Building Resilience – the Tigger effect
How to foster the ‘bounce back’ boy!

ISBC conference
23.9.15.

Key note presentation by Dr Tina Rae
I will argue

- There is a problem with resilience for today’s children and young people
- Boys are under additional pressures and the statistics re eating disorders and self harm are evidence of this
- We need skills to identify, screen and intervene early and measure outcomes
- We need knowledge and expertise in delivering evidence based interventions – CBT, Mindfulness, Positive Psychology etc
- We need whole school well being curricula and approaches and systems to build resilience
- We need our own resilience and mental health!
World health Organisation definition of mental health:

“A state of well being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”

“Mental health is the foundation for well being and effective functioning”

(National CAMHS Review, Nov 2008)
Why resilience is important for children and young people

Rise of mental health problems
Figures released by the NHS (Sept. 2012) indicate that one in seven adults in Scotland is on anti-depressants.

In England, nearly 46.7m such prescriptions were issued in 2012 and the figure is rising.

The average age of onset is now 14.5 years compared to 29.5 in 1960.

Depression is known to be prevalent and underdiagnosed among children.

A major survey found that 4% of 5 – 15 year olds were suffering from emotional disorder such as anxiety and/or depression.
Mental health issues on the increase

- The number of young people aged 15-16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and the 2000s
- The proportion of young people aged 15-16 with a conduct disorder more than doubled between 1974 and 1999
- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three children in every class
- Between 1 in every 12 and 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years this figure has increased by 68%
- (Young Minds 2015)
Consequences

- Mental health problems in children are associated with educational failure, family disruption, offending and anti-social behaviour, placing demands on social services, schools and the youth justice system.
- There is growing evidence that some types of mental health problems are predictive of negative outcomes in later life.
- Strong correlation between child and adolescent mental health issues and mental health problems in adults.
- Estimated cost of public services used through to adulthood by individuals with troubled behaviour as children are 10 times higher than for those with no significant problems.

The facts

- FACT 1: The rise in hospital admissions shows rates of self harm are going up. Admissions for boys have doubled in the last 2 years.
- FACT 2: The most common form is cutting, followed by overdosing, burning and strangulation.
- FACT 3: Anonymous surveys show 1 in 10 young people have tried to hurt themselves at some point.
- FACT 4: Most common reasons are family difficulties followed by body image and work or school pressure.
- FACT 5: Most young people who self harm say they do it to cope with their emotions, not as a plea for help or a failed suicide attempt.
A sense of isolation....
A need for contact and affirmation?
Daily access.......
Self harm websites made me do this......
I need this blog because....

you don’t understand
I HATE MY THIGHS
Cut deeper.
What about the boys?
The boy’s Barbie?
What have we done?
The real traumas?

- Anorexia
- Wanarexia
- Bigorexia
NSPCC’S 2015 SURVEY

- 700 CYP - 12 and 13 year olds
- 1 in 10 worried they are addicted to porn
- More than 1 in 10 made/been part of sexually explicit video
- Peter liver – director of child line - children said watching porn made them feel depressed, gave them body image problems and they felt pressured to engage in sexual acts they were not ready for
- A report from the charity Childwise (2013/4) – revealed the website Pornhub was among the top 5 favourite sites for boys aged 11-16.
Researchers say teenagers are getting more anxious and depressed because of the 24-hour demands of social media. GLASGOW UNIVERSITY- 467 teenagers – measured sleep quality, self-esteem, anxiety, depression and investment in social media.
Dr Heather Cleland Woods
We need to prevent this!
We need to ensure early intervention!
We need to build resilience!

We all have things to overcome in life..........................
Life throws things at us....quite often!
Life throws things at us..

- An F for a test
- Illnesses
- Accidents
- Falling out with others
- Setbacks
- Challenges
Resilience

Why is it that…
Resilience: some people bounce back
while other people crumble?
And some people humble us......Mariou Van Rhijn - gold - women’s 200m
What IS it?

- The term resilience comes from the Latin word ‘resilio’ – to jump back...hence the tigger image!
- Cyrulnik (2009) ‘resilience is about abandoning the imprint of the past’.
- Resilience is a dynamic process that occurs in a context and is the result of the person in interaction with his or her environment (Rutter 1991)
Defining Resilience

Inevitably a **construct**: socially, culturally and psychologically and personally constructed: Definition = includes what is personally meaningful

‘Bounce-backability! ‘Getting up, dusting down and starting all over again..’

‘We all know what resilience is until we try to define it’ (Padesky 2009).
Your life snake

- Resilience ups and downs? Where do you feel you ‘bounced back’ and where not? What helped and hindered?
Stage 1 - Identify strengths
Stage 2 – Construct a map of your resilience strengths
Stage 3 – Apply to other areas
Stage 4 - Practice using
We need to create a resilience ‘tool box’ for practitioners and parents to foster, build and maintain resilient, well balanced, optimistic and mentally healthy children and young people! - particularly in the light of a lack of ‘external support’
It looks as if it is becoming harder for young people to bounce back after setbacks.
The Loss of Sadness

- For the last 2,500 years human beings could distinguish between normal sadness or suffering and clinical depression.
- Since the development of the classification system for mental illness the boundary has become blurred
- The ONLY context the manual takes into account for depression is bereavement
What does this mean?

