


Building resilience
with children and
young people



Aims

- Explore different models of resilience in relation to adversity, risk and protective factors
- Discuss ways in which we can build the resilience of children and young people and develop a supportive context
- Examine the role of a significant adult in building resilience

Breakout/Introductions:

In small groups share how the pandemic might be affecting the mental health of CYP you work with?

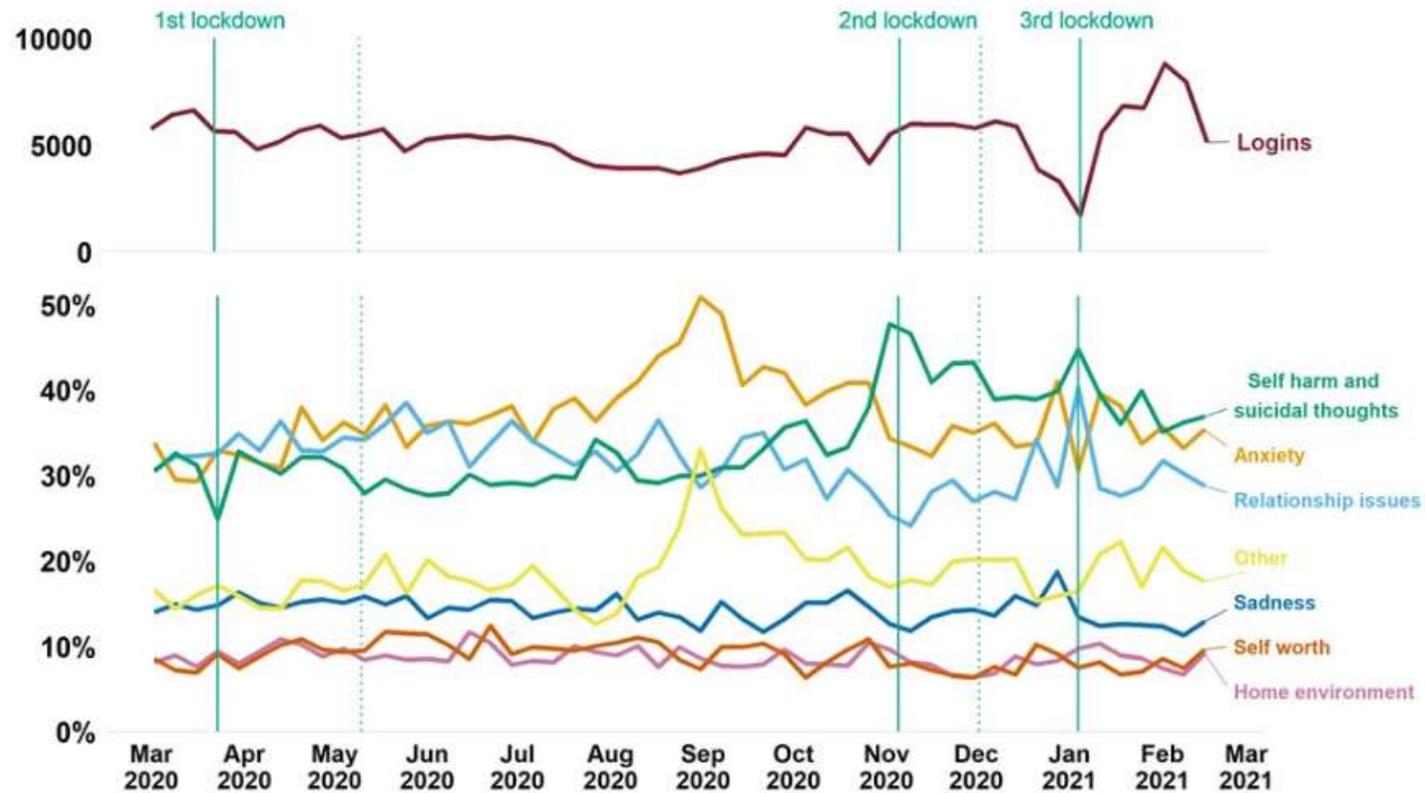




Research findings:
Covid and Young
People's Mental Health

