

What is resilience?

“Resilience” is the ability to recover or “bounce back” from challenges and difficulties. People who are resilient can effectively cope with or adapt to, stress and adverse life situations. Another aspect of resilience is a person’s ability to not only bounce back but to use their experience to build strengths so that they can grow as a person and are better able to cope with stresses and challenges in the future.

The ability to be resilience in the face of adversity involves a number of factors. People who demonstrate resilience also tend to be empathic, have good communication skills and problem solving skills and tend to set goals. They also involve themselves in meaningful activities and have positive support systems within their families and communities. Resilient people also tend to have a positive outlook for the future.

How is resilience linked to mental health and mental health promotion?

Part of being resilient is having good mental health and it could also be said that part of having positive mental health involves being resilient. Mental health promotion involves efforts to increase positive mental health, so building resilience also promotes mental health.

Risk and Protective Factors

Resilience is impacted by the interplay of risk and protective factors; characteristics of individuals, their families, and their communities or environments that either increase (protective factors) or decrease (risk factors) the likelihood that a person will be resilient. Most often people benefit from a bolstering of protective factors and a reduction in risk factors in any of the three areas of individual, family or environment.

Individual factors that affect resilience would include personality, self-concept, ways of thinking, social skills and physical health.

Examples of family factors that affect resilience include attachment, communication, family structure, parenting style and support from outside the family.

Environmental factors may include things like inclusion, social conditions education, health and community participation.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, *Growing Up Resilient: Ways to Build Resilience in Children and Youth*, 2007. www.camh.net

Towards Flourishing: Improving Mental Health Among New Mothers in Manitoba Families First Home Visiting Program, 2010