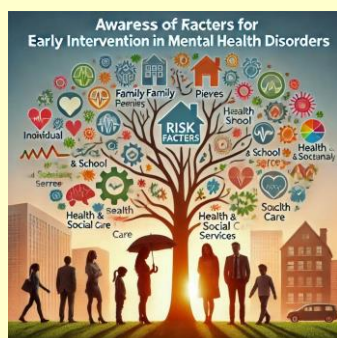
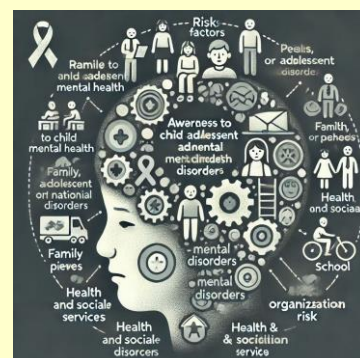


Resilient Minds: Understanding and Supporting Mental Health in Children and Adolescents Through Personal Experiences and Research

Risk Factors for Poor Mental Health Outcomes in Children and Adolescents



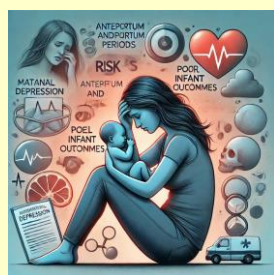
Certain groups of children and adolescents are at a heightened risk for poor mental health outcomes. This risk can be directly attributed to specific conditions, such as foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), or indirectly through complex factors like parental trauma or lack of support (Misirliyan et al., 2023).

Importance of Early Intervention

Awareness of risk factors is crucial for early intervention, which can prevent or mitigate mental health disorders. Risks to child and adolescent mental health can occur at individual, family, community, or national levels. They can relate to family, peers, school, health and social care services, or organisational risk (Misirliyan et al., 2023).



Maternal Depression



Maternal depression, encompassing both antepartum and postpartum periods, poses significant mental health risks, including poor infant physical and neurocognitive outcomes. Risk factors include somatic symptoms, intimate partner violence, unintended pregnancy, low maternal education, low socioeconomic status, lack of social support, and a history of mental health disorders (Misirliyan et al., 2023).



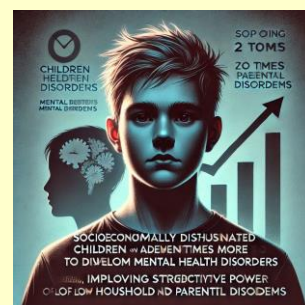
Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a mental health risk for both maternal depression and infant and child mental health. Abuse may contribute to toxic stress syndrome, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and long-term difficulties in handling stress and relationships. Abuse may first occur or intensify during pregnancy, further exacerbating these risks (Misirliyan et al., 2023).



