

Ordinary Magic: Nurturing Resilience in Children



Ann S. Masten

Opportunity Saint Paul ~ Interfaith Action 13 Mar 2018

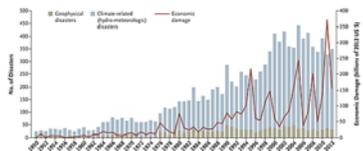
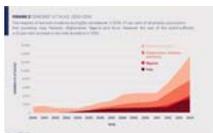
CEHD
Center for Community Engagement and Health Disparities



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We live in turbulent times...

- Natural disasters
- Climate and weather changes
- War and political conflict
- Millions of refugees and displaced families
- Terror attacks and threats



EM-DAT International Disaster Database



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...and growing alarm about lifelong effects of early adversity

- ❖ Poverty
- ❖ Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- ❖ Maltreatment or neglect
- ❖ Inequality or injustice
- ❖ Toxic stress
- ❖ Biological embedding of adversity

Yet... resilience is all around us



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Overview

- ❖ What is resilience?
- ❖ What have we learned?
- ❖ How can we promote resilience?

WWII survivors who pioneered resilience science



How do children overcome adversity to succeed?

What makes a difference?

How can we promote resilience?

Capacity of a system
to adapt successfully to challenges
that threaten its function, life, or development

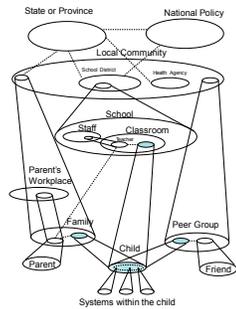
RESILIENCE

Photo© Kendra Mack 2008



Systems in a child's life

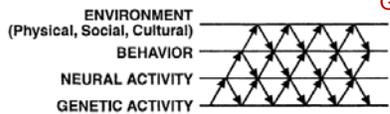
- Embedded
- Interacting
- Interdependent



Development

...emerges from interactions of multi-level systems

Gottlieb



→ Individual Development →



From this perspective...

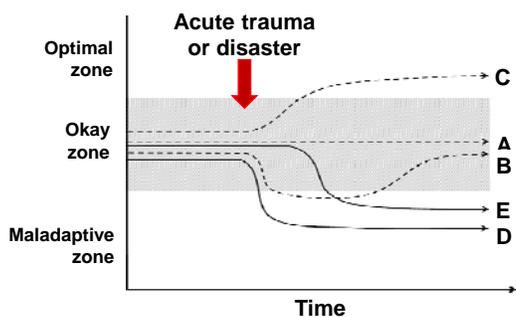
- Resilience is always changing
- Capacity for adaptation is distributed across systems
- Individual resilience depends on resilience of other systems
- Resilience is not a trait
- **Diverse pathways of adaptation are expected**

