

## **Fostering Resilience in Children and Adolescents**

"The capacity to bounce back; to withstand hardship and repair yourself." Steven Webb

Counseling 448:  
Intervention and Advocacy for Children  
Rosemary A. Thompson, Ed.D., LPC, NCC, NCSC

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### **Definitions of Resiliency**

- "The capacity to spring back, rebound, succeed, adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress."
- "The ability to develop coping strategies despite adverse conditions; positive responses to negative circumstances, and a protective shield from continued stressful surroundings."

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### **Resilience**

- "Qualities that foster a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity."
- "Innate capacity to develop social competence, problem solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy, and a sense of purpose."

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- ✓ **Responsiveness**  
The ability to elicit positive responses from others
- ✓ **Flexibility**
- ✓ **Ability to move between different cultures**
- ✓ **Empathy**
- ✓ **Communication Skills**
- ✓ **A sense of Humor**

Resilient Qualities: Social Competence

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- ✓ **The ability to plan;**
- ✓ **To be resourceful in seeking help from others;**
- ✓ **To think critically, creatively, and reflectively**

Resilient Qualities: Problem Solving

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- ✓ **A reflective awareness of the structures of oppression ( e.g., from an alcoholic parent, an insensitive school, or a racist society);**
- ✓ **Creating strategies to overcome the oppression (i.e., "Your present situation is not your permanent situation").**

Resilient Qualities: Critical Consciousness

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- 1. **A sense of one's own identity**
- 2. **An ability to act independently**
- 3. **An ability to exert control over one's environment (i.e., a sense of mastery, internal locus of control and self-efficacy)**

Resilient Qualities: Autonomy

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- A sense of purpose and a belief in a bright future**
- **Goal direction**
- **Educational aspirations**
- **Achievement motivation**
- **Persistence**
- **Hopefulness**
- **Optimism and**
- **Spiritual connectedness**

Resilient Qualities: A Sense of Purpose

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### **Three Major Protective Factors**

- **Caring Relationships:** A caring teacher who is also a confidant and a positive model for personal identification
- **High Expectations:** A belief in self and the future to foster self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy, and optimism
- **Opportunities for Participation:** Opportunities for meaningful involvement

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### **Risk versus Resiliency Factors**

#### **Risk Factors**

- rebelliousness
- low self-esteem
- shyness
- anti-social behavior
- feeling helpless
- academic failure
- lack of connectedness
- lack of positive role models
- lack of future goals

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### **Risk versus Resiliency Factors**

#### **Resiliency Factors**

- self control
- high self esteem
- communication skills
- team member skills
- decision making skills
- altruism
- academic success
- positive contributions to school/community
- positive role models
- goal setting

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### **Resiliency From a Developmental Perspective**

#### **Resilient Infants:**

- alert
- responsive to people and objects
- gain attention from caregivers
- easily soothed

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**Resiliency From a Developmental Perspective**

Resilient Preschoolers:

- Self confident
- Independent
- Highly involved in play
- Advanced in locomotion, communication, and self-help skills
- Tolerant of frustration and anxiety
- Able to take risks and seek assistance
- Socially mature; relates to others well

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**Resiliency From a Developmental Perspective**

Resilient School-age Children:

- Good students
- Enjoy classmates and teachers
- Have a wide range of coping skills
- Enjoy humor
- Develop meaningful relationships

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**Resiliency From a Developmental Perspective**

Resilient Adolescents:

- Well-functioning
- Energetic
- Future-oriented
- Achievement-oriented
- Responsible caring
- Positive self-concept
- Internal locus of control
- Belief in self-help

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**"She's depressed." "That kid's got an attention deficit disorder."**

**"He's got aids."**

*"Strong images are associated with diagnostic labels, and people act upon these images as useful generalizations or harmful stereotypes."*

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**Developmental Assets**

*The "capital" children and youth need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible.*

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**Developmental Assets**

Developmental Assets are External and Internal

- External Assets:
- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time

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**Developmental Assets**

Developmental Assets are External and Internal

Internal Assets:

- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

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**External Developmental Assets**

Support

- Family Support
- Positive Family Communication Other Adult Relationships Caring Neighborhood
- Caring School Climate
- Parent Involvement in School

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**External Developmental Assets**

Empowerment:

- Community Values Youth as Resources
- Service to Others
- Safety

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**External Developmental Assets**

Boundaries and Expectations:

- Family Boundaries School Boundaries
- Neighborhood Boundaries
- Adult Role Models
- Positive Peer Influence High Expectations

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**External Developmental Assets**

Constructive Use of Time:

- Creative Activities
- Youth Programs
- Religious Community
- Time at Home

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**Internal Developmental Assets**

Commitment to Learning:

- Achievement Motivation
- School Engagement
- Homework
- Bonding to School
- Reading for Pleasure

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**Internal Developmental Assets**

Positive Values:

- Caring
- Equality and Social Justice Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Restraint

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**Internal Developmental Assets**

Social Competencies:

- Planning and Decision Making
- Interpersonal Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Resistance Skills
- Peaceful Conflict Resolution

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**Internal Developmental Assets**

Positive Identity:

- Personal Power
- Self-Esteem
- Sense of Purpose
- Positive View of Personal Future

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**Internal Developmental Assets**

**Social Competence**

- Self Esteem
- Assertiveness Skills
- Decision-Making Skills
- Friend-Making Skills
- Planning Skills
- Positive View of Personal Future

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**School Staff Can Build Resiliency in Students**

- Caring
- Had respect for themselves as learners
- Listened without intruding
- Took the student seriously
- Made themselves available
- Had humor with the student
- Were competent professionally

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**School Staff Can Build Resiliency in Students**

- Allowed students to become part of the learning community
- Provided learning environments for safety, space, and freedom
- Fair in their grading and instruction
- Had high expectations
- Found the motivating factors behind inappropriate behavior before disciplining

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### **Student Resiliency Quotient**

1. Does the student have a sense of humor?
2. Is the student liked by peers and adults?
3. Is the student flexible, caring, and empathetic?
4. Does the student have good communication skills?
5. Is there at least one supportive caregiver?
6. Can the student solve problems?
7. Is the student resourceful in seeking help of others?

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### **Student Resiliency Quotient**

8. Does the student have a sense of autonomy?
9. Does the student have goals?
10. Does the student have persistence?
11. Does the student have hopefulness?
12. Does the student have a caring, supportive environment at school?
13. Does the school have high expectations for students?
14. Does the student have the opportunity to participate in school activities?

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### **Teacher/Counselor Strategies that Support Resiliency Building**

- Verbally reinforce that they can beat the odds
- Teach social skills
- Provide classroom leadership roles for an extensive time
- Teach relaxation, critical thinking, and reflection skills

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**School Wide Strategies that Support Resiliency Building**

- After school study programs
- After school recreation programs
- Establish relationships with local companies for mentors
- Implement enrichment programs
- Restructure schedules so that students have teachers for more than one year Incorporate peer counseling programs in the schools

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