



Harvey McMillan Associates

# Resilience Alphabet

Building inner strength and wellbeing for kids



© 2020 Martha Simpson and Philip Wong in Collaboration with  
Aberdeen City Council Education Team and Education Scotland



# About this toolkit

This Resilience Alphabet toolkit has been designed to help children build inner strength and wellbeing as part of the development of personal resilience.

Each of the letters offers an opportunity for children to explore a word linked to resilience through the use of a Think, Say and Do cycle. There are a range of activities suggested so children can choose the one that works best for them.

We have mapped these to the Protective Factors on the next page. Those are the factors that we know can support the emotional health and wellbeing of children.

Above all we hope children will have fun and learn as they use the Resilience Alphabet Toolkit.

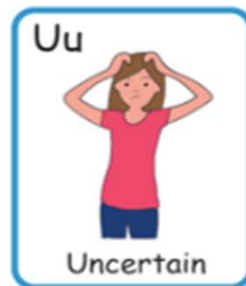
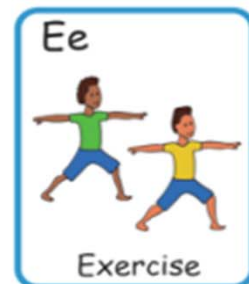
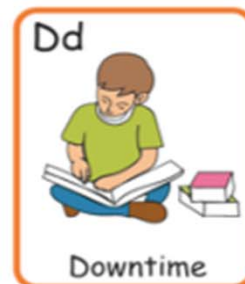
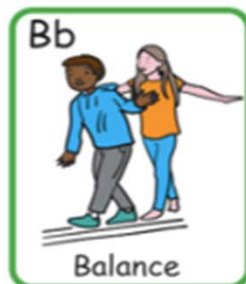
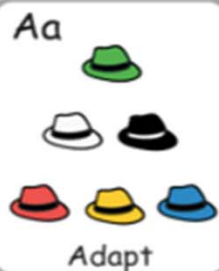
# Protective Factors...

Each letter of the Alphabet will be outlined with one of the colours opposite to show a Protective Factor which relates to that letter...



# Resilience Alphabet

Martha Simpson  
Illustrated by Phil Wong

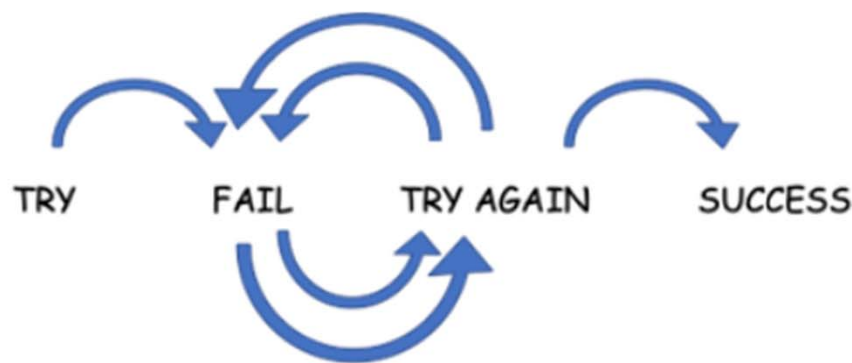


# What is Resilience?

What is resilience? It is the ability to keep going when things don't go as we expect, and to have a good way of talking about, and thinking about our feelings.

Having resilience means we can look after ourselves and prepare ourselves for whatever might happen.

Failing helps us to learn what doesn't work!

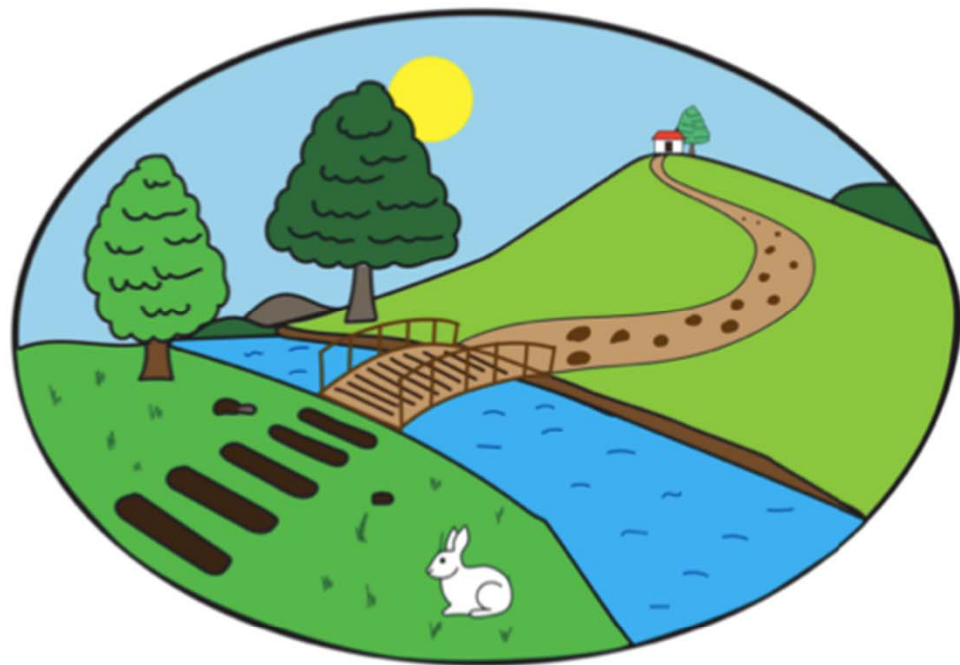




# Building resilience

Building our resilience is about building inner strength so we can take care of our mental, physical and emotional health.

