

Resilience in children and adolescents



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Resilience



- ✓ Controversy of what resilience is
- ✓ Is it a quality in the child himself?
- ✓ Is it an interactive process, environment *vis a vis* individual?
- ✓ Do some children “not have what it takes” to cope with adversity?

Resilience



- ✓ What resilience is
- ✓ Mechanisms of operation
- ✓ How to promote resilient features
- ✓ In the child, the family, social circumstances
- ✓ Implications for PREVENTION

What is resilience?



- ✓ Disagreement about definitions
- ✓ “invincible children”
- ✓ “vulnerable but invincible” (Werner)
- ✓ “superkids” or
- ✓ Combination of circumstances

What is resilience?



- ✓ Is it characteristics in the child , e.g. “ego” resiliency
- ✓ Or is it a process, for instance involving interactions (e.g. protective interactions with a mother, a teacher, etc.)

What is resilience?



- ✓ Child at risk
- ✓ Outcome is “better than expected”
- ✓ Better functioning than would be predicted
- ✓ A prediction that fails
- ✓ Child may come out “unscathed”

What is resilience?

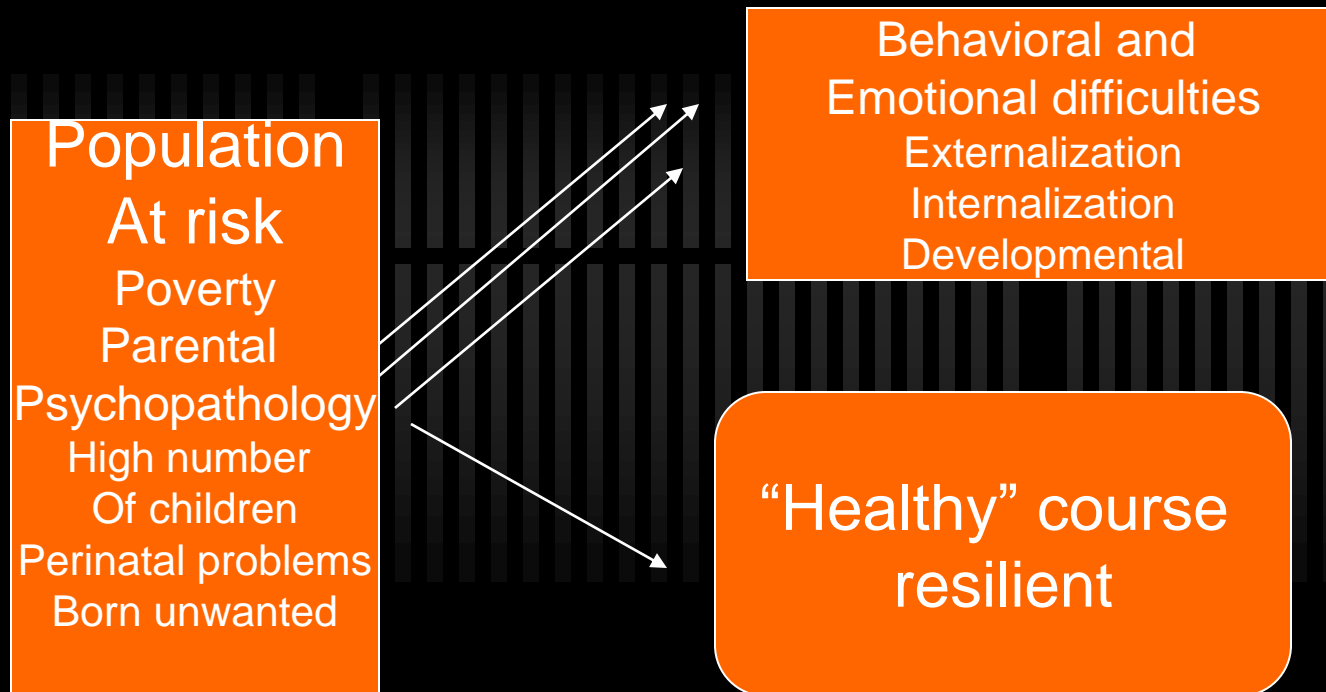


- ✓ The outcome:
- ✓ Better than predicted in certain areas but not in all areas
- ✓ Areas have strong cultural component, e.g. academic competence
- ✓ Relevant areas depend on social circumstances

