

## **My Focus on Resilience**

My approach to treatment and therapy is very different from that of most other psychiatrists. I am a humanistic, people-centered, community-based, and outcome-focused clinician who emphasizes recovery and resilience, not just understanding of problems. My priority is competence in the social, emotional, problem-solving and coping skills that are critical for success at home, at school, at work and in the community. Rather than staying solely in the isolation of my office, I use out-of-office sessions to meet the people who are influential in a client's lives; observe the life realities of children, adolescents, parents, and other caregivers; assess client's skills and abilities based on normal daily experiences; and utilize real-life situations to build critical skills.

The improved understanding that results from experiences outside of the traditional office setting enables me to intervene more effectively in the various systems that affect my client's lives. Through a better understanding of critical barriers and the identification of resources that can be mobilized to produce change, I can craft/create realistic strategies that help clients and their families navigate the overlapping demands of our complex and changing world.

Out-of-office activities that I have found valuable include:

- Taking walks with clients for downtown, at the beach, or shopping at Paseo Nuevo
- Taking clients to restaurants of their choice for meals and snacks
- Meeting teachers, counselors, coaches, bosses, or other "individuals of influence"
- At the client's discretion, meet with friends, family and/or co-workers
- Driving clients when necessary to/from their homes and schools or to skills-building opportunities in the community
- Visiting art museums, galleries, and artists' studios
- Attending school fairs, theater or music performances, or other community experiences (when invited)
- Introducing clients to peers who have battled comparable life challenges
- Reviewing possible residential options outside of home
- Encouraging mentee/mentor relationships that affirm value, provide personal and/or professional support, and teach the importance of helping others
- Developing informal group therapy experiences with a client's friends, peers, or other clients of mine.

## **Why I Do What I Do**

A growing body of research and experience confirms that to thrive in life, one must have strong social, emotional, coping and thinking skills. These skills are the foundation of resilience. With strong skills and solid connections to a caring community, people are best prepared to learn from life experience and thrive.

## **My Emphasis on Strengths-Based Methods**

Historically, mental health treatment has emphasized problem behaviors. However, research and experience during the last ten years regarding recovery, rehabilitation, and resilience has clarified the importance of emphasizing individual strengths and vibrant social support systems in addition to changing negative attitudes and thoughts.

Strengths-Based Methods include:

- Focus on strengths, interests, abilities and competencies rather than on deficits, weaknesses, or problems
- Emphasize people's capacity to learn, grow, and change
- Respect the empowerment of the individual as central to success
- Nurture connection to a caring network of support by encouraging connection to pro-social individuals and community programs

To most effectively achieve desired outcomes, I emphasize assessment of each client's talents, natural abilities, personal characteristics, and basic life skills. I then help clients apply them within their environment to achieve their personal goals.

## **So, What is Resilience?**

Wolin and Wolin, leaders in the field of resilience, describe resilience as "The capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair oneself." This capacity is based on a set of attributes that make up a resilient personality, and include:

- Self esteem
- Independent thoughts and actions
- Ability to compromise in interactions with others
- Well-established networks of friends
- High level of discipline and a sense of responsibility
- Acknowledgment of one's own special gifts and talents
- Open-mindedness and willingness to explore new ideas
- Willingness to dream
- Broad range of interests
- Sharp sense of humor
- Insight into one's own feelings and those of others; and the ability to effectively communicate these

- High endurance of distress
- Focus
- Appreciation and respect for personal challenges as necessary steps in the development of emotional depth and competence in critical life skills.

I will have achieved my therapeutic goals for each client when they develop into strong, creative, resilient children and adults who are ready and able to thrive in life with their eyes and hearts wide open, confident and competent in their critical life skills.

**Neal Mazer, MD, MPH**  
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**Santa Barbara, CA 93101**

The following release permits the full range of out-of-office activities that might be necessary in our shared commitment to success. Unless marked otherwise, all activities noted are acceptable.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give my permission for the following activities, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Dr. Neal Mazer in his treatment of \_\_\_\_\_.

- *Taking walks with clients for downtown, at the beach, or shopping at Paseo Nuevo*
- *Taking clients to restaurants of their choice for meals and snacks*
- *Meeting teachers, counselors, coaches, bosses, or other "individuals of influence"*
- *At the client's discretion, meet with friends, family and/or co-workers*
- *Driving clients when necessary to/from their homes and schools or to skills-building opportunities in the community*
- *Visiting art museums, galleries, and artists' studios*
- *Attending school fairs, theater or music performances, or other community experiences (when invited)*
- *Introducing clients to peers who have battled comparable life challenges*
- *Reviewing possible residential options outside of home*
- *Encouraging mentee/mentor relationships that affirm value, provide personal and/or professional support, and teach the importance of helping others*
- *Developing informal group therapy experiences with a client's friends, peers, or other clients of mine.*

I understand and accept the above. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

*For clients who are minors:* I, legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, give legal / parental consent for the above described psychiatric treatment program.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_