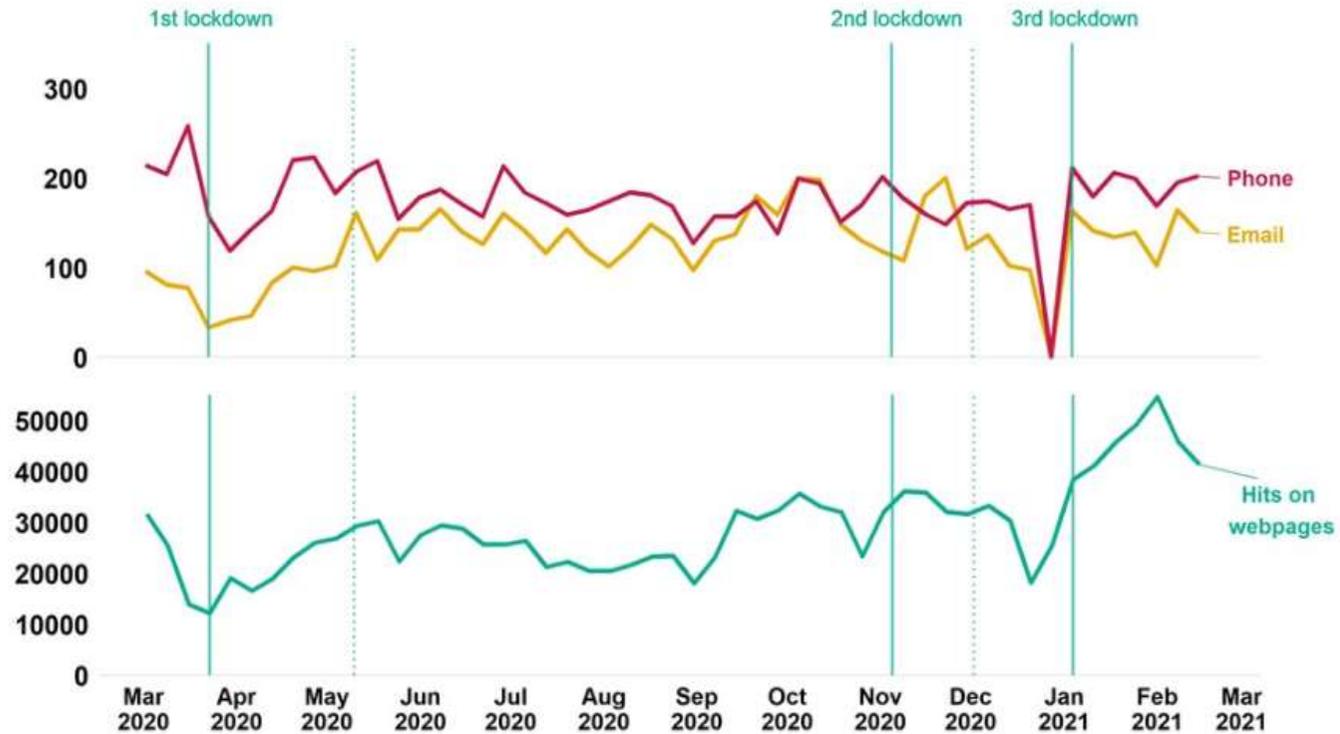
Kooth PLC “Kooth”

The upper graph shows weekly logins for 10 to 17 year olds. The lower graph shows the percentage of weekly users who present with each issue. Data provided by Kooth PLC and used with permission. Dotted vertical lines indicate lockdown easing.



Young Minds

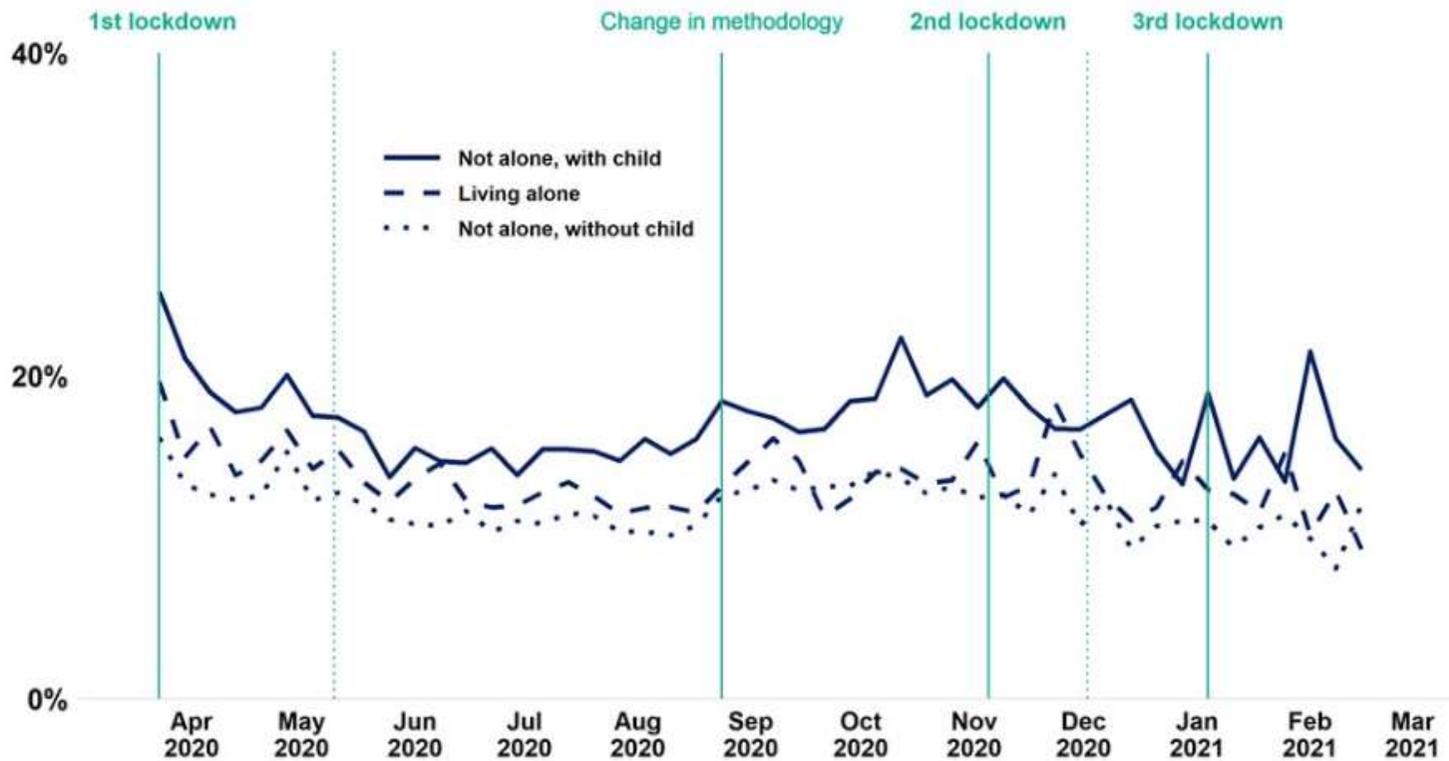
Weekly data of services to parents and carers who are concerned about their children's mental health, up to the age of 25. Data provided by Young Minds and used with permission. Dotted vertical lines indicate lockdown easing.



