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Chapter 5

THE RESILIENCE DOUGHNUT: COMBINING STRENGTHS TO SURVIVE

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ABSTRACT

The triumph of the human spirit to recover from, sustain through and even grow personally as a result of trauma is of paramount interest in the study of psychology. Three different resilient responses, recovery, sustainability and personal growth, have been observed in studies of individuals as they face adversity. The key element of these studies is that relationships appear to form the basis of an individual's resilience. A useful framework, The Resilience Doughnut is outlined noting the interacting factors that contribute to resilience. These factors show seven different contexts where potential relationships grow and contribute to social support, self esteem and efficacy. It is proposed that only three of these factors are needed to be strong in order to tip the balance towards a resilience response. Three case studies are presented, each with a different resilient response and each with a different set of strong factors in the Resilience Doughnut framework. Of interest is the ebb and flow of their resilience, and the changes in their factors over time. The Resilience Doughnut framework appears to be useful in tailoring interventions to individuals facing potential trauma or for those who have been victims of crime. While the framework is used primarily for development, it has the value of being able to identify and enhance exisiting strong relationships during times of adversity throughout the lifespan.

INTRODUCTION

A victim can be described as a person who suffers from a destructive action or who has been deceived by the dishonesty of others. A victim mentality can be described as having a cognitive style of helplessness, with a predominantly pessimistic thinking pattern. This

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pessimistic thinking style has been widely documented in research and referred to as learned helplessness (Seligman, 1973).

The study of helpless individuals who have been exposed to significant trauma and adversity has interested researchers for over four decades, leading to the study of psychological resilience. In the past, research into psychological resilience has focused on the risk factors that stop people from coping during adversity. Other research has considered resilience as a personality trait, present in only some people (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984).

Thankfully, we have reached a time where research has sent us searching for the strengths of ordinary everyday people who appear to cope in the midst of enormous changes and adversity. This research found that there are strengths in connections, relationships and social competence, and these may appear in a multitude of ways that contribute to building resilience (Masten, Obradovic, & Burt, 2006). Research has also found that there are multiple pathways to resilience throughout an individual's lifespan (Shaffer, Coffino, Boelcke-Stennes, & Masten, 2007). Some studies have considered people who have coped well through trauma, grief, loss, and disappointing life transitions, and have then recovered, sustained life and grown personally as a result. From these studies we can gain information about how resilient people think, respond and adapt to new or difficult situations. Significantly, interventions that draw on existing strengths appear to have a lot of success (Masten, Desjardins, McCormick, Kuo, & Long, 2010), so it is important that we focus on this research and examine ways to apply the interventions practically.

If we consider these different responses we can see that to be resilient during and after trauma takes many forms. Some adults recover quickly from trauma, some quietly sustain their living through the trauma while others may grow personally as a result of the trauma (Zautra, Arewasikporn, & Davis, 2010). To understand the factors that help ordinary people to recover, sustain, and grow through trauma, this chapter will consider three case studies where people have demonstrated multiple pathways towards resilience. Of particular interest is the application of a model of resilience, which shows how the interaction of positive external contextual factors builds personal competencies in order for the individual to triumph over adversity. Essentially, while there is evidence of multiple pathways towards resilience (Masten, Shaffer, Coffino, & Boelcke-Stennes, 2007), there appears to be a formula, or pattern of interaction that is optimum for recovery, sustainability and growth.

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE

Michael Ungar notes resilience is the ability to navigate and negotiate with one's social ecology (Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung, & Levine, 2008, p. 168). Throughout all life stages, personal and social competence develops through navigating and negotiating various social contexts in which the person is nested. However, as we consider the responses of individuals who have suffered trauma and considerable adversity, it is worth noting that it is also through adversity that personal competence is tested and developed. Thus we review the definition to include three interacting components. Firstly resilience is defined as an individual or group's process of continual development of personal competence. Secondly it

is navigating and negotiating with available resources and thirdly these processes occur in the face of adversity.

The following case concerns Jason and shows how his experience of his parents' separation in childhood affected his resilience during trauma in his later years. The example also shows how the definition above can be applied throughout the lifespan.

> Jason was aged 8 at the time of his parents' separation and divorce. He faced changes such as where he would live, how often he would spend time with his dad and dad's extended family, as well as facing a change of school and neighborhood friends. His personal competence was built by adapting to different houses, changing school environments, making new friends, packing his bags on the weekends and learning how to behave in different households. He was affected by the quality of the relationships around him. If he met a teacher at his new school that connected with him, he would be more likely to perform better academically. If the kids in the new neighborhood and school were friendly and accepting, he would be more likely to be more socially competent. If his parents learned to cooperate, he would be more likely to learn relational competence. If he saw his extended family more regularly, he would have a greater sense of belonging.

