

The Lived Experience of Resilience: Promoting Valuable Social Practices

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RECOGNIZING AND



PROMOTING RESILIENCE



*"Our greatest
glory is not
in never
falling,
but in rising
every time
we fall."*

- Confucius

Phenomenon of Interest & Reason for Study

- Lived experience of resilience
- Understanding is limited of why some people are resilient while others are defeated in comparable circumstances
- The practices of people who are resilient requires further study
- Understanding these practices and promoting them has far-reaching implications for health

Setting & Background for the Study

- Partnership York/BCCHC
- Catchment area
- Involve staff as research collaborators
- Celebrate strengths of members and involve actively in research process

Methodology and design

- Qualitative interpretive pilot study
- Narrative phenomenological approach
- Interpretation of participant accounts based on in-depth descriptions
- Focus groups & individual sessions to share overall findings and what in particular had been learned from each individual (giving back)
- Invitation for participants to become collaborators

Study Participants

- 6 individuals served by a Community Health Center
- Inclusion criteria: clients who endorsed living through adversity and referring staff saw them as being resilient as well
- No exclusion criteria
- Cross section of adult men, women, youth, range of experiences and age

Data Gathering

- Participants recruited through flyer circulated at CHC
- Referrals from staff and word of mouth
- Study approved by York University's Ethics Review Board
- Anonymous and confidential
- Semi-structured open-ended questions

Questions guiding conversations with participants and interpretive process

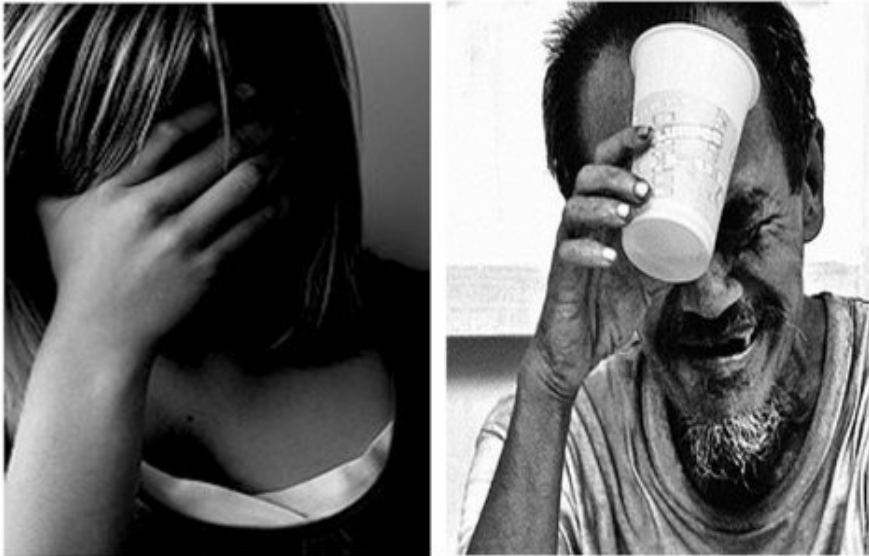
- What is the process in which resilience manifests itself?
- What are the thoughts, feelings and actions that characterize the process of becoming resilient?
- What resources do people draw on in the face of adversity?
- What perspectives about self and/or life emerge?
- What advice would these participants give to others (including health care professionals) in order to cope with adversity, hardship, etc?

Three KEY Themes

- Feeling alienated and wounded
- Persevering amidst adversity
- Accepting and Embracing Life

Feeling alienated and wounded (Theme One)

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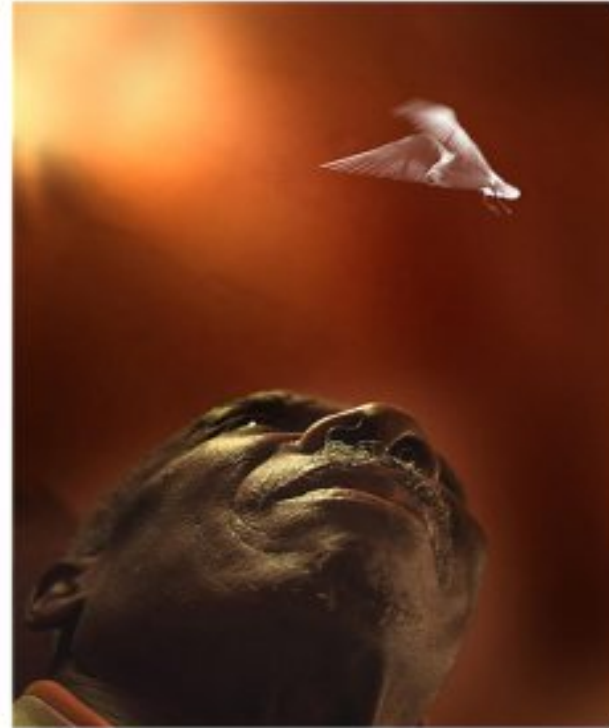


