

# Building young people's online resilience

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# Perspectives from Health

- Research repeatedly demonstrates the strong association between adverse life experiences and mental health problems.
- Despite this, 'pathogenic life circumstances' are not decreasing, despite our awareness of them.
- Most perilous factors are:
  - Child abuse and neglect
  - Institutionalisation
  - Parental divorce
  - Severe environmental circumstances e.g. natural disasters, war

(Fonagy et al, 1993)

# Perspectives from Health

- Mental Health Services cannot meet demand
- Economic context and desire for social justice led to a greater focus on prevention of psychological difficulties and an emphasis on promoting resilience.
- This promotes the development of a child who ‘works well, loves well and expects well, not withstanding profound life adversity’.
- The goal is ‘to understand and prevent maladaptation (so that) we understand resilience in development’.

(Fonagy et al 1993)

# Resilience

‘Some individuals have a relatively good outcome despite having experienced serious stresses or adversities’.

In addition to resilience, social support is critical.

The concept of resilience does not negate the need to assess risk and protective influences.

Risk and protective influences do not apply universally – need to consider social context and developmental stage.

(Rutter, 2013)

# Digital Resilience

Digital resilience is the ability to manage online stress and adversity. This necessitates experiences of progress through online and offline worlds, safely and effectively, being able to recognise and report concerns freely.

# Features Associated with Resilience

- 1. Neutral or risky factors e.g. sickle cell anaemia and malaria; day care for children in disadvantaged families (little benefit if experiencing good care).
- 2. Brief exposure to risks: inoculation and coping
  - Children reared on farms have less asthma.
  - Brief, happy separations enabled children to cope better the more complicated multiple stresses of hospital admissions.
  - Focus should be on coping

(Rutter, 2013)

# Features Associated with Resilience

## 3. Associated Mental features:

- 'Planning tendency' (propensity to plan)
- A style of self-reflection as to what worked, and what didn't work.
- A sense of agency or determination to deal with challenges.
- Self-confidence in being able to deal with challenges successfully.

(Rutter, 2013)

# Features Associated with Resilience

4. Experiences that foster development of positive mental features.

The main positive effect on planning came from successes in some activity at school.

The ability to exert control in in one area enabled them to develop a more positive self-concept.

A key mental feature concerns self-control; interventions to improve this are helpful, and the benefits are independent of IQ and social class.

(Rutter, 2013)



# Features Associated with Resilience

5. Turning point effects.

e.g. being married, having a job

6. Gene-environment interactions.

(Rutter, 2013)

# Features Associated with Resilience

## 7. Social Relationships and Promotive Effects

- Social relationships are associated with long-term resilience.
- Maternal warmth, sibling warmth and positive family atmosphere significantly protective against the effects of bullying.
- Warm family relationships promote good functioning, as well as foster resilience in the presence of adversity.

(Rutter, 2013)

# Recommendations

1. Resilience may be fostered by exposure to manageable challenges or small doses of stress.
2. Promote mental features such as planning, self-reflection and active personal agency (not passive victims); need to learn tactics. Many interventions e.g. for bullying or safeguarding leave young person feeling far less in control.
3. Allow young people to achieve success at school, through taking responsibility and learning from experiences; schools that promote this tend to have better outcomes.
4. Promote good social relationships.

(Rutter, 2013)

# Other Considerations

- Building resilience also requires:
  - That proportionate protection and safety measures are in place.
  - Interventions are developmentally appropriate.
  - Interventions are attuned to the needs of vulnerable groups.

# Perspectives on Internet Safety

Do current internet safety messages and measures:

- Promote a sense of agency and abilities to cope in young people?
- Do they build confidence in managing challenges, or promote feelings of helplessness?
- Do they promote self-reflection?
- Do they promote social relationships?

# What Can Be Done?

Exposure to some risks inevitable, even desirable, but to support positive learning from this:

- Evaluate risks for likelihood and consequences.
- Evaluate your response to risks, and whether there are opportunities for promoting reflection e.g. banning for breach of terms of service may lead to further disruptive conduct if no warning.
- Evaluate user journey, from registration, to understand opportunities to promote social relationships e.g. finding friends.
- Identify vulnerable groups for more focussed support.

