


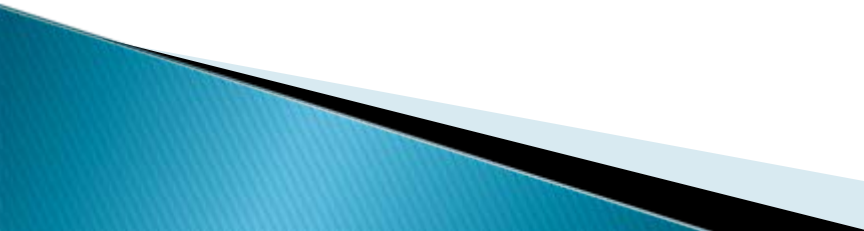
**Kids ARE Resilient...**  
(...but sometimes they need  
help.)

MaryEllen Salamone  
Families of September 11


# THE GREAT DISCONNECT

- ▶ Society's expectations for how children recover from disasters are often vastly different from the reality of the struggle these children face.
  - ▶ Recovery and resiliency programs are difficult to implement successfully when misconception dilutes need and alters outcomes.
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# Disconnect 1: “They’ll get over this in no time...”

- ▶ Expression of grief in the context of normal child development continues throughout childhood.
  - ▶ Society believes that children “get over” trauma and loss in one year.
  - ▶ Stage One of Kubler–Ross stages of acceptance is denial.
  - ▶ The practice of dispatching crisis counselors for only the first days following a trauma/disaster is commonplace.
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## Disconnect 2: Memorialization

- ▶ Allowing survivors of a disaster the opportunity to recall and remember the loss and/or experience is important in the mourning process and promotes healing.
  - ▶ Yet many schools and/or communities will not permit memorial ceremonies .
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## Disconnect 3: Discrepancy between children who need mental health assistance and children who receive services.

- ▶ The American Journal of Psychiatry estimates that 75 to 80% of youth in need of mental health services do not receive them (Katoka (2002) Amer.J.of Psychiatry, 159(9), p. 1548).
  - ▶ Concurrently, children with unmet mental health needs demonstrate diminished resiliency.
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## Disconnect 4: Disaster plans which address physical needs only.

- ▶ Most states now require disaster response plans in all schools. These plans outline securing the physical safety and evacuation of students and staff.
  - ▶ However, there is often little to no instruction as to how to promote safety so that it increases feelings of security as opposed to inciting fear and vulnerability.
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# Disconnect 5: Volunteerism empowers youth.

- ▶ Volunteerism and activities which allow a youth to take action, such as supporting a cause, increase a sense of empowerment which promotes resilient behaviors.
  - ▶ Schools and communities often do not offer volunteer opportunities or “take action” projects for youth.
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# Building the Bridge

- ▶ Existing misconceptions and disconnects between research findings and society's expectations must be addressed and resolved.
  - ▶ Planning for programs and policy addressing disaster response should be a cooperative effort between those charged with securing physical safety and those dedicated to securing emotional well being.
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