



**“The Roots of Resilience”:
A Framework for Assessing &
Promoting the Resilience of
Vulnerable Students in Schools**

Sparkle in the **Light**

Assessing 'Roots of Resilience'

Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity. How a child or young person copes with adverse life experiences can depend upon his or her level of resilience.

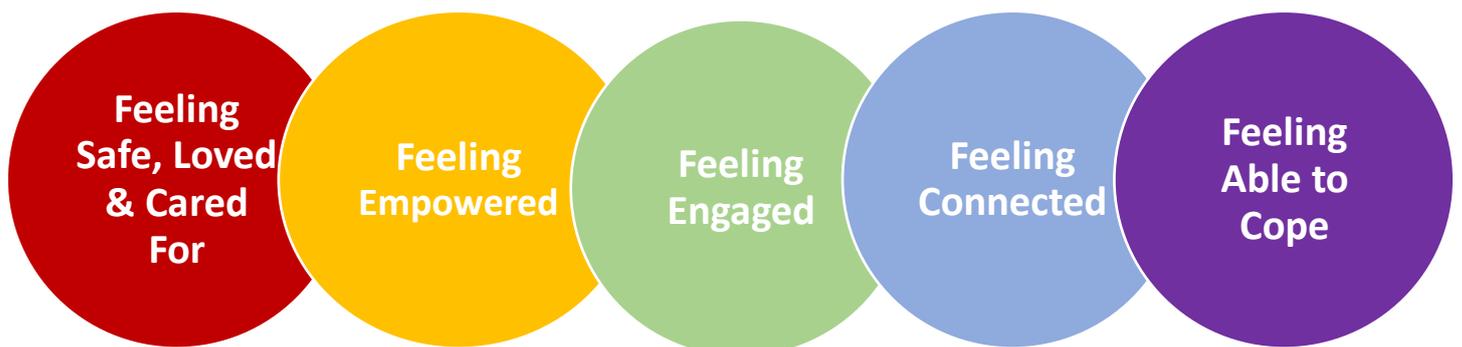
But resilience is not a fixed trait that we either have or do not have. It is experience-dependent and can 'see-saw' depending on the extent to which it is nurtured.

This means that interaction with our environment can either tip the scales in favour of vulnerability or resilience.



A child or young person who has more risk factors than protective factors may be less resilient, resulting in negative outcomes, including difficulties with their mental or physical health. However, in these cases, a school can actively promote protective factors. The more protective factors in a child or young person's life, the more likely it is that the scales of resilience will be tipped in favour of a positive outcome.

There are **five key school-based factors** that can help increase a child's resilience. These are described as '**Roots of Resilience**' (Ttofa) because they help a child to remain strong and stable in the face of adversity.