It helps us get to where we want to go and overcome the obstacles on the way.



# What helps?

I have strengths and supports that can help me when things get hard.

Sometimes:

- support can come from people around me like friends, teachers and family
- I can find my own strength and help myself too

This toolkit will help to give me tips and remind me:

You will see that each of the letters from A-Z match one of the colours of the hands



# A is for Adapt



When something changes, we may need to change something we do, when we do it, or stop doing it for a while to respond. We may do something different or start something new.

**Think:** What things are you doing at the moment that are new or different from normal?

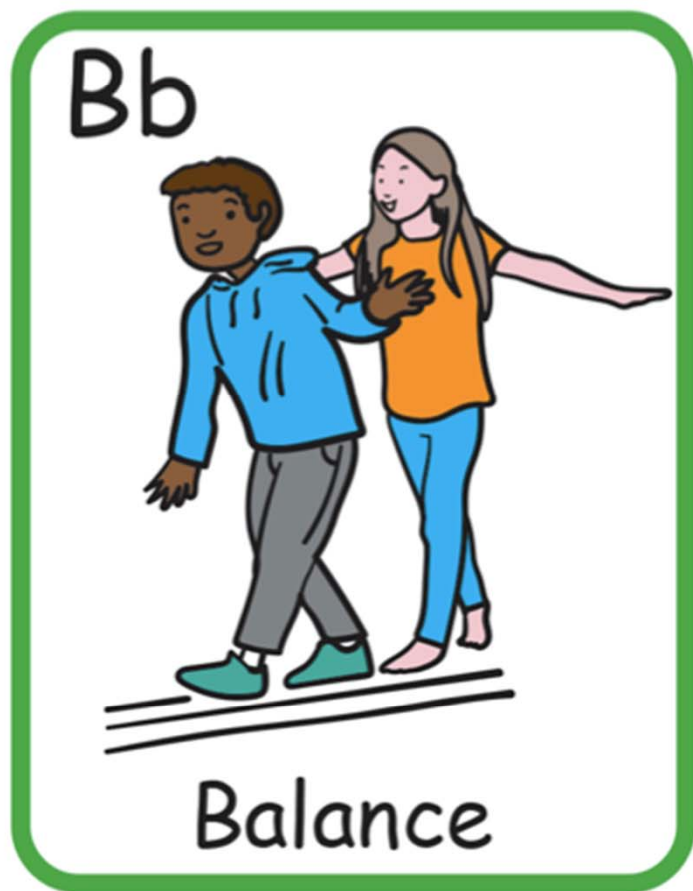
**Say:** “Every day I’m learning how to adapt by doing things differently.”

**Do:**

- Try brushing your teeth with your other hand
- Kick a ball with your other foot
- Draw a picture with your eyes closed



# B is for Balance



Balance is having the right amount of something. If we lean too far one way, we need to come back to the middle or we will fall over. Or when we exercise a lot, we need to rest to recover.

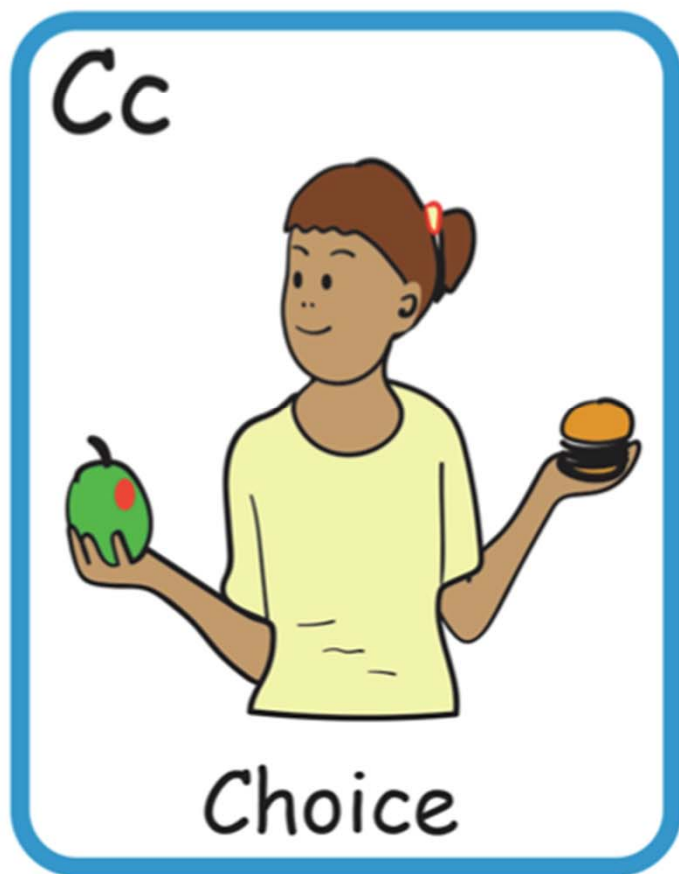
**Think:** Are you able to balance school time with family time; screen time with talk time; time with others with time alone.

