



Resilience Strategies for Grades 3 & 4

by Dr Andrew Wicking

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>

In Grades 3 and 4 students show high levels of engagement in learning and school belonging but are challenged by frictions in social relationships. For example, 19% or 1 in 5 students report having been bullied in the past year.

Suggested strategies:

Focus on the development of positive respectful relationships. Broadening and deepening friendships with peers and adults increases the sense of connectedness and belonging to school. By practicing how to create, maintain and repair friendships we can build values, social competencies, emotional intelligence and protect against violence and bullying.

This would also require schools to employ relationship-based approaches to behavioural incidents where there is an emphasis on forgiveness and the maintenance of attachment.

Case study:

In a small regional primary school, students in Grades 3, 5 and 6 felt safe at school in line with the Australian

Norms. However, in Grade 4, nearly 50% of girls reported feeling unsafe at school. School leadership were aware of an issue but had no idea of the ripple effect it was having on the other students. A young girl with significant family issues had recently joined the school and was proving disruptive. The school took two steps: personal support for the young girl, and classroom support for the entire year group. Connection to school and learning engagement increased while anxiety levels dropped across the school.

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