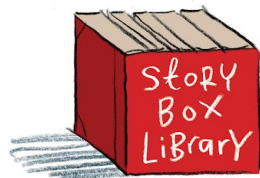


Resilience and Emotional Literacy in Early Years

***Thursday 12
October, 6pm (AEDT)***

*Story Box Library presents an online event with
The Resilience Project, author Zanni Louise &
clinical psychologist Dr Ameika Johnson*

**THE
RESILIENCE
PROJECT™**





Zanni Louise

Based in regional NSW, Zanni Louise has written over 35 internationally published books for kids, from picture books through to novels. Her picture book series, *Human-Kind*, helps kids and their families talk about important values like persistence, kindness and resilience. Her bestselling book, *I Feel The World*, co-authored with Dr Ameika Johnson, helps kids build emotional resilience. Find out more at www.zannilouise.com.



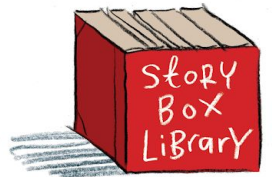
Dr Ameika Johnson

Dr Ameika Johnson is a clinical psychologist with a special interest in children's emotional health. She loves finding creative ways to engage children in conversations about their emotional wellbeing, and currently develops resilience resources for in-school theatre company Brainstorm Productions. Ameika has contributed to the popular *Human-Kind* series and is co-author of the best-selling picture book *I Feel The World*, which encourages children to explore their feelings with curiosity and acceptance.



Emma Peters

Emma is the Early Years Partnership Manager for The Resilience Project (TRP). Her role includes supporting around 300 early years services each year to deliver TRP's Early Years Wellbeing Program to teach positive mental health strategies to prevent mental ill-health and build young people's capacity to deal with adversity. She has 12 years experience working in the early childhood sector, including 10 years as a Kindergarten Teacher and Co-Director of an ELC in West Gippsland Victoria.



Melissa Keil

Melissa Keil is a writer and children's book editor, who has worked in the Australian publishing industry for over 15 years. She is the author of three YA novels and the *Barkly Mansion* junior fiction series. Melissa's books have been shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award and the CBCA Book of the Year award, and have been translated into many languages around the world.



Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



Human-Kind books help you and your kids discuss what matters. Written by Zanni Louise and beautifully illustrated by Missy Turner, the books share anecdotes inspired by real-life kids. The books include resources for parents & teachers, written by clinical psychologist Dr. Ameika Johnson.



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Kids are eager to talk about their experiences.

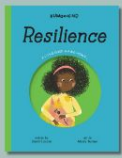
The depth and their ability to articulate will probably surprise you. As will their vulnerability and honesty.



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Sometimes you want to be honest because you don't want the icky sticky web of a lie to tangle you up.

Lila draws on the carpet.

Miss Rachel is cross. 'Who did this?' she asks.



Lila doesn't say anything. But the web gets bigger, and more sticky. She gets more tangled.



Later, when everyone has gone, Lila takes a big breath, and makes a big choice.



'Come, let's fix it together,' says Miss Rachel.

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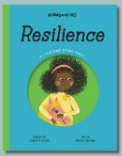
WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



“I popped the Human-Kind book series on the bookshelf in the girls’ room and hadn’t had a chance to tell Miss J about them as I thought Miss A would be more interested.

Miss J finds the new books and is drawn to this one and reads it to herself in her own time... later that evening she comes to me to confess that she hasn’t always been honest and would like to be more honest. Shares very openly some incidents that she hasn’t been very honest and relates them to each part in the book. I told her how proud I was that she was brave enough to tell me and how we can’t change the past but we can chose to be more honest in the future. She explains to me that being honest makes you feel close to people, keeps you safe and helps people trust you. I am so impressed at the impact this book had on her but also proud and amazed by her emotional intelligence to relate it to herself and how lying has affected her and others around her and that she wants to be more honest.”

