



THE  
**RESILIENCE  
PROJECT**™

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CURRICULUM  
INTRODUCTION  
**SECONDARY**

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY THE RESILIENCE PROJECT?

The Resilience Project delivers emotionally engaging programs to schools, providing evidence-based, practical strategies to build resilience and happiness.

A quick overview of the current state of mental health in young people in Australia:

- **1 in 4 adolescents** will experience mental health problems this year.
- **65% of adolescents** will not seek help.
- **1 in 7 primary school students** will experience mental health problems this year.
- **1 in 5 adults** will experience mental health problems this year.
- **Mental Health Disorders** carry the largest burden of disease for **15–24 year olds**.
- **Suicide** is the most common cause of death for **15–24 year olds**.

The key to reducing these figures is prevention. We know that 50% of mental health issues begin before the age of 15. Research has also shown that current treatments for mental health disorders reduce the burden by 13–36%. Research indicates that PREVENTION could reduce this burden by a further 22%.

Even for students who will never experience a mental health issue, the benefits, in terms of increasing capacity to deal with challenges, changes and stressors, are endless.

## THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF OUR CURRICULUM

The Lessons in The Resilience Project Primary Curriculum are focussed on four key strategies.

### 1. Gratitude

The act of being thankful and appreciating what you have in life. Rather than focussing on what you don't have or what you want, the focus shifts to all that you have.

In 21 days of practising gratitude, you rewire your brain to start scanning the world for the positives. You become three times more likely to notice a positive.

In 42 days you;

- Are less likely to get sick.
- Have higher levels of energy.
- Feel happier.
- Are more enthusiastic.
- Are more focussed.
- Are more determined.
- Are more optimistic.
- Have a better quality of sleep.
- Have lower levels of depression and anxiety.

## ABOUT THE RESILIENCE PROJECT

We teach positive mental health strategies.



## 2. Empathy (Kindness)

Empathy is the capacity to understand and feel what another person is feeling. Every time you do something kind for someone else, your brain releases oxytocin. Oxytocin leads to:

- Increased self-esteem/confidence.
- Increased energy.
- Increased levels of happiness.
- Increased levels of positivity.

## 3. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practise of attention regulation. It involves three aspects;

1. Where is our attention?
2. Prioritise where it needs to be.
3. Make it go there and stay there.

You can practise mindfulness in a formal way by completing meditation, mindful colouring in, etc., or in a more informal way by being mindfully engaged in your day's activities.

Research shows that mindfulness can have the following positive impacts;

MENTALLY	PHYSICALLY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduces depression</li><li>• Reduces anxiety</li><li>• Improves decision making</li><li>• Improves ability to focus</li><li>• Reduces drug/alcohol abuse</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relieves stress</li><li>• Prevents heart disease</li><li>• Lowers blood pressure</li><li>• Reduces chronic pain</li><li>• Improves sleep</li><li>• Makes you less nervous</li></ul>

## 4. Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy involves giving students opportunities to:

- Develop their ability to understand and express emotions.
- Practise recognising their own feelings and how to manage them.

Emotional literacy skills are needed by students in order for them to be able to:

- Cooperate.
- Manage conflict.
- Make friends.
- Cope.
- Be resilient when dealing with change.

- Recognise and manage their own feelings.
- Manage stress, set goals and plan for the future.
- Increase feelings of connectedness to school and peers.
- Increase feelings of acceptance from peers and teachers.

## TEACHER GUIDANCE

*Designed by teachers for teachers*

The Resilience Project curriculum has been designed by teachers for teachers. There is an understanding that teachers facilitating the delivery of the curriculum will have varying levels of expertise in the subject content.

To assist, lesson plans and activities have been designed to be easy to follow and include comprehensive resources and a range of practical activities to make the delivery of the curriculum an enjoyable experience.

The preferred approach with the curriculum is to complete each lesson in its entirety, however it is acknowledged that this is not always possible. To assist, lessons have been divided into time specific activities, which provides the opportunity to complete as much of the lesson as possible and still achieve great outcomes from each lesson.

