

# Building Resilience for Frontline Workers and Families

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# Some key ideas...

- Better than expected outcomes – in a context of adversity
- Bouncing back/up
- Asset or strength focused
- Compensatory experience – mitigating
- Positive chain reactions

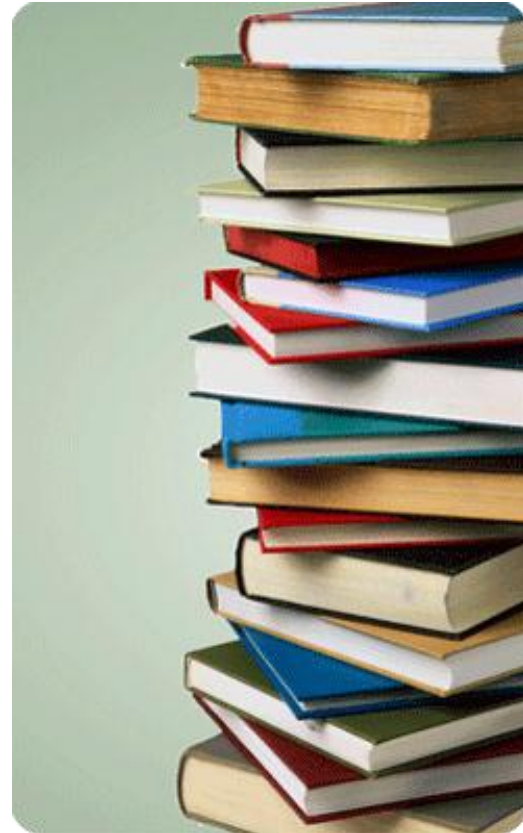


# Resilience can be thought of as

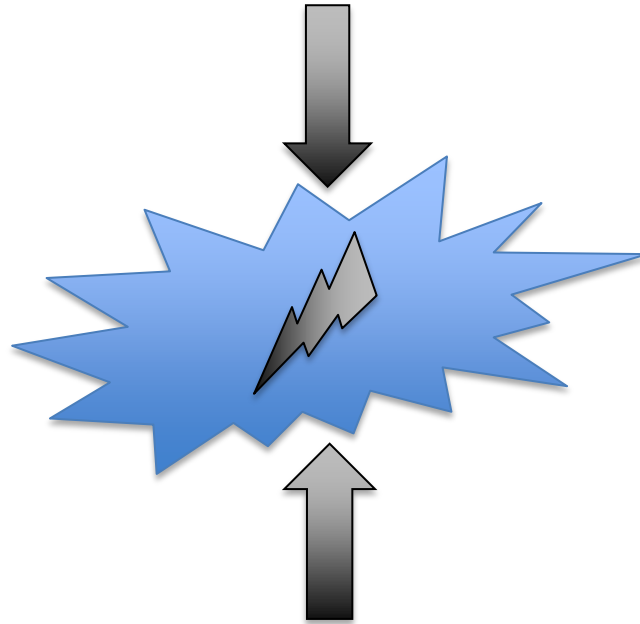
- Normal development under difficult circumstances.  
Relative good result despite experiences with situations that have been shown to carry substantial risk for the development of psychopathology (Rutter)
- Ordinary magic in the minds, brains and bodies of children, in their families and relationships and in their communities (Masten)
- An emergent property of a hierarchically organised set of protective systems that cumulatively buffer the effects of adversity and can therefore rarely, if ever, be regarded as an intrinsic property of individuals (Roisman et al)

# Pinpointing resilience

- 1000s of academic articles on what makes kids resilient
- Searching for particular characteristics, features and circumstances that are consistently present when children do well in the face of major difficulties



Experience of adversity  
(chronic and/or acute)



Better well-being than might be expected  
(in all or some domains)

- Data suggest that only about 1/3 of an 'at risk' child population experience negative long term outcomes; up to 2/3 appear to survive without serious developmental harm (Newman and Blackburn 2002)
- **70-20-10 rule:** 70% will cope well with challenges in adverse family, school and community contexts; 20% require more than just good homes, schools or community resources and need structural support + MH interventions; 10% of these need longer term support/little short term outcomes (Ungar 2014)

# Resilience factors – waves

- **Individual attributes:** e.g. good looks, good nature, intelligence
- **Family relationships:** e.g. good parenting, good relationships with brothers and sisters
- **Social and community factors:** e.g. good schooling, decent friends, meaningful hobbies
- **Processes and mechanisms**

# Processes and mechanisms

- Things that happen or resources we put in place that improve the odds for a child
- Ways of thinking and acting that help a child to do better than we might have expected
- Positive chain reactions we foster



# Maybe not so obvious

- Opportunities to contribute
- One good adult role model, preferably over time
- Sense of purpose
- Realising or setting up a talent/healthy interest
- Sense of self efficacy
- Reflective self-functioning
- A life story that makes sense

