

From the top with feeling:

***Promoting resilience through
reflective leadership***

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What do we mean by 'resilience'?

Resilience refers to a person's capacity to overcome adversities that would otherwise be expected to have negative consequences.

(Kinman and Grant, 2011)

Resilience can be defined as the capacity to rebound from adversity stronger and more resourceful.

(Walsh, 2006)

The potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using available internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges.

(Pooley and Cohen, 2010)

Resilience: key messages

- > For resilience to be present, a person must have:
 - a) encountered (unusually severe) adversities and;
 - b) shown signs of positive adaptation.
- > Resilience is not a character trait (Rutter, 2006)
- > Both risk and protective processes are cumulative
- > Managed exposure to risk is necessary if people are to learn coping mechanisms
- > Resilience can emerge at any point in the lifespan but early intervention offers the greatest promise

(Newman, 2011)

Emotional resilience and social work

- > Until recently, the majority of research was focused on deficit (e.g. burnout) models
- > Primarily considered individual-level factors associated with burnout, such as personality factors (Slattery and Goodman, 2009)
- > Greater attention is now being paid to what organisational factors influence resilience
- > This forms part of a wider strengths-based approach looking at what factors may promote resilience

Workplace factors

Job-related factors (Ellet *et al*, 2007)

- Exposure to threats and violence
- Uncertainty involved in working with involuntary clients
- The pressure of working in an environment of public scrutiny and mistrust

Workplace factors (Adamson *et al*, 2012)

- Burgeoning caseloads
- Limited resources
- Poor organisational culture
- Changing social policies

The role of the organisation (Fox *et al*, 2014)

- > Individuals and teams do not operate in a vacuum – they are part of a wider organisational context
- > Senior leaders need to create a workplace climate that facilitates resilience (Hiebert, 2006)
- > Managers must:
 - Ensure workplace demands are reasonable
 - Ensure employees have the appropriate skills and knowledge for dealing with demands
 - Set out clear employee expectations, with an explicit link between employee actions and outcomes
 - Motivate people (and help them to self-motivate)

Attributes affecting emotional resilience (Grant and Kinman, 2013)

- > self-awareness
- > self-efficacy
- > emotional intelligence/
literacy
- > reflective ability
- > optimism
- > social confidence
- > sense of humour
- > accurate empathy
- > good support networks
- > effective coping skills
- > commitment to self-care
- > problem-solving skills
- > cultural competence
- > commitment to
professional values
- > work-life balance

Emotional resilience and its impact on ~~service-users~~ people

In contemporary social work, with an emphasis on best value, economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the centrality of relationship and emotion is neglected.

(Collins, 2007: 257)

Emotional intelligence/literacy

...motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope.

(Goleman, 1995: 34)

Emotional intelligence/literacy

(Grant and Kinman, 2013)

- > Key competence for social workers
- > Inter-personal aspects (i.e. social intelligence) – helps people relate confidently and empathically to others
- > Intra-personal aspects (i.e. self-awareness) – gain insight into own emotional state, regulate mood
- > Helps people manage their own emotional reactions and those of others; and recognise impact of their personal emotional states on their problem-solving and decision-making (Howe, 2008)
- > Evidence suggests aspects of emotional intelligence can be developed through life experience and training (Fariselli *et al*, 2008)

A worker's values

- > A worker's intrinsic values (such as their 'personal sense of meaning and reward') may also moderate their experiences of stress
- > Workers believing in the value and efficacy of social work practice may be less likely to report distress (e.g. Adamson *et al*, 2012; Stalker *et al*, 2007)
- > 'Hope' has been linked to burnout in social workers and is a strong predictor of resilience (Spano and Koenig, 2007; Schwartz *et al*, 2007)

Social support (Grant and Kinman, 2013)

- › Important mechanism to build resilience (Collins, 2008; Jensen *et al*, 2008; Wilks and Spivey, 2010)
- › More supportive relationships = less stress; more physically and psychologically healthy (Sarason *et al*, 1985); fosters feelings of social connectedness and empathy
- › Lack of social support = feelings of social alienation; depression; anxiety; burnout (Eskin, 2003; Sundin *et al*, 2007; Li *et al*, 2012)
- › For students - mutually supportive relationships help develop a “community of learning” - enhances ability to cope with stress (Kevern and Webb, 2004)
- › In practice - supportive work environment; social support from colleagues: protect against burnout and compassion fatigue (Boscarino *et al*, 2004; Jenkins and Elliott, 2004)

Why is it important?

While social workers focus daily on caring for others, issues of self-care are too often neglected.

(Kanter, 2007: 289)

- › Key reasons for high turnover = workers' job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and stress (Webb and Carpenter, 2012)
- › Can lead to a less efficient and effective service; affect team and individual morale (Fox *et al*, 2014)
- › Lack of consistency can affect service delivery **and** – ultimately – outcomes for service-users (Fox *et al*, 2014; Alwon and Reitz, 2000)

Why is it important?