It is the quality of the relationships with the adults, families and communities in Jason's life, which will establish his personal competence and help him navigate and negotiate through future life challenges.

> Consider Jason later aged 35 with multiple responsibilities in his work, family and community but grieving the loss of a child. His past experience of going through crisis by reaching out to helpful teachers, neighbors and family would enable him to reach out for help and ask for assistance from those around him. If his previous experiences of life have modeled care and concern rather than hostility and abuse, he would now be more likely to see others as a source of comfort and support rather than a threat. Jason does have choices and can withdraw from help but his wife and children are also suffering. He knows they depend on him for strength. In the past, Jason's source of strength was others who helped him to adapt; now his source of strength is through empowering those around him to feel they can help. As an adult Jason now has the social competence to reach out for help and in turn to develop more competence for both himself and his family. So, as an adult he has his own personal strengths and also has the opportunity for choices that can make a difference.

A RESILIENT RESPONSE: RECOVERY, SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

Zautra et al. (2010) considered there were a number of different ways people showed resilience while experiencing trauma. They noted different circumstances led to different responses, and the successful negotiation of the trauma or crisis depended on the quality of the responses. Three of the responses noted by Zautra were recovery, sustainability and personal growth (Zautra, 2009).

Recovery

Recovery implies that a person when exposed to significant stress or trauma bounces back within a relatively short period of time. The recovery time that defines a 'resilient response' may be from three to six months, or even up to twelve months, depending on the nature of the stress as well as other cultural and individual factors (Zautra et al., 2010).

To determine the recovery period, the level of cortisone is measured. During stress the body is affected by the steroid cortisone, which is released in order to prepare the body for injury and recovery. Some people show a quick recovery after a traumatic event. These individuals have cortisone levels that return to normal levels quite efficiently even while experiencing physical signs of stress. This efficient regulation enables them to return to normal functioning in a short period of time after a stressful event (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2007).

The experience of resilience to trauma is demonstrated in some research on major traumatic events. In a study of the prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD) in people who had various levels of exposure to the September 11 attack in New York City, it was found that 65% of the overall random samples were resilient and only 6% were identified with probable PTSD. This suggests that there was a relatively quick recovery and adaptation following the experience for the people involved (Bonanno et al., 2007). In Australia, the Victorian bushfires in 2009 and Queensland floods in 2011, claimed many lives with families, neighborhoods and whole towns being destroyed. The Blue Mountains bushfires in 2013 claimed over 200 houses in the one neighborhood. Again following these natural disasters there was a relatively quick recovery reported. Those who bounced back were able to reconnect with their livelihoods, their usual relationships and local supports: however those who did not appear to cope were removed from their local supports as their livelihoods were destroyed. It seemed that people who had their strong connections remaining were able to recover, while people who had key connections destroyed, became more disconnected and took longer to recover.

Of interest, it appears social resources are enhanced and often linked during such traumatic times and for those individuals where strong families, communities and neighbors are already linked, the experience draws on the existing positive relationships, helping individuals and collective communities to recover. For those individuals not naturally linked, the experience of added support may actually increase their positive relationships and they may also be more likely to recover if they link with the supports provided.

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the action of people who can sustain their high level of functionality while simultaneously experiencing acute or chronic trauma. These people are able to continue relating to others in positive ways and appear not to be flustered by the stress. While recovery can look like an automatic return to normal following a crisis or traumatic event, sustainability is seen as *maintaining* normal living even in the midst of chronic stress.

Sustainability may be evident in people who are caring for a person with chronic illness or disability and meanwhile maintaining a clear sense of meaning and purpose in what they

are doing. For these people, personal wellbeing during times of difficulty is maintained by continuing to pursue the goals that link to their life meaning (Zautra et al., 2010).

An example of sustainability is evident in the story of Kathryn:

> Kathryn's third son was born with cerebral palsy and severe autism. For both parents there was an initial shock, and a developing realization of the impact their son's disability would have on their lives. While they adapted to their son's changing needs, they also grieved the loss and changes in their lives. Kathryn noticed there were times of deep personal resentment and anger, but at the same time there was a clear sense of purpose in her life. Her purpose in life was to care for her son and show the example of taking time for what mattered with her wider family. Her son's disability became a source of strength for the family, evident in the integrity and values of her older boys. It wasn't until her son turned 21 that Kathryn realized the family had never spent a night away from their son.

