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Integrating Resiliency Into Everyday Practice

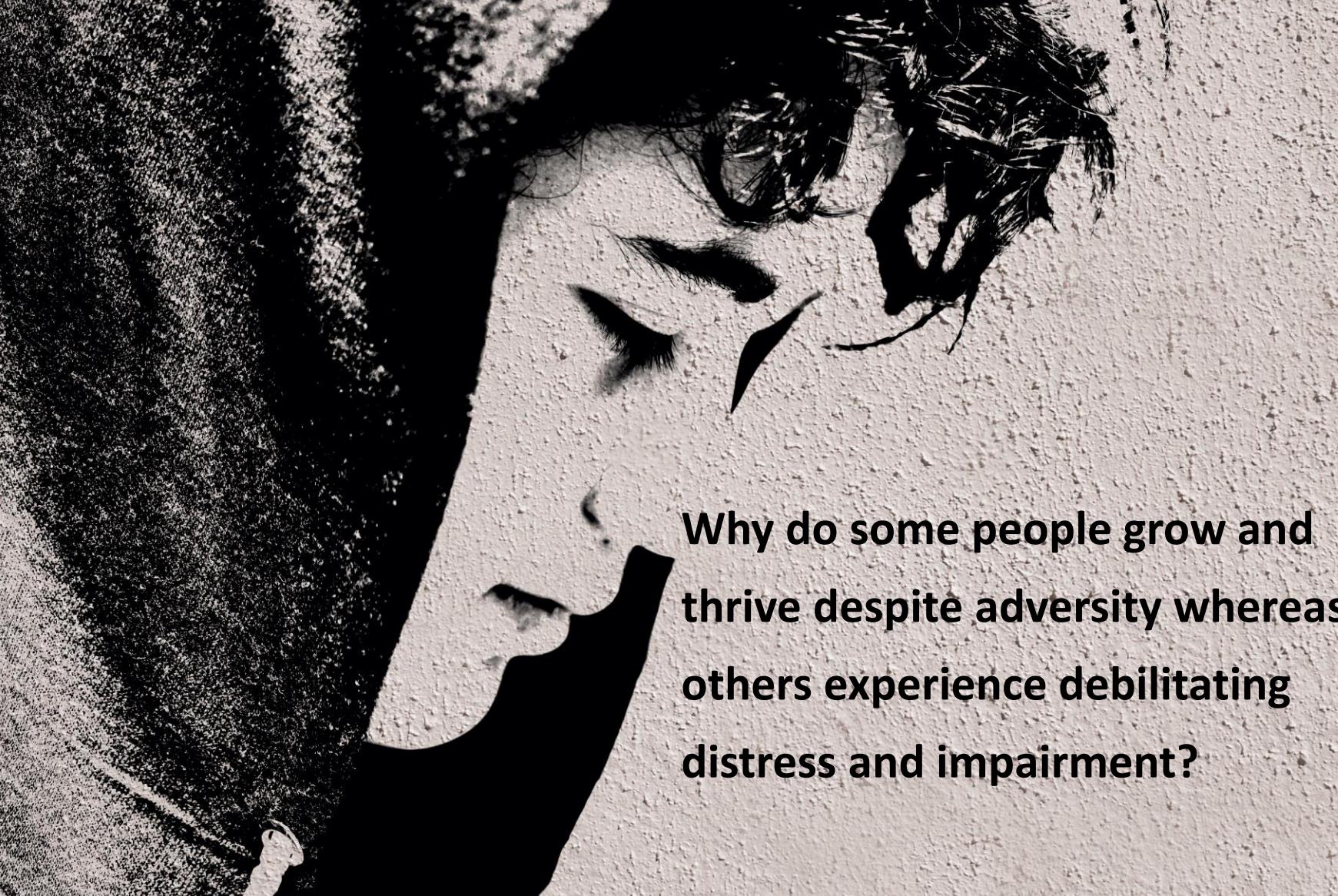
Aude Henin, PhD





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**Why do some people grow and
thrive despite adversity whereas
others experience debilitating
distress and impairment?**

The Interaction of Nature and Nurture

Nature

- Personality factors
- Predispositions/family history

Nurture

- Loving, responsive, consistent,
- predictable conditions during childhood
- Reasonable opportunities to master challenges and stressors
- Supportive cultural, political, economic systems



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Strategies to Foster Resilience



At the Community Level...

