

Fostering Resilience Through Relationships



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Resilience



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Resilience:

“an ability to recover from or adjust easily
misfortune or change.”

-Miriam Webster Dictionary

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What Will We Review Today?

- What is resilience?
- The biology of resilience
- Safety as a factor of resilience
- Stress, Shame and the impact upon resilience and learning
- The connection between attachment, relationship and resilience
- Building resilience in ourselves and building our resilience in our learners

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What is Resilience

- Resilience is the process of adapting in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress -- such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace/ learning place stress, financial stressors and now a pandemic.
- It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.



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Biology of Resilience



<https://exploringyourmind.com/neurobiology-of-resilience/>

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Telomeres

Telomeres are like the plastic tips on shoelaces preventing the chromosome ends from fraying and sticking to each other, which would scramble an organism's genetic information to cause cancer, other diseases, or even death.



Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn



Blackburn, E., & Epel, E. (2017). *The telomere effect: a revolutionary approach to living younger, healthier, longer*. Hachette UK.

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Move

“Movement has many positive effects, including the emission of dopamine - that wonderful neurotransmitter that helps us experience a sense of well-being.”

Physical activity stimulates all kinds of neural circuits that help our brain and bring loads of benefits, including:

- Improved memory
- Easing of depression
- Improved cognitive ability and problem solving
- Release of neurotransmitters that alleviate both physical and mental pain
- Enhanced neurogenesis, or the creation of new neurons in the brain

(Hawn & Holden, 2012)

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Moving Increases Dopamine and BDNF



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Sleep



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Mindfulness



Similarity Between Attachment and Mindfulness

- The same part of the prefrontal cortex is activated in two conditions: when there is a loving, present and connected relationship between two people, and when there is mindfulness practice in meditation.
- This brain part is responsible for self-regulation, attention span, impulse control and social engagement.



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The Role of Nature in Resilience



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Increase the Capacity for People to Feel Safe



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Attunement

- Ensure that interactions with children are intentional, responsive and 'tuned in' to them as individuals.
- Support families where secure attachments may be at risk and work with them to create strong secondary attachments in the setting for the child.



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Signs of Stress

- Watch for averted or fixed gaze
- Dramatic colour changes (ears)
- Gagging, coughing, yawning, sighing, restlessness, crying
- Hyperalert states
- Diffuse motor activity

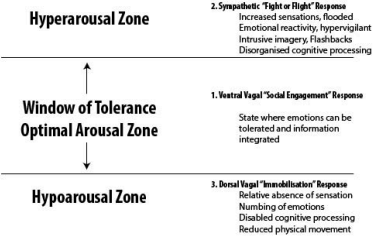


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Stress within the Window of Tolerance Facilitates Learning

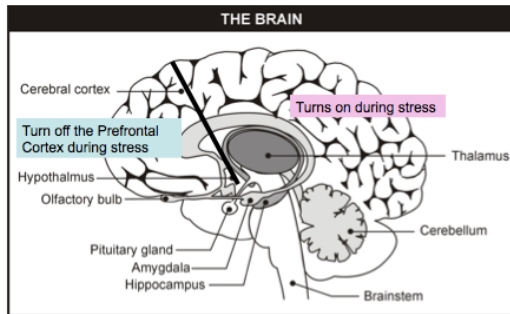
A stressful stimulus can be motivating if the person is still within their window of tolerance.

Window of Tolerance



Adapted from Ogden, Minton, & Pair, 2006, p. 27, 32; Corrigan, Fisher, & Nutt, 2010, p. 2

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Turning off prefrontal cortical control of behavior during stress may have survival value, but make us more vulnerable to neuropsychiatric illness.

When You Are Stressed You Can't Learn

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Self-Regulation Develops Through Attachment Relationships



Secure attachment is the foundation of resilience.

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Putting your Mind in the Mind of the Other



Secure attachment is the foundation of resilience.

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Gleaming and Beaming



Brains Light Up Like Lightbulbs

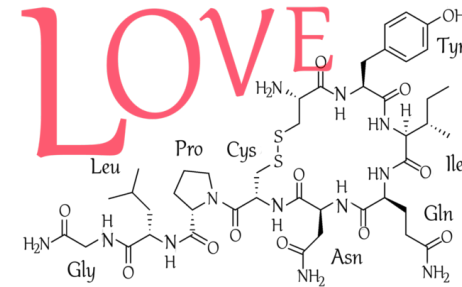
- When mom and baby first meet after delivery, they typically fall in love instantly as their brains both become very active - each lighting up like a lightbulb in the same parts of their brains.
- It is the right side of the front of their brains that light up.
- Baby's brain follows mom's brain.



Dawson, G., Frey, K., Panagiotides, H., Yamada, E., Hessler, D., & Osterling, J. (1999). Infants of depressed mothers exhibit atypical frontal electrical brain activity during interactions with mother and with a familiar, nondepressed adult. *Child Development*, 70(5), 1058-1066.

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Oxytocin



Licking and Grooming Pups

The quality of maternal care determines how mice react to stress as adults.

- Michael Meaney



<http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Page2Vol4No2Oct05ANG.pdf>

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Separation and Isolation

- Separation hurts small humans in the same way as physical pain.
- The feeling of loss is much the same as the feeling of physical pain.

- Margo Sunderland, 2016



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Co-Regulation Through Relationship

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Creating Resilience Virtually

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Relentless Positivity

You cannot let go of a coping strategy until you have something to replace it with.



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Self-Regulation



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The Healing Power of Holding Space



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There's a Micro Expression for **Compassion** - It Helps Regulate Yourself and Others



- soften and open eyes
- lean to the right
- genuinely care about the other

Healing is Being in Alignment With What Is



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References

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Thank you!

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