



YOUTH AND FAMILY AT THE TIME OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



How to develop resilience

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Stress and Trauma



- In the Covid-19 pandemic we are involved in a naturalistic experiment linking stress to mental suffering and psychopathology.

Kalin, N.2021:Trauma, Resilience, Anxiety Disorders, and PTSD. Am. J. Psychiatry 178-2,February 2021



Stress and Trauma

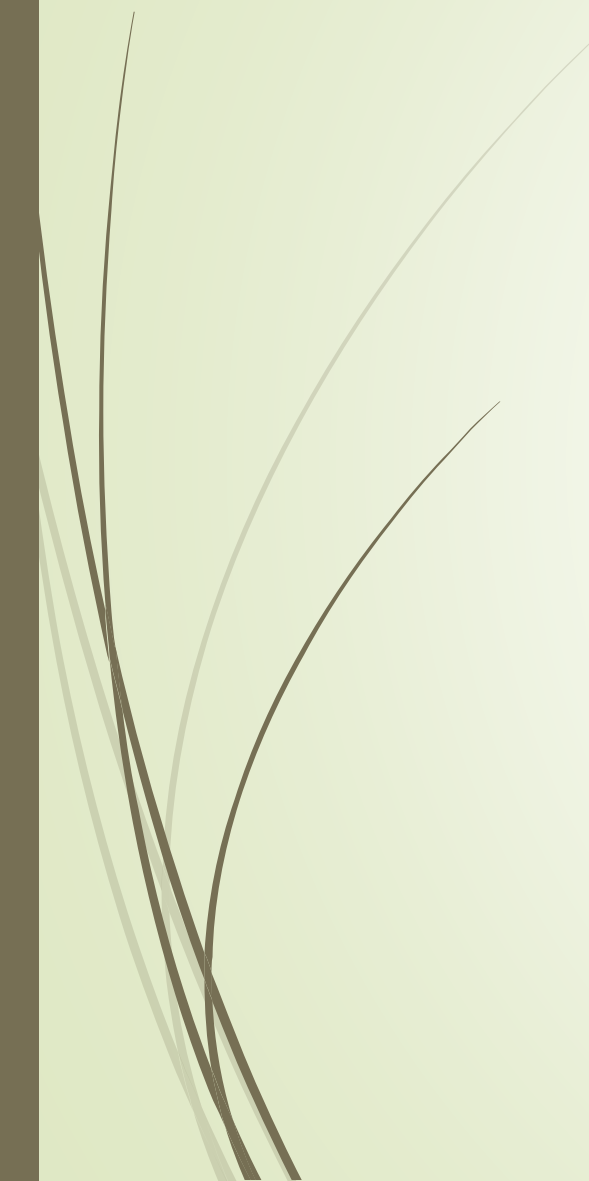

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health issues, substance use/abuse and suicidal ideation have been prominent.
- In January 2021, **41% of adults** in the general population reported symptoms of **anxiety and/or depressive disorder**.
- Certain groups in particular reported high level of stress and vulnerability to infection: **older adults, care providers, people with underlying health conditions, pre-existing mental, neurological or substance use disorders**.

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- In the USA IN 2020, **16%** of adults with children reported not having **sufficient food**. *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, <https://www.cbpp.org/site/default/files/atoms/file/8-13-20>.*
 - **Underprivileged and marginalized** individuals and their families are especially vulnerable to the direct and indirect consequences of the Covid-19 Pandemic.




CDC (Center for Disease Control) August 2020

- This study showed that almost **11%** of respondents had seriously **considered suicide** and the number was significantly higher among **18-24 year-olds** (> 25%).
- The prevalence of **depressive symptoms** in adults has increased **three-fold since** the pandemic started, JAMA, 2020.



Many people who have **recovered** from COVID-19 have reported not feeling like themselves: experiencing short-term memory loss, confusion, an inability to concentrate, and just feeling differently than they did before contracting the infection.



