

# Health promotion in children's life: protective factors

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# Etiology of child development

- Bronfenbrenner's & Belsky's systemic and transactional model of human ecology
- the dynamic interplay of distal and proximal factors affecting child development
- includes: the macrosystem, exosystem, microsystem and the ontogenic system

# Definitions

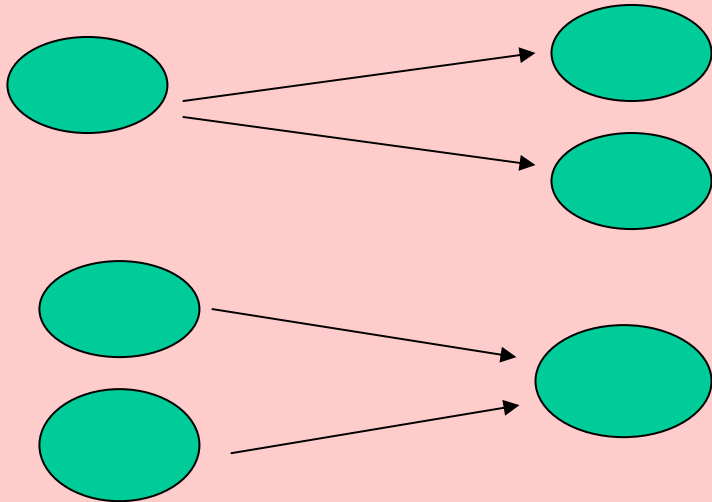
- Vulnerability – resilience
- Protective/compensatory factors – risk factors
- Salutogenesis – pathogenesis

Curing illness – preventing risk – promoting health

We know more about the etiology of mental/physical illness  
Protective factors sometimes conceptualized as the opposite of risk factors (for example, an absent father is a risk factor, but when he is there, we study the mother?)

# Not a linear model

- Multifinality: same background, different outcome
- Ekvifinality: different background, same outcome



# Macrosystem

- **Protective factors:**

equity and equality

high maternal educational level, possibilities for participation

culture that promotes trust and participation (social capital, democracy)

stable political and economical situation

# Exosystem

- Universal access to health care services, such as Maternity and Well-baby clinics
- Primary health care
- Social and educational services
- Informal support from friends and family – loneliness is poison for family life

# Microsystem

Protective for the development of the child:

- Stability/consistency of caregivers
- Socially responsive caregiving behavior, secure attachment relationships

A sensitive caregiver is alert to the needs of the child and enjoys interaction with him. The child's physical, emotional and cognitive needs are met.

# Ontogenic level

- The child's contribution: high IQ, easy temperament, physical attractiveness
- identical caregiver behaviour might be experienced differently by different children
- The child's capacity to reflect upon his experiences – is anybody interested in his inner reality, his feelings and thoughts?

Real objects – internal objects

# Early experiences: attachment relations

- Experiences of quality of attachment between infant and parent → internal working model of: *self*, *significant other* and of *interaction*
- This IWM will be used in future attachment relations

# Transgenerational transmissions

- The power of the IWM lies in the need to remain tied to early objects, the raw material, "the furniture" of the inner world
- When the child has positive "inner furniture", he develops capacity to seek help when needed, to take care of himself, to take care of others, to build close relationships, to explore the world etc. – implications for both mental and physical health
- Also the opposite is true – negative inner representations is connected with self-endangering behaviour

# Promoting childrens health

- Working for a society that promotes equity and equality
- Working for a society that promotes trust and participation
- Protecting parental health
- Supporting pregnant women and families with children during the first years of life
- Promoting access to health care and social services, daycare and schools for all children

# The healthy child

- Feels loved, protected, and welcomed in his family
- Feels safe and secure
- Is playful and curious, feels free to explore and work
- Has positive expectations of his future
- Has also learned to handle disappointments and frustration