

INDICATORS OF RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN: AN ASSET-BASED PERSPECTIVE

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“Positive adaptation to significant adversity in the context of a particular population or culture”

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- No consensus on the definition from public health perspective
- More than just an individual trait or characteristic
- “Ecological approach”: dynamic relationship over time with social, psychological, and environmental factors
- Few comprehensive methods of measurement:
 - Biological markers
 - Nature and extent of adversity
 - “Social ecology” of the target group
 - Process of development of resilience
 - Positive adaptations as outcomes

The literature (Masten & Wright 2010)

Resilience-promoting transactions:

- Positive attachments
- Agency
- Self-regulation
- Cognitive skill in solving problems
- Making meaning
- Cultural traditions and religion

WUN Youth Resilience Project

Dr Justine Gatt
Neuroscience Research
Australia & UNSW



Core global project sites

- Australia – Dr Justine Gatt
- New Zealand – Dr Trecia Wouldes
- UK – Prof Alan Eamond
- South Africa – Prof Linda Theron
- China – Prof Joseph Lau
- Canada – Prof Michael Ungar

Global project aims

1. Determine the personal, contextual and cultural elements that support the resilience of a young person who has migrated, and under which circumstances migration creates adversity for youth.
2. Determine how resilience processes of youth, who experience migration as adverse, compare across different cultures and contexts.
3. Determine if current measures of resilience are valid across multiple cultures, contexts and within ethnic groups.
4. Investigate how biological, cognitive, social, emotional, environmental and cultural processes interact to support resilience over time.
5. Identify interventions that successfully promote positive adaptation in migrant youth.

Core global project

Aims:

- To confirm the validity/reliability of the resilience measure to use in longitudinal study (initial pilot study)
- To provide a multi-level explanation of the resilience processes of migrant youth over time

Theoretical framework:

Social Ecology of Resilience Theory [SERT] (Ungar, 2011, 2012, 2015). SERT explains resilience as a process that requires personal and social-ecological input (*therefore design must measure both across multiple levels of functioning*)

Design:

- Pilot study of youth for different resilience measures
- Larger baseline and 2-year follow-up longitudinal study (5-year design)

Core global project – common measures

Psychosocial questionnaires:

- Resilience (eg Pathways to Resilience Youth Measure, PRYM; CD-RISC; ER-89.... others?)
- Mental health/risk (eg COMPAS-W measure of wellbeing, DASS-21 depression and anxiety symptoms... clinical indicators?)
- Environment (trauma during childhood, parenting styles, home environment, school environment, community)
- Others: Puberty status, demographic details, school performance, cultural identity, coping mechanisms

Biological:

- Saliva samples – genetic profiling or testing of stress hormones eg cortisol/DHEA
- Height/weight... others?

Cognitive:

- Neurocognitive test batteries – eg CANTAB

Youth panels

Panels

Alan Eamond (Bristol, UK)

Two groups of 14 to 17 year olds in Bristol, one middle class and white, the other mixed and multi- ethnic

Linda Theron (South Africa)

Youth in Gauteng and another in the Western Cape - 13-18 year olds, but possibly also 19-25 year olds

Trecia Wouldes (New Zealand)

Youth of 14 and 15 year olds, from our indigenous culture (Maori) and European and Pacific Islands

Youth panels

Panel Questions

Please think of a young person who has a hard life, but who is doing well in life, despite this hardship.

What does it mean when someone says a person is doing well in life?

What makes this young person's life hard? That is, what are some examples of life experiences a young person could encounter that you would consider them having a hard life?)

Why does he/she do well in life, despite knowing hardship?

AND

Please think of a young person who has a hard life, and who is not doing well in life.

What makes this young person's life hard?

Why does he/she not do well in life? How is his/her 'case' different from the young person who has a hard life, but who is doing well in life, despite this hardship?

Main themes: Bristol Youth panels

- ✓ Friendship groups
- ✓ Belief in yourself- 'positive' personality- 'making an effort'
- ✓ Support from someone a little older who's had similar experience
- ✓ Importance of school-based systems- summer school, 'buddy' system

SA: positive outcomes in life hinge on:

- ✓ Connections, particularly to:
 - women-relations, such as mothers/aunts/sisters
 - spiritual beings (e.g. God)
 - pro-social peers
- ✓ Aspirations, particularly relating to education and being invested in education
- ✓ Meaningful past-times, particularly those that afford expression of emotion (e.g., music, art, drama)
- ✓ Sense of contribution to family/community

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Leading Causes of Life

- Coherence
- Connectivity
- Agency
- Intergenerativity
- Hope

<http://www.leading-causes.com/>

(Gunderson & Cochrane)