Kathryn's ability to sustain meaningful goal-directed activities while caring for her son was a critical component of her resilient response, and was enhanced when the sources of positive experiences such as her partner and wider family remained intact during the stressful experience. It seems that the importance of continuing to connect and build on one's strengths, even during prolonged periods of stress, becomes vital for ongoing, healthy day-to-day functioning.

Growth

While traumatic experiences can cause major disruptions to life and make recovery and sustainability very difficult, the experience itself has also been observed to provide new opportunities for personal growth (Zautra et al., 2010).

It is often noted that during times of recovery, connections to significant people can enable personal growth. These significant people would usually share common experiences with the sufferer and perhaps have similar purpose and meaning or life goals. This was particularly evident in a study of cancer sufferers in Hong Kong with the development of personal optimism (Hou, Law, Yin, & Fu, 2010). In addition, a study of chronic pain sufferers, who showed higher levels of resilience and psychological wellbeing, revealed that their daily experiences and relationships had higher levels of positive emotions compared to those with lower levels of resilience (Ong, Zautra, & Reid, 2010). Other studies also revealed that those people who experience high positive emotions in the context of stress appear to amplify their positive experiences, while those who experience lower levels of positive emotions amplified their negative emotions (Ong et al., 2010).

Personal growth through trauma and pain can also occur when the sufferer is connected to other people who share a common life meaning and purpose. The sufferer's positive emotions are enhanced by connections to the social environments where these positive emotions, meaning and purpose are shared (Levine, Laufer, Stein, Hamama-Raz, & Solomon, 2009).

It is important to note however, that there are many times when people suffer through trauma and feel disconnected and disheartened. This happens during periods of grief or loneliness where the brain is unable to challenge difficult thinking patterns. Post traumatic

growth however, is often evident in situations where an individual recovers, and such people report a deeper sense of meaning in their life after having challenged their core beliefs and values (Ardelt, Landes, & Vaillant, 2010).

RESILIENCE IN ADULTS

Martin Seligman conducted a number of intervention programs aimed at increasing resilience with the US military as well as within schools and other organizations. Due to the increasing rates of depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress reactions of US soldiers involved in armed combat, a new approach to increasing soldier resilience needed to be implemented. Interestingly, when looking at the profiles of soldiers with psychological disturbance it was found they had significantly lower levels of external support (Cornum, Matthews, & Seligman, 2011; Reivich, Seligman, & McBride, 2011). It appeared their families, partners, peers and communities were less supportive which resulted in them feeling isolated from the rest of the world. However soldiers who had strong support from both home and peers appeared to be more resilient. These soldiers also had a shared meaning and purpose with significant people in their lives thereby giving them a strong resolve to persevere in the face of adversity.

By taking a superficial view of the research, it would be easy to draw a simple linear conclusion, that family and peer support equals resilience. However, developing resilience is much more complex than this. It is apparent that adults also bring with them their past experiences which have shaped their personalities, their social skills and their habits of seeking help. This in turn has shaped their available resources, and formed patterns of interactions, which continue to support and reinforce their now developed sense of self (Music, 2010).

Current studies examining the effects of positive emotions suggest that such emotions are important facilitators of stress resistance, which counteract the short term arousal generated by stress (Ong & Bergeman, 2010). Other work suggests that those who are deficient in positive emotional experiences are more vulnerable to the effects of stress (Zautra et al., 2010). It seems that positive emotional experiences during the developing years can create a buffer against future adversity.

When an individual encounters traumatic and stressful events, the brain is bombarded by negative and confusing messages. In order to sustain through and recover from these experiences, the brain needs to be able to balance both negative and positive emotions. In order for an individual to grow and thrive and so to be resilient, the brain needs to have more positive than negative emotions from the trauma (Losada & Heaphy, 2004).

The mathematician Marcial Losada proposed the “Losada Zone” noting that relationships and connections are not linear but are quantified in the positive interactions versus negative interactions ratio (the P/N ratio). The optimum ratio falls within the Losada zone when it is greater than or equal to 3:1, but lower than 11:1 (Losada, 2008). Within this zone an individual, relationship or an organization can move through difficulties and flourish as a result. Outside of this central zone, the individual will either become fixed and repetitive in their thinking or unable to adapt and be open to any new information (Losada, 2008).

