

Finding the Silver Lining



Resiliency

Ellis & Boyce (2008) used Swedish research in describing resilience in children and health outcomes. The term “dandelion child” describes children who seem to survive and even thrive in all kinds of circumstances such as a hardy dandelion can grow in and endure many difficult conditions. On the other end, “orchid child” describes children who are very connected to their environmental conditions. If the conditions are supportive and nurturing the orchid can be a beautiful flower, but with neglect (you might also consider harsh conditions), the orchid can wither or wilt. Orchid children, they say, would be children who have strong reactions to stress. If they are in low-stress situations, they are the healthiest children of all but if their environments are high in stress their bodies may be more sensitive and they are more likely to get respiratory illnesses. They showed a relationship between both the children’s characteristic and the environment, but suggested the environment can make a big difference in how the children are affected. Are certain children more likely to be “dandelion” or “orchid” children with regard to trauma? Here are some other factors that promote resilience:

- ⇒ Strong social connections/support/role models
- ⇒ Positivity/optimism
- ⇒ Commitment to finding a meaningful purpose in life
- ⇒ Meaning, including religion or spirituality
- ⇒ Flexibility in thoughts – being able to look at and accept the situation
- ⇒ Active coping styles such as exercising
- ⇒ Belief that the person can influence his or her surroundings and the outcomes of the event
- ⇒ Belief that learning and growth can occur from both positive and negative events
- ⇒ A positive self-concept/positive beliefs about oneself
- ⇒ Evaluating situations that are potentially stressful as less threatening
- ⇒ Children having positive attachments/connections to adults who are emotionally supportive and competent
- ⇒ Developing abilities in children to think and manage their emotions
- ⇒ Social behaviors such as a concern for the welfare of others
- ⇒ The ability to turn a sense of helplessness related to a traumatic event into helpfulness or turning the information into a positive direction
- ⇒ A sense of mastery and autonomy
- ⇒ Flexibility/easygoing manner
- ⇒ Motivation to influence one’s environment
- ⇒ Teaching, values, standards, and expectations at school
- ⇒ Traditions/rituals
- ⇒ An adaptive system of standards and laws



Nebraska’s Network of Care: www.dhhs.ne.gov/networkofcare

Nebraska Family Helpline: 888-866-8660

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK