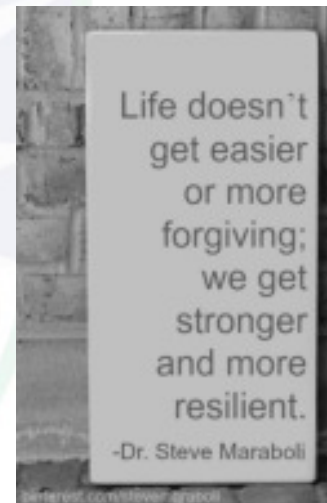




Revisiting Resilience

'Resilience is the capacity to mentally and emotionally cope with a crisis or recover quickly from difficulties'.

Current times have tested and tried our strength and bravery when facing adversity again and again, and just when we think we have survived... we seem to be facing another challenge. The hardest part of trying to keep head above water currently, is that the challenges we are experiencing could not have been predicted nor prepared for. We are fighting a fight that we could never have trained for. We keep getting back up, but are knocked down once more by something unforeseen and at times unseen. **Essentially we are experiencing trauma, loss and a state of heightened stress for a prolonged period of time, and yet we are expecting ourselves to continue functioning as 'normal'.** Therefore we need to revisit resilience as we have understood it.

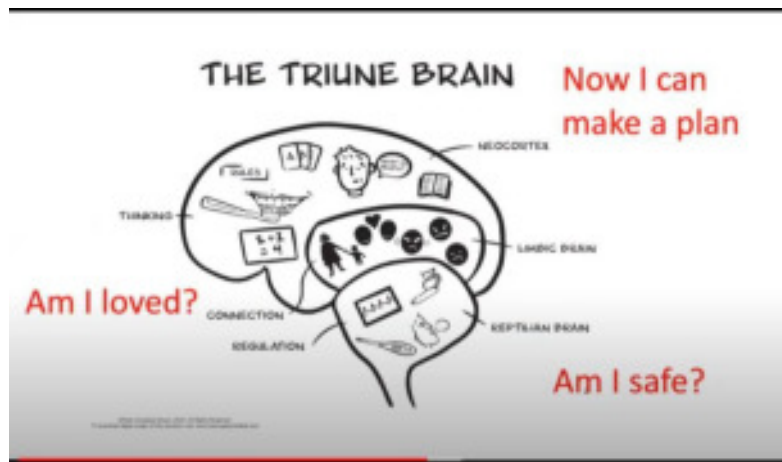


Trauma can be described as 'the response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness, diminishes their



sense of self and their ability to feel a full range of emotions and experiences.' Therefore between the threat of Covid 19 on our health and wellbeing, the lock down restrictions that limited our freedom of choice and severed connections with loved ones, the recent unrest which violated our sense of safety and security, as well as the possibility that we have experienced loss of

loved ones, financial strain, adaptations to online work, cancelled celebrations ... to name just a few; it is no wonder that we are experiencing a sense of post traumatic stress and severe fatigue.

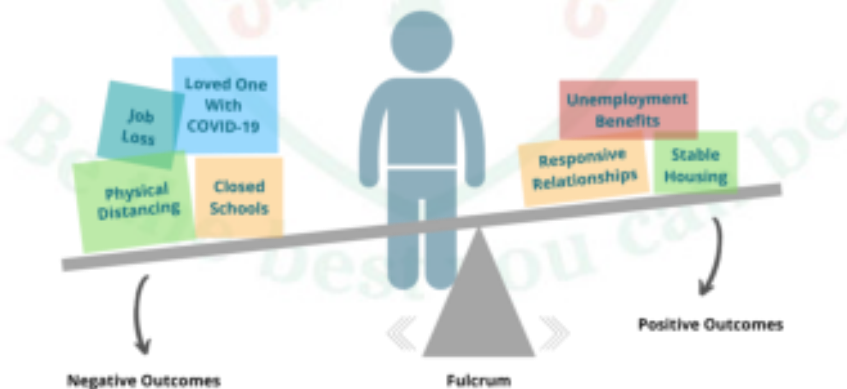


Our understanding of the Triune brain, as per the picture above, shows us that we cannot begin to think, learn and reason about work and school and make plans and decisions, before we first secure feelings of safety and belonging, or happiness. Therefore once we begin to realize that we are not under threat, we need to focus on connection with others, and building or maintaining relationships before we can be productive. **Connectedness is key; and a better predictor of health than your history of adversity. Share, celebrate and listen and learn from each other; this helps us regulate, feel rewarded and opens up our abilities to plan, teach and learn from our experiences.**

Instead of asking ourselves the question 'what is wrong with me?'... we need to begin to focus on 'what happened to me?' – we need to acknowledge everything we are going through. Then we can start to consider what we can do to develop resilience and increased strength from all this adversity.



Resilience exists when a person can use mental processes and behaviours in promoting personal assets, and protecting the self from the potential negative effects and stressors.



It is beneficial to think of resilience in terms of a balance scale or seesaw. Protective experiences and coping skills on one side can be used to counterbalance adversity. Resilience is therefore evident when a person's health and development tips towards positive outcomes. If we are faced with increased stress and obstacles and begin to feel overwhelmed with the task of managing under such pressure; we need to consider ways in which we can increase our coping skills and expose ourselves to positive experiences to balance out the difficulties we are facing.



Consider developing the following skills of Resilience using some practical ideas that can be integrated into every day life. Let us teach our children the skills we have learnt to feel capable and brave when facing hardships.

- **Competence**
 - Having the skills to face challenges
 - ✓ **Identify and acknowledge problem solving skills** in all situations and every day experiences.
- **Confidence**
 - Demonstrating belief in one's own abilities.
 - ✓ **Compliment yourself and your kids for any and every achievement.** Be proud of overcoming all challenges, no matter how small.
- **Connection**
 - Maintaining a sense of belonging and security.
 - ✓ Even though maintaining physical distance for safety, we can still use technology to connect. **Take time to reach out to others and remember you are not alone.**
- **Character**
 - Stay in touch with your values and be comfortable sticking to them.
 - ✓ Humanity can shine through any adversity if we speak and act out of kindness and care. **Practice respect and integrity.**
- **Contribution**
 - Feeling that the world is a better place because you are in it.
 - ✓ Although it can be overwhelming when contemplating how to be purposeful in the world, **start with contributing in the home or workplace to build and maintain a sense of purpose.**
- **Coping**
 - Develop stress reduction skills and social skills.
 - ✓ **Reflect on what you have done in the past to overcome challenges.** Reach out to others in similar situations and ask how they have coped. Make time for yourself to exercise, get some fresh air or cook a delicious meal; listen to music or have a relaxing bath.
- **Control**
 - Recognise that we still can make choices with regard to how to think or act in any circumstance; and therefore have an influence on the outcome.
 - ✓ **Re-gain a sense of control by choosing how we respond to challenges and our attitude towards restrictions and failure.** Growth mindset and an optimistic outlook are empowering.

