

The Ripple Effect of Trauma and Healing with Aboriginal Children.



**Keys to Children's Mental Health:
Assessing Children's Social & Emotional
Well-Being
The 9th Annual Assessment Workshop**

The Ripple Effect

*“A Ripple effect works because
everyone influences
everyone else.*

*Powerful people are powerful
influences.*

*If your life works, you influence your
family.*

*If your family works, your family
influences the community.*

*If your community works, your
community influences the nation.*

*If your nation works, your nation
influences the world.”*

The Tao of Leadership

Physiological Responses to Stress and Trauma

NEUROTRANSMITTERS INVOLVED IN STRESS REACTIONS:

If the brain judges a situation to be "dangerous" it responds by releasing:

***Epinephrine:** Mobilizes the body to cope. Regulates heart rate, breathing, muscles, blood sugar increase for energy, pupils dilate, blood clotting increases, white blood cell activity increases, blood flow increased to muscles and brain, decreased to peripheral blood vessels. Digestion and elimination is speeded up. Intended as a *temporary* imbalance to cope with an emergency.

***Cortisol:** Releases more sugar into blood for energy, and speeds up tissue repair. If supplied on an ongoing basis it will have damaging effects on internal organs.

***Norepinephrine:** Induces "hypervigilance" and enhances problem solving skills of cortex, attention increase while concentration decreases. This provides a state in which you are alert to everything, but cannot focus on one thing.

***Serotonin:** Creates calm, relaxed, "content" state, mood is modulated. If an individual experiences a great deal of stress or trauma, serotonin may no longer be naturally released.

***Endorphin:** Nature's pain killers. Also induce calm, relaxed state and feelings of well being.

***ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone):** Reduces immune system response. The body thinks/needs energy for survival so it shuts down the immune system and uses the energy for survival. Over long term, this has a huge impact on the body's ability to fight disease and can result in Immune Deficiency diseases.

****Some of the Auto-Immune illness's we are seeing on an increasing level amongst our people are: *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Crohn's Disease, Lupus, Fibromyalgia, Insulin Dependent Diabetes, Young Onset Diabetes, Juvenile Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, and Rheumatoid Arthritis.*

TRAUMA IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The various ways in which Trauma has impacted Aboriginal Communities:

Losses to Aboriginal culture:

- ~ Land/resources
- ~ Sustainability
- ~ Cultural practices
- ~ Spiritual practices
- ~ Leadership
- ~ Independence
- ~ Pride
- ~ Integrity
- ~ Identity

Losses to Aboriginal community:

- ~ Relocation
- ~ Fragmentation
- ~ Self-sufficiency
- ~ Heritage
- ~ Education
- ~ Health
- ~ Employment
- ~ Child apprehensions
- ~ Income
- ~ Housing
- ~ Intergenerational trauma



Losses to Aboriginal families:

- ~ Marital breakdown
- ~ Extended family
- ~ High mortality
- ~ Health of members
- ~ Suicide
- ~ Family violence
- ~ Alcoholism/Substance Use
- ~ Financial problems
- ~ Overcrowding
- ~ FASD
- ~ Imprisonment
- ~ Residential schools

Losses to Aboriginal individuals:

- ~ Family breakdown
- ~ Parental alcoholism/substance use
- ~ Victimization
- ~ Residential schooling
- ~ Interfamilial violence
- ~ Foster care
- ~ FASD
- ~ Self-harming behaviours
- ~ Criminal behaviours
- ~ Police/legal system
- ~ Educational challenges
- ~ PTSD

RESILIENCY

Resiliency is the ability of individuals and systems (families, groups, communities) to cope successfully in the face of significant adversity or risk. Resilient people, families, programs and communities seem to manage and even become *stronger* under difficult conditions.

Resiliency has limits ~ no such thing as a “superkid” or a child who is invulnerable. **All** children and families have the ability to learn new skills to become resilient.

