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Factors That Contribute to Resiliency in Anishinabe/Ojibwe Children Overcoming Adversity

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Overcoming Adversity

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AUGSBURG COLLEGE
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of:

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has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requierment

for the Master of Social Work Degree.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is respectfully dedicated to;
my wife, Beth, who has maintained her support
even through the hard times,
my children, Stephannie, Adam, and Megan, who have endured much,
and to all those that have touched my life and provided encouragement.

I also dedicate my work to the children who have stuggled towards resilience.

"Train up a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6

"Even in the uproarious din of unmet social needs,
some ought to cry out more than others."
David Gelman

"Resilience is not an exclusively interior quality.
It's existence, growth, and survival depend significantly on what and who
fills the spaces around us and the nature of the balance that exists between
ourselves and that outer world."
Frederic Flach, M.D.

"A hundred years from now
...it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house
I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...
...but the world may be different becuse I was important
in the life of a child."
Kathy Davis

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No piece of work is an individual effort. All my accomplishments are an accumulative total of my past experiences. I am who I am because of those that have entered my life and influenced my being. Their lasting impressions have, and will always be, a part of me.

Thanks be to God, for without whom, the confusions of life would be too hard to bear. God really does work in mysterious ways. I praise Him for the gifts He's given to me, the events that I have lived through, the pains and joys, and all the opportunities that I have been blessed to experience. I rejoice in my calling to the field of social work and human helping services.

Thanks also to my family of origin. For their personal and spiritual guidance. For always being available, even when I drifted away. Thank-you for not giving up on me, and for helping me endure my pains. Thanks for the memories, for the opportunities to grow, experience, and to live. Thank-you for life.

I would like to acknowledge all my educators. For their belief in me, even when I did not believe in myself. For their encouragement, their guidance, their inspiration, and their shared knowledge. They made me work hard, and I know at times I made their work hard. Thank-you for seeing beyond what I presented and keeping me on the right course.

Thanks to the volunteers who participated in the research. Without their insight and information, this project would not have been complete.

A special whole hearted thanks to my three children. I know that these times have been difficult. Now let's find time for us all to enjoy.

Finally to my wife Beth, this phase of my education is done, now it's your turn.

I love you!

Abstract

Factors That Contribute to Resiliency in Anishinabe/Ojibwe Children
Overcoming Adversity

Jeffrey S. Rodin

May 1998

The object of this research is to examine the resilience of the Native Americans from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. This group of people have faced many forms of adversity over the generations. These adversities include poverty, racism, and cultural separation just to name a few.

From the perspective of ecological systems theory, family systems theory, and the strengths perspective, this study focuses on individuals that grew up on the Mille Lacs reservation and have been recognized as being successful by their tribal community. Reflecting on their childhood, these individuals discussed three factors that contributed to their resiliency. These factors are their family relationships, the supports received from outside their family system, and a belief in self.

Identifying these factors and enhancing them in others may benefit the future of individuals, families, and society.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

All children experience trauma throughout their childhood. The mere transition from one developmental stage to another can be a time of turmoil and stress. Some adversities are in the form of the natural process of growth and development while other forms of hardship are caused within the environment in which the children live. Entering adolescence can create a sense of instability due to the rapid occurrences of developmental, biological, and environmental changes (Swearingen and Cohen, 1985; Windle, 1992). Living in poverty, isolation, or a home where parental conflicts are occurring are conditions that can cultivate adversity that hinders normal development. More severe traumatic experiences may include, but are not limited to, physical and emotional abuse. These traumatic experiences can create a chronic threat to the developing ego, or self-esteem, of a child causing damage to the individual's development, future adjustment, and their ability to adapt. Without these capacities, a child's ability to thrive and enjoy life is diminished (Daldin, 1988; Greene, 1993). Each child experiences these traumas differently. While some children appear to be greatly affected by adversity, other children survive and successfully adapt to their ever changing environment. What are the factors in these children's lives that assist them in their survival of adversity?

Resiliency is the ability to successfully adapt and function in the environment despite experiences of adversity, chronic stress, or severe trauma (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990;

Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993; Saleebey, 1996). In their 1993 article "Resiliency as Process", Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe defined resiliency as "the ability to use internal and external resources successfully to resolve stage-salient issues".

While there are many degrees of intensity of childhood trauma and environmental stressors, there are also many experiences and factors that contribute to the resilience of a child. This study is focused on protective factors, attributes, and characteristics possessed by an individual that may have an affect on childhood adversity and resiliency. Children who have survived adversity have recently become a focus of research aimed at identifying the attributes and conditions associated with resiliency. Preventative and protective measures may be created through further research in the area of children, adversity, and resiliency to stop the cycle of suffering. There is a saying that children learn what they live. This can also be said of resiliency. The environment that a child grows up in has an impact on the development of resilience enhancing traits. Can resiliency be developed and learned? There is not a consensus on that question in the research. However, there are attributes that can be acquired that enhance an individual's ability to succeed, function, and raise their level of self worth. What assets are available in the Ojibwe culture that has assisted the Ojibwe people to survive their adversity? Positive past and present experiences contribute to the development of resiliency in children following the experience of adversity. This thesis will explore how these resiliency factors affect the child's ability to overcome adversity. Specifically, this thesis will examine the attributes of five individuals from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the effect these attributes had on their development of resiliency.

Current research in the area of resiliency indicates that there are many factors that contribute to resiliency in children. There are three classes of commonly discussed factors that contribute to the development and enhancement of resiliency. These factors are; (a) the parent-child relationship and family system, (b) support systems outside the immediate family, and (c) belief in self (Benson, 1994; Cohen, Burt, and Bjorck, 1987; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991). These factors melded together create the formula for the potential development of resiliency (Benson, 1994; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993). Within each of the factors are sub factors that can alter the effects on the children.

Peter Benson, Ph.D. and others at the Search Institute, conducted a survey of over 270,000 children from across the country. The results gave some insight to the assets that help children be successful. These assets are divided into two parts, the external and the internal. According to Peter Benson's research, the more assets a child accumulated, the more resilient the child became (Benson, 1994). The Search Institute has identified at least 30 assets they describe as "building blocks for human development". In addition to these 30 assets, Peter Benson states, "There are probably dozens of other assets that are also important to helping teens succeed". These assets can be divided into the three categories identified for this study; parent-child relationship and family system, support systems outside the immediate family, and belief in self (See Appendix #5).

Adversity or trauma is described as a situation or circumstance where an individual has a sense of helplessness. Chronic stress or trauma is manifested from an accumulation of stimulations, whether these

stimulations be internal or external (Daldin, 1988). Adversity and trauma affect the way a child views the world. This view is influenced by the environment around them. The experiences an individual has during their childhood will affect their level of trust in the environment as they grow and develop. The development of trust is greatly impaired by the experience of severe traumatic events (Greene, 1993).

For the individual, the development of resiliency is an active process. As the child makes attempts to adapt to the surrounding environment, the responses that are received elicits a behavioral and emotional reaction. This pattern continues as the individual tests the strengths and weaknesses of their environment and themself. The more positive, affirming, and rewarding the responses are, the more self assured the individual will feel. As the individual grows and develops, their interactions and experimentations with their environment are keys to the potential to develop resilience (Benson, 1994; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993). Even after experiencing severe trauma, if children live in supportive and encouraging environments, they can develop the competence to cope with the developmental and environmental stresses they encounter. Throughout development, children may display varying degrees of successes and setbacks. These changes are dependent on the attributes the individual has during periods of stress and at the different developmental time periods (Greene, 1993; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993).

As stated earlier, the resilient child has, within and outside of itself, supporting factors that maintain resilience and the ability to adapt (Benson, 1994; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993). Individual factors enforced separately, may have little impact on the

individual's development of resiliency. However, when two or more of their forces are combined, the child has greater opportunities to develop resiliency (Benson, 1994; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993). Resiliency is a byproduct of the actions of the inner core of the individual as it is impacted by the elements within the environment. Some people call this inner core the ego, others call it self-esteem, while still others may refer to it as the soul. The development of this inner core is partially dependent on the environment that the individual lives. The individual's family and community are key elements that can hinder or enhance the developing inner core, or self-esteem.

