It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

Frederick Douglass
What is Resilience?
So you mean to tell me I spent a fortune on years of therapy and a "tummy rub" was the answer all along?

But I don't want to change!

What if today, we were just grateful for everything?

Technically, the glass is always full.
BHA DEFINITION OF RESILIENCE

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 caretakers and the social environment to nurture and provide them a sense of safety, competency, and secure attachments.

The core concepts of resilience, as established by the BHA Resilience Committee, can be used in strengthening assets and skills in children, families, individuals, organizations (including the workforce), and communities.

The 6 Core Concepts of Resilience Are:

- Sense of Competency
- Optimism and Hope for the Future
- Caring and Respect for Self and Others
- Ability to Reframe Stress
- Problem Solving and Coping Skills
- Sense of purpose and Meaning
Resilience is the capacity to bounce back from challenges.

- Challenges can include everyday stressors (like losing a sports game) or more severe adversities (like witnessing violence).
- Bouncing back refers to meeting developmental milestones (like walking, making friends, attending school) despite challenges.

The implication is that people don’t just survive challenges; they develop new capacities that enhance their ability to meet future challenges.
All people have the capacity to be resilient and successful.
Resilience is a dynamic process that develops over the lifespan.
Resilience depends on “ordinary magic,” not superhuman strengths.
Resilience is influenced by the interaction of internal and environmental factors.
  - Internal factors: temperament, strengths, and skills
  - External factors: social environment – family, community

(Masten, 2001)
RESILIENCE WHEN FACED WITH ADVERSITY AND TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES

• Development stays on track even under difficult circumstances
• Dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation with the context of significant adversity (1)
• Resistance to risks due to the presence of protective factors
• Capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful
### Resilience: A Strength-Based Approach to Good Mental Health

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**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Development & persistence
  - Takes pride in achievements
  - Develops alternative solutions
  - Task completion
- 6 to 12 years
  - Can lead to generalization of learned skills
  - Shows patience in meeting goals
  - Has integrity, high standards
- 13 to 18 years
  - Self-motivated sense of autonomy
  - Has initiative, sees things through to completion
  - Value diversification leadership
  - Cooperate in achieving goals

**Caring & Respect of Self & Others**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Empathy
  - Giving back, helping others
  - Ability to compromise
- 6 to 12 years
  - Listens to others, shows patience
  - Seeks comfort from familiar adults
- 13 to 18 years
  - Seeks others’ expertise
  - Has self-management skills

**Problem Solving & Coping Skills**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Willing to accept redirection
  - Keeps trying when unsuccessful
  - Early development of self-control
  - Can easily go from one activity to another
- 6 to 12 years
  - Seeks help when needed
  - Can use positive self-talk to feel better
  - Can make change based on another’s input
- 13 to 18 years
  - Seeks external resources for problems
  - Law enforcement as a last resort for community support

**Optimism and Hope for the Future**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Sense of humor
  - Playful, creative, exploration
  - Joy in accomplishments
- 6 to 12 years
  - Seeks innovative approaches
  - Expresses positive things about the future
  - Seeks out and can enjoy times of peace and quiet
- 13 to 18 years
  - Able to laugh at oneself
  - Seeks innovative approaches
  - Expresses positive things about the future
  - Seeks out and can enjoy times of peace and quiet

**Ability to Reframe Stress**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Tolerates frustration
  - Understands how perception influences outcomes
  - Flexibility, able to adapt to change
- 6 to 12 years
  - Uses imagination to build skills
  - Cooperates with others
  - Begins to identify alternative solutions
- 13 to 18 years
  - Can accept ambiguity/uncertainty
  - Connects attitude with behavior
  - Deals with adversity and the unexpected

**Sense of Purpose & Meaning**
- 0 to 5 years
  - Spirituality, higher purpose
  - Feeling that you are loved
  - Self-improvement
  - Cultural heritage and traditions
- 6 to 12 years
  - Shows understanding of the life cycle
  - Plays well with others
  - Takes responsibility and be with friends
- 13 to 18 years
  - Expresses different belief systems
  - Has a sense of belonging to a community
  - Tries to live by their core values

