



Newsletter

No 11

18/06/2020

Welcome to another of our weekly newsletters. This week our topic is '**Resilience**' which is our ability to regain original form (or bounce back, like elastic does!) and to thrive and fulfil potential in spite of adversity or difficult circumstances. When life situations get out of balance it is the one quality and skill we need most to get us through the difficult times such as we're experiencing at the moment. **Resilient people** are aware of situations, their own emotional reactions and the behaviour of those around them. By remaining aware, they can maintain control of a situation and think of new ways to tackle problems as they understand that life is full of challenges. We hope that you'll be able to use some of the ideas here and apply them to yourself!

It's also our anniversary and a celebration for us all, as Recovery in Mind has been running courses for 4 years this week! What a lot has happened in that time and what a fantastic, inspirational bunch of people we have been privileged to meet during this time. We'd love to share a celebration with you all, but sadly it'll have to wait until we'll meet again. (Good title for a song there..... and an excuse for cake!).



Best wishes to you all from the Recovery in Mind Team

Don't miss Angela on Kennet Radio on a Friday morning just after the news around 8:03am!

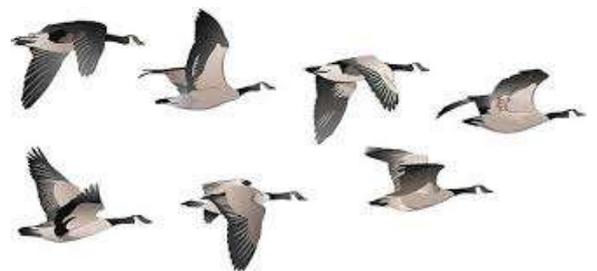


In This Week's Issue

- Celebrating Resilience on Recovery in Mind's 4th Birthday by Angela
- Resilience and Mindfulness a personal reflection by Gillian
- 10 Ways to build resilience
- Stories of resilience by Cath
- Still I Rise by Maya Angelou
- Realistic Optimism
- Personal Development to build your resilience
- What is 'Distress Intolerance'? And how to practice skills for it
- Colouring for Resilience by Sarah
- 'Resilience' wordsearch by Fiona
- Students' Corner
- External links and further help and support

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about your despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.



