



Resilience approaches for the school context.

Conceptual issues



Professor Angie Hart, with thanks to the Boingboing community, especially Dr Suna Erygit-Madzawamuse, Lisa Williams and Josie Maitland

19th May 2016





Background in UK re Schools-based resilience

- ❖ 10% of UK's child & adolescent population have clinically diagnosed mental health problems.
- ❖ Child & adolescent mental health services is in crisis.
- ❖ Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention is one of the key areas in current policy.





Early intervention matters

Half of lifetime cases of diagnosable mental illnesses begin between the ages of 5 & 16

Only **less than 50%** are treated appropriately at the time

Economic returns of early childhood intervention programmes exceed cost by an average ratio of 1:6

The total annual cost of mental health problems in the UK exceeds **£100 billion**

In an average class of 30 15-year-old pupils



3 could have a mental disorder

health



10 are likely to have witnessed their parents separate



1 could have experienced death of a parent



7 are likely to have been bullied



6 may be self-harming

10%



70%

10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

(Children's Society, 2008)

School Context

- ❖ Schools have greatest access to children and young people and therefore the opportunity to have enormous impact on their mental health.
- ❖ Big issue of inequality in outcomes in the UK for rich and poor students
- ❖ Private schools cream off the brightest students and take their parents with them.....
- ❖ Resilience approaches prominent in Australia, UK, USA etc.



Conceptual and practical problems...

- Many school-based resilience programmes lack:
 - Conceptual clarity – what definition of resilience are they using?
 - Theory of change
 - Effectiveness
 - Honest information on costs
 - The possibility of schools sustaining them
 - Bit question about which children these programmes are aimed at...

Who is often missing from research?

- Young people with complex needs and/or living in poverty are often excluded from research – intentionally or unintentionally
 - Selection of subclinical children or with no ‘co-morbid’ conditions
 - Using written/computer-based materials with a high reading age
 - Using inaccessible or non-adaptable activities eg ropes/CBT
 - Including young people from mainstream school/university/workplace
- Ableist mindset and disability blindness
- Absence of inequalities imagination



Political economy of research?

- ‘Tame’ research populations
- Academic capitalism – sale of knowledge ‘products’
- Economy of scale – development of universal approaches
- Focus on measurable outcomes
- Balancing cost-efficiency against ‘worthwhile-ness’?

<http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php/getting-hold-of-our-stuff/17-static-content/materials-publications/226-resilience-guide-2015>



Beyond RCT research on schools-based resilience programmes....

- To what extent do schools approaches actually include the most vulnerable students?
- How systems orientated are they?

- Widespread support for a whole school approach to reducing inequality and fostering mental health
- But many programmes are found to be overly reliant on funding, resources and external practitioners, threatening their sustainability.
- Our research helping schools experiment with self facilitated projects. Not reliant on external providers and additional funding.



Conceptual and practical approach to resilience we are taking...

- There has been an increasingly ecological approach to resilience over its life span
- However, criticisms of the study of resilience, and its application to social policy, remain...

Critiques of a focus on resilience

- “A focus on resilience cannot adequately explain inequalities in [health] and wellbeing and may serve to disguise or distract from analysis of social structures that result in and maintain inequalities in power, wealth and privilege” (**Friedli, 2012**)
- “the individualised [...] notion of resilience [...] obscures historical and more recent structural inequalities that are fundamental barriers to the wellbeing of the poor and blames and penalises them for what are [...] deemed to be their failings, deficits and unhealthy dependencies” (**Bottrell, 2012**)
- “putting a sticking plaster over the wound caused by macro-structural inequalities in power and resources” (**Taylor, Mathers, Atfield & Parry, 2011**)

Our inequalities approach

- Based on pragmatist philosophy – a post neo-liberal approach to resilience
- An overarching critical approach that acknowledges importance of individual resilience, within context of systems change and addressing social inequalities that create and maintain adversity contexts
- Brings resilience research and practice development together with activism explicitly to unite resilience work with social justice values

“Resilience is overcoming adversity, whilst also potentially subtly altering, or even dramatically transforming, (aspects of) that adversity”

or in other words:

“Beating the odds whilst also changing the odds”.