- Clubs and hobbies
- Summer camps – tipping points
- Belonging to something good (families, peers)
- Getting kids to do good for others, volunteering
- Holistic interventions that don't just tackle issue/s
- Having mentors who stick with kids over time
- Continuity of practitioner
- Reframing experiences
- Problem solving skills

# Social ecological approach to change

- Research with the most vulnerable children shows very clearly that they heal best when we shape their environments to meet their needs (Jaffee, Caspi, Moffitt, Polo-Tomas, & Taylor, 2007; Prilleltensky, 2012)
- Developing the protective factors associated with child development in adverse contexts
- Requires an ‘inequalities imagination’
- Multi-faceted strategies

# PRACTICE

Trying to effect  
positive change for  
socially excluded  
children, young  
people and adults



**Basics** - this potion conjures up the basic necessities needed for life

**Belonging** - this potion is about ways to help a child make good relationships with family and friends

**Coping** - the remedies in this potion help children get by in everyday life

**Learning** - includes school education as well as ways of helping with their life skills, talents and interests

**Core self** - the spells here work very deeply to help shape a child's character



## RESILIENT THERAPY: ORDINARY MAGIC

Angie Hart &/Derek Blincow©

- Magic .... sometimes the smallest move can make the most surprising difference
- Making resilient moves

**Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow 2007 [www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk)**

	<b>BASICS</b>	<b>BELONGING</b>	<b>LEARNING</b>	<b>COPING</b>	<b>CORE SELF</b>
<b>SPECIFIC APPROACHES</b>	Good enough housing	Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	Make school/college life work as well as possible	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	Instil a sense of hope
	Enough money to live	Help child/YP understand their place in the world		Being brave	
		Tap into good influences	Engage mentors for children/YP	Solving problems	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings
	Being safe	Keep relationships going		Putting on rose-tinted glasses	
	Access & transport	The more healthy relationships the better	Map out career or life plan	Fostering their interests	Help the child/YP to know her/himself
		Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope		Calming down & self-soothing	
	Healthy diet	Get together people the child/YP can count on	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	Remember tomorrow is another day	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself
	Exercise and fresh air	Responsibilities & obligations		Lean on others when necessary	
		Focus on good times and places	Highlight achievements	Have a laugh	There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them
	Enough sleep	Make sense of where child/YP has come from			
	Play & leisure	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Develop life skills		
		Make friends and mix with other children/YPs			
<b>NOBLE TRUTHS</b>					
	<b>ACCEPTING</b>	<b>CONSERVING</b>	<b>COMMITMENT</b>	<b>ENLISTING</b>	

# What challenges our professional resilience?

- When we lose some of the will that inspired us to do the work (will is a resilient quality)
- When we are over-critical (criticism can damage ourselves and those we work with)
- When we don't give enough time to reflection
- When we don't stay connected to our own sources of support

(Phillips 2008)



# How is resilience facilitated in practice?

- good risk assessment of what affects us as practitioners
- good protective supervision practices
- clear policies and procedures
- programme fidelity, reflexive thinking and environments
- outside consultation
- developing good collaborative networks
- building community capacity
- protected research and reading time

(Phillips 2008)

# Developing resilience

- Pride in being good at aspects of your job
- Being good at the bits of your job you think are most important
- Sense of agency
- Strong support - good leadership if you can get it.

(Teachers working in tough jobs in  
- Howard and Johnson 2004)

Australia

# What physicians say helps to build their resilience:

- Valuing the work role
- Setting clear boundaries between work & non work
- Developing well structured work routines
- Effective communication skills
- Successful peer support mechanisms
- Enhancing self awareness and acceptance by reflecting on strengths and limitations

(Jensen et al 2008)

# How to survive and thrive

1. Build positive professional relationships – networking and mentoring
2. Maintain positivity – laughter, optimism
3. Develop emotional insight to understand own risk and protective factors
4. Use life balance and spirituality to give one's life meaning and coherence
5. Become more reflective to build emotional strength and assist in meaning-making to transcend the present ordeal

(Jackson et al 2007 in McAllister 2009 lit review)

# Strategic way of building resilience

- **Basics:** getting the necessities sorted
- **Belonging:** good relationships
- **Learning:** interests, talents, life skills
- **Coping:** skills to get by in everyday ways
- **Core Self:** inner thoughts and beliefs
- Professional self-appraisal activity