Major stress: Finance

UCL COVID-19 Social Study. Panel of 20,000 to 70,000 adults weighted to the national population.
Data provided by UCL and used with permission (% reporting).

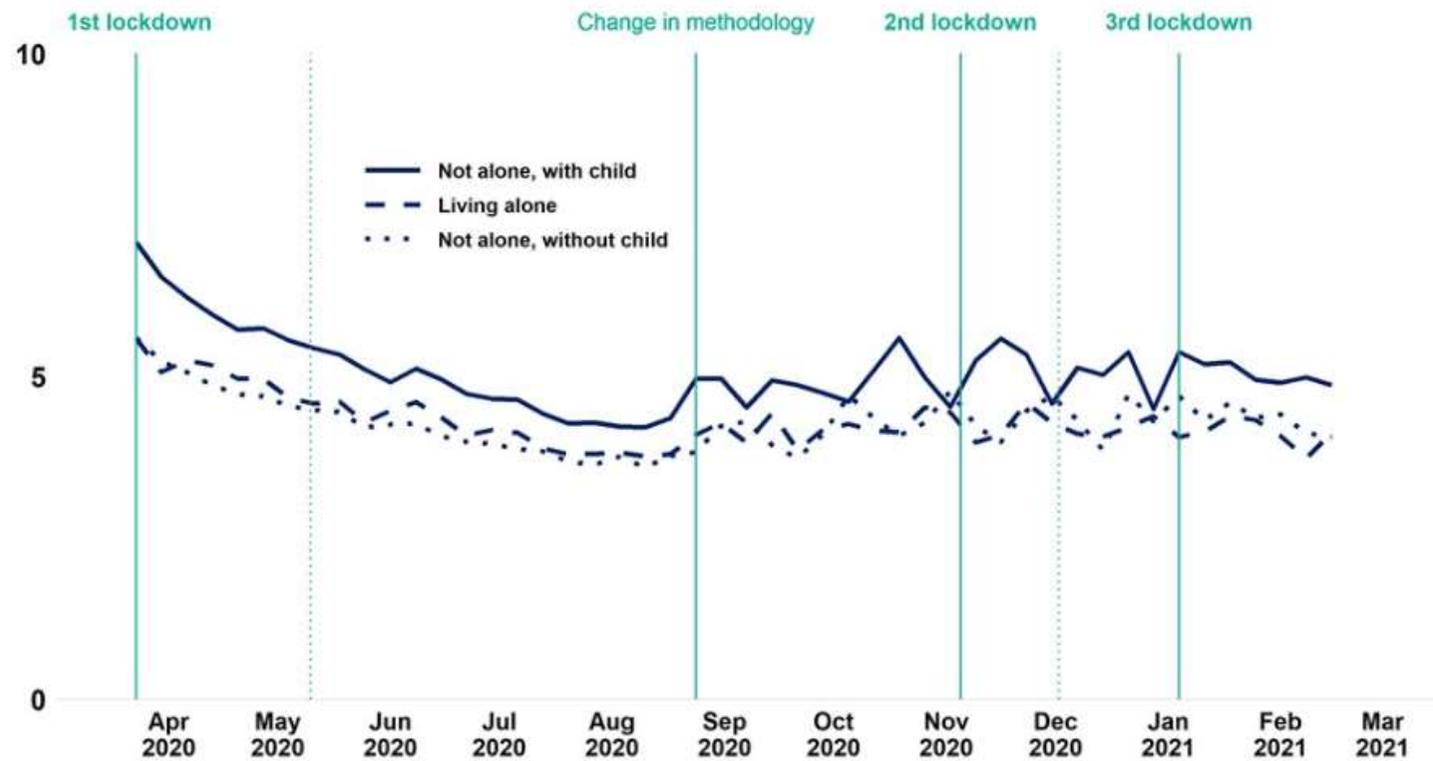
Dotted vertical lines indicating lockdown easing.