Inherently a systems definition of resilience

Schools-based resilience interventions need to:

- contribute to the **capacity building** and **sustainability** of good practice across the multiple levels of the local system;
- build **resilience** of the whole school community;
- influence the behavioural, academic and wellbeing **outcomes** of children and young people



Complex Systems

- Sum is **more than the parts**
- **Open** to the environment and other systems
- **Large number of interactions** create system
- **Dynamic flow** – ‘energy, evolution, change’
- Interactions are **reinforced** or **checked**
- Most interactions are **short range**, with limited knowledge of system ‘Each element in the system is ignorant of the behaviour of the system as a whole, it responds only to information that is available to it locally.’ (Cilliers, 1998, pp. 3-4)
- Moderation of influences – **dilutes** affects





- ❖ The **Academic Resilience Approach (ARA)** is strategic planning and practice that involves the whole school community to help vulnerable young people do better than their circumstances might have predicted
- ❖ *It is key to sustainability of resilience mechanisms*
- ❖ *Has a freely available web-version*
- ❖ *You can use the web resources for free or facilitation of the approach can be commissioned from Boingboing/University of Brighton*

The Academic Resilience Approach was devised by Lisa Williams and Professor Angie Hart with input from other individuals and organisations especially YoungMinds, Hove Park School and Eleanor Smith School.

It has been adopted by YoungMinds and other organisations, including schools in Durham, Blackpool and Bedford.

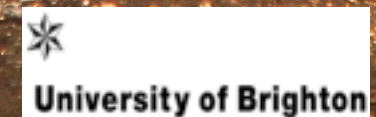
The ARA is based on Professor Hart's collaborative resilience work at the University of Brighton and boingboing.

Developed in partnership with
YOUNGMINDS
The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing

LISA
WILLIAMS
CONSULTING



University of Brighton
Community
University
Partnership
Programme



[Resilience research](#)
[Resilience in practice](#)
[What is Resilient Therapy?](#)
[Getting to grips with RT](#)
[Using Resilient Therapy](#)
[Communities of Practice](#)
[Academic Resilience](#)
[Approach](#)
[Resilience Forum](#)
[Training & events](#)
[Getting hold of our stuff](#)
[Who are we?](#)
[Subscribe](#)

Donate



Free, practical resources to help everyone in the school community step up and support pupils' academic resilience.

Our resources:

- Help any school establish systems to build 'resilience approaches' that support disadvantaged pupils over time through a whole school approach
- Will benefit all pupils from a school-wide approach to increasing academic resilience
- Raise achievement
- Offer 'quick wins' that can be implemented immediately
- Help identify pupils who are at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential
- Provide practical approaches to help pupils do better than might be expected
- Offer ideas to help everyone in the school community play a part.

All our resources are based on research evidence and practice. One Head teacher involved in developing Academic Resilience uses a famous quote from NASA to illustrate the idea of a whole school approach:

Resilience Forum

[COPs and Social Learning Theory](#)

Friday 30 June - FREE

1.15pm – 3.00pm

Brunswick, Central Library,
Queen Street, Blackpool

Training

Blackpool

[Free 2hr intro to resilience](#)

Thur 27 Apr - Free

[Intro to Resilient Therapy](#)

Mon 15 May - Free/£120

[Practitioner resilience](#)

Tue 16 May - Free/£120

[Understanding the Academic Resilience Approach](#)

Fri 5 May - Free/£120

[More workshops...](#)

Brighton



The ARA intervention

Based on complex systems theory and a social justice oriented resilience framework

A whole school based community development model

Identifies multiple resilience building mechanisms that are applicable in multiple contexts with students

