Emotional Resilience: 
Implications for You Can Do It! Education Theory and Practice

Michael E. Bernard, Ph.D.
Founder, You Can Do It! Education
Professor, College of Education
California State University, Long Beach
Principal Fellow, University of Melbourne

Introduction

Over the past decade, You Can Do It! has clearly shown that the human capital necessary for young people to be successful and happy resides in a positive mental make-up. Research has clearly shown that young people who possess confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along skills (the 4 Foundations) are likely to achieve to the best of their ability and possess good mental health in comparison to under-achieving, unhappy/angry young people who have not acquired these capabilities. Recent research conducted in Australia, England, and the United States also shows that young people with achievement and behavioural problems not only are low in the 4 Foundations, they also demonstrate – in comparison with relatively “problem-free” young people – higher degrees of anxiety/low self-esteem, general work avoidance, general disorganisation, and anger/rebelliousness.

In light of this recent research, theoretical developments in the field of emotional intelligence (e.g., Bar-On & Parker, 2000), and child development research that specifically examines the social-emotional competence called emotion regulation (e.g., Salovey & Sluyter, 1997), it has become clear that in order to describe (and teach) the full range of social-emotional competences leading to young people’s success and happiness, it is necessary to include a social-emotional competence that addresses the negative mindset of young people that can block the development of their confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along and that puts them “at risk” for poor mental health including severe under-achievement. In this article, I present the case for including what I call Emotional Resilience as the fifth foundation. I view this foundation as the bedrock foundation as can be seen in the accompanying illustration.

For those very familiar with YCDI, you will also notice that an additional positive Habit of the Mind, Social Responsibility, has been added to those positive Habits of the Mind that nourish and support the foundation of Getting Along.

Social Responsibility means thinking that it is important to be a good citizen and to help build a world with fairness and justice for all and where everyone feels safe and secure. I need to be sensitive to the feelings of others, to act honestly, to treat others – especially those who come from different backgrounds – with respect, to care and reach out to people in need, and to work towards protecting the environment.
**Background Theory: Emotional Resilience**

**Psychological Functioning: Positive and Negative Dimensions**

Research indicates that there are two dimensions of people’s/children’s psychological functioning. You’ll recognise this as people who operate from a belief system characterised by optimism, internal locus of control, and associated positive attitudes and emotions vs. those who operate from a belief system characterised by pessimism, external locus of control, and accompanying negative attitudes and negative emotions.

One of the YCDI models (“blockers” and “boosters”) represents this view. The model describes elements of an individual’s positive mindset that I called “boosters” (confidence, persistence, organisation, getting along) that lead more directly to the individual being successful and happy. As well, the model depicts elements of an individual’s negative mindset that I refer to as “blockers” (low self-esteem/anxiety, general work avoidance, general disorganisation, rebelliousness/anger) that place an individual at risk for poor mental health while elements of what I have called “boosters.”
The original YCDI “triangle” model that pre-dated the “boosters-blockers” model (see previous article on our website: youcandoiteducation.com) included 4 Foundations and supportive positive Habits of the Mind. This model has been very useful in capturing the positive dimension of psychological functioning of young people including the social-emotional competencies (4 Foundations) leading to success and happiness. However, it failed to explicitly represent a separate social-emotional competence (which I call Emotional Regulation) that, when present, minimises the development of blockers and, when not present, leads to the development of blockers and poor mental health. One of the strengths of YCDI theory and programs as viewed by those in the field is that we address both positive and negative characteristics of young people’s thinking, feeling and acting. The triangle model represents the positive mindset with no reference to the negative. Adding emotional resilience is a psychological “construct” that addresses why young people develop negative patterns of actions, feelings and thinking.

In the early and current YCDI theory, I have largely defined the 4 Foundations as positive social-emotional competencies that encompass positive types of thinking, feeling and action. As I have defined them, the 4 Foundations do not describe the individual’s capacity for emotionally coping with adversity. This capacity/faculty of the mind called Emotional Resilience sits squarely in the camp of what all consider being an important element of Emotional Intelligence. In YCDI theory, Emotional Regulation is the bedrock foundation because it prevents the development of blockers and which, because of its influence, enables the natural development of the 4 positive Foundations.

Theoretical Origins of Emotional Resilience: Independent Existence from the 4 Foundations

There is an expanding child development literature that examines different elements of children’s social-emotional competence that clearly identifies “emotional regulation” as a distinct capability. A reading of this literature clearly shows that this capability concerns children’s developing capabilities to regulate their strong emotions and inhibit their behavioural actions. The definition of emotional regulation does not directly include elements of what we refer to as confidence, persistence, organisation, and getting along (persistence is sometimes mentioned when children’s frustration regulation is discussed).

Now, emotional regulation is what I call in my model “Emotional Resilience.” This characteristic has been examined in many studies beginning in the 1990s and there are many articles – research based – that that describe children’s developing capacity to use coping strategies (distraction, changing thinking, exercise, seeking support) that help them regulate the intensity of negative emotions they experience in the presence of adverse events. In fact, it now appears that infants modulate/control their negative sensations beginning with crying for mother when in distress and shifting their gaze away from strangers. Within this development of emotional regulation is the ability of children to manage frustration associated with learning activities that are hard. Children also acquire the capacity over time to control their behavioural responses when they get extremely upset. It is my view that individual differences in the rate of Emotional Resilience development are governed by many factors, including biologically driven temperament of children, parenting practices, and the emerging belief system of the child. The content of children’s private thought/beliefs governs to some extent their capacity for self-regulation.
Now, in my view, the development of emotional regulation determines the extent to which children acquire what I call the blockers with particular reference to low self-esteem, anxiety and anger. Low emotional regulation skills lead to more blockers; higher emotional regulation, and fewer blockers.

**Emotional Regulation, Emotional Intelligence: The “Purists” and the “Believers”**

Questions have arisen as to whether emotional regulation is the same as Emotional Intelligence and whether the 5 Foundations represent what many refer to as Emotional Intelligence.

\[
\text{Emotion Regulation} = \text{Emotional Intelligence} \\
\text{Emotional Intelligence} = \text{Emotion Regulation} + \text{Confidence} + \text{Persistence} + \text{Organisation} + \text{Getting Along}
\]

The answers to these questions depend on one’s definition of emotional intelligence and whether one is from the “Purist” side of the family or from the “Believers” side of the family.

Within the field of education, educational psychology, mental health and resilience, I believe there are two families that are strongly related to each other in that each family is very interested in the development of Emotional Intelligence. The two families are united in their belief that for people of all ages to be successful and happy, well-developed social and emotional competencies that stem from their Emotional Intelligence are necessary. Both sides of the family believe that, in particular, children need experiences in home and school and from social-emotional learning curriculum that help them develop their innate capacities for dealing with emotional stimuli (e.g., their own feelings, the feelings of others). I call the different sides of this happy family the “Purists” and “Believers.” Both sides of the family have common interests but different views about Emotional Intelligence. Despite their differences in what might seem to be a fundamental issue, the families enjoy breaking bread with each other – although sometimes, arguments do break out.