- Develop policies and practices to ensure that basic needs are met and address health disparities
- Target resources towards most vulnerable youth
- Increase access to supportive and preventative interventions
 - Telehealth
 - School- and community-based options





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Parental Support and Information



- Provide support for parents experiencing stress
- Enhance parental self-efficacy
- Increase social and community supports
- Enhance engagement with teachers and community leaders
- Model healthy coping by parents and other adults
- Limiting pandemic-related news/processing this actively

Wang et al. *Lancet*. 2020.



Increase Individual Skills

- Psychoeducation to help recognize emotions and stress-related symptoms
- Teach resiliency skills
 - Relaxation/mindfulness
 - Cognitive restructuring
 - Problem-solving
- Practice helpful behaviors
- Enhance social and community connections
- Enhance natural, innate sources of resiliency





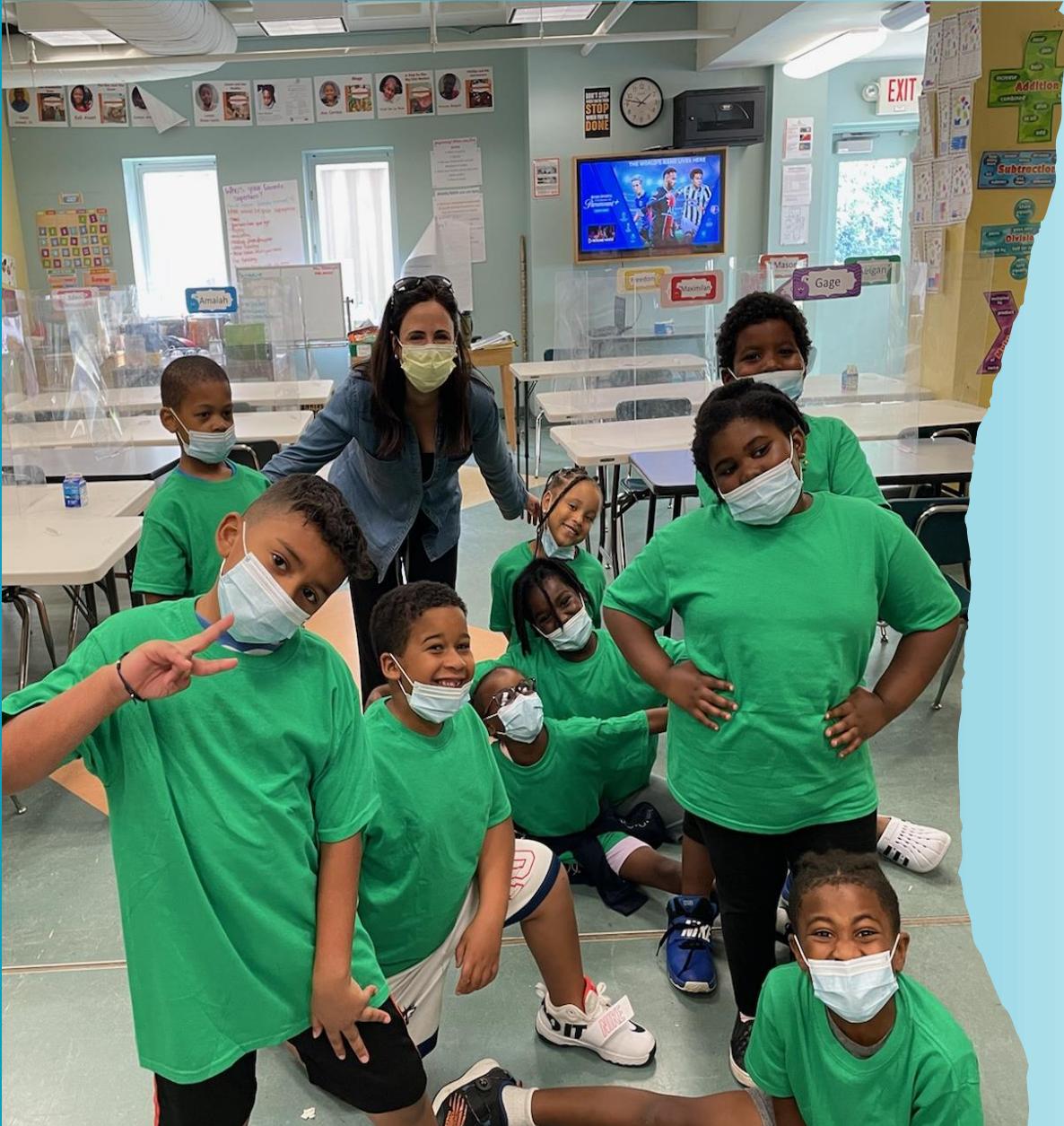
Resilient Youth Curriculum

- Modular 12-Session Intervention
 - Module 1 (sessions 1-6): Core Relaxation and Cognitive Skills
 - Module 2 (sessions 7-12): Enhancing Well-Being and Positive Coping
- Can be administered in a group or individually (online or in person)
- For youth from first grade through high school



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C.A.L.M.S. Practice

- C:** Coping Skills to Help my Body Relax
- A:** Actions I can Take
- L:** Looking at my Thoughts
- M:** Mindfulness
- S:** Social Support and Connection

Key Question: Is There Something I Can do About the Stressor?



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YES

NO



If YES...

Problem Solve

What can I do to change things?

Brainstorm at least 3 options

Evaluate the pros and cons of each option to come up with a plan

Implement the plan and evaluate the results



If NO...

Cope

Use mind-body skills to reduce stress

Use cognitive skills

Use mindfulness and acceptance

Distract



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Core Relaxation and Mindfulness Skills

The Relaxation Response (RR)

The Opposite of “Fight or Flight”



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Two Steps

1. The repetition of a word, a sound, a prayer, a thought, a phrase or a muscular activity
2. The passive return to the repetition when other thoughts intrude



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What Type of Repetition Is Calming?





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Remember

The stress response is usually automatic, BUT the relaxation response is voluntary and requires practice.



Evoking the Relaxation Response

- Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breaths)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (imaginative exercises)
- Imagery (“special place”)
- Mindfulness (focusing in the here-and-now)
- “Mini”-relaxation strategies to use in the moment