It is proposed that individuals who fall within the Losada zone have enough internal resources from which to draw on to enable their own resilience. However, those individuals falling outside of the Losada zone either have too many negative emotional experiences, making them rigid and fixed in their thinking, or they have too many positive emotional experiences, making them unable to adapt to changing circumstances. Inevitably such adults, when facing adversity, generally find it difficult to build on their resilience without some kind of intervention (Losada, 2008).

The Losada zone is supported by the work of John Gottman in his work with couples. He noted there was a higher ratio of positive to negative comments, emotions and schemas in couples with strong and healthy relationships compared to those whose relationships were less healthy (Gottman, 1994). It would therefore be a valid assumption that if there is a higher ratio of positive versus negative social resources in a person's life there would be a greater chance he or she could sustain, recover and grow as a result of trauma and crisis.

RESILIENCE INTERVENTIONS

Interventions that prove most successful in helping people develop resilience tend to focus on what is working and where the positive experiences are already thriving (Brehm & Doll, 2009; Dominguez & Arford, 2010; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). Many successful resilience interventions are underpinned by the connection of positive intentional relationships within various contexts. There are several case studies noting the resilient responses of individuals as they negotiate life's challenges (Mooney-Somers et al., 2010; Sampson & Laub, 2005). The positive turning points for many of these individuals are the interaction of a number of the strong external contexts in their lives (Araneta, 2010; Shaffer et al., 2007). Furthermore, there are case studies that point to a tipping point (negative change) such as the loss or the disengagement from an individual's strong external contexts, and these were apparent from their early years (Doherty et al., 2009; Hou et al., 2010). The number of supportive contexts needed to establish turning points is yet to be determined, but what is clear is that the interaction of the strongest available contexts significantly contributes to personal resilience by outweighing the negative effects of the trauma or adversity (Donnon & Hammond, 2007).

A FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENCE: THE RESILIENCE DOUGHNUT

The Resilience Doughnut is a model developed after extensive practical application in a number of contexts with youth in diverse settings (Worsley, 2006; Worsley, 2014). This ecological model depicts the multiple pathways to resilience as noted by resilience researchers, and places it into a simple yet practical tool. The shape of the Resilience Doughnut model is an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle represents an individual's internal characteristics that contribute to personal resilience. The outer circle, divided into seven segments, represents the seven external environmental factors that influence the individual.

The Resilience Doughnut model when applied to the developing child describes the interaction of the environment around the child with his or her emerging sense of self.

Therefore various contexts such as families, peers, communities and parents shape the child's social being, identity formation and efficacy. Thus, the environmental contexts have the most impact on the child, teaching him or her how to interact with others and modeling reactions that determine their future resilience. The Resilience Doughnut model when applied to adults considers the interaction of the environmental contexts with the now developed adult identity, self-efficacy and sociability. In the presence of extreme trauma, the model notes the effect of the trauma on a person's competence as well as ways to activate supportive resources in their environment to rebuild their competence.

Internal Characteristics of Psychological Resilience

The inner circle of the Resilience Doughnut represents the internal characteristics of resilience as found in the international resilience project (Grotberg, 1995). There appear to be three categories of how a person sees himself or herself in the world, (I have, I am, and I can) which all contribute to an individual's personal level of resilience. These categories are supported by studies of older people who have shown a resilient response through adversity.

These three categories are:

- An awareness of social resources (I have). Resilient adults have the social abilities to navigate and negotiate their social ecologies ensuring they are available, sustainable and useful at times when they need them. (Fuller-Iglesias, Sellars, & Antonucci, 2008).
- A sense of self (I am). Resilient adults have a secure sense of self, evident in adaptable behaviors during various life stages (Bauer & Park, 2010; Gergen & Gergen, 2010).
- Experiences of self-efficacy (I can). Resilient adults have skills, which enable them to change their circumstances (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Fry & Keyes, 2010).

Furthermore it was observed that when an individual's internal characteristics are linked together by a common purpose or meaning, there appeared to be sustainability, recovery and growth through adversity (Gergen & Gergen, 2010; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007).

The External Factors Contributing to Resilience

The outer circle of the Resilience Doughnut represents the individual's external, relational or contextual factors. These seven factors each contribute to building, sustaining and contributing to the internal 'I have', 'I am' and 'I can' characteristics.