Purists tend to be hard-nose researchers who operationalise Emotional Intelligence more narrowly than Believers. Purists believe that the early work of Goleman and others defined Emotional Intelligence too broadly by encompassing under its umbrella all aspects of human psychological functioning not covered under Cognitive Intelligence. It appears that early theorists and their followers continue to place social and practical intelligence under the umbrella of emotional intelligence despite research by the purists to suggest that these different intelligences appear somewhat distinct from one another. Purists define emotional intelligence in children as follows:

- Awareness of own emotions
- Awareness of the emotions of others
- Being able to communicate in words their emotions (including emotional vocabulary)
- Empathy with the emotions of others
- Capable of emotional regulation
Purists tend to define emotional intelligence narrowly as a capacity for processing, making sense of, reasoning about, and communicating to others about emotional stimuli/material. Purists prefer to leave social skill development and practical street smarts out of their frame of study of emotional intelligence.

Now the Believers share a view of emotional intelligence that is broader that the view of Purists; one that encompasses many diverse aspects of human capability not covered by academic/cognitive capability. I call this side of the family “Believers” because they tend to bring with them strong faith in the value of emotional intelligence and a desire to have it developed in people as a means for improving success, happiness, organisational and societal well-being. The Purists like the comfort of the research laboratory and are not as driven as the Believers by social interest. The Purists possess more investigative interest in the phenomena of emotional intelligence than the Believers; however, the emotional intelligence of the Purists tends to be higher than normal for research-academic types. It is also the case that I have met many who see themselves as both Purist and Believers!

Which view is correct? My reading is that the jury is still out on the question as of whether Emotional Intelligence is distinct from General Cognitive Intelligence or Practical Intelligence (street smarts), but the evidence is leaning in that direction. As well, my reading of the professional field, which, for me, is important, is that a narrower definition of emotional intelligence is being advised.

**Defining Emotional Resilience**

In examining the literature, I have discerned three elements of Emotional Resilience. In the face of adverse circumstances (rejection, failure, hostility, very difficult/boring tasks), people can:

- Control how anxious, down and angry they become
- Inhibit/self-control behavioural “impulses” when very upset
- Calm down relatively quickly when overly upset

There is an “action tendency” associated with emotional resilience; namely, in the face of adversity, and with emotional self-control, people are able to continue to pursue goals and solve problems, including being confident, persistent, and organised, and getting along.

An important point to stress is that Emotional Resilience does not mean one simply accepts a bad situation as a means for coping with it. Rather, with emotional control, one has the calmness to make rational behavioural decisions that are in one’s best interest.

The research indicates that as children grow older, they make use of an increasing number of cognitive and behavioural strategies for coping with adverse situations. The use of behavioural strategies (e.g., talk to someone, do something else) appears to remain constant, while the use of cognitive strategies focussed on emotions (e.g., distracting oneself, positive thinking, internal problem solving to figure out how to make the problem go away) increases. Research also reveals differences in boys’ and girls’ use of emotional regulation strategies (e.g., Brenner & Salovey, 1997). Boys are more likely than girls to rely on social support (e.g., talk to someone). Girls are more likely than boys to focus on their internal, emotional sensations and try to make the negative feelings go away (e.g., actively trying to forget about
painful emotion). Finally, boys are more likely than girls to use physical exercise to manage stress.

In our student development programs (e.g., Program Achieve), we have always taught children a variety of coping skills for managing negative emotions, including relaxation, changing and challenging negative thinking, practicing positive thinking, assertion, and cognitive problem solving).

**Implications for You Can Do It! Education Theory and Practice**

YCDI’s theory has grown over the past decade to encompass more factors that research indicates as contributing to young people’s social-emotional-behavioural-achievement outcomes. For example, the latest YCDI model provides a broader mental map for understanding young people’s social-emotional-behavioural-achievement outcomes. The new model describes good practices in the community, school and home that contribute to the development of children’s internal foundations (Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along, Emotional Resilience) and, therefore, to positive outcomes for youth. The move towards representing aspects of young people’s outside world (e.g., protective factors) as contributing to young people’s internal development and subsequent well-being and achievement is, I believe, a strength of the new model. YCDI theory has moved beyond a more narrow view that proposes that children’s psychological health and achievement are solely caused by their thinking/beliefs to a more ecological view that is more consistent with thinking in the field today.

In a real sense, YCDI programmes have always taught Emotional Resilience, although never explicitly mentioned by name. Program Achieve (2001), YCDI’s Student Development Curriculum first published in the early 1990s, explicitly teaches young people a range of coping skills (positive rather than negative thinking, emotional responsibility, relaxation, assertion, conflict resolution) that are just the coping skills that child developmental researchers study as enabling young people to demonstrate emotional regulation (see Appendix A).

It is my view that in schools at various stages of implementation of YCDI, the culture of schooling as represented by images of the 4 Foundations and school-wide assemblies, awards, etc., needs to move to explicitly move to the 5th Foundation of emotional resilience. The message contained here for young people is all about how young people can be supported by school in learning to manage their response (emotional, behavioural) to the adversity they experience in their world with peers, schoolwork and family. You Can Do It! means you have what it takes to cope in the face of adversity.

Young people need more opportunities to understand their own social-emotional well-being and, in particular, their negative emotions and how they have choices in how they feel and act in the face of not doing well in school, being bullied, etc. This is as true for young children as it is for older adolescents. It is my experience in visiting YCDI schools, that while we have done fantastic jobs in helping children become aware of keys for being successful learners, we need a similar school-home wide initiative in helping them learn to cope emotionally with adversity that is not, in my view, covered by our current reinforcement of positive Habits of the Mind and the 4 Foundations. We need to do more.
One of the strongest current examples of an initiative being used in many YCDI schools developed by Rob Steventon at Madison Park Primary School (Adelaide, Australia) is “Re-Think” for children with aggressive, oppositional defiant behaviour. In Re-Think sessions, children are given intensive tutorial work in applying the Happening->Thinking->Feeling->Behaving model to conflict situations where they experienced extremely strong negative emotions and behaved aggressively and are given practice in challenging and changing their thinking. From my understanding of Re-Think, it is a program dedicated to emotional resilience training as distinct from having a primary focus on teaching the 4 Foundations.

What Teachers and Parents Need to Know About Building Emotional Resilience

The following material is excerpted from Bernard (2003). These handouts can be distributed to teachers and parents. They include the definition of Emotional Resilience (Toughness) and ways that teachers and parents can help develop this vital foundation. In Appendix E, you’ll find a “Reminder Card” that can be photocopied on double-sided paper and given to teachers and parents to “remind” them what to look for and say to help young people develop emotional resilience.
What is Emotional Resilience (Toughness)?

