



# Reconceptualizing Resilience in the Context of an Arts Intervention for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

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**Improve M&E Processes in their  
refugee sites (Uganda, Colombia,  
Jordan, Bangladesh, Bosnia)**

Reconceptualizing Resilience with Insights from  
Psychology:

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) and Polyvictimization

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# Resilience vs. Post-Traumatic Growth

- Etymologically, resilience means to rebound or snap back into place.
- Someone being able to adapt, to continue functioning on the same trajectory as before suffering a traumatic event.
- Simmons (2019) argues that to expect someone to snap back to who they were before their experience is to risk eliminating substantial meaning from their experience.

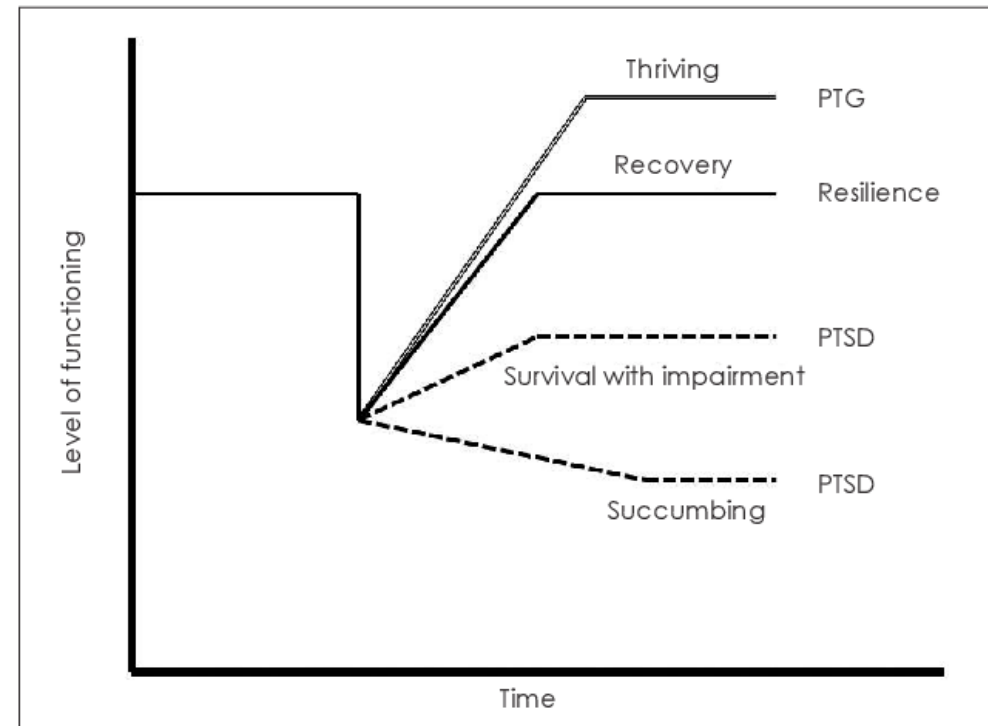


Fig. 4. Possible outcomes of adversity: PTG = Posttraumatic growth



# 5 Factors in PTG

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PTG will occur when the individual creates “new beliefs about themselves and the world, and builds a new way of life that is experienced as superior to the previous one” (Williamson 2016, 42).

1. Seeing New Possibilities
2. Changed Relationships
3. Paradoxical view of being both stronger yet more vulnerable
4. Greater appreciation for life
5. Changes in individual's spiritual and existential life

# Not All Shocks or Trauma Are the Same: Post-Traumatic Growth

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- In the study of posttraumatic growth, the severity of trauma becomes critical
- While coping and resilience are most likely to occur in the face of minor challenges, PTG seems to occur more frequently in reaction to “seismic” traumatic events (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1995)
- Individuals can accommodate small to moderate traumas through resilience, that is, they can snap back to their former trajectory.
- When experiencing larger traumas that call into question their identity and assumptive world, individuals must rethink their lives anew, and create a new trajectory.

# Not All Shocks Are the Same: International Development Literature

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- The general conclusion from the development literature is that there is something of a continuum where mild to moderate shocks are manageable, but major shocks are not (for instance Ghoshi 2020).
- However, the severity of shocks is not often theoretically considered in depth in the resilience literature. Indeed, many studies on resilience do not even note the levels of shock in a given context except to note whether it was “severe”.