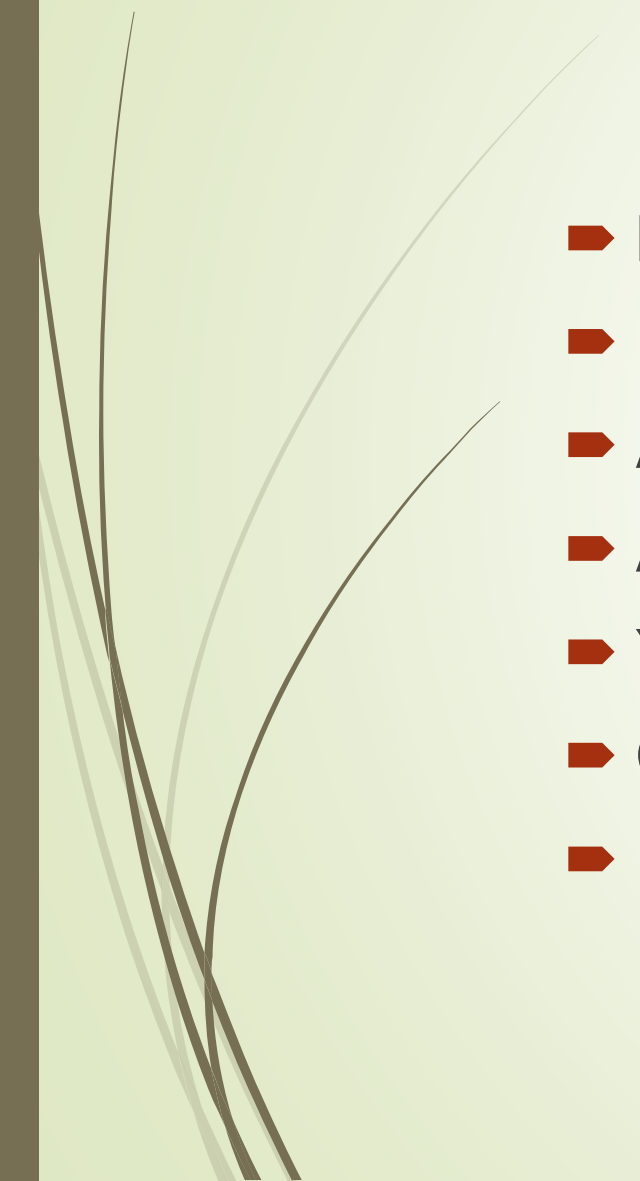


Young People and Covid-19

- Before Covid-19, **1 in 5 adolescents** world wide had **mental** health issues and **suicide** was the **third cause** of death for teens 15-19 years old.
- In UK, during Covid-19 pandemic, **40% of people 13-25 years** old, reported that mental health was much worse.
- In USA, **1 in 4 young people** considered **suicide**. It is significantly higher than 1 in 10 adults. reported that mental health was much worse.
- WHO reported that 72% of Mental Health Services for children and adolescents have been disrupted.




What is Happening During Pandemic?

- Millions of young people cannot go to school or to find jobs.
 - Financial situation is difficult.
 - Alcohol/drugs abuse is increasing.
 - Anxiety and depression are more prominent.
 - Young women and girls take more unpaid care work.
 - Child's marriages, unwanted pregnancies are more obvious.
 - During lockdown more gender base violence is prominent.
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Why the COVID-19 pandemic is a storm of stressors and traumatic events

1. A long-term sense of **uncertainty** about the future coupled with a sense of uncontrollability.
2. Concerns about **contracting** COVID-19, becoming gravely ill, and dying.
3. Worries about **losing loved** ones and friends, and the **grief** associated with real losses.
4. The trauma associated with being **gravely ill** with virus.



Why the COVID-19 pandemic is a storm of stressors and traumatic events

5. Prolonged **physical separation and social isolation** from family and friends.

6. **Disruption** of regular routines, including work and school for children.

