Now in a fully revised, updated, and expanded second edition, this informative clinical resource and text presents Froma Walsh’s family resilience framework for intervention and prevention with clients dealing with adversity. Drawing on extensive research and clinical experience, the author describes key processes in resilience for practitioners to target and facilitate. Useful guidelines and case illustrations address a wide range of challenges: sudden crisis, trauma, and loss; disruptive transitions, such as job loss, divorce, and migration; persistent multistress conditions of serious illness or poverty; and barriers to success for at-risk youth. New chapters present resilience-oriented approaches to recovery from major disasters and demonstrate community-based and international applications. Demonstrating powerful ways to bring out the best in family relationships—even in the worst of times—this volume provides essential tools for family therapists, social workers, clinical psychologists, and professionals in related fields. Authoritative yet readable and accessible, it is also an outstanding text for advanced undergraduate and graduate-level courses.

FROM CHAPTER 1:
Foundations of a Family Resilience Approach

Researchers have linked the emergence of resilience in vulnerable children to key protective influences in the family and social context. Children’s resilience to hardship is greater when they have access to at least one caring parent, a caregiver, or another supportive adult in their extended family or social world. Even the emergence of genetically influenced individual traits occurs in relational context (Reiss, Hetherington, Plomin, Neiderhiser, 2000). Only a few early studies of individual resilience looked for positive family contributions (Hauser, Vierya, & Patterson, 1983; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992). They focused on the family organization and emotional climate, noting the importance of warmth, affection, emotional support, and clear-cut, reasonable structure and limits. Researchers emphasized that if parents are unable to provide this climate, relationships with other family members, such as older siblings, grandparents, and extended kin, can serve this function. Moreover, shared belief systems transmitted through family interactions are powerful influences in resilience. Adaptation to crisis events and disruptive transitions is influenced by the meaning of the experience, which is socially constructed. Resilient children in troubled families often actively recruit and form special attachments with influential adults in their social environment. They learn to choose relationships wisely and tend to select spouses from healthy families.
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