Building Resilience in Rural Communities

TOOLKIT

Resilience Concepts

Introduction

How did this toolkit come about?

This toolkit is the outcome of a three year research project examining resilience in a rural community. The study, titled 'Identifying models of personal and community resilience that enhance psychological wellness: A Stanthorpe Study' aimed to clarify what factors contribute to peoples positive adaptation to living in a rural community.

The project design

The project was conducted over three and a half years in collaboration with the Stanthorpe community and consisted of three separate phases. In the first phase, 14 Stanthorpe residents were interviewed about their perceptions of resilience and the resilience of the Stanthorpe community. Phase I interview responses were used to guide the second phase of the project.

In phase II, six groups of Stanthorpe residents were interviewed and asked to describe the factors which they believed contributed to individual and community resilience. Group participants were selected based on their membership of one of six segments within the Stanthorpe community. One group, labelled the Resilient group, consisted of people identified as resilient in phase I of the project. Three groups were based upon occupation and were labelled as Service Providers, Commercial Sector, and Farming Families. Another group consisted of Special Needs providers or their clients, and the final group, labelled Youth, consisted of people aged 18–25. The factors most commonly described by the six groups of study participants, along with findings from a literature review, formed the basis for the 11 resilience concepts contained within this toolkit. A short summary of phase II results in relation to each concept is contained within the toolkit in the section titled 'A Stanthorpe Community Perspective'.

During phase II an exercise was conducted with a group of Stanthorpe High School students. The students were given the resilience concepts and asked to describe and photograph what the concepts meant to them. Where available, the results of this exercise are contained within the section labelled 'Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students'.

Phase III of the project involved further consultation with the community via a workshop and the development of this toolkit.

What is the purpose of this toolkit?

This toolkit intends to provide ideas and information that could be included in new or existing social programs or workshops conducted within Stanthorpe and other communities to enhance people's resilience. Although many community programs do not have a specific resilience-building component, the content or structure of a program, regardless of its primary purpose, may be easily modified to include some basic resilience principles. In addition, it is envisioned that the wider community may benefit from resilience-enhancing programs without direct participation. For example, pupils may benefit from their teachers' participation, and children may benefit from the involvement of parents.

What is included in the toolkit?

The toolkit consists of a series of information sheets explaining the purpose of the toolkit and outlining 11 resilience concepts found to be pivotal in enhancing individual and community resilience (see the next page for more detail about the 11 concepts). In addition, details about how to find additional information and a bibliography of resilience-related literature are included.

Who is the target audience for use of the toolkit?

The toolkit is designed to be used by program coordinators such as community workers, health professionals, and others working with individuals and groups in the community, including voluntary or commercial groups and community leaders—for example, scout or girl guide leaders, youth group coordinators or sports group coaches.

How can the toolkit be used?

Program coordinators may use the toolkit in a number of ways. For existing programs, information contained within the resilience concepts may provide a useful check to ensure that materials and methods to be used within the program adhere to resilience-enhancing principles. Modifications may be made to the existing program to improve this adherence. Where a new program is being created, coordinators may wish to select resilience concepts most relevant to the goals of the program and then build core components of the program around these concepts.
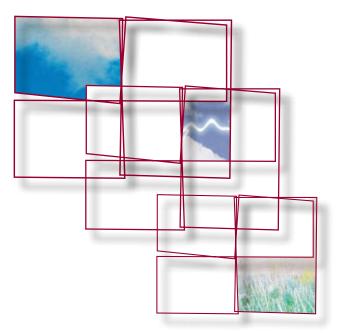
Resilience Concepts Explained

What is resilience?

Resilience refers to the capacity of an individual or community to cope with stress, overcome adversity or adapt positively to change.[1,2] The ability to 'bounce back' from negative experiences may reflect the innate qualities of individuals or be the result of learning and experience. Regardless of the origin of resilience, there is evidence to suggest that it can be developed and enhanced to promote greater wellbeing. Resilience is not regarded as a quality that is either present or absent in a person or group but rather a process which may vary across circumstances and time.[3]

What is a resilience concept?

The 11 resilience concepts contained within the toolkit incorporate the factors most commonly reported to enhance community and individual resilience. They were drawn from the results of interviews undertaken within the Stanthorpe community and a review of previous literature. Within psychology, these resilience concepts are sometimes referred to as 'protective factors' as they are thought to protect individuals from developing serious problems as a result of exposure to stress or adversity, known as 'risk factors'.[3] Many researchers now believe that enhancing a person's level of resilience may be a more effective way of preventing problems and improving wellbeing than trying to modify individual risk factors. Some risk factors, such as drought, unemployment, or a lack of services, may exist at a community-wide level. There may be a need or an opportunity to offer community-wide resilience programs to improve the wellbeing of community members.

What information is included in each concept section?

Each concept section consists of two sheets. On the first page, a description of the concept is given, followed by three prompts and ideas for enhancing resilience using this concept at the individual, group, and community level. On the other side of this page are case studies of how the resilience concept has been applied in other programs or communities. The next page of each concept contains a synopsis of how the concept relates to community-wide interview findings from the Stanthorpe Resilience Study. An overview of the concept through the eyes of Stanthorpe High school students is also presented where available. The second side of this sheet contains a brief review of relevant research findings reported in the scientific literature.

How are the concepts related?

Resilience is known to be a complex construct with many interrelated factors. As a result, some of the concepts overlap and no single concept is necessary or sufficient to enhance resilience for any one person. The relevance of each concept is also partly dependent on the individual group or people and their subjective experiences. For example, depending on values and interests, utilisation of the concept labelled 'beliefs' may encompass prayer or other forms of worship, meditation, spending time in nature, or improving self confidence. Enhancing 'beliefs' may also work to promote a more 'positive outlook' and generate greater 'leadership' skills in a person or group.

How do I know which concept is most applicable to my clients' or groups' needs?

Some concepts have an individual focus while others are more community or group related. For example, developing a 'positive outlook' is more applicable to individuals, while creating a 'diverse and innovative economy' has more use at the group and community level. However, both resilience concepts have application at all three levels. Many concepts can be applied equally well at the individual or group level. The usefulness of any specific resilience concept depends largely on the strengths and needs of the intended audience, thus it may be helpful to evaluate the individual or group's requirements prior to developing resilience-enhancing strategies.

[1] Kaplan, H.B. (1999). Toward an understanding of resilience. A critical review of definitions and models. In M.D. Glantz & J.L. Johnston (Eds.). *Resilience and development: positive life adaptations.* New York, USA: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

[2] Varghese, J., Krogman, N.T., Beckley, T.M., & Nadeau, S. (2006). Critical analysis of the relationship between local ownership and community resiliency. *Rural Sociology*, 71(3), 505–527.

[3] Luthar, S. S. (2006). Resilience in development: A synthesis of research across five decades. In D. Cicchetti & D. J. Cohen (Eds.), *Developmental psychology. Volume 3. Risk, disorder, and adaptation* (2nd ed.).

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1. Social Networks and Support

Social Networks build a sense of community that contributes to the resilience of individuals and groups. Types of networks that are important include families, friends and community organisations. These groups provide strong bonds within a social group; a sense of belonging, identity and social support; and strong linkages to other outside groups that can bring in additional social, financial or political resources. Successful and enduring groups or social networks create relationships with a common purpose and promote shared interests, but can also have adaptable and flexible functions.

They can provide emotional and practical support, information and resource sharing. They stay open, inclusive and diverse, and encourage community involvement.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Do you know who in the community is involved with social networks and who isn't? Are you?

- How can more isolated individuals be brought into groups?

- Can highly resilient individuals provide role modelling and support for others?

Ideas

- Assist isolated individuals to join with resilient community members, a group, or family.

- Identify common interests with other suitable groups.

- Encourage forms of interaction that would work for busy people (e.g. sharing time with other parents and children).

- Encourage socially isolated people to join a volunteer organisation.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- How well does your program or activity strengthen social networks?

- How can your program strengthen bonds within and between groups?

Ideas

- Find ways in which your group can assist another, for mutual benefit.

- Arrange social functions and events that include many groups and encourage them to help organise.

- Mix business with pleasure (where appropriate), make work occasions social ones too.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Can a link be established between groups/community organisations that are not well connected yet?

- How can you foster a sense of community?

- How are successful groups/ organisations recognised in your community?

Ideas

- Map out the social networks in your community.

- Develop networks between 'resilient' and 'less-resilient' groups.

- Organise festivals or other cultural activities to bring groups within the community together.

- Involve young people, elderly people, those with disabilities and isolated families.

Case Study

Enhancing Links and Shared Goals within a Community: the Condamine Community Project 1

Stage 1: Community Mapping

This process was used in a research study by Ken Keith, Helen Ross and Condamine Alliance towards building community capacity in the Condamine area and assisting the Condamine Alliance to understand its community better.

A few key informants were visited in each of the two case study areas (urban and rural) who were recommended as knowing the community well. They compiled a list of all the organisations in each community including sports and leisure clubs, Landcare, Country Womens' Association, and larger businesses. These organisations were then invited to workshops. At each workshop, butcher's paper was put on a trestle table and cards with each organisation's name were stuck onto it. People were asked to draw thick and thin coloured lines between cards to show where relationships existed.

Each organisation was given a set of questions to fill out, about how their organisation related to other organisations. This was scored and processed through a computer program which produced a tree diagram showing clusters of relationships. The process showed structural relationships among organisations, which helped identify opportunities to link up organisations that currently had weak links, to share resources and make them more effective.

Stage 2: The STIR Process

After a community mapping process was done, organisations were divided into small groups and asked to comment on a set of supplied 'shapers' (population, natural resources) and suggest 'shapers' themselves (e.g. education, family).

For each 'shaper' they had to talk about:

Shaper – what was the factor (e.g. population growth)

Trend – what was happening (e.g. slow and steady growth, still at a manageable rate)

Implications – what that meant for the community (e.g. social problems, housing shortage, pressures on water resources)

Resolve – what they wanted to do about it

Then there was a discussion session to share and talk about the ideas. The final report discussed key ideas and ways organisations could join forces to work on them, looking for synergies that cut across traditional boundaries.

The process was about

* building networks among voluntary organisations, local government, schools and businesses to achieve community goals and meet shared needs

* stimulating communication and goal-setting within the community (bridging from each organisation's agenda to build broader agendas, recognising common problems and emerging trends)

* giving Condamine Alliance advice about working with these communities

[1] Ken Keith and Helen Ross (2005). Understanding Eastern Downs communities: social networks and natural systems. In J. Whelan (Ed.), *Partnership-based social research for sustainable natural resource management in Queensland*. (pp. 10–16). Brisbane, Queensland: Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water. <http://www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research_sips/sips/social_economic/se03_partnership_reports.html>

Accessed 17/07/07.

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

Without exception, the presence of social networks and social support was seen as a critical resilience factor across all six interview groups. The majority of people interviewed believed that the support provided by family and friends, or networks based upon shared cultural, economic or recreational interests, formed the foundation of both community and individual resilience. A supportive social network helped an individual to cope during hard times, and positive and caring individuals strengthened the network. Extended family networks—many of them of multicultural and farming origins— were particularly important, with the links resulting from intermarriage or shared interests such as a faith or profession also of significant value. Groups enabled individuals to 'bounce back' and individuals contributed to the group's resilience and ability to offer further support. Overall, the presence of social networks and social support was the most frequently nominated element of both community resilience and an ideal resilient community.

'There's quite consistent and strong family networks and you can see people drawing a great deal of strength from that … If times are tough they turn to their parents or they have a strong support network for family, for kids, that allow them to go on and do other—you know broaden their horizons.'

'And I have a good husband and most of the time, good children. Been very supportive, so I think that helps … I have a wonderful mother … and brother.'

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'Networks range from family to friends and even further—and each network is just as important as the next'.

'We all are able to find our own sense of belonging with our family, our friends … our environment … but we are more likely to find our sense of belonging in a place that has great significance to us … '

' … our school friends are a big part of our life … being such a multicultural, welcoming community we have friends from everywhere … '

'Living in a small town like Stanthorpe most of the youth don't realise how many social networks are out there, and because of that you will find a large percentage of teens stick to their family and friends as their social networks.'
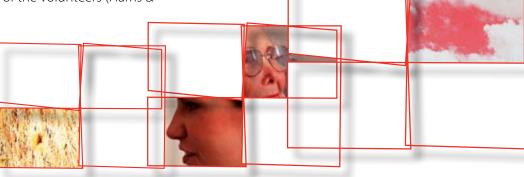
1. Social Networks and Support - Brief Literature Review

At the individual level, there is voluminous literature examining the role of social networks and support in physical and mental health. Within psychology and sociology, social support is characterised as a multidimensional construct which is differentially associated with many other aspects of intra and interpersonal functioning such as age and developmental stage, gender, personality, health status, ethnicity, and cultural norms (Helgeson & Cohen, 1999; Okun & Lockwood, 2003; Pearlin, 1985; Takizawa et al., 2006; Thoits, 1986). Despite these complexities, numerous reviews have concluded that overall, social support is an important protective factor which buffers stress and enhances resiliency (Helgeson & Cohen, 1999; Luthar, 2006; Okun & Lockwood, 2003). For example, elderly people with strong social connections have been shown to have better self-rated health and less functional impairment (Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell, & Rozario, 2007). A study of urban Australian women found that those with more social contact report greater mental health than those who are socially isolated (Griffiths et al., 2007). Physiologically, social support has been found to have beneficial effects on the cardiovascular, endocrine, and immune systems (Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996).