Confronting
the unsought

Teetering on
the edge

" If I kill myself... I had that because it was all my fault, you know, before Al Anon it was all my fault. I was thinking 'Okay, if I kill myself maybe he'll stop.' Realizing no, I can't do that to my son... And the other one was killing him. I had plenty of those thoughts, let me tell you."

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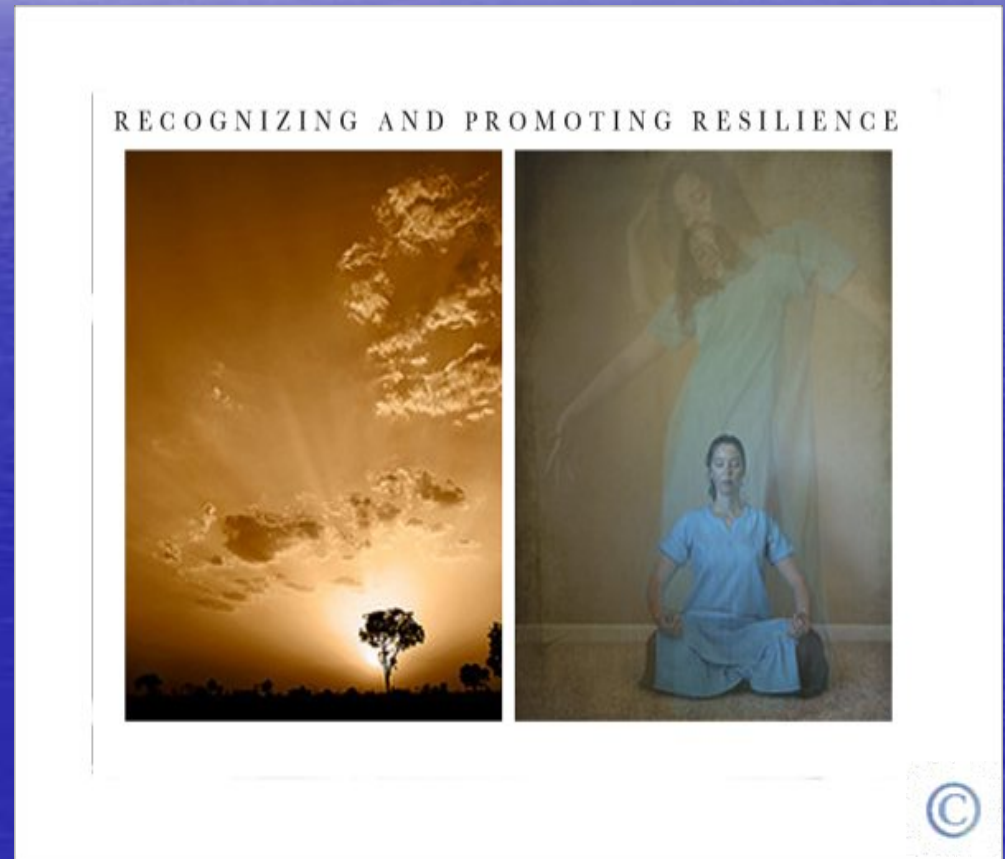
"What we decided... there are times we feel that we are lost. Like something that we are thought it's better for them to kill us. Because how are we going to start over again? How are we going to?"

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Persevering amidst adversity (Theme Two)

- Hanging on to a Thread
- Reaching Out and Keeping Moving
- Turning and Transcending
- Finding Creative Outlets
- Letting Go and Moving On



"...somehow, through some way things are going to turn around, you know... some way it's going to work out."

" That was my life saver. That's what brought me sanity, what brought me peace of mind, what brought me realizing that, hey, I don't have to live this way... I have a choice. I can get out. And I've got people to support me, behind me, I can turn around and go to... I have Al Anon [fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics] friends."

