

*The Risk-Taker's  
Advantage:  
How to Make Kids  
More Resilient by not  
Bubblewrapping  
Them*

**Michael Ungar, Ph.D.**

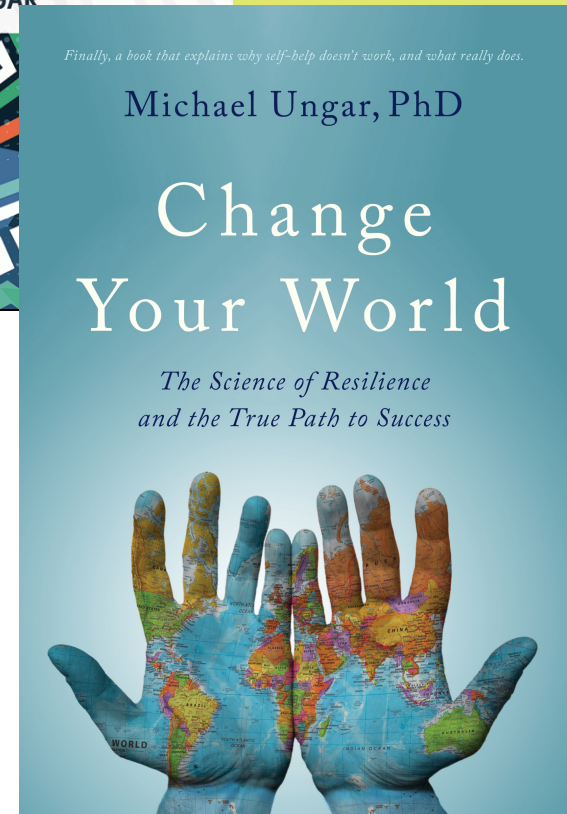
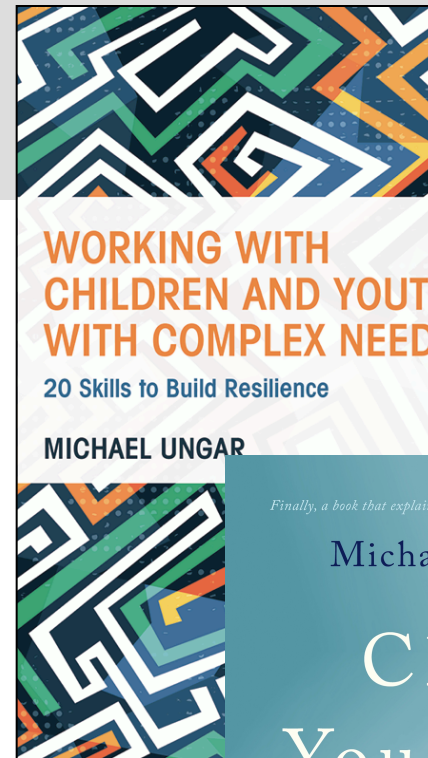
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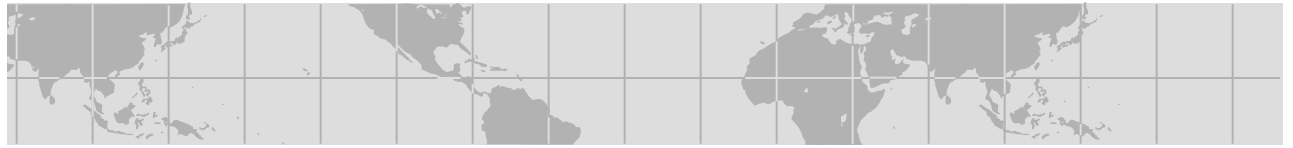
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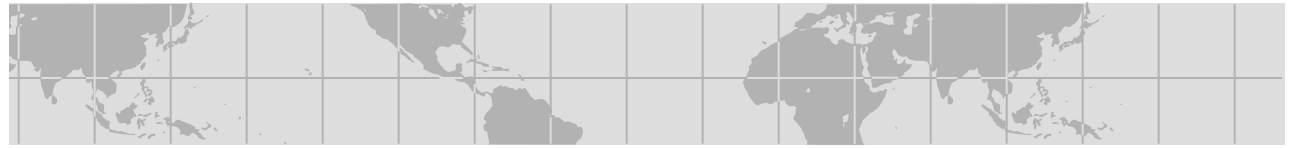
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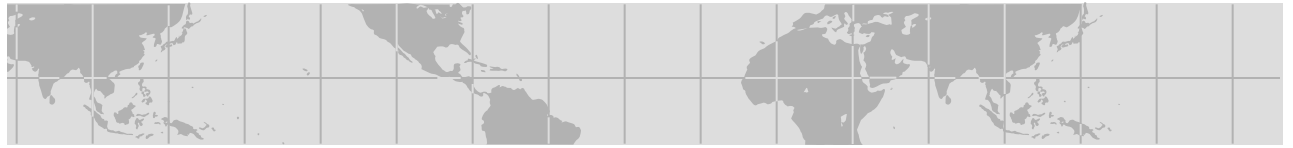


