

Sam Goldstein, Ph.D.

Assistant Clinical Professor

University of Utah School of Medicine



Sustaining Your Resilience in Stressful Times: Guidelines for Pediatric Mental Health Professionals

 www.samgoldstein.com

 info@samgoldstein.com

 @drsamgoldstein

 @doctorsamgoldstein



A man goes fishing.



The purpose of life is
to prepare the next
generation for their
future.





There are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect.

-Ronald Reagan

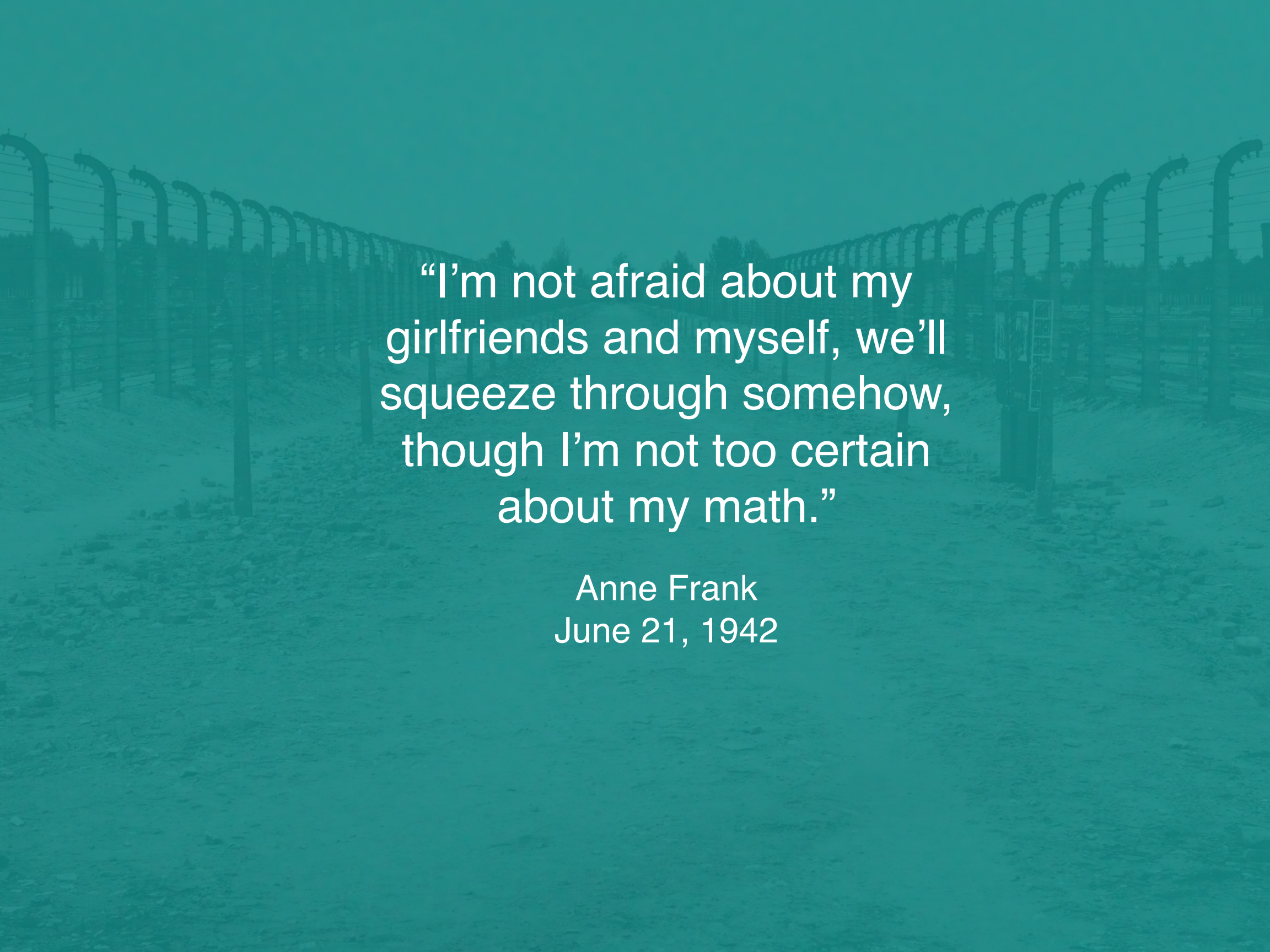
Resilience is a
process focusing
upon strengths
to overcome
adversity.