Anxiety

UCL COVID-19 Social Study. Panel of 20,000 to 70,000 adults weighted to the national population.
Data provided by UCL and used with permission (GAD-7 score, 5-9 = mild, 10-14 = moderate, 15-21 = severe).

Dotted vertical lines indicating lockdown easing.



Anxiety

- From the first lockdown and during the return to school in September 2020, there was an increase in reported anxiety and stress for some children who were worried about contracting and spreading COVID-19.
- This was especially felt by secondary pupils who had vulnerable family members at home.
- Some children and young people were worried and anxious about catching up with their schoolwork and uncertainty about the plans for exams.
- Another activity which increased anxiety around COVID-19 was reading or watching the news and social media

(Public Health England)

Breakout

What is resilience?



Protection/Bouncing Back

- Resilience is our ability to bounce back from life's challenges and unforeseen difficulties, providing mental protection from emotional and mental disorders.
- Michael Rutter (1985)
- Psychological resilience refers to the ability to use personal qualities to withstand pressure.

(David Fletcher and Mustafa Sarkar 2016)

- Resilience represents a constellation of characteristics that protect individuals from the potential negative effect of stressors.

(Ivan Robertson et al. 2015)

Positive Growth

- Resilience is seen as more than simple recovery from insult, rather it can be defined as positive growth or adaptation following periods of homeostatic disruption.
- Laura Campbell-Sills (2006)

Context/Adversity

- If we want to help vulnerable youngsters become more resilient, we need to decrease their exposure to potent risk factors and increase their competencies and self-esteem, as well as the sources of support they can draw upon.
- Emmy Werner (1995)
- Any psychological resilience training program should, as much as practically possible, consider the broader environment within which individuals operate.
- David Fletcher and Mustafa Sarkar (2016)

Continuum/Not Static

- Resilience is believed to be a process rather than a single event and a continuum rather than a binary outcome.
- Meetu Khosla (2017)
- Resilience is a process and a staircase. You might be on step four of the staircase, and I might be on step one, but we can both keep moving up the staircase so that our resilience levels will hopefully exceed the rising tide of stress.
- Glenn Schiraldi (2017)



Risk and Resilience Factors

Individual factors:

- **Risk**

- Low IQ or learning difficulty
- Developmental delay
- Communication difficulty
- Physical illness or disability
- Difficult temperament
- Low self esteem
- Lack of confidence
- Not an academic success
- Anxious personality
- Learned helplessness

- **Resilience**

- Easy temperament (sociability)
- Ability to regulate emotions
- Good coping & problem solving skills
- Physically healthy
- Positive sense of identity and cultural heritage
- Positive attitude to help seeking
- Connected to family, school, community

Family factors:

Risk

- Parental conflict or abuse
- Family breakdown
- Hostile or rejecting parents
- Abuse or neglect
- Parental mental illness, substance use or criminality
- Bereavement or loss of a parent
- Inconsistent or unclear or absent discipline

• Resilience

- One positive parental figure
- Attachment, a belief that ones needs will be met
- Supervision and authoritative discipline
- Demonstration of love and affection
- Family support of education and school
- A parent or significant adult who is themselves resilient
- Responsibilities

Community and environmental factors:

Risk

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Discrimination
- Low expectations

• Resilience

- Supportive network
- Good housing
- High expectations of behaviour in school/college
- Strong academic opportunities in school/college
- High morale in school/college

Breakout

in small groups share individual, community or family orientated interventions you deliver which might promote resilience.

What can we do to build resilience in children?

