



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia



Caring for the future growing up today

2013 Children's Week

Dr Michael Ungar



Department of Local Government and Communities
Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Mental Health Commission
Department of Sport and Recreation



What Children, Youth and Families Need to Thrive

*An Evening for Parents and
Caregivers
Perth, Australia*

Michael Ungar, Ph.D.

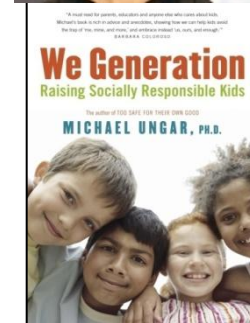
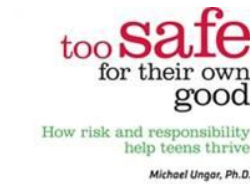
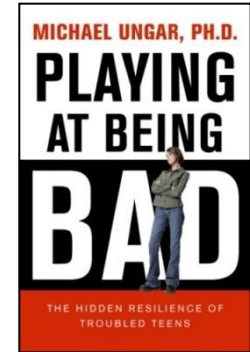
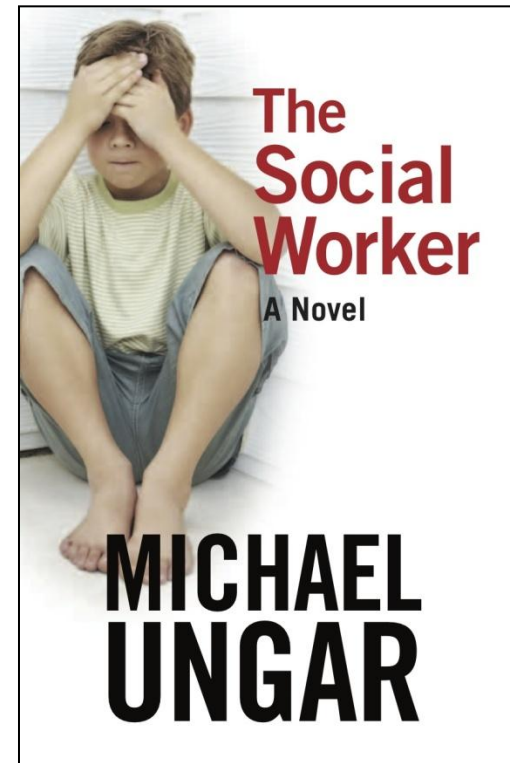
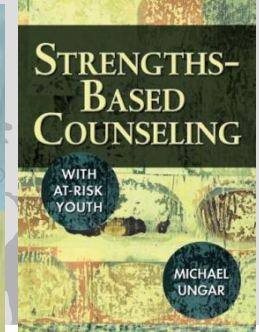
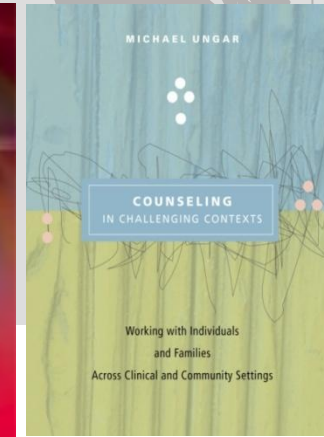
Killam Professor,

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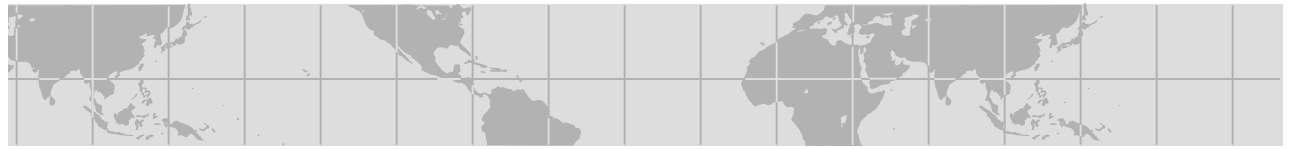
www.resilienceresearch.org