### Curriculum

The Resilience Project curriculum has been produced to align with Victorian and Australian Curriculum standards and frameworks. The Resilience Project curriculum addresses aspects of achievement standards in the Personal and Social Capabilities learning area and the Health and Physical Education learning area.

### Delivery

Schools have flexibility in how they plan and deliver The Resilience Project curriculum to best fit with their existing learning programs, resources and needs.

Options of how to plan and deliver the curriculum in your school include:

- In the time allotted to pastoral care in home groups.
- As part of the Health and Physical Education program.
- As a cross-curriculum approach, covering different lessons in different classes.

Whichever approach your school chooses, it is important that the concepts of The Resilience Project are adapted at a whole school level and that the practises are embedded wherever possible throughout the school. The more that students are exposed to these practises as a normal part of their day, the more positive impacts the program will have.

Examples of a whole school approach include encouraging teachers to:

- Complete an emotional 'check in' and 'check out' before and at the end of their lessons.
- Complete a five-minute mindfulness activity before commencing learning to increase focus and productivity.
- Highlight opportunities to develop empathy.
- Set an example of practising gratitude by telling students what they were grateful for at the end of each lesson.

### Lesson order

The lessons can be delivered sequentially in the order outlined or teachers can choose to deliver lessons that are most appropriate to meet the needs of their cohort and setting.

Lessons are generally broken up with a mix of each category (gratitude, empathy, mindfulness, emotional literacy) spread throughout. There are however some lessons where students may benefit from the opportunity to complete the same topic sequentially in order to consolidate and build on knowledge. Teachers can use their professional judgement to deliver the lessons in an order that they see will work best.

All student learning happens on a continuum. The Resilience Project curriculum has been designed to be accessed by students at varying levels of emotional and academic development. The year levels are a guide to the age and ability that the curriculum has been written to engage. As in all learning, teachers may need to make some adjustments to cater for the individual learning needs of their cohorts.

### Pedagogy

The Resilience Project curriculum requires teachers to adapt a facilitation approach. Rather than teachers imparting knowledge onto students, this curriculum places teachers alongside students. Together you will unpack the information in each lesson and build on the knowledge base of the group to find the answers together. Suggested approaches to maximise outcomes from each lesson include:

- Providing space and time for reflection when facilitating lessons. This is paramount. Give the group plenty of time to come up with responses – some silence is ok.
- Guiding and prompting group discussions with questions to elicit thinking and sharing.

The lessons require students to work individuals, in pairs, in small groups and as a whole class. This is to encourage discussion and also to provide opportunities to further develop social skills.

### Preparing to deliver The Resilience Project curriculum

There are parts of the The Resilience Project curriculum that students may find challenging. The Resilience Project curriculum is, in many ways, a personal development journey for our students and teachers. As with any journey there may be difficult parts along the way. As a teacher you need to be mindful of your own emotional reactions to the content and reflect on how it may influence your teaching. How you and your students respond to content will vary depending on past experiences.

It is therefore vital that you establish a safe learning environment before beginning. It is a good idea to involve the class in setting up some agreed behaviours. Include concepts such as confidentiality, respectful listening, etc.

Ensure that students have access to information about where to go for extra support if they need it and keep referring back to this throughout the lesson. Ideally, the school wellbeing team would be the first option; however it is a good idea to give students information about other support services including:

- **Kids Help Line** – 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)
- **eheadspace** – [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)

As the lessons progress you should look for any signs of distress in students. If you notice something that concerns you, seek advice from your student wellbeing support staff around how to approach and support the student. Remember that most young people will not seek help, so it is the responsibility of the adults in their lives to initiate these conversations.

#### Further information and support:

For extensive links to research and reference material, go to:

<https://theresilienceproject.com.au/resources-references/>

#### For other enquires contact:

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SCHOOLS PROGRAM MANAGER

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## EMPATHETIC CONNECTIONS

### Learning Intentions:

- Students will create compassion and understanding within the group by finding common emotions and experiences.

### Resources:

- Student Journals.
- Ball of string.
- Masking tape to create a line down the centre of the room.
- Peaceful music.
- Camera to take picture of web.