Focuses on protective processes



Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow with Thomas 2007

	BASICS	BELONGING	LEARNING	COPING	CORE SELF
SPECIFIC APPROACHES	Good enough housing	Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	Make school/college life work as well as possible	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	Instil a sense of hope
		Help child/YP understand their place in the world			
	Enough money to live	Tap into good influences	Engage mentors for children/YP	Being brave	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings
	Being safe	Keep relationships going		Solving problems	
	Access & transport	The more healthy relationships the better	Map out career or life plan	Putting on rose-tinted glasses	Help the child/YP to know her/himself
		Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope		Fostering their interests	
	Healthy diet	Get together people the child/YP can count on	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	Calming down & self-soothing	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself
		Responsibilities & obligations			
	Exercise and fresh air	Focus on good times and places	Highlight achievements	Remember tomorrow is another day	Foster their talents
	Enough sleep	Make sense of where child/YP has come from		Lean on others when necessary	
	Play & leisure	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Develop life skills	Have a laugh	There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them
	Being free from prejudice & discrimination				
NOBLE TRUTHS					
ACCEPTING		CONSERVING	COMMITMENT		ENLISTING

WWW.BOINGBOING.ORG.UK

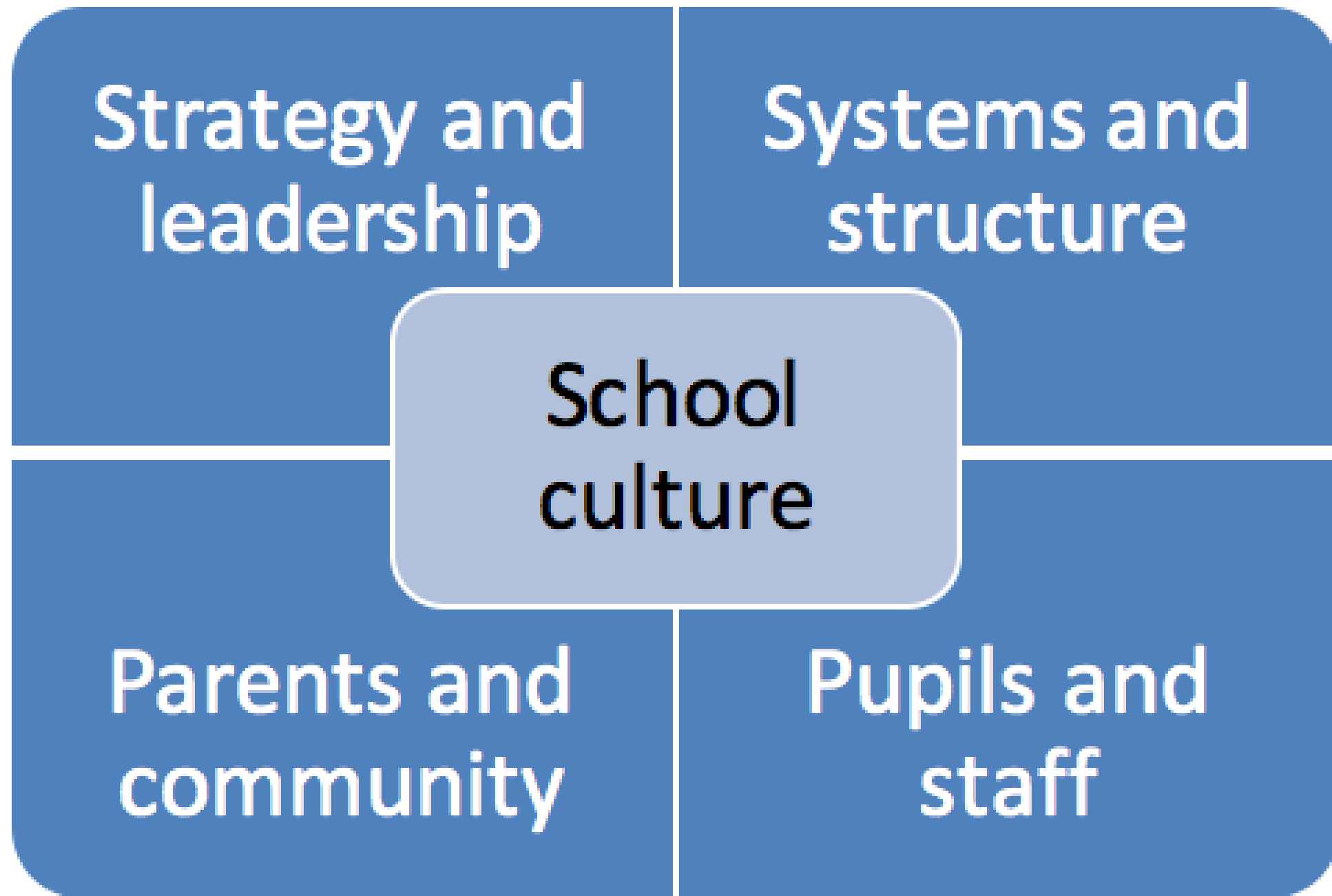
Resilient Framework Model...



