Resilience Rx: a prescription for resilience you can offer your families, one messy moment at a time!

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Disclosures: none

Objectives:
- Describe current understanding of positive childhood experiences & "stress busters"
- Describe current understanding of toxic stress and its impact on children in the context of COVID
- Review Bright Futures Social and Emotional guidelines for parents and providers
- Demonstrate how to integrate resilience building strategies such as breathing exercises, meditation and mindfulness into your anticipatory guidance and your day-to-day practice

"Tuning in: parents of young children speak up about what they think, know & need" (2016)

Parents:
- 91% say parenting is their greatest joy
- 73% say parenting is their greatest challenge
- 69% say they want more positive parenting strategies
- 54% which they had more information about how to be a better parent

Pediatricians:
- Highly useful and 62% Effective!
- 93% have a high degree of trust in our advice

Zero to Three 2016 Survey

- Parents want help with patience and discipline
- Pediatricians are poised to be helpful
  - Usefulness grade = B+
  - Effectiveness grade = D-

The way my parents raised me
Consumers of health care
Parents of my child
Medical professionals like the pediatrician
My partner/my child's other parent
Resilience University

- Use behaviors as an opportunity to integrate protective factors
- 4 sessions, 30 min each, >1 week apart
- Preliminary raw data (19/41, ongoing enrollment)
- Applying principles in all patient interactions now
- Bridges the gap between what we know about resilience building and what we’ve been taught to offer to families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exit Questionnaire</th>
<th>Percent answering agree or strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have changed the way I parent after this program.</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program provided our family with helpful skills.</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program changed the way I view my child’s unwanted behaviors.</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program changed the way I discipline my child.</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now feel better equipped to help my child when they are having a big unpleasant emotion.</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this program to others.</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC) is a 35-item parent-report questionnaire designed to identify children with difficulties in psychosocial functioning. Its primary purpose is to alert pediatricians at an early point about which children would benefit from further assessment. A positive result on the overall scale indicates that the child in question would benefit from further evaluation. It is not a diagnostic tool. The PSC has subscales which measure inner distress and mood, interpersonal relations and behavior, and attention.
1. Complains of aches and pains
2. Spends more time alone
3. Tires easily, has little energy
4. Fidgety, unable to sit still
5. Has trouble with teacher
6. Less interested in school
7. Acts as if driven by a motor
8. Daydreams too much
9. Distracted easily
10. Is afraid of new situations
11. Feels sad, unhappy
12. Is irritable, angry
13. Feels hopeless
14. Has trouble concentrating
15. Less interested in friends
16. Fights with other children
17. Absent from school
18. School grades dropping
19. Visits the doctor with doctor finding nothing wrong
20. Has trouble sleeping
21. Wores a lot
22. Wants to be with you more than before
23. Feels he or she is bad
24. Tackles unnecessary risks
25. Gets hurt frequently
26. Acts younger than children his or her age
27. Does not understand other people's feelings
28. Does not show feelings
29. Feels things that do not belong to him or her
30. Refuses to share

**Pediatric Symptom Checklist**

**COVID Stress**

Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Impact on Development (RAPID) - Early Childhood

**Bright Futures Guidelines**

But what leads to the behavior?

- Increased anxiety
- Increased depression
- Increased stress
- Increased irritability
- Increased aggression
- Increased withdrawal
- Increased somatic complaints

**COVID Stress**

Stress ↑ 53%

Depression ↑ 20%

Anxiety ↑ 35%


The rise of adverse childhood experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

Daniel J. Mayer, T. Hoyt Ci, April D. Derman w
Affiliations are current
PMID: 32900773 DOI: 10.1037/tra0000071

Abstract

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which is defined by different forms of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction occurring before the age of 18 years, is a major public health problem in the United States that has the potential to worsen in the current COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the challenge is even greater for children and youth from low-income communities and communities of color. Thus, there is a greater need for investments in youth-serving systems within and beyond health care and public health to effectively address adverse childhood experiences and prevent its short- and long-term negative health and social sequelae well beyond the current public health crisis. (PsychInfo Database Record © 2020 AAP, all rights reserved.)

A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide

Movement restrictions aimed to stop the spread of the coronavirus may be making violence in homes more frequent, more severe and more dangerous.

Forbes

For Some Kids, This Last Year Qualifies As An Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)

ACS rising with Parental Stress

Families in the COVID-19 pandemic: parental stress, parent mental health and the occurrence of adverse childhood experiences - results of a representative survey in Germany

Claudia Cohnert 1, 2, Andreas T. 3, Josefa Reijnen 4, Maria Hennen 5, Stefanie Beninger 1, 2, Sylvia Feldmair 1, 2
Affiliations are required
PMID: 32943428 DOI: 10.1038/s41481-019-00989-5 Free PMC article