# *Part 1: What is resilience?*



# *Nine Things All Children Need*

1. Structure
2. Consequences
3. Parent-child connections
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control
7. A sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
9. Safety and support



# *Exercise: Assessing my resources for resilience:*

## ✚ Structure:

☒ "There are people in my life who expect me to \_\_\_\_\_."

## ✚ Consequences:

☒ "When I don't meet expectations, I know that \_\_\_\_\_ will happen."

## ✚ Parent-Child, and Other, Relationships:

☒ "I can reach out to my \_\_\_\_\_ to get help when I need it."



## ✚ Identity:

- ✚ "I feel respected for what is special about me when I'm with/at/doing \_\_\_\_\_."

## ✚ Power and control:

- ✚ "In my \_\_\_\_\_ I get to participate in making decisions that affect my \_\_\_\_\_."

## ✚ Belonging, spirituality (sense of cohesion):

- ✚ "At my \_\_\_\_\_ people miss me when I'm not there."



## ✚ Sense of culture

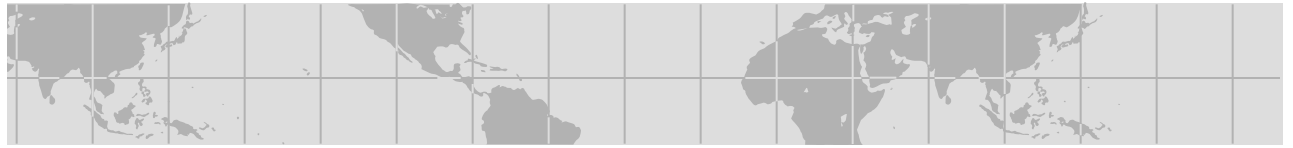
- ✚ “There are places such as \_\_\_\_\_ where I can celebrate my culture and beliefs.”

## ✚ Rights and Responsibilities (social justice):

- ✚ “When I’m with others at my \_\_\_\_\_ I feel treated fairly.”
- ✚ “When I’m with \_\_\_\_\_ I am responsible for myself/others.”

## ✚ Safety and Support:

- ✚ “I am well-cared for by \_\_\_\_\_.”
- ✚ “I feel safe when I’m with/at \_\_\_\_\_.”



