The Wizarding World of Resilience

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Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. In recent years there has been a marked decrease in the resilience among children, teens, and young adults. In higher education, this decline has resulted in increased anxiety and depression among college students. Record numbers of college students are attending counseling and taking medication. They report struggling to complete their coursework, interact with peers, or develop a clear sense of self. College faculty and staff find it difficult to support students and feel lost as how to prepare them for the adult world.

At Winthrop University, we have a comprehensive support system for our students. We believe that utilizing a wraparound approach to support students that addresses both their academic, social, and mental health needs is paramount in preparing them for the world. However, like so many other campuses, we continued to see a decrease in the resilience of our students. We wanted to know if resilience could be taught, and that question led to the development of the Winthrop College of Resilience: The Magic of Inner Strength.

Historically, it has been difficult to have students participate in group therapy. Group therapy can be the most effective form of therapy for many people but it makes people uncomfortable to find themselves in social situations with strangers where they are being asked to take a deep dive into their mental health. This is even more difficult for college students. So we brainstormed a way to attract students using a pop culture reference that they could relate to, that also showed clear themes of resilience. What better show of resilience than the boy who lived?

The Harry Potter series is a worldwide phenomenon that has captured the hearts and minds of people young and old. Current college students grew up with Harry Potter and have a special connection with the stories. Originally, we developed an eight-week program based on the “Road to Resilience” published by the APA. The original developers of the program were Courtney Leak, LISW-CP, Gretchen Baldwin, Psy.D., and Amy Kulbok, Graduate Intern. We thought the use of supervisees in the process allowed us to provide hands on education regarding developing and facilitating group therapy, as well as providing a parallel for students of someone who is currently in college and understands the stresses of that world.
Simple Definition of **resilience**

*noun* re-sil·i-ence /ri-ˈzil-yən(t)s/

: the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens

: the ability of something to return to its original shape after it has been pulled, stretched, pressed, bent, etc.

(Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

APA’s The Road to Resilience

Make connections.

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems.

Accept that change is a part of living.

Move toward your goals.

Take decisive actions.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery.

Nurture a positive view of yourself.

Keep things in perspective.

Maintain a hopeful outlook.

Take care of yourself

(American Psychological Association, n.d.)
References