Mary Oliver

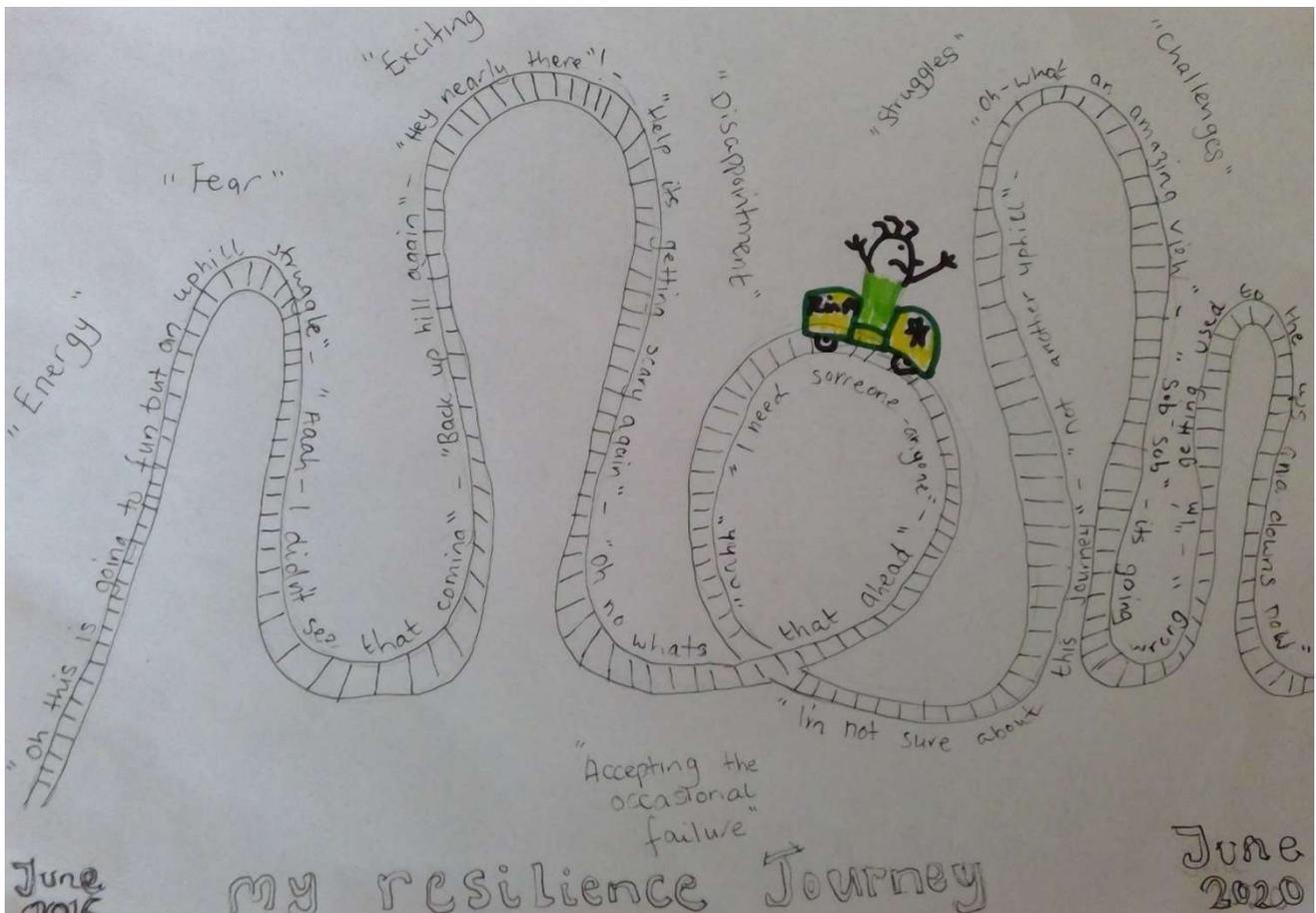
**"DO NOT JUDGE ME BY
MY SUCCESSES, JUDGE
ME BY HOW MANY TIMES
I FELL DOWN AND GOT
BACK UP AGAIN."**

Nelson Mandela

Celebrating Resilience on Recovery in Mind's 4th Birthday.

The past four years have gone so quickly. When I decided to set up Recovery in Mind I really didn't know what I was letting myself in for. It seems appropriate that this weeks Newsletter theme is resilience. On Monday 15th June was our fourth Birthday. My personal resilience has been tested over and over during this period. From the first difficulties in trying to register the company to the latest challenges caused by Covid 19, it has been a roller coaster of a journey. And it really has seemed like a journey

I hope you can see from my little diagram that it has been a journey of ups and downs. I have felt everything from 100% joy and triumphant to feeling beaten by my efforts and ready to give up. But what I have learnt is that it has helped me to become resilient. I was very naive when I started and expected it to be a challenge at times but nothing could have prepared me for the highs and lows. So, four years on we are celebrating our 4th Birthday and for now we are 'surviving' but in the future we will 'thrive' again. It is thanks to all our staff team, supporters, funders, my family, friends and you the students that have given me the opportunity of this journey and although I haven't exactly enjoyed every minute I have learnt to become resilient. We are all on this journey called 'Life' and much of what appears we don't see coming which is a good job as we might not have ventured out to experience more of life. Yes, it's scary and coming out again after Covid 19 will give us all ups and downs but I hope that knowing we are here will help you to steer through whatever life brings.



Resilience and Mindfulness – a personal reflection

While out walking today I was reflecting on my reaction to the easing of the lockdown and the consequential increase in the number of people about, both on the roads and out walking. Having become used to everywhere being fairly quiet I find myself becoming irritated by people's behaviour. This is not helpful to my well-being and I started to think how to become more resilient. I remembered a phrase from mindfulness which is "drowning or fighting". This describes a reaction to a stressful situation, either you are "drowning" by letting it overwhelm you or you "fight" which makes you angry. Neither of these are particularly helpful reactions. What I need to do is notice what the other people are doing but not connect with how that makes me feel and move on. By doing this the walk became much more enjoyable as did the drive home.