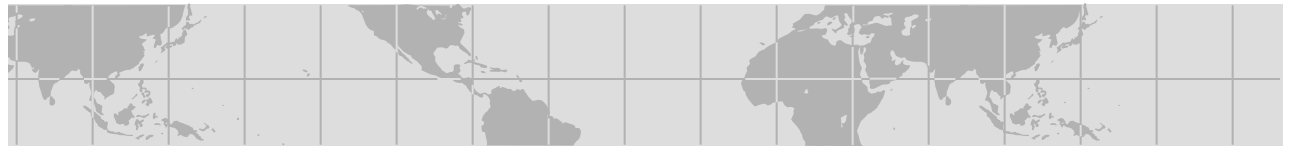
Resilience occurs when...

- ✿ We shape a child's social ecology
 - ▣ 'Nurture trumps nature'
 - ▣ 'Grit' and 'Perseverance' can be taught
- ✿ "Differential impact"
 - ▣ The more troubled a child, the more our efforts to help that child count
- ✿ It takes a community, a family, and a school



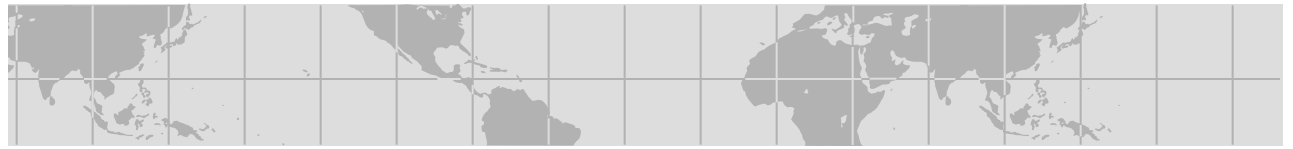
Nine Things All Children Need

1. Structure
2. Consequences
3. Parent-child connections
4. Lots and lots of strong relationships
5. A powerful identity
6. A sense of control



The Risk-taker's Advantage and its Impact on the Anxious Child

- ✿ Denying children the “Risk-taker’s Advantage” can create anxiety among children
 - ❑ A lack of opportunity to experience appropriate amounts of challenge
 - ❑ A lack of opportunity to experience appropriate amounts of responsibility
- ✿ Need **Balance** between ensuring safety and biopsychosocial development

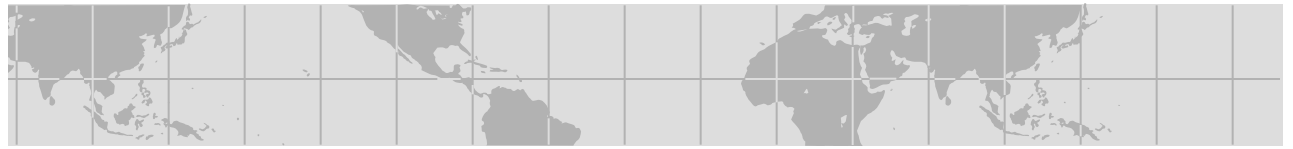


**What risks did
you take
growing up?**

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

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

**How will our
children learn
these same
lessons?**



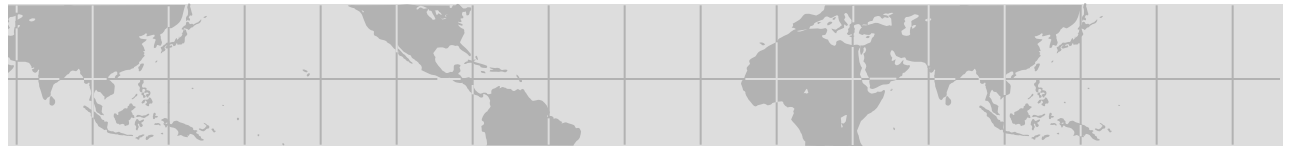
*Risk-takers and responsibility-seekers
hear 4 messages at home, at school,
and in their communities:*

- ⊕ "You belong"
- ⊕ "You're trustworthy"
- ⊕ "You're responsible"
- ⊕ "You're capable"



