



Parenting Within REACH: Achieving Emotional Wellness For the Children and the Youth

PPS-PSCAP Task Force on Mental
Health for Children and Youth



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ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

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BUILDING RESILIENCE in Children and Teens

**MODULES DESIGNED FOR PARENTS,
TEACHERS, AND COUNSELORS**



RESILIENCE



Stories Found in
Philippine Streets

Dr. Cornelio G. Banaag, Jr.
Father of Child Psychiatry in the Philippines

OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss stress and its effects
2. To define resilience
3. To discuss the ingredients of resilience:
the 7 C's
4. To discuss strategies to reduce stress and build our children's resilience.

What is Stress?

- A response to a negative change in one's life
- Even small changes can impact a child's feelings of safety and security

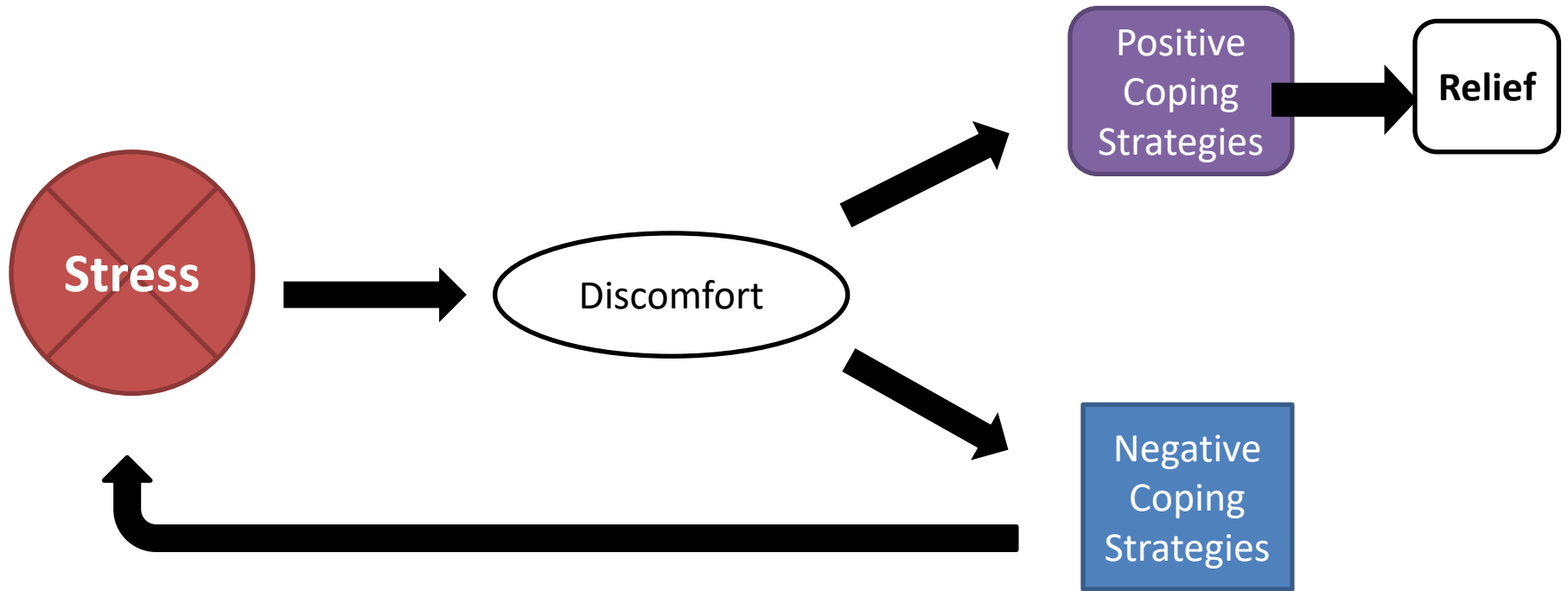




Stressors



- Bullying experiences, peer pressures
- Changing schools, neighborhood
- Having negative thoughts about themselves
- Going through body changes, in both boys and girls
- Juggling responsibilities
- Money problems in the family
- Seeing parents go through separation/ fights
- Living in unsafe home or neighborhood



taken from: Ginsburg, K. (2011) p. 244

What are the effects of stress in children?

Physical symptoms

- Decreased appetite
- Headaches/stomachaches
- Bedwetting
- Sleep disturbances/nightmares