Resilience




- A process leading to good outcome despite high risk
- The ability to function competently under stress
- The ability to recover from trauma and adversity

A background image of a barbed wire fence with a teal overlay. The fence is made of multiple strands of wire supported by wooden posts, stretching into the distance. The ground is covered in dry grass and small rocks.

“I’m not afraid about my
girlfriends and myself, we’ll
squeeze through somehow,
though I’m not too certain
about my math.”

Anne Frank
June 21, 1942

A faint, teal-colored silhouette of a person's head and shoulders is visible on the left side of the image. The person's right arm is raised, with their fist clenched, symbolizing strength or defiance. The background is a solid teal color.

“I have lots of courage, I feel so strong and as if I can bear a great deal, I feel so free and so young! I was glad when I first realized it, because I don’t think I shall easily bow down before the blows that inevitably come to everyone.”

Anne Frank
July 15, 1944

Predictors of Resilience

- Living above the poverty level
- Not experiencing a learning disability
- Easy temperament
- Competent parents
- Available parents
- Warm parental relationship
- Social relations

Predictors of Resilience

(cont.)

- Educational opportunity
- Organized religious affiliation
- Higher intellect
- Learning to problem solve
- Internal locus of control
- Sense of self-worth
- Sense of humor

Most Powerful Predictors of a Resilient Child



- Easy temperament
- Consistent family relationships
- Competent caregivers
- Development of self-esteem
- A sense of emotional security

Andy's Story



Corona Virus Stress Syndrome (CoViSS)

- Unlike the 9/11 tragedy, an unexpected, sudden event, the virus pandemic has evolved at a slow creep until critical thresholds were reached and governments began to act.
- Even then their actions have rolled out slowly over days and weeks until our country is coming to a halt, much like a speeding train trying to slow down before a downed bridge.

Corona Virus Stress Syndrome (CoViSS) *(cont.)*

- Further, the rapid growth of technology in the past 20 years is such that nearly every citizen has access to the web and television instantly on their phones.
- Cable news stations are devoting 24-hour coverage of the pandemic. For better or worse, we have truly become a global village. As with this teen's father, I think we are beginning to see some of our children, friends, family and neighbors succumb to these events.

Corona Virus Stress Syndrome (CoViSS)

- Spending hours on end watching news channels.
- Spending hours posting and reposting events related to the pandemic.
- Buying household products, foods, etc., that far exceed immediate need.
- Setting alerts on your phone for every news channel.
- Repeatedly texting friends, family and coworkers about related news events.

Corona Virus Stress Syndrome (CoViSS)

- Repeatedly making dire posts on social media.
- Making the pandemic all you can speak about with others.
- Ignoring daily responsibilities.
- Ignoring hygiene, rest and food.

Stress and Illness

- Stress and illness have intersecting components. Many studies indicate such a link.
- Theories of the stress–illness link suggest that both acute and chronic stress can cause illness, and lead to changes in mental and physical health, behavior and how the body functions.

Stress and Illness

(cont.)

- Research indicates the type of stressor, whether it is acute or chronic, and individual person characteristics, such as age and physical well-being, before the onset of the stressor can combine to determine the effect of stress on an individual.
- A person's personality, genetics and childhood experiences, including possible major stressors and traumas, may also predispose their response to an event such as a viral pandemic.

Impact of Quarantine and Isolation

- Increased social isolation.
- Increased problems with school work.
- Depression and/or anxiety.
- Health fears.
- Frustration and boredom.

Corona Virus Stress Syndrome (CoViSS)

- If these symptoms fit you, a family member or a loved one, don't despair.
- The lesson we learned from 9/11 is that most people over time draw strength from family and friends and eventually return to more normal behavior.
- However, it never hurts to bring your concerns about yourself to a mental health professional if you experience CoViSS, or to speak to a friend or family member in whom you recognize these signs.

