THE RESILIENCE DOUGHNUT®

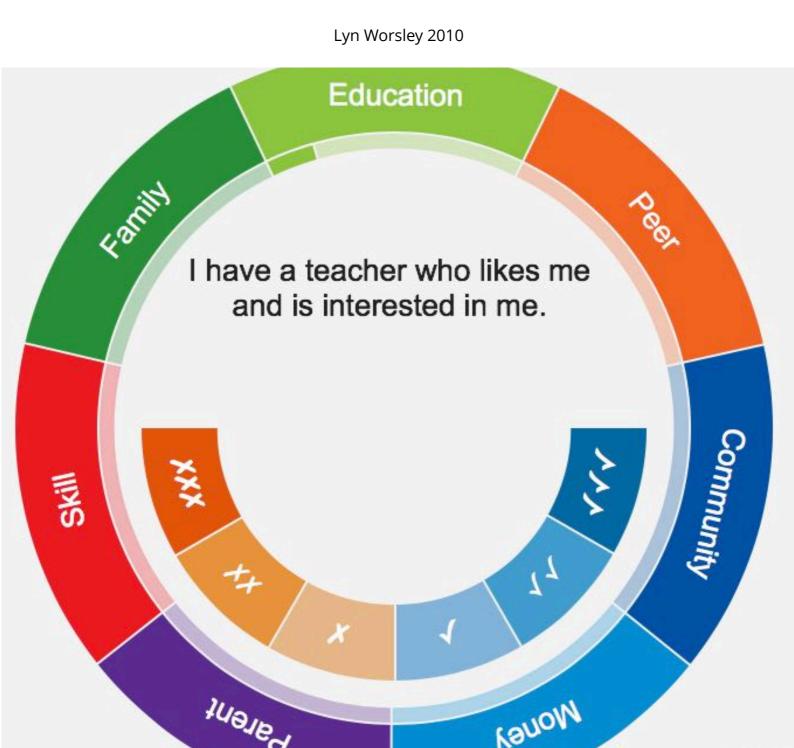The Resilience Centre
Resilience Report®

The Resilience Doughnut Framework: The Contextual Factors Which Combine to Build Resilience in Young People.

Lyn Worsley 2010

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Introduction

The Resilience Doughnut framework brings together research that focuses on the interaction of internal and external resources that are needed to develop personal resilience during times of stress. It is a framework indicating pathways to assist young people change their developmental trajectories towards a more resilient outcome. The application of this framework appears useful in educational and therapeutic settings and could prove to be a useful conversational tool to use with families, communities,and educational facilities and with the young people them selves. This report promotes the use of the framework when considering programs and interventions that address mental health, educational engagement, and healthy relationships in order to build resilience.

There have been, over the last 30 years, a number of definitions of resilience used with reference to individuals as they negotiate adversity. An international resilience project defined resilience as "the universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome damaging effects of adversity" (Grotberg, 1995, p. 6). A more recent definition notes that resilience is

"the capacity of individuals to navigate their physical and social ecologies to provide resources, as well as their access to families and communities who can culturally navigate for them" (Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung, & Levine, 2008, p. 168).

Another definition acknowledges the changeable and reactive process of building resilience in the face of adversity:

"Resilience refers to the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risks" (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005, p.399).

The above definitions demonstrate that there are several lines of thought with how to conceptualise resilience. Firstly, resilience can be conceived as a personal or group capacity that has been developed and achieved. Second, resilience can be represented as a dynamic process, affected by resources, adversity and the capacity of individuals. Thirdly, it can be seen as an individual's response to adversity as a practice and strengthening effect in building resilience.

Combining these concepts leads us to define resilience as an individual or group's process of continual development of personal competence while negotiating available resources in the face of adversity.

Research on Resilience

Masten (Wright & Masten, 2005) notes that previous research appears to have been in three waves, with an emerging fourth wave. The first wave focused on the individual factors that made a difference, focusing on personal traits and characteristics. The second wave noted individuals develop in the context of the systems around them with a focus on interaction and the process of building resilience. The third wave focused on creating resilience when it was not likely to occur naturally. The fourth wave appears to be focussing on the current

western cultural belief in individualism, which undermines the efforts in promoting a culture of connectedness and belonging (Wright & Masten, 2005).

