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# Is Resilience in Your Life? Excerpts and Examples from my Practice

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Résilience : pour voir autrement l'intervention en réadaptation

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Article abstract

Developing a more resilient approach to Life's inevitable bumps in the road is a lifestyle choice. To most, if it is nurtured, it begins to permeate both our professional and personal lives. It helps if one has daily reminders that keep the skills alive and in our foregrounds.

Objectives:

1. To introduce concepts related to resilience skills and abilities. 2. To provide highlights of relevant resilience research how this relates to the rehabilitation field. 3. To share highlights from staff resilience training and how this has been applied within Canada's largest paediatric rehabilitation facility. 4. To share clinical illustrations of how the skills and abilities are applied to current practice.

This article is rooted in an evidence-based resilience skills training program (known as Reaching In Reaching Out (RIRO) [www.reachinginreachingout.com](http://www.reachinginreachingout.com)) designed to help adults help young children (7 years and under). By modelling resilience skills and abilities for them, children can develop a more resilient view of life. The RIRO training program uses a cognitive-behavioural and social problemsolving approach based on the Penn Resilience Program.

Through music, humour, kid and family-friendly tools, narratives and other "tips", the audience is introduced to fun and creative ways to nurture the resilience within ourselves as well as our clients/families who are coping with Life after disability. Organizational issues, implications for future research and longer term clinical applications will also be highlighted. (235)

## Is Resilience in Your Life? Excerpts and Examples from my Practice

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Article original • Original Article

### **Abstract**

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Objectives:

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This article is rooted in an evidence-based resilience skills training program (known as Reaching In Reaching Out (RIRO) [www.reachinginreachingout.com](http://www.reachinginreachingout.com)) designed to help adults help young children (7 years and under). By modelling resilience skills and abilities for them, children can develop a more resilient view of life. The RIRO training program uses a cognitive-behavioural and social problem-solving approach based on the Penn Resilience Program.

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**Keywords :** Resiliency, daily life, paediatric rehabilitation

**B**elow, in italics, is an excerpt from Reaching IN...Reaching OUT's (RIRO's) website. Readers are encouraged to visit : [www.reachinginreachingout.com](http://www.reachinginreachingout.com), which is full of free, downloadable resources, video clips, a synopsis of relevant research and other useful teaching tools for clinicians interested in fostering resilience as part of their everyday practice. Adult and children friendly book lists which nurture resilience skills and abilities are also included on the website. Ongoing training opportunities for clinicians are also posted through this website. A quarterly newsletter is also produced and available on line.

### About Resilience

*Research has shown that resilience is the most important quality you can instill in your children. (Brooks & Goldstein, 2001).*

### What is resilience?

*Resilience is the ability to "bounce back" from life's inevitable pressures and hard times. It helps us handle stress, overcome childhood disadvantage, recover from trauma and reach out to others and opportunities so we can grow and learn (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner & Smith, 2001).*

### Resilience can be learned and shared

*Substantial evidence confirms that thinking and coping skills that promote resilience can be learned. More than 30 years of systematic research on preventing depression and promoting resilience at the University of Pennsylvania and other university centres has shown that these resiliency skills can be effectively taught to children eight years and older. (Reivich, & Shatté, 2002; Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995).*

*Further research conducted by Reaching IN...Reaching OUT demonstrates that these skills can be adapted and introduced through modeling and child-friendly activities with chil-*

*dren seven years and younger with positive outcomes.*

### Background

Is resilience in *your* daily life? Ideally, if one embraces it as a lifestyle choice, resilience can become a "new habit". It can begin to permeate our professional and personal lives.

The facilitator of this workshop is currently a community-based Social Worker at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Toronto, Ontario), the largest paediatric rehabilitation facility in Canada. As a member of the *Family Support Service/Brain Injury Rehab Team*, her current practice is with adolescents and young adults living with the effects of Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI's). With over 25 years of clinical experience in various rehab settings, her practice includes individual, family and community resource counseling and group work aimed at supporting people through adjustment to disability issues. She is also involved in systemic advocacy around unmet client/family service needs.

The facilitator was first introduced to RIRO's ([www.reachinginreachingout.com](http://www.reachinginreachingout.com)) evidence-based skills training through an adoptive parent group to which she belonged. She immediately saw RIRO's potential in creating a culture of resilience with the clients, families and staff at Holland Bloorview. She has been a Certified RIRO Trainer since June 2008, and offers the skills training to interprofessional clinicians on an annual basis. Her vision includes eventually co-facilitating skills training for parents of special needs children, once the current funded research trial RIRO is conducting has been completed.

This workshop will orientate the audience to the concept of resilience, share highlights of RIRO's research and training modules for staff. The RIRO training program uses a cognitive-behavioural and social problem-solving approach based on the Penn Resiliency Program ([www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu)). Concepts related to resilience will be defined through interactive exercises involving audience members.



The resilience abilities include:

- Emotional Regulation-keeping calm under pressure, being able to reduce the intensity and duration of emotion
- Impulse Control-being able to pause before acting, delay gratification, set goals and follow through
- Empathy-being able to understand the feelings and needs of another, including reading non verbal cues
- Causal Analysis-an accurate appraisal of a problem in order to get at the root cause
- Realistic Optimism-reality based, maintenance of hope for the future
- Self Efficacy-the perception of effectiveness, being able to influence circumstances and persevere
- Reaching Out-being able to ask for support when needed

The facilitator will also share practical examples and clinical illustrations of how she has attempted to integrate the resilience skills and abilities into her current practice. Through music, humour, kid and family-friendly visual tools, narratives and other “tips”, the audience is introduced to fun and creative ways to live more resiliently, even when adversity strikes.

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