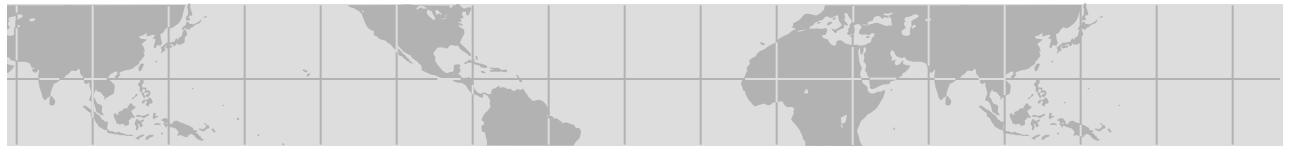
# *Part 2: Can Over-Protected Children be Resilient?*



# *Actual Risks facing our children today*

- ✦ Crimes by teens: *down*
- ✦ Likelihood of being murdered: *down*
- ✦ Rate of school drop-out: *down*
- ✦ Accidents causing death: *down*
- ✦ Smoking and drug use: *down*
- ✦ Early sexual activity: *down/stable*
- ✦ Pregnancy rates among teens: *down*

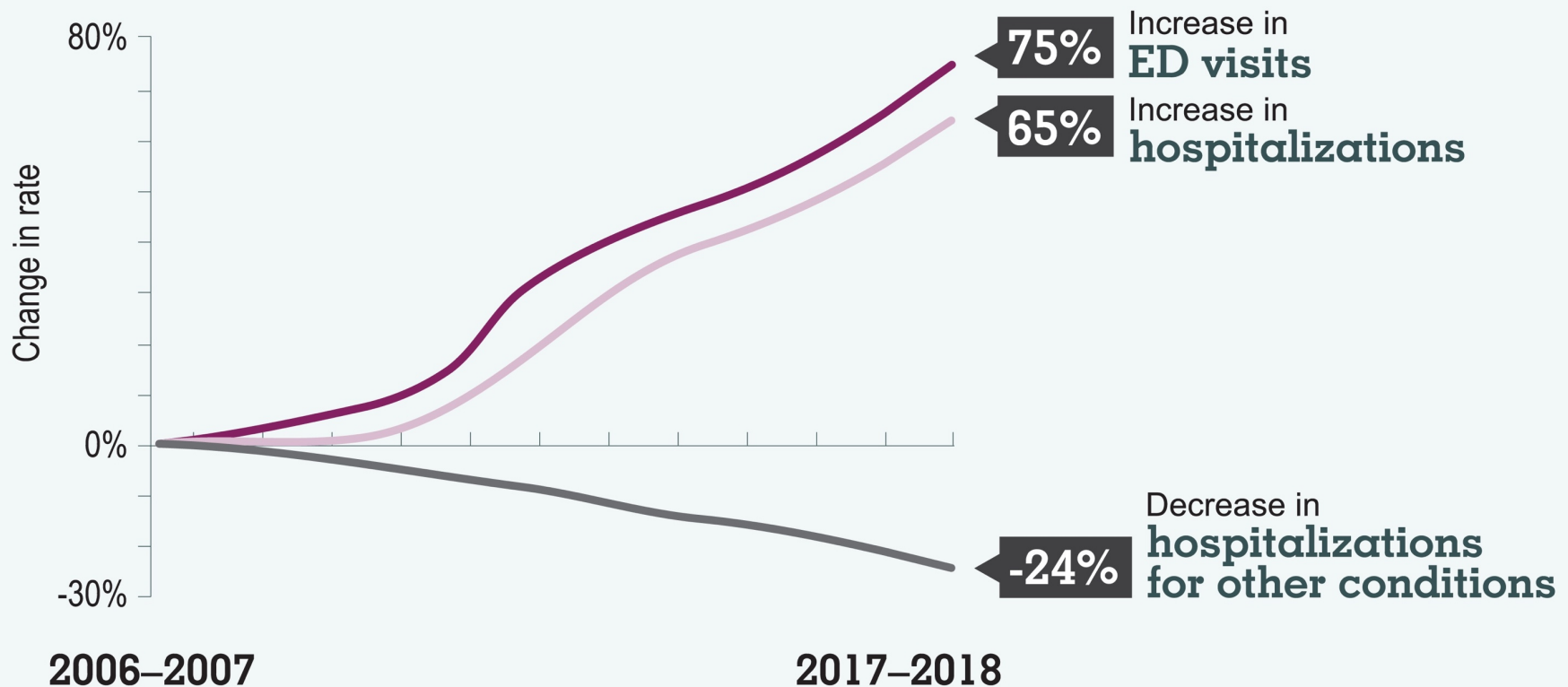




## *And the real dangers are...*

- ✦ Texting while driving
- ✦ More than 3 hours of screen time each day (unrelated to school work)
  - ▣ Social media is particularly harmful
  - ▣ Video games (and other active online activity) may be less harmful, or not harmful at all—in moderation
- ✦ Unprotected sex (STIs)
- ✦ Self-harming behaviors
- ✦ Anxiety

## Has hospital use for mental disorders changed?



Visit [cihi.ca](http://cihi.ca) for more detailed information about youth and mental health in Canada.



**What risks did  
you take  
growing up?**

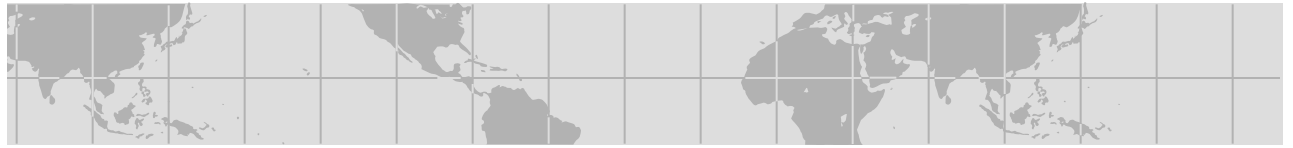