7. **Losses of jobs**, business failures, and profound economic consequences.


8. **Lack of trust** in leadership to effectively deal with the crisis.

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FAMILY STRESS



**Partner's
relationship**



Children



**Parents and children
relationship**





FAMILY STRESS

Partner's relationship:

Financial problems, partners losing jobs

Changed in daily routines

Spending all the time in the house

Overwhelmed with anxiety for the future of the family

Fear about personal and children's health

Social isolation

Acting out on personal stress, increased conflicts, aggression, domestic violence

Distancing from each other and increase in divorces



FAMILY STRESS

Children:

High anxiety related to unknown disorder, fear of getting sick

Home schooling, poor motivation for studying

Social isolation and lacking activities in sports and playing with peers

Observing parent's conflicts and violence, anger towards parents

Conflicts among siblings

Trauma faced at this developmental stage can continue to affect children across their lifespan





FAMILY STRESS

Parents and children relationship:

Parents not prepared to give appropriate explanation about Covid-19

Personal anxiety and frustrations are projected onto children

Inability to deal with children's stress and demands

Inability to organize celebrations and family gatherings

Poor contacts with extended family and friends

Children have stayed home because of school or child care closures. Difficult choices managing work and caregiving responsibilities

All of these above causes tension in relationship with children



RESILIENCE

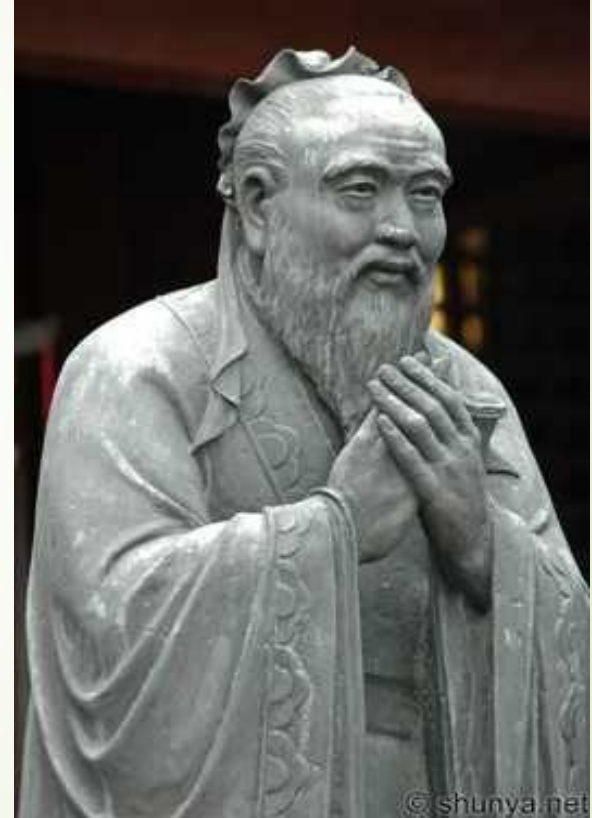


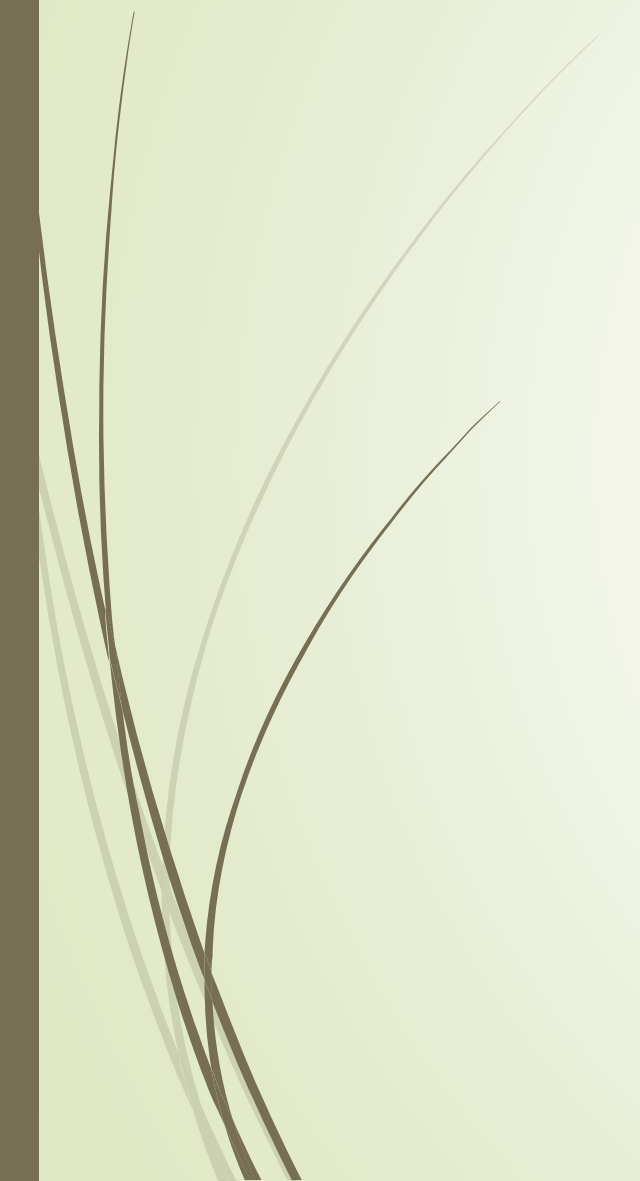

RESILIENCE

Our greatest glory is not in
never falling,

but in rising every time we fall.

Confucius





“You will never truly know yourself, or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by adversity.”

J.K. Rowling



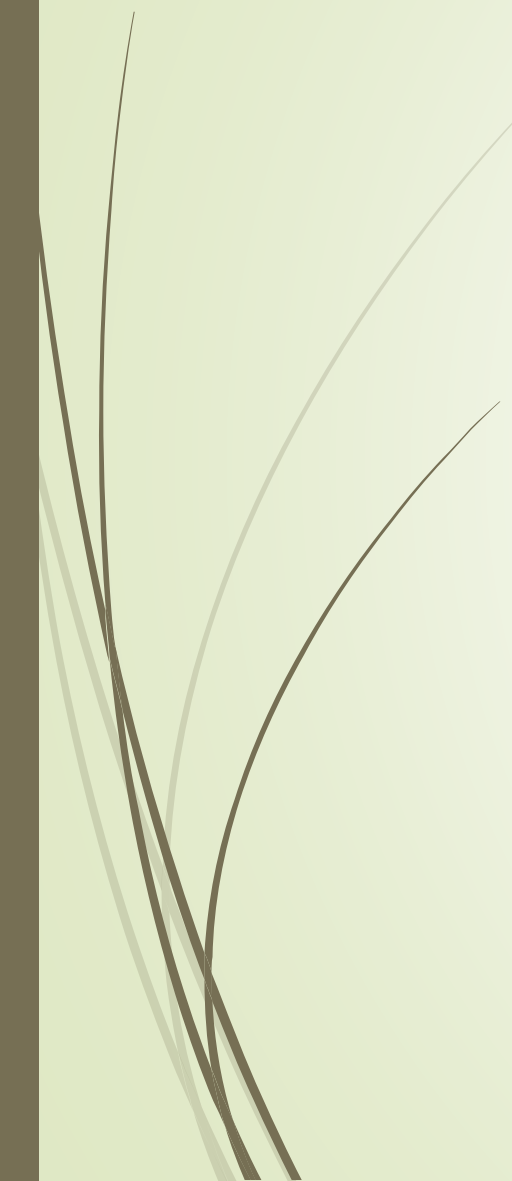
Resilience



- Believing in yourself, having good self-esteem and the courage to do things.
- Being optimistic and accepting the challenges of life.
- Having purpose/meaning in life.
- Cognitive and emotional flexibility: coming up with new ideas/solutions for challenges in life, being adaptable.



