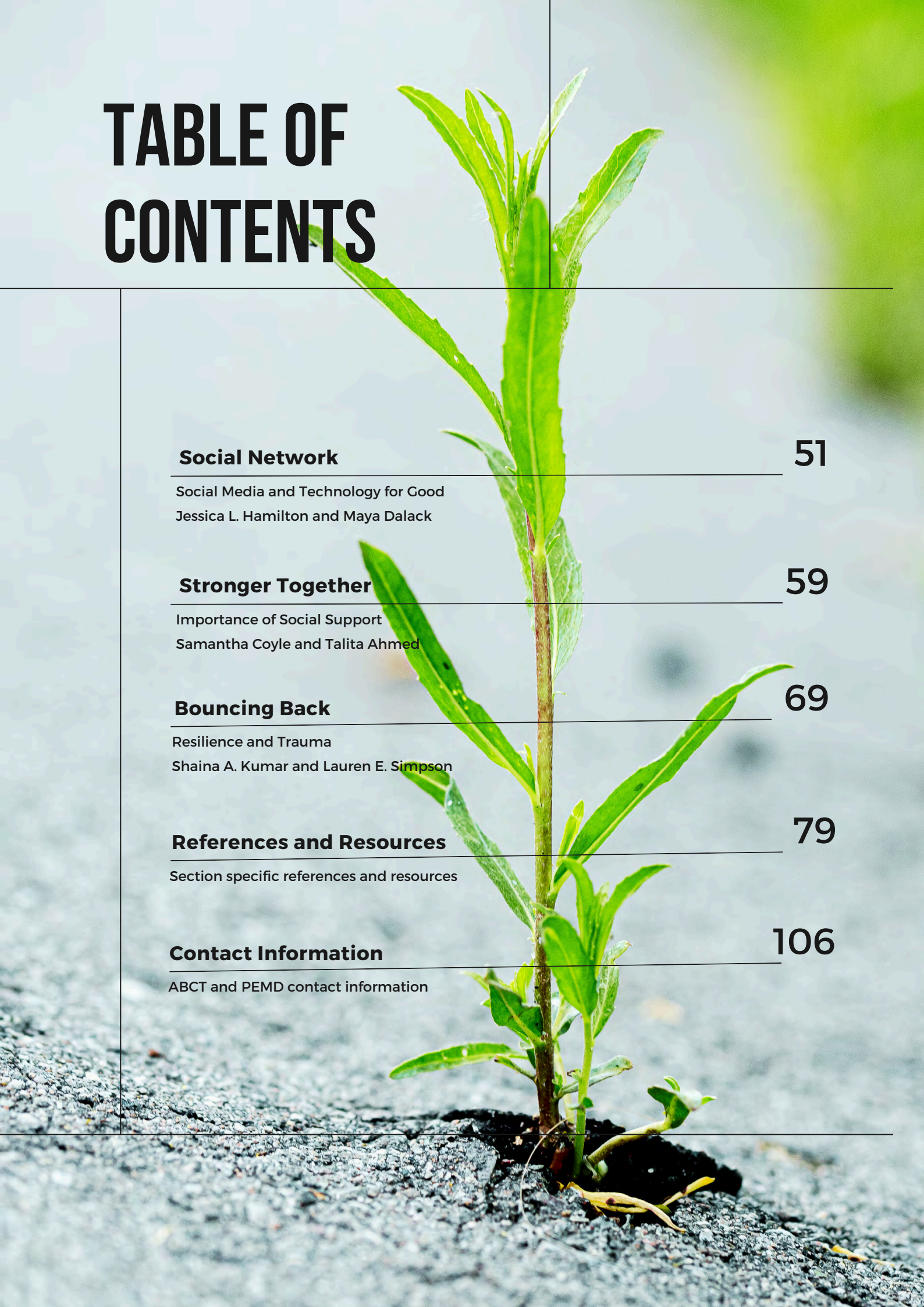
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BUILDING LIFE LONG RESILIENCE

SARAH BANNON

There are many definitions of resilience that vary based on researchers' theories of the factor(s) linked to outcomes and the specific outcomes of interest.

Currently, many researchers studying resiliency adopt a developmental systems perspective focused on understanding pathways to mental and physical health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities that take shape over time amid acute or chronic stressors. Though resilience is sometimes thought of as an individual trait, experts define resilience as “the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully through multisystem processes to challenges that threaten system function, survival, or development.” In this definition, the systems can include individuals biological, psychological, and behavioral functioning, social networks comprised of groups of individuals (e.g., families), and larger communities and societies. The definition also describes multisystem processes, or the interaction between different systems to overcome

adversity (e.g., individuals' behavioral responses to stressful events that are enacted with the support of their social network). In addition to this definition, it is important to consider factors that influence resilience. At the individual level, resilience is considered a multidimensional construct made up of several separate traits and skills. Factors inhibiting resilience in communities include natural disasters (e.g., flooding, hurricanes) and human-caused hazards (e.g., community violence, pollution). Factors enhancing resilience at this level include: 1) social capital and kinship—the aggregate of labor and resources are shared across social networks; 2) economic development – the level of economic resources, degree of equality in distribution of resources, and scale of diversity in economic resources.

STRATEGIES

FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

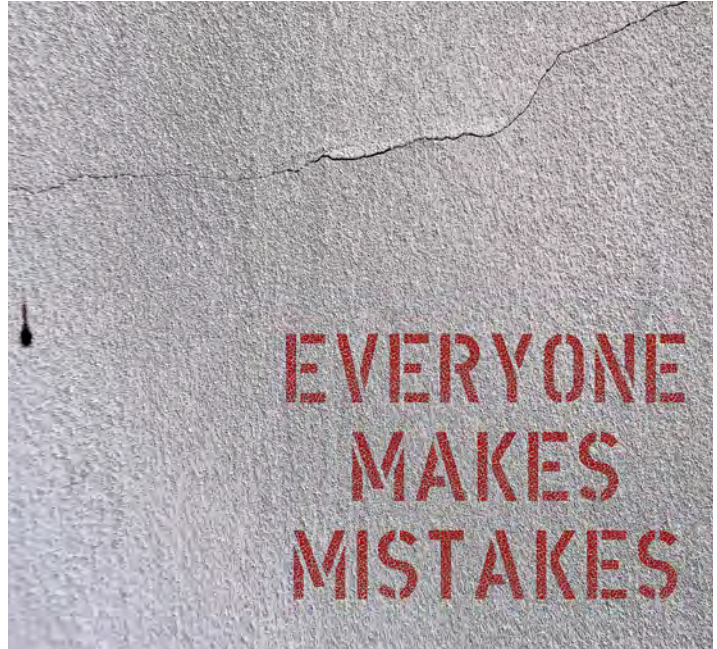


HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE

At the interpersonal level, factors that increase resilience include:

1. social support – engaging social resources to meet needs
2. open and compassionate interpersonal communication—open dialogue about stressors, preferences, and needs,
3. shared or collective coping – approaching challenges as a unit.

At the community or group level, resilience is influenced by the dominant culture beliefs as well as community and societal resources.



TOOLS AND PRACTICES THAT FOSTER INNER STRENGTH AND RESOURCEFULNESS

Include: 1) one's ability to practice mindfulness – staying present and deferring judgment in the face of adversity; 2) psychological flexibility—responding to situations in ways that facilitate valued goal pursuit; 3) problem solving – building and applying cognitive, behavioral and emotional strategies to navigate challenges; 4) self-efficacy – perceived resourcefulness to adapt to adversity; and 5) gratitude and optimism—focusing on valued aspects of life and adopting a positive view of the future.



HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

IMPORTANCE OF LIFE LONG RESILIENCE

Lifelong resilience allows for a more dynamic view of the processes that impact mental and physical health outcomes. This is important given the differences in what is considered “resilient outcome” in early versus later life stages, and the differences in individuals’ acute and ongoing stressors and available resources across life stages. Childhood resiliency research has focused on understanding how children develop and adapt following adverse experiences (e.g., traumatic events, interpersonal conflict and violence, natural disasters). For young and older adults, resiliency research has focused on understanding how individuals move forward in connection to physical and mental health outcomes as well as resuming employment and participation in daily activities in the event of illness or injury. For older adults (>65 years old), resiliency research has focused on understanding adjustment to acute and chronic illness, social isolation, and managing risk for illness or injury (e.g., in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic). Adopting a contextual, developmental lens has benefits to interventions focused on enhancing resilience for individuals, families, communities, and societies. This approach is particularly important given our current observations of factors impacting resilience following global and environmental events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the exacerbation of climate change leading to an increase in natural disasters and environmental hazards. These large-scale events have the potential to “press at the joints” of societal and community vulnerabilities and undermine the health and wellbeing of communities by reducing available resources and supports and increasing social isolation, unrest, and conflict.



FACTORS THAT BUILD AND HINDER RESILIENCE

Factors inhibiting resilience in communities include natural disasters such as flooding and hurricanes, as well as human-caused hazards, including community violence or pollution. Factors enhancing resilience at this level include: social capital and kinship – the aggregate of labor and resources are shared across social networks. Economic development is also important, by raising the level of economic resources and the degree of equality in the distribution of those resources, plus the scale of diversity in economic resources all foster the development of resilience.



01

Proverb

Smooth seas do not
make skilful sailors.

