

# Building Self-Esteem and Resilience in your child



**CAMHS**

**School In-reach Service**

Delivered by your Emotional Health and  
Wellbeing Practitioner



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# Aims

- What is self-esteem and resilience?
- Causes
- Why do we need them?
- Signs
- Strategies



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# What is self-esteem?

## Definition:

*Belief and confidence in your own ability and value*

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>



Self-esteem is about believing you have the right to be happy, feeling that you are worthy and deserving of good things in life. It's also about having confidence in your ability to cope with any challenges life may bring. (Brandon, 2021).

*I am worthy.*



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# Why do we need good self-esteem?

A huge amount of research suggests that having good self-esteem has many benefits.



People with higher self-esteem are happier in their jobs and have more successful relationships.



Healthy self-esteem can help you realise that it doesn't matter if things go wrong, if you make a mistake or if you have some faults.



It helps you to cope with adversity, stress and everyday pressures.

(Orth & Robins, 2022).



# Children with good self-esteem are more likely to:

- Have a growth mind-set
- Take on new challenges
- Cope and learn from mistakes
- Stand up for themselves
- Try and solve problems on their own
- Ask for help when they need it
- Make friends easily
- Cope with change
- Feel pride



<https://www.understood.org>



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# What causes low self-esteem?

Self – esteem is an outcome of a person's life experiences. The approval or rejection from family, friends and teachers can influence how a person perceives themselves.

(Szczęśniak, Mazur, Rodzeń & Szpunar, 2021)



# What causes low self-esteem?

Stress, difficult life events or bereavement can impact self-esteem negatively.

(Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song & Wang, 2019).



Personality can also play a part. Some people are just more prone to negative thinking.

(Zhao, Ren & Chen, 2023).



More recently, studies have shown that social media has played a part in reducing individual's self-esteem

(Amirazodi & Amirazodi, 2011).



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# Perfectionism and Low Self-esteem

## Possible signs your child may be a perfectionist:

- They can not stop thinking about a mistake they made
- They are intensely competitive and can't stand doing worse than others
- They either want to do something “just right” or not at all
- They will not ask for help as they think it shows weakness
  - They always find faults and will correct other people when they are wrong
- They are very self-conscious about making mistakes in front of other people

(Melrose, 2011).



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# Body Image

## How can you help your young person?

- Comment on individuality, personality, characteristics, morals, values, ethics, behaviour, skills, effort, passion and how they are feeling rather than how they look
- Remember: your words have power, be aware of throwaway comments
- Be kind to yourself, lead by example. Avoid talking about dieting or body shape in front of your child
- Talk to them about being safe online and limit their use of social media. Have open discussions about how the online world is very different to reality
- Encourage them to be kind to themselves and others (NHS, 2023).



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# Possible signs of low self-esteem

Fear of failure

Trying to please others

Avoiding certain situations

Neglecting or hurting  
themselves



Blaming themselves for  
things

Comparing themselves  
to others

Defensive when  
criticised

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk>



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**Take a few minutes to think about 3 things  
you love about yourself:**

1.....

2.....

3.....



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# Strategies to build self-esteem



## Model good self esteem

If a parent is talking negatively about themselves in front of their child, they will learn to do the same (Moffit, 2022).



“Look at next door’s new car. I’ll never have a car like that. My car is pathetic”



“I always burn the dinner, I’m useless”



“There’s no point going for that job, I know I won’t get it”

This doesn’t mean you have to think you’re the greatest person ever! Try to show your child that you can still have a positive attitude even when things don’t go to plan.



# Model good Self-esteem by encouraging **Positive Self-talk**

## Why are we so hard on ourselves?

We have a tendency toward self-criticism as human beings. Criticising ourselves in front of others is a defensive, safety behaviour and a way of beating others to it. If we say how awful we look in our outfit for example, we believe this will stop others from saying it (Neff, 2011).

It takes practice to talk to yourself in a positive way but the more you do it, the more likely your child will be to carry out positive self-talk. Some examples include:

**“I’m proud of myself for giving that a go”**

**“This looks difficult but I’ll try my best”**

**“I’ve done it before so I can do it again”**

**“I made a mistake but that’s OK”**

(Feeney, 2022).



# Talk About Feelings

Encourage your child to open up about how they are feeling.

There is a vast amount of research to prove that talking about your emotions and labelling how you're feeling helps to decrease negative emotional reactions (Lieberman et al., 2007).