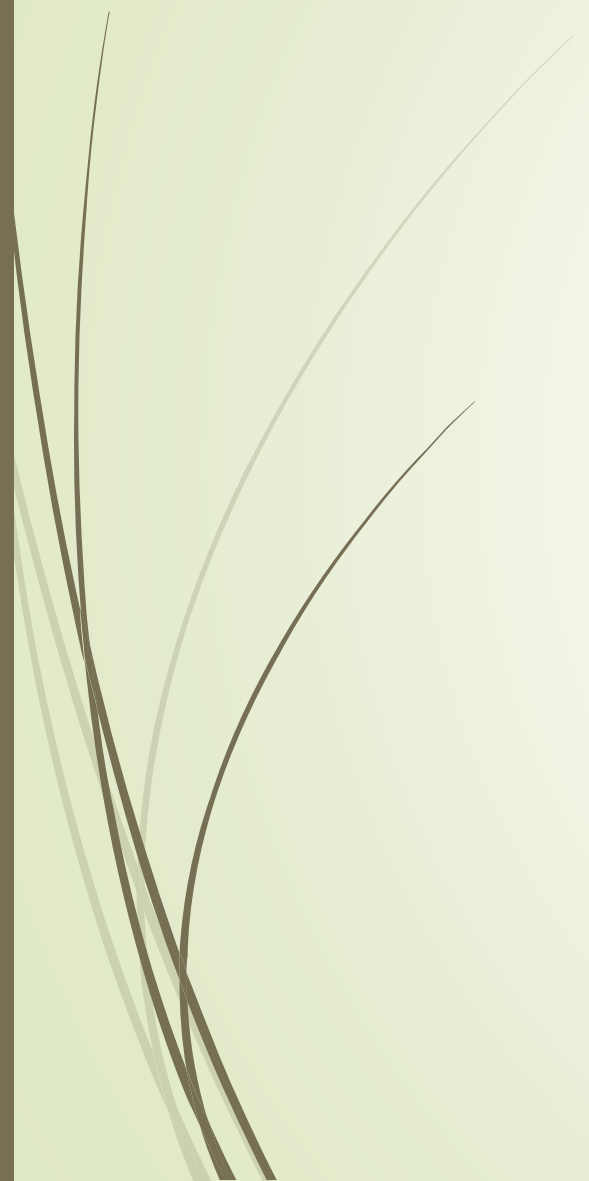
Resilience

- Internal locus of control: being in control of its own emotions.
 - Having a sense of humour.
 - Having spiritual beliefs.
 - Having strong relationships.
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Resilience

- Being resilient is not a personality trait, but more a dynamic learning process.
- Resilience is not a factor that exists solely within individuals.
- It is also amongst families and communities.







