

# Ways to Promote Resilience of Vulnerable Children and Mothers

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Resilience is the key to successful adaptation to change and the ability to resist new problems that makes a balance between vulnerability and the ability of individuals. This study aimed to review the ways of promoting resilience in treatment of vulnerable children and mothers.

**Method:** To find related studies, search the main databases including PubMed, Web of Science (ISI), Scopus, PsycINFO, EMBASE, Google Scholar, and national databases such as Irandoc, Civilica, MagIran SID, using the key words of promoting, resilience and vulnerable children and mothers was performed from the beginning of database until August 2022.

**Results:** In the initial search of databases, 1727 studies were obtained, of which 1532 studies were removed after duplication and 234 full-text studies were screened, of which 24 studies were included in the present study.

**Conclusion:** There are different ways to improve the resilience of vulnerable people, which can be used to increase the resilience of these people against problems and improve their quality of life.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Promotion, Vulnerable Population.

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## INTRODUCTION

Resilience is the ability of people to deal with damaging events (1), their ability to adapt in the face of disasters or life-threatening pressures and overcome and even be strengthened by those experiences (2), which is the reason for maintaining relatively stable levels of psychological health and performance (1). In other words, resilience is a component that balances the vulnerability and abilities of people (3), it helps people to use health, happiness, and meaningful life for defense against internal and external stress (4), and gives the person the power to make the most

of his adaptability skills in different situations (5), turn stressful situations into an opportunity for learning, and by focusing on The problem is to lower the level of stress in a person and cause positive adaptation in people (6). This ability is a multidimensional characteristic that varies depending on the time, gender and situation of the person and helps the response and adaptation of the person to stressful situations (7, 8), causes adaptation to unpleasant life situations and keeps people safe from cognitive disorders and daily life problems (9).

Vulnerable groups in society include teenagers, children,

physically disabled, elderly, addicts, beggars, and women (10). One of the psychological interventions that can improve the quality of life of vulnerable people is resilience. This process causes adaptation to challenges and threats and overcomes them, and states that individuals and groups of resilient people are equipped with a set of common characteristics that prepare them to overcome the changes and vicissitudes of life (11). With such a viewpoint, people who have high resilience examine the stressful situation and then by adopting logical solutions, direct those situations in the direction they want (12).

In identifying the individual factors related to resilience, there are many studies on the existence of its positive characteristics such as the ability to create self-discipline or self-control in adverse conditions, positive self-concept, autonomy, high self-esteem, problem-solving skills, high purposefulness in life, control and management of stress and mental and physical health (8). Some studies have also shown that increasing resilience improves the quality of life (13), reduces pain and stress (14), reduces emotional problems, and increases the level of mental health and life satisfaction (15).

To promote the resilience of vulnerable people, health care providers must have a clear understanding of the factors affecting resilience based on qualitative documentation and human experiences in the specific social, cultural and economic context of their society. Regarding the importance of resilience in the mental health of vulnerable people and its effectiveness in their ability to overcome problems, the present study aimed to review ways that improve resilience in vulnerable children and mothers.

## METHOD

### Data Sources and Searches

In this systematic review study we followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines for conducting this systematic review and meta-analysis (16). The searches were performed on the following electronic databases: Pubmed, EMBASE, Web of Science (ISI), Scopus, PsycINFO, Google scholar, and Persian databases, including Scientific Information Database (SID), Irandoc, and MagIran were searched. The following terms were used as text words and keywords in databases (for example PubMed): (Resilience OR ability of people to deal with damaging events), (Vulnerable Children), AND (Vulnerable mothers OR Vulnerable women) from the start dates of the databases (1988) through August 2022 were used. Two authors independently performed screenings of these databases. Also, these authors considered the reference lists of articles at the full-text stage and reviewed articles on the topic of Resilience and Vulnerable people.

### Eligibility criteria

We considered for inclusion criteria, observational studies (Cohort studies, cross-sectional) published as original or conference abstracts and used a validated method or instrument to assess Resilience, Vulnerable Children, and Vulnerable Mothers or women. Also for selections of studies. Exclusion criteria included Studies that did not report enough data to determine the Resilience and All types of review articles, letters, editorials, and interventional studies were excluded. The two mentioned investigators independently determined the study's eligibility. At beginning of the search, no linguistic restrictions were applied.