Emotional/behavioral

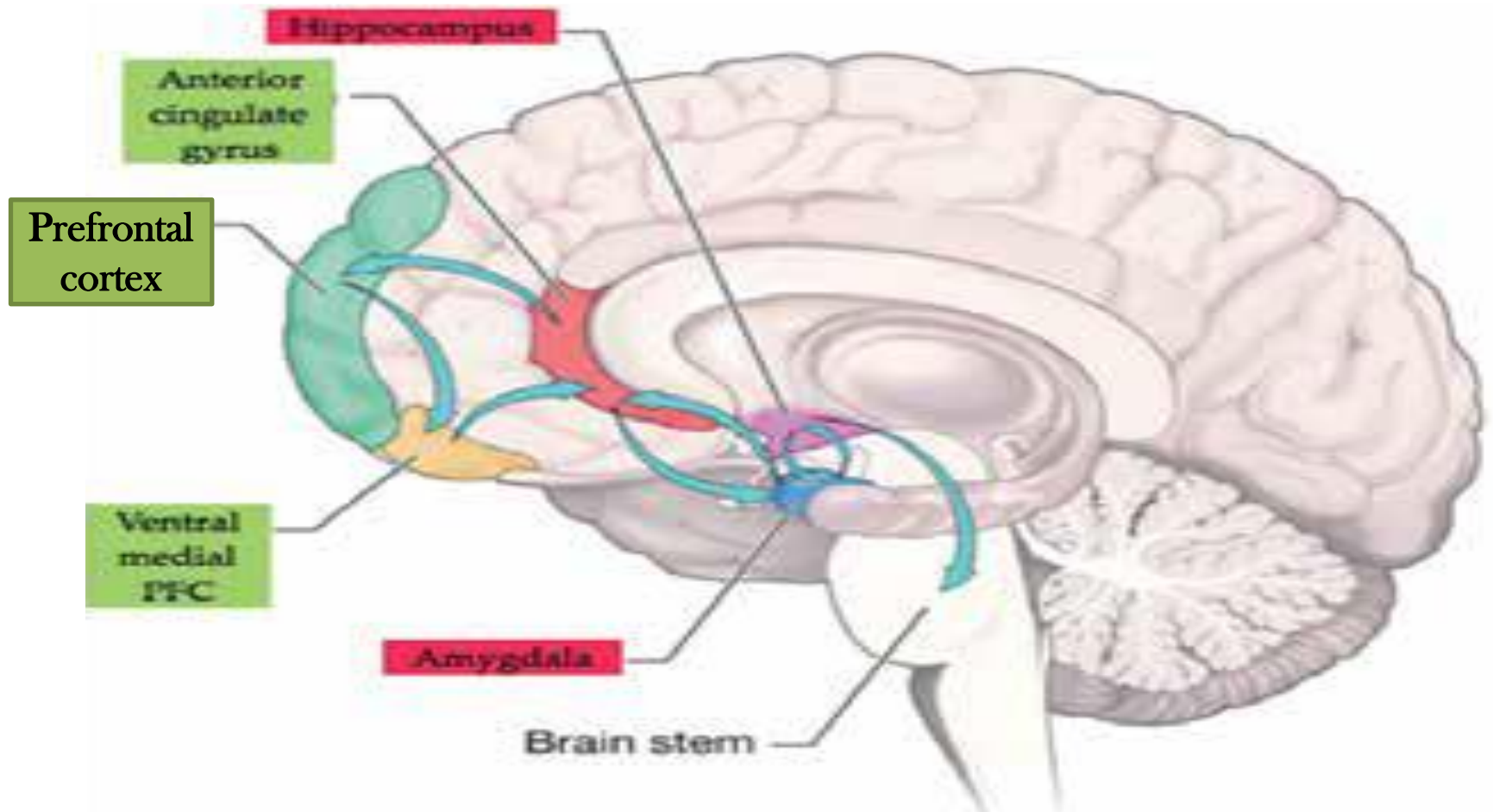
- Anxiety/worry
- Not able to relax
- New or recurring fears
- Clinging, unwilling to let out of sight
- Not able to control emotions
- Aggressive/stubborn
- Failure to participate in family/school activities



In older children and adolescents MALADAPTIVE coping strategies

- Drinking
- Drug use
- Sensation seeking
- Mutilation
- Sex out of the context of a healthy relationship
- Truancy
- Gang affiliation
- Running away





Stress - Bottom up control of brainstem

Stress Management strategies - Top Down regulation of emotional responses

How stress affects the Brain

Hand Model of the Brain



- <http://ageofmontessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Flipping-Your-Lid.sustainableparenting.pdf>
- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ce65d8e4b0939090645d85/t/59df33449f8dce1267114ae2/1507799878620/Brain+in+the+Palm+of+the+Hand+visual+handout+parents.pdf>

Changing behavior Step-by-step

1. Become aware that a problem exists
2. Recognize that the problem affects them so that they become motivated to change
3. Acquire the skills to find a solution
4. Weigh the costs and benefits of changing the behavior
5. Make a decision to change and commit to it

What Parents can do?

1. Provide a safe, secure, and dependable home
2. Be a role model for healthy behavior
3. Be careful about which television programs/ books/ internet apps, games that children watch and use
4. Keep children informed about anticipated changes in jobs/ schools/ environment
5. Spend calm, relaxed time with your children

What Parents can do?

6. Learn to listen. Don't be critical.
7. Build your child's feelings of self worth
8. Allow them to have opportunities to make choices and have some control in their own life.
9. Recognize unresolved stress in your child.
10. Seek help from a health care provider.