Family Resilience

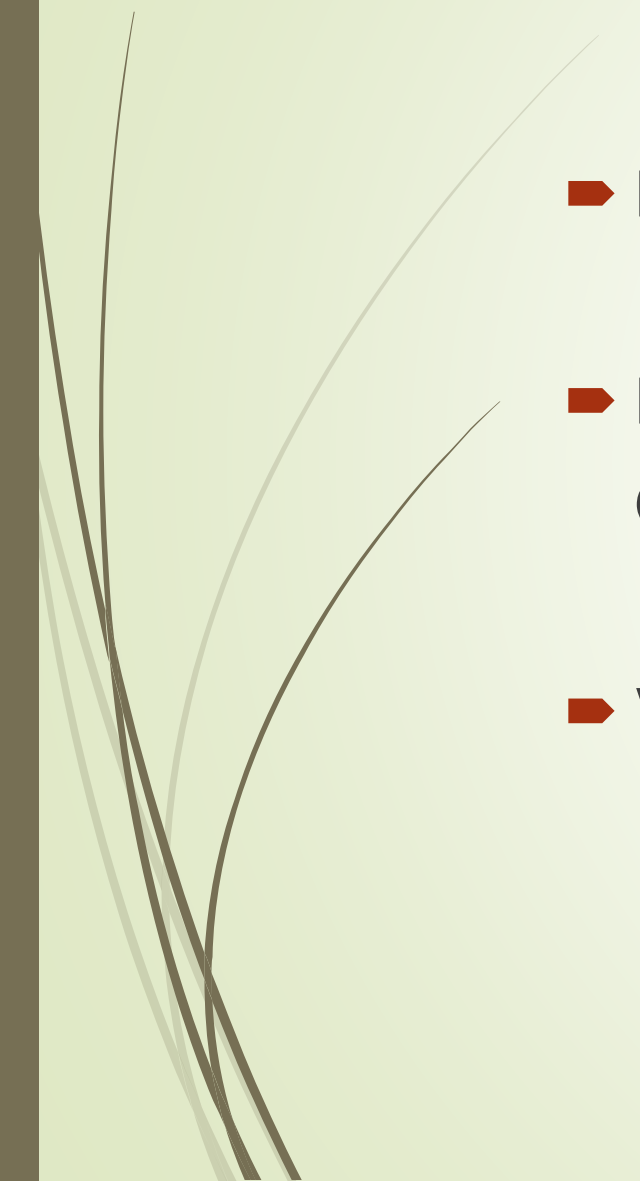
Froma Walsh offers nine “keys to resilience” in three different areas:

- Family belief systems
- Family organization and resources
- Family communication

Walsh, F. (2006): Strengthening Family Resilience (Second Edition). New York: The Guilford Press



Family Belief Systems

- **Make meaning of crisis and challenge**
 - **Maintain a positive outlook:
Objective optimistic view of life**
 - **Valuing spirituality and moral values**
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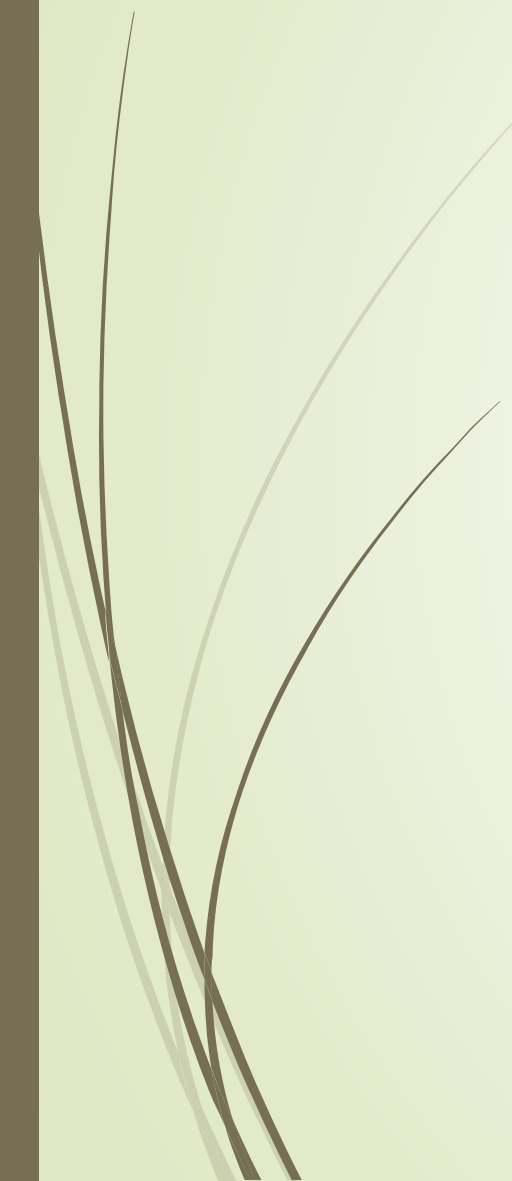