STRESS AWARENESS BUILDS RESILIENCE

RITA HITCHING AND SABA HORNE

Stress is part of life. Learning about stress and understanding how to effectively manage it is an important step to building lifelong resilience.

The term "stress" often carries a negative undertone, but not all stress is bad. Stress can be defined in several ways, but at its essence refers to any physiological or psychological response to internal or external threats or stressors. Stress activates the body's "fight or flight" response, preparing us to cope with a potentially challenging situation. According to the American Psychological Association's Stress in America survey conducted in 2023, the enduring stress experienced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has notably affected well-being, as indicated by a rise in chronic illnesses. Among the various everyday stress categories, health-related stressors (65%), financial concerns (63%), and economic factors (64%) were identified as the most notable sources of stress in adults' lives. Stress can be categorized in two enduring categories including acute and chronic stress.

Chronic stress is a prolonged and persistent state of stress that continues over an extended period, often months or even years. Unlike acute stress, chronic stress persists due to ongoing, unresolved issues or continuous exposure to stressors. Chronic stress can occur due to persistent financial challenges, enduring social isolation and loneliness, ongoing relationship issues, chronic health conditions, excessive workload, experiences of bullying, or residing in an unsafe environment, such as a war zone or a home with violence. Acute stress is stress that lasts for a short period of time such as being caught in traffic, sitting an exam or giving a speech. We typically possess the ability to endure and even benefit from acute stress, as it serves as an adaptive function, preparing us to confront challenges and threats in our environment, ultimately contributing to the development of resilience.

IMPACT

OF STRESS



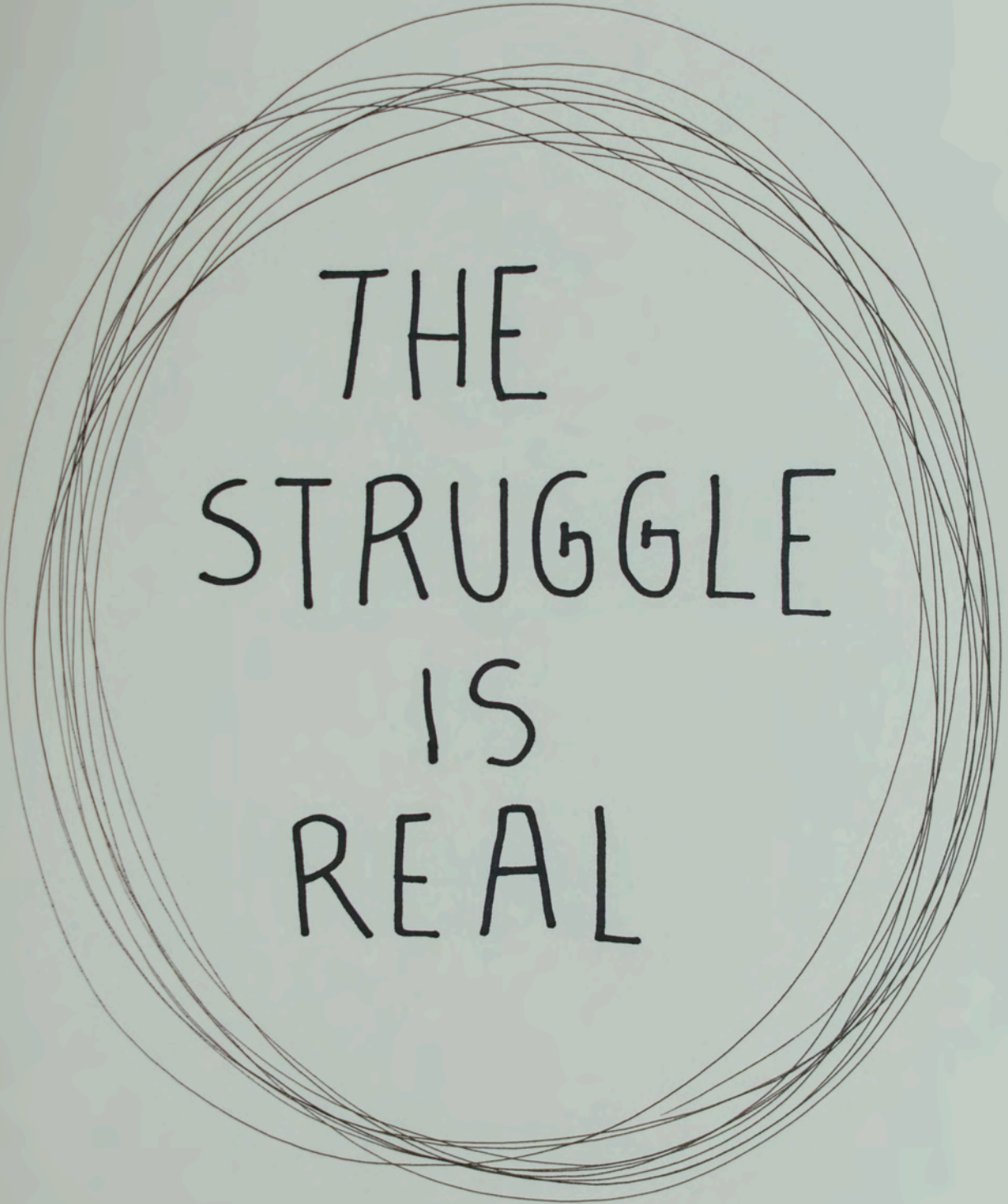
ACUTE AND CHRONIC STRESS IMPACTS EVERYONE DIFFERENTLY

The diathesis-stress model or the vulnerability-stress model aims to explain why some people show heightened stress responses and demonstrates how a consistently elevated stress response can lead to the development of psychological disorders. The model suggests that the development of disorders, in this case, stress-related issues, results from an interaction between a person's predisposition or vulnerability (diathesis) and stressful life events. It hypothesises that if the combination of diathesis and stress surpasses a certain threshold, an individual is more likely to develop a mental disorder.

While certain individuals may be more susceptible to heightened stress and consequent mental illness, research has proven that resilience is an effective protective factor that can counteract the impact of stressors, thereby preventing or mitigating the development of mental disorders.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT STRESS IS

Any stimulus or stressor that is primarily seen as possibly harmful or damaging, it will trigger a stress response. The body's stress reaction initiates through the activation of the body's 'fight or flight' response to elicit a heightened state of alertness. A process that places the body under stress.

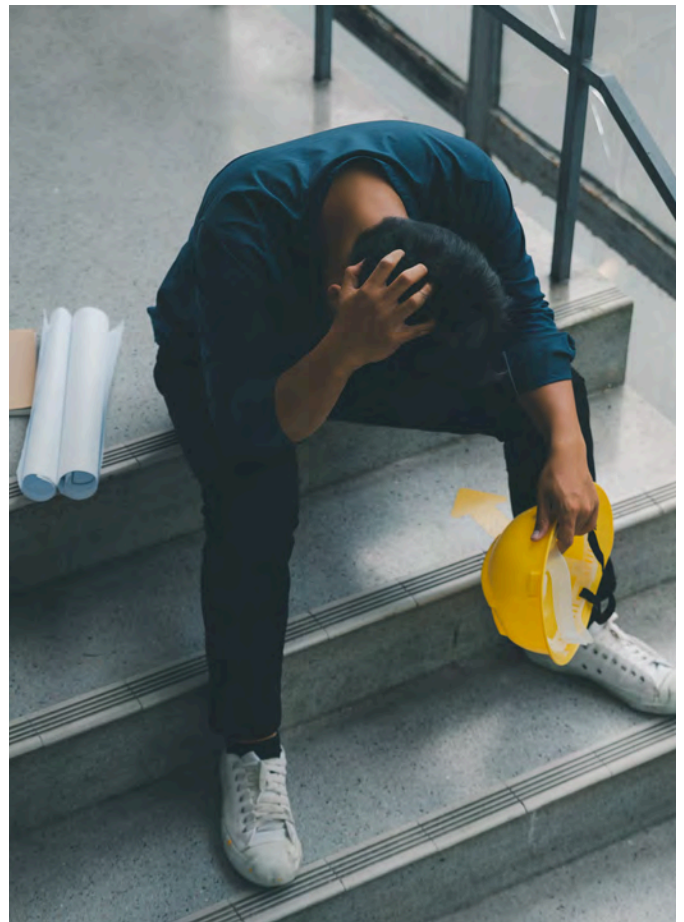


THE
STRUGGLE
IS
REAL

LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE LONG RESILIENCE

Short periods of stress are beneficial

In the diathesis-stress model, resilience serves as a protective factor against the adverse effects of stress. It's crucial to highlight that, despite the usual negative connotations, modern neuroscience research is revealing the positive aspects of acute stress and sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activation. Acute stress has an adaptive role, and when managed appropriately, can be beneficial for well-being. Short-term stress, lasting for minutes to hours, enhances both innate and adaptive immune responses. Mechanisms of immune-enhancement involve changes in the function and trafficking of immune cells, as well as the production of cytokines. Additionally, acute stress can also effectively contribute to the development of psychological resilience.



Confronting and effectively navigating brief stressors engenders a sense of accomplishment and cultivates heightened self-confidence. This ability to handle adversity becomes a foundational element in fortifying resilience for future challenges. Research comparing individuals who have never faced adversity with those who have experienced high levels of adversity showed that both groups were less likely to engage in catastrophizing thoughts when faced with pain induction.