**Say:** "Today I'm balancing what I do for myself with what I do for others."

**Do:**

- Write or draw 2 things you want to do more of
- Write or draw things you want to do less
- Tell someone what they are

# C is for Choice



Sometimes our choices become smaller because of what is happening around us. When that happens, it is a good idea to think about all the things we can still do rather than being grumpy about the things we cannot do.

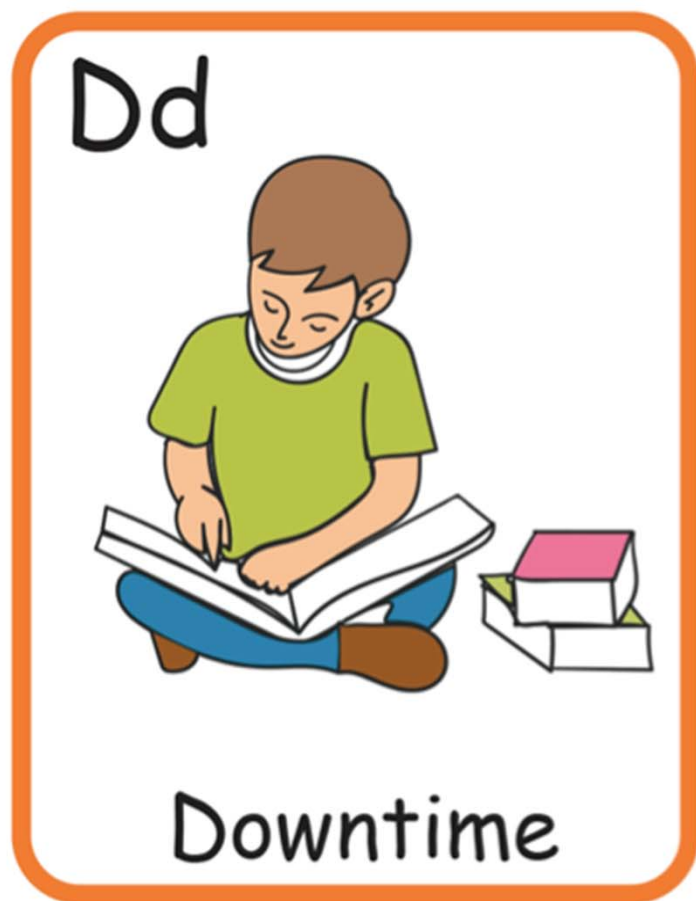
**Think:** Are there some things you can think of that you are not able to do just now?

**Say:** "I am choosing to enjoy all the things I can still do today."

**Do:**

- Write or draw a list of all the things you can still do
- Choose 1 or 2 things from your list that you would like to do today
- Try 1 of them

# D is for Downtime



Downtime gives us the chance to spend a little time doing what we want – or doing nothing! It can be like a little 10 minute holiday just for you.

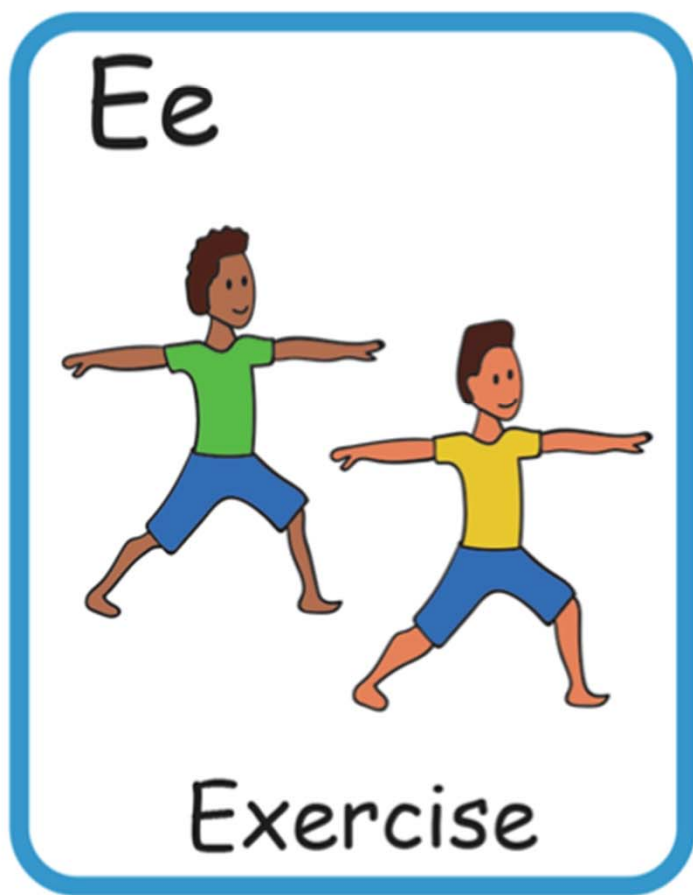
**Think:** Where is the best place in your house or garden to have downtime?

