

RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™

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Abstract

Adversity can affect our lives in a multitude of ways. Resilience and wellness can be cultivated through intentionally engaging in experiences that enhance our well-being. It is important to increase our awareness of toxic stress and the impact that experiences have on the human brain. There is an opportunity to increase our own self-awareness and how to engage in interactions and relationships in a centered and regulatory manner. RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ provides insight to increase opportunities that foster the indicators of well-being and highlight the human conditions needed to enhance resilience and wellness. The framework incorporates elements related to social and emotional development and connecting the whole person; mind, body and spirit. When we holistically cultivate each aspect of the framework, a person naturally RISES, living out their greatness for the world to see.

Keywords

Adversity, wellness, self-awareness, resilience, RISE

Wellness and resilience are foundational concepts for personal well-being. Through continued exploration, many elements have been identified that create wellness and resilience in individuals, families and communities (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Ginsburg, 2014; Karger, 1996; Meadows, Miller, & Robson, 2015; Sippel, Pietrzak, Charney, Mayes, & Southwick, 2015). RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™, a framework with trademark in development, aims to look holistically at varying factors to influence wellness and resilience. Informed by evidence and research, the framework

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desires to spread awareness, knowledge and integration of the key factors that cultivate wellness and resilience. This publication is an introduction to the framework with further writings and resources aiming to address the applications of RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™.

RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ describes wellness and resilience through an evolutionary lens of human needs and development. The framework provides insight for cultivating consistent factors and responding to experiences with the means to manage, restore, and rise through adversity. This can be done on a personal level as well as on an interactive and relational level. By integrating concepts within the framework, one can create systems, environments, relationships and interactions centered on fostering resilience and wellness.

RISE is a framework that practitioners would apply to their practice settings. The aim is for RISE to be used as a guiding compass for the work with youth and families across a variety of programs and services. This framework should be used to aid in the assessment process, treatment planning, safety and crisis planning, ongoing client engagement, and transitional planning. The framework will increase awareness regarding wellness factors, provide resources for practitioners, and create common language and collaborative planning among all parties participating in care. Below outlines each element of RISE: Relationships, Indicator of Well-being, Social and Emotional Development and Enhancements.

Relationships

The ‘R’ of RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ is *relationships*. The framework believes that the adaptive relationships we have with ourselves and others are the foundation required to actualize well-being and resilience. There is a recognition that healing and growth more consistently occur because of the groundwork created by healthy relationships. It is through these relationships that we increase our opportunities to positively view the world, others, and ourselves. There are three concepts laid out in the ‘R’ part of RISE: experiences, the ‘you’ intervention and characteristics.

Experiences

To understand our relationships, we must value our experiences. Life experiences influence the developing brain and overall emotional, social, mental and behavioral growth of humans. These experiences affect our private logic and how we foster



relationships with ourselves and others (Kottman, 2002). Our experiences are consistently integrated within our brains, creating neuropathways that start to influence all the core developmental needs of humans (van der Kolk, 2014).

These neuropathways start to condition our beliefs, assumptions, characteristics, and behaviors. These experiences, both positive and negative, start to influence an internal hardwiring and narrative of the developing brain (Kottman, 2002; Siegel & Hartzell 2014). If we provide young people with positive experiences, we build their brains to respond to life stressors in positive and healthy ways. Positive experiences include adequate nutrition, sleep, stability, consistency, nurture, and love. The framework believes these experiences play a vital role in one's overall wellness and resilience.

The 'You' Intervention

The 'R' *relationships* aspect of the framework is the 'you' intervention. Resilience and wellness are much less about interventions and much more about the way of being with others, but also stress how significant the 'you' part of the relationship is. This starts with our own philosophical belief as it relates to humans. Do we believe that all humans have greatness inside of them? Answering yes to this question allows each of us to be in the life space needed, not only to believe in, but also to desire to foster the greatness inside others and ourselves.

In the 'you' intervention we explore and assess ourselves. It is a belief within the framework that we cannot lead others past the point of our own healing. Our own self-awareness, reflection and exploration is not only one of the most beautiful gifts we can give ourselves, but also a gift to the world. It can be incredibly hard to be grounded, centered and present with self and with others during times of stress, tension and conflict (Siegel & Hartzell 2014). It is our responsibility to be self-aware, reflective and conscious of how our beliefs, assumptions, perceptions and characteristics can influence others and how to work most effectively with those around us. When we are self-aware and connected to our own sensations, feelings, thoughts and behavior, then we can first regulate self in order to offer a regulatory interaction with another (Siegel & Hartzell 2014). When we know ourselves, we open the door to living an authentic life. In doing this not only can we meet our own needs through healthy, adaptive mechanisms, but we also can be a healing agent for others.