Common Risk Factors to Mental Health

Individual	Family	Peers	School	Community
Difficult temperament (e.g. overly shy or aggressive)	Family conflict including domestic violence	Poor peer role models	Poor student-teacher relationships	Social or cultural discrimination and racism
Low self-worth	Inconsistent or unclear discipline	Exclusive or rejecting peers	Difficult or inadequate student transition management	Socio-economic disadvantage including limited access to support services
Low IQ and learning difficulties	Lack of warmth and affection by parents	Peer norms favouring excessive use of drugs, alcohol and violence or antisocial behaviour	Bullying or discrimination	Neighbourhood violence or crime
Impulsivity	Parent/s with mental illness or substance abuse problems		School community is not inclusive	
Poor social skills			School violence	
Significant negative life events relating to loss, trauma and abuse			Low teacher expectations of students	
Alcohol and drug use			Lack of parent and community involvement	
Chronic illness, physical or mental disability			Poor absenteeism structures and processes	

Common Protective Factors

Individual	Family	Peers	School	Community
Easy temperament (e.g. sociable)	Positive parent or carer relationship	Positive peer role models and influences (e.g. peer group with pro-social values and activities)	Supportive relationships	Participation in community networks
Socially and emotionally competent (e.g. able to regulate emotions)	Family provides structure, limits, monitoring and predictability	Inclusive group norms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health status • Same sex attraction • Disability • Open group membership 	Opportunities for academic or other school achievement	Access to support services (e.g. mental health care and family support)
Good coping and problem solving skills	Clear expectations for behaviours and values		Opportunities to participate in a range of activities	Economic security
Optimistic (e.g. a belief life has meaning and hope)	Supportive relationships between family members		Physical and psychologically safe environment	Safe and inclusive community
Physically healthy	Support available at critical times		Clear policies on behaviour and bullying	
Positive sense of identity and cultural heritage			Support available at critical times	
Positive attitude to help seeking			Connections to competent and caring adults	
Connected to family, school and community			School acknowledges and respects diversity (inclusive environment)	
			Positive approaches to behaviour education	

Risk and Protective Factors

RISK FACTORS

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Genetic influences ✗ Low IQ and learning disabilities ✗ Specific development delay ✗ Communication difficulties ✗ Difficult temperament ✗ Physical illness ✗ Academic failure ✗ Low self-esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Family disharmony, or break up ✗ Inconsistent discipline style ✗ Parent/s with mental illness or substance abuse ✗ Physical, sexual, neglect or emotional abuse ✗ Parental criminality or alcoholism ✗ Death and loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Bullying ✗ Discrimination ✗ Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships ✗ Deviant peer influences ✗ Peer pressure ✗ Poor pupil to teacher relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Socio-economic disadvantage ✗ Homelessness ✗ Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events ✗ Discrimination ✗ Other significant life events ✗ Lack of access to support services |
|--|--|---|---|