With reference to the emerging positive psychology movement, Seligman (1998) suggests future enquiry should be geared towards finding simple and practical ways that promote human strength. While there is a predominant focus on the internal strengths and characteristics of individuals who appear to be resilient in the face of adversity,(Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Grotberg, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005; Werner & Smith, 2001) there is a growing body of research that looks at the external or protective factors around individuals who appear resilient(Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar, Shoum, & Brown, 2006; McGraw, Moore, Fuller, & Bates, 2008). Furthermore, there is the recognition that adversity or a degree of risk has a place in the development of resilience(Ungar, 2006; Ungar, et al., 2008; Wright & Masten, 2005). While the strength research focuses on the positive factors in a child's life, there is an implication that these factors are tested and strengthened in the face of adversity (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005).

Benard (2004) summarised the key findings from long-term developmental studies that examined young people in high-risk environments using the following four statements:

1. Resilience is a capacity all youth have for healthy development and successful learning.

2. Certain personal strengths are associated with healthy development and successful learning.

3. Certain characteristics of families, schools, and communities are associated with the development of personal strengths, and in turn with healthy development and successful learning.

Resilience and Mental Health

4. Changing the life trajectories of children and youth from risk to resilience starts with changing the beliefs of the adults in their families, schools and communities (Benard, 2004).

Resilience research has the potential to add substantially to the study of mental health by identifying the strengths of individuals and communities in order to replicate what is working with those who are going through adversity successfully (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2009).

Studies have identified several important risk factors that influence levels of depressive symptoms, such as adverse life events (Pine, Cohen, Johnson, & Brook, 2002), bullying (Seals & Young, 2003) and social anxiety (Chartier, Walker, & Stein, 2001). Low social competence was also found to predict depressive symptoms (Hjemdal, Aune, Reinfjell, Stiles, & Friborg, 2007). There has also been found to be a significant negative correlation between resilience and trait anxiety, indicating persons with anxiety disorders demonstrate decreased resilience (Benetti & Kambouropoulos, 2006).

Conversely, based on strength research, Donnon and Hammond (2007) conducted a study that examined the presence of protective factors and level of bullying behaviour, acts of aggression and vandalism. The results showed that the greater number of reported strengths, the less likely were the youth to engage in acting out behaviour (Donnon & Hammond, 2007). Furthermore, in a subsequent study it was found that the greater number of developmental strengths, the greater the engagement in constructive behaviours such as helping others, good health, volunteering, leadership, resisting danger and delaying gratification (Donnon, 2007).

Resilience Programs

Strengthening positive interactions with communities, families and peers can foster environments rich in the developmental supports and opportunities needed to develop resilience in young people. The place of educational facilities in helping to develop resilience in young people cannot be overestimated since a young person will develop friendships, skills, mentor relationships in their school. Schools are also the context where significant change can be implemented with community, families and peers. Benard (2009) noted that teachers and other support staff need to be encouraged to become "turnaround" people and schools "turnaround" places. She noted turnaround teachers demonstrate and create the nurturing and empowering climates that in turn engage young people's innate resilience by developing their capacities for positive development and school connectedness (Benard & Slade, 2009).

There is a range of resilience promoting programs used in schools and youth organizations. Some school programs focus on building internal coping skills and academic buoyancy (Frydenberg, 2007; Martin & Marsh, 2008), while others show change in the net effect of risk versus protective factors in building resilience (Fuller, 1998; McGrath, 2003). Resiliency researchers (Masten, Herbers, Cutuli, & Lafavor, 2008) have developed a framework for resiliency research, policy and practice. They suggest three major strategies that resiliency programs can employ: (a) risk-based approaches, which aim to reduce adversity, (b) asset-focused strategies, which attempt to improve assets in the lives in children, and (c) process-oriented designs, which attempt to mobilize children's adaptive capacities such as improving attachment relationships with parents, or providing social skills training (Masten, et al., 2008).