Developing a sense of belonging is an important aspect of social networks and the support they provide, both at the individual and community level. A sense of belonging can encompass a psychological attachment to objects of significance, a place, or even the history of an area, as well as to people or a group of people within a community (Hill, 2006). There is evidence to suggest that a sense of belonging may have beneficial effects for the wider community as well as an individual. Participating in a community through voluntary work cultivates or maintains a sense of belonging which in turn links individuals to their community and benefits the community members assisted by the volunteers, as well as improving the health and longevity of the volunteers (Harris & Thoresen, 2005).

At the community and group level, social networks have been demonstrated to have an influential role in many aspects of functioning, including information seeking (Chia, Foo, & Fang, 2006), group performance (Shah, Dirks, & Chervany, 2006), and health behaviours and the seeking of medical treatment (Sivaram et al., 2005). Some theorists view social networks as a defining aspect of communities (Piselli, 2007). According to Piselli (2007), a community is 'not a 'place' but a network of meaningful social relations with friends, neighbours, relatives, and work colleagues who do not necessarily belong to the same residential unit' (p. 867).

Further, theorists often conceptualise social networks as part of the wider construct of 'social capital'. The subject of strong research interest and debate in recent years, social capital has been defined by Putman (1993) as the 'features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit' (p. 35, cited in Holland, Reynolds, & Weller, 2007). While many social capital theorists stress the positive effects of high levels of interpersonal trust and social networks on a community (Casson & Della Giusta, 2007), it has been acknowledged that closely knit communities may not always produce uniformly beneficial outcomes. The recognition of negative aspects of close social networks, for example, the denial of benefits for newcomers or subgroups within a community, has led to the distinction made between *bonding* and *bridging* social capital (Ferlander, 2007; Paxton, 2002). Bonding social capital may be associated with closed social networks whilst bridging networks are cross-cultural and generate more positive outcomes and inclusive benefits across communities (Coffé & Geys, 2007).

2. Positive Outlook

Having a positive outlook involves being confident and optimistic about the future, persevering, being determined, keeping a sense of humour, and willingness to change. Individuals and groups with a positive outlook tend to view adversity or hardship as a challenge to be overcome rather than an insurmountable problem. Individuals and communities differ significantly in response to adversity, and their responses vary across time and situations. Resilient individuals and communities are able to find positives within their adversities.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Do you have a positive or negative view of yourself, the world or the future?
- Do you know and appreciate your strengths and abilities?
- Can you learn from the ways others handle difficulties?

Ideas

- Read some self help books on challenging negative thoughts and beliefs, and promoting positive ones.
- Try focussing on positive outcomes for situations.
- Talk to a professional (counsellor/psychologist) who can help you to improve your positive thinking.
- Recognise the value of humour in dealing with adversity.
- Mix with others whose positive outlooks can help you.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Are you able to inject a sense of optimism or humour into a group program wherever appropriate?
- Do you get involved in or encourage others to participate in appropriate confidence building activities?

Ideas

- Conduct group getting-to-know-you sessions which involve confidence building or humorous activities, such as sharing past successes or getting group members to pass a large balloon from person to person without using their hands.
- Include cartoons and humour to lighten presentations and program materials.
- Ensure program materials and activities reflect a positive attitude.
- Talk through difficult situations, offering constructive ways forward.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Does your community promote a sense of determination and an optimistic outlook for the future?

Ideas

- Plan comical activities for community gatherings such as sack or three legged races for adults.
- Run community competitions to find the best overcoming-the-odds or bouncing back stories.
- Run community courses which promote positive thinking and individual goal achievement.

Case Study

Challenging negative or unhelpful thoughts and replacing them with more helpful ones is a useful way of developing a Positive Outlook

'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' Prince Hamlet from William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616), 'Hamlet', Act 2 scene 2

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an effective form of talking therapy. It has been used successfully to improve the wellbeing of many people by helping them get rid of negative self-defeating thoughts and replace them with more helpful thoughts. These negative thoughts frequently cause or maintain a whole range of problems which may severely affect a person's wellbeing. CBT examines all elements that maintain a problem, including thoughts (cognitions), feelings, actions (behaviour) and the environment. The therapy is based around helping people understand, manage and change their thoughts and actions. This form of therapy has been shown to be very effective for a whole range of problems but is particularly effective in treating depression and anxiety.

How Does CBT Work?[1]

Depression is one of the most widespread mental health problems suffered by people in Australia. Cognitive behavioural therapy for depression works in three ways:

1. It helps people identify and change negative thinking associated with depressed feelings

People who are depressed often feel hopeless or empty, and lack energy. They may also feel very anxious. These feelings make it difficult for the person to think positively about themselves, their relationships with other people and life in general. Cognitive behavioural therapy works by examining situations that have occurred in the past as well as current problems. By looking at a person's life from different angles and reviewing how the person managed or responded to a situation, all possible interpretations of events are examined. In this way, negative or unhelpful thoughts are identified along with more helpful interpretations of a situation. Through this process the person learns how to replace negative thinking patterns with more positive ones. This process of challenging unhelpful thoughts helps the person to feel better about themselves, their relationships with other people and life in general.
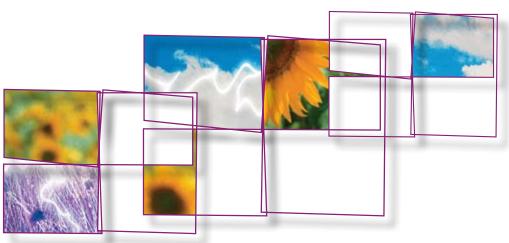
2. CBT helps to focus on the positive things

People who are experiencing depression often stop doing many of the things that they used to enjoy. This can turn into a cycle where doing less enjoyable activities results in the person feeling sadder which in turn makes them feel less like doing something fun. In this situation, it is important that someone supports and helps motivate the person to include enjoyable activities in their day. Cognitive behaviour therapy techniques are used to gradually increase the pleasant activities and reinforce the positive steps that are being taken.

3. CBT helps to manage your problems

When people have depression, managing problems can feel overwhelming. Cognitive behavioural therapy provides strategies for dealing with problems so they become manageable.

[1] Adapted from the Reach Out Website <**http://www.reachout.com.au/home.asp**>

Accessed 15/10/07

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

Having a positive outlook was seen as a crucial component of individual and community resilience across all groups within the study. In total, 58 of 68 interviews contained at least one reference to the importance of having a positive outlook. Of the characteristics subsumed within the positive outlook concept, determination and perseverance were the most frequently reported as essential components of resilience, followed by the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity. Many people believed that having a positive outlook was significant in the development of both individual and community resilience. However far fewer people reported that this would be an essential component of their ideal resilient community.

Many people talked about how they or other people kept going despite adversity.

'And then you look around and you see people that are less fortunate than what you are, so when you really think about it you say, 'Well, what have I got to be whinging about?' You just keep going. You really have no option. You know it's—you chose the game you're in, no one forces you to stay here. It's something that I want to do, so I talk about my personal experience. It is something that I want to do. Well, OK, hell or high water you just persevere.'

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'Having a positive attitude is the belief that one can increase achievement.'

' … (they) deal with people everyday that are low in confidence about their appearance and they strive to make these people feel comfortable … '

'Humour is everywhere, because that's the way we choose to make it.'

' … humour is the cherry on top of what defines someone … '

2. Positive Outlook - Brief Literature Review

The resilience concept 'positive outlook' encapsulates a range of interrelated innate or learned positive psychological characteristics including perseverance or determination, the ability to bounce back, having a sense of humour, and optimism. Numerous studies have shown that positive emotions in general have enduring effects on individual functioning by promoting problem solving and flexibility in thinking (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), and enhancing general wellbeing (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Resilient people have a realistic, positive sense of self, and regard themselves as survivors (Luthar, 2006). Rather than being passive observers, resilient people tend to feel that they can have an impact on their environment or situation (Seligman, 2002). They are hopeful about the future and confident in their ability to overcome adversity or obstacles (Werner, 1993). There is overlap between 'positive outlook' and the 'sense of purpose' concept also contained within the toolkit.

The 'positive outlook' concept is similar to what has been termed proactive orientation within the research literature. Proactive orientation has been identified as a primary resilience characteristic and has been defined as 'taking initiative in one's own life and believing in one's own effectiveness' (p. 239, Alvord & Grados, 2005). Proactive orientation has been extensively studied under terms such as problem solving (Werner, 1995), self-efficacy (Rutter, 1990), coping (Thurber & Weisz, 1997), internal motivation (Masten, 2001; Masten, Obradovic, & Burt, 2006), optimism (Seligman, 2002), and personal control (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

An individual's level of perseverance or determination is closely related to their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1989, 1992; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Bandura has extensively examined the role of self-efficacy in relation to motivation. According to his Social Cognitive Theory, a person's self-efficacy beliefs determine how much effort they will exert in an endeavour, and significantly, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles. Specifically, the more the person believes in their capabilities, the greater and more persistent are their efforts (Bandura, 1989).

Other aspects of the 'positive outlook' concept, such as optimism and humour, have been extensively studied in relation to wellbeing or resilience. For example, optimism has been shown to be positively associated with a range of psychological characteristics linked to healthy behaviour and good health, including internal locus of control, the use of problem focused coping strategies, and having high self esteem (Lightsey, 1996). In particular, optimism is an influential cognitive factor contributing to resilience in adolescents, by moderating the effects of life stressors (Hauser, 1999; Tusaie & Patterson, 2006).

Humour has been shown to be an effective buffer to stress, although as for many psychological concepts, the relationship between humour and stress is very complex and is influenced by many variables, such as the population sampled and the measures of humour used. A good sense of humour has been positively related to a number of factors associated with psychological health, such as optimism and self esteem, and negatively with signs of psychological distress such as depression (Thorson, Powell, Sarmany-Schuller, & Hampes, 1997).

Research also supports the contention that humour plays an important role in resilience at the group and community level. Humour amongst work groups has an important community-creating function and may promote standards that define the group such as trust and security (Baarts, 2006; Holmes & Marra, 2002). Research into humour amongst emergency service workers found that humour was a crucial coping strategy which contributed to 'adjustment to difficult, arduous and exhausting situations' (Moran & Massam, 1997). However, there was evidence that certain forms of humour, such as sarcasm, amongst work groups under a high level of stress may be detrimental to performance (Sayre, 2001). Theorists contend that some forms of humour play an important role in promoting resilience and cultural identity at the wider community level, particularly in times of crisis, such as WW1 and WW2 (Holman & Kelly, 2001).

3. Learning

Learning happens throughout life, formally and informally. Formal education, learning from experiences and role models can build resilience through increasing personal and group capacity to cope with life challenges. The ability to reflect can be a powerful learning tool especially when lessons can be drawn from previous experiences. Communities can learn from collective experiences, such as a natural disaster, and develop their resilience when faced with future adversity. Resilient people and groups seek out opportunities for learning and development.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Do you have access to a group of 'survivors' who understand what it's like to confront a significant life challenge, and who are prepared to share their wisdom?

- Are you a member of a group than can help you overcome challenges?

- Do you seek out further information or relevant experiences when confronted with a challenge?

Ideas

- Seek advice and support from someone who has experienced what you are going through.

- Focus on finding solutions or desired outcomes rather than on the challenge itself.

- Consider furthering your education or increasing your knowledge to enhance your work or social life.

- Be prepared to share your experiences with others who might be going through similar situations.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Do your group activities focus not just on sharing problems but also solutions?

- Do you foster learning from role models who have faced and overcome adversity?

- Is your group able to help a person or another group going through difficult times?

- How can you relate the program to participant's experiences?

Ideas

- Develop a mentor program where more seasoned 'survivors' can provide one-on-one support and coaching to those facing adversity.

- Encourage your group to provide support and help out in the community wherever they can.

- Encourage your group to reflect on adverse situations and identify what could be learnt from that scenario for the future.

- Encourage people to seek out and share information that may put problems in perspective—or offer fresh solutions.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Does your community embrace and honour its survivors?

- Is there scope within your community to bring together groups of resilient and not so resilient people to learn from each other?

- Does your community promote life-long learning for all?

Ideas

- Provide safe forums for community people to share their experiences—ask local 'survivors' to share their stories.

- Begin a 'storytelling' process between different groups in the community.

- Obtain funding for adult education programs or additional library facilities to promote further education.

