

AFRM MIND SIG 5/12/2012

5:00-5:30

Annual members meeting

5:30-6:30

Webinar: Resilience – Philip Funnell

Resilience

Philip Funnell

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Overview

- what is resilience?
- recent neuroscience research
- application to rehabilitation:
the rehab physician and the rehab patient

What do we mean by
“resilience”?

Just bouncing back?

Resilience is actually a far more complex phenomenon than we once thought

especially in respect of biological and sociological systems

Resilience:

The capacity of a person, enterprise or system to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of changing circumstances

A better definition?

At the personal level, resilience is the ability to survive, mature, thrive and increase personal competence in the face of challenge or adversity, and...

refers not only to acute adversity but also to chronic and unremitting stress

What resilience is not...

- robustness or “toughness”: which refers to hardening of a system against adversity
- recovery: there is usually no fixed baseline state
- optimism
- hope

Characteristics of resilient children:

- Good cognition
- Self-regulation
- Faith and hope
- Quality parenting
- Social connection

Psychoneuroeimmunological correlates:

- DHEA/cortisol regulation
- HbA1C
- CRH/ACTH
- Testosterone
- Noradrenaline, COMT, serotonin
- Immune function

Psychoneuroimmunological correlates:

- quick-switch thinking
- stress inoculation
- “positive emotional granularity”

How resilient are *you*?

- A number of validated self-report questionnaires

but personal resilience is a far more fluid and dynamic phenomenon, rather than a group of fixed psychological responses

Why evaluate resilience?

- “living systems are messy and complex, and operate in ways that are less than perfectly efficient”: dynamic disequilibrium
- “forces us to take the possibility of failure seriously, and to accept the limits of human knowledge and foresight”

Steps in the process of reacting to events:

- Who am I?
- What does this event mean to me?
- What is the likely outcome?

How to strengthen resilience?

The 7 element model:

- Vision
- Self-determination
- Interaction
- Relationships
- Problem-solving
- Organisation
- Self-confidence

“Habits of mind...”

- the belief that one can find meaningful purpose in life
- the belief that one can influence one’s surroundings and the outcome of events
- the belief that positive and negative experiences lead to learning and growth

The rehabilitation “system”:

- Patient
- Patient’s family/friends/local community
- The rehabilitation team
- The hospital and its resources
- LHD
- MOH
- Commonwealth government

The patient:

- has suffered significant emotional trauma
- is removed from their usual support systems; home and personal objects, family and friends
- is alone in an unfamiliar environment
- is likely to face ongoing disability
- is uncertain of their future

The patient:

Each will react differently, although there is a recognisable pattern of

- shock and disbelief
- despair and withdrawal
- gradual acceptance and adaptation

but there are no 'normal' patterns, sequences or time frames

The ability to accept and adapt:

- the nature and *value* of the loss
- previous life experience of loss
- innate emotional resilience
- unresolved past emotional trauma
- the ability to accept life change

Barriers to acceptance:

- social isolation
- cognitive impairment
- lack of recognition of the personal nature of the experience of loss
- lack of opportunity to work through grief

In terms of 'resilience':

- the world will *never* be quite the same again
- how to help our patients regain core purpose and integrity
- to recognise that this process *takes time*
- to detect those at risk of delayed grief and maladaptive responses

Suggestions:

- screening on admission to rehabilitation
- normalising the experience of loss and encouraging hope
- validating the patient's experience
- making time and space for grief work
- challenging maladaptive responses, and supporting positive change

Working through emotional grief: developing resilience (1)

The expression of thoughts and feelings
by...

- talking to empathic listeners
- personal reflection
- writing

Working through grief: developing resilience (2)

- the ability to imagine and resume life as it will now be, but without disabling emotional pain: “*re-connecting*”
- the ability to continue to function with a renewed sense of integrity/wholeness and (new) purpose and meaning

How to strengthen resilience?

The 7 element model:

- Vision: imagining goals for a new life
- Self-determination: encouragement
- Interaction: assertiveness & co-operation
- Relationships: re-establish & maintain
- Problem-solving: dealing with disability
- Organisation: planning & implementing
- Self-confidence: regaining competence

Building longer term resilience

- the importance of ongoing rehab input during community resettlement/placement
- ongoing efforts to reduce disability and handicap: therapy and adaptation
- ongoing opportunity for therapeutic and supportive counselling
- support for social re-connection
- monitoring for complex grief