Definition of Emotional Resilience

Emotional Resilience means being able to stop yourself from getting extremely angry, down or worried when something “bad” happens. It means being able to calm down and feel better when you get overly upset, and bounce back from adversity. Emotional Resilience also means being able to control your behaviour when you are very upset.

Examples of Emotional Resilience

- Not getting overly upset from mistakes in your work or when you have not been as successful as you would like to be.
- Not getting overly frustrated and angry with yourself when you do not understand something.
- Not getting down when your friends seem to understand their schoolwork and do better on tests than you.
- Avoiding getting extremely worried before an important test or event in which you have to perform in public.
- Avoiding excessive worry concerning your popularity with peers.
- Not getting overly angry when peers are mean to you.
- Remaining calm and in control when an adult treats you unfairly or disrespectfully.
- Not getting too down when being teased or ignored by friends.
- When meeting someone new, not getting extremely nervous and being calm.
- Stopping yourself from getting extremely worked up when you want to stand up and say “No” to someone who is putting pressure on you to do the wrong thing.
- Not losing your cool when you have lots of homework to do.
- Staying in control when your parents say “No” and the parents of your friends seem to be saying “Yes.”

Negative Habits of the Mind to Eliminate to Help Build Emotional Resilience

- **Self-Downing** – thinking that you are useless or a total failure when you have been rejected or have not achieved a good result (replace with Accepting Myself).
- **Needing to Be Perfect** – thinking that you have to be successful or perfect in everything important that you do and that it’s horrible when you are not (replace with Taking Risks).
- **Needing Approval** – thinking that you need people (peers, parents, teachers) to approve of what you do and that when they do not, it’s the worst thing in the world (replace with Being Independent).
- **I Can’t Do It** – thinking that when you have not been successful at something important, you are no good at anything and that you never will be (replace with I Can Do It).
- **I Can’t Be Bothered** – thinking that life should always be fun and exciting and that you can’t stand it when things are frustrating or boring (replace with Working Tough).
• **Being Intolerant of Others** – thinking that people should always treat you fairly, considerately and the way you want and when they do not, they are rotten people and you have a right to get back at them (replace with **Being Tolerant of Others**).
Teaching Emotional Resilience

I. Things to Say to Encourage Emotional Resilience

When you catch a young person being emotionally resilient, say:

“That was great. You didn’t let yourself get too angry.”
“When I raised my voice with you earlier today, I noticed that while you were upset, you weren’t furious. Knowing how to control your temper is a great skill to have.”
“You seem to really have learned how not to get too nervous and to relax before exams. That will help you be successful.”
“You really controlled your nerves when you gave that speech.”
“You see, talking with someone about the problem can help you feel less upset.”
“You didn’t let that setback stop you from trying. Great!”
“You really are learning that sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you.”
“You seem not to have blown that event out of proportion. That helps you to be in control.”
“You really seem to know the meaning of ‘resilience.’”
“Even though you haven’t made the team yet, you seem to have a really positive outlook.”

II. Ways to Eliminate Different Types of Negative Thinking that Lead to Poor Emotional Resilience

To Eliminate “Self-Downing”: Explain to the child that s/he is made up of many characteristics – some good, some that are not so good. You should have the child come up with five good things about the child’s skills, talents and personality and five things that could be improved on. The teacher/parent can help the child who gets stuck. Then, it should be explained that because the child possesses good qualities, it never makes sense for the child to think “I’m hopeless” or “I’m a loser” when something bad happens. The child should be encouraged to think: “When a bad thing happens, I do not lose my good points. I am still me – capable and likeable.”

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s tendency to down him/herself when something bad happens include the following. Teacher and parents should:

- try to see the child in a positive way
- show interest and excitement about non-curricular areas of child’s skills, interests and personal strengths
- expose the child to a variety of extra-curricular activities where s/he is likely to be successful
- keep a record with the child of all of his/her positive characteristics
- acknowledge the child when s/he does not appear to be getting overly down when something adverse does happen
- model for the child by thinking out loud how the teacher/parent does not put him/herself down and is self-accepting when something bad happens (e.g., “I
wasn’t elected to be on the committee. While this is disappointing, I will not put myself down by thinking ‘I’m hopeless.’ After all, I’m still me – a capable and likeable person.”

**To Eliminate “Needing to Be Perfect”**: Explained to the child that one of the greatest mistakes the child can make is being afraid to make mistakes. Mistakes are a natural part of learning and while it is good to do the best you can in your work, it is not helpful to insist that everything important is done perfectly. Explain that even the greatest scientists and inventors bumble and stumble their way to success. For older children, it can also be explained that demanding perfection of oneself leads one to be so worried that it lessens one’s ability to perform well. Instead, the child should be encouraged to develop the positive Habit of the Mind called “Risk Taking.” In Risk Taking, the child prefers to do his/her best but accepts that mistakes are inevitable and frequently good as one is learning something new.

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s need to be perfect include the following. Teacher and parents should:

- help the child become more aware of his/her perfectionism and its negative effects on his/her anxiety
- have the child make a list of the things s/he always wanted to do but was afraid of not doing perfectly. Encourage the child to agree to try one of these activities.
- encourage the child to identify areas of weakness. Have him/her agree to try activities in these areas. When the child has attempted such an activity, point out that the child now has evidence that s/he can tolerate doing things imperfectly.
- encourage the child to stop ruminating about grades and, instead, encourage him/her to get involved in activities unrelated to school.
- teach the child that there is a continuum of achievement and that achievement is not an all (perfection) or nothing (complete failure) outcome. Encourage the child to set goals at a place on the achievement continuum where s/he does not have to be the best in order to learn something and have fun.
- acknowledge and praise the child for attempting things and not doing them perfectly.

**To Eliminate “Needing Approval”**: In order to help a child who is overly concerned with what others think of him/her, teachers and parents should find an opportunity to explain to the child that while it is nice to be liked and approved of, s/he does not need the approval of teachers or friends all the time. The following should be communicated to the child: “You know that there are only a very few things we do need in life, and these include food, shelter and clothing. While it may feel like we cannot stand it when we do something that someone disapproves of or that it is the worst thing in the world to be teased or criticised, it is important to know that while it is not pleasant to be thought badly of or criticised, it is something that you can put up with and survive.” It should be emphasised that while it is preferable to try to be accepted and approved of, it is equally important to have a “Be Independent” Way of Thinking. That means that it is important to try new things even if others think you are silly or stupid. Teachers and parents should try to eliminate extreme dependency
of a child concerning schoolwork and his/her fears of being criticised for not having done it well enough.

