Nurturing Community Resilience: Strategies to Build Social Cohesion and Community Engagement

Is this resilience?

“You can’t stop the waves but you can learn to surf”
--John Kabat-Zinn

But…it’s easier to learn to surf if you have a surfboard, a coach, and a lifeguard


2008 British Columbia Adolescent Health Survey
Resilience is...

- In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is our capacity, individually and in groups, to navigate our way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain our wellbeing, and...

- Our capacity individually and in groups to negotiate for these resources to be provided in meaningful ways.

When problems are few, we can rely on ourselves to solve our own problems

When problems are many and complex, we need lots of resources to cope effectively

Nine Things All Young People Need

1. Structure
2. Consequences
3. Parent-child connections
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control
7. A sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
9. Safety and support

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How young people find the nine things they need for resilience depends on both their personal qualities and the capacity of the environment around them to bring out their best.

Day in the life video

- Participants as co-researchers

Predicting anti-violence behaviour

- Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism Measure (BRAVE-14)
- Mixed methods design to develop and shorten questionnaire
- Somali-Canadian sample of 203 youth ages 18-30, replicated with a sample of 475 Canadian youth from marginalized, immigrant communities

Five dimensions of Resilience to Violent Extremism

1. **Cultural identity and connectedness**: Familiarity with one’s own cultural heritage, practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms
2. **Bridging capital**: Trust and confidence in people from other groups
3. **Linking capital**: Trust and confidence in government and authority figures
4. **Violence-related behaviours**: Willingness to speak out publicly against violence
5. **Violence-related beliefs**: Degree to which violence is seen to confer status and respect; violence is normalised

- On a scale of 1 (very little) to 5 (a lot), how much do these statements describe you?
  - It’s important to me to maintain cultural traditions.
  - Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.
  - I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.
  - I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.

Building Resilience

- Changing an individual is very difficult
- Changing an individual’s environment (to help people change) is both easier, and more efficient
When communities help young people and their families NAVIGATE and NEGOTIATE for the resources they need to be their best, people engage and communities are more cohesive.

Nine Things COMMUNITIES CAN PROVIDE Young People to Build their Resilience

1. Structure
2. Consequences
3. Parent-child connections
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control
7. A sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
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Thank you!

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*No conflicts of interest to declare