Gillian

Recovery in Mind '10 Ways to Build Resilience'

1. Make connections - by building healthy relationships with those close to us, being open to accepting help, and helping others to strengthen our resilience;
2. Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems - by reassessing, reframing, and adapting our responses to stressful events. By looking forward to the future rather than focusing on the problem at hand;
3. Accept that change is a part of living - and focusing on what we can, rather than cannot change;
4. Move toward our goals - setting realistic targets and goals that we can accomplish...
5. Take decisive actions - ...and take decisive steps to achieve.
6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery - we can learn from traumatic, stressful, or difficult events, use them to make ourselves stronger and more resilient;
7. Nurture a positive view of ourselves - trusting our instincts and growing confidence in our own capabilities;
8. Keep things in perspective - and avoid catastrophizing or losing our long-term view.
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook - being optimistic, using visualization techniques and
10. Take care of ourselves - physically, emotionally, and socially.

Also remember the following are important:

Knowing our resources: "I have", where we think about our social support networks;

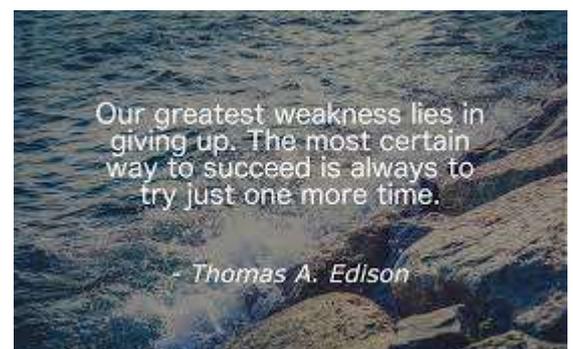
Knowing our strengths: "I am", which comprise our virtues and the good things about ourselves; and

Knowing our abilities: "I can", which covers how we can use our resources to train our resilience.

Video available:

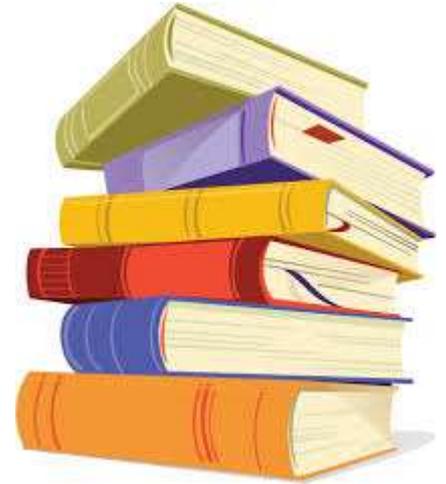
<https://youtu.be/fPMqMJMiBiA>

From the APA brochure 'The Road to Resilience'



Stories of Resilience

One of the opportunities our enforced time at home has given us is more time to read. I don't know about you, but I've retrieved a few of the books sitting on my bookcase (some of them for years, sadly!), unread. One of these was the novel 'The Tattooist of Auschwitz' by Heather Morris, which I was given for Christmas 2018. I would highly recommend it to anyone who hasn't read it. The book tells the true story of Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew imprisoned in the notorious Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. I found it an incredibly powerful and moving story of survival, determination, courage, hope, compassion and love in the most unimaginably horrific of circumstances. In short, it was a story that demonstrated the triumph of human resilience over extreme adversity and was, ultimately, a hugely uplifting story, notwithstanding the atrocities described.



There are many well-known men and women throughout history, of course, whose courage, determination and resilience have enabled them to achieve amazing things to make the world a better place. (I've probably got some of their biographies sitting gathering dust on my bookcase too!!) What I particularly liked about this book was that the individual concerned wasn't famous; it was a very personal story of one individual among many thousands. That didn't make him any the less remarkable; he clearly was remarkable in many ways (as were several of the other characters in the book), and his story was, I found, quite incredible - breathtakingly so, in places.

That got me thinking...

One of the aspects I've always enjoyed most in my career as an occupational therapist, is the opportunity to hear people's personal stories. Back in my old role at CMHT, I always enjoyed meeting individuals for the first time and hearing their stories - not what was written in their clinical notes - but their own narratives. And then, sometimes having the opportunity to work alongside them, and having a small part to play in their journey towards recovery. I have always considered it an enormous privilege to be entrusted with an individual's story, and have frequently been moved, challenged and humbled when I've heard of the difficulties people have faced and had to overcome (I say that very genuinely). I have heard countless stories of courage, tenacity, optimism, hope and, yes, resilience over the years.

