

*Resiliency:
Strength Under Stress*



*UW-Extension Family Living
Families in Stress and Transition State Team*

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Participants will:

- Define the concept of resiliency
- List traits of resilient families
- Identify strengths in a family they know
- Identify strategies to build resiliency in themselves and others

We all have difficult times



Families experience stress

- What are some typical, predictable sources of stress in family life across the age span?
- What might be an unexpected crisis?



Stress comes from many sources



- Normal changes in our lives
 - e.g., leaving home; birth of a child; getting older
- Unexpected events
 - e.g., death of a loved one, job loss, severe illness, winning the lottery.
- Developments in the world around us
 - e.g., poverty, crime, school violence, social and political trends

Resiliency is the ability to

Not only survive, but thrive!



In order to remain strong, we must stretch ourselves and spring forward!

Definitions of resiliency

- “The path a family follows as it adapts and prospers in the face of stress.” (Hawley and DeHaan, 2003)
- “Capacity to cultivate strengths to positively meet the challenges of life.” (Silliman, 1994)
- “Ability to bounce back from adversity” (Stuart, 2004)
- “Capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful” (Walsh, 1998)



What helps you be strong under stress?

- Think back to a rough time in your own life. What did you do that helped? (For example, talked to friends,)
- Now think about that rough time and identify what qualities were helpful in keeping you resilient. (For example, a sense of humor.)



8 Traits of Resilient Families

- Commitment
- Time Together
- Respect
- Spirituality
- Connectedness
- Adaptability
- Communication
- Cohesion



All families have strengths!

- Think of a family you know.
- What resiliency strengths do they have?
- What's one area you think is not as strong?
- What could you do to help strengthen that area?

Walsh's Key Processes in Family Resilience: Belief System

- Resilient families:
 - Make meaning of crisis and challenge
 - Maintain a positive outlook
 - Value spirituality



Walsh's Key Processes in Family Resilience: Organization

- Resilient families:
 - Are flexible
 - Stay connected
 - Use their “lifelines”



Walsh's Key Processes in Family Resilience: Communication

- Resilient families:
 - Share clear, consistent messages
 - Openly express their emotions
 - Solve problems together



We need resiliency in all domains

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Social
- Emotional
- Spiritual



Brainstorm!

- What could people do in each of the five domains to keep themselves and their families strong under stress?

Physical Domain



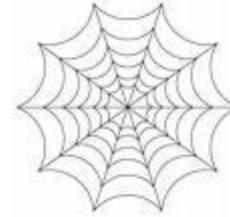
- Actively work to protect and enhance physical wellness
- Plan for and make healthy and attractive food choices
- Plan for and engage in enjoyable physical activity

Intellectual Domain

- Understand what are normal changes across the lifespan
- Use flexible problem-solving
- Seek challenges
- Keep mentally active



Social



- Regularly connect with each other (rituals, routines, and traditions)
- Maintain supportive social networks and close kin relationships
- Have access to sufficient community resources

Emotional

- Use flexible and adaptive problem-solving
- Communicate feelings appropriately and interact respectfully and safely
- Respond sensitively and effectively to others



Spiritual



- Have a positive or optimistic outlook
- Engage in regular reflection, meditation, or prayer
- Are cognizant of own important values

What about you?

- What do you already do to help strengthen your resiliency?
- What is one thing you could start doing to build resiliency?
- How could you help others be resilient?

Resiliency:

It's not what happens to you but what you make out of what happens to you that makes you resilient.