### Outline:

#### Activity 1: Step to the line (30 mins)

- Move furniture to the sides of the classroom and use masking tape to make a line through the centre of the room on the floor. Have students standing shoulder-to-shoulder along the length of the masking tape line, facing it. They should take one step back from the line.  
**Note:** If all students don't fit in one line, have two lines of students both standing shoulder-to-shoulder facing into the masking tape line.
- Ask the students questions, beginning with 'Step to the line if...'. If students have experienced what you ask about, they should step up to the line.  
**Note:** This activity should be done in silence and students should only step forward if they have experienced what you ask about, not just because everyone else has stepped to the line/their friends stepped to the line.
- You must also remind students that this is a judgement-free zone, and open and honest responses will be accepted and supported. Inform them that what goes on in the room today remains in the room, to ensure feelings of safety and trust when doing this activity. There should be no talking or laughing. You may like to play some soft/instrumental music during this activity to help set the mood and encourage silence. The statements should start with a few easy warm-ups and could include, but are not limited to: 'Step to the line if...'

(Start with a few easy warm ups):

- You're wearing socks
- You ate breakfast this morning
- You have used social media today

(Then get a little more meaningful)

- You have ever felt nervous coming to school

- You have stuff going on outside of school that people in this class wouldn't know about
  - You have ever felt nervous at home
  - You have ever been hurt by a friend
  - You have hurt a friend
  - You have ever been bullied
  - You have been a bully
  - You have people you can trust here at school
  - You have someone you look up to in your life
  - You have things in your life that you enjoy doing
  - You have learnt something about someone else during this activity
- Have the students sit down where they are, continuing to be silent. Prompt a discussion with the class about the activity by asking the following questions and having only one student at a time talk:
    - Was there anything you noticed about the activity? (Students may identify that there are more similarities in the group than they may have realised).
    - Was there one response that stood out to you? (Choose a few students to report something different each).
    - Was there one that disappointed you? (If possible, guide students/discussion to identify the amount of people who stepped to the line who have both been bullied and also have bullied before. This may prompt a discussion around bullying and how it feels to be bullied and why people might bully. Remind students that no one should be judged during this activity – promote open and honest responses in a safe environment).
    - What did you learn from this activity? (This could be a good opportunity to identify bravery of students who are anxious at school or at home. It might also be a good opportunity to remind students who have bullied others in the past to think prior to acting in future. Lastly, it would be great to remind everyone to think about the supportive people they have in their life or the people they look up to – you may even like to have some students identify those people).

Lesson 28 continues on the next page.

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## LESSON 28

EMPATHETIC CONNECTIONS

**Journal Entry:**  
Discuss your observations of others/the group, including your thoughts and feelings about yourself and others before, during, and after, the following activities:

- Step to the line:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Empathy web:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I rolled the ball of string to...  
\_\_\_\_\_

and I identified that I learnt...  
\_\_\_\_\_

about them.  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## MINDFULNESS AND SELF-TALK

**LESSON 8**  
MINDFULNESS AND SELF-TALK

Write down four adjectives for each – positive or negative – the first things that come into your head!

Celebrity #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Celebrity #6: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 8**  
MINDFULNESS AND SELF-TALK

Circle the **negative words** that you used to describe the celebrities and underline the **positive words**.

Count them up in the tally table below.

Positive	Negative

**Self-talk:**  
Self-talk is basically your inner voice, the voice in your mind that says things that you don't necessarily say out loud.

Often self-talk happens without you even realising it and can be a subtle running commentary going on in the background of your mind. But what you say in your mind can determine a lot of how you feel about who you are.

**Positive self-talk**  
Positive self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel good about yourself and the things that are going on in your life.

It is like having an optimistic voice in your head that always looks on the bright side.

**Example:** These clothes look pretty awesome on me. I can totally make it through this exam. I don't feel great right now but things could be worse!

**Negative self-talk**  
Negative self-talk is the stuff that makes you feel pretty bad about yourself and things that are going on. It can put a downer on anything, whether it is good or bad.

**Example:** I look stupid in these clothes. Everyone thinks I'm an idiot. Everything is crap and nothing is going to get better.

Negative self-talk is particularly bad as it brings you down all the time. It can impact on recovery from mental health difficulties and tends to make people pretty miserable. But being positive all the time isn't achievable either, and isn't helpful all the time. So how can you make your self-talk work for you?