| The <b>ZONES</b> of Regulation®                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                                |                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |               |         |
| <b>BLUE ZONE</b><br>Sad<br>Sick<br>Tired<br>Bored<br>Moving Slowly                | <b>GREEN ZONE</b><br>Happy<br>Calm<br>Feeling Okay<br>Focused<br>Ready to Learn   | <b>YELLOW ZONE</b><br>Frustrated<br>Worried<br>Silly/Wiggly<br>Excited<br>Loss of Some Control | <b>RED ZONE</b><br>Mad/Angry<br>Terrified<br>Yelling/Hitting<br>Elated<br>Out of Control |

| ZONES OF REGULATION!                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Blue                                                                                                                                                                     | Green                                                                               | Yellow                                                                                                                                                                     | Red                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <br> |  | <br> | <br> |
| Sick<br>Sad<br>Tired<br>Bored<br>Moving Slowly                                                                                                                           | Happy<br>Calm<br>Good to Go<br>Focused<br>Ready to Learn                            | Frustrated<br>Worried<br>Silly/Wiggly<br>Anxious<br>Excited                                                                                                                | Mad/Angry<br>Mean<br>Yelling/Hitting<br>Out of Control<br>Need Time and Space                                                                                              |

| What Zone Are You In?                                                               |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Blue                                                                                | Green                                                                               | Yellow                                                                              | Red                                                                                 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sick<br>Sad<br>Tired<br>Bored<br>Moving Slowly                                      | Happy<br>Calm<br>Feeling Okay<br>Focused<br>Ready to Learn                          | Frustrated<br>Worried<br>Silly/Wiggly<br>Excited<br>Loss of Some Control            | Mad/Angry<br>Mean<br>Yelling/Hitting<br>Disgusted<br>Out of Control                 |

Created by Leah Kuypers in 2011, The Zones of Regulation is a framework that groups emotions into colours. It encourages emotional literacy, the recognition of emotions and provides strategies to manage emotions. Have regular emotional check ins as a family, normalise emotions and make time to allow for discussions.



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# Recognise Your Skills

Encourage your child to recognise the things they are good at as this will help them to feel more confident. This doesn't have to be about academic achievement.

*For example:*

“You were a really good friend today”.

Keep a positivity jar, make paper chains with positive affirmations written on each chain, or older children could write in a journal. Seeing your strengths written in black and white is powerful and will help to prepare you for potential challenges.

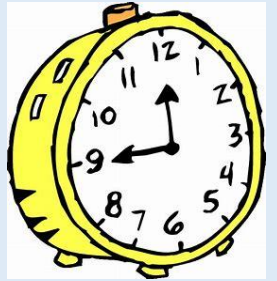
(Deroo, 2006)



# Build Positive Relationships

Spending quality time with your child increases their feelings of self-worth and ultimately their self-esteem.

1. Set aside time for you child and give them your undivided attention
2. Make the time special, it's not enough to just be present in the room. Let your child know you want to spend time with them.
3. Allow your child to choose the activity whether they want to bake cakes, play board games, paint or draw.
4. Don't allow yourself to be distracted. Turn off technological devices and avoid doing household chores (Martin, 2020).



# Value Effort Over Attainment

- Praise the process not the outcome

Praise your child for working hard on a project or studying for a test. Comment on their concentration or perseverance on a certain task.

- Praise specifically

For Example:

“I love how detailed your drawing is,” rather than, “I like your drawing.”

- Praise sincerely

Children can tell when praise is insincere. If they think you feel sorry for them or are trying to manipulate them in any way, it will make the praise totally ineffective. Also you don't want to give them false praise either as they will think they don't need to improve or try harder next time.

- Praise sparingly.

Too much praise can have a negative effect. Children may become over-reliant on praise and will crave the approval of others. They may think your attention and love is conditional on their achievement. They can also become afraid of losing that approval therefore, will not challenge themselves in case they fail.

(Cullins, 2022)

# Setting Goals

When setting goals, encourage your child to set SMART goals- specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

| S.M.A.R.T GOALS                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use the acronym, S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound) to define criteria to focus your goal and improve your chances of success. |                                                                                                                   |
| GOAL #2:                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                   |
| <b>SPECIFIC</b><br>                                                           | Ask yourself the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, and Why                                                           |
| <b>MEASURABLE</b><br>                                                         | How will you know you have reached your goal? What will you see, feel, hear, think?                               |
| <b>ATTAINABLE</b><br>                                                         | Do you have what you need to reach your goal (Skills, tools, attitudes, etc.)? How can you obtain what is needed? |
| <b>RELEVANT</b><br>                                                          | Is this something you really want? Will it help you achieve a greater goal or dream?                              |
| <b>TIME-BOUND</b><br>                                                       | When will you achieve this goal? Be realistic about your time constraints to avoid stress.                        |

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- I want to get better at reading as this will help me access lots of information. I will read a page/chapter every evening. Once a week I will ask a grown up to listen to me read.

- I will be finishing the books faster and I will feel good about myself. Grown ups will comment on how well I am reading. I will have reached the next reading stage.

- I can already read but I want to get better. I will make sure I read every day as I'm determined to reach my goal.

- Being good at reading will help me improve in all subjects not just English.

- I want to reach the next stage by the end of term

## Goal Suggestions:

Practice playing my musical instrument

Keep my bedroom tidy

Walk the dog

Raise my hand more in class

Talk to different people at play time

Be more helpful

# Setting Challenges

A challenge is, “Something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability,” (Collins Dictionary, 2023).

Setting yourself a challenge requires trying something new, pushing yourself out of your comfort zone and is usually a long term goal (Lovett, 2023).

