

Fostering resilience in
young people with
additional support needs
(ASN)
using a ‘settings’ approach
(September 2021-March 2022)

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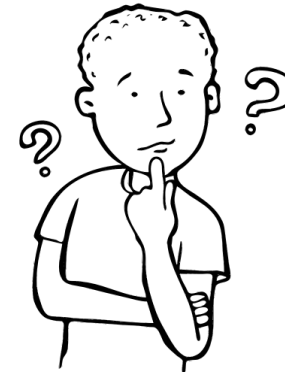


Defining resilience – where to start?

For Cicchetti and Rogosch, "Resilience is a dynamic process that encompasses the attainment of positive adaptation within the context of exposure to significant adversity that typically exerts major assaults on biological and psychological development."¹⁷

According to Masten, "Resilience can be broadly defined as the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development. The concept can be applied to systems of many kinds at many interacting levels, both living and nonliving, such as a microorganism, a child, a family, a security system, an economy, a forest, or the global climate."¹⁸

For Windle, "Resilience is the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and 'bouncing back' in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary."²⁰



Defining resilience – a ecological/settings framing I

- We are adopting Michael Ungar's definition:
- *“in the context of exposure to **significant adversity**, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the **psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources** that sustain their wellbeing, and their capacity **individually and collectively** to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in **culturally meaningful** ways*
- Connects with similar '**settings**' approaches to health promotion for those with ASN

Why is resilience important for those with ASN?

- People with ASN have *poorer health outcomes* compared to the general population – physical, mental and social (Tyrer et al., 2022)
- COVID-19 also had a significant impact in terms of anxiety, fear and isolation (Lunsky et al., 2022)
- Distinct *lack of research* on the nature of resilience in this group and how it might be fostered (Scheffers, Moonen and van Vugt., 2020)



Our research project – The Usual Place (TUP) as a case study

- TUP as an organisation is the *focus* of our case study
- TUP is a social enterprise which focuses on empowering people with ASN through a *real world – front facing* learning style within a public café setting
- Trainees learn a variety of crucial skills related broadly to wellbeing and resilience more specifically (cooking/serving food/customer interaction etc.)
- We wanted to see how such a *setting might foster* resilience amongst it's trainees

Our research questions

- **Question 1:** *How is 'resilience' broadly conceptualised within the setting?*
- **Question 2:** *What features of TUP as an organisation are significant in promoting resilience and what barriers exist?*
- **Question 3:** *What has been the specific impact of COVID related circumstances on the potential for TUP to promote resilience with its young people?*



Our data collection and analysis

Stage	Data collection tools	Population/unit of interest	Sample size	Analysis
1	Individual semi-structured narrative interviews	Trainees at TUP	7 participants	Thematic
2	Individual/group based semi-structured interviews	Internal (trainee mentors/management) and external stakeholders (parents/external professionals)	10 participants	Thematic

Initial findings – conceptualizing resilience within the setting

- Basic articulation of resilience as *flexibility*
 - *“bendy tree in a big storm....when the storm comes....you’re being battered about but afterwards you’re still standing”*
- ...and a form of *maturation* and *becoming* an adult
 - *“about helping people with learning disabilities be adults...take risks...go out clubbing, go and have a drink, go and do what everybody else does”*
- ...and an *inevitable challenge*
 - *“part of life”* and *“big bad world”*
- an *internalised concept* [“inner strength”] and as the consequence of *nurture* [setting]
 - *“not something you are born with...something you grow into”; “like parenting it depends on the nurture...the adults round about you”*