The seven factors are:

1. The partner factor: A strong factor would indicate a person has a partner who is loving, affectionate and considerate when making decisions. There would also be predictability and security in the relationship. (Fuller-Iglesias et al., 2008; Holcomb, 2009; Moen, Sweet, & Hill, 2010; Soons, Liefbroer, & Kalmijn, 2009)
2. The skill factor: A strong factor would indicate the individual has a skill that they master and feel good about. They may also have a reputation for their skill with people around them (Fry & Debats, 2010b; Iwasaki, Mactavish, & Mackay, 2005; Morgan, 2010).
3. The family factor: A strong factor would indicate the individual has a family where they feel as though they belong. This may be with the family of origin, which includes parents, as well as their own children (Gardner, 2007; Gardner, Huber, Steiner, Vazquez, & Savage, 2008; Gottman, Gottman, & Atkins, 2011; Huber, Navarro, Womble, & Mumme, 2010; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007).
4. The education factor: A strong factor would indicate enjoyment of learning and an understanding of how to research. They may also be involved in further education or have achieved tertiary training (Bonanno et al., 2007; Martin, MacDonald, Margrett, & Poon, 2010).
5. The friend factor: A strong factor indicates a strong sense of belonging to a group of friends or a close friendship. There may be some conflict at times however the friends may have gone through some tough times together and strengthened their relationship as a result of this (Heisel & Flett, 2008; Windle & Woods, 2004).
6. The community factor: A strong factor indicates belonging to a community group such as a church, sports club or another group with a wide range of ages (Brown & Kulig, 1996/97; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; Ong & Bergeman, 2010; Sanders & Munford, 2006).
7. The work and money management factor: A strong factor indicates a strong work ethic, accountability and value associated with work. Work can be voluntary or paid (Diener & Seligman, 2009; Liossis, Shochet, Millear, & Biggs, 2009; Peterson, Park, Hall, & Seligman, 2009).

Resilience does not rely on all seven factors to be strong. There only needs to be some factors that are strong and interacting in order for the internal characteristics to be affected in a positive way. There is research currently being conducted to identify how many strong factors are necessary to most effectively contribute to the internal characteristics of ‘I have’, ‘I am’ and ‘I can’, however in practice having three strong and interacting factors appears to contribute to people sustaining, recovering and growing during stressful and difficult times. It also appears that having three strong interacting factors bolsters the positive versus negative emotions ratio of 3:1 as determined by Losada (2008).

It has been noted that “resilience rests, fundamentally, on relationships” (Luthar, 2006, p 780) and that to advance the study of quality of life for adults there needs to be a link with the quality of social relationships (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Thus the key to the model’s use is initially to enable an individual to identify their three areas of strength and once identified, creating connections between the strong factors and thus building internal messages that promote resilience.

Figure 1. The Resilience Doughnut model.

Shaping the Resilience Doughnut for Adults

The Resilience Doughnut model shows how social resources or factors are activated by how the adult interacts with them. Once these resources or factors are activated, they can become a source of resilience during times of stress or adversity. However, difficult or traumatic past experiences can also lead a person to defend or withdraw when they feel unsafe. These reactions potentially disable the existing connections in the adult environment, giving a further sense of insecurity, thus hindering the resilience response. Therefore if the Resilience Doughnut is applied in practical ways, an individual can identify what it is in his or her external environment that currently gives positive experiences. During times of crisis, if an individual is able to connect with the strongest positive resources they will subsequently be less likely to withdraw or defend, and more likely to evoke helpful and supportive responses from others.

When applying the Resilience Doughnut model to the life stories of those who have survived and thrived there appears to be the presence of three or more positive and strong factors or resources which connected during times of stress or crisis. These strong factors in turn appeared to bring support, encouragement and a sense of purpose to help recover, sustain and/or grow through the crisis.

CASE STUDY 1: AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINING LIFE THROUGH ADVERSITY

The following case study follows the life of Col, aged 50, who was the victim of sexual and physical abuse from 8 years of age by his stepfather and a teacher in his primary school. His story demonstrates his ability to sustain life throughout difficult circumstances, with Col finding connections to help him to cope with significant mental illness. His life course has its ups and downs, however when there is evidence of three strong factors that give him positive

intentional connections, Col appears to be free of mental health crisis, and thrives. Col's story will be told using the framework of the Resilience Doughnut whereby the strength of each factor will be determined based on Col's current circumstances.

The Partner Factor

Col is a single man and while he would like to have a relationship, he has not had a long-term relationship since high school. He lived with his mother until two years ago when she died of a prolonged and undefined illness, which had left her housebound for over 20 years. Col was the main carer and support for his mother during this time. This meant his home life and potential for relationships were limited as his mother's illness and her subsequent anxiety restricted him socially.

A strong partner factor would mean that Col would have a partner he could share his life with and his partner would support but challenge him to become a better person. However as Col does not have a partner he cannot include this factor as strength.