**Why should I practise?**  
The more you work on improving your self-talk, the better you will get. It's kind of like practising an instrument or going to sports training, it won't be easy to start with, but will get easier with time.

**LESSON 8**  
MINDFULNESS AND SELF-TALK

**My self-talk**

**1. Reality testing**

- What is my evidence for and against my thinking?
- Am I jumping to negative conclusions?
- How can I find out if my thoughts are actually true?

**2. Look for alternative explanations**

- Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
- What else could this mean?
- If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

**3. Putting it in perspective**

- What is the best thing that could happen?
- Is there anything good about this situation?
- Will this matter in five years' time?

**4. Using goal-directed thinking**

- Is this way of thinking helping me to achieve my goals?
- What can I do that will help me solve the problem?
- Is there something I can learn from this situation, to help me do it better next time?

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY**

**Three Affirmations I am going to practise are:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

In the beginning you might feel some resistance to the statements, as though they aren't true, or don't apply to you. However, with repetition they will become true and normal for you. Trust the process, say them with a smile on your face and practise them 'til they're a part of you!

**Journal Reflection:**  
What did you notice about the thoughts going through your mind today?

**Debrief:**  
It might not seem like much, but self-talk is a really important part of our self-esteem and confidence. By working on the practice of positive self-talk, you're more likely to get things done and feel more in control of stuff that's going on in your life.

### Learning Intentions:

- Students will become aware of their self-talk.
- Students will develop strategies to change negative into positive self-talk.

### Resources:

- Internet access, speakers, projector.
- Student Journals.
- Video Resource List.
- Affirmations examples for Extension Activity (Year 8 Teacher Resource Sheets).

### Outline:

#### Activity 1: Celebrities (20 mins)

- In pairs, students are to think of the six most famous celebrities they know of, and note them in their Student Journals. Then they are to write down at least four adjectives for each celebrity. These can be anything at all that they think describes the person. Let them write whatever they feel – the aim of the activity is to see how many negative and positive things the students write.
- Have the students circle the negative words they have used to describe the celebrities and underline the positive words.
- Each pair should count their words up in a tally, negative and positive. Collate as a class.

#### Activity 2: Negativity bias (10 mins)

- Our brains are simply built with a greater sensitivity to negativity and unpleasant news. The bias is so automatic that it can be detected at the earliest stage of the brain's information processing.
- How many negatives vs. positives did the students write down? There will probably be more negatives than positives. This is called the negativity bias, and unfortunately we do it to ourselves as well with our **inner self-talk**.

#### Activity 3: Self-talk (20 mins)

- Discuss with students: Self-talk is basically your inner voice, the voice in your mind that says things that you don't necessarily say out loud. Often self-talk happens without you even realising it and can be a subtle running commentary going on in the background of your mind. But what you say in your mind can determine a lot of how you feel about who you are.
- Go around the room and ask students to give an example of one thing they have negative self-talk

- about or of a time when they have had negative thoughts, e.g. 'I was shooting for a three pointer in basketball and all that was going through my head was that I'm going to miss, I'm going to miss...'
- It might be their skill at a particular sport, or their attitude towards a subject at school or about a relationship they have.
- Students then complete the table in their Student Journals with one their examples of negative self-talk in mind.
- Share these with the group if the students are comfortable doing it. For some students this may be quite confronting.
- Watch **Video 812** from the Video Resource List. Finish the lesson with this song.

#### Activity 4: Student Journal Activity (5 mins)

- What did you notice about the thoughts going through your mind today?

#### Debrief:

- It might not seem like much, but self-talk is a really important part of our self-esteem and confidence. By working on the practice of positive self-talk, you're more likely to get things done and feel more in control of stuff that's going on in your life.
- Why should I practise?  
The more you work on improving your self-talk, the better you will get. It's kind of like practising an instrument or going to sports training. It won't be easy to start with, but will get better with time.