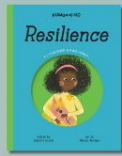
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The mental health of Australian children

- **Before the pandemic: 1 in 7 children aged 4-17 yrs had a mental health condition** (Lawrence et al., 2015)
- **During the pandemic: 1 in 3 were in the high or very high range for emotional symptoms** (Sicouri et al., 2023)
- **Since 2020: More children under 5 yrs presenting with anxiety & sleep problems** (APS, 2022)





Universal primary prevention

- Programs that target all children
- Build social & emotional skills
- Improve resilience
- Reduce the likelihood of mental health conditions later in life





‘Emotion socialisation’: How parents/carers contribute to children’s emotional competence

- Discussion of emotions
- Expression of emotions
- Modelling appropriate emotion regulation
- Responses to emotions
- Emotion coaching



Children's books & emotional resilience

WITH ZANNI LOUISE & DR AMEIKA JOHNSON



'I Feel the World'

- **Explores feelings with curiosity & acceptance**
- **Helps children develop a healthy relationship with their feelings**
- **Encourages children to observe feelings without judgment (mindfulness)**



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Feelings come in different shades,
sizes, colours, textures, shapes.

Big and bold and loud and strong.
A quiet hum. A gentle song.

Smooth like pebbles in my hand.
Light as air or fine as sand.

Like the sun, some shine bright.
Some glow like a starry night.

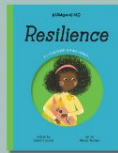
- **Helps children describe their feelings ('Name it to tame it')**
- **Provides information about feelings, e.g.:**
 - **All feelings are okay**
 - **Feelings have purpose**
 - **Feelings always change**
- **Uses metaphors & imagery**
- **Offers strategies to cope with feelings**

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**Relationships are the
foundation of
resilience**



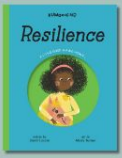


“When we allow our children to deeply depend on us, to really lean into the embrace of our care, literally and figuratively, then what happens is that – out of the gift of deep dependence – true independence emerges.”

Dr Vanessa LaPointe

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Strengthen relationships by:

- Being present & authentic
- Noticing needs for connection vs exploration
- Responding to emotions with warmth & empathy
- Playing, sharing joy & delighting in them
- Setting loving limits
- Repairing 'ruptures' in the relationship



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“Parenthood is above all a relationship, not a skill to be acquired. Attachment is not a behaviour to be learned but a connection to be sought.”

Dr Gabor Maté



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Let's talk about persistence

Can you remember a time when you were persistent?



Duncan farmer

"My best sheep dog, Stomper, was lost. We searched the paddocks for long hours. I found him trapped in a log. I was very glad I did not give up and that Stomper was safe."



Madeleine neuroscientist and epidemiologist

"Part of my work is finding out new things by running experiments. Sometimes they don't work out. That feels really hard, but when this happens I take a break and some deep breaths and I try again. Keep going and never lose hope."



MISSY artist (and the illustrator of this book)

"I've always dreamed of drawing for a living, but it seemed scary to try being an artist in case I failed. I took some classes, practised and practised, and drew and drew. And then I drew some more! I put together a book of my artwork to show at an art fair. I was so nervous. But someone liked it, and I got my first illustration job that day!"



Ed paramedic

"I had a very sick lady at work who refused to go to hospital. She was going to die if she didn't. We tried everything to persuade her, but nothing worked. When everyone had given up trying and were leaving, I tried once more. I said, "I'll do a headstand in front of you if you agree to go to hospital." She laughed and said, "I'd like to see that." So I did a headstand. She came to hospital and we saved her life."

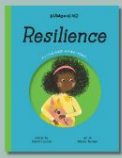
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Ed Armytage, paramedic (Human-Kind: Persistence)

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***“The shortest
distance between
two people is a
story.”***

Patti Digh



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The role of children's books:

- Build connection
- Provide opportunities for independent reflection
- Calming & regulating
- Rituals & routines



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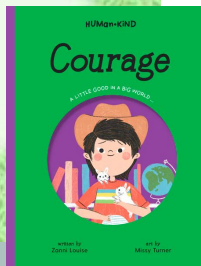
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Discussion questions for children

Courage means doing things that are important, even if they are scary. Sometimes we need courage to do the things that keep us healthy, happy and safe.