**Say:** "I can have a 10 minute holiday every day if I choose."

**Do:**

- Decide where in your house or garden you can go for a 10 minute holiday
- Ask an adult if you can make a snack or picnic
- Draw a picture of your favourite place; or just sit and enjoy your picnic in it

# E is for Exercise



We know that exercise is important to give us a healthy body both inside and outside. Like plants we need fresh air and sunshine to grow and feel good, so getting outside to exercise is important for us too.

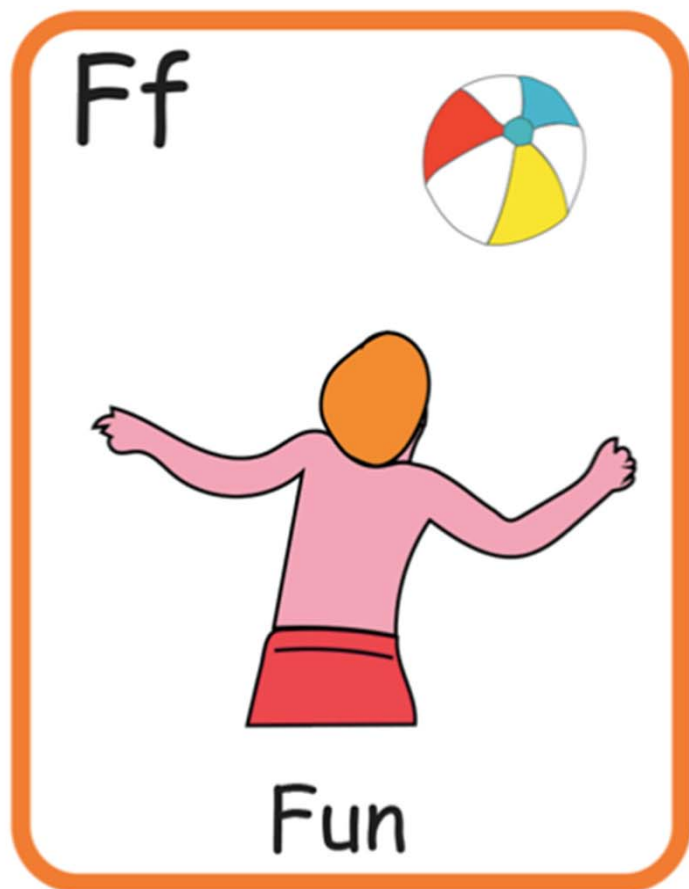
**Think:** What is your favourite kind of exercise?

**Say:** "I am exercising every day, so my body and brain are full of energy."

**Do:**

- How many different kinds of exercise can you do today?
- You can go on a walk, skip, jump, run, climb the stairs, star jumps, box the air
- Try to include someone else and have fun together!

# F is for Fun



Fun is when we do something that makes us feel happy. It can be something we do with others or something we like to do by ourselves. It can be something we do indoors or outdoors. No matter what is happening, it is good to have times of fun and enjoyment.

**Think:** What have you done over the last week that has been fun for you?

**Say:** "Today I am choosing to have fun!"

**Do:**

- Write, draw or think about 7 different activities you would find fun
- Plan to do one each day this week
- Try to make them a mix of things you can do on your own or with someone else



# G is for Gratitude



Gratitude means taking time to be thankful for all the things we have and are. Even when things are a little tough for us, it's a good idea to remind ourselves that we can breathe, and we can enjoy nature.

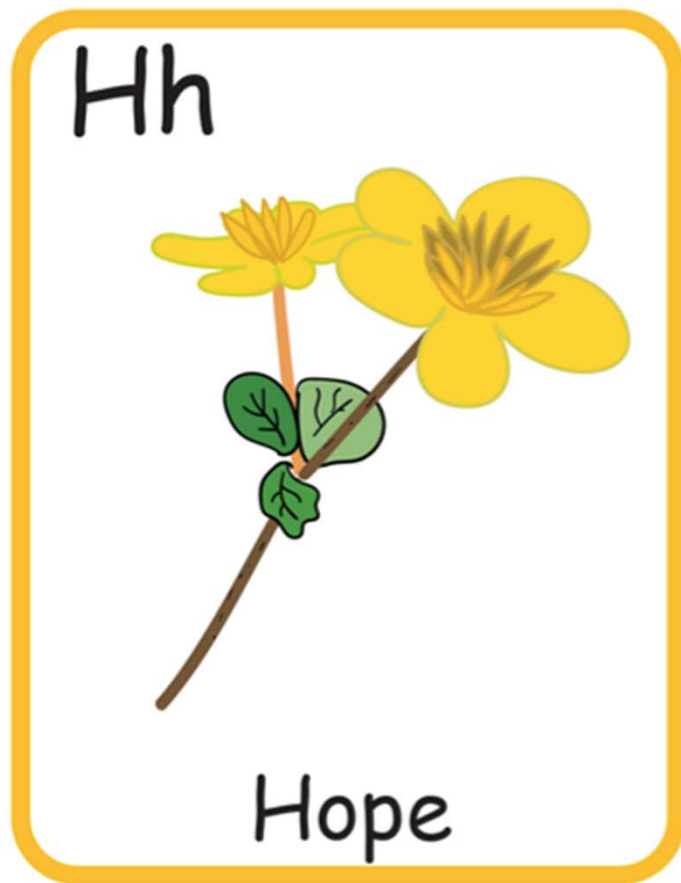
**Think:** Think about the different parts of your body and what you can do with them.

