BUILDING RESILIENCY TO WITHSTAND TRAUMA

JENNIFER CARLSON, CMHC MAC

CARLSONCOUNSELINGANDCONSULTING@GMAIL.COM
PAUSE, STRETCH, BREATH
WHERE WE ARE GOING

DEFINING RESILIENCE
GROWTH MINDSET
TRAUMA AND POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH
THE BRAIN
PRACTICAL TOOLS/PRACTICES TO BUILD RESILIENCY
RESILIENCY

• An ability to cope with adversity and push through challenges in pursuit of opportunities. (Hanson & Hanson, 2018)

• The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress. (American Psychological Association, 2014)

• A stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event. The trajectory is characterized by a relatively brief period of disequilibrium, but otherwise continued health.

• A conscious effort to move forward in an insightful integrated positive manner as a result of lessons learned from an adverse experience.

• A process to harness resources to sustain well-being.

• The capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, and development of that system. (Southwick et al. 2014)
RESILIENCY IS IN CONTEXT

- A person’s resiliency is influenced by three cultures:
  - Individual
  - Interpersonal/social
  - Societal

(Livesey, 2004)
RESILIENT PEOPLE...

- Know that suffering is part of life.
- Are good at focusing on what they can change and letting go of what they can’t change
- Realize they have control over their decision making, ask the question, “Is what I am doing helping or harming me?”

(Hone, 2019)
WHAT IS A RESILIENCY MINDSET?
TRAUMA

• “Trauma is specifically an event that overwhelms the central nervous system, altering the way we process and recall memories. Trauma is not the story of something that happened back then, it’s the current imprint of that pain, horror, and fear living inside people.” - Bessel van der Kolk
FIGURE 3.1 Dynamic patterns of regulated and dysregulated autonomic arousal (J. Wheatley-Crooke, based on Porges, 1997)

- **Arousal Level**
  - Hyperarousal
  - Optimal Arousal
  - Hypoarousal

- **Safety Level**
  - Danger
  - Safety

- **Dominant ANS System**
  - Sympathetic System
    - fight-flight
    - dissociated rage or panic
    - sleep disturbance
    - stress
    - muscle tension
    - heart rate increase
    - emotional reactivity
    - irrational thinking
  - Parasympathetic System
    - feeling competent
    - "social engagement system"
    - rest & digest
    - in balance
    - relaxed & alert
    - immobility - "freeze"
    - dissociated collapse (withdrawal)
    - tired
    - lack of focus or motivation
    - depressed/down
How Trauma Can Affect Your Window Of Tolerance

**HYPERAROUSAL**

Anxious, Angry, Out of Control, Overwhelmed
Your body wants to fight or run away.
It’s not something you choose – these reactions just take over.

**HYPOAROUSAL**

Spacy, Zoned Out, Numb, Frozen
Your body wants to shut down.
It’s not something you choose – these reactions just take over.

**WINDOW OF TOLERANCE**

When you are in your Window of Tolerance, you feel like you can deal with whatever’s happening in your life. You might feel stress or pressure, but it doesn’t bother you too much. This is the ideal place to be.

When stress and trauma shrink your window of tolerance, it doesn’t take much to throw you off balance.

Working with a practitioner can help expand your window of tolerance so that you are more able to cope with challenges.

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In order to experience post traumatic growth someone typically must experience change in at least one of five primary areas:

- Improved relationships
- More confidence in one's strengths and abilities
- New life priorities and possibilities
- Greater appreciation of life
- Spiritual or existential change

(TEDESCHI & CALHOUN, 2004)
ASK YOURSELF THESE 6 QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH (FRIEDLANDER, 2021)

1. We would never wish this (the traumatic experience) on anyone. But at the same time, what wisdom have you discovered as a result of this experience?

2. List three personal strengths you’ve been relying on through this challenging time. In what ways are you using these strengths effectively right now? Have you noticed any new strengths that have surprised you?

3. What relationships in your life are important to you right now? Have any new connections formed or have old connections strengthened in a way that has surprised you?

4. How have your spiritual beliefs or practices changed during this challenging time?

5. What was most important to you before this challenge began? Compare that to now. What has changed? Are there values or activities that are now a higher priority for you?