## Some ideas for children:

- Learning a new skill, language or sport
- Doing better in a subject over a term
- Saving for a new computer or games console
- Volunteering at a local charity for a set period
- Improving their fitness by doing the couch to 5K
- Learning to cook
- Trying new foods



(Naik, 2023)



# The Link Between Self-esteem and Resilience

It has been suggested that a person with high self-esteem ultimately, becomes more resilient. If an individual feels good about themselves, this leads to higher confidence levels which enables them to cope with adverse situations and pressures (Liu, et al., 2021).

Researchers believe that self-esteem is a predictor of resilience therefore, we need to build an individual's self-esteem in order for them to become more able to deal with stressful factors (Balgiu, 2017).

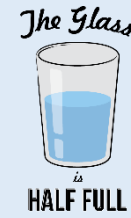


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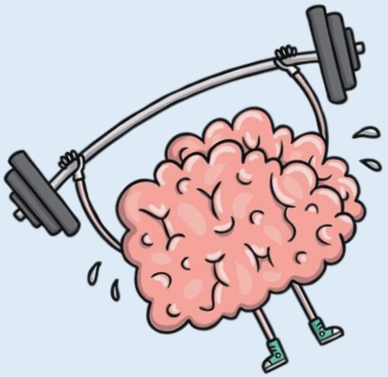
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# What is Resilience?



**The ability to face challenges and recover from difficulties with positive outcomes.**

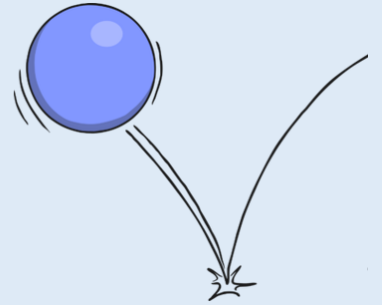


**adapt**

**stay positive**

**keep going**

**bounce back**



**Overcome adversity**

**Cope**



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(Arslan, 2019; Vella & Pai, 2019)

# Causes of Low Resilience

There are so many factors to consider when looking at what causes low resilience in children.

Some common themes that influence our ability to become resilient individuals are:

Personality traits

Past experiences

Locus of Control

Emotional Intelligence  
and Literacy

Trauma

Emotional Regulation

Parenting styles



# Resilience

## Why do we need it?

- Lower rates of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Arslan, 2019; Bethell et al., 2016)
- Promotes social inclusion and a sense of belonging (Arslan, 2019)
- Positive mental health and emotional well-being (Happer, Brown, & Sharma-Patel, 2017)
- Protects against Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (Elmore et al., 2020)
- Better physical health (Hughes et al., 2021; Southwick et al., 2011)



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# Signs a child may be struggling with resilience

Resistance to change

Unable to adapt

Internalises problems

Pessimistic

Reluctance to 'try again' or  
take on new challenges

Irritable or self-critical

Not asking for help



Difficulty forming and  
maintaining relationships

Takes things personally

Rumination

Disproportionate  
reactions/unable to problem  
solve

Lacking confidence

# Distress Tolerance

We need to allow children to 'sit with' their unwanted feelings in order to build a **tolerance** to them.

If we remove all unwanted feelings at the first signs of them, this can lower their resilience.

Sometimes we need to self-reflect and think about how willing **we** are to allow our children to experience appropriate levels of distress.

