

An Overview of Expatriate Resiliency

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Plenary Outline

Introduction

1. Open Construct – begin to shape a dynamic depiction of expatriate resiliency by presenting pertinent findings from a literature review and fitting them together into a cohesive whole.
2. The integrative possibilities of a paradigm of expatriate health management that seem to reside in the Greatest Commandment.
3. Clinical Observations – pertinent notations from a decade of helping to develop and implement MHI/IHM's multi-disciplinary approach to expatriate health management.

OPEN CONSTRUCT

1. **A** dynamic and ordinary process of attunement, adjustment and adaptation across the expatriate journey (life-course);
2. **Between** a bounded human agency and significant present and/or past adversity and/or risk that has to be overcome;
3. **Likely influenced by:** (1) protective and promotive factors/processes that are present and/or absent on three levels, (2) the degree and number of stressors, and (3) timing;
4. **Evaluated and empowered** through a combination of antecedents/attributes, therapy/training, and outcomes.

1. A **Dynamic** and **Ordinary** Process of **Attunement**, **Adjustment** and **Adaptation** across the Expatriate Journey (**Life-Course**)

(a) **Dynamic** – a multidimensional complex mix of continuities and change (Marshall, 2001) used here in reference to: (i) positive outcome despite the experience of adversity; (ii) continued adaptive functioning in challenging circumstances, &/or (iii) recovery from significant trauma (Rutter, 2006).

(b) **Ordinary** – sign of health and may sometimes be considered “extra-ordinary” (Masten, 2001). Risk emerges with “super-resilience” and “sub-resilience” (Moller 2009/10). *What began as a quest to understand the extraordinary has revealed the power of the ordinary. Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of the ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, their families and relationships, and in their communities* (Masten, 2001).

(c) **Attunement** to a higher sense of meaning – the upward journey (Blieszner and Ramsey, 1999).

(d) **Adjustment** of self and significant others – the inward journey (Butcher, 2001).

(e) **Adaptation** to people and place – the outward journey (Kelley and Meyers, 1995; Peterson, 2004).

(f) **Life-Course** approach – *describes the transitions from one life stage to another as movements involving interaction between a changing individual and a changing context, allowing for many diverse events and roles that do not necessarily proceed in a given sequence* (Elder in Schoon, 2006). *Expatriates face a double-edged challenge to their mental and physical health. The stressors affecting them are not only new and unfamiliar, but the coping resources that worked at home may not do so abroad* (Sanchez et al., 2000).

2. **Between a Bounded Human Agency** and **Significant Present** and/or **Past Adversity** and/or **Risk** that has to be **Overcome**

(a) **Between** – i.e. never stands alone (Arthur and Pedersen, 2008; Luther, 2003). For example, transitioning betwixt and between one's overseas and passport cultures. *It has been argued that understanding how individuals navigate development transitions and choices is the crux of understanding risk and resilience across the life-span* (Graber and Brookes-Gun in Schoon, 2006). *The major risk factors for children tend to lie within chronic and transitional events rather than in the acute risks* (Coleman and Hagell, 2007; Luther, 2003).

(b) **Bounded** – heart, mind, soul and body (Schoon, 2006).

(c) **Human Agency** – Individual. For example research outcomes on the spirituality of older women indicate that they: (i) *share the lost art of crying in community* (heart); (ii) *are decisive, rational and able to reframe and solve problems* (mind); (iii) *have an experienced-based search for meaning and storied soul*; (iv) *are able to actively serve* (body) (Blieszner and Ramsey). Also includes Systemic human agencies (Adler and Bartholomew, 1992; Augsburg et al., 2007; Harvard Business Review, 2003).

(d) **Significant Present/Past Adversity** – includes transitory adversity, persistent adversity and chronically hard environments (Viscott, 1996).

(e) **Risk** – appraisal, communication, perception and management (Brenner et al., 2010; Tizard and Varma, 1992).

(f) **Overcome** (Alayarian, 2007; Elsass, 1992; Kohls, 2001; Ornish, 1998; Vargas-Reighley, 2005). *Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts* (Winston Churchill).

3. Likely influenced by: (1) **Protective and Promotive Factors** that are present and/or absent on **Three Levels**, (2) the **Degree and Number of Stressors**, and (3) **Timing**

(a) **Protective Factors/Processes** (Barnard et al., 1999). For example, the outcomes of Grotberg's research (2003): (i) "I have..."; (ii) "I am..."; (iii) "I can...". *The so-called triarchic framework of resilience has been tremendously influential and the three broad sets of protective influences have been shown to be highly robust predictors of resilience in a variety of domains* (Schoon, 2006).

(b) **Promotive Factors** of love(s) – Love "energy is always available, it surrounds us. But [we] must be open to [give] and receive whatever is available" (Ornish, 1998). *The combination of desires and ways of loving gives the loved one the power to make his lover blossom – or tear her apart* (Cyrulnik, 2005).

(c) **Three Levels**: (i) Attunement to the voice of Higher Love; (ii) Adjustment of loving self and significant others; (iii) adaptation to loving people, place and projects (Greatest Commandment; Grotberg, 2003; Secretan, 2004).

(d) **Degree of Stress** – normal, acute, chronic, hidden and overload (Donovan, 2002; Mate, 2004; Scaer, 2007).

