BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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- In Australia 14 % of children have a mental health disorder.
- The prevalence of mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, has remained unchanged for the past 20 years.
- 50 per cent of mental health disorders beginning before the age of 14 years

Murdoch Children's research Institute 2022

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Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to become personally and professionally successful despite severe adversity
- Resilience is a normal trait that comes from inborn tendencies to adapt
- Resilience can be fostered in the right environment

Paine (2002)

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RESILIENCE

Resiliency is the happy knack of being able to bungy jump through the pitfalls of life

(A.Fuller 1998)

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50 years Of Resilience research tells us……..

- When the focus is on supporting and empowering young people, over 70% of young people in most challenging of life's conditions not only survive but grow into thriving adults

Bernard

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The Importance of Resilience

- Resilience is essential to success in school and life
- Adults can help children become more resilient
- Fostering resilience in children improves school and personal outcomes and reduces risk behaviors

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Profile of the Resilient Child

- **Social competence**
- **Problem solving skills**
- **Autonomy**
- **Sense of Purpose and Future**

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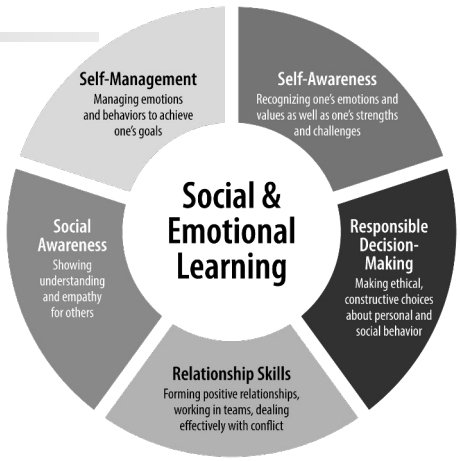

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Social Competence

- **Communication skills**

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Friendship skills

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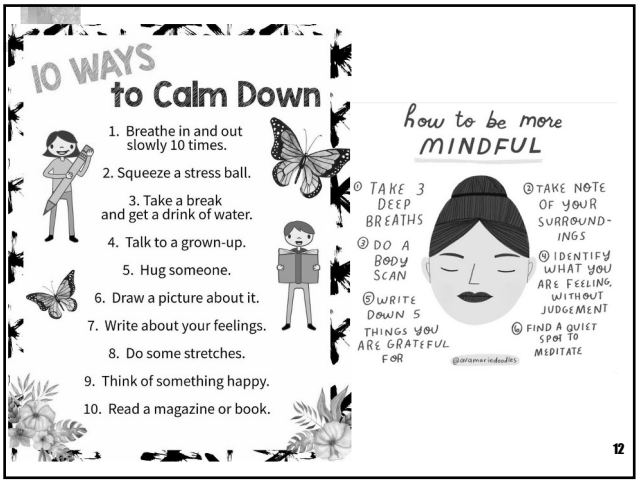

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The Importance of Social Skills

Social skills are actually far more predictive of outcomes into adulthood than early academics.

……even while controlling for family demographics and early academic ability, **the social skills observed in kindergarten showed significant correlation with well-being at age 25.**

Jones, Greenberg and Crowley 2015

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Social Competence

- More likely to have a good sense of humor.
- Alternative ways of looking at things.
- Ability to laugh at themselves and ridiculous situations.
- Humor as transcendent strength.

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Problem - Solving Skills

- **Planning**
- **Critical thinking**
- **Generating Alternatives**
- **Flexibility**
- **Resourcefulness**
- **Produces change**

Bonnie Benard Resilience: What We Have Learned, 2004

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Teaching Coping Skills

Learning coping skills builds confidence and competence

Coping skills should include:

- Problem solving skills
- Relaxation skills
- Healthy nutrition
- Exercise
- Rest
- Changing destructive thinking

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Problem Solving

- Define the problem
- Generate possible solutions
- Evaluate the solutions
- Make decisions - choose solutions
- Determine how to implement the decision
- Assess the success of the solution.

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POOCH PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

P *Identify the* PROBLEM — **Problem:** Encourage the other person to think and speak freely

O *Explore the* OPTIONS — **Options:** Explore different ways to resolve the problem

O *Discuss the* OUTCOMES — **Outcome:** Evaluate possible outcomes from all of the options

C CHOOSE *an option* — **Choose:** Help the person decide on a course of action

H HOW *did it go?* — **How did it go?** Review progress – re-engage POOCH process

