



Staying Strong as a Family When One Member Is Weak

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Burnout

physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance, and negative attitudes toward oneself and others. It results from performing at a high level until stress and tension, especially from extreme and prolonged physical or mental exertion or an overburdening workload, take their toll.

'Burnout' in [APA Dictionary of Psychology](#), American Psychological Association,



I. Building resilience

qualities of strong families

Families—in all their amazing diversity—are the basic, foundational social units in every society, as far as we know. [...]

Most of the research on families, historically speaking, has focused primarily on the problems or weaknesses of families or the individuals within the family. [...]

Over the past three decades researchers [...] have studied families from a strengths-based perspective. The similarities that are found among research with families globally point to a set of qualities that describe the characteristics of strong families.

DeFrain, John and Sylvia M. Asay. (2007) 'Strong Families Around the World: An Introduction to the Family Strengths Perspective', *Marriage & Family Review*, 41(1/2), pp. 1-10

I. Building resilience

qualities of strong families

Appreciation and Affection

- Caring for each other
- Friendship
- Respect for Individuality
- Playfulness
- Humour

Commitment

- Trust
- Honesty
- Dependability
- Faithfulness
- Sharing

Positive Communication

- Giving compliments
- Sharing feelings
- Avoiding blame
- Being able to compromise
- Agreeing to disagree

Ability to Manage Stress and Crisis Effectively

- Adaptability
- Seeing crises as challenges and opportunities
- Growing through crises together
- Openness to change
- Resilience

Enjoyable Time Together

- Quality time in great quantity
- Good things take time
- Enjoying each other's company
- Simple good times
- Sharing fun times

Spiritual Well-Being

- Hope
- Faith
- Compassion
- Shared ethical values
- Oneness with humankind

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I. Building resilience

qualities of strong families

Cohesion

Commitment

Cohesion

Adaptability

Interpersonal
& coping skills

Communion

Communication



Role structure

Role clarity

Complementarity

Environmental stability

Co-journeying

J.O and J.K. Balswick (1999) *The Family* 2nd edn. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Gary Collins (1988) *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, revised edn. Nashville: W Publishing.

Paul B. Coulter (2024 for ELF)

II. Biblical perspectives

A. The divine family (John 5:19-24)

Cohesion commitment *and* companionship
“the Father loves the Son ... that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father”

Communion activity *and* understanding
“... and shows him all that he himself is doing ...”

Complementarity distinct roles *and* shared goals
“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son”

Co-journeying navigating ups *and* downs together
“... And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel”.

II. Biblical perspectives

B. The church family (1 Corinthians 12)

Cohesion commitment *and* companionship
“in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body —Jews or Greeks, slave or free” (v13)

Communion activity *and* understanding
“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’” (v21)

Complementarity distinct roles *and* shared goals
“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (v7)

Co-journeying navigating ups *and* downs together
“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice” (v26)

II. Biblical perspectives

C. Present weakness and coming strength (2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Romans 8:18-39)

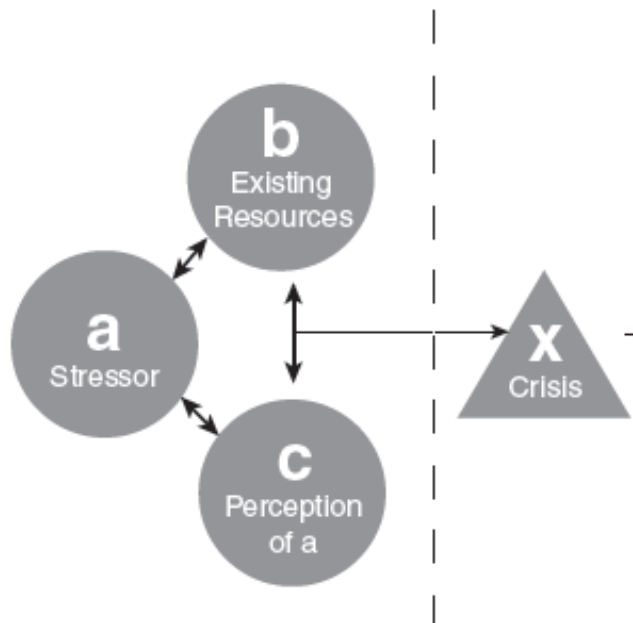
Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day **2 Corinthians 4:16**

we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **Romans 8:23**

the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable [...] God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it **1 Corinthians 12:22,24**

