

Seminar on Research Language, Vulnerability and Resilience

Dr. Donald Wertlieb, Professor Emeritus from the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University, Massachusetts visited Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri Campus. He led engaging discussions on research language, vulnerability and resilience with team members from Ammachi Labs and the Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. He was very impressed by the projects of AMMACHI Labs with regard to women's empowerment and skill development and enjoyed Prof. Bhavani's informative presentation.

Dr. Wertlieb spoke of his work in the area of resiliency and coping among children and youth, particularly those youth from adverse experiences such as parental divorce, disability, or illness. The importance of high quality research with proper interpretation was discussed. This is especially true given that during the last century people at large assumed that children are simply resilient by nature. This assumption, according to Dr. Wertlieb, put many youth at higher risk for suffering and negative outcomes in the aftermath of stressful life events. In fact, many factors play a role in the level of resiliency, or lack thereof, among children and youth.

Lacking the knowledge of how to properly assess a child or youth's experience of stress, its source, and its impact on the youth, many overlook the likelihood that youth are in need of particular attention in the wake of serious adversity. Similarly, some believe that increasingly common experiences, such as parental divorce, do not negatively affect children in any lasting manner. Such conjectures, again, increase a child's risk for negative outcomes to adversity (e.g., mental distress, behavioral problems, and more). In fact, research indicates that childhood adversity can interrupt normal development patterns, and contribute to later psychological problems. Properly executed research, and attention to dissemination of its results, is highly important to change myths that ultimately hurt children and youth. Research derived information, on the other hand, can help populations to be more attentive of the needs of youth, particularly during periods of high stress from some adverse experience.

About the Speaker

Donald Wertlieb is past president of the American Orthopsychiatric Association and current president of the Partnership for Early Childhood Development and Disability Rights. He is professor emeritus and former chair of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University. Internationally, Dr. Wertlieb's work emphasizes collaboration in the development of mental health and integrated human services frameworks, with particular attention to fostering resiliency for children and families placed at risk. Notable are partnership projects in Haifa, Israel (Mercaz Gil Center for Learning) and in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine (Educational Resource Center for Children with Disabilities). Dr. Wertlieb is a pediatric psychologist whose major research interest has been in understanding the complex processes by which children and families cope with stressors such as marital separation and divorce, chronic illness and disability, and complex social change. In addition, he is committed to the dissemination of research to policymakers and the public. He served on the steering group of the National Forum on the Future of Children and Families (1992-1993), a joint program of the National Academy of Science's Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education and the Institute of Medicine. Dr. Wertlieb was president of the Society of Pediatric Psychology (1996-1999), a professional membership organization of over 1000 scholars and practitioners committed to the improvement of healthcare research and services for children and families. He earned his Ph.D. in pediatric psychology from Boston University.



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By Dr. Donald Wertlieb

Date: 14th December,
Time: 09:00 to 17:00
Venue: Amrita University



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