Acute stress contributes to the development of psychological resilience.





IMPROVING SLEEP QUALITY CAN ENHANCE RESILIENCE

Sleep is critical to health and wellbeing because it enables our bodies and brains to rest, repair, and rejuvenate. Improving sleep quality can enhance resilience, leading to better mental health outcomes.

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR RESILIENCE

RITA HITCHING AND LISA LAMPE

**THE ABILITY TO ADAPT
AND RECOVER FROM
STRESSORS - A KEY
ASPECT OF RESILIENCE
IS SIGNIFICANTLY
INFLUENCED BY SLEEP.**

Sleep is a naturally recurring state characterized by reduced consciousness and responsiveness to the environment, along with distinctive patterns of brain activity that can be measured using an electroencephalogram (EEG). While the precise reasons for sleep remain unclear, it is widely recognized as essential for overall well-being, including both physical and mental resilience.

Resilience, defined as the ability to adapt and recover from stressors, is significantly influenced by sleep quality and duration. Research indicates that adequate sleep not only supports physical health but also enhances psychological resilience, thereby creating a synergistic effect that promotes overall well-being.



Sleep plays a critical role in restoration and repair of the body and brain.

SLEEP AND PHYSICAL RESILIENCE

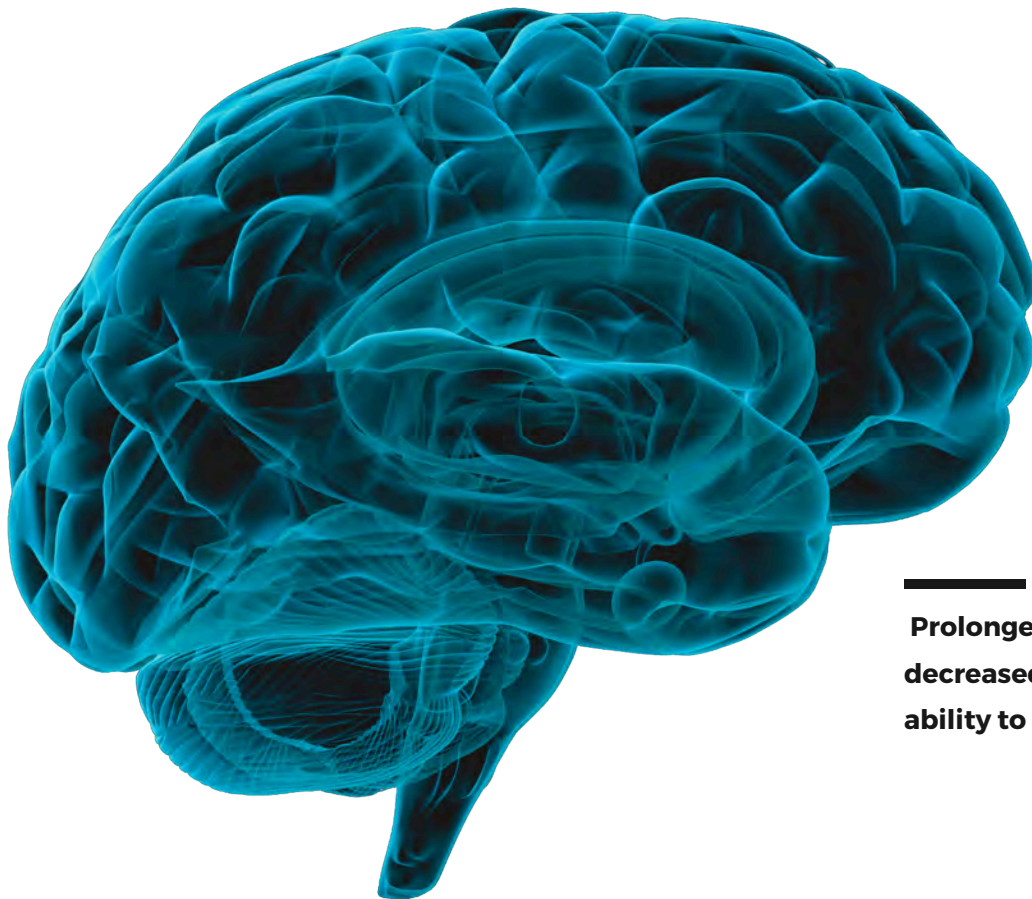
Sleep is critical for physical resilience as it facilitates recovery processes which are essential for maintaining physical health and resilience. Adequate sleep enhances muscle repair from physical exertion and stress, thereby improving overall resilience.

Numerous changes to aspects of the immune system have been reported in lab studies following sleep deprivation, a finding that does not seem surprising. Any system that operates without sufficient opportunity or time to rest, repair, and recuperate is more likely to malfunction.

Sleep is critical to restoration and repair. During sleep, the body produces higher levels of growth hormone, which helps with tissue repair and regeneration, especially in muscles and other tissues. In deeper stages of sleep, the body also produces cytokines—proteins that play a vital role in immune function and help reduce inflammation. This may explain why, when we're sick, the body naturally craves more sleep. It could also explain why lack of sleep often leads to physical symptoms like headaches, muscle tension, nausea, and other digestive issues.

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR BRAIN HEALTH AND COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Sleep provides an opportunity for the brain to do its housekeeping. The glymphatic system – responsible for the removal of metabolic waste and toxins that naturally accumulate in the brain, is significantly more active during sleep. The process helps to keep the brain healthy and ready to cope with the demands of the following day. The ability to focus, concentrate, problem solve, make decisions, learn, and remember is impacted by lack of sleep. Irritability, mood swings, and fatigue are all worsened by lack of sleep. Sleep deprivation has been associated with increased levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, which can impair cognitive functioning and emotional stability, thereby reducing resilience.



Prolonged sleep deprivation can lead to decreased neural plasticity, limiting the ability to adapt to stress.



EMOTION REGULATION

Sleep plays a critical role in emotional processing and regulation, which in turn contributes to resilience. Sleep quality significantly impacts emotional regulation. Poor sleep can lead to heightened emotional reactivity and impaired regulation of emotions. Individuals with poor sleep quality exhibited increased amygdala activity in response to emotional stimuli, which is associated with reduced resilience. This heightened emotional reactivity can make it more challenging to

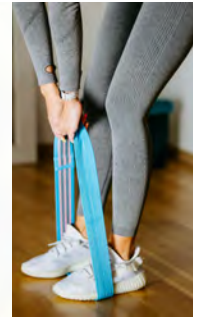
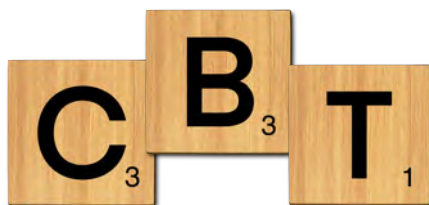
cope with stress, thereby diminishing their resilience. Sleep disturbances can exacerbate negative emotions and lead to difficulties in managing stress, which further complicates emotional regulation. Resilience itself has been identified as a protective factor that can buffer against the negative effects of stress on emotional well-being. Resilience moderates the relationship between fear and depression, suggesting that resilient individuals possess effective emotional regulation skills that help mitigate the impact of stressors.

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP IN RESILIENCE-BUILDING INTERVENTIONS

The bidirectional relationship between sleep and resilience highlights the importance of sleep quality in resilience-building interventions.

By improving sleep, individuals can also enhance their resilience, leading to better adaptation to stressors and improved physical health outcomes.

Activities that support the circadian clock, including regular exercise (preferably outdoors), low fat/sugar diets, and the avoidance of caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol are commonly recommended. Considering the relationship between stress and disrupted sleep, approaches to minimize chronic stress or its impact are central to addressing sleep difficulties. Additional treatment approaches include behavioural modifications such as good sleep hygiene and limiting daytime naps in concert with cognitive therapies that target the thoughts that often contribute to sleep problems. Mindfulness practices have been shown to improve sleep quality, which in turn can enhance resilience by promoting better emotional regulation and coping strategies. The interplay between mindfulness, sleep, and resilience suggests that interventions aimed at improving sleep could also enhance resilience, particularly in high-stress environments.



FACTORS THAT BUILD AND HINDER RESILIENCE

Factors inhibiting resilience in communities include natural disasters such as flooding and hurricanes, as well as human-caused hazards, including community violence or pollution. Factors enhancing resilience at this level include: social capital and kinship – the aggregate of labor and resources are shared across social networks. Economic development is also important, by raising the level of economic resources and the degree of equality in the distribution of those resources, plus the scale of diversity in economic resources all foster the development of resilience.



MENTAL RESILIENCE

Sleep is a critical factor in mental resilience: the ability to adapt to stress and adversity. The relationship between sleep and mental resilience involves psychological, physiological, and neurobiological mechanisms. Poor sleep quality correlates with increased perceived stress, which negatively impacts resilience. Resilience acts as a buffer against the adverse effects of stress on sleep quality, thereby creating a feedback loop where improved sleep leads to better resilience and vice versa. Having higher resilience is linked to better sleep, which in turn can mitigate the impact of stress on physical and mental health. This symbiotic relationship is particularly evident in vulnerable populations, where resilience has been linked to healthier sleep patterns and reduced risk of sleep disorders.

