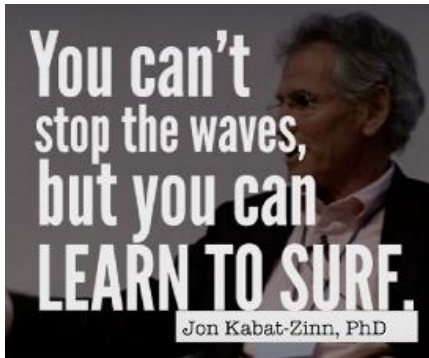


Term 2 2019 Sabbatical Report

Resilience

*The solution of adult problems tomorrow depends upon the way we raise our children today.
There is no greater insight into the future than recognising when we save our children, we save ourselves.*

Margaret Mead



Ma te huru huru, Ka rere te manu

With feathers, a bird can fly

(With support our children can achieve great things)

Purpose

To investigate how schools and providers can foster resilience in children and support this development with family and whanau at a time when there are an increasing number of students demonstrating poor resilience and coping strategies. Explore successful interventions and supports that can be utilised by schools to benefit ongoing wellbeing and later life success and mental health.

Four key points influenced the choice of investigation :

- Our own school's "noticing" of the increasing number of children who appeared to lack resilience and coping strategies, as well as the number of parents who appear to be overly anxious about their children and the potential issues they may face.
- Conversations with other principals where resilience is a widespread concern for many children.
- Parental, community and societal concern about levels of anxiety, mental health issues of children and young people appearing to be on the increase. This includes my involvement in a local initiative to support families and whanau as an alternative to a "Children's Team" and the conversations which repeatedly turn to talk about anxiety and resilience.
- The strong belief that early intervention is prevention for so many things.

Introduction

As a strong Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) school (since 2011) in an increasingly diverse community I have observed a growing need to foster resiliency for our students and whanau. To do this teachers, schools and parents/caregivers and whanau need access to tools and strategies to teach, nurture and socially coach children to build their capacity to cope with daily disappointments, upsets and setbacks. It is my belief by building this early in a developmentally appropriate way we have the potential to improve later life outcomes for all.

As part of my sabbatical I sought to investigate strategies, approaches and programmes with a view to identifying the essential building blocks for resilience in students in schools, their families and the wider community. It is my fundamental belief resilience is essential to positive wellbeing.

As well as exploring the plethora of information available online, building on my own experience with schools, families and whanau as well as my own personal life experiences which has shaped my thinking and practice, time to think, assimilate and reflect has been invaluable. Having the time and opportunity to

meet with and have conversations with community and support providers and health professionals was essential to developing an authentic understanding of needs and how best to support and nurture the development of resilience in students. Conversations with friends, colleagues and parents also provided increased depth and insight into shared realities of noticing the lack of resilience in an increasing number of children and the need for resilience development.

It is my belief that the approach to developing resilience should be a universal one, with a school-wide approach and focus on positive school culture and learning environment. PB4L, Positive Behaviour for Learning is a mechanism for this where we teach positive behaviour because we understand that it may not be something that has naturally occurred. Resilient behaviour can be learned and this is best done from an early age.

Why is there a need for more attention to resilience development now?

Adolescents in New Zealand relative to those in other developed countries have a high rate of social morbidity. While most adolescents are resilient to the complexities of the social milieu in which they live, at least 20% of young New Zealanders will exhibit behaviours and emotions or have experiences that lead to long-term consequences affecting the rest of their lives. (Executive Summary – Gluckman report page 11)

Professor Sir Peter Gluckman: Youth Suicide in New Zealand *“that youth suicide is more than simply a mental health issue and that, with what we know at present, the focus must also include an emphasis on primary prevention starting from very early in life. This means promoting resilience to the inevitable exposure to emotional stresses and building self-control skills in early childhood and primary years”*

Resilience is the strongest antidote we know for self-harm, depression and drug abuse and it's built on our sense of belonging. – Andrew Fuller

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5679df7dbfe8734dc487539b/t/59a78c343e00be307bbd0f79/1504152629998/How+to+Increase+Resilience.pdf>

The inability to roll with the punches has ramifications for learning and life. These include higher rates of dropping out, lower levels of academic achievement and engaging in risky behaviours. Studies have also shown that academic resilience increases the chances of success in the classroom. This, coupled with the fact that half of lifelong mental illness starts before the age of 14, is a good incentive for schools, parents and communities to engage with resilience as part of a broader, and more importantly preventative, mental health strategy.

What's going on in a person's life clearly impacts their mental health—but it's also true that how you respond to these events also plays a big role in mental health. In this vein, a new study from Pennsylvania State University finds that the more one perseveres and sticks to life goals, *and* the more one is able to find the good in bad situations, the lower their risk of mental health disorders in the decades that follow.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwaltton/2019/05/03/pursuing-life-goals-may-protect-against-anxiety-and-depression-new-study-suggests/#4aaf11f21cbf>

We need to help the young New Zealanders to learn the knowledge and strategies to cope with everyday challenges of life now and in the future. The New Zealand curriculum provides a clear steer and direction for attending to resilience development within all key competency areas but more specifically as part of managing self – students who manage themselves are enterprising, resourceful, reliable and resilient, and participating and contributing – where all children develop and experience a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate within new contexts.

Life is full of change and transitions. Any change or transition can make a person vulnerable, when things don't go as well as planned, or it is different to what we thought it might be. Over recent years I have

observed changes in how children deal with disappointment, changes, hearing the word “no”, “not yet”, or simply being asked to do something. Increasingly responses observed have been melt downs, walk outs, tantrums, and escalated behaviour over simple daily events. Increasingly more children have a diminished capacity to handle what they come up against, their ability to accept the word “no” or do as they are asked. Simply being asked to get off the device can result in throwing things and a torrent of abuse. (device addiction is a whole other sabbatical for another time).

We also know that how a student feels affects how they learn and of course as educators learning is ultimately our business. There is a link between resiliency and doing well at school but one would think our high teenage morbidity rates should be incentive enough. Not surprisingly, ERO’s (2019) analysis found there was a clear link between resilience and doing well at school. And in keeping with the international research, children who rated themselves highly for grit in particular did better academically.

<https://www.ero.govt.nz/footer-upper/news/ero-insights-april-2019/can-resilience-be-built-at-school/>

In 2016 at the request of the Minister for Social Development a study was undertaken entitled, Journeys of Resilience: from adverse childhoods to achieving in adulthood by Social Policy and Evaluation Unit NZ. This study looked at the importance of resilience in helping children and adults respond to adversity, it estimated how many at-risk children would go on to achieve both good education and employment outcomes and looked at key factors that contributed to this. The study projected that of the 121,400 at risk children (14% children 0-14 in 2013), 44% of these would have positive outcomes in education and employment in comparison to 79% of children with low or no risk. The study went on to identify protective factors which helped to be more resilient despite childhood adversity and how these could be further enhanced (discussed later).

Anxiety if not dealt with appropriately can severely impact a child’s development and create problems later, anxiety causes excessive worry. People become resilient and can cope better with stress in adult life if they are exposed to some stress in childhood.

To become resilient we need

- to learn early on that life is going to be a mixed bag of positive and negative experiences – we’re going to be much better equipped to deal with whatever life will inevitably throw at us down the track.
- to learn life doesn’t always go to plan or play fair, nothing is certain, there are curve balls, surprises and blindsides – not all of them are good.
- to overcome set backs, rise to challenges, pick ourselves up
- to roll with the punches and cope with life’s ups and downs,
- to be better able to manage stress,
- to be less susceptible to negative emotions and be quick to bounce back
- to learn to cope with manageable threats
- to persevere, not give up too easily – or want rescued
- to develop the capacity to be calm, clear and adaptive when the going gets tough.

What Grows Resilience? –

Relationships and Connections, it’s about the adults and what they do

He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

The research overwhelmingly states resilience rests on the relationships of the individual and how secure and consistent they are. The development of resilience depends on supportive, responsive relationships

and mastering a set of capabilities that can help us respond and adapt to adversity in healthy ways. (Shonkoff – developing child, Harvard.edu) Resilience rests, fundamentally on relationships. (Luthar cited in Bagshaw page 81). Children become resilient when exposed to a threat or stress in the presence of a comforting secure adult. When children are alone and exposed to a threat or stress the child's emotional state becomes highly aroused, but also quickly returns to normal, as the fear and anxiety are alleviated by the presence of a comforting attachment figure. Over time, as this process of exposure to stress followed by protection and comfort is repeated, the child develops an ability to rely on an internal sense of security, and resilience is built. (Page 3 Calmer Classrooms.)

When referring to work with neglected and abused in infancy, Perry (sited in Calmer Classrooms, page 7) stated the presence of other caring adults in the child's life will build resilience, maintain hope, and provide a different template of possibility.

Protective factors commonly identified, despite differences in culture and national economic factors are; spending time with parents, feeling safe in neighbourhood and school, feeling that adults, especially teachers, care for you and having non-delinquent peers. (Ungar sited in Bagshaw 81). The power of one healthy adult – (Beardslee cited in Burns page 93) by acting as a mirror to reality, the healthy adult assists the young person in clarifying difficult feelings and challenges, while helping him or her to solve problems. In the process, the child learns positive skills for dealing with problems and challenges.

