



CAMBRIDGE

Building resilience

Supporting learners to thrive in a changing world

Suzi Haigh, Education Futures Manager

July 2026

Housekeeping

- Health and safety
- Fire safety
- Washrooms



Agenda

In this session, participants will:

- understand what resilience is and why it matters
- explore a framework for building resilience with learners
- discover practical tools and strategies to use in your school.

What words do we associate with resilience?

Join at menti.com | use code 2686 2883



Resilience

What words do we associate with resilience?

 Mentimeter

PE



Open Menti to edit



Replace this slide



Add Menti slides



menti.com
2538 1609

Waiting for participants

How do we define resilience?

- The ability to bounce back from challenges or adversity.
- Resilience empowers you to grow and improve.
- Resilience is closely linked to wellbeing.
- A resilient learner keeps going even when it's hard.
- It's a skill that can be taught and nurtured.

Why is resilience important?



Good mental health and wellbeing



Adaptability



Perseverance



Self-esteem and confidence



Healthy relationships



Preparing for adulthood

“Our job is not to get them to the finish line, but to prepare them with the character strengths that will launch them into the future.”

Kenneth R Ginsburg

Professor of Paediatrics at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

Activity

Characteristics of a resilient learner...

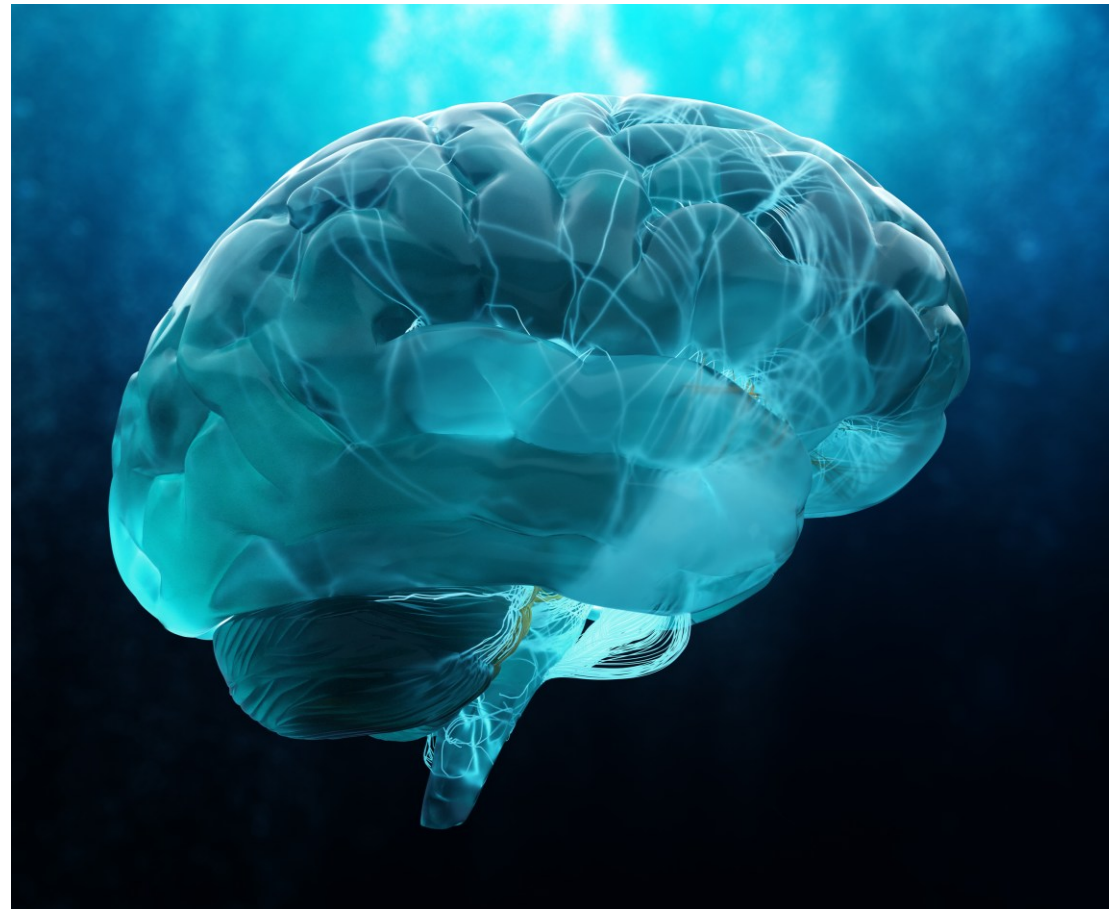
- Keep going, even when it's hard
- Growth mindset
- Stay motivated after a setback
- Take on board feedback
- Try different strategies
- Confident
- Celebrate small wins and progress