Stress in Childhood, US Natl Library of Medicine



STRATEGIES



- Assess the stressor
- Problem-focused engagement strategies
- Emotion-focused engagement strategies
- Healthy Disengagement strategies



ASSESS THE STRESSOR

- Is it a “real tiger” or a “paper tiger” (a worry is not a “real tiger”)
- Avert catastrophic thinking to remember that bad things are often temporary.



OTHER STRATEGIES

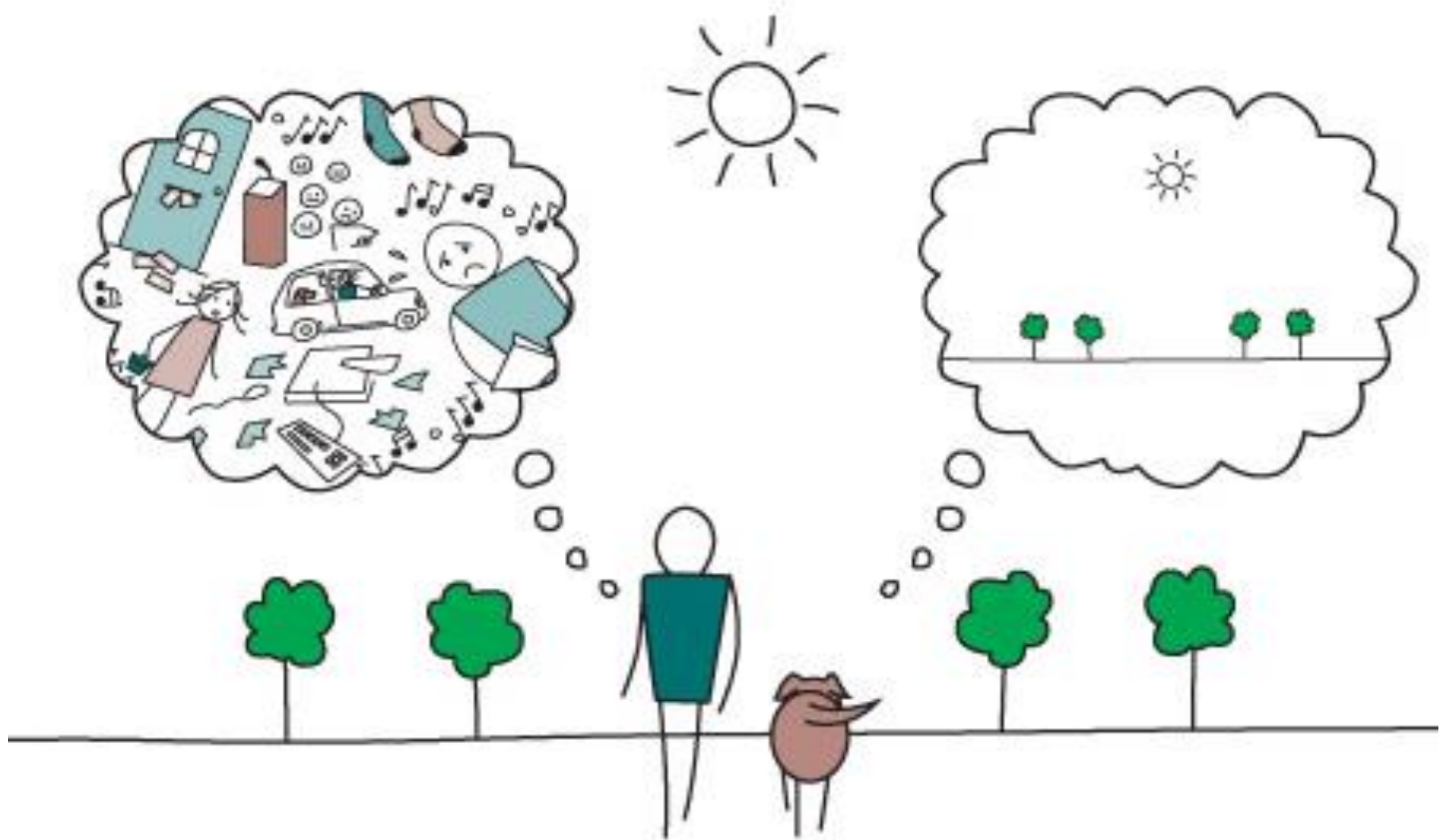
1. Avoid stress when possible and letting things go
2. Take instant vacations – visualization/ engage in interests or hobby, reading, music
3. Release emotional tension – meditation/ journaling/ talk with someone you trust/ explore creativity/ crying or laughing hard with other people or with self

Other Strategies

Take care of your body

- Eat well – avoid junk foods
- Recognize the power of exercise
- Sleep well
 - * Go to sleep about the same time every night
 - * Exercise 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.
- Active relaxation - breathing exercises

Time out – enjoy activities with family/ setting aside use of computer/ cell phones



Mind Full, or Mindful?

What is Mindfulness?