BUILD RESILIENCE

Promoting healthy sleep habits should be integral to resilience-building strategies.



SLEEP MATTERS

Sleep better, feel better, and be more resilient

Sleep is critical to health and well-being because it enables our bodies and brains to rest, repair, and rejuvenate. However, the process by which sleep impacts physical and mental health is unclear, and likely complex. Disrupted sleep increases the risk of accidents and injuries, particularly motor vehicle accidents. Lack of sleep increases the risk of common health conditions such as type II diabetes and obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and chronic pain.

Quality of life is reduced when sleep difficulties persist. Poor sleep increases the likelihood of psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety and may contribute to relapse and impede recovery. Improving sleep quality can enhance resilience, leading to better mental health outcomes.

Interventions that focus on promoting healthy sleep habits should be integral to resilience-building strategies, particularly in populations facing significant stressors, such as military.



RESILIENT CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

RACHAEL WEINSTOCK, NINA SHIFFRIN STARIN,
COLLEEN CUMMINGS AND MARY ALVORD

Children of all ages can quickly and effectively be taught strategies that build lifelong resilience.

A child's resilience arises from the abilities, skills, and attributes that allow them to adapt to life's challenges and hardships, such as growing up in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood or facing a learning difference or an attentional disorder. Some children facing adversity adapt and even thrive, when others growing up in similar circumstances do not. Research into childhood resilience during the past six decades has

identified key characteristics of resilient children. Importantly the protective factors that resilient children show suggest skills children and teens can learn and hone that help them meet the challenges they face daily and improve their relationships and mental health and wellness. Fortunately, many protective factors that lead to resilience can be taught.



INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO BUILD CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE

There are several effective interventions for increasing resilience in youth using cognitive behavioral strategies to teach children to change their thoughts and behaviors to cope with life stressors. The Penn Resilience Program is a group-based intervention for late elementary and middle school students that teaches strategies to strengthen assertiveness, social problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Students learn strategies through skits, cartoons, role plays and group discussions. Randomized trials found the Penn Resilience Program prevented anxiety and depressive diagnoses amongst children ages 9-14 and led to reductions in behavioral problems. The Resilience Builder Program® is another group intervention that seeks to improve social competence and increase resilience. Children engage in lessons and hands-on activities that help them learn to be proactive, manage difficult emotions, and improve mental flexibility. A randomized trial of 5th grade students who took part in the Resilience Builder Program® at economically marginalized schools found gains in resilience including children's sense of mastery, academic engagement, study skills, motivation, interpersonal skills, and sense of relatedness. Merrell's Strong Kids/Teens Program is also a school-based intervention used to promote social connections and resilience in students by helping them learn to understand emotions, manage anger, and relieve stress, amongst other skills. Jovenes Fuertes is a culturally adapted version of the Strong Teens program, for Latino teens who are English language learners. Students who took part in the Jovenes Fuertes program had improvements in social emotional resiliency. These interventions incorporate strategies from cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to teach youth skills to manage

difficult emotions and become more resilient. First, children learn that emotions are natural, normal, and harmless. Most emotional states, including unpleasant ones, are temporary and do not last forever. Occasionally, we may experience a "false alarm" - an unpleasant feeling in the absence of a real stressor. We may try to rid ourselves of these unpleasant emotions in ways that make us feel better in the short term, but these are not helpful in the long term. For example, a child who becomes frustrated with a difficult school assignment may experience relief in the short term if they stop working. However, in the long term, it is much more helpful for them to tolerate their frustration and continue to work on the assignment. In this way, they can become more resilient as they learn to experience challenging emotions, rather than avoiding them.





FACTORS THAT HELP SOME CHILDREN FACING ADVERSITY ADAPT AND EVEN THRIVE

- **Being Proactive** - in finding ways to think flexibly and solve problems. Even in extraordinary circumstances, there may still be ways to make things better. Children can learn ways to make things better and not feel like a victim.
- **Peer Connections** - to at least one good friend means children are less likely to be bullied and more likely to develop positive, reciprocal relationships.
- **Caregiver Attachment** - be it family members or other caregivers or trusted adults who understand them and can meet their needs help children learn to be aware of the impact of their words and actions and how these affect the other person and understand what they may need to say or do differently.
- **Emotion Regulation**- Regulating our emotions and behaviors is critical to sustaining relationships, participating in school, and achieving goals.
- **Self-Control** - Active ways to calm ourselves include challenging our unhelpful inner dialogue, practicing diaphragmatic breathing and muscle relaxation, and developing ways to visualize coping with situations.
- **Hobbies and Interests** - Children and teens can learn to find activities and characteristics that they value, which motivates them to engage in life.
- **Inner-Strength** - Naming their strengths reminds them that while they may not excel in certain areas, they have other talents that they can develop.

- **Family** - Parents can strengthen a child's community and engaging in proactive parenting. In tandem, families and caregivers provide firm and clear child rearing, with warmth and understanding.
- **Community** - Strengthening the support around children and teens allows them to lean on others when needed and help others. Teachers, coaches, religious leaders, and others encourage them to do their best.

BELIEVE
IN
YOURSELF



Children's resilience can also be bolstered by developing a proactive, problem-solving approach to life - by taking the initiative to solve or prevent challenges rather than waiting to react to them. Youth learn about ways individuals behave when facing stressful situations: proactive responses, reactive responses, and passive responses. For example, a child who has a conflict with a peer may react with aggression, passively ignore the situation, or proactively collaborate with the peer and come to an agreement. Being able to set goals, solve problems, and think optimistically helps children make adaptive choices when faced with stressful situations.

Children learn about negative ways of thinking that may lead to increased levels of stress and problematic coping behaviors and are then taught to develop more balanced and optimistic ways of thinking. For example, a student who avoids studying or skips a test because they assume they will fail will be taught both to recognize this thought and think more optimistically. When they think more realistically, they may be more motivated to prepare, and as a result, will likely be more successful. The good news is that the protective factors of resilience can be taught and enhanced to strengthen children and teens' ability to adapt to life's challenges.



Y O U



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BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

THE POWER OF GROWTH MINDSETS,
GRATITUDE, AND OPTIMISM

BOKYUNG KIM AND KAY W. KIM

Parents are instrumental in helping children navigate life's challenges by helping cultivate a growth mindset.

Fostering resilience is essential for children, as it equips them with the ability to navigate life's challenges with adaptability across mental, emotional, and behavioral domains.

Parents are instrumental in cultivating this resilience. We will delve into how parents can foster growth mindsets, gratitude, and optimism to aid in building resilience in children.





NURTURING A GROWTH MINDSET IS CENTRAL TO BUILDING RESILIENCE

Central to building resilience in children is nurturing a growth mindset. Coined by renowned psychologist Carol Dweck, a growth mindset is the belief that human abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work. In contrast, a fixed mindset is the belief that abilities and intelligence are fixed and do not change even with effort later.

These two mindsets significantly shape how children perceive success and failure in their lives. For instance, when faced with grades below their expectations, a student with a fixed mindset might conclude, "I am not capable enough. I am not smart," which often results in them giving up on that subject. Conversely, a student with a growth mindset views failure as a chance for improvement, reasoning, "Perhaps I did not study enough this time. Maybe I should modify my strategies for better results. Let's consider what changes can be implemented." Repeated experiences through such lenses eventually yield distinct developmental trajectories depending on the mindset embraced.



**PARENTS ARE
INSTRUMENTAL
IN FOSTERING
OPTIMISM IN
THEIR CHILDREN**



EXPLAIN TO CHILDREN THAT ABILITIES ARE MALLEABLE AND CAN CHANGE

Parents can cultivate a growth mindset in children by emphasizing effort rather than innate abilities when acknowledging their achievements. For example, researchers captured video footage of parents spontaneously offering person praise (i. e. ,“That’s a really good score. You must be smart at this.”) and process praise (i.e. “I really like the way you did those hard problems. You stuck to them until you figured out how to do them.”) in their homes when their children were between the ages of 1 and 3. Process praise predominantly emphasizing during these formative years was associated with the children’s cultivation of a growth mindset and their propensity to embrace challenges five years later. In another study involving daily phone interviews with parents of 8- to 10-year-olds, findings showed that mothers who frequently employed person praise were associated with their children developing a fixed mindset six months later, irrespective of their mindset at an earlier age. Furthermore, it is helpful to explain to children that abilities are malleable and can change. Children who learn about the principle of neuroplasticity, which states that the brain can change through experience, feel more enjoyment, and are more willing to take on challenges when learning something new.



**CULTIVATING
RESILIENCE EQUIPS
CHILDREN TO MANAGE
CHALLENGES WITH
FLEXIBILITY AND
STRENGTH**

HELP CHILDREN DISCERN THE POSITIVE ASPECTS IN THEIR PRESENT SITUATION

In a scenario where only positive occurrences transpire, achieving happiness would seemingly be straightforward; however, such circumstances are not universally experienced. To bolster children's resilience, it is imperative to instruct them to discern positive aspects within their present circumstances. Robert Emmons, a leading gratitude researcher at the University of California, Davis, posited that gratitude comprises two key elements. Firstly, it entails acknowledging the inherent goodness in the world, recognizing the gifts, kindness, or benefits we have received. Secondly, it involves acknowledging that these positive outcomes are not solely the result of our own efforts but also contributions from external factors.

