The Influence of Resilience and Parenting Style on Children’s Dietary Behaviour

Matt Wood
University of Brighton
WSMC Washington D.C. May 2017
Matthew.wood@brighton.ac.uk
What is resilience?

• An individual’s ability to overcome adversity and continue his/her development

• “In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.” (Unger, M. 2008;2011)
This definition shifts our understanding of resilience from an individual concept, popular with western-trained researchers and services providers, to a more relational understanding of well-being embedded in a social-ecological framework.

Resilience requires individuals have the capacity to find resources that bolster well-being, while also emphasizing that it’s up to families, communities and governments to provide these resources in ways individuals value.
Socio-ecological model and health

Determinants of health

Health interventions:
- Policies
- Programmes
- Information

Outcomes:
- Behavioural outcomes
- Specific risk factors, diseases and conditions
- Injuries
- Well-being & health-related quality of life
- Health equity

Assessment, monitoring, evaluation & dissemination
Lower resilience amongst disadvantaged groups (OECD, 2012)

Greater risk of:
- Poor health
- Social, emotional and behavioural “issues”
- Attentive, cognitive and language problems

Which negatively affects:
- Educational progress
- Literacy and numeracy
- Social skills and employability
- Criminality
- Lifestyles and long-term health outcomes
A study of the impacts of BMI on Portuguese and British adult males found links between resilience and obesity (Stewart-Knox et al., 2012):

- **Men with high BMI had lower resilience, were older, had a lower level of education, and were generally physically inactive**

- **Obesity-resilient mothers were younger, physically active and more highly educated** (Ball, Abbott and Cleland et al., 2012).

- Resilience for Eating and Activity Despite Inequality (READI) study in Victoria identified at-risk lower SES mothers in the ‘at risk’ group who demonstrated obesity-resilient characteristics: healthy weight range, regularly consumed fruit and vegetables, and were physically active (Williams, Veitch and Ball, 2011).
Abecedarian Project (Ramey et al., 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Longitudinal study involving RCT of pre-school day-care for disadvantaged children; intervention group showed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Higher cognitive development from 18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greater social competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better school achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More college attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delayed child bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less smoking and drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Healthier <em>eating practices and more exercise</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lower <em>risk of obesity</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oykf-pcGcPY#t=17](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oykf-pcGcPY#t=17)
Benefits of ECEC

“Widening access to pre-primary education can improve both overall performance and equity by reducing socio-economic disparities among students, if extending coverage does not compromise quality.” Pisa in Focus, OECD (2011)

Education and Social Adjustment
- Educational achievement improved
- Special educational needs reduced
- Behaviour problems, delinquency and crime reduced

Decreased Costs to Government
- Smoking, alcohol/drug use, obesity, depression reduced
- Employment, earnings, and welfare dependency improved
Parenting Styles

• Parenting styles relate to the attitudes and beliefs that determine how parents interact with children, and provide a context for development (Ventura & Birch, 2008).

• Authoritative (high control and high warmth)

• Authoritarian (high control and low warmth)

• Permissive (low control and low or high warmth).

• These styles can be mapped onto child feeding practices, which include perceived responsibility, concern about weight, restriction, pressure to eat and monitoring (Hubbs-Tait et al. 2008)
This study

- **Aim:** to investigate whether a relationship existed between parental resilience and child feeding practices associated with an authoritative parenting style
- **Sample:** 242 parents of children age 2-11
- Quantitative Qualtrics *on-line survey*
- Wagnild and Young’s (1993) *Resilience Scale* was used to assess parents’ levels of resilience.
- *Child Frequency Questionnaire (CFQ)* was used to identify authoritative, authoritarian or permissive parenting styles (Cullen et al., 2000).
- **Meal planning and preparation skills/practices:** items developed by Cullen et al. (2000)
- Additional questions on *fruit & vegetable consumption* and *frequency of family meals*
Findings

• Child feeding practices consistent with an **authoritative parenting style** were demonstrated by **resilient parents**

• **Parents with higher resilience** had lower concern for their child’s weight and **did not use restrictive feeding practices or put pressure on their children to eat**

• **Resilience was positively correlated with monitoring of unhealthy food intake, planning of healthy meals, consumption of fruit and vegetables, and a more positive family attitude towards healthy eating**

• **Children** with highly-resilient mothers have a **healthier diet and weight status**

• An **authoritative parenting style underpinned by higher resilience** leads to a greater likelihood of children eating healthier and a lower risk of childhood obesity.
Implications for Social Marketing?

• Focussing on resilience implies a person-centred, holistic and long-term developmental approach...

• How can social marketing help build resilience amongst individuals, families and communities?

• What approaches/interventions are required at the micro, meso/exo and macro levels?

• How does parenting relate to resilience and culture?

• How do we learn from/collaborate with social workers, psychologists and educationalists?