These trusting secure relationships with adults help the child to;

- cope with fear and worry
- explore with confidence
- develop their ability to concentrate and learn
- learn about right and wrong
- recognise and regulate their emotions
- attune to the feelings of others cope with separations and transitions

https://www.benevolent.org.au/ArticleDocuments/404/Resiliencepracticeframework_overview.pdf.aspx Page 18

One stable committed relationship with a supportive adult, a consistent responsive adult, helps the child to develop the ability to plan, monitor and regulate behaviour, and adapt to change. So essentially is about what the adults do to support kids as they grow and develop that builds resilience, therefore for our children it's down to us, teachers, schools and parents.

<https://www.skylight.org.nz/resources/resilience>

Strengths that help

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness –

Desmond Tutu

There is a plethora of information from a variety of sources that explore what I consider the strengths or protective factors for resilience, that is what is in place when resilience is present. In the NZ Journey to Resilience study (2016) referred to earlier, the following protective factors helped at risk young people be more resilient and achieve despite childhood adversity:

- positive individual attitudes, beliefs and aspirations and self determination
- close relationships and strong supportive networks
- accessible and supportive social, community and health services, such as counselling, to support children and adults in their healing process.

The study also found that these protective factors could be further enhanced by providing:

- effective early intervention, for children and their families and whānau, to prevent adversity and to provide effective support when it occurs
- a whole-of-family approach to address the multiple and complex issues within families and whānau

- adult education opportunities, to build confidence and vocational capability and a pathway to strengthen positive outcomes in education and employment.

In the same study it was noted Māori participants shared many of the same resilience strategies as non-Māori, however, the way this was conceptualised and described was often different for Māori participants. This highlighted that there is a cultural dimension to resilience and this needs consideration when being discussed. “Māori are identified as being over-represented in the at-risk group in the Treasury analysis. Just over half of those interviewed in this study were Māori and this enabled the researchers to identify culturally-specific ways in which resilience operated. While Māori participants shared many of the same resilience strategies as non-Māori, the way this is conceptualised and enacted can be different for whanau.

Five interrelated themes emerged from the interviews:

whanaugatanga (whakapapa/kin group relationships that can extend beyond kinship groups);

manaakitanga (caring for and hospitality to others);

kotahitanga (unity, togetherness, solidarity);

wairuatanga (spirituality); and *rangatiratanga* (self-determination).

While understanding of, and access to, *Te Ao Māori* varied among Māori research participants,

Māori culture and identity in general was considered by all participants to be a positive and enriching experience and a significant factor in terms of its contribution to their overall wellbeing. “

https://thehub.sia.govt.nz/assets/documents/Journeys-of-resilience-summary_2.pdf

People can improve their mental health by raising or maintaining high levels of tenacity, resilience and optimism, so how is it we do this?

Having

- Caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family
- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses

Resilience research highlights the immensely positive difference that close family ties, social support, family routines, parenting quality, thinking and coping styles (such a optimism and positive emotions), physical activity , and cultural and spiritual beliefs can have on human reaction to adversity.

To develop resilience we need to help people better manage their upsetting feelings – anger, anxiety, depression, pessimism, and loneliness . It can be seen as a form of disease prevention helping people handle their emotions and feelings better could potentially have a medical payoff as great as getting heavy smokers to quit.(Daniel Goleman – Emotional Intelligence Bloomsbury 1996). To do this we need people to engage in positive thoughts, emotions and self-regulation, create alternatives to solving problems, develop self confidence and self-esteem. Encourage smiling, happiness and bravery.

Ginsberg (cited in Bagshaw page 81 believe attributes of resilience can be developed and he lists these as;

- competence
- confidence
- connection
- character
- contribution
- coping
- control

People need a variety of learning strategies to apply if having difficulty – so they can try again. We need to create an environment where asking for help is a positive trait and experience, praise and admire perseverance and grit, teach failing (our failures give us the information we need to succeed and supporting high expectations.)

According to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, thinking processes directly affect several critical abilities associated with resilience, including:

- Emotional regulation: the ability to keep calm under pressure and express emotions in a way that helps the situation
- Impulse control: the ability to stop and choose whether to act on the desire to take action; the ability to delay gratification and follow through on goals and plans
- Causal analysis: the ability to analyze problems and accurately decide what the causes are
- Empathy: the ability to understand the feelings and needs of another person
- Realistic optimism: the ability to keep a positive outlook without denying reality
- Self-efficacy: the belief that one has the ability to solve problems, handle stress and persevere
- Reaching out: the ability to take new opportunities and reach out to others

What can adults do to help children develop these key resiliency abilities?

- Teach children strategies to calm themselves down, control impulses, and delay gratification.
- Help children plan for positive outcomes by analyzing the cause of the current problem.
- Guide children as they try to identify their own and others' feelings, understand cause and effect, and reach out to ask for support from others when they need it.
- Promote development of children's self-worth and encourage them to express an interest in life, take opportunities that are presented, and actively engage with others

<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/documents/GUIDEBOOK-March11-19FINAL.pdf> page 8

Resilience does not prevent children from experiencing stressful times – but powered by resilience they are able to build coping skills, and these are the very same skills that help children to deal with stress

- Use positive self talk for encouragement
- Capably express their feelings and thoughts
- Not hide away from strong feelings
- Have helpful, age appropriate strategies to manage emotions if they are upset
- Rearrange their plans to work around an unexpected situation
- Use a trial and error approach to their daily life
- Remain hopeful and keep in trying if something doesn't work out
- Know when to stop trying if they decide the effort is not worthwhile
- Actively ask for help if they need it

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au>

Profile of a Resilient Child (*Benard cited in Burns p 100*)

Social Competence

- Responsiveness
- Flexibility
- Empathy/caring
- Communication skills
- Sense of humour

Problem Solving Skills

- Critical thinking
- Generates alternatives
- Planning
- Produces change

Autonomy

- Self-esteem, self-efficacy
- Internal locus of control
- Independence
- Produces change

Sense of purpose and Future

- Goal directedness
- Achievement
- Motivation
- Educational aspirations
- Healthy expectations
- Persistence
- Hopefulness
- Compelling future
- Coherence/meaningfulness

<https://www.skylight.org.nz/resources/resilience> is a short article which provides an excellent overview of key strategies to help develop resilience. The Skylight Trust is an excellent resource bank for many aspects of mental health and supports for children and young people going through difficulties.

How can children's resilience be promoted?

As repeatedly stated the most important factor in promoting children's capacity for resilience is a stable relationship with a caring, responsive adult who provides protection, positive experiences, guidance and opportunities to build self-regulation skills. Children also benefit from community supports that are accessible, culturally relevant and meaningful for their family. These supports include faith and cultural groups, drop-in centres, sports and volunteer programs, help for those with special needs, etc. Another key factor is the importance of thinking processes in the development of resilience and the handling of stress and adversity. Resiliency skills that help develop accurate and flexible thinking can be absorbed by children from an early age and can optimize the development of resilience.

Mininni (2015) in her work in developing an "Emotional Toolkit" she explored five key areas of emphasis that are needed to develop resilience. The first was the need to;

Cultivate Optimism – you do this by watching your language, keeping it positive, drop the words "always" and "never" from conversations ... "this always happens," "we never"(Seligman cited inMininni 2015)

Shift your focus – move from the negative and have gratitude, looking forward, train our brain to look for positive, gratitude journals...proven to work improving how you feel (Evans cited in Mininni 2015) Three things that went well each day, (small things). "we only see what we focus our attention on... and very often we focus on the negative. (Quinlin 2018)



"It is amazing talking about it, how somebody can go through so much but yet they can make the choices as an adult of whether they want to really heal from it or not, and how far you actually can come...You may not be able to change your circumstances but you can change the way that you think about it, and how you feel about it in the way of believing – well I believe in a God – but even believing in yourself. It is internal that you can make a difference."

(Pākehā, female, 30-39 years)

Process difficult emotions, acknowledge where you are, accept them and move on, "this is a terrible thing that has happened and I feel really sorry about it." (Baker cited in Mininni 2015)– when you express your emotions you will be happier and healthier.

Connect relationships are important, smile and nod, calms our bodies, get more connection in your life, human is good but animals/pets can do this – it improves life satisfaction, we are wired to connect with others/ living things

Be present focus on the present – use of mindfulness and meditation, (Davidson cited 2015 in Mininni) impact on brain left frontal cortex – contentment /calmness presides, studies on medical students – impact of level of stress and anxiety and depression. [https://www.uctv.tv/shows/Science-of-](https://www.uctv.tv/shows/Science-of-Resilience-How-to-Thrive-in-Life-Frank-B-Roehr-Memorial-Lecture-29118)

[Resilience-How-to-Thrive-in-Life-Frank-B-Roehr-Memorial-Lecture-29118](https://www.uctv.tv/shows/Science-of-Resilience-How-to-Thrive-in-Life-Frank-B-Roehr-Memorial-Lecture-29118)

In addition to these strategies of challenging unhelpful thoughts, and mindfulness and attention training and dealing with our emotions in my view there is also a need to develop strategies to problem solve.

Thinking - What we are thinking counts.

There has been a huge amount of work and investigation undertaken into the human brain, how it works and what impacts on it. What we are thinking and how we react to this thinking has been explored

especially with regards to early learning experiences and the impact of neglect and trauma. Throughout this investigation a key factor contributing to resilience capacity has become apparent, *What we are thinking counts*.

If you've suffered a major failure, take the sage advice given by psychologist Martin Seligman in the HBR article "[Building Resilience](#)." Talk to yourself. Give yourself a cognitive intervention and counter defeatist thinking with an optimistic attitude. Challenge your downbeat thinking and replace it with a positive outlook.