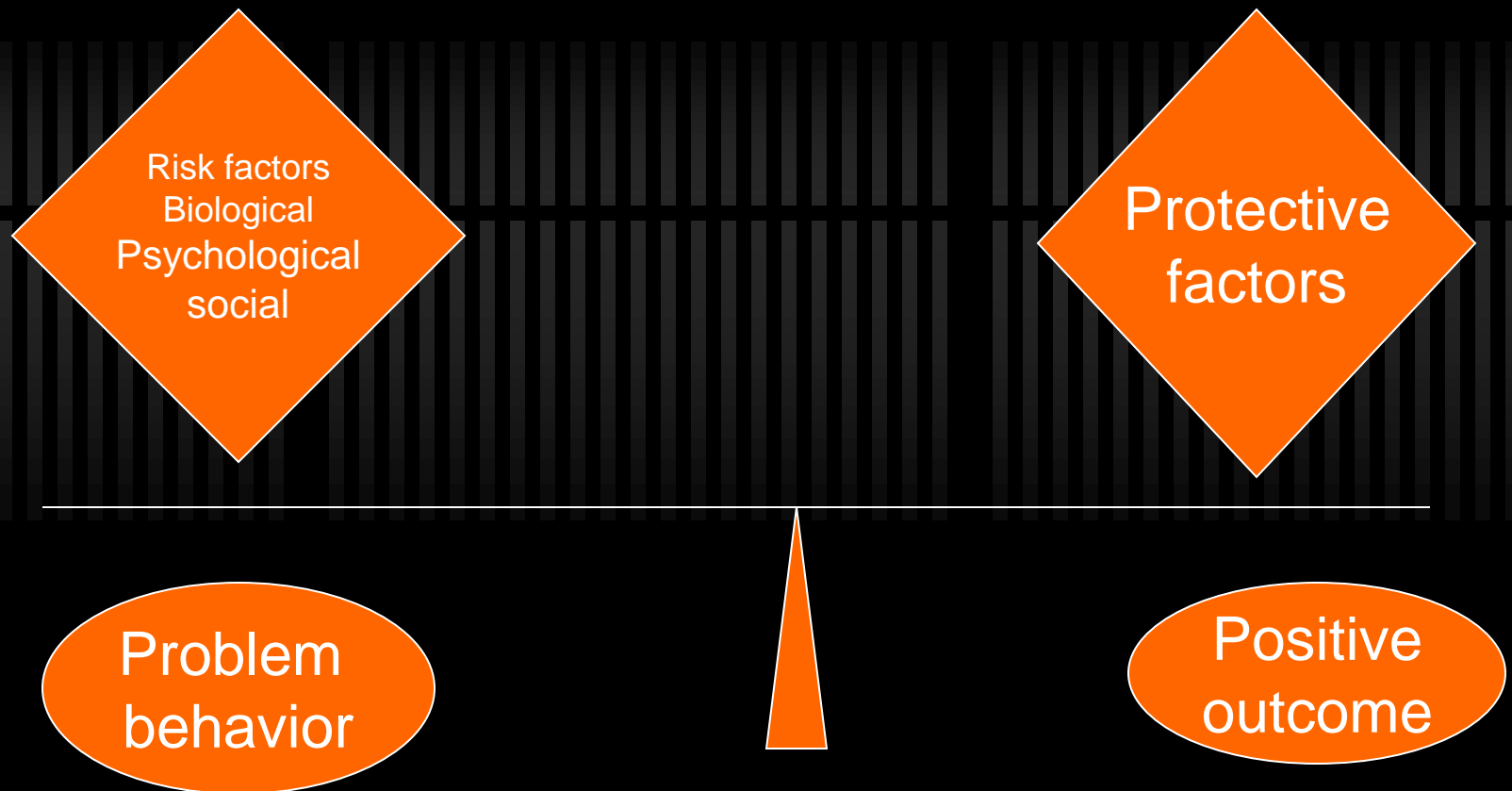
Resilience : Dimensional or categorical?