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**Related Topics & Models**

- Resilience Theory Pioneer: Norman Garmezy
- Attachment Theory: John Bowlby
- Neuroplasticity: Neuroscience
- Empathy: Mindfulness
- Social and Emotional Competency: Daniel Goleman
- Stress Reduction: Martin Seligman
- Positive Youth Development: Positive Psychology
- Positive Relationships and Support (PRP)
- Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)
- Strength Based Practices (SBP)
- Resilience Coaching
- Primary Mental Health Project: Emory Cohen
- Public Health Approach to Children’s Mental Health: Gehweiler Center for Child and Human Development
- Subtyping Model of Resilience: Sense of coherence
- Resilience in the Workplace
- Resilience in the Family
- Resilience in the Community

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**Compiled by:**

- 2015 by Louis B. Wilf, MD, and Jean Wilf, RN.

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**Sponsored by:**

- Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Alliance of Community Care Providers
- Youth HELP of Maryland, Inc.
- Youth CORE of Howard County
- Lower Shore Early Intervention Program
Neuroplasticity:
Restore, repair and build resilience in the brain
CORE CONCEPTS:

Sense of Competency/Mastery
- Determination & persistence
- Takes pride in activities
- Develops/evaluates alternative solutions
- Task completion

Caring and Respect for Self and Others
- Empathy
- Giving back; helping out
- Ability to compromise
- Giving others the benefit of the doubt
CORE CONCEPTS:

- **Problem Solving and 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

- **Optimism and Hope for the Future**
  - Sense of humor
  - Belief that things can get better
  - Playful; Creativity; Exploration
  - Joy in accomplishments
CORE CONCEPTS:

- Ability to Reframe Stress
  - Tolerates frustration
  - Understands how perception influences outcomes
  - Flexibility; able to adapt to change
  - Can improvise

- Sense of Purpose and Meaning
  - Spirituality; higher purpose
  - Feeling that you are loveable
  - Self improvement
  - Cultural heritage and traditions
How Resilience is Built
WHAT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES CAN DO TO FOSTER RESILIENCE

- Have High, but Realistic Expectations
- Consistency and Fairness
- Provide a Sense of Belonging
- Provide Comfort in Times of Distress
- Model Ways to be Resilient
- Opportunities for Involvement
- Sense of Safety and Trust
- Belief that all People can be Successful
RESILIENCE AS THE FOUNDATION OF GOOD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Support of wellness from a public health perspective
- Application for treatment - strength and asset based interventions
- What we all need to feel connected, valued, competent and have life purpose and meaning.
- Social and emotional competency, positive psychology, and attachment theory

*Post Traumatic Growth, Stress Hardiness, Transformational Coping, Sense of Coherence*
Children’s Mental Health Matters!

Facts For Families
Well Being & Resiliency

The Behavioral Health Administration, Child and Adolescent Resilience, Wellness and Prevention Committee has defined resilience as: “an innate capacity to rebound from adversity and change through a process of positive adaptation.” For youth, resilience is a fluid, dynamic process that is influenced over time by life events, temperament, and the capacity of caregivers and the social environment to nurture and provide them with a sense of safety, competency, and secure attachments. Resilience can be learned and practiced through using skills that lead to a sense of competency, optimism, and gratitude, and being balanced in one’s attitude toward life.

Parents, caregivers, extended family members and other adults in children’s lives have the opportunity to model ways for children to feel safe, connected, valued, capable and respected. Below are some suggestions that parents and caregivers can use to help children be more resilient, while also understanding the importance of taking care of themselves in ways that promote positive family interactions, relationships and personal growth.