**Say:** "I am glad I can breathe fresh air and enjoy nature."

**Do:**

- Make a picture or card to say thank you
- Lie on the floor and notice all the things that happen in your body when you breathe

# H is for Hope



Hope is when we are looking forward to something good or happy in the future. It can be soon or it can be further away. We might hope for a sunny day tomorrow, to see our friends soon, that we can return to school.

**Think:** Have you ever hoped for something really special and it came true?

**Say:** "Today I hope I can help make someone else smile!"

**Do:**

- Write or draw a list of 10 things you hope will happen in the next year

# I is for Intention



Intention means thinking about something we want to do and deciding to do it. Sometimes we can be sad and frustrated when something we want to do is not possible. At other times we can be happy that something we intend to do is possible and is even more fun than we expect.

**Think:** What do you intend to do today to make it a special day?

**Say:** "I intend to enjoy today as much as I can!"

**Do:**

- Put your intention to good use today
- Decide which area of your room or set of toys you will tidy up
- Choose to climb the stairs or walk a certain number of steps in one day

# J is for Journal



A journal is simply a way to capture your thoughts. You might want to write or draw what you are doing or have done during the day, what has been good about the day or about how you are feeling. You can complete a journal every day, or just when you feel like it!

**Think:** If you were going to keep a journal, what would you put in it and how often would you like to complete it?

**Say:** "My journal is my space for writing about what matters to me!"

**Do:**

- Spend 15 minutes completing your journal
- Use a notebook, paper, or Google docs



# K is for Kind



Being kind is when you do something nice for someone else; or someone else does something nice for us. Sometimes it's good to be kind to ourselves. Kind people are good friends, and look out for us when we are sad or we are feeling down. We can be kind to other people too.

**Think:** How many times could you be kind to someone today?

**Say:** "I am choosing to be a kind person today."

**Do:**

- Think about all the people you know and choose 3 people that you think are kind
- Draw them
- Around each person, write what they have done that makes them kind



# L is for Laughter



Laughter is a great way to make us feel good and makes lots of muscles in our faces move. I wonder when you last had a great big laugh? We know that when one person laughs out loud, it sends messages to the brains of the people around us and they sometimes start laughing too!

**Think:** What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you that made you laugh?

**Say:** "Today is my day for finding something to laugh about."

**Do:**

- Ask someone to tell you their favourite joke
- Write some jokes or a funny story today about something that makes you smile
- Tell a joke or funny story to someone else

# M is for Move



When we think about all the bones, muscles, and brain cells in our bodies and how they all move together it is amazing! Bodies are made for moving. Even if it is only a walk around your house, don't forget to get up and move today.

**Think:** How many times do you think you will move today?

**Say:** "I am made for moving and am using all my body parts today."

**Do:**

- Think about how many different parts of your body you can move
- Make up a game to get different parts of your body moving
- Try out your game, invite someone to join you

# N is for 'No' Thank You



No is a tiny word and is one of the first sounds that babies make. Although small, it can have a big impact so we have to be careful with it. It is a good idea to add 'Thank You' after it. Sometimes our parents or teachers say 'No' and we are disappointed. Sometimes we want to say 'No' too, so don't forget to add Thank You.

**Think:** What are the things you'd like to say "no thank you" to?

**Say:** I am learning that small words can have a big impact and am learning to use them carefully.

**Do:**

- Count how many times you hear or say the word 'No' today
- See if you can find out when it's OK to say 'No Thank You'.

# O is for Open



When we are open we are able to share with others what we are thinking and how we are feeling. We usually find this easier with someone we know well. The good thing about being open is that someone else knows how we are and might be able to help us think things through.