- Can you think of a time you needed courage?
- What feelings did you get in your body?
- What were some of your worries?
- What did you do that helped you to have courage?
- Who helped you?
- Can you think of some things you would like to do in the future that might need you to be courageous?

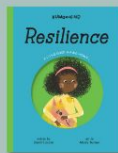


- Provide rich opportunities for discussion
- Facilitate learning through narrative, characters & illustrations
- Give parents/carers confidence to address tricky topics

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Some tips for managing big feelings:

- Take slow, deep breaths. Breathe in through your nose (count to 3) and out through your mouth (count to 3).
- Close your eyes. Notice the ground under your feet and the sounds you can hear.
- Look around you. What do you see?
- Notice the feelings in your body. Do you have a racing heart, tense muscles, butterflies in your tummy, jumping feet or wriggling hands?
- Try to name your emotion. Are you excited? Worried? Frustrated?
- Move your body. Jump, skip, dance, play, run, climb or kick a ball!
- Have some quiet time. Snuggle under a blanket, read a book, listen to music or draw a picture. Cuddle a pet, a toy or someone you love.

These skills take time and lots of practice. Remember your parents and carers are there to help you.



**The broad appeal of
I Feel the World has shown
how valuable these kinds of
books can be.**

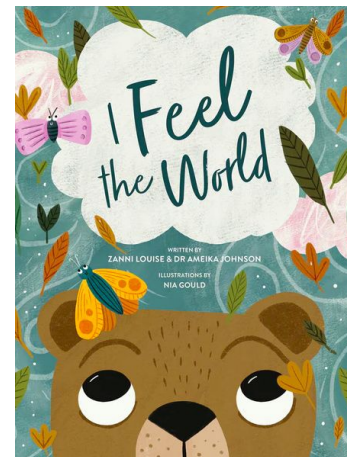
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“This beautiful picture book is fabulous and would make an excellent Christmas gift! Zanni Louise, Dr Ameika Johnson and Nia Gould have created something very special for homes, early childhood and schools! I will be getting a book for each of my families.”



Maggie Dent, parenting author and educator

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Useful resources

- 'The Whole-Brain Child' and 'No-Drama Discipline' (Daniel Siegel & Tina Payne-Bryson)
- 'Parenting from the Inside Out' (Daniel Siegel & Mary Hartzell)
- 'Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting' (John Gottman)
- 'The Single Most Important Parenting Strategy' (Becky Kennedy, Ted Talk)
- 'Tuning in to Kids' parenting program: tuningintokids.org.au/parents
- Berry Street: berrystreet.org.au (trauma-informed resources & PL for educators)
- Raising Children Network: raisingchildren.net.au
- Maggie Dent: maggiedent.com
- Hey Sigmund: heysigmund.com
- Raised Good: raisedgood.com



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Founded by Hugh van Cuylenburg, we deliver emotionally engaging programs to schools and early years services—providing practical, evidence-based, **positive mental health strategies to build resilience and happiness.**



GratITUDE

Empathy

Mindfulness

Emotional **L**iteracy



Emotional Literacy

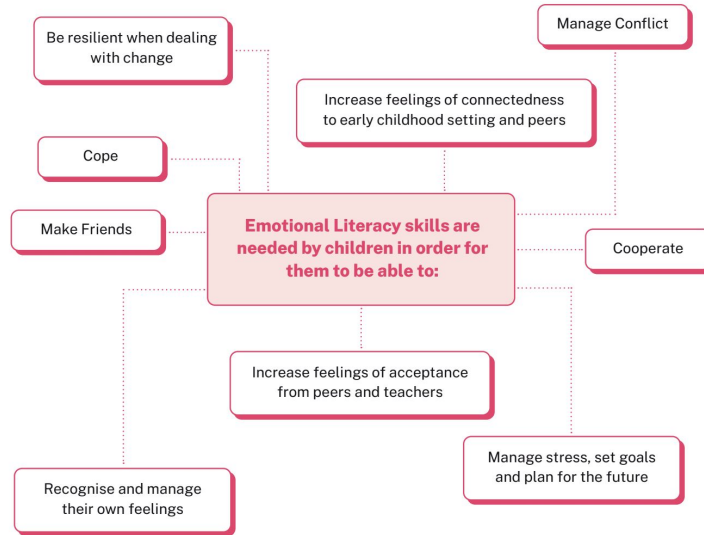
Labeling our emotions as we experience them



How many emotions can you think of?