- Encourage a 'learning community' culture within your sector, workplace or program.

Case Study 1
Listening to Survivors

Survival through life's adversities is a theme well developed in religious traditions, mythology, the arts and personal narratives (Dyer and McGuinness 1996). Works from authors such as Bettelheim (1980) and Frankl (1985) offer evidence of the extraordinary human capacity to overcome disaster and even transform it into a learning and growing experience. Writing of the Holocaust, Frankl said

> *'everything can be taken from a man (sic) but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way'* (1985, p. 86)

When people are confronting a significant personal or community adversity, a positive strategy is to look for role models. Individuals and groups are interested in, encouraged by, and learn from the experiences of others who have confronted significant challenges yet lived to tell the tale. Think, for instance, of the intense public interest aroused by the Stuart Diver story, or the 2006 rescue of the two miners in Tasmania. Nurses and doctors know that people diagnosed with cancer draw hope from knowing about others who have faced the same illness and survived in the long-term. Such a focus fosters optimism, an essential tool in the healing process. This approach also focuses on stressful times as opportunities for personal growth. Cynthia, a young breast cancer survivor from southwest Queensland, reflected that she would never have chosen to have cancer. Despite this, she says that she realises that despite its tremendous challenges, living with cancer has provided her with the most powerful learning opportunity yet.

Case Study 2
Storytelling

This is a process that has been used by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years to enhance the process of reflection and enable meaningful learning. On Harmony Day 2002 a group of young Sudanese men donated a 'story-telling chair' to the Toowoomba City Library to thank the City Council for its support. The purple and green 'bodja chair' was made by local young men during workshops with a community development artist, Michael Epworth.

While creating the chair (from recycled products and traditional woodworking tools) the Sudanese men told their own stories and Michael was able to gauge their needs and aspirations as new members of the Toowoomba community. The workshop organisers thought that one of the outcomes might be that some of the young men might take up 'bodja chair making', however, what did occur was above everyone's expectations. Some of the young men returned to secondary school, others completed courses at TAFE, and three young men enrolled in full-time studies at the University of Southern Queensland. Building the 'bodja chair' together opened up a space for these men to tell their stories and learn in a meaningful way from their experiences. It also enabled Michael to help these young men realise their dreams and enact them. The 'story-telling chair' is now used by Indigenous Elders in the community to tell stories to young people during the school holidays in the City Library.

Bodja chair makers Michael Epworth and workshop participants

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

The process of learning from experience, or the need for ongoing formal or informal learning and knowledge acquisition, was frequently mentioned by participants in the study. A total of 48 of 68 interviews discussed the importance of learning in the development of resilience, with most references coming from the Commercial, Special Needs, and Resilient groups. For numerous participants, the ability to bounce back from stressors was closely tied to learning from past experience. These resilience factors were also closely related to having a sense of purpose for some participants. Being able to bounce back, adapt or cope effectively was discussed in relation to the everyday trials of life as well as major events such as divorce, the death of a loved one, or, at the community level, a severe bush fire or hailstorm. Learning was seen as equally important at both the community and individual level.

At the individual level, some participants noted the value of more than one form of learning:

'I think that what you are born with, what you experience in your own life and what you read, are the three main things that create who you are and how you are able to deal with things and interact with other people.'

Many participants noted that one learnt from life experiences.

'Experience, it's just having been in similar situations I guess, if it's happening repeatedly you're going to get better at bouncing back.'

Some participants noted that community resilience was the result of its ability to learn from adversity:

'Because it is a district that has always had to struggle hard to make a living. Between hailstorms, droughts, hard country to work with, you know poor soils, rocky terrain, not big broad acres, big paddocks and not lots of water, very limited with water supply.'

For several people, an important characteristic of an ideal resilient community would be the presence of excellent schools or informal learning centres.

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

' … if I was the boss of the town I would put a bigger learning centre so it doesn't matter whether they're working, on the Youth Allowance with Centrelink, or whatever, they can just come in—come in and learn … '

' … learning … is not only a mental process but it has to do with our ability to understand and negotiate the meanings from our mistakes and experiences.'

'Making a mistake in anything is OK, because it helps you to learn from that mistake.'

' … we feel that soccer is a great example of learning … As soccer players we know what it is like for someone to be new to a team, and not to be fully confident of how to play the game properly. It is hard for a new player to know exactly what they are doing on their first game, yet it is okay to be able to make mistakes.'

3. Learning - Brief Literature Review

At the individual level, the concept of learning has been defined as

The action of receiving instruction or acquiring knowledge; a process which leads to the modification of behaviour or the acquisition of new abilities or responses, and which is additional to natural development by growth or maturation' (Oxford University Press 2007).

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2007), learning includes problem solving, associative processes, psychomotor and perceptual learning, discrimination of sense-data, imitation, concept formation, and learning from insight.
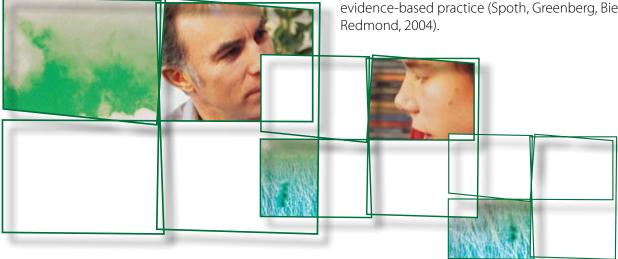
Contemporary research has reached a consensus on some basic facts about learning: a) the importance of a deeper conceptual understanding, b) a focus on learning in addition to teaching, c) creating learning environments, d) the importance of building on learner's prior knowledge, and e) the importance of reflection (Sawyer, 2002). Effective learning can occur implicitly, informally and formally.

Learning and education has been found to link with health outcomes. For example, those individuals who have continued with formal education over a longer period and gained higher educational qualifications are likely to have better mental health than their less well-educated counterparts (Burnette & Mui, 1994; Montgomery & Schoon, 1997; Vega Dienstmaier, Mazzotti, Stucchi Portocarrero, & Campos, 1999). Findings from longitudinal datasets suggest that education does have positive effects upon an array of health outcomes (Grossman & Kaestner, 1997; Hartog & Oosterbeek, 1998; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999).

In a fieldwork study of 145 adults, Hammond (2004) found that participation in lifelong learning affects a range of health outcomes including well-being, protection and recovery from mental health difficulties, and the capacity to cope with potentially stress-inducing situations including the onset and progression of chronic illness and disability. Hammond highlights that not all educational experiences had positive effects on health outcomes. Each individual had individual interests, strengths and needs which were unique and determined by their background and current situation. Hammond concludes by saying,

'Education has the potential to enhance all health outcomes through enabling individuals to see their lives in a broader context. Understanding within a broader context develops new interests, provides new opportunities, and thereby generates purpose, hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and personal growth. There is an expansion from looking inwards to looking outwards, which has positive effects upon health along the whole of the mental health continuum and enables individuals to cope more effectively with ill health and other types of adversity (p. 566).'

At a community level, partnerships between schools, community and university have been developed to enhance the capacity of state and local public education systems to support student competence by building, learning and development. In one longitudinal study of a large-scale youth and family competence-building project in the US, the PROSPER (PROmotion School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience) partnership model was found to provide a well-defined framework for the delivery of family and youth competence-building interventions via mechanisms grounded in state educational organisations that are oriented toward evidence-based practice (Spoth, Greenberg, Bierman, & Redmond, 2004).

4. Early Experiences

The experiences that people have during their childhood and teenage years can have an enormous impact upon their later wellbeing. Both positive and negative experiences can provide valuable skills and coping mechanisms to build individual resilience. Early childhood experiences that are influential in building resilience include the degree to which carers meet emotional and physiological needs, the consistency and appropriateness of discipline, the opportunities for learning and growth provided, and the values transmitted by important role models. Instilling pride in a child's cultural or ethnic heritage may also be an important source of self esteem and identity in later life.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Are you aware of how your early experiences impact on your current behaviour or outlook?

- Do you embrace the positive aspects of your upbringing and heritage?

Ideas

- Consider becoming involved in mentoring projects for young people such as the *Big Brother Big Sister* program for at risk children, or coaching sporting activities.

- Join a club or group which celebrates positive aspects of your upbringing (or start your own).

- Enrol in a personal development program that examines core beliefs and attitudes.

- Speak to a counsellor or similar professional.

- Enrol in a parenting course to develop effective parenting skills.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Are you aware of how past experiences or upbringing may impede participation in group programs or activities?

Ideas

- Consider group discussion or storytelling processes that share early experiences and what can be learnt from them.

- Generate opportunities for your members, particularly young ones, to gain new experiences.

- Help establish a parenting course in your community to promote positive early experiences for future generations.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Does your community promote positive parenting principles and healthy role modelling?

- Does your community provide information and programs to support parents and carers?

- Does your community provide a wide range of events and activities that can foster new experiences and learning?

Ideas

- Encourage community members to visit the local neighbourhood centre or library and access information on programs and resources.

- Encourage sectors of the community to volunteer to work for a disability organisation.

Case Study 1
The YWCA Big Brother Big Sister Program[1]

Providing positive role models or mentors for children and youth at risk of later problems is a powerful way of harnessing early experiences to improve resilience.

'The aim of the program is to develop the self-worth and confidence of the young person through the experience of having a caring and positive adult friend in their lives who listens, understands, accepts and respects them. The healthy development of every child is enhanced by positive, nurturing, mentoring relationships.

Y Big Brothers Big Sisters is part of a national professionally run mentoring program that provides children and young people with positive adult role models who offer support and friendship. This is achieved through a trusting relationship with a professionally trained adult volunteer. The friendship develops through regular outings together, usually on weekends. Outings might include going to the park, bike riding, seeing a movie or going to a museum.'

[1] YWCA New South Wales website <**http://www.ywcansw.com.au**>
Phone: 1300 4 mentor and office 02 9285 6250 – Email: bbbs@ywcansw.com.au

Accessed 2/10/07

Case Study 2
Parenting Programs

Parents have an enormous impact upon their children's early experiences and play a large role in shaping their future values and behaviour. There are many resources available to assist in the difficult job of parenting. Local community or health centres may run parenting courses and there are numerous parenting sites on the internet. If there are no courses available in your area consider banding together with other interested parents and approaching a local councillor or community worker to request a course be conducted in your local community.

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program is one well known parenting program which has won awards within Australia as well as internationally. The Triple P website offers parenting advice and information as well as a search engine to locate the closest Triple P practitioner to your area.

<**http://www.triplep.net**>

Accessed 29/10/07

The Families First Parenting Program is another website offering a large range of practical parenting advice.

The following tips for increasing a child's self esteem have been modified from one of the information pages available on the website:

1. Praise less, but praise more authentically.

2. Stop saying, 'good boy' or 'good girl' or at least say it less often.

3. Allow children to make mistakes.

4. Help children experience mastery of skills.

5. Help children find connections.

6. Set appropriate limits.

7. Give children responsibility.

8. Teach children gratitude.

<**http://www.families-first.org**>

Accessed 29/10/07

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

The influence of early experiences, both at an individual and community level, was believed to be an important component of resilience by many Stanthorpe residents interviewed. The types of early experiences highlighted by participants included struggle and hardship, specific cultural and heritage factors such as origins and farming influences, and parenting or school practices. Participants talked about the impact that positive childhood experiences, particularly the love and support of family, had on shaping their resilience. Many believed that history shaped the future. This was from both the community and individual perspectives.

With regard to community perspectives, many people believed that a major contributor to Stanthorpe's resilience was its agricultural background. That is, farming people took the good with the bad and worked hard.

'Stanthorpe is resilient because of the farming heritage and that's made people tough.'

They also believed that the different ethnic communities brought with them not only their culture but also the ability to work hard (necessary to establish themselves in a new country).

' … I think the primary factor that makes this place resilient is that the major population growth happened immediately after the War by immigrants… They had to knuckle down and get into it … they left their mother country and they came here and they just had to get on with it and they've passed that onto their kids and a substantial percentage of their kids are still here.'

Many participants spoke about how both positive and negative early experiences added to their resilience.

'I come from a broken home. My parents broke up very early in the piece and I was shunted off to boarding school so I think that teaches you resilience in a way because you can either sink or swim when you go away to boarding school.'

' … I lost my mother when I was 13 and I was an only child, so I guess it stems from there.'

' … we had to work … I learnt to work as a child.'

'To start off with I was very fortunate in having great parents. Parents who made me find myself and believe in myself … '

'I had a very happy childhood so I think that makes me feel very confident in myself.'
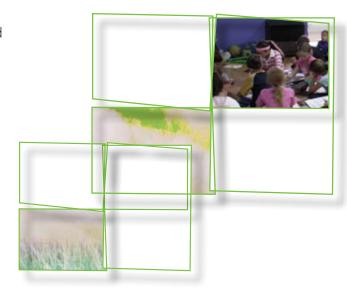
4. Early Experiences - Brief Literature Review

For the purposes of this study, 'early experiences' is a concept related principally to the individual and their experience within the social environment in which they are raised. Factors that contribute to the early experience include family functioning, parenting practices, school experiences and peer relationships. Some behavioural scientists believe that there are optimal times for learning certain age-appropriate developmental tasks (Bigner, 1993). Bigner suggests that individuals are especially responsive to environmental events during these critical times. Without these critical events, there is a risk of adverse outcomes for children.

