

RESILIENCE AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

Ruth Fordyce

Alpha Psychology & The Resilience Centre

My brief:

1. What does resilience look like in a child?
2. How do we identify a child who is not resilient?
3. How do we build the resilience of a child?
4. Collaborative approach to building resilience

What is resilience?

Competent functioning despite adversity

Invulnerability (Garmezy 1974)

“The human capacity to face, overcome and be strengthened by or even transformed by the adversities of life” (Grotberg 1995)

“The happy knack of bungy jumping through the pitfalls of life” (Andrew Fuller 1998)

What is resilience?

Note:

- Resilience is *not* invulnerability – adversity does have an effect
- Resilience as adaptability and growth

What is resilience?

“Positive adaptation despite adversity is never permanent; rather, there is a developmental progression, with new vulnerabilities and strengths emerging with changing life circumstances” (Luthar 2006)

“The capacity of individuals to navigate their physical and social ecologies to provide resources, as well as their access to families and communities who can culturally navigate for them” (Ungar 2008)

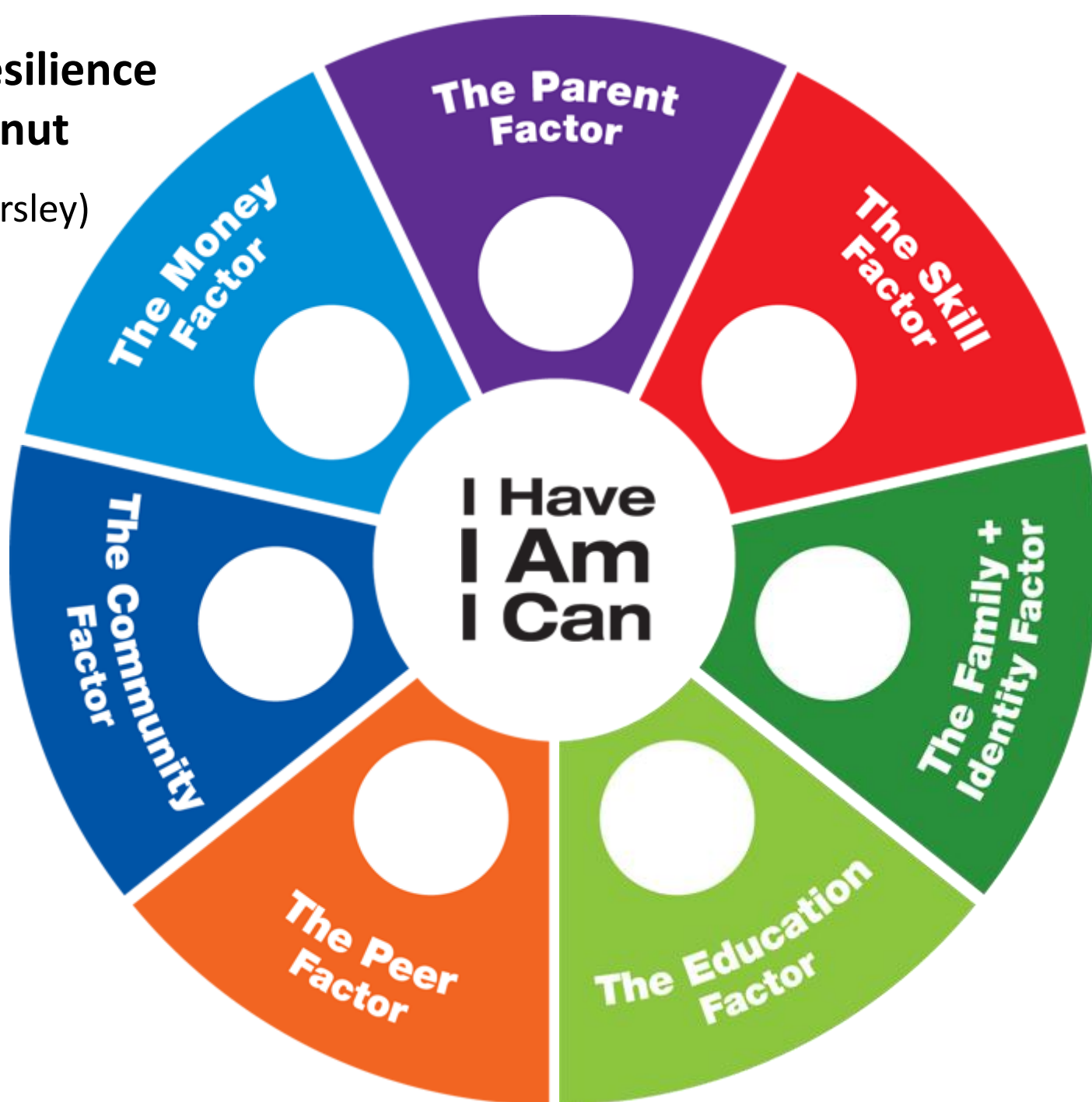
What is resilience?

Does resilience come from attributes within the child?

Or does it result from a helpful environment surrounding the child?

The Resilience Doughnut

(Lyn Worsley)



What is resilience?

Note:

- Resilience is a process seen over time – not a static quality
- Resilience involves interaction between an array of resources. There is no single pathway to resilience!

What does resilience look like in a child?

Hard to measure!

- Need to observe over time and across a range of domains
- Not the same as a 'happy' child
- Not the same as a 'good' child

What does resilience look like in a child?

A child who is navigating the resources around them to enable coping / growth ...
and ideally an environment that is also serving them well!



**The Parent
Factor**

**The Skill
Factor**

**The Family +
Identity Factor**

**The Education
Factor**

**The Peer
Factor**

**The Community
Factor**

**The Money
Factor**

**I Have
I Am
I Can**

What does resilience look like in a child?

- What resources are available to the child?
- What is their external response to these resources? Do they access and engage with them?
- What is their internal response to these resources? What do they think and believe about them? What is their view of self as a result?

How do we identify a child who is not resilient?

Again, need to observe over time and across a range of domains

Causes for concern:

- Lack of supports and external resources
- A child who has resources around them but is not engaging with them

Lacking awareness

Pessimistic thinking style

How do we build resilience?

- Identify strengths *within* the child and *around* the child
- Encourage practical use of these strengths
- Promote an optimistic mindset

Of course, balanced with appropriate sensitivity & empathy

Adversity is painful and hard – but ‘normal’

(Seligman) ‘It won’t always be this bad’

‘Not everything is bad’

‘It’s not my fault’

How do we build resilience?

- Mindful choices about the language we use – ‘resilience building conversations’

How did you get through that?

Which strengths did you use to deal with that?

How will you know when you're ready to ... ?

What do you know now for next time?

Resilient actions, resilient thinking

Collaborative approach to building resilience

- Seek a broad view from significant adults around the child – what resources are available?
- Enhance the strengths focus – what is working well?
- Foster hope and optimism in the significant adults around the child
- Shared language between adults and also the child
- Empower the child to practice optimism and to use their strengths

Collaborative approach to building resilience



Case example

Connect 3 program – the ‘Kindness Project’

Further reading

The International Resilience Project

Edith Grotberg

The Resilience Research Centre

Michael Ungar

The Resilience Doughnut

Lyn Worsley

Further reading

A great article summarising resilience research:

'Is resilience still a useful concept when working with children and young people?'

By Cathryn Hunter, Australian Institute of Family Studies

My details

Ruth Fordyce

Psychologist

Accredited Resilience Doughnut Trainer

ruth@theresiliencecentre.com.au

The Resilience Centre

Positive life changing Group Programs and Seminars

48 Oxford St Epping

www.theresiliencecentre.com.au