

At each stage during the building resiliency process there is a danger that the parent may get stuck at that stage and not be able to continue to move forward to create a better life.

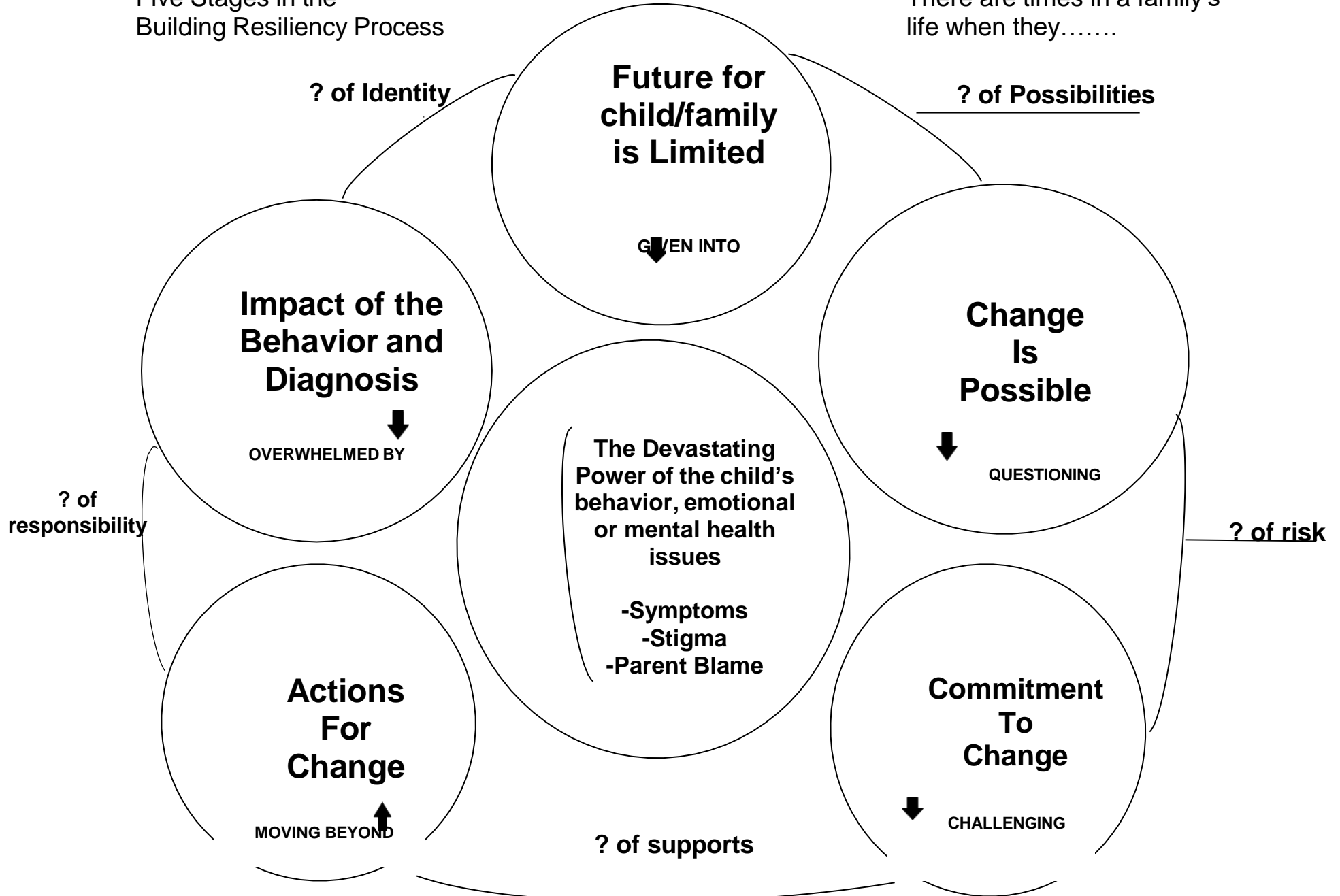
Session 3

Five Stages in the Building Resiliency Process: Dangers

This Session explores the possible dangers at each stage and what often happens that is unhelpful or even harmful that prevents parents from continuing to build a better life for their family, child, youth and young adult.

Five Stages in the Building Resiliency Process

There are times in a family's life when they.....