RECOGNIZING AND

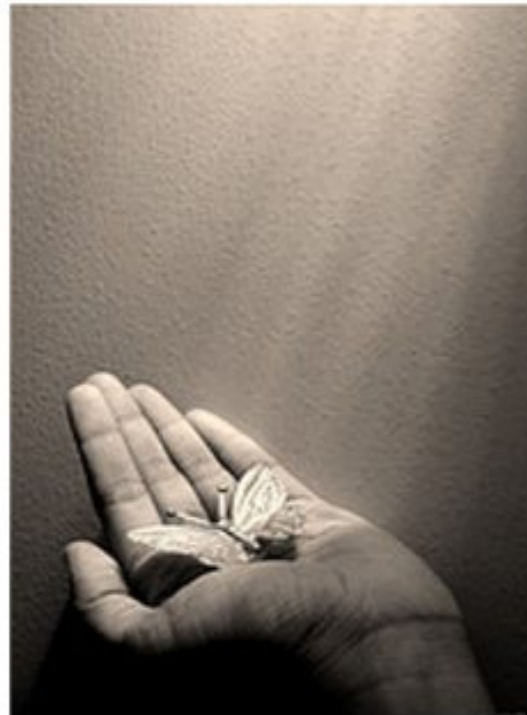


PROMOTING RESILIENCE



"... some people, Christian people, really motivated me and the religion as a whole, motivated, pushed me to be what I want to be today."

RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING RESILIENCE



" So I need to get out and meet people and work so that we are worthy for this country. Because when you are on ODSP you feel like you are not worthy. That's why I... Volunteer. To show that we are worthy for something. That's the way you feel like that, you know. That's why I am being a volunteer."

" Photography for me is creative. Basically, uh, you know, it's a way of expressing myself, you know, even if you're not feeling well there's a way of expressing yourself. "

RECOGNIZING AND



PROMOTING RESILIENCE



" I just want to survive...So I just need to because I am still young and I need to make use of my time and my life and keep going, you know. I have to do my own work. There are so many worse than mine."

RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING RESILIENCE



"All of sudden they admire me, they like me. If I'm willing to work permanent.

I said I don't need to think about it. I WANT it. So like I was accepted permanent... I'm counseling. I'm having a lot of experience... I feel that yeah... But the sense of joy and creativity that truly comprises life... in fact there had been no life in my life at that time. As a result of this awareness, passion came and reason... I committed myself to it only and solely completely. I had no idea what it meant, I just knew that my daily purpose was to get up and move forward and go towards my goals."

Accepting and Embracing Life (Theme Three)

- Healing by Helping
- Loving and Belonging: Bringing Hope
- Gaining a New Perspective



" I hope it helps, like it helps everybody, you know... That's my whole goal. To make one difference... If I can see somebody make it through what I've done or through what I'm telling them... yeah, that's rewarding for me. "

" I may be physically ill, not my brain. I am going to be the same person. I am going to use my skill, whatever I can, able to use here plus whatever skills I am going to help people especially in our building. Whatever the skills I am able to share I will do it."

RECOGNIZING AND



PROMOTING RESILIENCE



" I'm starting to love myself. I'm starting to feel good about myself... .

So that's one of the things I'm working on through Al Anon is to accept that I can be loved without being hurt. And showing my feelings. I can show that I love somebody.

That's simple."

" And I would like to say anything is possible, there's nothing that is not possible in life. Everything is up to the individual..."

