



# RESILIENCE FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

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**“Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength.”**

**Arnold Schwarzenegger**

Resilience is a personal capability that all members of your school community need -- students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents/guardians – **everyone!** Why? The reason is clear. Every one of us today, in our personal, professional, and educational lives, is faced with a myriad of stressful events and people. Not only can these create numerous headaches and heartaches, but they produce conditions for poor mental health and under-achievement of our potential.

Not too long ago, a teacher I was presenting YCDI! Education to described how one of their students, Alex, entered the class after recess crying and very distressed. The teacher asked the student what had happened. The student sobbed: “Taylor was running past me, pointing their finger (index) at me.” Apparently, Taylor didn’t do anything more than that. Reviewing this example with the teacher, I agreed. Alex’s extreme emotional reaction did seem to reflect a

high level of vulnerability and a lack of resilience to help inoculate and protect.

At another school, I spent time coaching a secondary school librarian, Helen, who was experiencing significant job stress due to the highly disruptive behaviour of one of her Year 9 students when they were in the library. Helen is an outstanding librarian, 110% committed to doing her job well and has a tremendously supportive and caring partner and family. But for the first time in her life, Helen was strongly considering retiring because of the stress she felt every Monday morning getting ready to start a new week. It was evident that to manage and cope with this disruptive student emotionally, Helen required support not only from her leadership, colleagues and family; she needed high degrees of personal resilience.

My final example is parenting today. Knowing how to raise happy, successful children is as



stressful as ever – probably more so! Our children are growing up faster than ever before. Social media and technology, in general, are exerting an extremely dominant influence on our children’s mental health. These can increase everyone’s stress, and we can be lost, not knowing what we can do to help.

## HOW WE DEFINE RESILIENCE

**Resilience means...**When encountering difficult situations, such as changes or challenging people...

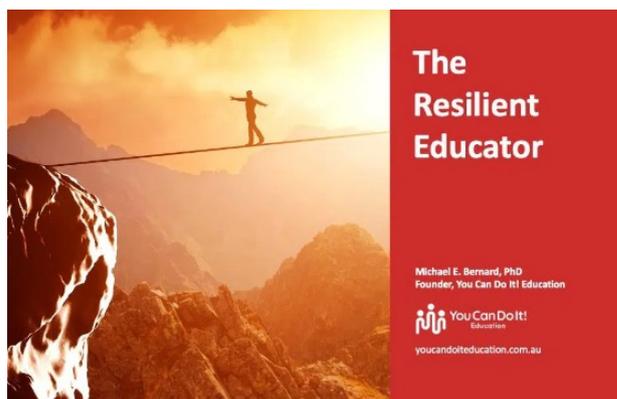
1. being aware of your different emotions (anxiety, anger, feeling down), including the degree of your upset,
2. being able to prevent yourself from getting extremely upset,
3. if you do get extremely upset, being able to control your behaviour so that you do not behave aggressively or withdraw from others at inappropriate times
4. and when you are very upset, knowing how to think and what to do to calm down within a reasonable period
5. then bouncing back to be able to continue with your work and being with others.

There are two standout points.

1. The capacity to be aware of and regulate emotions is required to be able to self-manage behaviour and to be able to bounce back.
2. Resilience is not just reserved for people facing catastrophic, life-threatening events. It is needed regularly to deal with the many hassles of life, not just the horrors.

## HOW YCDI! EDUCATION BUILDS RESILIENCE

We have put in a lot of effort to emphasise to policymakers and senior school leaders that resilience is not just about creating positive relationships. It also involves educating people on



how they can use resilience as a tool to overcome stress.

We continue to advocate for strengthening the resilience of educators (teachers, principals), parents and students. Our resilience programs teach the attitudes - ways of thinking - and coping skills needed for emotional regulation and effective problem solving of all members of a school community.

## HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR PROGRAMS

### The Resilient Educator

(<https://youcandoiteducation.com.au/product/the-resilient-educator/>)

To support educators’ wellbeing and job performance, we have an eLearning professional development course, The Resilient Educator, with which over 10,000 educators have already engaged. The 4-module eLearning course, with an accompanying 35-page digital guide, will

1. strengthen participants’ social-emotional capabilities, and
2. ‘acquaint’ and personalise participants with the attitudes and social-emotional skills teachers present to students as they employ social-emotional programs like Program Achieve.

### Stress Management for Teachers and Principals: A Professional Development Program

(<https://youcandoiteducation.com.au/product/stress-management-for-teachers-and-principals/>)

To combat the constant rise in teacher burnout and early retirement, this program enables



schools to build the psychological capital of staff (who they are as people) to manage stress and cope with the myriad of challenges and demands. Containing the latest neuroscience research identifying the importance of the pre-frontal cortex of your brain (sometimes called your inner CEO) as the source of resilience you need to combat stress. Participants are shown strategies for managing stress designed to activate and strengthen the pre-frontal cortex.



### Investing in Parents

(<https://youcandoiteducation.com.au/product/investing-in-parents-parent-education-classes-to-offer-at-your-school/>)

Our parent education sessions, developed in collaboration with Patricia Bernard, are designed to increase parent effectiveness skills and strengthen parent resilience to manage stress. These sessions can be presented to groups of parents of any size and take 60 – 90 minutes to present.



### Program Achieve. A Social-Emotional Learning Program for early childhood, primary and secondary students, 5th Ed.

(<https://youcandoiteducation.com.au/>)

From the earliest of ages, YCDI!'s early childhood program has introduced young children to resilience using the character (hand puppet) of Ricky Resilience. Young children learn the various things they can do (e.g., talk to a grown-up, find something fun to do) to stay calm when bad stuff happens.

These lessons continue in Program Achieve Primary and Program Achieve Secondary. Each year level contains lessons teaching students what resilience is, an awareness of their reliance, and things to think and do to manage their emotions and behaviours.

### TAKEAWAYS

1. Experience has shown us that when members of your school community are provided with opportunities to strengthen their resilience using YCDI! Education programs, they become more empowered, confident, and less stressed.
2. Instil in all members of your school community the self-belief that by learning more about resilience, they can gradually become more proactive and effective in managing modern-day pressures and the resultant stress.