# Classifying Risks

Model from EU Kids Online

# Classifying risks (exemplars)



	<b>Content</b> Child as receiver (of mass productions)	<b>Contact</b> Child as participant (adult-initiated activity)	<b>Conduct</b> Child as actor (perpetrator / victim)
<b>Aggressive</b>	Violent / gory content	<b>Harassment, stalking</b>	<b>Bullying, hostile peer activity</b>
<b>Sexual</b>	<b>Pornographic content</b>	<b>'Grooming', sexual abuse or exploitation</b>	<b>Sexually harassment, 'sexting'</b>
<b>Values</b>	<b>Racist / hateful content</b>	Ideological persuasion	<b>Potentially harmful user-generated content</b>
<b>Commercial</b>	Embedded marketing	<b>Personal data misuse</b>	Gambling, copyright infringement

*Note: risks in bold are included in the survey*



# Evaluating Risks

- Risks can be classified in terms of type of risk.
- But should risks also be evaluated in terms of likelihood and consequence, so that the approach to their management is based on some evidence?
- Assessing risks using a risk matrix could help industry prioritise which risks are attended to first, recognising that evidence is always evolving.

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Almost certain to occur</b>	5	5	10	15	20	25
	<b>Likely to occur</b>	4	4	8	12	16	20
	<b>Could occur</b>	3	3	6	9	12	15
	<b>Unlikely to occur</b>	2	2	4	6	8	10
	<b>Very unlikely to occur</b>	1	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Risk Matrix</b>			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Catastrophic /Fatal
			<b>Consequence</b>				

# Personalisation

- Content or conduct that is felt to be supportive can vary between individuals with the same vulnerability.
- An individual may also produce darker or lighter content at different times.
- For individuals struggling with a depressed mood:
  - Some would find uplifting images of beautiful landscapes or kittens helpful; some others might feel the images portrayed a world that they feel excluded from.
  - Some would find darker images portraying despair more helpful, as they would then feel less alone in their despair; others might be upset or 'triggered' by such images.

# Young Londoners' attitudes to health

## July 2014



## Trust in support services was valued by young people

- Young people across groups were presented with a selection of scenarios about people their age facing a variety of pressures. The groups discussed how those young people might feel and what they could do to improve their situations.
- The young people in the qualitative research discussed the different avenues through which they receive support. They were able to provide constructive solutions, such as talking to friends, family, school counsellors or services provided by the NSPCC. Of these, talking to friends, family or somebody at school were preferred over counsellors, or the NSPCC. This was partly because of a lack of perceived trust of the latter options, but also because of fear that peers could discover they were using counselling or support services and mock them for it. There was also a sense that family members or friends might be offended if they spoke to an external agency in the first instance.
- When considering what made avenues of support effective, **trust in the confidentiality of services was seen to be vital**. For some young people this translated into a distrust of technology being used in these services, for fear that personal information could fall into the wrong hands.

We had this pastoral manager at school and she was really annoying and rubbish. You'd tell her something and the next day every teacher would know! It was supposed to be confidential but it wasn't!

*Girl, 16-18*

- There was also a suggestion, particularly among the 16 to 18 year olds, that young people have other avenues open to them, like hobbies and youth groups that could help them cope with feeling low. In addition, developing personal resilience came up in one or two groups, with 'being able to pick yourself up' being considered a key feature.



# What Young People Suggest

- Talking to friends, family or someone at school preferable to counsellors or NSPCC due to issues of trust, and fear of being exposed if seeking help.
- That they have other avenues open to them like youth groups that could help them cope when feeling low.
- In addition, developing personal resilience came up in one or two groups, with 'being able to pick yourself up' being considered a key feature.

# Example of Promoting Resilience

- School-based programme, for teachers, parents and pupils.
- Based on programme developed by Dr Poul Lundgaard Bak, Aarhus University, Denmark.
- Trialled in Denmark, Greece and UK.
- Currently being evaluated.
- [www.myresilience.org](http://www.myresilience.org)

Other programmes exist for e.g. self-harm.

# Resilience



## ☰ Menu

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## Welcome



Resilience means being able to handle challenges of life, small as well as big ones - especially when life is hard.

Resilience is usefull in many situations, e.g. to experience something exciting. Resilience makes it easier to learn something new, to make good decisions and it prevents stress and conflicts.

Naturally, it all takes place between people and in our minds.

At the website you will find useful knowledge about resilience for children, youngsters and adults. You will find good old and new knowledge about thoughts, feelings and the brain, knowledge about bullying as well as good stories and small games.

And you can find new inspiration for problem solving.

Enjoy!