An extensive evaluation of resilience programs conducted by Windle and Salisbury (2010) found that of the 21 interventions reported, very few had been subjected to evaluation or

controlled trials. From their findings they concluded that more research has focused on

identifying protective factors that underlie the resilience process, but less on designing and

testing interventions that might change negative outcomes (Windle & Salisbury, 2010).

A comparative study of resilience between the World Health Organisation (WHO) health

promoting schools emphasized the potential for whole school programs that strengthen

connections and build resilience to exert positive changes in students, community

organizations, families, parents and staff (Wong, et al., 2009).

This research suggests that programs targeting resilience development should be evaluated

for their overall community building effects, as well as the mental health benefits.

Furthermore, it seems that implementing programs into educational settings should use and

support existing relationships with teachers and support staff within those schools.

The Resilience Doughnut

The conceptual orientation of the Resilience Doughnut framework accounts for pathways

towards coping successfully, based on known contexts and how they interact with the

individual. The framework maps an individual's capacity for constructively dealing with

adversity, the availability of personal strength resources and the presence of adversity.

Research that has influenced the development of the framework considers the internal

qualities and the environmental contexts in which an individual develops. Furthermore there

is support for multiple pathways in the process of developing resilience, which enables the

framework to be used as a resilience-building tool, helping programs, measures and

therapeutic interventions to be better informed in their use.

The resilience doughnut framework draws on the work of a number of resilience development practitioners (Benard, 2004; Grotberg, 1995; McGraw, et al., 2008; Rutter, 2006; Ungar, et al., 2008) supporting three dynamics that are at play.

1. The development of internal or personal characteristics that enable a person to bounce back from adversity (Benard, 2004; Grotberg, 1995).

2. The external or environmental influences that contribute to the building of these internal assets or personal competencies (Fuller, 1998; Ungar, 2008; Ungar, et al., 2008; Werner, 2001).

3. The interaction of the internal characteristics with the external available resources, which hinder or enhance a resilience mindset ultimately affecting an individual's reaction to adversity (Rutter, 2008; Sun & Stewart, 2008).

These dynamics support the multifaceted definition of resilience, indicating resilience is the process of continual development of personal competence while negotiating available resources in the face of adversity.

Consistent with this definition, an internal and external circle of the RD framework conceptually represents the interaction of internal and external factors in developing resilience. The inner circle represents the internal individual characteristics and the outer circle represents the external contexts within which an individual develops. The external contexts are divided into seven sections, each of which has been shown in the research to contribute to building individual resilience. The interactional nature of the internal and external worlds of an individual is represented by the visual connection between the inner circle of the framework within the external circle. Thus, the two circles, an inner circle and an external circle divided into seven external contexts, represent the essence of the resilience framework (see figure 1).

Figure 1. The Resilience Doughnut framework.

The internal structure of the Resilience Doughnut

The inner circle of the framework, representing the internal characteristics of an individual showing resilience, give expression to a number of concepts, which repeatedly appear in research. These concepts contribute to raising self-esteem (Benard, 2004; Frydenberg, 2007; Grotberg, 1995a; Werner, 1992), self-efficacy (Benard, 2004; Martin & Marsh, 2006; Seligman, 1992; Ungar, Toste, & Heath,2005), and an individual's awareness of their available resources (Cameron, Ungar, & Liebenberg, 2007; Fuller, et al., 1998; Masten, et al., 2004; Ungar, 2004).

In combination they contribute to resilience as noted by Grotberg's *I have, I am* and *I can* categories (1995). These categories are the basis of the internal individual concepts for the

Resilience Doughnut, which interact with the external contexts of the framework as shown

in Table 1.

Table 1. Internal concepts of the Resilience Doughnut with construct and related external contexts.