But, fortunately, major failures come along rarely in life.

What about bouncing back from the more frequent annoying screwups, minor setbacks and irritating upsets that are routine in any leader's life? Resilience is, again, the answer — but with a different flavor. You need to retrain your brain.

The brain has a very different mechanism for bouncing back from the cumulative toll of daily hassles. And with a little effort, you can upgrade its ability to snap back from life's downers.

Whenever we get so upset we say or do something we later regret (and who doesn't now and then?), that's a sure sign that our [amygdala](#) — the brain's radar for danger, and the trigger for the fight-or-flight response — has hijacked the brain's executive centers in the prefrontal cortex. The neural key to resilience lies in how quickly we recover from that hijacked state.

The circuitry that brings us back to full energy and focus after an amygdala hijack concentrates in the left side of our prefrontal area, finds [Richard Davidson](#), a neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin. He's also found that when we're distressed, there's heightened activity on the right side of the prefrontal area. Each of us has a characteristic level of left/right activity that predicts our daily mood range — if we're tilted to the right, more upsets; if to the left, quicker recovery from distress of all kinds.

To tackle this in the workplace, Davidson teamed with the CEO of a high-pressure, 24/7, biotech startup and [Jon Kabat-Zinn](#) of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Kabat-Zinn offered the employees at the biotech outfit instruction in [mindfulness](#), an attention-training method that teaches the brain to register anything happening in the present moment with full focus — but without reacting. <http://www.danielgoleman.info/resilience-for-the-rest-of-us/>

Your thinking style determines your level of resilience, your ability to overcome, steer through, and bounce back when adversity strikes. (Hone 107)

Lehan Stemmet (2107) who works in the area of stress research describes our brains as a weave of patterns that we have built with our experiences and thinking. Our brains are a universe of possible connections, we keep producing new cells we can therefore change our patterns of thinking. His research and investigation showed that resilient people do not confuse needs with wants, they contribute what they have. They face reality and see it for what it is and deal with it proactively, they don't ruminate, they don't add negative emotion. "What ifs", "should haves" rumination is not helpful as it adds to stress and cortisol level. They forgive others they don't resent and envy people. They think very differently about life. There will always be change and your brain will keep changing also, we need resilience to deal with this change. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7XE9pYnC5E> Change your Brain and Resilience. Lehan Stemmet 2017.

A lot of studies and research point to the important of patterns of thinking, the ability to be self aware and reflective and to assess consequences and make choices in their resilience processes. https://thehub.sia.govt.nz/assets/documents/Journeys-of-resilience-summary_2.pdf.

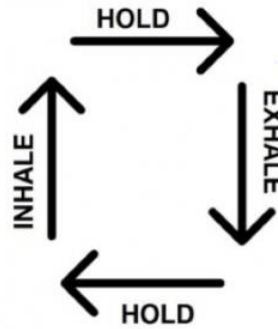
The need to build new neural pathways, new thinking habits with healthy, positive and strong thoughts to form pathways in the brain is strongly promoted through neuroscience. These strong pathways of brave thoughts, “I can do this”, calm thoughts, breathe in breathe out and positive self-talk can assist in developing our resilience.

Quinlan (2018) talks of “thinking traps”, unhelpful habitual thinking patterns that often interfere with optimal functioning and are often based on faulty thinking. This can be jumping to conclusions, personalising externalising, magnifying and minimising and ruminating all based on whether a situation is being read accurately. All of this can occur when we are tired, stressed, and fail to take on board other information. Simply stopping and breathing properly can immediately change the thinking that happens next.

How to Practice Box Breathing

Box breathing is exceedingly simple to practice. Simply relax your body and do the following:

- Let out all of the air in your lungs to the count of four.
- Keep your lungs empty for a count of four.
- Inhale for a count of four.
- Keep your lungs full for a count of four.



<https://www.xptlife.com/improve-recovery-and-bust-stress-with-box-breathing/>

Hikitia te Ha <https://tahufm.com/hikitia-te-ha-simple-breathing-exercises/>

The impact of negative and anxious thoughts children have or are exposed to affects their thinking, exposure to adult worries or excessive worrying of adults is harmful to their thinking so any positive strategies that build positive thinking patterns can significantly build resilience. The language we use and the beliefs we have about ourselves has impact on our resilience.

Martin Selligman (2011) as part of the Penn Resilience project suggests we need to change the way we think, slow down our thinking, consider what is the challenge or the setback, consider how our beliefs, thoughts and worries are impacting on what is happening and argue with ourselves about this. <https://hbr.org/2011/04/building-resilience>

Andrew Fuller (2012) states it is important that in order to develop resiliency that a child learns to think accurately and positively about situations rather than negatively about experiences, for example if they are not good at maths , thinking “I’m so dumb I don’t understand anything” will not help them to develop strategies for studying , nor is it an accurate or true thought. Instead we need to watch our thoughts – talk about the kinds of thoughts they have about themselves and daily experiences, encourage them to notice their thoughts and not be influenced by thoughts that make them feel bad about themselves like “I’m so stupid”. They need to question their thoughts getting them to ask themselves “are the upsetting thoughts I am thinking about myself/the situation really true?” what is the evidence to support this or dismiss the thought. <https://www.generationnext.com.au/2012/10/4-foundation-stones-to-building-positive-thinking-and-resilience/>

A more intensive and focused approach around dealing with thinking patterns is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This approach undertaken by trained professionals takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem-solving. Its goal is to change patterns of thinking or behaviour that are behind people’s difficulties, and so change the way they feel. CBT works by changing people’s attitudes and their behaviour by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes that are held. <https://psychcentral.com/lib/in-depth-cognitive-behavioral-therapy/>

Mindset and Grit

The view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. (page6 Dweck 2016) If you believe your qualities are fixed and “carved in stone”, that you have only certain amount of intelligence, a

certain personality, and a certain moral character that you must live with as this is what you have been dealt then you possess a fixed mindset and you are less likely to flourish. You have a growth mindset if you believe that your abilities can be developed and that you can cultivate these through your efforts, your strategies and help from others. In this mindset you can grow through application and experience. It follows with a growth mindset you are more likely to survive more positively if not thrive in more challenging times. (page 7 Dweck 2016) <https://youtu.be/aNWA3ZwJdLk>

Carol Dweck's work shows that you can change your mindset. Her research on motivation found that when students had a growth mindset, or a mindset which perceives a challenge as an opportunity to learn rather than an obstacle to overcome, they responded with constructive thoughts and their behaviour showed persistence rather than defeat.

From Dweck's research into the growth mindset, tenacity and its effects on achievement, Dweck discovered 4 factors that affect ongoing tenacity or grit, especially in educational settings:

1. Their beliefs about themselves
2. Their goals
3. Their feelings about their social connectedness
4. Their self-regulatory skills

As students move through our education system, all of them will face adversity at one time or another, whether it is social or academic in nature. Thus, a central task for parents and educators is to prepare students to respond resiliently when these inevitable challenges arise. Although educators and parents have intuitive strategies for doing so, many of these strategies may be ill-advised, such as praising students for being "smart" to boost their self-esteem or condemning those who behave aggressively as evil bullies. 'Our research has looked at these adversities through the eyes of students to try to capture the underlying psychology of what causes some students to feel vulnerable, discouraged, or stressed when they face challenges. We have found that what students need the most is not self-esteem boosting or trait labelling; instead, they need mindsets that represent challenges as things that they can take on and overcome over time with effort, new strategies, learning, help from others, and patience. When we emphasize people's potential to change, we prepare our students to face life's challenges resiliently.' (Dweck and Yeager 2012).

In a further study about depression in students during the winter months Dweck established that mindset once again made a difference. The more depressed people with the growth mindset felt, the more they took action to confront their problem, the more they made sure to keep up with schoolwork, and the more they kept up with their lives. The worse they felt the more determined they became. (P 38 Dweck 2016.) It becomes very clear that mindset impacts on resilience.

To develop a growth mindset we need to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning. Seeing that failure is a regular feature of our life, that is not an outcome, it is a journey. Failure is about trying and then what you do about it? Making mistakes and learning from them and applying this to life.

Praise Effort Instead of Intelligence (be specific)

Carol Dweck has researched and written a great deal about the importance of praising hard work and persistence in overcoming challenges and helping people identify the strategies they used. According to Dweck this reinforces a 'growth mindset' - one where people feel energised and knowledgeable about how to overcome barriers. Dweck contrasts this with a 'fixed mindset' that is promoted by praising intelligence ("*You are so smart getting that finished so quickly.*") People with this kind of 'fixed' perspective tend to want to look "smart" and value that more than learning.

To praise effort instead of intelligence, it can be helpful to describe, for example: *“You really listened to the other questions students were asking and clearly tried to think of an original one. That really stood out!”*. Praising what they did for it to turn out well and what the specific effort or strategies were will increase the likelihood of the repetition of these strategies.

Grit and Resilience

Why is it that when some people encounter obstacles to a goal it stops them, while other people gain energy from the challenges life presents? The ability to bounce back from adversity and stay persistent with your passions—especially when things get tough—are traits of highly successful individuals. Grit is something you can develop, although some individuals seem more predisposed to it. What is grit? Angela Duckworth (2017) defines it as the “perseverance and passion for long-term goals.” Duckworth’s research has evolved around discovering why some individuals accomplish more than other individuals despite having the same talent, intelligence, and resources. She discovered that grit can be related to how much you can inspire yourself, access your passion, and sustain your motivation.