# What is Resilience?

## Key Components

- Being able to cope with the challenges that life presents
- Feeling Good Enough
- Bounce Backability
- Having good relationships both with self and others
- Being on Track/Having the ability to focus

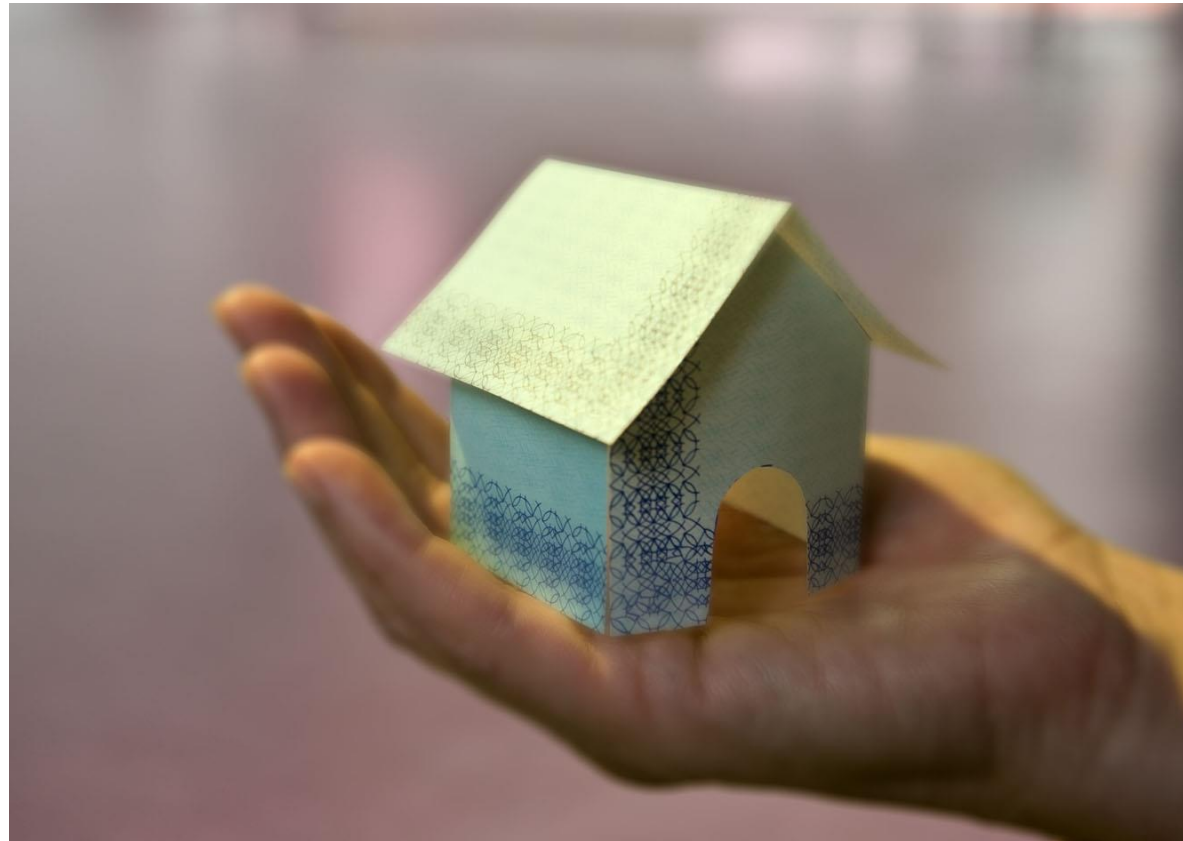
# Definition of Mentalisation

Mentalising can be defined as the ability to 'think about' other people's thoughts and feelings and to reflect upon one's own thoughts and feelings.

Being able to mentalise/having the capacity to mentalise, which is:

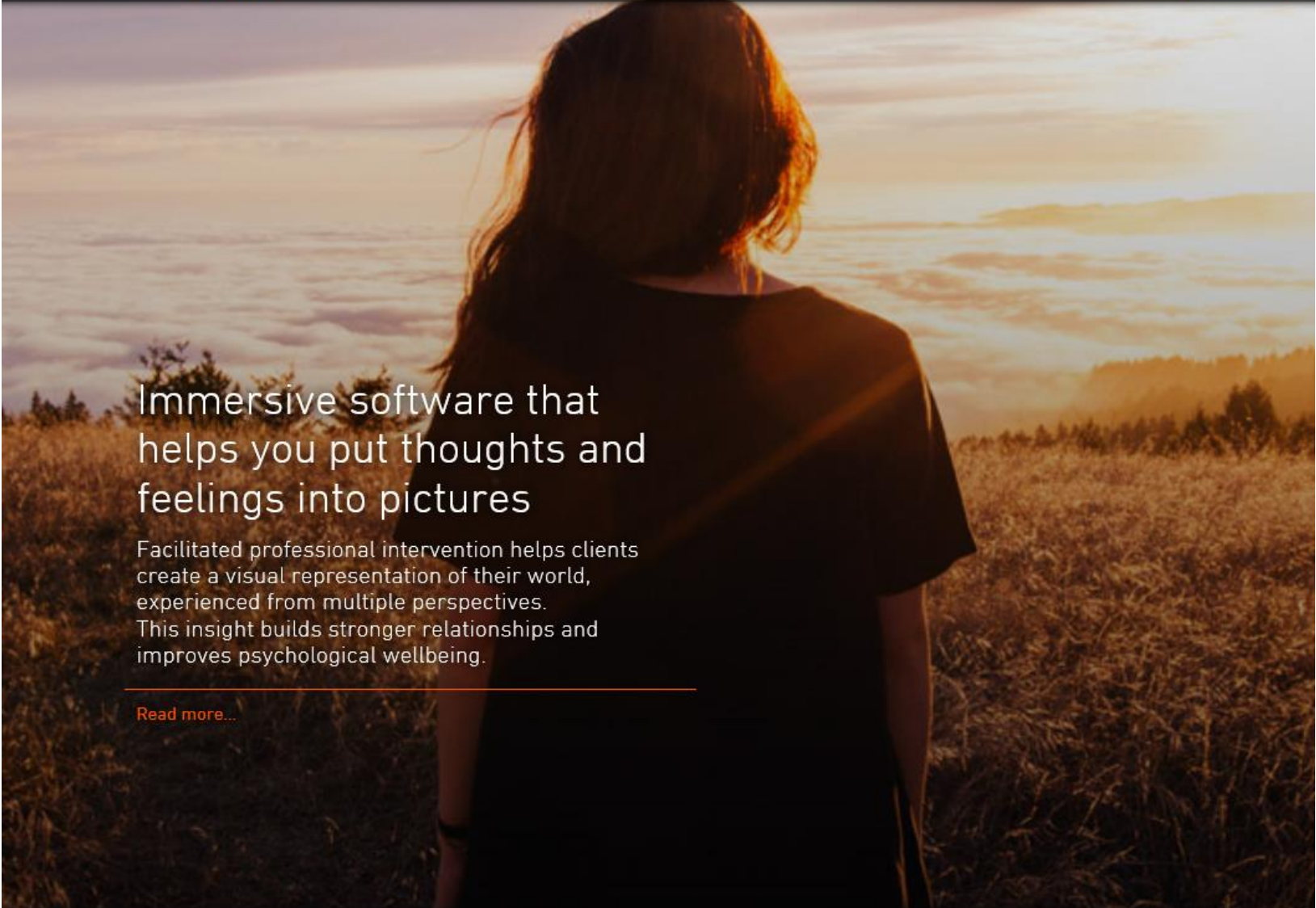
- Thinking about thinking
- Can I adjust my thinking?
- Can I change the focus of my thinking?
- Understanding misunderstanding?

# The story of The House of Thoughts



# Limitations to Resilience Programme

- Scalability; requires self-help/guided content.
- Relatively small focus.
- Content could be expanded to cover range of issues, including issues from digital life.
- Could be more immersive and allow for imaginative creation of content.

A person with long, dark hair is seen from behind, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, and the foreground is a field of tall grasses. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

## Immersive software that helps you put thoughts and feelings into pictures

Facilitated professional intervention helps clients create a visual representation of their world, experienced from multiple perspectives. This insight builds stronger relationships and improves psychological wellbeing.

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[Read more...](#)

### ProReal in Business

Innovative technology improving communications and engagement across boundaries.

### ProReal in Health

Helping clients to make their difficult experiences more accessible and supporting resilience and recovery.

# Partnership with ProReal

- Immersive platform, easy to use.
- Stimulates imagination (simple avatars), empathy and self-reflection.
- Content creation for self-help programmes on key areas of resilience and mentalisation; can be used at scale.
- Young people can also create content on difficult issues, and platform allows for this without 'triggering' (cf actual people/videos).

# Some Examples of using ProReal to build Resilience

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5ecAMhx8gc>

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