Building Resiliency in Crime Victims

Kentucky's 2007
Victims Assistance Conference
General Session
Presented by
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Tuesday, March 27, 2007
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Learning Objectives

- Identify characteristics of resilient people
- Describe ways to build resilience in crime victims

Crime Victims

- Sexual Assault
- Family Violence
- Child Abuse
- Drunk Driving Crashes
- Homicide

Crime Victim Trauma

- Fear
- Helplessness
- Horror
- Impact

Kolski, T.D., Avriette, M., & Jongsma, A.E. (2001). *The Crisis Counseling and Traumatic Events Treatment Planner* (p. 29-36). NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Resiliency

Ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event, such as death of close relation or violent or life threatening situation, to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of functioning.

Bonanno, G.A. (2004). Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? American Psychologist, 59(1), 20-28.

Resilience

- Ability to adapt well to stress, adversity, trauma or tragedy
- Remain stable
- Healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning in face of disruption

http://www.nayoclinic.com/health/resilience/MH00078

Closely Related Terms for Resilience

- Adaptive Coping
- Hardiness
- Learned Resourcefulness
- Sense of Meaning
- Thriving

http://www.wilderdom.com/psychology/resilience/PsychologicalResilience.html#Definition

What Makes a Crime Victim Resilient?

- Strength Based
- Learning Approach
- Trait Approach
- Biologically Mediated Experience

Gordon, K (1085). The self-concept and motivational patterns of resilient African American high school students. Journal of Black Psychology 21, 239-255.

Increase Resilience in Crime Victims

When the situation cannot be fixed
or an illness cannot be cured,
our therapeutic goal is to help clients
live with inherent stress and anxiety
by increasing their resilience.

Loss, Trauma, and Resiliency: Therapeutic work with ambiguous loss, (2006). Boss, P. NY:W.W. Norton & Company.

Elements That Facilitate Resilience

- Tolerance of change
- Open communication
- Hopefulness
- Sense of community

Flach, F. (1997). *Resilience: The power to bounce back when the going gets tough*. NY: Hatherleigh Press.

A Resilient Mindset

- Feeling in control of ones life
- Being empathetic
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills

Brooks, R. & Goldstein, S. (2004). *The power of resilience: Achieving balance, confidence, and personal strength in your life*. NY: McGraw Hill.

Keys to Resiliency

- Healthy network of co-workers
- Problem-solve effectively
- Balance emotional and rational lives
- Core self-esteem and confidence

Resiliency linked to stress-related problems: ability to adapt is a critical skill. (CorpCare Associates Inc.) Occupational Health Management. August 2004 v14 i8 p89(2).

“Don’t be discouraged;
it may be the last key in the bunch
that opens the door.”
- Stonsifer

Developing Resiliency

- Don't be cynical or distancing
- Have balance or anchoring force
- Humor
- Engage in self-reflection

Resilience - a survival tool for the nineties. (for perioperative nurses) (Editorial) Beverly P. Giordano. *AORN Journal*. June 1997 v65 n6 p1032(2).

Strategies to Develop Resilience in Crime Victims

- Self-Knowledge and Insight
- A Sense of Hope
- Healthy Coping
- Strong Relationships
- Personal Perspective

