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The abusive father and the ignorant mother - Resilience despite adverse life circumstances

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Children who can live a good, enjoyable, or successful life despite experiencing a variety of negative life events are described as resilient. Resilience is the ability to withstand challenges across various psychological, social, and societal aspects, depending on the context. The topic of children with mentally ill parents has already been examined from several perspectives. Extensive studies on risks and burdens have been conducted, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary networking in caregiving, early detection, as well as the need for diagnostics and interventions. Despite this knowledge and data, there remains a deficiency in approaches that prioritize giving a voice to those affected. Addressing this research gap, a participatory research design was chosen for the current book project, placing emphasis to the perspective of adult children of mentally ill parents. Drawing from individually written reports, individuals affected by the situation described their childhood experiences, identified coping mechanisms for dealing with these burdens, and reflected on the areas where they still encounter limitations in their well-being today. Coco, a middle-aged woman, described impressively how she experienced the traumatic events as a child and how she finally looked back on and reappraised them during psychotherapeutic treatment. In a multi-stage process, an individualized risk-resilience model was developed based on her report to derive options for action and intervention strategies for psychotherapy and counselling.

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