



RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN

**John Clifton Waring
Clinical Psychologist**

**John Waring & Associates
Clinical Psychologists
Unit 4/149 Ambleside Circuit
Lakelands 2283
Ph 49537111**

Overview of Presentation

- Resilience defined
 - What the research says about the concept of resilience
 - The importance of resilience to children's development
 - Raising resilient children: what can parents do to foster resilience in their children
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Acknowledgements

- This presentation is taken from the work of:
 - Dr Edith H. Grotberg, Ph.D.
The International Resilience Project
 - Dr Tiffany Hense St Georges Hospital Sydney
 - Dr Brigid Daniel, Promoting Resilience in Children
paper presented at 9th ACCAN, Nov 2003
 - Dr Brien Heibert Keynote address to the Finnish
Education Research Association November 18, 2005
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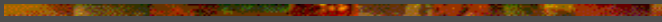
What Is Resilience?

Most simply: resilience is the ability to *bounce back* (or recover) when hit with unexpected demands from *out of the blue*

Resilience is:



Normal development under difficult conditions

- *Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Higgitt, A. and Target, M. (1994) The Emanuel Miller Memorial Lecture 1992: 'The theory and practice of resilience.' Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 35 2, 231–257.*
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Resilience:

- Defined both as an *outcome*:
 - – emotional well-being against the odds
 - and/or as a *process*:
 - – adaptability in the face of adversity.
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Resilience:

-qualities which cushion a vulnerable child from the worst effects of adversity in whatever form it takes and which may help a child or young person to cope, survive and even thrive in the face of great hurt and disadvantage.

- *Gilligan, R. 'Beyond permanence? The importance of resilience in child placement practice and planning', Adoption and Fostering, 21, 1997,pp. 12-20*
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Resilience:

- “the ability to manage the vicissitudes of life and to adaptively protect oneself from the detrimental consequences of stressful events”
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Resilience

- Resilience is not simply a personal construct: a family/school or even a whole community can be seen as showing resilience in the face of adversity
 - Eg) recovery after the 1989 Newcastle Earthquake
 - The economic recovery after the BHP closure
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Research findings about resilience

- Resilient children are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, cope with change and uncertainty, and to recover faster and more completely from traumatic events or episodes.

- *Newman, T & Blackburn, S. (2002) Transitions in the Lives of Children and Young People: Resilience Factors, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive*

- All children have some inherent level of resilience, results show children with high life event stress and low illness significantly more resilient than than children with high stress and high illness

Dr Tiffany Hense St Georges Hospital Sydney

Research continued:

- Potential Pitfalls and Criticisms
 - • Could imply that adversity from social disadvantage can be overcome simply through the efforts of individuals.
 - • Resilience emphasises a ‘quintessentially U.S.’ concept that emphasises individualism and mobility striving (*Rigsby, 1994 (the risk here is to blame the individual)*)
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Resilience research continued:

- Term can be used too loosely as in ‘children bounce back’ –must not make assumptions
 - • Children may appear to be coping well with adversity, but may be internalising their symptoms and showing ‘apparent resilience’ (*Luthar, 1991*) –apparent coping cannot be taken at face value and careful assessment is essential.
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Extrinsic Factors

- Adversity <-----> Protective factors
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Three Key Protective Factors:



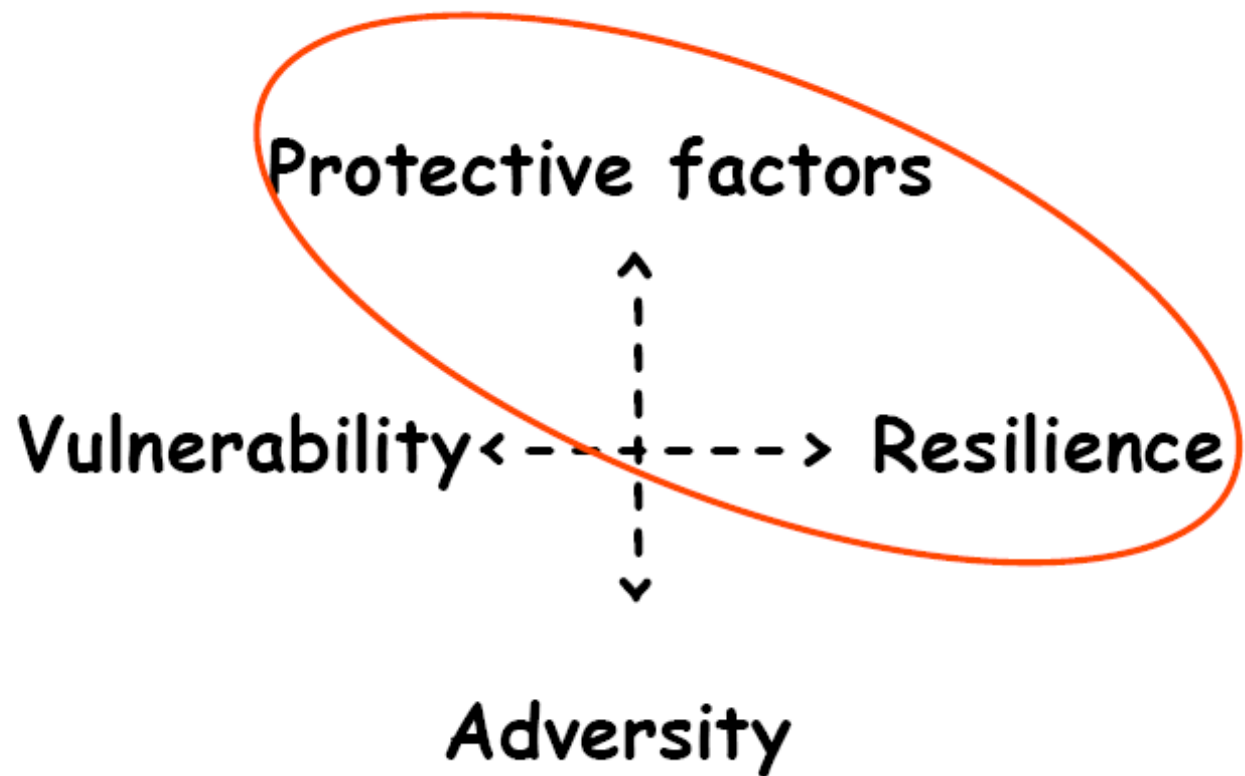
- 1. At least one secure attachment relationship.
- 2. Access to wider supports such as extended family and friends.
- 3. Positive nursery, school and or community experiences.

