

The Art and Science of Healing:

Every Place, Every Time, Every Relationship

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The Art and Science of Healing

- Part I: Advances in Our Understanding of Human Resilience and of the Limits of Emotional Endurance
- Part II: What Can Be:
 - Life Experiences That Can Help Us Rise Above Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Part III: Summary

Part I:

Advances in Our Understanding of Human Resilience and of the Limits of Emotional Endurance

Resilience Through the Lifespan

- Resilience: Strength in the face of adversity
- Risk Factors: Exposure to experiences, conditions that can stretch even the most resilient among us beyond our limits of emotional endurance - in the absence of protective processes
- Protective Processes: Experiences, conditions that can outweigh or neutralize the effects of exposure to known risk factors

Are There Limits to Emotional Endurance?

- Exposure to Single Vs. Multiple Risks
- Jim Garbarino, Ph.D. "Juggling Several Tennis Balls"



- Michael Rutter, M.D. – Impact of multiple risk exposure; Arnold Samaroo, Ph.D. Children Exposed to 7 or More Risks

Are There Limits to Emotional Endurance? The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Study

- Assessed prevalence of 10 categories of adverse childhood experiences among general middle class adult population (Kaiser Permanente San Diego) and the impact of these experiences on later life health, mental health, life adjustment and other outcomes.

10 ACES

- 1) emotional abuse
- 2) physical abuse
- 3) sexual abuse
- 4) emotional neglect
- 5) physical neglect
- 6) parental discord as evidenced by separation or divorce
- 7) witnessing domestic violence
- 8) alcohol or other substance abuse in the home
- 9) a household member who was depressed, suffered from mental illness or attempted suicide
- 10) crime in the home (having a household member was imprisoned)

ACE Study

- ACE Study and 10 ACE categories (ACE score) as a framework to explore impact of childhood trauma on later life physical health, mental health and later life adjustment
- Some are helping us see beyond 10 ACE categories
- Helping us understand the impact of historical trauma
- Helping us understand the impact of trauma embedded in social conditions

Turnaround for Children

<https://www.turnaroundusa.org/what-we-do/tools/>

- Schools in U.S. where poverty rate is <10%
 - score at or near the top of the world on PISA math and reading tests.
- When the poverty rate exceeds 50%
 - ranks 17th in reading, 27th in math, and 20th in science, despite spending more money per student than any country

ACE Study Findings www.acestudy.org

- Strong graded relationship between # of categories of ACES endured through age 18 (ACE score) and variety of later life health, mental health, life adjustment and other problems.
- Exposure to 4 or more categories of ACES (ACE score of 4 or more) -
 - 4-12-fold increase in alcoholism, drug abuse, depression and suicide attempts
- ACE score of 7 or more -
 - self-reported suicide attempts rose to 35.2 fold increase (Chapman et al 2007)

ACE Study Findings www.acestudy.org

- Ace score of 6 –
- 4600% increase in likelihood of becoming an injection drug user (Felitti & Anda, 2014)
- One of most startling findings –
- ACE score of 4 or more - significantly more likely to be suffering from diseases representing common causes of death among Americans today
- ACE score of 6 or more in infancy, childhood, or adolescence – shortens life expectancy by almost 20 years (Felitti & Anda, 2014).

ACE Study Findings www.acestudy.org

- Co-principal investigator Robert Anda (2011)
ACE score likely captures the cumulative neurodevelopmental consequences of childhood exposure to traumatic stress.
- ACES environmentally based
- School as a turning point for some children growing up exposed to multiple adverse childhood experiences

School as a Potential Source of Prolonged Inescapable Stress

- Some school-age children begin school impacted by neurodevelopmental challenges that can potentially go unnoticed or misunderstood (learning differences, ADHD, executive function challenges, etc)
- Neurodevelopmental risks can potentially co-occur with/be exacerbated by ACES and other environmental risks and adverse life experiences

Are There Limits to Emotional Endurance?

- 6 Year old, exposed to multiple ACES (Type II trauma), family is poor, living in impoverished neighborhood, inner city war zone, begins school with uneven abilities (ADHD/LD)
- At 16, many conditions may still be present.
- If risk exposure persists, vulnerability persists.