- “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”

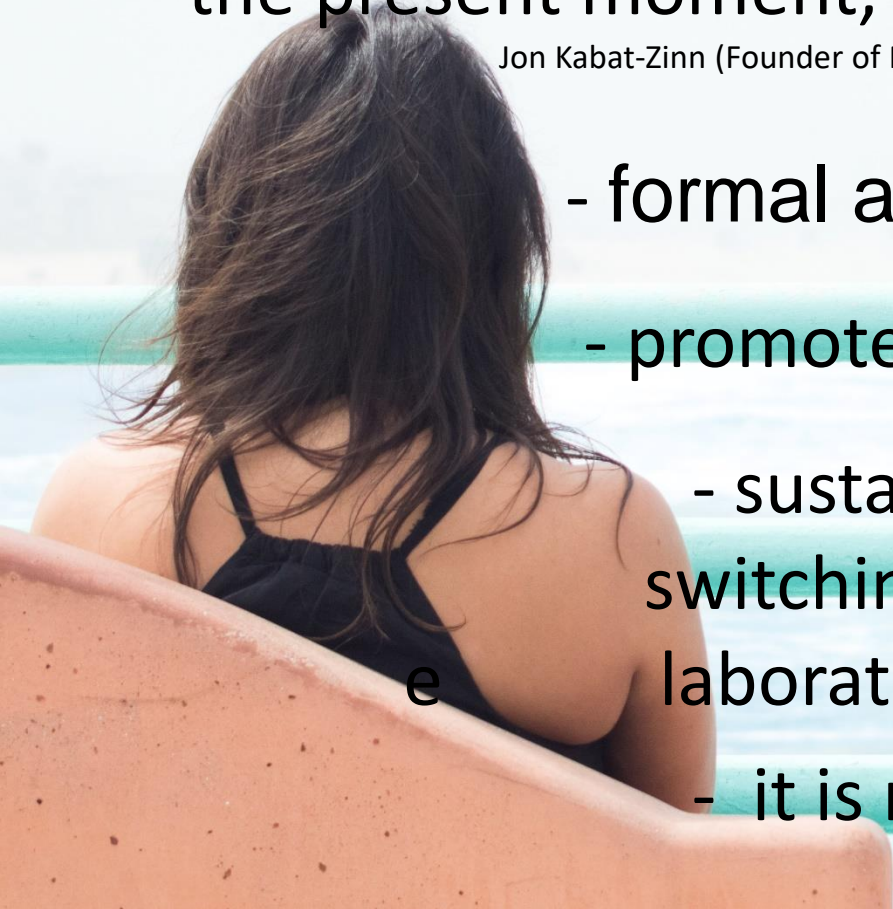
Jon Kabat-Zinn (Founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction)

- formal and informal meditation skills

- promote resilience and coping

- sustained attention, attention switching and inhibition of laborative processes

- it is not about thought suppression



Cultivating awareness

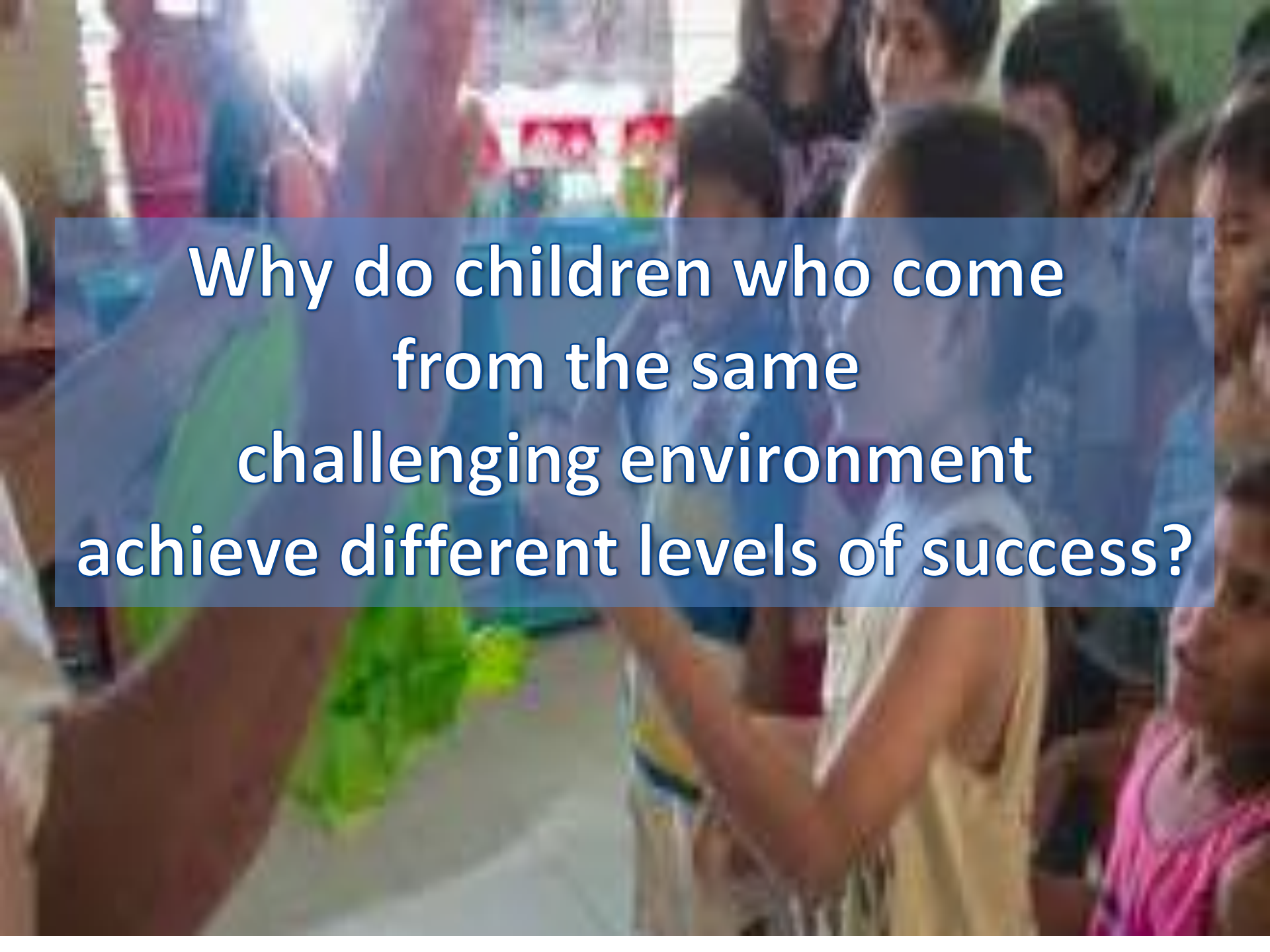
1. Coming to the awareness that you are multitasking.
 - choose the days when you will not multitask;
 - engage in self-care activities;
 - come up with activities to slow down before these critical moments.