How Is Grit Different to Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to get back up when you’ve been knocked down or to come back fighting stronger after a loss. The subtle differentiating factor between these two entwined character traits seems to be that resilience is the optimism to continue when you’ve experienced some failures, even during tough times when everyone else gives up. Conversely, grit is the motivational drive that keeps you on a difficult task over a sustained period of time or life. Put simply: resilience is to bounce back. Grit is to persevere.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaeFnxSfSC4> Angela Duckworth -The Power and Passion of Perseverance.

Hope, Optimism, Gratitude and the Power of Positive thinking

Our worries become self-fulfilling prophecies, propelling us toward the very disaster they predict. People with high levels of hope share certain traits, among them being able to motivate themselves, feeling resourceful enough to find ways to get to their objectives, reassuring themselves when in a tight spot that things will get better, being flexible enough to find different ways to get to their goals or to switch goals if one becomes impossible, and having the sense to break down a formidable task into smaller, manageable pieces. (Snyder in Goleman page87)

Psychologists commonly recognize that hope counteracts mental illness and that hopeful individuals have a greater sense of meaning in life, and generally accomplish their goals more frequently, and they also do better academically and in sport performance. (Cheavens, Feildman and Gum in Hone 2017). Having hope means that one will not give into overwhelming anxiety, a defeatist attitude, or depression in the face of difficult challenges or setbacks. Indeed people who are hopeful evidence less depression than others as they manoeuvre through life in pursuit of their goals, are less anxious in general and have fewer emotional distresses.

Studies have demonstrated that optimism is a key protective mechanism against depressive symptoms in the face of trauma, regardless of individuals culture of origin, (Hone 2017). Optimism, like hope, means having a strong expectation that, in general, things will turn out all right in life, despite setbacks and frustrations. Optimism is an attitude that buffers people against falling into apathy, hopelessness and depression in the face of tough going. People who are optimistic see a failure as due to something that can be changed so they can succeed the next time around (a growth mindset). Pessimists react to setbacks by assuming there is nothing they can do to make things go better next time (fixed mindset), and so do nothing about the problem; they see setback as some personal deficit that will always plague them.

Optimism and hope can be learned (Goleman 89). Underlying both is an outlook that psychologists call self-efficacy, the belief that we have control over the effects of the events in our lives and can meet challenges as they come up and as we do this we in turn increase our self-efficacy. “People’s beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on those abilities. Ability is not a fixed property; there is a huge variability in how you perform. People who have a sense of self-efficacy bounce back from failures; they approach things in terms of how to handle them rather than worrying about what could go wrong. (Bandura in Goleman page 90)

Five Ways to Develop Grit & Resilience

1) Focus on Your Language Choice

Praising efforts fosters resilience and reminds people of their role in a successful outcome. Too often, young children are praised for “being smart” rather than having a good plan. When a child is praised for an ability (e.g., “You are really smart. You are so flexible.”) it teaches a fixed mindset. Today, there are different approaches to **teaching resilience in schools**. Most students have only heard how smart they are (or worse), so failure feels like they aren’t smart anymore. Use language that encourages perseverance and praises effort, rather than celebrates a seemingly fixed trait.

2) Surround Yourself with People Who Persevere

Whether **grit** is nature or nurture is a common debate- but like all things, it’s a combination. Duckworth cites the example of height. Yes, the height of our parents affects our genes (nature) but over generations, we have evolved to be taller as a population (nurture). Surrounding yourself with people who have both passion and perseverance towards their goals, will strengthen the mindset required to increase resilience and grit.

3) Adopt Flexible Thinking Patterns

Being less rigid in your thoughts and actions allows resilience and grit to blossom. Flexible people don’t see problems: they see opportunities for growth and learning. When every challenge is met with enthusiasm and **creative thinking**, you will see yourself as capable. This confidence breeds resilience.

4) Set Tiny Goals That Align with Your Purpose

People with a **sense of purpose** are happier. However, your purpose is very abstract and often difficult to define. By creating smaller short term goals which align with your bigger purpose, you increase your success rate and your speed of accomplishing goals. This will keep you motivated to keep persevering.

5) Build Time into Your Day for Reflection

When you take time to reflect, you bring awareness to the things you have accomplished, and the path you want to take to continue. Reflection can take the form of **meditation**, a journaling session, a **gratitude exercise** or a walk outside while you think back on your day.

When you give yourself time to reflect on your day without judgment, you can see what you have accomplished, as well as what actions you need to take tomorrow to keep moving forward. Good or bad days become equally important reflection tools: what worked for you and what didn’t?

Take Home Message

- Grit is our passion and perseverance towards reaching a long-term goal.
- Resilience is the optimism to keep bouncing back from failure.
- Both of these traits for success are rooted in a growth mindset, and everyone can learn, develop and build your resilience and grit. Like most valuable skills, this will take practice and dedication.

However, these efforts are well worth it and can have positive impacts on every aspect of your life

5 Ways to Develop a Growth Mindset Using Grit and Resilience April 28, 2019

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/5-ways-develop-grit-resilience/>

Gratitude

Gratitude helps us by enabling us to focus on what we have rather than exclusively on what we have lost or dwelling on the negative. It also provides an element of hope. Gratitude is an emotion similar to appreciation, and positive psychology research has found neurological reasons why so many people can

benefit from this general practice of expressing thanks for our lives, even in times of challenge and change. <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/gratitude-appreciation/>

The benefits of practicing gratitude are nearly endless. People who regularly practice gratitude by taking time to notice and reflect upon the things they're thankful for experience more positive emotions, feel more alive, sleep better, express more compassion and kindness, and even have stronger immune systems. <https://www.happify.com/hd/the-science-behind-gratitude/>

Put simply increasing your gratitude is useful because:

- it's an instant mood booster and feels great in the moment
- you're likely to feel closer to friends and family
- you're likely to enjoy your life more
- it's good for your physical health
- it's easier to cope with tough times
- good things in life don't stick in our heads as easily as bad events.

This last point is really important. We tend to remember when bad things happen, and the time we spend thinking about them makes us unhappy. But, if we make an effort to increase how often we experience gratitude, it can balance out some of the negative stuff. <https://au.reachout.com/articles/the-how-and-why-of-practising-gratitude>

Emotional Intelligence - Dealing with, Understanding and Managing Our Emotions

Mininni (mentioned above) referred to the importance of this, processing difficult emotions. The need to acknowledge the emotion and work it through is part of the development of self regulation, and self control. Hone (2017) highlights the importance of patience and perseverance, will power and way power with goal setting and the need for goal planning as part of setting ourselves up for success identifying obstacles and planning for alternatives. All of this pertains to maintaining self control which is ultimately about mastering our feelings.

Help Understand and Develop Self-Control

Helping students develop self-control is important, not only for their behaviour but also for their ability to stay on task and complete things. Developing intrinsic motivation (*the internal drive to focus and remain on task*) is far more helpful than constantly trying to motivate them through extrinsic means.

The psychologist Walter Mischel initiated the famous 'marshmallow experiment' 40 years ago. Joachim de Posada's TED video [Marshmallow Experiment](#) - Mischel left a succession of 4-year-olds in a room with a marshmallow. They could eat the marshmallow at any time. However, if they didn't eat the marshmallow and waited for him to return, they received a second marshmallow. Only one out of three students had the self-control to wait. According to the research, the children who waited longer went on to get higher academic scores. They got into better universities and had, on average, better adult outcomes. The children who didn't have the self-control to wait, were more likely to become bullies. They received worse teacher and parental evaluations 10 years on and were more likely to have drug problems at age 32.

Model and Encourage Self-Set Goals

Setting our own goals ensures that we feel a sense of autonomy and helps us to develop self-discipline. Modelling and encouraging the following language pattern can be helpful. 'When I...Then I...'

When I have completed the first 10 math questions on my homework, then I'll watch TV for 30 minutes.

When I have studied for 30 minutes, then I'll have a snack and break for 15 minutes.

When I have completed this task then I'll take a coffee break.

If parents don't have a healthy way of handling emotions themselves, they will have trouble teaching kids to handle theirs. That is why the change starts with the adults. Fortunately, all five components of emotional intelligence can be taught and learned at any age. There are many tools and techniques that can help us and our children start to identify and understand the emotions of ourselves and others. This process begins with recognition, because it's only when we notice where we're at that we're able to shift ourselves to where we want to be.

On a face-to-face level, as parents, teachers, friends and caretakers, we can open up a dialogue and encourage kids to express what they're feeling. We can teach them "name it to tame it," in which children learn that naming their feelings can help them get a hold on them. We can also talk more about our own feelings, being honest and direct about the times when we feel sad, angry or even afraid.

When we mess up or act out with or around our children, instead of trying to sweep it under the rug, we should acknowledge what occurred in us and repair any emotional damage we may have caused. In taking these each of these steps, we create an environment in which our children can continually make sense of their emotions and experiences. This skill set is perhaps the largest predictor of not only their success in life, but more importantly, their happiness. (Firestone 2016)

When you teach kids emotional intelligence; how to recognize their feelings, understand where they come from and learn how to deal with them, you teach them the most essential skills for their success in life. Research has shown that emotional intelligence or EQ "predicts over 54% of the variation in success (relationships, effectiveness, health, quality of life)."

