

Mental Health & Behavior Support Services

Newsletter Issue No. 9 July 2020

Resilience to Childhood Trauma

Resilience to trauma can be defined in several ways: positive child outcomes despite exposure to trauma, prevention of trauma recurrence despite high risk for further exposure, or avoidance of traumatic experiences altogether in the face of significant risk.

Ecological approach to resilience. Using an *ecological approach* to promote resilience in development among children who experience trauma is useful because it assumes that there are multiple levels of influence on a child's development—the individual, parent, family, school, community, and culture—which may increase or decrease a child's risk for and response to experiencing trauma. These various influences are often referred to as risk and protective factors.

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/how-to-implement-trauma-informed-care-to-build-resilience-to-childhood-trauma>

Risk factors

Risk factors are circumstances, characteristics, conditions, events, or traits at the individual, family, community, or cultural level that may increase the likelihood a person will experience adversity (e.g., childhood trauma, re-traumatization, or negative outcomes due to trauma). Risk factors for specific types of trauma may vary, but commonly include living in poverty, a lack of social supports, and prior history of trauma. However, the presence of risk factors or membership in a high-risk group does not necessarily mean that a child will experience trauma or its most adverse effects. Protective factors can buffer children from risk and improve the odds of resilient functioning.

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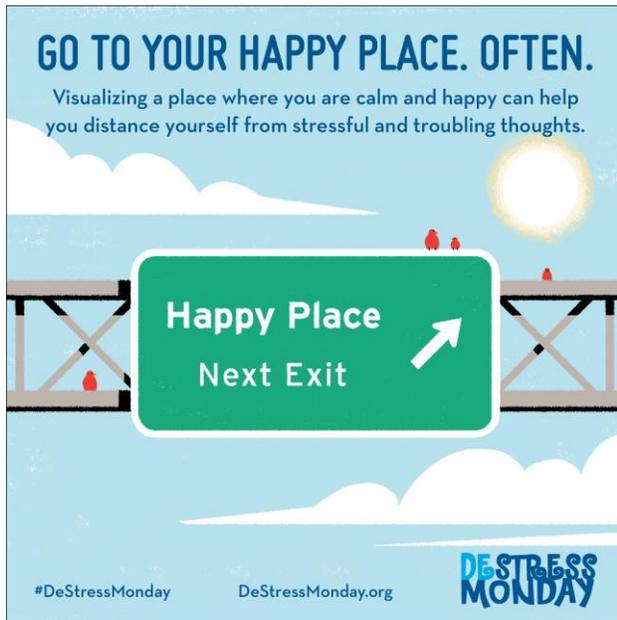
Protective factors

Protective factors are characteristics, conditions, or events that promote healthy development and minimize the risk or likelihood a person will experience a particular illness or event, or its related negative outcomes. ***Research shows that the strongest protective factor linked with resilience to childhood trauma is the reliable presence of a sensitive, nurturing, and responsive adult. The presence of such a figure can help children by restoring a sense of safety, predictability, and control; giving them the feeling of safety; providing them a way to process traumatic events; protecting them from re-traumatization; supporting their development of self-regulation; and helping them heal.***

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When you feel too much tension, take a moment to imagine yourself in a place where you feel relaxed and content, your happy place. Also known as visualization, or guided imagery, this [research-supported](#) tool can help you reduce stress.

Visualization is highly effective because you're providing your brain with positive suggestions in contrast to stressful ones. It can be done anywhere and at any time. When practiced regularly, like every Monday, it may also increase your overall sense of well-being.

<https://www.mondaycampaigns.org/destress-monday/find-happy-place>

Here are some tips on finding your happy place:

Think of a place that already exists. Close your eyes and recall all the details of a special place. Remind yourself why it makes you feel good. Is there a lot of light? What does it feel like? Use all your senses to bring it to life in your mind's eye.

Or, come up with a new place. You can imagine yourself on a beach, in a garden, or anywhere that rings true for you. Either way, visualize that you're truly in your happy place, and then simply rest in the imagery of it for a few minutes to de-stress.

Guided meditations. To increase the efficacy of reducing your stress, pair visualization with relaxation techniques, such as [progressive muscle relaxation](#). And, for more inspiration to develop your visualization practice, [visit our Meditations page](#) to get started.

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Next Issue:

1. Will continue to provide self-care tips and techniques.
2. Continue to provide Information on Trauma.