

# Developing children's resilience in schools



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# What is resilience?

- **Resilience is the ability to cope when things go wrong.**
- Resilience can also be described as:
  - Bouncing back after difficult times
  - Dealing with challenges and still holding your head up
  - Giving things a go or trying your best
  - Being strong on the inside
  - Being able to cope with what life throws at you and shrug it off
  - Standing up for yourself
  - Getting back into shape after you have been bent or stretched
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYsRGe0tfZc>

# A resilient child has...

- Someone that loves them unconditionally
- A positive role model that they want to be like
- Someone who praises them for being independent
- An older friend or family member outside of their home to talk to about important things, feelings, or problem solving
- A reliable family
- A belief and confidence that things will be okay
- A desire to try new and different things
- A willingness to achieve goals and to do well in life
- A belief that what they do and who they are makes a difference in how things will turn out
- Good self esteem
- The ability to focus and stay on task
- A good sense of humor
- A desire to make plans and follow through
- The ability to do nice things that make others think fondly of them

# Why is resilience important?

- Challenges and trauma occur in life – we encounter some sort of minor obstacle almost on a daily basis – no one is exempt from facing some adversity
- We need to be able to face and overcome struggles in life
- It is important that children and adults are able to rise above crises in life
- Resilience is the ability to overcome and triumph

# Why are some children more resilient than others?

- Genetics
- Family dynamics
- Life experiences
- Education about resilience

# Sources of resilience

- Resiliency can be innate, but it can also be taught or promoted
- Some skills may seem obvious or easy, but not be a given for every child
- According to The International Resilience Project, resilience comes from features in a child labeled as “I Have,” “I Am,” and “I Can.”

# I Have

- These are external supports and resources in the child's life
- Before a child can develop internal means of resilience, they rely on outside sources



# I Have...

- The resilient child has:
  - People in their life whom they trust – they love the child unconditionally
  - People who set limits and boundaries so they will know how to avoid danger
  - People who will assist them if they are in trouble, sick, or in need of help/guidance
  - People who want them to learn to be independent and self-sufficient as able
  - People who will guide them and lead by a positive example

# I Am

- These are a child's personal strengths that are internal
- Incorporates beliefs, attitudes, and feelings



# I Am

- The resilient child:
  - Is one who likes to do good and nice things for others to show that they care
  - Takes responsibility for their actions
  - Is sure that everything will be okay
  - Has respect for both themselves and others

# I can

- These factors incorporate social and interpersonal skills
- These skills are learned by interacting with others and from those who teach them



# I can...

- The resilient child:
  - Talks to others when they feel scared or bothered by something
  - Attempts to solve problems on their own
  - Finds help when needed
  - Determines when it is a good time to stop and talk with someone or to take action
  - Has self control when they feel like doing something that isn't right or that could be harmful

# Sources of resilience...

- A child may not have all three sources – I have, I am, and I can, but they need more than one – resiliency comes from a combination of these traits.
- A child with good self-esteem (I am) who is unable to solve problems (I can) and has no one to turn to (I have) will struggle to be resilient.
- A loved child (I have) who lacks self confidence (I am) or the ability to trust others (I can) will also struggle to be resilient.

# Talking about resilience

- Teach the vocabulary of resilience – talk about the traits you see in them that are part of the I have, I am, and I can.
- Some children simply don't realise they have these things in place and need them to be identified.
- Use “feeling” words and use yourself as an example - It's okay to say that you feel sad or scared, but include how you overcome this

# How can we promote resilience?

- Skills can be taught to all ages
- Younger children rely more on the “I have” and later switch to “I can” – it is a continually process of learning the “I am”
- Actively refer to resilient skills
- Build up the child
- Talk through situations as they occur

# Overall checklist for resilience

- The child:
  - Has someone that loves and supports them unconditionally
  - Has a trusted adult to talk to
  - Receives praise for being autonomous
  - Can count on family/friends/teachers to be there if they need them
  - Has a good role model
  - Thinks everything will be okay in the end
  - Does kind things for others
  - Is not afraid to try new things
  - Likes to set goals and do what it takes to accomplish them
  - Feels like they matter
  - Has good self-esteem
  - Can focus on something and follow through
  - Has a sense of humor

# Teaching strategies - EYFS and KS1

- Talk about adversities that people might face – problem solve what to do when they happen
- Ask children to use examples from their life and how they responded
- Use the word resilience and talk about what it means – identify these traits when you see them in a child or in class
- Teach the class the “vocabulary of resilience” – encourage them to identify this when seen in class



# More teaching strategies – KS2

- Help children identify who is there to support them. Ensure they know they can come to us. When they do come – we listen and are supportive.
- Discuss other resources that might be available.
- Present a possible adverse situation and ask these questions for a single child or group to discuss:
  - What would you do?
  - How would you feel if this happened?
  - What resilience factors could be used?
  - How do you think the situation ends?



# How can you help at home?

- Be resilient and be a role model. Don't pretend that you don't have problems. Model how to deal with adversity and changes.
- Don't try to protect children from problems, changes, or difficulties. Instead, teach them how to cope.
- Teach how to problem solve.
- Help to identify emotions
- Model communication skills and teach how to do this
- Offer choices and support decisions
- Teach and model empathy and kindness
- Give opportunities to try new things – be supportive
- Believe in children and convey this to them.

# Remind children



"You have everything you need to be successful – and you can do it."

--Roger Mills

# Questions?