Characteristics of a non-resilient learner...

- Give up easily
- Fixed mindset “I’m no good at this”
- Avoids challenges
- Fear of failure
- Lack confidence
- Negative
- Poor emotional regulation
- Reluctant to ask for help

Science of resilience

- The teen brain is a work in progress!
- The brain is not fully formed until the age of 25
- The emotional centre of the brain (amygdala) develops more rapidly than the thinking centre (cerebral cortex) that regulates emotions.



What role does stress play?



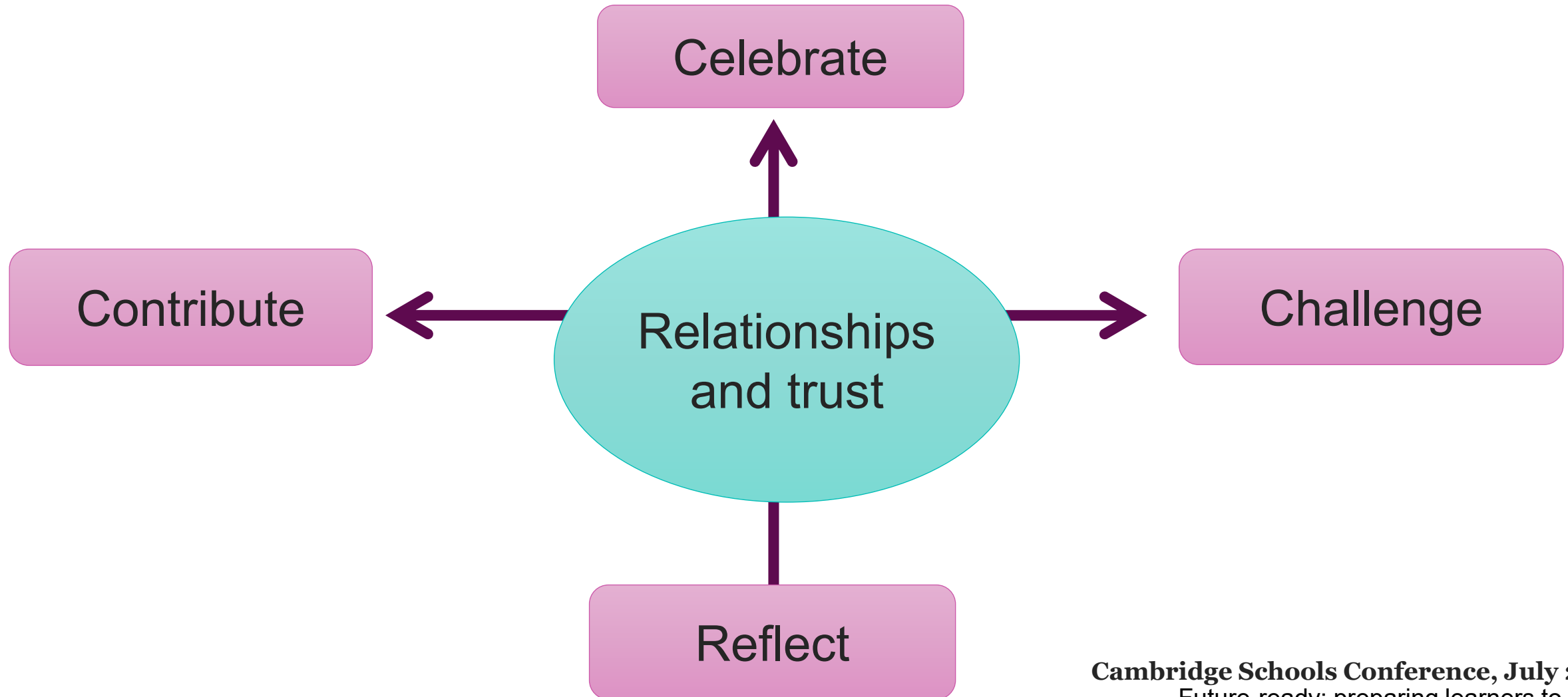
- Stress is a positive biological process
- It helps us to stay safe when facing threats
- It help us to perform well in exams, win a race or give a great performance on the stage.