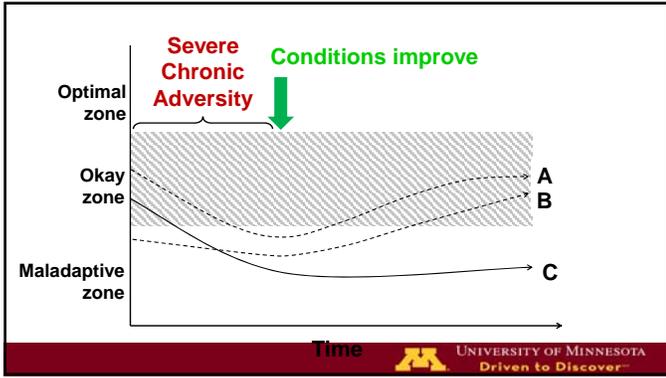


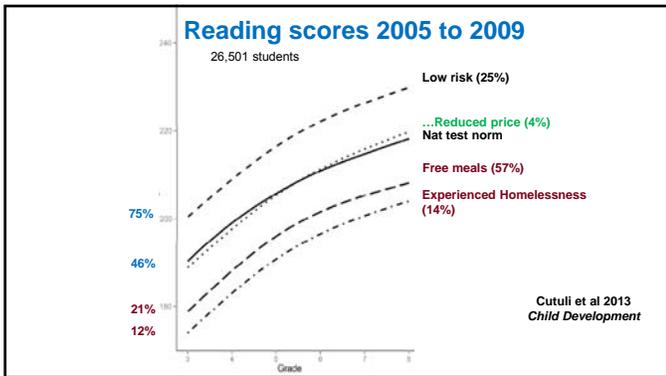
Pathways

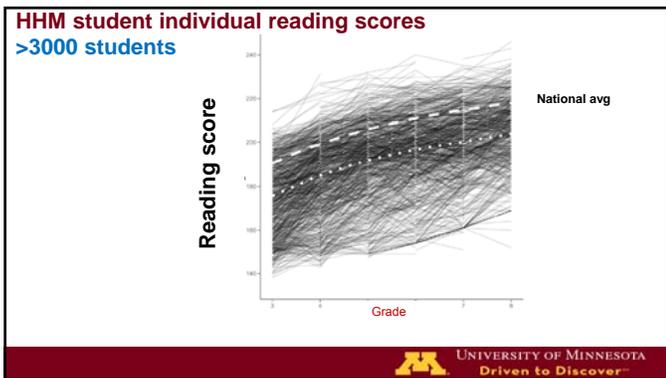
The course of development
can be described as a pathway
Diverse pathways are expected and observed











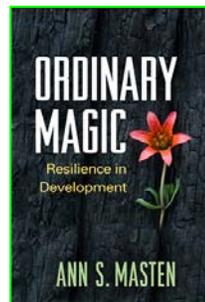


What makes a difference?



The short list

- Capable caregiving
- Other close relationships
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-regulation skills
- Self-efficacy
- Motivation to succeed
- Faith, hope, optimism
- Purpose/belief life has meaning
- Effective schools
- Well-functioning communities



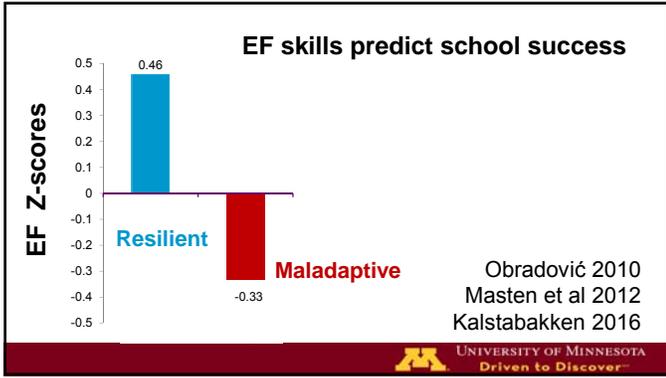
Child skills matter

- **Executive function skills (EF)**
 - Neurocognitive processes involved in goal-directed control of attention, thought, actions - cognitive control
- **Important for school success**
 - pay attention, listen to teacher
 - control emotions and impulses
 - wait turn, sit on the circle
 - follow instructions
 - switch activities

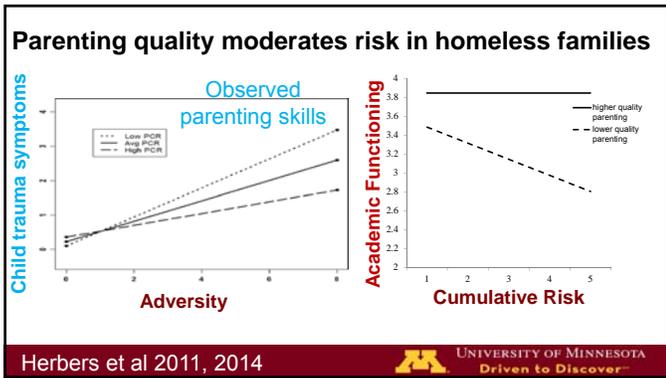


Photo by Dawn Vellella





- ### Families matter
- Moderating stress
 - Epigenetic programming
 - Nurturing body, mind and spirit
 - Emotional security
 - Economic security
 - Safety monitoring
 - Scaffolding learning and self-regulation skills
 - Facilitating achievement in developmental tasks
 - Brokering of resources (social capital)
 - Transmitting cultural capital
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Parallel Protective Factors	
Individual Resilience	Family Resilience
Nurturing, sensitive caregiving	Nurturing care of vulnerable members
Attachment, security, belonging	Family cohesion, sense of belonging
Skilled parent management, discipline	Maintaining family boundaries, rules
Agency, motivation to adapt	Active coping, mastery
Problem-solving, planning	Collaborative problem-solving
Self-regulation, emotion regulation	Co-regulation, family balance
Hope, faith, optimism	Hope, faith, optimism
Meaning making, life has meaning	Coherence, family meaning making
Positive views of the self or identity	Positive views of family/family identity
Routines and rituals	Family routines and rituals