The Skill Factor

Col is a keen musician and has played the drums since he was 11 years old. He follows and knows many professional drummers in Sydney. He is a regular customer at the drum shop in the city, often visiting the shop on the weekends. Col has lessons with the in house tutor, and spends time catching up with him regarding various gigs that occur on the weekend. The tutor also trains visiting musicians as they come to Sydney to perform and Col is often in attendance when they come for training. Col also plays the drums for two bands in the local community and volunteers as the drummer in the local church band. He is very skilled at the drums but struggles to maintain a long-term commitment to a band.

A strong skill factor is evident where a person has a reputation for their skill. They may have people with whom they share their skill and they may have a sense of challenge and efficacy regarding the practice of their skill. It would seem that the skill of drumming and music is an area from which Col gains a lot of satisfaction and efficacy as well as being connected to those who value his skill. Therefore we would include his skill factor as a key strength in his life.

The Family Factor

Col lived with and was looking after his elderly mother for many years. As his mother was agoraphobic, she was house bound and was dependent on Col for anything outside of the house. The house belonged to Col's stepfather, and while he and Col's mum were no longer married he allowed Col's mum to live in the house while she was alive. After Col's mother died, Col's stepfather and children sold the property giving Col the added stress of becoming homeless. Col did not have any other relatives he could ask for help.

The family factor refers to parents, siblings, grandparents, and extended family as well as immediate family such as children. A strong family factor is where there is a sense of

connection and belonging with being part of the family. There is also recognition of the family and their reputation by others in the community. Strong families have often been through hard times together and as a result feel close. Col was close to his mother, however when she passed away, Col's family were far from being supportive and he did not have any relatives he could call on. As a consequence the family factor would not be regarded as a strong factor.

The Education Factor

Col didn't finish high school due to a psychotic breakdown in the school playground, after which he felt he couldn't return. He did enjoy reading and was particularly interested in musicians and the evolution of their styles. He would research the musicians and the drumming styles prior to performances and would engage people in the conversation about what he had learnt.

Adults with a strong education factor are often involved in continuing education and are attending courses, extending their professional development, or continually reading and researching topics that interest them. Col appears to have an interest in the music industry however his incomplete formal schooling currently limits the strength of this factor.

The Friend Factor

Col has a wide group of friends from many areas of his life: drumming professionals, staff from the drum shop, friends he made during various hospital visits, and people from his local church and neighborhood. Col is regarded as a good friend who follows people up regularly and visits them when they need it. He often lends them money and shares his meals. Col is the main person to organize band rehearsals and often drives his friends to music venues in the city.

Adults with a strong friends factor report they have a group of supportive friends who share common interests. The friends may have gone through difficulties together and there is an understanding and acceptance of each other's differences. It is evident that Col is quite close to his friends and they appreciate his care over a long period of time. Therefore Col's friend factor would be regarded as a strong factor.

The Community Factor

Col is a member of two local churches, the Catholic Church and the Baptist Church. He is well known in both congregations and often helps set up the drums for the Baptist Church and the prayer books in the Catholic Church. Col also helps out by playing drums for the children's service. Col teaches the drums to two 10-year-old boys after school each week and they meet at the local church to practice. After Col's mum died he was allocated housing away from the neighborhood he had lived in since he was eight years old. While Col was apprehensive about leaving the neighborhood, he was positive about having his own place to live as the new housing was near the Baptist Church.

People who have a strong community factor are linked to a group with a range of ages, such as a sports club, a church or religious group, or an informal group within the neighborhood. The people who score the highest on this factor have a community that is linked by either a faith or a purpose or meaning for their lives. It would seem that the community factor is a strong factor for Col with his links to two local churches and his proximity to his local church community.

The Work Factor

Col is unemployed and has been receiving a disability pension for over 10 years. Col was diagnosed with schizophrenia at age 27 and has had several hospital admissions since then. His work has involved a lot of short-term jobs such as taxi driving, wards-man at the local hospital, and cashier at the petrol station. However, due to his mental illness, Col finds it hard to stay on task and manage the expectations of others. In the past he also found it hard to balance work with caring for his mother. Col was also very generous and gave his money away to friends, which often left him unable to pay his own bills. Adults who have a strong work factor have a sense of responsibility for the work they do and feel that their work is valued.

This may be in a voluntary capacity or a paid capacity. The work factor is also strong if the person can manage their money well and can balance their income with their spending. It would seem that Col's work and money management may not be strong as he has not had a job for a length of time and his generosity interrupts his ability to plan ahead for daily living costs.