Research on early experience and resilience has primarily focussed on the maltreatment of children and their outcomes. For example, Collishaw et al. (2007) investigated the mental health outcomes for maltreated children. They aimed to address the extent of resilience to adult psychopathology in a representative community sample, and to explore predictors of a good prognosis. The authors found that there was an increased rate of adolescent psychiatric disorders and adult psychopathology in a group of individuals who reported repeated or severe physical or sexual abuse in childhood. However, a substantial minority of individuals reported not having mental health problems as adults. Resilience was related to perceived parental care, adolescent peer relationships, the quality of adult love relationships, and personality style. Collishaw et al. (2007) concluded that good quality relationships across the lifespan appear important for adult psychological wellbeing in the context of childhood abuse.

In another study focusing on parenting practices, Prevatt (2003) evaluated a risk and resiliency model of children's adjustment. Risk factors included family stress, family conflict, parent psychopathology and low socio-economic status. Protective factors included family cohesion, family social support and family moral-religious orientation. Prevatt hypothesised that parenting practices would have a direct effect on children's outcomes. Consistent with past research (Frick, 1994; Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996), Prevatt (2003) found that negative parenting, rather than positive parenting, is predictive of behavioural problems in children.

Parenting practices were also highlighted in the work of Masten et al. (1999). Masten and her colleagues conducted a longitudinal study investigating the phenomenon of resilience. Competent outcomes for adolescents were related to adversity over time, antecedent competence and psychosocial resources. Competence was measured by academic achievement, conduct and peer social competence. Even in the context of severe, chronic adversity, better intellectual functioning and parenting practices were associated with good outcomes across the competence measures. Those adolescents who were considered to be resilient (high adversity with adequate competence) differed from their high adversity maladaptive peers who had few resources and high negative emotionality. Masten et al. (1999) concluded that IQ and parenting practices were markers of essential adaptational systems that protect the development of children in a severely adverse environment.

Many adults also adapt successfully despite adverse early life experiences. Watt, David, Ladd, and Shamos (1995) investigated adults who had not only survived extreme early life experiences, such as emotional abuse, but thrived in the face of them. Watt and colleagues compared 31 resilient adults and 19 controls from comparable life circumstances who had not been exposed to severe early adversity, such as emotional abuse by parents. The resilient group showed extreme signs of emotional oppression as children, but normal development in intellectual functioning. These adults sought and received substantial support outside the family including religious and psychotherapeutic counselling. Most attributed their success to persistent effort and self-reliance.

5. Environment and Lifestyle

The natural and built environment can have a major impact on how people feel and how they interact with their surroundings. The environment is also important in attracting new residents and visitors, and building a sense of community pride. Smaller communities can offer lifestyle options not available elsewhere including a sense of being known and valued, and solving problems within the community. A pleasant natural environment and climate encourages outdoor activities, and possibilities for connecting with nature.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Do you take time to enhance and appreciate your surrounding environment? How does it make you and others feel?
- How do your surroundings affect your lifestyle?
- Are there changes you could make to improve the effect your surrounds or lifestyle have on you?

Ideas

- Identify things that you both like and dislike about the environments you are in.
- Make small changes like adding some pot plants, hanging up a piece of art or photo or changing the colour of the cushions/rugs in a room.
- Actively seek out places that make you feel good.
- Adapt your leisure activities and day-to-day lifestyle to take advantage of the best aspects of your environment.
- Join or assist groups caring for the natural environment or enhancing access to it.
- Plant something native to your area and watch it grow.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Does your group value their surrounding environment?
- What does your group like and dislike about their surrounds? About their community?

Ideas

- Incorporate spaces in your programs or workshops that allow participants to assess their everyday environment and suggest changes to make it more appealing.
- See if your group can identify an area in the community that could use enhancing and help them make the required changes.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Does your community promote and value its appeal, both environmental and lifestyle?
- Does your community actively support the protection and enhancement of the urban and natural environments?

Ideas

- Encourage groups to participate in enhancing the appeal of areas they utilise.
- Access funding for urban renewal and environmental projects.
- Encourage builders and developers to consider the aesthetic appeal of future developments and utilise community consulting groups for ideas.
- Always think 'green'. Focus on preserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Case Study 1
Stanthorpe 'Kidspace' Community Project

The Kidspace Project began due to the removal of un-safe playground equipment in local parks. It soon became a vehicle for building social cohesion and for providing a place where people could gather and interact, an important component of having an appealing environment and lifestyle.

The Kidspace Project developed from a design concept to create four recreational areas based on Stanthorpe's seasonal calendar—Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn. The aim was to incorporate themes and design elements associated with each season, in order to address an identified gap in infrastructure for young children and youth, especially those with a disability. The project had three main objectives:

1. To provide the Stanthorpe community with an attractive and safe recreational playground that is inclusive to all ability levels.

2. To provide infrastructure that will encourage healthy, outdoor activity that all children no matter what their abilities, can use.

3. To promote and support an inclusive and tolerant community.

Case Study 2
Enhancing community lifestyles through the development of community gardens

Community gardens can be found in many countries across the globe. They have a long and interesting history, fulfilling a variety of important roles from neighbourhood renewal and community building to health benefits, general well-being and environmental education. Reported benefits of community gardens are diverse, including physical and psychological well being, providing community spaces for learning and shared decision making, relationship building, and community development (Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network, 2006).

A Community Garden on the Waterloo Housing Estate in Sydney was researched by a team of UNSW academics from a range of disciplines and schools, based on a series of stakeholder interviews and focus groups with people from the Gardens. The researchers found that the Community Gardens had many benefits for both gardeners and other tenants.

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

Across all groups, 42 interviews discussed the importance of the surrounding environment and lifestyle factors in resilience. Participants talked about the impact of a wide range factors which contributed to the aesthetic appeal of a community such as the presence of attractive buildings and streetscapes, parkland, nature reserves, and the absence of graffiti, derelict buildings, litter and other forms of refuge. In addition, many participants emphasised the role of the natural environment and climate in shaping Stanthorpe's resilience. These factors had attracted early and recent settlers to the area, and underpinned both cultural and economic diversity in the region. In relation to individual resilience, the features of the natural environment were credited with fostering feelings of wellbeing for some, while other participants indicated that the climate was the source of much character building. In particular, it was noted that learning to cope with climatic events such as drought, hail, and frost, was a primary source of resilience for Stanthorpe's farmers, both historically and in the present day. This influence was felt to filter into the wider community. The natural environment was also associated with community pride and a sense of belonging by some participants. Many Stanthorpe residents commented that the appeal of the region's natural environment and laid-back rural lifestyle was pivotal in Stanthorpe's resilience and would be found in an ideal resilient community. In particular, several participants noted that the small size of the population and relative safety and low crime rate contributed to its resilience.

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'… *just doing simple healthy activities is something that we all need to do more of to be physically, mentally and spiritually healthy … We can't enjoy the finer things in life, unless we learn to enjoy the simpler things first.*'

'… *these activities are good for bonding with your family, pets or just having some time alone.*'

5. Environment and Lifestyle - Brief Literature Review

Research supports the contention that many aspects of the natural and built environment have an important influence on psychological wellbeing. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that negative aspects of an environment may have a detrimental impact upon individual and community resilience. For example, it has been demonstrated that environments that are noisy and dilapidated are associated with social withdrawal, and have been shown to discourage the establishment of social relations with neighbours and the elderly (Kweon, Sullivan, & Wiley, 1998).

Sirgy and Cornwell (2002) developed a conceptual model to explain how satisfaction with lifestyle factors and environmental features affected the quality of life of community members. The model posited that satisfaction with different features of a neighbourhood (social, economic, and physical) affected different life satisfaction domains, which then affected overall satisfaction with quality of life. Specifically, the model argued that satisfaction with physical features affected both neighbourhood satisfaction and satisfaction with housing. Neighbourhood satisfaction played a role in community satisfaction, while housing satisfaction was associated with home satisfaction. Both community satisfaction and home satisfaction, in turn, played a role in life satisfaction. Further, satisfaction with the social features of the neighbourhood influenced satisfaction with the neighbourhood and the community— with the latter believed to feed into life satisfaction. Satisfaction with the economic features of the neighbourhood influenced satisfaction with the house and home—with the latter said to feed into degree of life satisfaction. The authors tested this model, and two competing ones, and found their model was largely supported (Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002).

Within the community literature, the natural environment is one component of what is termed the 'natural capital' of a community (Black & Hughes, 2001). This form of natural capital is said to encompass all aspects of nature that are aesthetically appealing such as flora, fauna, and landscape features. Results from other studies examining community resiliency have also found that respondents believed that a pleasing environment containing attractive parks and playgrounds was a desirable aspect of their community (Kulig, Edge, & Guernsey, 2005). The natural capital of a community also provides the natural resources that underpin economic development and rich natural capital generally enhances opportunities and diversity.

Community gardens have also been examined as a method of enhancing the local environment and lifestyle of communities. In her study of an Australian urban community garden project, Crabtree (1999) explained how a community garden enhanced resilience in two ways. First, by using 'edges' within both physical design (for example keyholes, spirals) and social organisation (for example by enhancing areas of communication) and second, by 'replication' at the physical and social levels. According to the author, it was desirable to have each function fulfilled by numerous components and each component fulfilling multiple functions. In addition, she suggested that such concepts created space for education and community development.

A small number of studies have investigated the link between physical environment, including nature, and aspects of community resilience such as place attachment (Vorkinn & Riese, 2001) and sense of community (Joongsub & Kaplan, 2004). A diverse range of theories have been formulated to explain the phenomena known variously as place attachment, human-place bonding or environmental embeddedness. A US study examining the influence of the environment on level of attachment to a community found that open spaces and natural features play an important role in people's sense of community (Joongsub & Kaplan, 2004).

Many lifestyle factors may influence individual or community resilience, such as climate, community size, crime rates and employment opportunities. There is some suggestion that the smaller size of communities in rural areas may facilitate a greater degree of interaction with friends and family and promote a greater sense of belonging (Krout, 1988).

6. Infrastructure and Support Services

Infrastructure such as water supplies, public transport, recreational services, health services, schools and telecommunications are important tools which enable people to carry out their daily activities. These facilities and services allow individuals and communities to function well and recover from adversity. Support services provide everything from information and social support to food, housing, employment, counselling, interpreters and help for people with special needs. The absence of important facilities and support services within a community is detrimental to the quality of life of its members and may lead to the depopulation of the community.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- What infrastructure and support services are available in your community?
- If you need help, do you know where and how to find it?
- What could **you** offer to the community?

Ideas

- Know how to access the services that are available— check the internet and local council.
- Visit the local library and local community centres.
- Know your own strengths and be prepared to share them by volunteering or mentoring.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Is your program environment comfortable, welcoming and accessible for participants?
- Are supports such as transport, disability access, financial assistance, translator services and child minding available?
- Do you **really** know the benefits of your service or program?

Ideas

- Different groups can band together to apply for funding or share resources and facilities.
- Establish a website to provide ongoing information about your program to participants or to reach a wider audience.
- Anticipate problems and brainstorm solutions to factors which may prevent participants from attending and participating in the program.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Is there an adequate set of services and facilities to meet community members' needs?
- Do groups work together to build community facilities and services?
- Do you know how disadvantaged groups are treated or included in your community?
- Could more people be included?

Ideas

- Coordinate with local government, state agencies, and community groups to identify and address any important gaps in infrastructure and support services.
- Provide new residents with a 'Welcome Pack' containing information about services and facilities.
- Provide avenues for information and feedback, i.e. websites, fridge magnets, community displays.

Case Study 1
Community Support Services

Stanthorpe Community Development Services Inc (CDS) is a community resource and referral service which supports people in crisis, assesses community needs and has initiated social projects since 1986. CDS offers a variety of supports and services for the community, including parenting workshops like the one outlined below.

Supporting people with the difficult job of parenting. The 'Growth Through Change' Parenting workshops

Parenting is not an easy job. There are plenty of situations we face where we feel unprepared. Right or wrong, without alternatives, most of us fall back on what our own parents did.

The program provides alternative answers for parents, helping them learn a more effective approach to parenting. Parents learn a process to help them navigate the life-long job of parenting while maintaining a loving relationship with their child. Run over four evenings, the workshops cover areas such as understanding behaviour and strategies for effective discipline. The workshops also aim to enhance the levels of confidence and competence within parents and to develop an awareness of the use of effective communication.

Educating and supporting parents in the development of effective child management skills greatly benefits parents and can help to ensure that a child's early experiences have a positive impact on their resilience.