Concept	Constructs as noted by Grotberg (1995).	Interacting external contexts
Awareness of resources (I Have)	I have people around me I trust	Parent, Family,
	I have people who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble	Parent, Family
	I have people who show me how to do things right by the way they do things	Community,
	I have people who want me to learn to do things on my own	Education Peer
	I have people who help me when I am sick	Parent, Family
Self-concept, self esteem. (I am)	I am a person people can like and love	Parent, Peers
	I am glad to do nice things for others and show my concern	Family, Peer
	I am respectful of myself and others	Community
	I am willing to be responsible for what I do	Skill, Peer
	I am sure things will be all right	Community
Self efficacy (I can)	I can talk to others about things that frighten me or bother me	Peer, Education, Family
	I can find ways to solve problems that I face	Skill, Money
	I can control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous	Skill, Peer, money
	I can figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or take action	Peer, Parent Education, Peer
	I can find someone to help me when I need it	

The external structure of the Resilience Doughnut.

The outer circle of the framework, divided into seven sections, addresses research, which

shows the environmental contexts where resilience can be ignored, recognised, or

developed. These seven contexts, are labelled *parent, skill, family, education, peer,*

community and *money,* A number of research constructs make up each context with a number of common features between contexts. These features appear to correlate with the internal structure of the framework, which represent self-esteem (*I am*), self-efficacy (*I can*), and awareness of resources (*I have*) as shown in Table 1.

The following section will consider each part separately; outlining constructs from research which link to building resilience in an individual.

Parent.

A number of factors were found within the context of the parent relationship and the development of resilience in children and young people. These were discipline styles (Baumrind, 1991), parental monitoring and control (Suchman, Rounsaville, DeCoste, & Luthar, 2007; Ungar, 2009a), parent decision making (Baumrind, 1996; Suchman, et al., 2007), parental communication (Ungar, 2009) parental warmth and affection (Fuller, et al., 1998; Suchman, et al., 2007), parental satisfaction (Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, & Bruder, 2000; Fuller et al., 1998), parental cooperation (Walsh, 2006), parental values of independence and self control (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006), and parent's sense of purpose (Grant, 2004; Walsh, 2009).

Skills.

A number of factors were directly related to the development of resilience through acquiring a skill. These were hardiness (Dolbier, Smith, & Steinhardt, 2007), optimistic thinking (Reivich & Gillham, 2003; Schueller & Seligman, 2008; Seligman, Schulman, & Tryon, 2007), problem solving (Caldwell & Boyd, 2009; Reivich & Shatte, 2002), feelings of success and achievement (Martin, 2008; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), being recognised for their skill (Brown, D'Emidio-Caston, & Benard, 2001), able to try new experiences (Garmezy, et al., 1984; Ungar, Dumond, & McDonald, 2005), self-confidence (Benard,

2004; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), and having people who encourage and admire the skill (Bottrell, 2009; Busuttil; Gillham & Reivich, 2007). Furthermore, through difficulties associated with developing a skill, individuals are exposed to elements of adversity and challenges associated with failure and persistence (Griffin, Martinovich, Gawron, & Lyons, 2009; Hooper, Marotta, & Lanthier, 2008; Linley & Joseph, 2005).

It was also found that deviant or antisocial skills are negatively (RDT)related to the development of constructs associated with resilience such as perseverance, persistence, carefulness, caution and courage (Munford & Sanders, 2008; Ungar, 2001b).

Family.

There are many areas of research that consider family structure (Hetherington, 2003), and family systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Furstenberg & Teitler, 1994) in developing resilience. Of significance is identity formation through belonging to a group of related people (Masten & Shaffer, 2006). Other aspects are: connectedness (Geggie, et al., 2007), feeling accepted (McGraw, et al., 2008), showing respect (McGraw, et al., 2008), having family traditions (Geggie, et al., 2007), having an interested older adult (Furstenberg, 2005), wider family networks (A. Fuller, 2004; Oglesby-Pitts, 2000), going through difficult times (Geggie, et al., 2007; Walsh, 2006), a family identity (Wiener, 2000), adults with high expectations (Dandy & Nettelbeck, 2002; Oglesby-Pitts, 2000), family holidays (Geggie, et al., 2007), sibling connectedness (McGraw, et al., 2008), strong spiritual values (Jonker & Greeff, 2009; Oglesby-Pitts, 2000), a positive world view (Whitten, 2010) and responsibility within the family (Geggie, et al., 2007).

Education.

