

Welcome



SACC 9th September 2015

Elizabeth Hall

RESILIENCE

Introductions

'England and America are two countries separated by the same language'

George Bernard Shaw

Thanks to Garth Blake, not just for his introduction just now but also for his leadership on these matters. His influence spreads not just here in Australia but also through his work for the Anglican Communion internationally.

Use of our intellect but also other senses – music, pictures, stories, poems. See leaflet for more details.



Building Resilience

Definition for use throughout this conference:

**Resilience is the capacity for survival
following soul-shattering trauma**

To note:

- Most definitions use 'adversity' but this loses the depth of trauma involved
- Abuse is not always soul-shattering, but usually is
- Abuse in adulthood as well as in childhood
- Other experiences can be soul-shattering e.g. refugees, war victims

Outline of Session



1. **Resilience**
 - some theory
 - what it is **NOT**
 - glimpses through story, writing
2. **What impact** does this have for our work?
3. How does our **Christian faith** context help us explore this concept?

Resilience



1. Resilience

- some theory

Resilience – some theory

- **Physical matter** – ability of a substance or object to bounce back into shape
- Application to experiences of working with children post-trauma: **doing well in the face of adversity**
- Professor Robbie Gilligan, Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland: ***why, bearing in mind what has happened to them, does a resilient child do better than s/he ought to?***
- The concept helps **focus on strengths** whilst **recognising past trauma**
- **‘Resilience’** in this context comprises a set of qualities that may help a child to withstand many of the negative effects of adversity – more developed in some than in others
- No magic bullet, qualities from **both ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’**
- Kirsty MacLean, Director Child & Youth Care Network (CYC-NET) article 2004

Resilience – some theory

Kirsty MacLean CYC-NET 2004

‘Nature’ factors

- **Good news – children born with:**
 - good intellectual ability
 - placid / cheerful temperament
- **Harder news – children who:**
 - have a premature birth
 - are born with physical disabilities / illness
 - cry and find it hard to take comfort
 - cannot sleep easily
 - do not easily accept being held
- These children are **more vulnerable to adversity** as well as less likely to be resilient

‘Nurture’ factors (see leaflet)

- Good self-esteem
- Belief in one’s own self-efficacy
- Initiative
- Faith / morality
- Trust
- Attachment
- Secure base
- Meaningful roles
- Autonomy
- Identity
- Insight
- Humour

Resilience



1. Resilience

- what it is **NOT**

Resilience – some theory

What is it NOT?

It is NOT

- a moral attribute or behaviour
- Putting on a brave face
 - *Walter's story*



Resilience – what is it NOT?

It is NOT

- A moral attribute or behaviour
- Putting on a brave face
 - *Walter's story*
- Part of a pastoral skill-set
- Set in stone – traumatic and beneficial experiences can be multiple
 - *Daniel's story*
- Bouncing back to how you were before
 - *Alistair's story* 'England's leading Test match run-scorer the approach embodied by Cook urges resilience and self-knowledge' (Times newspaper)

Survivor quote:

*'Resilience suggests a returning to how you were before the event, and I would say for survivors of abuse this is not the case. Someone has done something to us, that **changes us forever**. I think **enabling** and **empowering** are words which better capture how we can be alongside and support survivors, thus moving the locus of power from the abuser to the survivor.'* (my emphasis)

Resilience



1. Resilience

- catching glimpses of resilience through stories and other writing

Glimpses of Resilience

- **Scout** in 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'
- **Adam** London, born addicted to crack, died aged 12 in gang stabbing
- **Sue** London brothel aged 13, suicide aged 15
- **Tanya** fostered aged 4yrs 1 week

Glimpses of Resilience

Tanya



Glimpses of Resilience

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Glimpses of Resilience

Norma Jean...



Glimpses of Resilience

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- **Norma Jean** Marilyn Monroe
- **Jonathan** Robbie Gilligan's research
- **Karen Rose** novelist with Waardenburg Syndrome

Introduction to a new hero in 'Closer Than You Think' 2014:

'I wasn't sure why he looked the way he did, but then I realised I'd introduced a character with several of my own physical characteristics...As a child I hated that I had a syndrome that made me different. Kids can be very cruel and made fun of me unmercifully. I wanted to run and hide.'

Previous dedication, in 'You Belong To Me' 2011, in memory of her father who had recently died:

'He taught me binary when I was 7, gave me my first Poe story when I was 8, and taught me to box using a Hoppity Donald Duck so that I could defend myself against schoolyard bullies when I was 9. He employed creative means to teach me parallel parking so that I could get my driver's license.

