

**Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery
Child and Family Committee**

**Comparing Resiliency and Recovery:
A Side by Side Guide**

In 2001, a group of consumers, providers and family members came together to form the Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery. The Coalition began its work in response to reports from service users that they often felt that they were not being heard by providers and that they seldom had opportunities to participate in the planning of their treatment. Over the next four years, the Coalition has worked to develop the groundwork for the transformation of systems of care in Allegheny County to provide services that are supportive of change and development for people who have mental health or substance use problems. Hope, autonomy, choice and affiliation have been the organizing concepts for these efforts.

At the same time, recovery has emerged nationally as an outcome driving service development and change, despite the fact that there is a great deal of diversity in the way that it might be conceptualized. In child and adolescent systems, another term has commonly been used. Resiliency describes both innate and developed abilities to withstand stress and adversity. Services promoting resiliency are focused on strengths, providing hope and developing potential. Both resiliency and recovery oriented services reject the idea that illnesses are permanent or defining or that they cannot be overcome.

Despite some similarities, these terms have not been used interchangeably. Resiliency may occur with or without an antecedent illness, and might be considered to be one of the elements of an evolving recovery. Recovery implies to many that something was lost and needs to be regained, and this would seem to have limited applicability to persons who have had lifelong struggles with illness.

The ACCR began its work with the adult service using community in mind. As its work progressed, there were many inquiries about how it might apply to children and young adults. From these interests, a child and family committee was formed to explore the applicability of its work to the child and adolescent population and to identify the common elements of recovery and resiliency.

The comparison that follows is one of the results of that inquiry. While it may never be possible to identify terms that everyone is comfortable with, it is clear that there are important concepts or principles that move people toward hope, productivity, autonomy, and interactivity which are held in common regardless of age or disability.

Elements of Resilience and Recovery

| Element | Resilience | Recovery |
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| Defining Concepts | <p>Resilience is a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity*</p> <p><i>*Within the context of the individual child, the family and the larger connections to the community</i></p> <p><i>Also: Resiliency recognizes that children have a wider range of challenges and that not all are related to an actual “mental illness” per se</i></p> <p><i>*adversity =an illness, disability, poverty, racism or other challenging life circumstance.</i></p> | <p>Recovery is a process in which people are able to live, work, learn and participate fully in their communities. For some individuals, this means the ability to live despite adversity*. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms. Recovery also recognizes that the individuals may also need to recover from controlling, bad experiences with the “system”</p> <p><i>*adversity =an illness, disability, poverty, racism or other challenging life circumstance.</i></p> |
| Time Frame | Resiliency is an on-going developmental process | Recovery is an on-going individualized, life long process |
| Social Context | Resiliency occurs in the context of a social context of peers, school and community supports. | Recovery occurs within a social context that encourages individual to take on “new roles” and/or re-establishing connections to a community |
| | Resiliency occurs when there is a strong bond within a family and a significant attachment to a caring adult | Recovery occurs when individuals develop reciprocal relationships with hopeful, caring others |
| | Resiliency occurs in an environment where there is awareness of the presence and impact of violence and social disruption on the family and child. | Recovery emphasizes overcoming social stigma related to experience adversity. |

