SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS & BEHAVIOUR

(finding our place in the world)

The Psychology of the Developing Child
Birkbeck College
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Session Outline

- Introduction to Social Development
- Theory of Mind
- Social Identity
- Moral Development
- The Importance of Peer Relations
- Friendships
- Parenting role
- Resilience

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Group Discussion

- Why study Social Development?
  - Examples of where this can be applied
- How significant are friends/peers (define) to our social development?
- How significant is identity (cultural, gender) in social development
- What is the impact of parents on our social development?
- What variables are important/essential for normal social development?

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Two Sides to Social Development

- Socialisation
  - The process by which children acquire the standards, values and knowledge of their society

- Personality
  - The unique pattern of temperament, emotions and intellectual abilities that develop in social interactions

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James Mark Baldwin (1902, p.23)

- "*The development of the child's personality could not go on at all without the constant modification of his sense of himself by suggestions from others. So he himself, at every stage, is really in part someone else, even in his own thought of himself.*"

FACT 1: James Mark Baldwin (1861-1934), Princeton University

FACT 2: Established first Psychology Laboratory in the British Empire (Toronto, Canada)

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Theory of Mind

- Theory of mind refers to the notion that many autistic individuals do not understand that other people have their own plans, thoughts, and points of view.
  - See also Piaget's mental representation
- Furthermore, autistic individual's have difficulty understanding other people's beliefs, attitudes, and emotions.
  - How does one teach individuals with autism to understand and acknowledge the thoughts and feelings of others?

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Social Identity

Who am I?

Identification

- The process in which children try to look, act, feel and *be* like significant people in their social environment

- Two main processes:
  - Imitation and social learning
  - Formation of cognitive schemas

Self Concept

- Self-concept refers to the beliefs, desires, and attributes that define a person to herself or himself.
- For young children, self-concept is linked to cognitive development.
  - Self-concept may begin to develop at birth.
  - Self-recognition: At 15 months a child will realise that they have a paint on the nose and rub it off.
  - By 3, children understand they have distinct psychological characteristics I.e. being happy in certain situations and not in others
  - 8-11 - begin to describe themselves in terms of personality traits
    - This ability to self-label depends on reasoning abilities that develop in the period of formal operations

Gender Identity

- Gender identity is the belief you are male or female.
  - Exposure to sex hormones in the womb predispose children toward a male or female gender identity.
- Gender identity is part of the self-concept, which is determined in part by biological factors present since conception; these biological factors may persist in spite of a child's being raised as a member of the opposite sex.
  - Case JP: Penis sliced-off, parent decision to raise him as a 'girl', given female hormones, however, child felt wanted to be a boy
  - Girls exposed to higher levels of male hormones in womb are more likely to prefer boy's toys and games
  - Boys not exposed to appropriate levels of male hormones are less likely to engage in rough and tumble play.

Sex-role identity

- As children turn 3-years-old, shift in social motivation
  - Infancy
    - Want to be *near* primary caregivers
  - Toddlerhood/Preschool
    - Want to be *like* primary caregivers, especially identifying with same-sex caregiver

- Different roles allocated for boys and girls

Identification through observation and imitation 1

- Social learning theory:
  - Observation and imitation are key to socialization:
    - Availability
    - Attention
    - Memory
    - Motor reproduction process
    - Motivation, payoff, reward
    - Rewards:
      - smiles, attention, praise

Identification through observation and imitation 2

- Bev Fagot (1978)
    - Boys get rewarded for: playing with blocks
    - Girls: dress up, dancing, dolls, shadowing
    - When caught acting against type, criticized

- Links with role playing
- Guided by encouragement from parents

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Cognition

- Gender roles are the result of the child's active structuring of experience
    - Identity: By 3, they label themselves as boys vs. girls
    - Stability: by early childhood, understand that sex roles are stable (boys --> men)
    - Constancy: No matter what you look like, you're still what you are

- "I'm a boy, and so, I want to do boy things!"