Community Development Services Inc is funded by the Department of Communities, Queensland. Further information is available from (07) 4681 377 or via the internet <**http://www.cds.granitebeltdirectory.com**>

Case Study 2
Beyondblue

Beyondblue is a national organisation working to provide information and support for people suffering from depression, anxiety and related substance misuse disorders in Australia.

In addition, the program aims to increase community awareness about these disorders, develop prevention and early intervention programs, improve training and support for GPs and other health care workers, and initiate and support research into depression.

The website is designed for community members and professionals, and is a highly accessible source of information and support for urban and rural people. As such, the website offers a wide variety of information including facts sheets for special interest groups.

One such special interest group is people living in rural areas. The Beyondblue National Drought Information and Resources Map details the resources that are available to rural people in Exceptional Circumstances areas throughout Australia.

More information is available from the Beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636 or the website:
<**http://www.beyondblue.org.au**>

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

The presence of infrastructure and support services was perceived as a necessary component of resilience in 41 of 68 interviews conducted. Across the groups interviewed, participants within the Commercial sector discussed the importance of these resources most frequently, followed by the Youth group. Comments generally focused on the negative impact of the absence of facilities and support services and were closely tied to the interview group that a participant belonged to. For example, Farmers or their families most frequently indicated that infrastructure was essential for resilience, with adequate water supplies the most frequently mentioned example. Similarly, most people who emphasised the importance of support services were from the Service Provider group or were Special Needs Providers or their clients. Comments concerning the quality of support services available in Stanthorpe varied markedly from very poor to very good. Numerous participants from the Youth group emphasised the detrimental impact that an absence of recreational facilities, work opportunities, and a lack of public transport had on individual and community resilience.

The importance of infrastructure and support services was seen as most essential to community resilience and in the development of an ideal resilient community:

'Yes, I would like council to help us have tanks in our backyards, I would like us to have more recycled water and you know just for own gardens and things if we wanted … '

'There would be communal areas for meeting, such as a park which had sheltered areas and communal areas … '

Numerous participants reported that a lack of infrastructure impaired their resilience by reducing the recreational choices available or preventing them from connecting with their social networks:

'Transport… lots of people live out of town and, you know, their parents are willing to drive them in a lot of the time but they don't want to drive back in at 12 o'clock, you know, to pick them up and that sort of stuff.'

' … They've got absolutely nothing here for the high school kids to do.'

However, not all comments were negative:

'They have got good fields around here … You know there are a fair few things like that. They have got a place of learning over at the state school, … that people can go to if they want to, want to learn.'

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

' … another important part of our community is the facilities and support services within it.'

'It brings our community, young and old, together.'

6. Infrastructure and Support Services - Brief Literature Review

There is a range of evidence indicating that a deficit of infrastructure and services in rural communities may have a major impact on mental wellbeing and resilience. A Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report investigated whether declining rural community infrastructure in central Western Australia has impacted upon the social, environmental, and economic well-being of this area (Haslem McKenzie, 1999). The report highlighted a range of facilities which had a major impact upon the rural population and their quality of life. This included a lack of services supporting employment, housing, casual labour, health, banking and education (Haslem McKenzie, 1999).

Others have also highlighted the impact that infrastructure and services may have upon rural communities. The availability of public transport is one example where rural people in general are considered disadvantaged (Denmark, 1998) due to the lack of links with the employment, education, recreation and other services they require. Thus for the segments within rural communities unable to access private transport, such as the elderly, disabled, poor, or young people, the lack of public transport may have major ramifications at a personal level (Denmark, 1998). Further, it has been found that infrastructure such as water, electricity and telecommunications are essential in order to support and expand economic activities in rural areas (Fox & Porca, 2001). It does this by attracting resources, raising productivity levels, and allowing expansion in the use of other resources (Fox & Porca, 2001).

A recent study investigating issues and challenges related to mental health service delivery in rural Queensland found there were major problems in accessing appropriate and ongoing services for those with mental health problems (Bambling et al., 2007). General practitioners and allied mental health service providers cited lack of appropriate services, poor follow-up, and lack of expertise as some of the impairments to rural residents receiving quality mental health care when required.

These results were mirrored by another Australian study comparing health concerns and service utilisation among adolescents in rural and urban areas (Quine et al., 2003). Quine et al. found that compared to their urban counterparts, rural adolescents were more likely to express concerns over limited recreational, employment, and educational opportunities, which they believed contributed to their risk-taking behaviour. Further, rural adolescents reported difficulty in obtaining access to healthcare services with a limited number of providers available and lengthy waiting times; having only a limited choice of service providers, and being unable to afford the cost of services with virtually no bulk billing available in the communities studied.

7. Sense of Purpose

Having a sense of purpose or meaning in life is an important component of resilience because it provides motivation, focus and a future, as well as present orientation. At the individual level, having a sense of purpose enables people to work towards important goals and see the 'bigger picture' in times of hardship or stress. At the community level, a shared sense of purpose enhances community wellbeing by creating common objectives and encouraging community members to work together for the 'greater good'.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

-   What are your 'core' goals in life? Do these goals reflect your most significant values and beliefs about the purpose of your life? Are you living in ways that help you achieve your life goals?

-   Do you have work, hobbies, or relationships that you find meaningful and fulfilling?

-   Do you have skills or spare time that you could volunteer to help others in the community?

Ideas

-   Spend time reflecting on the values and beliefs that are most important to you.

-   Develop long and short term goals and problem-solve barriers to achieving them.

-   Enrol in a course or group to learn a new skill, make new friends, or further your education.

-   Keep a register of local community groups requiring volunteers and be prepared to lend a hand.

Enhancing Group Resilience

-   Does your program connect to people's need for a sense of purpose? Are program goals clear and achievable?

-   Do program goals accurately reflect the needs and interests of your target groups?

-   Are there intrinsic or extrinsic rewards for participating in and completing your program?

Ideas

-   Encourage program participants to work together to generate project goals and select program activities.

-   Ensure participants understand the importance of their task to the overall goal.

-   Offer incentives for active participation or achieving particular program outcomes.

Enhancing Community Resilience

-   Are all groups of people in your community encouraged to access community plans and be involved in decision making?

-   Do you encourage different groups of people to come together to work towards important community objectives?

Ideas

-   Organise regular community meetings to discuss project needs and encourage possible involvement.

-   Organise appropriate community-wide gatherings to mark significant events.

-   Provide information about community events and projects on websites, notice boards, and through newsletters.

Case Study 1
A Canadian community project: Volunteer Youth in the Millennium

Projects which target the youth in a community benefit from partnerships that directly involve them in the process.

'Partnerships built among all stakeholders in the youth-servicing sector, including schools, youth employment centres, government and volunteer agencies benefit youth because they all have the shared objective of helping young people succeed. In Ontario, the Volunteer Youth in the Millennium project sought to promote volunteerism among youth aged 14 to 25 and to improve the transition from school to work through career exploration and preparation. The employability skills of youth were improved through volunteerism involving hands on and specialised projects such as volunteering with the Canadian Red Cross, seniors and the disabled. School credits were used to encourage and give incentive for active participation by youth.

The project raised the awareness of volunteer opportunities in the community and allowed youth to contribute to their community in a positive manner while learning about themselves. Approximately 3000 youth were reached and more than 60,000 volunteer hours of service were recorded throughout the project.'

From Canadian Rural Partnership website <**http://www.rural.gc.ca/programs/**>
Accessed 10/10/07

Case Study 2
Public Events can Create a Shared Sense of Purpose in the Face of Adversity

In 1999, in one of the worst school massacres in the history of the United States, two students shot and killed 12 students and a teacher at their school. Twenty-three other people were wounded. Below is an excerpt from a piece written by a past Columbine student who describes the impact of a memorial service on himself and those around him. The shared purpose of honouring those in the community who had been killed, and trying to make sense of the tragedy, united members of the school and wider community. Thus through the sharing of their grief, both individually and collectively, the community's resilience was enhanced.

Reflections on Attending the Memorial Service for Columbine High School Students in Littleton, Colorado by David LaChapelle[1]

' … It is apparent as I crest a hill and begin to see the crowds forming ahead of me that this event is far larger than anyone expected … From all directions there is a streaming river of humanity walking with a measured purpose that is unfamiliar to large groups in our culture. The only other time I have witnessed similar crowds are at rock concerts and football games. This crowd is fundamentally different. This is the first flower of hope in the midst of a day of deep grief …

As I wait for the ceremonies to begin humanity flows past me. Six high school girls, arms linked and each with roses, walk before me. They are bonded beyond linked arms. There is a pool of melted heart which flows tangibly through their friendship. Tears form in my eyes as I witness this blossom of humanity. Uncommon evil has as its counterpoint the deepest wells of compassion.

This truth was to be played out before me the entire day. We are called to the other pole of possibility when destruction is before us and we do not understand. As the thousands of people walk past me I see that they are moving in subtle waves and wavelets. The bonding of families and friends organises the flow into coherent pulses which have a beauty of their own …

The tender heart of this extraordinary afternoon is the best healing we can bring to our schools, our communes and our nation; see if we can walk in crowds linked through the heart in waves of elegance, see if we can stand with strangers and realise we are joined together in this school of life, see if we can end the battlefields within our homes and communities which have made refugees of us all…

May we not turn our backs, out of expediency, to the light of this moment.'

[1] Resilient Communities Archive <**http://www.resilientcommunities.org/articles/columbine.htm**>
Accessed 10/10/07

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

A thematic analysis of interview results found that having a sense of purpose was reported as an important element of resilience in 40 of the 68 interviews. A sense of purpose was most commonly reported by participants in the Farming and Resilient interview groups. Participants believed that having a sense of purpose was particularly important for individual resilience. Fewer people believed a sense of purpose was an essential component of community resilience. It was generally felt that having a shared sense of purpose was particularly important in times of crisis, and that this was an important component of Stanthorpe's continued resilience despite repeated adversity. They mentioned fighting bushfires, overcoming drought and hailstorms, as well as events such as festivals, as assisting in creating a shared sense of purpose within the community. Relatively few indicated that a sense of purpose would be a central feature of an ideal resilient community.

'… I wouldn't say I'm exceptionally organised but there are certain things that I just do every week that I have to do to function … Otherwise it would just be chaos.'

'… but as I got into my teens I realised well look, you know, this is you, what you do with your life, is what you are going to get, so I studied hard … '

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'… It signifies having something to strive for … the knowledge that I can make a difference to the world by doing little things in my community … Doing everyday and sometimes unnoticed things … '

'Without these ordinary people working together, our town would not have the necessities such as electricity, water, or any form of quick and easy communication.'

7. Sense of Purpose - Brief Literature Review

At the individual level, the concept of 'sense of purpose' has been examined in various ways including a sense of coherence, goal-setting or goal orientation, sense of control or self-control, self-efficacy, conscientiousness, persistence, and motivation. These alternative views have portrayed a sense of purpose as a disposition or personality trait, a learned behaviour, and a cognitive competency or a situationally-based characteristic. These have rarely been directly linked with enhanced resilience within the literature. However, they have been associated with increased wellbeing, reduced social problems, higher achievement, positive learning outcomes, or with increased academic, task or work performance (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Baumeister & Exline, 2000; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007).
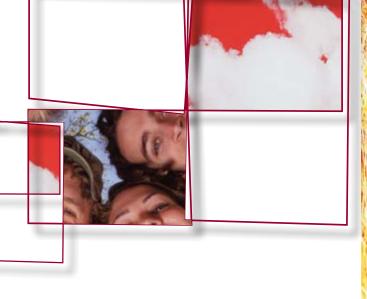
In a recent review, a meta-correlation matrix was used to examine the influence of goal orientation on achievement (Payne et al., 2007). Strong goal setting or orientation predicted job performance above and beyond the influence of cognitive ability and personality. Higher perceived self-efficacy has also been found to enhance motivation and performance (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Evidence suggests that self-efficacy may be a key motivational construct that has a major impact upon an individuals' choices, coping mechanisms, goals, effort, level of persistence, and performance (Hoyt, Murphy, Halverson, & Watson, 2003). Personality theorists characterise a sense of purpose as a form of performance motivation. Having a high level of performance motivation is positively related to the personality trait of conscientiousness and negatively related to neuroticism (Judge & Ilies, 2002).

Within community-focused literature, the sense of purpose concept is linked to the research areas of community participation and empowerment, community development initiatives, and the creation of community capital. As for the resilience concept of a diverse and innovative economy, all of these related domains are indirectly concerned with enhancing community resilience by working towards common community goals.