Dan Siegel, 1999

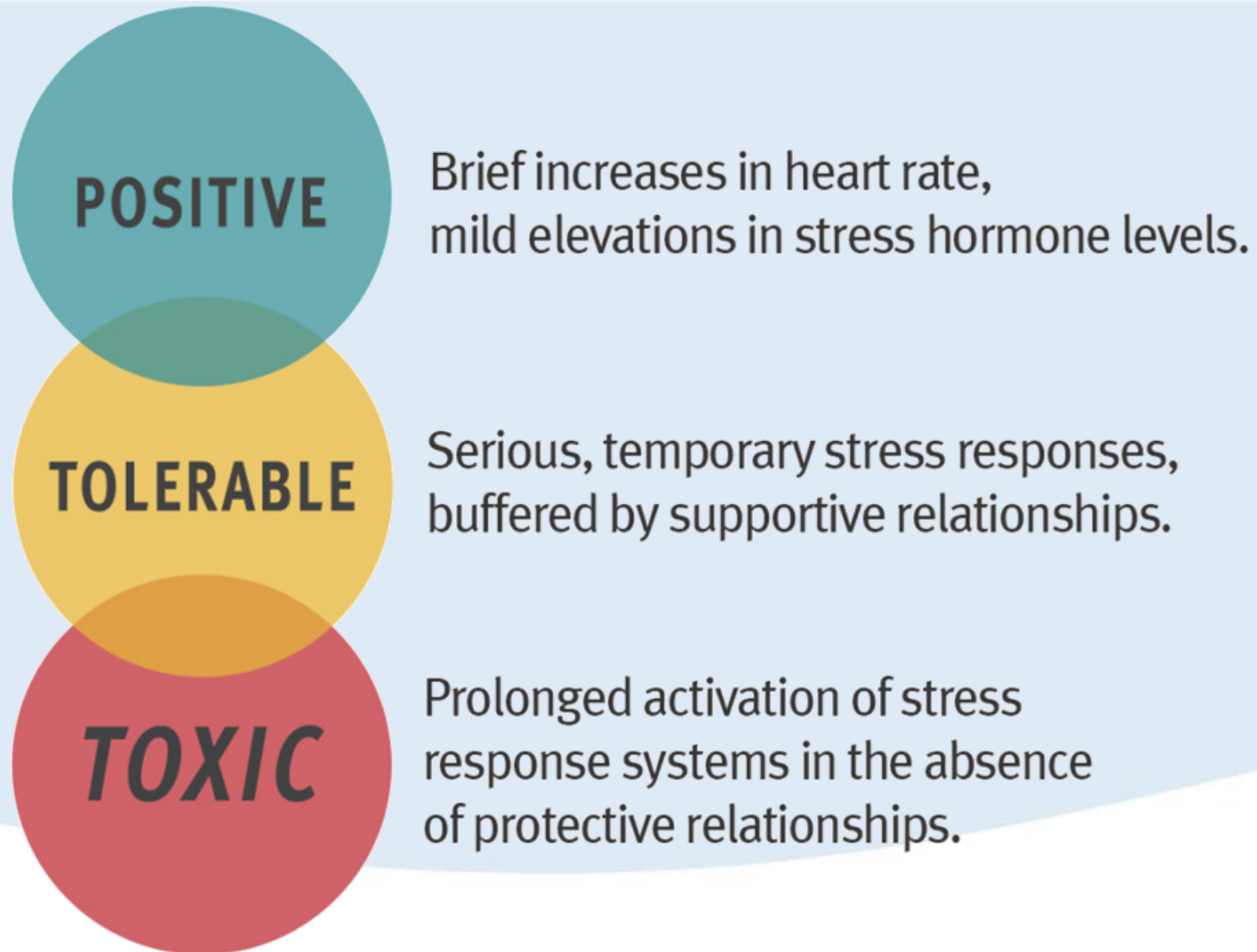


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# Distress Tolerance - Resilience

Stress is a natural and inevitable part of childhood



**Positive relationships and resilience act as protective factors for all types of stress.**



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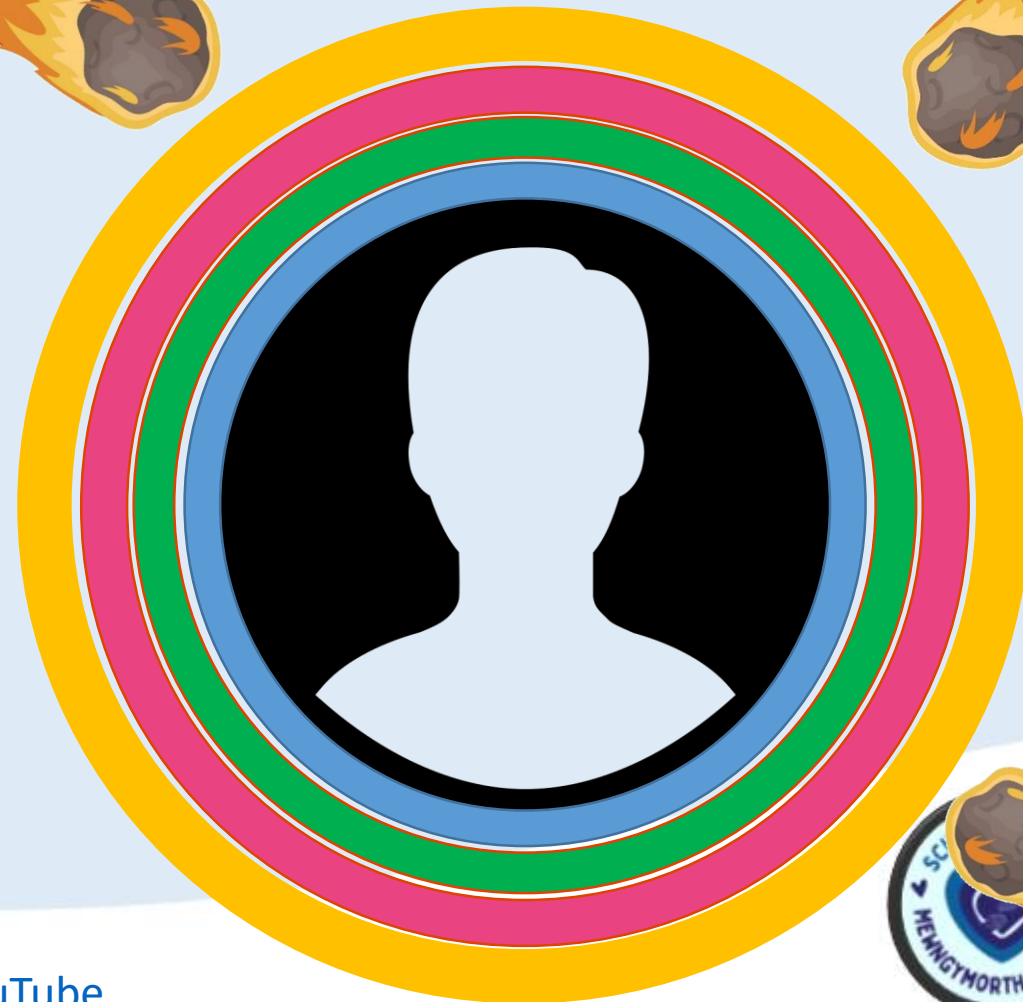
(Garner & Yogman, 2021)

