Resilience in Multiple Sclerosis

Brandon Beaber M.D.
My head was spinning. I was in severe pain. On a scale of one to ten, it was a twenty. I couldn’t even turn my head to the left because I was in such pain. I had paralysis of my right face. My throat had closed down, and I could not eat. I had peripheral blindness of both eyes. I felt like I was dying. I lost faith. I lost hope. I lost my career as a healthcare professional. I was slowly going into a state of depression, and I felt worthless to society. I went to my nephew Jonathan when he was seven days old, and I said to him, “I’m not going to be around. I’m going to be a little angel watching over you.”
Stress Diathesis Model of Resilience

- **Resilient Individual**
- **Fragile Responder**

Axes:
- **outcome** (positive, negative)
- **environment/experience** (negative, positive)
Posttraumatic Growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun)

- 1) Increased awareness of new opportunities and new possibilities
- 2) Stronger personal relationships and stronger emotional connections to others who suffer
- 3) Greater awareness of personal strength despite also being more aware of vulnerability to traumatic events beyond one’s control
- 4) Valuing life more than before and growing more appreciative of things that previously might have been taken for granted
- 5) Experiencing a deeper spiritual life, sometimes also resulting in a change in one’s belief system
Resilience (Reivich and Shatte)

- Emotion regulation
- Impulse control
- Realistic optimism
- Causal analysis
- Empathy
- Self-efficacy
- Reaching out
Influences of MS outcomes

Disease factors
- Mobility
- Fine motor skills
- Vision
- Cognitive impairment
- Fatigue
- Pain
- Medication side effects

Social support
- Family
- Friends
- Religious affiliation
- MS support groups
- MS charities

Life stressors
- Relationships
- Family conflict
- Finances
- Work
- Discrimination

Medical support
- Disease modifying therapy
- Symptom management
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Adaptive equipment
- Diet
- Exercise
- Alternative medicine
- Counseling

Psychological factors
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Early childhood experiences
- Past trauma
- Life experience

Outcomes
- Adaptation
- Life satisfaction
- Productivity
- Life purpose
- Sense of meaning

Interventions
- Meditation
- Philosophy
- Planning
- Organization
- Perseverance

Societal Support
- Disability
- Insurance
- Legal aid
- Student loan
- Forgiveness
- Transportation assistance
- Work accommodation
- Home health care

Resilience
- Emotion
- Regulation
- Impulse control
- Self efficacy
- Causal analysis
- Optimism
- Empathy
- Reaching out
Everyday Matters (Dawn Ehde/Kevin Alschuler)

- Gratitude journal
- Meditation
- Altruism
- “20 second rule”
- Invest in social support
Positive Psychology (Martin Seligman)
Things you can do to improve happiness

- Eat abundant whole fruits and vegetables
- Become financially secure—though research suggests you may not gain additional happiness beyond a salary of $75,000 US dollars per year
- Develop a strong social network
- Find a job/career you enjoy
- Get married, especially to a happy person
- Spend time with happy people
- Exercise
Forms of happiness

- Pleasure
- Engagement
- Meaning
PERMA

Positive Emotion
Engagement
Meaning
Relationships
Achievement
Logotherapy (Viktor Frankl)

“Has all this suffering, this dying around us, a meaning? For if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival” - pg. 115
## Values (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Adventure</th>
<th>Altruism</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Beauty</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Connectedness</th>
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<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>Free Time</td>
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<td>Fun</td>
<td>Golden Rule</td>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
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<td>Learning</td>
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<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Respect</td>
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<td>Social Life</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The American Psychological Association

- Form strong relationships with your family, friends, and community.
- View big problems as solvable or adaptable.
- Appreciate change as part of life.
- Make goals.
- Take action.
- Improve yourself
- Think positively.
- Maintain a healthy perspective.
- Be hopeful.
- Take care of yourself.