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Resilience and education

It is a challenge!

- Really problematic
- Different meanings, different concepts
- A large amount of overlap
- Resilience, well-being, flourishing, buoyancy and so on
- Different levels of adversity
- Research goals often conflated or confused.

Four studies

- The TEAM of life
- FRIENDS for Life
- Healthy Minds
- Professional learning communities

The TEAM of Life

- A narrative approach to building resilience in UK school children
- An example of “collective narrative practice”
- The team is used as in a sports team
- Who is your “goal-keeper, your defender etc”
- Outputs
 - increase in goal-based attainment
 - Reduction in emotional and social difficulties
 - Social confidence and team working.

Method and Conclusion

- Years 9 and 10 – workshops and group work over one term
- Only a pilot, but improvement in confidence, peer support and team working
- Part of CAMHS Extended Schools Network
- Key themes
 - Joint working between health and education
 - Using sport as a metaphor
 - Resilience defined as goal-directed behaviour and reduction in externalising and internalising problems.

Friends for Life

- Australian programme – evidence based.
- Much like PRP, cognitive-behavioural intervention
- Goals – lower level of anxiety, improved self-concept, coping and self-efficacy, school connectedness
- RCT in Irish schools, 700 pupils aged 10 – 11
- Measures show significant change.

Content – 10 sessions

- Introduction to feelings
- Introduction to body clues and relaxation
- Self-talk (helpful and unhelpful)
- Challenging helpful and unhelpful thinking
- Introduction to coping
- Learning from role models
- Introduction to a problem-solving plan

Healthy Minds

- Resilience has to be part of something wider
- If promoted in schools it has to be longitudinal and reviewed and rehearsed
- Cognitive-behavioural change has to go hand-in-hand with the development of other knowledge and skills

Study design

- Funded by EEF
- 36 schools, 7,000 pupils, Year 7 to Year 10
- Randomised control trial, delayed start design
- Strong focus on teacher-training
- Most elements of the curriculum were already in existence, but some newly developed -
- Media Navigator, Sex Ed Sorted, and Mental Illness Investigated.

Overall programme

- Year 7 - Managing the world around me
- Year 8 - Moving towards my future
- Year 9 - Taking control of the decisions I make
- Year 10 - Planning for the future

Why important

- Developmental
- Learning continually reviewed
- Resilience seen as something broad relating to health, the social world, and academic attainment
- Tackles all the topics that matter to young people
- Never been done as far as we know.

Professional learning communities

- Important because pupil resilience is only one side of the coin
- How can you promote resilience in pupils if teachers are stressed or lacking resilience themselves?
- Studies tend to talk of “teacher well-being” rather than resilience
- But is it different?

Discussion

- Very few actual studies in the area, but quite a lot of qualitative data
- One example – key themes that emerge
- Feeling healthy and safe in school
- Being able to express autonomy
- Being able to negotiate autonomy
- Having a sense of affiliation and connectedness
- Having a sense of agency
- Being able to continue professional development.

Does this matter?

- From a common sense point of view – it seems obvious
- The focus on adults is outside the accepted framework of concern
- It is a more holistic view of resilience, taking into account both sides in a relationship
- BUT, is it resilience?
- As I said at the beginning – it is a challenging topic!

Key references

- Coleman, J (2009)(Ed.) Well-being in schools. Special Issue of the Oxford Review of Education. 35. 281-422.
- Greig, A et al. (2016) The changing context for mental health and well-being in schools. Educational and Child Psychology. 33.3-129.
- www.healthymindsinschools.org
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