III. Navigating Family Stress

Reuben Hill's ABC-X Model



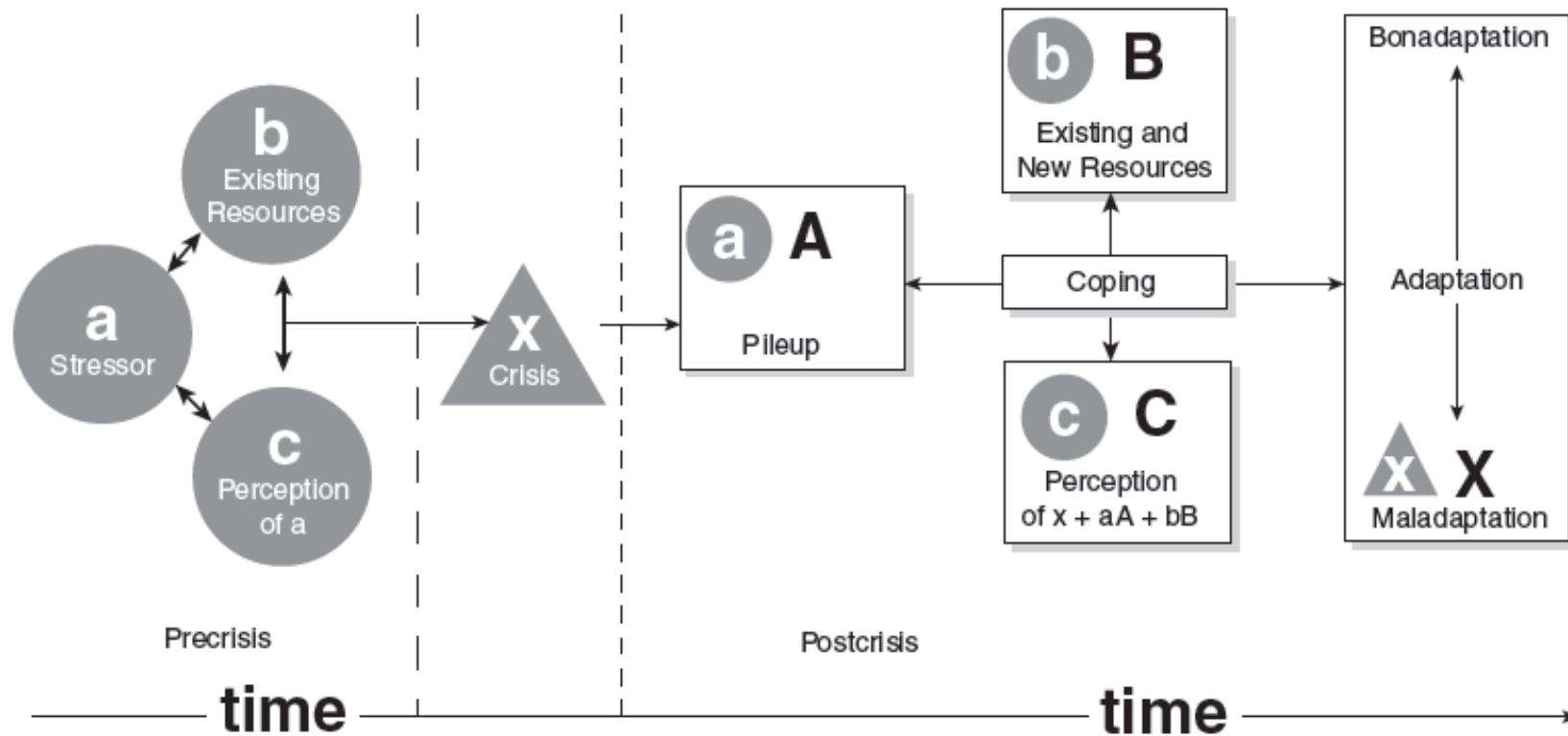
- a Stressor** – event precipitating a potential crisis
“a situation for which the family has had little or no prior preparation and must therefore be viewed as problematic” (p. 139)
- b Existing resources** – crisis-proofing factors
e.g., family integration and adaptability (the four Cs)
- c Perception of A** – interpreted meaning of event
positive perceptions are less likely to enter a crisis
- x Crisis** – role patterns in flux; shifting expectations