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Gender schema theory

- How social learning and cognitive theory come together
    - Environment affects children indirectly through a schema that guides the way they select and remember information, and provides a model for behavior.

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Bradbard et al. (1986)

- Children shown gender neutral toys
    - Told that one set is for boys, and another set is for girls, and one is for "boys and girls"
    - Explored what they tried to learn more about, and what they could remember a week later
    - Results consistent with gender schema theory

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Sex-role Behavior 1

- Even before children understand about sex-roles, they behave differently
    - Infant boys are more active than females, more "rough-and-tumble" play
- By 2 years, children are already developing somewhat distinctive styles of play.
    - Also show clear toy preferences from 1- to 3-years
        - boys: trucks and cars
        - girls: dolls and soft toys

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Sex-role Behavior 2

- Children spend more time playing with their sex-typed toys than other equally available toys
    - ...but these preferences are not that strict
        - 3-year-olds will, in free play situations, play with against type toys, and role play against type.
        - 4- to 5-years old sees a shift towards strictness and "battle of the sexes" type interactions.

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Rigidity of Sex-roles

- With the preschool shift (around 4)
    - Explicit categorization along gender lines
    - Gender roles are seen as inflexible
    - When broken, major social consequences

    - Examples:
    - "playing in the doll corner" (Paley)

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Influences on Sex-role development

- Environment is a big deal but...
    - Genetics (E. Maccoby)
        - Temperamental differences may make certain things in the environment more salient. Intra- and intergroup processes, not dyadic relationships, are responsible for the transmission of culture and for environmental modification of children's personality characteristics.
        - However, development is not derailed by the wide variations in parental behaviour found within and between societies.

PARENTING AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHILDREN: On Reading and Misreading Behaviour Genetics. Annual Review of Psychology, 2000.

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Environmental Factors

- Family:
    - Beliefs about what is appropriate for sons & daughters
    - Boys: toys stress action & competition
    - Girls: nurturance, cooperation, warmth, beauty
- Emotion talk:
    - Boys: explain emotion
    - Girls: label emotions
- Teachers
- Peers
- Broader social environment (TV, media, art)

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Conclusions

- By early infancy, children show signs that they understand aspects of gender

- During the preschool years, these ideas become very rigid beliefs

- Likely to be genetic, cognitive & social bases of these starting biases and beliefs

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Moral Development

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Lawrence Kohlberg (1927 – 1987)

- Researched how an individual develops their own moral codes.
- Applied the developmental approach of Piaget, who he studied under, to the analysis of changes in moral reasoning.
- Director/Professor of Harvard's Centre Moral Education
- Born into wealth in 1927 in Bronxville, New York - chose to become a sailor, after WWII helped to smuggle Jews through the British blockade of Palestine.
- Doctoral research studying differences in children's reasoning about moral dilemmas. Hypothesised that moral difficulties motivated their development through a fixed sequence of increasingly flexible kinds of moral reasoning.
- Thereafter, became a leader in moral education.
- In 1973 Kohlberg developed a tropical disease – whilst hospitalised in 1987, reported missing. His body was later recovered from a marsh - exact date of his death remains unknown. Rumour committed suicide?

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Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development 1

- Assessed moral reasoning by posing hypothetical moral dilemmas and examining the reasoning behind children's answers
  - I.e. how do they assess what is right, wrong, and just.

- Proposed six stages, each taking into account a broader portion of the social world

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development 2

- His observations and testing of children and adults, led him to theorise that human beings progress consecutively from one stage to the next in an invariant sequence, not skipping any stage or going back to any previous stage.
- These are stages of thought processing, implying qualitatively different modes of thinking and of problem solving at each stage.
- These conclusions have been verified in cross-cultural studies done in Turkey, Taiwan, Yucatan, Honduras, India, United States, Canada, Britain, and Israel.

Moral development

- Lawrence Kohlberg used moral dilemmas to assess the sophistication of children's moral thinking.
- Kohlberg identified three levels of moral development, each with two stages:
  - The *preconventional level* rests on the idea that good behaviours are rewarded and bad ones are punished.
  - The *conventional level* rests on the role of rules that maintain social order and allow people to get along.
  - The *postconventional level* rests on the development of abstract principles that govern the decision to accept or reject specific rules.
- Males and females use different moral principles, but the differences reflect differing daily activities rather than inherent gender differences.