In the last three decades, there has been a proliferation of organisations developed around the principle of a shared sense of purpose within communities. Known within the literature as community development corporations (CDCs), CDCs take many forms but generally have the goal of mobilising community capital and nurturing intragroup cooperation. They do this by harnessing grass roots participation to work towards shared goals and community projects (Savitch & Kantor, 2003).
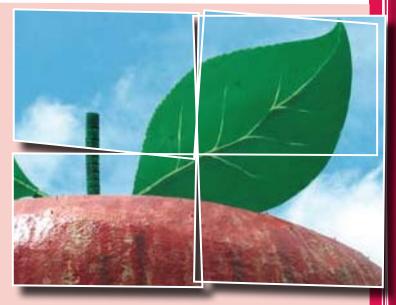
Arnstein (1969) developed the popular ladder of participation to describe different levels of community participation and empowerment in planning and government decision making. The ladder has eight 'rungs' going from manipulation at the bottom to citizen control at the top. She argued that consultation, a term frequently used by the various levels of government, business and other organisations, is merely a form of tokenism, and a true partnership is required to enhance genuine community involvement (Arnstein, 1969).

Others have also emphasised the importance of a shared sense of purpose or ownership of community planning and service provision (Watt, Higgins, & Kendrick, 2000). Community collaboration in the identification and assessment of unmet needs can be seen as an important element of developing a shared sense of purpose within the community. This has been characterised as an important element of the 'social capital' within a community (Savitch & Kantor, 2003).

8. Diverse and Innovative Economy

A resilient local economy is one with diverse businesses and employment opportunity, so that community wellbeing does not stand or fall according to the market fortunes of just one industry. This includes diverse crops and value adding within an agricultural system. Businesses can cooperate rather than compete, to bring economic welfare to the area. A diverse and innovative economy emphasises the interdependency of businesses and the community. It focuses on how businesses and consumers can cooperate to keep as much money as possible circulating within the community. Money spent and re-spent within the community builds more business, keeps more people employed, more services active in support of the community, and raises quality of life. Residents can support the process by buying locally. Innovation, meanwhile, revitalises business and makes them—and their industries—more resilient. The idea is to work towards the community's benefit, revitalise the local community and improve its quality of life.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Are you good at budgeting and managing your finances?
- If you are a business owner, do you take time to work on your business rather than in it?
- Do you support local businesses and buy as much as you can locally?
- Do you seek and welcome new ideas and approaches?

Ideas

- Do a short course on budgeting and managing household finances.
- If you own a business, get a business coach or join a benchmarking group.
- Learn about the local economy and what factors affect it.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Are there support services for small business in your town?
- Is the community encouraged to support small/local businesses? Do mentoring groups exist?
- Does the local media (paper and radio) provide cost effective advertising for local business?

Ideas

- Support other businesses by buying supplies from each other.
- Support local businesses by buying locally yourself.
- Try a mentoring scheme for start-up businesses.
- As a community, invest to provide small-scale capital to start-up businesses.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Are groups of businesses encouraged to work together, to share experience, support, purchasing and marketing power?

Ideas

- Identify, and strengthen synergies within and across sectors.
- Identify and strengthen value chains that use community assets and strengths.
- Mobilise business and voluntary leadership to build from what you have.
- Do an audit of community assets, needs and opportunities.

Case Study
Community Economic Development Strategy in Fairfield, Iowa

Fairfield (population 9400) was once a typical rural town, at risk of economic decline and loss of population and services. Two factors seem to have been important in its turnaround—conscious building of community leadership focused on mobilising community entrepreneurs, and a timely influx of residents with different values, energies and purchasing power. Fairfield seeks to be entrepreneurial, creative and sustainable.
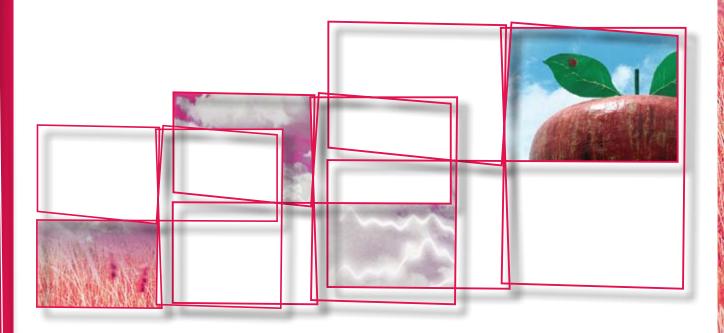
The community is consciously building a culture of entrepreneurship, focused on value-adding to agricultural produce, the arts, and catering to lifestyle interests. Existing businesses consciously encourage and mentor start-ups, passing on skills and advice to newer entrepreneurs. They hold monthly 'entrepreneurs boot camps' at which small businesses share skills. They have a 'CEO's Round Table for Peer Networking', and support from Iowa's Centre for Community Vitality. There is a US $2 million revolving fund for cultural trial businesses and property improvements, backed by the local banks.

Another initiative is the community arts walks, held monthly on Friday nights. Businesses in the town centre lend space for the display of arts and crafts, and residents turn out in masses for a walk, visiting the temporary galleries that interest them, stopping to buy other goods in the shops, and eating at restaurants and street stalls. This highly sociable community event adds to community 'life', helps the arts, and helps the businesses by bringing new people through their doors.

Fairfield also has the 'big green summer' internship program in association with a University, and one of the top farmers' markets in Iowa, to promote sustainable living. They promote a strong culture of buying local agricultural produce, and serving it in the diverse array of restaurants. These are a place to network and every restaurant at lunchtime is a 'virtual incubator' of other businesses. Farmers love this chance of contact. Meanwhile, approximately 100 homes have left the electricity grid and rely on wind, geo-thermal and solar energy.

Thanks to such initiatives, Fairfield has equity investments of US $270 million, has created 3000 jobs, has 60 companies headquartered there, and is ranked first in Iowa for income growth and philanthropy. It has three newspapers, and a large proportion of homes wired for broadband. In addition, Fairfield is now home to 150 not-for-profit organisations with combined assets of US$250 million.

Source: The information presented here comes from Burt Chojnowski, Community Developer, Fairfield Iowa.
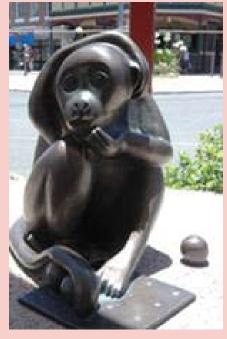
A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

The degree to which people believed that a diverse and innovative economy contributed to resilience varied greatly across the six groups interviewed. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all 12 of the people interviewed from the Commercial group emphasised the importance of having a diverse and innovative economy, or aspects closely related to this concept. Farmers noted that the ability to switch to other crops in times of need such as following fire, hail, or drought, enhanced their resilience. In contrast, no-one within the Service Provider group, and only three people from the Special Needs group mentioned this component of resilience. Very few people discussed the importance of a diverse and innovative economy in relation to individual resilience. The majority of people who reported this to be a significant factor, did so in relation to community resilience.

Some participants noted the connection between social and economic diversity, with diverse cultures modelling hard work and perseverance in the face of adversity, and newcomers offering different approaches. A number of participants also noted the role of the environment, climate, and lifestyle in encouraging social and economic diversification.

Economic diversity is an important aspect of a resilient local economy. Similarly, an important component of community economic development is having a shared sense of purpose within the community related to promoting and supporting local industry and people. Stanthorpe has a diverse economy based on numerous agricultural products and value-adding to these. It is recognised for fruit, wine and agri-ecological tourism—people come to the area to experience these together, therefore groups of businesses benefit from promoting the area together. A diverse and innovative economy was also seen by numerous people as an important component of an ideal resilient community.

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'This monkey represents the famous freezing winter of Stanthorpe (the brass monkey season) to which visitors flock and bring in money.'

'Although the Apple and Grape Festival probably costs thousands and thousands of dollars to run, it brings in so much money from other places, back into the community. Not only do tourists spend lots of money at the actual festival but for weeks, money is spent at local wineries, restaurants, hotels, shops and other tourist destinations scattered around the Granite Belt Shire.'
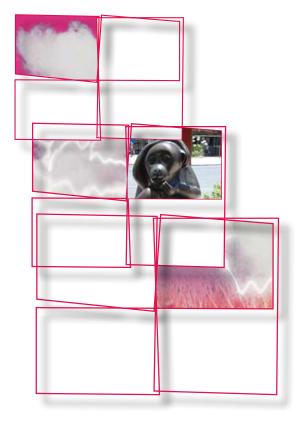
8. Diverse and Innovative Economy - Brief Literature Review

The community economic development literature emphasises the importance of having a diverse economy, so that economic cycles in different sectors can compensate for one another, and purchasing locally so that as much expenditure as possible is kept within the local economy. Generating a diverse and innovative economy is closely tied to a growing literature focusing on social capital (Evans & Syrett, 2007), economic diversity (Dissart, 2003), and rural economic development (Falk, 1996). Although not often referred to in these terms, community resilience is at the core of these approaches.

Research has also explored the impact of economic or workplace diversity on resilience. One study of economic diversity and development in US rural communities highlighted the dilemma of risk of economic collapse by retaining traditional local industries and current identities, versus diversification and potentially prospering, but with the risk of fundamentally changing the nature of the community (Falk, 1996).

One recent conceptual model of community economic development specified six community capital assets necessary for communities to thrive and prosper: polity, physical, financial, human, cultural, social (Johnson, 2002). This model rests on the ability of community leaders to harness polity capital in order to generate win-win and/or reciprocal relationships between profit and not for profit organisations within the community. According to the model, the other five sources of 'community capital' can then be harnessed to generate entrepreneurial strategies to increase employment, reduce poverty, and create a healthy and economically competitive community. It draws on earlier elaborations of synergies among the community capitals, using slightly different concepts (Flora, Flora, & Fey, 2004; Flora, 1998) but adds spiritual capital. Cocklin and Alston (2003) have used the 'capitals' framework to analyse six Australian rural communities, raising some questions about the ways in which the capitals interact. For instance the importance of human agency must be recognised in managing the transactions, and trade-offs are commonly made, for instance between levels of natural and produced capital.

Others have also suggested strategies that may be employed by local governments and communities in pursuit of their economic development agenda (Savitch & Kantor, 2003). These include the use of slow or smart growth, and a focus on community development practices such as harnessing the social capital within a community. According to Savich and Kantor (2003) communities reap greater and more lasting benefit from slower economic growth utilising a social-centred approach rather than the more common market-centred fast growth. Sirolli (1999) outlines an approach for increasing local economic resilience by harnessing the passions of would-be entrepreneurs, and mentoring and assisting them to develop successful businesses. This approach emphasises creation of a diverse and innovative economy through stimulation of a diversity of small enterprises, suited to the social and environmental characteristics of their locations. The businesses often use local natural assets and skills, and seed further economic development within their areas.

9. Embracing Differences

By embracing the individual differences within a community, unique qualities and differences between people are accepted and valued, allowing diverse groups to thrive together. Differences may refer to variation in age, abilities, cultures, language, physical characteristics, socio-economic backgrounds, values and beliefs, sexuality, and gender. Diverse communities can be interesting and vibrant places to live, especially where a culture of acceptance and celebration of difference thrives. Different groups bring different perspectives, knowledge, connections and strengths to the community and its organisations.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Have you reflected on your attitudes to people who are 'different' to you, and assessed your own behaviours towards members of other groups?
- Are you aware of the resources and services available to assist with inclusion and assimilation of different people into the community, for example, translator services?
- Could you help others by volunteering (language/literacy), mentoring (both adults and young people) or being involved in community education?

Ideas

- Lead by example. Within your own networks, welcome people from diverse groups.
- Have you considered volunteering, mentoring or other ways of assisting members from other groups to integrate within the community?
- Take every opportunity to share your views about the benefits of a diverse, inclusive community.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Does your program embrace diversity and help members to learn about and appreciate their differences?
- Do you offer opportunities and alternative materials to allow other groups, such as non-English speaking community members, to access your group program?

Ideas

- Can you carry out an activity with the group that celebrates individual difference?
- Can your group get involved in enhancing the diversity within an area of interest to them?
- Include lessons on discovering and understanding different perspectives, elements and approaches to diverse groups.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Are there public events that celebrate diversity and help community members to learn about and appreciate their differences?
- Do local groups get involved in promoting and enhancing diversity within the community?

Ideas

- Arrange community activities that celebrate language, religion, cultural holidays and other customs.
- Develop a community radio station that celebrates difference in all forms.
- Identify services or programs within the community that are inaccessible to certain groups and develop ways of giving them access.
- Encourage local groups to include a diversity agenda as part of their mission.

Case Study 1
Building Bridges within a Community

On June 16, 2006, the **Ridgedale YMCA**, Minnetonka, Minnesota, USA celebrated the five year anniversary of its Community Enhancement Program. This unique program is based in a high density housing complex where approximately 25% of the residents are immigrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Belarus, China, Somalia, Moldova, Russia, Japan and Mexico. Celebrating the diverse cultures and backgrounds has been well received by the residents. Increased exposure to differences has helped to educate both the young and old who live in the complex. Opportunities for cultural exchange happen throughout the year. Examples include having immigrant parents speak to the youth about their culture and share traditions from their native lands in an on-site, after-school program. American traditions are also shared in order to make incoming immigrant families feel welcome and included.