# Rings of Resilience

## The Seven Cs of Resilience Model

- Competence
- Confidence
- Connection
- Character
- Contribution
- Coping
- Control

(Ginsburg, 2023)



## Four Types of Resilience

- Emotional
- Mental
- Physical
- Social

[The Seven C's of Resilience – YouTube](#)



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# Building Rings of Resilience

**Build self – esteem**  
(Talk about feelings, self-talk, new challenges)

**Responsibilities**

**Relationships & connecting**

**It's OK to Fail**

**Problem solving**

**Sleep and healthy lifestyle**

**See the Positives**

**Pride**



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# Resilience Through Relationships



**Relationships  
& connecting**

Relationships act as a ring of resilience. They show children that they are not alone, they are worthy of love and that they are a part of a wider community.

The parent and child relationship is the scaffolding for any future relationships.

Research has shown that the most common factor for resilient children is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver or other adult. This support could come from wider family, neighbours, teachers etc



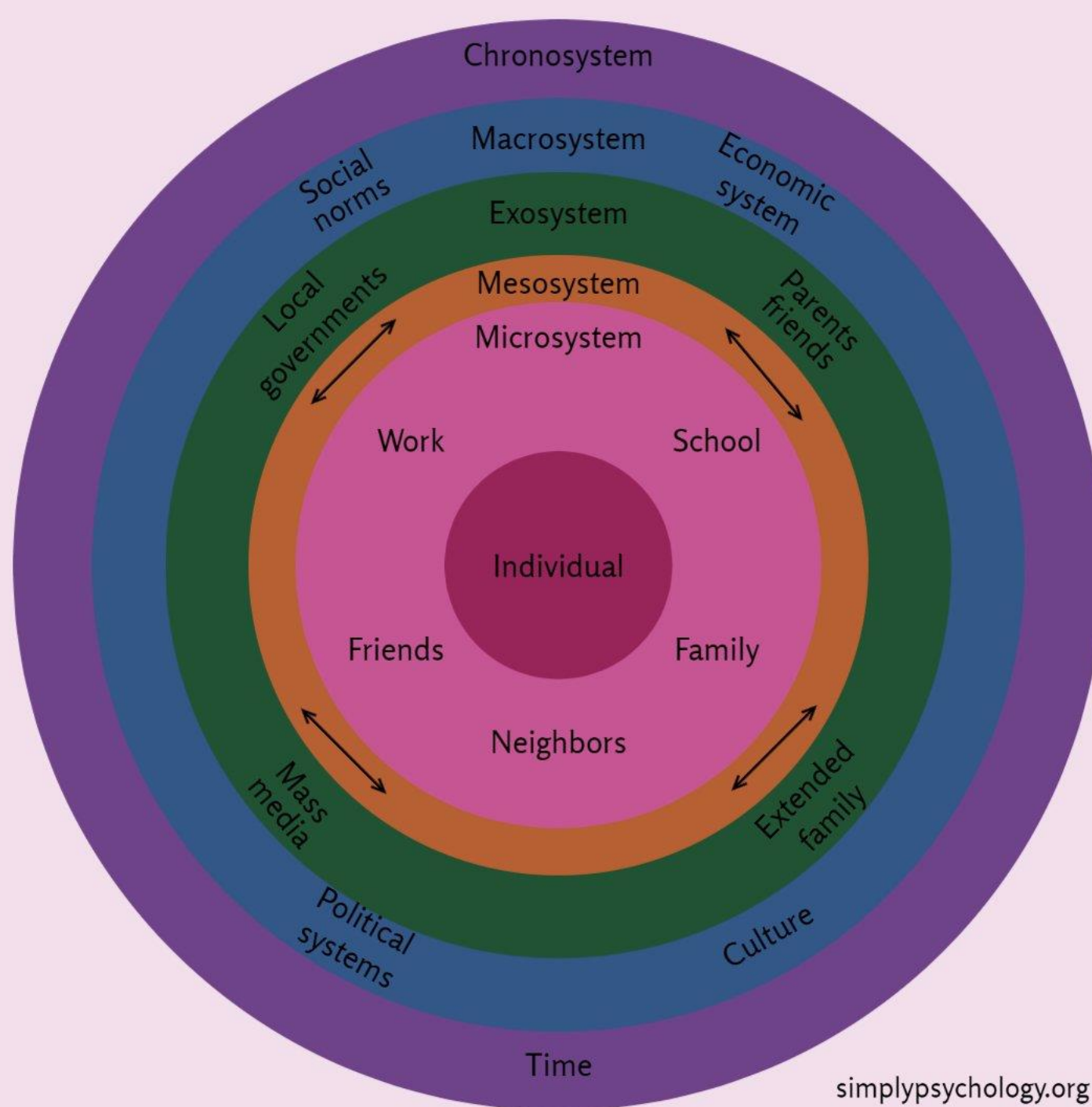
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## The Microsystem

Family, friends and school staff have direct contact with the child.