**Think:** Is there something that you are worried or excited about and could you share this with someone else?

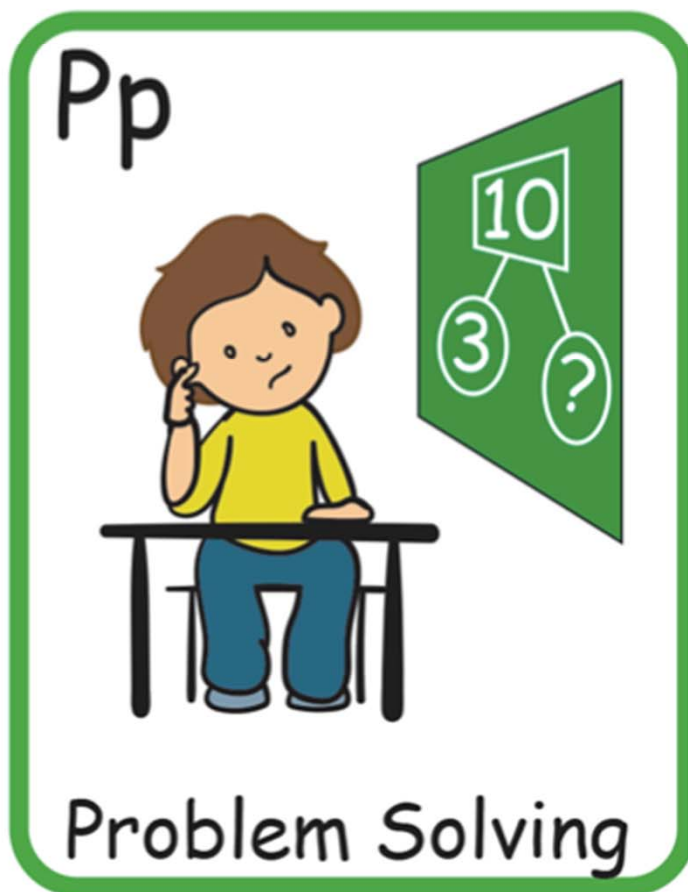
**Say:** "My ears are open to listen to how I am feeling today and I'm learning to share with others."

**Do:**

- Think about some of the feelings you have had over the last week
- Draw or write about them
- Tell someone about them



# P is for Problem Solving



When we have a problem we can feel stuck. Problem Solving is a skill that is useful when we face a challenge or puzzle. The more we practise problem solving the better we become.

**Think:** What problems, puzzles or challenges have you solved?

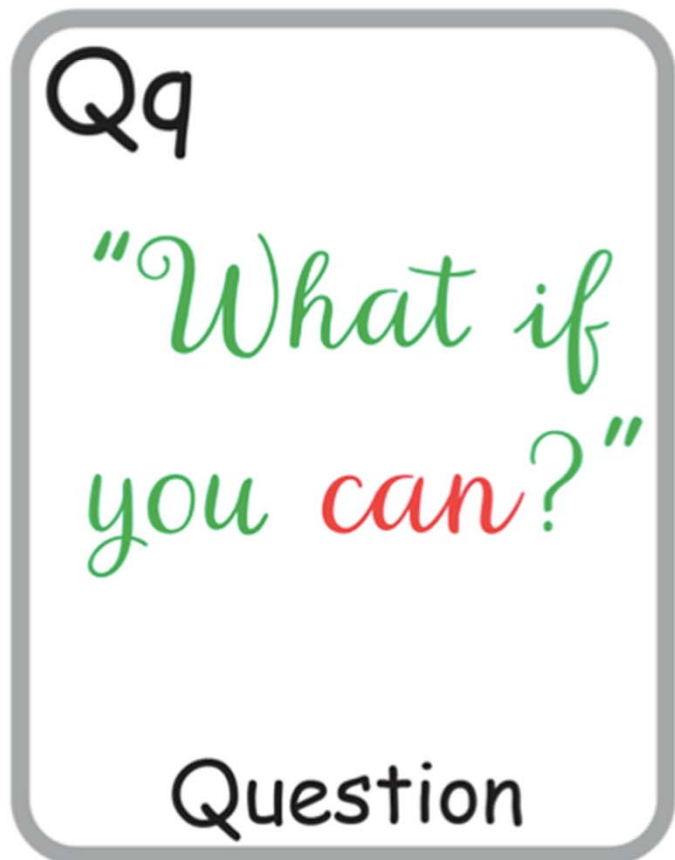
**Say:** "Every time I face a problem I will look for different ways to solve it!"

**Do:**

- Make a jigsaw with a photograph or page from a magazine
- Build something with Lego, blocks or some household objects
- Write a scavenger hunt for someone else



# Q is for Question



Questions have many purposes. Some questions help us to find out information; some help us to find our way; and some help us to know what we are allowed to do. Some days we ask lots of questions, and sometimes we don't really ask questions at all. So, like all the Resilience Alphabet letters, we have a question for you today.

**Think:** Who do you like to talk with most?

**Say:** "It's OK if I don't know things, because I can always ask a question!"

**Do:**

- Think about some questions you would like to know the answer to.
- Ask someone to help you answer them
- If you can't find out the answer, what would you like it to be? Have some fun drawing it!

# R is for Remember



We remember when we think back on something that has already happened. Some people like remembering all the people who look after them, in hospital, at home and in school. We are so lucky when our brains allow us to remember things that have happened to us.

**Think:** What can you remember from when you were much younger?

**Say:** "I am lucky if I can remember happy times!"

**Do:**

- Write a story or draw about one of your very happy memories
- Talking about what you saw, what you heard, how you felt and who was there with you is a nice way to remember

# S is for Senses



Our senses are how we experience life. If we have all our senses, we can see, hear, touch, feel, taste and smell. Some people are not able to use all of their senses so it helps that there are 5. Our senses help us to make sense of the world, and sometimes we rush through the day and don't use all of them.