There are a number of characteristics of education associated with building overall resilience as well as academic resilience. These are a sense of belonging and acceptance

(Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; DePaul, 2009), a significant relationship with at least one teacher (Jennings, 2003), teachers with high expectations (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Masten, Herbers, Cutuli, & Lafavor, 2008), a resilience-promoting curriculum (Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle, & Hardie, 2004), participation in extra activities, attribution (Stewart, et al., 2004) engagement (Martin, 2008; Sharkey, You, & Schnoebelen, 2008), teachers with an optimistic and positive world view (McCusker, 2009; Parker & Martin, 2009), inclusive environment (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008)and enjoyment of and participation in learning.

Peers.

The development and maintenance of friendships is a major task during adolescence because social skills and a sense of belonging is dominant for their moral development (Horn, 2005; Schonert-Reichl, 1999). Research noting those young people who have developed resilience in the context of a strong peer group (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), have groups that are characterised by a number of aspects. These are belonging and acceptance (Schonert-Reichl, 1999), conflict (Horn, 2005), cooperation and sharing (Daddis, 2008), closeness, group identity (Horn, 2005) and cohesion and peer support, conformity (Sanders & Munford, 2008), close friendships, forgiveness , care and concern, loyalty to the group (Schonert-Reichl, 1999; Wolseth, 2010), self regulation (Noeker & Petermann, 2008) and social awareness (Pineda Mendoza, 2007).

Local Community.

Having links to the local community and supportive social services has been shown to have a major impact on contributing to building resilience (Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, & Bruder, 2000). Common research themes are: connections to sporting clubs, religious or activities groups (Ungar, Dumond, & McDonald, 2005), belonging to a local area (Bottrell,

2009), positive relationship with another adult (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005), family friendships (Sanders & Munford, 2006), mentoring relationships (Beltman & MacCallum, 2006; Zimmerman, et al., 2005), belonging to a faith group (Crawford, et al., 2006; Grant, 2004; Oglesby-Pitts, 2000), being involved in a community that values children and a community that shares a purpose (Van Dyke & Elias, 2007).

   Money.

This aspect refers to the economic stability (McLoyd, et al., 2009) and affluence of the individual's family (Pittman, 1985) as well as attitudes towards the acquisition of material possessions. Research shows there are a number of aspects related to money that contribute to building resilience. These are economic stability for basic needs (McLoyd, et al., 2009), a sense of control over earning money (Peterson, Park, Hall, & Seligman, 2009), understanding the value of money (Fuller, McGraw, & Goodyear, 1998), able to wait and think about spending (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006), able to contribute to daily tasks (Munford & Sanders, 2008), self discipline and self efficacy with regard to spending (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), budgeting and planning, a sense of gratefulness (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007), care of material possessions, and a strong work ethic (Peterson, et al., 2009).

Constructing the Resilience Doughnut Tool

The concepts collected from the research form a number of constructs within each context and are represented by items suggested in the preliminary resilience doughnut tool (RDT) (Worsley, 2006). The tool divides the external section into seven subscales with ten items within each subscale. The items are simple statements, beginning with *I have, I am,* or *I can,*

requiring either a dichotomous response on the worksheets in the teacher practitioner pack

(see appendix) or a 6 point Likert Scale on the on-line resilience doughnut (ORD) computer

game (see table 2).

Table 2. External contexts of the Resilience doughnut framework with construct and associated items from the resilience doughnut tool.

Factor	Research Constructs	Items in Resilience doughnut tool
Parent	Discipline style and Decision-making, warmth/ affection	1, 2, 3, 6, 7. (Parent items)
	Monitoring/control/Independence	4, 5
	Parent satisfaction and purpose	9
	Parent reliability and adaptability	8, 10
Skill	Optimistic thinking, Success, achievement, persistence	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, (skill items)
	Organisation, self-discipline, confidence	8, 9, 10
Family	Connectedness, Traditions and events, Family networks	3, 4, 5, 7 (family items)
	Belonging and valued	1, 2, 6
	Tough times	8, 9, 10
Education	Belonging, Inclusive and respectful environment Teacher expectations, optimism, relationship	4, 5, 6, 7, 9(education items)
	School organisation and Extra activities, Engagement	1, 2
		3, 8
Peer	Belonging	1, 3 (Peer items)
	Conflict	7, 9, 10, 2
	Group identity	4, 6
	Conformity, cooperation, self control and regulation	5, 8
Community	Informal network, sport club neighbourhood Organised groups, religious youth,	5, 7, 8 (community items)
	Local resources	3, 4, 6
	Faith and belief	1, 2, 9, 10
Money	Money accessibility,	1, 4 (Money items)
	Earning and spending	3, 6, 8, 9, 10
	Family work ethic	3, 7, 2