They have the biggest influence on child development, including their physical and emotional health.



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Bronfenbrenner, 1977

# Relationships

All of the relationships in a child's life act as a model of how to respond to challenge, change, stress, worry and disappointment.

Trying our best to have a 'can do' attitude, be optimistic and to 'keep going' even though something is hard can show children how to be resilient.

Being age-appropriately open and honest about things being hard can also show children that everyone has hard times but we are resilient.



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(Narayan et al., 2021; (Pinquart, 2017)



**Sleep and  
healthy  
lifestyle**



**73% of your brain is water. So, to make sure we can think clearly, solve problems, understand our emotions and make memories, you need to drink plenty of water!**

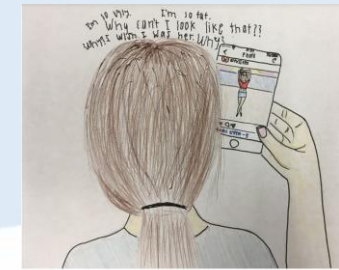
**Get enough sleep! Sleep deprivation has been linked to reduced concentration, low mood and delayed reactions as well as serious health conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and poor mental health.**



**Being active and doing things you enjoy boosts your self esteem and makes you feel good.**



**We live in a world filled with technology!  
It can be amazing, however too much screen  
time can affect your mental health and self  
esteem.**

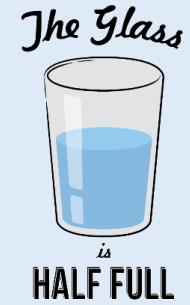


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See the  
Positives

# See the Positives

Nurturing optimism is a great way to build all the components that we have discussed so far.



Optimism has been proven to be a key characteristic of resilient people. The brain can be rewired to be more optimistic through the **experiences it is exposed to**.

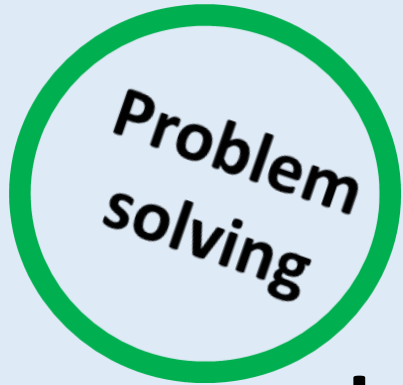
If you have a small human who tends to look at the glass as being half empty, show them a different view. This doesn't mean **invalidating** how they feel.

**Acknowledge** their view of the world, and introduce them to a different one

“I can see that you’re sad about not getting an award today. Let’s be happy for Tom who won it and hope you get it next time!”