# Not All Shocks Are the Same: Polyvictimization

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- What is polyvictimization?
  - “The experience of multiple types of victimization such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, bullying, and exposure to family violence versus multiple episodes of the same kind of victimization” (Polyvictimization.org).
  - Polyvictimization leads to multiplicative or even exponential trauma (Simmons and Téllez 2014)

# Polyvictimization and the Rohingya

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- Historical trauma dating back at least to World War II,
- Removal of citizenship status along with concomitant withholding of services after 1982
- Forced relocation to internal displacement camps,
- Harassment,
- Frequent weather events such as typhoons
- Previous forced relocations to Bangladesh
- Ethnic cleansing of 2017
- Various traumas while the refugee camps were established
- Traumas within Bangladeshi refugee camps (violence, withholding of education, fires and floods,)
- Women and girls
  - Social isolation, patriarchy, domestic violence, sexual violence, forced marriage, etc.

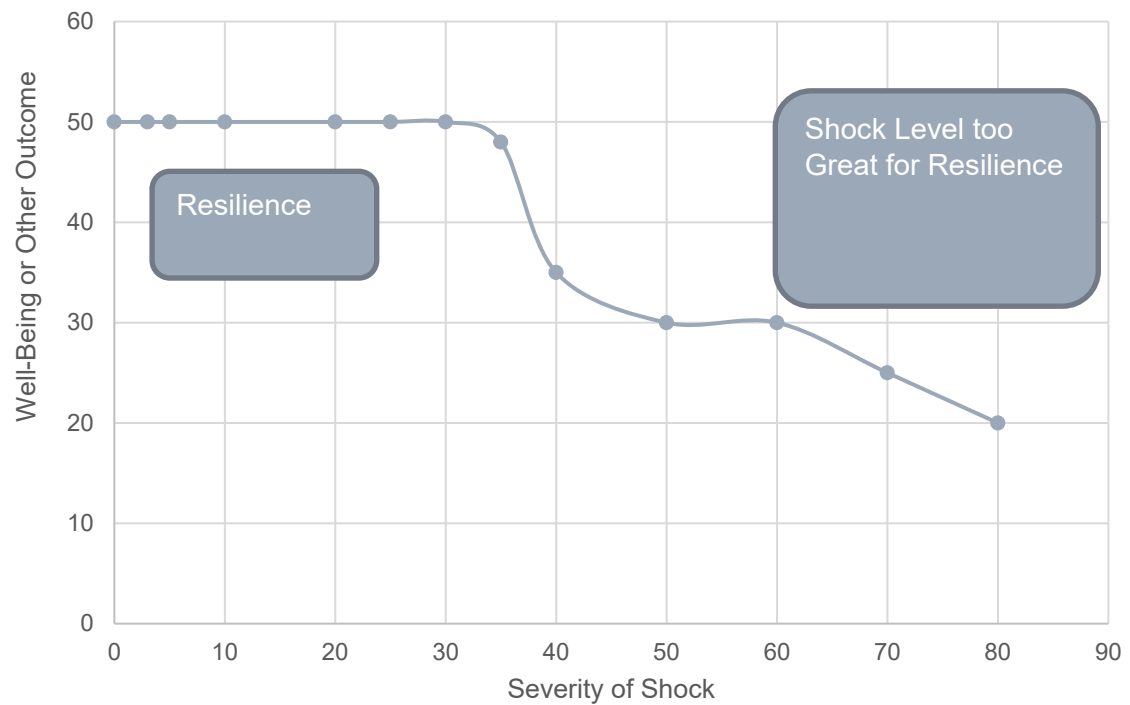


# The Relationship between PTG, Resilience, and Polyvictimization

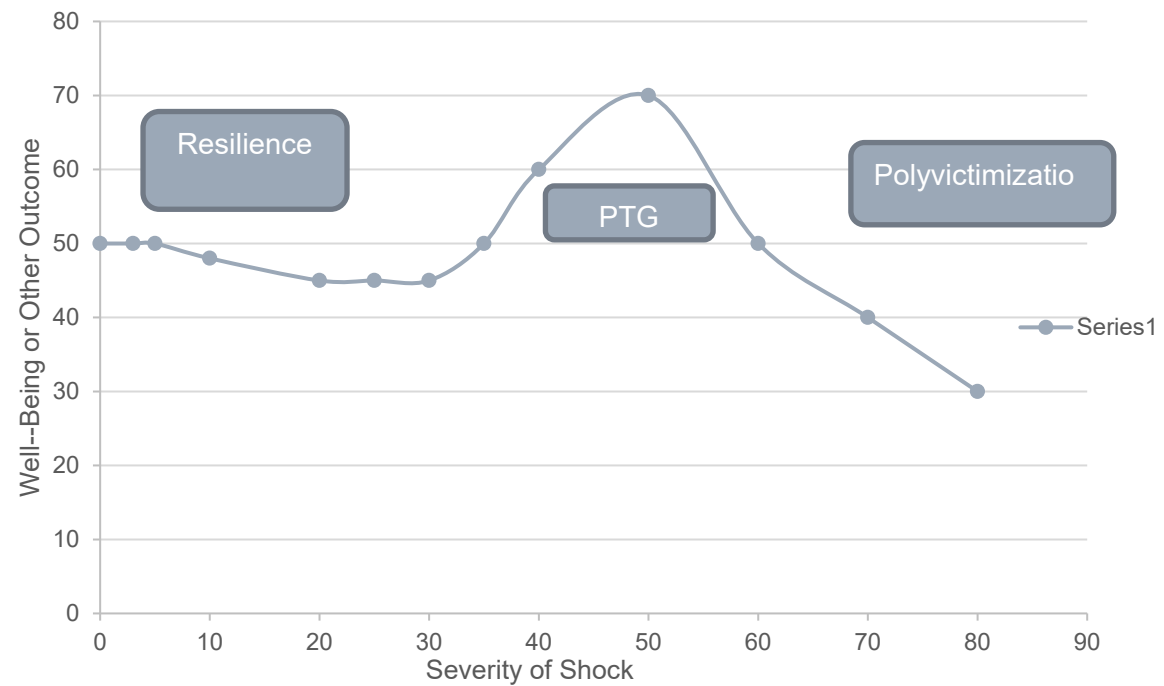
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Simmons (2019) argues that polyvictimization is a limiting principle to posttraumatic growth. With minor to moderate shocks a system can be maintained. With dramatic shocks there is the potential for PTG which transcends the system, but with extreme amounts of shocks, we are beyond the reach of PTG, and very little seems to be hopeful, at least in the short term.

### Resilience



### Resilience, Post-Traumatic Growth, and Polyvictimization



# Other Reconceptualizations

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1. Defining Systems: Oppressive vs. Support Systems
2. Individual vs. Communal Resilience
3. Individual vs. Communal Post-Traumatic Growth