And, of course, that it is equally true of all of you at Recovery in Mind. You each have your individual story, as Angela reminded us a few weeks ago, when she spoke about how our stories can be a gift to ourselves and to others. The threads of hope, control, opportunity...and resilience run through every student's story, I would suggest. Whilst your

"Rock bottom became
the solid foundation on which
I rebuilt my life."

- J.K. Rowling

stories might not be written down and made into best-selling novels, as Lale Sokolov's was (although, maybe there are some that might; why not?), they are each important, inspiring and remarkable in their own way. I believe our stories are each uniquely precious; let's treasure them.

Cath

Still I Rise - Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Realistic Optimism

Here is a proposition: "We only have one life so it's important to make the most of it."

Would you agree with that?

Now consider this idea: The things we can change, we should. The things we can't change, we must accept.

- Realistic optimism means seeing things as they are, accurately, then making the best of them.
- Realistic optimism is **not** about wishful thinking. It is certainly not about ignoring problems. Making the best of things might mean you make radical changes to a situation - or that you leave the situation altogether.
- Realistic optimism is about engaging with life positively and constructively.
- It's about taking personal responsibility for your choices.
- It's about taking a problem-solving approach to difficulty.
- It's about looking for solutions.

Making the best of a difficult situation

A difficult situation presents you with two basic options and then a choice.

Two basic options...**Change the situation** or **change your response to the situation**.

1. **Change the situation**

Can I change the situation? Yes - how? Can I alter it by making it more manageable?

No? Then can I avoid (or leave) the situation?

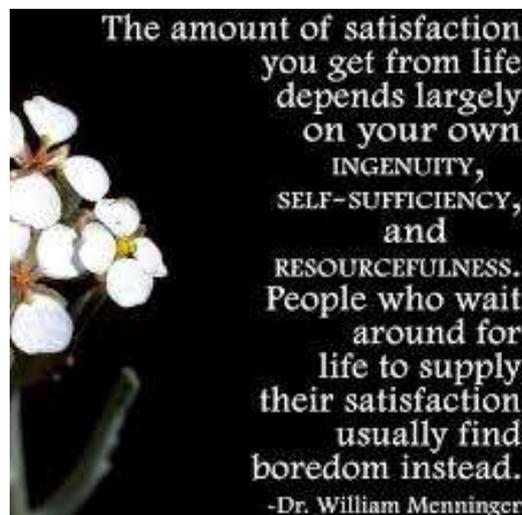
Choice: Alter it or Avoid it

2. **Change your response to the situation**

Can I make the situation manageable by changing my behaviour? No? Then I just have to accept it and stop worrying.

Choice: Adapt to it - change your behaviour

Accept it and stop worrying



Personal Development to Build your Resilience

Research has identified seven characteristics at the heart of personal resilience.

Seven characteristics of personal resilience

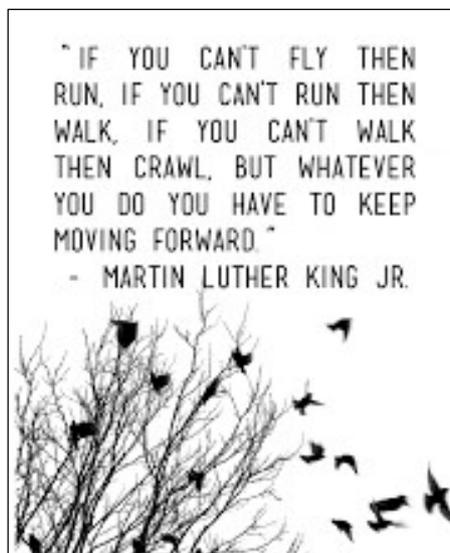
People behave resiliently when they:

1. Are able to identify and manage their thoughts and feelings.
2. Tolerate ambiguity - ie they can live with the fact that there are uncertainties in a situation. That ability allows them time to assess the situation before they respond, allowing them to act thoughtfully.
3. Take a positive approach - ie they take a realistic view of people and situations and then try to make the best of things. This has been called being realistically optimistic.
4. Think accurately about events and their causes - this is essential for problem-solving, but it also greatly affects how a person interprets events, which affects how they see themselves and everything around them.
5. Are sensitive to other people's emotions - helpful in all sorts of ways, not least in communicating with people and in building networks of support.
6. Have confidence in their ability to solve problems - they make a realistic assessment of their strengths and weaknesses; they make good use of their strengths and do not dwell on their weaknesses (ie they take a positive approach to themselves).
7. Are willing to run the risk of failure in order to grow - they accept that failure is part of life and fear of it does not stop them from exploring new directions.