The Ridgedale YMCA has found flexibility, education and respect to be the keys to their success. For example, some immigrant populations are restricted to eating certain foods because of cultural practices. Therefore, program leaders are willing to learn from immigrant families to guarantee that there is a wide variety of food available in order to meet the needs of all of their participants.

Source: Youth Worker News, National Youth Development Learning Network, Accessed on 8 March 2007, <**http://www.nydic.org/nydic/about/ServingAllYouth.htm**>

Case Study 2
2RRR 88.5 FM Community Radio Station

2RRR is a Sydney community radio station that aims to broadcast informative and entertaining material while facilitating and encouraging wide community use of its broadcasting facilities. In 1995, 2RRR established a website to promote the station online. 2RRR's website[1] is rapidly becoming essential to its operation, and the station has experimented with leading-edge technologies such as streaming audio and web casting.

2RRR first went to air in 1984. The station sees itself as an important voice of diversity and believes that diversity is its greatest strength. As well as broadcasting, 2RRR provides community information and cultural exchange, and people can use its broadcasting facilities for their own cultural activities.

Source: Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. Case Study Enhancing Operational Efficiency and Capability 2005
[1] <**http:www.2rrr.org.au**>
Accessed 6/11/07

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

Individual differences were seen as an important component of individual and community resilience in 36 of 68 interviews conducted with community members. As with several other resilience concepts, opinions regarding the influence of individual differences tended to reflect the group that a participant belonged to. For example, Youth group participants suggested that individual differences were not well catered for in Stanthorpe, particularly in relation to the range of recreational activities available. The Special Needs group felt that there needed to be more services to cater for the different requirements of people with disabilities in Stanthorpe. Commercial group participants recognised the contribution that social diversity made to the economy, with new people bringing in different skills and ideas. Farmers and many others spoke of the cultural influences in Stanthorpe's background and how this had helped develop resilience factors.

Individual differences within the community were discussed in relation to age, length of residency, cultural background, and occupational or economic factors. Many people expressed the opinion that acceptance of difference and diversity was an important characteristic of community resilience in general. However, opinion regarding the degree to which Stanthorpe embraced social diversity varied greatly. Some participants felt Stanthorpe enthusiastically embraced cultural diversity and that acceptance of all types of people contributed to its resilience. Others reported that a strong social or cultural stratification existed within the area, which was exclusionary and adversely affected numerous minority groups such as new residents, non-Italians, the poor, young people, and the disabled. Some participants noted that being at the bottom of Stanthorpe's social hierarchy contributed to the resilience of these individuals. There were also reports of conflict between a small segment of residents and itinerant workers or 'backpackers' from other cultures.

The majority of interviewees regarded diversity as important to community resilience, but not individual resilience. Eleven of twelve interviews conducted with the Commercial group focused on the importance of diversity compared to three and two respectively for the Service Provider and Youth groups.

Study participants discussed the cultural nature of the Stanthorpe community. In particular, most participants noted that Stanthorpe was a multicultural community. The major cultural influence discussed was the influx of people from Italy and how this had shaped Stanthorpe over time, in association with farming occupations.

They also noted that this diversity of culture was continuing with new people from different cultural backgrounds adding to the cultural mix. This influx was generally seen as a positive influence on the community.

' … It's a multicultural community … There's lots of interesting people here and all new ideas coming into the district.'

' … some of these people are bringing new ideas, new thought processes, new ways to do things … '

However, they also saw that the diversity was not just from the past, but also from current and future migration to the town.

' … but there's—as I say, because of the number of people that are coming into our community I'm quite staggered by the versatility of our population. Not all coming in because of wanting to find work, they come in to retire … It's a wealth of talent out there that could be used, not only on a community basis, but be involved in … them contributing in some way.'

9. Embracing Differences - Brief Literature Review

Social diversity or group differences, whether defined by ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation or other forms of difference is becoming more prevalent within communities (Carpenter, Zárate, & Garza, 2007; Watkins, Larson, & Sullivan, 2007). However, there is little published literature directly examining the impact of cultural and social differences on individual and community resilience. There is, however, a substantial literature devoted to the related fields of multiculturalism, prejudice, and intergroup relations. This research explores cultural or ethnic diversity and the impact of group differences within workplaces, schools or communities. It has been claimed that social harmony is best achieved by maintaining the identities of subgroups (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), but this is not universally agreed. Evidence also suggests that highlighting the differences between cultural subgroups by embracing their distinctiveness reduces prejudice and negativity (Carpenter, Zárate, & Garza, 2007; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). Thus, from this perspective, embracing differences by celebrating the uniqueness of subgroups within a community enhances its resilience.

The authors of a recent study aimed at bridging intergroup difference among youth argued that teaching communities to interact successfully was an essential requirement to achieving positive societal relations (Watkins, Larson, & Sullivan, 2007). They maintained that increasing social diversity had resulted in an urgent need for people to acquire the skills to form cross-group relationships. Watkins et al. (2007) determined that three stages were necessary to produce change within the group of youth studied. In the first stage, interaction and building relationships across groups occurred. In the second stage, learning about other groups and their culture, experiences, and heritage assisted in overcoming stereotypes about the groups. In the last stage, the youth began to incorporate the insights learned from stage two into their behaviour and began acting with awareness and sensitivity towards other groups. The youth became active agents of self-change and through the three stages were able to gain a critical understanding of the processes that create marginalisation and injustice (Watkins, Larson, & Sullivan, 2007).

Within Australia, the federal government initiative 'Diversity Works!' aims to promote workplace and community diversity by emphasising 'the benefits for business and the economy of utilising the cultural and linguistic skills of the Australian workforce'.[1] Associated with this policy, a review paper examining the impact of diversity outlines a range of problems and benefits associated with diversity in work and educational settings (Nicholas et al., 2001). There is evidence that if managed poorly, gender or ethnically-based diversity may lead to low levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Riordan & Shore, 1997), high turnover (O'Reilly, Cadwell, & Barnett, 1989), and emotional conflict (Jehn, 1995). However, there is also evidence that a diverse workforce may produce an increased range of values, knowledge, views and beliefs of the world which can create a platform for better quality decision-making, innovation, and more creative problem solving within an organisation (Chatman, 1991; Nicholas et al., 2001).

[1] <http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au>

Accessed 9/3/07

10. Beliefs

The concept of beliefs incorporates spirituality, a connection with nature, and all types of religious beliefs that enhance the life of individuals and groups. Belief systems have been shown to enhance personal and community resilience, often by providing people with an additional sense of meaning and purpose in their everyday lives. As well as the many forms of organised religion, practices such as 'rites of passage' and 'coming of age rituals' may contribute to the resilience process. Church groups also contribute to social networks and support and provide individuals with a sense of belonging.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Does connecting with nature appeal to your sense of self?

- Religion provides a strong sense of faith for many people.

- Do you reflect on those things in your life that are most important to you?

Ideas

- Spend time reflecting on your place in the universe and what is most important to your happiness and the happiness of others.

- Is going to church an opportunity to connect?

- Do you spend time just being, in the environment?

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Does your program enable opportunities for participants to learn, develop and understand their own sense of spirituality?

- Does your program enable opportunities for participants to connect with nature?

- Does your program allow participants to appreciate other's beliefs?

Ideas

- Incorporate spaces in your programs or workshops that allow participants to practice their own forms of spirituality.

- Have resources available for people to explore different types of spirituality, in order to find something that suits them.

- Run your workshop outside rather than indoors to allow participants to connect with nature.

- Encourage a wide view of spirituality, enabling people with very different beliefs to identify commonalities.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Does your community understand and/or respect diverse forms of belief?

- Does your community have festivals and public events that celebrate the oneness in the meaning of spirituality?

- Do *all* groups of people in the community have access to nature in some form, e.g. disability and elderly access to bush walks and gardens?

Ideas

- Identify and renew individual and community rites of passage.

- Research and connect with your local indigenous community.

- Provide opportunities to access spaces for meditation and yoga.

- Organise a community bush walk or picnic.

Case Study 1
Building Resilience through Spirituality

Writers on spirituality in practice suggest that with the right state of mind, we can experience our connectedness by 'seeing how our energy feeds into all the energy that makes up reality'. For example, a volunteer might explore how their energy can best contribute to the bigger pool of community volunteerism. Similarly, practitioners in the health field might look at how enhancing the health of certain groups in the community enhances the resilience of the community as a whole. Not only do we have spiritual connections with one another, but we can also have spiritual connections with the landscape or people who are no longer living. For example, Indigenous Australian's respect for culture emphasises close spiritual stewardship, spiritual and economic ties with ancestral lands.
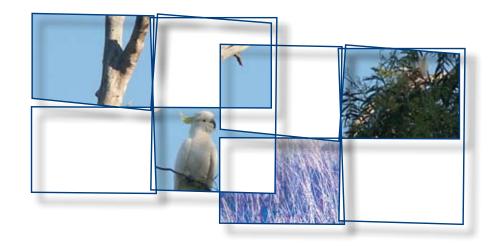
Case Study 2
Tim Costello's hints for enhancing Spirituality in young people

Tim Costello highlights the importance of 'coming-of-age' rituals to young people in offering a sense of meaning to the past, present and future. He suggests that communal celebrations or meanings have been replaced by things like getting a drivers licence or getting drunk for the first time, which do not bring the event of moving into adulthood into any clear relationship with the broader canvas of our lives or culture.

'Many of our young people have lost not only their church-based rituals, but without employment, their work-based rituals are gone too. There are no tea breaks or shared drinks after a hard day for those without work. And even for those with jobs, shift and casual work leave family rituals hard to organise. No wonder our Anzac Day celebration, one of the very few national rituals we have left, is increasingly well attended.'

Tim Costello reports on a study of high school students which demonstrated that the most powerful factors protecting students against multiple drug use, suicide, poor body image, and so on, were school connectedness, family connectedness and spiritual connectedness. Costello also highlights the importance of other rituals that are increasingly being lost, such as 'the shared meal' and 'choral singing'; and warns against the segmentation of ritual where young people or the elderly are segmented and pushed away to be part of their own rituals (following the business strategy of market segmentation).[1]

[1] Costello, T. (1999). *Tips from a travelling soul-searcher*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

A Stanthorpe Community Perspective

The importance of having beliefs was one of the least frequently reported resilience concepts. The Resilient group and the Commercial group made the most reference to the importance of aspects of belief in forming community and individual resilience. Several participants expressed the view that shared religious beliefs or practices, such as belonging to the same church, were an important component of community resilience within Stanthorpe. Conversely, some people interviewed talked about how not belonging to the prevalent religious in-groups led to a lack of acceptance and even exclusion within the community, thus impairing individual resilience or community coherence and unity.

Some participants felt that having beliefs was important but the form that the belief took was less important:

'So … I think people who have a bit of some sort of spiritual nourishment are more resilient and whether that comes from the church or from their own spiritual beliefs. I think that people who have a sort of a relationship or a belief in a level of things that's outside human experience, I think that they're probably more resilient.'
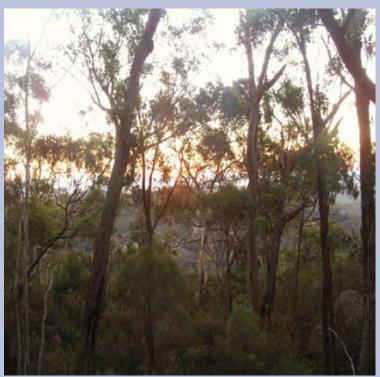
Self belief was an important aspect of individual resilience for many participants:

'I am a true believer in like you are your own person.'

'A faith in oneself.'

'Believing in yourself and … trying not to let the emotional things, ummm get too much control, like the grief, the loss, the things going wrong and things like that you know.'

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

' … it gave me a feeling of aloneness and it was good to be able to just think for a while … it was also just nice to be able to admire the world that God made for us.'

' … it was quiet. There were only birds and the wind. No planes or cars or people yelling or screaming. It was a time to get away from everything and just be yourself for a while. It was also a time to dream and I thought about my future.'

10. Beliefs - Brief Literature Review

The concept 'beliefs' encompasses interview responses focused on spiritual and religious beliefs. Spirituality can be defined as a search for meaning and purpose in life, or efforts to connect with a higher order or divine being which may or may not be religious (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). For some, spirituality involves a connection to nature or humanity as a whole, while for others it is directly tied to forms of organised religions or established belief systems. Within the research literature, the boundary between the concepts of spirituality and religion are blurred, with many diverse definitions and points of view expressed. According to one perspective, spirituality can exist outside the boundaries of formal religion, however, spirituality is also a part of religion (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Others claim to have found supporting evidence that spirituality and religiousness are related but distinct concepts (Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005).