Schools matter

<p>Nurture resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build human capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cognitive and social skills – Knowledge and talents • Promote positive relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prosocial peer activities – Relationships with competent adults • Opportunities for self-efficacy • Normal routines 	<p>Effective schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership • Effective teaching • Positive school climate • Asset rich environments • High expectations, support, & structure
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Communities matter

- ❖ Supports for families
- ❖ Supports for education
- ❖ Parks, libraries, recreation
- ❖ Health care
- ❖ Emergency services and disaster preparedness
- ❖ NGO + government services
- ❖ Policies and laws that support children & their families
- ❖ Traditions and rituals for overcoming stress
- ❖ Support for cultural practices and celebrations

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Protective Systems at Other Levels

- **Within the individual**
 - Immune system
 - Arousal regulation systems
 - Stress systems

- **In religion and cultural systems**
 - Meaning-making systems of belief, rules and rituals for living
 - Attachments to spiritual figures
 - Arousal regulation through meditation, prayer, mindfulness
 - Cultural practices that provide support



Resilience science has transformed practice in many fields

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical psychology • Pediatrics, Psychiatry • School psychology • Counseling • Social work • Family social science | <p>Shifting the focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive outcomes • Strength-based • Promotive & protective processes • Building capacity at multiple levels |
|--|--|



Resilience Framework for Action

Mission	Frame positive goals
Models	Include positive influences
Measures	Assess assets & positive goals
Methods	Prevent - promote - protect
Multiple	Multiple levels & disciplines



3 basic strategies to promote resilience

- Reduce or mitigate risk
- Boost resources and opportunities
- Mobilize power of “ordinary magic” resilience factors



Risk-focused strategies

- Prenatal care to prevent premature birth
- Reduce stress of pregnant women
- Screen and treat depression in mothers
- Reduce child maltreatment
- Avoid multiple foster care placements
- Reduce family violence
- Reduce school and neighborhood violence
- Clean up toxins
- Dig up landmines
- Prevent homelessness



Asset-focused strategies

- Food, water, shelter, medical care, dental care
- Educate parents, teachers, and traditional “first responders”
- Add financial resources
- Provide books or a tutor
- Quality childcare & early education programs
- Build schools, playgrounds, libraries
- Build or restore community services
- Stabilize housing, schooling, case managers
- Scholarships from early childhood to adulthood



Adaptive system focused strategies

Engage powerful engines of change

- Foster secure attachment relationships
 - Promote bonds with competent/caring adults
 - Support healthy family life and function
 - Protect and nurture brain development
 - Facilitate school bonding and engagement
 - Foster friendships with prosocial peers
 - Integrate systems of care
 - Provide opportunities to succeed, develop talents...
-
- Support cultural traditions that provide children with adaptive tools and opportunities to connect with prosocial adults



Example

How can we promote school success in children from very high-risk homeless or highly mobile families?

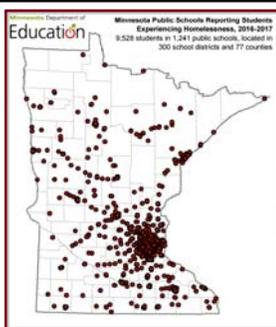
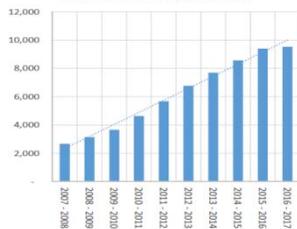


Photos © Kendra Mack 2008



MN Student Homelessness

Students Identified as Homeless in October 1 Enrollment Census



Graphs courtesy of MDE

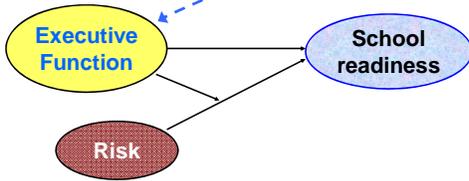


Interventions to consider

- ★ **Reduce risk & stress**
 - Reduce family stress: screen & treat depression in parents
 - Prevent homeless episodes & school changes
 - Reduce hunger and food insecurity
 - Prevent family and community violence
- ★ **Increase resources & access**
 - Financial supports, housing
 - Health care and mental health services
 - Quality childcare, early education, schools
 - Tutors, summer programs, computers, high speed internet
 - Family advocates
- ★ **Promote protective processes**
 - Effective parenting, teaching, mentoring
 - Self-regulation skills
 - Opportunities to succeed and develop talents
 - Support families & cultural traditions that promote resilience