Family Organization and Resources

- ▶ **Flexibility:** Strong leadership with a focus on security and some sense of predictability is needed within the family to help guide vulnerable family members through changes.
- ▶ **Being connected:** Family members have to know that they can count on each other during times of crisis. At the same time, family resiliency is strengthened when members respect each others' individual differences, separateness, and boundaries.
- ▶ **Supported by social and economic resources:** Resilient families are able to recognize when they need help and make use of their network to get the help they need.

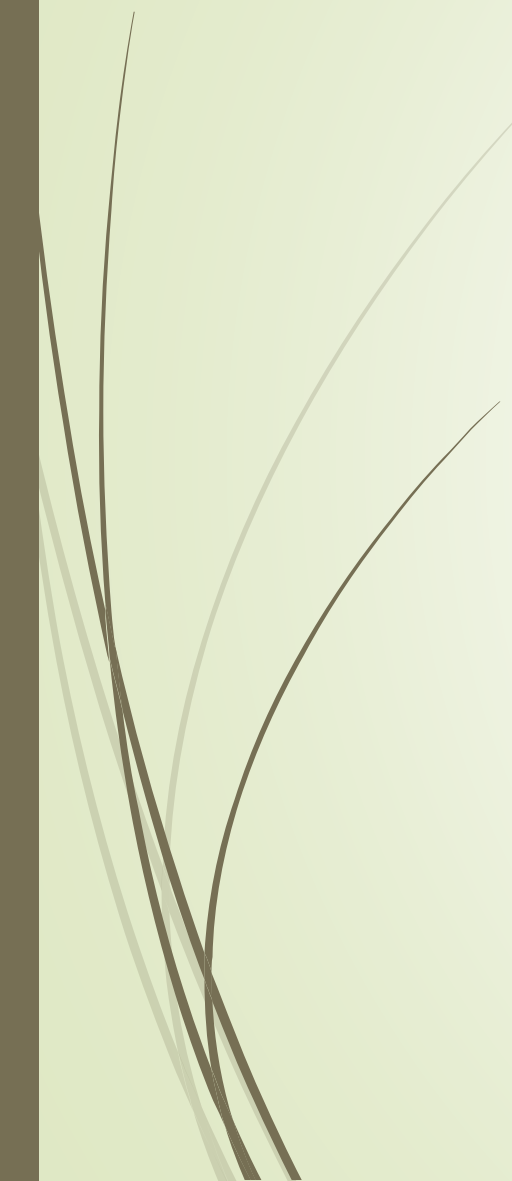


Family Communication

- **Share clear, consistent messages**
 - **Openly express their emotions:** Family members are nurturing mutual trust and encourage each other to share a range of feelings, practice empathy, and comfort one another. Family members enjoy humor and pleasurable interactions that can serve as respite during challenging stressful times.
 - **Use of collaborative problem solving**
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Conclusions

- Resilience in the family in the time of the Pandemic is an important factor in keeping families well and connected and using appropriate resources to support them.
 - Resilience is a quality that families can develop if they understand its value and have learned some of the skills it requires.
 - Mental health professionals need to teach families how to be resilient and to offer skills groups for families.
 - The percentage of people that develop anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, increased substance use including high stress levels for children indicates that many families need help in developing resilience and learning how to talk to their children about the Pandemic.
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HOW YOUNG PEOPLE CAN IMPROVE RESILIENCE

- Stay connected with peers, communicate, share its own feelings
 - Helping others and being supportive
 - Keeping daily routines and taking care of its own self, having hobbies
 - Nurturing positive self view
 - Having hope for the future
 - Accepting changes in personal life, family and community life
 - Talk to family members, having family rituals, enjoying humour and family stories
 - Asking parents and other family members how did they cope in the past in the times of adversity
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