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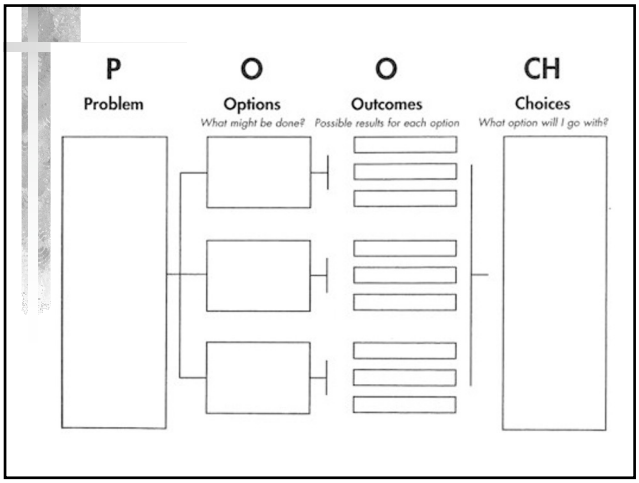

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Autonomy

- **Positive Identity**
- **Internal locus of control**
- **Self-efficacy/mastery**
- **Initiative**
- **Humor**
- **Self-awareness**
- **Resistance**
- **Adaptive distancing**

Bonnie Benard
Resiliency: What We Have Learned, 2004

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"In order for your child to experience mastery, it is necessary for him to fail, to feel bad, and to try again repeatedly until success occurs."

"Failure and feeling bad are necessary building blocks for ultimate success and feeling good." M Seligman

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The Right To High Self Esteem

The surest path to high self esteem for all learners is to continuously be successful at learning tasks they perceived to be difficult. Each time we "steal a student's struggle", we steal the opportunity for them to develop high self esteem."

Dr. Sylvia Rimm

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Sense of Purpose and Future

- **A special interest/hobby**
- **Goal directedness**
- **Imagination/creativity**
- **Achievement motivation**
- **Educational aspiration**
- **Persistence**
- **Optimism/hope Faith**
- **Sense of Meaning**

Bonnie Benard
Resiliency: What We Have Learned, 2004

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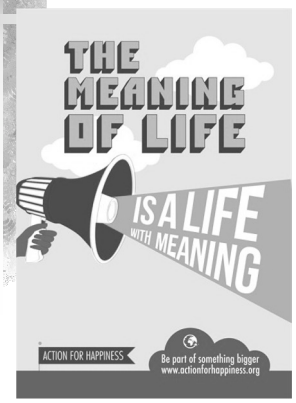

People who have meaning and purpose in their lives are happier, feel more in control and get more out of what they do

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"…….. a school can serve as a protective shield to help children withstand the multiple vicissitudes that they can expect of a stressful world." Benard 1995

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"Protective factors appear to alter or even reverse potential negative outcomes and enable individuals to circumvent life stresses."

B.Benard

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PROTECTIVE FACTORS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

- Caring and Supportive Relationships
- High/Realistic Expectations
- Participation and Involvement.

Benard, B. (1995).

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Caring Relationships

- "Being there"
- Models caring
- Showing interest in
- Getting to know
- Compassion
- Listening/Dialogue
- Patience
- Basic trust/safe

Benard B. (1995)

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"….people do not learn to try to achieve in socially undesirable ways until they have learned that they cannot succeed in socially useful ways."

(Adler 1943)

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"...students at greatest risk of dropping out of school are those who have never been friends with any teacher."

Larry Brenndtro

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…when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally….It is obvious that children will work harder and do things - even odd things like fractions- for people they love and trust *(Noddings, 1988)*

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High but Realistic Expectations

Research has indicated that schools that establish high expectations for all youth--and give them the support necessary to achieve them--have high rates of academic success. They also have lower rates of problem behaviors such as dropping out, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquency than other schools (Rutter et al., 1979).

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High but Realistic Expectations

- Belief in people's resilience
- Respect & confirmation
- Challenge & support
- Firm guidance
- Structure/rituals
- Strengths-focused
- Reframing "the story"
- Teaches personal resilience

Benard 1995

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How do teachers expectations affect student performance?

Increase or decrease confidence levels as tasks are approached- thus affecting the intensity of effort we're willing to expend.

Influences the way we think about or explain our performance outcomes
e.g. "I don't have what it takes."
People who come into a task expecting to fail attribute their failure to lack of ability.
J.Howard 1981

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Participation & Involvement

- **Safe places**
- **Inclusion**
- **Experiential skill development**
- **Creative expression**
- **Caring for others**
- **Peer support**
- **valued responsibilities**
- **making decisions**
- **giving voice**
- **being heard**
- **contributing one's talents to the community**

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Providing youth with opportunities for meaningful involvement and responsibility within the school is a natural outcome in schools that have high expectations. Participation, like caring and respect, is a fundamental human need. Several educational reformers believe that when schools ignore these basic needs of both students and teachers, schools become alienating places (Sarason, 1990).

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“Deprived of opportunities for genuine productivity, lured into consumptive roles, young people come to believe that their lives make little difference to the world.”

Brendtro 2002

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Chris Daicos

Helping Organisations and Families Flourish

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