# Nurturing change



# Nurturing resilience in practice



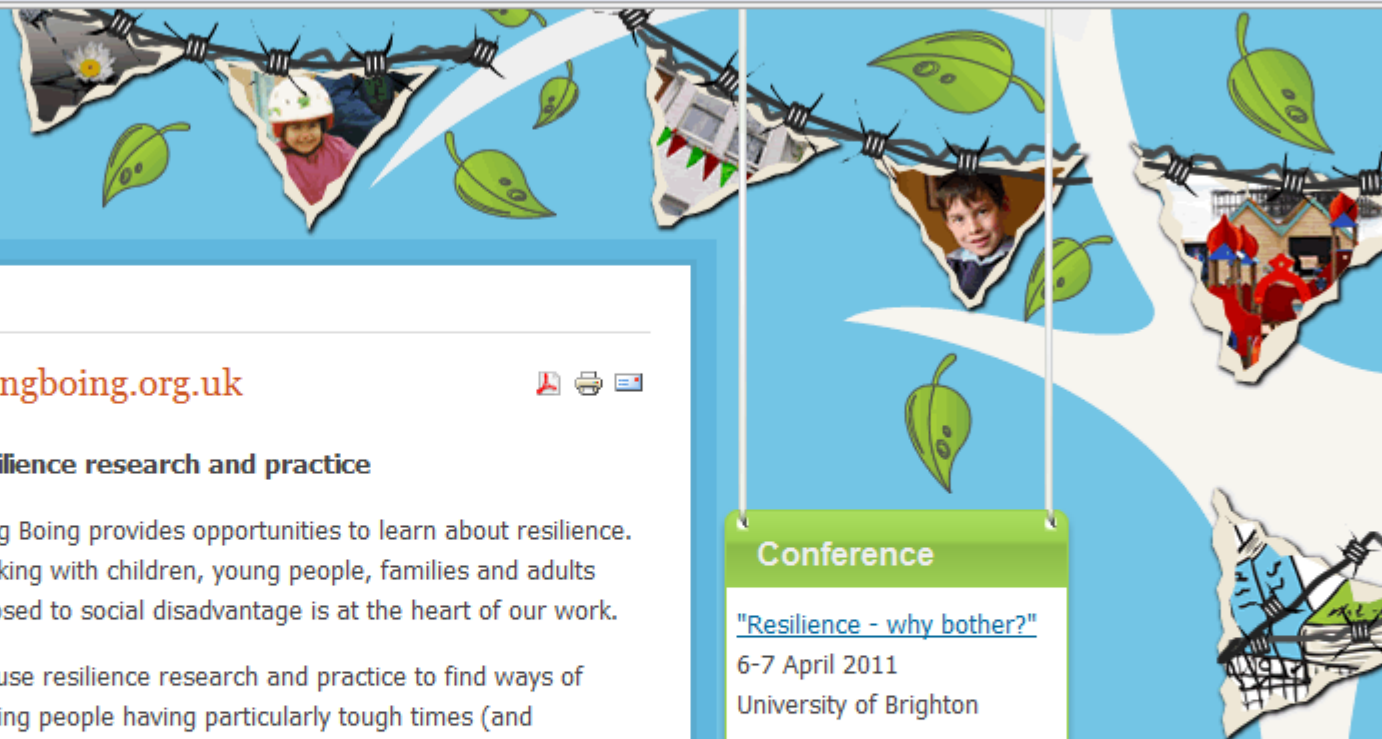
- One trusted adult who can support the family/young person/you
- A focus on the basics
- Problem solving skills
- Access to other activities such as talents or hobbies /work/life balance
- Safe and personal boundaries & recognition of limitations
- Self soothing and coping skills

# Nurturing resilience in practice



- Supporting participation and engagement
- Supporting YP, families & Yourself to understand the concept of resilience and how to use ideas to best effect
- Working with yp, communities, schools, organisations etc to promote resilience and working together to tackle the issue
- Hope and inequalities imagination!



[Home](#)[What is resilience?](#)[Resilience research](#)[Resilience in practice](#)[Training & events](#)[Resilience Conference](#)[Getting hold of our stuff](#)[Who are we?](#)[Links](#)**boingboing.org.uk**

## Resilience research and practice

Boing Boing provides opportunities to learn about resilience. Working with children, young people, families and adults exposed to social disadvantage is at the heart of our work.

We use resilience research and practice to find ways of helping people having particularly tough times (and ourselves) because it is a source of very useful knowledge about how individuals overcome such times.

While there are loads of academic articles and books on resilience, not enough tell us how to go about using this knowledge to help children, young people and adults to bounce up against the odds.

That's why we have been developing approaches, like [Resilient Therapy \(RT\)](#), for anyone to use.

We work with a mixed bag of people – academics, parents

## Conference

["Resilience - why bother?"](#)

6-7 April 2011

University of Brighton

## Resilience Forum

[Hope and Resilience](#)

Tuesday 5 July 2011

10.00 am - 12.30 pm

Checkland Building A500

University of Brighton

E · S · R · C  
ECONOMIC  
& SOCIAL  
RESEARCH  
COUNCIL