Note. Items for the ORD tool are with a 6 point Likert scale - Disagree very strongly XXX to Agree very strongly √√√(Worsley, 2006)

The interaction of the internal and external factors in the Resilience Doughnut.

In each of the seven environmental contexts, as suggested by previous research, potential

exists to enhance positive beliefs within the individual, helping to develop resilience

(Benard, 2004; Fuller, 2004; Resnick, et al., 1997). It is also suggested that most resilient individuals have only some, and not all seven contexts working well in their life (Dolbier, Smith, & Steinhardt, 2007; Eisenberg, Ackard, & Resnick, 2007; Fuller-Iglesias, Sellars, & Antonucci, 2008; Noeker & Petermann, 2008). If this is to be applied to the framework, the available external contexts would need to show sufficient strength and interaction to positively effect all of the three internal concepts, thereby influencing an individual's overall resilience. Considering each of the external contexts and their potential to influence all three internal concepts, it is possible that clusters of only a minimum number of external contexts may be helpful to build resilience.

Programs using the resilience doughnut framework, aim towards helping participants determine a minimum of three strong contextual factors, in order for them to strengthen and increase the interaction of these factors. These programs are based on the principles of creating cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1996; Festinger, Carlsmith, & Bem, 2007) and strength based therapies (Shatte, Reivich, & Seligman, 2000)in order to affect change. This proposes that strengthening three existing factors causes dissonance, which in turn encourages the subsequent strengthening of other factors in the framework.

The Resilience Doughnut Framework and Current Models of Resilience

It is possible the strengthening of only three factors within the Resilience Doughnut framework combines the compensatory, protective and challenge models proposed by (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). The framework appears compensatory, by focussing on the strong contexts not associated with the risks. It appears protective, by showing how the interaction of only some existing strengths in the system can neutralise the effects of weaker

factors. It also shows a challenge effect when strong contexts are mobilised during

adversity preparing individuals for future challenges. Furthermore, within each of the

external contexts the child could be exposed to conflict and tensions (parental control versus

warmth, skill mastery, family identity and roles, educational expectations, peer belonging

and acceptance versus conflict, community support and money management).

The Resilience Doughnut framework appears to be different to the present models of

resilience in three main ways. Firstly it is based on the strength of the external factors in an

individual's life. Secondly, it has seven external contextual factors. Thirdly, the framework

proposes that the turning point, evoking changes in the trajectories of individuals, is based

on the presence or absence of a minimum number of contextual factors. This framework

could enable a more practical application in how to enhance resilience development.

Implications for the use of the Resilience Doughnut fram

In order to promote a resilience building pathway for all youth, there is potential for the

framework to be used with the parents, community, peers and teachers that are involved in

caring and nurturing children and young people as well as with the young people

themselves.

Establishing purposeful connections, which seek to strengthen and encourage youth in their

existing strengths can be challenging and rewarding. The use of this strength-based

framework however has the potential to enable a process of mapping the available resources

that a person has which in turn may influence future decisions.

Assessing resources using the framework can be used in conjunction with assessing risks for

children and young people in family court proceedings, departments for children and young

people, child safety in family and community settings, educational and welfare decisions as well as juvenile justice issues. The framework has potential for use with strengthening communities and organisations by giving a formula for purposeful connections.

At present here is widening interest in the use of the framework in each of the above areas. Research is underway that assess the viability of various programs in schools, hospitals, community and welfare settings.

It is hoped that the future of the resilience doughnut framework will guide policy decisions with regard to the development of communities around the care and nurture of children in the future.

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