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/compassion-matters/201603/why-we-need-teach-kids-emotional-intelligence>

Daniel Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence. Each of these elements contribute to an individual's personal success and sense of well-being.

1. Self-awareness. Knowing our own emotions.
2. Self-regulation. Being able to regulate and control how we react to our emotions.
3. Internal motivation. Having a sense of what's important in life.
4. Empathy. Understanding the emotions of others.
5. Social skills. Being able to build social connections.

Mindfulness

Over the last several decades the evidence for the effectiveness of mindfulness-based training for young people has continued to grow. Studies all over the world show that mindfulness training is effective . It helps children and young people develop increased calm and resilience, increased focus and attention, enhanced self-awareness and conflict resolution skills, increased kindness, empathy, connection and prosocial behaviour and statistically significant increases in emotional and general wellbeing. (Latta 2018)

Studies have found that a mindfulness practice can help reduce symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety in children. It can also increase gray matter density in regions of the brain involved in emotional regulation. Another study of adolescents found that yoga, which can increase mindfulness, helped improve student's emotional regulation capacity.(Firestone, 2016)

Badri Bajaj and Neerja Pande.(2016) Writing in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, confirm that psychological resilience is more pronounced in mindful people. In the same study the researchers found "individuals with higher mindfulness have greater resilience, thereby increasing their life

satisfaction.” They note that resilience “can be seen as an important source of subjective well-being,” and point out many ways mindfulness can promote this state of mind. “Mindful people ... can better cope with difficult thoughts and emotions without becoming overwhelmed or shutting down (emotionally),” they write. “Pausing and observing the mind may (help us) resist getting drawn into wallowing in a setback.” Put another way, mindfulness “weakens the chain of associations that keep people obsessing about” their problems or failures, which increases the likelihood they will try again. This isn’t the only reason mindfulness promotes well-being, of course. Another new study provides evidence that the practice also promotes self-compassion, which leads to higher levels of happiness. But increased resilience clearly plays a major role in this beneficial equation. Bajaj and Pande conclude. “Mindfulness training could provide a practical means of enhancing resilience, and personality characteristics like optimism, zest, and patience.”

Mindfulness in real terms is being able to intentionally focus our attention, to fully attending to the present moment and successfully refraining from being easily distracted, and letting our thoughts wander aimlessly. Essentially mindfulness is good for calming and focusing a racing mind. Aside from formal mindfulness practice, there is the whole notion of informal mindfulness practice which is also extremely beneficial. This involves making an effort to be aware of our thoughts, emotions and feelings, and the environment on a moment-to-moment basis, and to keep our minds focused on the present rather than wandering essentially we are **focusing on the present**

Regardless of how we do it, through meditation, mindfulness, through our breathing, whatever, when we focus on the present moment we allow the mind to spring back to original shape. This is when our mind is at its most powerful state, even the All blacks do this after a team has scored against them, they regroup and are told to focus on the now, stop thinking about the past and move forward. This effectively impacts the left frontal cortex of the brain, bringing calmness/contentment and is clearly helpful for stress and anxiety whatever method used.

Approaches such as [5 Ways to Wellbeing](#) can provide a simple framework for everyone in simply keeping positive mental health in balance. Work on this can be hugely beneficial in schools, families, homes and workplaces to highlight that we all need to balance ourselves and take personal responsibility for our own mental health. Approaches such as this build skills and self-efficacy, contributing, giving, getting involved can develop self-esteem, and belief.

What can schools do

Connected and belonging

Building resilience is more than just providing individuals with knowledge, skills and positive attitudes, although programmes that do this are helpful (Bagshaw) p79. It is about the relationships between adults, children and young people and the best outcomes occur when these relationships are part of any work that is undertaken. This is where schools and parents can have a role. Schools and staff need to focus on their connections and relationships with children to allow students to see adults as consistent, trustworthy, able to be relied upon to provide boundaries and safety, to follow through with them, to allow them to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

Creating a supportive learning environment that helps students to develop the competencies of self-management, participating and contributing, and relating to others is a priority for all teachers and staff in schools in New Zealand. An environment needs to be created where students feel valued, included, supported and secure and in which they can take responsibility for themselves and others. Routines need to be in place that promote safety, smooth transitions between activities, and a calm cooperative place for learning and socialising.

Schools have a vital part to play in developing resilient young people. Education that starts at an early age with an emphasis on teaching self-control, delayed gratification and developing relationships with adults to grow social skills have good evidence of effective outcomes. Schools that have high expectations, moderate classroom sizes and in which teachers treat students with warmth, positive regard and support also have good outcomes academically. Better outcomes also occur when schools are smaller in size, have an emphasis on individual programmes not competitive, and mixed ability rather than streamed classes. (83 Bagshaw)

The New Zealand Curriculum promotes the development of social and emotional competencies; managing self, participating and contributing and relating to others being the most obvious. School environments that promote positive behaviour and create inclusive learning environments that foster wellbeing as well as achievement can play a major role in fostering well-being and creating safe, healthy communities. Programmes which incorporate the teaching and reinforcement of prosocial skills, appropriate behaviour and problem-solving strategies can help children build their social and emotional competence and resilience. Consistent schoolwide behaviour management systems based on strong values which promote clear behaviour expectations/consequences, and use consistent language and practice provide children with security and boundaries. It is predictable and safe, and risk taking and mistake making are undertaken in an environment that supports this and sees this as learning.

Coping out loud (Grouse 2019) is important. If we amplify the healthy ways of managing difficulties children and teenagers can see how healthy adults cope with their worries and difficulties. “there is so much to do today I am taking a few minutes to notice everything I can hear so I can be more mindful and focus on what we need to do. Then I am going to make a list and do one thing at a time.”

Children need and respond positively to the provision of a safe, consistent, predictable and reliable environment based on clear behaviour expectations, reliable rewards and consequences and predictable consistent classroom routines. The basic provision of structure, consistency, boundaries and systems ensures that everyone in the school knows and understands. Schools cultures that provide this assist in building strong connections and relationships and in turn have the ability to build resiliency. One such programme and approach is PB4L, Positive Behaviour for Learning. PB4L Schoolwide is based on an organisational systems approach to achieving academic and social success for all students.

PB4L is an evidence based problem solving framework comprised of research validated practices and organisational systems for establishing a social culture, learning and teaching environment, and individual behaviour support needed to achieve positive academic and social outcomes for students.

PB4L helps to foster positive behaviour, strengthen relationships, and increase student well-being by creating caring, inclusive learning environments clearly paving the way for positive effects on resilience. Wellbeing, learning, behaviour are interlinked. A respectful inclusive learning environment enables children and students to express their needs and feelings in positive ways that do not cause further barriers to learning or achievement.

Research undertaken by NZCER 2015 identified that one of the broad range of positive changes for schools involved in PB4L was the positive changes in students' ability to reflect on and manage their own behaviour, an essential component of being resilient. Teaching positive behaviours in their obvious absence, that is where a skill deficit exists will assist students to build their capacity to be more resilient. By teaching appropriate skills; breathing, mindfulness or mediation that helps promote calm and gratitude, reflective thought and actions which develop self regulated behaviours, goal setting and self-reflection based on real information and positive mindset will assist promoting more resilient behaviour that provides positive coping and thinking both learning and behaviour promote the skills needed to be a self-regulated.

It is my strong view that approaches like PB4L naturally lead themselves to incorporating the provision and extension of resilient behaviour. A significant component of this is emotional intelligence, knowing our emotions managing and regulating our emotions and being empathetic to those of others. Furthermore a large body of research has demonstrated that self-regulation and control as a young child are important determinants of social, academic, and emotional stability and success in later life. Some of the strongest evidence has come from Dunedin's 40 year multidisciplinary health and development study (Moffitt, Poulton, and Caspi 2013).

Even without approaches such as PB4L it appears to me that teaching the use of breathing, calming exercises, mindfulness and meditation, growth mindset, positive self-talk –and other resilience building strategies can be incorporated into a school's expectations and procedures as part of their approach to key competencies and commitment to health and wellbeing.

Teaching children about moods, emotions and feelings is part of the development of emotional competence. When children (and adults) understand what is happening in their brain it helps them recognise their symptoms, emotions, reactions and allow them to make sense of how they think, feel and act within their emotions. Naming it can lead to taming it, for example I am angry I need to .. I feel worried so I need to.... Excellent examples of scripts that can be used with children are found in Micheal Grouse's book page 63/64, *Anxious Kids* (2019). Taking this further and using some form of checking with children about their emotions and feelings firstly acknowledges we all have them and they change but also allows growth of empathy and understanding as well as develops an excellent emotional intelligence tool. We can better manage our emotions by identifying how we feel and identifying possible causes. The use of statements... I feel..... because, is one of the simplest scaffolds and strategies to develop emotional understanding.

Thought noticing is important, thoughts not always facts. Tuning into your thinking, or thought noticing, is vital to your effectiveness and wellbeing. Being able to observe your thoughts and notice whether they are helpful or not, based on fact or not and learning techniques to distance ourselves from unhelpful thoughts is an effective resilience technique. Moving away from unhelpful thinking (defusion) is tied to resilience as it enables children to approach previously stressful or fearful situations rationally and purposefully. It enables them to meet experiences they may previously have avoided, and this is building resilience. An extension or alternate to this is the modelling and encouragement of the use of positive self talk. Promotion of positive language and development and work on growth mindset across schools has potential to provide a solid resiliency base for students.

