



Insights on Resiliency: Using Family-Based Evidence to Inform Policy and Practice

**Developed by Members of Ohio's
Resiliency Project***

***Supported by the Ohio Department of Mental
Health**



Resiliency and Mental Health


- Resiliency is an inner capacity that when nurtured, facilitated, and supported by others—empowers children, youth, and families to successfully meet life’s challenges with a sense of self-determination, mastery, hope, and well-being.

Ohio Resiliency Workgroup (ODMH)



Resiliency an Expectation

- Resiliency is an EXPECTATION and not an exception for youth with significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges

- 
- *“There is never anything wrong with us that something right with us can’t fix.”*

Mark Katz



Resiliency is an Ordinary Process

- Resiliency is an ordinary process available to all youth.

Ann Masten



Nurtured Resiliency

- Internal qualities, talents, and skills, that can be developed and fostered through relationships of those around us (core people)



Facilitated Resiliency

- Facilitated resilience means shaping the natural environment to enhance youth and family success.
- Everyday strategies and structures are used to support all children and families.
- Some children and families may need additional strategies and structures.



Supported Resiliency

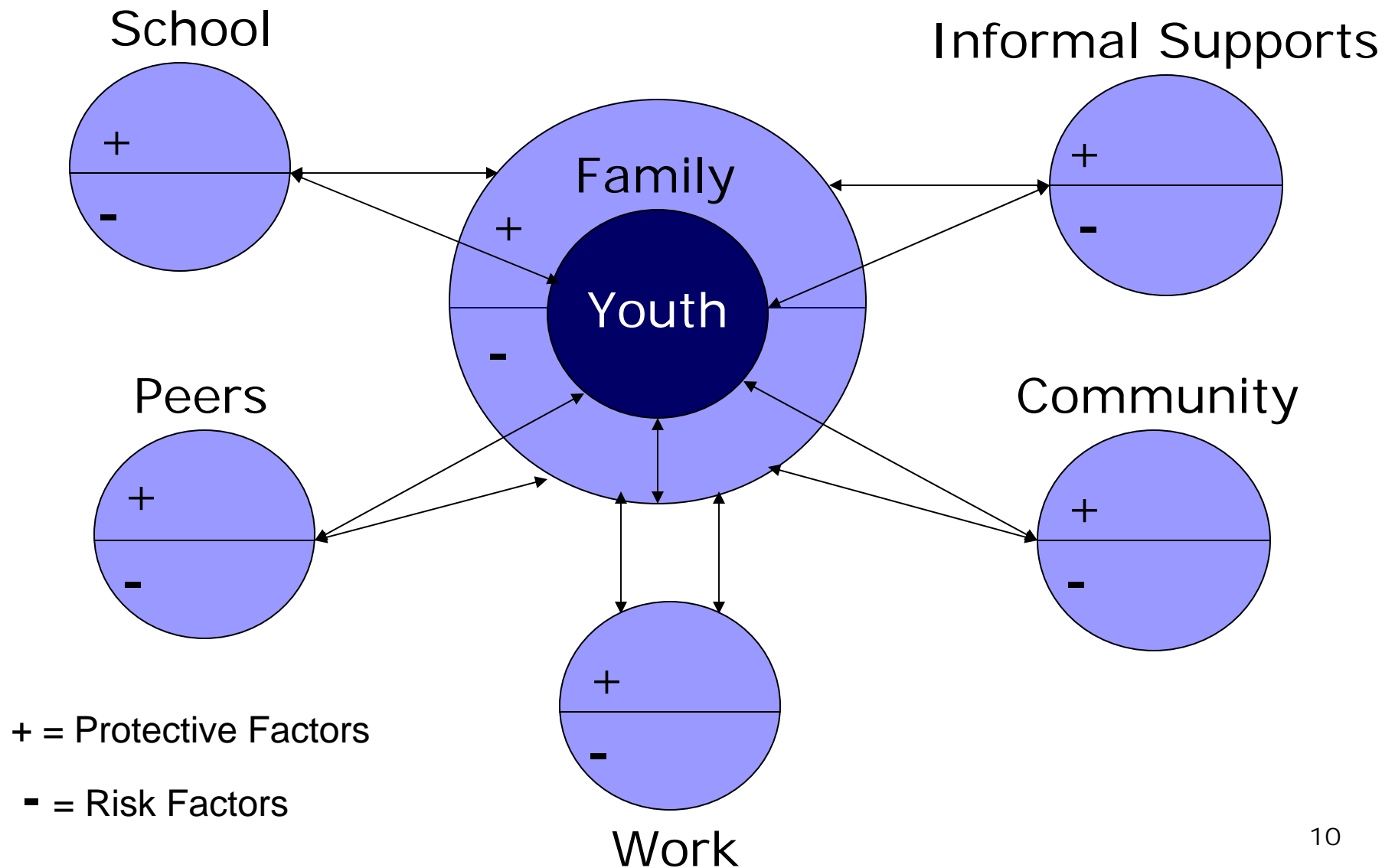
- Efforts by members of the community to build and sustain a foundation of acceptance, support, and opportunities for developing resiliency within youth and families of all ages, abilities, and needs
- Resiliency is a shared community responsibility