Are There Limits to Emotional Endurance?

- If vulnerability persists, need experiences that can potentially buffer child/youth/family from potentially harmful effects of prolonged risk exposure.
- Treatment programs when effective, will end. But risks persist.
- Among the reasons why it's so important to look beyond treatment for experiences that can prevent harm in the face of adversity, or overcome the effects of a difficult past

Protective Influences

Events, Experiences, Conditions
That Can Outweigh or Neutralize
the Effects of Exposure
to Known Risk Factors

Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

- The good news is that researchers have identified broad based protective processes in the lives of individuals who have overcome exposure to multiple risks.
- The risks varied, but the protective processes were similar.
- Introducing protective processes that can outweigh the effects of multiple childhood risk exposure may reduce the risk of school failure, youth violence and serious life adjustment problems down the road.

The Study of Resilience Through the Lifespan

- Kauai Longitudinal Study – following children exposed to 4 or more risks into their adult years (Emmy Werner & Ruth Smith)
- At age 18, 1 in 3 “beat the odds,” 2 in 3 succumbed
- Of those who succumbed, ½ rebounded by age 31-32, and were still adapting well at 40
- (Studying life outcome, not to be confused with the study of treatment outcome)

Protective Processes That Researchers Feel Can Offset the Effects of Multiple Childhood Risks

(Werner et al., 2001)

1. Experiences That Reduce the Impact of Prevailing Risks:
 - A. Learning to see adversities in a new light
 - B. Reducing the amount of exposure to risks or adverse conditions (role of context); buffers
2. Preventing a Chain Reaction of Negative Life Events; Creating Safety Nets
3. Experiences That Promote a Sense of Mastery (Mastery to meaning connection)
4. Opening the Door to Turning Point Experiences or Second Chance Opportunities

Overcoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

- What about preventing reducing incidence of major health consequences decades later?
- May require enhancing protective processes we're about to discuss
- May involve incorporating new protective processes based on advances in our understanding of neurodevelopmental and/or environmental risks
- Will return to discussion of improving health outcomes a little later

Part II: What Can Be

Protective Processes: 1a. Learning to See Adversities in a New Light

Among the protective processes identified in the lives of adults who overcame exposure to multiple adverse childhood experiences was the ability to see adverse experiences in a new light.

The meaning we attach to adverse experiences can determine whether we view ourselves as resilient and courageous, or helpless and hopeless.

Perceptions That Foster Resilience

(Seligman, 1998; 1992)

- Adversities are temporary – the perception that things will get better
- Adversities are limited – Things may not be going well in one area but they are going well in others areas
- Not personal – Doing the best we can under the circumstances

Perceptions That Can Have the Reverse Effect

(Seligman, 1992)

- Permanent – the perception that things will never change
- Pervasive – problems are evident not just in one life area, they're pervasive
- Personal – It's all your fault.
- Learning to see adversities in these 3 ways increases the likelihood of psychological problems; may also weaken our immune system
- Start young, may be especially impairing

Perceptions That Can Have the Reverse Effect

(Seligman, 1992)

- The role of human understanding in rising above a difficult past,
- The role of human misunderstanding in prolonging one
- Can human misunderstanding among very caring people transform otherwise resilient school-age children into demoralized young adults?

Experiences That Are Helping Children/ Youth Learn to See Strengths, Challenges and Adverse Life Experiences in a New Light

- Mentors, others who are translating the pain of their past into meaningful action in an effort to help children/youth enduring experiences they endured years ago

Translating the Pain of Our Past Into Meaningful Action on Behalf of Others

"In our sleep, pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

Aeschylus

Translating the Pain of Our Past Into Meaningful Action on Behalf of Others

- After overcoming the stigma associated with their own differences, a growing number of young people are stepping forward to help others learn to do the same.
 - High school students who started a club on campus to stamp out stigma
 - Young adults who spent years in foster care mentoring children currently experiencing feelings similar to those they experienced years ago
 - Young adults/older students doing well despite learning, behavioral, other challenges mentoring younger children with similar challenges