6. Before this challenge, it’s possible your life was on a different path than it is now. If you hadn’t had this challenging experience, what about your current life would never have happened? What would you be missing if you never had this fork in the road?
PAUSE, STRETCH, BREATH

Mind Full, or Mindful?
SELF-COMPASSION

BE KIND to YOURSELF
by KRISTIN NEFF

1. SELF KINDNESS
   WE ARE AS CARING TOWARD OURSELVES AS WE ARE TOWARD OTHERS

2. RECOGNIZING OUR COMMON HUMANITY
   PAIN
   MOMENT OF CONNECTION WITH OTHERS
   SHARED HUMAN EXPERIENCE

3. MINDFULNESS
   BEING OPEN TO THE REALITY OF THE PRESENT MOMENT
   ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SUFFERING WITHOUT EXAGGERATING IT

SELF-COMPASSION
A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

RESEARCH AND MORE RESEARCH

SELF-COMPASSION

seeyourwords.com
BRAIN NEGATIVITY BIAS
“Our brain has a negativity bias, which makes it like VELCRO FOR THE BAD and TEFLOWN FOR THE GOOD. so we have to learn to take in the positive experiences, weaving them into the fabric of our brains.”

-RICK HANSON, PH.D.
GROWING RESOURCES IN THE MIND/BRAIN
LEARNING TO TAKE IN POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

1. Have a beneficial experience: notice it or create it.

2. Enrich it: stay with it, feeling it fully.

3. Absorb it: receive it into yourself.

(HANSON & HANSON, 2018)
RESILIENT CONNECTIONS

• Our sense of belonging grows by engaging in the messiness of human interaction.
• Move from mismatch to repair, disconnection to connection.
• Resilience emerges out of the number of repaired interactions you experience.
• Repair, repair, repair!

(Tronick & Gold, 2020)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WAYS TO CULTIVATE RESILIENCE</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Write down personal values and let them guide behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice repair in relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrate growth</td>
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<td>Self-compassion</td>
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<td>Mindfulness</td>
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<td>Savoring positive experiences</td>
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<td>Take time to relax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laugh, find the humor and delight in life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating a growth mindset at home/work/classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify what gives your life meaning/purpose</td>
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<td>Exercise/dance/move the body</td>
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<td>Feed the body nourishing food</td>
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<td>Maintain Healthy Boundaries</td>
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<td>Be in nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sing with people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play a musical instrument</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Puedo ver claramente ahora
Puedo ver claramente ahora, la lluvia se ha marchado
puedo ver todos los obstáculos en mi camino
se han marchado las nubes negras que me tenían segado
va a ser un brillante (brillante) brillante (brillante)
día soleado
da a ser un brillante (brillante) brillante (brillante)
día soleado

Oh, si ahora lo lograre, el dolor se ha ido
todos los malos sentimientos han desaparecido
he aquí el arco iris por el cual he estado rezando
va a ser un brillante (brillante) brillante (brillante)
día soleado

Mira todo alrededor, no hay nada más que cielos azules
Mira al frente, no hay nada más que cielos azules

Puedo ver claramente ahora, la lluvia se ha marchado
puedo ver todos los obstáculos en mi camino
he aquí el arco iris por el cual he estado rezando
va a ser un brillante (brillante) brillante (brillante)
día soleado
RESOURCES

• Dr. Lucy Hone, 2019, 3 Secrets of Resilient People, TED TALK
  • https://www.ted.com/talks/lucy_hone_3_secrets_of_resilient_people?language=en

• Dr. Carol Dweck, 2014, The Power of Believing that You Can Improve, TED TALK.
  • https://www.ted.com/speakers/carol_dweck

• Kelly McGoginal, 2013, How to Make Stress Your Friend, TED TALK.
  • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU


• Rick Hanson PhD and Forrest Hanson (2018), Resilient: How to Grow an Unshakable Core of Calm, Strength, and Happiness. www.rickhanson.net, https://www.thefoundationsofwellbeing.com/ The Foundations of Well Being is a year long program designed to change your brain for the better. Partial and full scholarships available.

• Ed Tronick, PhD and Claudia M. Gold, MD (2020), The Power of Discord: Why the Ups and Downs of Relationships are the Secret to Building Intimacy, Resilience, and Trust.
RESOURCES

• Self Compassion, Dr. Kristin Neff, [https://self-compassion.org/](https://self-compassion.org/) Free Guided Self Compassion Meditations.

• The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body In the Healing of Trauma, Bessel van der Kolk, MD, (2014), [https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/](https://www.besselvanderkolk.com/)