- ✓ Categorical: the person, resilient or not (statistically, cluster analysis, analysis of variance, discriminant function)
- ✓ Dimensional. More or less resilient features (regression, path analysis, structural modeling).

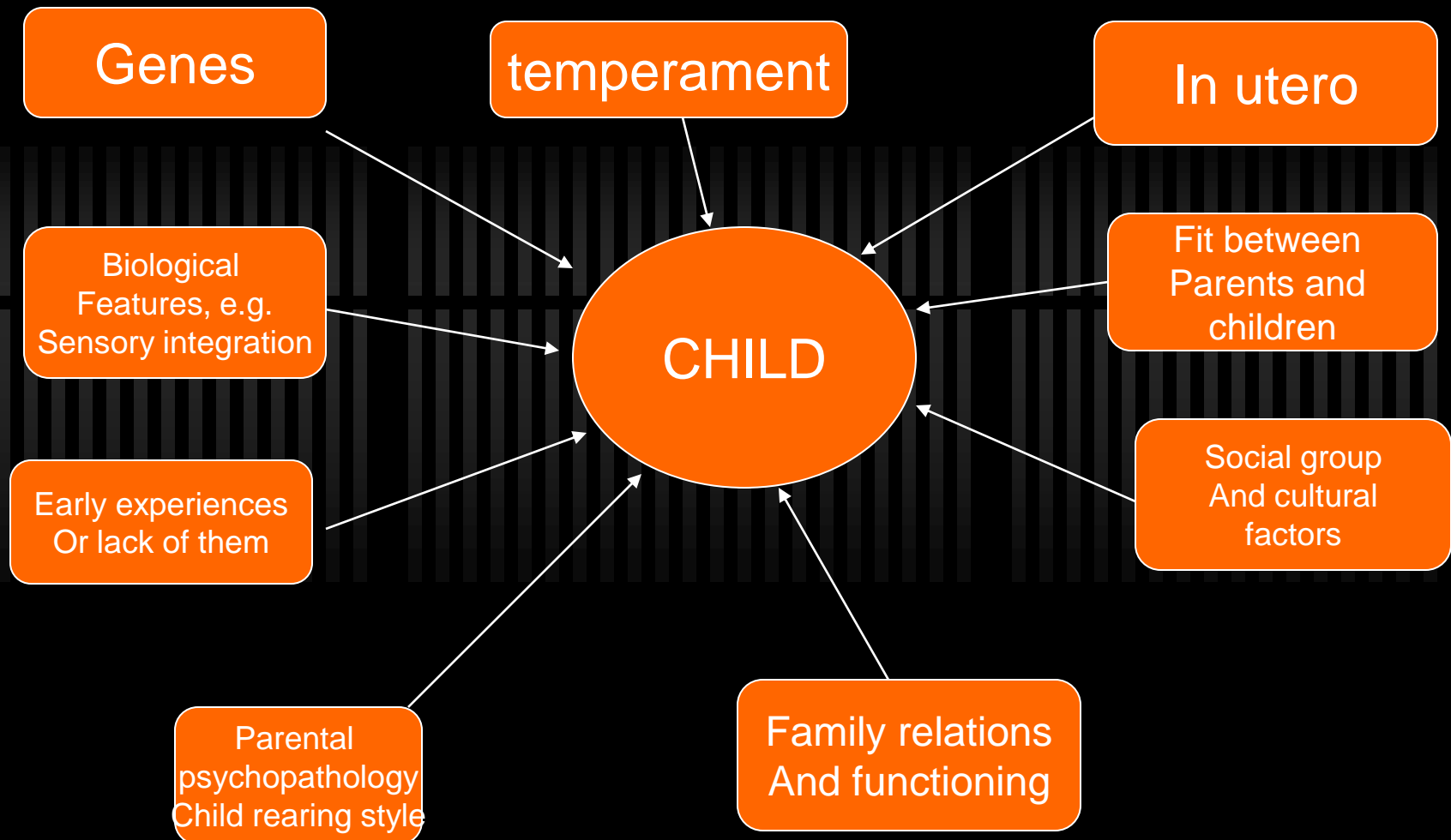
Resilience



Emotional and behavioral difficulties



Some risk factors....



Some studies on resilience



- ✓ Kauai study (Werner et al), from pregnancy to age 40
- ✓ Project competence (Garmezy et al.) with children at risk
- ✓ Thousand families stud (I. Kolvin) in Newcastle UK

Some studies of resilience



- ✓ Christchurch study (McGee, Fergusson et al.) New Zealand. Follow up study
- ✓ Rochester child resilience project (Cowen et al.)

Some studies of resilience



- ✓ Salutogenic effects , long term follow up age 30 (Cederblad et al). Lundby, Sweden
- ✓ National Child Development Study (Buchanan et al) UK

Kauai study .



- ✓ Vulnerable but invincible
- ✓ Children at risk followed up at various points
- ✓ A third of children defied the prediction of negative outcome and were considered resilient

Kauai study



- ✓ Adverse perinatal conditions, complications
- ✓ Poverty. Difficult early child rearing conditions
- ✓ Parental psychopathology, family discord
- ✓ Comparison group
- ✓ Physical, cognitive and psychosocial development at different points in life
- ✓ Protective factors?
- ✓ 698 children born in 1955

Kauai study



- ✓ Follow up ages 1, 2, 10, 18, 31-32 and 40 years old
- ✓ High rate of follow up around 80%
- ✓ Importance of child rearing environment
- ✓ Emotional support provided by people

Kauai study



- ✓ Emotional support by family, friends, teachers and adult mentors