Kindred Kids: A Story of Friendship and Understanding in the Wake of Tragedy

- Following the murder of 9 people at Mother Emmanuel Church
- Outpouring of compassion, support and unity from members of the Charleston S.C. community
- An initiative - Kindred Kids (sponsored by WINGS for Kids) keeping movement alive.
- Brings together children from diverse backgrounds to build friendships and to help them understand one another in new ways.
- <https://medium.com/@WINGSforkids/amazing-story-of-friendship-understanding-in-wake-of-tragedy-d9b811926212#.ysep3fjiu>

Translating the Pain of Our Past Into Meaningful Action on Behalf of Others

- Brings together children from diverse backgrounds to build friendships and to help them understand one another in new ways
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Translating the Pain of Our Past Into Meaningful Action on Behalf of Others

- Ongoing project exploring how young people are translating the pain and frustration associated with various life challenges into actions on behalf of others who experience similar challenges
 - (see website – ongoing projects or e-mail: markkatzphd@gmail.com)
- Importance of action phase in reframing process

Learning to See Strengths, Challenges and Adverse Life Experiences (ACES) in a New Light (Continued)

- Access to a language (vocabulary; mindset) that allows us to interpret experiences in a new light

Learning to See Abilities/Challenges/ACES in a New Light (continued)

- Writing strengths based, trauma informed reports
- Ongoing project (www.learningdevelopmentservices.com)
Click Book icon, click ongoing projects or e-mail markkatzphd@gmail.com)

Learning to See Abilities/Challenges/ACES in a New Light (Continued)

- Can assessment results provide us a language (mindset) to help understand adversities/challenges in a new light?
- Be a vehicle for highlighting our unique strengths?
- Help take threat and danger out of difference?

Learning to See Abilities/Challenges/ACES in a New Light (Continued)

- Brainology
Carol Dweck, Ph.D. www.mindsetworks.com
- Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid
www.shutupaboutyourperfectkid.com
- Active Minds www.activeminds.org
- WhyTry Program www.whytry.org
- Eye to Eye www.eyetoeyenational.org

Learning to See Abilities/Challenges/ACES in a New Light (Continued)

- Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) - www.kidsmentalhealth.ca
- <https://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/get-involved/change-the-view/winning-videos>
- Reaches out to youth to create videos that can help remove the stigma from the lives of children/youth with mental health challenges. First prize = \$2000. Videos focus on these questions:
 - "How can we help our friends instead of turning our backs on them?"
 - "How do we talk about it?"
 - "How do we show everyone that any problem can be worked out with a little kindness and understanding?"



Learning to See Abilities/Challenges/ACES in a New Light (Continued)

- It's not how smart are we, but rather, how are we smart www.mindsetworks.com
- Howard Gardner, Ph.D. - Diverse intellectual strengths
 - linguistic
 - logical-mathematical
 - musical
 - kinesthetic
 - spatial
 - naturalist
 - interpersonal
 - intrapersonal

Protective Processes: 1b) Reducing the Amount of Exposure to Prevailing Risks or Adverse Conditions (role of context); Buffers

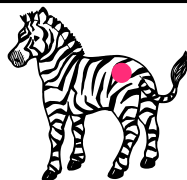
- We can act, think, react very differently in different contexts.
A child who fails in one school, then another school, can be successful in the next school.
- A person who struggles in one work setting, then another work setting, can be successful in the next work setting
- The context within which our life experiences unfold can vary.
- As adults we have the opportunity to alter/change/escape the context within which our life experiences are unfolding.

Protective Processes: 1b) Reducing the Amount of Exposure to Prevailing Risks or Adverse Conditions (role of context); Buffers (Cont)

- Within some contexts we can feel like we belong, we have something important to contribute, we feel connected to people who care about us deeply, and that our actions can alter our outcomes.
- Within other contexts, the opposite can be true.

Portraits of Resilience- In Context

- Resilience and context are inseparable
- In an environment that you perceive as dangerous and threatening, it makes no sense, from a survival point of view, to appear conspicuously vulnerable
- Contextual blind spots



Portraits of Resilience- In Context

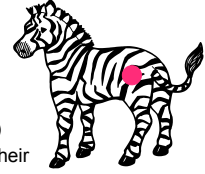
- Powerlessness in the context of prolonged inescapable stress
- For some, humiliation in the context of inescapability

When Difference Signals Threat and Danger

- Numbers of children/youth/adults who won't accept help because they feel stigmatized
- Won't speak to doctors or counselors
- Would rather suffer in silence than be target of ridicule

Portraits of Resilience- In Context

- Creating environments, school and otherwise, that are safe (free from bullying)
- Where differences are legitimized rather than stigmatized
- Where children/youth (and adults) learn to see themselves through their strengths, not challenges
- Where you learn to work hard, not give up and treat mistakes as learning experiences, in spite of your challenges.



