

K-12 Overview

The 7 C's: The Essential Building Blocks of Resilience¹

Competence: When we notice what young people are doing right and give them opportunities to develop important skills, they feel competent. We undermine competence when we don't allow young people to recover themselves after a fall.

Confidence: Young people need confidence to be able to navigate the world, think outside the box, and recover from challenges.

Connection: Connections with other people, schools, and communities offer young people the security that allows them to stand on their own and develop creative solutions.

Character: Young people need a clear sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity.

Contribution: Young people who contribute to the well-being of others will receive gratitude rather than condemnation. They will learn that contributing feels good and may therefore more easily turn to others, and do so without shame.

Coping: Young people who possess a variety of healthy coping strategies will be less likely to turn to dangerous quick fixes when stressed.

Control: Young people who understand privileges and respect are earned through demonstrated responsibility will learn to make wise choices and feel a sense of control.

Elementary

Grades K - 3 we would likely focus on self-regulation (Social Intelligence, Fairness, and Self-Regulation).

Grades 4 - 6 we would teach and work with all 24 virtues.

Grade 7 work on a self-profile of the virtues (likely through VIA) and work on our character strengths and the implications of those strengths.

¹ Ken Ginsburg - <http://www.fosteringresilience.com/7cs.php#>

VIA Character Strengths² (24)

Wisdom and Knowledge – Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

- **Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it
- **Curiosity** [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering
- **Judgment** [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly
- **Love of Learning**: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows
- **Perspective** [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people

Courage – Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

- **Bravery** [valor]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it
- **Perseverance** [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks
- **Honesty** [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
- **Zest** [vitality, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated

Humanity - Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

- **Love**: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people

² VIA Institute on Character (based on the work by Seligman and Peterson) - <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/en-us/viainstitute/classification.aspx>

- **Kindness** [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
- **Social Intelligence** [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick

Justice - Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

- **Teamwork** [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share
- **Fairness**: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance.
- **Leadership**: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done, and at the same time maintaining good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.

Temperance – Strengths that protect against excess

- **Forgiveness**: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful
- **Humility**: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is
- **Prudence**: Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- **Self-Regulation** [self-control]: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions

Transcendence - Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

- **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence** [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience
- **Gratitude**: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks
- **Hope** [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about
- **Humor** [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes

- **Spirituality** [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort

Secondary

Grade 8 work on knowing thyself: Adversity - Belief - Consequence relationship; eight thinking traps; detecting icebergs (achievement, acceptance, and control).

Grade 9 work on changing thyself: challenging beliefs (7 steps); putting it in perspective (5 more steps); calming and focusing; and real-time resilience.

Grades 10 - 11 work on practicing and improving resiliency skills.

Grade 12 have students go deeply into a character trait of their choosing.

Resiliency Project (UPenn/Swarthmore)³

Key Points – “More than 50 years of scientific research have powerfully demonstrated that resilience is the key to success at work and satisfaction in life. Where you fall on the resilience curve – your natural reserves of resilience – affects your performance in school and at work, your physical health, your mental health, and the quality of your relationships. It is the basic ingredient to happiness and success.” – *The Resilience Factor* p. 2

7 skills of resilience – learning your ABCs; avoiding thinking traps; detecting icebergs; challenging beliefs; putting it in perspective; calming and focusing; real-time resilience.

Capacity for resilience is not a genetically fixed trait.

The primary obstacle to resilience lies with our cognitive style (thinking style) – ways of looking at the world and interpreting events.

Four fundamental uses for resilience: to overcome the obstacles of the past; to steer through our everyday adversities; to bounce back from major set-backs or emotional trauma; to reach out so that we can achieve all we are capable of.

Our emotions and behaviours are triggered by how we interpret events.

³ Peter Schulman, UPenn; Dr. Nussbaum, *Save Your Brain*; Dr. Jane Gillham, UPenn; Mark Linkins; *Flourish* by Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman; *The Resilience Factor* by Dr. Karen Reivich and Dr. Andrew Shatte

The Skills

Know Thyself Skills – help to build self-awareness

1. Learning your ABCs

Greater understanding of the recurrent situations in which we are least resilient
Detect thoughts when in the midst of adversity and understand the emotional impact of those thoughts/beliefs.

The world does not go A – C, we need to recognize and own B

A – adversity

- What pushes our buttons?
- What do they have in common?

B – beliefs (thoughts about the events)

- Have to get at the core, fundamental, uncensored beliefs not our socialized ones
- Two types – causal beliefs (why?) and implication beliefs (what-next?)
- Causal beliefs have three dimensions – personal (me versus not me), permanent (always versus not always), and pervasive (everything versus not everything)
- People tend to answer the question “why?” the same way, over and over again
- What-next beliefs often are catastrophic and highly improbable
- Beliefs shape the quality and intensity of feelings and influence our behaviours

C – consequences (emotional and behavioural)

- The way we feel and what we do in the moment of adversity or challenge
- Resilient people are able to regulate their emotions and control their reactions (not always in a good mood or to never give up) – the goal is to have emotions and behaviours be productive, appropriate responses to the facts of the situation

2. Avoiding Thinking Traps

Eight (8) common thinking traps

1. jumping to conclusions
2. tunnel vision
3. magnifying and minimizing
4. personalizing
5. externalizing
6. over-generalizing
7. mind reading
8. emotional reasoning

3. Detecting Icebergs

At the root are “underlying beliefs”

These are different from the beliefs in ABC as these are deeper/below the surface

3 general categories of themes

1. Achievement
 - i.e. success is the most important thing in life
2. Acceptance
 - i.e. need to be liked, accepted, praised and included by others
3. Control
 - i.e. need to be in charge and in control

How icebergs can hurt

- can become activated at unexpected times, which lead to out-of-proportion emotions and reactions
- activation might lead to emotions and behaviours that, although not extreme, are mismatched to the situation
- contradictory iceberg beliefs can make it hard to make decisions
- can become too rigid, which causes one to fall into the same emotional patters over and over again

Change Thyself Skills – identify true causes of problem and assess where you have control

4. Challenging Beliefs

Analyze beliefs about the causes of the adversity

Seven (7) steps

1. ABC an adversity
2. Pie chart the causes
3. Identify your explanatory style
 - a. me versus not me
 - b. always versus not always
 - c. everything versus not everything
4. Being flexible
5. Being accurate
6. New pie chart
7. New solutions

5. Putting it in Perspective

Better determine the future outcomes of adversity

Step 1 – write down the worst-case beliefs, etc.

Step 2 – write down how likely those outcomes are

Step 3 – generate best-case alternatives

Step 4 – write down most likely implications/outcomes of the best-case scenarios

Step 5 – problem-solve the most likely

6. Calming and Focusing

Works to impact negative emotions directly or to push non-resilient beliefs out of one's mind

Need to control stress – PMR (Progressive Muscle Relaxation) has helped with this.

Intrusive thoughts can hijack the process

Is a stop-gap, not a long-term solution and thoughts will likely recur

7. Real-time Resilience

Enables one to do *Challenging Beliefs* and *Putting it in Perspective* the moment an adversity strikes

Works by changing counterproductive beliefs the moment that they occur.

Three tag lines for using real-time resilience

1. Alternatives: a more accurate way of seeing this is....
2. Evidence: that's not true because
3. Implications: a more likely outcome is....and I can.....to deal with it

Summary

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