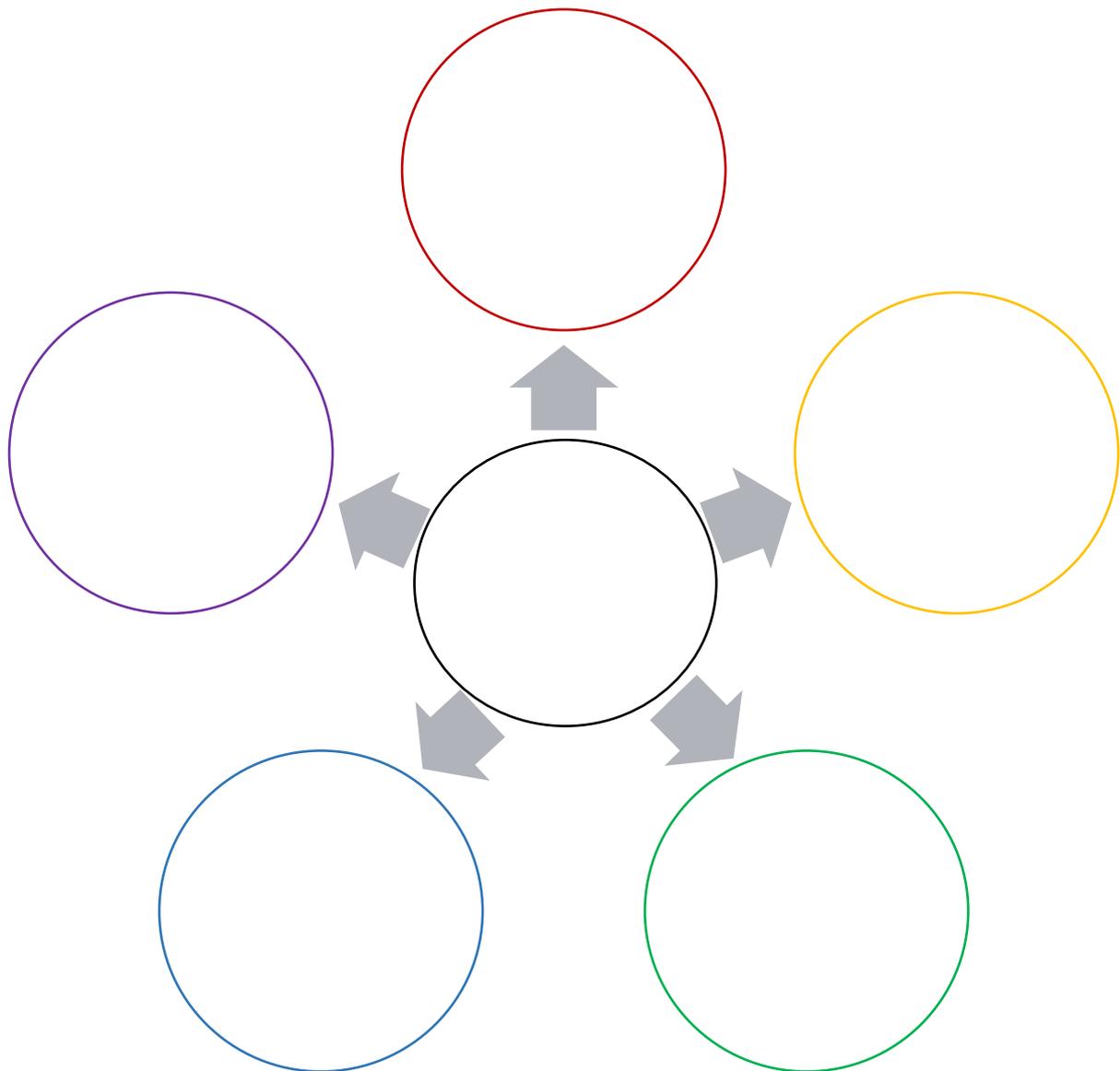


In the face of adversity, neither resilience nor pathology is a certain outcome.

“My Roots of Resilience”

After assessing the child’s *‘Roots of Resilience’*, use this framework to create some **positive goals** with the young person (and any supporting adults) in order to promote their resilience.

Write the name of the young person in the centre and, in each coloured circle, write **one** strategy that corresponds to the root of that colour. Ideas for each ‘root’ can be found in the whole school resilience prompt cards overleaf.



Consider a child or young person’s **difficulties, adverse childhood experiences** or **risk factors**, as well as their **current strengths** or **protective factors**.
Aim to **reduce risks**, whilst **enhancing strengths**.

Promoting Whole School Resilience

Root 1: Feeling Safe, Loved and Cared For

The single most common factor for children and young people who develop resilience is at least one stable relationship with a supportive parent, care-giver, or other trusted adult. How does your setting provide a safe haven / secure base (including clear and consistent boundaries), develop stable and supportive trusted adult-child relationships and help young people to feel safe, loved and cared for (including ensuring their basic needs are met)?

Root 2: Feeling Empowered

How does your setting nurture strengths, talents and interests, encourage children and young people to have high expectations and aspirations (e.g. via a mentor or role-model), and help them to develop an understanding of their values and a strong, empowered sense of self?

A sense of competence, self-efficacy, and perceived autonomy are key protective factors.



Enlarge & cut out these prompt cards to evaluate and promote a whole school culture of resilience.

Root 3: Feeling Engaged

How does your setting enable participation, enjoyment and achievement in learning experiences and promote a sense of meaning and purpose?

A sense of meaning has been identified as a key protective factor that can mitigate the effects of adversity and cultivate greater strength of spirit. This may include accessing sources of faith, spirituality and hope.



For more ideas, view the 'Nurturing Resilience Card Deck' (available to buy via Amazon or Routledge.)

Root 4: Feeling Connected

How does your setting develop friendships, promote connection and positive interactions, teach social competencies and pro-social behaviours, and foster a sense of belonging with young people?

Connection with others, including opportunities to contribute to school, family or community life, is a key protective factor.

Root 5: Feeling Able to Cope

Developing self-regulation skills and a sense of coherence about life events is thought to promote greater resilience. How does your setting support young people to cope with uncomfortable or distressing thoughts and feelings e.g. through emotional literacy, co-regulation, self-care and calming techniques, and encourage them to process or make sense of stressful, traumatic or adverse life experiences e.g. through the arts, play, creativity and imagination?