- This has had an impact on wider society
- People can suffer similar symptoms to depression in reaction to many life events (e.g. when they break up with a partner, fail an exam or don’t get into the school pantomime for example) This is normal and not pathological.
- These symptoms usually don’t last long.
- There is a tendency to medicalise this misery.
- Major Clinical Depression usually arises for no reason. And, context usually cannot explain it.
- We may be creating a problem of resilience by pathologising normal reactions to life experiences
Why is it becoming harder for young people to bounce back after set backs?

10 big reasons to explain the erosion of young people’s resilience
Why? 1: Treating young people like infants

Our society thinks that young people:

- Need constant protection
- Can’t handle responsibility
- Aren’t capable thinkers
- Are moody and selfish
- Some argue that there is something wrong with their brain

But research shows that treating young people like infants makes them behave like infants
Why? 2: Spotlight on the individual

- Society focuses too much on the individual and how they feel.
- This encourages young people to think that they are the centre of the world.
- This means that young people blow out of proportion any setbacks or challenges in life.
Why? 3: Black and white thinking

- Our culture views people as fixed entities, which are unchangeable.
- People are born good/bad.
- People are born smart/stupid etc.
- This type of thinking exaggerates the significance of failure and difficulties.
Why? 4: Entitlement

I want it all **NOW**

- Our society makes people feel that they are entitled
- Celebrity culture suggests success should be instant
- This makes people think that effort and hard work are not important
- This increases **self-obsession** and undermines resilience
Why? 5: Wrapping up in cotton wool

- Parents now do not want their child to have any negative experiences.
- This means that they try to protect them from life's knocks and blows.
- Doing this undermines their resilience.
Why? 6: Psychological cleanliness

- Young people are being brought up in an environment that is too clean, psychologically.

- Resilience is formed as a result of dealing with setbacks.
Why? 7: Negative emotions are wrong

- People are frightened of negative emotions
- This encourages people to try to suppress their emotions
- Paradoxically, research shows this causes more of the negative emotions that they didn’t want
Why? 8: Ignoring the importance of bad feelings

- People think that bad feelings don’t have a purpose.
- And that bad feelings such as guilt, shame and frustration are only negative.
- But research shows that bad feelings can galvanise us to do things differently: we need them to succeed.
Why? 9: The need to be perfect

- Mass media encourages people to believe that they need to be perfect.
- This encourages us to feel inadequate and, again, exaggerates our inevitable problems and difficulties.
- This undermines resilience when the person sees that perfection is not attainable.
- Mass media encourages us to compare ourselves with the rich and famous.
Why? 10: Too much choice

- We now have more choice than ever
- Paradoxically this makes people
  - Not choose
  - Regret their choices
  - Feel depressed
  - Overwhelmed
All of these factors undermine young people’s ability to bounce back
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT FRAGILE
Young people can be likened to springs or balls.
They can bounce back

- People can bounce back psychologically after being knocked out of shape, just like in nature.
- Bouncing back is the ability to cope with adversity or hardship.
- Bouncing back means that people can carry on, and even flourish, after setbacks.
The Attributes of Resilient Children and Young People

Connectedness
Social and emotional competence
Freedom from excessive anxiety
Effective communication skills
Engagement in meaningful activity and regular experience of flow
A sense of control and a growth mindset
A sense of purpose and meaning
The Attributes of Resilient Children and Young People (cont.)

Resilience
Self-esteem
Optimism
Outward focus
Present and future mindedness
Humour
Playfulness
Freedom from excessive materialism
Building resilience involves a two pronged approach

1. Personal coping skills – they CAN be taught! And YOU can teach them!

2. Environmental factors – you can change things!
The seven ‘learnable’ skills of resilience:

- Emotional awareness or regulation
  - Impulse Control
  - Optimism
  - Causal analysis
  - Empathy
  - Self-efficacy
  - Reaching out
What can be done to help people bounce back?

Here are 11 things we should factor in to our thoughts and behaviour…
What? 1: Hold high expectations

- Young people are capable
- We need to challenge them.
- We should expect that young people will achieve their goals
- People reach goals at different times. But most will get there
What? 2: Focus away from the self

- It is important that you don’t make the child the centre of the universe
- This undermines their well-being as they exaggerate every minor incident
- Encourage young people to volunteer and help others
What? 3: People are not born smart

- Encourage young people to see intelligence and ability as something they need to work at
- People are not born smart
- ALL of the most successful people in life will have had to overcome failure
- Use role models to illustrate this
What? 4: Failure often leads to success

- Encourage young people to view failure in a different way
- Failure is a learning opportunity
- Talk about the failures you have overcome. You are a role model.
What? 5: Normalise don’t personalise

- After a negative experience it is common for young people to think that this type of thing **ONLY** happens to them.
- Encourage young people view these setbacks as normal – everybody experiences them.
- And help them not to think that this is something which reflects badly on them.
What? 6: Bad feelings are normal