Parents can proactively foster gratitude in their children by engaging in meaningful conversations. These discussions may include:

1. Highlighting children's awareness of receiving or possessing something special.
2. Encouraging children to express their positive feelings when they receive something special.
3. Prompting children to consider the reasons behind why someone gave them something special or why they received it.
4. Guiding children to demonstrate gratitude through actions that extend beyond mere good manners.

Gratitude encourages individuals to focus more on the positive aspects of their lives rather than dwelling on the negatives. Regularly reflecting on things to be thankful for trains children's minds to notice and appreciate the good, even in challenging circumstances. This shift in focus promotes an optimistic outlook on life.



HAVING AN OPTIMISTIC MINDSET MAKES NAVIGATING STRESSFUL SITUATIONS EASIER

Optimism is defined as a generalized tendency to anticipate favorable outcomes in the future, as opposed to unfavorable ones. Consequently, individuals with optimistic outlooks are highly motivated to navigate stressful situations effectively, thereby mitigating the adverse impact of stress on their physical and mental well-being. This capacity serves as a protective factor against psychological distress and promotes resilience and fulfillment amidst challenging circumstances. The experience of positive emotions contributes significantly to the development of various resources—social, physical, intellectual, and psychological—in individuals across all age groups, including children.



Parents play a pivotal role in fostering optimism in their children through supportive communication strategies including:

- Emphasizing neutral and factual elements when discussing challenges.
- Selectively focusing on positive news or aspects of situations.
- Providing examples of others similar to them who have overcome obstacles successfully.
- Reminding them of past achievements, strengths, and future potential.

It is important to note that nurturing optimism in children does not entail dismissing their negative feelings but rather understanding and enhancing their psychological well-being.



**NO RAIN
NO FLOWERS**



FOSTERING A GROWTH MINDSET, EMPHASIZING EFFORT RATHER THAN INNATE ABILITIES

In conclusion, cultivating resilience is crucial for children's development, enabling them to confront life's hurdles with adaptability and strength. Parents play a fundamental role in nurturing resilience by focusing on key components such as growth mindsets, gratitude, and optimism. By fostering a growth mindset, emphasizing effort rather than innate abilities, and teaching the flexibility of skills, parents support children to confront challenges and pursue personal growth.

Additionally, promoting gratitude through proactive communication and reflection instills optimism and a positive outlook, enabling children to discover silver linings even in challenging circumstances. By fostering optimism through supportive communication strategies, parents not only enhance their children's psychological well-being but also equip them with essential tools for navigating life's challenges with resilience and hope. Through these efforts, parents can empower their children to thrive in adversity, molding them into resilient individuals capable of overcoming obstacles with confidence and grace.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND
TECHNOLOGY ENABLE
US TO LEARN ABOUT
SOCIAL ISSUES AND TO
FEEL PART OF A LARGER
SOCIAL MOVEMENT**



BUILDING RESILIENCY WITH SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

JESSICA L. HAMILTON AND MAYA DALACK

Technology and social media can be a force for good and help build resilience for people of all ages, and especially for adolescents and young adults.

Public conversations around technology and social media use are typically framed through a negative lens, with the assumption that media is harmful for individuals' mental health. However, technology and social media can play an integral role in building resiliency for individuals across the lifespan, especially for adolescents and young adults. One clear example of technology's potential for resiliency is the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, most people, adolescents specifically, turned to social media to build and maintain connection to others, as a medium for expressing oneself, and as a news source to learn about current events. With decreased ability to physically gather, connecting online became both important and inevitable. As the world becomes inextricably linked to technology, it is near impossible to engage in daily life without interfacing with technology. Indeed, there has been a steep increase in the number of adolescents reporting that they are online almost constantly (24% in 2014-15 shifted to 46% today).

TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS



Younger generations, in particular, engage with technology in unprecedented ways, which highlights the importance of exploring and using social media and technology as a tool to build resilience. While technology can include a range of devices and tools, social media is defined as online platforms (particularly using “apps” or Web 2.0) that promote social networking, messaging, online forums and discussions, content-sharing, and gaming with a social component. Social media has the potential to promote resiliency and well-being across development through its impact on building community and supportive networks, exploring and developing one’s identity, learning and advocacy, and improving equity and access to resources and information about mental health. These resiliency-promoting aspects of social media may be especially important to consider among individuals who hold minoritized identities or who have limited supports or resources in their offline environment.

**MINORITY IDENTITIES
CAN FIND AND CONNECT
WITH OTHERS**



SOCIAL MEDIA IS A UNIQUE SPACE TO EXPERIMENT WITH SELF-EXPRESSION

Technology provides a unique opportunity for individuals of all ages to explore and build their identities or a sense of who they are and where they belong. While identity exploration continues throughout the lifespan, adolescence and young adulthood (spanning ages 10-24) are key developmental periods for identity development. As adolescents gain increasing autonomy from parents, spend more time with peers, and initiate romantic and sexual relationships, they have more opportunities to explore new parts of themselves. The anonymous features of social media provide a unique space for individuals to experiment with self-presentations and expression. Technology allows individuals to also control how they explore and express themselves in a potentially anonymous and temporary

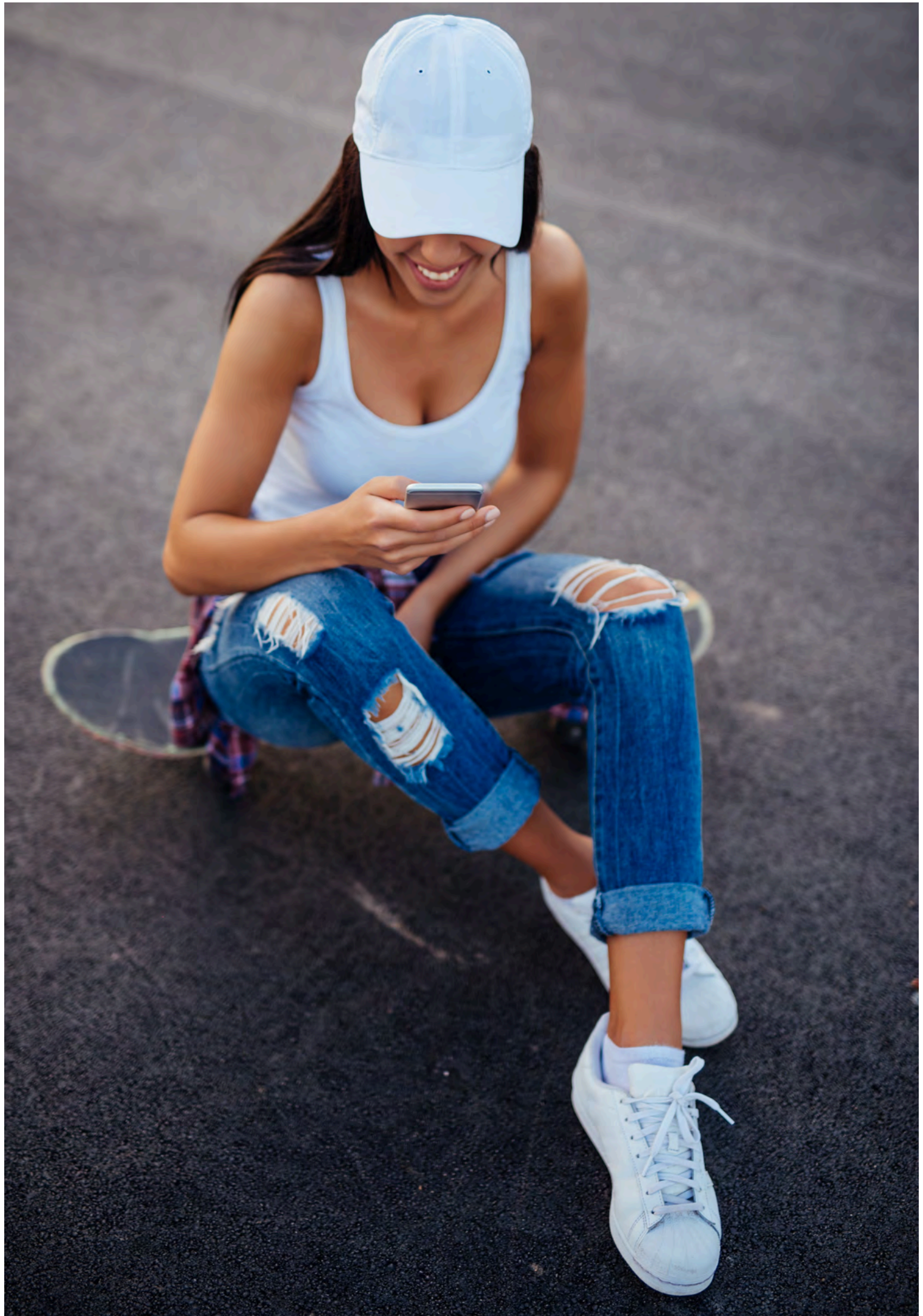
way as they navigate their own identities. Specifically, individuals can select the methods and platforms that are most conducive to their needs, such as sharing photos or videos, texting, or social gaming avatars. Technology and digital media also provide accessible online tools to further explore interests, such as art, music, and online videos to learn new skills, which may further enhance individuation through creative expression. Indeed, most adolescents (71%) report using social media as a way to exhibit their creativity, and around 43% use it to share accomplishments. Further, social media offers youth the option to decide how they present themselves through positive self-presentation, which strengthens one's self-concept through reinforcing social feedback. This may be especially important for individuals who hold minoritized identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.) in spaces that are more isolative, or where it may be less safe to explore these identities in offline spaces. For example, given that LGBTQIA+ identities are highly stigmatized, youth who are exploring their identities may feel safer disclosing, exploring, and learning more about these identities in online communities.