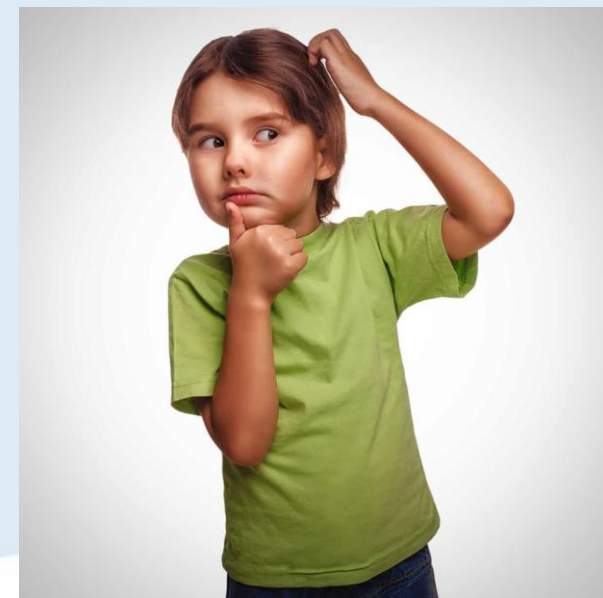
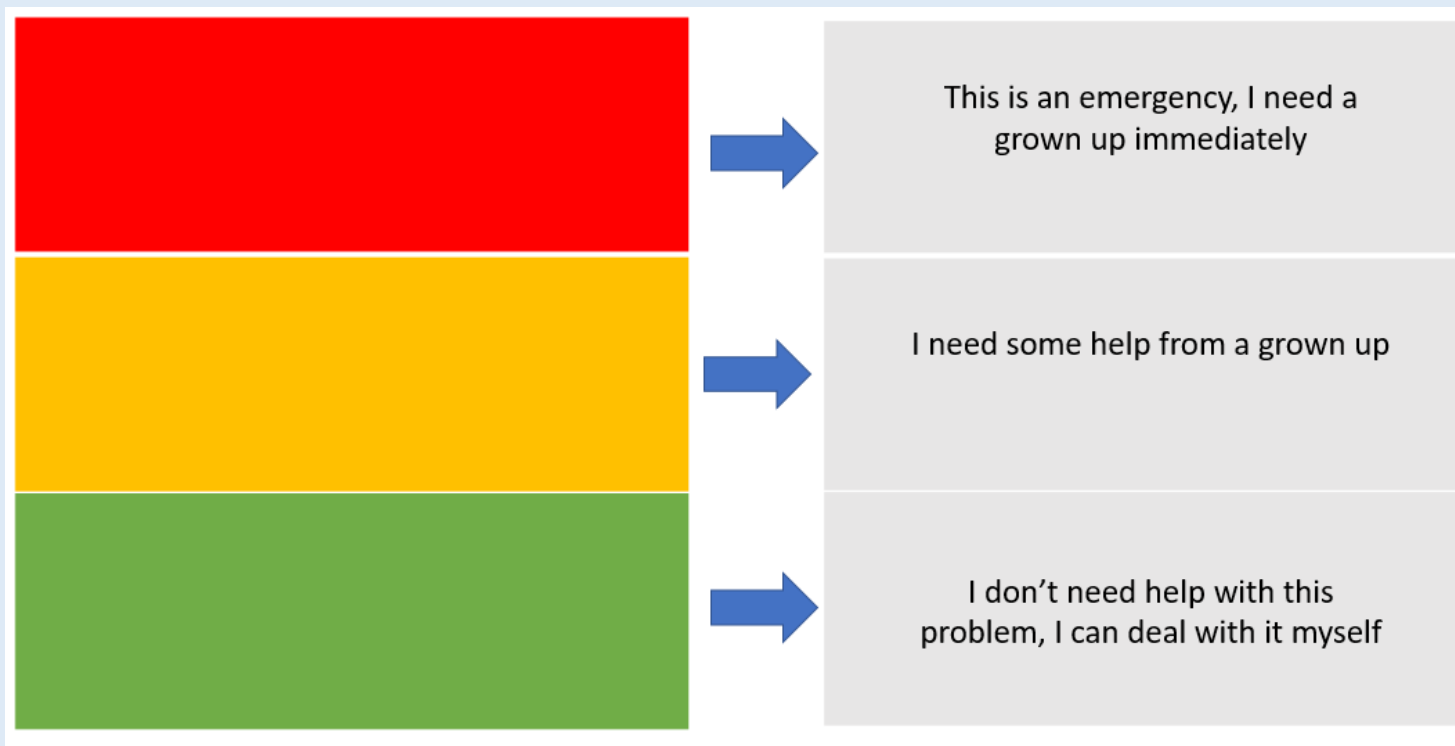


(Erthal et al., 2021)



# Problem Solving

**Encourage your child to figure out how big their problem is by themselves.**



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# Problem Solving

Encouraging your child to solve every day problems by themselves will give them a vote of confidence in their own ability.

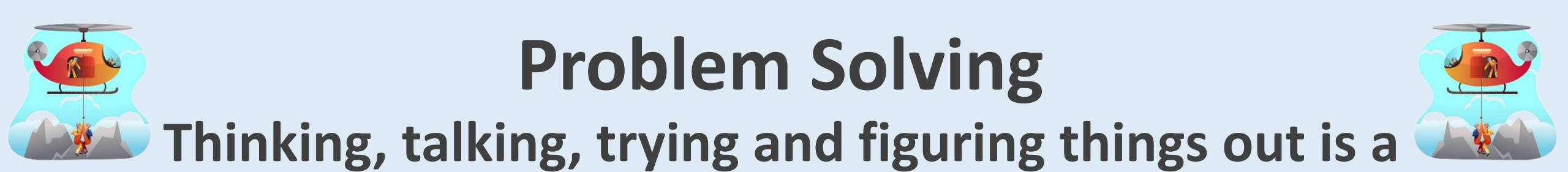
If they come to you with an issue, a good response could be  
*“That sounds hard, what do you think you should do?”*

This approach will help to build those important conflict resolution skills as well as developing a child’s independence  
(Monke, 2021).



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# Problem Solving



Thinking, talking, trying and figuring things out is a huge part of resilience.

## Rescuing

Because we care about our children, it is a natural instinct to want to solve their problems, remove unwanted feelings or to ‘rescue’ them from a situation that they are finding challenging.

Where appropriate, we need to encourage children to try to figure out themselves how ‘big’ a problem is and if there are any solutions that they can find themselves.

This doesn't mean abandoning them!  
Rather facilitating the problem-solving process.



(Parkinson & Creswell, 2011)

# Problem Solving



I am hearing they were mean to you. What could you say to them tomorrow?

That test sounded tough, how might you feel if you don't get the results you want? What could we do next time?

If that happens again tomorrow, what could you do?



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# Resilience

Confidence in your own worth or abilities

## Responsibilities

Responsibilities allow children to experience success independently from the input of adults. It gives them the opportunity to experience success and to make mistakes!

Responsibilities show children that you trust them and that you believe they are capable.