What are ways that parents and caregivers can support resilience in children?
- Model ways to have everyday resilience and to manage stress and change
- Have high, but realistic expectations based on the child’s age and developmental stage
- Encourage exploration, self-reliance and healthy risk taking
- Provide comfort in times of distress
- Establish limits, rules and structure that are fair and consistent
- Promote a love of learning and curiosity
- Show by example how to admit mistakes
- Promote a sense of humor, playfulness and delight in their imagination
- Instill a sense of pride in your family as well as your cultural traditions and rituals
- Encourage, within limits, a child’s need for autonomy and expression of free will
- Try to have consistent meals and bedtimes
- Encourage good nutrition, exercise, diet and physical fitness

What can parents or caregivers do for self-care?
- It is important to take care of you too!
- Find ways to take care of yourself based on what you enjoy doing
- Have a creative outlet/hobby for self-enrichment
- Develop and stay in touch with friends and a support system
- Be okay with asking for help and provide it to others when you can
- Find quiet moments every day that you can use for relaxation and reflection
- Be a lifelong learner
- Have realistic expectations of yourself and others
- Seek out resources needed to support family growth and development

www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org
IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS

There are multiple ways to identify strengths:

- Take a strengths assessment, such as the VIA Survey.
- Look for strengths in your everyday life.
- Look for other people’s strengths in everyday life.
- Some activities:
  - Reflecting on your personal strengths
  - Strengths spotting – identifying strengths in others
  - “The Badge Game”
  - “Catch a Kindness”
  - “Family Tree of Strengths”
SELF ASSESSMENT
IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS IN OTHERS
Activities for Children and Families

The Badge Game

- Everyone in the group gets a clear badge and several cards. The cards should each have 1 strength written on them.
- The goal of the game is to see how many cards you can give away within 2 weeks.
- You give away a card when you see someone demonstrating that particular strength.
- The person who receives the card places it in their badge.

Catch a Kindness

- Notecards are available to everyone in the group. A poster is hung in a central location.
- The goal of the game is to identify other people’s acts of kindness.
- Every time you see someone being kind, you write what happened on your notecard and post it to the kindness poster.

Linkins, 2012
SONGS FOR RESILIENCE

I can do it!

Emotion

Three Rules

Centerforresilientchildren.org
REFLECTING ON YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS

Think of a time when you used a top strength.
- What did you do?
- What happened?
- What strengths did you use?
- How did you feel?
- How did you feel later?

Think of a time when you were at your best.
- What did you do?
- What happened?
- What strengths did you use?

Learning from what went well.

Slide from Gillham (2013) Presentation at the Resilience Breakthrough Series Collaborative
STRESS & RISK MANAGEMENT

And you thought there was stress in your life

That which does not kill us makes us stronger.
Friedrich Nietzsche

“I have a lot of stress.”
EVERYDAY RESILIENCE

Deal with uncertainty / change
Roll with the punches
Adaptation / control – anxiety
Tree in a storm – flexibility
(d)stress tolerance and threshold – ability to choose what to react to (free will vs. determinism)
Snap judgments (blink of the eye), and calculated response
Put things in perspective, seek balance, let go
Stress as a subjective or objective perception
SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

- Positive, supportive relationships with friends, family members, neighbors, and/or community members provide parents with several types of resources:
  - Emotional support – i.e., listening and showing empathy
  - Informational support – i.e., offering advice
  - Instrumental support – i.e., helping with childcare or transportation
  - Spiritual support – i.e., providing encouragement.
- Positive social connections also allow parents to “give back” to those in need.
- When parents are facing major stressors (i.e., illness, trauma), extra support from formal services can be helpful.

Strengthening Families, Center for the Study of Social Policy
http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/the-basics/protective-factors
SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Children thrive when the social environment (family, community) provides them with a sense of safety, competency, and secure attachments.

Families and communities can foster children’s resilience by:

- Having high but realistic expectations
- Demonstrating consistency and fairness
- Providing a sense of belonging
- Providing comfort in times of distress
- Modeling resilience
- Offering opportunities for involvement
- Providing a sense of safety and trust
- Believing that all people can be successful.
“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

-Albert Einstein
Mini Meditators. Mindfulness and meditation exercises are helping kids get an edge in the classroom

By Mandy Oaklander

HERE'S WHAT THE SCIENCE SAYS!

MORE KINDNESS
Fourth- and fifth-graders who participated in a mindfulness and kindness program showed better social behavior than their peers and were less aggressive and better liked.

MORE SELF-CONTROL
Three years after a Transcendental Meditation program was implemented at a troubled middle school, suspension rates dropped from 26% to 4% and teacher turnover plummeted.