Theoretical models

The theoretical models used for the base of this research are; ecological systems theory, family systems theory, and strengths perspective. In a study such as this, all of these theories are significant in themselves and in conjunction with the others. Each is a building block to the development of resiliency. While this research is primarily a focus on individual strengths that contribute to an individual's resilience, families and communities also share these traits and have demonstrated signs of resilience throughout history. Examples would be family systems that maintained structure in the face of devastating events like fires, storms, death, or poverty. The same is true of communities. Resilience has been evident in communities that have risen against adversity and struggled together for the common good. These would include areas struck by war, famine, and oppression.

Ecological systems encompasses the entire environment of the individual; the family unit, the school system, the neighborhood, peer

relationships, church or spiritual organizations, and social involvement just to name a few. Events within the environment create an affect in the elements of the system and the elements of the system affect the development of the environment. When the surrounding community provides a safe environment for the individuals that live within the community, the results will be an increase in the resiliency factors available to those individuals. As stated in Peter Benson's research, the more assets available and utilized by a child, the more resilient the child is likely to become (Benson, 1994). The Native American people have historically lived lives rich with culture and close family and community ties. This has increased their ability to adapt and survive their many adversities (Jenz, 1994).

Family systems theory emphasizes the system of the family unit. Behaviors of each member of the family influences the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the other members, therefore, affects how the other members will respond (Bradshaw, 1988; Kantor, 1975; Nichols and Schwartz, 1991). The strength and weakness of the family system is measured by the individuals within the family and the interactions between family members. Build up the resiliency factors of one individual, primarily a parent, and the rest of the family will tend to adapt to the change and thus become more resilient.

The focal principle for this thesis rests on the theory of strengths perspective. Much of the current research, and that of society's view point, is focused on pathology, problems, deficits, abnormalities, and disorders. Strengths perspective focuses on the talents, competency, visions, capacities, and hopes that are within the individuals, families, and communities

(DeJong and Miller, 1995; Saleebey, 1996). Through the emphasis on the individual's ability to survive in the face of adversity, the strengths and assets are highlighted and can be utilized when further stressful situations arise.

Strengths perspective hinges on the individual's understanding of their self and their current frame of reference. Individuals, families, and communities become reenergized to the prospect of change as they discover and utilize the resources available within and around them to create solutions (Benson, 1994; DeJong and Miller, 1995; Kaplan and Girard, 1994; Saleebey, 1996). While it may be less painful to learn from others' mistakes and experiences, it is human nature to learn from our own adversities. Personal growth, positive characteristic qualities, and the development of resilience are often "forged in the fires of adversity" (Saleebey, 1996). For it is through our personal struggles that we develop, learn, and accept our strengths (Bradshaw, 1988). As a community, it is important to maintain cultural stories. There is an abundant source of strength in the shared history and culture. It is believed that, through the continual focus on the inherent strengths within the members of the system, the system and those surrounding it will begin to be positively impacted and thus strengthening the larger system (DeJong and Miller, 1995; Saleebey, 1996; Satir, 1972).

Study population

The Ojibwe people were chosen because of their cultural strengths and their strong sense of tradition. The Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe have a philosophy of caring and sharing with their fellow man (Jenz, 1994). These strengths have helped in creating a level of trust and admiration outside the

tribal system. The study population consisted of five Native American adults, over the age of 25 years of age, from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, who have achieved a measurable level of success within the tribal community. The areas where these people have achieved success was in maintaining tribal history and culture, tribal leadership, education, and service. Each participant grew up, or spent most of their childhood, on the reservation.

Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe

There are many nations of Native Americans currently living within the United States of America. There are over 250 recognized Native American tribes in the lower forty-eight states (Harlan, 1987) To outsiders, they may appear to maintain similar lifestyles, values, and problems. But, this is not so. Each tribal nation is a unique culture in it's own right (Attneave, 1982; Harlan, 1987). The Native Americans are a proud people, striving to keep their culture alive. They believe and practice their culture, language, religion, and history. They want to be a recognized member of society with their own strengths. Their strengths have helped to build a community that is self governed, self determined, and self sufficient (Attneave, 1982; Harlan, 1987; Jenz, 1994).

The Native American people are rich in culture and heritage. The Ojibwe people called themselves Anishinabe, the first or original man (Danziger, 1978; Hirschfelder, 1986; Jenz, 1994; Warren, 1984). Their basic belief is that everything in the universe has a spiritual connection, a place, and a function (Attneave, 1982; Danziger, 1978; Jenz, 1994). The strengths of the people are believed to be given by the Great Spirit. Everything and

everybody is given purpose, to complete the task of sharing life as it is supposed to be (Danziger, 1978; Hilger, 1992; Jenz, 1994). While much of western society attempts to control nature, the Native Americans believe in living in harmony with the natural forces around them. The whole world is a learning place and all people learn to live according to nature (Attneave, 1982; Buffalohead, 1988; Jenz, 1994; Luepnitz, 1988). Everything, all of nature, is sacred to the Native people.

Much of the history and heritage of the Ojibwe tribes has been lost over time. White historians paid little attention to the Ojibwe tribes. They had more interest in recording the activities of the Navajo, Cherokee, the Mohawk, and the Sioux. The Ojibwe people were generally a peaceful people with no bloody wars of resistance to the advancement of white civilization (Danziger, 1978; Jenz, 1994; White, 1979). Attempts to assimilate, separate, and eliminate the Native American societies played a large part in the sparse history of the Ojibwe people (Danziger, 1978; Jenz, 1994). Contact with white society, children being sent off to boarding schools, treaties, poverty and unemployment, and assimilation nearly destroyed the foundation of the Mille Lacs people (Jenz, 1994). While the information is limited, there is a rich theme that is threaded throughout the Ojibwe tribes. This theme is a respect for others and of being one with nature (Danziger, 1978; Hilger, 1992). The values of the people were able to survive. There is a strong resolve of strength amongst the Native people. It was the responsibility of the family to pass on these moral standards to the future generations (Danziger, 1978; Jenz, 1994).

The people of the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe were originally seasonally migrating people. They followed the changes of the seasons to

locations suited to meet their needs. They were in tune with nature and their surrounding environment. In the 1600's, the Mille Lacs Ojibwe settled around, and within, the Mille Lacs area (Jenz, 1994). This area was rich with food; fish, deer, wild rice, and berries. The people were able to gather what was needed to survive. They also believed in sharing the riches around them with others and were helpful to the traders and others in the white society that came to their area (Hirschfelder, 1986; Jenz, 1994).

The traditions of the Native people are kept alive through the use of cultural stories, religion, and mythology. These are shared by the elders to the children. The stories are generally focused on the rhythms of nature and are full of meaning and morals (Attneave, 1982; Jenz, 1994). The respect for others, their beliefs and way of live, are valued in the Native culture. Helping others is deeply ingrained in the traditional behavior of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe (Attneave, 1982; Buffalohead, 1988; Jenz, 1994).

Ojibwe children are typically raised in large extended families. These families include parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, close friends, and the children (Danziger, 1978; Hilger, 1992; Hirschfelder, 1986). In large part, it is the extended family system that has maintained the Ojibwe culture. Parents taught their children through their actions and by example of how they lived their live's (Hilger, 1992; White, 1979). The grandparents and elders of the tribe taught lessons through the use of stories, myths, and legends (Hirschfelder, 1986; Warren, 1984). All of the adults played an active role in the lives of the children, even taking on a substitute parenting role (Hilger, 1992; Hirschfelder, 1986).