- ✓ Problems in adolescence for most of the high risk children. Learning difficulties, mental health problems, teenage pregnancy , delinquency

Kauai study



- ✓ Recovery by fourth decade of life for most
- ✓ Stable marriages and jobs, satisfied with their relationships, responsible citizens

Kauai study



- ✓ Worst outcome in adults for exposed to parental alcoholism or mental illness, especially for men
- ✓ Born small for gestational age had most health problems and depression
- ✓ More losses and disruptions, more health problems in adulthood

Kauai study



- ✓ Better health status during childhood, better adaptation at age 40
- ✓ Mother's caregiving competence
- ✓ Emotional support by mother in childhood
- ✓ All these lead to better outcomes

Kauai study



- ✓ Most adults manage to make successful adaptation
- ✓ A third of children at risk did not present difficulties during childhood or adolescence

Kauai study



- ✓ Importance of community colleges, vocational skills
- ✓ Service in armed forces
- ✓ Good marriage, strong religious faith
- ✓ Catalysts for change, e.g. illness, accident, second marriage

Kauai study



- ✓ Many adults had low opinion of effectiveness of professional help
- ✓ Social workers or psychiatrists
- ✓ Psychotherapy helped only 5% of those with mental health problems

Lundby study (Cederblad et al)



- ✓ Prospective population study, 1947, 1957, 1957, 1988-89
- ✓ 148 persons, (42-56 years of age at follow up)
- ✓ At least 3 risk factors for mental disorders at beginning of study

Lundby study



- ✓ Life span coping style
- ✓ Coping mechanisms .e.g.
- ✓ Optimism
- ✓ Substitution
- ✓ Wishful thinking

Lundby study. Coping mechanisms



- ✓ Planning,
- ✓ Self reliance
- ✓ Humor
- ✓ Acceptance,
- ✓ Resignation
- ✓ Social support