LESS DEPRESSION
Just nine lessons of a mindfulness program led to lower depression scores, less stress and better well-being in British kids ages 12 to 16, compared with students who didn't participate in the program.

IMPROVED FOCUS
At an elementary school in Richmond, Calif., teachers reported better focus, self-control, class participation and peer respect in kids who followed a mindfulness program, compared with their levels before.

FEWER ADHD SYMPTOMS
Even third-graders can get Zen. Eight weeks of mindfulness and yoga resulted in fewer ADHD symptoms and less hyperactivity—and the effects lasted for months after the program ended.

BETTER MATH SCORES
The mindful group had math scores 15% higher than their peers. In a separate study, 41% of meditating middle schoolers gained at least one level in math on a state standardized test.

ANY TEACHER WHO'S EVER PRODDED, begged or bribed a child to sit still and listen knows there aren't a ton of proven ways to get a kid to tune in. But a slew of new research offers a different suggestion: Breathe. Not you—them.

Mindfulness and meditation programs are emerging as powerful ways to calm kids down, sharpen their brains and make them kinder to their classmates. Though the research looks at many different techniques, the outcomes seem consistently positive—and they appear to work in kids so young, they've yet to meet their first fraction all the way up to high school seniors. Some research even hints that Transcendental Meditation leads to higher graduation rates: 25% higher, one 2013 study found. Seemingly idle time may have a place at school after all.
HAPPINESS ACTIVITY
The following informal, exploratory question was asked of 75 people in Maryland, as part of the resilience work being done in the state. Respondents ages: 3 to 92

Please list 10 things that you believe will give, or has given you, a sense of life purpose, meaning and satisfaction. For children, the question was 10 things that made them happy.

Top 13 broad categories in rank order were: (can be used for treatment goals)

1) Family and friends – an appreciation, and love of – a number said pets as well
2) Spirituality and life balance, religion, meditation, belief in something larger than self
3) Overcoming obstacles, reframing challenges which reduces stress
4) Volunteering, giving back, making a difference, having a community cause
5) Having a meaningful career, financial stability, provide for self and family
6) Having empathy, compassion, love, gratitude, hope for the future
7) Life long love of learning, personal growth, imagination, history, new ideas
8) Sense of humor, peace of mind, solitude, times of quiet, reflection, relaxation
9) Being active, staying healthy, exercise, sports, sleep, and enjoying food
10) Enjoying or participating in arts and hobbies, creative expression and outlet
11) Having values, quality of character, self reliance, comfortable with who they are.
12) Sense of belonging to a family history, traditions, cultural pride
13) Being outside in nature, gardening, travel and adventure

This exercise was done to see if what the resilience committee determined was important about life purpose was identified by others – which it was.
FUN & LAUGHTER

How do fun and laughter promote resilience?

- Fun and laughter help people relax both physically and mentally.
  - Laughter, like mild exercise, increases blood flow and exercises the muscles. This produces a physical release of tension.
  - Fun and laughter reduce stress by helping people see the light side of stressful situations.

- Fun and laughter help us develop a positive, optimistic outlook on life. Humor helps us see the “big picture,” notice the good as well as the bad, and create positive visions of the future.

- Humor, laughter, and family fun build positive family relationships, which are central to healthy development.

Wilkins & Eisenbraun, 2009
The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well being.

~ The Dalai Lama ~
MIND RESILIENCE
Resilience Tip

Be determined. Be persistent.

For more mind resilience tips, visit us at www.mindresilience.org

MINDRESILIENCE
Nurture your Well-Being

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HYGIENE
RESOURCES

- Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
  http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/
- Devereux Center for Resilient Children
  http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org
- Devereux Resilient Family Blog
  http://resilientfamilyblog.org/
- Little Children, Big Challenges from Sesame Street
  http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/challenges
- Mind Resilience
  http://www.mindresilience.org
- Reaching In...Reaching Out
  http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/
- Resilience Resource Center (Australia)
- Strengthening Families from the Center for the Study of Social Policy
  http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families
- Values in Action Institute
  http://www.viacharacter.org/www/
- Values in Action Strengths Surveys Strengthening Families
  http://www.viacharacter.org/www/The-Survey
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