

Protecting Children's Mental Health By Building Resilience in Schools

Thursday 28 January, 2021

The importance of children's wellbeing and mental health has been well documented during the pandemic. Now, a team of educational psychologists at EdPsychEd believe that we need to understand and instil resilience to maintain wellbeing. Resilience builds, protects and supports children to grow past adversity following challenges, guarding them against mental health difficulties. EdPsychEd has developed a new online programme called **Resilience in Schools and Education (RISE)** launching on the 1st February 2021. RISE includes 35+ practical strategies to use within the classroom, designed to help rather than hinder teachers during this already strenuous time.

Dr Richard Skelton, one of the programme creators, said: "Now, perhaps more than ever, children's resilience is being tested, and many mental health professionals have anticipated a tsunami of mental health difficulties to arise over the coming years. But, there is a lot that we can do to prevent this from happening. Decades of research and practice show us the most important protective resilience factors, and which strategies have the greatest impact to build these up in children. RISE brings all this together into an accessible and practical programme."

RISE is the first programme of its kind, providing an all-inclusive collection of strategies to build resilience. Drawn from decades of scientific research, RISE is a reference guide which gives teachers the practical tools and strategies to build children's resilience capacity throughout their school lives. A useful framework called the '7 Cs & E' is a guide through the programme. It holistically targets key areas that impact children's resilience: competence, contribution, confidence, connectedness, character, coping, control and enjoyment. Creating balance in these critical areas ensures that there are no gaps, reducing the chances of vulnerability.

Dr Lee Randall, one of the programme creators, said: "We know that, in order to maintain good mental health and wellbeing, we need the resilience to cope with the difficult emotions' adversity presents. RISE give us the tools to instil within our children the kind of capacity for resilience that will benefit them for the rest of their lives."

Programmes to improve children's mental health often focus heavily and understandably on wellbeing. However, to protect and maintain wellbeing, children need the resilience to cope with difficult situations. RISE trains staff on how to build children's resilience to prevent instability during difficult experiences. By establishing resilience, the strategies in RISE give children the foundations to not just get through challenges and difficult experiences, but actually learn and grow as a result of them. This is what some have called inoculating children against mental health difficulties using resilience.

RISE launches on the 1st February 2021 and is available in three whole-school packages at www.edpsyched.co.uk. RISE provides continued professional development for staff to build resilience in their students and become specialist RISE practitioners.

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