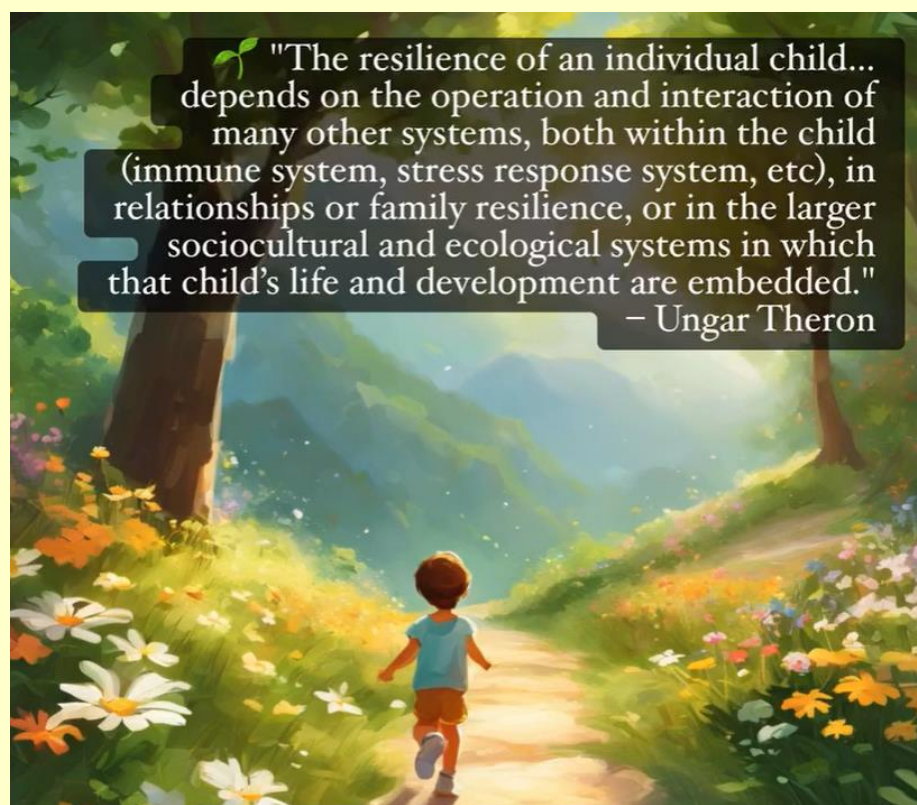
Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Socioeconomically disadvantaged children and adolescents are 2 to 3 times more likely to develop mental health disorders, with persistently low socioeconomic status increasing lifetime risk. Conversely, improving socioeconomic status reduces this risk, highlighting the strong predictive power of low household and parental income on mental health outcomes (Misirliyan et al., 2023).



Resilience in Children

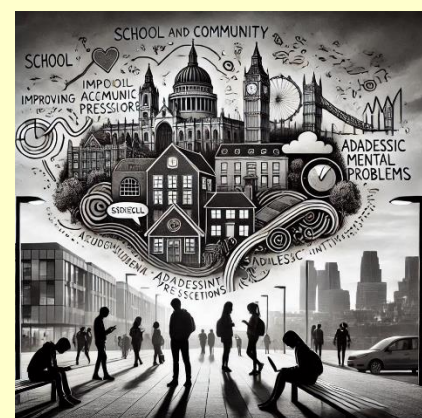
Resilience in children is shaped by the complex interplay of their personal qualities, relationships, and broader sociocultural systems, enabling them to adapt to and recover from adversity. It is important to focus on improving the child's environment to reduce the need for resilience rather than solely trying to build resilience in the child (Misirliyan et al., 2023).



Reference Image - Sr. Laura Prince: www.nurseagainstabuse.co.uk

Research

Research from the Evidence-Based Practice Unit at UCL highlights the importance of school and community interventions in improving mental health outcomes for children and young people. Their findings suggest that targeted interventions can significantly reduce mental health issues and promote well-being (UCL, 2023).



A systematic review conducted by the University College London found a positive association between academic pressure and adolescent mental health problems, including depression and anxiety. This underscores the need for public health interventions to address academic stress as a potential risk factor for mental health issues (Stearea et al., 2023).

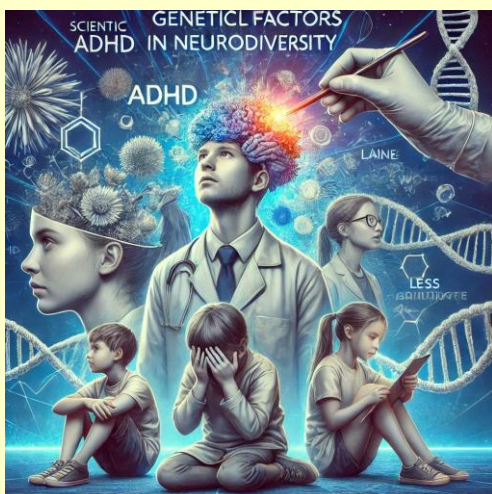


A scoping review of qualitative studies on children and youth's perceptions of mental health emphasises the importance of establishing a shared language concerning mental health. This can help clarify the distinctions between everyday challenges and issues that require treatment, promoting better mental health outcomes (Beckman et al., 2023).

