

# Resiliency in Primary Care

F David Schneider, MD, MSPH  
Professor and Chairman  
Family & Community Medicine  
Saint Louis University



ADVANCING HEALTH EDUCATION & RESEARCH



# What is Resilience?

The tendency to adapt to  
risk or adversity



# Measures of Resilience

- Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale
- Post-traumatic Growth Inventory



# Connor Davidson Resilience Scale

- Adapt to change
- Deal with whatever comes my way
- See humorous side of things
- Bounce back after illness or injury
- Believe I can achieve goals despite obstacles
- Stress makes me stronger
- Under pressure I stay focused
- Not easily discouraged by failure
- Think of myself as a strong person when facing challenges
- Able to handle unpleasant feelings

# Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory

- 5 Constructs:
  - Relation to others
  - New possibilities
  - Personal strength
  - Spiritual change
  - Appreciation of life



# Protective Factors

- Personal Strength
  - I know better that I can handle difficulties
  - I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was
- Caregiver Support (of children)
  - Especially maternal
- Supportive Social Networks



# Protective Factors (without a lot of evidence)

- Parenting Qualities
- Cognitive Functioning
- Socioeconomic Status
- Positive Self-Image
- Intellectual Ability
- Good Attention
- Good Interpersonal Skills
- Mother's Mental Health



# Why Are These Protective?

- Greater medial prefrontal cortex-amygdala coupling in children with more nurturing mothers
- Epigenetic factors?





# Effect of Resilience on Health

- Not a lot of evidence
- Moderates the development of depression in people with high ACE scores



# Resilience in Primary Care: What we can do to help our patients

- Ask about trauma histories
- Listen to their answers
- Explore level of risk and impact on their lives
- Discover their strengths
- Encourage patients to build on their strengths
- There's no magic pill



# Behavioral Interventions That Help

- Reframing
  - It's typical to catastrophize
  - Use more objective terms
    - Horrible/terrible vs long, tiring, stressful
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Referral to behavioral health professionals



# Behavioral Interventions That Help

- Reframing
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
  - Coping skills, relaxation training, emotional regulation
  - For children – incorporation of parents, bolstering the parent-child relationship



# Behavioral Interventions That Help

- Reframing
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Referral to behavioral health professionals



# Behavioral Interventions That Help

- Reframing
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Referral to behavioral health professionals
  - 25% of patients referred to a BH specialist ever go
  - Integrated behavioral health in primary care



# Resilience in Primary Care: What we can do to help our patients

- Ask about trauma histories
- Listen to their answers
- Explore level of risk and impact on their lives
- Discover their strengths
- Encourage patients to build on their strengths
- There's no magic pill