### Data collection

Regarding the selection criteria, the results of the search were screened for relevant titles and abstracts. The relevant abstracts were chosen for full-text review. After that, data extraction was done individually by the two authors. Also, references to relevant articles were screened for relevance. Duplicates were removed. Then, for extracting the following information from included studies, a standardized data collection form was used: first author, study design, purpose people, year of publication, sample size, and conclusion.

### Study quality

For each included article, a second author investigated all extracted data during the quality assessment process. The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) was used for assessing the methodological quality of studies. Sample selection, comparability, and exposure were the 3 main items for qualitative assessment.

## RESULTS

In this study, all published studies analyzing the resilience, vulnerable children and vulnerable Mothers or women in Iran and other countries were systematically reviewed and meta-analyzed based on the PRISMA guidelines Fig.1.

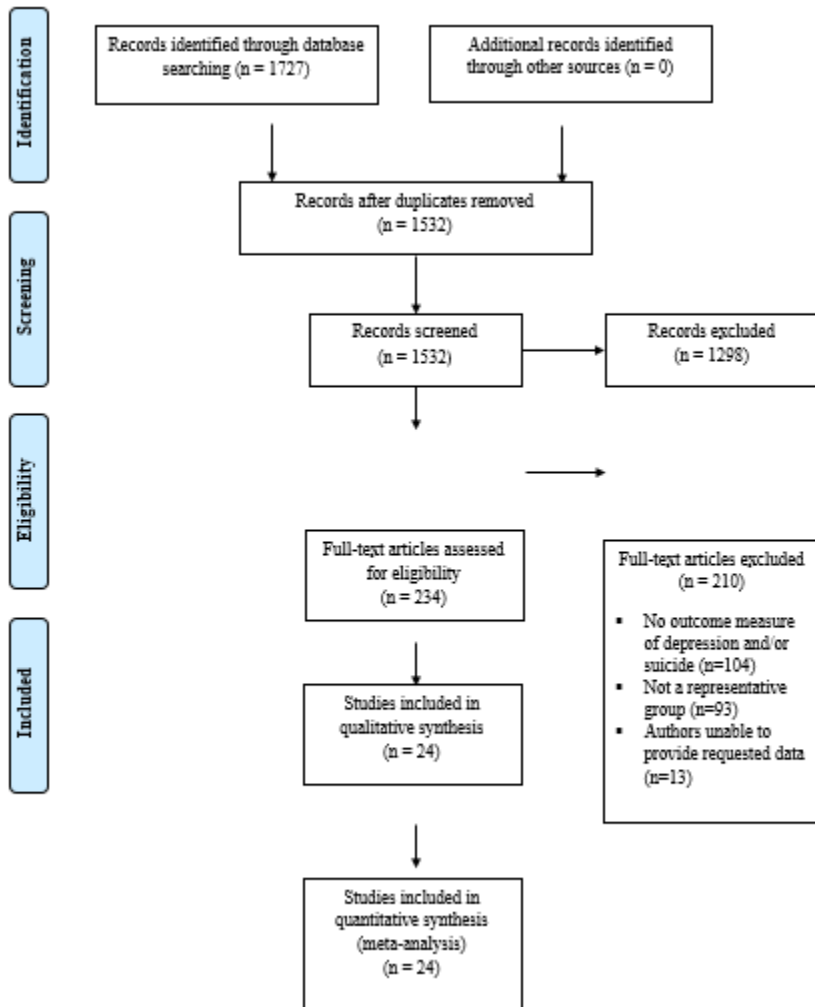


Fig. 1: Four-phase PRISMA flow diagram showing the number of studies identified, screened, eligible, and included in the systematic review and.

In the initial search of databases and other databases, 1727 studies were obtained, of which 1532 studies were removed after duplication and 234 full-text studies were screened, of which 24 studies were included in the present study. Study

design in this study was include Experimental (Exp), Semi Experimental (Semi Exp), Randomized Clinical Trial (RCT), Cohort, and Cross-Sectional (C-S).