Cultivating awareness

2. Inhale fully for at least 5 seconds; PAUSE and then allow self to exhale for another 5 seconds before the next task.
3. Consciously notice a physical detail in your current environment.
4. Cultivate mindfulness through yoga, meditation, deep-breathing techniques, personal narrative writing, religious and spiritual activities, personal psychotherapy.

Promoting Resilience in our children



A group of children in a classroom are holding hands in a circle, suggesting a community or support group. The children are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual clothing. The background shows a typical classroom setting with posters on the wall.

**Why do children who come
from the same
challenging environment
achieve different levels of success?**

Defining Resilience

Def. The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties: toughness (Pilipino – matatag)

Synonyms

Flexibility

Pliability

Plasticity

Suppleness



Resilience is ...

The capacity to rise above difficult circumstances.

The ability to recover from a setback



RESILIENCE is ...

A MINDSET



UNEVEN

Resilience is ...

- A trait all parents need to develop in children so they will be equipped to navigate a stressful, complicated world while relishing its abundant pleasures.
- IT is not a TRAIT of perfect people.
- Perfectionists fear making any mistakes
- They perform well but don't take chances to perform at their very best.

Resilient people are...

More successful because they push their limits and learn from their mistakes.

A CORE FACTOR that determines who not only will ADAPT, but who will THRIVE / SURVIVE



Resilience is also...

CONFIDENCE



**The power or ability to return
to the
original form or position**

NATURAL RESILIENCE?