By working through each of the factors in the Resilience Doughnut model, we can see that Col has three areas of strength evident in his life. These three areas are skill, friends and community. When these strengths are active and connected, Col appears to be able to sustain his everyday life, with minimal interruptions from his mental illness. He is able to monitor his medication, attend regular visits with the psychiatrist, contribute to the life of the church community and involve his friends in his social life. However, of significance, when any of these existing strong factors are disconnected Col becomes agitated and anxious, which can precipitate a psychotic episode.

Despite all the difficulties Col has had in the past, he does not regard himself as a victim, but rather sees himself as lucky to have the people around him who share in his life. Since moving to the current housing near the local church community Col has not had a psychotic episode.

The two-year period since his mother passed away is the longest Col has sustained his mental health since his diagnosis, and during this time his drumming skills, his friends and his church community have been connected and strong. It may also be significant that in the past, while he was caring for his mother, his three areas of strength were disconnected, thus he would have had less than three strong factors present and less positive intentional connections to help sustain his life.

CASE STUDY 2: AN EXAMPLE OF RECOVERY AFTER ADVERSITY

The following case study considers the experience of Marg, who lived through 12 months of intensive treatment to treat and eventually recover from cancer, while at the same time enduring other overwhelming life circumstances. Her experience highlights how the intervention of actively connecting her three strong factors helped her to recover and bounce back to normal life. While there is also evidence of personal growth, her resolve to actively connect her strengths in the process of treatment appears to have contributed to her recovery. Permission has been granted by Marg to tell her story.

We will start with the story written in the local newspaper (Sharples 2013):

> Marg Jones is a local patient and has had radiation and chemotherapy for cancer and also works at the Children's Hospital. She is planning to do the Ride to Conquer Cancer. *While Marg Jones only finishes her treatment for lymphoma in August, she is determined to ride 200km over two days in October to raise money for the Chris O'Brien Life-house at RPA Hospital.* The Newtown local, whose father and brother-in-law also have cancer, said it has been hard to adjust from life as a social worker at the Sydney Children's Hospital to a patient.
>
> With cancer we think it happens to other people, but it can happen to anyone," she said. "I was perfectly healthy and I did the 100km MS Ride in November; in March I got sick and couldn't get out of bed.
>
> However, where possible Ms Jones has still ridden to appointments at the hospital, which she said has helped her to manage stress and enjoy the sunshine. But the 46-year-old said she wouldn't be doing the charity ride without the support of Newtown-based shop Cheeky Transport, which has donated a bike.
>
> "I'm overwhelmed by the donation, I feel like a superstar. The most important thing is they are believing in me at this time," she said. Store manager Nick Boyakovsky said he found Ms Jones inspiring, "as tough a cyclist as any of the athletes or endurance riders I've ever met".

The further complexities with Marg's story were that not only did she have to deal with her treatment of lymphoma, but also the treatment of her father and brother-in-law at the same time. This meant that the family was strained and her level of individual support from her parents and sister was compromised. She also could not continue working at the hospital for fear of infection. Thus it was her decision to concentrate on finding strengths from other sources to help her to cope with the demands of the long-term treatment.

Here we can see that Marg has activated her three strengths of community, skill and work. Marg activated her community factor by gaining the support of people from the hospital and the bike shop, as well as others Marg knew in the neighborhood, who all supported the riding event to raise money to conquer cancer. Her newly acquired skill of cycling was enhanced as Marg faced the challenge of riding 200km only two months after completing her treatment. And finally Marg's work factor was enhanced through her own personal experience as her job at the hospital was as a social worker to families with children experiencing recent complex diagnoses such as cancer. By continuing to train and ride for the charity, Marg combined her strengths, which ultimately enhanced her support and boosted her

positive connections while undergoing treatment. Further to this she has also combined these strengths by supporting a cause that is linked to her purpose and meaning in life.

To date the benefits of the ride to conquer cancer are held firmly in Marg's mind. She recalls the camaraderie of crossing the finish line holding the hands of those beside her as she rode. The family, friends and wider community who had come to watch her finish encouraged her. She notes the tiredness from the chemotherapy and the difficulties associated with hair loss and sickness. However her attitude became one of passing on the solutions she found to each of the symptoms to help others in the same circumstances rather than being dragged down emotionally by the situation.

On an even more positive note, Marg rekindled some old friendships, and is currently preparing to be married to a long time friend who supported her through the charity ride. Their wedding will be 12 months after her initial diagnosis. Her treatment has been regarded as successful and she continues to work at the children's hospital as a social worker.

