

AN EXPLORATION INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE IN STUDENT MIDWIVES

A longitudinal case study approach in one Higher Education Institution (HEI) in England during the first 18 months of their programme (November 2015-March 2017) involving one cohort of midwifery undergraduate students.

Williams, J.; Lathlean, J.; Norman, K. (2019) Doctorate of Education thesis, The Open University.

Aims of study

- ✧ To explore what the concept of resilience meant to student midwives.
- ✧ To ascertain the role that resilience might play for student midwives and whether it developed or not during the first 18 months of their midwifery programme.

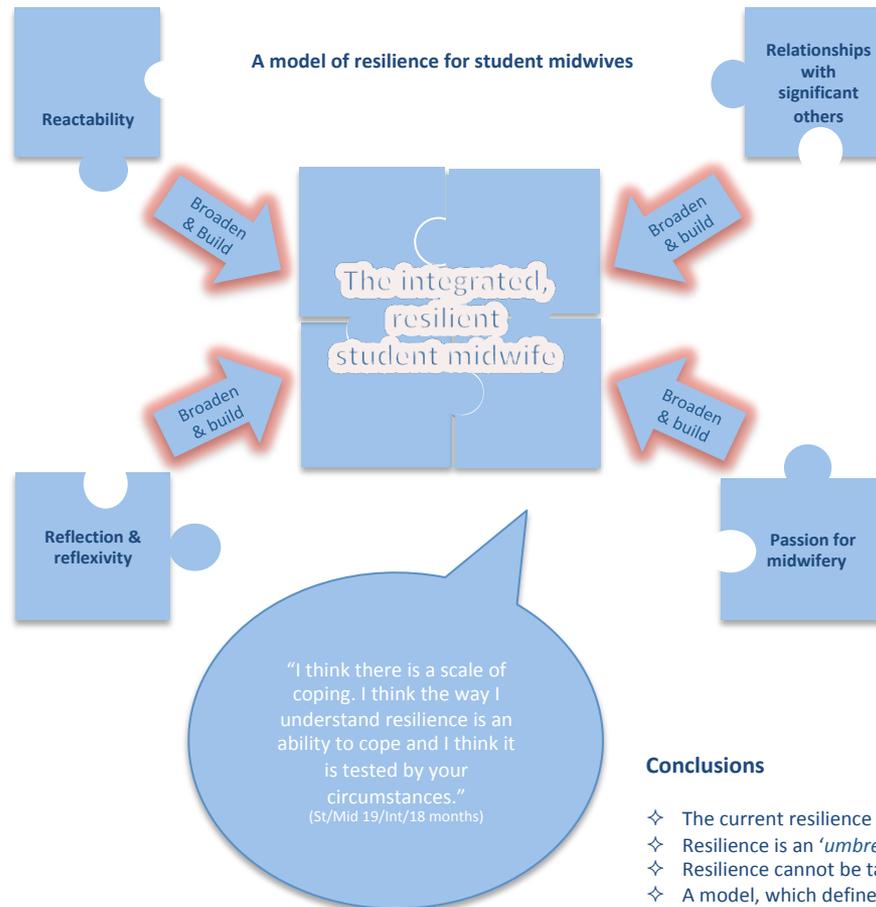
"It's the positive way in which we can move forward from something possibly that has been a negative experience.."
(StMid25/FG4/8 months)

Research design & timescales

- ✧ Wagnild and Young's (1993) (updated 2015) True Resilience Scale©, administered on three occasions, analysed using Version 24 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
- ✧ Four focus groups were conducted twice (18 participants) and six participants were involved in one-to-one interviews, to explore issues raised in the focus group. Thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke (2013) stages.
- ✧ Biographical information and assessment scores (first 18 months of programme).

References

- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2013) *Successful Qualitative Research: a practical guide for beginners* London: Sage Publications.
Fredrickson, B. (2004) The broaden and build theory of positive emotions. *Phil Trans. R. Soc. Lond. B.* 359:1367-1377.
Tinto, V. (1997) Classrooms as Communities: Exploring the Educational Character of Student Persistence. *Journal of Higher Education* 68(6):599-623
Wagnild, G., Young, H. (2015) *The True Resilience Scale©* (updated version) [Personal communication with Gail Wagnild].



"I think there is a scale of coping. I think the way I understand resilience is an ability to cope and I think it is tested by your circumstances."
(St/Mid 19/Int/18 months)

Key Findings

- ✧ Pairwise comparisons revealed that there were significant differences in True Resilience Scale© scores between the first and the second completion ($p=0.034$) and time 1 and time 3 ($p=0.002$); there were no significant differences between time 2 and time 3 ($p=1.0$).
- ✧ In this cohort of student midwives the scale showed that the majority had developed their resilience during the study.
- ✧ The participants described themselves as developing resilience despite the programme being very hard. They believed that being passionate about midwifery, being adaptable and learning from reflection was key to being resilient as a student midwife. The importance of support and belonging in clinical practice and their mentors were key to success.
- ✧ Despite the challenges they encountered on the programme, they felt supported and prepared to become midwives.

"I think it is being able to bounce back when something does not go as expected ..."
(StMid17/FG3/18 months)

Conclusions

- ✧ The current resilience discourse should be challenged.
- ✧ Resilience is an 'umbrella' term.
- ✧ Resilience cannot be taught but can be promoted.
- ✧ A model, which defines resilience for student midwives, is presented for consideration in midwifery curricula to strengthen how reflection and reflexivity is taught and supported. It is based on Fredrickson's 'broaden & build' theory and Tinto's integration model (adapted for student midwives).