

# Pupil Engagement Resilience Activity

The purpose of this activity is to encourage pupil participation based on the resilience framework. Ideally it would be run with a group of 8-15 pupils from Year 4 upwards.

## Which pupils should you identify and select for this work?

It is important that the pupils taking part have an interest in promoting positive mental health and resilience of the whole school. We recommend that these are pupils who themselves have experienced vulnerability or adversity in the past, perhaps having been helped to develop their resilience in response to these challenges. That said it is important to note that this activity is not a therapeutic intervention nor is it a therapeutic group, and so pupils who are currently in distress or at risk need careful consideration by those recruiting. Pupils need to be able to work effectively as a group, participate in group discussions and generate ideas.

## Why do we need them?

The Academic Resilience Approach is all about co-production involving the whole school community. In order to promote the positive mental health and resilience of pupils, it is imperative we listen to their views and involve them in the process, taking our lead from them and helping them create their own solutions where this is possible. This means we are practicing what we preach and authentically modelling resilient practice!

We suggest that you get a senior member of staff who has decision-making influence to attend.

## What you need

YoungMinds Resilience Cards

## Introduction

Start by asking everyone what they think resilience means and collect ideas. Tell them that for this session it would help to think of resilience as doing better than they might have thought they could when things are tough (or an age appropriate version of this).

## Activity A

- Ask everyone to stand/sit in a circle.
- Place the cards face up on the floor.
- Explain that the statements on the floor have been proven to help us build resilience.
- Invite the participants to look at them all and think about the ones that they have in their life.
- As soon as they find one that they do have, ask them to pick it up and hold it in the air. Once everyone has one ask them to each read it out and explain why they have chosen the statement.
- Repeat so that they find another statement. Do this a few times, or as many times as you want with the pupils so that they can start exploring the resilient factors in their lives.
- To extend the activity, ask them to think about what gets in the way of us feeling resilient and then what they currently do to help with their own resilience.

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## Activity B

- Put all the statements in a big pile.
- Ask pupils to consider which statements they think their school has to help support their resilience
- Create two piles (Does well/does not so well) and go through each one with the pupils to place it into a pile. e.g. If the school is really good at keeping pupils safe the pupils might agree that the “I feel safe” card is put in the “Does well” pile. Some cards will cause a discussion and some will go in the middle.
- When the cards have been divided into different piles, ask the group to look at the ones that the school needs to improve on. Explain to them that they are going to lead a project in their school (with the support of a staff member) to build resilience in the school, based on these cards.
- Ask participants to look at all the cards in this pile and silently choose one that they think is the most important to work on. When they have all chosen ask them to say which ones they want. Help them to agree which one/ones they would like to build a project on.
- Once one has been agreed, plan with the group what they think could be done to improve things and develop an action plan with timescales and outcomes that they agree to. Make sure you consider who will help and how things will actually get done.

## Things to consider

Some pupils may want to choose more than one statement, whereas others may struggle to find one statement that applies to them. This needs to be facilitated sensitively so pupils feel positive about the support they do have.

It is important that pupils are not asked to share their ideas unless they have volunteered to do so. This prevents vulnerable pupils from disclosing information about themselves that others may use or share.

The pupils should be supported to know that they can say anything positive or negative about the school, as the purpose of Activity B is to run a project in their school/setting to make it a more resilient place.

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Welcome