- Too much stress can have a negative impact
- Feeling anxious
- Can't switch off
- Affects mood
- Affects ability to focus and concentrate
- Can affect health

A whole-school framework for building resilience

A Framework for building resilience in schools



The framework should be underpinned by:



Agency and
voice

Emotion
regulation
and coping

Adult
modelling

What does this look like in practice?

Relationships and trust

- Social connection is vital for our wellbeing
- Staff and students need to feel they belong

Consider the students in your school:

- How well do you know them?
- What are their social connections?

[Connecting with others: How social connections improve the happiness of young adults | The World Happiness Report](#)

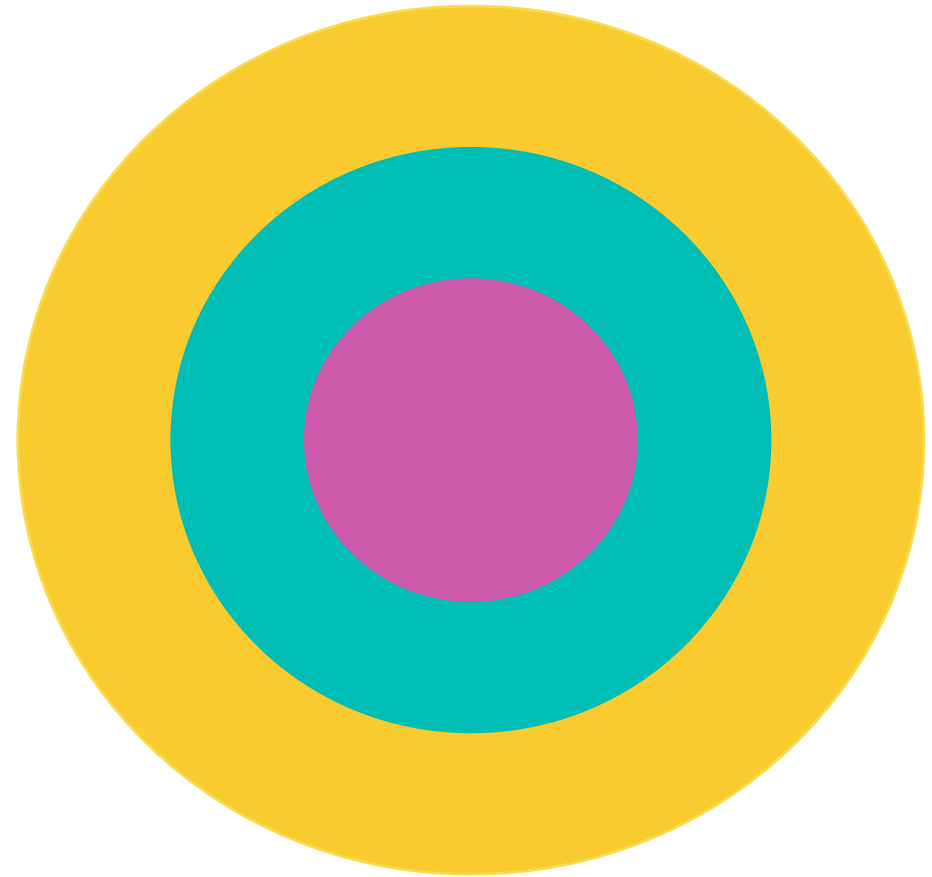
[Trainee teachers with more friends less likely to quit | Tes Magazine](#)

Connection

Help young people to understand their support networks.