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(Ginsburg, 2023)

# It's OK to fail

- Let your child know you don't expect them to be perfect and that your love is unconditional regardless of their mistakes
- Avoid bringing up past mistakes
- Praise your child for admitting to a mistake
- Encourage them to take responsibility for their mistakes and not to blame others
- Ensure them to apologise if their mistake has hurt others
- Talk to them about the times you made mistake and how you learned from them
- Encourage their problem-solving skills when they've made a mistake, rather than doing it for them



(Price-Mitchell, 2023)



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# Confidence in your Own Worth or Abilities



Acknowledging success in all its forms is really important.

**Success looks different for all children.** Sometimes, trying something new, doing something independently, going to school or telling the truth are all successes that should be acknowledged.

Allowing and encouraging a child to feel **pride** adds to their bank of evidence that they are capable and worthy.

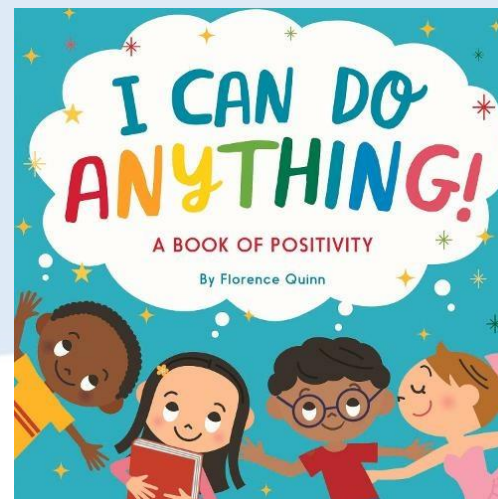
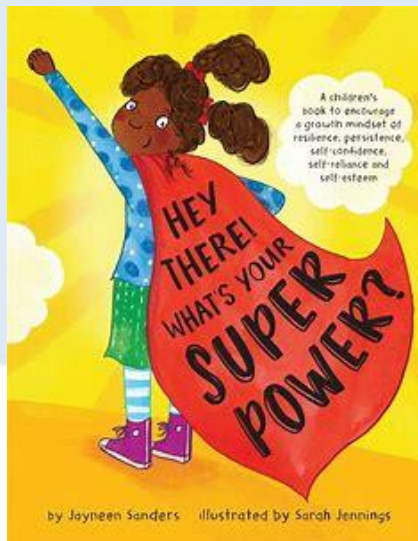
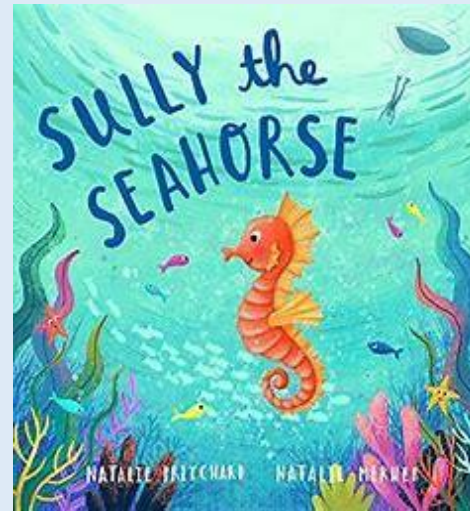
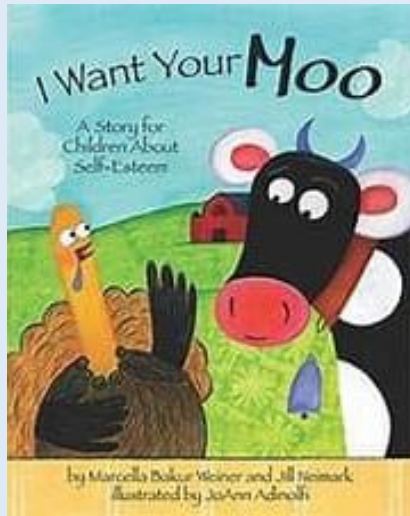
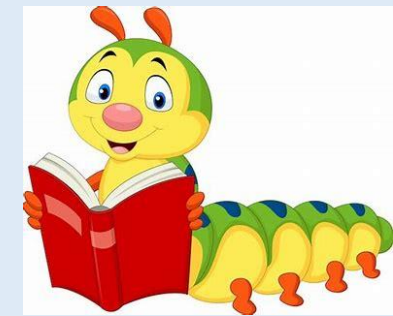


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# Book Recommendations



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# Key points:

## Self-esteem

- ✓ Model good self-esteem
- ✓ Talk about skills and qualities rather than looks
- ✓ Encourage positive self-talk
- ✓ Talk about feelings
- ✓ Encourage them to recognise what they're good at
- ✓ Build positive relationships
- ✓ Value effort over attainment
- ✓ Set goals and challenges



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# Key points:

## Resilience

- ✓ Understand distress tolerance
- ✓ Encourage communication and connection with others
- ✓ Sleep well and lead a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ See the positives
- ✓ Learn problem-solving skills
- ✓ Take on responsibilities
- ✓ Let them know it's OK to fail
- ✓ Encourage feelings of pride



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*Thank you for listening*

# Questions??



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[Home – Kooth](#)



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## We'd really appreciate it!



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