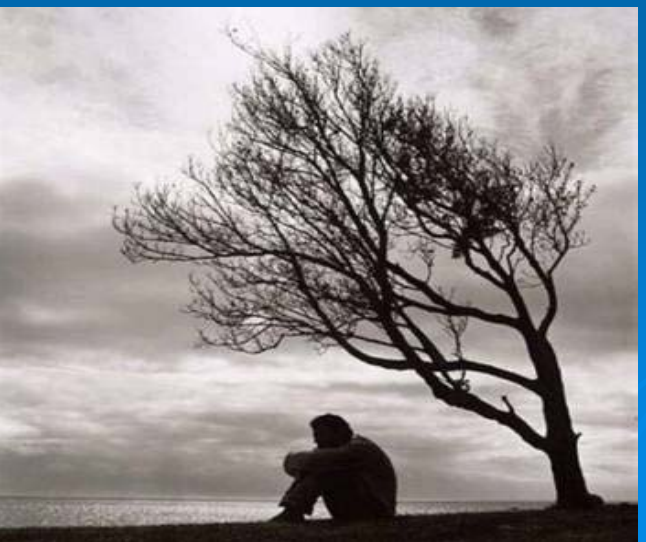
Virginia Resilience Project Post 9/11

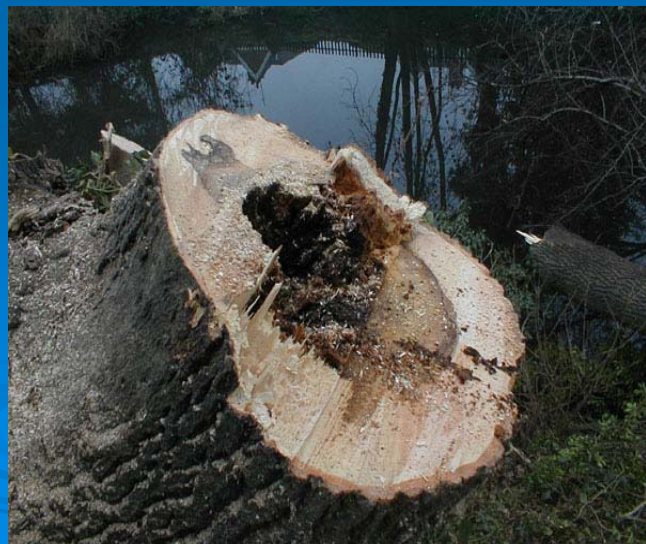
"It takes 2 things to blow down a tree:

a heavy wind outside and rot and decay inside. So it is with man. The winds of adversity may cause him to bend, but if he's strong and vigorous within, he will arise and grow to new heights after the storm passes."

McLellan;

Wise Words and Quotes





www.griefworkcenter.com

Victim's Advocacy and Resiliency

- Immediate crisis intervention
- Court process
- Notify survivors & victims of rights
- Referrals to agencies
- Gift of presence

Finding Meaning

"When what we value is destroyed, we need tools to heal and measures to take to find meaning in the loss".

Rubel, B. Impact of a grief-crisis intervention immediately after a sudden violent death on the survivor's ability to cope. 1999. Illness, Crisis & Loss (7) 4. 376-389.

Personal Meaning

"Meaning is the sense that,
no matter what is going on in your life,
you can hang onto the things
that really matter to you.
It is the belief that there are elements
and people and views that cannot
– no matter what – be taken from you"

-Viktor E. Frankl

10 Ways to Build Resiliency

1. Make connections
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable
3. Change
4. Goals
5. Decisive actions
6. Self-discovery
7. Positive view
8. Perspective
9. Hopeful
10. Take care of yourself

American Psychological Association

Social Support Network

- Emotional attachment is most likely primary protection against traumatization.
- As long as social support remains intact, people are protected against catastrophic stresses.
- Central issue in acute crisis intervention is provision and restoration of social support.

van der Kolk, McFarlane, & van der Hart (1996), A general approach to treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder. In B.A. van der Kolk, A.C. McFarlane, & L. Weisaeth (Eds.), Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society, (p. 417-440).

Characteristics of Resilient Victims

- “Bounce back" and “Recover”
- Problems as opportunities
- Healthy social support network
- Wide comfort zone

http://www.wilderdom.com/psychology/resilience/PsychologicalResilience.html#Definition

“Your life is like a coin.
You can spend it any way you wish,
but you can spend it only once.”

- Lillian Dickson

Building Resiliency in Crime Victims

- Bounce back
- Flexible
- Patient
- Adapt easily
- Self confident
- Sense of self
- Optimistic
- Stronger because of difficult experience
- See problems as opportunities
- Creative solutions to challenges
- Decision-making skills
- Sense of humor
- Playful
- Able to self-sooth
- Effective communicator
- Good listener
- Social support
- Good friendships
- Sense of community
- External sources of strength
- Realistic goals
- Hopeful outlook
- Meaning
- Intrinsic spirituality
- Engage in self reflection

Palette of Grief®

Creative Problem Solving Process

1. Fact finding
2. Problem finding
3. Idea finding
4. Solution finding
5. Acceptance finding

Flach, F. (1997). Resiliency: The power to bounce back when the going gets tough. NY: Hatherleigh Press. p. 143.

Non Resilient Crime Victims

- This is the way I have coped in the past and though it doesn't work, I don't know any other way to cope.
- I blame myself when things go wrong.
- Absolutely no one can ever understand what I am going through.

Personal Growth as a Positive Outcome

4 factors emerged as correlates of better adjustment:

1. See some good resulting from the death
2. Chance to say goodbye to the loved one
3. intrinsic spirituality
4. Spontaneous positive memories of decedent

Gamino, L.A., Sewell, K.W., & Easterling, L.W. (2000). Scott and White Grief Study—Phase 2: Toward an adaptive model of grief. *Death Studies*, 24, 633-660.

The Rubber Band

Palette of Grief®

If you had to describe resiliency using just one word,

what would that word be?

If you were training a novice
to do your job working
with crime victims,
what is one piece of advice
you'd be sure to give them
to build a crime victim's resiliency?

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