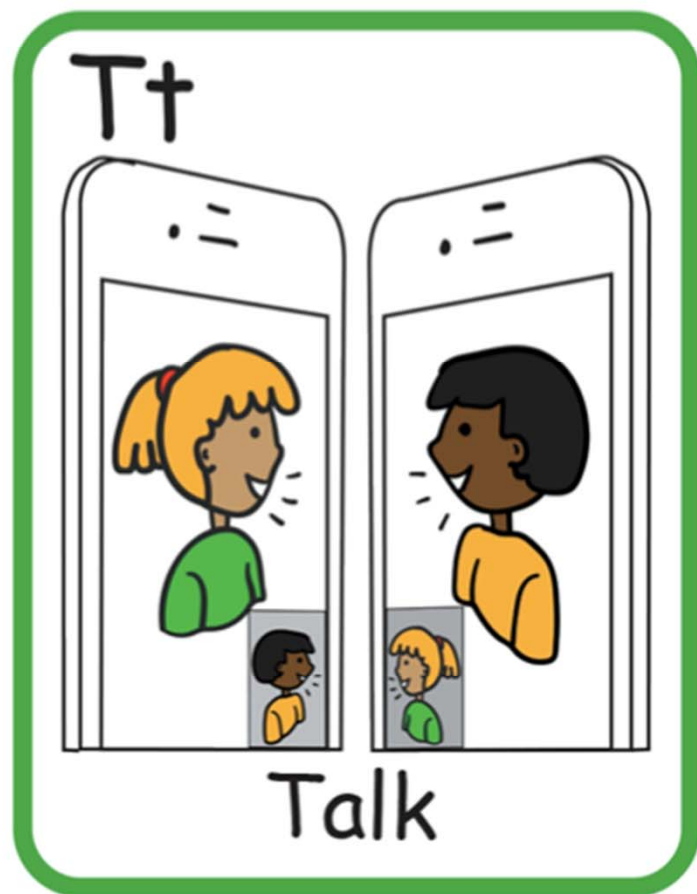
**Think:** Whether you are inside or outside today, stop for a few minutes and notice what you can see, hear, touch, feel, taste and smell.

**Say:** "Today I am learning to use all of my senses and notice all the good things around me."

**Do:**

- Think about your 3 favourite senses
- Try eating something today and investigate what your 3 senses are finding out

# T is for Talk



Talking is a great idea when we have good news to share, or when we are worried about something. When we share good news, it is like doubling the happiness. When we tell someone our worries, it is like sharing the worry and can make us feel better. Talking is a great way to build our inner strength and help us be OK.

**Think:** Of all the people you know, who do you like talk with most?

**Say:** "I will talk with someone when I feel worried about something."

**Do:**

- Draw a picture of all the people you can talk to
- Write down the kind of things you might talk to them about



# U is for Uncertain



Uncertain means when we are not sure about something. We feel safer when we are certain about what is going to happen or we are doing things we have done before. Sometimes when we are uncertain it is a good idea to think about all the things we are certain of.

**Think:** Can you think of something you do now that you enjoy, that you were uncertain of the first time you did it? For example, walking.

**Say:** "When I feel uncertain I will think about all the things I am certain of."

**Do:**

- Write or draw 5 things which you are uncertain of
- Beside it write or draw 5 things you are certain of



# V is for Vulnerable



Vulnerable means we may be in need of special care. Sometimes we are sick and someone needs to look after us, are frightened and we need a hug or sometimes we are upset and feeling a bit sad. When we are vulnerable it's a good idea to tell someone so they can help us.

**Think:** When you are vulnerable, who can help you?

**Say:** "When I feel vulnerable, I will let someone know so they can help me."

**Do:**

- Write or draw when you or others might feel vulnerable, there are some ideas above
- Can you think of things that would help make you or them feel better?
- Draw a poster to show things that make us feel good or help us

# W is for Wish



When we wish, we can imagine all the things we'd like to do, or places we would like to visit one day. A wish is like a dream. Sometimes our wishes come true, and sometimes they haven't come true yet. The great thing about a wish is that it's ours and we can imagine it how we like.

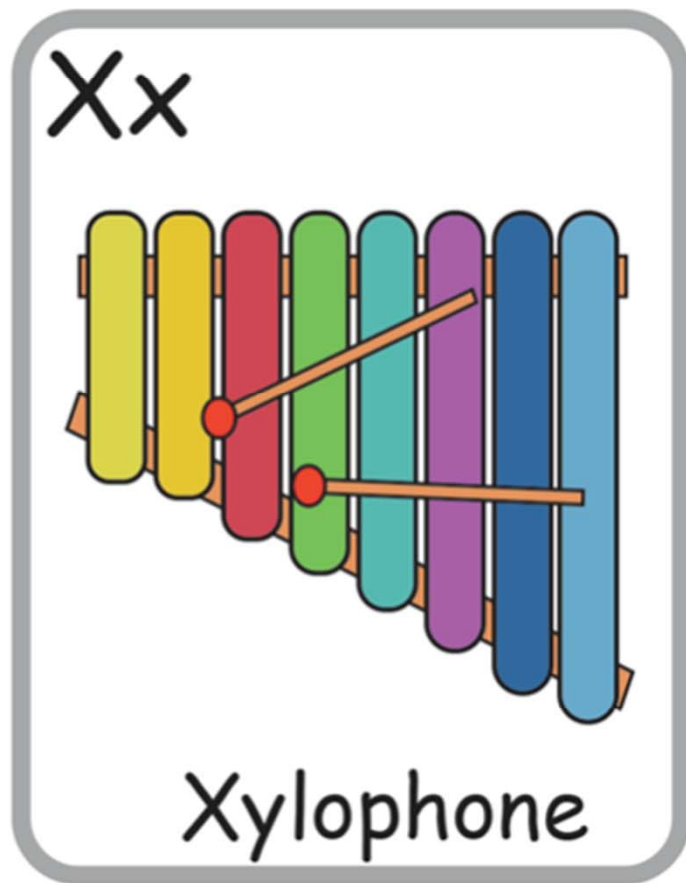
**Think:** If you had a magic wand, what would you wish for?