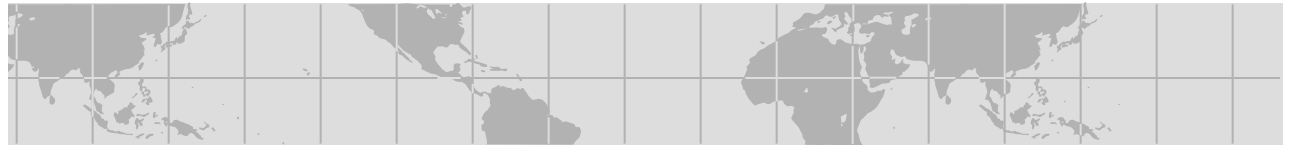
Nine Things All Children Need

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/spirituality/life purpose
8. Rights and responsibilities
9. Safety and support



The Right Amount of Risk and Responsibility

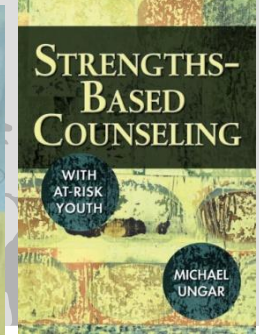
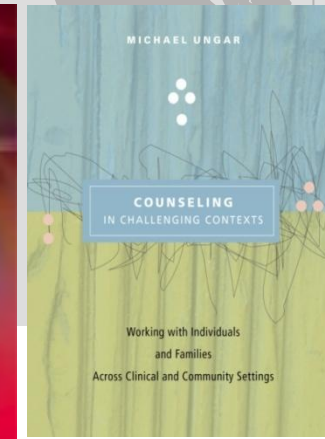
- ✚ Work Opportunities: paid or volunteer; certification as coach, life guard...
- ✚ Dangerous 'toys': knives, chemistry sets, scooters, make-up, video games, motorbikes, extreme sport gear
- ✚ Navigate community: walking, busing, skateboarding, driving



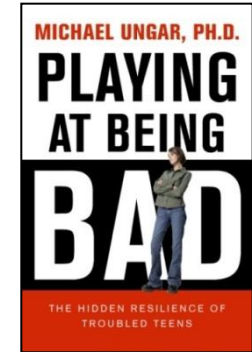
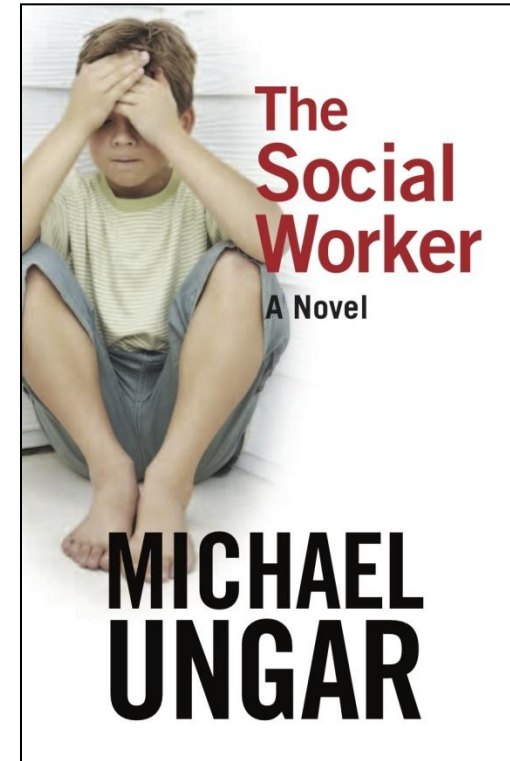
The Right Amount of Risk and Responsibility

- ✿ Bodily experiences: celebrations of puberty, first love
- ✿ Outdoor challenge: wilderness trip, extreme sports

Thank you!



Resilience
Research
Centre



too **safe**
for their own
good
How risk and responsibility
help teens thrive
Michael Ungar, Ph.D.



We Generation
Raising Socially Responsible Kids
The author of TOO SAFE FOR THEIR OWN GOOD
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For more information about Dr Ungar
and the 2014 Thinker in Residence

go to

ccyp.wa.gov.au