Characteristics

Thus far, in the 'R' *relationships* component of RISE we have explored the idea that experiences shape who we are and that it is through the power of relationships, both with others and ourselves, that we can cultivate resilience and wellness. This leads us to the concept of relational based characteristics. Relational based characteristics are those very characteristics found in theories, research and evidence-based modalities such as Attachment Theory founded by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. These characteristics encourage healing agents to develop and influence through their relationship.

Characteristics demonstrated can include unconditional positive regard, compassion, engagement, support, caring, listening, strength-based, loving, adaptive, empowering, collaborative, flexible, humorous, restorative, centered, nurturing, playful, optimistic, consistent, and reliable. Garfat, Freeman, Gharabaghi, and Fulcher (2018) explore 25 specific characteristics found in relational practice. When we live and lead with these characteristics, healing interactions and relationships become a way of being, promoting wellness, and resilience from inside out.

Indicators of Well-being

The 'I' of RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ represents the *indicators of well-being*. These are the conditions needed both to foster a sense of psychological wellness and support resilience. These conditions include the need for safety, connection and belonging, meaning and purpose, and efficacy in the world. We believe it is our responsibility to develop systems, services, relationships, and interactions that foster these conditions.

Safety

The condition of safety is a core element of wellness and one of our most basic, evolutionary needs. Most of our decisions and actions are based on sustaining or improving our circumstances. Safety is a felt sense of predictability, security and consistency on a physical, physiological and psychological level (Siegel & Bryson 2012). Ensuring a common understanding of expectations, support and accountability to safeguard trust and respect is at the forefront of safety. Safe environments and relationships establish norms, seek feedback and facilitate restorative practices (Glasser, Bowdidge, & Bravo, 2013; Greene & Ablon, 2006; Siegel & Bryson 2012). It is only when

we have a sense of safety that we can continue to grow, develop and be motivated forward.

Connection & Belonging

The condition of belonging is an overarching ideal that connects us. Belonging is more of a state-of-mind than a tangible outcome: It is something that is individual to us all. This includes a felt sense of connection and engagement. Environments that foster a sense of connection and belonging facilitate inclusion, collaboration and honor each person's truth. When we work to create environments that uphold the need for connection and belonging, we aim to promote the experience of shared interest, assets, and capabilities. Engagement occurs through involvement, being resourceful, and contributing to the larger community. When humans feel connected and a sense of belonging, they are motivated by relationships and the desire to be a part of community. The larger community becomes integrated within the self-construct. The community also sees the person's strengths and believes in the person's potential.

Meaning & Purpose

Meaning is an intangible ideal but one that encompasses the very essence of life and our existence on earth. How we find meaning in our lives is different for everyone, but the consistent idea is that it is the 'Why' that drives you forward. Your heart is your best tool to access your true purpose and passion. When you lead from your heart, you are naturally more joyful and motivated to explore (Brown, 2010). When we demonstrate purpose, we project an infectious passion, a love for life and an unyielding connection to daily living. Meaning gives humans direction, personal fulfilment and desire for curiosity. It is a felt sense of value and living a purpose driven life. It is the ability to identify contribution, fulfilment and a sense of altruism within one's life. Meaning and purpose often help humans feel they are a part of something bigger than themselves. When we feel the interconnection between ourselves, others and the world around us we are given the energy to create a life that is rooted in meaning and purpose.

Efficacy

Efficacy refers to the ability to act, be effective, accomplish, and assume responsibility. It refers to the feeling of control and a sense of agency. One of the important components of efficacy is that of self-actualization; the fulfilment of our talents

and potential. This fulfills our sense of mastery and satisfaction. It is a felt sense of capability and reaching expectations within daily living. An ability to identify, grow, and feel invested to use our strengths (Lew & Bettner, 1998). Efficacy is the belief that we are courageous, capable, independent and autonomous. Efficacy leaves us feeling empowered, proud and accomplished. Efficacy can be fostered by establishing goals and meeting them, utilizing strengths, accomplishing tasks and projects, and problem solving through difficulty.