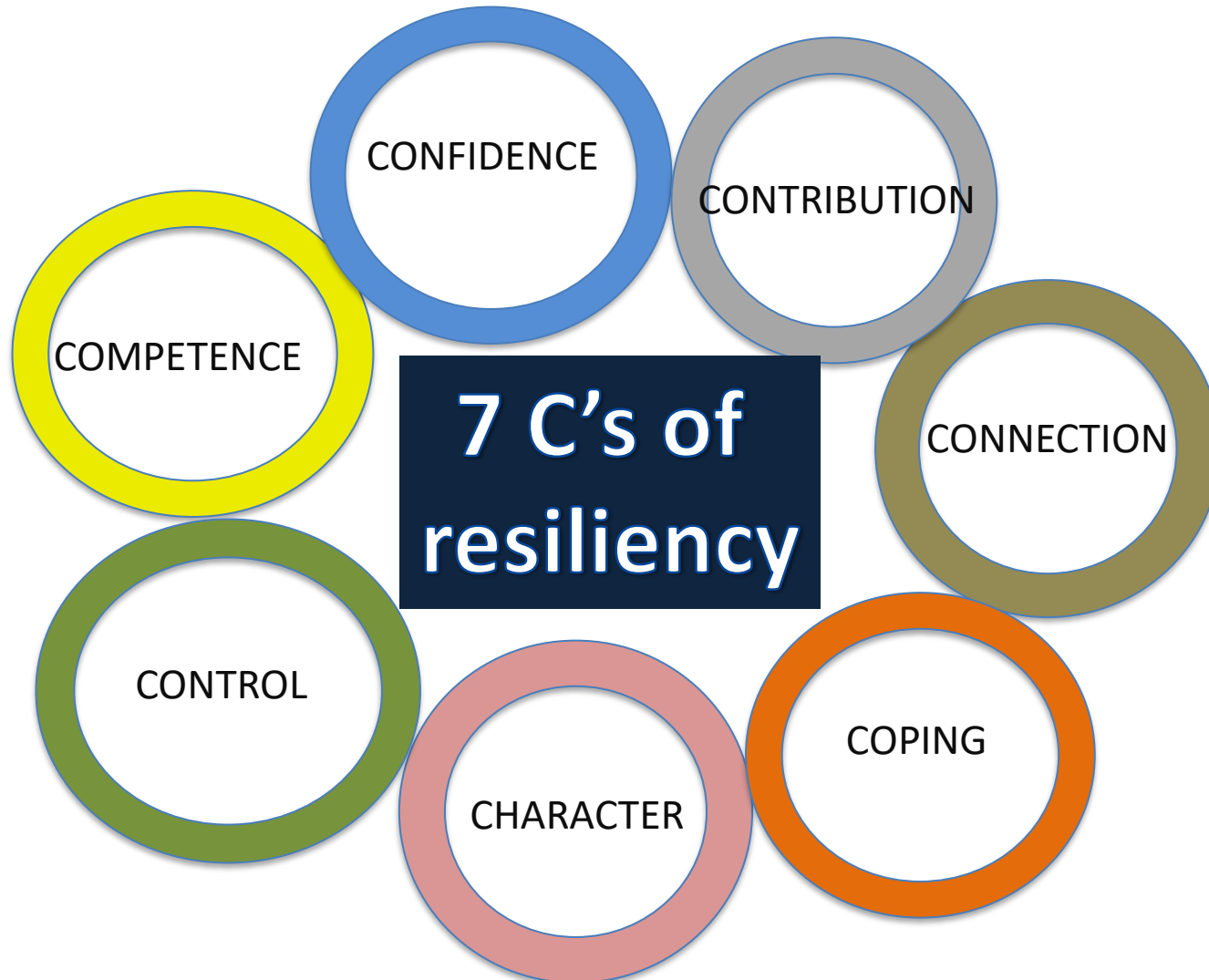
- Some kids have ability to recover from obstacles, while others need extra support.
- Children need to tap into their strengths, acquire specific skills to cope, recover from adversity, and be prepared for future challenges.
- Parents take the lead in building resilience, but the community that surrounds them helps them to thrive.

THREE ESSENTIAL THEMES

that affect children's resilience

1. Unconditional love
2. Children meet adult expectations
3. Children watch what we do more than what we say

PROMOTING RESILIENCY



COMPETENCY

- **The ability to handle situations effectively.**
- It is acquired through actual experience.
- Ask yourself:
 - Do I help my child focus on her strengths and build on them?
 - Do I notice what she does well or do I focus on her mistakes?

COMPETENCY

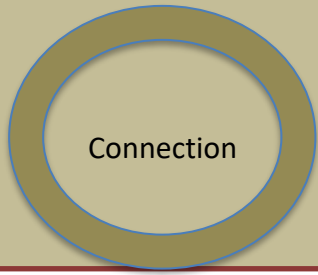
- Ask yourself:
 - When I point out a mistake, am I clear and focused or do I communicate that I believe she always messes up?
 - Do I help her recognize what she has going for herself?
 - Am I helping her build educational, social, stress-reduction skills necessary to make her competent in the real world?

COMPETENCY

- Do I let her make safe mistakes so she has the opportunity to right herself or do I try to protect her from every trip and fall?
- As I try to protect her, does my interference mistakenly send the message “I don’t think you can handle this?”

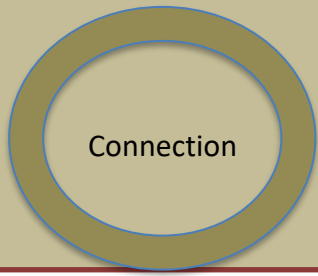
CONFIDENCE

- **The solid belief in one's own abilities**
- Consider:
 - Do I see the best in my child, so that he can see the best in himself?
 - Do I express that I expect the best qualities in him? (fairness, integrity, persistence, kindness)
 - Do I help him recognize what he has done right or well?



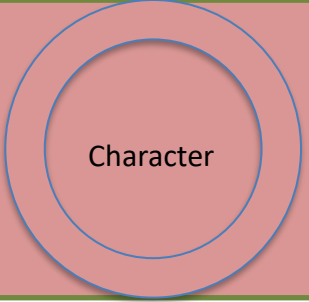
CONNECTION

- Close ties with family, friends, school, and community
- Builds a sense of security
- Joining educational, religious, athletic organizations increases their sense of belongingness.



CONNECTION

- Do we build a sense of physical safety and emotional security within our home?
- Do we create a common space in the house where we can share time together?
- Do I allow my child to express all types of emotions or do I suppress unpleasant feelings?
- How do we resolve conflicts within the family? Do we address them and work on them together?