Why is EL important?



The preschool years are a critical time to develop positive wellbeing strategies and prevent mental-ill health later in life.

A-lexi-thymia

a = without: lex = words : thyme = emotions/feelings

An inability to put emotions and feelings into words

EL in our Early Years Program

SESSION 1

EMOTION SELF-PORTRAITS

Learning objectives:
We are able to recognise the ability to identify and manage emotions.

Activities:
- Drawing Emotions Chart
- Family Feelings Chart
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel
- The Colour Wheel

12 Activities

Activity 1: The Colour Wheel of Emotions

1.2 Purpose:
To help children identify and name different emotions and understand how they can be managed.

1.2.1 Objectives:
- Children will be able to identify and name different emotions.
- Children will be able to understand how emotions can be managed.

1.2.2 Activities:
- Children will be able to identify and name different emotions.
- Children will be able to understand how emotions can be managed.

1.2.3 Evaluation:
- Children will be able to identify and name different emotions.
- Children will be able to understand how emotions can be managed.

TRY IT AT HOME

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

EMOTION CARDS

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

FAMILY FEELINGS CHART

THINKING ABOUT FEELINGS

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

TRY IT AT HOME

EMOTIONAL LITERACY

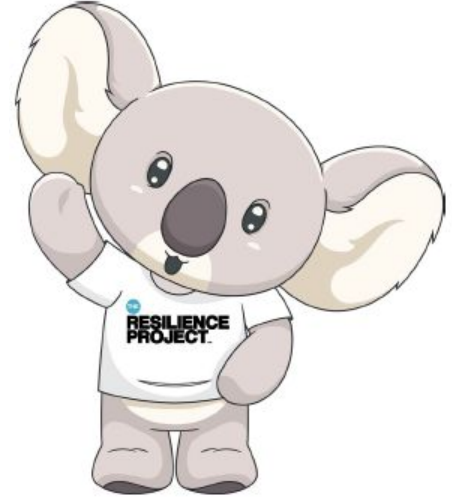
EMOTION CARDS

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

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THINKING ABOUT FEELINGS

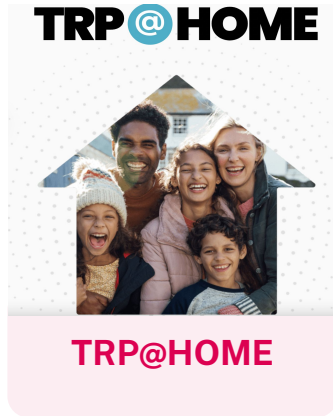
SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...



Supporting EL



- Explicitly model
- Stories
- Use visuals
- Practise mood changers



Let's practise feeling happier! TRP@HOME is a place filled with inspiration and activities to help us improve our wellbeing and build resilience.

Kids

Teens

Adults

Parents

the imperfects

hosted by
hugh van cuylenburg
ryan shelton
& josh van cuylenburg

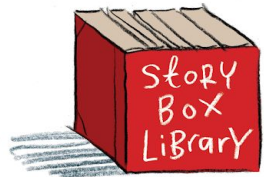


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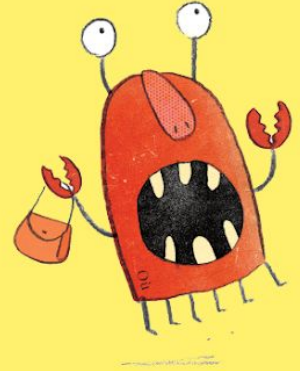
***Thank you
for attending!***

All registrants will receive a recording of this event in their inboxes tomorrow, plus handouts and slide presentation.

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We're part of the Victorian School Readiness Funding menu



Find out more [here](#)

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about resilience, from schools sales
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