Creating a Social Climate Where We Feel We Belong and Have Something Important to Contribute

- A universal need
- Meaningful roles and responsibilities (examples)
- More labels, not less

More Labels, Not Less

- **Important Jobs and Responsibilities:** To feel we matter and have something important to contribute
 - **Computer Specialist:** Assists students (and staff) in operating computer programs.
 - **Master of Ceremonies:** Reads list of activities for the day, or special events
 - **School/Grade Ambassador:** Greets visitors to class or school, takes them on tours.



Social Context – More Labels, Not Less (cont)

- The Danger of a Single Story
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>
- Nigerian Novelist - youtube video, tells of how a single story about another person or culture or country can lead to misunderstanding; speaks to how our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories.

Social Climate: Experiences That Help Us Both Raise the Bar and Level the Playing Field

- Raising the bar = raising expectations
- Leveling the playing field = learning to use tools, strategies, technologies, supports, accommodations that can help us reach our goals

Leveling the Playing Field

- Helpful technologies to level the playing field
 - Pulse Smartpen www.livescribe.com
 - Audio Note
 - Google Read and Write
 - Dragon Naturally Speaking
 - Virtual Reading Coach www.mindplay.com
 - Watchminder www.watchminder.com
 - Audiobooks www.rfbd.org www.learningally.org

Changing the Social Climate

- How do you change a social climate?
 - Buy-in and sustainability
 - Focusing on strengths
 - Mistakes/setbacks as learning experiences (Carol Dweck, Ph.D. – malleable (growth) vs fixed mindsets)
 - Making a significant contribution
 - Legitimizing, validating differences
 - Teaching behaviors and alternatives in specific situations where problems occur (points of performance)
 - Modeling
 - The role of bystanders

Social Context: Changing Bystander Behavior

"In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Social Context: Changing Bystander Behavior

- Key ingredient in changing the social climate of a classroom and of a school
- Key ingredient in preventing and reducing bullying
- Key ingredient in preventing stigma
- Can be key ingredient in helping those impacted by stigma to overcome its effects
- Public awareness is one thing, taking action on behalf of others is quite another
- Creating a context (social climate) where what we believe in is more powerful than what we are afraid of

Harnessing the Transforming Power of Bystander Behavior

- On average, 93% of girls and 82% of boys feel sorry for bullied students (Bullying in U.S. Schools: 2014 Status Report)
- From empathy to action
- Bystanders as unsure vs. unkind (Cialdini, 1993)
- Bystander behavior can change dramatically when bystanders know what to do and how they are supposed to act
- What we do when we know what to do - New York beachgoer experiment (Cialdini, 1993; Moriarty, 1975)

Changing Bystander Behavior

“There is something you must
always remember.
You are braver than you believe,
stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think.
But the most important thing is,
even if we’re apart...
We’ll always be with you.”

A.A. Milne (Winnie The Pooh)

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/video/player.asp?video=81>

Changing the Social Climate — Classroom Promising Practices

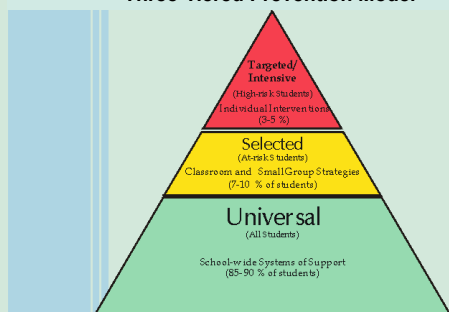
- PAX Good Behavior Game
www.goodbehaviorgame.org
- Concentration Game
www.uoregon.edu/ivdb/
- Jigsaw www.jigsaw.org