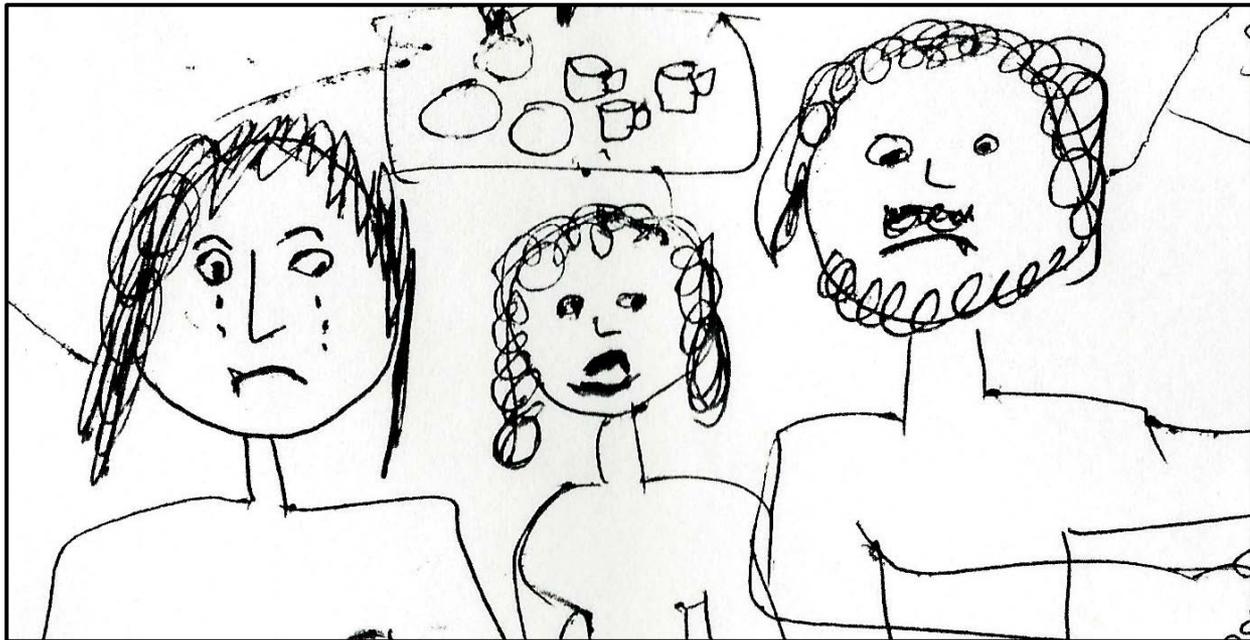
He retyped my final university paper from my handwritten draft when my computer crashed the night before it was due, so that I could get a much-needed night's sleep and my degree, and only scolded me a little for not having my files backed up. He made sure nobody ever told me that I couldn't do anything I set my mind to. Most of all, he always loved me, every day, every year.

Glimpses of Resilience

- **Scout** in 'To Kill a Mocking Bird'
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- **Ibo** Syrian refugee aged 17, in Lebanon



Glimpses of Resilience



Glimpses of Resilience

No worst, there is none. Pitched
past pitch of grief,
More pangs will, schooled at
forepangs, wilder wring.
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?
Mary, mother of us, where is your
relief?

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed.
Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long
our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep.
Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a
whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day
dies with sleep.

Gerard Manley Hopkins 1844-89

It's like being in the ocean when the waves are really rough and high. They knock you over and you find yourself on the floor of the ocean with your face in the sand. The sand is getting in your nose and your eyes and the waves are holding you down. But then the wave recedes and you stand back up and you walk until the next wave comes in and knocks you down and the same thing keeps happening. And each time you just stand back up and after a while it seems to you that the waves are getting smaller and smaller.'

Pema Chadron

And did you get what you wanted from this life, even so?
'I did.'
And what did you want?
'To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on the earth.'

Raymond Carver 1938 – 1988

Resilience

'The capacity for survival following soul-shattering trauma'

In summary

- Resilience relates to a set of qualities that helps someone do better after trauma than would be expected
- Most definitions use 'adversity' but this loses the depth of suffering involved hence 'trauma'
- Remember the survivor quote: 'it changes us forever' hence 'soul-shattering'
- Remember 'the Bridge Test'. Thoughts of suicide are a present reality for victims / survivors hence 'survival'

Note:

- Abuse is not always traumatic, but usually is
- Abuse can be in adulthood as well as in childhood, although most resilience research has been done with children
- Other experiences can be soul-shattering e.g. refugees, war victims
(use of Triptych in the section break slides: explosion, shell-shock, hope)
- Respecting what resilience is NOT as well as what it is helps to prevent trivialisation

Resilience



2. So What Does This Mean for Us?

Resilience

Golden Threads

1. Our churches already are, but need to become increasingly, places where people can flourish

Mark's story

Alex's story



Resilience

Golden Threads for Today

1. Our churches already are, but need to become increasingly, places where people can flourish

Mark's story

Alex's story

2. We need to find ways of responding to survivors (& close friends/family) that **enables and empowers** them
 - choices, power sharing
 - engagements that are **therapeutic** even if not therapy

... and for tomorrow

3. We need to be resilient too, as do churches and their leaders
 - Impact of Secondary Traumatic Stress.

Resilience



3. How does our **Christian faith** context help us explore this concept?
 - What can we learn from our faith, our Scriptures, from the wisdom of Christians who have gone before?
 - How can we cross-cultivate our Christian reflection, with our understanding of trauma and resilience, to support our work moving forward?