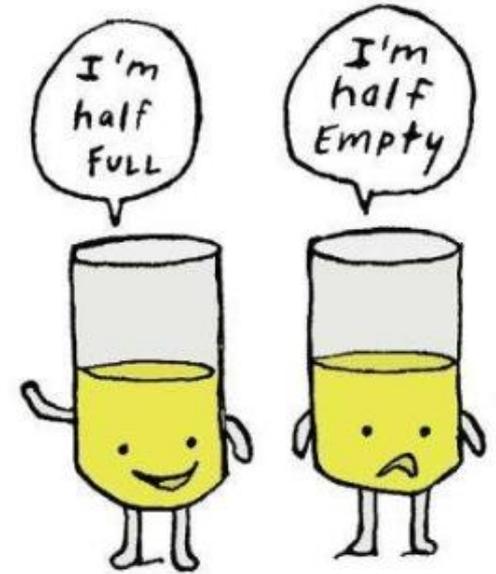
Crucially, and despite the challenges ...

- > Not all workers go on to experience burnout and some practitioners actually appear to '**thrive**' within this stressful context (Wendt *et al*, 2011)
- > Many workers find their role **rewarding** and experience **job satisfaction** (Ellett, 2009; Nordick, 2002)

Thus, Adamson (2012: 188) argues: resilience depends on "*the activation and interaction of an array of possible resources both internal and external to the person*"

7 learnable skills of resilience

1. Emotional awareness or regulation
2. Impulse control
3. Optimism
4. Causal analysis
5. Empathy
6. Self-efficacy
7. Reaching out (taking appropriate risk)



(Reivich, 2005)



Tool 15: Seven Learnable Skills of Resilience

How to use this tool

This is a self-audit tool that encourages reflection on your own resilience. Think about the different skills you use to manage adverse and difficult situations. How good are you at using these skills in times of stress?

Once you are able to understand which skills work best for you, and what might get in the way of you using them in stressful situations, take the time to plan to build up your resilience. This plan can then be shared with your supervisor to support your learning and development.

| Learnable Skill | Current ability 1 – 5 (Low – High) | Strategies that support use of each factor | Support | Blocks |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Each of the factors below support resilience and can be learnt | How good are you at doing these things? | The behaviours below describe skills that support resilience | What supports you to employ these skills? | What makes it hard for you to use these skills? |
| 1. Emotional regulation: Manage your internal world in order to stay effective under pressure | | A+B=C Recognise the impact of your 'in- the-moment' thoughts and beliefs on behavioural and emotional consequences | | |
| 2. Impulse control: Manage the behavioural expression of emotional impulses, including ability to delay gratification | | Calming and focusing Finding ways to step back from adversity; creating breathing space to think more logically and in depth | | |

Reflective practice and reflective supervision

Reflective practice has 'the potential to help us make sense of uncertainty in our workplaces and offer us the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos'...

(Ghaye, 2000: 7)

Enhancing reflective practice

(Grant and Kinman, 2013)

- > Development of **reflective thinking** skills can help - explore emotional reactions, doubts, assumptions, beliefs and their impact on well-being and practice
- > **Narrative writing** can facilitate reflection and enhance self-awareness, empathic reflection and reflective communication (Hodges *et al*, 2008; Bolton, 2010)
- > Try writing a narrative from a child or parent's perspective, and sharing these reflections in small groups of peers
- > Also... **reflective supervision** can help develop problem-solving; coping styles; a goal-oriented perspective.

What is supervision?

A process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another in order to meet certain organisational professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users.

(Morrison, 2005)

Giving and receiving of critical constructive feedback can create an atmosphere of learning, self-improvement and strong sense of security while contributing to organisational objectives.

(Hafford-Letchfield *et al*,
2008)

A secure professional relationship where the supervisor takes the time to understand and assess the supervisee's strengths and weaknesses.

(Morrison and Wonnacott, 2010)

Key elements of supervision

Management

Focusing on the interests of people who use services and quality of practice

Support

Focusing on the emotional impact of the work and any resulting stress or support needs

Case discussion
(professional)
supervision

Mediation

Ensuring role clarity and effective multi-agency working

Development

Self-evaluation and building professional capability

The KSS

The statement for Practice Supervisors sets out an expectation that they will be able to:

- > provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all staff
- > identify emotional barriers affecting practice and recognise when to step in and proactively support individuals
- > protect practitioners from unnecessary bureaucratic or hierarchical pressures and have in place strategies to help manage the root causes of stress and anxiety
- > continually energise and reaffirm commitment to support families and protect children.

