

Fostering Resilience Lessons for and from Military Families

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Capacity of a system
to withstand or recover
from significant disturbances that threaten its
adaptive function, viability, or development

Resilience

5 Decades of Resilience Research

Research Framework

- Meaning
- Mission
- Models
- Methods (research)
- Measures
- Multiple levels, disciplines

Intervention Framework

- Mission
- Models
- Methods (strategies)
- Measures
- Multiple levels, disciplines



Translational Synergy

How to think about fostering resilience

- **Mission** Frame positive goals
- **Models** Include positive influences & outcomes as well as risks, problems
- **Measures** Assess positives as well as negatives
- **Methods** Prevent, ameliorate, promote, protect
- **Multiple** Consider multiple levels & perspectives

Methods

Consider strategies for positive change

Risk-focused

- Prevent or reduce risk, adversity, trauma exposure

Asset-focused

- Increase resources or access to resources

Process-focused

- Restore, mobilize, or harness the power of human adaptive systems

Lessons for military families

- Resilience is dynamic
 - Many interactions shape system function, development
 - Capacity varies over time, situations, development
- Resilience is distributed across systems
 - The capacity for resilience is not “in” the person
 - Resilience is not a trait
- Systems are interdependent
 - Military, family, children in the family
- There are multiple pathways to resilience

More lessons

- Risks matter
 - Cumulative
 - Sometimes it is essential to LOWER RISK
- Resources matter
 - Human, social, economic capital
 - Can be helpful at all levels of risk
- Protective systems matter
 - In the person, relationships, family, community, culture...etc
 - Nurture and protect these systems

Families matter in multiple ways

- Safety monitoring
- Emotional security
- Economic security
- Nurturing body, mind and spirit
- Scaffolding learning and self-regulation skills
- Facilitating achievement in developmental tasks
- Brokering of resources (social capital)
- Transmitting cultural capital
- Moderating stress
- Epigenetic programming, including prenatal

Military families have common as well as unique risks and opportunities

- Moving and mobility
- Living in other cultures
- Separation and reunification
- Injury, disability, death
- Prenatal stress

Lessons from military families

- Delivering quality early childcare at scale
- Strategies for mobile school children
 - MCEC programs
 - “Student 2 Student”
- Creating a family-supportive culture
 - Support resources for spouses
 - Focusing on the health, education, and well-being of children
 - Rethinking policies that affect children
- Benefits of recognizing the interdependence of work and family effectiveness
 - Both for now and future soldiers (former military children)
- Potential –
 - Longitudinal research on promoting resilience
 - Research on developmental timing effects of trauma and stress
 - How to transform systems for families and children