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# CHALLENGES IN RESEARCHING FAMILY RESILIENCE: EXAMPLE FROM THE FAMRESPLAN PROJECT

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# Content

- Challenges in researching family resilience
  - Challenges in researching families (system)
  - Challenges in researching resilience (family)
- Example of family resilience research (project FamResPlan, University of Zagreb, Croatia)

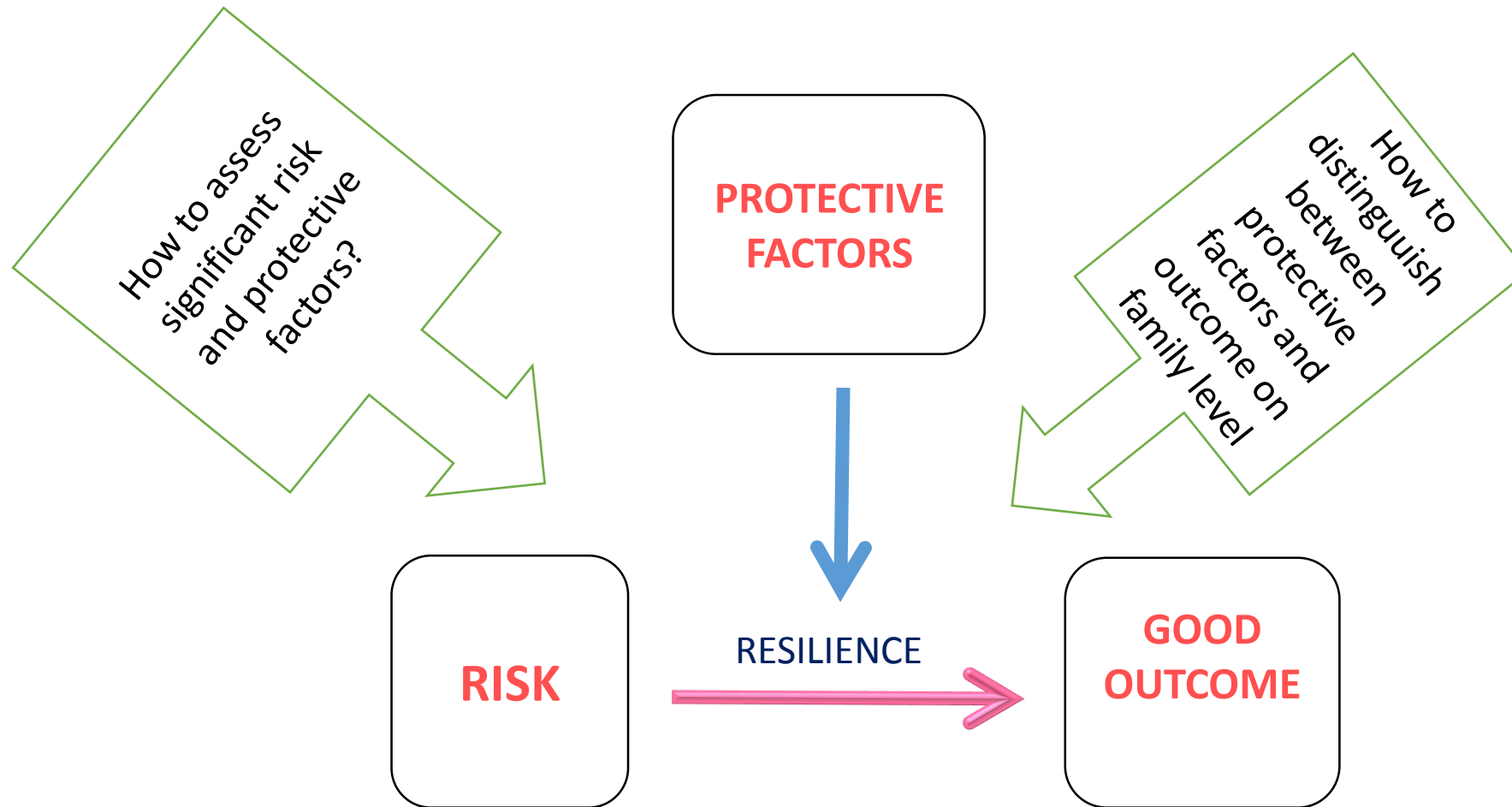
# Challenges in researching FAMILY (system)

