THE ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION: WORKING WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS & OTHER EMERGING ADULTS
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Learn about trends specific to college student and emerging adult mental health.
2. Review clinical assessment measures and treatment interventions specific to resilience.
3. Identify strategies for building resilience and learn how to apply these strategies for suicide prevention work with college students and emerging adults.

HOW THIS NARRATIVE IMPACTS EMERGING ADULTS
- First, let’s define emerging adults
  - Not a new concept
  - The developmental period “from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on ages 18-25.”
  - Distinct identity development, different from adolescence or young adulthood, especially for individuals in industrialized countries.
  - Future is yet to be decided.
- What does it mean to reach “adulthood”?
  1) Responsibility for one’s self
  2) Making independent decisions
  3) Financial independence

SO, HOW DOES THIS NARRATIVE IMPACT EMERGING ADULTS?
- Impact on educators who are teaching emerging adults:
  - Concern that students will become depressed or hostile with lower grades
  - Insensitiveness to the students’ distress and/or assuming that they simply cannot cope when the students have very real and valid concerns.
- Impact on employers of emerging adults:
  - Belief that they are ill-prepared for the “real world” or work
  - Over-emphasis on generation gap rather than creative methods of having multiple generations working alongside one another
- Impact on emerging adults themselves:
  - Individuals belief that they cannot tolerate distress, cannot problem-solve, cannot survive adverse situations
  - Seeking immediate help for perceived crises that could likely be solved on their own
  - Not seeking help because they do not get a quick answer or because they think the helping professional sees them as incapable

MERITS OF THIS NARRATIVE?
- Are today’s emerging adults really that different than those in the 70’s, 80’s, 90’s?
  - Consider the changing demographics of students
  - Parental involvement
  - Cost
  - Achievement gap
  - Global, national, and local events that shape worldview
  - Stigma reduction, willingness to seek help
  - Some things are consistent, others are different…
HELICOPTER AND SNOW PLOW PARENTING
Message sent to young people: you are not capable of making good decisions, of taking care of yourself.

COST OF COLLEGE

SOCIAL MEDIA

MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

- Today about 13 percent of college students enter into college having been diagnosed with a mental health condition.
- Research conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health shows that half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14; three-fourths by age 24.
- Students are more likely to be referred and more willing to seek help.
- Students who use campus counseling resources while at college are more likely to stay in school than students who do not use these services.

BY THE NUMBERS

Presenting Concern of CTC clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress/Stress management</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety/fears/worries</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression/sadness/mood swings</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems related to school</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem/confidence</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep difficulties</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/roommates/dating concerns</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating behavior/body image</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame/social discomfort</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal thoughts/urges</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NCHA data, specific to UWL's respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelming anxiety</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered suicide</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentionally cut, burned, bruised, or otherwise injured yourself</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress... It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences (American Psychological Association) Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.
RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENCE AND EMERGING ADULTS

- Protective factors have often been proposed promoting/enhancing resilience, and typically fall into three categories:
  - Individual
    - coping skills, problem-solving skills, intelligence, internal locus of control (“I can shape my own life”), sense of purpose and goals, self-esteem, social competence and interpersonal communication
  - Family
    - secure attachment, direct guidance with encouragement; learning what NOT to do
  - External/community
    - caring non-parent adults (teachers, counselors, coaches, ministers, neighbors); positive peer relationships

HOW DOES RESILIENCE RELATE TO SUICIDALITY?

- How do you see these as related concepts?
- Consider Joiner’s Interpersonal Theory of Suicide as one example:

HOW WE MIGHT ASSESS RESILIENCE

- Clinicians
  - Interviews & assessments
  - Invite dialogue about success and failure, share your stories
  - Observe and individual’s response to adversity
- Educators
  - Listen for language and use it in your conversations
  - Strengths
  - Sense of agency, hope, etc.
- Friends and Family

SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

- Based upon a meta-analysis on resilience measures/assessments (Windle et al., 2011), 3 adult assessments were reviewed to have the strongest psychometric properties:
  1. Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)
  2. Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)
  3. Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

NOTE: Other scales exist (including a number for children), but many scales were in early development and needed further research – for example, the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) for at-risk youth is designed to be a culturally and contextually relevant measure. The manual is available online:

CONNOR-DAVIDSON RESILIENCE SCALE (CD-RISC)

- Target population: adults
- Self-report
- Measures 5 dimensions, has 25 items
- Developed for clinical practice to measure stress and coping ability; sees resilience as a personal quality.
- There is a short version developed in 2007 normed on young adults (10 items).

RESILIENCE SCALE FOR ADULTS (RSA)

- Target population: adults (developed in Norway)
- Self-report
- Measures 5 dimensions, has 37 items
- Used to examine protective factors presumed to facilitate adaptation to adversity.
- A 2005 version with 33 items was normed on adults in 20’s and 30’s.
- There is a short version developed in 2007 normed on young adults (10 items).
BRIEF RESILIENCE SCALE

- Target population: adults
- Self-report
- Measures 1 dimension, has 6 items
- Developed to assess ability to bounce back or recover from stress.

SUICIDE RESILIENCE INVENTORY-25 (SRI-25)

- Studies supporting its use in adolescent psychiatric populations and in college students
- Factor analyses indicated support for the three dimensions it measures:
  - Internal Protective Scale
  - Emotional Stability
  - External Protective Scale

HOW WE MIGHT CULTIVATE RESILIENCE

- In ourselves
  - Make connections with others.
  - Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.
  - Accept that change is a part of living.
  - Move toward your goals. Take decisive actions.
  - Nurture a positive view of yourself.
  - Keep things in perspective.
  - Maintain a hopeful outlook.
  - Take care of yourself.
  - Reflect

- As Clinicians
- As Educators
- As Friends and Family members

What are your ideas? Success stories?
RESOURCES ON RESILIENCE

- Edutopia resources: http://www.edutopia.org/resilience-grit-resources
- Resilience Project: https://undergrad.stanford.edu/resilience
- The Princeton Perspective Project: https://perspective.princeton.edu/
- The Success-Failure Project: http://successfailureproject.harvard.edu/
- The Mindset Kit: https://www.mindsetkit.org/about

ENDING THOUGHTS…

I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles overcome while trying to succeed.
- Booker T Washington

I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.
- Carl Gustav Jung

I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship.”
- Louisa May Alcott