Resiliency is Contextual

- Resiliency evolves and interacts within contexts
- Best conceptualized utilizing an ecosystemic framework
- Youth live and function in multiple worlds, each with their own set of risk and protective factors (family, community, schools, neighborhoods, peers, culture, etc)

Resiliency in Context





Both the person and the context matter

- *Person and context are mutually interactive: by increasing the developmental strengths of one kind tends to increase the strengths of the other (Benson et al. 2006, P. 5)*



Components of Resiliency

Adapted from R. Friedman

- **Connections to individuals, families, and institutions**
 - Supportive relationships and environments
- **Competencies (SAT)**
 - Skills
 - Abilities
 - Talents
- **Contribution: Giving to others**
- **Positive view of self and future: Hope and optimism**
- **High expectations and standards: community, family & individual**



Asset Building Literature

- **40 Developmental Assets:** The Search Institute's Framework of Developmental Assets
- **External Assets:** Positive, structured growth environments
- **Internal Assets:** the values, skills, and self-perceptions needed for self-regulation
- <http://www.search-institute.org/>



Youth and Family Insight

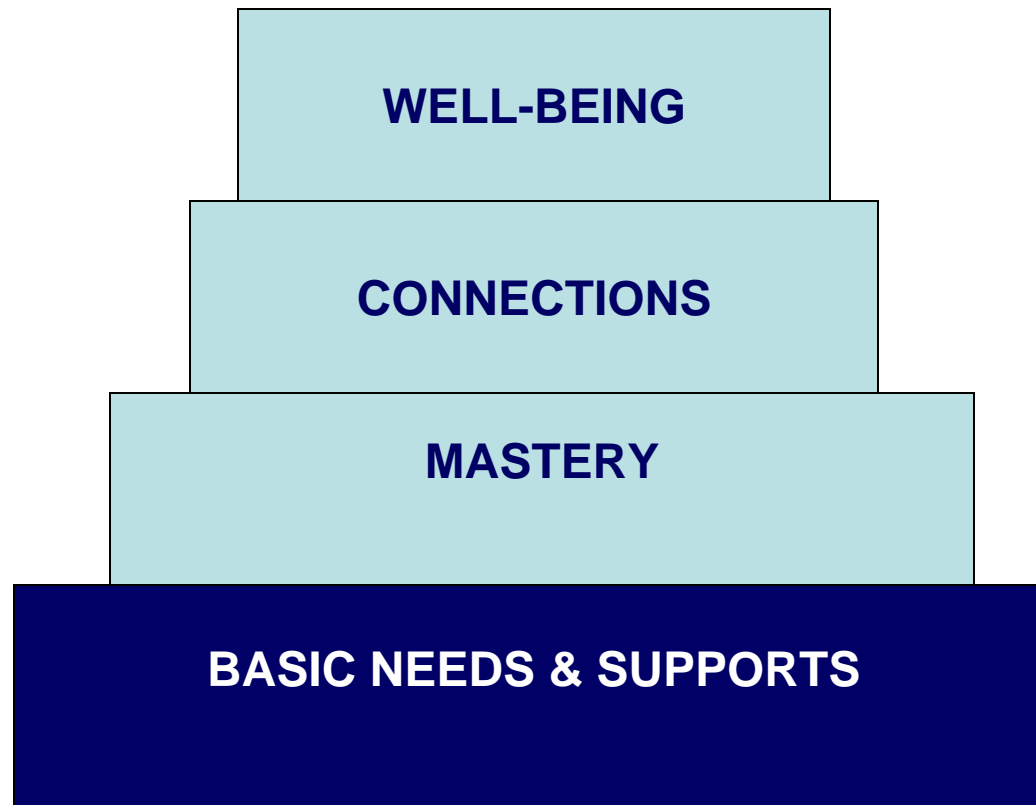
1. Validation and valuing
2. Basic needs, safety, and services
3. Sanctuary
4. Justice
5. Courage and confidence
6. Self Wisdom & Self Acceptance
7. Competencies
8. Expectations and accommodations that maximize success
9. Supportive connections
10. Contribution & participation
11. Hope
12. Sense of meaning and joy