Breathing

The reality is many of us breathe very inefficiently and ineffectively because we breathe shallowly, not getting enough oxygen for optimal functioning. Deep breathing can help us significantly in anxiety prevention and management but also as a strategy in our resiliency tool kit. Teaching children to breathe deeply and effectively can be incorporated into daily lives at school. There are many techniques, box breathing as mentioned earlier, belly breathing, whatever the name or technique it is, it requires that we breathe into our abdomens as opposed to our chests. Deep breathing encourages good oxygen exchange, releases stress, muscle tension, calms anxiety, increases energy and brings you into the present. "Focus" and "doing a release" (deep breathing) and "setting your dial" are all part of the Davis Learning Strategies <https://youtu.be/jn4xd5a3EsY> that supports students with learning difficulties many of whom have significant anxiety about their learning based on the challenges they face. The simple strategies provided can impact all learners.

Exercise-daily – exercise not only promotes mental health but it is also a tool we can use to better manage mental states. Exercise pumps up endorphins, creates mindfulness in motion, relieves muscle tension, helps us sleep and alleviates anxiety. Exercise is also one of the best ways to release tension and stress,

especially if it involves large limbs, arms and legs. Running, chasing and climbing are particularly good for this. At an appropriate age it is important to be open with kids and explain to them that exercise is one of the tools they need to utilise to improve their mood, reduce their anxiety and ultimately get them in the right frame of mind that face anxieties or worries, but also potentially reduce them.“ When you feel overwhelmed do something physical such as going for a brisk walk, playing a game, it will make you feel better”.

Mindfulness or meditation

Wandering minds need to relax, calm down and focus on what’s right in front of us, to more mindful of the present, rather than on the past or future. Mindfulness can help children feel calmer , more in control and capable of handling challenges they worry about. It can help them relax so they feel less stressed, overwhelmed and out of control. Incorporating mindfulness into classroom programmes will provide yet another tool to develop resilience in our young people.

Play

Schools develop and build resilience through play, whether it be guided or independent. Emotions have a key role in play and playing – developing emotion regulation, building strong attachments and peer relationships, engendering positive feelings and enabling them to cope with stressful situations through developing creative approaches and problem solving. Children potentially face many challenges when they are able to play freely in outdoor environments. These challenges encourage them to face up to fears, cope with new situations and uncertainty and feel comfortable with unpleasant emotions. The type of play that that’s beneficial for kids in terms of mental health promotion and safe risk taking generally occurs outdoors. When we move away from four walls of home, the world becomes a little more uncertain, even unpredictable. When a child is play-fighting with a friend, swinging from bar or simply jumping off a rock, they are not only learning how to manipulate an environment, they’re learning how much stress they can cope with.

In addition to components discussed above simple organisational strategies and systems can assist with developing healthy life patterns with the appropriate explanations and reinforcements in place.

Consideration given to the timing and provision of

- Appropriate break times for food, rest, play and activity
- Food- breakfast clubs, lunch programmes, if appropriate and needed, setting kids up for success. Food is also a calming time and a time to talk and share and prepare
- Induction and orientation of new staff and students to the school about expectations, values and what is important in the school culture allowing them to experience consistency, security and support in a new environment, for example the use of “Newcomers Club” to learn about the school and its systems and to find out what they need to know in a group with other new children.

Provision of additional supports

Because of the high identification either by parents or staff of, of children lacking resilience, there is a need for schools to consider other additional supports for individuals and groups of children from time to time. These supports need to be readily accessible for students and parents is necessary. The provision of school counsellors or “Support Workers” a less stigmatised title, in schools where the skill set and culture match is appropriate can provide one on one support whilst also liaising with the other staff the child works with. The use of a Check in Check Out (CICO) system which provides a student with a regular adult they catch up with each day and develop a positive relationship with. This system can be as formal or informal as is needed to guide and support a child who needs guidance and strategies to build their resilience. The use of social skills development initiatives including restorative approaches, social stories, and the promotion of problem solving strategies and approaches can be used to support the needs of target groups. Where it is

clear there are more significant and concerning issues outside support should be sought through health professionals and earlier the better.

ERO identified and developed testing for four important components of resilience: belonging, growth mindset, self-efficacy, and “grit” across 2000 learners. (Jason Timmins 2019) Not surprisingly, ERO’s analysis found there was a clear link between resilience and doing well at school. And in keeping with the international research, children who rated themselves highly for grit in particular did better academically. In educational psychology, grit is defined as “perseverance and passion for long term goals” and is a key indicator of future prosperity and wellbeing.

Can we make children more resilient?

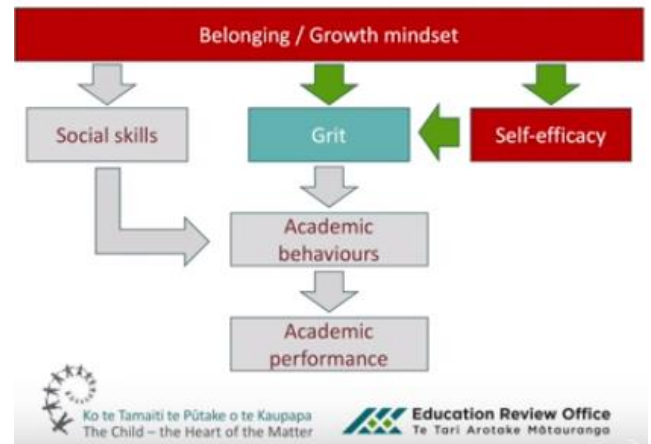
- Relationship between non-cognitive factors (resilience) and doing well at school and between doing well at school and long-term outcomes
- Hard to change academic grit/perseverance directly without addressing academic mindset and effective learning strategies (resilience)
- Evidence that academic mindset is something you can change in schools
- Developing resilience is not just important at school, but later in life as well



Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mōtauranga



In practical terms, schools can help children succeed by giving them a variety of learning strategies to apply if they are having difficulty (so they can try again), creating an environment where asking for help is a positive trait and experience, praising and admiring perseverance and grit, teaching the concept of “failing up” (our failures give us the information we need to succeed), and supporting high expectations.

Restorative Practice –Approach in Schools

- Positive interpersonal relationships are a major influence on behaviour
- A culture of care supports the mana of all individuals in the school community
- Cultural responsiveness is key to creating learning communities of mutual respect and inclusion
- A restorative approach leads to individuals taking responsibility for their behaviour

The restorative approach views problems as problems rather than people as problems and that understand that people are happier, more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things **with** them, rather than *to* them or *for* them.

Intervention Programmes

Resilience describes our ability to cope with and bounce back from negative events, challenges, or situations to return to a sense of wellbeing. In other words, resilience is the capacity to respond adaptively to difficult circumstances and still thrive. Young people need to be socially and academically resilient. Fortunately, the skills to develop resilience can be taught. A programme that looks at this is Bounce Back. The key message from Bounce Back is that everybody experiences setbacks makes mistakes and experiences adversities – not just you.

<https://nziwr.co.nz/bounce-back-strategies-to-develop-resilience-with-dr-toni-noble/> podcast

Clearly schools can do a lot, and when they have parents on the same page (which we will get to), a lot of difference can be made to building resilient people. The Australian government obviously felt that this whole area was significant enough need that they put in place the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework <https://www.education.gov.au/aus-student-wellbeing-framework> in October 2018. This aimed at providing schools (Nationally) with a vision and set of guiding principles to support mechanisms to develop wellbeing from the first year of school until Year 12. It provides resources via a “hub” <https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/> for schools with information for parents also. A further initiative was then launched. “Be You” <https://beyou.edu.au/> which also included early learning services as well as school.

As yet, despite the concerns about the mental health and resilience of young New Zealanders there is no clear directed or cohesive approach to how we as a country need to deal proactively with what has long been identified as an issue as reinforced in the Gluckman report (2010) <https://www.pmcsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Improving-the-Transition-report.pdf>

Amongst recommendations from the Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction 2018

<https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/inquiry-report/he-ara-oranga/> the following two relevant to schools were made:

Taking a whole-school approach to develop resilience is hugely beneficial. To do this schools must make wellbeing and resilience a priority, reflecting this explicitly in policy and practice. Supporting teachers in implementing resilience initiatives is essential through allocating time and through valuing staff wellbeing and resilience.

Take a whole-of-government approach to wellbeing to tackle social determinants and support prevention activities that impact on multiple outcomes, not only mental health and addiction. Despite the substantial benefits of focusing on prevention and promoting wellbeing, especially early in life, the balance of resources has not shifted to prevention and long-term investment in our future. Multiple agencies are engaged in fragmented and uncoordinated activities that target similar outcomes. A proposed social wellbeing agency would provide a clear locus of responsibility within central government for social wellbeing, with a focus on prevention and tackling major social determinants that underlie many inequitable outcomes in our society.

Facilitate mental health promotion and prevention with leadership and oversight from a new commission, including an investment and quality assurance strategy for mental health promotion and prevention. Although there have been some excellent national campaigns, such as Like Minds, Like Mine, a plethora of different programmes are delivered by many organisations; some may not be sound. A more organised approach, with quality-assured programmes, would benefit schools, workplaces and local communities. We will wait to see the actual outcomes of this with interest and hope.