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s need for approval include the following. Teacher and parents should:

- encourage the child to complete his/her schoolwork independently. If the child does have a question about what to do concerning schoolwork, teachers/parents should use the Praise, Prompt and Leave procedure (e.g., say something positive about what the child knows/has done, provide a brief prompt about the next step, and then walk away).
- provide recognition to the child for completing work independently.
- teach the child not to judge or evaluate his/her work until after a certain period of time.
- not give the child too much attention when s/he expresses negative feelings about work.
- encourage the child to participate in rather than avoid social activities.
- acknowledge the child when s/he has “survived” being in social situations s/he experienced as stressful. Say: “See, you are strong enough to put up with unpleasantness.”
- when the child has gone through an unpleasant situation (e.g., being teased, not being invited to a party) say: “See, you can stand it when people are not nice to you.”
- encourage the child to act confidently when s/he is starting to worry.
- model the “Being Independent” Way of Thinking by doing things that are silly or fun even though others might think the teacher or parent is weird.

To Eliminate “I Can’t Do It”: In order to combat this form of negative, pessimistic thinking, teachers and parents should explain to the child that s/he has a choice in how to think about things that have happened and about things in the future. It should be explained that when something bad happens to the child such as getting a bad grade or being rejected or teased by a classmate, the child can think negative thoughts or positive thoughts.

Examples of Negative “I Can’t Do It” thoughts: “I can’t do this. No one likes me. I’m not good at anything. It’s my entire fault. Things will never change; I’ll always be hopeless with friends/in my work.”

Examples of Positive “I Can Do It” Thoughts: “Next time things will be different. Maybe I did not try hard enough or behaved stupidly. I know that if I do things differently including trying harder, the next time I am more likely to be successful than to fail.”

Teachers and parents should explain to the child that an “I Can’t Do It” Way of Thinking leads them to feel very down when bad things happen and can cause him/her to stop trying and withdraw.

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s negative Way of Thinking called “I Can’t Do It” include the following. Teacher and parents should:
• encourage the child when the child is faced with difficult work to think of the last time s/he was successful at doing something s/he did not think s/he could do. Then, encourage the child to think: “I did it before, I can do it again.”
• allow the child to stretch, struggle and succeed. A child who has a pessimistic style of thinking will begin to modify the tendency as a result of persevering on tasks and succeeding without being helped to do so.
• evaluate the child’s progress based on the amount s/he has learned rather than comparisons with other children.
• Praise the child at those times when s/he continues working towards achieving goals/finishing work after experiencing difficulty or setbacks.
• Remind the child before commencing a difficult task of eliminating from his/her thinking the “I can’t do this” Way of Thinking and developing the mindset that “I will probably be successful.”
• Model for the child the two different ways of thinking about doing something difficult. For example, a teacher could say “Now, I have to learn more about how to use a computer. I can think, “I’m hopeless at doing these things. I’ll probably never learn it.” or “If I try my best, I’ll probably be successful.” The teacher should discuss the different impact these two ways of thinking will have on the teacher’s feelings and motivation to learn about computers.

To Eliminate “I Can’t Be Bothered”: The key explanation that teachers and parents should offer to a child who holds this negative way of thinking is that while it may seem that things in life, including schoolwork, should be fun and exciting, the reality is that life consists of things to do that differ in terms of degree of excitement and fun. Teachers and parents should indicate that while it is preferable that the child’s life be filled with only fun and exciting things and not things to do that are boring, life on earth as we know it contains both excitement and drudgery. The child needs to know that while it is natural to try to avoid the drudgery of homework/chores and other activities, the more s/he avoids those things that may be boring or uninteresting, the greater chance the child has of not achieving his/her potential.

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s negative Way of Thinking called “I Can’t Be Bothered” include the following. Teachers and parents should:

• explain the meaning of the expression “No pain, no gain.” (In order to get ahead in life, one has to do things that are “painful” to do.)
• point to the experience of others in the life of the child and show how their success has come in part from doing things that are not pleasant to do.
• provide examples from their own lives of times when they avoided doing unpleasant work and how it led them to fail to achieve their goals.
• model for the child examples for their own lives where the parent or teacher is doing unpleasant things in the short-term in order to achieve pleasant results in the long-term.
• alert the child ahead of time of aspects of upcoming work s/he is likely to find to be boring or tedious. Remind him/her that to be successful, the work cannot be avoided.
• catch the child avoiding work s/he finds tedious and provide feedback: “By not doing this work, you are making the choice not to be successful.”
- catch the child doing work s/he finds tedious and offer feedback: “See, you can stand doing boring stuff. And by doing it, you are choosing to be successful.”
- show the child concrete evidence that by doing tedious work, s/he is more successful.
- teach the child the 5 Minute Plan. Have the child ahead of time identify aspects of schoolwork that s/he finds to be boring or tedious (e.g., vocabulary, maths problems.) Have the child agree to work no more than five minutes on this work. Then, after five minutes have transpired (set a timer), encourage the child to work for no more than another five minutes. In this way, the child obtains evidence to challenge his/her belief that s/he cannot be bothered (and put up with) things that are not exciting and fun.

To Eliminate “Being Intolerant of Others”: There are several points that teachers and parents will want to communicate to help a child who has a tendency to blame, condemn and put down people who s/he perceives as having done the wrong thing. The first point to be made is that all people from time to time will act unfairly and inconsiderately to others, including friends and family – it is human nature. A second point to be reinforced is that while it is undesirable for them to behave this way, it is important not to view the person who is doing the wrong thing as totally bad. When we view people who do the wrong thing as totally hopeless, we tend to get overly angry with them. This is especially the case if we believe that people who do the wrong thing deserve retaliation and “pay back.” A third and related point is that in life, we will meet people who are different from us (come from different cultures) and share different beliefs, values and customs. In order for us to live in a safe and secure world without violence, it is important that when we notice people who seem different from us and who may demonstrate values, ways of relating and even dress that we do not like, that we do not judge their overall value as people (e.g., “They’re hopeless, inferior”) on the basis of aspects of their behaviour or appearance we do not like.

Other suggestions for eliminating a child’s negative Way of Thinking called “Intolerance of Others” include the following. Teachers and parents should:

- help a child to draw up a list of positive characteristics of a person or group of people whom the child appears to condemn. Once the list is drawn up (the teacher/parent may have to assist the child to come up with positive characteristics), ask the child whether it makes sense to think that someone is totally bad if s/he behaves poorly. The point that should be made is that people who have bad points always have good points, and that while it is understandable when one dislikes their behaviour, it never makes sense to rate their overall character or worth as a person on just their bad points.
- provide the child with first-hand experiences to learn about the positive qualities of an individual or group whom the child tends to hold a grudge against.
- be on the lookout for those times when a child is condemning of another person who might be acting in a way that the child perceives as mean, disrespectful or unfair. At these times, remind the child that it is OK to dislike the behaviour but that s/he should not think of the person as totally bad.
- model for the child out loud the difference between holding an Intolerance of Others and Tolerance of Others Way of Thinking in the face of adversity. For
example, a teacher could say, “You know, the other day the grocer overcharged me for what I bought. So, I started to get extremely angry with him by thinking ‘He shouldn't act so unfairly. He’s a total jerk.’ When I realized I was losing my temper, I changed my way of thinking to: ‘He did the wrong thing. He made a mistake. Humans make mistakes. I’ll bring the mistake to his attention.’ I then calmed down.”