Personal Experience

After my son was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder at the age of five, my research into his diagnosis led me to understand my brain better.

It wasn't until I was 32 that I visited my GP, feeling overwhelmed, particularly due to my home life. I hoped someone would delve deeper and notice my struggles. Before my GP could offer antidepressants, I expressed that I didn't believe I was depressed but suspected I had undiagnosed ADHD.



The societal stigma I had experienced before and since vanished with her open and understanding response. She referred me to a new ADHD service for adults, highlighting the positive steps society has made—not only in creating such services but also in having GPs who are open and understanding that there are more reasons people struggle in life beyond mental health. Years later, my diagnosis and advocacy for harnessing the positives have led me to hope for change and challenge the mentality that remains in society. I aim to help the children and adults I meet understand that

being diagnosed with the correct neurodiversity or mental health condition is essential for the correct treatment.

Too often, adults feel compelled to conceal their struggles until everything falls apart. If we were to recognise these challenges in children and address them effectively, we could cultivate a far more positive future. By embracing their strengths and providing them with the comfort and understanding that there is nothing 'wrong' with them, we can help them realise that, like many, they are unique. This uniqueness does not mean they are lesser.

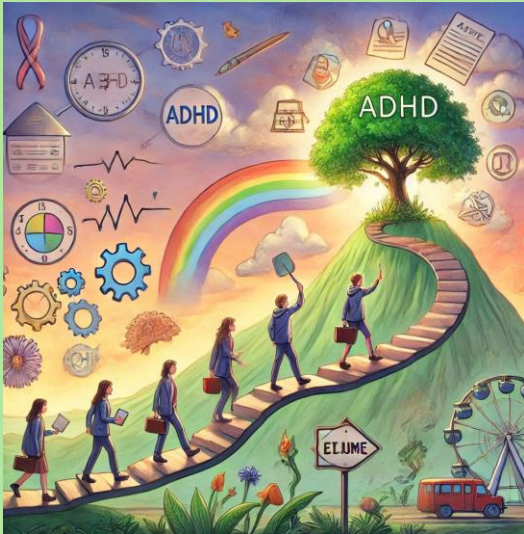
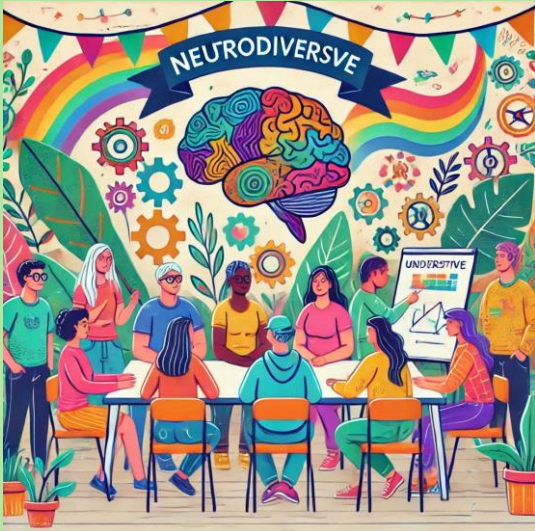




Some of the most talented artists, musicians, authors, and public figures have neurodevelopmental conditions. Although many face significant challenges, these would be less daunting for parents and children if society could keep pace and accept that difference is not synonymous with deficiency.

Embracing neurodiversity can create an inclusive environment where a variety of talents can flourish, ultimately enriching our culture and communities. Recognising and valuing different ways of thinking not only benefits individuals but also enhances creativity and innovation across all fields.