Reuben Hill (1958) ‘Generic features of families under stress’, *Social Casework*, 49, 139–150 [based on experiences of World War II]

Image from Janice Gauthier Weber (2010) *Individual and Family Stress and Crises*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p.86

III. Navigating Family Stress

McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model

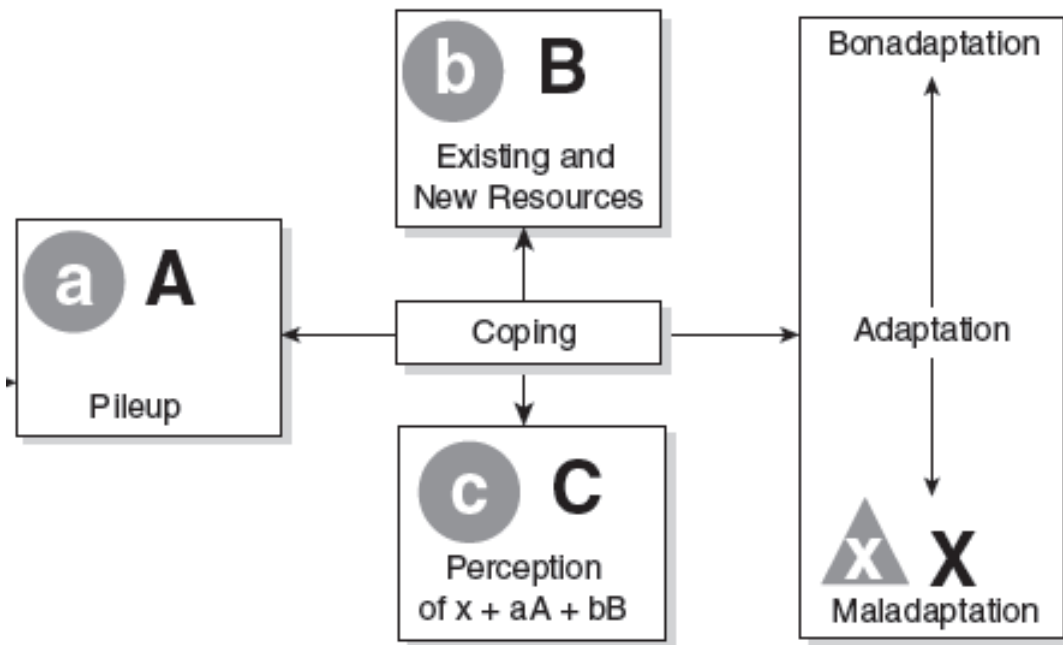


Hamilton McCubbin and Joan Patterson (1983) 'The family stress process: The Double ABCX Model of family adjustment and adaptation'. In H. I. McCubbin, M. Sussman, & J. M. Patterson (eds.) *Social stress and the family: Advances and developments in family stress theory and research*. New York: Haworth. [based on experiences of Vietnam War]

Image from Janice Gauthier Weber (2010) *Individual and Family Stress and Crises*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p.86