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| Locus of Control | <p>Resilience emphasizes family or primary caregiver involvement as primary decision makers for children's care.</p> <p>Resiliency focuses on the family learning about their child's illness/disability and ways to treat and support their child.</p> <p>.</p> | <p>Recovery emphasizes the individual as the informed decision maker! The individual is informed about their life and treatment options.</p> <p>Individuals plan for possible future times of incapacity (e.g. Development of Advanced Directives). The individual is in the driver's seat and has control of their life's journey with an emphasis on personal responsibility.</p> |
| | <p>As adolescents approach adulthood, youth are educated and decision making is transferred to the youth, as appropriate for their age and individualized related to each youth's development</p> | <p>Recovery emphasizes the importance of the individual understanding and managing their illness. (Family/significant others are encouraged to learn about illness and how to help support their loved one)</p> |
| Outcomes | <p>Families and children learn to experience resilience through positive communication between family members</p> | <p>The individual defines the role and extent of family/significant others in recovery. Recovery oriented services and supports encourage reconciliation and forgiveness of/by family.</p> |
| | <p>Children and families experience good physical and mental health; Children and their families feel accepted and included in every day life.</p> | <p>Individuals experience good physical and mental health. Individuals feel accepted and included in every day life.</p> |
| | <p>Children/adolescents develop age-appropriate competencies (emotional and cognitive) through inclusion in life with typically developing peers</p> | <p>Individuals develop skills and competencies according to their own life plan for a positive, fulfilling future.</p> |
| | <p>Children/adolescents master skills and improve self-esteem through positive interpersonal interactions.</p> | <p>Individuals build confidence and self-esteem through work, relationships, power, choice, hope and control.</p> |
| | <p>Children/adolescents develop self-efficacy to successfully cope with life challenges</p> | <p>Individuals develop self-efficacy and self-management skills to build hope for a fulfilling life.</p> |

| Element | Resilience | Recovery |
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| Outcomes | Children/Adolescents learn appropriate skills to play, interact with others and participate in community activities. | Adults focus on working, or other meaningful activities, to become productive, contributing members of their community. |
| | Families and children are aware of and accept illness as an adversity that can be overcome. | Individuals learn to accept and understand their illness. Individuals taking personal inventory of their strengths and develop empathy for others. |
| | Families and children are encouraged to develop/use humor and personal coping strategies to cope with impact of adversity/illness. | Individuals are encouraged to develop/use behaviors they find helpful to manage symptoms and cope with life's stressors. |
| | Families and children develop skills/resources that allow them to play appropriate social roles. | Individuals develop skills/abilities to nurture productive, meaningful relationships that support the recovery process. |
| | Families and children feel hopeful about the future and work toward fulfilling their dreams. | Individuals feel hopeful about the future and work toward fulfilling their dreams. |
| Indicators | Understand challenges presented by illness/adversity. Tolerate discomfort as part of life. | Accept illness and challenging life circumstances. Tolerate discomfort as part of life. |
| | Families and youth establish independence. | Individuals establish independence. |
| | Families and children develop supportive relationships. | Individuals develop supportive relationships and community connections. |
| | Children/Youth develop positive self-concepts and value system | Individuals experience self empowerment with humility. |
| | Children/Youth/Families initiate creative, productive activities. | Individuals take control of their own life. |
| | Children/youth/families develop skills to help them cope with life's challenges. (e.g., humor, forgiveness, honesty, empathy, hope, initiative, productivity) | Individuals develop skills to help cope with life's challenges (e.g., humor, forgiveness, honesty, empathy, hope, initiative, productivity) |

| Element | Resilience | Recovery |
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| Supportive Service Characteristics | Families and children have services/treatment goals that are appropriate to developmental age of the child. | Individuals receive services and treatment /approaches that support recovery. Individuals are given information about their choices of types of treatment/supports. |
| | Families and children have access to individualized and evidence based services. Families and children have a choice of providers. | Individuals set their own goals that are manageable and focus on small steps that can be achieved along the way toward larger life goals. |
| | Services build on family/child/community strengths. Services are individualized and respect the culture of the child/family and their community. | Services build on strengths and are person-centered and individualized. Services respect the culture of the individual, their family and/or community. |
| | Services help families maximize financial resources minimize the risk of poverty. | Services emphasize the importance of work as a means to achieve financial independence. |
| | Services help identify factors that may lead to abuse or neglect and help families learn skills to prevent abuse/neglect. | Services emphasize the importance of supportive relationships. Relationships with family and friends are critical, with individual choice in relationships emphasized. Relationships with hopeful, caring supportive others are encouraged. |
| | Services focus on the importance of high quality early care and education. | Services for adults focus on movement toward work and typical participation in community life. |

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