Abstract

Planning during the COVID-19 pandemic is highly challenging, with parents having to meet various demands simultaneously. An increase in adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has been reported during the COVID-19 pandemic, and parents and children are at risk of experiencing ACEs. The ACEs increase is due to the social distancing required during the pandemic. This study includes a representative population sample of parents with children aged <18 years, who were recruited from a mental health service in Germany. The survey included a total of 1,000 participants. The results showed that the prevalence of ACEs increased significantly during the pandemic (p < 0.05). The data revealed that parents reported higher levels of depressive symptoms (P < 0.05) and anxiety (P < 0.05). Up to 62% of the sample reported ACEs in the child’s lifetime. In this group, 10% reported an increase in child welfare cases during the pandemic, and 10% reported a decrease in mental health cases. The increase in ACEs was associated with the loss of employment, financial stress, and health problems. The results of this study highlight the importance of mental health services during the pandemic, and the need to provide support to parents and children.
Positive Childhood Experiences

Positive Childhood Experiences questions asked how often the respondent:
1. Felt able to talk to their family about feelings
2. Felt their family stood by them during difficult times
3. Enjoyed participating in community traditions
4. Felt a sense of belonging in high school
5. Felt supported by friends
6. Had at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in them
7. Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home

Not just another list

Evidence Based Strategies
Coregulation

Self-regulation develops in a child who experiences their parent’s or caregiver’s calm repeatedly when the child becomes distressed or co-regulation.


Mutual Dysregulation & Toxic Stress

Stressed Parent

Center for Translational Neuroscience (2020, July 30)

MUTUAL DYSREGULATION OCCURS

Bridging the Gap

1. Offer concrete help
2. Foster parental resilience
3. Facilitate social connectedness
4. Enhance parent knowledge of child development and social emotional competence in children

Listening to a Baby’s Brain: Changing the Pediatric Checkup to Reduce Toxic Stress

Listening to a baby’s heartbeat, examining a toddler’s ears. Testing a preschooler for exposure to lead. These critical screenings have long been the hallmarks of early childhood checkups.

Now, leading pediatricians are recommending major changes to the checkups of the future. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) wants primary care doctors to screen their youngest patients for social and emotional difficulties that could be early signs of toxic stress.
Latest Bright Futures Guidelines (2017) expanding our ability to provide anticipatory guidance around self-care & stress management.

“Resilience Rx” aligns AAP’s recommendations during COVID to help families talk about difficult feelings.

“Resilience Rx” aligns with CDC Recommendations.

“For all ages and stages, facilitating resilience is key. Pediatricians can remind families about the strength they provide for their children by being present, empathic, and nurturing. Practicing techniques together such as mindfulness, relaxation, and focusing on the present moment can help the entire family build coping skills to deal with uncomfortable and frightening feelings. When practiced regularly, children and caregivers can build skills that promote self-regulation and greater awareness of their feelings and the feelings of others that last long beyond the duration of the pandemic.”
CDC Recommendations during COVID

**Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress**
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. It’s good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- Take care of your body.
  - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
  - Try to get healthy, well-balanced meals.
  - Exercise regularly.
  - Get plenty of sleep.
  - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
  - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

Resilience Rx

- **Trained to focus on behaviors**
- **Talking about feelings? That’s for a counselor…**
- **Shame factor**
- **We are perfectly poised to normalize the messy!**
- **“It’s okay that things are hard.”**

**What gets in the way of positive experiences?**

#1 = **STRESS!**

**Two step process:**

#1 Notice each feeling

#2 Care for each feeling

**Evidenced-Based Buffering Interventions**

- Meditation, Mindfulness practices
- Promote self-care (use Vagus Nerve)
- Ask for help
- Prioritize mental health
- Emotional Awareness
- Breathing exercises
- Headspace/Calm
- Glitter jar meditation
- 5 big deep breaths/Singing
- 5-2-1-0 Listening to body, emotional awareness
- Probiotics
- Outside activities: Play, Exercise, sports, dance party
- Inside activities: Playdoh, meditation, music
Resilience Rx

- Age Based Case Studies
- Anticipatory guidance model
- Using real examples from my practice
- The "Anatomy of a Meltdown"
  - How is the child feeling?
  - How is the parent feeling?
  - How do we restore tolerable stress and improve relational health?
  - How do we return to co-regulation (away from mutual dysregulation)?

Tool Kit

- Emotions > Behaviors
- Coaching parents in self-care (respond/don’t react)
- Breathing Exercises
- Emotional awareness
- Meditation
- Mindfulness

Tool Kit: Breathing

- 5 big Deep Breaths
- Box Breathing
- 4:7:8 Breathing with Mantra

Tool Kit: Emotional Awareness

Each emotion comes and goes like an ocean wave. Your job is to take care of yourself while it is there so it doesn’t wash you out to sea!
Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance for Parents: Infancy

Every baby has his own unique personality or temperament that is unlike any other. You can begin to understand your baby’s temperament by:

- Watching how he responds to you and the other people around him
- Noticing how he reacts to objects he sees, hears, and touches
- Observing how active or quiet he seems to be
- Becoming more aware of his moods and behaviors

Others who care for your baby should also understand his temperament. Help them by describing your baby’s likes, dislikes, needs, and responses.