Technology and social media facilitate connection with peers to build and sustain meaningful interpersonal relationships

Broadly, social media and technology provides unique opportunities for social interactions with others, which may help to build and sustain meaningful interpersonal relationships and communities. The unique features of social media allow for asynchronous (i.e., not in real time) communication and public networking with others on the basis of one's interests or identities. Meeting and connecting with others through technology can cultivate a sense of belonging to a larger social group and allow people to contribute to a broader conversation on topics of interest.

Social support and community are critical for health and well-being, and research indicates that social support may protect against detrimental mental health outcomes. Yet, to make the most of this aspect of social media, it is critical that individuals use social media actively to engage others and use it in a way that promotes their mood, learning, and overall well-being. While more work is needed on the topic, research has demonstrated possible associations between active social media use (posting, messaging, etc.) and well-being outcomes. Additionally, research has highlighted that individuals with depressive symptoms might benefit more from active, over passive, social media use.





CONNECTION WITH PEERS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Building relationships and community with peers are especially important during the adolescent years. In the context of COVID-19, normative friendship-forming and maintaining were disturbed and adolescents were physically isolated from their peers and social networks. Digital technology through social networking and social gaming provided adolescents a creative approach to stay in touch with their peers and remain socially connected.

Fostering a sense of community through social media may be especially important for individuals who come from minoritized backgrounds or those who may not have means of connecting in offline spaces (i.e., those with chronic medical conditions, disabilities), which benefits psychological well-being. Teens who are unhoused or live in unsafe environments may also turn to social media communities to get support that they're unable to receive from a home environment.

Particularly, LGBTQ+ teens who aren't able to fully express their identities or engage with romantic partners at home can use social media to make connection, as well as seek support from online networks.

In support of this, data from Pew Research Center indicates that 28% of adolescents report that social media makes them feel a lot more accepted and 35% of teens believe social media is mostly positive and makes them feel like they have people who can support them through tough times.

In this critical way, digital media may serve as a valuable tool to build community and support resiliency, especially during developmentally-sensitive periods. Social media also has a unique ability to unite people all over the world as part of an even larger community or cause. For instance, individuals may use social media to engage in and feel part of a larger social movement or learn about social issues happening in a completely different part of the world to foster collective action. The pressure of an ever-present "audience" on social media can positively reinforce prosocial behaviors and resiliency-building.

REDUCE ISOLATION BY FACILITATING CONNECTION

SOCIAL MEDIA PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH PLUS ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND INTERVENTIONS

Technology has the ability to offer greater accessibility to resources that are traditionally difficult to attain. More individuals are using social media and technology to seek out and engage with mental health resources and interventions, including psychoeducation and discussions surrounding mental health and wellness. For instance, more mental health providers are using their digital platforms to spread information and awareness about an array of mental health topics. This widespread, accessible sharing of resources may prove especially helpful for individuals who cannot afford or access traditional therapy. Indeed, research has demonstrated that a large portion of adolescents experiencing mental health conditions like depression access information through the internet.



Individuals can more readily find helpful support groups, screening tools, resources (crisis lines, therapy, and interventions delivered digitally, as well as build community around mental health to share their own experiences and reduce stigma). Research demonstrates that many individuals living with mental illness utilize social media both to have conversations around mental health and to seek guidance around treatment options. Individuals also may feel more comfortable sharing personal information online anonymously than in-person. Stigma may limit people from expressing mental health concerns to their in-person networks—sharing and connecting online has the potential to direct people to resources more quickly and seamlessly. Technology offers a newer medium through which to conduct and receive mental health support and therapy, thus increasing access to an important component of mental wellness. In cases where traditional individual therapy is not feasible, research shows that online mental health interventions have high potential for improving mental health outcomes.

Technology offers a newer medium through which to conduct and receive mental health support and therapy



IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

SAMANTHA COYLE AND TALITA AHMED

Social support refers to caring and supportive behavior provided by friends and family that enhance well-being and promote resilience.

The caring, helping and supportive behavior received from individuals within one's social network, often referred to as 'social support', can enhance well-being and promote resilience in the face of stress. Research shows that greater perceptions of social support are linked with positive outcomes across development. While social support is important for everyone, it is especially helpful for individuals who may be going through difficult times. Referred to as the stress-buffering model of support, social support can promote resilience in the face of adversity by facilitating the use of more adaptive coping strategies and providing resources needed to overcome challenges associated with a stressor. A student experiencing bullying at school may be able

to turn to peers for support to talk about their experience, or seek out advice on how to more effectively deal with bullying. These forms of support can help reduce the negative impact of bullying, as well as other types of stressful events, on problems such as anxiety and depression. In other words, access to supportive individuals can help promote resilience. Social support can be provided by individuals such as family members, friends, people in school, and in the community. It can also include different types of behavior including things like providing warmth and validation (i.e., emotional support), providing resources, such as time or money (i.e., instrumental support), providing information or advice surrounding a situation (i.e., informational support), and constructive feedback (i.e., appraisal support).

**DIFFERENT TYPES
AND SOURCES OF
SUPPORT ARE
ESSENTIAL TO HELP
YOUNG PEOPLE
DEVELOP RESILIENCE**

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory states that many social and environmental factors impact development. It is important to consider how individuals across different social contexts, such as the home and school environment, help to promote resilience. Parents and other family member (e.g., siblings, grandparents, etc.) are important sources of support throughout life. In fact, one meta-analysis that explored how different sources of social support are related to depression found that support from families had the strongest relationship with depression compared to all other sources of support across childhood and adolescence (Rueger et al., 2016). Support from family members such as parents and siblings has been shown to protect youth from the negative outcomes commonly linked with stressful experiences such as victimization and negative life events. However, other studies have found that the potential benefits of social support from families in promoting resilience may be specific to the kind of stress experienced. For example, when everyone in a family is going through a stressful time, it may be helpful to find others outside of the family to provide support and facilitate adaptive coping.





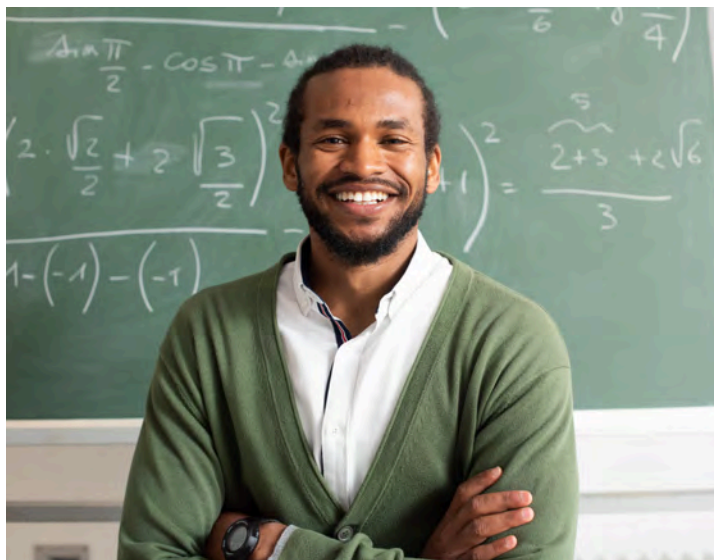
SOCIAL SUPPORT

FOUNDATION

OF RESILIENCE

CARE AND SUPPORT
OF FRIENDS AND
FAMILY PROMOTE
RESILIENCE





TEACHERS, SCHOOL STAFF, ARE IMPORTANT SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR YOUTH

Outside of the family, there are other sources of support available for youth, such as teachers, school personnel, peers and friends. Teacher support is a protective factor for youth experiencing stressors such as medical illnesses or for youth who report less support from individuals at home. Teachers may also facilitate resilience in victims of bullying and youth experiencing significant family conflict. Positive and supportive teachers also promote positive academic performance, particularly for those at risk for academic failure, such as those experiencing economic hardship. As children age, peer sources of support become increasingly important, as youth tend to spend more time with their peers and rate these relationships as more important.



SOCIAL SUPPORT: A STRONG BUFFER IN TIMES OF STRESS

Social support from peers can serve as a protective factor for those experiencing bullying-victimization and can help to reduce suicidal ideation for youth with depression. Peers can also help to promote more positive outcomes for youth experiencing adversity in the home, such as childhood maltreatment. The use of peers as a supportive resource has even been included in evidence based interventions, such as the Skills for Social and Academic Success (SASS), to build skills in youth experiencing disorders that have an impact on social relationships, such as social anxiety. As children age, peer sources of support become increasingly important, as youth tend to spend more time with their peers and rate these relationships as more important. Social support from peers can serve as a protective factor for those experiencing bullying-victimization and can help to reduce suicidal ideation for youth with depression.