**Taking those  
risks, what did  
you learn?**

**Were those  
lessons helpful,  
unhelpful, or  
both?**

**How will your  
children learn  
these same life  
lessons?**



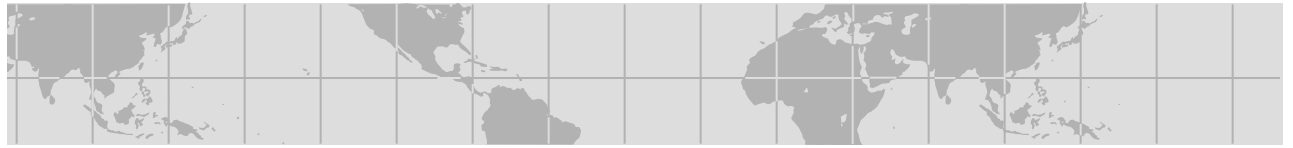
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# **Better to Substitute than Suppress**



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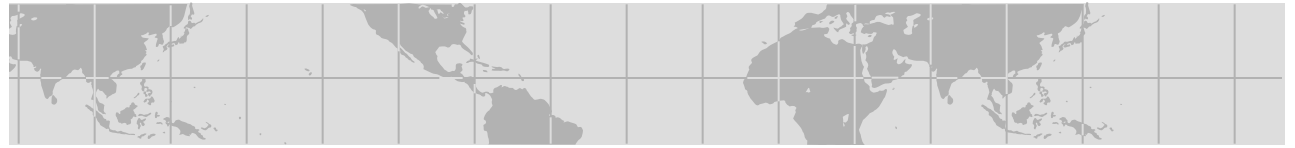


# **Better to Say 'Yes' than 'No'**



# *The Right Opportunities to Experience Resilience*

- ✚ Failure is okay, as long as there is the capacity and the resources to fix mistakes
- ✚ Work Opportunities: paid or volunteer; certification as coach, life guard...
- ✚ Dangerous 'toys': knives, scooters, make-up, video games, motorbikes, extreme sport gear



# *The Right Opportunities to Experience Resilience*

- ✚ Navigate community: walking, busing, skateboarding, driving
- ✚ Bodily experiences: celebrations of puberty, first love
- ✚ Outdoor challenge: wilderness trip, extreme sports



*Thank you!*