Although the relationship is a complex one, one study found that both constructs are associated with enhanced life satisfaction and adjustment (Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005). It was found that these relationships are mediated by factors such as social support and optimism. In a review of research on religion, it was concluded that, although the effect tends to be moderate, there is supporting evidence of a link between religious practices and reduced mortality and onset of physical and mental illnesses (George, Larson, Koenig, & McCullough, 2000). In addition, being religious is linked to a greater likelihood of recovery from or adjustment to physical and mental illness. The authors claimed there were three underlying mechanisms which accounted for these effects: an increase in healthy behaviours, social support, and a sense of coherence or meaning in life.

For some people, a connection to nature forms the basis of their belief system. Research indicates that the natural environment may have a role in self- and emotional-regulation and provide important restorative experiences for some people (Korpela & Hartig, 2001). Some theorists investigating an individuals' connection to nature have suggested that the motivation to engage with natural environments is the product of lifelong socialisation processes (Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004). It is believed that expectations of positive outcomes related to specific environments develop over time, and are learned through personal experience and from significant others. Others have claimed that through their interaction with their physical environment, individuals develop a cognitive structure representing feelings, memories, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behaviour and experience related to that environment (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Further, due to the interweaving of meaning and affect, connection to a place becomes an important part of a person's identity (Stedman, 2002).

11. Leadership

Leadership has been defined as the process of influencing people's activities to facilitate achieving goals. Leadership can build resilience at the individual, group and community level. Leadership can be formal (such as local government) or informal (through individual or small group action). Different individuals or groups of individuals can offer leadership at certain times and the role can be shared. Leadership is about setting up helpful structures and processes to allow individuals, groups and communities to achieve their goals. It includes foresight and planning, and the ability to be flexible and adaptive.

Enhancing Individual Resilience

- Do you have strong abilities or skills in a specific area?
- Are there issues you feel passionate about?
- Is there a way you can use your strengths to assist others or achieve important goals?

Ideas

- Read some self-help books on leadership and communicating with other people.
- Don't be afraid to share your ideas and offer your skills/ experience to help others.
- Follow things through to the end—even when obstacles seem certain to stop you.
- Volunteer to be on the management committee of an organisation you feel passionately about.

Enhancing Group Resilience

- Do you understand different types of leadership, and do you encourage leadership in your programs?

Ideas

- Carry out an activity which will highlight leadership qualities within the people in your program.
- Encourage participants to utilise their expertise and skills in areas to assist the group.
- Identify participants with leadership qualities and encourage them to take more active leadership roles in activities.

Enhancing Community Resilience

- Can leaders be identified in your community that represent different groups (e.g. young people, elderly, Indigenous people) or do they represent 'mainstream'?
- Do leadership programs that have been run in your community focus on individual leadership or community leadership?
- Do organisations or groups within the community take a leadership role when appropriate?

Ideas

- Develop leadership skills in different community groups.
- Raise funds for community people to attend leadership programs.
- Organise a community bushwalk that includes leadership training.
- Support leadership in local government and community organisations.

Case Study
Building Rural Leaders Program by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries [1]

What is *Building Rural Leaders*?

Leadership transformation, not just information

The *Building Rural Leaders* program assists people, industries, communities, and agribusinesses to build a critical mass of people, men and women of all ages, skilled in leadership and strategic thinking.

The Program aims to assist individuals to deal with change affecting rural people at the business, industry and community levels. *Building Rural Leaders* challenges existing ways of thinking, develops new skills and encourages greater self-confidence in participants.

What is leadership?

We define leadership as influence. It is the art of influencing people so that they strive willingly to achieve shared goals. Leadership is also the art of leading yourself, to know what you want to achieve, how you're going to get there, and know that you're making satisfactory progress.

Leadership is not about holding a particular position in an organisation, it is about having positive influence in your business or organisation, regardless of what position you hold.

Why rural communities need leadership, not just leaders

Throughout the world, it has become increasingly evident that those communities which have effective leadership and strategic thinking at all levels within their community, local businesses and industries, are those which are prospering, both economically and socially.

Building Rural Leaders assists participants to achieve real change for themselves, their communities and their businesses. This Program is about working with participants to build their skills so they can better influence their businesses, industries and communities, regardless of the position they hold.

Why is the Building Rural Leaders program so effective?

Significant behaviour change and, more importantly, attitudinal change rarely comes from short, 'one-off' training courses. These courses offer information and some inspiration, but are hampered in the long term because the significant learnings are not reinforced.

Leadership is about relationships. The nine month term of the *Building Rural Leaders Foundation Program* allows time for relationships to develop, the integration and reinforcement of learning elements, and ongoing support from presenters and co-participants to put learning into practice back in the real world.

Building Rural Leaders uses well-developed 'action learning' principles. Participants work on their own projects or problems and are supported and encouraged by other participants in a small group setting. The program presenters are highly skilled in their particular areas, and are experienced in working with rural people and their particular issues.

This type of training significantly contributes to participants breaking the repetitive behaviour cycle which often stops them from succeeding in their leadership endeavours.

Participants notice real change occurring in their lives as soon as they start *Building Rural Leaders* training. This reinforces their confidence and their willingness to try new and different ways of thinking and behaving.

Many say that *Building Rural Leaders* has radically and positively impacted on their business, family and industry involvement.

[1] Building Rural Leaders Website <**http://www2.dpi.qld.gov.au/community/11968.html**>

Accessed 5/11/07

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In total, the importance of leadership was discussed within 24 of the 68 interviews conducted. As with several other resilience concepts, specific reference was made to the importance of leadership in times of adversity. In particular, several participants highlighted the important role that leadership had played in Stanthorpe's resilience during the severe bush fires. However, not all the responses regarding leadership were positive, with several participants from the Service Providers, Special Needs, and Resilient group claiming that there was a lack of good leadership within Stanthorpe, particularly in the areas of social welfare and community engagement. The need for good leadership was mentioned twice as often in relation to creating an ideal resilient community as it was in response to questions about what makes Stanthorpe resilient or the characteristics of a resilient person.

Several participants spoke about the Stanthorpe Council and noted that the Council could either enhance community development through leadership or constrain it.

'… the Council's got to get more lighter on—in regulations and rules, not to chase that (potential investors) out of town, keep it in town.'

Other participants spoke about leadership within Stanthorpe in a broader sense.

'… I think we've got good energy in the community organisation[s] and individuals within the community. It's a matter of liaising it all, getting it together.'

Perspectives from Stanthorpe High School Students

'Leadership is everywhere … Firstly and fore mostly our parents and older siblings, who have and will for the rest of our lives, show us great leadership.'

'Captains of our soccer teams, our school captains, the organisers of social events, our teachers and even the efforts of those responsible for the running of such organisations as scouts, girl guides, cadets, sporting teams and clubs and even the performing arts association… each making an impression of what we are aiming for as we grow and reach our goals in life.'

11. Leadership - Brief Literature Review

The study of leadership and its influence on groups and communities has a long history. A recent empirical review of leadership literature concluded there was substantial evidence that leadership had a profound influence on communities, groups and organisations (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Good leadership enhanced the wellbeing of those being led by promoting effective performance and goal achievement while poor leadership 'degraded the quality of life for everyone associated with it' (p. 169, Hogan, 2005). The authors cited four primary leadership virtues: integrity, decisiveness, competence, and vision (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

There is evidence to suggest that good leadership is also needed in families. A study of family leadership styles in two-parent families found that an active transformational leadership style was associated with greater wellbeing than families where parents had a passive or laissez-faire style of leadership (Galbraith & Schvaneveldt, 2005). According to Bass (1997), a transformational leadership style occurs when a leader becomes a motivating force among their associates or followers by helping them work toward their full potential. A transformational leader helps their followers to achieve greater heights by addressing higher needs and aspirations, and by sharing and engaging them in a mission or vision that transforms their perspective or outlook. Further, a transformational leader uses individualised interactions and serves as a mentor to foster growth and raise expectations in their followers (Bass, 1997; Galbraith & Schvaneveldt, 2005). In their family study, Galbraith and Schvaneveldt (2005) concluded:

Given the many pressures and challenges faced by families, there is a need to help parents elicit cooperation and trust among members of the family and become actively involved in providing good leadership, especially leadership that fits the description of transformational leadership. As suggested by research in the field of organisational behavior and as implied by this study, positive outcomes are associated with active leadership that is transformational ... When adopted and practiced over time, outcomes associated with this type of leadership

may include the involvement of children in a shared vision or cause; positive role modelling; family unity, trust, cooperation, and teamwork; a sense of responsibility among family members; the use of power in healthy ways; and a collective sense of ownership for overcoming problems and working toward positive individual and family outcomes (p. 236).

One theorist evaluating leadership styles and leadership change in human and community service organisations emphasised the importance of leaders being able to adapt their style according to organisational needs (Schmid, 2006). Basing his study on the assumption that leadership styles must adapt to changing environments, Schmid (2006) examined four human and community service organisations to determine the appropriate leadership style for each of the organisations described at different stages of the organisational life cycle. He found that in order to be effective, leaders must develop awareness of and sensitivity to changing situations and organisational constraints. More specifically, Schmid concluded that leaders must know when to adopt a task-oriented style versus a people-oriented style, and when to adopt an internal versus an external orientation.

Within Australia, research examining the role of leaders in rural communities has confirmed the importance of effective local leadership in community resilience (Epps & Sorensen, 1996; Smailes, 2002a). A South Australian study concluded that rural leaders played a central role in community sustainability by providing original ideas and a vision for the future and thus providing a focus around which community identity and belonging could be fostered and thrive (Smailes, 2002a, 2002b). A study examining leadership in four rural communities in Queensland identified four key qualities of effective rural leadership: the ability to formulate a vision, the ability to generate acceptance of that vision within the wider community, the ability to activate key persons and groups to achieve the vision, and finally, the ability to set an example (Epps & Sorensen, 1996; Smailes, 2002b).

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There are many other resources available to enhance resilience for communities, groups and individuals. They are located on the internet, in the library, and in your local phone book. A selection of these resources and how to access them are described below.

Enhancing Resilience in Individuals

Rural Mental Health Support Line 1800 201 123

Lifeline <http://www.justlook.org.au>
A Lifeline database of where to go to for help or call Lifeline on 13 11 14

Kids Help Line <http://www.kidshelp.com.au>
or phone 1800 55 1800: kids help line offers counselling and support for young people aged 5 to 25

Family Helpline 1800 643 000

Youthlink 1800 803 356
(Duty Officer 12.30–4.30pm, Mon–Fri)

Centrelink <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>
Centrelink is an Australian government agency, 'assisting people to become self-sufficient and supporting those in need'. Centrelink offers financial assistance and help for a wide range of people including those looking for a job, people with a disability, and people needing emergency assistance

<http://csd.csa.gov.au/CSD>
A community services directory run by the federal government **Child Support Agency**. The directory provides information on organisations in the community which provide services to assist parents on a wide range of family related issues

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au>
or phone 1300 22 4636: for assistance dealing with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and postnatal depression

<http://www.schizophrenia-help.com>
for assistance dealing with schizophrenia

<http://www.ysas.org.au>
A youth substance abuse service

Managing the Pressures of Farming

The Australian Centre for Agriculture Health and Safety have developed this new interactive website at <http://www.aghealth.org.au/pressures> The site contains checklists and support information related to farm business, family farms, and personal issues to assist people on the land

Enhancing Resilience in Groups and Communities

<http://www.community.gov.au>
an Australian government website which offers a large directory of information on services and useful sites. Directories that are included: **For Community groups, Community development, Community information and services, Get involved, Internet tools and tips**

<http://www.harmony.gov.au/harmony.htm>
The Living in Harmony programme *assists incorporated, not for profit organisations with funding for projects that aim to promote Australian values and mutual obligation, engage the whole community and address understanding and intolerance at the community level*

<http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au>
'Diversity Works!' is a policy of the Australian Government to promote the benefits for business and the economy of utilising the cultural and linguistic skills of the Australian workforce. This site has a large range of resources and information to promote diversity in business, schools, and groups

<http://www.hlth.qut.edu.au/ph/resilience>
The Queensland University of Technology project: *A multi strategy health promotion project that promotes resilience in children of primary school age in school, family and community settings. This project is sponsored by Queensland Health and Brisbane City Council*

<http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/index.html>
Resilience Net *information for helping children and families overcome adversities*

<http://www.resilienceinstitute.com.au>
The Resilience Institute *provides consulting, assessment and training to help individuals and organisations develop five disciplines of resilience*

<http://www.cedworks.com/index.html>
The Centre for Community Enterprise offers expertise and resources in *starting and strengthening CED organizations, revitalizing communities, developing community-minded businesses, CED curriculum design and delivery, and publishing*

<http://www.cce.umn.edu/nrrc>
The University of Minnesota's National Resilience Resource Centre Viewing all students, residents, clients and organizations as *at promise* rather than *at risk*

Stanthorpe Shire Council Website
An informative site which includes an A–Z of Services in the region.
Go to <http://www.stanthorpe.qld.gov.au>
The Council has also developed a community website at <http://www.granitenet.net.au>