CASE STUDY 3: AN EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL GROWTH THROUGH ADVERSITY

> The following is a story by Sherri Fisher, a teacher and positive psychology coach who writes a regular column for the Positive Psychology News Daily. This excerpt is from the book titled "Resilience" reproduced with Sherri's permission (Maymin & Britton, 2010).

In my work with children and families, people often tell me their secrets. This is the story of someone who transformed a life of risk factors into a life of success by using approaches that others can duplicate.

Timothy was born into a family of ten children at the beginning of the great depression. His mother had been married three times. His parents were both alcoholics. Their family occupied a series of apartments in the poorest neighborhoods. From vacant lots, the children collected milkweed stems that their mother boiled into a broth for their dinner. They regularly heard that they would never amount to anything.

Beatings and other abuse were part of Timothy's everyday life. Even though he attended school, he was not considered a good student by any means. He learned to keep secrets about his life, and developed a great skill at listening to and observing people. When he was 15, Timothy left home and never returned. He connected with a charity organization where a kindly man became a caring adult in his life. Timothy eventually graduated from high school in a distant city. When his family did come looking for him, it was much later. They were not coming to invite him home. They wanted money.

While still at high school, Timothy went to work in a leather-tanning factory where he found the long hours a great diversion from the anger he felt toward his family and the nine siblings he hoped he would never see again. While still underage, he enlisted in the Navy where he was guaranteed a berth, consistent rules and expectations, and three square meals per day.

Timothy met his future wife hitchhiking while on leave, and they eloped to begin a 52-year marriage. The navy was Timothy's permanent address for nearly 30 years and he lived in

several countries. Timothy, his wife and their four children all graduated from college, and two of them earned Master's degrees.

In his fifties, Timothy was diagnosed with incurable cancer and underwent an extreme operation and experimental treatments in hopes of prolonging his life for up to two years. He lived on for 19 years, despite each follow-up test being positive for spreading cancer. He saw eight grandchildren join the family and the eldest one graduate from high school. For more than 15 years, he was also the Sunday school superintendent and youth group leader and he mentored future military officers.

Timothy died a few days before his 77th birthday, having beaten the odds that he would be a failure in numerous quarters of his life, and that he would die in his prime. Instead, he passed away quietly with his family close by, in a home with no mortgage. He had paid for it himself.

There were hundreds of mourners at his funeral. Many had been children and young adults that he mentored. They spoke about Timothy's quiet strength, steadfast faith, and steady moral compass. He kept the secret of his childhood from nearly all of them and they never guessed." (Maymin & Britton, 2010)

When considering this story, there are some distinct turning points in Timothy's life.

Firstly as an adolescent, Timothy left home and connected with a charity organization where there was a kindly man who mentored him, which enhanced his community factor. Meanwhile he continued to attend school, building his education factor and also his work factor by securing a part time job in a leather-tanning factory. At this time Timothy was receiving messages of personal support and success to build on his 'I have', 'I am' and 'I can' characteristics.

The second turning point came when Timothy joined the Navy. Here all three strong factors were evident and clearly linked as the navy provided the community, work and education factors. Timothy's flow-on effects were evident for the rest of his life, showing all factors of the doughnut to be strong. His resilience was evident and his outcome was completely different to the seven siblings who lived to adulthood only to repeat the troubled lives of their parents. He became the exception due to the turning points linking three strong external factors in his life. Instead of bitterness, Timothy had grown through his adversities.

CONCLUSION

Resilience is evident in adults in a number of ways, from sustaining life during adversity to recovering or bouncing back after a trauma. However those who demonstrate personal growth in response to trauma are always of interest in the study of personal resilience.

Each adult goes through many life stages including entering the workforce, partnering, parenting, changing jobs, re-partnering, moving, downsizing, retiring and aging. These normal transitions between the life stages can evoke a mixed set of emotions and reactions, which challenge personal adaptability and strength. Significant trauma adds considerably to these life stages and brings another layer of struggle.

Many people suffer multiple layers of trauma and transitions due to their life circumstances and they challenge both the successful navigation of each stage, as well as the ability to sustain and recover from the additional bouts of trauma. However, what appears

many times in research is that ordinary people who have shown exceptional resilience in the face of multiple layers of adversity appear to have a number of strong factors operating in their lives.

The Resilience Doughnut framework would suggest the difference between those who remain in the victim state after trauma and those who appear resilient is the way they connect with their resources. It is proposed that the positive intentional connection of three strong factors promotes a strong sense of personal identity and efficacy, which helps to overcome feelings of helplessness often associated with being victimized.

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