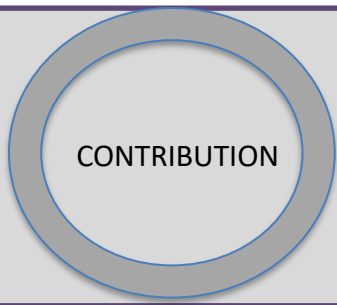
Character

CHARACTER

- **A FUNDAMENTAL SENSE OF RIGHT OR WRONG**
- Usually have a strong sense of self-worth and confidence
- Maybe future-oriented and make wiser decisions today.

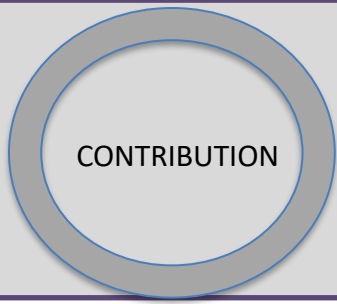
CHARACTER

- Do I help my child understand how his behaviors affect other people in good and bad ways?
- Am I helping my child recognize himself as a caring person?
- Do I help him clarify his own values?
- Do I value him so clearly that I model the importance of caring for others?



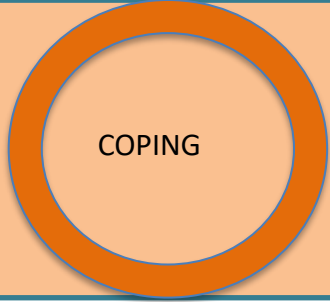
CONTRIBUTION

- Children who understand the importance of **PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION** gain a sense of purpose that can motivate them.
(helping out/ volunteerism)
- It will enhance their own competence, character, and sense of connection.



CONTRIBUTION

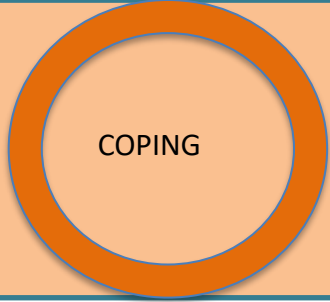
- Do I communicate to my child that many people in the world do not have as much human contact, money, freedom, and security as they need?
- Do I teach the important value of serving others? Do I model generosity with my time and money?
- Do I make clear to my child that I believe she can improve the world?



COPING

- Children who effectively cope with stress are better prepared to come to life's challenges. The best protection against unsafe, worrisome behaviors may be a wide repertoire of positive, coping strategies.





COPING

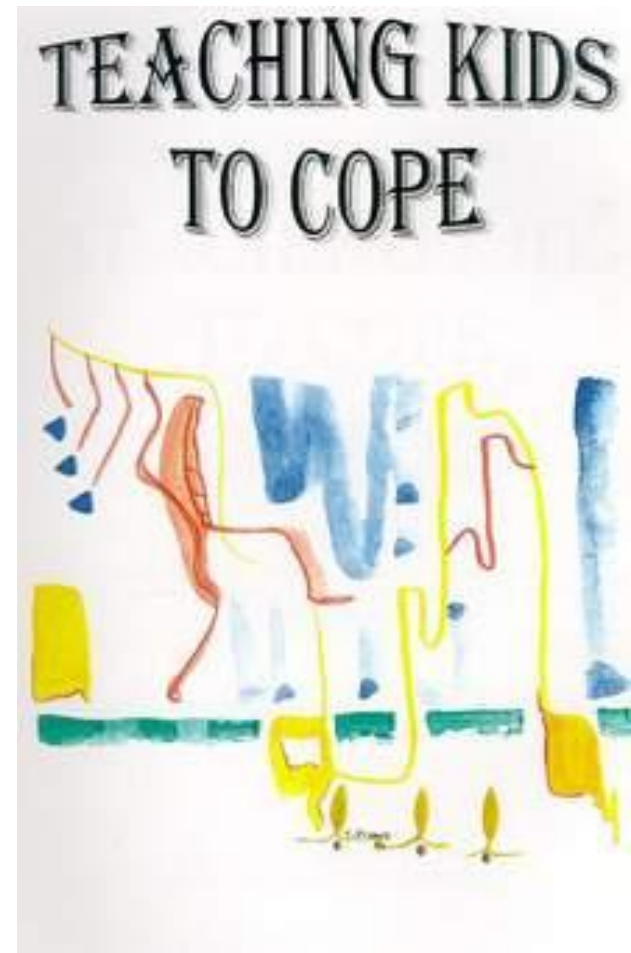
ASK YOURSELVES:

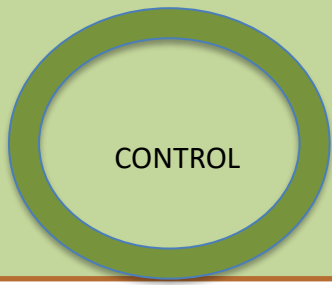
- Do I help my child understand the difference between a real crisis and something that feels just like an emergency?
- Do I model positive coping strategies myself?
- DO I believe that telling him to “JUST STOP” the negative behaviors will not do any good?



COPING

- Do I recognize that for many young people, risk behaviors are attempts to alleviate stress and pain?
- Do I guide my child to develop positive effective coping strategies?