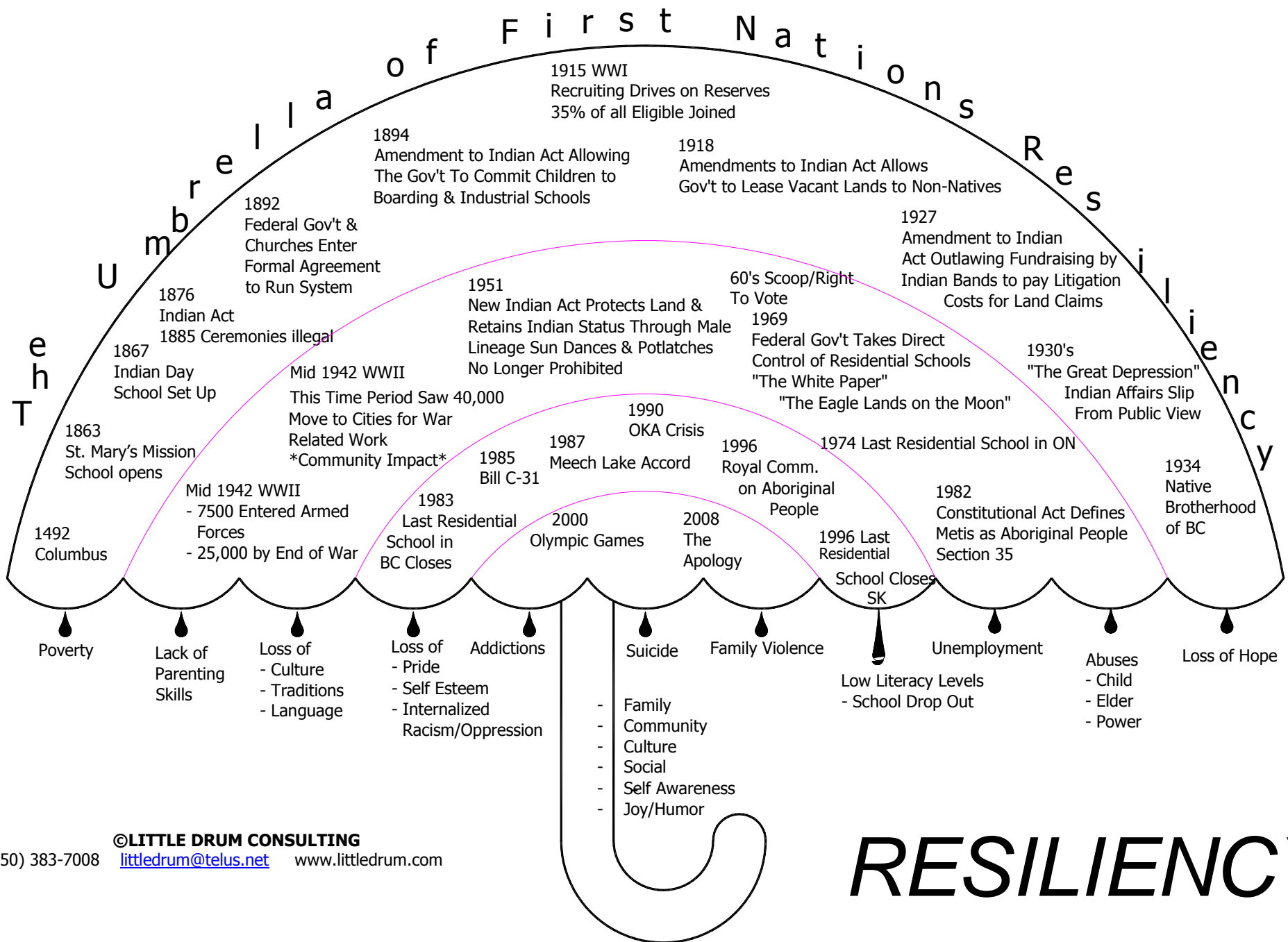


Factors that influence Aboriginal children's resiliency

-  FAMILY
-  COMMUNITY
-  CULTURE
-  SOCIAL
-  SELF
-  JOY/HUMOR



Thoughts, insights, what I want to remember...



RESILIENCY