Resilience in a Christian context

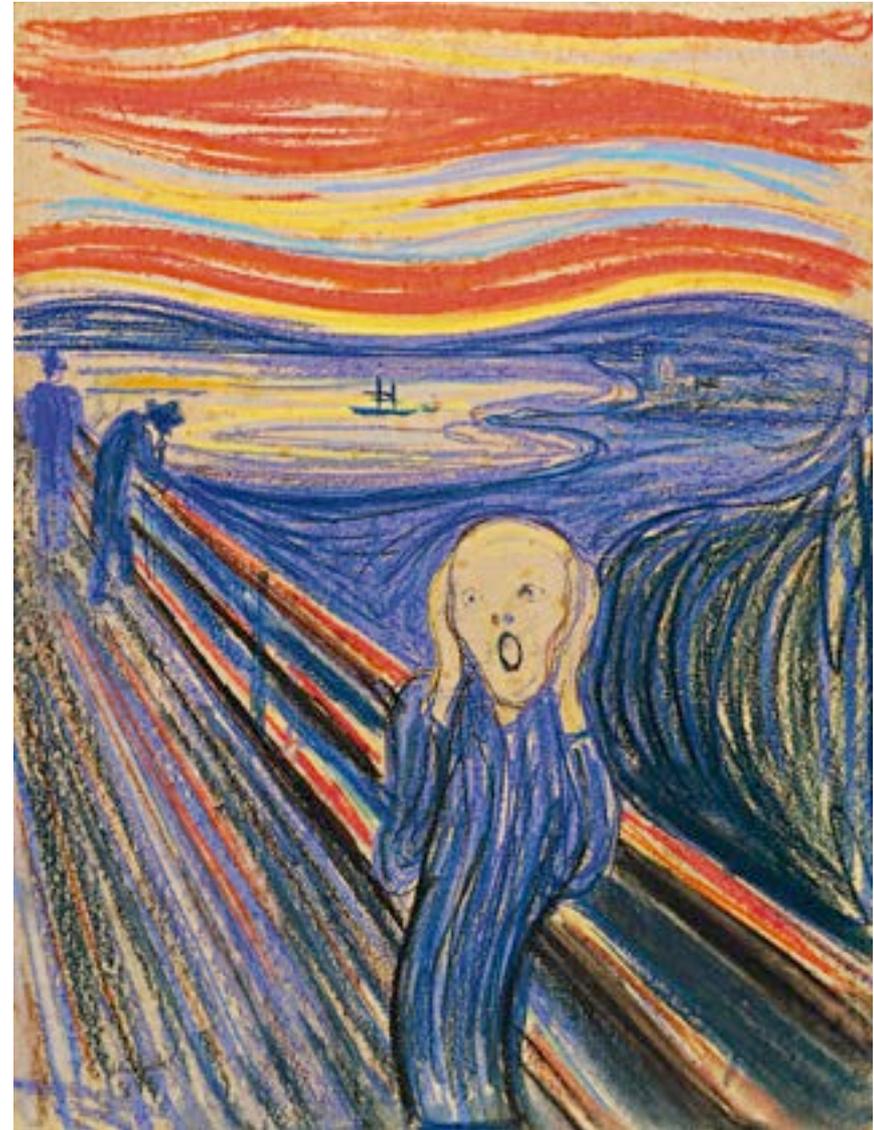
- Professor James Dunn, Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Theology at the University of Durham, UK
- No 'clobber' texts
- Methodist Church (UK) Foundation Safeguarding Module four key texts
- The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in Spirit. (Psalm 34:18)
- To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)
- Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs. (Matthew 19:14)
- [Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:39)

Resilience in a Christian context

Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures stories of trauma:

- *Hagar* (Genesis 16.1-16 and 21.9-21)
- *Tamar* (2 Samuel 13.1-22)
- *Rachel* (Matthew 2.18)
- *Hosea*