**FAITH AND BEING
PART OF A FAITH
BASED GROUP IS
PARTICULARLY
HELPFUL WHEN
FACING CHRONIC
HARDSHIP**

Peers can also help to promote more positive outcomes for youth experiencing adversity in the home, such as childhood maltreatment. The use of peers as a supportive resource has even been included in evidence-based interventions, such as the Skills for Social and Academic Success (SASS), to build skills in youth experiencing disorders that have an impact on social relationships, such as social anxiety. Finally, support can be also be accessed through the community. For example, one study

of social and community supports on mental health seeking behavior of homeless youth found that individuals who received support from community-based providers were more likely to seek out mental health services. Another critical source of community-based support is religious or spiritual support. Individuals with strong ties to faith-based institutions often have access to large social networks that are made up of individuals that share similar backgrounds and values. Individuals with higher levels of religious social support are at lower risk for negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression and substance use. Faith-based organizations may be especially helpful for those experiencing chronic hardship, as many religious institutions focus on supporting those who endure challenges and engage in community outreach, which may help facilitate resilience and connect those in need to appropriate recourses within the community.



WAYS TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE ACROSS DIFFERENT AREAS OF LIFE

- Keep lines of communication open and discuss problems in a loving and respectful way.
- Regularly checking in and asking young people about their lives and especially when they have problems.
- Providing advice that supports effective problem solving and develops skills to manage similar problems in the future.
- Guiding youth to use adaptive coping strategies (e.g., help seeking) and avoid maladaptive coping (e.g., avoidance).
- Supporting kids through day to day activities, such as school work and developing routines.
- Helping kids access the things/resources they need to be successful (e.g., materials for school).
- Providing positive feedback to youth through praise/encouragement (e.g., letting youth know when they do something well).
- Spending time with youth and helping them connect with others who may be able to support them in times of need.



**We bend so
we don't break**

PROVERB

FACILITATING SOCIAL SUPPORT THROUGH MENTORING



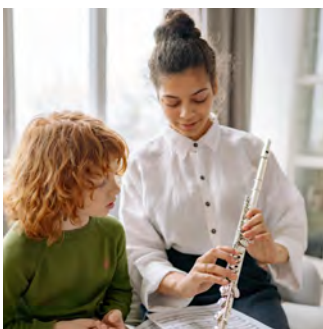
While social support is important in promoting resilience, not all youth have access to supportive individuals in their lives. Thus, understanding ways to facilitate social support is important to explore. Mentoring programs are one mechanism to help promote supportive relationships, specifically for those who are at risk. Mentoring programs pair youth with a caring adult or peer and help to provide a structured, supportive environment that can facilitate positive relationships. There are several key characteristics of positive mentoring relationships. The relationship between the mentor and the mentee should be long-term, consistent and reliable . Mentors and mentees should share similar backgrounds or characteristics and be emotionally close. Engaging in developmentally appropriate activities that capitalize on the interests of the mentee and involving families in the relationship can enhance the positive benefits of mentoring programs.

**MENTORS AND MENTEES
SHOULD SHARE SIMILAR
BACKGROUNDS.**

MENTORSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG RESILIENCE

Mentoring can serve as a method to promote resilience in several ways. Mentoring relationships model prosocial skills, facilitate the development of positive relationships with others, and provide a formal venue to obtain social support. Mentors can also provide other forms of support, such as access to resources or education. Research has found that youth mentoring programs are associated with improved outcomes for youth; specifically, participation in school or community based mentoring programs have been linked with increased social support, reduced likelihood of engaging in risky behavior, and smoother transitions into adulthood.

There are several evidence based community and school based mentoring programs. One widely studied program that is offered in both the community and school setting is the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Mentoring Program. Research investigating this program has found that when implemented with integrity, it can promote social support and improve outcomes for youth. A study investigating the effectiveness of this program in school settings found support that it helped promote academic performance and attendance.. A meta-analysis of mentoring programs has supported that participating in mentoring programs can benefit youth across development levels, that participation in programs can lead to positive gains in multiple areas (e.g., academic, social) and that mentoring is most effective for youth with behavior challenges.



**COMMUNITY-BASED MENTORSHIP
PROGRAMS BENEFIT MENTORS
AND MENTEES**



RESILIENCE AND TRAUMA

SHAINA A. KUMAR AND LAUREN E. SIMPSON

For most people, having to navigate and adapt to difficult or challenging life experiences leads to increased resilience.

Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences. In the context of a traumatic event, resilience is commonly characterized by the ability to “bounce back” from negative emotional experiences. Consistent with a more complete model of mental health, “bouncing back” may refer to a decrease in a negative state of functioning, lower symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety—or an increase in positive functioning, or well-being, through greater experiences of positive affect, satisfaction with life, and personal growth, as examples. Those who experience high levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being are believed to be “flourishing.” Notably, researchers have found resilience is the modal response to major life stressors and potential trauma.

One framework for understanding how trauma survivors might successfully “bounce back” from these events or “flourish” in the face of adversity is the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. In the aftermath of a traumatic event, survivors may naturally experience a wide range of negative emotions, such as fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame. However, even brief experiences of positive emotion, such as joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love, can broaden one’s life perspective, allowing survivors to see beyond immediate distress. This broadened mindset, in turn, may build survivors’ physical, intellectual, and social resources and counter the experience of negative emotion. Essentially, positive emotions may “undo” the lingering aftereffects of negative emotions, promoting resilience to the effects of trauma.

“Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands” - The American Psychological Association (2018)



Importantly, trauma survivors are not only capable of experiencing posttraumatic resilience but also posttraumatic growth. It is noteworthy that voicing experiences of posttraumatic growth does not discount or invalidate one's trauma but rather acknowledges that these are significant and complex events that may lead to both challenges and opportunities for growth. In other words, challenges and growth can coexist. Survivors may experience positive changes in how they relate to others; establish new opportunities or pathways in life; better recognize their own strength; develop in service of the spiritual or existential; or build a greater sense of appreciation for their life and life in general. Although it is difficult to provide an exact number given the multifaceted nature of traumatic events, researchers estimate that half to two-thirds of trauma survivors may experience posttraumatic growth following trauma exposure .

Comparatively less studied than factors that increase symptoms and suffering, a growing literature has begun to outline specific processes through which trauma survivors may demonstrate resilience and growth in the face of adversity. For the purpose of this review, we briefly summarize three commonly examined areas of resilience and wellbeing research that map on to "Criterion A" traumatic events as defined by the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (i.e., exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence). We also discuss the importance of examining the intersections among trauma, resilience, and wellbeing among marginalized populations. We acknowledge this brief overview is not enough to capture the complex nature of trauma, resilience, and wellbeing but hope this piece serves as an introduction to the literature in this area and encourage readers to engage in a deeper exploration of this topic.





RESILIENCE AND COMBAT TRAUMA

Combat exposure is the experience of highly stressful or traumatic events related to warfare, such as being in life-threatening situations involving hostile fire or exposure to war-related injury or death. Research on the effects of combat exposure among military service members and veterans has revealed these events increase risk for a range of physical and mental health concerns, including poor health and disability; symptoms of PTSD, depression, and substance use; and suicidal ideation and behaviors. Prevalence estimates suggest that approximately 1.7 million U.S. veterans currently experience suicidal ideation, 1.3 million had planned suicide, and over 700,000 have attempted suicide in their lifetime . It is noteworthy that not all military service members will develop these concerns following exposure to potentially traumatic events.



FAMILY AND FRIENDS KEY TO VETERAN WELLBEING

Researchers have since begun to explore how service members and veterans might demonstrate resilience and wellbeing in the face of their experiences. Studies have shown the invaluable role that social support from friends, family, significant others, and the broader community plays in promoting healthy adjustment following service, lessening symptoms of PTSD, depression, and general psychosocial difficulties, and also encouraging a sense of meaning in life, post-traumatic growth, and overall wellbeing. Similarly, from an individual perspective, personal strengths such as meaning and purpose in life, spirituality, gratitude, and perseverance are associated with less symptoms of PTSD, depression, psychological distress, and suicidal ideation, and also greater reports of PTSD growth following service. Importantly, few studies have specifically examined these protective factors as moderators of the impact of combat exposure on post-military mental health, which is a key direction for future research.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault encompasses a broad range of behaviors and is generally defined as any attempted or completed sexual act committed against someone without freely given consent, ranging from unwanted sexual contact to rape. These behaviors may include acts that are committed by force, threat of force, or verbal coercion, as well as acts that are committed against someone who is unable to consent due to age. National lifetime prevalence rates of sexual assault suggest between 13.0–43.9% of women and 6.0–23.4% of men have experienced sexual coercion, and between 18–21.3% of

women and 1–7.1% of men have experienced attempted or completed rape. These unwanted experiences are associated with a host of physical and mental health concerns, such as negative reproductive health outcomes; depression, symptoms of PTSD, and substance use; poor self-esteem and social difficulties; and suicidal ideation and behaviors. Researchers have argued the importance of understanding experiences of PTSD resilience and growth among survivors given the severity of consequences associated with sexual assault.



**Greater understanding of
PTSD resilience is needed**





INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to abuse or aggression that occurs in the context of a romantic relationship and can include acts of physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence among current or former partners. IPV is highly prevalent in the U.S., with 36.4% of women and 33.6% of men experiencing physical violence, contact sexual violence, and/or stalking in their lifetime. IPV is associated with numerous negative physical and mental health outcomes, including hospitalization, traumatic brain injury, depression, and PTSD, highlighting the importance of identifying factors that contribute to resilience following experiences of IPV.

