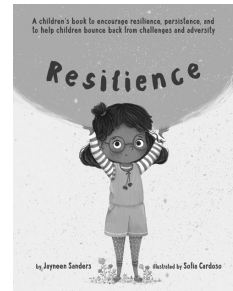


3 Lessons in Understanding and Building Resilience



FOCUS TEXT: *Resilience* (ages 4–9 years)

Depending on the age of the children, the following lessons will take place over three sessions. Please adapt the lessons to suit the needs and ages of the children.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Children will understand that:

- resilience is the ability to bounce back following disappointment, failure, challenging times and/or adversity
- experiencing challenges, disappoint and/or failure helps us to grow as a person
- supportive people around us can help us to be resilient
- we can learn to be more resilient.

In these lessons children will:

- develop an understanding of the term 'resilience' and the importance of being resilient
- identify times in their lives where they have shown resilience
- understand that we all have a 'support team' who are there to help us in stressful, unfamiliar and/or disappointing situations

- analyse responses to disappointing and/or unexpected situations as a means to building resilience
- examine their own strengths as a means to overcome difficulties.

For the lessons you will need:

- music and speakers
- poster paper
- whiteboard, markers
- A4 paper
- coloured pencils, textas
- resource masters: 'I'm Resilient', 'My Support Team', 'Building Resilience — using strengths to overcome difficulties', 'Strength Cards' provided in the teaching lessons for *Pearl Fairweather*, *Pirate Captain* (option)

Lesson 1: Resilience

Tuning In: What Is Resilience?

You will need: whiteboard, markers

Write the word ‘resilience’ on the whiteboard. Ask, ‘What does this word mean?’ Allow students time to respond, then discuss the notion that resilience is the ability to bounce back in the face of adversity, or when something doesn’t go according to plan. True resilience occurs when we have had something go wrong, have been sad or disappointed and we have found ways to deal with our problems, learnt how to move forward and come out stronger than before. In order to achieve this, we need to take risks, be brave and most importantly, be willing to fail. If relevant, provide an example of a time in your life where you have shown resilience — this could be related to your own schooling, a sports activity or another time where you have overcome a difficulty that is relatable to the students in your class.

Whole Class Activity: In-depth Reading

You will need: Resilience by Jayneen Sanders

Turn to page 2 and read the quote by Kayla Barron, USA astronaut candidate. Discuss this quote and how it shows resilience. Ask students, ‘Why do you think the author selected this quote?’ Read *Resilience* to the class. During this first reading, it might work best to not stop for the questions; allowing the verse to flow. On completion, discuss the following general questions:

- Who is telling the story? Why do you think the author chose this voice?
- Is there anything in the story that reminds you of your own life?
- Do you think Emmi shows resilience? Why do you think that? How does she show resilience?

Read the book again to the class; this time, stopping for the questions and selecting students to provide responses. Emphasise the idea that everyone has already shown resilience in their lives; we have all faced challenges and found ways to overcome them. Allow students to put themselves into Emmi’s shoes and relate her examples of resilience to their own lives.

Independent Task: I’m Resilient!

You will need: resource master ‘I’m Resilient!’, coloured pencils

Have students complete resource master ‘I’m Resilient!’ by writing an example of when they have shown resilience. Students may draw on ideas from the text that relate to them, or think of their own experiences.

Reflection

Have students sit in a circle and ask volunteers to share times when they showed resilience, or when they have seen other people show resilience.

Lesson 2: Enlisting Supports

Tuning In: Space Tag

You will need: a large open space

This game is a variation of Scarecrow Tiggy, where students have to work as a team to free one another. This activity is designed to simulate the idea of social supports working together to help out others when in need. Select two to three students to be the ‘aliens’ who try to tag the other students. When tagged, students must freeze like a ‘rocket’, straight and tall, with hands together above their heads. In order to be released, two other students must hold hands around them; making a ‘force field’ and free the ‘frozen’ rocket. If time allows, select different students to be the ‘aliens’ and continue.

Note: if playing in a limited space, students are allowed to walk only. Discuss the rules of tagging prior to beginning the game, i.e. light taps with fingers onto other students’ shoulders.

Whole Class Discussion: Support Networks

Discuss the idea that everyone, no matter what their age, have a network of people around them that are always there for support. These people will listen, help with any problems and truly have your best interests at heart. Support people should be honest (this means they may not always tell you what you want to hear but you know they are on your side), and if you have done the wrong thing, they may tell you so but they will also help you to find a way to make amends and to learn from your mistakes. Most people should have three to five support people in their lives. Have students think about the support people in their lives; they may consist of a combination of adults and children. Ideally, each student will have at least two adults as support people but one should not be a family member. Teachers often form part of a child’s support team/network (this team can also be called a Safety Network when relating to Body Safety Education), so suggest to students that teachers in the school (including yourself) are potential adults they can trust. Other students can also be support people for their peers. From around seven years of age, children begin to look to their friends for support, and in the teenage years the support of their peers may outweigh that of adults. It is important that the classroom is a safe place, where all students feel supported by their peers and teachers, and this support team/network can develop.