III. Navigating Family Stress

McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model



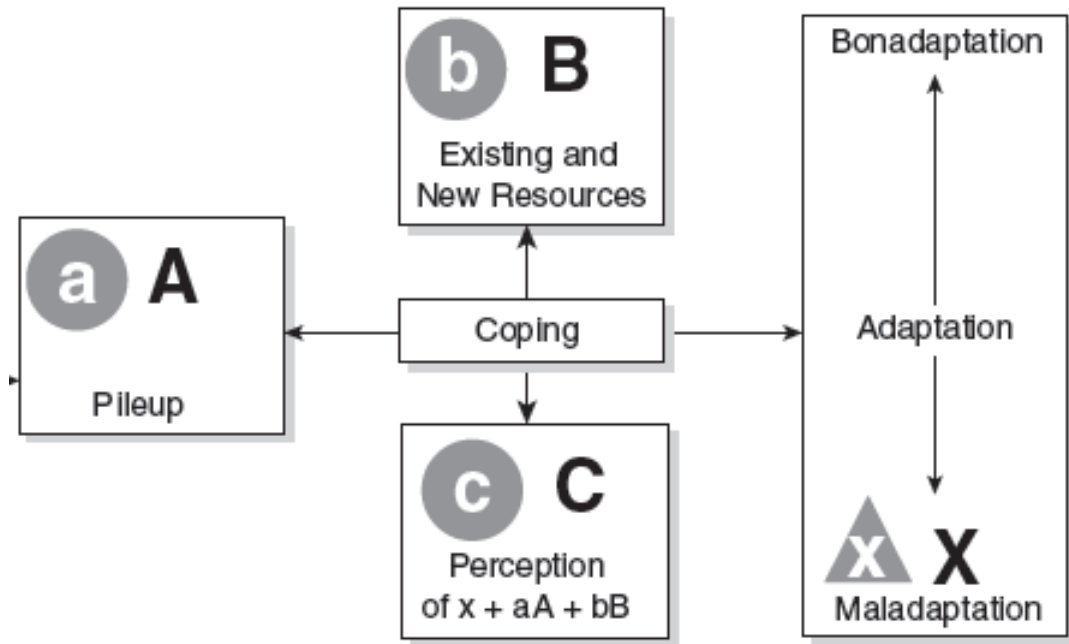
Additional variables

1. additional life stressors and strains;
2. psychological and social resources as well as intrafamilial resources;
3. changes in the family's definition;
4. family coping strategies; and
5. a range of outcomes

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III. Navigating Family Stress

McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model



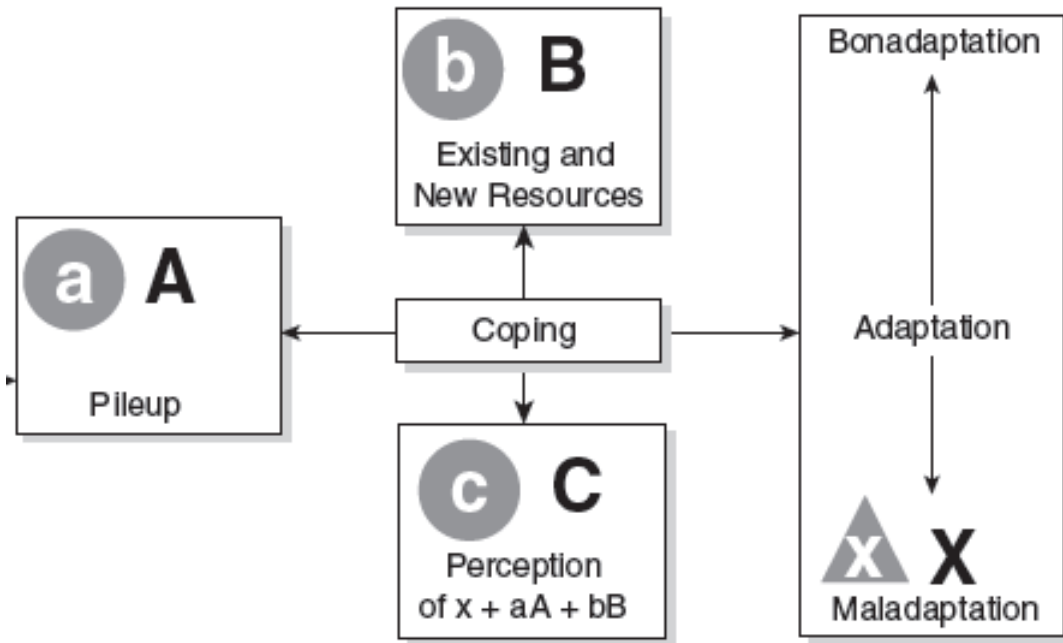
aA Pileup

1. the initial stressor;
2. resulting hardships that become chronic strains;
3. transitions;
4. consequences of family efforts to cope;
5. ambiguity within family and society.

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McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model

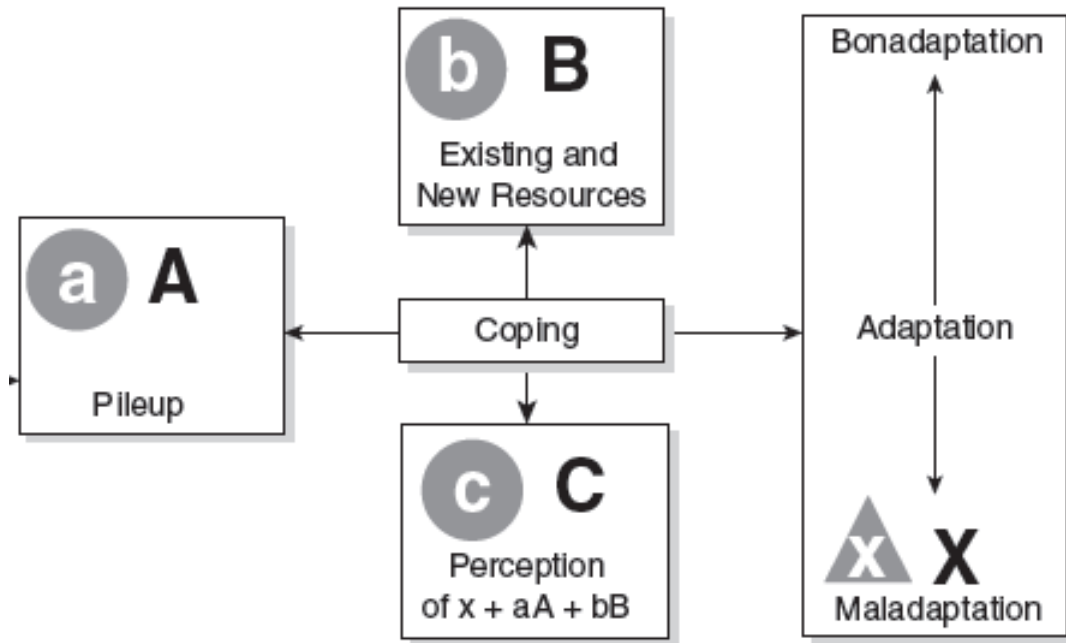


- bB Existing and New resources, e.g.,**
- educational opportunities;
 - increased self-esteem and self-sufficiency;
 - reallocated roles and responsibilities;
 - new communities;
 - new families;
 - **churches**, groups and clubs.