- constantly encourage the child not to make overall judgments of people who do the wrong thing or who are different. Explain that when we are intolerant and make overall judgments, we only lose our temper.

### III. Other Things to Do to Teach a Young Person Emotional Resilience

- Accept that it is normal and healthy for young people to experience negative emotions. (It is good to show and talk about different negative feelings you have as long as they are not too extreme.)

- Explain to the young person that it is normal to have negative feelings and that there is nothing wrong with him/her if s/he goes through periods of time or reacts to events with high amounts of anger, anxiety or of feeling down.

- Provide the young person with words to describe his/her own feelings (e.g., “You are feeling angry, worried or have hurt feelings-down.”) as well as your own feelings (e.g., “I am worried about you staying out late.”).

- Help the young person become aware that when something bad happens to him/her (e.g., teasing, bad mark in school, no one to play with), he/she has options in how upset he/she gets (extremely upset, medium upset, a “bit” upset).

- Help the young person put together a list of negative things that can happen to them at school, at home or with their friends and discuss with him/her the common negative feelings they can have when these things occur.

- Discuss with the young person how getting extremely upset (furious, panicked, very down) when negative events have occurred or are about to occur is not so good and that it is better to try to be only medium upset. (The exception to this is when children experience life threatening or catastrophic events.)

- Teach the young person that one way to control how upset he/she gets when something bad happens is to learn not to blow the “badness” of what happened out of proportion. Help the young person see that while some events are truly the worst things that could happen (e.g., death of a loved one, natural disasters), other things (e.g., difficult/boring homework; being teased) are bad but not the worst things that could happen. Help children to discriminate among things that are terrible/horrible/awful, things that are bad, and things that are “a bit” bad.

- Teach children that one way not to get overly down is not to think negatively about himself/herself when he/she is not as successful in his/her schoolwork as he/she would like or someone is mean to him/her. Help the child to identify all his/her positive qualities (e.g., good athlete, good friend, good reader) and help
them see that doing something wrong, failing at something or rejection doesn’t take away their good qualities and doesn’t show they are totally hopeless (see previous discussion on eliminating Self-Downing).

- Help the young person understand that he/she will not always be treated fairly and considerately by others and when that happens, he/she can handle it.

- For a young person who gets very uptight in anticipation of tests or social gatherings, relaxation skills such as the 5-3-5 Relaxation Technique can be taught. In using this deep breathing technique, young people can be taught to use the following instructions:

  “To begin with, rapidly exhale all the air from your lungs. Next, slowly to a count of five, inhale … one … two … three … four … five. Hold your breath of air for a slow count of three … one … two … three. Now slowly, very slowly, exhale the air to a slow count of five … one … two … three … four … five. You have just completed one repetition. To continue to relax, breathe in slowly to a count of five, hold for a count of three, and again exhale to a slow count of five.”

- Model for the young person the kinds of positive thinking he/she can use when he/she is having a bad day to help brighten his/her mood (e.g., “This won’t last forever. I still have friends. I’m still good at playing chess.”). Explain to the young person the power of positive thinking.

- Discuss with the young person the importance of finding someone to talk to when they have very strong feelings. This could be the parent himself or herself, another family relative, a member from church, school counsellor, teacher or trusted friend.
**Negative Ways of Thinking Checklist**

**Purpose:** Place a mark to indicate **how often** a child tends to think in a particular negative way.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Self-Downing</strong> – Does the child think that s/he is totally useless or a failure when s/he is has been rejected or has not achieved a good result?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Needing to Be Perfect</strong> – Does the child think that s/he must be successful or perfect in everything important that I do and that it’s horrible when s/he is not?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Needing Approval</strong> – Does the child think that s/he needs people (peers, parents, teachers) to approve of him/her and that when they do not, it’s the worst thing in the world?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>I Can’t Do It</strong> – Does the child think when s/he has not been successful at something that s/he is no good at anything and never will be?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>I Can’t Be Bothered</strong> – Does the child think that life should always be fun and exciting and that s/he can’t stand it when things are frustrating or boring?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Being Intolerant of Others</strong> – Does the child think that people should always treat him/her fairly, considerately and the way s/he wants and when they do not, they are rotten and s/he has a right to get back at them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YCDI Steps to Teaching Emotional Resilience (“Toughness”) to Young People

In addition to or in combination with lessons drawn from Program Achieve (see Appendix A) that teach emotional resilience, the following steps can be used with individual, small or large groups of students to further the development of this very important foundation.

1. Help students construct a list of events that can occur at school or home that can be considered adverse, bad or negative. Leave off the list any events that are life threatening. Include examples of lack of achievement, including mistakes in class assignments, rejection including teasing, not being invited to play, being yelled at by parents, etc.

2. Introduce the idea that there are three negative emotions that people can have when they are confronted with these negative events. Ask for and acknowledge suggestions and list the following three on the board: anger, worry and down. Discuss differences in these three feelings in terms of things that can happen that lead to one or more of these feelings. Have students portray/role play how the different feelings look and how people sound when they experience a feeling. You can have students search for illustrations of people who demonstrate these three feelings in magazines/newspaper and cut them out.

3. Introduce the Emotional Thermometer (see Appendix B). Explain that it measures how strongly one feels. Explain that all feelings vary in intensity from strong to weak. Give students practice in evaluating how strong someone is feeling employing the Emotional Thermometer and using the cut out pictures of people.

4. Make the point that when something bad happens, people have options in how strongly they feel. Ask: Does everyone feel the same way about different things? Ask: Can people feel different degrees of the same feeling (e.g., when someone calls you a name, can you feel different degrees of anger or feeling down)? Illustrate using the events listed in Step 1 how people can feel different about the same negative events.

5. Using Horace’s Mad Thermometer (see Appendix C), explain the relationship between how strongly one feels, their behaviour, and different types of negative consequences that are associated with different levels of emotions and behaviours. Help students see that, generally speaking, extremely high levels of anger, worry and feeling down are harmful to them because of the effects extremely high emotions have on their behaviours and ensuing consequences. Provide plentiful examples so that students appreciate that getting overly upset is not good and that they do have options in how strongly they feel when something bad happens.