Levels of Moral Reasoning

- Preconventional—moral reasoning is based on external rewards and punishments

- Conventional—laws and rules are upheld simply because they are laws and rules

- Postconventional—reasoning based on personal moral standards

Kohlberg's (1963) Stage Model of Moral Reasoning

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

|		
LEVEL 3	POSTCONVENTIONAL Shared standards, rights and duties	Stage 6: Self-selection of universal principles
		Stage 5: Sense of democracy and relativity of rules
LEVEL 2	CONVENTIONAL Performing right roles	Stage 4: Fulfilling duties and upholding laws
		Stage 3: Meeting expectations of others
LEVEL 1	PRECONVENTIONAL Values in external events	Stage 2: "Getting what you want" by trade-off
		Stage 1: Punishment avoidance

Criticisms of Kohlberg's Model

- Moral development occurs slowly, with very few people ever moving into the postconventional level.
- People may use different types of moral reasoning depending on the situation.
- Gender bias (Gilligan, 1982)
  - Emphasis on "justice" emphasises a male perspective
  - Women place more value on care and responsibility for others
- Western cultural bias
  - Many cultures value principles that don't fit into Kohlberg's structure easily.

The Importance of Peer Relations
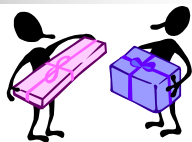
The Importance of Peer Relations

- Peer bonds are vital for social competence
- Parent and peer relations complement each other
  - Parents provide affection and guidance and give children the initial social skills necessary for peer interaction
  - Peers allow social skills to develop further

Development of Peer Sociability 1

- Infants and Toddlers
  - 3 months: Babies look at and touch other children
  - 6 months: Babies engage in babbling and peer-directed smiling
  - Between 1 and 2 years: co-ordinated interaction and mutual imitation occurs

Development of Peer Sociability 2

- Peer sociability most often studied in the contect of observing play situations

- The Pre-school Years – 3 stages of social development:
  - Non-social activity: Unoccupied, onlooker behaviour and solitary play
  - Parallel play: A form of limited social participation in which the child plays near other children with similar materials but does not try to influence their behaviour

Development of Peer Sociability 3

- Associative/Co-operative play - Two forms of true social interaction
  - Associative play: A form of true social participation in which children engage in separate activities but interact by exchanging toys and commenting on one another's behaviour
  - Co-operative play: A form of true social participation in which children's actions are directed toward a common goal

Development of Peer Sociability 4

- Developmental trends:
  - Children acquire these three kinds of play in stages, but they do not replace the other.
  - Non-social (solitary) play is the most frequent form of play among pre-schoolers.
  - Sometimes parents worry about this, but it's not a cause for concern (in most cases)

Development of Peer Sociability 5

- Cultural variation:
  - Collectivist vs. individualist
    - Collectivist tend to have more play in large groups -- higher levels of cooperation
    - More "sociodramatic play"
  - Within culture: Beliefs affect play

Development of Peer Sociability 6

- First Friendships:
  - Four-years-old:
    - Children understand something about what it means to have a friend
      - Someone who is fun to play with!
  - Act differently with their "friends"
    - More emotionally expressive
    - More cooperative, praising, etc.
    - Social support!
      - Important additional socializing factor!

