Introduction to *beyondblue* and resilience

Included in this session are:

- **Activity 1.** Cocoa Club – forming groups  
  (activity sheet not in work book)
- **Activity 2.** Resilient role models
- **Activity 3.** Class rules
- Reflection
- Home tasks
Purpose of beyondblue

*beyondblue* — the organisation

*beyondblue* is a national organisation that has been set up to look at ways to improve people’s emotional well-being. It also aims to increase our understanding of depression and to reduce the stigma of mental health problems. It has funded a number of research activities, including this school project.

*beyondblue* Schools Research Initiative

The *beyondblue* Schools Research Initiative has a number of different parts. As well as this classroom program, the school project is also looking at ways of improving the school social environment, providing better access to help for students experiencing difficulties, and informing the community about mental health issues.

Life experiences

The project recognises that people of all ages face a range of life experiences. Some of these can be positive, fun and challenging, while others can be negative and difficult to deal with. Life may not always go the way we think it should. In fact, some people find it difficult to cope with all the experiences and changes that occur in their lives. However, other people seem to be able to bounce back from sad or bad times, and look forward to good times ahead.

Resilience and the five resilient ‘senses’

Those people who cope well with problems and bounce back are said to be resilient. The good news is that researchers have found that you can learn skills and develop characteristics that help you build resilience. Resilient people value themselves (have a good sense of self-worth), have a realistic idea of their control over themselves and situations (a sense of control), have good relationships with others and feel part of a community or group (a sense of belonging), have a driving force (a sense of purpose), and are optimistic and enthusiastic about their future (a sense of future). The *beyondblue* classroom program will focus on skills that help to build these five resilient senses.

*beyondblue* classroom program

The *beyondblue* classroom program aims to help you to understand how you think and feel about events in your life and yourself, the changes and challenges that happen to you, and learn the skills that help you face and cope with them. The program will also identify who can help and where to go for help if you (or a friend) need to, even if it is just finding someone to talk to.

Being part of a research project means that you have a say in what happens and play a part in how future programs are developed to help other young people in the future.
Think of someone you admire who has had a really difficult problem to deal with in life and has been able to cope and bounce back. This might be someone you know (like a family member or friend) or someone you have read or heard about.

Name of resilient role model: ______________________________________________

What did they have to cope with? ________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What characteristics or qualities did this person have?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What skills did they use to overcome their problems?
____________________________________________________________________

What sources of social support did they use? ______________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

In your group, compare role models and make a list of the different characteristics and skills the ‘resilient’ role models have.

List the resilient characteristics and skills identified by your group and the class.
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What is resilience?

- Resilience refers to an ability to cope in the face of challenges — it’s about being able to cope well and bounce back after difficulties.

- People who are resilient believe that they will be able to cope with most things that happen to them. It’s not that they think bad things will never happen, rather they have a positive view of themselves and their world and their own ability to deal with things.

- Just like we may go to the doctor’s for a checkup, take vitamins or medicine if we need to, and do exercise to look after our physical health, resilient people also take care of their emotional health.

- People who are resilient use strategies to keep themselves feeling good, like planning to do things they enjoy regularly.

- Resilient people have good social support systems or know other people to talk to or to get some help from in difficult times.

Key messages

Resilience helps you to cope and bounce back from life’s difficulties.

It is possible to learn skills to build resilience.
In your groups, brainstorm the sort of rules for the classroom that you think would be useful when working on the beyondblue classroom program.

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Write down the rules agreed to by your class.

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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

I agree to follow the rules developed by our class to ensure a respectful and supportive environment for everyone.

Signed ________________________________

Date _________________________
What does ‘resilient’ mean to you?
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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Write down two or three of the skills or characteristics you think are the most
important in becoming resilient.
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What resilient skills or characteristics would you like to have (or improve)?
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1. Resilience

- Think some more about what characteristics and skills help someone to be resilient. Do some research — look for real life examples.
- You might like to talk to an adult you know.
  - Ask them if they can give an example of a time when they were able to bounce back from a difficult life problem.
  - What helped them to cope and what skills do they think are important for coping?

OR

- Look for stories or articles in newspapers, magazines or on the Web about people who have been able to bounce back after difficult times.
  - Read about their experiences. Look for the things that they thought helped them cope.
  - What characteristics or skills did they use to help them through?

Write your notes here.

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2. Adolescent images

In the next session, you will be asked to consider ways in which adolescents are portrayed in society. You need to bring in an image or images of adolescents. This could be pictures or articles from magazines or newspapers, song lyrics, a description of characters in a TV show or any other portrayal of adolescents.
Resilience helps you to cope and bounce back from life’s difficulties.

It is possible to learn skills to build resilience.

(You can write any notes or thoughts you have about today’s session here.)