

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In our country Malaysia, there is no evidence of any studies conducted by local writers on resiliency of couples with hearing impaired children. However in other countries like the United Kingdom and United States of America, writers have stated about resiliency in parents of a hearing impaired child. The following sections represent some definitions and some specific core factors linked with resiliency on the basis of some pertinent literature review.

#### **2.2 THE RESILIENCY MECHANISM**

Wolin and Wolin (1993), operationalizing Rutter's (1987) thoughts (see page 11) in their research, suggested that resiliency describes the individuals' capacity to bounce back and withstand hardship. Pitzer and Meyer (1987) state that resilience is the property of a material that enables it to resume its' original shape after being stretched or bent. The common theme in this definition is that resiliency in individuals is exhibited by an innate capacity to overcome or adapt to adversity and continue to function in a healthy way. A highly resilient couple will be able to use their "inherent strengths to challenge and triumph over adversity and in doing so emerge stronger and more confident. Their

inherent strengths may comprise of one or an amalgam of resiliency mechanisms, originated from several sources (see section 2.3, below for information on sources). Depending on the couples' perception of adversity, either one or a constellation of resiliency mechanisms are exercised to challenge it" (Johnson, 1995). The couples' resiliency is thought of as being operative when the couples can cope with the crisis of facing the fact that their child is hearing impaired.

### **2.3 THREE CORE FACTORS OF RESILIENCE**

"A successful adaptation and adjustment after experiencing an adverse, hostile, or negative event is referred to as resilience" (Garmezy, 1993). Results of studies on resilience by Holaday and McPhearson, 1997, indicate that three core factors influencing resiliency are as follows:

- i) external factor of resilience or social support which includes variables such as: cultural influences and community, school, professional, personal and family support
- ii) internal factor of resilience or cognitive skills which includes variables such as intelligence, coping style, personal control, and assignment of meaning
- iii) internal resilient source or psychological resources (inner locus of control) which includes variables such as flexibility, tolerance, humour, love, commitment, trust, optimism, and maturity.

These important variables of the above three core factors of resilience are briefly described in the following sections of this chapter. Couples of hearing impaired children

who have these external and internal factors of resilience will portray a favourable level of resiliency in their lives.

### **2.3.1 Social Support**

#### **i) Cultural influences.**

Resilience is strongly influenced by the overall cultural attitudes, values, and standards of beauty sanctioned within the society (Beuf, 1990). Whether an individual with impairment is accepted or rejected and avoided or welcomed also is determined by race, gender, religious beliefs, family status, and the amount of financial resources available for costly medical technology and rehabilitation (Beuf, 1990). Cultural influences that result in acceptance of a hearing impaired child as a worthy individual instead of rejecting the child as an abnormal being, will be gainful for parents of the exceptional child.

#### **ii) Community support.**

Couples of hearing impaired children who do well under adverse circumstances are those who are supported and accepted by the community in which they live. Resilient couples are those who have community support through their well-maintained relationships over a period of years at school, work, church or other religious sites. Religion provides stability (Murphy and Moriarty, 1976; Werner, 1990), cohesiveness (Garnezy, 1993), unity (Murphy and Moriarty, 1976), a sense of meaning and purpose (Werner, 1989; Werner and Smith, 1982). Advice or counsel from good spiritual leaders

is important for the human spirit and can help to foster resilience in the couples during times of crisis and stress as it gives them the ability to make meaningful sense out of chaotic and traumatic events (Garbarino, 1998). Appropriate, community support can help the couples of hearing impaired children because it can "reduce stress, and improve their emotional well-being (Goldfarb et., 1986).

### **iii) School support.**

Caring teachers and school administrators that promote high self-esteem, encourage social and scholastic success, and refuse to tolerate prejudicial behaviours are key figures in helping couples of hearing impaired children to be more resilient. Wilders and Robson, 1980, believe that teachers' who have a good working relationship with couples of hearing impaired children can help them to minimize the feeling of isolation felt by these parents. Schools can further help these couples by linking them up with additional beneficial services, which the couples may be ignorant about such as speech therapy and valid social services.

### **iv) Personal support.**

A strong contributor to resilience is a long-term relationship that the individual has with at least one person other than someone in the immediate family (neighbor, relative, counselor, or friend) who display a consistent, unconditional positive regard and faith in the individual's ability to overcome adversity (Zimrin, 1986). This positive support and acceptance found in special relationships can help the couples with hearing impaired children to make successful adjustments to overcome their stress.

v) **Familial support.**

Couples who have had firm, kind and good role model parents with stable marriages can rely on their parents for family support to help them adapt to the chronic stressor of having a hearing impaired child. These couples will be highly resilient if they had parents who "were models of resilience themselves" (Anthony & Cohler, 1987).

vi) **Professional Support.**

Doctors, ENT specialists, speech therapist, social workers, vocational rehabilitation teachers and counselors are all examples of professional support for the couples with hearing impaired children. These couples "may receive tangible assistance with their problems - for example, a training program for their child or youth or Medicaid reimbursement for adaptive equipment" (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990). Resilient couples will attempt to turn to these agencies or private practitioners for help in dealing with the hearing impaired problem of their children.

