

## Clarifying the Vocabulary of Resilience

Those who work with children and families need to have tools to work with that help them apply information to particular situations or programs. They need tools that are simple to communicate, clear in meaning, and adaptable to use. Such changes were necessary from the findings of the International Resilience Project. For example, the long and complex definition of resilience could easily be simplified as follows: Resilience is the human capacity to face, overcome, and even be strengthened by the adversities of life.

The resilience features were a greater challenge. It was necessary to reduce the number of features from 26 to something more manageable and yet to retain the essence of all of them and also reflect the findings from the International Resilience Project; and it was necessary to find some clear and meaningful classification system

for the different sources of resilience. Instead of External supports and resources, the term **I HAVE** is used; instead of Inner, personal strengths, the term **I AM** is used; and instead of Social, interpersonal skills, the term, **I CAN** is used. With that classification, the resilience features were collapsed as follows:

### **I HAVE**

- People around me I trust and who love me, no matter what
- People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- People who want me to learn to do things on the own
- People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn

### **I AM**

- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be all right

### **I CAN**

- Talk to others about things that frighten me or bother me
- Find ways to solve problems that I face
- Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous
- Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action
- Find someone to help me when I need

The Guide was developed to help people working with children and families incorporate resilience into their work as they  
From <http://resilnet.uiuc.edu/library/grotb97a.html>

help parents and children promote resilience in the children (Grotberg, 1995).