

Creating Supportive Environments for Students with Mental Health Issues Using Restorative Approaches

Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW
Social Worker in Private Practice

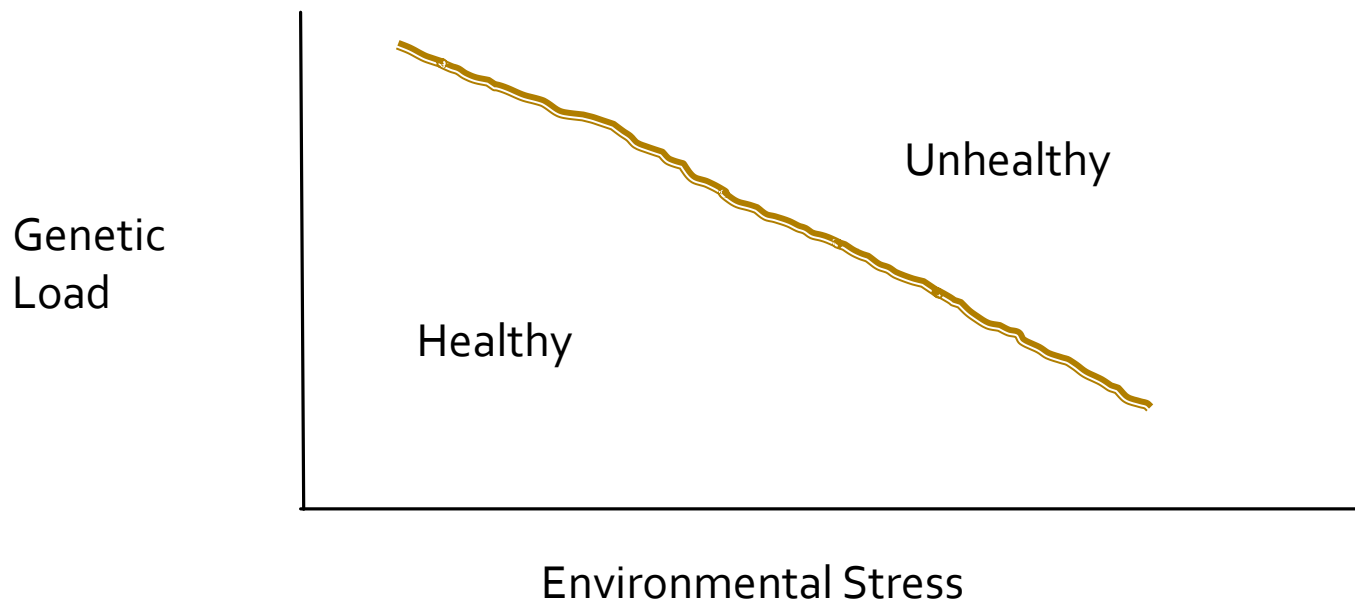
Millwood Family Inservice Day, Feb. 14, 2014

Who Is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner
- Former Coordinator Family Mediation Programme, YOU Inc., Worcester, MA
- Former Student Support Worker HDSB
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Ex.Dir. NS Child& Youth Strategy
- Former Ex. Dir. Child Welfare – Cumberland
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power

Mental Health

- Mental Health influenced by interaction of “genetic load” and environmental stressors



Mental Health

- Most frequently encountered in schools:
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Mood disorders
 - Developmental disorders
 - Substance abuse/addiction
 - Stress disorders
 - Personality disorders

School is a Stressful Environment

- Increasing need for education requires retention of broader scope of students
- Schools no longer natural extensions of nurturing communities (external soc. forces)

Life is More Stressful

- Social progress and population prosperity is on the decline
- Social and economic forces are creating increased challenges for even the most resourced families
- Increasing diversity in such times inflates tensions if these trends are poorly understood

Restorative Principles

- Adaptation of Indigenous cultural world view
- Used to bring sanity to justice approaches
- 3 major principles
 - Promotion of peace and inclusive community is the ultimate goal
 - Interventions focus on repairing relationships
 - The whole community is harmed, the whole community responsible for restoration

The Application

- Restorative approaches can . . .
 - Be used to promote a community culture
 - Be used to reduce the environmental stresses
 - Be used to promote awareness of social forces
 - Be used to create a community in which persons can self disclose their challenges without stigma (secrets confound community)
 - Be used during interventions when student mental health issues are at the centre of conflict

The Discussion

- Your Questions here:

The Plan

- What are your next steps as school communities?

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