Lundby study. Coping mechanisms



- ✓ Religion, catharsis, self criticism
- ✓ Value reinforcement, alcohol and drug consumption
- ✓ Professional help, endurance, information seeking, isolating activity
- ✓ Magic and minimizing

Lundby study



- ✓ Quality of life
- ✓ Mental health
- ✓ Problem solving, social support and optimism associated with greater mental health
- ✓ Sense of coherence and personal disposition

Project competence



- ✓ Norman Garmezy et al. Minnesota
- ✓ Children with major illnesses, undergone surgery (transposition of great arteries)
- ✓ How they cope with problems related to illness

Project competence



- ✓ Features that promote successful coping:
 - ✓ Greater social cognition
 - ✓ Greater creativity
 - ✓ Ability to delay gratification

Project competence



- ✓ Cognitive flexibility
- ✓ Aspirations, self-esteem
- ✓ Sense of humor
- ✓ Tolerance
- ✓ Accepts other people's perspective

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ Longitudinal study of unselected birth cohort
1265 children born in 1977
- ✓ Studied at birth, 4 months, 1 year, annual intervals to age 16, age 18, age 21
- ✓ Parental interview, self report, testing, teacher reports , police records
- ✓ High sample retention, statistical modeling of resilience

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ Being female diminished risk of externalizing disorder
- ✓ Being male diminished risk of internalizing disorder
- ✓ Gender specific vulnerabilities?

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ Low novelty seeking and high self esteem mitigate effect of adversity
- ✓ Low neuroticism mitigates risk of internalizing disorder

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ Studied risk factors and protective factors
- ✓ Exposure to abuse, to stressors in environment
- ✓ Children with “high resilience” or low, and high or low levels of symptoms

Christchurch Health and Development Study 21 yr follow up

- ✓ Children reared in high risk environments
- ✓ Intelligence and problem solving abilities
- ✓ Gender (e.g. females fare better after divorce)

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ External interests and affiliations
- ✓ (e.g. attachments outside family)
- ✓ Parental attachment and bonding at least one parent
- ✓ Early temperament and behavior

Christchurch Health and Development Study

- ✓ Peer factors (positive peer relationships contribute to resilience)
- ✓ Poverty is a crucial risk factor: increases chances of criminality

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ 205 children, 8-12 yrs, 27% minority
- ✓ Inner city school. Mostly lower middle class in Minneapolis public school
- ✓ Reassessed 7 and 10 years after first assessment (98 % participation)

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ Rate academic achievement
- ✓ Conduct of child (parent and adolescent questioned)
- ✓ Social assessment
- ✓ Self worth, distress
- ✓ Life events questionnaires

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ Group divided in
- ✓ Resilient youth
- ✓ Competent youth
- ✓ Maladaptive youth

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ Intelligence , IQ and problem solving abilities strongly associated with resilience
- ✓ Better parenting quality (warmth, expectation and structure)

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ Resilient less rule-abiding than competent group
- ✓ IQ quite high in resilient group and low in maladaptive group
- ✓ Resilient : low in negative emotionality
- ✓ Possibly some with more emotional distress

Competence study. Masten, Garmezy



- ✓ High adversity makes good outcome more difficult
- ✓ If good resources at start, generally good outcome
- ✓ Good parenting strong predictor of good outcome

Resilient features infancy



- ✓ Easy temperament
- ✓ Attractiveness and vitality
- ✓ Next sibling at least two years younger
- ✓ Gender (female)
- ✓ Oldest child

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- ✓ Attractiveness and vitality
- ✓ Next sibling at least two years younger
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Resilient features infancy



- ✓ History of less separations from the mother during the first year of life
- ✓ Social orientation, interest in others
- ✓ Secure attachment

Resilient features in infancy



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- ✓ Social orientation, interest in others
- ✓ Secure attachment