Activity:

- Inner circle
- Middle circle
- Outer circle



Contribution

- Everyone contributes to the school community

For example, buddy service, leadership roles, peer support or mentoring, clubs

- Partnerships with local community including parents

For example, local organisations, community partners



Contribution

GREENING THE EXPRESSWAY



As part of our commitment to improve ecological conditions and promote sustainability along our expressways,

Challenge

Learners strengthen resilience by practising manageable discomfort in safe ways.

School culture:

- Challenge is normal
- Gradual challenge levels

“We do hard things with support”



Celebrate

- Celebrate progress and effort

“What got better this week?”

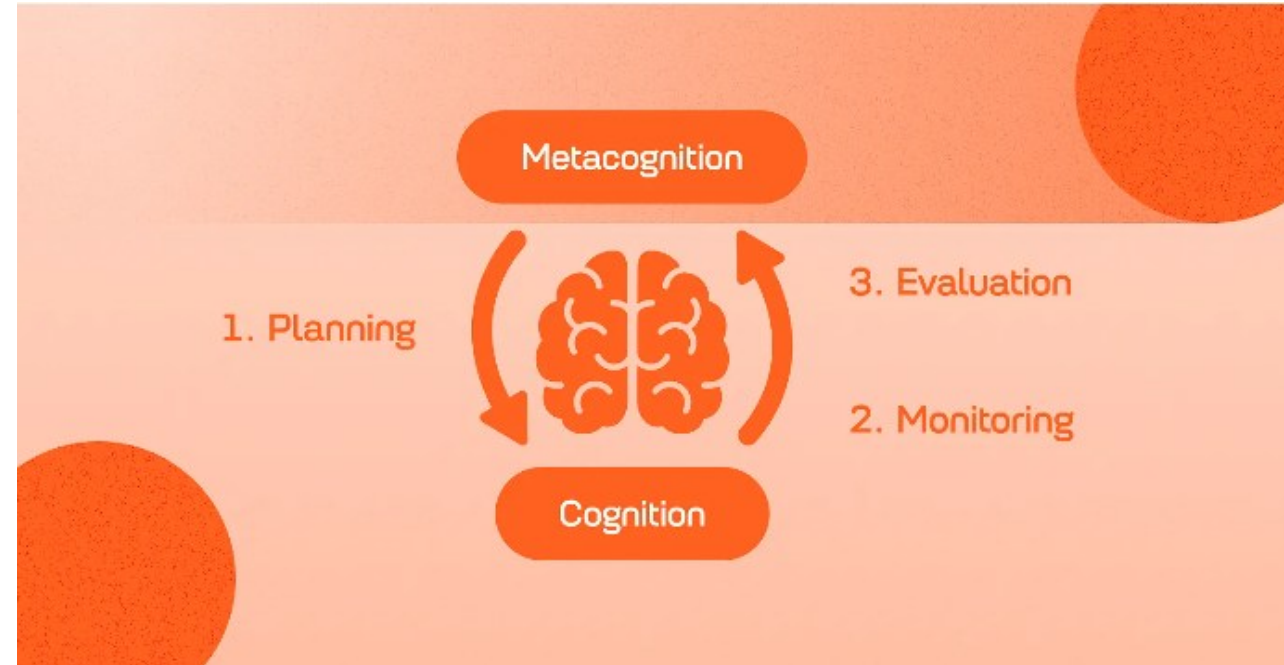
- Make success visible, help learners to see their growth over time
- Keep it fair - ensure quiet progress is recognised not just high achievers