I Suggest for You:

- Limit your news-watching to a ½ hour per day.
- Turn off all alerts from news channels on your devices.
- Exercise.
- Attend to daily responsibilities.
- Work if you can.

I Suggest for You:

(cont.)

- Keep busy with family activities even if restricted to home.
- Resist posting or texting bad news.
- Reassure your children that the world isn't ending.
- Consider a budget for spending over the next 3 months if needed.

Guidelines for Quarantine

- Information is key; people who are quarantined need to understand the situation.
- Effective and rapid communication is essential.
- Supplies (both general and medical) need to be provided.
- The quarantine period should be short, and the duration should not be changed unless in extreme circumstances.

Guidelines for Quarantine

(cont.)

- Most of the adverse effects come from the imposition of a restriction of liberty; voluntary quarantine is associated with less distress and fewer long-term complications.
- Public health officials should emphasize the altruistic choice of self-isolating.

I Suggest for the Youth You Work With:

- Communicate the facts as is age appropriate.
- Have parents make time to talk.
- Reframe the current stress.
- Look into the future.
- Help children think logically.
- Listen for catastrophic thinking.
- Offer empathy.
- Model problem solving.
- Teach relaxation.



The late singer-songwriter Tom Petty wrote in his classic song “Crawling Back to You,” *Most things I worry about never happen anyway.*

Who We Are

- Worry is in our genes. It keeps us alert and aware of danger.
- But worry can also consume us if we are not vigilant and proactive, further complicating challenging situations and times.
- But so too is hope, optimism, motivation and empathy, the foundations of resilience.



Resilience is about functioning adequately during challenging times. It is a resource we all possess and most certainly must harness in these difficult times.

Goldstein's Axiom



Through intelligent and ethical educational and therapeutic practices, we can foster self-discipline, mental health and resilience in ourselves and our students without stealing away their dignity and hope.

Five Strategies to Foster a Resilient Mindset

- Teach empathy by practicing empathy.
- Teach responsibility by encouraging contributions.
- Teach decision-making and problem-solving skills that foster self-discipline.
- Offer encouragement and positive feedback.
- Help children deal with mistakes.

Teach Empathy by Practicing Empathy

- Are we saying or acting in a way that our children will be responsive to hearing us?
- Would we want anyone to speak to us the way we speak to our children?
- How would our children describe us at various times?
- How would we want our children to describe us?

Teach Empathy by Practicing Empathy *(cont.)*



- Listen
- Validate
- Avoid preaching and lecturing
- Avoid judgments and accusations
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Change your negative scripts

Teach Responsibility by Encouraging Contributions

- Provide ample opportunity
- Focus on existing success
- Build islands of competence
- Allow the opportunity to witness concrete examples of success

Teach Decision- Making and Problem- Solving Skills That Reinforce Self- Discipline

- What's my problem?
- What solutions are available?
- Which solution is the best?
- How can I implement each step of the solution?
- How did I do?

Offer Encouragement and Positive Feedback



- Become a charismatic adult
- Provide realistic appreciation
- Focus on building rather than tearing down
- Be available

Help Children Deal With Mistakes



- The fear of mistakes is a strong roadblock to developing a resilient mindset
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn
- Model the benefits of mistakes

The Mindset of a Resilient Child

- Optimistic and hopeful.
- Feel special and appreciated in the eyes of others.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- View mistakes, hardships and obstacles as challenges.
- Solve problems and make decisions.
- Internal locus of control.
- Believe you can and set out to solve problems.
- Possess empathy.

Creating a
Masterpiece!





Creating a
Masterpiece!



The Future

NEXT EXIT

May our philosophies keep pace with our technologies. May our compassion keep pace with our powers. And may love, not fear, be the engine of change.

-Dan Brown, *Origin*



Children are living messages we send to a time and place we will never see.

-Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*

Questions?



Sam Goldstein

 www.samgoldstein.com

 info@samgoldstein.com

 @drsamgoldstein

 @doctorsamgoldstein

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isfw8JJ-eWM>