Table 1: The frequency of conducted studies on vulnerable Children and vulnerable Children's mothers

NO	First author	Year	Study Design	Purpose Population	Sample Size	Way to promote Resilience
1	Shojaee et al. (17)	2015	Semi Exp	Children with Down syndrome	30	Teaching Resilience Skills
2	Dehghan et al. (18)	2014	C-S	Deaf-blind children	131	Mental health of children's parents
3	Kim et al. (19)	2005	C-S	Korean children	442	Meaning Therapy
4	Ashournejad et al. (20)	2016	Semi Exp	Female student children	240	Teaching emotion regulation strategies
5	Atadokht et al. (21)	2014	Semi Exp	Children with learning disabilities	40	Teaching social problem solving
6	Kang et al. (22)	2009	Semi Exp	Cancer children	29	Meaning Therapy
7	Khosravi et al. (23)	2020	Semi Exp	under 11 years old - Children	40	Friends program
8	Rezaie et al. (24)	2013	Semi Exp	Mothers with retarded children	24	Existential psychotherapy
9	Veysi et al. (25)	2015	C-S	Mothers with slow-paced children	100	Religion
10	Saeedifard et al. (26)	2016	RCT	Mothers of children with learning disabilities	30	Acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy

Results showed that common suggested way for promote of resilience in vulnerable Children and vulnerable Children's mothers were include teaching resilience skills, Mental health of children's parents, Meaning Therapy, teaching

emotion regulation strategies, Teaching social problem solving, Friends international program, Existential psychotherapy, Religion, and Acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy (**Table1**).

Table 2: The frequency of conducted studies on vulnerable mothers and women

NO	First author	year	Study Design	Purpose Population	Sample Size	Way to promote Resilience
1	Evazei et al. (27)	2019	Semi Exp	Middle-aged women	30	Yoga
2	Davis et al. (28)	2015	Semi Exp	Pregnant Women	46	Yoga
3	Heidarian et al. (8)	2016	RCT	Women with breast cancer	40	Mindfulness Training
4	Kamarzin et al. (29)	2012	Semi Exp	Isfahan women	30	Yoga
5	Rosenzweig et al. (30)	2010	Cohort	Women with chronic pain	133	Mindfulness Training
6	Mohamad Karimi et al. (31)	2018	Semi Exp	Women with cancer	30	Spirituality – Therapy
7	Tajikzadeh et al. (32)	2016	C-S	Women with cancer	61	Comprehensive Care Plan
8	Pustchian et al. (33)	2018	Semi Exp	Divorced Women	30	Group Meaning Therapy
9	Graham et al. (34)	2001	C-S	Women	115	Meaning Therapy
10	Khodabakhshi et al. (35)	2013	C-S	Pregnant Women	211	Spiritual Intelligence
11	Zare et al. (36)	2015	Semi Exp	Female-headed households	28	Encouragement Training
12	Chehri et al. (37)	2019	Semi Exp	Women with marital conflict	30	skills of stress management
13	Jalili et al. (38)	2015	Semi Exp	Infertile Women	16	Existential psychotherapy
14	Jafari et al. (39)	2016	Semi Exp	Female-headed households	30	Self-awareness and emotion management skills

Results showed that common suggested way for promote of resilience in vulnerable mothers and women were include Yoga, Mindfulness Training, Spirituality – therapy, Comprehensive Care Plan, Group Meaning Therapy, Meaning Therapy, Spiritual Intelligence, Encouragement Training, skills of stress management, Existential psychotherapy, and Self-awareness & emotion management skills (**Table2**).

**DISCUSSION**

In general, resilience is defined as the process, capacity, or result of successful adaptation despite challenges or threatening conditions (40) and the economic and social problems in people's lives have always necessitated the feature of resilience as a resistant shield (41, 42). Of course, resilience is not stability against injuries and threatening conditions, nor is it a state of passivity in facing dangerous conditions; rather, it is the active participation in the surrounding environment and the individual's ability to establish biological-psychological balance in difficult conditions (7). By reviewing various studies, various ways

to overcome problems and improve people's resilience have been suggested, which include.

**Skill Training**

One of the ways to overcome problems and increase resilience against them is to learn skills that can be used to adapt to existing conditions. In various studies, many skills such as interventional mindfulness skill training (8), encouragement training (36), stress management skills training (37), self-awareness and emotion management skills training (5), mind training awareness (30), teaching resilience skills (17), teaching emotion regulation strategies (20), teaching social problem solving (21), and teaching self-compassion (43) to promote resilience People have been reported. Education allows people to have a non-judgmental attitude towards themselves, which helps them define their desired goals in life and increase their self-confidence to develop possible paths to achieve those goals. In addition, people with higher levels of education tend to deal with their failure more adaptively.

