So what is resilience?
Some foundations.

- Exercise.
- Mindfulness meditation.
- Build strong and positive relationships.
- Learn to resolve conflict.
- Manage external factors that undercut resilience.
- Build self-efficacy: not just self-esteem.
- Think differently about stress.
‘Stress seems to have an effect on the brain and body similar to that of vaccines on the immune system. In limited doses, it causes brain cells to overcompensate and thus gird themselves against future demands. Neuroscientists call this process stress inoculation. What’s become lost amid all the advice about how to reduce the stress of modern life is that challenges are what allow us to strive and grow and learn.’

Resilience: habits of mind.

‘Who is your enemy? Mind is your enemy. Who is your friend? Mind is your friend. Learn the ways of the mind. Tend the mind with care.’

The Buddha

‘Men are disturbed not by things, but by their opinions of them.’

Epictetus

‘We cling to our beliefs, even when they drown us.’

Jules Evans
Caution...

DON'T WORRY. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE AMAZING.
Resilience.

• Resilience is the ability to adapt to change and overcome adversity, **using flexible and accurate thinking.**

• **Optimism:** the belief that elements of our lives can be changed through our efforts.

• **Pessimism:** the belief that little or nothing in our lives can be changed, no matter what we do.
Explanatory style.

• How we habitually explain/interpret the events in our lives.

• How much of this style is inaccurate?
• How often do we misinterpret what happens?
• How often do we import a script and see what we want to see?
Albert Ellis’ ABC model.
A → B → C


B = **Beliefs/thoughts**: what runs through our mind in response to the Activating Event (tickertape – icebergs)

C = **Consequences**: how we feel and what we do as a consequence of our beliefs (not as a consequence of the A).
B – C connections.

Beliefs.
• Violation of rights
• Loss
• Violation of another’s rights
• Future threat
• Negative comparison

Consequences.
• Anger
• Sadness, depression
• Guilt
• Anxiety, fear
• Embarrassment
Thinking Traps: the big 3.

Most thinking traps are a form of jumping to conclusions: holding a belief without looking properly at the evidence.

1. **Always beliefs:** this *always* happens, things are *never* going to change.

2. **Me beliefs:** it’s all *my* fault, *I’m* so stupid.

3. **Them beliefs:** it’s all *their* fault, I can’t believe *they* would do it.
Thinking Traps.

- Tunnel vision
- Character assassination: making large personal judgements on limited information
- Magnification: making a mountain out of a molehill
- Minimization: making a molehill out of a mountain
- Mind reading
- Perfectionism
Resilient explanatory style.

- Flexible and accurate thinking response.
- Emotionally intelligent: self and others.
- Listens to useful critical feedback.
- Doesn’t waste emotional energy: take what is useful and make use of it.
- Know what they can control and what they can’t.
- Growth mindset: focused on mastering subject, not (excessively) concerned with image/how they appear to others.
- Forward looking and solutions focused.
Pie charting: the past.

An email accuses you of being unprofessional.
Pie charting: the past.

- What evidence is there to help me understand this situation?
- What did I contribute to this situation?
- What did others contribute?
- What can I control? What can I change? When?

- **What rather than why**: it avoids blame and focuses on solutions.
- **Beware perceptual biases**: negativity and confirmation.
Pie charting: the past.
Catastrophising – PIIP.

It’s Saturday morning. You receive an email asking you to see your line manager first thing on Monday morning. No reason is given. How can you salvage your weekend?
PIIP: future threat.

- What’s the worst case scenario?
- What’s the best case scenario?
- What’s the most likely outcome (based on my experience and what I know to be true)?
- What can I control? How? When?

- Avoid why. Watch for perceptual biases.
Iceberg situations.

- Where something seemingly innocuous happens which elicits a strong emotional response in us (e.g. someone pushing into a queue in front of us).
- Iceberg situations are where we perceive a threat to our values, our deeply held beliefs about the way the world ought to be.
- Icebergs tend to be about competence, control or acceptance.
- Icebergs are big, strong and best steered around. They can be changed over time.
Flexible and accurate thinking.

1. Resilience training helps us to separate the facts from our interpretation of them.
2. It helps us to recognise the link between what we think about events and how we feel/what we do.
3. It helps us become aware of when our thinking is not helping us.
4. It helps us to undo unhelpful patterns of thinking that can lead to unnecessary anxiety, anger or sadness.
5. It helps us to become emotionally skilful.
6. It helps us to stay on track with what we need to accomplish and not be de-railed by emotions that don’t need to be there.
What can we do?

Explanatory style is learned and can be unlearned.

• Make students aware of ABC.
• Help students tune-in to their explanatory style.
• Help students to distinguish between facts and interpretations.
• Encourage students to ask critical questions of their beliefs and interpretations.
• Help students proportion their beliefs to the evidence available.
• Remain focused on solutions and moving forward.
“No, try not! Do or do not, there is no try.”
“No, only different in your mind.”
“You must unlearn what you have learned.”
“I don’t believe it”, “That is why you fail.”
Resources.

- The Resilience Factor by Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté.
- www.howtothrive.org
- Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Situations by Jules Evans.
- Punished by Rewards by Alfie Kohn.
- Bounce by Matthew Syed.
- Self Theories by Carol Dweck.