Managing Organizations to Promote Resiliency

Results from a national pilot with child abuse organizations
Learning Objectives

1. Summarize what organizations can do to promote resiliency through hiring, supervision and supporting workers.
2. Identify three strategies that have been helpful in CAC or CASA settings.
3. Apply strategies gleaned from the pilot in your organization.
4. Explain the significance of “the gecko.”
• ‘What do you know about this business?’ the King said to Alice.
• ‘Nothing,’ said Alice.
• ‘Nothing whatever?’ persisted the King.
• ‘Nothing whatever,’ said Alice.
The Resiliency Project

UT - IDVSA

• Karen Kalergis, Project Director
• Noël Busch-Armendariz, Principal Investigator

Resiliency Coaches

• Debra K. Anderson
• Veronica Neuhoff
Our Purpose

Collaborate with researchers, educators and practitioners to develop evidence-based training and technical assistance products that promote resiliency in child abuse staff and volunteers.
Guiding Principles

• Engage the field throughout the process
• Develop tools that can fill current gap
• Draw on evidence-based and practice wisdom
Speak English!' said the Eaglet. `I don't know the meaning of half those long words, and, what's more, I don't believe you do either!'

And the Eaglet bent down its head to hide a smile: some of the other birds tittered audibly.
There will be more evidence-based practice

When there is more practice-based evidence
Research Questions

- What strategies have been explored in the child welfare field?
- Have they been evaluated?
- How have they been evaluated?
- What does the child abuse field think of these strategies?
Practice wisdom

“To participate in trauma stewardship is to always remember the privilege and sacredness of being called to help ... We can enjoy the world and set it straight.”

- Lipsky, 2009
Overview of our Strength based Model
Resilience

- One’s ability to return to healthy functioning after being in a stressful situation

  • The Power to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change.

*The Bounce-Back Factor*
The Resiliency Project Model

The five core elements of resilience are integrated into the organization’s policies, supervision, and training.
Tools for the Trip

Resiliency Coaches Planning Tool
Resiliency Project Pilot sites

- Adams County CAC, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
- Calico, Alameda County CAC, San Leandro, CA
- CASA of Lane County, Springfield, Oregon
- CASA of St. Louis County, St. Louis, Missouri
- Child Advocates of Fort Bend, Texas
- Childhelp CAC, Phoenix, Arizona

- Florida DCF, Emerald Coast CAC & Santa Rosa Kids’ House, Pensacola, Florida
- Project Harmony Child Protection Center, Omaha, Nebraska
- Pulaski County CASA, Little Rock, Arkansas
- Richland County CASA, Columbia, South Carolina
- Safe Shores, the D.C. CAC, Washington, D.C.
- Synergy Services, Inc., CAC, Parkville, Missouri
“Things are getting curiouser and curiouser.”

The Five Core Elements and Strategies for Organizational Resiliency
Self-Knowledge and Insight

- Self-Esteem
  - Knowing who you are, what you believe
- Inner Locus of Control
  - Recognizing one’s own ability to influence outcomes
- Independence
  - Able to act freely, and rely less on others
Research and Practice

- Self-kindness
- Common Humanity
- Mindfulness

- Neff, 2011
Workers most likely to remain DESPITE burnout were those who…

- Had a sense of personal & professional mission
- Were well-matched to their position OR
- Could move to a more suitable position
- Enjoyed supportive relationships with supervisors

- Bednar, 2003
Screening for “Fitness for the Work”

• Sample questions
  – Tell us why you’re interested in volunteering as a child advocate? What is it about this opportunity that appeals to you the most?
  – From what you know about the role as a CASA volunteer, how much interaction with the children are you expecting? Are you anticipating working with other volunteers? *(Explain: As a CASA volunteer, you are working directly with your Case Advocacy Supervisor, but you are not working with other volunteers. Also, while the time you spend with the children is important, you will spend more of your time working for children by advocating for them in court and at meetings, making phone calls collecting information, and ensuring they receive the services they need.)*
  – How comfortable would you be working with children or parents who are HIV positive or have AIDS or Hepatitis C?
Fitness for the Work

– Do you believe it is in a child’s best interest to be placed in a foster home of a different race? How do you feel about transracial adoptions?