Everyone in the tribe, including the children, were expected to participate in the daily activities of the tribe. This included participation in

ceremonies, chores, and recreational activities (Hilger, 1992; White, 1979). The close knit society lessened the threat of hunger, deprivation, or famine. The united cooperation of the individuals assisted the tribe in satisfying the elementary needs of all their people (Danziger, 1978; Hilger, 1992).

Children are the center of the Ojibwe culture. The future of their society rests in their hands. Families viewed children as gifts and thus respected them (Jenz, 1994). When a child did as expected or accomplished a good deed, there were no display of praise or reward. In fact, the child's level of expectations raised. Likewise, striking a child or raising the voice for discipline was also rare (Danziger, 1978; Harlan, 1987; Hilger, 1992). Children were told of their parents displeasure and their expectations reiterated in a matter of fact way. These disapproved actions were viewed as learning opportunities for the child (Hirschfelder, 1986).

Summary

The factors that contribute to the resiliency in people appear to be similar from culture to culture. The differences are seen in the ways the attributes are displayed. The research shows that the more supports available to children the more secure and self assured the adults will likely become. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe have demonstrated that they are a successful and resilient people.

To study the resiliency of Ojibwe children, this writer conducted 5 exploratory, qualitative interviews with resilient individuals that had been raised on the reservation. This thesis will explore the attributes that enhanced resilience and how these attributes played a part in the lives of the individuals in the study.

adversities. This writer has experienced many forms of adversities throughout life. These adversities included personal and family difficulties. This writer has questioned the reasons for the hardships and asked what was available within his environment that has assisted him in overcoming many of these adversities.

There are two reasons that this writer chose the Native American people for this study. One reason was a long time fascination with their customs and the culture. While living in the Pacific Northwest, this writer was exposed to the Native American people and their way of life. This exposure was through personal contact and individual research. Through this personal exposure, this writer has developed an understanding of the hardships experienced by the Native American people. Through it all, this writer has seen a spirit that has lifted the Native American people. Their spirit and sense of belonging had not been extinguished. This writer now lives a few miles south of the Mille Lacs reservation and has been interested in discovering more about the Ojibwe and their culture.

This writer wants to know, given the adversities experienced by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe what factors are available in their lives that have assisted them to survive these adversities?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Current research in the area of resiliency has identified the role that the parent/child relationship and support systems outside the immediate family play in the development of resiliency. These factors melded together create the formula for the potential development of resiliency. It is generally recognized that the individual's belief in self or self concept is the key to unlocking the secrets of resiliency (Cohen, Burt, and Bjorck, 1987; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991). Within each of the factors are sub factors that can alter the effects on children.

Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe used data from a longitudinal study of high-risk children and families. Their study is an attempt to explain and explore the factors that contribute to the attribute of resilience. The study is a time-series design which fits into the quasi-experimental definition of research designs. The researchers had as their sample 267 women in their last trimester of their first pregnancies and who, at that time, fell below the poverty level. The study began in 1975 and followed these families over an 18 year period. Poverty was the main risk factor in the study, but other risk factors were identified. Sixty-two percent of the mothers were single at the time of the birth of the child and only 13% of the biological fathers were in the home by the time the child turned 18 months. The level of education was also low, 40% of the mothers did not complete a high school education. Many families in the study group were multi-problematic families. Some of

the indicators included child abuse and neglect, drug abuse, and parental conflict. Over the 18 year period, data was collected from the families during each of the child's developmental stages.

Negative influences of risk factors can hinder the development of resiliency. Some of the identified factors mentioned in the research are poverty, family instability, low socioeconomic status, and low maternal education (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993; Werner, 1993). When people struggle with problems in their lives, they have more difficulty taking care of themselves. Add a family with children to the risk factors and the problem is compounded. These risk factors hinder the parent's role in providing a secure environment. The factors limit the parent's capacity to be supportive and nurturing to their children. When these risk factors become a constant stress to the family, the family system may begin to deteriorate. Unfortunately, one of the possible outcomes of chronic stress in a family system is the onset of child neglect and abuse (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993).

Masten, Best, and Garmezy's research included findings from numerous studies in the area of resiliency in children that have overcome adversity. They reviewed three phenomena of resilience; positive development of high-risk children, continued adaptability in children under stress, and in children recovering from trauma. The findings are used to examine and explain the factors that contribute to the attributes of resilience. This is a descriptive study. The hypothesis of this study was that the positive influences of parental care and support in the children's lives contribute to the child's development. Children raised with positive influences in their

personal belief are then reinforced by the subsequent mastery of the task or the recognition of their efforts. Recognition of accomplishments from the parents and other supports within the environment steer the child towards a view of personal self worth and of being a person worthy of love (Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990).

The Kauai longitudinal study written by Werner followed all 698 children born in 1955 on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. An exploratory study was designed to document and examine long term effects of adverse conditions on individuals' development and adaptability. This study provided information from over a period of time from infancy to the age of 32 years. Of the sample of 698 individuals, 201 were considered to be high-risk children because they were born in poverty. Of the 201 high-risk individuals, 72 grew to be competent and confident adults. The data was gathered through the use of personal interviews with the children and their families. The researchers also examined the records (criminal, educational, and military) of the individuals over the duration of the study.

The children in the study, both resilient and non-resilient, experienced circumstances in their lives that perpetuate and reinforce the cycle. For the resilient group, they sought and received support from significant adults. They participated in extracurricular activities and experienced some recognition and sense of accomplishment. All these factors, along with their faith of self or belief in self, served to provide a sense of self-worth in the children. This self-worth enhanced awareness of significance, belonging, and feelings of being special to someone else. The children in the troubled group did not have people that supported them. They were children with behavioral problems at home and in school. The

attention they received was negative, punitive, or they were generally ignored. They did not receive the encouragement to strive for excellence. They lacked self-worth and had feelings of hopelessness.

One thing is clear. All these factors, both positive and negative, can co-occur. This being so, an accurate conclusion as to which factors truly influence the resiliency of children is hard to achieve, and thus, the unpredictability of nature does not allow a researcher to set up a truly random control and study group. Studies must be completed in retrospect to assure that the stresses and crisis situations are exposed and identified.

Resilient children had higher perceptions of themselves and had positive goals for the future. Those children from the 'trouble children' groups also had multiple adversities and did not develop a sense of stability or security. These children did not receive the supports that the resilient group received. Thus the chronic stressors made it easier for further trouble to develop and harder for the children to receive and accept positive affirmations. It is apparent that an attribute for effective resilience and adaptation in one stage of development did not necessarily continue to meet the developmental needs in the next stage. For example; it is easier for a younger child to avoid or deny adverse conditions, therefore escaping the reality of the situation. Older children have the capacity to understand the complexities of their situation and the risks involved (Cohen, Burt, and Bjorck, 1987; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991).

Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe's study, as well as others (Masten, Best, and Garmezy 1990; Radke-Yarrow and Brown,1993; Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991), emphasizes the importance of supportive

care giving and a protective and organized family environment. The implications of these studies provide a clear service direction of prevention and intervention. Providing intensive and transactive treatment to families determined to be in high-risk populations could help in breaking the cycle of abuse, neglect, and maltreatment. Enhancing the parent-child relationships are discussed as the greatest influence on the development of the child's adaptation and resilience. When it is determined that the parents are unable to provide the positive influences for the child, other adults can play a positive enabling role for these children. Ties within the family are the most favorable and they need to be strengthened.

Parent/child Relationship and the Family System

Characteristics of a resilient enhancing system.

Studies indicate that most resilient children describe a positive relationship with at least one parent during their childhood (Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993). Parents are the first and foremost role models for children in the early years of their lives. A positive start, with caring and emotionally responsive parents, is the foundation to the child's later development and adjustment (Cohen, Burt, and Bjorck, 1987; Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Greene, 1993; Werner, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991).