Changing the Social Climate – School-wide Promising Practices

- Restorative Practices (IIRP) <http://www.iirp.edu/>
- PeaceBuilders 8004PEACENOW
www.peacebuilders.com
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program OBPP
<https://www.clemson.edu/olweus>
- Heroic Imagination Project
www.heroicimagination.org
- PBIS/BEST Behavior
Jeff Sprague, Ph.D. IVDB, University of Oregon
Jeffs@uoregon.edu

Three-Tiered Prevention Model



Protective Processes:

2. Preventing a Chain Reaction of Negative Life Events; Creating Safety Nets

- For children at risk for serious emotional, behavioral, learning and later life adjustment problems, can simply going to school each day actually protect them from these negative outcomes years down the road?
- Schools can be protective – examples
- After school time can be protective - examples
- Neighborhoods can be protective - examples

Protective Processes:
2. Preventing a Chain Reaction of Negative Life Events; Creating Safety Nets (Continued)

- Wraparound services
- Naomi Tannen study - 7 categories of service
- Preventing/reducing compassion fatigue

Compassion Fatigue

**“Suffering is half pain
and half being alone
with the pain.”**

Edwin Shneidman

Compassion Fatigue: When Are We at Risk?

- When caring for others obscures our need to also care for ourselves. When we lose the balance.
- Are all caregivers at risk? Only those with the ability to empathize with and feel compassion for those whose suffering they are trying to alleviate.
- If you lack empathy and compassion you don't have to worry about compassion fatigue.
- On the other hand, administrators not directly in the line of fire can experience compassion fatigue if the necessary ingredients are present.

Questions

- How many of you have tried to explain the nature of the work you do to loved ones and others not in the field, and have felt that they just don't get it?
- How many of you feel that people don't really understand how hard your job can be?
- How many of you feel undervalued and unappreciated for the contributions you make to other people's lives?

Questions

- During the course of a difficult workday, how many of you have thought of looking for another job, in a completely different field of work?
- How many of you have questioned if all you do to help others really makes a difference in their lives?
- How many of you lose sleep thinking about things that happened at work?
- How many of you schedule appointments during times when you should be eating meals?
- How many of you think about exercising on a regular basis but just never seem to have the time?

Compassion Fatigue

**How to work in the field of
mental health without
losing our mental health**

Mark Katz, Ph.D. 2017

Preventing/Reducing “Compassion Fatigue”

Remembering our ABC’s*

- A = Awareness
- B = Balance
- C = Connections

*Angie Panos: <http://www.giftfromwithin.org/html/Compassion-Fatigue-Dont-Forget-About-Self-Care.html>

Balance

Increasing Joy, Hope, Laughter, Gratitude

- Self care plans that include activities that bring us joy, hope, laughter, gratitude; Role of positive emotions
- Self care plans that weave into our day activities that calm and soothe us, and that allow us to keep perspective
- Self care plans that help us monitor our emotional temperature so that we are more aware of times when our ongoing exposure to the pain of others is starting to impact us in potentially unhealthy ways
- The science of happiness video – gratitude
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE69BKXG4RE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3G5sdUUd1Y>

Compassion Fatigue: Is it the “C” in ABC That Matters Most?

- Have we been looking for remedies within us rather than between us?
- Our greatest source of strength is each other.
- We’re all in this together.

Compassion Fatigue: Is it the “C” in ABC That Matters Most?

- We now know that self-care alone may not be enough to prevent secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue (Mathieu, 2015)
- Other factors that may need to be addressed:
 - A more manageable worker caseload
 - Less trauma exposure
 - Experiencing success at work
 - Better social support

Protective Processes: 3. Experiences That Promote a Sense of Mastery

**“There’s never anything
so wrong with us that’s
what right with us
can’t fix.”**

A Sense of Mastery

- The belief that our actions control our outcomes. If we try hard, learn from our mistakes, we’ll reach the goals we set out to achieve.
- A sense of mastery is learned
- Not be confused with self-esteem

A Sense of Mastery Vs Self-Esteem

- VCU Study - College students obtaining a grade of C or below on midterm exam randomly assigned to two groups, one that received weekly self-esteem enhancing messages, another (the control group) that received neutral messages.
- Students receiving weekly self-esteem boosters received lower grades on their final exam. In fact, grades were even lower than those they received on their midterms.
- Says social psychologist Roy Baumeister, "It's possible to learn how to feel better about doing worse."
(Baumeister & Tierney, 2011)

