

# RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

## TOP 10 TIPS FOR RESILIENCE

**R**

**Remain Positive**

Look towards the future, think of what you want from life.

**E**

**Establish Realistic & Achievable Goals**

This helps give you focus.

**S**

**Strategies**

Plan your coping strategies. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

**I**

**Identify**

Identify your strengths and be confident in yourself.

**L**

**Learn from Experience**

Learn from experience and move on.

**I**

**Introduce**

Introduce a positive way of thinking. Focus on the good things in your life.

**E**

**Enjoy**

Make time to do the things you enjoy.

**N**

**Needs**

Take care of yourself. Keep healthy and fit.

**C**

**Connect**

Build healthy relationships with your family, friends and teachers.

**E**

**Embrace Change**

Don't dwell on the past. Put your energy into the present to shape your future.

# RESILIENCE TOOLKIT

## Introduction

This resource is an initiative of Glasgow CHP South Sector Youth Health Improvement team developed in partnership with The South Strategic Youth Health and Wellbeing Group. This Emotional Resilience Toolkit provides practical guidance in promoting the resilience of young people as part of an integrated health and wellbeing programme. The resource is designed to be used by workers and volunteers working with young people aged 10 and over.

## What do we mean by resilience?

Resilience describes a person's capacity to cope with changes and challenges and to bounce back during difficult times. The more resilient someone is, the better they are at getting through tough times, and the better their chances at recovering from experiences of adversity and trauma (Gilligan 2004)

Resilience is a key factor in protecting and promoting good mental health. It is the quality of being able to deal with the ups and downs of life. It is a term that can be applied to people of any age. A young person's ability to be resilient can depend on many different circumstances - they may be able to overcome challenges in one situation but not in another.

## What resilience is not!

Resilience is not about keeping quiet and putting up with a potentially harmful situation. When encouraging resilience in young people, it is important to avoid sending the message that it is about being the 'strong, silent type' who avoids asking for help or communicating their needs or feelings. Resilience needs to be developed with care as not to push unrealistic expectations onto young people. Rather than growing as a person and developing new skills, such messages have the potential to increase the risk of psychological problems in young people.

## Qualities Associated with Resilience

Resilience doesn't develop in isolation. There are many other qualities which impact on and affect resilience - the main ones can be summarised as follows:

### SELF-ESTEEM

being accepted by people whose relationship you value, and from completing tasks you value.

### SELF-EFFICACY

Having the qualities of optimism; 'stickability' and believing that one's own efforts can make a difference.

### TRUST

Experience people as reliable, value them and expect them not to betray your confidence.

### ATTACHMENT

A secure attachment relationship creates a secure base from which a young person feels safe to explore the world.

## SECURE BASE

The provision of a consistent and stable place to live and continuity of wider relationships which then allow the maintenance or development of attachment relationships.

## MEANINGFUL ROLES

Provide a sense of positive identity and a source of self esteem as well as a source of enjoyment and distraction.

## AUTONOMY

Make decisions and know that it is OK to make mistakes and that you can learn from mistakes.

## IDENTITY

Young people need to know and understand who they are, where they belong and to whom they are important.

## INSIGHT

Helps people to take appropriate actions and make appropriate choices. It is therefore linked to self efficacy and to initiative.

## HUMOUR

Can help young people to distance themselves from, and therefore reduce, emotional pain and it can also help them make and sustain relationships.

## Risk Factors for Resilience

It is more challenging for a young person to develop resilience if there are a number of risk factors apparent in their life.

The risk of young people not becoming resilient can be reduced greatly by decreasing these factors and increasing protective factors that are internal and external to the individual.

It is particularly helpful for young people to develop positive and caring relationships within family, social, school and community settings, as positive relationships provide opportunities in life. The more protective factors a young person has, the more resilient he/she is likely to be. Protective Factors will be discussed in a later section. There are many different factors that affect a young person's resilience:

### FAMILY

Absence of warm and healthy attachments between a child and parent

Low connectedness to family and it's members

Violence, abuse or neglect

Family dysfunction

Moving away from family / friends

### INDIVIDUAL

Difficult temperament.  
Risky behaviour.  
Drug / alcohol misuse.  
Criminal involvement.  
Psychological problems

### PEER

Lacking friendships

Insufficient relationships with peers

Association with delinquent / high risk young people

Relationship break ups

### SCHOOL

Low achievement

Poor attendance

Low connectedness to school

Transition from primary to secondary, college / university

### COMMUNITY

Poverty

Instability of accommodation

Low connectedness to community

### Benefits of Resilience for Young People

Young people who are resilient tend to be more hopeful, confident and possess higher self-worth during hard times. They are more likely to overcome challenges, recognise when they need support and develop coping strategies enabling them to handle difficulties more easily in the future.

Resilient young people are also more likely to;



## 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.

**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.**

This finding is in line with other research showing that resiliency is the product of a number of mutually enhancing protective factors. It is not a personality attribute, but the result of many factors which combine to buffer a young person against the potentially harmful effects of adversity.

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.

At different ages, young people rely more or less heavily on their I HAVE, I AM, and I CAN resources. As young people grow, they increasingly shift their reliance from outside supports ( I HAVE ) to their own skills ( I CAN ), while continually building and strengthening their personal attitudes and feelings ( I AM ).

In order to develop a young person’s resilience, it is important to know to what extent they have the above qualities i.e. where their current strengths and deficits lie.

### 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.

Protective Factor	Description	What can Youth Organisations do?
<p><b>SKILLS</b></p>	<p>Young people need many skills to be resilient, healthy and successful in life and active in their communities.</p> <p>Personal skills include:</p> <p>Self-awareness and self-monitoring.</p> <p>Adaptive, coping and management.</p> <p>Interpersonal communication.</p> <p>Relationship and social skills.</p> <p>Critical and creative thinking skills.</p>	<p>Adapt environments so that young people with learning and physical disabilities can take part and fully benefit.</p> <p>In group work sessions use learner-centred approaches such as drama activities to help young people learn about and practice living and learning skills.</p> <p>Provide a sounding board, mentor or coach young people who are trying to get through a problem or conflict.</p> <p>Encourage young people to spend time with people who like them and make them feel good about themselves.</p> <p>Help young people set realistic and achievable goals.</p> <p>Encourage young people to share their opinions so they get good practice at communicating their views.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for young people to challenge themselves.</p>

Protective Factor	Description	What can Youth Organisations do?
<b>PARENTS</b>	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.	Provide information about parenting programmes and other services that can support parents.
<b>FAMILY</b>	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.
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	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.
<b>PEERS</b>	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.

**Protective Factor****Description****What can Youth Organisations do?****COMMUNITY**

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.

**CULTURAL IDENTITY**

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.

**ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL**

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.