

## BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE IN STAFF TEAMS

**Background:** Resilience can be defined as a personal trait that helps people adapt positively to adversity, an aspect of the external environment that helps people thrive, and as a combination of the two. Resilience is most commonly seen as the capacity to 'bounce back' or recover from difficulties or setbacks. Developing emotional resilience means counterbalancing protective experiences and coping skills on one side with significant adversity on the other. Resilience is evident when positive outcomes outweigh negative ones.

**Why it matters:** Working with children, families and adults at risk is both very rewarding and physically and emotionally exhausting. Resilient teams are more able to work collaboratively, communicate effectively and share information appropriately with each other & partner agencies, leading to safer outcomes for the people they serve. Organisations have a key role to play in creating a workplace climate that builds the capacity for resilience so that the wellbeing of practitioners is protected.

**Questions to consider:** What do you know about the wellbeing of your workforce? What are the main sources of stress in your organisation? What type of professional support and supervision do staff receive? How does your organisation support emotional resilience & staff wellbeing? If you are a manager, how do you support your staff whilst ensuring your own wellbeing? As an employee, how might you help your organisation to support staff wellbeing?

**What to do:** The NHS Every Mind Matters website is a useful source of information for supporting yourself and others ([www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/)). Mental Health at Work has toolkits tailored to specific sectors, eg emergency services, healthcare, voluntary sector ([www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/)). The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families has a free booklet on supporting staff wellbeing in schools, including ideas on what supervision can look like in schools ([www.annafreud.org/media/7653/3rdanna-freud-booklet-staff-wellbeing-web-pdf-21-june.pdf](http://www.annafreud.org/media/7653/3rdanna-freud-booklet-staff-wellbeing-web-pdf-21-june.pdf)) RIP films - [Building emotional resilience in social work \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](http://researchinpractice.org.uk)



**Personal resilience:** Key resilience-building qualities are emotional literacy/self-efficacy, bounded empathy, self-care, reflective ability, social resources, coping flexibility and work-life balance. Resilience can protect mental health, prevent burnout & enhance feelings of personal accomplishment. Employers have a duty of care to protect the wellbeing of staff but strategies focused on the individual will not in themselves be enough – even the most resilience practitioner will be unable to cope in toxic working conditions.

**Interventions/strategies to build resilience:** mindfulness; reflective supervision; peer support/coaching; emotional writing; time management/personal organisation; self-knowledge/stress appraisal skills; cognitive behavioural techniques. Information on these strategies is in the Research in Practice Briefing '[Building emotional resilience in the children and families workforce – an evidence-informed approach: Strategic Briefing \(2016\)](http://researchinpractice.org.uk)' ([researchinpractice.org.uk](http://researchinpractice.org.uk))

**Organisational resilience:** a resilient organisation seeks to understand how resilience can be fostered at individual, team & leadership levels. Factors include job content; a calm and well-ordered working environment; improving support networks (including practice supervision); reducing the stigma of stress; sharing good practice; building a culture of reflection where self-care is prioritised; identifying emotional barriers affecting practice & recognising when to intervene to support individuals; protecting staff from unnecessary pressure and implementing strategies to alleviate the causes of stress and anxiety.