Personal Resilience in a nutshell

You behave resiliently when you:

1. Manage your own thoughts and feelings
2. Assess a problem before you try to resolve it
3. Are realistically optimistic
4. Think accurately about things
5. Are sensitive to other people's emotions
6. Are confident in your own ability to solve problems
7. Are willing to embrace the new in order to grow.



What is distress intolerance?

What is distress intolerance?

All humans experience a range of emotions. Some emotions may be comfortable to us, and others may be uncomfortable. There are varying types of emotions that people might find distressing, which include...

The Sad: This group includes emotions that reflect sadness at varying degrees of intensity. This includes emotions such as disappointment, hurt, despair, guilt, shame, sadness, depression, grief and misery.



The Mad: This group includes emotions that reflect anger at varying degrees of intensity. This includes feelings such as irritation, agitation, frustration, disgust, jealousy, anger, rage and hatred.



The Scared: This group includes emotions that reflect fear at varying degrees of intensity. This includes feelings such as nervousness, anxiety, dread, fear, panic and terror.



Most people dislike feeling uncomfortable, and so when we experience emotional discomfort, we may evaluate it negatively. Below are some of the common beliefs that people might have when they start to experience negative emotion...

- I can't stand this
- I hate this feeling
- Take it away
- I will lose control
- I'll go crazy
- It's bad to feel this way
- It's unbearable
- I must stop this feeling
- I can't cope with this feeling
- It's weak to feel this way
- This feeling will go on forever
- It is wrong to feel this way

The more strongly we hold these kinds of beliefs about our emotions, the more bothered we will be by our emotions, and the more we will want to get rid of them. Our level of tolerance towards emotions is based on how much we fear emotions, how unpleasant they feel to us, how unbearable they seem, and how much we want to get away from emotions, rather than the intensity of the emotions themselves.

Distress intolerance is when someone believes they are unable to cope with their uncomfortable emotions, and tries to escape or avoid them.

How does distress intolerance develop?

It is likely a combination of biological and environmental factors that lead some people to be more intolerant of emotional distress than others.

There is some suggestion that some people are biologically more sensitive to negative emotions, experiencing negative emotions more easily, at a higher level of intensity, and for a longer duration than other people. This means that some people experience negative emotions as more painful, and hence have greater difficulty coping with the experience.

It is likely that our experiences growing up through childhood, adolescence and through adult life, may shape how we deal with emotions. Some people may not have been shown ways to tolerate emotional discomfort appropriately, for example being punished for expressing normal emotions like crying when they were sad. Others may have only been shown unhelpful ways of dealing with their emotions, such as seeing a loved one use alcohol to deal with their own emotions.

The problem with distress intolerance

It makes a lot of sense to try to get away from things that feel unpleasant. This strategy seems to work for other things that make us uncomfortable (e.g. heat, cold, pain, hunger). Unfortunately, when we apply the same strategy to our emotions, it seems to backfire. The more we fear, struggle with, and try to avoid any form of distress, generally the worse that distress gets. Our fear and avoidance of the distress actually amplifies the distress.

What can be done to help?

Instead of fearing and fighting uncomfortable emotions and desperately trying to get rid of them, it is possible to learn how to sit with and tolerate emotional distress, such that we learn the emotion will pass and that we can cope.

This will involve identifying and challenging beliefs we hold about emotions, and learning to balance tolerating emotional discomfort when it does arise, with taking action to improve our emotional experiences.

This document is for information purposes only. Please refer to the full disclaimer and copyright statement available at <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au> regarding the information from this website before making use of such information. See website www.cci.health.wa.gov.au for more handouts and resources.

