

July 2021

The Resilience Doughnut: The Secret of Strong Kids - Bringing Resilience into the Common Language of Families

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Recommended Citation

Gretton, Tara (2021) "The Resilience Doughnut: The Secret of Strong Kids - Bringing Resilience into the Common Language of Families," *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 1 , Article 17.
Available at: <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/journalsfp/vol5/iss1/17>

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BOOK REVIEW**The Resilience Doughnut: The Secret of Strong Kids - Bringing Resilience into the Common Language of Families**

Lyn Worsley

The Resilience Doughnut Pty Ltd, Kindle edition, 2015. 130 pages, ISBN 978-0-646-55255-2. £11.22

Review by Tara Gretton

Social worker, solution focused practitioner and trainer (UK)

Lyn Worsley is a clinical psychologist with a background in nursing, youth work and teaching. Lyn and her family are based in Sydney Australia. Lyn's extensive experience of working with children, young people and their families in a variety of settings; schools, street youth work, children's hospitals, prisons and local youth groups give her first-hand experience both of the complexities of life that children, young people and their families can experience in their everyday lives, and also of how these complexities can cause limitations for people within their communities and social environment.

Lyn's book and her model The Resilience Doughnut offers an ecological model to support children, young people and their families to see hope and possibilities in their future. The model is simple, fun and accessible, where the focus is on finding a coherent way to communicate what resources are available to people in their everyday lives, in everyday communities.

The Resilience Doughnut, like any good doughnut, has two parts: the hole in the middle and the outer circle. The hole in the middle represents the person; *'I have, I am, I can'* with a focus on what is working well already in the person's life. Lyn refers to some wonderful *'strength-based research and studies of individuals'* where it is usefully highlighted that *'people have survived and thrived despite the risk factors and adversity in their lives'*. She highlights that people have resilience and that it needs to be noticed and amplified.

The outer circle is made up of seven external factors as shown in the diagram of the Resilience Doughnut itself below. The Resilience Doughnut uses a scale to record the strengths of each external factor and together creative ways to strengthen each factor are born.



The Resilience Doughnut has elements of the solution focused assumptions infused within the model; with its belief in change and its focus on strengths. The resilience doughnut however in my view, with its focus on external factors to increase resilience, is more of a strengths-based model rather than a solution focused model. I am curious to see what

difference it would have made to the book if there was more reference made to the solution focused approach; whether it would have enabled more of a focus on the solution focused assumption that people are experts in their own lives with the strengths and capabilities to (in a co-constructive manner) create their own solutions related to the seven external factors.

However, an experienced solution focused practitioner would be able to use the resilience doughnut alongside the young person to elicit their hoped-for change and by inviting them to notice how they had coped with adversity in the past, and how the seven external factors (and individual characteristics) had contributed to how they had coped in the past. They would then be able to start to explore the small signs that would tell them they were building their resilience in the seven external factors and how others in their community could be a part of this change.

Lyn Worsley exudes knowledge, experience and passion throughout the book. It is evident in abundance that Lyn believes in children and young people and has written a book and created an accessible model that gives them every opportunity to thrive by focusing on their strengths and by drawing on the community where the young person *'receives messages that nurture inner self – the I HAVE, I AM and I CAN resources'* (p 19). This can only be of benefit to children, young people and their families and can truly invite a shift from problem and deficit focused models to a model of hope and possibility.

This book is written with the intention that anyone working with children and young people can pick it up and instantly have the Resilience Doughnut Model at their fingertips, ready to use. It's inspiring how the author's attention to detail answers those 'what if' scenario questions, ensuring that the reader can visualize the use of the model in every type of scenario and potential complex situation. I can see this book and *The Resilience Doughnut* being incredibly useful to workers in community settings; where they are interacting with young people and their families and where familial difficulties can be negatively affecting the potential life outcomes of the young person - where it can be hard to notice what's working well already and how this can be built upon.

Having trained as a social worker. I see this book being hugely useful to this field. This is a field where workers are often completely entrenched in work with children and families where there is pervasive adversity, where assessments, interactions, meetings are often focused on deficit, crisis intervention and analyzing the problems. I believe that *The Resilience Doughnut* would offer something more hopeful and pertain to the more traditional social work approaches where the community/external factors are drawn upon to enable a young person to thrive and reach their full potential. I also believe that in the context of social work and perhaps other fields where risk is being assessed; the framework offers more of a directive structured model that is robust to assess and manage potential risk factors.

The Resilience Doughnut is an accessible means to measure strengths and how to increase strengths in relation to external factors in a child and young person's life, no matter what adversity that they have experienced. The quote in relation to this book that springs to mind is the African Proverb, *'It takes a village to raise a Child'*. This book highlights what we can draw upon that is at our fingertips within our communities and it does it in a coherent accessible way; giving hope and possibility for all.

The reviewer

Tara Gretton is a social worker, solution focused practitioner and trainer in the UK. Tara works with schools, children, young people and their families.

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