Five Stages in the Building Resiliency Process: Dangers

At each stage of the building resiliency process there are dangers. At each stage there is a major question that a parent must answer or a major decision that the parent must make. As parents, we always have things influencing our decisions. Internally, there are pressures on the parent to answer this question in a negative way. Externally, there are pressures on the individual to answer this question in a negative way. When the internal and external come together in ways that reinforce each other, it often causes a person to get stuck or side tracked on the journey. The following are examples of the internal and external pressure.

Impact of Behavior and/or Diagnosis: Question of Identity – How will I define myself, my family, child or youth as a result of their behavior and/or diagnosis?

Internally – the parent experiences sadness, loss, guilt because of their failure as a parent, etc. causing them to question their ability to be a parent

Externally – others see the parent as the reason why the child has behavior issues or the reason why they have a diagnosis, will not be able to function as a parent in the future

Future for the child/family is Limited: Question of Possibility – How will I relate to possibilities for my child, youth and family when I have been redefined as a parent of a child or youth with behavior issues and/or a mental health diagnosis?

Internally – the parent sees their child/youth and family being unable to do the things that others do.

Externally – others see the parent as not being able to be the parent needed for a child/youth with behavioral/mental health issues.

Change is Possible: Question of Risk – How will I relate to the need to take risks if I am going to change?

Internally – the parent is afraid of things getting worse instead of better

Externally – others tell the parent they have made some progress and it's as good as it's going to be and not push it

Commitment to Change: Question of Support – How will I get the supports that my family, child, youth and I need?

Internally – the parent is facing a new experience, doesn't know what kind of support they need or what their child/youth needs.

Externally – others don't believe the parent should attempt to change and they fear others won't support them

Actions for Change: Question of Responsibility – Will I be able to take on the necessary responsibilities?

Internally – the parent knows/senses they will have to take on more responsibilities, not sure they can do it **Externally** – don't believe the parent knows what is best for their child and family, will need the system to take care of them

The Question of Identity...When I have experienced the behaviors of my child/youth or the symptoms of the diagnosis, how am I going to relate to this in terms of defining who I am as a parent and defining who my child/youth is and what I am able to do?

Impact of the Behavior and/or Diagnosis is the time from the initial onset of behaviors through the time of diagnosis. When a parent is experiencing intense emotional distress due to the behaviors and symptoms or dealing with the child/youth being diagnosed with a mental illness, they are often times overwhelmed by all of this and it changes the way they see themselves as a parent. The danger is that the parent takes on a new identity and begins to re-define themselves as a parent of a bipolar child/youth or use of other medical terminology. This *re-defining of their identity* automatically limits the parent's belief as to what their child/youth can and will be able to do in the future. They begin to see their child/youth as the diagnosis/illness, and, therefore, see them as unable to do most of the things others their age would do. The parent gives up their hopes, dreams, and expectations for their child/youth and their family.

Parents often give up or reduce their hopes, dreams and expectations of their child/youth after the behaviors start or when they are diagnosed with a mental illness. They often re-define their abilities to be a parent AND re-define the abilities of their child/youth that reduces their sense of possibilities.

Question of Identity – How will I define myself as a parent as a result of the behavior and/or diagnosis?

Internally – the parent experiences sadness, loss, guilt because of their failure as a parent, etc. causing them to question their ability to be a parent

Externally – others see the parent as the reason why the child has behavior issues or the reason why they have a diagnosis and will not be able to function as a parent in the future

Give 3-5 examples of internal threats that cause a question of identity.

Give 3-5 examples of what other people sometimes do that increases the danger.

The Question of Possibility... How will I relate to possibilities for my child, youth and family when I have been redefined as a parent of a child or youth with behavior issues and/or a mental health diagnosis?

Life is Limited is that time when the parent is resigned to a life without possibility of anything ever changing. They believe their life and the life of their child/youth is limited in ways that are not necessarily true because of the diagnosis and they will get stuck in the mental health system for years. They may not believe they will be able to work because of the inability of the child/youth to stay in school and their family may not be able to be involved in other community and family activities because of the child/youth behaviors or diagnosis. They are also not sure whether the child/youth will be able to continue their education, live on their own, or do other things that would bring a sense of meaning and purpose to a young person's life. The parent often resigns their self to a limited life of being isolated from others and unable to have a family life. The danger is they will refuse to acknowledge that there is anything they can do that will make a difference in their life as a parent, the life of their child/youth with the behavior/diagnosis and the life of their entire family.