(e) **Number of Stressors** exceed our coping resources (Flach, 1997; Foyle, 2001).

(f) **Timing** – principle of historical time and place, prevention, pro-activity, sequencing, pacing and resending (Coleman and Hagell, 2007).

4. **Evaluated and Empowered** through a combination of **Antecedents/Attributes, Therapy/Training** and **Outcomes**

(a) **Evaluated** – *There is a need for measures and benchmarks that define personal resiliency as multidimensional, that assess across a wide age range, and that examine multiple domains across populations and circumstances* (Prince-Embury, 2007). *Ultimately the resiliency of another human being remains beyond the abilities of scholars to describe or define. Just as each symphony creates a particular and special sound, so the marvelous, complex interweaving of themes of personality, history and culture and faith in each life story is unique* (Masten and Coatsworth, 1998)

(b) **Empowered** - For example, the outcomes of Secretan's research (2004): (i) "Destiny - to higher love..."; (ii) "Cause - to be..."; (iii) "Called - to do...". (MacDonald, 2004; Orsborn, 1997; Sarma, 2008). Eight ways of

inspiring one's whole being: (i) Desire; (ii) Insight; (iii) Intuition; (iv) Image; (v) Metaphor; (vi) Symbol; (vii) Song; (viii) Story. For example, the Japanese Daruma Doll – *If you fall down seven times, get up eight*.

(c) **Antecedents** – For example Black and Gregersen's research on corporate expatriate spouses (1991): (i) *Spouse's opinion is sought about the international assignment*; (ii) *Self-initiated pre-departure training*; (iii) *Social support in the overseas environment*; (iv) *Solutions for under-employment in the overseas environment*.

Attributes – For example, Caligiuri's research on global executives (2000): (i) *Agreeableness*; (ii) *Conscientiousness*; (iii) *Emotional stability*; (iv) *Openness*; (v) *Sociability*.

(d) **Therapy** – Clinicians (Arthur and Pedersen, 2008; Cairns, 2002; Greene, 2002, 2007; Neenan, 2009; Padesky, 2007; Parens et al., 2008; Prince-Embury, 2007; Reich et al., 2010).

Clients (Barlow and Clark, 2010; Borysenko, 2009; Brooks and Goldstein, 2001, 2003; Cyrulnik, 2009; Dayton, 2007; MacDonald, 2004; Reivich and Shatté, 2002; Salmansohn, 2007).

(e) **Training** (Black and Mendenhall, 1990; Fredrickson et al., 2002; Jarrett, 2008; Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999; Shaffer et al., 2006).

(f) **Outcomes** – Endurance (Calhoun and Tedeschi, 2006; Peterson and Seligman, 2004) and Effectiveness (Bridges, 2005; DFAIT, 2000; Hess and Linderman, 2002; Kealey, 1990).

Conclusion

1. Guidelines for future work (Luther et al., 2000).

2. Noticing and nurturing where resilience resides:

Adults (Brooks and Goldstein, 2004; Reich et al, 2010).

Children and Youth (Barnard et al., 1999; Benard, 2004; Bowers, 1998; Ungar, 2004).

Families (Brooks and Goldstein, 2001, 2003; Levine and Kline, 2008; Walsh, 1998).

Leaders (Perkins et al., 2000; Pulley and Wakefield, 2001; Roberto, 2009).

Teams at Work (Maddi and Khoshaba, 2005).

Organizations (Harvard Business Review, 2003; Hoopes and Kelly, 2004).

Health Professionals and Member Care Providers (Powell and Bowers, 2002; Skovholt, 2001).

3. Integrating resilience into pre-departure, overseas and re-entry services.

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- Fishful Thinking - <http://www.fishfulthinking.com/> (training for positive parenting).



- Happier - <http://www.happier.com/> (training to improve happiness and resilience).
- Mayo Clinic - <http://www.mayoclinic.com> (use search term “resilience”).
- MemCare by Radio - <http://www.membercareradio.com> (TWR’s member care resource).
- Missionary Care - <http://www.missionarycare.com> (Ron and Bonnie Koteskey’s resources and services).
- Missionary Outreach - <http://missionaryoutreach.net> (online support services provided by the School of Psychology and Counseling of Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, U.S).
- Mobile Member Care Team Africa - <http://www.mmct.org> (MMCT’s resources and services).
- People in Aid - <http://www.peopleinaid.org> (resources for NGOs).
- Positive Psychology Center - <http://www.positivepsychology.org/> (Martin Seligman’s research alliance).
- Project Resilience - <http://projectresilience.com/index.htm> (Steven and Sybil Wolin’s resources).
- Resilience Net - <http://www.resilnet.uiuc.edu/> (Edith Grotberg’s research on resilience and culture).
- Resiliency Initiatives - <http://www.resiliencyinitiatives.ca> (models of youth and adult resiliency).
- SIETAR - <http://www.sietar-europa.org> (go to “3.3” for a list of cross-cultural adaptability assessments and instruments).
- The Hardiness Institute - <http://www.hardinessinstitute.com> (Salvatore Maddi and Deborah Khoshaba’s performance enhancement and leadership training. Includes the online HardiSurvey).
- The Headington Institute - <http://www.headington-institute.org> (resources and training for NGOs).
- The Resiliency Center - <http://www.resiliencycenter.com> (Al Aiebert’s resources).
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