6. Explain to young people that while it is very natural to feel upset when something bad happens, getting extremely upset (extremely angry, highly nervous, very down) is not generally good. Explain that very high degrees of negative emotions not only can feel bad, but also can lead people to behave in unhelpful ways. For example, when someone is extremely angry with someone who may have acted badly, s/he can say or do things in an aggressive fashion (e.g., yell, scream, swear) that can get him/her into trouble. Or too much worry about a test can lead to a loss of memory during the exam. Feeling very down can cause the child to withdraw from others and lose motivation to work. Use the Anger Thermometer to illustrate these relationships.
7. Introduce the term Emotional Toughness (“Resilience”). Explain that Emotional Toughness means knowing how to stop yourself from getting extremely angry, down or worried when something “bad” happens – for example, by thinking positively rather than negatively and not thinking that the “bad” thing is the worst thing in the world that could happen if it is not really that bad. It means knowing what you can do when you are very upset to be less upset, including talking about what happened to a trusted friend or adult and learning to relax. Provide examples of Emotional Toughness as related to the adverse circumstances listed in Step 1.

8. Explain that people vary in their degree of Emotional Toughness and that over one’s life, it is good to continue to develop Emotional Toughness as a way to help cope with adversity when it happens.

9. Provide students with the following questions to survey their own Emotional Toughness:

- When someone treats me unfairly or is mean to me, I am good at controlling my temper.
- I have someone I can talk with when I get really upset.
- When I find myself getting very stressed, I know how to relax.
- I am good at thinking positive thoughts when bad stuff happens.
- I am someone who does not take mistakes or disappointments personally.

Discuss how some students will have marked all the boxes, while others may have not marked any. Emphasise that Emotional Toughness can be learned and is very helpful.

10. Emotional Toughness Skill: Keeping Things in Perspective - Introduce the human tendency to blow the “badness” of events out of proportion by explaining that there are different degrees of badness: things that are “a bit” bad (someone pushes in front of you in line, someone breaks your pencil, careless spelling mistakes), things that are “medium” bad (failing a class, being called a bad name by the class bully), things that are “very, very” bad (natural disaster, being terminally ill, something horrible happening to your parents). Give young people practice in categorising bad things that happen during the school day and at home, as well as events they read about in the news into these three categories. Encourage students not to blow events out of proportion.

Build/display a Catastrophe Scale that goes from 1 to 100 in your room that illustrates events that are 90-100 “catastrophic” (natural disaster, death, terminal illness), events that are 50-90 “very bad” (house burns down, car accident, losing lots of money, best friend moves away), and events that are 10-50 “bad” (making mistakes on a test, being teased, someone steals your lunch money). Refer to the Catastrophe Scale during the year to help students keep hassles and other adverse events listed in Step 1 in proportion.
11. Emotional Toughness Skill: Positive vs. Negative Self-Talk - Introduce the concept of “self-talk” as the way we think about events and how our self-talk can be negative and positive. Provide illustrations of how when something adverse happens, it is easy to get into a negative mode of thinking using negative self-talk. Explain that Emotional Toughness can be helped by countering negative self-talk with positive self-talk. Provide illustrations using the accompanying diagrams (see Appendix D for a sample lesson that teaches this idea; from Bernard, 2002).

12. Emotional Toughness Skill: Counter (Eliminate) Negative Habits of the Mind

- Self-Downing - thinking you’re hopeless when something bad happens.
- Needing to Be Perfect – thinking you must do everything perfectly and that it’s horrible to make mistakes.
- Needing Approval – believing you must have the approval of peers (or adults) for everything you do and being thought to be silly or stupid by others cannot be endured.
- I Can’t Do It! – thinking that when something is difficult, you’ll be more likely to fail than to be successful.
- I Can’t Be Bothered – believing that everything in life should be fun and exciting and that you cannot stand to do things that are not fun or easy.
- Being Intolerant of Others – believing that people who are unfair, inconsiderate or different, or inferior or bad people who deserve punishment.

13. Emotional Toughness Skill: Develop Positive Habits of the Mind

- Accepting Myself – knowing that I have many good qualities and a few that could be improved, and accepting myself warts and all.
- Taking Risks – knowing that it is good to try new things even if I make mistakes.
- Being Independent – knowing that it’s good to speak up even if others think I’m silly or stupid.
- I Can Do It! – trusting myself when I’m doing something hard that I will be more likely to be successful than to fail.
- Working Tough – knowing that in order to be successful, I sometimes have to do things that are boring and not fun.
- Being Tolerant of Others – accepting that people make mistakes and have differences from me and that while I might not like their behaviour, they are not totally bad or deserving of punishment when they do the wrong thing.

14. Emotional Toughness Skill: Relaxation - Explain to students that when they are faced with pressures or other adverse circumstances and notice they are getting uptight, they can learn to cut their stress down to size by learning to relax. There are a variety of relaxation skills that young people can be taught.

For example, you can teach the 5-3-5 Relaxation Technique. In using this deep breathing technique, young people can be taught to use the following instructions:

“To begin with, rapidly exhale all the air from your lungs. Next, slowly to a count of five, inhale … one … two … three … four … five. Hold
your breath of air for a slow count of three … one … two … three. Now slowly, very slowly, exhale the air to a slow count of five … one … two … three … four … five. You have just completed one repetition. To continue to relax, breathe in slowly to a count of five, hold for a count of three, and again exhale to a slow count of five.”

15. Emotional Toughness Skill: Assertive Behaviour - Explain that in the face of pressure by peers to do something they do not want to do (e.g., drink, smoke) or when faced with someone treating them badly, it is common for emotions to run high. You can indicate that “assertiveness” can help all people reduce levels of negative emotions by helping to change the circumstances that helped create the emotions in the first place. Discuss how when you’re assertive, you state clearly and directly your honest feelings and wishes. Rather than raising your voice or mumbling, you use a warm and yet firm tone of voice. You wear a relaxed expression and look directly at the person who is pressuring you or treated you with disrespect. Explain the differences between acting assertively to being too aggressive or passive/shy.

16. Emotional Toughness Skill: Find Someone to Talk To - Discuss with students how when things are not going well and you’ve tried everything to remain positive and not blow things out of proportion, sometimes it is good to seek out someone you trust and who is a good listener. Make the point that trusted friends and adults are never too busy to not have time. Brainstorm types of people whom students would trust to talk to. Make sure that everyone has identified a source of support.
Summary of YCDI Good Practices in Building Young People’s Emotional Resilience

1. In discussing with students, staff and parents, the mission of your school as being one that seeks to support students’ success and social-emotional well-being, emphasise that throughout the school year, opportunities will be provided to students to help them develop further the attitudes and skills they need to be successful and happy including: Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along, and Emotional Resilience.