Image from Janice Gauthier Weber (2010) *Individual and Family Stress and Crises*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p.86

III. Navigating Family Stress

McCubbin & Patterson's Double ABC-X Model



xX Maladaptation

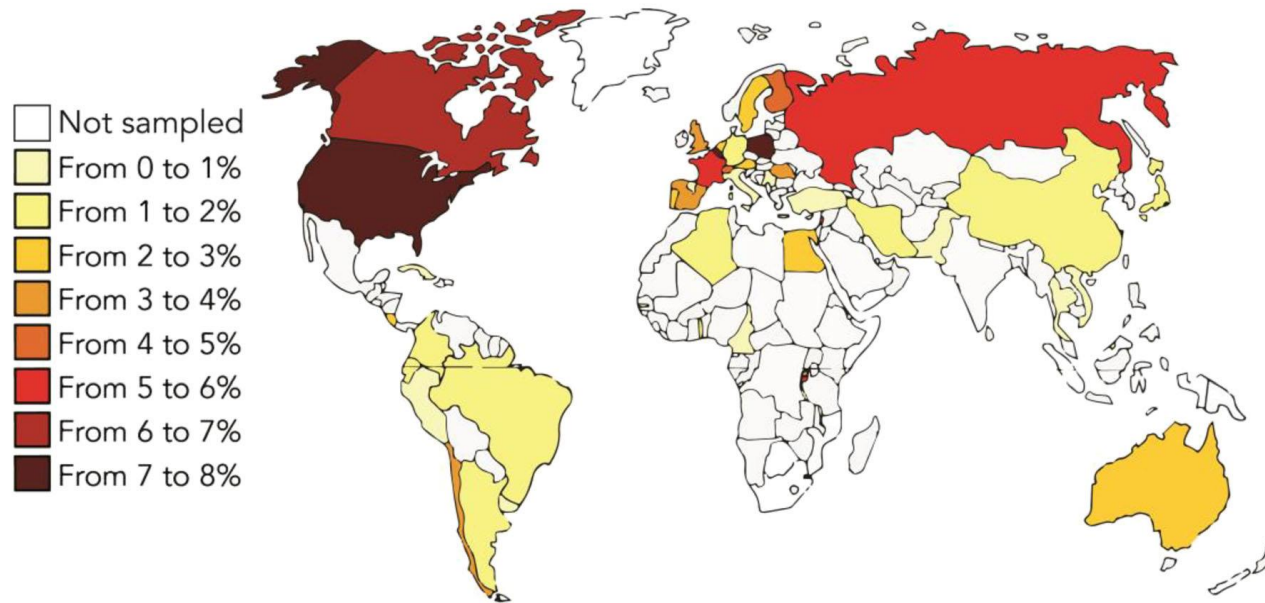
continuing imbalance in functioning:

- a) member to family; and/or
- b) family to community

or balance at the expense of the family's or a family member's integrity, development, or autonomy.

Image from Janice Gauthier Weber (2010) *Individual and Family Stress and Crises*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, p.86

‘It takes a village to raise a child’



the higher the individualism of a given country, the higher the mean level of parental burnout in that same country. The effect size is large

a child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive view of parenting [...] Parents are expected to both reduce the slightest risks to offspring and to optimize their children’s physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Isabelle Roskam *et al.* (2021) ‘Parental Burnout Around the Globe: a 42-Country Study’, *Affective Science* (2), pp.58–79

IV. Recovering as a family

A. Coping mechanisms

Space for ...

each individual

each relationship

whole family

What can the 'church family' offer?

Presence – listening and lightness (fun); 'you are not alone' (sharing our own weakness)

Provision for material/practical needs

Prayer – lament and intercession

Pastoral guidance – sorting and reordering life rhythms, perspectives and expectations

IV. Recovering as a family

B. Thriving in a 'new normal'

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. **2 Corinthians 12:9**

Grace forgiveness, forbearance and fun
gratitude and faith

Power doing what we can with what he gives (change what you can – small changes can make a big difference)

living within limits ('remember you are dust' –
sleep, Sabbath, food, light, exercise)

IV. Recovering as a family

C. Families of faith, hope and love

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. **1 Corinthians 13:13**

Faith trusting acceptance of mutual contributions

Hope patient endurance through disappointment

Love intimacy and vulnerability, secure in God's love

Questions?
Comments?