CONTROL

- When children realize that they can **control the outcomes of their decisions and actions**, they're more likely to know that they have the ability to do what it takes to bounce back.
- If parents make all the decisions, children are denied opportunities to learn control.

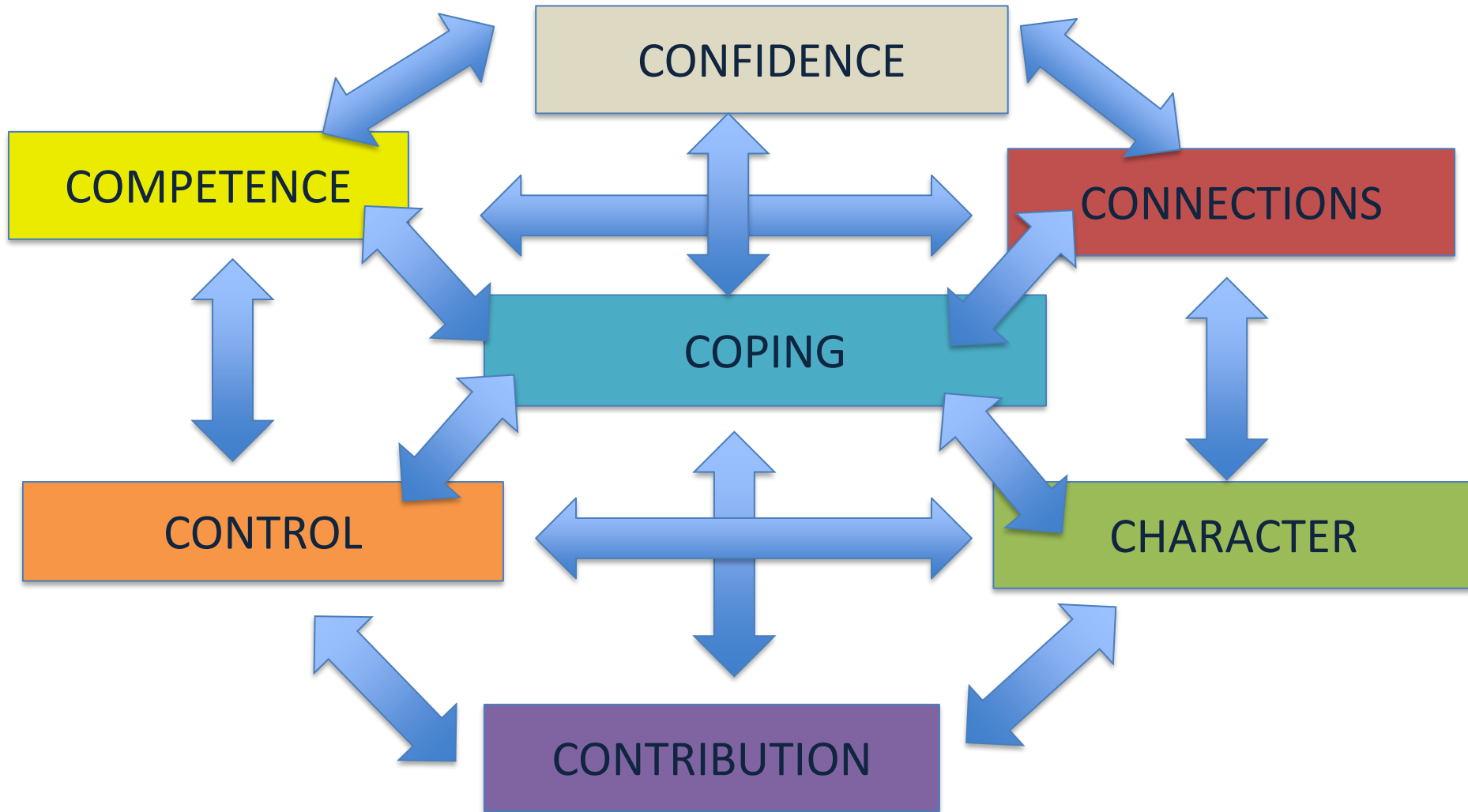


CONTROL

CONTROL

- Do I help my child understand that **life's events are not purely random** and most things happen as a direct result of someone's actions and choices?
 - Do I help her think about the future but take it one step at a time?
 - Do I help my child understand that she isn't responsible for many of the bad circumstances in her life?

A WEB OF C'S





FINAL WORDS...

- Discussed stress and resilience
- Learned strategies which can be used during brief office visits to reduce stress and increase resilience in our children
- Reinforce periodically
- Most of all: Practice these as well

Helpful websites

- www.smilingmind.com.au;
- www.headspace.com and
- www.calm.com.
- <http://kelymentalhealth.ca/healthy-living/mindfulness> for free audio recordings of guided mindfulness meditations

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www.drkristiqolfe.com

www.aacap.org

www.youtube.com - Ellen Langer: Mindfulness over Matter

Most pictures sourced from: www.unsplash.com

THANK YOU!!