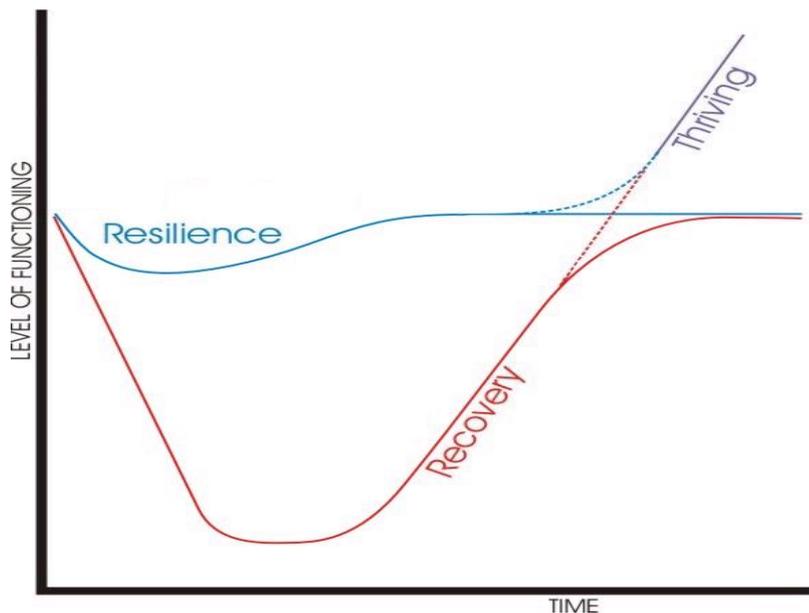


RESILIENCE, RECOVERY AND THRIVING

Dr Gloria Marsay

These are words which are commonly used these days when we talk about surviving adversity. Perhaps it would be good to get a greater understanding of what they mean. After people have had bad experiences let's take for example a bout of influenza, they need time to *recover*. However, if we take necessary precautions before we are attacked by flu, we promote our *resilience*. You can see from the graph that if one is resilient, the level of functioning does not deteriorate as much.



Recovery is the pathway which is followed after a bad experience. It usually starts off as a temporary dysfunction and then, gradually over a period of time, the person recovers and returns to functionality. Recovery requires a process of healing and strengthening, in order for the person to be restored to their former level of functioning.

Resilience reflects the ability a person has to maintain a relatively stable equilibrium in the face of adversity. Resilience is distinct from recovery and is common in most people. It can be reached by a variety of often very simple pathways, some of which may be unexpected. People who are resilient are able to recognize and make use of every opportunity to engage with other people in purposeful action. This connection with other people is vital to both resilience and recovery. Ann Masten, who has done a great deal of research on resilience in children, reminds us that “resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary normative, human resources, in the minds, brains and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities.”

The greatest threat to successful human development is that which weakens our protective systems. So let us not ignore the importance of developing resilience in our communities. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Connection to others who are caring and competent

- Cognitive ability – critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Self-regulation skills – the ability to regulate our ways of thinking and behaving so that the outcome is positive
- Self-confidence – If we believe in ourselves and our ability then we can put plans into action.
- Self-efficacy – If we have the motivation that we are able to positively influence the surroundings in which they live.

Thriving can be thought of as a “better off afterwards” experience which happens after the process of healing when circumstances permit positive, forward development through understanding what has happened, and finding effective ways of making things better for ourselves and our communities.

Most often healing does not come from extraordinary processes, but rather from consistent everyday caring for others. If we aim to enhance the development of protective factors in each individual within our community we can build a resilient society. So the question that we need to ask is: What can we do within our communities to connect with each other and share our resources?