### Exercise and yoga

Various studies have proven the effectiveness of yoga on resilience, Evazei *et al.* considered yoga as an accessible and low-cost treatment for improving resilience (27), Goodman *et al.* considered yoga as a suitable tool for reducing anxiety, depression and improving Resilience (28), and Kamarzrin *et al.* have considered yoga as a means to improve resilience and increase problem-solving skills (29). Dirmanchi *et al.*

### Supportive and social resources

The overall goal throughout life is the ability to live well, and this will be achieved through the use of more supportive resources. Various studies confirmed the role of support resources in promoting resilience; Lee *et al.* reported that Physical health, social support, and human dignity(45), Netuveli *et al.* Social resources including access to trusted people (46), Izadi-Avanji *et al.* Supportive resources and well-being (47), Jansen *et al.* Social services (48), Dimatteo *et al.* Family support (49), Tajikzadeh *et al.* Comprehensive care program (32), and Resnick *et al.* the existence of different support resources (50), are effective support resources on promoting resilience. Support sources such as organizations, friends, and family members help people to deal with losses and challenges and strengthen their self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-education, and resilience.

### Spiritual-therapy

Spiritual-therapy means considering the cultural-religious beliefs of the people in the treatment process and considering the transcendent dimension of clients that leads them to the transcendent source (31). In various studies, spiritual therapy in different ways has led to the improvement of resilience in injured people, the intervention of spiritual therapy, the promotion of spiritual intelligence (35), internal religious orientation, and developed defense mechanism (25) There have been various forms of spiritual therapy in vulnerable people, which have been proven effective in promoting resilience. After facing the problems and conflicts of life, religious people make it easier for themselves to bear them by relying on fate and destiny and connecting them with divine destiny, and as a result, their resilience in the face of problems is improved.

### Acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy

In various studies, the role of acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy in promoting resilience has been pointed out. Seyyedjafari *et al.* (51) and Saeedi Fard *et al.* (26) have reported acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy as factors that promote resilience. In acceptance and Commitment-based Therapy, the main goal is to change a person's relationship with his thoughts and feelings and to be healthy and increase resilience, they must be rid of them. This treatment helps people to cope with stressful conditions through increasing mindfulness, cognitive distancing and making a commitment to actively engage in the external

have mentioned sports as a suitable way to improve resilience and self-efficacy in people (44). Since people face stressful situations many times a day and this may reduce their resilience, the way of life can be designed in such a way that exercise and physical activities, especially yoga, the level It reduced anxiety in people and improved their resilience.

world and trying to achieve a meaningful and original life with the aim of increasing psychological flexibility.

### International Friends and Hardship Program

International Friends program is one of the tools for promoting resilience, increasing calm and reducing anxiety disorders in vulnerable people (23) and Hardship is one of the other tools for promoting resilience (52). Hardship and having a high spirit is one of the factors that motivate people and increase the ability to overcome adversities and conflicts in life.

### Psychotherapy and mental health

Psychotherapy is one of the methods of intervention that is effective in reducing many psychological problems, improving the quality of life, and enhancing resilience in numerous studies, Rezaei *et al.* (24) and Jalilniko *et al.* (38) in their studies, they mentioned psychotherapy and medicine among the factors affecting the promotion of vulnerable people. Dehghanmonshadi *et al.* (18) mentioned mental health as another effective factor in improving the resilience of vulnerable people. A healthy mind has a healthier understanding of life's adversities and, as a result, has a higher ability to deal with them.

### Perception of God and meaning therapy

Understanding life will enable people to tolerate difficulties and hardships. In various studies, the effect of meaning therapy on the promotion of resilience has been proven, Postchian *et al.* (33), Kim *et al.* (19), Kang *et al.* (22), and Kuchakinia (53), in their studies have proven the effect of meaning therapy and perception of God on improving the resilience of vulnerable people. It seems that people, believing that their life is important and has a purpose and has an impact on their surroundings, give a positive meaning to the incidents and events of their lives and in this way achieve a more effective adaptation to traumatic life experiences. This meaning helps a person to consider hardships and adversities as a factor to achieve spirituality and to have more resilience and tolerance against life's problems. The meaningfulness of life increases not only for the person in overcoming inconsistencies. It helps, but it also leads to a person's satisfaction with life.

## CONCLUSION

Spiritual therapy, skills training, exercise and yoga, commitment and acceptance therapy, supportive and social resources, perception of God and meaning therapy, Friends International Program, and Hardiness, and psychotherapy and mental health are the affecting factors on the promotion of resilience in vulnerable children and mothers.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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