Building Blocks of Resiliency

- **Basic Need & Supports (Foundational)- What I need:** Validation; Basic Needs and Supports; Sanctuary; Justice
- **Mastery (personal growth): What I know and what I can do:** Competencies; Self Wisdom & Self Acceptance, Courage & Confidence
- **Connections: How I am connected (Quality Connections):** Positive Connections; Expectations that Maximize Functioning & Potential; Contribution and Participation
- **Well-Being (Quality of Life):** Hope and Optimism (Future's Orientation); Sense of Meaning and Joy

Building Blocks of Resiliency





Building Blocks of Resiliency: Basic Needs

- Validation
- Basic Needs, Safety, and Supports
- Sanctuary
- Justice



Validation and Valuing

- The youth and family are validated for their efforts and persistence, knowing that progress is sometimes very difficult, and that “hanging in there” is sometimes all that is possible.
- Youth with mental health challenges and their families are doing the best they can, not only maintaining, but “surviving well.”



Basic Needs, Safety, & Supports

- Safe and supportive environments
- Affordable, available, and accessible mental health care

Having children with special needs costs more all around...money, time, and energy...forcing our own resources to be fewer.

Family member – Ohio Resiliency Project



Sanctuary

- Safe and calming people and places for refuge, respite, recovery, and rejuvenation.
- Designated and predictable breaks (Respite and support)



Justice

- Safe and non-traumatizing care (Do No Harm)
- Culturally mindful and respectful services
- Proactive advocacy and facilitation of meaningful accommodations
- Youth and families have a legitimate voice at all levels of policy, services, and supports.



Building Blocks of Resiliency





Building Blocks of Resiliency: Mastery

- **Competencies: Skills, Abilities, Talents**
- **Self-Wisdom and Self Acceptance**
- **Courage & Confidence**



Competencies

- Unique strengths, skills, abilities, and talents
- Active facilitation, support, and encouragement
- Positive learning environments that enhance abilities, teach skills
- Opportunities for expression of each youth's unique talents.



Youth Insight: Self Wisdom

- *Resiliency is knowing when you are falling, and knowing how to catch yourself*

Youth member – Ohio Resiliency Project



Self-Wisdom & Self-Acceptance

- Youth and families are experts in their own experiences and develop practical knowledge about coping with, and managing, behavioral and emotional challenges.
- Youth cultivate self acceptance, recognizing they are doing the best they can given their current abilities, life experiences, and circumstances.
- Youth may have setbacks, but learn from each experience, always growing emotionally stronger and wiser.
- Youth learn to appreciate who they are becoming including their unique abilities, talents, and strengths.



Courage & Confidence

- The daily act of coping with mental health challenges requires great personal courage
- Youth and families have the courage to stand their ground and say “I can” regardless of what others tell them is possible.
- Youth grow in confidence through each life experience, developing self-assurance and belief in their abilities, not only to cope, but to thrive.
- *We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.*

Maya Angelou



Building Blocks of Resiliency





Building Blocks of Resiliency: Quality Connections

- Positive and Supportive Relationships and Connections
- Expectations that Maximize Functioning and Potential
- Contribution and Participation



Supportive Connections

- Positive connections to supportive family members, adults, peers, institutions, and community. (Schools, mentors etc)
- Social support systems that are responsive and offer tangible, emotional, educational, and advocacy supports.



Expectations that Maximize Potential

- Reasonable and achievable expectations
- Flexible and accommodating environments with personal champions
- *“Set goals so that I can reach them, and once I reach them, then you can raise them.”*

