

Part 2

# Stress, Trauma, and Resiliency

## A 3-PART SERIES

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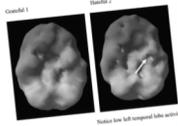
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**Why does gratitude, optimism, positivity, and hope matter?**

- Empowers during times of stress
- Releases dopamine
- Instills a sense of control

Thapar et al 2014, Oswald, 2009

**Super Extra Bonus Question**



What did this image teach us about the power of gratitude?

Notice how left hemisphere lit up



When placed in a positive state, mood, or emotion the brain is up to 31% more efficient compared to a neutral mood.

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✓ practice **GRATITUDE**  
 (...that's #2 on the list!)

And there's even more evidence:

- Expressing gratitude via letters produces mental health benefits (Wong & Brown, 2017).
- Focusing on gratitude stimulates the hypothalamus (which helps to regulate stress) and the ventral tegmental (part of the brain's reward and pleasure system).
- Grateful people are physically healthier and sleep better (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).
- Demonstrating gratitude reduces aggression (DeWall, 2011).

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### 1. Gratitude:

- In what ways are you "rich"?
- What is something cool, interesting, or strange that you learned recently?
- What small "luxury" do you appreciate? (ex: heated seats, hot showers, park near your house, George Foreman grill)

### 2. Optimism:

- What is something fun you get to do this week?
- What cues do you look for that it will be a good day?
- Who/What recently "made your day"?

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### Can expressing gratitude make you happy?

**Research Question:** The problem is that most research studies on gratitude have been conducted with well-functioning people. *Is gratitude beneficial for people who struggle with mental health concerns?* And, if so, how?

**Sample:** 300 adults, mostly college students  
**Design:** Randomly placed into 1 of 3 groups; all 3 groups received counseling services to improve mental health

1. One letter of gratitude each week for 3 weeks
2. Write about deepest thoughts and feelings about negative experiences
3. No writing (control group)

**Results:** Those who wrote gratitude letters reported greater levels of happiness; results lasting up to 12 weeks after the study ended.

**Insights:**

- Gratitude unshackles us from toxic emotions
- Gratitude helps even if you don't share it
- Gratitude's benefits take time
- Gratitude has lasting effects on the brain

[https://ereaterpool.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_gratitude\\_changes\\_you\\_and\\_your\\_brain](https://ereaterpool.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain)

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- Quick Review
- Resiliency & Relationships
- Next Steps

**AGENDA**



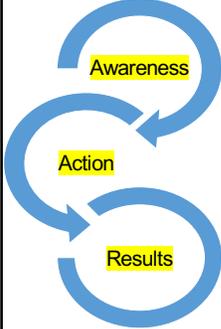
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**THE B?G QUESTION**

*How do we support students who have experienced trauma and stressors and still maintain a focus on classroom instruction?*

Hint: We build resiliency through specific strategies designed to provide equitable solutions. Trauma and stress are the problems; resiliency is the solution!

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Awareness is good. It's necessary. But I can be aware without taking action.

Action is necessary for results. I can't act until I'm aware.

But in order to get the results we are looking for, I need to take action that is most likely to produce those desired results.

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**Be on the look out...**



**What is going in your "cart"?**

**Why?** The ideas we'll discuss are powerful and make a huge difference for your success and student success. Be on the look out for strategies, concepts, and ideas that you'll commit to trying right away.

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**Quick Quiz...**

1. Stress can be defined as a p \_ \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ n (or belief) that a situation is beyond your control.
2. T or F? All stress is bad.
3. If stress is the problem, \_\_\_\_\_ is the answer. (hint: starts with an r)
4. One way to practice resilience is to re-\_\_\_\_\_ situations. (hint: it's what you put around a picture)
5. When helping others build resilience, we always start with building, fostering, maintaining, and repairing r \_ \_ a \_ \_ \_ \_ s \_ \_ \_ \_ .

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Trauma and Stress - a 10,000 foot *review*



**Key Idea** – Traumatic experiences and ACES increase the brain's stress response. That's the problem. One way to address the negative effects of stress is to help students build resiliency. Stress is the problem. Resiliency is an answer.

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Stress is the **physiological response** to a **perception** of a **lack of control** over an adverse situation or person

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✓ **stress** (on/off) is healthy for us.



