



Together We Are Safe, Together We Are Respectful, Together We Achieve

Wellbeing Wednesday #4

Each Wednesday we will be posting some exciting Wellbeing content for our community. This may include information about how you can support your children's and families' wellbeing, a snapshot on mental health issues currently prevalent in the community, or information about a local service in the area that might benefit you or your child.

This week's topic is Growth Mindset

Has your child ever said to you 'There's no point, I'll never be able to do it' or avoided doing something because they've failed at it in the past? This is related to their mindset. They may believe that being 'good' at a particular activity is a fixed state, and is something they can't control. This is called **Fixed Mindset**. Over time, children who feel like this may decrease their efforts and sometimes even engage in disruptive behaviours.

Opposite to this is **Growth Mindset**. This is when someone believes they can thrive on a challenge and sees failure as a springboard for growth. Children and adults with a growth mindset are able to bounce back and believe that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort, persistence, trying different strategies and learning from mistakes.

Why is Growth Mindset important to develop?

Carol Dweck, a pioneering researcher in the field of motivation and mindset, has found that building a growth mindset helps children at school; making them more motivated, more engaged in the classroom and likely to receive higher marks and greater rewards from their work. Growth Mindset can help students learn and develop social skills. By practicing Growth Mindset, students can move beyond feeling like they're not good enough and rather set themselves up for success, whilst building up their resilience. It improves behaviour, increases life satisfaction, and helps children to control their emotions.

How can we help students?

Research has shown that Mindsets can be changed relatively quickly and there are plenty of things that families can do to help. There are a range of things you can do to help your child develop their Growth Mindset including:

Setting high expectations:

It is commonly believed that lowering our expectations promotes self-esteem in children (e.g. "never mind, let's try an easier one"), but this is not the case. Having high expectations shows that you believe they can do it, which in turn has a positive impact on their own beliefs, behaviour and outcomes.

Encouraging resilience:

We now know that the brain adapts to new information and practise by creating new connections, so help your child to believe that challenge is a positive thing because it means they are growing their brains! This can help them to be comfortable with the times that they struggle and mean that they see this as a sign of learning.

Celebrating mistakes!

The fear of making mistakes and associated shame can stop children from giving something a go in the first place. We all make mistakes, so try to embrace these mistakes and use them as learning opportunities, rather than feeling embarrassed about them. If we are not making mistakes, then we are not stretching ourselves.

Using inspirational role models:

Think about your child’s favourite athlete, musician or teacher and talk about their journey to success. We call this unravelling the talent myth. If someone has done well, we have a tendency to think they were born that way. We need to show our children that this is not the case. Rather than focusing on somebody’s ‘natural talents’, focus on their early efforts, strong work ethic, and the mistakes and learning that led them to where they are now.

Using Specific Praise:

Using focus praise on the effort they’ve made to get to that point of triumph, the strategy they used or the outcome itself helps to develop children’s resilience to failure, as it teaches them what to do when they are challenged or fail-try again, try harder or try a different way, all things that are within their own control.

Trying different learning tactics:

There’s no one-size-fits-all model for learning. What works for one person may not work for you. Encourage your child to find different ways to work out the problem.

Using the word “yet”:

Dweck says “not yet” has become one of her favourite phrases. Whenever you see your child struggling with a task, just tell them they haven’t mastered it **yet**.

Here is a collection of books relating to Growth Mindset, that you may like to read at home or on YouTube:



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