What’s the Deal with Resilience Theory?
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Introduction

- Janet Yaffa Tillman, CEO, J. Tillman Consulting
- Professional background
- Herff Jones
Presentation Objectives

- Key Elements of Resilience Theory
- Determining Resiliency
- Basic Ways to Promote Resiliency
- Activities That Promote Resiliency
• 1955 study of 700 babies born on Kauai, HI. Followed up at ages 1, 2, 10, 18, 32 & 40.

• 1/3 children were considered “high risk” due to multiple risk factors at birth.

• Out of these children, 70 seemed “invulnerable” to the risk & developed no problems.
Main reasons for this “invulnerability: 1. Born with outgoing social dispositions. 2. They were able to recruit several resources of support for themselves.
The other 2/3 of the “high risk” group developed problems and were doing well in their mid-30’s. 5/6 of the original “high risk” group bounced back. (RESILIENT)

How?: They told researchers that someone reached out and told them they mattered regardless of their past.
What is Resilience Theory & the Key Element of it?

• Resiliency Theory: Based on the concept that there are protective factors (personal, social, familial, and institutional safety nets) that enable individuals to maintain competent functioning in the face of major life stressors. An individual’s resilience at any moment is calculated by the ratio between the presence of protective factors & the presence of hazardous circumstances. (Kaplan, Turner, Norman, & Stillson, 1996).
Lessons Learned from Resiliency Studies

- Protective factors have a more profound impact on life than specific risk factors.
- Protective factors appear to transcend ethnic, social, geographical & historical boundaries.
- Resiliency is a dynamic, innate capacity that can be learned & developed.
What is Resilience Theory & the Key Element of it?

- Risk Factors: Poverty, low parent education, instability/discord, not in touch w/racial identity, alcoholism/substance abuse and violence in family.
What is Resilience Theory & the Key Element of it?

- Protective Factors: School, Home, & Community
- Caring Relationships (someone who is “there” and listen non-judgmentally)
- High Expectations (consistent messages that the student can succeed)
- Meaningful Participation (relevant)
• Guided meditation
School: Caring & Support

- Resiliency: What We Have Learned, Bonnie Benard (2004, WestEd)
- Reaches beyond resistance
- Creates and sustains a caring climate
- Gets to know life context
- Shows common courtesy
- Is available/responsive
School: High Expectations

• Conveys persistence/determination
• Sees students as vital partners in school improvement
• Articulates clear expectations/boundaries/structure
• Holds students accountable
School: Participation/Contribution

- Practices equity and inclusion
- Provides opportunities for planning/decision-making & problem solving
- Empowers students to create classroom rules/norms
- Aims to meet developmental needs for power/autonomy & meaning
Examples from the Audience
Family: Caring & Support

- Models and teaches empathy and compassion
- Is available/responsive/trustworthy
- Checks in often
- Looks beneath “problem” behavior
- Create one-on-one time
Family: High Expectations

- Believes in & teaches innate resilience ("You have what it takes"...)
- Encourages self-awareness of moods & thinking
- Helps to reframe problems into opportunities
**Family: Participation/Contribution**

- Gives meaningful responsibilities
- Gives child the opportunity to make amends for mistakes/misbehavior
- Makes time for personal reflection & discussion
- Gives child voice in creating rules & disciplines
Examples from the Audience
Community: Caring & Support

• Respects young people
• Actively listens
• Uses humor / smiles / laughter
• Gets to know interests / hopes & dreams
• Names & accepts young people’s feelings
Community: High Expectations

- Sees culture as an asset
- Conveys optimism and hope
- Models boundary-setting
- Focuses on meeting needs of the whole child (social, emotional, cognitive, physical and spiritual)
- Recognizes strengths & interests
Community: Participation/Contribution

- Empowers youth to help create organizational rules
- Creates opportunities for creative expression
- Includes & engages marginalized groups
- Provides opportunities to contribute their strengths/interests/dreams
Examples from the Audience
Determining Resiliency

“The Resiliency Quiz” by Nan Henderson

• If resiliency is defined as the ability to bounce back from, and successfully overcome risks & adversity, why are you a “resilient” person?

• What are some of the struggles/challenges you have faced in the past (currently)?

• Share how you overcame these difficulties... What did you DO? What BELIEFS about yourself & others guided you?

• WHO helped you? HOW did they help? WHAT else helped you?
Determining Resiliency

• Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Survey: (1st 18 years of life)

• Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...swear at you, insult you, put you down or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you feel you might be physically hurt?

• Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
Determining Resiliency

California Healthy Kids Survey (largest assessment of resiliency, protective & risk factors in the nation)

• How strongly to you agree/disagree with the following?
  • I feel close to people at this school
  • I am happy to be at this school.
  • The teachers at this school treat students fairly.
  • I feel safe in my school.

• I f
• Stand if...
Activities that Promote Resiliency

- Adventure Learning
- Arts-Based Learning
- Service-Learning
- Cooperative Learning
- Project-Based Learning
- Mentoring / Peer Helping
Why Am I Invested in Resilience Theory?

• If you really knew me you would know...
My mom
My Motivation:
Jarod 5 years old
My Protective Factors
Partners:

• Challenge Day
• Pacific Educational Group, Inc.
• NABSE
• For being someone who cares about youth
• For being a Protective factor for youth
• For perhaps, being a resilient adult
• For being courageous, passionate and generous with others