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Implications for Practice

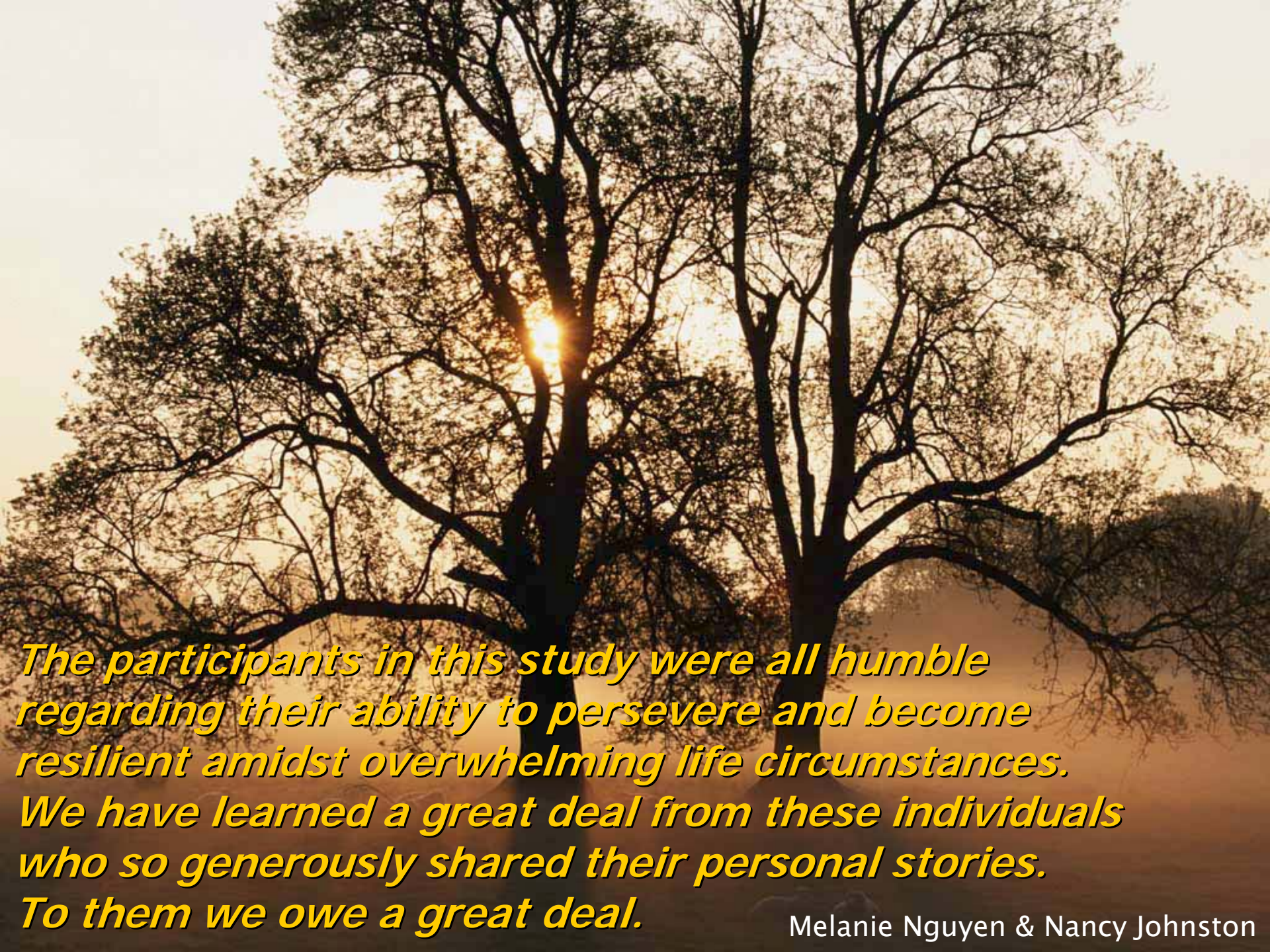
- Importance of inviting narratives to make sense of life and foster meaningful connections
- Caregivers can support and honor stories of resilience
- It is essential to accept suffering, pain or change for what it is and to welcome challenges in order to become resilient – How do we promote this?
- Promoting human connectedness, creativity, sense of belonging, acts of kindness toward others

Hope, Healing, and Recovery for Mental Health

- The importance of **hope** shone in our study
- Our stories highlighted the **value of health professionals and social service workers** who hung in with clients through difficult times

Hope, Healing, and Recovery for Mental Health

- Recovery movement describes mental health care from a strengths and **resilience** perspective; building on the inherent skills, competencies, and talents of the individuals we work with
- Resilience is essential for human development and part of the **meaning-making experience** that reflects the client's voice, self-discovery, and healing potential



The participants in this study were all humble regarding their ability to persevere and become resilient amidst overwhelming life circumstances. We have learned a great deal from these individuals who so generously shared their personal stories. To them we owe a great deal.

Melanie Nguyen & Nancy Johnston

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!



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R E S I L I E N C E

Thank-you Jackeline, Denise, Nancy
and Melanie for seeding new life in
the lives of others.

"Be you transformed
by
the renewing
of your
mind"

ROM 12:2

S E E D I N G N E W L I F E