4. Types of Interventions, such as those that provide opportunities for crafting new identities and reflection on and shape system
5. Outcomes of resilience literature must be broadened to include cultural competency, cultural pride, etc.



# PTG in the Rohingya Context

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- Develop a new Rohingya-proud identity
- Demand for human rights including education, security, political participation, right to culture, etc.
- Sense of community, sense of belonging, family unity
- Economic Security/Stability - Self-reliance, pride in being able to provide for one's family
- Emergence of Rohingya artists, journalists, activists, engineers, health professionals
- New possibilities outside of Myanmar
- Collective dignity and mutual respect, cultural and religious gatherings

# Insights were drawn from:

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1. Academic and Gray Literature
2. 35 participants mostly from South Asia in a 12-week workshop including a number of Rohingya and folks working directly with the Rohingya
3. Faculty at North South University in Dhaka
4. Artolution's Country Director in Bangladesh – an expert on Rohingya culture

# Next Steps

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1. Focus Groups with Rohingya and host community artists on resilience and PTG in this context
2. Finalize M&E Process of Artolution interventions including the following scales:
  - a. The Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory Short Form (Cann et al. 2009)
  - b. The Individual and Collective Posttraumatic Growth Scale (Włodarczyk et al. 2017)
  - c. The Subjective Feelings of Resilience Scale (Jones et al. 2018)
  - d. The Scale of Protective Factors (Ponce-Garcia, Madwell, and Kennison, 2015)
  - e. Resilience Scale for Adults (Friborg et al. 2003)

# Research Study

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1. Pilot test with Rohingya and host-community participants in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh
2. Translate processes for refugee populations in Jordan, Uganda, Colombia, and Bosnia