It is normal to feel frustrated when your baby is fussy and hard to console. No matter how frustrating it may be, never, never shake, hit, or slap your baby. Shaking can lead to blindness; can damage your baby’s eyes, brain, or spinal cord; and can even cause seizures or death.
Infancy

- Address parental stress
- Identify current self-care strategies
- Brain-storm around other options
- “Very few true parenting emergencies”
- “It’s okay for things to not be okay”

“Resilience Rx”

Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance:
“Managing Emotions” 2-5 years

Discussion questions:

- Does your child have a will of her own? How and when does she show it?
- Is your child having frequent temper tantrums?
- What seems to trigger the tantrums? How do you respond to them?
- What kinds of things do you find yourself saying “no” to?
- Tell me how you set limits for your child. How do you discipline her?
Can feel embarrassing
Lack of perceived control
Child having unpleasant feelings (?identify)
Toddler needs coregulation
Singing!

Goodnight Body with Elmo on Headspace

Match the energy

- High energy ↔ low energy
- “stress buster”
- Use existing parenting strategies intentionally to harness power of nervous system
- “Brain Aligned Parenting”
- Perfectly imperfect parenting
- Not going to ruin them for life
Transitions

The Boy who Loved Frogs

List of things for each “step”
- Parent notices energy level/feelings
- Addresses these needs rather than focusing on behaviors
- Parent practices self-care too

Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidance:
Middle Childhood/Elementary

For the Parent
- What does your child do when he feels stressed, angry, or frustrated?
- Has he had any recent stresses in the family or at school?
- What concerns or worries has your child shared with you?
- How do you try to help him handle his mistakes and disappointments?

For the Child
- What are some things that make you worried or mad? How do you handle those feelings?
- Who do you usually talk to about these things?
- How do your parents and other adults help you when you make mistakes? Are disappointed? Get upset or angry?

And then there was math….

- Not wanting to do school work
- Only wants to play video games
- Parents get frustrated
- Fear Of Ruining Them For Life (#FORTFL)
- Time for self-care
And then there was math…. And then there was math….  

**Bright Futures Guidance for Parents: Middle Childhood**

Children with loving and supportive parents generally have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves. You can help your child feel good about herself by:

- Giving her lots of hugs and showing her you love her
- Spending individual time with her doing things she enjoys
- Taking part in activities together (at home, at school, and in your community)
- Talking with her, listening, and encouraging her to express her feelings

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Elementary

**Bright Futures Guidance for Parents: Middle Childhood**

Let your child try different types of activities such as sports, art, and music. This will help her to find things that she is good at and will give her a chance to challenge herself in a positive way.

If your child doesn’t succeed at something right away, encourage her to try again. You may be tempted to do things for her if they are hard, but she will feel better about herself if you help her to do things for herself. Praise her for trying and for making progress toward a goal, not just for succeeding.

Age-appropriate chores will teach your child responsibility and help her to feel that she has a valuable role to play in the family. Include her in decisions about the chores she will do, when she will do them, and how. Even if she complains about doing her chores, she will feel good about what she is able to do.
Extracting from video games

Rescue mission
Empower both parents and tweens to practice breathing/self-care
Safe-word
Go into video games

Bright Futures Social Emotional Guidelines: Parents of Teens

Let your teen know that you love him just the way he is. Point out the things that make him special—his great smile, sense of humor, or concern for others. Knowing that he is loved, valued, and supported will help protect him from negative feelings and self-doubt.

Praise the things your teen does right and recognize his efforts as well as his achievements. Correct him when it’s necessary, but don’t be overly critical. Avoid insulting comments and belittling messages that can lead to his having feeling bad about himself.

It’s not easy being a teen. There are pressures to do well in so many aspects of life. Make sure that your goals for your teen are realistic. Never make him feel that he is not “living up” to your expectations. When he doesn’t do as well as you or he would hope, praise his efforts and encourage him to work harder next time.

Your teen is more likely to avoid risky behaviors if he is involved in activities that interest him and make him feel good about himself. Attend as many of these events as possible. He may not say so, but he really wants you to be there!

Bright Futures Guidelines for the Teen

There is no one else exactly like you. Accept and appreciate yourself for who you are—both inside and out. Try not to compare yourself with others. Value yourself instead and be the best “you” that you can be.

We each have our own set of talents and strengths. Think about the things that you do well and how you’d like to improve. Try harder at the things you already do and try new things that interest you.

Step out of your “comfort zone” and take on new challenges to increase your self-confidence. Join a club or take part in an activity you’ve never tried before—sports, volunteering, music. This will help you discover new interests you can develop and could even lead to friendships with others who have the same interests as you.

Spend time with friends who listen to you, respect you, understand you, and share your beliefs and values.
Teens

- More challenging choices
- Parents feel fear, frustration, anger
- Can't just do shock and awe
- Have to integrate resilience

Key Strategies:
- Parents need to be aware of their own stress level & take care of themselves
- Parents need to not take away teens emerging coping skills (work to extinguish unhealthy ones one at a time but only once teen has a new one in place)
- “What helps you when...?” Ask them!
- Can't do school work or think logically when prefrontal cortex offline
- Can't expect high energy behavior if sad/lonely/depressed
- Matching expectations for behavior with emotional health/state

RESOURCES
THANK YOU!

Questions?

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