Parents often go for years dealing with the disruptions that come along with the behaviors that are sometimes exhibited by a child/youth who is struggling emotionally and behaviorally without seeing any possibility for having a different life. They seem to always be able to find excuses for not moving towards a better life for them, their child/youth and their family.

Question of Possibility – How will I relate to possibilities for my child, youth and family when I have been redefined as a parent of a child or youth with behavior issues and/or a mental health diagnosis?

Internally – the parent sees their child/youth and family being unable to do the things that others do.

Externally – others see the parent as not being able to be the parent needed for a child/youth with behavioral/mental health issues.

Give 3-5 examples of internal threats that would cause the question of possibility.

Give 3-5 examples of what other people sometimes do that increases the danger.

The Question of Risk: How will I relate to the need to take risk if I am going to change?

Change is Possible is the time when a parent has accepted or is resigned to a life without the possibility of change. They see their life limited in ways that may not necessarily be the result of their child/youth's behaviors and/or diagnosis, and they believe that there is nothing they can do about it. They may have been dealing with the behaviors and the consequences of the behavior for years. Something happens that causes them to see that their life and the life of their child/youth can be more than they ever thought it could be. The danger is that when the parent sees that they will need to take some risks and move out of their comfort zone they begin to question their ability to do this.

They are beginning to see things they could do – I could... I could... I could... But they never do any of them. They find ways to talk themselves out of doing what they say that they want to do.

Question of Risk – How will I relate to the need to take risks if I am going to change?

Internally – the parent is afraid of things getting worse instead of better

Externally – others tell the parent they have made some progress and it's as good as it's going to be and not push it.

Give 3-5 examples of internal threats that cause questions of risk.

Give 3- 5 examples of what other people sometimes do that increases danger.

The Question of Support: How will I get the supports that my family, child, youth and I need?

Commitment to Change is the time when a parent decides to take a risk and move out of their comfort zone. Often this involves taking small steps that don't necessarily move you toward a goal, but does break the pattern of doing nothing. The danger is the parent will not know all of the supports they will need or their child/youth will need to be safe and successful. The parent will move out too quickly, not succeed, and retreat back into their comfort zone.

Parents often do not know what supports are needed for them or their child/youth or do not get the support from others that they feel they need.

Question of Support – How will I get the support that I need?

Internally – the parent is facing a new experience and they don't know what kind of support they need or what their child/youth needs.

Externally – others don't believe the parent should attempt to change, and the parent fears others won't support them.

What is going on with the individual that would cause the question of support?

What do other people sometimes do that increases danger?

The Question of Responsibility: Will I be able to take on the necessary responsibilities?

Actions for Change is the time when a parent decides to make a major change in their life. Often times this involves creating relationships and getting involved in activities outside of the mental health system. Being connected to other parents who have been on a similar journey is very helpful during this step. As the parent moves more towards life outside of the supports of the mental health system, they have to take more and more responsibility for their own decisions. The danger is that the parent will begin to doubt their own decision-making abilities and their ability to be a parent. The parent may decide they can't function without the supports of the mental health system and revert back to a life revolving around supports and services within the confines of the mental health system.

Parents often times begin to seriously question their ability to make major changes that involve creating new relationships and getting involved in activities outside of the mental health system.

Question of Responsibility – Will I be able to take on the necessary responsibilities?

Internally – the parent knows/senses they will have to take on more responsibilities but are not sure they can do it

Externally – others don't believe the parent knows what is best for their child, youth and family, and will need the system to take care of them.

Give 3-5 examples of what is going on with the individual that would cause the question of responsibility.

Give 3-5 examples of what do other people sometimes do that increases the danger.

Session 3 – Review Questions – Five Stages in the Building Resiliency: Dangers

- 1) What is the danger in the Impact of Behavior and/or Diagnosis stage? Explain.

- 2) What is the danger in the Future of child/family is Limited stage? Explain.

- 3) What is the danger in the Change is Possible stage? Explain.

- 4) What is the danger in the Commitment to Change stage? Explain.

- 5) What is the danger in the Actions for Change stage? Explain.