### 2.3.2 Cognitive Skills

i) **Intelligence.**

In general having at least an average intelligence is necessary for resilience: People must be able to concentrate on a task, participate in problem solving, generate alternative solutions, and reason abstractly (Bernard, 1993; Cowen & Work, 1988; Garbarino et. al., 1991; Garmezy, 1991; Zimrin, 1986). Resilience is associated with

competence in understanding and sharing information through adequate language...(Werner, 1989) and through nonverbal and verbal communications (Murphy, 1987). Intelligence also is associated with the ability to use hope by disengaging the mind from trauma (Zimrin, 1986). Olson et al. (1993) cites that the resilient couple has the ability to "redefine a demanding situation in a more rational and acceptable way in order to make the situation more managable" (p. 143).

## **ii) Coping style.**

Actively coping with any kind of stress is more effective than passively enduring or simply reacting (Garbarino et al., 1991; Rutter, 1985; Zimrin, 1986). Successful adapters more often have a "belligerent coping style rather than a compliant, yielding style ..." (Zimrin, 1986, p. 347). Resilient couples of hearing impaired children have the ability to persist on a task to completion, expend effort, grapple against obstacles, and keep on trying after failure (Murphy, 1987). They take responsibility for their own actions and their consequences (including failures) without viewing themselves as failures (Henly, 1993). Resilient couples will be able to rely on effective coping skills such as those mentioned in the resilience couple rating scale (see appendix V: pp. 61-62).

## **iii) Personal control.**

Personal control and sense of self-efficacy includes the "belief that one can achieve needs and goals mediated by a capacity to delay gratification" (Murphy, 1987) and a "willingness to take responsibility for.... problems" (Pruzinsky, Rice, Himel, Morgan, & Edlich, 1992). Resilient couples will have the self-determination and

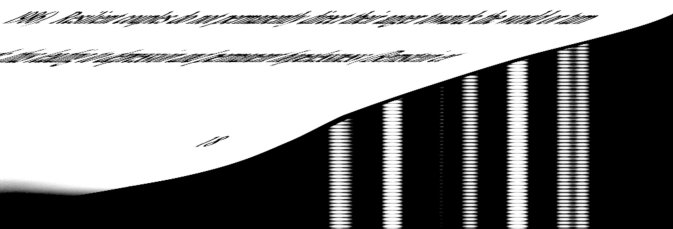
willingness to make the necessary personal sacrifices to overcome or adapt to the chronic stressor of facing and dealing with the hearing impairment problem of their child.

iv) **Assignment of meaning.**

According to Frankl (1984), everything in life has a meaning, including suffering. Making sense of, and learning from, negative experience influences an individual's conclusions about his or her own ability to cope and is a self-judgement of efficacy (Bernstein, 1976; Watkins, Cook, May, & Still, 1992). Sometimes, religion or spirituality may help individuals find the needed faith, stability and meaning to go on with their lives (Valentine & Feinhauer, 1993). After the initial stage of grieving, resilient couples of hearing impaired children will be able to continue their lives with a positive purpose to do their level best for their child instead of remaining stagnant in their sorrows.

### 2.3.3 **Psychological Resources**

Resilient people tend to have certain personality characteristics or dispositional attitudes that protect them against stress (Garmezy, 1991; Luthar & Zigler, 1991). These include: i) an internal locus of control (Jens & Gordon, 1991); ii) often display a high activity level, an ability to be flexible in new situations (Garmezy, 1991); iii) creativity, initiative, morality (Wolin and Wolin, 1993) and iv) a sense of humor (Bernard, 1993). Resilient couples with hearing impaired children have the ability to avoid self-blame or guilt and a refusal to believe that suffering was deserved (Ross & Faustini, 1990; Zimrin,



al. 1992). In this proposal, various other resilient traits, which resilient couples need are listed in the couple resilience scale (see appendix V: pp. 61-62). It is believed that couples of hearing impaired children who have these resilient traits such as commitment, cohesion, communication, effective resource management, affection, optimism, tolerance, hardiness and so forth will portray a better internal locus of control (Jens & Gordon, 1991) and a higher level of resiliency in their lives which keeps their relationship stable during adversity

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

Based on the literature review from various sources mentioned in this chapter, it is apparent that couples who have the three core factors of resilience which are social support, cognitive skills, psychological resources and their variables operating in their lives, will be most likely to meet the variety of demands that arises when dealing with their child who is diagnosed with sensori-neural deafness.