How to practice “distress tolerance skills” for being alone: A practical guide

The best guide I've read for this purpose comes from the Centre for Clinical Interventions, supported by the Australian government's department of health. Psychologists there have published [a comprehensive guide to developing “distress tolerance skills.”](#) It's free, it's online, and it uses an evidence-based approach rooted in CBT and mindfulness-based therapy. It's worth checking out the whole guide, but here's a summary of the process it recommends.

First, accept the distress you're feeling. Instead of engaging in your usual escape methods for avoiding uncomfortable emotions (whether it's bingeing TV or foods, numbing yourself with alcohol, etc), commit to doing the opposite: Stay with the emotion.

Second, watch the emotion. Noting how it's manifesting in your clenched muscles or using imagery to describe it (“this feeling is not 'me', it's just like a cloud floating past in the sky”), may help you detach from it a bit. Keep observing it until it naturally subsides.

Third, turn your attention back to a task you WANT to do in the present moment. It can be a simple inward task like focusing on your breath, or an outward task like [volunteering to help people in need during the pandemic.](#)

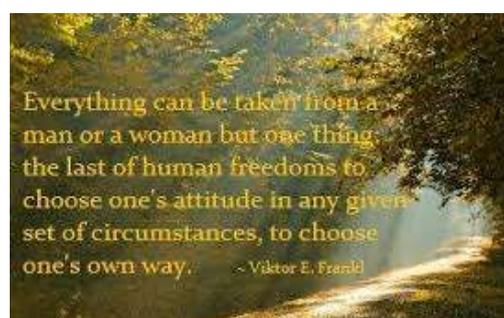
Expect that the distressing feelings will come back. But know, too, that by actually facing them rather than running away from them, you're teaching yourself that you're strong enough to handle them.

“Our calm is contagious”: How to use mindfulness in a pandemic

Accepting your isolation, letting it take you deeper into yourself, remembering your purpose for the hour or the day— these are tried-and-true strategies for successful solitude. You will find the same strategies echoed in other sources, from contemporary [Psychologists and mindfulness teachers](#) to ancient [Buddhist texts](#).

Perhaps there's some comfort in that. As alone as you might feel right now, remember that many human beings have experienced isolation before you, and they've left you their best tips for how to make the most of it. In a sense, you're in a community with them & everyone else trying to cope during this CV19 crisis, right now.

You're also in community with the friends and family you have access to through your phone, Zoom, and so on. We should definitely keep using these distance-collapsing technologies. But there's a difference between using them from a place of desperation, where we're scrambling to generate a constant stream of chatter to distract us from our aloneness, and using them from a place of mindfulness, where we've already faced the distress of being alone and experienced it naturally subside. When we do the latter, [psychologists say](#) that a Zoom dance party becomes a reward for approaching rather than avoiding our solitude.



Colouring for Resilience

Do you think spending time colouring-in is only a pastime for children? Think again!

The adult colouring craze has therapeutic mental health benefits, including reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Psychology research in New Zealand found that there are definite mental health gains for adults colouring-in for as little as 10 minutes a day. Enjoy your colouring time!



'Resilience' Word search by Fiona

S	M	E	L	B	O	R	P	M	O	R	F	R	E	V	O	C	E	R
E	L	P	S	O	B	E	S	T	N	E	M	T	I	M	M	O	C	G
K	A	R	E	U	O	G	S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	S	K	N	R
A	E	A	L	N	U	A	E	A	S	T	E	P	S	R	T	R	A	O
T	V	C	F	D	N	I	R	C	R	E	V	A	R	B	R	O	L	W
S	I	T	A	A	C	N	T	C	U	N	O	I	T	C	A	W	A	I
I	T	I	W	R	I	C	S	E	O	P	E	N	R	E	T	T	B	N
M	C	C	A	Y	N	O	E	P	I	O	T	R	Y	C	E	E	E	G
M	E	E	R	S	G	N	G	T	V	A	T	X	E	N	G	N	F	T
O	P	Y	E	E	B	T	A	A	A	D	A	P	T	E	I	T	I	H
R	S	O	N	T	A	R	N	N	H	E	P	O	C	I	E	R	L	R
F	R	U	E	T	C	O	A	C	E	W	O	R	G	T	S	O	K	O
N	E	R	S	I	K	L	M	E	B	O	R	E	L	A	X	P	R	U
R	P	S	S	N	S	N	W	O	D	D	N	A	S	P	U	P	O	G
A	P	K	E	G	N	A	H	C	E	C	A	R	B	M	E	U	W	H
E	E	I	G	N	I	K	N	I	H	T	E	V	I	T	I	S	O	P
L	E	L	A	T	N	E	M	E	G	D	U	J	N	O	N	W	R	A
A	K	L	I	V	E	I	N	T	H	E	M	O	M	E	N	T	E	I
V	M	S	I	M	I	T	P	O	C	I	T	S	I	L	A	E	R	N