**Say:** "One day, some of my wishes will come true."

**Do:**

- Draw a picture of what the world would look like if all your wishes came true
- Write a funny story that includes some of your wishes

# X is for Xylophone



A xylophone is a musical instrument . Playing music and singing can be really good for our health and well-being and can help our brains to grow and be active. We can also listen to music even if we don't normally play an instrument or sing.

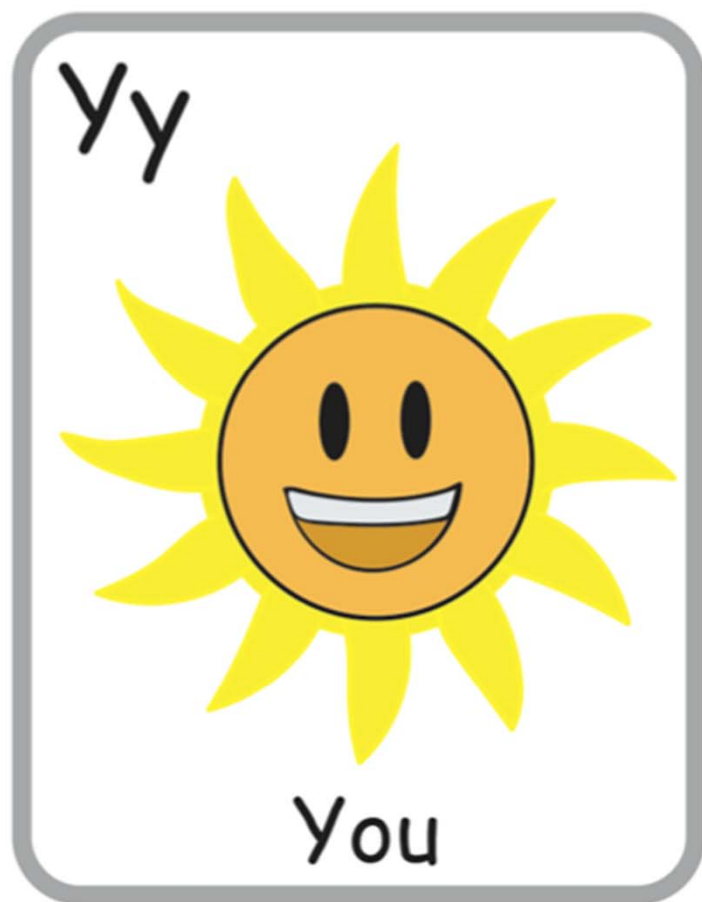
**Think:** What kind of music do you like to listen to?

**Say:** "Music can help my brain to grow and feel positive."

**Do:**

- Listen to music, you can dance, sing along or just enjoy it quietly
- Make up your own song
- Find objects to make your own instrument. For example pots and pans with a wooden spoon

# Y is for You



You is for someone special who is different from every other person in the universe. That is YOU! You are so precious it is important that you take care of yourself and all of the letters in this Resilience Alphabet have been written for you, to give you some ideas about how to build your inner strength so you can stay OK, well and happy.

**Think:** What is the thing you like best about yourself?

**Say:** "Every day I'm learning to be my best self!"

**Do:**

- Draw a picture of yourself in the middle of a page
- All around the picture write down things that you like about yourself, things you are good at doing, and things that other people tell you are what they like about you



# Z is for Zebra



A zebra is an animal that looks a bit like a white horse with black stripes. Did you know that the stripes on every zebra are different from all the other zebras? The zebra in the picture is having a little problem with his stripes. Sometimes being different can be a bit difficult for us, and like the zebra we need to remember it's OK to be different.

**Think:** Do I like things to be the same, or do I like things to be different?

**Say:** "I am special because I am different from everyone else in the universe. It's okay to be different!"

**Do:**

- Think about one of your friends and write or draw as many differences as you can think of between you and your friend
- Design a poster to show all the things that make you who you are, the things that make you different



# The end...



Harvey McMillan Associates

We've come to the end of The Resilience Alphabet and hope that you have learned about how to build your inner strength and wellbeing by THINKING, SAYING and DOING some of the activities suggested.

Now you have some tools to help you to keep going when things don't go as you expect, and to have some good ways of talking about, and thinking about your feelings.

Remember, you can go back and do any activities again, but especially remember some of the things you can SAY to help remind you.

As a last exercise you could write the Say statements on a poster with coloured pens so you don't forget how special you are.