Effective parents influence their children in many ways. They model effective actions, demonstrate positive relationships, and provide their children with opportunities of accomplishment (Daldin, 1988; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990). Parents create the environment for their children to grow, develop, and learn. When this environment is consistent in providing positive attachments, the parents may provide resources that

enable the child to adapt well in spite of stressful events (Greene, 1993; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991). A child's development is continuously impacted by the parent-child relationship. A supportive and nurturing parent can assist in the development of effective autonomy in the child (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993). When a child receives good care from their parents, they get the sense that they are lovable and can see themself as a worthwhile person (Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990).

Structure and rules are important factors for the developing child. Consistent and familiar life styles assist in reducing the stress of unexpected events (Werner, 1993). When a child knows what to expect, they can make decisions with better judgment. Knowing the outcome of an action can be viewed as a enforcer or deterrent of that action. Trust is a key element in the establishment of positive relationships and experiences. Trust grows out of the positive support of intimate relationships with parents, peers, and other adults.

Characteristics of at-risk families.

When the family is intact and stable the child is buffered from some of the situations that cause distress. The reverse is also true. When a family environment is chaotic, due to separation, poverty, or abuse, the child is forced to face many of life's difficulties without the security of a safe family system to protect them. Without the comfort of a safe and stable home environment, the child is placed in high-risk of continued psychological distress and maladjustment (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Greene, 1993; Werner, 1993). Low parental supports together with more stressful events in adolescents remain predictors of potential problematic behaviors

(Windle, 1992). These factors are amplified when abuse or neglect occurs from within the system of the family.

Children that grow up with abuse in their family tend to live in family systems that are rigid and inflexible or chaotic and unpredictable. Many of these families experience low emotional bonds and a general sense of isolation. These characteristics tend to discourage or prevent healthy development of individuals within the family system and the children will tend to become passive and restrictive in coping skills when they feel powerless and not in control of their life (Bischof, Stilth, and Wilson, 1992; Greene, 1993; Luthar, 1991). Children need to have a sense of security, safety, and hope for the future to make successful transitions in development (Greene, 1993). The family is the key facilitator in these transitions.

Inconsistencies and the anticipation of not knowing what to expect at any given time raises the level of distress that the child encounters. The child is dependent on the family. Chronic trauma impairs the establishment of trust. When the environment is full of violence, hate, and constant stress it is difficult to establish intimacy (Greene, 1993). In a chaotic home environment, the child may experience an increased level of vulnerability to the effects of discord within the family (Werner, 1993). Many children that are raised in a chaotic environment have difficulties in many aspects of their life. There is stress in the family which could lead to difficult parent-child relationships, problem behaviors at school, poor social skills, and academic difficulties (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993). Many children who experience trauma internalize and blame themself when things go wrong. They also tend to see the world as blaming them and focusing on their failures (Greene, 1993).

Economics also has an influence on the stability of the family structure and poverty plays a role in the adaptation of children (Greene, 1993). Families that are in constant worry over the finances of the family have difficulty enjoying the opportunities available to them. However, it is quite evident that poverty alone does not cause severe adversity. A strong family system, that works together, can produce the protective factors that contribute to the development of resiliency.

Children and adolescents tend to imitate the environment around them. Many children that experience severe traumatic experiences exhibit behavioral problems or problems with coping skills. Deviant behaviors often serve a purpose and function within the family system. This function may serve to distract from other problems or they may be acts of desperation to bring attention to other more severe problems within the family system (Bischof, Stilth, and Wilson, 1992). Unless these symptoms and problematic behaviors are properly identified, the cause of the distress experienced by the child can remain undetected.

Support systems outside the immediate family

For children, the most important resource in the development of resiliency is a strong, positive relationship with someone who cares. This may be within the family system, but it could also come from sources outside the immediate family (Greene, 1993). Relationships with stable and supportive adults and peers can be factors that help in the formation of the characteristics associated with resiliency. These relationships can be with people in the child's neighborhood, school, church, or through involvement

in clubs.

Positive relationships and experiences in the community can compensate for less positive relationships within the family system. These more favorable experiences may lessen the effects of a stressful home life (Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990). Friendships are important to the fostering of resiliency. A children with supportive friends tend to have less mental disorders, fewer problems in school, and higher self-esteem (Fishman, 1995). The objectivity of supportive peer relationships can help create a healthy balance to life. Many friendships begin with a shared interest, but are maintained through loyalty, trust, and intimacy (Fishman, 1995).

Involvement in a church and a strong faith in a higher power can serve as a protective factor against the trauma suffered by the child. There is a recognized universal need to find a meaning to life (Leslie and Korman, 1985). One of the primary commonalities of many major religions is to define the relationship with the Almighty, the supernatural, or a higher power. Some cultures believe that their purpose is to serve and worship, to protect and appreciate nature, or to maintain and continue the family line. The main theme is a motivation for survival (Leslie and Korman, 1985). Adverse life experiences may enhance the development of a deeper spirituality and commitment (Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990). There are many interpretations to the reasons for suffering. In some religions suffering comes from displeasing the Almighty or higher powers. Another belief is that people receive comfort from the supreme in order to pass on the comfort that they have received to others who suffer. John Bradshaw, author and host of P.B.S. television show *Bradshaw On: The Family* , stated

"Without my suffering, I would not be able to bear witness..." (Bradshaw, 1988). Religion can enhance positive beliefs about the individuals self worth, provides opportunity for social connectedness, and furnishes a rational for existence (Bradshaw, 1988; Leslie and Korman, 1985; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990).

Belief in self.

Belief in self is fostered by the environment in which the individual has lived. It is in the family that the feelings of self worth are first learned (Satir, 1972). The child begins to create a self image from the first responses it receives from the parents. As the child grows, these feelings are reinforced within the environment. The combined efforts of the family and community create an atmosphere that enhances a positive belief in self, and thus, self-esteem (Benson, 1994; Flach,1988). An individual's view of self is dependent on how they were brought up. Parents and families can foster resilience through praise and setting of boundaries and limits. Self-esteem and self worth flourish in an atmosphere that tolerates mistakes, appreciates differences, has open communication, and where the rules are fair (Satir, 1972). Communities have an impact on resilience by how they respond to the individual's attempts to engage within the community. As individuals sense support of others, they begin to make attempts to become affiliated with their environment, community, and social organizations. The individual learns to adapt and utilize their strengths to accomplish tasks and a sense of competence is created through the mastering of skills (Flach, 1988).

A personal belief in self and one's own abilities helps to build self-confidence. With more self-confidence, a child may enter a situation more

prepared for the challenges that may await. Successful experiences reinforce the self-confidence which in turn enhances an individual's self-esteem (Benson, 1994; Flach, 1988; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990). The individual has a feeling that they matter and that the world is a better place because they are a part of it (Satir, 1972). Integrity, honest, and responsibility are signs of a person with a well balanced self-esteem. Compassion and love also flow from individuals with high self-esteem and feeling of self worth (Benson, 1994; Satir, 1974).

An important factor to resilience is the will to survive. This will is influenced by hope. Hope is born out of faith and self-actualization of a meaning and purpose to life. For if life has no purpose and there is no meaning, what is there to hope for? Without hope to guide the individual towards happiness, where is the will to live? Hope is a key to resilience. An individual needs hope and faith that their situation can be different (Satir, 1974). In a supportive environment, hope is implanted early. As the individual discovers their own strengths and abilities, this hope is nurtured and strengthened (Flach, 1988). Resilient people view adversities in their life, as Virginia Satir stated in her book *Peoplemaking*, as "a crisis of the moment from which (they) will emerge whole and something (they) can feel uncomfortable about but (do) not need to hide".

Summary

There is a common theme emerging from the research on resiliency. There are three areas that are most widely addressed when discussing the factors related to resilient individuals. These three areas are the parent-child relationships, the supports outside the family system, and a belief in self.

