

Abstract

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Editorial. Resilience: A construct in search of a theory (*Luciano L'Abate*)

After a brief historical introduction, this introductory article offers an overview of the construct of Relational Resilience (RR) within the light of Relational Competence Theory (RCT). This theory consists of 16 specific abilities ranging from fundamental experiences of feelings, rationality, activity, awareness (of self and context) to settings, levels of description and explanation, basic abilities to love and to control self, combination of both abilities, the Triangle of Life, developmental differentiation, styles, interactions, selfhood, priorities, as well as distance regulation, the Drama Triangle, intimacy, and the ability to negotiate and problem-solve. Interactive practical exercises to improve RR are included in appendix.

Key words: ability, intimacy, intimate relationships, relational resilience, theory.

A model of family resilience for intervention and prevention (*Froma Walsh*)

This article illustrates the characteristics, applications, and advantages of a popular Family Resilience framework based on nine key processes: Making Meaning of Adversity, Positive Outlook, Transcendence and Spirituality, Flexibility, Connectedness, Social and Economic Resources, Clarity, Open Emotional Expression, and Collaborative Problem-solving. The construct of Family Resilience is proposed as having a great potential for intervention, prevention, research, and social policies aimed to strengthen families. Examples of possible applications are presented.

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Key words: family resilience, family intervention and prevention, family strengthening, adaptation.

Ten years of family resilience: New theoretical and practical perspectives (*Giovanna Ganesini*)

This article explores the contribution of Family Resilience to the development of family research, focusing on those interventions aimed at supporting efforts toward harmony and balance during normal transitions of the life circle, changes in time, crisis and prolonged challenges. Building on ten-year studies on individual and family resilience, this paper offers an overview on constructs, processes, and approaches to family interventions that strengthen competences, find grounds in the systemic perspective of the family life circle, and emphasize collaborative exchanges, resources and contexts. New perspectives and questions on the assessment of the construct in different context and populations are presented.

Key words: family resilience, post-traumatic growth, positive psychology, family competence, psychological resilience, resilience assessment and evaluation.

Family resilience: An integrated model of research and intervention (*Cardinali Paola, Guiducci Valentina, Migliorini Laura, Cavanna Donatella*)

The transformations occurring within family relationships, on a psychological and social level, refer to a widespread and pervasive “fragility” of such relations and their meanings. The aim of the paper is to build an integrated model to understand the family protective and risk factors, according to the family resilience framework. An integrated model can facilitate a more attentive analysis of the family complexity, taking into account structural and processual variables, while overcoming the dichotic view that too often separates “families with problems”, from “families with resources”. This work will examine family functioning, adult attachment styles and relations with social workers, as part of the broader family resilience framework, in natural and foster families that refer to a Social Service in Genoa.

Key word: family resilience, family fragility, integrate model, foster families, at-risk families.

Family resilience in post war context (*Silvia Galvani e Wilma Binda*)

Recent research findings highlight the role of context and family functioning (Walsh, 2008) in strengthening resilience both individual and familiar. Studies about adolescents in post conflict context (Galvani, 2008) have confirmed the relevance of meanings (considered both as a making process and content) in mobilizing resources in the face of adversities. Literature (Antonovsky, 1987; Almedom e Glandom, 2007) states that Sense of Coherence (event's Comprehensibility, Manageability and Meaningfulness) indicates resilience in face of critical events. This study on Kosovar adolescents who experienced war during childhood (N. 144) suggests the centrality of family support and family functioning in making meaning out of adversities in order to enact individual adjustment. Data confirm family sense of coherence as resilience mediator in wellbeing.

Key words: family resilience; wellbeing; family relations; adolescent; ethnic conflict.

Processes of resilience and psychosocial mediators in unemployment situations: Women's competences (*Mara Manetti, Anna Zunino, Elena Zini e Laura Frattini*)

The term job loss is used to describe a transition that takes place in individuals' life altering their personal balance. Decrease in self-efficacy and self-esteem, reduction of psychosocial competences and de-structuring of time represent the main psychological outcomes of unemployment. The purpose of this work is to study resilience processes women are able to activate as a result of their job loss and to analyze its consequences at a personal and familiar level. Data collected by interview has showed that competencies develop according to the following phases: acknowledgment of the loss, reaction to the traumatic event, abandonment of the old attachments, finding of new meanings, investment on new energies.

Key words: resilience, women, unemployment, psychosocial mediators.

Couples in stepfamily after divorce: a resiliency example (*Silvia Mazzoni e Ludovica Iesu*)

This study investigates possible differences concerning romantic attachment and marital quality through a comparison between a sample of cou-

ples in stepfamilies after the divorce of one or both partners (N = 18) and another sample of intact couples (N = 68). The *Experiences in Close Relationships* scale is utilised to examine romantic attachment, the *Dyadic Adjustment Scale* is employed to assess dyadic adjustment and the *Parental Bonding Instrument* is used to measure the quality of parental bonding for each partner. The partners in stepfamily couples reported that they have negatively perceived maternal care during their childhood and described a greater levels of anxiety concerning romantic attachment; however stepfamily couples showed protective variables in couple relationship, that were perceived satisfying and represent a resiliency factor in regard to the break-up of their first marriage and the lack of maternal care.

Key words: stepfamilies, dyadic adjustment, romantic attachment, parental bonding, resiliency.

Resilience and children away from home: A research on 21 hidden child survivors of the Holocaust (*Marco Ius e Paola Milani*)

This paper reports on a qualitative research about resilience processes in Holocaust child survivors, particularly hidden children. Data refer to 21 life stories collected through 19 semi-structured interviews and 2 published biographies and analyzed assuming a Long Term approach that focuses on all life trajectories to obtain developmental outcomes within a life time perspective. The main aim of the research is to understand the protective factors that enable child survivors to develop and grow and can be used by social practitioners working with vulnerable children and families, in order to foster similar resilient responses in children away from home.

Key words: resilience, child survivors, Holocaust, children out of home, protective factors.