Name	Condition	Contribution	Citation
Albert Einstein	Autism or Asperger’s Syndrome	Developed the Theory of Relativity	Blogbrandz, 2023
Nikola Tesla	OCD and Autism	Work with alternating current (AC) electricity	Blogbrandz, 2023
Leonardo da Vinci	ADHD or Dyslexia	Contributions to art, science, and engineering	Blogbrandz, 2023
Vincent van Gogh	Bipolar Disorder	Iconic works like "Starry Night."	Blogbrandz, 2023
Temple Grandin	Autism	Improvements in animal handling systems	Blogbrandz, 2023
Steve Jobs	Dyslexia	Revolutionised the technology industry with Apple products	Blogbrandz, 2023
Greta Thunberg	Autism and OCD	Climate activism and mental health advocacy	Blogbrandz, 2023
Sir Anthony Hopkins	Dyslexia	The acclaimed actor known for roles in films like "The Silence of the Lambs."	Blogbrandz, 2023
Dan Aykroyd	Asperger’s Syndrome	Comedian and actor known for "Saturday Night Live" and "Ghostbusters."	Blogbrandz, 2023

Name	Condition	Contribution	Citation
 			
Simone Biles	ADHD	Olympic gymnast and mental health advocate	Blogbrandz, 2023
Bill Gates	ADHD	Co-founder of Microsoft, philanthropist	NeuroNav, 2023
Sir Isaac Newton	ADHD, Autism	Mathematician, scientist, astronomer	NeuroNav, 2023
Barbara Corcoran	Dyslexia	Founder of the Corcoran Group, Shark Tank Investor	CEO Today, 2024
Ingvar Kamprad	ADHD, Dyslexia	Founder of IKEA	CEO Today, 2024
Dan Harmon	Autism	Writer, creator of 'Community'	CEO Today, 2024
Emma Watson	ADHD	Actress, UN Goodwill Ambassador	CEO Today, 2024
Ryan Gosling	Dyslexia	Actor	CEO Today, 2024

Name	Condition	Contribution	Citation
Satoshi Tajiri	Autism	Creator of Pokémon	Blogbrandz, 2023
Florence Welch	ADHD	Lead singer of Florence + The Machine	Blogbrandz, 2023

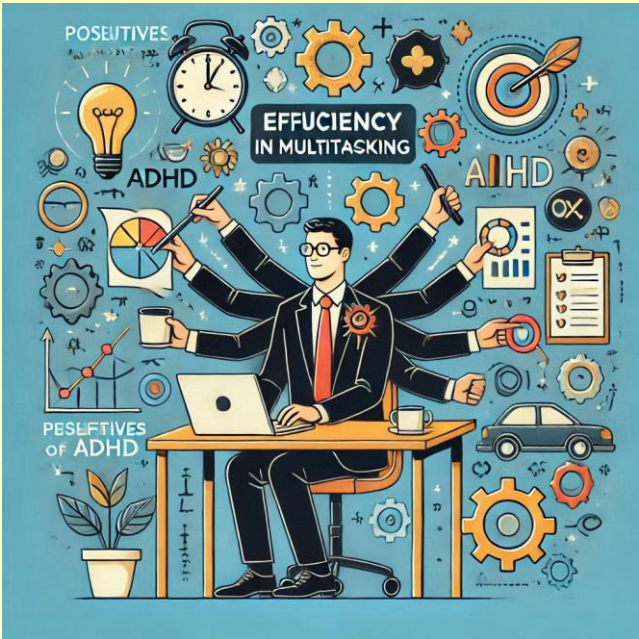


Viewing conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia as natural variations rather than deficits fosters societal acceptance and encourages advocacy for the positive aspects of neurodiversity, particularly within professional settings (Doyle, 2020).

As society increasingly embraces neurodiversity, the impacts of this shift are substantial. Implementing inclusive educational, healthcare, and employment practices significantly reduces stigma while nurturing environments where neurodiverse individuals can thrive.

This transformation is evident in the growing number of specialised services and programmes designed to support neurodiverse individuals, enhance their well-being, and empower them to make meaningful contributions to society (LeFevre-Levy et al., 2023).

The ongoing efforts of thought leaders and advocates play a crucial role in driving this change, reinforcing the importance of recognising neurodiversity as an essential aspect of human diversity (Johnson & Ahluwalia, 2024).





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