Enhancing Resiliency in Children & Adolescents

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Overview:

Resilience
Stress

Protective Factors
Coping Styles
Post-Traumatic Growth
Share Clinical Tools
It’s hard to define but, as the Supreme Court has noted, “You know it when you see it”:  

*The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances*  

Masten, et. al, 2014
Resilience

APA defines it as:

“The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress—such as family/relationship problems, serious health concerns of workplace/financial pressures”

APA, The Road to resilience
Resilience

The problem with APA’s definition:

This “bouncing back” definition is too broad

Proportions of “resilient youth” varies from 25 to 84%

A narrower definition focusing on specific developmental outcomes at different points of life is needed

Vanderbilt’Adriance, 2008
Resilience

It is an individual’s **capacity**, the **process** he/she goes through, and the **result**

**CAPACITY:** *adapting to changes/stress events in healthy ways*  
*Catalano, 2004*

**PROCESS:** *a reintegration process & return to normal functioning with support of protective factors*  
*Richardson, 2002*

**RESULT:** *the positive/beneficial outcomes resulting from successfully navigating stressful event*  
*Masten, 2014*
Resilience

The cultivation of resilience means fostering a child’s/adolescent’s capacity, flexibility, and coping strategies while facing developmental changes and life stresses in order to bounce back from difficult life experiences and achieve positive outcomes. (whew)

Cheng, 2002
STRESS

✓ We all have and live with it

✓ “It” can be pervasive

✓ But, What is STRESS?

✓ Is “it” always bad?
Two Dimensions of Stress

- **Eustress** (positive stress)
- **Distress** (negative stress)
- **Hypostress** (under-stress, low arousal)
- **Hyperstressed** (over-stress, high arousal)

Seyle (1974)
Eustress
(Positive Stress)

✓ A stressor that is perceived as positive, beneficial, or fun
Eustress
(Positive Stress)

✓ A stressor that is perceived as positive, beneficial, or fun
✓ Stress motivates & challenges an individual
✓ Stress that leads to optimal performance

The Yerkes-Dodson Law

![Graph showing the Yerkes-Dodson Law](image-url)
Hypostress
(Under-Stress)

✓ Couch Potato Syndrome
✓ Low interest level and inattention
Hyperstress
(Over-stress)

✓ Stress level that starts to interfere with performance
✓ A stressor that is perceived as overwhelming
✓ Accumulation of minor stressors that are perceived as overwhelming
✓ Stress that is repeated or chronic - *allostatic load*

McEwen & Stellar, 1993
Reduce physiological activation of the autonomic nervous system

**Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)**

- **Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)**
  - dilates pupils
  - contracts blood vessels (increases BP)
  - increases heart rate
  - reduces digestion

- **Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)**
  - constricts pupils
  - dilates blood vessels (lowers BP)
  - slows heart

Carson (2016)
Some typical signs that are associated with the stress response. The earlier you can detect excess stress, the easier it is to take steps to manage it before it stress out of hand.

### Signs of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Changes</th>
<th>Behavior Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of energy or fatigue</td>
<td>Drinking too much alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stomach problems</td>
<td>Increased tobacco use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense muscles</td>
<td>Eating compulsively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems sleeping</td>
<td>Grinding your teeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent headaches</td>
<td>Acting “bossy”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of sex drive</td>
<td>Yelling or shouting at others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excessive sweating</td>
<td>Driving too fast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of appetite</td>
<td>Using drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortness of breath</td>
<td>Overdoing” activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skin breakout</td>
<td>Sleeping too much</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Nail-biting, hair-twisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Pacing or fidgeting often</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Laughing or crying inappropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Picking fights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Road rage</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Changes</th>
<th>Cognitive Changes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of interest in activities or work</td>
<td>Trouble concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Trouble remembering things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irritability with others</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness or depressed mood</td>
<td>Difficulty making decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger or resentment toward others</td>
<td>Repeating thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudden shifts in mood</td>
<td>Criticizing yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased mood sensitivity</td>
<td>Misunderstanding others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overreacting to minor situations</td>
<td>Poor judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Racing thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatience</td>
<td>Self-doubt or low self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent uneasiness, restlessness</td>
<td>Pessimistic and negative thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling pressured or trapped</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling emotionally numb</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Two Coping Styles

**Problem-Focused**
- Change the situation
  - (e.g. form a study group and study for exam)
- Associated with resilience

**Emotion-Focused**
- Avoid or attenuate the emotional distress of the situation example: go to a movie to avoid thinking about the exam

Lazarus & Folkman, 1984
Problem-Focused Coping

Step 1: Recognize the signals of stress
Step 2: Define the problem
Step 3: Set a goal
Step 4: Brainstorm possible solutions
Step 5: Evaluate possible solutions
Step 6: Choose the best solution based on pros and cons
Step 7: Make a plan to implement the solution and try it!
Step 8: Assess success
Step 9: If the first solution didn’t work, try another!
Emotion-Focused Coping