The *right type of supervision* (Fox *et al*, 2014)

- > Supervision that spends too long on administrative practices and risk management, or is authoritarian in approach, may be counter-productive (Beddoe, 2010)
- > Practitioners should have time, and a safe environment, to reflect and learn both from their own experiences and from wider research messages
- > It is crucial that a worker can express stresses openly in supervision, without fear of judgement
- > A healthy supervisor-supervisee relationship can greatly aid the development of emotional resilience

Qualities of a good supervisor

What service-users want:

- > Knows what they are doing
- > Can work towards a goal
- > Is honest and realistic about what can be achieved
- > Can recognise progress and pitfalls
- > Can be trusted

What supervisees want:

- > Good working professional knowledge of the field
- > Skills in coordinating work
- > Setting limits and manageable goals
- > Monitoring progress for front line workers
- > Creating a climate of belief and trust

The role of the supervisee

- › Reflective supervision 'locates the supervisee as the "driver"' while the supervisor 'shifts from being an "expert" to become a "facilitator"' (Davys, 2013)
- › Supervisee should be empowered to retain ownership of solutions (Fox *et al*, 2016)
- › Should be an 'interactive dialogue' (Davys and Beddoe, 2010)
- › CQC (2013), supervisees should:
 - Prepare; inc. identifying issues from practice for discussion
 - Take responsibility for making effective use of time, and for the outcomes/actions taken
 - Take an active role in their own personal and professional development, keeping written records of supervision sessions.

Reflective supervision and emotional resilience

Supervision as a site for facilitating reflection for individual development within a relational space – e.g. managing emotions and uncertainty, kindling hope.

(Beddoe, 2010)

Effective supervision [...] can delay or mitigate the effects of detrimental factors and can contribute to positive outcomes for workers in social service organizations.

(Mor Barak et al, 2009: 25)

Reflective supervision and emotional resilience

- > Clear associations between supervisory support and worker stress, burnout and role conflict (Mena and Bailey, 2007)
- > An empowering supervisory approach may increase workers' feelings of empowerment (Cearley, 2004) and job satisfaction (e.g. Lee *et al*, 2011; Renner *et al*, 2009)
- > Can be used to develop workers' resilience – particularly reflective/empathetic abilities and boost their social competencies (e.g. communication skills)
- > Targeting workers' intrinsic values may help moderate how they experience stress and promote resilience
- > This may be particularly beneficial for workers in the early stages of their career (Kinman and Grant, 2011)

Reflective supervision and emotional resilience

Workers' state of mind and the quality of attention they can give to children is directly related to the quality of support, care and attention they themselves receive from supervision, managers and peers.

(Ferguson, 2011)

Modelling resilience: relationship-based reflective practice

The supervisor

The practitioner



The organisation

The service user

High expectations
High Support
High Challenge

Key messages from today

- › Effective practice requires resilient practitioners
- › A lack of resilience in practitioners can affect service delivery and even outcomes for service-users
- › We can identify our strengths and weaknesses, and work on building our own emotional resilience
- › Resilience in practitioners can be promoted via effective supervision, mentoring, reflective practice, peer support, and experiential learning
- › Individuals, managers, and organisations all have a role in creating a workplace climate that facilitates resilience

At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself - yet also a belief in something larger than oneself.

Resilient people do not let adversity define them. They find resilience by moving towards a goal beyond themselves, transcending pain and grief by perceiving bad times as a temporary state of affairs... It's possible to strengthen your inner self and your belief in yourself, to define yourself as capable and competent. It's possible to fortify your psyche. It's possible to develop a sense of mastery.

(Estroff Marano, 2003)

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PRACTICE TOOL

Appreciative Inquiry in child protection: Identifying and promoting good practice and creating a learning culture

Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organisation [...] the tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organisation wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success. (Hammond, 1998)

Appreciative Inquiry shines a spotlight on what is working well in an organisation and potentially engages all stakeholders in building conditions for best practice. (Chellings and Elliot, 2002)

A great deal of structural change and redevelopment in children's services is prompted by 'what goes wrong'. Mirroring child protection procedures, action for change is often precipitated by 'trigger incidents'. Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), Ofsted judgements of inadequacy and high profile child deaths trigger senior leadership changes, service restructuring and national policy reviews (The Victoria Climbié Inquiry, 2003; The Protection of Children in England, 2008).

While these imperatives continue to drive service development, there is increasing interest in learning from what works well in local government - a shift from 'learning from mistakes' to one where the focus is on 'looking toward what works and finding ways to do more of that' (Hammond, 1998).

Some Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in particular are looking at complex cases and re-examine cases that have gone well. Indeed, Appreciative Inquiry has been recognised by Ofsted as a method available to LSCBs to audit and evaluate safeguarding practice and change (Ofsted, 2011). It is recognised as one of the review methods that can be considered by LSCBs when reviewing practice, together with Ofsted's Learning Together, Root Cause Analysis, Learning Lessons Review and Child Death Reviews which can meet the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) for reviews of cases below the SCR threshold.

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research in practice Strategic Briefing

Social work recruitment and retention

Darlington www.rip.org.uk

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Reflective supervision: A handbook

Jo Fox, Caroline Webb, Ferdia Earle and Susannah Bowyer

PILOT

research in practice

PRACTICE TOOL

Supporting emotional resilience within social workers

This resource explores the concept of emotional resilience and how this can be promoted and supported within social workers in order to improve practice and service delivery.

It discusses:

- > what emotional resilience is
- > social work and emotional resilience
- > how teams can develop emotional resilience
- > the positive role of supervision
- > how organisational context can affect emotional resilience.

The resource also includes three practical exercises:

- 1 Team Supervision Tool
- 2 Individual Supervision Tool
- 3 Managers' Audit Tool.

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