Social and Emotional Development

The 'S' of RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ is *social and emotional development*. Social and emotional development aims to integrate prosocial growth in everyday systems, services, relationships and interactions in order to help others interact with self, others and the larger world in prosocial ways (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). These factors include awareness of self and others, affect management, relational rhythms, and healthy choices. The framework believes we need to provide opportunities where others can develop and grow within their social and emotional intelligence. This social and emotional development promotes our wellness and resilience.

Awareness of Self & Others

The ability to be aware of self and others in order to understand the possible impact of choices and actions is at the core of wellness and resilience. Awareness of self and others involves self-reflection, empathy, and perspective taking. Others can help develop a person's awareness of self and others through tracking, reflecting, paraphrasing, validating, 'I' statements, and meta-communicating (Kottman, 2002). Increasing awareness of self and others can develop out of curiosity, asking open-ended questions, and making inferences. The goal is to help build one's own awareness of self and others to promote prosocial living.

Affect Management

The ability to execute affect management allows exposure to stressful, uncomfortable and potentially triggering experiences in prosocial ways. It is the capacity to regulate sensations and emotional states of being. We learn how to manage our affects through coregulation. When we foster affect management for others, we first remain regulated

ourselves by modeling sensation awareness, breathing, and the utilization of coping mechanisms. Affect dysregulation typically indicates the need for sensory input as well as the need for affect attunement, reflection, paraphrasing and validation. By attuning to the emotional regions of the brain, we can assist another's state of affect management in order to most effectively aid them in logical awareness of wellness needs, thus cultivating one's resilience.

Relational Rhythms

Relational rhythm is the ability to develop and sustain healthy relationships with others. This can include daily interactions, social skills and ongoing maintenance of relationships. Relational rhythms require a person to have the skills to problem solve, manage conflict and execute healthy communication skills. Relational rhythms include all the interconnections within interactions and relationships. It is about perspective taking, boundary setting and respect. As relationships ebb and flow, the ability to maintain ongoing relationships with others promotes wellness and resilience.

Healthy Choices

This core social and emotional developmental skill involves the capacity to integrate emotion and logic to make healthy choices and forward think. Making healthy choices requires us to establish personal values, know what is important to us, then execute and follow through with the boundaries needed in our life. Healthy choices require discipline, fortitude and intentionality. Making healthy choices necessitates one to manage impulses and accomplish goals.

Enhancements

The 'E' of RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ is *enhancements*. In this section, we enhance the interconnections of the whole person. This includes a person's mind, body and spirit. When we connect and meet the needs of the entire person, we intertwine the parts of self to create the whole.

Mind

When we focus on enhancing the mind we engage in activities and behaviors that promote mental and intellectual health. Engaging in routines that enhance the mind offer greater opportunities for resilience and wellness. These activities can include reflection,



journaling, down time, reading, gratitude, mindfulness, positive thinking, etc. When we exercise both stimulating and quieting the mind, we nurture wellness.

Body

When we focus on enhancing the body, we engage in activities and behaviors that promote physical health. The body and brain are an ever-connected system. Fueling the body in health-oriented ways allows for optimal wellness. This can include adequate sleep, engaging in nutritional and mindful eating, exercise, movement, hydration and more. When we honor the body and its needs we are more alert.

Spirit

When we focus on enhancing the spirit, we engage in activities and behaviors that promote emotional and existential health. The spirit can be seen as religious or explicitly existential. This is about believing that there is something larger than oneself, that the world holds a larger purpose and is connected through a higher power. The spirit is about energy and a way of being in the world; knowing things are intangible, unexplainable, and much larger than a single entity. When we honor our spirit, we honor a larger essence.

Conclusion

RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ is designed to increase awareness and competencies as it relates to wellness and resilience. A limitation of this piece is that it does not address application to practice. However, there is the intention to produce future writings that will address integration of elements of the framework within service delivery and practice.

Wellness and resilience are both ways of being, as well as a way of doing. It lives within each system and interaction that touches the lives of those who receive care and those who give care. We believe that fostering wellness and resilience allows for the greatness inside all of us to shine bright; giving a light to others and allowing us to be a bright place for so many. Doing this work is life changing, for those giving and those receiving care. RISE: Wellness & Resilience Framework™ is about rising; despite the adversity, despite the struggle, despite the tragedy; rising and choosing to live out our greatness. At its core it is about being a bright place, being the light.

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