



May 2021

Wales Primary School

Wellbeing Newsletter

Welcome

To the May edition of our wellbeing newsletter.

In this month's issue, we are going to be looking at resilience; what it means and how we can foster resilience in ourselves and our children.

I have a beautiful, pink blossom tree outside my nurture room window at school and I always think of resilience when I admire this tree. The tree has seen the harshest of weather conditions, has survived long harsh winters and summer droughts but still, come spring time, it produces the most amazing blossoms. No matter what the elements throw at this tree, it still keeps going and giving us beauty; resilience is very much like the tree: keep trying, keep going and the world can be beautiful!

What is Resilience?

Resilience is sometimes also referred to as the ability to bounce back. To have a hardship or adversity and work your way through it.

It is also often assumed that children are naturally resilient. "They are OK, they're young - they'll bounce back". But as we come to understand more about brain development, we now know that resilience needs to be taught and it can be successfully taught at any age.

Helping our children to navigate the stresses and strains of daily life is more important than ever due to not only the recent pandemic but to navigate the growth in an increasing online life. Whilst as parents we can't remove all life's challenges, we can teach our children the skills to cope with stress and adversity and be strengthened in the process.

Resilience is the ability to overcome difficult experiences and be shaped positively by them.



School Website and SEMH

Just in case you haven't already seen it, we have an SEMH section on our school website. We are constantly adding to this so please do keep checking in to see what's new.

Already available in the SEMH section are:

- An in depth explanation of what mental health and wellbeing is
- Parent information leaflets on a range of different mental health topics
- Information leaflets to support adult mental health
- Mental wellbeing support during the Corona Virus
- Wellbeing activities to try at home

The website also provides details of how to get in touch with schools Mental Health and Wellbeing Support.

National Awareness days

3-9 May: Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week

4 May: Star Wars Day 2021

4 – 9 May: Deaf Awareness Week

7 May: NSPCC Number Day 2021

10 – 16th May – Mental Health Awareness Week



How to help your child build resilience

- 1) Have one-on-one time with each child, without distractions.** This is really good for both you and your child's wellbeing and resilience; it's a time to disconnect from the wider world and just simply enjoy each other's company. Resilience comes from relationships; children need nurturing, it's not a magical inner strength that will get your children through those tough times but the reliable presence of one or more positive relationships, be it parent, teacher, relative or family friend. By having this one to one time in place, your children will know they always have a safe space to talk about what's on their mind.
- 2) Get plenty of sleep.** A lack of good quality sleep is a huge driver for stress; it also has a negative effect on memory, concentration, cognitive function and wise decision making. One of the fastest ways to improve sleep – for all of us – is to limit screen time before bed. The type of blue light emitted by digital devices suppresses production of melatonin, the hormone that signals to the body it's time for sleep. In addition, looking at screens before bed keeps us emotionally wired and stimulated, making it harder for us to switch off.
- 3) Get out and Exercise.** As well as keeping us physically fit, regular exercise will increase your child's resilience by strengthening their brain. It's well documented that exercise is on a par with medication when it comes to treating mild to moderate depression and anxiety. This could be because it gets the body used to moving more fluidly in and out of the stress state. The same hormones released when we're stressed (cortisol and adrenaline) are raised temporarily when we exercise. Regular physical activity teaches our stress-response system to recover more efficiently.
- 4) Teach delayed gratification.** Resilience means understanding you can't always have what you want as soon as you want it. It's an important concept to pass on in the age of Amazon Prime, Spotify, Netflix and Uber. Psychology teaches us that people who can accept delayed gratification lead happier, healthier lives. Without the ability to defer pleasure and reward, our children are losing an important skill for their wellbeing. One of the best ways to teach it? Playing board games. These require impulse control, turn-taking, and mental flexibility. They exercise the prefrontal cortex, the rational part of the brain involved in decision-making, emotional regulation and, yes, resilience. Board games are also a good way for you to model resilience by being a good loser.
- 5) Eat well.** Nutrition has a significant impact on mental health. Good-quality food changes the composition of our gut bugs, which helps send calm signals to the brain. Poor-quality, highly processed food sends stress signals instead. A diverse diet, rich in fibre, will lead to greater diversity in our gut bugs which in turn will help make us be more resilient, and anxiety and depression less likely. Persuading children to eat more healthily can feel like an uphill battle, though, especially if they're fussy, so this is not about becoming a top chef – just trying a few tricks like eating more greens that can really benefit them emotionally.

Wellbeing Activity

The Gratitude Game

You can play this simple game over meal times at the table. Everyone takes it in turns to answer three questions:

- 1) What did someone do today to make you happy?
- 2) What did you do today to make somebody else happy?
- 3) What have you learnt today?

This simple exercise helps us all find the positive in every day. It teaches gratitude, nurtures optimism, and recognises kindness.

Useful websites for mental health and wellbeing

www.nhs.uk

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.cruse.org.uk (bereavement)