Note: some children may experience difficulty trusting people to be on their support team/network; if this is the case, modify the Independent Task and/or suggest they can also list Kid’s Helpline (1800 55 1800, <https://kidshelpline.com.au>)

Independent Task: Who's On Your Team?

You will need: resource master 'My Support Team!', coloured pencils

Have students complete resource master 'My Support Team!' by drawing pictures of all of the people who they regard as being part of their support team. Refer students to page 31 of *Resilience* for reference.

Reflection

Have students volunteer to share their work, briefly discussing their support teams. Ask, 'If someone is a really great support person for one person, does that mean they would be good for another person? Why/Why not?' Discuss the idea that a support team is personal; some people, like a teacher, may be many students' support person; whereas adding family and friends to your support team will differ greatly from one student to the next.

Lesson 3: Dealing with Disappointment and Failure

Tuning In: Strike a Pose — Reaction Freeze

You will need: resource master 'Building Resilience — using strengths to overcome difficulties', music and speakers

This game is a variation on the standard Musical Statues. Have students dance to the music, and when the music stops, have them freeze and listen to the instructions. Students perform various reactions to either success or failure through silent mime. Select options from the list below or develop alternatives to better suit your students:

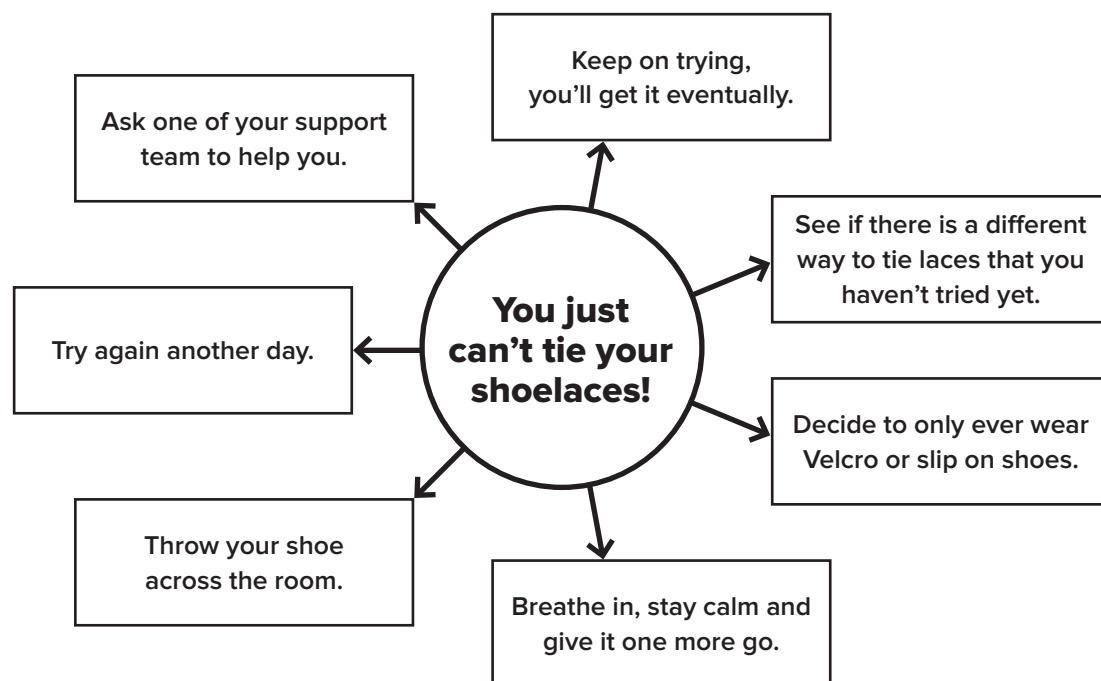
- You've just won the final in your tennis tournament.
- Your team lose your basketball game by one point.
- You've saved up your pocket money for a new toy but when you get to the shop, they've just sold out.
- You see a new toy that you really love and your mum/dad/carer surprise you and buy it for you.
- You miss out on the role you wanted in the school play.
- You are put in a class at school without your best friends.
- You score 100% on your maths test.
- You just can't tie your shoelaces!

Whole Class Focus: Control Your Reactions

You will need: whiteboard, markers, 'Strength Cards' provided in the teaching lessons for Pearl Fairweather, Pirate Captain (option)

Explain to the class that throughout our lives, each and every one of us will experience many failures, disappointments and challenging times. In order to truly learn, we need to risk failing — sometimes our risks pay off straightaway, and we experience success, at other times we fail (sometimes more than once). It is how we respond to failure that shows our level of resilience. We cannot control every situation, but what we can control is how we react to a situation.