Development of Peer Sociability 7

- Middle Childhood and Adolescence
  - Rough-and-tumble play: A form of peer interaction involving friendly chasing and play-fighting that, in our evolutionary past, may have been important for the development of fighting skills

Development of Peer Sociability 8

- Parental influences on peers
  - Direct:
    - Play dates
  - Indirect
    - working models and attachment
    - socio-emotional discussion

Development of Peer Sociability 9

- Over time...
  - There is a major shift in the relative importance of parents and peers in socialization
  - Parents are most important early, but some have argued that as kids get older, peers play the biggest role

Friendship

'fren(d)-"ship - A close relationship involving companionship in which each partner wants to be with the other

One soul inhabiting two lives (Aristotle)

Importance of friendships

- Friends provide support in three main ways:
    - Emotional – By demonstrating care and affection.
    - Cognitive guidance - During times of decision-making.
    - Tangible help – To meet practical needs, such as lending a book, sharing snacks
- Therefore friends are actually coping mechanisms; by providing companionship and resources, friends alleviate stress in a person's life.

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Raise Your Child's IQ

- People who have friends tend to have:
    - Better physical health
    - Better sense of psychological well-being
    - As compared to those with weak or no network of friends.
        - NOTE: Although some people may know a lot of people, they have a more select group of friends and an even smaller number of "best" friends.
        - Cathi Cohen (2000). Raise Your Child's Social IQ: Stepping Stones to People Skills for Kids. NY, Advantage Books.

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Friendship 1

- Three levels of friendship:
    - Level 1(4 - 7 years): Friendship as a handy playmate
    - Level 2 (8 - 10 years): Friendship as mutual trust and assistance
    - Level 3 (11 - 15 years and older): Friendship as intimacy and loyalty

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Friendship 2

- Friendship Selectivity and Stability
    - Children become more selective about their friendships with age
    - Friendships are very stable over time

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Friendship 3

- Interaction between Friends
    - Children are more prosocial towards their friends and they also compete more often with their friends than non-friends
    - Interaction depends on type of children they form a friendship with

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Friendship 4

- Sex Differences in Friendships
    - Girls value emotional closeness more than boys
    - Boys gather in groups to engage in an activity, such as playing sports

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Friendship 5

- Friendship and Adjustment
  - Close friendships provide opportunities to explore the self and develop a deep understanding of another
  - Close friendships provide a foundation for future intimate relationships
  - Close friendships provide support in dealing with the stresses of everyday life
  - Close friendships can improve attitudes toward and involvement in school

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Friendship 6

- Cultural Differences:
  - In Asian cultures where familial network is valued, the function and role of a friend are found within the family structure - friendships are not given the same weight of importance.
  - There are also varying definitions as to what constitutes a friend. Someone might call another person "friend" because they have mutual interests and activities, while another person considers a friend someone he shares similar attitudes, values, and beliefs.

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Peer Acceptance 1

- Peer acceptance
  - Defined as "likeability", or the extent to which the child is viewed by a group of age-matched peers as a worthy social partner
- Research Methodology:
  - Self-report measures that ask peers to evaluate another's likeability

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Peer Acceptance 2

- Popular children: Children who get many positive votes on sociometric measures of peer acceptance
- Rejected children: Children who are actively disliked and get many negative votes on sociometric measures of peer acceptance
- Controversial children: Children who get a large number of positive and negative votes on sociometric measures of peer acceptance
- Neglected children: Children who are seldom chosen, either positively or negatively, on sociometric measures of peer acceptance

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Origins of Peer Acceptance 1

- Popular children
  - Popular pro-social children – good students who communicate with peers in friendly, sensitive ways
  - Popular anti-social children – athletically skilled but poor students; highly aggressive
- Rejected children
  - Rejected-aggressive children – show severe conduct problems, like fighting and impulsive behaviour
  - Rejected-withdrawn children – passive and socially awkward; at risk for peer victimisation

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Origins of Peer Acceptance 2

- Controversial children
  - These children display a blend of positive and negative social behaviours. They are hostile and disruptive but they are also likely to engage in prosocial acts.

