



# What Makes A Family Resilient?



The definition of resilience, applied to the family system can be introduced as “the property of the family system that enables it to maintain its established patterns of functioning after being challenged and confronted by risk factor” and “The family's ability to recover quickly from a misfortune, trauma, or transitional event causing or calling for changes in the family's patterns of functioning”.

It is clear that all families experience at times stressful events that can have traumatic effects for some. These events can be more or less easily managed through specific coping mechanisms and effective protective factors.

These stressful events include on one hand, “normative events” such as illness, death of a family member, separation and divorce, and on the other hand “non normative hardships”, such as disabling conditions, substance abuse and addictive pathologies, physical or sexual violence, severe neglect or powerful manipulation strategies, employment problems, natural or war disasters.

The term resiliency means literally to jump or bounce back, and when taken in a systemic approach, it becomes the family's or the group's ability to cultivate and strengthen protective factors whilst avoiding or diminishing risk factors.

Intra and extra familial supports, open and honest family communication, positive beliefs, problem solving and communication skills, family identity and rituals, coherence, and flexible roles have been found to promote resilience in families.

Those are some of the characteristics that can constitute the core of protective factors to strengthen resilience when facing challenges in life.

D.Wayne Matthews, a Human Development Specialist, shows that families can also have an active part in developing and strengthening resilience in order to face, when times come, normative or non normative events and challenges of life.

**himaya** , in collaboration with **Moms & to be** , aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.



This can be done by learning and using some very practical strategies, such as Planning ahead through prioritizing activities, having specific time frames for specific activities, maintaining healthy nutrition and moderating physical activities or exercises, having consistent and adequate sleep habits, and Working together and learning from experiences through encouraging cooperation among family members and making sure each one makes a positive contribution to the overall family well-being, promoting self-reliance and building sense of confidence and control, communicating openly and honestly about issues within the family, including conflicts and concerns.

From the Family to the Community, it is also important to note that some community characteristics can also be considered as protective factors to help facing or preventing traumatic experiences. Amongst those characteristics, researches have shown that communities favoring safe neighborhood, low level of community violence, affordable

housing, access to recreational centers, clean air and water, effective schools, well-trained and well-compensated teachers, after-school programs, recreation resources (e.g., sports, music, art), employment opportunities for parents and teens, good public health care, clear and open access to emergency services (police, fire, medical), connections to caring adult mentors and prosocial peer, protective child policies shared and endorsed by members of community (child labor, child health, and welfare), low acceptance of physical violence, are communities that understand and facilitate resilience factors.

Family Protective Factors and Community Protective Factors have to be advocated and fought for. This is what we truly believe, and this is what we would like to stand for.

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