✓ **distress** (chronic) is toxic to our brain and body



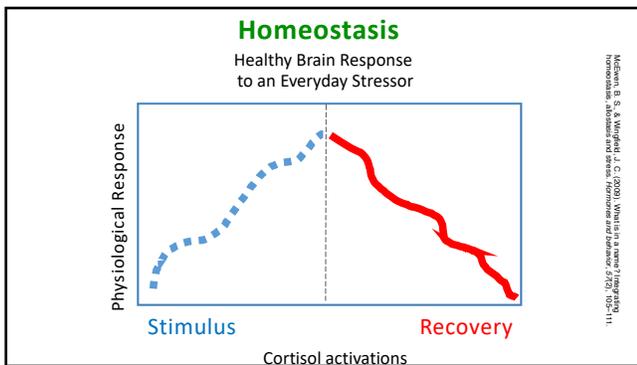
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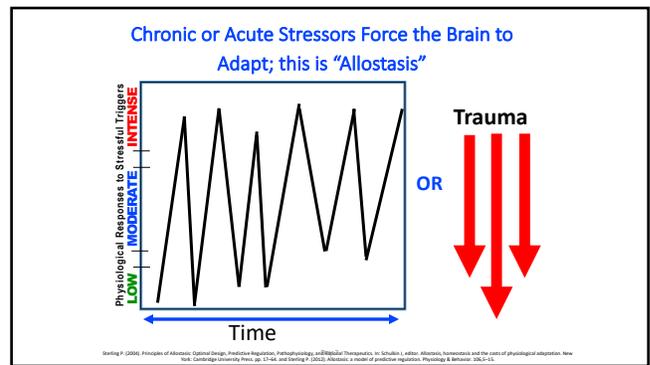
Remember – stress is our perception of a lack of control.

When our stress levels go up, we need to increase control. Increase control and our stress levels go down.

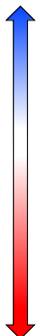
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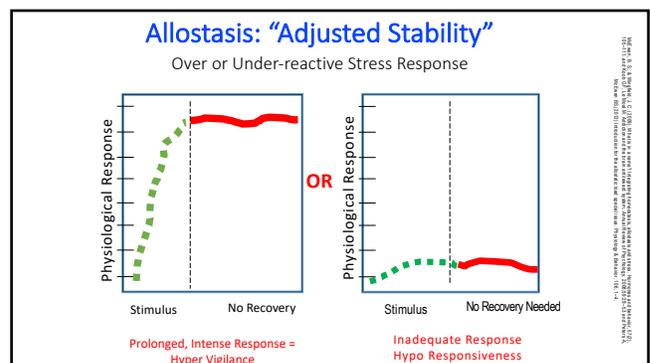
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Chronic stressors can induce **Allostasis** (a new set point). It is a reset of your brain's "thermostatic norm." It is also a survival tool.




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✓The issue of trauma isn't simply that something bad happened. It is what that bad thing does to your brain. The issue of trauma is the issue of stress. The problem with stress is that prolonged, unmediated stress (we'll call that *distress or chronic stress*) messes with your brain. Unchecked stress impacts every aspect of your life – learning, relationships, memory, physical health, mental health, behavior, etc. *How do we overcome stress caused by trauma?* We develop and practice **resiliency**.

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*What is Resilience?*

Words and concepts most commonly associated with resilience include: **persistence**, the ability to “**bounce back**” after a setback, and the ability to **cope during times of adversity**. At its most basic, resilience is made up of those **mindsets/beliefs/internal values** we possess along with a **set of specific strategies** we employ during the tough times.