Edvard Munch 1863-1944



Resilience

Review our work this morning

1. Resilience

- some theory
- what it is **NOT**
- glimpses through story, writing

2. What impact does this have for our work?

3. How does our Christian faith context help us explore this concept?

Invitation to Lament all the trauma in our world

Music – *the Lament from Karl Jenkins' Stabat Mater*

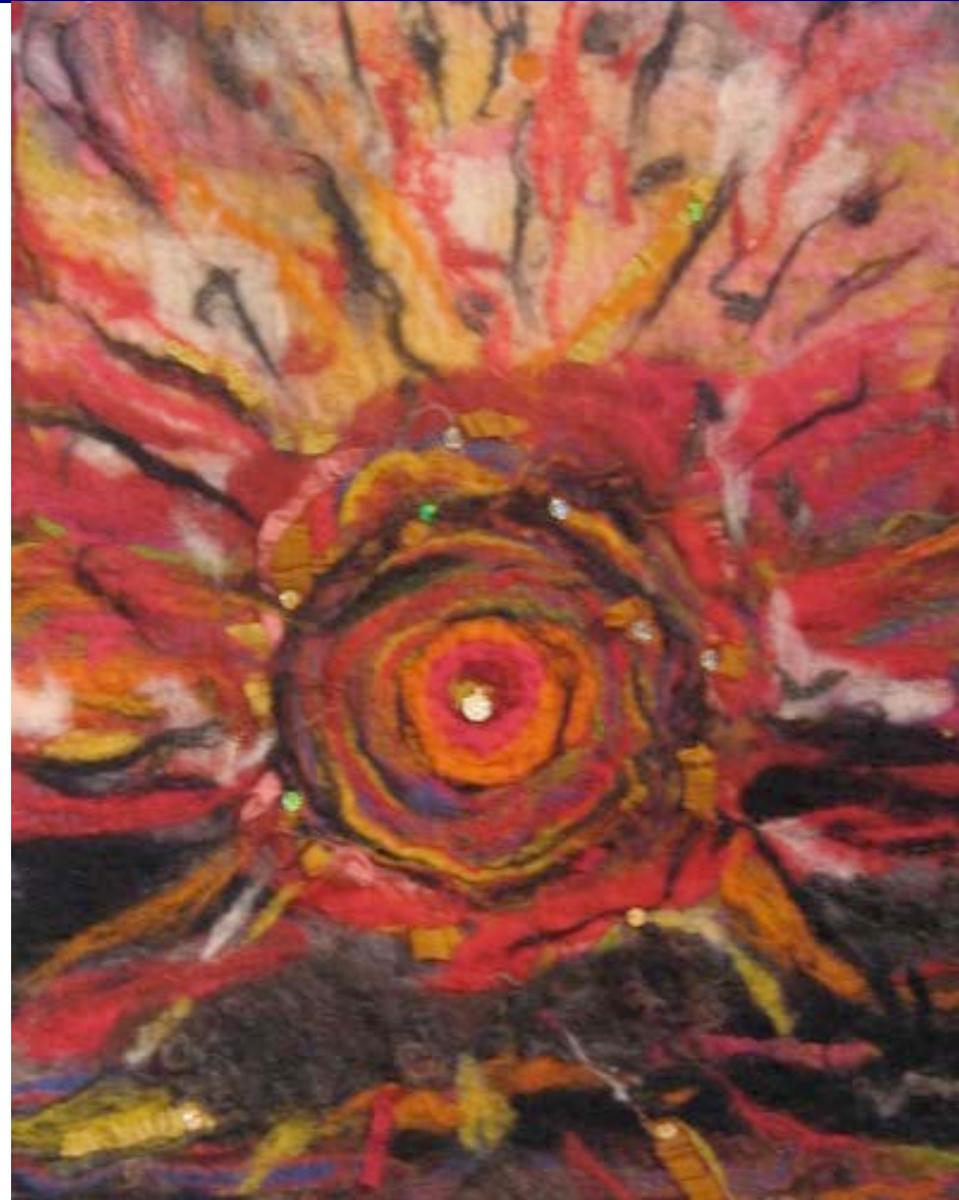
Words – *the Lament by Carol Barrat.*

(The full work is a combination of Middle Eastern and Western musical traditions and languages)

Resilience

Taking time to lament all the trauma in our world

*Feeling all the grief and sorrow
we live life with shadows in our
hearts and minds,
with tears that wait to fall when
sorrow in the world is more than
we can truly bear*



Resilience

Taking time to lament all the trauma in our world



*We hear the cries of children,
we see death cast shadows on
their hearts and minds,
as mothers in their grief stand
crying, weeping, weeping,
crying,
crying, weeping, weeping
for this world.*

Resilience

Taking time to lament all the trauma in our world

*On our bed of thorns
such sorrow must surely
end, our tears can wash
away the sins of the world,
no more crying, weeping,
weeping, crying, crying,
weeping, weeping
in this world, this world*



Resilience

Coffee and Comfort Break