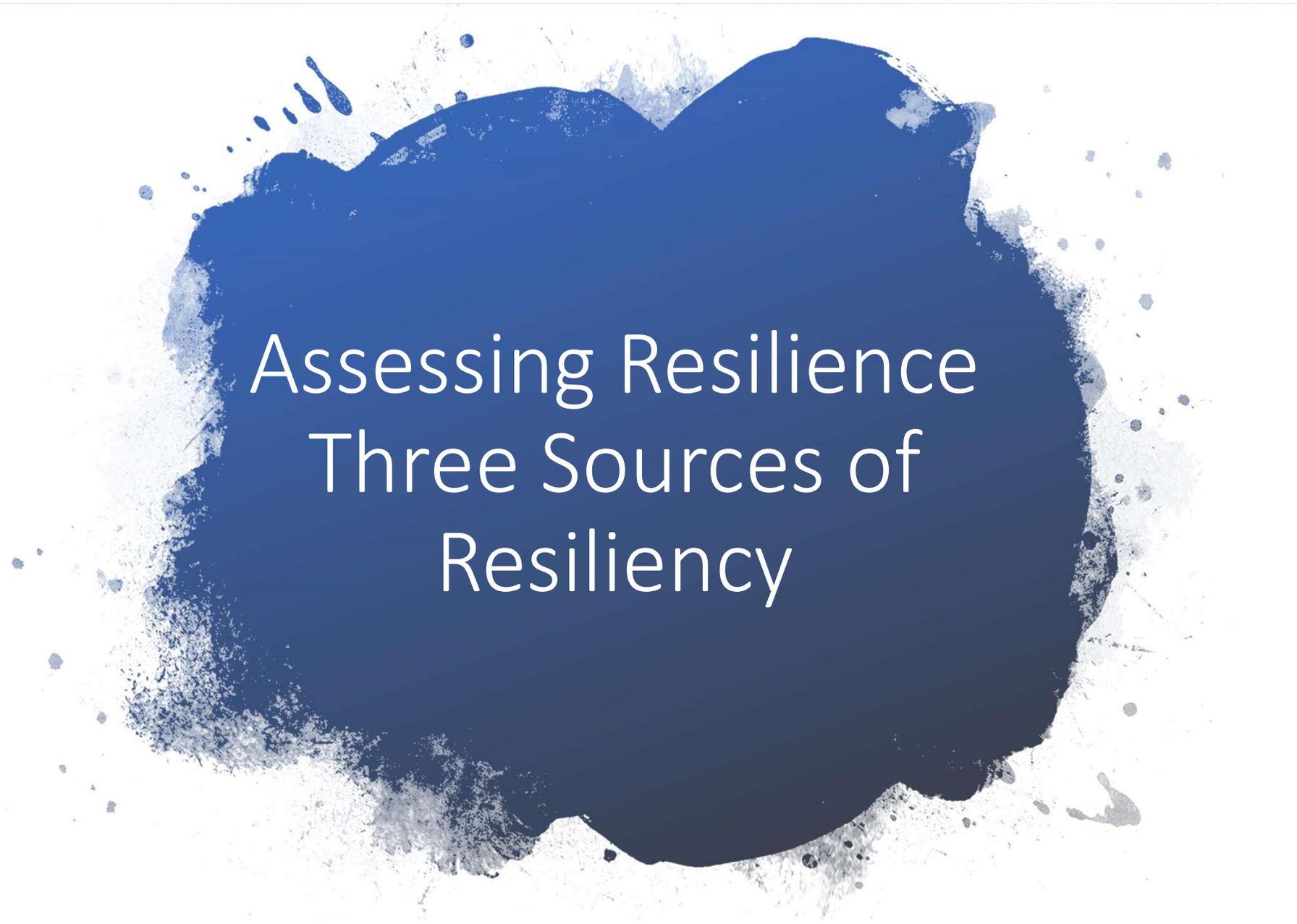


- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secure attachment experience ✓ Good communication skills ✓ Having a belief in control ✓ A positive attitude ✓ Experiences of success and achievement ✓ Capacity to reflect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Family harmony and stability ✓ Supportive parenting ✓ Strong family values ✓ Affection ✓ Clear, consistent discipline ✓ Support for education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Positive school climate that enhances belonging and connectedness ✓ Clear policies on behaviour and bullying ✓ 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems ✓ A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wider supportive network ✓ Good housing ✓ High standard of living ✓ Opportunities for valued social roles ✓ Range of sport/leisure activities |
|---|--|---|---|

PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Break



Assessing Resilience
Three Sources of
Resiliency

Edith Grotberg of the International Resilience Project

Defines resiliency in terms of three sources.

For a young person to be resilient, he or she needs to have more than one of these strengths.

I HAVE

Social and interpersonal supports

Awareness of those who support them

Who I have

Trusting and loving relationships with others

Parents, siblings, teachers, friends.

Structure at home

Clear rules and routines, comprehensible and fair sanctions when breached, praise when followed.

Role models

Parents, other adults, peers, siblings, who model good behaviour and morality.

Encouragement to be independent

People who offer praise for growing autonomy.

Access to health, education and social care

Consistent direct or indirect protection for physical and emotional health.

I AM

Inner strengths

How they view themselves

Who I am

Loveable

The young person possesses, or is helped to develop qualities that appeal to others.

Loving

The young person is able to express affection to others, and is sensitive to their distress.

Proud of myself

The young person feels they have the capacity for achievement and resists discouragement.

Responsible

The young person accepts and is given responsibilities, and believes their actions can make a difference.

Hopeful and trustful

The young person has faith in institutions and people, is optimistic for the future and is able to express their faith within a moral structure.

I CAN

Interpersonal and problem solving skills

Degree of confidence they have in their own abilities

What I can do

Communicate

The young person is able to express feelings and thoughts and listen to those of others.

Solve problems

The young person can apply themselves to problems, involve others when necessary and be persistent.

Manage my feelings

The young person knows and understands emotions, recognises the feelings of others and controls impulsive behaviour.

Seek out trusting relationships

The young person has the ability to find people, peers or adults, in whom they can confide and develop mutual trust.

Understand my temperament

The young person has insight into their personality and that of others.

Edith Grotberg of the International Resilience Project

For example, if a young person has good self-esteem (I AM), but lacks anyone whom they can turn to for support (I HAVE), and does not have the capacity to solve problems (I CAN), they will not be resilient.

Edith Grotberg of the International Resilience Project

Each of the I HAVE, I AM, and I CAN factors suggests numerous actions young people and workers can take to promote resilience.

You do not have to use the entire pool of resilience factors, some use many; others use few.

However, the larger the pool of choices before them, the more options young people have for selecting appropriate responses to a situation.

Breakout

in small groups think of a young person whose resilience you are worried about in the context their support, inner strength and skills

I HAVE

I AM

I CAN

Building and Developing Resilience in Young People

There are eight sets of protective factors which can affect a young person's daily life and shape their resilience.

Below gives youth organisations some ideas around what they can do to develop and support these protective factors

Skills

Description

Young people need many skills to be resilient, healthy and successful in life and active in their communities.