– Assuming the home is safe and loving, would you be willing to advocate for the adoption of a child by a gay and/or lesbian couple?

– What do you hope to gain from your experience as a CASA volunteer?

– How do you take care of yourself when you feel overwhelmed?

– Many of the children we represent have been physically and/or sexually abused; so it’s important that we understand the dynamics surrounding this type of abuse. We do need to ask – have you ever been physically or sexually abused? Are you aware of any such incidents in your family? (If yes: Can you tell us a little bit about the situation? How did you handle the pain and emotions that stemmed from the abuse? Did you receive any type of therapy or counseling to deal with the issue? How do you see this experience affecting your work as a CASA volunteer?)
Answers that reveal Fitness for the Work

• Reflect self knowledge, control, independence
  – Gauge where they are in their recovery from any abuse they may have sustained.
  – Their understanding of the program, its mission and their role in fulfilling that mission
  – Openness to differences
  – Ability to cope with trauma and stress
Changes in recruiting volunteers

- Training is more focused on curriculum with less discussion of abuse history from participants
- Training for volunteers/staff on STS, burnout and working with traumatized children
- Higher rate of training completion as participants understand what they signed up for
- Team discussion of interviews
- Additions to NACASA training manual to include information on Resiliency
- Staff/volunteers to attend Board meetings quarterly
- Use of strategy in start-up CASA
Other SKI Strategies

- Mission statements
- Code of Ethics/Conduct
- Recharge and Regroup Focus Group.
- “Why do you do this work?” activity.
- Deep conversations about values – very respectful of others beliefs.
- Respect for the work ethic of others and their personal needs.
Sense of Hope

Components
- Ability to Have Fun
- Sense of Humor
- Optimism

- Belief that situations can get better
- Belief that future is better than the present or past
- Recognize difficulty of the present, yet maintain a positive view towards life
Sense of Hope

- Werner
- Snyder
- Seligman
- Luthans
- Losada
- Fredrickson
Strategies for Hope

• Staff outings and retreats
  – Agency
  – Program

• Holiday parties
  – Resiliency theme

• Make Hope visible - Personal Office Decorations

• More frequent meetings during periods of upheaval – things will get better

• Celebrating successes

• Practicing Gratitude

• Legislative Advocacy

• Tour visionary leaders
Laughter is the best medicine.
Healthy Coping

• Balance work and life
• Pay attention to the impact on you mentally, physically and emotionally and do something about it.
Vicarious Trauma and Burnout Club

- Never exercise
- Do everything for everyone
- Feel everyone’s pain
- Eat fast food
- Have cell phone surgically attached

- Never laugh
- Take responsibility for everything
- Don’t sleep
- Work 24/7
- Abandon your family
- Take work home
Well, aren't you just the most adorable black hole of need?
Healthy Coping

Components
- Planning
- Addressing STS
- Balance
- Using Skills and Abilities
- Commitment to the Truth
- Empathic Attunement
- Intentional Practice
Research & Practice

- Commitment to the truth
- Empathic attunement
- Intentional Practice
- Acknowledge this work has an impact
- What supervisors model & develop in workers
- Applying policies & practices to put people first
Research Link

Kadushin’s Functions of supervision

- Educational
- Supportive
- Administrative

- Commitment to the truth
- Empathic Attunement
- Intentional Practice
Supervisor Strategies
Supporting Healthy Coping

• Commitment to the Truth
  – Address negativity in workplace
  – Conduct “rounds”

• Empathic Attunement
  – Bring in outside therapists for monthly debriefing or for crisis events

• Intentional Practice
  – Encourage different viewpoints in problem-solving
  – Friday afternoons off
  – Using tenured staff and volunteers as mentors
Strong Relationships

Components

- Attachment to Others
- Seeking and Giving Support
- Speak Up for a Change

• BELONGING is a basic human need.
• POSITIVE connections work both ways
• Giving others SUPPORT supports us
• Keep connections
Research Basis

An organization that provide services to traumatized individuals, families or communities is susceptible to becoming a traumatized system.