2. In focussing on the foundation of Emotional Resilience/Toughness, take opportunities during school assemblies and smaller meetings of students (e.g., year/grade level meetings of student) to discuss with and solicit from students examples of common stressful events that lead to extreme emotions. Provide students with the mindset that schools can help students develop skills of emotional resilience so that students are not overwhelmed by these events. Emphasise that while it is quite normal for young people to get extremely upset in the face of stressful, adverse events, with age, people develop skills in being able to cope.

3. Explain to students the meaning of Emotional Resilience/Toughness including providing examples of emotionally resilient behaviour. Indicate the different types of negative thinking that make it harder to be emotionally resilient as they contribute to very high levels of emotional upset.

4. Display images (e.g., Bernard, 2001) portraying Emotional Resilience/Toughness in the classroom/around the school (see Appendix F). Include descriptions of what it means to be Emotionally Resilient/Tough, including definition. Review on a regular basis.

5. Present lessons drawn from personal development curricula (e.g., Program Achieve) that teach young people the variety of coping skills that help them develop their emotional resilience/toughness.

6. Across language art areas of the curricula (e.g., English, history), take opportunities to illustrate characters that do and do not display emotional resilience.

7. Teachers should take opportunities to provide students with behaviour-specific feedback when they demonstrate emotional resilience.

8. It is vital that students be taught how their thinking about themselves, others (peers, adults), their schoolwork and their future is a large factor in determining their emotional reactions and emotional resilience. Take time to educate young people concerning the negative ways of thinking that lead to extreme upset and the negative ways to think that lead to emotional resilience/toughness and behavioural self-management.

9. A variety of parent education “inputs” should be provided (e.g., parent education classes, school-home notes) that educate parents about emotional resilience. Parents also need to be presented with positive parenting practices (e.g., positive relationships with children; developing positive mindsets in children) that help children develop resilience.
10. Regular staff development should be provided for teachers to help strengthen their emotional resilience in order to support them in providing the best instruction possible, in order to maintain positive relationships with and communicate high expectations to all children and, so they are equipped with the personal experiences and skills that help them be effective in supporting the development of emotional resilience in young people.
References


Appendix A
Program Achieve Lessons that Teach Emotional Resilience Skills

Many but not all of the activities contained in the following lessons are designed to teach young people the coping skills that enable them to demonstrate the following constituent elements of emotional resilience (select those activities that suit your goals):

- control how anxious and down they become
- inhibit/self-control behavioural “impulses” when overly upset
- calm down relatively quickly when very upset

One additional point is that Lesson 2 from the Getting Started unit in each of the six volumes makes the case to students that there are four keys to success and happiness. You will need to revise this to indicate that we’ve now discovered a fifth key.

If you are wishing to put together a sequence of instruction designed to teach Emotional Resilience, you should “cobble” together activities that appear in the following list of lessons.

A final point is that you may wish to use the term “Emotional Toughness” rather than “Emotional Resilience.” Some young people have difficulty with the term “resilience.”

Vol. 1: Years/Grades 1-2

Unit 1 Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
   Lesson 3. Emotions for Everyone
   Lesson 4. Face Our Feelings
   Lesson 5. Try on Some New Thoughts

Unit 2 Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
   Lesson 2. Just Relax
   Lesson 3. Flowers in the Garden
   Lesson 4. Making Mistakes
   Lesson 5. Cool Cucumbers
   Lesson 6. Nipping Negatives in the Bud

Unit 3 Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
   Lesson 2. Exaggerations
   Lesson 6. It’s Yucky!

Unit 5 Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
   Lesson 3. Looks Aren’t Everything
   Lesson 6. Stormin’ Norman or Cool Calvin
Vol. 2: Years/Grades 3-4

Unit 1  Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
Lesson 3. Different Strokes
Lesson 4. Taking Our Emotional Temperature
Lesson 5. Now That Makes Sense

Unit 2  Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
Lesson 1. Confident Conclusions
Lesson 2. Confident Relaxation
Lesson 3. Who Cares?...I Care!
Lesson 4. How Does Your Cookie Crumble?
Lesson 5. Bloopers
Lesson 6. It's Affirmative

Unit 3  Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
Lesson 2. Weighing the Task
Lesson 4. It's Hard Yakka Time
Lesson 6. Quitters

Unit 5  Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
Lesson 2. No Worries
Lesson 3. You Can't Judge a Book…
Lesson 5. Stand Tall
Lesson 6. Chill Out

Vol. 3: Years/Grades 5-6

Unit 1  Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
Lesson 3. Do the Local Emotion
Lesson 4. Emotions: The Hot or Cool
Lesson 5. Cool Thoughts

Unit 2  Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
Lesson 1. Confident Conclusions
Lesson 2. Relax, Be Brave
Lesson 3. Speaking Confidently
Lesson 4. My Own Spokes Get Me Going Again
Lesson 5. Who’s Perfect?
Lesson 6. Feeling Good

Unit 3  Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
Lesson 1. Hard, Not Impossible
Lesson 3. Hard Yakka, Now?
Unit 5  Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
Lesson 2.  Make and Keep Them
Lesson 3.  Friendly Conversations
Lesson 4.  Alternative Solutions
Lesson 5.  Doing the Right Thing (assertion)
Lesson 6.  Stop Anger in Its Tracks

Vol. 4: Years/Grades 7-8

Unit 1  Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
Lesson 3.  Feelings Count Too!
Lesson 4.  Thinking Makes It So
Lesson 5.  Challenging and Changing

Unit 2  Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
Lesson 1.  Confidence-Building Self-Talk
Lesson 2.  Relax and Be Confident
Lesson 3.  Speaking Up
Lesson 4.  There is Good and bad in Everyone
Lesson 5.  Absolutely Perfect
Lesson 6.  Don’t Be Afraid of Mistakes

Unit 3  Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
Lesson 2.  Getting Hard Yakka Done!
Lesson 4.  Don’t Be Afraid of Hard Work
Lesson 5.  Nothing Is Impossible

Unit 5  Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
Lesson 2.  No Worries
Lesson 5.  Cool Conflict
Lesson 6.  Words Will Never Hurt Me

Vol. 5: Years/Grades 9-10

Unit 1  Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
Lesson 3.  Taking Your Emotional Temperature
Lesson 4.  Emotions in the News
Lesson 5.  Guilty

Unit 2  Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
Lesson 1.  Trying New Things
Lesson 2.  Stressful Situations
Lesson 3.  Off the Cuff
Lesson 5.  Destructive Criticism
Lesson 6.  Taking Risks
Unit 3  Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
  Lesson 1.  Pressure from All Sides
  Lesson 3.  Horrible Homework
  Lesson 4.  Hard Yakka Rules!