What the Framework means...from a teacher

- To achieve a healthy adult into the community is a co-production of school, parents and the pupil working together on shared goals. The resilience framework provides areas to focus on and achieve goals to achieve personal outcomes using a shared approach. These can be time focussed (short or long term) and enable the child to take responsibility for themselves once they are ready to have that independence. The framework enables a pupil to see all the characteristics which create a 'healthy adult', it isn't a quick fix or a 6wk intervention which enables a healthy adult to develop; it is definite, concrete steps and secure changes with appropriate adaptations, and allows the pupil to experience these successes and the outcomes they bring.

- “It’s the whole organisational approach that works. Working with individuals won’t work because then kids are only getting the message in one place, that won’t help. There needs to be consistency and it needs to be about shared values within the whole system.”



Whole school community & whole organisation approach.....

The school as a complex system of interacting elements making up the whole

How schools can help...



how schools can help

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du8lkH-HNnw>

- ❖ Research tells us that applying the resilience approach to a whole school will be more sustainable
- ❖ Planning ahead to ensure students can be resilient is more effective
- ❖ Everyone in the school has the power to make resilient moves
- ❖ Finding out who is vulnerable is very important
- ❖ Capturing information about students and knowing how to use the the information is important
- ❖ Finding out what staff, pupils and parents think is also crucial
- ❖ Thinking creatively using the Resilience Framework

The steps of the ARA are:

- ❖ Initial senior leadership team meeting
- ❖ Staff workshops/training on resilience
- ❖ School audits with staff, senior management, students and parents
- ❖ Development of action plans based on intelligence derived from above steps
- ❖ Implementation of action plans and review through further training and consultancy