Ready? Set. Go! Intervention



Grand Challenge: End Student Homelessness



Homework Starts
with Home
Research
Partnership



4th wave of resilience science

Emerging neurobiology of resilience

- Interplay of genes, biological systems, and experience
- Programming and reprogramming of adaptive systems
- Biological embedding of stress, good parenting, culture

Aligning systems to foster resilience

- Linking families, healthcare, schools, peers, community
- Aligning state and national policies with child resilience

Cultural traditions/practices that promote resilience



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Intriguing questions

- Can resilience as well as trauma be transmitted across generations?
- When and how does experience with adversity foster resilience?
 - Is overprotection a problem?
- Are some children more sensitive to adversity?
 - Are they also sensitive to positive experiences and intervention?



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Integrating resilience across systems, disciplines, applications

In theory

- ❖ Molecular & global
- ❖ Individual & family
- ❖ Family & community
- ❖ Psychosocial & ecological
- ❖ Human & electronic
- ❖ Social & economic

In action

- ❖ Disaster response
- ❖ Humanitarian
- ❖ Prevention science
- ❖ Public health
- ❖ Climate change
- ❖ Peacebuilding



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Enduring Take-home Messages

- ❖ Resilience is common
- ❖ There are many paths of resilience
- ❖ Ordinary human adaptive systems are powerful
- ❖ Resilience can be supported and promoted
- ❖ Resilience of children/ families depends on other systems
 - Resilience of individuals, families, communities, cultures, religions, health care systems, government agencies, and NGOs



Resilience of societies globally depends on the resilience of children



Invitation to a MOOC on Coursera.org



Thank you!

- ❖ To families & individual research participants
- ❖ Mentors in developmental resilience science
- ❖ Faculty, student, and community collaborators
- ❖ Funders over the years

University of Minnesota ~ William T. Grant Foundation ~ NIMH
NICHD ~ National Science Foundation ~ Institute of Education Sciences
William D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, Humphrey Institute
McKnight, Emma M. Birkmaier, Irving B. Harris, and Regents Professorships



Recent Resources by Ann Masten on Resilience

Book

Masten, A. S. (2014, paperback ed. 2015). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. New York: Guilford Press. This book summarizes what I learned about resilience over the past 4 decades.

PopTech talk on resilience (18 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBMet8oIvXQ>

MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on resilience by Ann Masten (free or paid certificate). New sessions start every 8 weeks. Can join anytime. Thousands of participants have taken this MOOC from over 170 countries. Active discussion forums. Six modules on topics such as resilience in disaster, in homeless families, or in war. Guides to intervention. Interviews with other resilience scholars and links to many resources.

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/resilience-in-children>

Video preview of the MOOC - <https://www.class-central.com/mooc/1768/coursera-resilience-in-children-exposed-to-trauma-disaster-and-war-global-perspectives>

EDtalk on resilience in students experiencing homelessness given in Minneapolis Sep 25, 2017

<https://www.achievempls.org/edtalks>

Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development section on resilience

Resilience section (edited by Masten). There is a summary and also articles by leading researchers.

<http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/resilience/introduction> (free to download complete topic)

A nice summary of the case for investing in young children globally

Huebner, G., et al. (2016). Beyond survival: The case for investing in young children globally. *NAM Perspectives*. National Academy of Medicine. [free to download]

<https://nam.edu/beyond-survival-the-case-for-investing-in-young-children-globally/>

User friendly succinct article on resilience for educators

Masten, A. S. (2009). Ordinary Magic: Lessons from research on resilience in human development.

Education Canada, 49(3), 28-32. <http://www.cea-ace.ca/education-canada/article/ordinary-magic-lessons-research-or-resilience-human-development>

Risk and resilience in homeless families

Masten, A. S., Fiat, A. E., & Labella, M. H., & R. Strack (2015). Educating homeless and highly mobile students: Implications of research on risk and resilience. *School Psychology Review*, 44, 315-330.

Children in war and disaster

Masten, A. S., & Narayan, A. J. (2012). Child development in the context of disaster, war and terrorism: Pathways of risk and resilience. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 227-257.

<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100356>

Masten, A. S., Narayan, A. J., Silverman, W. K., & Osofsky, J. D. (2015). Children in war and disaster. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), M. H. Bornstein and T. Leventhal (vol. Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science. Vol. 4. Ecological settings and processes in developmental systems* (7th ed.) (pp. 704-745). New York: Wiley. A more detailed recent review.