

Resilience: *It Begins With Beliefs*

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Art of Discovering Resilience

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Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and
Substance Abuse Services

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What Do You See?



QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Reframing: Risk to Resilience

DEFICITS

Hyperactive

Impulsive

Stubborn

Willful

Tests Limits

Explosive

Defiant

Angry

Withdrawn

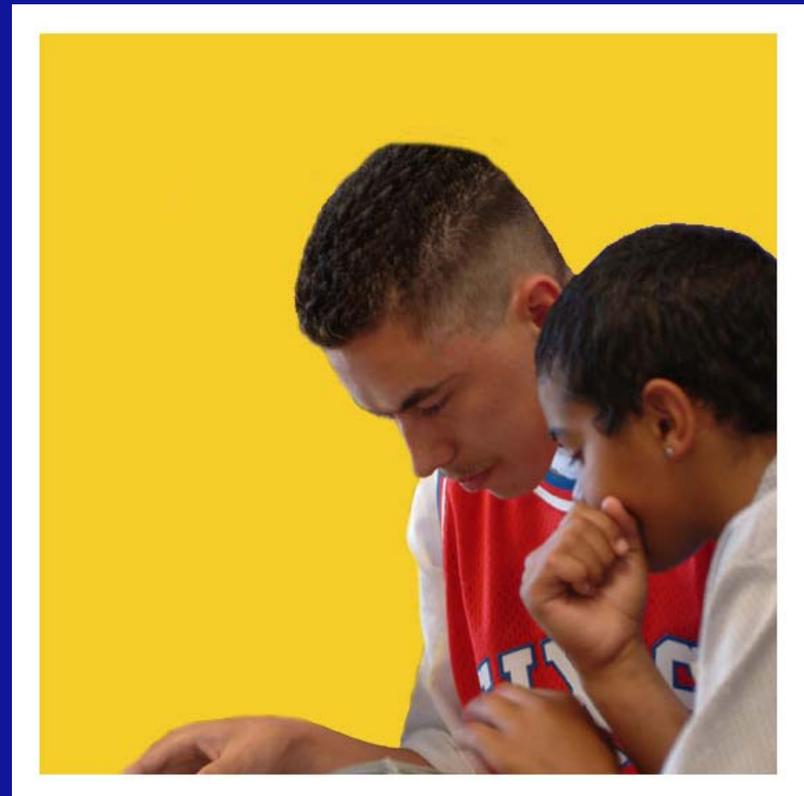
Aggressive

Victim

STRENGTHS

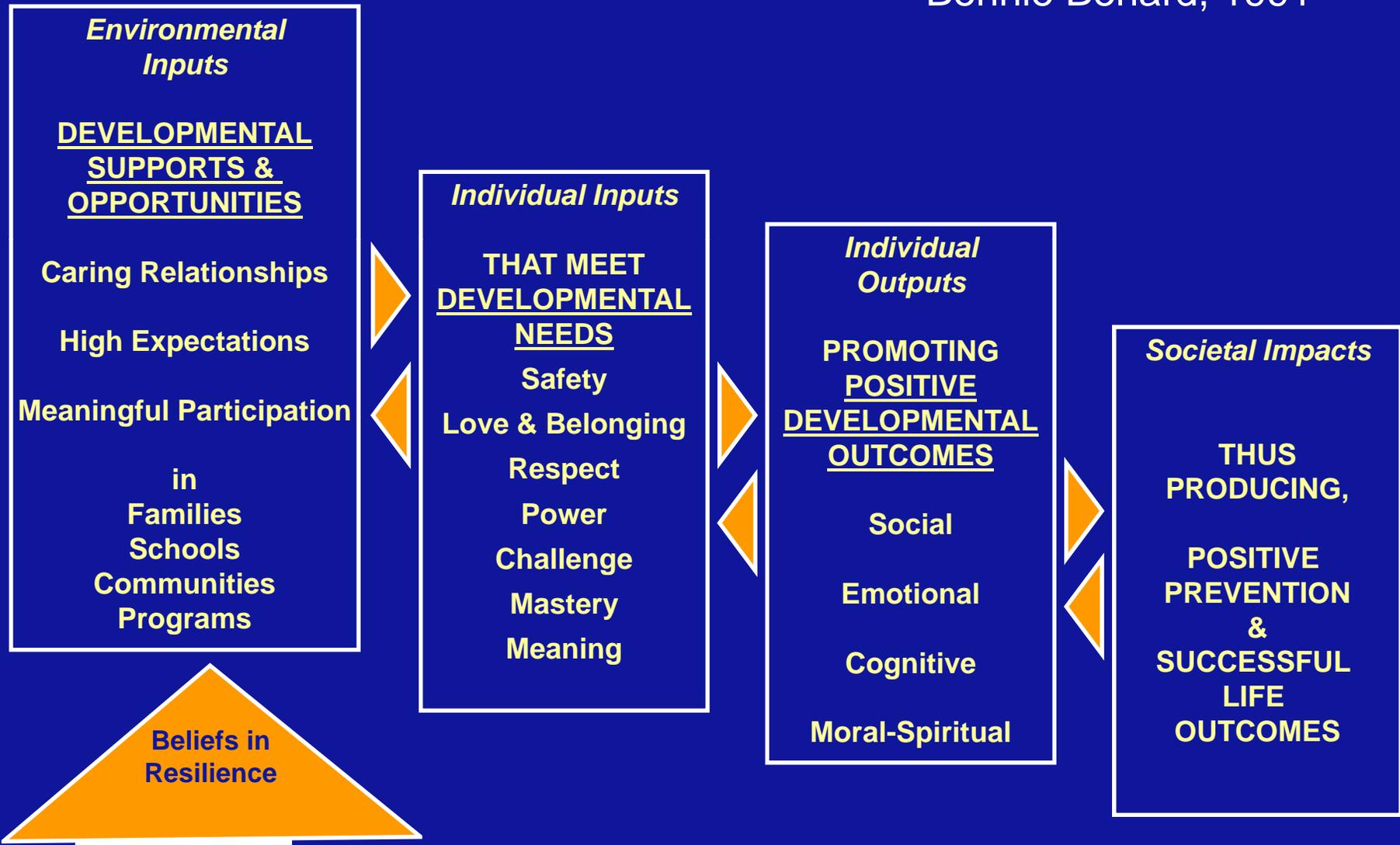
Resilience Research

How children & youth have transformed risk and adversity into healthy development and life success.



Resilience in Action

Bonnie Benard, 1991



Personal Resilience Strengths: What Resilience Looks Like

