

Resilience

Lecture 11
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Early studies in Resilience

- The scientific work on resilience goes back to the 1960s, particularly through the work of Ann M. Clarke & A.D.B. Clarke (1976).
- A number of authors including Jerome Kagan, Michael Rutter and the Clarks document numerous incidences of children suffering pervasive and long term neglect and deprivation who go on to make remarkable recoveries and lead quite typical lives as adolescents and then adults.

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What is Resilience?

- Psychological resilience is the ability to bounce back from negative events.
- Need for a study among street boys of Nairobi: when they get back to mainstream education why do they perform consistently better than their younger 'normal' counterparts?

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Garmezy (1983): three categories of protective factors

- *Dispositional attributes of the child*: children themselves were easy to relate to, felt good about themselves, believed they were in control of their lives, and were self-reliant.
- *Family cohesion and warmth*: a child experienced a warm relationship with at least one adult family member, the family felt close, and order and organization were in evidence.
- *Use of external support systems* by parents and children, in the neighbourhood or elsewhere in the community.

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Positive Psychology on Resilience

- Positive psychology examines the role of positive emotions to cope with adverse events and gradually bounce back.
- Seligman: People with optimistic explanatory style recover from set backs more quickly.
- Positive emotions serve a buffering function and provide a useful antidote to the problems associated with negative emotions and ill health (Fredrickson, 2000).

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Recall Frederickson's: Broadening-and-Building Theory

- When we focus on positivity, we have energy to creatively explore..
- **Broadening**: As we explore, we acquire more resources (human, social, psychological, material).
- **Building**: These resources, which last beyond the emotions that led one to explore and attain them, are used to further personal development.
- **The positive resources stand by us during time of adversity, building resilience!**

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