

# Resilience interventions: What works?

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**School-based resilience approaches with young people: Raiding the academic evidence base to find out what parents and practitioners want to know.**

## Systematic consultative review methodology

- Similar aims to realist review
- Incorporated some of the principles
- Consulted parents & practitioners to find out what they want to know
- Systematic review of resilience interventions
- Synthesised into what we are calling a “systematic consultative review”
- Fed findings back to parents & practitioners to generate new questions and responses

## What parents & practitioners want to know

- What really works?
- Where do I start? And what can I do right now that will make a difference?
- Is it better to work with YP, parents, teachers or whole school?
- How do you make a marginalised young person change?
- What do you do exactly, for how long & with what intensity?
- How much does it cost? (££££ vs £)

## Review methodology - Method

- Inclusion criteria:
  - Participants aged 12-18 (12-25 for wider review)
  - Intervention was resilience-based
  - Outcomes included either a resilience scale or measures of the individual resilience capacities defined in the authors' rationale (eg self-esteem)

## Review methodology - Extraction

- Information extracted included:
  - Method and intensity of delivery, participant characteristics, setting and circumstances
  - Resilience definitions, program-theory links, capacities, measures and outcomes
  - Evaluation design & methodology, strengths & weaknesses of program & evaluation, program costs, funding & implementation history (where available)
- Of the 1488 retrieved school-based references, 581 were relevant, 84 met the review criteria and a representative sample of 12 were included here

## Resilience concept

- How resilience has been conceptualised within the articles, including locus



Resilience as a: tool, outcome, process, interaction, capacity, ability, characteristic, act, skill, trait, protective factor, positive influence, potential, asset, resource, recovery, disposition, competency, attitude, value, strength, knowledge, response, performance, functioning, adaptation

## Range of characteristics of young people in our 12 papers

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| • “Lowest quintile of disadvantage” <sup>5</sup>              | 1449 |
| • Average <sup>4</sup>  | 781  |
| • At risk of HIV <sup>11,12</sup>                             | 670  |
| • Black and ethnic minority <sup>2,3,6</sup>                  | 229  |
| • Exposed to trauma <sup>1,9</sup>                            | 136  |
| • Specific learning difficulties <sup>8</sup>                 | 6    |
| • Severe emotional & behavioural difficulties <sup>7,10</sup> | 2    |

## Level of intervention

- Systemic school-wide approaches (eg Henderson et al., 2000) vs. individual eg process-orientation (eg Middlemiss, 2005)
  - 4 interventions targeted individual students on the basis of characteristics (gifted intelligence<sup>2</sup>, learning disability<sup>8</sup>, involved with child welfare services<sup>7,10</sup> (2)) via voluntary work<sup>10</sup>, group work<sup>2</sup>, art & music therapy<sup>8</sup>, often multiple strategies<sup>7,8</sup>
  - 4 interventions targeted entire year groups (selected for age<sup>3,6</sup> (2), exposure to trauma<sup>9</sup>, or opportunity sample<sup>4</sup>) via in-class activities<sup>6</sup>, performing arts<sup>4</sup>, role-play<sup>3</sup>, adventure recreation<sup>9</sup>



## Level of intervention

- 2 interventions were ‘whole-school’ (selected for exposure to trauma<sup>1</sup>, or low disadvantage<sup>5</sup>) via teacher training<sup>1</sup>, modifying school policies<sup>5</sup>, developing school-community links<sup>5</sup>
- 1 intervention recruited participants from several schools, acting via afterschool activities such as football<sup>11</sup>
- 1 targeted teachers with schools to act as resource negotiators<sup>12</sup>

## Findings: Types of things people have done

- Flavour of interventions:
  - Range: psychosocial group<sup>2</sup>, dance/drama competition<sup>4</sup>, skills & training<sup>3</sup>, curriculum modification<sup>5,6</sup> (2), recreation<sup>9,11</sup> (2), teacher training<sup>1,12</sup> (2), work experience<sup>10</sup>, tailored to individual<sup>7,8</sup> (2)
  - Intensity: from 12 x 1hr sessions over 5.5 mths<sup>8</sup> to 1 week residential<sup>9</sup>
  - Country: USA<sup>2,3,7</sup> (3), Australia<sup>4,5</sup> (2), South Africa<sup>6,8,11,12</sup> (4), Russia<sup>9</sup>, Israel<sup>1</sup>, Scotland<sup>10</sup>, Zambia<sup>11</sup>
  - Sample size: 2-1449
  - Example strategies: complementary skills groups for kids, parents & teachers<sup>2</sup>; role-playing new skills<sup>3</sup>; reward points systems<sup>7</sup>

## Findings: Key resilience capacities

- Individual: self-esteem (7), autonomy (6), problem-solving (4), goals (6), sense of purpose (5), skills (8);
- Interpersonal: empathy (8), caring (5), social competence (8);
- Family: connectedness (8), bond with adult (7), positive peer relationships (7);
- Community: social support (7), community connectedness (7), school connectedness (4)

## Findings: Key resilience capacities

- Innovative, evidence-based strategies:
  - Evoking images of family, obligation and responsibility<sup>2</sup>
  - Vocational training & field trips<sup>3</sup>
  - Mountaineering & survival skills<sup>9</sup>
  - Organising a dance competition for younger children<sup>10</sup>
  - Using same reward points system across home & school environments<sup>7</sup>
  - Peer-pressure limbo dancing<sup>11</sup>
  - School-family-community veggie garden<sup>12</sup>

## Gaps in the literature

- The studies we reviewed lacked:
  - Much school-parent interaction
  - Complex or marginalised (or absent) kids
  - Participatory interventions or evaluations
  - Inequalities focus or angle
  - Hobbies
  - Value of the basics (eg a good breakfast)
  - Much detail on how much they cost to implement

## What parents & practitioners wanted to know

- Is it better to work with YP, parents, teachers, school?
  - 6 interventions worked directly with kids, 2 with kids & parents, 2 with kids & teachers, 2 with only teachers
- How do you make a marginalised young person change?
  - High intensity intervention customised for YP<sup>10</sup>

## What can parents/practitioners actually do?

- Where do I start?
  - 5 point RT plan: basics, belonging, coping, learning, core self
  - Decide what's most urgent, what's most doable, quick wins, what you're up for, what the child/family wants, what the child/family can most easily manage, time available – see [www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk)
- What can we take anywhere?
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Autobiographical narrative – ‘consciousness-raising’
  - Relationship with 1 caring adult
  - Reward points
  - Intensity & consistency

## Further reading

- Aumann, K. & Hart, A. (2009). *Helping children with complex needs bounce back: Resilient Therapy for parents and professionals*. London: Jessica Kingsley
- Hart, A. & Blincow, D. with Thomas, H. (2007). *Resilient Therapy: Working with children and families*. London: Routledge
- Hart, A., Hall, V., & Henwood, F. (2003). Helping health and social care professionals develop an 'inequalities imagination': A model for use in education and practice. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 41(5), 1-9.
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- Website: [www.boingboing.org.uk](http://www.boingboing.org.uk)



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11. Peacock-Villada, P., DeCelles, J., & Banda, P. S. (2007). Grassroot Soccer resiliency pilot program: Building resiliency through sport-based education in Zambia and South Africa. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2007*(116), 141-154. doi:10.1002/yd.241
12. Ebersöhn, L., & Ferreira, R. (2011). Coping in an HIV/AIDS-dominated context: teachers promoting resilience in schools. *Health Education Research, 26*(4), 596-613. doi:10.1093/her/cyr016