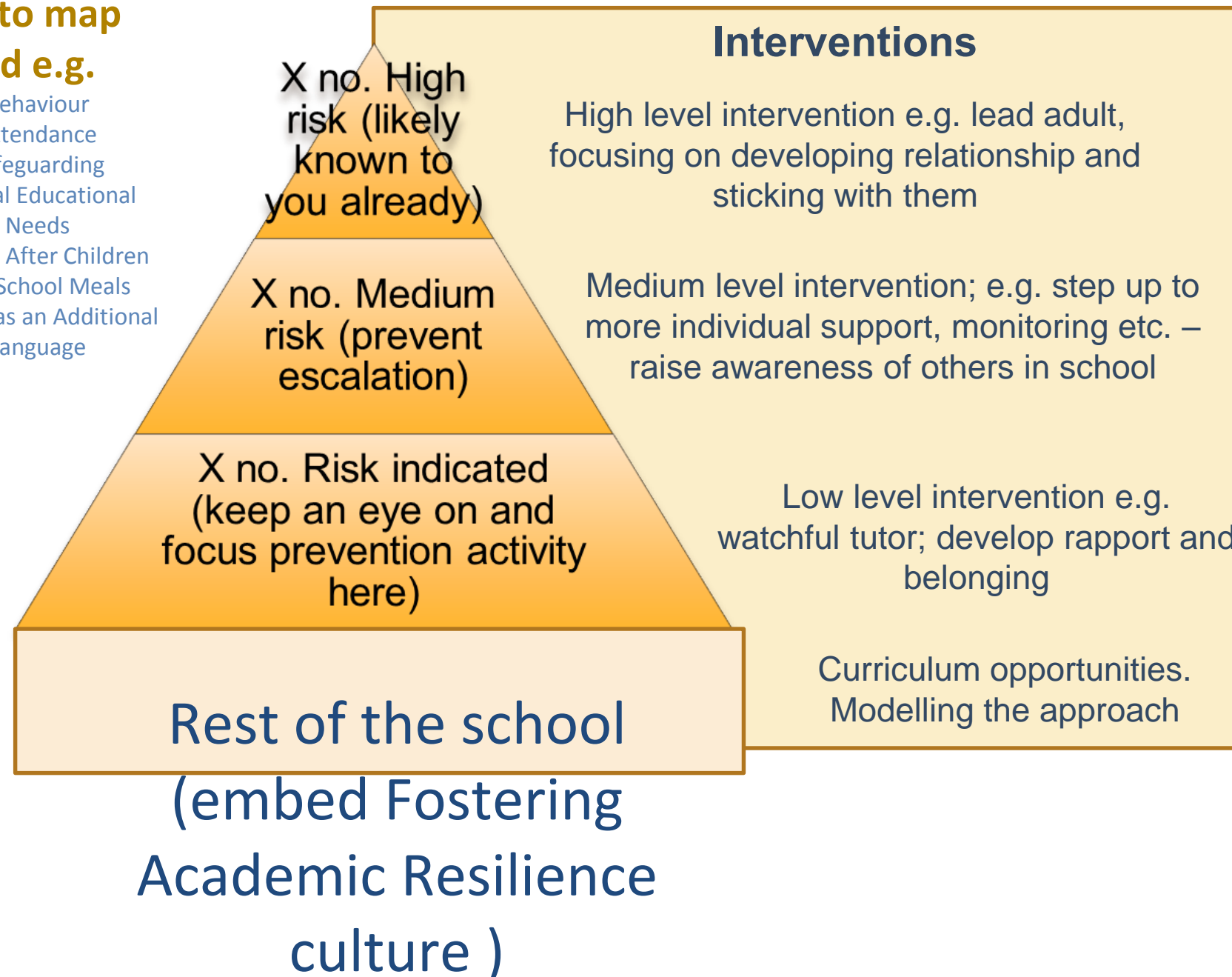


<http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php/resilience-in-practice/ara>

‘Pyramid of Need’ – score and collate pupil data to map

need e.g.

- ❖ Behaviour
- ❖ Attendance
- ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ Special Educational Needs
- ❖ Looked After Children
- ❖ Free School Meals
- ❖ English as an Additional Language



Examples of actual delivery/changes

- ❖ Primary Vulnerability Register template – resulting in structured delivery – universal and targeted
- ❖ Resilience/well being weeks – using Resilient classroom resources (adapted)
- ❖ Building resilience lens into planning – class and individual levels
- ❖ Co-production with parents – parents place, better use of family workers, proactive family support, parent led projects
- ❖ Improved transition planning – for children moving to and from Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and vulnerable children moving schools (and their families)
- ❖ Changed behaviour policies
- ❖ Change in school day
- ❖ Extra staff capacity
- ❖ Evaluation measures - school behaviour database, resilience walks through school

Staff pledges following whole staff training

- “Try and be consistently patient with all my students and answer all questions even if they are not work related.”
- “Take an interest in my students’ days, and ask them how their day is going when they come to my lessons.”
- “Talk about their future plans with them.”
- “Speak and get to know the more quiet students in my form.”
- “Getting to know about my students’ interests and talking about these with them.”
- “Knowing more about their personal lives.”
- “Making more personal phone calls home.”