Three broad categories of strengths that may promote resilience following IPV: regulatory, interpersonal, meaning-making. Examples of strengths that fit into each of these categories include: general coping and emotion regulation skills (regulatory), social support (interpersonal), finding purpose through helping others who have experienced IPV by volunteering or working for advocacy organizations (meaning-making).

Specifically, studies show that greater social support, sense of belonging in a community, spirituality, problem-focused coping, self-esteem, and optimism and hope predict greater resilience among women who have experienced IPV.

An important limitation to our current knowledge of resilience following IPV is that research has primarily focused on women in heterosexual relationships. Given that sexual and gender minority individuals are significantly more likely to experience IPV than heterosexual, cisgender individuals, further work is needed to examine resilience among men and sexual and gender minority individuals.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS: BELONGING, SPIRITUALITY AND PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING STYLE



RESILIENCE FOLLOWING TRAUMA FOR MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

Although our primary objective should be to eradicate the underlying causes of identity-based discrimination and violence (e.g., racism, heterosexism, transphobia), in the interim, identifying sources of resilience for marginalized individuals experiencing identity-based trauma can provide crucial support and enhance overall well-being. Racial/ethnic and sexual/gender minority individuals experience disproportionate rates of trauma related to violence, minority stress, and discrimination. There is discourse around the expansion of Criterion A (i.e., a specific type of traumatic event needed to receive a diagnosis of PTSD) to include experiences of discrimination and racial trauma, which it does not currently address. Formal recognition of racial trauma would acknowledge and validate that racial and ethnic minority individuals often experience discrimination and oppression that can feel life-threatening and induce chronic stress, which should be considered traumatic events that could lead to the development of PTSD. Similarly, sexual and gender minorities also experience discrimination and violence related to their identity that can be life-threatening. Minority stress theory was originally developed based on sexual and gender minority individuals but can be applied more broadly to individuals belonging to marginalized groups. The theory states that marginalized individuals experience unique, chronic stressors due to their marginalized identities that stem from societal prejudice, discrimination, and systemic oppression, leading to greater psychological and physical stress compared to non-marginalized groups. Although racial/ethnic and sexual/gender minorities are not monolithic and there are limitations to making broad generalizations across groups, they share a common thread of minority stress and discrimination. Acknowledging these limitations, the current section will review current research on resilience following trauma among racial/ethnic and sexual/gender minority individuals.





RESILIENCE AMONG RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY INDIVIDUALS

Several characteristics and specific coping strategies are known to contribute to resilience in the face of racial stress and trauma. Racial socialization, which refers specifically to parents teaching their children about racism and discrimination and how to cope with it, and generally increasing awareness of systemic racism in adults can foster resilience through recognizing and validating the impact of systemic racism. Developing coping skills, such as engaging in self-care, mindfulness, expressive writing, and emotion regulation strategies, can also help to mitigate the negative impacts of race-based stress and trauma.

Additionally, high levels of cultural pride, social support and connection with other racial/ethnic minority individuals, and engagement in activism promote empowerment and resilience. Although research has identified many sources of resilience for racial/ethnic minority individuals experiencing racial trauma, it is important to note that our current definitions and framework for resilience were developed with regards to White, Western populations and may not capture broader cultural differences in how resilience is defined and promoted.



RESOURCES

Stay Strong

Building life long resilience
Sarah Bannon

Building your resilience

A roadmap for adapting to life-changing situations, and emerging even stronger than before.

American Psychological Association. Available from:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/building-your-resilience>

Resilience

A practical guide to building emotional, mental and physical resilience. Written by experts in post-traumatic stress, this book provides a vital and successful road-map for overcoming the adversities we all face at some point in our lives.

Southwick SM, Charney DS. Resilience: The science of mastering life's greatest challenges. Cambridge University Press; 2018 May 3.

RESOURCES

Under Pressure

Stress awareness builds resilience
Saba Horne and Rita Hitching

The upside of stress: Why stress is good for you, and how to get good at it.

Explanation of the role stress can play in building resilience, including strategies to understand, embrace, and harness the potential power of stress,
McGonigal K. Penguin; 2016 May 10.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Information on the difference between stress as a response to a threat and anxiety is a reaction to the stress, in addition to tips and strategies to manage anxiety and stress.
<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/additional-disorders/stress>

World Health Organisation

Information on the signs of stress, its impact, how our response to stress varies, and strategies to lessen the potential negative impact of stress.
<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress>

RESOURCES

Sleep Matters

Stress awareness builds resilience
Rita Hitching and Lisa Lampe

National Sleep Foundation

An independent nonprofit, dedicated to improving overall health and well-being by advancing sleep health. They provide multiple resources on a range of sleep related topics.

<https://www.thensf.org/sleep-health-topics/>

Sleep Education

Sleep health information suitable for parents, educators, and young people developed and provided by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine,

<https://www.thensf.org/sleep-health-topics/>

Centers for Disease Control

General information and recommendations about sleep and sleep health for adults, children, and teens in addition to a range of free to download resources.

<https://www.thensf.org/sleep-health-topics/>

RESOURCES

Early Years

Resilient Children and Adolescents

Rachael Weinstock, Nina S. Starin, Colleen Cummings and Mary Alvordry

Project Competence Research on Risk and Resilience

Part of the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities conducts research on risk and resilience and provides reports on resilience in youth including the role of protective factors and interventions for increasing resilience.

<https://innovation.umn.edu/pcr3/>

Center on the Developing Child

Harvard University presents research on resilience in children, with an emphasis on those who have faced significant adversity. They provide several easy-to-understand resources, including videos, podcasts, and infographics.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>

American Psychological Association

Teaching resources focus on helping students adapt and grow academically, emotionally, and socially with resilience-building skills. They promote skills that can be used to cope with a broad range of stressors. Grades 4-8 and High School.

<https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/resources/building-student-resilience>

RESOURCES

Building Resilience in Children

Building Resilience in Children: The Power of Growth Mindsets, Gratitude, and Optimism.
Bokyoung Kim and Kay W Kim

Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life

The father of positive psychology draws on more than twenty years of clinical research to show you how to overcome depression, boost your immune system, and make yourself happier.
Seligman MEP. Vintage; 2006 Jan 3.

Grit: The power of passion and perseverance.

A guide for anyone striving to succeed, be it parents, students, educators, athletes, or business people, that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls "grit"
Duckworth A. New York, NY: Scribner; 2016 May 3.

Mindset: the new psychology of success

From the renowned psychologist who introduced the world to "growth mindset" comes this updated edition of the million-copy bestseller--featuring transformative insights into redefining success, building lifelong resilience, and supercharging self-improvement.
Dweck CS. Random house; 2006 Feb 28.

RESOURCES

Social Network

Social Media and Technology for Good
Jessica L. Hamilton and Maya Dalack

Center for Digital Thriving

Part of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a research center offering information and resources to help everyone, but especially young people thrive in a tech-filled world.

<https://digitalthriving.gse.harvard.edu/>

Techno Sapiens

Practical tips for living and parenting in the digital age as well as information on the latest research on technology and who use it.

<https://technosapiens.substack.com/>

SPARC-Life Research Center

A range of resources for adolescents and their families on ways to manage a variety of challenges from cyberbullying to LGBTQ+ mental health supported by the University of Pittsburgh's social media and suicide prevention among adolescents research center.

<https://www.sparclife.pitt.edu/>

RESOURCES

Stronger Together

Importance of Social Support
Samantha Coyle and Talita Ahmed

RESOURCES

Bouncing Back

Resilience and Trauma

Shaina A. Kumar and Lauren E. Simpson

Military Trauma: Veterans Crisis Line

A 24/7 crisis hotline for US military veterans, service members, their families, and caregivers.

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Sexual Violence: RAINN

Anti-sexual violence organization that founded and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline in partnership with 1,000+ local sexual assault service providers across the US.

<https://rainn.org/resources>

Intimate Partner Violence

National Domestic Violence hotline offers a 24-hour confidential service for survivors, victims and those affected by intimate partner, relationship, or domestic violence.

<https://www.thehotline.org/>

BIPOC Community

Mental Health Coalition provides resources tailored to the mental health needs of the BIPOC community.

<https://www.thementalhealthcoalition.org/>

SGM: Trevor Project

Suicide prevention and crisis support for LGBTQ+ young people available year round, 24/7

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>

RESOURCES

Goal focused positive psychotherapy: A strengths-based approach.

Includes a description of therapeutic techniques and positive psychology interventions to promote happiness, health, and well-being
Conoley, C. W., & Scheel, M. J. (2018). Oxford University Press.

Greater Good in Action

A collaboration with HopeLab, providing easily accessible and digestible research-based information on ways to lead a happier, more meaningful life.
<https://ggia.berkeley.edu/>

The Human Flourishing Program

Access to information and educational activities supported by the Harvard University community to support human flourishing.
<https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/>

The International Positive Psychology Association

Programs and information aimed at supporting the research and practice of activities that support the wellbeing.
<https://ippanetwork.org/>

The Positive Psychology Center

University of Pennsylvania research and education on resilience and grit.
<https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/>

The VIA Institute on Character

Psychometrically validated personality tests that support an understanding of an individual's strengths.
<https://www.viacharacter.org/>

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