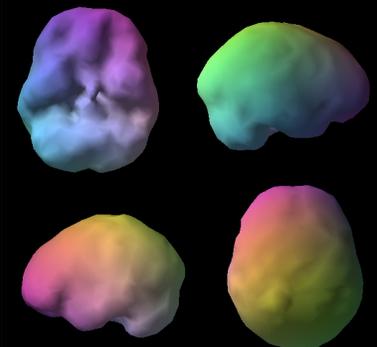
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✓ **Resiliency consists of 2 things:**

- ✓ How we think: **mindsets, attitudes, beliefs, values** (what goes on inside our heads)
- ✓ What we do: **actions, strategies, coping mechanisms** (what we do when times are tough)



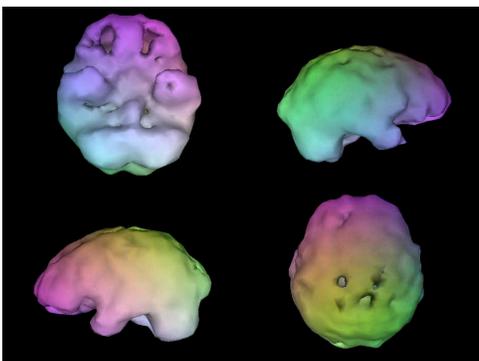
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**Healthy Brains Have Smooth Even Activation During Resting States**

SPECT Scans courtesy Dr. Amen

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**Areas of Underactivity in this Brain Under Bad Stress**

*Those areas that appear to be holes are areas of underactivity.*

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**How do we “move the needle”?**

- Fostering **Relationships** at multiple levels
- More “**micro**” **strategies** to use with students



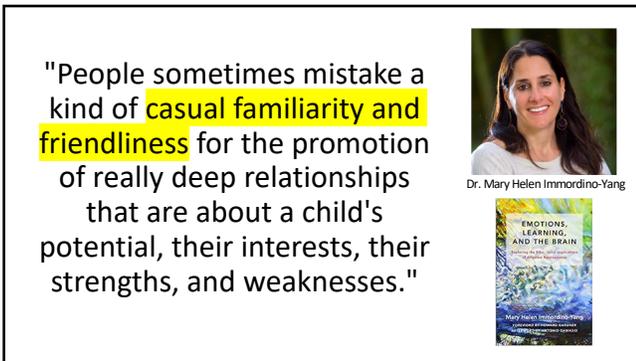
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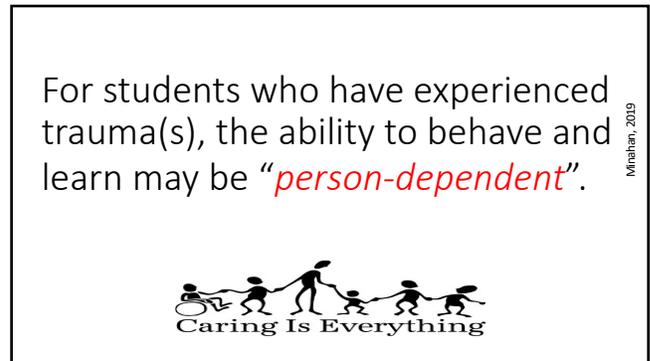
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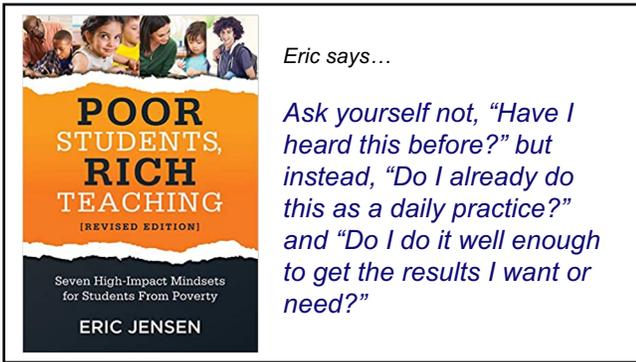
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Eric says...

Ask yourself not, "Have I heard this before?" but instead, "Do I already do this as a daily practice?" and "Do I do it well enough to get the results I want or need?"

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### 4 easy relationship builders

- I wish my teacher knew
- Beware of "should"
- Greet Students at the Door
- Positive Calls Home

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### What I Wish My Teacher Knew

**Strategy**

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### I want to be known as...

<https://makethemmasterit.com/>

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## "If you knew me, you'd know...."

**Strategy**

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### Beware of "Should"

What is problematic with statements such as

"You should do better"  
or  
"You should try harder"  
or  
"You should behave better"  
or  
"You should know how to...."

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### Greeting Students at the Door



**20% Increase!**

A 2013 study found that students who were regularly greeted at the door by their teacher were engaged at a much higher rate than in classrooms where teachers did not greet their students. And, there was a 9% reduction in misbehavior.

