

Risks / stressors and protectors / resources relevant to children

Risk / stressor	Factor	Protector
Intrinsic		
Younger	Age	Older
Male	Gender	Female
General or specific learning disabilities, developmental disorder, lack of educational skills	Development (language and cognitive abilities)	Good cognitive and language abilities and educational skills
Chronic physical illness / disability	Physical health	Healthy
Predisposition to mental disorder, or increased risk	Genetics	No adverse predisposition
Difficult	Temperament	Easy
Belonging to minority – being 'different' experience of oppression, discrimination, racism	Ethnicity	Belonging to majority group
Intermediate circumstances		
Discordant / distant	Parent – child relationship	Warm / mutual
Lax / hostile / no control, neglect, abuse	Parenting	Positive, e.g. co-operation and good control, age-appropriate interactions
Distant / discordant / violent	Inter-parental relationship	Mutually supportive / co-operative
Co-morbidity, both parents ill, single parent ill	Parental mental health	Partner well
Absent / discordant / oppressive	Sibling and peer relationships	Warm / supportive
Material hardship	Socio-economic resources	Financially secure
Crowded, unhygienic	Housing	Good, spacious
Poor ethos, low support, bullying, punitive	School	Good ethos, supportive
Absent supports, anti-social influences	Community	Support, provision of child activities
Life events		
Loss and other negative life events and experiences	Life events and experiences	Positive life events, acknowledgement of achievements

Ref: Falkov A 9ed) (1998) *Crossing bridges. Training resources for working with mentally ill parents and their children. Reader – for managers, practitioners and trainers. P. 72. Pavilion Publishing, Brighton*

Vulnerabilities and strengths for children aged 10-14 years and teenagers 15 years and over

Vulnerabilities	Strengths
Coping with puberty without support.	Factual information about puberty, sex and contraception.
Denying own needs and feelings.	A mutual friend. Unstigmatised support of relevant professionals.
An increased risk of psychological problems, behavioural disorders, suicidal behaviours and offending. Low self-esteem.	The ability to separate themselves either psychologically or physically from stressful situations.
Poor school attainment due to: difficulties in concentration, poor attendance in order to look after parents or younger children, unacceptable behaviour resulting in a pattern of school exclusion.	Regular school attendance. Sympathetic, empathetic and vigilant teachers. A champion who acts vigorously on behalf of the child. For those no longer in school, a job.
The fear that revealing family problems will lead to the family being broken up. This may result in increased isolation from friends and adults outside the family.	A mentor or trusted adult with whom the child can discuss sensitive issues. Practical and domestic help.
Increased risk of abuse. Inappropriate role models.	An alternative, safe and supportive residence for children and young people subjected to violence or the threat of violence.

Cleaver, H. (200a) When Parents' Issues Influence their Ability to Respond to Children's Needs. I Horwath, J. (ed) The Child's World: Assessing Children in Need. The reader. The NSPCC, London.