- Listening to music
- Getting together with a friend
- Reading a good book or watching a movie
- Getting physical exercise
- Spiritual activity such as prayer
- Yoga
- Humor (jokes or funny movies)
- Meditation
- Taking a nap
- Writing in a journal or diary
- Reappraising the event
- Taking a hot bath
- "Anxiety-surfing"
- Helping others in need
- Expressing your stress creatively
- Taking a "mental holiday"
Resiliency SAVES

Social Connection

Attitude-4 P’s
- Permanence
- Passion
- Perseverance
- Personalization

Values

Emotional Acceptance

Humor
Protective Factors for Resilience

Individuals who adapt very well despite facing risks do so as the result of protective factors:

✓ Internal: optimism, perceptions of control, self-efficacy, & active coping

✓ External: functional social support systems, ability to recognize & utilize social supports

Smith et. al, 2004

Hepworth et al. 2002
Main Components of Protective Factors

✓ **Bonding**: emotional attachment and commitment to parents, caregivers, close relationships with mature supportive adults.

✓ **Competence**: involves 5 areas of competence
  1. Cognitive (good cognitive abilities)
  2. Emotional (good self-regulation of emotions/impulses)
  3. Moral (positive self-perceptions)
  4. Behavioral (talents valued by self & society)
  5. Social (general appeal of attractiveness to others)

Masten, 2002
Main Components of Protective Factors

✓ **Optimism**: self-efficacy, spirituality or faith and a sense of meaning in life, a clear and positive identity

✓ **Environment**: organized home life, authoritative parenting, SES advantages, effective schools, neighborhoods with high collective efficacy

✓ **HUMOR**: This psychologist walks into room….combined with optimistic outlook = internal factor that reduces focus on personal failures

✓ **Ethnic family’s cultural values**: a provision of mutual psychological support

Masten, 1986 2006 & 2014
Resiliency and Post Traumatic Growth

Most People

PTSD
Depression
Anxiety
Suicide

RESILIENCE

Post Traumatic Growth
Post-traumatic Growth

• Post-traumatic Stress is Transformative (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).
• Persons with highest level of coping mechanisms report relatively little PTG
• PTG may be more applicable to adolescents or adults rather than young children
• Younger people have more PTG than older people

Tedeschi, R.G., & Calhoun, L.G., 2004
People reported positive change in these 5 areas:
• Had a renewed appreciation for life
• Found new possibilities for themselves
• Felt more personal strength
• Their relationships improved
• They felt spiritually more satisfied
Tools for your toolkit

✓ Some of the examples are from actual patients.
✓ I have taken steps to protect privacy
✓ It my hope that we share stories, share strategies used
✓ WE are the tools!
Personal Strengths
(Have patients/students circle)

- brave
- persistent
- honest
- curious
- open-minded
- creative
- enthusiastic
- authentic
- kind
- generous
- energetic
- compassionate
- loving
- trustworthy
- imaginative

- ambitious
- artistic
- mature
- patient
- tough
- bold
- proud
- a natural leader
- responsible
- loyal
- fair
- modest
- humble
- grateful
- spiritual

- self-disciplined
- wise
- intelligent
- street-smart
- friendly
- good-natured
- sensible
- analytical
- spunky
- motivated
- supportive
- clever
- witty
- adventurous
- easygoing

- logical
- charming
- calm
- rational
- resourceful
- tolerant
- strong
- strong religious beliefs
- good sense of humor
- able to see the big picture
- able to inspire others
- other__________
- brave
- persistent
- honest
- curious
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Mapping Your Social Support

“My Social Atom”
Summary: Resilience and Managing the Stress Response

- Recognize when you are under stress
  - know your personal stress profile and use the stress thermometer
- Reduce physiological activation of the autonomic nervous system
  - deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness meditation, yoga
- Actively manage coping response
  - Determine the amount of control you have
    - Use active or problem-focused coping for controlled
    - Use emotion-focused coping for uncontrolled
- Increase appraisal of your ability to handle the stressor
  - Change threat appraisal into challenge appraisal
  - Employ your personal strengths rather than focusing on your weaknesses
- Seek/enhance social support
Resilience Toolkit

**Cognitive Skills**
- realistic optimism
- self-acceptance and appreciation
- personal strengths
- world view bigger than self
- gratitude

**Emotional Regulation**
- positive coping strategies
- stress management
- tolerance for frustration

**Problem-Solving Skills**
- problem-solving
- goal setting
- making good choices

**Social Skills**
- reflective listening
- assertiveness
- conflict resolution
- empathy

**Self-Care Skills**
- nutrition
- physical exercise

- rest/sleep hygiene!!!
- moderation
YET!!!
Finally, wanna measure your resilience?

http://www.trueresilience.net/briefresiliencescale.aspx
Thank you for all you do for our kids, adolescents, students, and for your patients!!