Initial findings - facilitators of resilience within TUP

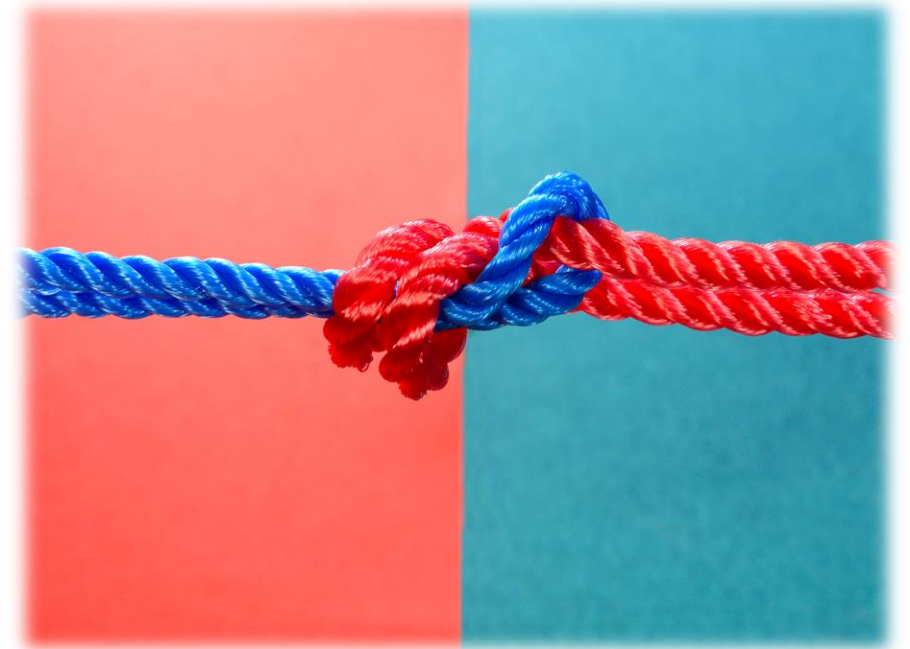
- Vital role of *personal support*, helped trainees overcome difficulties
 - *“The fact that they stood, stood in and still believed in me when I was going through a difficult time helped”*
- TUP thought of as a *safe space*
 - *“Yeah, it was safe here. It felt safe here”*
- A place where *friendships* are formed
 - *“it’s just loads of fun, and meeting pals”; “TUP is a bit different, when I worked somewhere else, obviously you can’t have a laugh like you can here”*

Initial findings - facilitators of resilience within TUP

- What it is *not*
 - *“molly-coddling”; “smothering”; “wrap in cotton wool”*
- Broad notion of needing to **“stand up”** and **“react”** to challenges
 - *“it’s...about trauma....and just challenges that you actually face every day...how you dealt with them”*
- Linked to realistic ‘front-facing’ café/naturalistic/social visibility notion
 - *“working naturally within the café...out in the public”*
- Centrality of doing and **experiential** and **situational** experiences
 - *“so that in itself is....a big thing....all the practical jobs...all the kind of practical element of it”*
- Extending beyond boundaries **and limits**
 - *“helping to push them to know where their boundaries are.... getting them out of their comfort zone”*

Initial findings - dynamic tensions in the organisation at various levels

- Tailored individualized approach – the needs of the whole organization as a working café
- Consistency (regularity and routines) – uncertainty/unpredictability (flux and built in change)
- Creating a safe space – a space which demands trainees to break their comfort zone
- A continuum of...*freedom-choice agency – expectation-responsibility*



‘Protective’ features

‘Challenging’ features

Active, interventionist support (when needed)

Fostering independence and taking responsibility (and the notion of ‘stand back mentoring’)

Tailored individualised approach

Recognising the collective needs of the whole organisation as a working café

Providing consistency and security through regularity and routines

Recognising the important of uncertainty and unpredictability as a pre-requisite of resilience

Creating safe and secure spaces

Allowing and enabling spaces to be unpredictable where trainees go outside their comfort zone

Future work

- a more detailed examination of *how* TUP fosters resilience *on the ground*
- a more detailed examination of the *organisational culture and structures* that successfully negotiates the constructive tension between 'exposure' and 'support' in fostering resilience
- an exploration of the extent to which TUP specific approaches have the potential to be *translated* into other organisational settings – for example, schools, workplaces

Thanks for listening, any questions?

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