It is evident in the research that those individuals that have been exposed to positive environmental factors have a greater chance of becoming, or maintaining, their resilience.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and measurements

Study population

The study population consisted of five Native American adults, over the age of 25 years of age, from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, who have achieved a measurable level of success within the tribal community. The areas where these people have achieved success was in maintaining tribal history and culture, tribal leadership, education, and service. Each participant grew up, or spent most of their childhood, on the reservation.

Method of study

This study of the factors that contribute to resiliency in Anishinabe/Ojibwe children was conducted with the approval and assistance of the administration of the Mille Lacs Band Government Center who coordinated the recruitment of volunteers. The Government Center provided the researcher with a list of possible interviewees. These individuals were contacted by this researcher. Five persons, three males and two females, volunteered to participate in the study.

Using key concepts from the literature on resiliency the questionnaire was developed to provide the researcher with information and insight into resiliency factors developed in childhood. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part asked general demographic questions regarding the individuals age, gender, and current occupation. The second part was developed to explore the past experiences of the individual. The

participants were asked to answer the questions as they related to them as a child. These questions included information about their childhood environment (i.e. where they were born and raised, their parent's marital status, Native American customs practiced, and their families economic status), the relationships within their families, their personal temperament and personality, and their experiences and recollections of school (i.e. how far they traveled to school, where they attended school, peer relationships, relationships with teachers, and their academic performance). This section also contained questions relating to their personal dreams, goals, and aspirations. The focus of these questions were on the supports received towards achieving these goals. Finally, this part included questions about personal adversities experienced during the childhood of the individuals participating in the study. The final part of the questionnaire examined the individuals as adults. The individuals were asked for their definition of "success" and to describe the level of control he/she felt he/she had in his/her life. The subjects also were asked how he/she believed others view him/her. The final question in the questionnaire related to information and insight that they could share to help others overcome adversities. (See Appendix #5 for copy of questionnaire)

Individuals who agreed to participate in the study were given a copy of the questions for the interview prior to their consenting to be included in the study. Some potential candidates for the study did not consent for reasons of a personal nature. The interviews were conducted individually at sites chosen by the participants. Three interviews were conducted at the Social Services office and two at the Government Center. This researcher conducted face to face interviews with the volunteer study population. The

questions from the questionnaire were read by the researcher and answered by the individuals. The researcher took hand written notes. These notes included paraphrasing and highlights of statements made. The Internal Review Board at Augsburg College specified that the direct use of quotations was restricted. Based on the sensitivity of the information gathered from the interviewees, and out of respect of the participants, specific information and direct quotes were not used to assure the anonymity of the individuals. Each interview was audio taped for accuracy of note taking. Each participant was informed of the intended use of the information to be gathered and that they were not obligated to answer any of the questions. The participants were also told that no identifying information would be used. (See Appendix #2 and Appendix #3 for consent information). The information gathered during the interviews was reviewed by the researcher's thesis advisor to assure accuracy of data. After the information was gathered, the data was compiled using the questionnaire as an outline. The findings were compiled, compared to the research and literature review, and utilized for the thesis.

CHAPTER 4

Research data

Demographics

The population of this study included three males and two females. The males were 52, 45, and 40 years of age. The females were 48 and 37 years of age. These individuals occupational areas included social services, education, government, and business. After concluding with the questionnaire, linking demographic information regarding the careers, ages, and gender of the individual participants was deemed to be 'identifying information' due to the small number of participants.

CHILDHOOD

All five participants talked openly about their personal childhood struggles, pains, and traumas. They also shared the personal and cultural attributes behind their success stories.

Environment

Each participant described the environment where they grew up as a small community. One individual stated that the community was a small traditional community. While the numbers were small, as few as fifty residents, the relationship ties were strong. The areas were described as rural with lots of space to play. Three participants, two of the males and one of the females, mentioned that the woods were their playground. Their homes were small and the families were generally large, between four to ten children in the family. Some of the homes had no electricity nor running water. The older individuals, those over 45 years of age, talked about how they would stay with extended family for part of the year. These extended

families were usually the grandparents. The descriptions of the environments differed little between ages and genders.

Born and raised

Four of the five participants were born off the reservation. Only the oldest two of those four commented about being born in an Indian hospital. While these individuals were born off the reservation, three of the four families lived on the reservation when they were born. During some point in their life, all of the participants had moved off the reservation for a period of time and then moved back onto the reservation. For the male participants, they left the reservation generally for duty in the armed services or to find employment. The females left to be with their family.

Parent's marital status

While each participant's parents were married, some of the families included step-siblings from previous marriages. Two of the five individuals commented that their parents were culturally, or common law, married prior to their legal, or state marriages. The fathers were generally away for much of the time due to their employment and the mothers stayed home with the children. Extended family were helpful in the parenting of the children.

Native American customs

All five of the participants' families participated in many Native American customs throughout their childhood. These practices have continued into their adult lives. Their culture is an important part of their identity and much of their culture was taught to them by their grandparents. Three of the five participants' families were active participants in the ceremonial customs of their culture. These included honored positions that

have been passed down through the generations. Two of the participants have been honored to carry on this tradition. All five of the individuals participated in, or attended, ceremonial Pow-wows when they were children. Three of the five participants mentioned the Native American crafts that their grandparents would make and sell. These included birch bark canoes, baskets, and bead work. The two males in their 40's, commented that they wished they had paid closer attention to their grandparents, for this was probably one of the ways that the grandparents were trying to pass on some of the cultural and family traditions. The two females enjoyed these times with their grandparents and continue some of the craft work.

Economics

All participants mentioned economics as an issue that separated them from non-Native American people. However, when they were younger, all of the participants had a general sentiment that they were wealthy. They had everything that they needed. However. four of the five participants stated that they now realize that they were living well below the poverty level and were probably amongst the poorest of the poor. Each participant talked about receiving some sort of charity or assistance. The help came in the form of hand-me-down clothes from family or church organizations, surplus food, as well as state and federal financial assistance. Their economic status was sometimes better than those around them. It was not until they went to the "white" schools that their economic status became an issue for them.

Family relations

Each member of the study viewed their families as having close relationships as an asset. These included their immediate, as well as extended, families. There was an element of caring for and watching over

each other. Three of the five participants had a perception that there was no fighting within their families. Two individuals commented that their families did not fight or argue any more than other families did. All of them acknowledged that there were disagreements, but that their families were able to work them out. Each participant talked about their ties with their grandparents. Three of the five participants commented about the extended periods of time they were with their grandparents during their youth. Communications were sometimes difficult between the generations. This was most evident in the individuals within the study that grew-up during the 1960's. This was the era of rock-n-roll, Vietnam, and political and racial unrest. Even through there were tensions, generally speaking, their childhood memories of their families were positive and happy.

Personality

When discussing their temperament and personality, each use the word "shy" to describe himself or herself. Two of the males added that they were introverts, keeping to themself. This was especially true when they entered the white culture. Within their own families and communities, they were more willing to be open. These individuals also mentioned that, while they were shy, they were well liked by the other children. The participants of this study also mentioned that they were taught, and followed the rule, of respecting their elders. It may have been this respect that helped them to be welcomed into other social circles within the community.

School

All five participants spent their elementary school years at small private schools. Two of the participants traveled over twenty miles to get to their elementary school. Only one individual lived close enough to the

school to walk. One individual commented that one-third of the students in the school of less then fifty students were American Indian. The general consensus was that the elementary school years were good times with good relationships with the other students. There was mention of more one-to-one education, teachers that understood and cared for the students, and very little competition or tension between the students. All five participants stated that this all changed when they went to the public schools during their high school years. The division of economics and race became apparent during this time and conflicts were an every day occurrence. The racial tensions included relationships with the teachers. Each commented that there were fights between the Native Americans and the white students on a regular basis. The perception was usually that it was the Native Americans that were the ones disciplined for the altercation. All three males mentioned that the racial tensions drew the Native Americans closer together as a group, but these ties only enhanced the division between the races. One individual commented that it felt as though he went to school in a survival mode; always on the lookout for what may happen to him. Each participant stated that their racial differences became more evident in the public schools and that they began to mistrust others more. All felt that the tensions during this time had a negative effect on their education and academic performance.