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Diaphragmatic Breathing





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Just This





Sensory Awareness



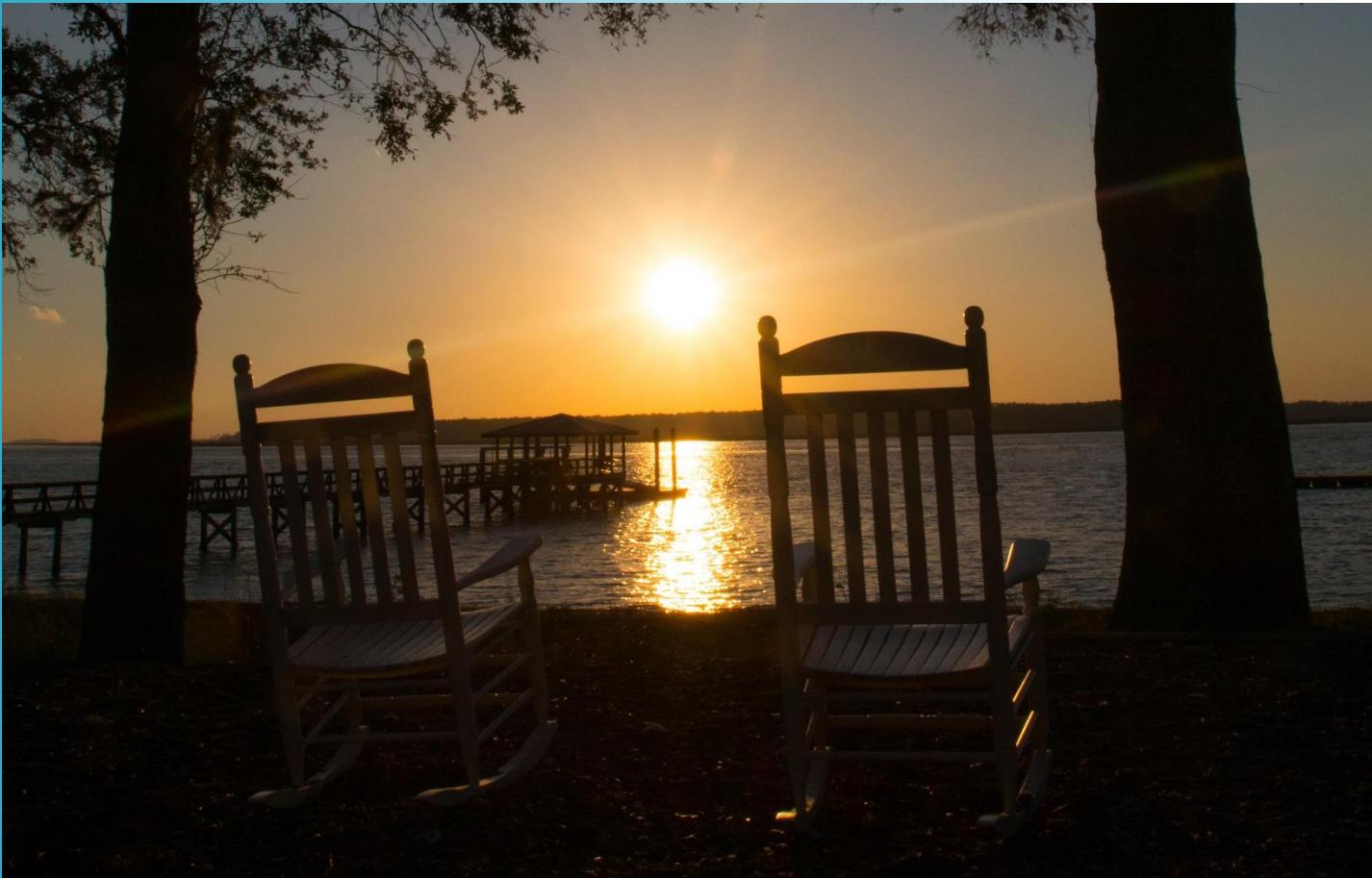
- Focusing on the here and now
- Using your senses to focus your attention
- Everyone is different in which sense(s) are most powerful



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Using Imagery to Elicit the RR





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Progressive Muscle Relaxation



- Tense and relax various large muscle groups
 - Hands and arms
 - Shoulders and back
 - Face and jaw
 - Chest and stomach
 - Legs and feet



Increasing Social Support and Connection



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How can you be in
service to others
(greater good)?





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Increasing Social Support and Connection



Which forms of support are important?

- Emotional?
- Informational?
- Tangible?
- Self-esteem/affirmational?
- Belonging?



Being a Good Listener

Pay attention

- Mindfully listen to what the other person is saying. Be interested in what they are saying

Validate

- Show you understand the other person's feelings or opinions

Show interest with your body

- Smile, use humor, use open body language

