

The language of resilient schools

Resilient schools develop their own words and phrases to help students get through the inevitable tough times that they experience. The language of resilience is generally built around the following seven areas:

1. Coping

Resilient children use a variety of simple coping strategies such as humour, relaxation, normalisation and acceptance when they experience social or personal hardships.

Language of coping: "You've got to laugh!" "You will get through this!" "Some things you just can't change!" "Everyone feels that way sometimes."

2. Courage

Resilient children and young people take learning and social risks, and know that things won't always go their way. Rejection and failure aren't taken personally.

Language of courage: "What's the worst thing that can happen?" "Take a smart risk." "You've got to develop the courage to be imperfect."

3. Persistence

The ability to keep persevering in the face of difficulty is a characteristic of resilience that leads to success in the classroom, on the sports field and in other fields of endeavour both in the schoolyard and beyond.

Language of persistence: "Have another go." "Hang tough!" "Push through the hard stuff to get the rewards."

4. Relationships

Resilient kids are able to develop and maintain strong relationships with a number of peers over time. They are supportive of others; they can handle common conflict situations and don't take rejection personally.

Language of relationships: "Is that how a good friend acts?" "Who have you spoken to about this?" "It's not all about you!"

5. Thinking

Children may not be able to control a situation, but they can control how they think about an event. Resilient kids look for the positive side in negative situations, and see negative events as temporary. Reframing, remaining flexible and using realistic language are common resilience traits.

Language of resilient thinking: "Look on the bright side." "Let's look at this another way?" "Where does this fit on the disaster scale?"

6. Problem Solving

Resilient children and young people have developed competencies from resolving their problems and challenges. They believe that they can overcome challenges, because they have done so in the past.

Language of problem solving: "How can you work this out?" "What's the first step?" "Let's set some goals together."

7. Learning

Resilient children and young people learn from negative situations, and importantly develop greater awareness of their own strengths. Self-knowledge is perhaps the best knowledge of all that we can encourage children to develop.

Language of learning: "What have you learned for next time?" "You've learned a lot about yourself." "You're more capable than you think."

Start with the vocabulary you already use

Start building your school's proprietary language of resilience by mapping the vocabulary already in use. Identify the key terms and phrases that will make up your school's proprietary resilience language. Then share the language you've chosen with teachers, children and parents

BIG 3 Points

- ✘ 1. Decide on the core language of resilience that you will use.
- ✘ 2. Explain the story and meaning behind each phrase and term.
- ✘ 3. Consistently and sensitively use the language in appropriate situations.

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