Pilot evaluation data

- “I’ve been seeing how staff have changed their behaviour towards students. The restorative language is now a real part of the language and culture with staff, and staff seem to really care about fixing a problem with students, instead of not caring. That for me is hard evidence.”
- “We’re proud and think there is significant shift in students wanting to be part of school life. For example today with cultural day we’re holding for charity, 95% of students were taking part.”
- “Without a shadow of a doubt this has been the most impactful area. They’re [the young people involved] engaging with the school, and with staff and having to think about how to change things at the school.”

- Giving staff the training on the Academic Resilient Approach has enabled the staff to have more confidence to deal with wellbeing themselves. I think before that they were a bit worried that they might do or say the wrong thing or that it wasn't their job to do that. They're now more aware within the classroom setting and more pro-active with what they're doing themselves.
- Drawing on the training we have had on the ARA has meant that a lot of children have been picked up a lot earlier and given support packages - high level interventions that have dropped down as they have developed the skills they need. I'd say that what we've put in place is a lot more targeted so it's a lot more effective.

Verdict

- we are much more aware of who the vulnerable groups are now in school and the children are more aware of the techniques and strategies they can use to help themselves and how to communicate to us and it's made a big difference ... soft outcome wise - they are happier, they trust us - there's a big trust culture now - they absolutely know that they can go to any adult and be heard and that's made a huge impact on them.
- One of the crucial things we created from the project was a) - employing the wellbeing officer but b)- having someone just below her which was a mentor and with that - as the year has evolved - she now does a drop in clinic on a Monday and Friday lunchtime which is heavily used and the Tuesday is the school nurse drop in as well as referrals being made to the wellbeing officer which is one on one - so the whole system and tiered approach to that has created the culture shift which we think isn't fully established but has definitely moved in the right direction.
- we've had 2 members of staff where we took them off timetable and allowed them to have 1:1 time with the wellbeing officer and that prevented long term sickness

In one school ARA has led to...

- A decrease in the number of reported incidents at school. Last year in the same period of time they had 634 recorded incidents, this year they have 134.
- The percentage of resolved incidents has risen. Last year 30% of incidents were resolved, while this year 76% of incidents have been resolved.

What the children say....

- “The teaching assistant at my school knew me really well. She could tell when I was upset even if I didn’t say anything”
- ““I enjoy when we get to think of ideas to improve the school and know that we are allowed to say anything.”
- “I always liked seeing Mr Jones because he liked football too, and he came to watch me play after school sometimes”

What the children say

- He shouldn't be shy because there's lots of lovely people here
- People will always help you
- If you're playing an activity and you don't know what to do you should ask a buddy.
- Child describes the sunny or blue process. It's helpful 'cos your feelings are let out - they're not trapped inside.'
- He might need to know that it's a very nice school - we have a lot of grown ups here who - if you're feeling worried - or if you're not feeling very good to day then there's always an adult you can go and tell ... you can go to anyone.... mostly you can go at break time and lunch time because then you have plenty of time to get everything out ... if you've got a certain teacher you like to talk to then you can ask to go and see them.
- Children describe special help for children who get angry/upset - include the sensory tent and 'smell the cake and blow out the candle' technique for controlling breath.

Durham Resilience Project

Aim:

To establish a sustainable approach to building resilience of the whole school community (drawing on the ARA), which in turn will influence the behavioural, academic and wellbeing outcomes of pupils in schools.

Overall, the aim is to help more vulnerable young people thrive in spite of adverse circumstances, thus reducing educational inequality.

Who?

All schools in a county called Durham in the North of England were invited to participate (primary, secondary and special education settings). At present around 34 schools are part of the project with more signing up. The area has a higher level of 'disadvantaged' students (including SEND, low SES)

How?

Educational Psychologists from the local county who already know the schools are delivering training to all school staff based on the freely available Academic Resilience resources through 'twilight' training sessions.