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Mistakes as Learning Experiences

- A sense of mastery requires an ability to see mistakes/setbacks as learning experiences
- Mistake jar; Struggle jar – Who had a great struggle today? (Carol Dweck, Ph.D)
- "Oh, Well" - Teaching, practicing, celebrating replacement behaviors
- "What does it mean to be smart?" Valuing effort – as opposed to praising intelligence (Carol Dweck, Ph.D.)
 - Growth (malleable) mindset – protective against bullies; can over-ride stereotype threat; in the workplace – learn and help learn versus judge and be judged

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Improving Self-Control and Emotional Self-Regulation Skills Among Young School-Age Children

- Making the Case for a Universal Approach
- Two Studies
- The Dunedin Study - following the life trajectories of all babies born during 1972-1973 in the city of Dunedin, New Zealand (1,037 in total).

Dunedin Study (continued)

- Results show a strong relationship between children's self-control skills and a range of later life outcomes, among them,
 - physical health and illness,
 - criminal offending,
 - addiction,
 - heavy smoking,
 - personal finances,
 - saving for retirement,
 - dropping out of high school,
 - and unplanned single-parenting

Dunedin Study (continued)

- Outcomes hold true regardless of IQ or social class. They also hold true whether or not a child meets diagnostic criteria for ADHD.
- Though the Dunedin Study isn't designed to explore the impact of self-control interventions on later life outcomes, some study participants did manage to move up in their self-control ranking over the years, and improved self-control was associated with better outcomes (Moffitt, 2012; Moffitt et al., 2011).

Making the Case – 2nd Study

- Landmark study that followed the developmental trajectories of highly aggressive first graders in several Baltimore public schools.
- Results = aggressive first grade boys in classrooms with few other aggressive first grade boys were about three times more likely to have serious problems with aggression in middle school six years later.

Making the Case – 2nd Study

- Aggressive first grade boys in classrooms with similarly aggressive first graders were 59 times more likely to have serious aggression problems six years later (Kellam, 1999).
- These first graders also displayed a significantly higher rate of serious problems by early adulthood.

Making the Case – 2nd Study

- In a follow-up study, researchers were able to change the developmental trajectories of these first graders by introducing the Good Behavior Game into their classrooms.
- Prevention Scientist Dennis Embry, Ph.D. would enhance the Good Behavior Game and introduce it to the country as an effective universal prevention tool for improving self-control and emotional self-regulation skills among young school-age children.
- PAX Good Behavior Game www.paxis.org

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Improving Self-Control/Emotional Self-Regulation

- Replenishing our Executive Function Fuel Tank
- Self-Regularity Strength is a Limited Resource Pool
 - the more you tax emotional self-regulation/ self-control the more you deplete the resource; why after a day of school or work, person can feel depleted.
 - Need to replenish this fuel tank.
- What works

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Improving Self-Control/Emotional Self-Regulation

- Before school and after school aerobic exercise opportunities
- Aerobic exercise – studies show that it improves attention, self-control, among other areas.
- *“A bout of exercise is like taking a little bit of Prozac and a little bit of Ritalin.”*
John Ratey, M.D.

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Increasing Stimulation/ Reducing Boredom

- Accommodating problems associated with repetitive, uninteresting yet important routines
- Creating extra stimulation through a different sense modality – Different strategies work for different children/youth/adults
- Listening to music when working on a visual task (homework); working standing up; fidget toys; chewing gum; for lengthier tasks – working in changing/novel settings; brain breaks; aerobic exercise; study buddy – body double – co-coaching
- Effective strategies can seem counterintuitive

Fostering a Sense of Mastery: Improving Self-Control/Emotional Self-Regulation

- Self Monitoring Strategies
- Peer organizer/coach meets for a few minutes before and after school - before school goes over “to-do” list, helps organize; after school checks to see if homework was turned in, assignments written down and right books coming home

**Fostering a Sense of Mastery
Improving Self-Control/ESR:
Programs and Practices (short list)**

- PAX Good Behavior Game
www.goodbehaviorgame.org
- BOKS – Building Our Kids Success
www.bokskids.org
- Irvine Paraprofessional Program (IPP)
www.learningdevelopmentservices.com (click What's New – see promising practices articles)

