

Wisconsin Correctional Association



Resilience: Natural or Developed?

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Resilience is a mystery of sorts and begs the questions, who and how does someone become more resilient to stressful environments? There are certainly examples of resilient children, teens and adults that appear to have been genetically predisposed to handle stress better than others, but what about the rest of us? Working in corrections can be very challenging and calls for a resilient mindset throughout our careers. Newer research is suggesting that while some of us hit the lottery of sorts related to resilience, it does not mean the rest of us are not able to develop resilience along the way.

Dr. Gregory Miller from Northwestern University has been using MRI scans to help uncover how brain activity may be the key to resilience. Dr. Miller found that children in high stress environments that had higher levels of functional connectivity in the central executive network had better cardiac and metabolic health than their peers that had lower connectivity. One plausible explanation for this is that an increase in this activity may increase self-control and lower the need for unhealthy coping strategies like smoking or eating junk food. While some participants in this study appeared to naturally increase this activity, it gave some hope to others that there are answers to developing this activity, if it is not naturally taking place.

If we increase self-control, could we in-turn develop more resilience? The question is not that far fetched and in fact it looks like taking control in a few select areas may assist in resilience in the workplace. A few examples that help build self-control includes: working out, creating social gatherings outside of the work place, or embracing mindfulness. The attached article explores both these and other ideas that are gaining momentum when it comes to creating our own resilience in the workplace.

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/opinion/sunday/stress-anxiety-depression-research.html?utm_source=Center+Members&utm_campaign=80ec9f1d86-Dec_2018_Donor_ScienceFindings&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4a32dc39b4-80ec9f1d86-9258555