Audits of existing school practice are then carried out with reference to the resilience framework identifying priorities for an action plan which develops existing practice and includes a set of strategy and policy changes bespoke to each education setting. The Educational Psychologists then act as facilitators to guide the progress of the project and capture data as it progresses.

Durham Resilience Project Evaluation

The DRP is being evaluated by a team at Brighton University who are sharing their findings with facilitators and school staff in Durham.

The DRP evaluation is part of the Imagine project

- ❖ Overall aims of the evaluation are
- ❖ A) to consider the extent to which the ARA has contributed to the capacity building and sustainability of good practice across the multiple levels of the system
- ❖ B) To explore the extent to which resilience of the whole school community increases, and the impact this may have on measurable pupil outcomes

Durham Resilience Project Evaluation

- ❖ **Data being collected throughout the DRP evaluation:**
- ❖ Pupil and staff demographics
- ❖ Pupil resilience survey
- ❖ Staff school climate survey
- ❖ School Audits and Action plans
- ❖ Facilitator interviews
- ❖ School staff interviews
- ❖ Focus group interviews
- ❖ Pupil attendance, staff absence, exclusion rates, referral rates and academic data



Emerging data of the ARA in the DRP

- ❖ Discussions with facilitators (Educational Psychologists) suggest that **current local impact of national budget cuts** (including potential redundancies and resulting teaching assistant strike action) has presented significant adversity for staff, making the ARA timely and relevant for staff
- ❖ In some schools, the **ARA has a strong focus emerging from contextual need**. For example, in one school the facilitator reports that the insular nature of the local community can prevent young people accessing opportunities on offer county wide. A scheme has been set up where local schools offer free extra curricular activity sharing run by parents and carers who, prior to the ARA were seen as unsupportive of school in general by school staff. The facilitator reports that parents, staff and students are communicating more openly and with a shared goal of resilience building
- ❖ In other schools, staff are using the **ARA to reinvent school ethos**, drawing together the often competing aims of academic and pastoral development

The Staff Perceptions of School Climate Survey (SPSC)

- ❖ At this stage **all staff in all schools have completed the SPSC survey** combining three existing scales that measure organisational climate from staff perspectives (Social Capital Scale(Onyx & Bullen, 2000), Health Promoting Schools (Lemerle, 2005), School Organisational Health Questionnaire (Hart et al, 2000))
- ❖ The survey has nine subscales exploring staff perceptions (via a self report likert-type scale) of school climate including leadership, workload, morale, peer support and connection community partners
- ❖ The survey will be repeated at the end of the ARA in order to see if the organisational climate acted as a facilitator or barrier to ARA implementation, and also to see if any change in staff perception occurs as a result of the ARA
- ❖ In addition to the survey – interviews are carried out once a term with facilitators in each school and with a sub sample of leaders, teachers and non teaching staff in case study schools.

The Staff Perceptions of School Climate Survey (SPSC) Results

- ❖ Most schools in this area have a higher than average intake of students with special educational needs (SEND) and from areas of socio-economic deprivation
- ❖ But data suggests **that even where adversity for students is high and workload for staff is high, organisational climate can still be perceived as a positive force in promoting resilience if staff feel supported by and connected to one another and to a shared vision.**



Staff Survey Results contd.

- ❖ Data suggests that by **distributing power beyond leadership teams and reducing workload** (particularly work that is seen as less meaningful), organisational climate including **staff morale is likely to become more positive.**
- ❖ Since we already know that staff and student wellbeing and outcomes are **interrelated** (Malmberg & Hagger, 2009; Moolenaar, 2010; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Roth et al., 2007; Covell et al, 2009), this may suggest **that outcomes for young people can be raised by tackling these aspects of staff experience**

Contacts and websites

- Website: www.boingboing.org.uk
- Boingboing training details available on our website:
<http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php/training>
- Short film on resilience
Tedex:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPUzjyAoOK4>
- Various films on resilience including one on systems
http://www.youngminds.org.uk/training_services/head_start/resources



Resources and information available at:

<http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php/resilience-in-practice/ara>