Personal skills include:

Self-awareness and self-monitoring.

Adaptive, coping and management.

Interpersonal communication.

Relationship and social skills.

Critical and creative thinking skills.

What can Youth Organisations do?

Adapt environments so that young people with learning and physical disabilities can take part and fully benefit.

In group work sessions use learner-centred approaches such as drama activities to help young people learn about and practice living and learning skills.

Provide a sounding board, mentor or coach young people who are trying to get through a problem or conflict.

Encourage young people to spend time with people who like them and make them feel good about themselves.

Help young people set realistic and achievable goals.

Encourage young people to share their opinions so they get good practice at communicating their views.

Provide opportunities for young people to challenge themselves.

Parents

Families

Description

Many different people play a parenting role in young people's lives. Their resilience is greatly affected by parental expectations, their style of discipline and the quality of attachment and communication between them.

What can Youth Organisations do?

Provide information about parenting programmes and other services that can support parents.

Families that are resilient and function well give young people a positive identity, a sense of connectedness and an environment in which they can flourish. Family includes anyone a young person sees as important because of a strong enduring connection, whether related by blood or not.

Engage young people in activities to identify family values, strengths and rituals.

Schools

Most young people spend much of their time in school. Of particular importance to a young person's resilience is the feeling of belonging and acceptance at schools.

Establish working relationships with local schools to ensure consistency of support and development of young people.

Peers

Relationships with peers are important in adolescence. Friends and other peers provide social support and a sense of belonging.

Use group management techniques that recognise the power and impact of the peer group. Avoid negatively labelling groups of young people. Engage young people in discussions about peer groups and moral dilemmas.

Community

Cultural Identity

Economic & Financial

Resilient young people have links to their community and have opportunities to be meaningfully involved. A strong community nurtures a sense of belonging and connectedness and engages in constructive activities that benefit them and others.

Encourage young people to get involved with community organisations and volunteering opportunities.

Involve young people in advocating for needed resources in their community.

Work with community partners to help develop a youth friendly community.

A strong cultural identity is an important part of how young people see and value themselves.

Provide opportunities for taking part in cultural traditions and celebrations.

Provide opportunities for young people to learn about stigma and discrimination and to critically reflect on how this impacts on their lives.

Belonging to an economically secure household affects the health and wellbeing of young people. Young people need to understand how money works and have the skills needed to earn and manage their own money.

Develop financial literacy classes and workshops.

Provide services to support young people in finding and retaining employment.

Promote open communication about finance. Encourage youth participation in budgeting processes.

Breakout

in small groups discuss how you address the 8 sets of protective factors. Could you do more? Should you specialise?

