Resilience: A Strength-Based Approach to Good Mental Health

Sponsored by: Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Maryland Coalition of Families; Youth M.O.V.E. of Maryland Wicomico County; Lower Shore Early Intervention Program

Resilience is an innate capacity to rebound from adversity and change through a process of positive adaptation. In youth, resilience is a fluid, dynamic process that is influenced over time by life events, temperament, insight, skill sets, and the primary ability of care givers and the social environment to nurture and provide them a sense of safety, competency and secure attachments.

Core Concepts:

Sense of Competency

- Determination & persistence
- Takes pride in activities
- Develops/evaluates alternative solutions
- Task completion

Caring & Respect of Self & Others

- Empathy
- Giving back; helping out
- Ability to compromise
- Giving others the benefit of the doubt

Problem Solving & Coping Skills—

- Seeks help when needed
- Ability to self soothe or self regulate
- Willingness to admit and learn from mistakes
- Can accept instruction and constructive criticism
- Willing to accept redirection

Engages in make-believe play

Tries to do things for him/herself

Listens to others; shows patience

Seeks comfort from familiar adults

Enjoys interacting with others

Tries to comfort others

Acts happy when praised

Tries out new words / builds vocabulary

Interested in new things

Imitates behavior of others

- Keeps trying when unsuccessful
- Early development of self control
- Can easily go from one activity to another
- Tries different ways to solve a problem

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- Can begin to generalize learned skills
- Shows patience in meeting a goal
- Desires to be the best one can be
- Self-Efficacy; "I Can!" attitude
- Begins to be able to organize time

Beginning capacity for self sacrifice

Can recognize their own strengths

Can use positive self talk to feel better

Can make change based on other's input

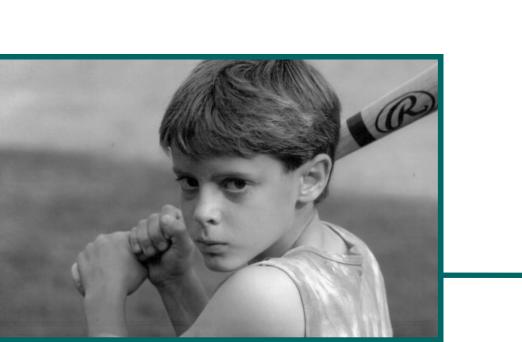
Can accept that life is not always fair

Shows concern for a bullied classmates

Completes chores for the benefit of the family

Not afraid to ask for help with an assignment or task

Acts persistent; tries other ways to solve problems



- Has initiative; sees things through to completion
- Has integrity, high standards

Self motivated / sense of autonomy

Cares about what happens to others

- Incorporates new knowledge
- Forming coherent sense of self

Values win-win solutions

Has capacity for intimacy

Has self-management skills

Ability for abstract thinking

Able to laugh at oneself

Future and goal oriented

Understands cause and effect

Takes ownership and responsibility

Shows gratitude for successes

Can show forgiveness



Have the ability to work with diversity

Have high, but realistic expectations

What can Families Et

Communities do to

Promote Resilience?

Gather and unite around priority issues

Value diversified leadership

for youth

Cooperate in achieving goals

- Offer ample volunteer opportunities
- Treat all youth with consistency & fairness
- Promotion of Wellness and Prevention efforts

Promote open communication around Seeks others' expertise community satisfaction

- Seeks external resources for problems
 - Law enforcement is seen as a vital part of the community
 - Resilience is modeled in homes/communities

Opportunities for modeling/peer mentoring

- Recreational outlets available for families
- Youth are integrated into the community
- There is a belief that all children can be successful

Optimism and Hope for the Future -

- Sense of humor
- Belief that things can get better

Ability to Reframe Stress-

Flexibility; able to adapt to change

- Playful; Creativity; Exploration
- Joy in accomplishments

Tolerates frustration

Can improvise

Enjoys social play Accepts alternative choices

Shows interest in his/her surroundings

Uses imagination to build skills

Begins to accept rules for behavior

Begins to identify patterns and routines

Cooperates with others

- Says positive things about the future
- Trusts familiar adults and believes what they say
- Laughs and shares jokes with a friend
- Can give examples of positive outcomes Involved in clubs / sports / hobbies
- Likes to explore environment / nature
- Enjoys school and learning

Healthy risk taking



Open to new ideas

- Begins to learn to manage stress Able to identify alternative solutions
- Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing situations Doesn't give up even when disappointed
 - Puts things in perspective
- Can accept ambiguity / uncertainty Connects attitude with behavior
- Deals with adversity and the unexpected

Has creative outlets for self expression

Sees life as basically good and positive

Seeks out and can enjoy times of peace and quiet

- Has positive outlets to reduce stress

Able to provide comfort in times of distress Open communication without blaming

- Families encourage self reliance
- Communities engage in creative problem solving

Can calm self down when upset Sense of Purpose & Meaning-Enjoys imitating people in play

Understands how perception influences outcomes

- Spirituality; higher purpose Feeling that you are loveable
- Self improvement
- Cultural heritage and traditions

- Begins to show willful behavior
- Asks questions; tells stories
- Wants to please others and be with friends
- Displays joy and curiosity

- Shows understanding of the life cycle
- Feels loved and has secure relationships
- Wants to challenge self to do better Participates in and values family rituals

Can decide between right and wrong

- Explores different belief systems Has a belief that one's life matters
- Wants to plan for a rewarding career
- Has a sense of belonging to a community Tries to live by their core values



- * Safe, healthy outdoor activities available
- Diverse opportunities for spiritual and cultural enrichment
- Families and communities support quality education

Related Topics & Models

Resiliency Theory Pioneer – Norman Gramezy **Attachment Theory – John Bowlby**

Erickson's Developmental Stages Neuroplasticity - Neuroscience- through Mindfulness and

Social and Emotional Competency – Daniel Goleman

Positive Psychology – Martin Seligmann

Positive Youth Development Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) – Richard Tedeschi Strength Based Practice / Systems of Care (SOC)

Transformational Coping Primary Mental Health Project – Emory Cowen Public Health Approach to Children's Mental Health –

Georgetown Univ., Center for Child and Human Development Salutogenic Model of Health – Sense of Coherence

(comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) – **Aaron Antonovsky**

International Resilience Project – Resilience Research Center (across cultures)

Reaching In...Reaching Out – Penn Resilience Program Resiliency: What We Have Learned by Bonnie Benard Stress Hardiness – Susan Kobasa

Family & Community Models that Support Resilience **Building Bridges to Support** Families and Schools Together (FAST) **Nurse Family Partnerships** Safe Schools / Healthy Children Healthy Communities / Healthy Youth **Asset Based Community Development Center** The Incredible Years Resiliency Ohio

Longitudinal Studies

Project Competence – University of Minnesota – Ann Masten Kauai Study – Emmy Werner and Ruth Smith Project Human Development Chicago Neighborhoods

Some Assessment Tools Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

40 Developmental Assets – Search Institute Connor – Davidson Resilience Scale CANS (Child & Adolescents Needs & Strengths) **Post Traumatic Growth Inventory** The Stress Vulnerability Scale – Sheehan Resilience Scale Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early

Learning (CSEFEL) Infant/Toddler, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales

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