- **Who is family?**
  - Postmodern families -pluralisation of families, hard or impossible to define family (Daly, 2003; Neill, 2007; Charles, Davies i Harris, 2008)
  - This problem is solved differently in different research:
    - Some researcher use practical approach - they focus on what is easy/possible to explore (parent/child), leaving one „whole world unexplored” – mostly quantitative researcher
    - Others use qualitative methods in order to explore family as a whole; they explore what is family and the meaning of the family during the research
- **How to measure family as a system and not sum of individuals?**
  - Models: agregation, pathogenic, salutogenic, consensus
- **Ethical questions**
  - where to do research, how to ask questions, risk of secondary traumatisation, the role of researchers in the family environmentt (therapist/researcher), what to do with unexpected findings (victimization, planned criminal conduct ...)

# Challenges of researching RESILIENCE (family)

FAMILY CHARACTERISTIC	PROCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial family resilience research;</li><li>• influenced by strength – based approach (Henry, 2013)</li><li>• higher levels of protective factors= higher resilience</li><li>• practitioners more use this approach (for them, family resilience is synonymous with family strengths)</li></ul> <p>Family resilience: “characteristics, dimensions and properties of families which help families to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adaptive in the face of crisis situations” (McCubbin &amp; McCubbin, 1988, p. 247)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• dynamic process that starts with risk and ends with good outcome</li><li>• includes the dimension of time (Hawley, 2013)</li></ul> <p>Family resilience: “a path the family follows as it adapts and prospers in the face of stress, both in the presence and over time. Resilient families positively respond to these conditions in the unique way, depending on the context, developmental level, the interactive combination of risk and the protective factors, and the family’s shared outlook” (Hawley &amp; De Haan, 1996, p. 293)</p>

# Family resilience as a process: key challenges in conceptualising ELEMENTS OF RESILIENCE



# EXAMPLE:

**Specific characteristics of families at risk: contribution to complex interventions planning (FAMRESPLAN)**

**Croatian science foundation (2015-2019)**

# Objectives

**Overall objective:** to identify characteristics of families at risk, **family resilience**, readiness for change, readiness for intervention and life satisfaction, as a set of new, under-researched processes which could be of importance for complex family interventions planning

Families at risk- families in which at least one member is, due to behavioral problems, a beneficiary of interventions in the area of social welfare, mental health and/or justice.

# Definition of family resilience

- Process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma (**risk**). Assets and resources within the individual, family, their life and environment (**protective factors/mechanisms**) facilitate this capacity for adaptation in the face of adversity (**good outcome**). Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary (adopted from Windle, 2011)





# Research questions (qualitative)

- How family members define family?
- What family members recognise as the risk of a family?
- How did family cope with risks?
- How family members describe interventions they were involved in?
- How family members perceive good outcomes for their family?
- What helps family achieve that good outcomes?
- What characteristic of family members and family as a whole contribute to resilience?
- Which aspects of environment (formal and informal support, available resources is contributing to family resilience?)

# Sample

## Quantitative

- 200 families with one or more members included in some of the interventions (education, health care, social welfare and the judiciary) aimed at persons with behavioral problems.
  - 100 of them with a child beneficiary
  - 100 with a parent beneficiary
- families from the City of Zagreb and the Zagreb County

## Qualitative

- 20 families from the quantitative study, that are willing to participate



Who is family? Who will participate in the study?

# Definition of family

## Quantitative part

- When the beneficiary is child – him and primary caregiver (assessing household)
- When beneficiary is adult – him and:
  - 1) life partner or
  - 2) parent or
  - 3) brother-sister or
  - 4) child older than 12

## Qualitative part

- Everyone who is defined as a family by family members (and that can participate in the interview)

# Limitations and strenghts of the study...

- First study on family resilience in Croatia
- Family perspecitve- not taken into account enough
- Quantitative part –environment system not taken into account enough, distinction between protective factors and outcomes properly?
- Qualitative part – opportunity for family member voices to be heard
  - how environment support vulnerabilities of these families, to research aavailability of resources, aaccessibility of resources, good outcomes from the perception of at risk families
- ?

Thank you for your attention!

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