<u>Dreams and aspirations</u>

In the area of dreams and aspirations, there was a distinct difference between the ages of the individuals in the study. The three individuals in the group over 45 years of age had few aspirations or goals for themselves. Those that had dreams of careers or college believed them to be unrealistic. There was very little or no support for them, nor encouragement to pursue

their dreams. One individual stated that he assumed that he would be drafted or have to join the military. When that did not occur, he left home with no plans or means to support himself. One male wanted to be a teacher, but was discouraged by others. At that time the Native Americans were not expected to attend college. They were steered towards occupations that required manual labor, stating that they were told, "Indians are good with their hands." One male individual pursued a trade school education. The younger two individuals in the study actively pursued a life that would be different. They went to college, returned to the reservation, and began careers. While the support was not always evident, the discouragements that the older three felt were not present, or at least not as noticeable. The women were expected to stay at home and begin families. They had to go against these expectations to achieve their current status.

Adversities

Each of the five individuals had many stories to tell about his or her life as he or she grew up, the good times, as well as the difficult times. Many experienced similar adversities during their childhood. Poverty was the first adversity discussed by each of the participants. These individuals stated that they did not know what poverty or wealth meant when they were younger. One male in his 40's stated that wealth is a state of mind when some have more than others. When they were younger, no-one had much more than anyone else. What they now recognize as being poor, was just a way of life to them. Racism was another adversity that these individuals endured. As children, they were not exposed to the misunderstandings and hatred that were felt later in life. Exposure to non-Native American public schools made this issue more apparent. When they did not know that there were

different races, it did not matter. When they were put down, shunned, and targeted due to their race, feelings of inadequacies and pain developed.

Three of the individuals discussed their personal adversity with alcohol abuse. They stated that it was a stereotype of the Native Americans to be alcoholics. Unfortunately, for these individuals, that stereotype was true. Alcohol was a part of their community and was accepted as a form of social entertainment. One individual stated that alcohol was the downfall of a lot of people that felt like they did not have a chance. All five participants stated that other family members drank alcohol, with some having more difficulties than others. It appeared that problems with alcohol affected the Ojibwe males more than females.

Three individuals discussed experiencing the death of very close significant others when they were young. These included grandparents, uncles, and younger friends and relatives. These times were especially hard on them and each talked about their period of shutting themself off to the rest of the community. Living on the reservation was also mentioned as an adversity. The reservation had limited resources for the health and welfare of it's people. Education and medical attention were not readily available. There were few jobs that paid a decent wage on the reservation. This adversity was an accumulation of all the other adversities combined. While the Ojibwe people are a proud people, this in fact encouraged them to hide their feelings from others and endure their pain alone.

Supports outside the family

Each of the individuals in the study discussed their culture as a support. This culture was recognized as the traditions, heritage, and philosophies. However, none of the individuals discussed a specific

individual, nor structured system, as positive supports.

ADULTHOOD

The individuals of this study talked about the personal ways they dealt with or met these challenges. The males met these challenges with anger, aggression, and hatred. The women handled these challenges with anger and isolation, keeping many of their feelings to themselves. Two of the males stated that they escaped through the use of alcohol. However, all five stated that they found an inner strength that changed their life. They developed or enhanced their personal belief in self and a hope for the future. Two individuals mentioned striking out on their own and creating a new path for themself. It felt good to be able to walk away from their personal adversities and start anew. Each participant commented that they found strength in the knowledge that they were not alone in their feelings. Four of the five commented that they had renewed spirituality and a sense of community. They reinvested themselves into the ceremonial aspects of their Native American customs and community.

Success

A common theme when these individuals discussed their definition of success was to be satisfied in whatever it is that one is doing. This concept was mentioned from two philosophies. One being that an individual should find ways to enjoy whatever they are doing. The other is to do that which they enjoy doing. Two individuals, the 48 year old female and the 45 year old male, mentioned that to be successful one must be realistic and not under or over estimate ones own personal limits and abilities. If a person can meet their necessities and their responsibilities, they are successful. Some of the responsibilities that were mentioned included giving back that

which one has received. By giving to others, one gives to the whole community. The thread that was woven throughout the definitions of success was honesty, to be true to oneself and to others. Without honesty, the rest is for naught. With it, great is the reward.

Community view of individuals

Each of the participants believed that others viewed them as respectable people. People that were honest and true. When others had trouble, they thought that others could look to them for support. All five participants mentioned at least two of these characteristic, when talking about how others viewed them; easy going, honest, successful, a hard worker, caring, and forgiving. Three individuals stated that others knew that they had suffered with problems and were able to live through them. One stated that he believed others may be envious of the status and position that he had achieved. While the word was not used directly, perseverance was a trait that all five of the individuals saw in themselves and thought that others saw as well. They maintained their morals and ethics. Even during the difficult times, they continued in working towards their goals.

Personal control

They expressed a sense of control over their lives. Three stated that some circumstances are out of their control, but they knew that they had control over the decisions that they made and that they could make the best out of any situation. They also recognized the influence that they had on others. Four commented that their actions and decisions had influences on others. Sometimes these situations may have limited the control that others had for themself.

Lessons learned

True to their word, each had sound advice to pass on to the next generations that could help others towards success. These words of wisdom come from the experiences of five individuals that have been successful. They have lived through difficult times, and have come through strong. Loyalty and hard work were mentioned by all five individuals. All five also stated that people needed to have a belief in themself. Four participants commented that a hopeful outlook on life was important. This leads to the advice to never give up, even when it looks hopeless. The enjoyment of work, family, community, and life was mentioned by four of the individuals. Three stated that to love and be loved is important to the survival of adversity. Two talked about staying in tune with nature, and then allowing things to come naturally. Two said not to worry about what might be, or what might have been. One stated that people need to use common sense and be thoughtful. One individual summed it up by stating that one must be satisfied with who they are and not be out to satisfy others. A final word from one individual; everyone must remember that people in authority do not have all the answers nor do they know everything. All five individuals encourage people to take an active role in life. This includes participation in community events, religious or spiritual ceremonies, and government decisions.

Summary of advice gathered from interviews

- Be loyal to family, community, and culture.

- Become involved.

- One must work hard and enjoy the work that is being done.

- Use common sense.

- Do not worry, for things will happen naturally.

- Have a hopeful outlook.

- Believe in self.

- Be true to oneself.

- Learn from personal mistakes and from the mistakes of others.

- Do not worry about what might be or what might have been.

- Do not satisfy others.

- One must take control of their own life.

CHAPTER 5

Findings

The findings of this study reveals that the individual participants of this study had many resiliency factors available to them as children. In comparing the findings from previous research, this writer concludes that the resiliency factors available to these individuals enhanced their likelihood of becoming successful adults. Using the three areas of resiliency factors identified in the study, this writer will discuss the contributions these factors may have played in the development of the resiliency of the individuals of the study. The three factors are; (a) the parent-child relationship and family system, (b) support systems outside the immediate family, and (c) belief in self.

While each participant had variations to their environment, each had a core of support within the family system. Family systems were described as having close relationships with an element of care and concern for one another. The parent-child relationship was a factor in the development of self-worth and self-esteem for the participants. The participants had at least one of their parents home during their childhood years. This was generally the mother. The fathers may have been away for a period of time due to their employment, but they were not viewed as absent parents. The fathers were involved with their children whenever they were around. For the individuals in the study, extended family was also a large part of their developmental process. As indicated in the research, Native American families relied on the extended family for support and assistance with parenting and family responsibilities. For these individuals, extended

families created additional parent figures for them and provided strength and support. The research studied for this thesis supports the findings of this study: Children with a supportive caregiving parental system were more likely to overcome their adversities (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990; Wyman, Cowen, Work, and Parker, 1991). The families of these individuals were not only involved with their formal schooling, the extended family was also involved in the education regarding moral standards and cultural identity. It was clear that the participants spent much of their time with other members of their family system. These times included play, family chores, meals, and being together for singing and story telling. These positive attributes are consistent with the findings of the Search Institute and the research compiled by Peter Benson.