SOCIAL

Social Competence

- Responsiveness
- Communication
- Empathy/Caring
- Compassion
- Altruism
- Forgiveness

EMOTIONAL

Autonomy

- Positive Cultural Identity
- Internal locus of control
- Self-efficacy/Mastery
- Initiative
- Humor
- Self-awareness
- Resistance
- Adaptive distancing

COGNITIVE

Problem-solving

- Planning
- Flexibility
- Critical thinking/Insight
- Resourcefulness

MORAL/SPIRITUAL

Sense of Purpose & Future

- A special interest/Hobby
 - Goal directedness
- Imagination/Creativity
- Achievement motivation
- Educational aspiration
 - Persistence
- Optimism/Hope
 - Faith
- Sense of meaning

Resilience is NOT

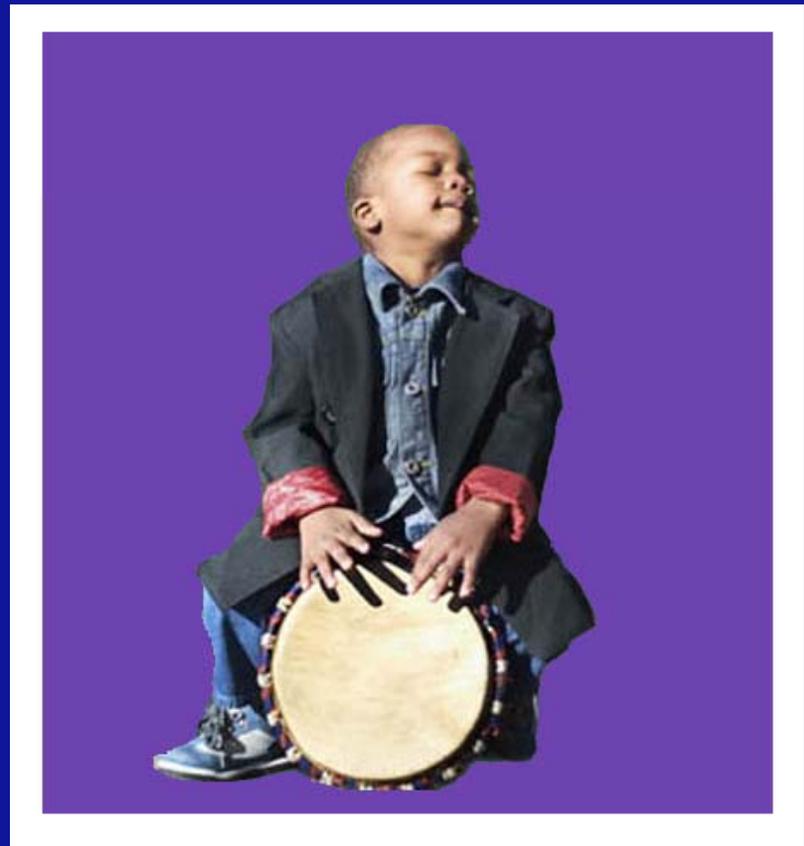
- Only for youth
- Only for individuals from high-risk environments
- A program or curriculum
- A monetary investment
- Only for prevention or intervention
- Anything new!!