- It is human nature to experience negative emotions
- Only psychopaths and dead people don’t
- Bad feelings are normal
- Learning anything worthwhile requires some frustration
What? 7: Bad feelings don’t last

- When young people encounter negative experiences they make think that they will **ALWAYS** feel that way.
- Research shows that bad feelings don’t last.
- Remember to remind young people that these feelings will pass.
What? 8: Don’t over worry or over protect

- Life is full of ups and downs
- If you protect young people from them they will not cope when they meet setbacks and will not be able to assess risk
- Allow young people to make mistakes
- Overprotection only makes young people more vulnerable and anxious
What? 9: Perfection doesn’t exist

- Everyone has flaws, even the most accomplished people
- There is no standard for perfection
- It is much more important that people try to do their best, rather than be the best
What? 10: Teach young people skills

- Young people have an inbuilt need to learn
- You can help young people to learn the skills to help them in life
- Organisation, reading, writing etc etc
Not all children will respond to one way of building resilience. This is why it is important to foster many different ways for children to bounce back.
Prevention is better than cure?

- Resiliency across the curriculum
- Resiliency in school systems
- Training in CBT, Positive Psychology and Mindfulness
- Screening processes – resiliency scales, SDQ, MFQ etc – target
- Well being policy
- Well being for staff?
- Peer mentoring
- Mental health training and awareness for all
What ‘next’ when the support has gone or is ‘thin on the ground’?

- The need to develop in house skills
- The need to ensure staff competence and confidence
- The need to ‘grow your own’
- The need to develop early identification
- The need to interact more therapeutically with CYP
- The need to tackle the stigma
- The need to build a resilient staff team who can effectively model the behaviours
A potential solution? Using the well being tool kit – a joint publication SEBDA and NGN

- Why this programme is needed
- What it offers
- 20 training sessions
- Information sheets
- Key principles
- Activities
- Case studies
- Skills practice
- Self reflection
- Gaining confidence
What about the professionals???
So what about you – the ones who do the looking after and resilience building?

How do you maintain well being and mental health?

How do you build and further develop your own resilience?

How do you model this to CYP?

Who supports you?

Issues of supervision and supportive structures?
10 top tips for students AND grown ups

1. Build positive beliefs in your abilities and remind yourself of your strengths whilst NOT comparing...

2. Find a sense of purpose to your life – DO something for others? An old fashioned mantra?

3. Develop a strong social network with no blood suckers

4. Embrace change – learn how to adapt and thrive

5. Be optimistic and understand that set backs can be learnt from and remain hopeful even when the worst happens

6. Nurture yourself – in the right way
10 top tips cont.....

7. Develop and PRACTICE your problem solving skills

8. Set yourself goals and make them realistic and break them down into manageable chunks

9. Take steps to solve problems and focus on the progress that you have made thus far and planning your next steps, rather than becoming discouraged by the amount of work that still needs to be accomplished

10. Keep working on your skills! Remember that building resilience and being ‘happy’ are both A JOURNEY
Final questions to you?

- Does your approach, context and parenting style build this resiliency in your children and young people?
- What needs to happen next?
- Can you develop your approaches in order to further develop resilience in your children?
- Can you develop your support systems to truly meet needs?
Don’t forget the ‘tigger’ effect.......
Keep bouncing back!
Further Reading

Teaching Happiness; A ten-step curriculum for creating positive classrooms, by Ruth MacConville, Optimus Education 2008

Celebrating Strengths; Building Strengths Based Schools, Jennifer, M. Fox Eades, CAPP Press, Coventry.

A Short introduction to Promoting Resilience in Children, Colby Pearce, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011

How to inspire and develop positive values in your classroom by Neil Hawkes, 2006, LDA, Cambridge.


Creating confidence; A handbook for working with your people, Carol Craig, 2007, Centre for Confidence and Well-being, Scotland

Further Reading cont.

How to be Happy; Promoting achievement through Wellbeing at KS1 & KS2  by Ruth MacConville, Optimus Education 2012

Building Resilience: A Skills based programme to support achievement in Young People by Ruth MacConville, Optimus Education 2012

Building Happiness, Resilience and Motivation in Adolescents, by Tina Rae and Ruth MacConville, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012

What Children Need to be Happy, Confident and Successful: Step by step positive psychology to help children to flourish, by Jeni Hooper, Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2012
Key References


Linley, A., *Average to A+*, Coventry, CAPP Press


Web Resources

- www.positivepsychology.org.uk
- www.celebratingstrengths.com
- www.authentichappiness.org
- www.centreforconfidence.co.uk
- www.coachingtowardsapppiness.com
- www.livingvalues.net
Challenge questions for you

- What are the important aspects in a school community which foster resilience?
- What do staff need in order to develop resilience both professionally and personally?
- How do we educate our boys about social networking and the dangers this may pose?
- How do we tackle the problem of sexual objectification of girls and young women?
- How can we promote healthy body image in our boys?
- How do we prevent boys from stigmatising those who display mental health problems?
- How do we teach our boys how to manage negative thinking patterns and engage in ‘happy habits’ of positive thinking and reframing?
- How do we motivate our boys to learn, achieve, take appropriate risks and keep going when the going gets tough?