



# Resilience Strategies for Grades 11 & 12

by Dr Andrew Wicking

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The work of Resilient Youth Australia in over 1,300 schools with nearly 400,000 school students has identified the three main components of resilience: to be Connected Protected Respected™ (CPR).

<https://resiliencyouth.org/survey>

Building resilience in Grades 11-12 is about managing time, stress and energy. For example, In Grades 11-12, 37% of boys and almost 50% of girls report feeling anxious, also representing a significant gap between the genders.

## **Suggested strategy:**

Mentoring and coaching of students so they achieve milestones and maintain motivation is helpful. The frame that needs to be authoritatively and caringly made is that successful completion of Grades 11 and 12 is a journey. Parents also need to be educated about the process of successfully completing Grades 11 and 12.

Incorporating anxiety reduction methods into these years is essential. Mindfulness approaches are useful for some, but more active forms of anxiety reduction need to be practiced. We need to manage expectations and catastrophic thinking.

The results of the Resilience Survey show that many students are sleep deprived, social media dependent, eating poorly and not exercising or looking after themselves. In short, a recipe for fatigue and sadness. As well as educating parents and students about how to maintain energy, you might consider that each student nominates two “guardian angels” one in school, one out of school who check in with the student and also can contact the student welfare coordinator if they feel concerned.

## **Case study:**

A co-educational school surveyed Grades 7-12 students using the Resilience Survey. The Principal and leadership group were concerned when Grade 11 males and females had anxiety levels well beyond the Australian Norms, and with highly anxious girls in excess of 50% of the cohort.

Immediately the school responded by taking the data back to a randomly selected focus group of Grade 11 students, asking them why this would be so. The students responded by saying five Grade 11 subject teachers had set assignments due in the same week. At that school, teachers had never or rarely consulted each other to ensure students work-load was distributed over time. They do now!

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