Youth member – Ohio Resiliency Project

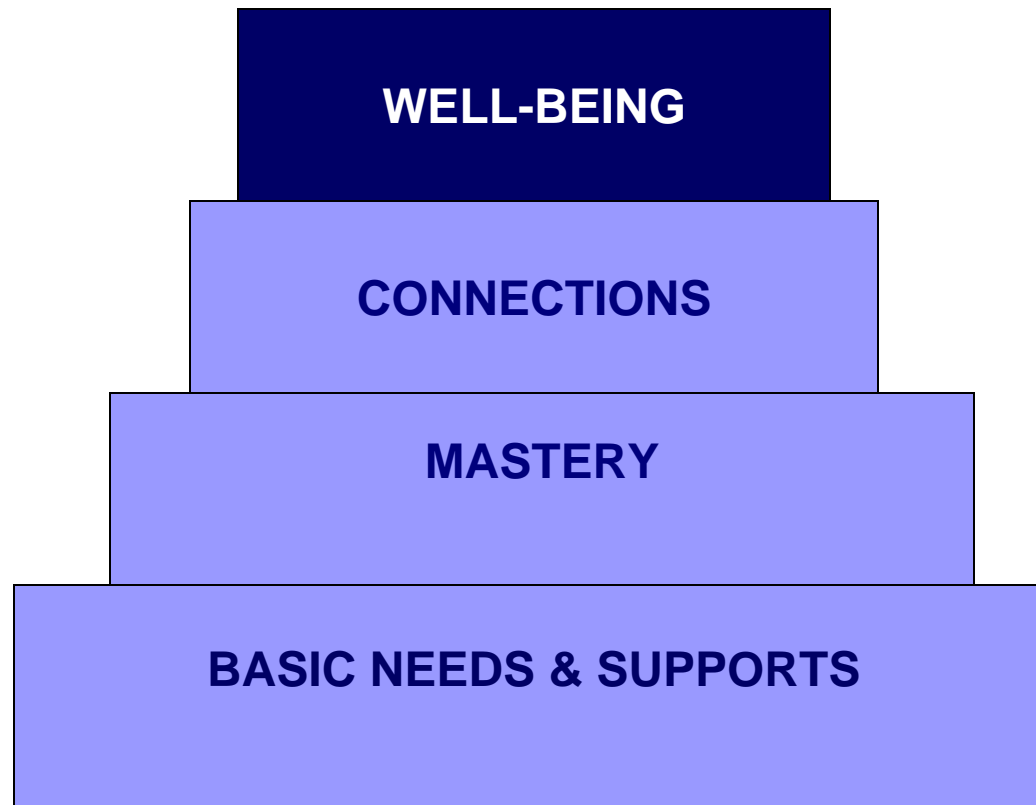


Contribution & Participation

- Opportunities for contribution, participation, and positive involvement are created
- Active involvement and meaningful belonging in community activities and schools
- Meaningful leadership roles are created



Building Blocks of Resiliency





Building Blocks of Resiliency: Well-Being & Quality of Life

- Hope and Optimism; Futures Orientation
- Sense of Meaning and Joy



Hope and Optimism

- Opportunities and possibilities are fostered
- Hope for a positive future with a self-determined and fulfilled life
- Little victories are significant, sustaining our hope, and giving us the courage to persevere.



Sense of Meaning and Joy

- Personal happiness, meaning, and joy that brings satisfaction and quality to our lives.
- A sense of purpose and fun promotes wellness and gives us something to look forward to each day
- Creativity, playfulness, and humor, allow youth and families to experience lightheartedness and joy.



Resiliency and Culture

- Policy is informed and developed by culturally diverse representation of youth experiencing mental health challenges and their families and significant others
- Resiliency requires that each provider cultivate a deep level of cultural awareness and heightened awareness for each family and their unique culture and values
- *Need to understand how strengths emerge and are nurtured within specific groups (and cultures).* Sesman, A., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (2003). Unique strengths, shared strengths: Developmental assets among youth of color. *Insights and Evidence*, 1 (2), 1-13.
- *Recognize the need to support and align strategies that actively address individual and cultural differences*
(Sesman & Roehlkepartain,2003).



Resiliency-Oriented Mental Health Practice

- Build affirming relationships with youth & family
- Foster hope and futures orientation
- Build functional competencies
- Build ***compensatory strengths*** (*strengths in one area may compensate for challenges in another, Benson et al, 2006*)



Resiliency-Oriented Mental Health Practice

- Engage formal and informal services & supports to promote multiple resiliencies
- Promote the understanding that youth have different resiliency needs and trajectories
- Develop expectations & standards that maximize potential and success
- Facilitate opportunities for positive contributions and involvement



Resiliency-Oriented Mental Health Practice

- *Avoid either only focusing on building young people's skills or only changing the environment or contextual variables; the best results occur with simultaneous efforts to do both*
(Benson et al. 2006, p. 6)
- *Balance the general with the specific: no single strategy will work for each young person, even though all (children and adolescents) need more strengths/assets.*
(Benson et al. 2006, P. 11)
- *Increasing the number of developmental nutrients across settings is what matters most, not increasing specific strengths or combinations of strengths in any single setting*



Service Adaptations

- Service adaptations may be necessary to achieve resilience for youth with unique challenges:
 - Assertive outreach
 - Increased intensity and availability of services
 - Multiple resources and supports may be needed
 - Supported connections (mentors)
 - Advocacy that builds positive system relationships
 - Creating supportive functional environments
 - Facilitate reasonable and realistic expectations



Extreme Persistence

Resiliency-oriented mental health systems “recognize that needs can be complex, that change is sometimes very difficult to achieve” and promotes “extreme persistence” and creative adaptations in the delivery of services, “changing the plan instead of rejecting the child and family from services and supports.”