Resilient features preschool age



- ✓ Attractiveness
- ✓ Social orientation
- ✓ Persistence
- ✓ Sense of humor

Resilient features in preschool age



- ✓ Attractiveness
- ✓ Social orientation
- ✓ Persistence
- ✓ Sense of humor

Resilient features preschool age



- ✓ Eliciting other's attention
- ✓ Gender (female)
- ✓ Normal intelligence
- ✓ Optimism and self-confidence
- ✓ More energy and vigorous

Resilience features school age



- ✓ Gender (female)
- ✓ Self-esteem
- ✓ Persistence (despite disappointment or failure)

Resilient features school children



- ✓ For boy: Less stereotypically masculine interests
- ✓ More cognitive flexibility
- ✓ Internal locus of control
- ✓ To be able to reflect on problems

Resilient features school age



- ✓ To be able to speak to others about one's problems
- ✓ Better problem solving abilities
- ✓ More independent
- ✓ A social orientation
- ✓ Several interests and hobbies

Resilient features adolescent



- ✓ Gender (male)
- ✓ For girls : required helpfulness (e.g. look after siblings, help parents, etc.)
- ✓ Belief that one can have success

Resilient features adolescent



- ✓ Interest in others, prosocial orientation
- ✓ Participation in peer organizations and social causes, sports
- ✓ Less feelings of competition with siblings
- ✓ Oriented to details and focused on details
- ✓ Exhibit responsibility

Resilient features in family



- ✓ Features of families:
- ✓ Structure
- ✓ Functioning
- ✓ Adaptability or flexibility
- ✓ Cohesiveness
- ✓ Communication and emotional expressiveness)

Salutogenic effects



- ✓ Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky)
- ✓ Comprehensibility (understand problem)
- ✓ Manageability (coping strategies)
- ✓ Meaningfulness (it makes sense to cope with the problem)

Salutogenic effects



- ✓ Intelligence
- ✓ Validity (energy level)
- ✓ Solidity (flexibility level)
- ✓ Stability (Sociability level)
- ✓ Locus of control
- ✓ Mastery, ways of coping

Resilient families



- ✓ Able to cope with normative changes
- ✓ Able to cope with challenges/stressors by developing new strategies
- ✓ Improve cohesiveness and problem-solving
- ✓ Challenge improves the functioning “cars in a circle” to face stressors

Resilient families



- ✓ Importance of rituals
- ✓ Vacations together
- ✓ Time to talk, eat together
- ✓ Celebrations and anniversaries
- ✓ Optimal degree of involvement and individuation
- ✓ What the family needs depends also on cultural factors

Community protective factors



- ✓ Educational opportunities
- ✓ Chance to have friends,
- ✓ Extended family
- ✓ Neighbors, relatives, elders for counsel
- ✓ Support in case of crisis

Community protective factors



- ✓ Extra curricular opportunities
- ✓ Help to bond to the school and teach skills
- ✓ Leadership and teamwork
- ✓ Church opportunities, faith

Promoting resilience



- ✓ Early intervention
- ✓ Promotion of healthy pregnancy
- ✓ Programming effects, etc.
- ✓ Preparation for transition to parenthood
- ✓ Early identification of difficulties

Promoting resilience



- ✓ Promoting sensitive parenting
- ✓ Supportive, may be authoritative but not authoritarian
- ✓ Less separations from children
- ✓ Spacing between children

Promoting resilience



- ✓ Promoting positive of self esteem
- ✓ Intervene in stressful situations
- ✓ Work on strengths
- ✓ Promote internal locus of control

Promoting resilience



- ✓ Importance of school experience, environment as protective in situations of stress
- ✓ Importance of mentors and protective benign figures

Promoting resilience



- ✓ Importance of life transition points
- ✓ Educational transitions
- ✓ Job opportunity
- ✓ Opportunity for friendships
- ✓ Extracurricular activities

Promoting resilience



- ✓ New opportunity after a failure
- ✓ Tutoring,
- ✓ Teaching problem solving skills
- ✓ Teaching social skills