Resilience, Risk and Positive Development

Discussion led by:

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How would you define Resilience?

What is Resilience?

Broadly defined as:

"... positive or protective processes that reduce maladaptive outcomes under conditions of risk."

(Greenberg, 2006)

Two parts of Resilience

1. How well a child is doing in life

2. Exposure to significant risk or adversity

How well a child is doing: Success

"...doing ok in life..."

What does that mean?

How well a child is doing in relation to competence in developmental tasks

Exposure to Risk: Risk Factors

Conditions or attributes that
**regularly forecast problems in
developmental task achievement**
that predict behavioural problems, emotional
distress or mental disorders.

Risk Factors - Predictive?

Situations considered risky can be defined objectively or subjectively.

Some risk factors have consistently demonstrated a high correlation to an increase in maladaptive behaviours.

Addition to Defining Resilience: Context

Development in the context of:

- History

- Culture

- Situation

Another layer of Resiliency:
Internal + External

Happiness +

      Doing well in developmental tasks =

            Resilience

If a child is doing well with developmental tasks
(in his/her culture) they could be described as competent, successful or well adjusted. That child would not be considered resilient without exposure to significant adversity.

What do you think?

What makes a difference?

Assets

Promotive Factors } Attributes of a person or environment associated with better outcomes

Resources

Protective Factors – moderate the impact of adversity

Protective Factors

Greenberg (2006) identifies 3 broad types:

- Characteristics of the individual

- Quality of relationships

- Ecological factors

Response to Stress:
A Protective Factor?

How does an individual respond to stress?

Does the individual have an effective set of responses to stress?

According to Masten (2006), development and effective use of these skills are among the most important in resiliency.

Short List -
Common Predictors of Resilience

Within the:

- Child

- Family Context

- Community

?

Promotive and Protective Systems

Attachment
- close social bonds

Learning and Problem solving
- cognitive functioning
- problem solving skills

Promotive and Protective Systems

Self regulation
- ability to pay attention
- regulate emotions and behaviour

Mastery motivation system
- self-efficacy / self-confidence
- intrinsic motivation

Self-Regulation - Executive Functioning

"...refers to psychological functions that are involved in the conscious control of thought."

(Greenberg, 2006)

Promotive and Protective Systems

Effective school systems
- high expectations, orderly structure, warm relationships among staff and students

Cultural systems
- traditions, rituals, practices passed down from generation to generation

A Framework for Practice and Policy

Recent interventions have been designed to engage or enhance **promotive and protective effects.**

"Schools are a central connecting point among many of the systems that shape child development."

(Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009)

The 4 (now 5!) M's
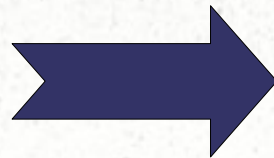
Key elements of a resilience framework for practice:

- Mission
- Models
- Measures
- Methods
- Multiple systems/levels of analysis

Mission: Frame Positive Goals

Begin with a positive statement of objectives or mission.

Deficit-based
Symptom-focused
Illness model

→

Strength-based
Competence-focused
Health model

Models: Include Positive as Well as Negative Influences

Models that use this framework differ from previous models in that they include positive as well as negative components:

- Assets
- Promotive factors
- Protective factors
- Protective factors

Measures: Assess the Positive as Well as the Negative

Resources are focused on positive goals and progress so systems should also evaluate measurable positive goal attainment.

Methods: Reduce Risks, Add Resources, and/or Mobilize Adaptive Systems

Likelihood of a particular positive outcome can be increased by:

- Reducing exposure to damaging risks
- Increasing or enhancing quality/ availability of resources
- Protecting, restoring or mobilizing the power of protective systems

Multiple Components, Systems and Levels of Analysis

"Children rarely face one, isolated threat to development. Risks typically come in bundles or cumulate over time..."

(Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009)

Intervention and Executive Functioning: PATHS

This curriculum targets neural systems that underlie self-control (attention and behaviour), classroom behaviour and functioning and whole school functioning.

PATHS: ABCD Model

This model focuses on how cognition, affect, language and behaviour is integrated in the child's development.

As youth mature, emotional development happens before cognitive development. Young children can react to experiences before they can verbalize them.

PATHS: Summary

- Provides opportunities for children to practice conscious strategies for self-control

- Intensive focus on helping children label their feelings in order to man age them ("feelings faces")

Greenberg and Neuroscience

Correspondence between improved reading skills and changes in brain activity in children with a reading LD

Very little known about childhood neuroscience

- fMRI cannot be used with children
- Methods to study brain functioning in adults cannot be used safely with children

Hmmmm...

Masten & Motti-Stefanidi seemed to negate the role peer relationships play in resilience.

Both Greenberg and Masten & Motti-Stefanidi focused primarily on younger children – what is known about middle and high school aged children?

Hmmmm...

Was there a clear definition provided for resilience or risk?
It seemed that you could alter the meaning to fit your purpose.

Masten & Motti-Stefanidi made assumptions that the reader would understand what the adaptive systems were as many of these terms were not defined.

Hmmmm...

Although the PATHS program is based on neuroscience, many of the programs we know of or use are not based on these findings.

How relevant for educators is the understanding of the neurological connection to practice?

Hmmmm...

Masten & Motti-Stefanidi (2009) utilize the definition of intelligence that is defined by IQ tests.

Future Directions

- Older children?

- Children with different learning needs

- Can neuroscience findings in adults really be applied to children?

- Effects of peers?

- Can we ever fully understand what makes one child more resilient than an other?

Case Study: Fred

- 10 years old
- one older brother
- an LD in reading and writing
- parents divorced when he was young
- lived with mom until she passed away last year
- spent some time living with an aunt, grandparents
- dad back on the scene...
- dad and grandparents don't see eye to eye...
- doesn't know where he will be each night (very unstable home life)
- behaviour problems presenting at school

Case Study: Fred

Which of Fred's adaptive systems have been affected?

What interventions could we use to support and build Fred's resiliency?