Another factor included supports received by the individuals from outside the family system. The community of the Ojibwe people is rich with resources. However, the five individuals of this study reflected that some of these resources are under utilized. Research recognizes the importance of community involvement and it's role in the development of resilience. Many children find their support from their communities. These outside supports assisted in the development of the individuals' resilience and self-worth (Benson, 1994; Masten, Best, and Garmezy, 1990; Radke-Yarrow and Brown, 1993). The findings of this thesis indicates that the individuals that participated in the study had positive community supports during their younger childhood years. The daily life of the Ojibwe was centered around the activities of the community. Through active participation in ceremonial rituals and other community gatherings, the individuals of this study were exposed to the positive influences of the community. This began to change

during the times of integration into the white culture. Racial and cultural differences began to take their toll on the participants' development of self-esteem and resilience. Many of the positive influences were replaced by negative ones. Peer relationships were strained, the school climate was threatening, and the interactions with adults and authority were tense. Each participant talked about these times being more difficult and that their feelings of self-worth was diminished. Their community supports decreased during this time. As was the circumstances in the other studies, fewer community supports decreased the resiliency factors available to the individuals. The decrease in resiliency factors increased the likelihood of continued stress and adversity. Fortunately for these individuals, they had a history of positive community supports. They also had numerous other positive factors in their lives that enhanced resiliency.

The third and final resiliency factor is the belief in self. This relies heavily on the previous two areas. A belief in self is built on past experiences and the successes of achievements. These individuals maintained higher expectations of themselves and had obtainable goals for their futures. While there were struggles and disappointments in their lives, they were able to have and maintain a positive outlook on life. These factors of concern for others, high expectations of self, hope for the future, and motivation to succeed are important elements towards achieving success (Benson, 1994; Luthar, 1991; Werner, 1993). The individuals in this study demonstrated that they strived to achieve, kept their hopes alive, and had a concern for the well-being of others.

This research only examined the lives of individuals who were viewed as successful. Therefore, the positive factors were more evident.

Peter Benson asserted that the more factors available to the individual in their younger years, the more resilient that individual would become (Benson, 1994). These individuals would score high on the scale of resiliency factors.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

Limitations of study

The concept of looking at resiliency through the strengths perspective is generalizable throughout many cultures, communities, and individuals. This study has a narrow focus on a small homogeneous group of individuals within a specialized group of people. The findings of this study may not necessarily reflect the same resiliency traits within other cultures, communities, or individuals.

The study population consisted of self selected individuals chosen for their specific characteristics. These characteristics included; a) adult Native Americans, who b) lived, or spent most of their childhood, on the reservation, and c) have been recognized by the Mille Lacs Band as successful within the tribal culture. The narrow focus of the study population limits the ability to generalize the findings to persons with different characteristics, traits, and/or cultural identity.

The voluntary nature of the study limits the potential accuracy of the findings. Each participant of the study received a copy of the questions for the interview prior to their consenting to be included in the study. There may have been some candidates for the study that did not consent for reasons of a personal nature. Each participant also had the opportunity to filter their responses. While it is clear that these situations do occur in many research studies, it is important to recognize the participants right to privacy.

Another limitation to this study is the size of the study population.

The small study group may not be representative of the Ojibwe population, nor possibly that of the general characteristics identifying the target population. While the size of the study population does identify themes and concepts that are relevant to the study question and hypothesis, the findings may have been skewed by the specifications of the target population.

Having in mind the limitations, one must remain open to the findings produced by this study.

Implications for Social Work practice

The concept of strengths perspectives is not new to Social Work. The Social Work philosophical framework is based on improving individuals and communities through the enhancement of their positive attributes. This study follows that same philosophy through the utilization of the three theoretical models; strengths perspective, family systems theory, and ecological systems theory.

The information and insight learned from this study regarding the beliefs and traditions of the Ojibwe people may hold some keys to the successful implementation of the concepts and methodology of the strengths perspective. Their suggestions of living and overcoming adversity can be applied to every person, no matter their race, religion, age, or sex. By identifying the positive traits in the study population, a practicing Social Worker may be able to assist their clientele to become aware of their own personal strengths. By focusing on the assets, individual's and community's can build a solid foundation that will lead to growth and personal enrichment.

The majority of the research done in the area of resiliency focuses on

the positive attributes or protective factors available to the individuals and the community. To begin, the social worker must find ways within the environment to strengthening the environment that surrounds the individual. Then the worker can help the individual build around their attributes and strengths.

Implications for further research

This research has added to the growing body of knowledge in the area of resilience. The interviews show the richness of the culture and of the people. Included in the interviews is information regarding the hardships witnessed and encountered by those that participated in the study.

Further research is necessary to continue to identify characteristics that contribute to resilience. Additional research with other homogeneous population groups could be conducted to identify strengths within other cultures and individuals, as well as being utilized for comparison studies. Expanding the research to include the general population may help to distinguish both the strengths and weaknesses associated with identifiable characteristics. Thus, practitioners may be able to more accurately identify individuals at risk of suffering from the affects of adversity. A study using a longitudinal design would provide a more accurate picture of the individuals adversities and stressors. A longitudinal design would also reflect a clearer understanding of the factors that contribute to the individual's resiliency.

Recommendations

Children are a part of the future of our communities. Their lives, and

the lives of others, depend on their ability to overcome adversity. Resilience is the key to a successful life. Some children that have faced adversity may require intensive therapy for their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to change. Others may only require counseling and/or a structural change in their support system. The best route to build resiliency is the path of prevention. This would require a cultural vision of strength. Building the community prior to experiences of adversity can be a key to success. It is this writer's belief that factors or attributes that are essential to the development of resiliency can be acquired through support, reassurance, and positive interactions.

As social workers, we must be aware of, and sensitive to, the history and culture of the people that we work with. A strong emphasis must be placed on the strengths the individuals carry with them. These strengths may be evidence of the resiliency factors available to them. Building upon these strengths will increase the individuals feelings of satisfaction and self-worth. Building the strengths of the individuals in turn builds the strengths of the community. We must also not neglect the areas of weakness, stress, or adversities. Recognizing these areas are the first steps towards making a change. We need to continue to examine the needs of the individuals and communities for which we serve. The more we demonstrate that we understand, the more open others will be to seek our assistance.

Traditions and heritage are the keys for the enhancement of resiliency for the Anishinabe culture. Assisting the community in reestablishing and maintaining their culture should be the main emphasis for social workers working with the Anishinabe.

Historically, the family was the central focus of the Anishinabe

culture. The extended family played an vital part in the raising of the children and the continuation of their traditions and customs. In recent years, this trend has diminished. Signs that the culture was endangered began to appear with the advancement of the white 'civilization'.

It is not too late to recapture the spirit of the Anishinabe culture and set it free. One important element to the revitalization of the native heritage lay in the heart and soul of the tribal elders. Social workers need to assist the Anishinabe to organize the tribal elders to chronicle the history of the Anishinabe using the voices of the Anishinabe, The elders would once again be vital educators to the younger generations. The tribal elders could develop a curriculum of native legends, cultural stories, and Anishinabe tales. Tribal story times could be part of the school day with the tribal elders leading, just as they did in the past. These sessions could be video taped to be shared with others, Anishinabe and non-Anishinabe alike.

Social workers can assist in the introduction of cultural awareness activities. Through the utilization of community education and cultural diversity education in the public school system, we may be able to break away some of the stereotypes that continues to divide the cultures. It is this writer's opinion that cultural diversity must begin with the education of the 'white culture'.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has begun to implement some positive educational models that will enhance the cultural esteem and self awareness of the tribal community. These include Ojibwe language classes, historical videos, and an Anishinabe comic book. Continued emphasis on the strengths of the culture must be maintained. The Anishinabe have a rich culture, one that could provide lessons for all of us.