(VanDenBerg, 2002)



Resilience:

A Complementary Construct

- Resilience is a complementary construct to current evidenced-based practices
- Resilience can be integrated into and inform other best practice models, serving to enhance them



Examples of best practice models complementary to resilience

- **Multisystemic Therapy**
- **IHBT**
- **Wraparound**
- **The DECA program**
- **The Incredible Years**



Elements of resilience common to these models

- Strength based
- Skill development and competency-enhancement
- Focus on parenting skills that are high in nurturance, supervision and monitoring
- Linkage to pro-social activities, peers, and mentors
- Development of positive connections in schools and in the community



Agency and Program Level

- Agencies focus on resiliency-driven policies and practices
- See CQC document



Policy Implications and Challenges

- *Community-wide efforts to build developmental nutrients are as important as those on the organization, family, and individual levels.*
(Benson et al. 2006)
- *Seek to bring about change in multiple systems and environments* (Benson et al. 2006)
- Efforts to implement a resiliency-oriented mental health system need to be imbedded in a community structure that supports them and sustains their effects (funding and policy considerations)



Policy Implications

- Consumer-driven change is transformation - and the goal is transformed lives.
- *Make youth engagement and leadership normative* (Benson et al. 2006)
- Utilize family-based evidence to make policy decisions (What do youth and families identify they need to be resilient?)



What will resiliency look like when implemented?

- Re-balancing of mental health services and supports: Informal, natural, paraprofessional supports
- Flexible funding mechanisms and processes for supporting resiliency generating resources, supports, and activities (e.g. Respite & support services are developed, funded, and available)
- Outcomes and evaluation that focuses on factors of resiliency and quality of life
- Increased community-based options for maintaining youth in their homes and communities



What will resiliency look like when implemented?

- Resiliency assessment is utilized for each youth and family to identify strengths, skills, abilities, talents, and resources (High Fidelity Wraparound)
- Resiliency constructs are operationalized and integrated into all supports and services



Training and Education

- Comprehensive mental health education for youth, families, and communities that fights stigma and stereotypes (Presented by youth and family teams)
- Trainings for youth and families
- Training for providers
- Training for boards



Next Steps

- ODMH adoption and support
- Obtain stakeholder buy-in
- Linking with other statewide and ODMH initiatives including OFCF and TSIG
- Statewide dissemination and implementation
- Resiliency-oriented outcomes and evaluation



Summary

- Resiliency is a natural platform for creating an overarching, strength-based framework for both prevention and intervention with youth with significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges and their families
- Resiliency is equally available to youth with significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges
- Resiliency is an expectation and not an exception for youth with significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges



Quote from Dr. Ann Masten

■ “The great danger I see in the idea of resilience is in expecting children to overcome deprivation and danger on their own... There is no magic here; resilient children have been protected by the actions of adults, by good nurturing, by their assets, and by opportunities to succeed. We cannot stand by as the infrastructure for child development collapses in this nation, expecting miracles.”



The Resiliency Workgroup

- Tova Black, Tracee Black, Ella Clayborn, Terre Garner, Robin Gilbert, Pam Gulley, Carrol Hernandez, Karen Hocker, Randall Hocker, Michael Jamison, Rachel Lewis, André Martin, Pam Mattson, Peter Mattson, Connie Truman, Susan Thompson, Sandy Regula, Rick Shepler, Bill Stidham-Garner, and Kathy Tenney, Charlotte Williams. The group would also like to acknowledge contributions from past workgroup members including Marci Dvorak, Mary Beth Haubert, Mike Lemon, Bernie Schell and Ed Schell.



Contact Information

- Rick Shepler
Center for Innovative Practices
330-455-3811
ricks@cipohio.org
- Terre Garner
Ohio Federation for Children's Mental Health
www.ohiofederation.org
513-218-8819
- Kay Rietz
Ohio Department of Mental Health
www.mh.state.oh.us
614-466-1984