Realistic optimism
Boundary setting
Commitment
Self awareness
Solutions
Recover from problems
Acceptance
Regain control
Live in the moment
Behaviours
Relax
Action
Cope
Support network
Steps
Brave

Next
New
Positive Thinking
Strategies
Growing through pain
Work life balance
Non judgemental
Patience
Bouncing back
Learn from mistakes
Manage stress
Grow
Practice your skills
Embrace change
Ups and downs
Adapt

Open
Keep perspective
Try (x2 to find!)

**"PERSISTENCE AND RESILIENCE
ONLY COME FROM HAVING
BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE TO
WORK THOUGH DIFFICULT
PROBLEMS"**

Queen Tulley

Students' Corner

Hi Helen and the Recovery Team

I attended the wonderful 'Being your own Shed' course and still have the My Shed picture on which I entered all my hobbies with little pictures. I therefore really enjoyed Newsletter 10! When lockdown first occurred I decided to get out my camera which hadn't seen the light of day for a long while as it was a hobby I had neglected. As a nature lover I particularly love taking close ups of flowers and insects. One morning I was in my front garden as I wanted to take a picture of this flower when I spotted this beautiful Red Damselfly and managed to take a photo of it! I have now added photography to my hobbies on My Shed picture!



Thank you for all your lovely Newsletters! I really enjoy and look forward to them! I of course love the Nature Notes by GW!

My very best wishes S

Remember Me?? "Tweets"



7th May this was me
helpless and alone



but a week later I have grown



AND now look at me!!!



I love to nibble my Dad's earring
.....and just sit on his shoulder



R says it makes him feel good that the tiny little bird trusts him and it just goes to show if you're kind to Nature they seem to know.

All I can say is "Well done R"

External Links

Here are some different types of links this week.

Firstly, we have two songs which seem to be about resilience

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4szP49_HKE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_E6Me6q3us&list=PLPPM1g2LkgBsw7yw7IKUes1bAmZOWnDPk

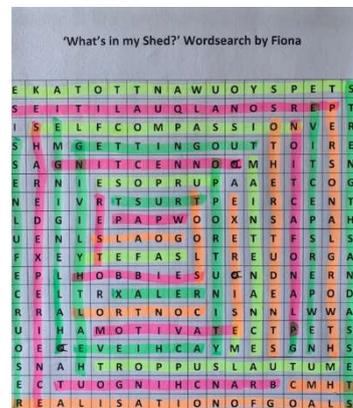
This is the organisation that created the shared reading that we follow in Reading for Recovery. The link takes you to a short anthology which hopefully, will remind you of our shared reading sessions.

Ignore the bit at the end about subscribing to the magazine or joining a group.

<https://www.thereader.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Bread-and-Roses-anthology-part-one.pdf>



Answer to last weeks' word search



Further Help and Support

If you are struggling with your mental health and feel that you need further help & support here are some contact numbers for you:

West Berkshire Community Mental Health Team- 01635 292020

CRHTT (Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team)- 0300 365 9999

Samaritans - 116 123

NHS - 111 (number to call should you feel you are physically unwell with Coronavirus or indeed any other physical health condition which is deteriorating.

West Berkshire Community Hub is where you can find out information and support locally for a variety of matters relating to Coronavirus - look at their website (cut and paste this into your internet browser) <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-communityhub>

The Age UK Berkshire Befriending and Buddying scheme is now open for referrals. Enquiries should be made directly to Age UK Berkshire by emailing info@ageukberkshire.org.uk or calling 0118 959 4242

999 is for **EMERGENCY** calls only.