- Neglected children
  - These children are well-adjusted. Even though they are considered shy by their peers they have good social skills and don't feel lonely

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Peer Relations and Socialisation 1

- Peer Reinforcement and Modelling
  - Peer reinforcement begins early and increases with age
  - Children are just as receptive to peer reinforcement for antisocial behaviour as they are for prosocial behaviour
  - Peers model a broad array of social behaviours

Peer Relations and Socialisation 2

- Peer Conformity
  - Conformity to peer pressure is greater during adolescence than in childhood or early adulthood
  - Parents have more influence on teenagers' basic life values and plans, but peers influence day-to-day things like style of dress and choice of friends

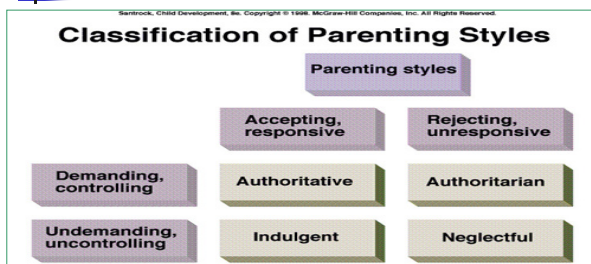## Parental Roles

Child rearing styles

- Combinations of parenting behaviours that occur over a wide range of settings

- Diana Baumrind's 4 types (1971, 1980)
  - Authoritative
  - Authoritarian
  - Permissive
  - Uninvolved

Parenting Styles

Classification of Parenting Styles

Santrock, Child Development, 8e, Copyright © 1998, McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

	Parenting styles	
	Accepting, responsive	Rejecting, unresponsive
Demanding, controlling	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Undemanding, uncontrolling	Indulgent	Neglectful

NOTE: Authoritative styles produce the most positive outcomes

Authoritative

- Control children's behaviour by explaining rules and decisions.
- Make reasonable but high standards for children's behaviour.
- Unlikely to use physical punishment or stress obedience to authority as a virtue in itself.
  - Children of Authoritative parents:
    - more self-reliant
    - more self-controlled
    - more willing to explore
    - happier

Authoritarian

- Stress importance of obedience to authority and discourage verbal give-and-take.
- Favour punitive measures to curb child's "willfulness" when child misbehaves.
- Often appeal to "traditional" standards
  - Children of Authoritarian parents:
    - lack social competence in dealing with other children
    - withdraw from social contact
    - less likely to take initiative
    - "lack spontaneity and intellectual curiosity"
      - These outcomes especially pronounced for boys

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Permissive

- Avoid exerting explicit control over children's behaviour.
- Often results from parental belief that children need to figure things out on their own.
- Parents are often warm and accepting.
  - Children of Permissive parents:
    - "immature"
    - Difficulties with impulse control
    - Difficulties accepting responsibility for their social actions
    - "Over-dependent" on adults
      - again, especially strong for boys

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Uninvolved

- Emotionally detached from children
- Often parents appear to be depressed, and resent their children.

- This affects all aspects of development.

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Understanding this research 1

- Two potential problems:
  - Child's temperament may affect the parenting style
    - e.g., parents might be more likely to be authoritative with more intelligent and calmer children
    - How do we know what is responsible for the outcomes?

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Understanding this research 2

- Cultural Context
  - Pattern is based upon white, suburban, middle-class, 2-parent families
    - Different patterns shown for
      - African-American
      - Chinese
  - specifically, authoritarian is not so bad...

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What makes a parenting style good (effective)?

- Fair & Reasonable
  - Easier to internalise general principles rather than arbitrary rules

- Confidence
  - Leads to consistency, self-regulation

- Combination of warmth & control
  - Use of regular praise to acknowledge children's attempts to reach goals

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Resilience in Children

A.K.A. Sticks and Stones...

Definitions

- **1901**
- Resil'ience, Resil'iency, act of springing back or rebounding.
- adj. Resil'ient, springing back or rebounding.

- **1988**
- Resilience(ri-zil'i-ans): recoil: elasticity, physical or mental.
- adj. Resil'ient elastic, physically or in spirits

Definitions

"Although researchers may disagree on a single definition and also on the network of constructs surrounding resiliency, most researchers agree that resilient individuals share some outcomes."

(Jewel et al, 1999)

THE CAPACITY TO SURVIVE / BUFFER

In brief...