Skills

Parents

Families

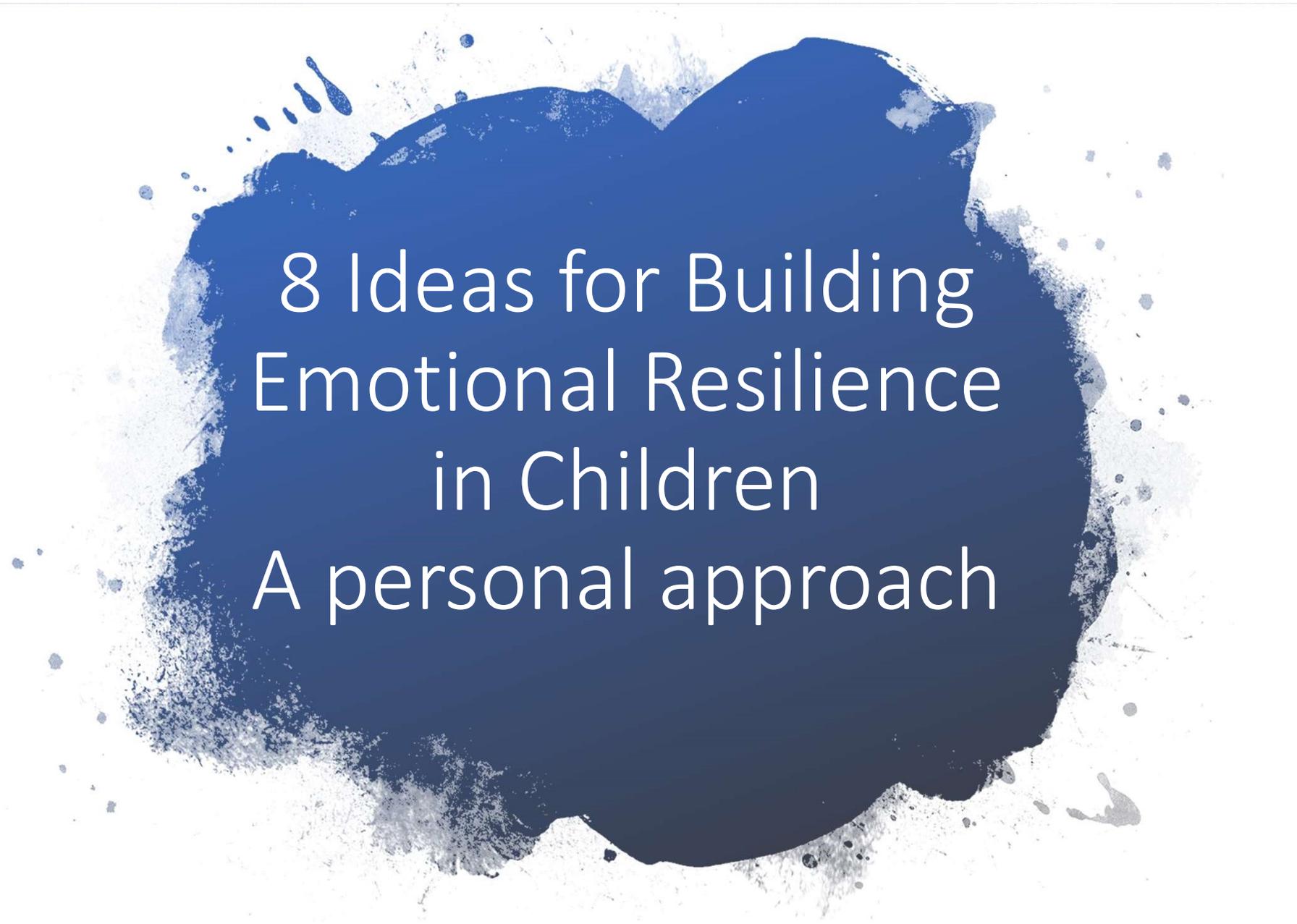
Schools

Peers

Community

Cultural Identity

Economic & Financial



8 Ideas for Building
Emotional Resilience
in Children
A personal approach

Encourage healthy risk taking

Many people make the mistake of preventing children from taking risks, or they jump in too soon to solve a child's problems. It comes from a well-meaning place, and in many cases it can be necessary to protect the child. But it could prevent them from developing their self-sufficiency.

So, if you see that a child is doing something that may not go the way they want, but the risk of harm is low, resist the temptation to pre-emptively intervene. Let them face the challenge and attempt to problem-solve on their own. You can offer help if they really do need it, of course.

Show acceptance of mistakes and losses

It's important for you to adopt this mentality. Doing so demonstrates that mistakes are not the end of the world and you shouldn't avoid trying new things due to fear of failure.

What's important is reflecting on mistakes and learning from them. This helps children to develop a growth mindset and encourages them to look for solutions, rather than focusing on unhelpful blaming or self-criticism.

Ask questions to encourage independent thinking

Whenever children face problems, you may be tempted to simply tell them the answer. But doing this prevents them from practising self-sufficiency. This is why you should actively ask questions if children come to you with an issue. It allows them to think for themselves and gain valuable problem-solving experience.

Praise accomplishments in the right way

Praise and recognition are critical for building a child's self-confidence. There is a balance you must strike here, however. Excessively and exclusively praising accomplishments and talents, while failing to praise effort, can send the wrong message to children.

It may lead to them thinking that they must succeed at everything and be talented to be valued. It can make them afraid of failure and generate feelings of inadequacy, which in turn can lead to poor resilience when they face challenges.

Define and discuss emotions

Children should learn how to identify and talk about their emotions. It will help to develop the emotional intelligence they need to handle how they're feeling when things get tough. Otherwise, confusion and frustration can stop them from carrying on.

Resilience involves recognising and controlling our emotions, but not permanently eliminating them, as this isn't realistic.

Promote optimism and positive thinking

The best way to do this is by showing rather than telling, as children often learn from the example of others.

If you have a positive attitude and respond optimistically to difficulties, observant children will notice and may start adopting this behaviour themselves

Another way is to positively reframe pessimistic and negative thoughts and comments.

Encourage social interaction

Another key characteristic of resilience is being able to draw strength from friends and family. This is why it's important that children learn how to develop relationships.

So, where possible, you should create the opportunity for children to practice their social skills and problem solve with others.

Show that it's okay to ask for help

Encouraging children to take healthy risks and to think through problems on their own is important, but

In situations where they're working through a challenge or problem independently, make it clear that you are still there to help them.

Breakout

What have you
gained from today
and what might
you put into
practice?

Building and Developing Resilience in Young People

Why are you worried?

What sort of behaviour is causing the problem? Who is being affected, how, when and where?

When did it start?

What factors are in the child's background? (e.g. divorce / illness) What are the present and past risk and protective factors?

Which risk factors are decreased?

Which protective factors can be increased?

What are the strengths in the child, family, community, school and how can they be built on?

What is the worst thing that could happen?