Building Resilience in Children, Families, & Our Communities: Part 1

06/18/20

Miriam Stevenson
Student Services Director
Wellness & Support Department

Beti Loomis
Administrative Assistant to Director
Wellness & Support Department

Indira Selvakumaraswamy
Chair, Social Emotional Learning Committee
Palo Alto PTAC

Sarah Kremer
Director, Resilience Consultation
Acknowledge Alliance
Hello!

Sarah Kremer, PhD, LPCC, ATR-BC

Director, Resilience Consultation Program at Acknowledge Alliance
Faculty, Notre Dame de Namur University, Art Therapy Psychology
RESILIENCE AGENDA

- Basic concepts
- Questions & conversations
- Practical strategies
For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out and everything changes. To someone who doesn’t understand growth, it would look like complete destruction.

_Cynthia Occelli_
What is resilience?
Any guesses? Please type them into the Q&A section.
Resilience

- Protective processes as the phenomenon of competence despite adversity
- Capacities, strengths, individuality, and uniqueness
- Distinct levels
  - Individual
  - Family/ close non-family adult relationships
  - Social environment/ community level

bouncing back
Vulnerabilities
• Living in poverty
• Experiencing family conflict, maltreatment, violence, abuse and neglect
• Racial discrimination and experiencing systemic and institutional racism

Strengths
• Effective coping skills
• Self-regulation
• Confidence
• Optimism
• Attachment to attuned supportive adults
• Positive, supportive peer relationships
• Extracurricular activities
• Positive community outlets

Dekovic, 1999; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Hostinar & Miller, 2019; Lee et al., 2012; Zimmermann et al., 2013; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012
Core concepts to building resilience

**Innate capacity**
All of us have the capacity to build resilience over the lifetime and it is not a fixed amount from birth

**Some adversity is good**
Having moderate adversity has been shown to be helpful in displaying resilience in face of stress

**But not too much adversity**
Does not mean better resilience – instead, these are children/ adults who need more supports

**Focus on strengths**
Strengths-based strategies help support building resilience; what you pay attention to is what you pay attention to

**Interaction between biology and environment**
Resilience is not solely about individual characteristics OR supportive environment

**Impacted by culture**
Those who have greatest influence (dominant) define outcomes and processes related to resilience that may not be under control of anyone part of non-dominant culture

*Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Ozbay et al., 2007; Seery et al., 2010; Shonkoff et al., 2016; Ungar, 2011; Zimmermann et al., 2013; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012*
The optimal functioning of a child’s environment is the most important factor for being resilient.
Stress or adversity from global pandemic, political crisis, racial injustice as seen in…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Inability to focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regressive behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased mental health issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loneliness or isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trouble sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic frustrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regressive behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequently angry or disagreeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling loss of independence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Missing social time with friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trouble sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change in attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-medicating to relieve stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loneliness or isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trouble sleeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions & conversations
Strategies for Building Resilience
1. Acknowledge feelings
2. Ground yourself
3. Normalize your feelings and responses
4. Acknowledge the losses
5. Expand your understanding of cultural humility
6. Engage in regular relaxation response activities
7. Engage in regular creative expression
8. Stay socially connected
9. Be intentional with media consumption
10. Increase gratitude and compassion practices

https://www.acknowledgealliance.org/news/resilience-tips
References


Thank you!

Next sessions

• Thursday, June 25th 4:30 – 5:30 pm
  *Focus on Strengths & Challenges*

• Thursday, July 2nd 4:30 – 5:30 pm
  *Focus on Uncertainty in the Future*

Please register again through EventBrite to attend future sessions!