<https://twitter.com/edutopia/status/1155494620500918274?s=03>  
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/welcoming-students-smile>

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### “The driver for learning is social connection.”



- ✓ Greet students at eye level.
- ✓ Some variation of high 5, handshake, or hug.
- ✓ Students get to select the type of greeting. That’s empowering!
- ✓ It’s a way to “check the pulse” to see what individual students need.
- ✓ It’s about intentional interactions with students so that they enter the learning environment feeling cared for, safe, and valued.

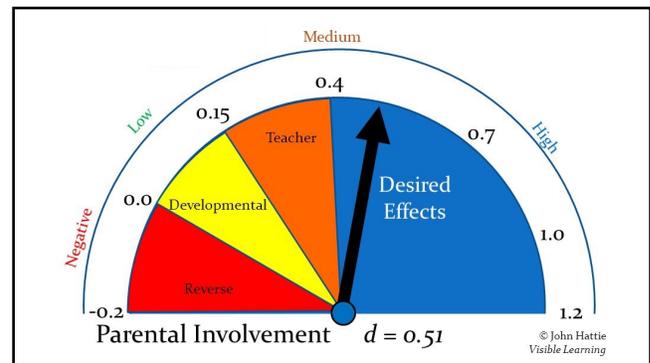
<https://www.ed-moodle.com/yn/plan/making-connections-creating-a-door>

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### 4 easy relationship builders

- ✓ *I wish my teacher knew*
- ✓ *Beware of “should”*
- ✓ *Greet Students at the Door*
- **Positive Calls Home**

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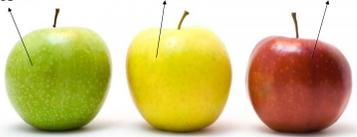
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- *Students in a high school credit recovery program*
- *Placed into 1 of 3 groups*

Parents received a weekly message from the teacher containing positive messages about their child’s performance

Parents received a weekly message from the teacher containing info on how their child could improve performance

Parents received no messages



Kraft MA, Rogers T. The individualized potential of teachers to assess communication: Evidence from a field experiment. Economics of Education Review (Internet). 2015;77: 749-63.

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- *Students in a high school students in a credit recovery program*
- *Placed into 1 of 3 groups*

- 6.5% more likely to earn credit
- 6% less likely to drop out
- Reduced absenteeism by 2.5%



Kraft MA, Rogers T. The individualized potential of teachers to assess communication: Evidence from a field experiment. Economics of Education Review (Internet). 2015;77: 749-63.

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- *Students in a high school students in a credit recovery program*
- *Placed into 1 of 3 groups*

- "Improvement" messages were more effective than "positive" messages – 8.8% increase in course credit compared to the "positive" message group

Parents received a weekly message from the teacher containing positive messages about their child's performance.

Parents received a weekly message from the teacher containing info on how their child could improve performance.

Parents received no message.

Kraft MA, Rogers T. The Individualized potential of teachers to assess communication. Evidence from a field experiment. Economics of Education Review (Internet). 2015;74:249-63.

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| Low Intensity Strategies     | High Intensity Strategies    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Letters/Postcards            | Phone calls                  |
| Newsletters                  | Face-to-Face Conversations   |
| Flyers                       | Conferences                  |
| Electronic/media             | Personalized notes           |
| Report Cards                 |                              |
| <i>One Way Communication</i> | <i>Two Way Communication</i> |

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Effective 2-Way Communication...(in person or via the phone)

- Develops rapport
- Helps with perspective and understanding
- Establishes "...a mutuality of trust"
- Builds appreciation of contrasting experiences
- 
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The **POWER** of the **POSITIVE PHONE CALL**

We have a moral and ethical obligation to communicate with our families. This is especially true for underperforming or marginalized students.

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Another reason you want to make positive calls home (and help students express positive qualities)....there's a thing called

**Spontaneous Trait Transference**

Spontaneous trait transference: communicators taken on the qualities they describe in others. Skowronski JJ1, Carlston DE, Mae L, Crawford MT.

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**4 easy relationship builders**

- ✓ *I wish my teacher knew*
- ✓ *Beware of "should"*
- ✓ *Greet Students at the Door*
- ✓ *Positive Calls Home*

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Be on the look out...



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Let's call it a day.



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