**Improving Self-Control/ESR:
Programs and Practices (short list)**

- Regional Intervention Program www.ripnetwork.org
- Collaborative and Proactive Solutions
Ross Greene, Ph.D. www.livesinthebalance.org
- Organizational Skills Training (OST)
(see www.learningdevelopmentservices.com promising practices articles)
- First Step to Success
www.firststeptosuccess.org
- Tools of the Mind www.toolsofthemind.org
- Sesame Workshop Curriculum – Starring Cookie Monster (see promising practices articles)

**Improving Self-Control/ESR:
Programs and Practices (short list)**

- Social thinking model – Michelle Garcia Winner www.socialthinking.com
- Zones of Regulation
www.zonesofregulation.com
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
www.learningdevelopmentservices.com
Click What's New - see promising practices
- *Mindfulness Prescription for Adult ADHD*
Lidia Zylowska, M.D.

**Protective Influences:
Opening the Door to Turning Point Experiences**

- Individuals, who as children and teenagers succumbed to adversity, but who, in adulthood, are doing well:
- Life experiences they cited as important turning points (Werner and Smith, 2001):
 - Marriage or entry into a long term committed relationship
 - The birth of a first child
 - Establishing themselves in a career or a job

Protective Influences:
Opening the Door to Turning Point Experiences

- Life experiences they cited as important turning points: continued
 - Obtaining further education, such as through a community college
 - Joining the armed forces as a way to gain educational or vocational skills
 - Becoming active in a church or religious community

**Turning Point Experiences:
A Second Slightly Different Question**

- Question 1: Were there specific turning point experiences or second chance opportunities that help explain how or why your life changed for the better?
- Question 2: Still on the matter of turning point experiences or second chance opportunities, are they related to specific people in your life? People who make you feel grateful that they were or continue to be a part of your life?
- The role of personal connections/relationships in overcoming a difficult past

Turning Points: Lessons Learned

Our greatest source of strength = each other.

Part II - Continued

What Can Be
Improving Later Life Health
Outcomes

Remaining Mindful of the Potential Stress Levels of Children Who “Beat the Odds”

- Surprising finding from the Kauai Longitudinal Study
- Recall that by age 18, 1 in 3 “beat the odds,” 2 in 3 succumbed
- Of those who “beat the odds,” 54.5% of the men and 41.2% of women reported health related symptoms decades later.
- Surprising, their health related symptoms were twice that of high risk peers who developed coping problems as teens (Werner and Smith, 2001)

Remaining Mindful of the Potential Stress Levels of Children Who “Beat the Odds”

- One possible reason: Added stress they endured (Masten, 2014)
- “Beating the Odds” more psychologically demanding than realized?
- Resulted in added stress affecting later life health?
- In order to prevent health problems decades later, seems important to alleviate burden of coping with exposure to multiple childhood risks and adverse experiences of all children, including those not showing behavioral, emotional, social, academic signs

Remaining Mindful of the Potential Stress Levels of Children Who “Beat the Odds”

- Complicating matters, at least some may very much want to keep attention away from stresses in other life areas, preferring not to share personal experiences with teachers, counselors, or others at school.

ECMH Conference 2017

- ECMH conference presentations – many explore life experiences through music, art, movement and other modalities that can potentially reduce stress, help soothe an overly stressed nervous system
- These are experiences that can help improve the lives of all children. Might they provide extra value for children exposed to toxic stress, including children who we might believe are beating the odds?