- The biological impulse to thrive and grow
- Characteristically - skills, beliefs or processes which allow some children to overcome adverse beginnings and go on to live successful lives
- Resilience is about the power to overcome adversity:
  - Physically
  - Emotionally
  - Cognitively

Risk Factors

Correlates of adverse life outcomes:
- Poverty
- Family breakdown
- Substance abuse
- Illness
- Stress

However 30-60% of children exposed to risk overcome or resist the dangers and go on to achieve successful, well adjusted lives.(Jew et al, 1999; Benard, 1995)

Against all odd?

Benard, 1997 - Longitudinal studies have shown that while the percentage of "high-risk" children developing various problems was higher than in the normal population, a greater percentage of the children "became healthy, competent young adults"

So... why do some children succeed despite the odds?

Questions

- Is resilience an ability?
- Does everyone have it?
- Learned or innate?
- Does it vary between individuals?
- Does it vary for an individual over different situations, over time or through different developmental stages?

- And, most importantly:
  - **Can it be taught, developed, or promoted?**

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So what is resilience?!

Benard (1995) defined resilience as a "set of qualities" which develop out of an innate capacity "we are all born with".

- These "qualities" have been divided into personality traits and abilities:
  - Social competence
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Critical consciousness
  - Autonomy
  - Sense of purpose

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Resilience traits

- **Social competence** (the ability to elicit positive responses from others, flexibility, empathy, communication and sense of humour)
- **Problem-solving skills** (ability to plan, resourcefulness, critical thought, creativity, reflectiveness)
- **Critical consciousness** (a "reflective awareness of the structures of oppression" plus strategies to overcome them)
- **Autonomy** (sense of identity, self efficacy, independence)
- **Sense of purpose** (aspirations, optimism, motivation, persistence and 'spiritual connectedness')

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Cognitive Appraisal

- Cognitive appraisal theory proposed that individuals' responses to stress are influenced by their appraisal of a situation and the way in which the experience is processed, *meaning is attached*, and the experience is incorporated into one's schemas

- ....Beliefs influence the choice of responses and strategies that resilient people bring to bear on stressful situations.
- These schemas are developed in the context of personality, *environmental*, and developmental influences.

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Protective factors

- "those traits, capacities, and personal and environmental resources that propel individuals in the direction of health, stability, and growth"
  (Masten, 1994, cited in Benard, 1997, 169)

- Protective factors can be:
  - Internal (personality, temperament, attitudes)
  - External (relationships, opportunities to participate)
  - Transactional

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Protective factors are..

"Characteristics of persons and environments. Factors or processes are protective if they contribute to good outcomes in individuals at risk."
  (Benard, 1995 & 1997)

- supportive relationships
- cognitive skills
- social skills
- positive self perceptions
- positive future orientation
- competence
- models and information
- belonging, responsibility & participation

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Protective factors 2

- Supportive relationships (with adults/peers, high expectations)
- cognitive skills (problem solving, planning, critical reflection, adaptation)
- social skills (communication, friendships, conflict resolution)
- positive self perceptions (self-esteem, self-efficacy)
- positive future orientation (sense of purpose, hope, optimism, aspirations)
- competence (academic / sport)
- Models and information (role models, support)
- belonging, responsibility & participation

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Developing resilience

"Whether young people develop depression or resilience depends largely upon their feelings of powerlessness or capacity... Feelings of powerlessness can be changed to those of capability by teaching youth the building blocks of resilience.... In short, resilience can be built as part of the developmental process." Grotberg (1999)

"Resilience and the development of strengths and resources occurs in interaction with the surrounding environment, notably families, schools, and social environments. Those environments that foster resilience and build strength all have similar attributes". (Bernard, 1997)

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Key texts

- Benard, B. (1995) Fostering Resilience in Children. In B. Cesarone (Ed), *Resilience Guide: A Collection of Resources on Resilience in Children and Families*. Champaign, Ill: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/library/benard95.html

- Benard, B. (1997) Fostering Resiliency in Children and Youth: Promoting Protective Factors in the School. In D. Saleebey (Ed), *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*. New York: Longman: Chapter 11, pp. 167-182.

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