#### Extension Activity: Daily affirmations (10 mins)

- Introduce the concept of affirmations.
- Affirmations are sayings about you that you repeat, either silently or out loud, every day. The more you practice the more they stick. The best time to use an affirmation is first thing in the morning or last thing at night.
- Distribute copies of the affirmation worksheet (Year 8 Teacher Resource Sheets).
- Students should select three affirmations from the list that they are going to practise for themselves, and record the affirmations in their Student Journals.

### Learning Intentions:

- Students will identify fixed and growth mindsets.
- Students will become more aware of their own self-talk and change their thought processes, in some instances, from a fixed to a growth mindset.

### Resources:

- Internet access, speakers, projector.
- Student Journals.
- Video Resource List.
- Juggling balls (enough for pairs to have three balls each to juggle). Juggling balls are easily made with balloons and rice (see **video 926** from the Video Resource List).
- A3 poster paper (extension activity).
- Colouring pencils/textas (extension activity).

### Outline

#### Activity 1: What is your mindset? (10 mins)

- Take the quiz 'Mindset | Test Your Mindset' <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset/step1.php>

#### Activity 2: Introduction to the Concepts of Mindsets (5 mins)

- Briefly outline what mindsets are.
- Watch **Video 927** from the Video Resource List.

#### Activity 3: Discuss the findings of the quiz (5 mins)

- After completing the quiz and finding out more about mindsets, discuss students' results with them. Ask students whether there are some things they have a fixed mindset about, e.g. maths. Ask them what things they have a more growth mindset about, e.g. sport.
- This discussion could also include strategies to try to shift thinking in some areas. For example, students may identify with sports as they may train regularly and improve times/win. Discuss the importance of the word 'yet' in developing a growth mindset, e.g. I'm not good at maths, YET!

#### Activity 4: Fixed and growth mindset activity (10 mins)

- Have students complete the fixed and growth mindset tables in their Student Journals with an example that is relevant to them.

#### Activity 5: Juggling (10 mins)

- Put students into pairs. They are to 'learn' how to juggle. For three minutes, Student 1 has a turn at juggling and Student 2 provides feedback in a 'fixed' mindset manner. 'You are just better at less-physical tasks', 'You can't really do this', 'It's not your fault you can't do this, it's the ball', etc.
- Discuss how it felt to work in and receive feedback in a fixed mindset manner.

#### Activity 6: Video (15 mins)

- Watch **Video 928** from the Video Resource List.
- Provide students with another opportunity to retry juggling. Use feedback in a growth mindset manner. Remind students to accept the feedback in a growth mindset manner, e.g. being open to it. Feedback might include 'Keep your elbows close to your sides', 'Remember to throw each ball' and 'Keep your head as still as possible'.
- Swap if time allows.

#### Activity 7: Journal Reflection (5–10 mins)

- Students are to answer the questions in the Reflection activity in their Student Journals.

#### Extension Activity: Class growth mindset pledge (10–20 mins)

- Come up with a class growth mindset pledge. You can do this as a whole class or start in small groups and then come together as a class.
- Start with 'In this class we...' Have students come up with five statements to finish this sentence that show how the class will learn with a growth mindset. Some examples might include 'In this class we choose tasks that challenge us because this is how we learn', 'In this class we value mistakes', etc.
- Once you have five statements, if time permits, divide the class into groups of five and have each group decorate a poster using one of the class growth mindset statements. Display around the room.
- Alternatively, take note of the completed pledge

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## LESSON 22

FIXED AND GROWTH MINDSETS

**What is your mindset?**  
Take the quiz at <http://mindsetonline.com/testyourmindset/step1.php>

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## LESSON 22

FIXED AND GROWTH MINDSETS

**FIXED MINDSET**

**THINK**  
I suck at maths.

**REFLECTION**

How did it feel to work in a fixed mindset manner?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did it feel to work in a growth mindset manner?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conversely, how did it feel to receive feedback in a fixed mindset manner?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conversely, how did it feel to receive feedback in a growth mindset manner?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What were three emotions you felt today? Underline the one you felt the strongest.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

What happened to make you feel that way?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why is the word 'yet' important in developing a growth mindset?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Take it home:** How you start and end your day will help you develop a growth mindset. Start each day by reminding yourself - "I will have a great day today by...", and end each day by asking yourself - "What did I do today to succeed?", or "What can I learn from the challenges I faced today?"

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