



Early career top tips: Understanding teacher resilience

Cornelia Lucey

What's the idea?

In these top tips, Cornelia Lucey, psychologist and leadership consultant presents some possible approaches to building resilience for teachers and educationalists and shares ways they can be applied to build resilience.

These are only some tips to help you cope with everyday challenges. It is advisable to seek out professional help if you need support with your mental health. Education Support, a charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and well-being of education staff, also provides many helpful resources.

Resilience is a foundation stone for early career teachers wanting to perform at their best and role model resilient behaviours to students.

What does it mean?

Resilience is generally regarded as emotional flexibility, the ability to stretch under pressure and bounce back after a challenging experience. As such, resilience helps us to maintain our wellbeing in difficult circumstances. Schools and classrooms can be demanding environments, partly because not every student is in the classroom ready to learn and partly because successful teaching and learning require high levels of cognitive, social and emotional investment. Resilience can help teachers respond effectively to the challenges they may encounter.

Likewise, resilience is critical for leadership roles. Having the tools and support to build their own resilience could help teachers and leaders to sustain their energy and generate

better thinking to innovate and problem solve (Zwart, Korthagen & Attema-Noordewier, 2014).

So, setting the habits and behaviours of resilience is essential as you develop in your early years of teaching, not only for your role as a classroom teacher, but throughout your career.

What are the implications for teachers?

You may find that your energy levels deplete as the term goes on, which is why it helps to pay attention to your resilience:

1. Consider one recovery-based activity that you do each week that you enjoy.
2. Think about when you will do this and how you can be held accountable to yourself and others to support this.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- » Day C (2012) Resilient leaders, resilient schools (Opinion piece, National College for School Leadership)
- » Gu Q & Day C (2007) Teachers resilience: A necessary condition for effectiveness. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 23(8): 1302-1316.
- » Zwart RC, Korthagen FAJ, & Attema-Noordewier S (2014) A strength-based approach to teacher professional development. *Professional Development in Education* 41(3), 579-596.