- I tried something new
- I used a different strategy
- I asked for help
- I helped someone else
- I bounced back after a setback

Reflect

Reflection needs to be a routine part of practice, learners need to develop self-awareness

- 1) Support learners to set realistic goals
- 2) Consider what's working/not working?
- 3) What will I do differently next time



[Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning | EEF](#)

Coping strategies



Audit tool

- What do you already do in your school which contributes to building resilience?
- What areas do you want to develop?



Review

Summary



Challenge helps **before**



Tools support us **during**



Reflection helps **after**

Reflect



Understand what resilience is and why it matters



Explore a framework for building resilience

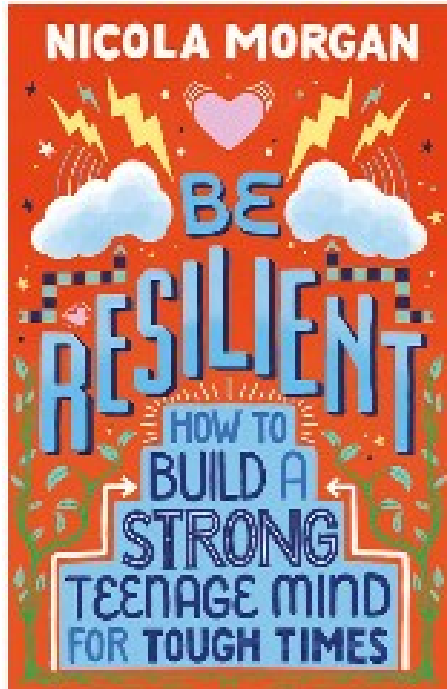


Discover practical strategies to build resilience in your school

What will you do:

- Next week?
- In the next term?
- A year from now?

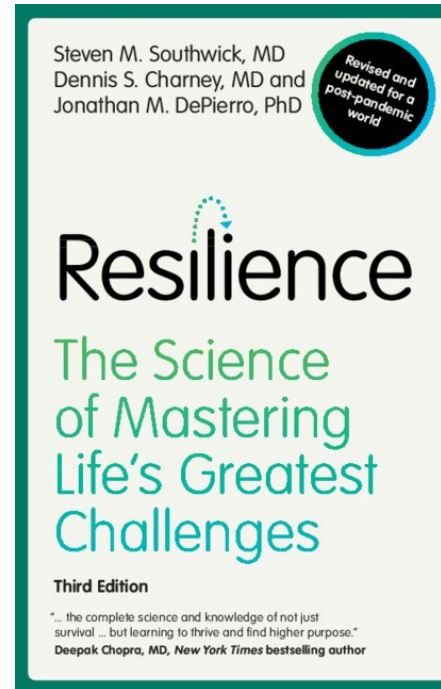
Resources



A fantastic book for teens with coping strategies, tips and advice.

Have a copy in your school library.

[Be Resilient: How to Build a Strong Teenage Mind for Tough Times - Walker Books](#)



Combines cutting-edge scientific research with the personal experiences of individuals who have survived traumatic events to give practical guidance on how to become more resilient.

[Resilience \(3rd edition\) – Cambridge University Press Bookshop](#)

Non-formal education opportunities



Home - Intaward

Three levels of challenge: bronze, silver, gold

Includes:

- Physical recreation
- Skills
- Voluntary service
- Adventurous journey



Capable Kids - Creators of the Mini Duke, Junior Duke & Senior Duke

Hear more about this on our Podcast:
Preparing students for life: Global Perspectives, Junior Duke Award

Feedback



Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2026
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

Any questions?

Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2026
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

Thank you!

Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2026
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive



Get in touch!

+00 (0) 000 000 000

sample@sample.com

cambridge.org/internationaleducation

Cambridge Schools Conference, July 2026
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2026