It is not only the Anishinabe that need to develop a means to maintain an understanding and appreciation of their cultural past. This is a need that extends across all races and nationalities. The elders are a resource of knowledge. It is important in every society for the elders to pass on the histories. Unfortunately for the 'white cultures', much of the cultural past has been lost to the history books. Digging up the cultural roots and sharing them with others could lead to a better understanding of our pasts, as well as the pasts of others.

The findings also indicate that more emphasis needs to be placed on educating the communities of the factors that contribute to resiliency. This education could be accessed through community education course, public service announcements, and an increase in available literature on the subject of resiliency. Education also needs to start with the children in early childhood education and elementary school. These programs should continue through the educational process. Churches and other community organizations also need to be involved in this educational process. The increased community involvement in the educational aspect of resiliency will add to the community's resiliency factors, strengthening the community through it's own efforts.

The power of the family and the community greatly affects the members within the system. A strong bond to the beliefs and culture of the system will enhance the self-esteem and the belief in self of the individual members of the system. As demonstrated by the people of this study, there needs to be a connectedness to others - physical and spiritual - for resiliency to flourish. Where there is hope or a belief in a positive future, success and resilience can be found.

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Appendix

Appendix index

1. Key terms
2. "Request for participants" letter
3. Consent form
4. Permission from Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
5. Interview questionnaire
6. Resiliency assets

Appendix #1

Key terms

1. Child -   A person between eight (8) and twelve (12) years of age.

2. Trauma/Adversity -   An event or circumstance that causes distress.

3. At-risk -   Individuals and/or families that experience chronic stress or adversity within their environment which potentially limit psychological, emotional, economic, or physical well being.

4. Resiliency -   The ability to successfully adapt to and function, despite experiences of chronic stress or sever trauma.

5. Success -   The attainment of personal goals and/or recognized by their peers as achieving a desirable status or position.

Appendix #2

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN working towards my Masters of Social Work degree. For my thesis, I am researching individual childhood characteristics and experiences that enhance the development of resiliency. Resiliency factors are the individual strengths that enhance an individual's ability to overcome difficulties. I would like to focus on the strengths of the Native American culture. I am seeking individuals who grew up, or spent most of their childhood, on the reservation. Please take some time to read this form carefully and ask any question you have before agreeing to be in the study.

This research is being conducted to provide me with information to complete my Masters of Social Work thesis and to provide you an opportunity to share some insights of the Native American culture.

Although your experiences and insight are important, your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary. It is up to you whether or not to participate in this research project. Even if you decide to participate, you may discontinue your involvement at any time. While each question is important to the study, you are not obligated to answer all of the questions. Your decisions will not affect your relationship with Augsburg College or the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Requests for volunteers will be distributed to individuals residing on the reservation. Scheduling of interview times will be made in conjunction with the volunteers and the interviewer. Each interview will be audio taped for note taking purposes. You have the right to refuse to be audio taped. There will be no consequences to your participation in the study if you do not want to be audiotaped. Audio tapes and notes from individual interviews will remain with the interviewer in a locked file. The interviewer, and the thesis advisor, will be the only ones to have access to the tapes. At no time will

identifying information be used in the thesis. After the interviews have been completed, information will be compiled from the notes. Information from the interviews will be formatted into the thesis and will not be used for any other purposes. All notes and audio tapes will be destroyed by July 15, 1997.

Through your participation in this research and interview, you may be reminded of feelings or experiences associated with your childhood. You may choose to skip any questions that are uncomfortable for you to answer without necessarily dropping out of the research study. In the event that questions asked during the interview process produce emotional distress for you, please contact the *Director of Social Services, Mille Georgette Bunker, M.S.W. She may be reached at the Lacs Band of Ojibwe Social Services, (320) 532-4754 exit. 2533* so that support services may be provided to you.

I request your assistance in this research study. The interview will be a one time commitment on your behalf and will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me, Jeffrey Rodin, at (320) 983-3763 by June 30, 1997.

Thank you in advance for considering this research study. Attached you will find a copy of the questions to be asked during the interviews.

If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me, Jeffrey Rodin, at (320) 983-3763. My Thesis Advisor at Augsburg College is Mary Lou Williams, M.S.W. She can be reached at (612) 330-1157.

Please keep this copy for your records.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Rodin
Graduate Student and Principal investigator

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

"Factors that contribute to resiliency:

Overcoming Adversity"

I have received and read the the letter outlining the research purpose and process. I have asked questions and understand what is being requested from me. By signing this form, I give my permission for Jeffrey Rodin to interview me using the questions attached to the informational letter.

Participant: _____
         (please print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I consent for my interview to be audio taped.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix #4

March 19, 1997

To whom it may concern:

Mr. Jeff Rodin, graduate student of Augsburg college, has been granted permission to conduct interviews with Mille Lacs Band members for a Masters Thesis Poject. The method of gathering this information will be through a questionaire as well as interviewing. The topic of his thesis will be "Resiliency Factors" with a focus on American Indians and their Culture.

David G. Matrious
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The following questions are used for demographic and statistical purposes only.

What is your current age?

What is your gender?

What is your current occupation or trade?

Please answer the following questions as they relate to when you were a child.

1.   Briefly describe the environment where you grew up.

Where were you born and raised?

    a. Born and raised on reservation.

    b. Born on reservation, moved away, then returned.

    c. Born off reservation, then moved on to reservation.

What was your parent's marital status?

a. Single mother	b. Single father
c. Step-family w/mother	d. Step-family w/father
e. Divorce w/mother	f. Divorce w/father
g. Married	h. Other

What Native American customs did your family practice?

What was your family's economic status?

    a. Below poverty level.

    b. Poverty level.

    c. Working class.

    d. Middle class.

    e. Upper class.

2. How would you discribe the relationships within your family?

3. Briefly describe your temperament and personality when you were a child.

4. Did you go to school on the reservation?

    If not, how far did you have to travel to get to school?

1 to 5 miles

6 to 10 miles

11 to 15 miles

16 to 20 miles

More than 20 miles

What type of school did you attend?

    Public school

    Private school

    Religion related school

    Other

What was your experience or recollection of school; peer relationships, relationships with teachers, and academic performance?

5.   What were some of your dreams/goals and aspirations for when you grew up?

Were these dreams/goals supported?

How were they supported and by whom?

6.   All children experience some form of adversity as they grow up; peer pressure, poverty, divorce of parents, death of significant individuals, racism, or abuse to name a few. Please describe some of the life transitions or challenges you experienced as a child that have had an impact on your life?

Describe how you dealt with or met these challenges?

7.   Outside your family, what supports were available to you and who could you count on to be there for you?

a. Spiritual leader   b. Teacher

b. Coach   d. Neighbor

e. Peers   f. Club leader

g. Community elder   h. Other

Please answer the following questions as they relate to you now.

9.   How would you define "success"?

10. How would others describe you?

11. How would you describe the level of control you have regarding situations or circumstances that happen in your life?

12. What have you learned through your life experiences that may help others overcome adversity?

Appendix #6

Community	Family	Self
1. Adult resources	1. Family support	1. Motivation
2. Adult communication	2. Parents as social resources	2. Educational aspiration
3. Positive school climate	3. Parent communication	3. School performance
4. Positive peer influence	4. Parent involvement in school	4. Home work
5. Music	5. Parental standards	5. Helping others
6. Extracurricular activities	6. Parental discipline	6. Global concern
7. Community activities	7. Parental monitoring	7. Empathy
8. Involvement in a faith community	8. Time at home	8. Sexual restraint
		9. Assertiveness skills
		10. Decision-making skills
		11. Friendship-making skills
		12. Planning skills
		13. Self-esteem
		14. Hope