Unit 5  Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
  Lesson 2.  Shunning Shyness
  Lesson 4.  Conflict Mismanagement
  Lesson 5.  Anger Inoculation
  Lesson 6.  Taking the Pressure Off

Vol. 6: Years/Grades 11+

Unit 1  Getting Started Lessons (emotional awareness, communication, thinking-feeling connections)
  Lesson 3.  Human Nature
  Lesson 4.  What?…Me Irrational?
  Lesson 5.  It’s a Challenge

Unit 2  Confidence Lessons (anxiety, feeling down management)
  Lesson 1.  Putting Your Best Foot Forward
  Lesson 2.  Seeing Success
  Lesson 3.  Taming Tests
  Lesson 5.  Bloopers

Unit 3  Persistence Lessons (frustration management)
  Lesson 3.  Hard Yakka Now
  Lesson 4.  It Can Be Done

Unit 5  Getting Along Lessons (anger management)
  Lesson 2.  I’ll Never Fall in Love Again
  Lesson 4.  Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion
  Lesson 5.  Desirable Detente
  Lesson 6.  Standing Strong
Appendix B
Emotional Thermometer

10  Exceptionally Strong
9   Pretty Strong
8   Medium
7   Pretty Weak
6   Nothing Happening
5
4
3
2
1
Appendix C
Horace’s Mad Thermometer

The drawing below shows that Horace can have different feelings and reactions to being told by his father that he can’t go to his friend’s house to listen to music until after he has done his homework. Notice the different consequences that occur as a result of different levels of Horace’s upset.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Feelings and Reactions</th>
<th>The Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 (fuming)</td>
<td>big punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- swear</td>
<td>father gets mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- throw things</td>
<td>gets yelled at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- yell and scream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 (angry)</td>
<td>smaller punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- swear under my breath</td>
<td>father gets mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- slam door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 (irritated)</td>
<td>no punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- look upset</td>
<td>father not mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- have an attitude</td>
<td>no compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ask for compromise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 (annoyed)</td>
<td>father listens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ask for compromise</td>
<td>compromise discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- no attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (feel nothing)</td>
<td>open communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
Teaching Positive and Negative Self-Talk
(from Bernard, 2002)

Activity 5

The Power of Self-Talk

Directions: Write in the thought clouds examples of self-talk that determine whether the person continues to try or gives up.

Positive Self-Talk

Negative Self-Talk

Your self-talk can power you to success.
Are you a positive thinker or a negative thinker?
This is an important activity for you to present to mentees, because it presents new information. You can begin the activity by explaining that all people have choices in the way they think about their work, themselves, and other people. The word used in YCDI for thinking is “self-talk.” Self-talk and thinking mean pretty much the same thing.

Explain to your mentee that there are two different types of self-talk: “negative self-talk” and “positive self-talk.” Examples of positive self-talk are:

“I can do this.” “I will be successful.” “Even though I did not do well, I am still a talented person.” “There are many things I do well.” “I accept myself with all my mistakes.”

Examples of negative self-talk are:

“I can’t do this.” “I’m a loser.” “I’ll never be successful.” “No one likes me.” “I’ll never have a good friend.”

You can also say that a person’s self-talk has a very powerful effect on their success and happiness. You can emphasise that people have the power to change their negative self-talk to positive self-talk. The more positive self-talk, the more you are likely to be Confident, Persistent, Organised and to Get Along.

Have your mentee write in the thought clouds examples of positive and negative self-talk that will determine whether the swimmer keeps swimming in the rough waters.

Discussion Questions and Sample Answers

1. Does thinking positively guarantee you success?
   Sample answer: No. If you cannot swim, no amount of positive self-talk will get you across the pool. However, positive thinking prepares your way to success by making you believe in yourself.

2. Does negative thinking doom you to failure?
   Sample answer: No. It is possible to shoot a basket in the hoop with the thought “I’m going to miss this.” However, day in and day out you will tend to fail achieving the goals you have set if you have negative thinking and do not believe in yourself.

“Real Life” Application

1. Ask mentees to keep their ears open for examples of negative self-talk that people say aloud around them during the week (e.g., “I can’t do anything right!” “I can’t stand it!” “Everything is going wrong!” “Life is really unfair.” “She is a total idiot.”). Remind mentees to notice how people feel and behave when they make these types of statements.

2. Have mentees discuss their observations with you next time you meet. What positive self-talk could the people have used instead in each case?
Appendix E
Emotional Resilience Reminder Card

Emotional Resilience Behaviour

⇒ Does not get too down when schoolwork is not good
⇒ Keeps trying in the face of setbacks
⇒ Handles teasing or social difficulties without getting too upset
⇒ Manages frustration when he/she does not understand something right away
⇒ Manages frustration of having a lot of work to do
⇒ Controls anger when treated unfairly
⇒ Manages nerves when taking exams or performing in public
⇒ Is able to say "no" and stand up to negative peer pressure
⇒ Calms down quickly after getting very upset
Emotional Resilience

Things to Say to Encourage Emotional Resilience

- “You didn’t let yourself get too angry.”
- “You’ve learned how not to get too nervous.”
- “You didn’t let that setback stop you from trying.”
- “Even though you didn’t do as well as you wanted, you are still positive.”
- “You seem not to have blown that negative event out of proportion.”
- “Keeping your cool helps.”
- “You see, you can get through the tough stuff.”
- “You chose not to get upset yourself about what happened.”

Eliminate the Following Types of Thinking

- **Self-Down**: Don’t put yourself down when something bad happens.
- **Needing to Be Perfect**: Mistakes are normal along the road to success. It doesn’t have to be perfect.
- **Needing Approval**: Don’t be too worried about what others think of you. You are you.
- **I Can’t Do It**: If you think you can’t, you can’t.
- **I Can’t Be Bothered**: Doing things you don’t like to do is the key to your success.
- **Being Intolerant of Others**: Do not judge people. It is good to find out more about them.

www.youcandoiteducation.com
© You Can Do It! Education

Emotional Resilience

Things to Say to Encourage Emotional Resilience

- “You didn’t let yourself get too angry.”
- “You’ve learned how not to get too nervous.”
- “You didn’t let that setback stop you from trying.”
- “Even though you didn’t do as well as you wanted, you are still positive.”
- “You seem not to have blown that negative event out of proportion.”
- “Keeping your cool helps.”
- “You see, you can get through the tough stuff.”
- “You chose not to get upset yourself about what happened.”

Eliminate the Following Types of Thinking

- **Self-Down**: Don’t put yourself down when something bad happens.
- **Needing to Be Perfect**: Mistakes are normal along the road to success. It doesn’t have to be perfect.
- **Needing Approval**: Don’t be too worried about what others think of you. You are you.
- **I Can’t Do It**: If you think you can’t, you can’t.
- **I Can’t Be Bothered**: Doing things you don’t like to do is the key to your success.
- **Being Intolerant of Others**: Do not judge people. It is good to find out more about them.

www.youcandoiteducation.com
© You Can Do It! Education
Appendix F
Images Portraying Emotional Toughness

Emotional Toughness
Emotional Toughness