Take one of the examples from the Tuning In activity that led to disappointment or failure, and have students suggest ideas to unpack every possible response, for example:



Write down every suggestion provided by students, and add responses to ensure there is a mix of positive and negative reactions. Discuss each of the responses in turn, in relation to their ability to solve the problem and build resilience; what strategy/ies are they using? Some may include, but are not limited to:

- finding another way
- positive self-talk
- avoidance
- enlisting support from others
- giving up
- anger
- acceptance
- practice.

Throughout this discussion, make a list of problem-solving strategies on the whiteboard or on a separate piece of poster paper so students can refer to these during the Independent Task. Explain that when something is frustrating or you have failed to complete it, that it's okay to feel angry or sad. It's just not okay to stay that way for too long. Being resilient is the ability to pick yourself up and look at other options, e.g. you might throw your shoe across the room and shout in anger but this should be short lived; you might then try a more positive approach to solving the problem. As a class, decide on which reactions are likely to lead to success and circle them. Discuss the idea that they will not guarantee success but if you react in these ways, they will guarantee increased resilience!

Independent Task: Know Your Strengths, Acknowledge Your Weaknesses

Discuss the idea that when we take on a challenge, we naturally use our strengths to overcome our weaknesses, e.g. a basketball player who is shorter than her teammates but is fast, may work hard to increase her speed and agility so she can move around the court quickly and play to the best of her ability; or a student who loves maths but has trouble with spelling, may be able to look for patterns and apply mathematical logic to his spelling. In order to do this, we need to have an understanding of our own strengths and weaknesses. Have students complete resource master 'Building Resilience — using strengths to overcome difficulties'.

Note: if students are having difficulty thinking about their strengths, have them refer to the resource master 'Strength Cards' provided in the teaching lessons for *Pearl Fairweather*, *Pirate Captain* which further builds on some of the ideas in these lesson plans.

Reflection

Have students share their personal analysis with a partner. If applicable, the partner may be able to offer another strategy for overcoming difficulties. If time allows, students may volunteer to share their responses with the class.

Teaching notes written by Yale Mercieca

I'm Resilient!

Draw a picture of a time in your life where you have shown resilience by overcoming a difficulty or moving on from sadness, then write about it in the space below.

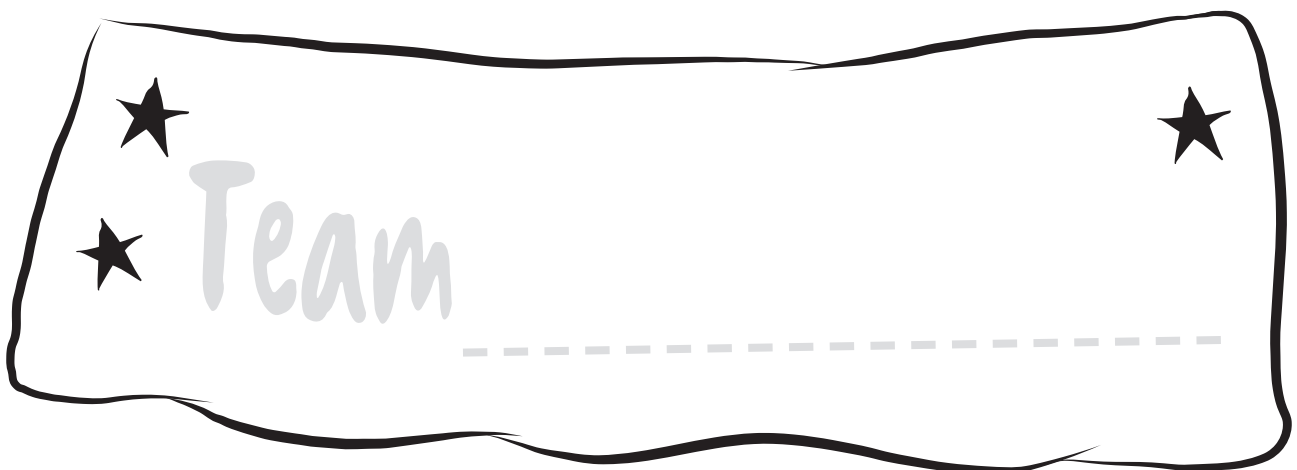


I have shown resilience by...



My Support Team!

Fill in your name on the banner and then draw your support people cheering for you!



My awesome Support Team!

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

**They're
always there
for me!**

Building Resilience —

using strengths to overcome difficulties

Draw yourself doing
something awesome!

Things I'm good at
(my strengths):

1

2

3

Something I find difficult is...

Here are some things I could try to
overcome my difficulty...

