



# Resilience

**Definition:**

Resilience is the capacity to adapt to situations and circumstances by harnessing our positive attributes and individual strengths. Resilience involves the development of a range of skills that act as protective factors which enable individuals to bounce back from life's experiences. Peer Support Foundation, 2003.

“The development of resilience in young people may be most strongly developed by schools creating structures that promote connectedness and belonging, and learning experiences that build in their students a sense of excitement about learning and a sense of hopefulness and possibility for their future” Andrew Fuller, 2001.

Research indicates that resilient students express a sense of belonging and connectedness to individuals, groups and institutions, whereas non resilient students talk less confidently about these factors. A key feature of this module developed by Peer Support Australia is the inclusion of learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to develop this sense of belonging and connectedness.

The focus has shifted from seeking to address problems as they arise, to developing protective factors within students. We now appreciate the value of directing resources towards restoring and protecting environments that foster resilience, strengthening social relationships and equipping young people with skills to navigate their way through life.

As a result, Peer Support Australia developed *Facing our Challenges* with the premise that resilience can be enhanced within students by providing opportunities to develop a range of skills and coping strategies.

**Facing our Challenges**

This 8 session module supports students to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will equip them to cope more effectively with situations and circumstances they may find challenging.

*Facing our Challenges* provides a framework for students to learn about positive self talk and attempt new tasks with the underlying philosophy that perseverance leads to success. It equips students with the ability to approach life optimistically and to develop resilience to deal with difficult experiences.

Optimistic thoughts
It's not all my fault
Things will get better
This situation won't last long
I can change how I deal with this situation
I'll keep trying
I'm good at other things

*Facing our Challenges* highlights a number of protective factors, which enable individuals to maintain their emotional and social wellbeing and cope with life experiences and adversity.

- feeling connected to school and peers
- feeling cared for and supported by teachers
- knowing how to think optimistically
- having one close adult outside the family for support
- having a sense of humour to defuse conflict and cope with pain and anxiety

*Facing our Challenges* focuses on developing the following skills:

- optimism
- empathy
- positive self talk
- perseverance
- resilience
- coping