Addressing Emotional Self-Regulation/Self-Control Challenges Among Young School-Age Children

- A second consideration -
- Poor emotional self-regulation/self control skills among young school-age children related to increased risk for later life health problems (as well as a host of other negative later life problems)
- Even in absence of exposure to multiple childhood risks and adversities – even in absence of high ACE score

PAX Good Behavior Game

- A universal approach toward improving self-control and emotional self-regulation skills among young school-age children
- Children root for each other to control themselves

ACE Study Findings Linking ACE Scores of 4 or More to Later Life Medical Problems

- Previous discussion shows they may be children who are beating the odds; children who choose to remain silent about ACES; children who prefer not to draw attention to difficult life circumstances
- Poor emotional self-regulation/self control skills among young school-age children linked to later life health problems – can be the case in the absence of 4 or more ACES

Summary: Advances in Our Understanding of Human Resilience and of the Limits of Emotional Endurance

- We are more resilient than we realize
- There are limits to emotional endurance even for the most resilient among us, school-age children included
- You and I have more influence than we realize in determining who endures and who succumbs

Summary

- The meaning we attach to the adversities of others can influence the meaning they attach to these same adversities.
- And the meaning they attach to adversity and life's challenges can determine whether they see themselves as resilient and courageous or as helpless and hopeless. This is especially true during their younger years.
- It takes a lot of strength and courage to learn to see life's adversities in a new light. But for even the most resilient among us, it may not always be possible when too many others can only see them in a very old light.

Summary

- Multiple childhood risk exposure seems in many instances to translate into paradoxically uneven learning and behavioral profiles.
- Paradoxically uneven learning and behavioral profiles can, in turn, translate into entirely understandable yet erroneous perceptions on the part of loving parents, caring teachers, and expert healthcare professionals.
- Entirely understandable yet erroneous perceptions can translate into equally understandable interventions that can unfortunately lead to disappointing results.

Summary

- If we replace a few erroneous perceptions regarding commonly observed uneven learning and behavioral profiles with new, empirically validated ones, it can potentially allow access to protective processes that can over-ride the effects of exposure to multiple childhood risks and adversities.
 - An important and overlooked first step in changing the odds for struggling school-age children. And this includes children at risk for a range of later life problems.
- New meaning new mastery; new mastery new meaning

Summary

- *“There anything so wrong with us that what’s right with us can’t fix.”*
 - Those who rise above adverse childhood experiences are living proof that our strengths are more than capable of over-riding whatever lifelong weaknesses we might be struggling with. It all depends on what we choose to focus on.

Summary

- While our differences can render us at a serious disadvantage at one stage of our life, they may provide us at an advantage at another stage.
- Life outcome can be very different than tx outcome

Summary

- To feel we belong and have something important to contribute is a universal need.
 - For some, it’s a need that went largely unfulfilled until their adult years.
 - Today, we’re much more aware of how to fulfill this universal need during our school-age years.
 - There’s reason to believe that doing so can prevent a range of potentially serious school-related and later life problems.
 - Meaningful roles and responsibilities, more labels, not less

Summary

- There are many different ways of being smart, some of which can’t be measured by how well one does in school.
- Knowing this and truly believing this can avoid personally humiliating experiences at school as well as in life.

Summary

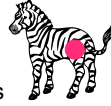
- No matter how smart one might be in whatever areas, it does not make them wise.
- To be wise is to know how to use our strengths and our successful life experiences to serve not only our own personal needs but the needs of others as well.

Summary

- A number of those who overcame difficult childhood experiences have learned to transform the pain of their past into meaningful action on behalf of others.
- We're now learning how to help struggling school-age children eventually learn to do the same.

Summary

- Resilience and context are inseparable
- In an environment that we perceive as threatening and dangerous, it makes no sense, from a survival point of view, to appear conspicuously vulnerable
- Some of the most resilient people we will ever have the pleasure of knowing have to work very hard just to get through a normal day, school-age children included



Summary

- We know now that children who succumb to adversity can, in time, rise above a difficult past and eventually go on to lead meaningful and productive lives.
- What's more, we now know this to be the case for children who succumb to a range of different adverse childhood experiences, beyond those leading to school failure.
- Regardless of the nature or degree of adversity, in the final analysis, our greatest source of strength may be each other

Children Who Fail at School But Succeed at Life

Are there things that count
that can't be counted?

And do the things we count, count?

Final Thoughts

- It's impossible to predict with absolute certainty any one person's life course.
- It's among the mysteries in life that makes one a believer in turning point experiences, in second, third, and fourth chance opportunities, and in knowing that lives can change for the better at any point in time, sometimes in response to completely unanticipated and unpredictable events.
- Which, in a way, is another way of saying that when it comes to overcoming life's adversities, there are things that count that can't be counted. And not everything we count, counts.