Programmes and supports known to be used widely by schools and professionals which promote resilience building strategies and supports for young people’s mental health;

- *Davis Learning Strategies of –Release - Focus – Dial- Exercises help primary level students develop self-regulation skills and the ability to control their energy level and focus attention for classroom work.* <https://youtu.be/jn4xd5a3EsY>
- *Leading Lights through Christchurch based Mana Ake project) username Stronger password 4Tomorrow* <http://ccn.health.nz/FocusAreas/ManaAke-StrongerforTomorrow.aspx>
- *Pause Breathe Smile – Mindfulness based* <https://mindfulnesseducation.nz/pause-breathe-smile/>
- *Skylight Trust* <https://www.skylight.org.nz/>
- *Sparklers* <https://sparklers.org.nz/>

What can parents do

Life is not smooth and predictable and overprotecting children feeds anxiety. In reality bad and unpleasant things do happen so we need to foster the necessary qualities, behaviours and attitudes so children can survive and thrive through the inevitable adversities they will face as part of life.

Starting early by simply calming and comforting rather than fussing when a child falls over to simply “oopsie daisy” up you get and carry on. Normalise mistakes and talk about how this is how we learn things, talk about our mistakes and what you learned. Let them mess up and learn from their mistakes, if they mess up once by leaving their lunch behind they are unlikely to make that mistake again. A natural consequence is a great teacher.

We need to work with children to manage their emotions, working with positive outlets for anger rather than holding it inside and to seek comfort when they are sad. Working with children to find positive thoughts, worries and feelings we also need to teach them problem solve in all sorts of situations, figuring out for themselves so they can handle what is thrown at them with increasing confidence and independence. Part of this is also about modelling resilience, allowing children to see that life is full of ups and downs, there are disappointments and unfortunate events. Modelling our own resilience by being calm, consistent and positive despite the difficulty or upset sends the message this is ok and part of our life. Developing a culture in your family where you talk about challenges, adversities and disappointments openly will allow them to develop attitudes to events that will help them remain positive and optimistic. Looking for the upside when you suffer a set back can help.

Most studies agree that parents who provide structures with clear but negotiable boundaries, consistent warmth, and consequences that are reasonable and not harsh have young people who generally do well. Families that deal with conflict constructively without violence, and set good role models for alcohol and other drug use also do better. Parents can act as a filter and have an influence on the type of friends their children have, their career choices and how much they value education. These things seem to be more important than the effect of divorce, low income, or being in a one-parent family. (Page 82 Bagshaw) . Zarrett and Lerner recently showed that young people take part in fewer risk-taking behaviours if they take part in collective family activities such as eating together and collective out-of-school activities such as chess clubs, music, drama or sport. (Bagshaw82).

One of the most important things that parents can do to build resilience in their child is to give them age-appropriate independence, to not overprotect their child and not do things for them that they can do for themselves. normalises challenges as a part of life.

A little about Parenting styles

Over parenting

It's ironic that, even as they worry about messing their kids up, so many well-meaning parents spend considerable time and energy keeping their kids from experiencing the consequences of their actions. Consequences are life's way of teaching someone not to do something, or to do it differently.

'Helicopter' parents prevent children from experiencing the consequences of their actions by intervening with teachers and coaches to advocate for a specific outcome, even when it's not a serious or long-lasting situation. Parents might deliver assignments, forgotten lunches or equipment to school. They might try to neutralise disciplinary outcomes or get rules and policies waived. They get involved in peer conflicts and manage the social calendar.

Children of helicopter parents, hovering parents who are over involved in their children's lives. micromanaging, being overprotective and are unwilling to let go are associated with higher levels of narcissism and more ineffective coping skills (e.g., internalizing, distancing). These ineffective coping skills were associated with greater anxiety and stress in young adult children. (Segrin et al, 2013)

Tiger parents are directive. They push and direct their children's life, they hover and micro manage, taking over their child's sense of internal control, and self-motivation.

Dolphin parents are firm but flexible and they have rules and expectations, they value creativity and independence. They work collaboratively with their children and guide them and model good behaviour.

Lawn mower parents go to whatever lengths necessary to prevent their child from having to face adversity, struggle or failure. Instead of preparing children for challenges they mow obstacles down and get everything out of the way so their children do not have to experience them in the first place. These are the parents who rush ahead to intervene, saving the child from any potential inconvenience, problem or discomfort. These parents, like most parents come from a good place they do not want their children to struggle. However what occurs is their children have no idea what to do when there is an issue, a struggle or challenge. These children potentially panic or shut down at any suggestion of failure. When failure is too painful we potentially leave coping mechanisms like blame, addiction, self-medication, and potentially fostering mental health issues. Instead we need to give them opportunities to learn how to solve problems, strength and self-confidence, so they can handle future challenges

If we eliminate all the bumps, the little problems and struggle in children's younger years they will not arrive as teens or adults at adulthood equipped to deal with failure or real problems. These parents need to step back, and let their child gain experience dealing with adversity and daily challenges.

A better way is allowing your child to make mistakes and learn from them. To help them when they ask for your help but not to always jump in. Each child is different and so is every parent, so one-size parenting does not fit all. But we know loving and attentive parents have resilient children, so let them be "free range" sometimes, and enjoy being a parent. <https://theconversation.com/too-much-love-helicopter-parents-could-be-raising-anxious-narcissistic-children-116182> <https://video.foxnews.com/v/5836447797001/> lawnmower parenting presentation

Permissive (Over Indulgent) parents

Permissive parents tend to avoid discipline, setting limits or expectations and whilst it comes from a good place of wanting to give your child everything you can by not providing any sense of limitation, children's wants and desires can get out of control. This type of parenting causes a lot of grief along the way when there are limitations put in place by others but can cause real difficulty later in life. It is my experience that there appears to be an increase in permissive parenting that results from parent under pressure and simply giving in to their children are out of exhaustion and lack of time to and energy to persist in following through. The results are an increasing number of challenging children who do not cope when they are faced with limitations, rules and expectations they are faced with. This makes them vulnerable to setbacks and challenges later in life.

Permissive parenting can be seen in;

- Very few limits and expectations on behaviour and attitude
- Bribes and bargains to appease the child's wants
- Wanting to be the cool parent rather than the bad guy
- Avoiding saying not to prevent a tantrum, argument or outburst
- Few if and rules that are inconsistent and not well monitored
- Trying to be a friend rather a parent

The impacts of this parenting can be seen in

- Children lacking self control and willpower
- The development of a bad temper, attitude or anger when things are not entirely in their favour or go their way
- Problems socialising because they feel they are entitled to whatever they want
- Insecurity and deficits in the child's mental maturity and stability
- More impulsive and emotional
- Delayed cognitive development due to lack of consistency and stability
- Not able to cope with sadness and anger

- Happiness being harder to achieve because they have learned this only comes from instant gratification
- Behaviour is increasingly challenged with age

Parents Overcompensating

Personal experience tells me there are parents who overcompensate for their children. This is particularly prevalent in children of parents who may perceive their child has some form of deficit or they feel particularly guilty about some aspect of their child's life...(their lack of presence, a child's specific need such as learning need or speech issue, something that the child may have experienced they feel responsible for, an example being exposure to domestic violence, an illness). Some adults will do what ever they can or is necessary to avoid stressful confrontations, difficult situations or a scene.

Over parenting regardless of whether over-parenting comes from too much love or the need to see yourself in your children, is not the best way of parenting.

Jelly fish parents (Parenting Place) don't believe in rules, they are inconsistent, there are no rules and they take no responsibility. They are permissive and hence the result is overindulged children who lack impulse control. These parents keep their kids happy to avoid meltdowns, tantrums and sadness. This type of parenting results in the "it's not fair" when things go wrong, wobbles and walkouts and often yelling shouting and abuse that makes the parent feel bad and therefore results in more overcompensating for them and their behaviour. All this lack of discipline with no effective consequence causes these children to have a really tough time when discipline and consequences are in place or when there is disappointment or an element of challenge.

For further information regarding other descriptions of parenting styles a very useful article is written by Diane Levy referring to "Brickwall" parents and "Backbone parents" <https://www.kiwifamilies.co.nz/2007/06/parenting-styles/>

Essentially children need structure, affection, connection and consequences.

Be parents

Ungar (2011) identified nine things all children need;

- structure
- expectations and consequences
- sense of control
- sense of belonging/culture/spirituality/life purpose
- parent-child connections
- lots and lots of strong relationships
- rights and responsibilities
- safety and support
- powerful identity

Strength based parenting

Identifying and nurturing our kids strongest qualities, what they are best at, helps build resilience and self-esteem. Parenting Mag, Jo Batts – strength based parenting [https://www.theparentingplace.com/building-character/raising-confident](https://www.theparentingplace.com/building-character/raising-confident-kids/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Confident+kids%2C+a+book+to+read+%2B+a+game+to+win%21&utm_campaign=Parenting+Online_May+2019)

[kids/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Confident+kids%2C+a+book+to+read+%2B+a+game+to+win%21&utm_campaign=Parenting+Online_May+2019](https://www.theparentingplace.com/building-character/raising-confident-kids/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Confident+kids%2C+a+book+to+read+%2B+a+game+to+win%21&utm_campaign=Parenting+Online_May+2019)

Naming what your child is naturally good at and giving that your time, love and full attention is cultivating their strength (instead of improving on their weakness). Building on what's right with your kids is proven to create resilience and confidence. For your child who loves maths – do more maths, and for your child who loves art – do more art. Simple.

Equally, a child with the strength of steely determination on the sports field can be apply that same strength to get the job done in the classroom, to persevere and overcome when it gets difficult. When the strengths that are innate in our kids are clearly named and celebrated, they can be applied in all sorts of contexts to achieve all sorts of things. That is resilience.