- Hormann & Vivian, 2005
• Workers who are able to exercise voice are less likely to disengage from work or their own self care.

- Travis & Mor Barak, 2010
Speak up for a change

- Authenticity
- Humanity
- Inquiry
Strategies for Strong Relationships

- Improved supervision
- One-on-one meetings
- Separate support and case management meetings

- Crucial conversations
- Open door policy
- Team newsletter
Strategies for Strong Relationships

- Quarterly social events
- Annual volunteer banquet
- Nominated volunteers for state and national awards
- Volunteers assigned to staff based on skill set
- Volunteer council as mentors
Strategies for Strong Relationships

- Agency feels like a family
- Lunch together
- Happy hours
- Respect and support others’ outside lives
- Welcoming new staff as part of team/family
- Revisit problem with like a family!
Personal Perspective and Meaning

Having a personal point of view about this work
Helping, fixing, and serving represent three different ways of seeing life. When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. Fixing and helping may be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul."

- Rachel Naomi Remen, 2000
Personal Perspective and Meaning

Components

• Morality
• Integrity
• Spirituality
• Meaning making
Strategies for Personal Perspective

**Staff**
- Report on trainings
- Address meaning of work in exit interview
- Encourage staff to volunteer outside agency
- Individual supervision addresses values related to work

**Volunteers**
- Address motivation in recruiting interview
- Encourage volunteers to leave in a positive way
- Training – address topic of personal values relating to work
Perspective

• Diverse values and spirituality are respected

• Attend Bible Study together

• Create safe environment for staff to feel accepted
What we learned

‘No, no!’ said the Queen. ‘Sentence first--verdict afterwards.’

‘Stuff and nonsense!’ said Alice loudly. ‘The idea of having the sentence first!’
Preliminary Findings

• Awareness of impact of work
• Organizational focus on resiliency
• Reduction in perceived risk of turnover
• Culture of resiliency
Personal Changes
(Self Knowledge and Insight)

• Inside out … each has to practice it
• Recognition of their need for support
• Constant focus on resiliency

• Excitement- learning something new and being good at it
• Competency-using research backing
• Leaving the work
Surprises  
(Sense of Hope)

• Not hard to do
• 2 to 4 hours month reasonable
• People responded favorably
• Saw several areas where what they were doing already was resiliency work

“If you can laugh at it, you can survive it.”

– Bill Cosby
THE END IS NOT NEAR
YOU MUST LEARN TO CODE!
Challenges
(Healthy Coping)

- Wish they had set a side consistent time
- More use of Learning Community
- Expected impact
- Creating products
- Resistant staff
Office Policy

I will try to be more understanding of others.

I will try to be more patient when dealing with the incompetent people around me.

I will not slap anyone first thing in the morning.
Connection
(Strong Relationships)

People
• Two member team
• Peer support from fellow geckos
• Launch and booster

Integration of the Topic
• Work into grants
• Leverage in discussions
• Credibility – people seek them out
• In the budget/before the Board
I ♥ my attitude problem
Personal Perspective and Meaning

- Reconnected with why they do this work
- Seeking out new areas of exploration
- Continuing personal resilience journey
- Interest in being part of Gecko 2
What’s Next?

‘Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?’ said Alice.

‘Where do you want to go?’ said the Cheshire Cat.
• ‘I don't much care where—’ said Alice.
• ‘Then it doesn't matter which way you go,’ said the Cat.
“Quiet Leaders”

Individuals who with “modesty and restraint are in large measure responsible for their extraordinary achievements. And since many big problems can only be resolved by a long series of small efforts, quiet leadership, despite its seemingly slow pace, often turns out to be the quickest way to make the world a better place.”

You have a solemn obligation to take care of yourself because you never know when the world will need you.

- Rabbi Hillel
Enough of this stuffy stuff!

Let’s squeeze in some time for questions and discussion!
For more info on

Contact us

IDVSA@austin.utexas.edu
Presenters

- Karen Kalergis
  Karen.Kalergis@austin.utexas.edu
- Debra K. Anderson
  danderson@projectharmony.com
- Veronica Neuhoff
  vneuhoff@jeffersoncountycasa.org