



SIEC ALERT

April 2000, #40

If you have WEB access, you can download this & future issues.

Please provide your email address, and we will let you know when subsequent issues are available from our site.

SIEC ALERT is a topical review of current literature relevant to suicide prevention.

Suicide Information & Education Centre (SIEC)
201-1615-10th Ave. SW
Calgary, Alberta CANADA T3C 0J7

SIEC is a program of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division

phone: 403-245-3900 fax: 403-245-0299
email: siec@siec.ca web: <http://www.siec.ca>

Suicide Prevention Doesn't Always Mean Talking About Suicide

Suicide prevention shouldn't start when a person is suicidal and intervention is necessary. Ideally, suicide prevention needs to begin far in advance of a crisis situation when a person, preferably a very young person, is taught how to respond to adversity and stress in a manner which will lead to solutions that do not put their life at risk.

There are many approaches that can result in a reduction of suicidal behaviour and the earlier they are initiated the more effective they will be.

What is Resiliency?*

Resiliency is defined as the ability to readily recover and adapt to adversity. A resilient person demonstrates an ability to manage or cope with significant adversity or stress in ways that are both effective at the time, but which also help strengthen them against future adversity. Resilience is born out of the balance between what are known as risk factors and protective factors.

Risk Factors include characteristics or circumstances which may precede life-style problems and dysfunction.

They include:

- aspects of individual personality and disposition
- psychological and behavioural traits
- environmental factors related to the person's family, peer group, or community
- life events such as normal developmental transitions associated with age and rites of passage, divorce and death

Protective Factors operate both at the individual and environmental levels as well. They include:

- positive personality traits such as a sense of personal value and purpose
- skills such as the ability to communicate and think things through effectively
- environmental supports such as strong and consistent parenting and non-drug using friends

*excerpted from: Callan, L., "Resilience: the Touchstone of Well-Being", in *AADAC Developments*, 15 (4), June/July 1995. See verso for web address.

Building Self-Worth in Children*

"No parent starts out in the morning planning to make his child miserable. No mother says to herself, "Today I'll yell, nag, humiliate and hurt my child whenever possible." On the contrary. Yet, we often find ourselves doing just that - and doing things we don't mean, in a tone we don't like."

Haim Ginott, Child Psychologist

The formation of self-image begins very early in a child and is largely the product of relationships with parents and early caretakers. Whether a child will be a confident, self-assured person or a fearful, guilt-ridden one depends very much on the treatment he or she receives. Several ways parents and other caregivers can influence a child's feelings of self-worth follow:

- *Avoid labelling - labelling a child as bad or worthless is self-fulfilling*
- *Provide unconditional positive regard - generous doses of love, tenderness and acceptance of the child even in the face of undesirable behaviour*
- *Remember your own experiences - enhance the positive ones and ensure that you do not repeat the negative experiences you faced*
- *Cheer your child's accomplishments - provide lots of positive verbal feedback, offer attention, approval and appreciation for desirable behaviour*
- *Be interested and attentive - pay attention to your child and show interest in their activities*
- *Accept children as individuals - avoid comparisons and competition with siblings and other children, accept the child as an individual in his own right, with his own abilities and limitations*
- *Help children to be non-prejudiced by teaching concepts such as:*
 - * *all people are individuals worthy of dignity, and are interesting and important*

more >