Intrinsic Factors

■ Vulnerability <-----> Resilience

Three building blocks:

- 1. A sense of security, whereby the child feels a sense of belonging and being loved
 - 2. Good self-esteem, that is an internal sense of worth and competence
 - 3. A sense of self-efficacy, that is, a sense of mastery and control, along with an accurate understanding of personal strengths and limitations.
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The Language of Resilience

- Resilient children can say:
- 'I HAVE.....people I trust and love'
- 'I AM.....a loveable person'
- 'I CAN.....find ways to solve problems'

- *Grotberg, E. (1997) 'The international resilience project.' In M. John (ed) A Charge against Society: The Child's Right to Protection. London:*

JessicaKingsley.

The language of Resilience

- **I HAVE**

- The I HAVE factors are the external supports and resources that promote resilience. Before the child is aware of who they are ('I AM') or what they can do ('I CAN'), they need external supports and resources to develop the feelings of safety and security that lay the foundation, that are the core, for developing resilience.
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I Have:

- Trusting relationships
 - Structure and rules at home
 - Role models
 - Access to health, education, welfare, and security services
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The Language of Resilience

- **I AM**
 - The I AM factors are the child's internal, personal strengths. These are feelings, attitudes, and beliefs within the child.
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I Am:

- Lovable and my temperament is appealing
 - Loving, empathic, and altruistic
 - Proud of myself
 - Autonomous and responsible
 - Filled with hope, faith, and trust
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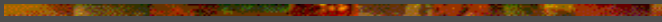
The Language of Resilience

- **I CAN**

- The I CAN factors are the child's social and interpersonal skills. Children learn these skills by interacting with others and from those who teach them.
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I Can:

- Communicate
 - Problem solve
 - Manage my feelings and impulses
 - Gauge the temperament of myself and others
 - Seek trusting relationships
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- Each of the I HAVE, I AM, and I CAN factors suggest numerous actions children and their care givers can take to promote resilience.
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How parents can build resilience

*Identify and support
these resources*

Protective factors



Resilience

*Nurture the child's capacity to
make use of these resources*

What parents can do

- Create a Secure Base
 - There is a clear association between the presence of a secure attachment relationship and resilience in the face of adversity.
 - When it is not immediately possible to enable the attachment to one person, a network of attachment figures can be created around the child.
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What parents can do:

■ Actively Promote Friendships

- Resilience is associated with having generally positive peer relationships, and, specifically, good friendships.
 - Having friends can help buffer the effects of stress, prevent stress, mediate stress and provide information to deal with stress.
 - Friends are also for fun and provide companionship: children enjoy activities much more if they are carried out with friends rather than nonfriends.
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What Parents Can Do:

- Promote the Child's Recognition of their Own Talents and Interests
 - Self-esteem is one of the fundamental building blocks of resilience.
 - Self-esteem is based in the balance between what children would like to be and what they think they actually are.
 - Encouraging the child's unique talents and interests can help to boost resilience.
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What Parents Can Do:

■ Promote Positive Values

- Having the capacity to act in a helpful, caring and responsible way towards others is associated with resilience.
 - The child must have understanding that other people have feelings, have empathy for those feelings, have the ability to act kindly towards others and be able to inhibit negative actions.
 - The parent or carer is more effective if their messages about prosocial behaviour contain an emotional element and are replicated by modelled behaviour.
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What Parents Can Do:

■ Promote Social Competencies

- Resilience is associated with possessing the skills of self-regulation, including control of attention, impulses, emotions and behaviour.
 - Social competence is underpinned by the development of autonomy as the child learns inter-dependence.
 - Social and behavioural problems can be associated with difficulties with peer relationships and with schooling.
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Help your child to never give up
despite the adversity