Major Messages from Resilience Research

#1: Most children & youth do make it despite exposure to risk & adversity.

50 Years of Resilience Research Tells Us That:

...When the focus is on supporting & empowering youth, over 70% of young people in the most challenging of life's conditions not only survive, but grow into thriving adults.



Major Messages from Resilience Research

#2: All people have the capacity for resilience.



Resilience is our own human capacity to transform & change.

Robert J. Lifton

The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Transformation

11

Major Messages from Resilience Research

#3: People matter!

You Matter!

“Kids can walk around trouble if there is someplace to walk to, and someone to walk with.”

Tito in *Urban Sanctuaries*
(Milbrey, McLaughlin et. al)



Major Messages from Resilience Research

#4: It's HOW we do what we do that counts.

Protective Factors Critical to Healthy Development & Life Success

CARING RELATIONSHIPS

- “Being there”
- Models caring
- Showing interest in
- Getting to know
- Compassion
- Listening/Dialogue
- Patience
- Basic trust/safe

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

- Safe places
- Inclusion
- Responsibility/voice & choice
- Child-initiated/youth-driven
- Experiential skill development
- Contribution
- Caring for others
- Peer support

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

- Belief in youth resilience
- Respect & confirmation
- Challenge & support
- Firm guidance
- Structure/rituals
- Strengths-focused
- Teaches personal resilience
- Reframing

Major Messages from Resilience Research

#5: To help others, you have to help yourself.

TAKE CARE OF THE CARETAKER!!

Implication for Practice

- Care for the Caretaker: YOU
- Apply the Resilience Theory to yourself
- Take time to reflect
 - Keep a journal
 - Identify needs
 - Find support; ask for help
 - Give yourself a break to play or have fun
 - Give yourself permission to not have answers

Major Messages from Resilience Research

#6: The process of tapping resilience begins with the belief in human resilience.

What Individuals with a Resilience Perspective Do: **BELIEVE**

Moving to a resiliency approach requires a personal transformation of vision...the lens through which we see our world. To make systemic changes...depends on changing hearts and minds.”

Bonnie Benard

Our Lens: Half-Empty or Half-Full



The Power of Beliefs

- Changing the life trajectories of people from risk to resilience starts with changing the beliefs of the adults in their families, schools, and communities.



When we don't know each other's stories ...

When there are walls of ignorance between people, when we don't know each other's stories, we substitute our own myth about who that person is. When we are operating with only a myth, none of that person's truth will ever be known to us, and we will injure them – mostly without ever meaning to. What assumption did you make because she is a woman? What assumption did you make because he is black? What myths were built around the neighborhood listed on the application? What myths were built around the employment of the father or the absence of the mother? What story did we tell ourselves in the absence of knowing this person's real story?

- Paula Lawrence Wehmiller, *Harvard Educational Review*, Fall 1993

Systems Change

Where does it begin?

Systems vs. Services

“When there’s improvement, it usually isn’t that the services per se were different, it’s about a change in the person who delivered the service, and the way they delivered it. It became clear systems change meant changing the interactions between people in all the systems...a very different and difficult agenda.”

--Annie E. Casey Foundation, Don Crary.

The Key Insight, The Eye of the Storm: Ten Years on the Front Lines of New Futures

My Grandfather once told me that there
are two kinds of people;
Those who do the work and those who
take the credit.

He told me to try to be in the first group:
There is less competition there.

~ Indira Gandhi

Believe

Changing the life trajectories of children and youth from risk to resilience starts with changing the beliefs of the adults in their families, schools, and communities.

--Bonnie Benard , 2004