Supporting the Development of a Resilient Child

Mental Health - Resilience - Wellbeing

Positive Psychology
Mind Changes
India, Bangladesh, Resilience
Bengaline and Karen Reivich's Learnable Attributes of Resilience
Amygdala Hijack
Emotional Literacy
Oxytocin
Stress
Flow
Extra Reading

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Statistics in Australia

Mental ill-health describes a number of diagnosable disorders that can significantly interfere with a person's cognitive, emotional or social abilities.

Relevant Statistics for Adults

25% suffer from some form of mental ill-health
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress disorder
- Eating disorder etc.
8.5% have self harming thoughts
5% have suicidal thoughts

Return to normal
Post Traumatic Growth
What are we missing?
Martin Seligman - Associate Professor of Psychology at University of Pennsylvania
- 96.6% of psych. research world wide post WW2 was focused on what is wrong with us.
- 4% focused on what we do well in order to be happy.

What is Positive Psychology?
The science of optimal human functioning, of what makes people flourish and thrive. A branch of psychology that focuses on 'building what's strong' as opposed to 'fixing what's wrong'. Positive psychology addresses questions such as 'what makes people more happy?', rather than 'what makes people less depressed?'. The basic premise of PP is 'there's more to wellbeing than an absence of ill-being.'

Mental Health Spectrum

Evidence that Positive Emotion builds Cognitive Capacity
- Broader Attention
- Greater Working Memory
- Enhanced Verbal Fluency
- Increased Access to Information
- Increased Creativity
- Increased Engagement (Ref: Seligman, 2002)
Mood Changers

What three things can instantly change your mood?
- Music
- Exercise
- Laughter

Gratitude
Write down 3 new things you are grateful for everyday

Doing this for 21 days in a row rewrites your brain to retain a pattern of scanning the world not for the negative but for the positive first.

Positivity
Record the best things
- Journaling about 1 positive experience you’ve had in the past 24 hours allows your brain to relive it.

E.G. What was the best thing that happened at school today?
Karen Reivich’s 7 Learnable Attributes of Resilience

- Emotional Awareness
- Impulse Control
- Optimism
- Causal Analysis
- Empathy
- Self Efficacy
- Reaching Out

Emotional Awareness or Regulation

This is primarily the ability to identify what you are feeling and, when necessary, the ability to control your feelings.

Amygdala Hijack

WHAT THE SMART BRAIN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR

- Problem solving
- Judgement
- Impulse control
- Strategic thinking
- “Executive functions”

- Differentiate among conflicting thoughts,
- Determine good and bad, better and best, same and different,
- Future consequences of current activities,
- Working toward a defined goal,
- Prediction of outcomes, expectation based on actions,
- and social “control” (the ability to suppress urges that, if not suppressed, could lead to socially-unacceptable outcomes).

Amygdala Hijack

The smart brain

(Pre-frontal cortex)
Impulse control

Highly resilient people are able to tolerate ambiguity so they don’t rush to make decisions. They sit back and look at things in a thoughtful way before acting.

Mindfulness

[Image]

[Image]
Optimism

Optimism is ‘realistic optimism’ which is important. Not pie-in-the-sky optimism. People who are blindly optimistic who, for example, stick their heads in the sand, do not have a brand of optimism which facilitates problem solving; in fact it interferes with it. So for optimism to help resilience, it needs to be ‘wed to reality’.

What Went Well

Ten Pin Bowling research

Causal analysis

This means the ability to think comprehensively about the problems you confront. Folks who score high in resilience are able to look at problems from many perspectives and consider many factors.
Empathy

People who score high on emotional awareness and understand their own emotions tend also to score high on empathy - the ability to read and understand the emotions of others. This is important for resilience for two reasons: it helps build relationships with others and then this gives social support.
Empathy - Acts of Kindness

Self-efficacy
This is confidence in your ability to solve problems. This is partly about knowing what your strengths and weaknesses are and relying on your strengths to cope. Reivich stresses that this is different than self esteem. In other words, it is not just about feeling good about yourself, it is what she calls 'a skills based mastery based notion of coping'.

Via Character Strength Survey
240 Questions
20 minutes
Identifies your character strengths

The 24 Character Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virtue</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prudence</td>
<td>Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Doing favours and good deeds for others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Presenting oneself in a genuine way; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; weighing all evidence fairly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social intelligence</td>
<td>Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>Approaching life with excitement and energy; feeling alive and activated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that makes sense to oneself and to others</td>
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From Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification by Prof Chris Peterson and Prof Martin Seligman

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Which of them are strongest in you?
Reaching out

By this, Reivich means being prepared to take appropriate risk. People who score high on resilience are willing to try things and think failure is a part of life.

Oxytocin

- The Cuddle Hormone
- The bodies inbuilt resilience mechanism
- Mends damaged heart cells

Stress

LATEST RESEARCH

30,000 adults in the USA for 8 years.

Asked people how much stress have you experienced in the last year?
Do you believe that stress is harmful for your health?

Then they used public death records to find out who died.

Results

Unless... you believe that stress is not harmful to your health.
WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR BODIES MIND ABOUT STRESS, YOU CHANGE YOUR BODIES RESPONSE TO STRESS

This is exactly what participants were told in a social stress test at Harvard University.

- pounding heart = preparing you for some form of action
- breathing faster = getting more oxygen to the brain.

Participants who were trained to view the stress process as helpful to performance were less stressed and more confident. But what was most fascinating was the physiological stress response.