Fostering Resilience after Trauma

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TRAUMA

Abuse and neglect, Abandonment, Incarceration

Mental Illness

War, Addiction

Violence (witnessed or direct)

Trafficking

Homelessness, displacement, food insecurities

Death, grief, and loss

Disaster (natural or man made)

Disability

Illness: chronic or sudden

Financial insecurity

Sexual assault

Bullying

Suicide

Racism

Changes in the family

Historical and systemic discrimination, exclusion

Anything perceived as traumatic from the individual’s perspective!!!
“A blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one can not react to it effectively.” ~ Kai Erikson
“Collective trauma, on the other hand, is a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality.” ~ Kai Erikson
Individual and Societal Cost

- ACEs cause toxic stress (prolonged or excessive activation of the stress response system).
- Toxic stress interferes with development of healthy neural, immune, and hormonal systems and can alter our DNA expression.
- ACEs affect the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems and have lasting effects on attention, behavior, decision-making, and response to stress throughout a lifetime.
- Poor health outcomes (higher rates of autoimmune disease, depression, obesity, alcoholism, opioid abuse, greater risk of worse pregnancy outcomes, etc).
- Poor school performance, unemployment, family and interpersonal problems, homelessness, greater risk for additional trauma, and the development of high-risk health behaviors.
Trauma and Substance Use

- Use of substances starts for a range of reasons, not always due to trauma. However, those that have been impacted by trauma are at higher risk of substance abuse and dependence.

- Adolescent sexual assault victims: 4.5X more likely to experience alcohol abuse or dependence, 4X more likely to abuse marijuana, and **9X more likely to abuse or become dependent on hard drugs**
We see and are living with the costs of trauma!

What do we, individually and collectively, do about it?
Resilience

“Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.” ~American Psychological Association

Building and maintaining resilience is an active and ongoing process.
Several factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them:

- the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world
- the availability and quality of social resources
- specific coping strategies

Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with greater resilience can be cultivated and practiced.
Individual Resilience Resources, Boosters, & Recovery Capital
Recovery

- A return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength. ~Oxford dictionary

- SAMHSA defines recovery from mental health and substance use disorders as: “A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”
Resilience through Recovery Capital

Recovery Capital refers to “the breadth and depth of internal and external resources that can be drawn upon to initiate and sustain recovery.”

Primary Types of Recovery Capital:

- PERSONAL RECOVERY CAPITAL
- FAMILY/SOCIAL RECOVERY CAPITAL
- COMMUNITY/CULTURAL RECOVERY CAPITAL
## Personal Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Capital</th>
<th>Human Capital</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Health and health insurance</td>
<td>- Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial resources</td>
<td>- Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Housing/Shelter</td>
<td>- Skills, education, vocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Clothing</td>
<td>- Self-efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Food</td>
<td>- Self-esteem, confidence</td>
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<td>- Transportation access</td>
<td>- Self-awareness</td>
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<td>- Interpersonal skills</td>
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<td>- Sense of meaning and purpose</td>
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**Internal Resilience Resources**

- Healthy, effective coping skills
- Sense of purpose
- Vulnerability
- A growth mindset
- Diverse outlets, interests, hobbies
- Relational resilience (connection & emotional engagement)
- Emotional connection
- Values
- Building and strengthening internal resources and strengths builds character and resilience.

**External Resilience Resources**

- Access to basic needs
- Community needs resources: food banks and resources, shelters, medical care, transportation resources, social service supports, etc.
- Community social resources: healthy social events, activities, social events, clubs, spiritual supports, festivals, opportunities that facilitate connections and support hobbies.
- Social relationships
- Family support
- Mentors
- Culturally relevant resources
Cultivating Individual Resilience in Self and Others

- What are your strengths? What are the strengths of the person you are working with/supporting?
- Resilience can be amplified by tapping into your own strengths and using those strengths to help you move forward.
- Maximize your talents, mindset, personality traits, relationships, and physical assets and identify and learn to develop untapped potential.
Teach, encourage, and model vulnerability: The willingness to try things, knowing you will not always succeed builds resilience.

Flip the switch: flip your mindset to that of opportunity and growth, challenge your narrative. Practice more optimism. The lens through which you view the world is key to strengthening resilience.

Connection: put down your device and tune in to others. This is vital to emotional connection and resilience.

Develop and engage in a variety of outlets: connect with others and to connect with activities that are enjoyable.
Develop and Practice Coping Skills

- Maintaining resiliency through continually repeating the coping cycle is the core of recovery.

- Strengthening coping skills and resources helps shift towards a cycle of healthy coping and disrupts the unhealthy cycles that a person has been stuck in. This takes time and team support. This is part of building resilience.
Stress and Coping Cycle

- Stress
- Discomfort
- Positive Coping Strategies
- Negative Coping Strategies
- Relief
Character Strengths that Promote Resilience

- Persistence
- Optimism
- Forgiveness
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy

...and so many more. How can you develop these strengths and support these strengths in others?
Family/Social Capital

- Family and kinship relationships
- Intimate relationships
- Supportive social relationships
- Relationship to recovery supports
The Power of Support

- When you believe you have support there is an oxytocin release. Your system experiences a positive immune response from connection.

- Identifying the individual and community supports for a person is key to strengthening a person’s resilience.

- **Individually:** Who are your supports or what supports are available to the individual? Recovery coaches, therapists, support groups, family, friends, supportive place of employment, etc.

- **Community:** What supports are available in your community and what gaps exist that need attention? Are there enough service providers? Support groups? Recovery coach programs? Shelters? What type of support do you as an employer provide to staff?
Community/Cultural Capital

- Community attitudes, policies, and resources that are supportive.
- Access to healthy role models.
- Culturally relevant supports and resources.
- Treatment resources, supports, events, groups, accessible organizations.
- Spiritual and/or faith-based resources
Cultivating Community Resilience: Treatment Resources

- Diverse programs and community resources
- Recovery Coach supported programs
- Support groups
- Addressing community barriers such as transportation, housing, access to care, etc.
- Well trained professionals in evidence-based modalities
- Community competence
## Community Resilience: Cultivating Connection

<table>
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<th>Develop and support healthy outlets for all age groups.</th>
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<td>Accessible entertainment and healthy opportunities to connect with peers</td>
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<td>Ideas include festivals, music, outdoor activities such as canoeing or kayaking, swimming, etc.</td>
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<td>Gyms, yoga, sports, clubs, events (events not centered around alcohol or other substances).</td>
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<td>When putting on local events, include a sober tent so there is a supported and fun space honoring and supporting sobriety as a norm!</td>
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Collective problem solving and resilience depend on our capacity to come together to effectively address challenges, heal the fragmentation and conflict that exists, and strengthen connection amongst each other and across our communities.
Challenges/Call to Action

- What will you, as an individual, do to strengthen your own resilience?
- What will your agency do to contribute to individual and collective resilience?

Suggestions:
- Community forums to facilitate conversation and connection, community education and stigma reduction opportunities, strengthen partnerships, etc.
- Workforce training and development (competency boosts resilience)
- Provide a healthy and supported workforce
- Consider additional programs that strengthen and expand the services available to the populations that we serve
- Volunteer, participate in community conversations, encourage healthy activities and access in communities, mentor others, partner with others
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