Even mealtimes can assist with our resilience, the talking and discussion that occurs at the dinner table can assist the development of our thinking and our attitudes appreciation of our life. What is discussed and shared here will have influence. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/capitalone/2019/04/29/how-to-make-family-meals-more-mindful/#3bc1ce8732dd>
<https://www.learninglinks.org.au/strategies-to-promote-resilience-in-children/>

Don't

- rescue your child each time they are upset – learning to regulate behaviour and emotions is taught during times of upset for children allowing them to learn how to calm.
- Make excuses for your child - making an excuse only enables . Hold your child accountable for the mistakes they made, and see it as an opportunity for growth. Messing up in life is inevitable – owning up to it and managing it appropriately important.
- Always break up siblings fights allowing children to argue, get upset and work through this process can be very helpful for learning to resolve conflict.
- Do everything for them, expecting them to do no jobs will not provide learning opportunities to do things because they need to be done rather than desire. This develops competence in organizing, self-care and other aspects of daily life.
- accommodate every need
- provide all answers

Do

- allow your children to struggle this allows them to build resilient when they face challenging tasks in the future.
- Say no -saying yes to everything your child wants doesn't allow them to opportunities for disappointment and sets an expectation of always getting what they want.
- Let them cry, crying can be regulating and can then provide a better outlook and a time to talk
- Let your kids make mistakes Allow failure moments of failure allow for failure and growth
- Label emotions- helping to understand emotions can be helpful in coping with them
- Deal with the issue when the emotion is out of it
- Create boundaries They create comfort and stability
- Avoid eliminating all risk
- Teach to problem solve
- Avoid why questions
- Avoid talking in catastrophic terms
- Teach delayed gratification we have to work for things, set goals and wait
- Support the development of friendships and community involvement –they provide further support, companionship, socialising
- Allow them to develop talents and interests –these provide opportunities to develop confidence and self esteem, and further goal setting and coping skills experiencing success and practicing their resilience skills in positive situations, encourage your child to tell their teachers and peers about their achievements at sport, music and dance concerts, volunteering, or fundraising efforts
- Nurture your child's positive self-view and teach your children to love and like themselves.
- Give them lots of praise and positive affirmations. It is important they learn good self-care while they are young.
- Teach your children to be able to ask for help. You want children to grow up being able to reach out to others for support and advice and comfort.
- Teach your children to be grateful and appreciative. Speak as a family about the ways you are fortunate in your family.
- Teach and model to your children that being kind and caring makes you feel good and weave lots of “helping others” into your child's everyday life.

Adult modelling

Warm caring adults at home, school and in the community, who model resilient thinking and coping in their daily interactions, nurture children's lifelong capacity for resilience. By eight years of age, most children have developed a thinking style, or habitual way of reacting to stress. Even children two and three years old mimic the thinking styles and coping behaviour of caregivers around them.

(Seligman2007)

When stress gets the best of us, children learn to lose patience and perspective, to misplace blame and to imagine the worst. When we cope well, children learn valuable resiliency skills like calming down more easily, being more empathic and helping others, being more confident and persevering, and finding alternative ways to deal with problems. The need to develop emotional regulation is inherent in resiliency development. Being in charge of our emotions enough to stay calm under pressure, calm down, clear our heads enough so that we don't stay overwhelmed. Young children need our support to calm down, we need to do this by letting them know all feelings are acceptable but not all behaviour. "it okay to be mad but it is not okay to hurt yourself or anybody else."

Parents can help children develop coping capacity when facing difficult situations through modelling and teaching various coping activities through trial and error, being playful as well as serious or being able to laugh or cry and being calm and relaxed. Each approach can be helpful. Other useful skills are developed through mindfulness techniques and being able to engage in conversations about fears and how to deal with them.



Wholehearted parenting: Raising kids with courage and resiliency

July 30, 2013 - Author: Karen Pace, [Michigan State University Extension](#)

As anyone who serves in a parenting role knows, parenting is hard work! Parenting requires dozens of day-to-day choices and decisions from birth through adolescence – and even into the role of being a parent with adult children.

Brown's research on shame, vulnerability and courage illuminates several ways that parents can engage in what she calls "wholehearted parenting" with a focus on raising children who move through the world with courage and resiliency. Here are a few suggestions based on the Brown's work:

- Cultivate a sense of love, belonging and safety within your family. We all feel vulnerable at times and we need to feel that we are connected to a family where we belong, where we are seen, where we are accepted and loved. Love and belonging are a birthright – and Brown's research shows that resilient people believe that they are worthy of love and belonging. It's our job as parents to cultivate this belief in our children (and in ourselves).
- It's important to remember that children are radically shaped by their families of origin and how they see their parents interacting with the world. That said, there are many ways to be a good parent. There is not "one way," a "better way" or a "perfect way." Brown stresses that talking about "good parenting" and "bad parenting" is a shame minefield. A key to wholehearted parenting is to support each other as parents – and don't engage in harsh judgments of each other when someone is parenting in ways that are different than our own. Seeing that we're not alone, that we all make mistakes and that we're "in this together" fosters shame-resilient parenting practices.
- Avoid using **shame** as a parenting tool. While shaming children may work to change their behaviour, it usually happens at a great cost to their overall sense of worthiness and mental health. Children experience shame as a threat of being unlovable. Brown's research shows that most kids who are shame-prone are more likely to engage in risky behaviours (substance use and school failure), compared to adolescents who are guilt prone. Talk with children about the difference between shame and guilt. Shame communicates that we are "bad" and unworthy of love and belonging. Guilt communicates that I made a bad choice, mistake or decision. So, when your child draws on the wall or stays out past curfew, she is not a "bad girl." She is a creative, wise young person who made a bad choice. Wholehearted parenting communicates "I love who you are, but your choices are unacceptable."
- **Don't be afraid to set boundaries.** Our job is not to be "friends" with our children or to be "cool" or to be liked by them. Kids are hardwired to be defiant and push boundaries – and research shows that kids who push and test limits with their parents have better social outcomes. Our job is to set healthy limits and hold our boundaries and let our children try on different ways of being as they push against these boundaries. Brown's research showed that young adults who had little to no boundaries as children felt like their parents didn't care about them; this fostered a deep sense of shame. Brown reminds us that boundaries give kids a sense of safety and security – and that kids learn to hold boundaries themselves based on how well we hold our own boundaries.

http://players.brightcove.net/293884104/SJa0ThI7_default/index.html?videoid=4457290900001 brilliant clip by Brene Brown

Implications

If the lessons of the resilience research are to be learned then investment in teacher education to enhance social learning skills at all levels of education will be important. Parent skills training and family-friendly workplace policies to allow parents more time to spend with their families, especially in the first five years of life and around puberty, would be helpful. Investment in out-of-school activities so that all young people can access them, not just the middle class, would reduce the numbers in juvenile detention. (p84 Bagshaw)

Over twenty years ago Goodwin (in Goleman 241) stated “There’s been a tremendous erosion of the nuclear family, a doubling of the divorce rate, a drop in parents’ time available to children, and an increase in mobility. You don’t grow up knowing your extended family much anymore. The losses of these stable sources of self-identification mean a greater susceptibility to depression” We’ve seen the ascendance of individualism and a waning of larger beliefs in religion, and in supports from the community and extended family. This means a loss of resources that can buffer you against setbacks and failures. (Seligman in Goleman 241). Now more than ever we need to ensure our young people are equipped with resilience in a constantly challenging and changing world.

The Gluckman report from 2011 stated in its executive summary, page 79

- Building resilience is more than just providing individuals with knowledge, skills and positive attitudes, although programmes that do this are helpful.
- Resilience is also about the relationships between adults and children and young people. Programmes that build these relationships have positive outcomes.
- Resilience is shaped by policies that enhance the abilities of families, schools and communities to provide structure and opportunities for young people to contribute, participate and develop skills. The best outcomes occur when policies ensure that programmes work together across silos.
- There is evidence to show that mental, emotional and behavioural disorders can be identified early in at-risk populations and prevented. These need to be overlapping and co-ordinated across health, education and social welfare agencies, be developmentally appropriate, and based in the community.

Taking a whole-school approach to develop resilience is hugely beneficial and highly recommended. To do this schools must make wellbeing and resilience a priority, reflecting this explicitly in policy and practice. Supporting teachers in implementing resilience initiatives is essential through allocating time and through valuing staff wellbeing and resilience. Essentially we need to support children and families to develop ways to handle the small stuff so they have strategies for the hard stuff when it comes along.

As well as equipping and preparing our young people we also need a government that actively works to reduce some of the challenges rather than expect to people to cope better with adversity, by addressing social problems. “Even good swimmers get tired – and without higher ground to swim to we all drown”
Kyle McDonald – Psychotherapist

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall
Nelson Mandela

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Useful language, words and advice

Bounce Back provides the acronym for 10 statements that develop good thinking habits and resilience:

- **B**ad times don't last, things will always get better- stay optimistic
- **O**ther people can help, if you ask them.
- **U**nhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset – think again.
- **N**obody's perfect, not you and not others.
- **C**oncentrate on the positives in a bad situation no matter how small
- **E**verybody experiences sadness, hurt, failure, rejection and setbacks sometimes, not just you.
- **B**lame fairly.
- **A**ccept what you can't change.
- **C**atastrophizing exaggerates your worries.
- **K**ep things in perspective.