

<p>CHAPTER 5</p> <p>Resilience Enhancement Kit</p> <p>Design</p>
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"Although the world is full of suffering it is also full of the overcoming of it. For we carry within us the wonders we seek"

(Freedman, Rideout. & Jensen quotes Hellen Keller, 1998:35).

5.1. Introduction

South Africa is continuously changing and developing society where information is constantly expanding and knowledge regarding the needs of middle adolescents within the school system improved, in order to guide them to become competent and well-rounded members of society who can contribute towards a productive civilization. Continuous research in Educational Psychology is necessary to address the needs of the middle adolescents and to improve the delivery of services to them. *"The Educational psychologists is a problem-solving consultant, an in service trainer, a system analyst, and an advisor. The aim is to identify what kind of areas of work, based on psychological research and practice would bring about an improvement in school practice"* (Sharratt, 1995:212). The Educational psychologists have direct and indirect services that they provide to schools, families, community and the education authorities. These services in the school context include the following:

- ❖ Provision of assessment and evaluation.
- ❖ Consultation and advisory services.
- ❖ Collaboration with multi-disciplinary teams.
- ❖ Support and therapeutic interventions for learners and their families.
- ❖ The continuous development of services, programs and policies for the schools.

- ❖ Early intervention and preventative work with middle adolescents, groups, school and families.
- ❖ Workshops to share information to parents, teachers and members of the community with regard to the optimal learning and development of learners in a complex and interdependent social system.
- ❖ Training focused on instructional strategies and adaptation of the curriculum to address the middle adolescents' needs.
- ❖ Evaluation and development of policies and practices that foster whole school development as well as lending support for the changing school system that functions as an organisation that embraces inclusive practices.
- ❖ The identifying of future changes, the analyzing of middle adolescent needs and suggestions on how to address these needs through curriculum and organisational development. "*The task of the Educational Psychology is to achieve theoretical understanding of how the internal (psychological) structures supporting conceptions of truth and value are developed in children through interactions with teachers, parents, peers etc., and the application of this theoretical knowledge to practice in the form of curriculum planning and design*" (Sharrat, 1995:215).
- ❖ The training and support of teachers, principals, assistants, parents and professional services within the school framework to foster the principals of Outcomes Based Education and inclusion.
- ❖ Guidance with regard to optimally utilizing the resources in the community and the development of support networks. "*Educational psychologists encourage the establishment of inclusion task forces and the designation of a support facilitator to work with classroom teachers and other personnel to encourage inclusive practices, locate resources and even team teach*" (Sharrat, 1995:13).

In the light of the services that the Educational psychologist provides to the school community, the contribution presented in this research to the Educational Psychology field within the school context emerged. The changing education system in South Africa posed not only a challenge in developing middle adolescents to think critically, utilize skills and become actively involved in the learning process but also emphasized the need for them to exhibit the apposite resilience competencies that would enable them to rebound against adversity, changes and risks in a changing society. This research aims to add to the knowledge base concerning ways to appraise, enhance and develop resiliency competencies by amalgamating research and developing activities that take into account the middle adolescents' developmental phase as well as ways of facilitating the process of resilience enhancement in the school context. The Resilience Enhancement Kit empowers teachers and psychologists to provide a learner centred assistance based on middle adolescent needs, which is multi-cultural and inclusive of all middle adolescents. The Resilience Enhancement Kit enables the significant role players in the school system to appraise and enhance the learner's resilience modalities in a non-threatening and enjoyable manner. The competencies underlying the resilience modalities that are represented in the Resilience Enhancement Kit will be outlined and discussed hereafter.

5.2. The resilience modalities

5.2.1. Emotional competencies

5.2.1.1. Identifying and managing emotions

Developing the sensitivity to identify emotions starts at an early age. Parents teach their children the basic emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, loneliness and fear by association. As a result middle adolescents can also learn unfavorable ways of expressing emotions through modeling the example of adults (e.g. anger and intolerance exhibited in road-rage). Unfortunately parents and teachers do not always have the necessary skills themselves to teach children and middle adolescents how to identify and manage emotions. The

experience of emotions often becomes automatic and no thought is given to why a middle adolescent feels like he or she does, what gives rise to that emotion or how that middle adolescent expresses that emotion. Self reflection and management of emotions are necessary to break the linear cycle of cause and effect, action and reaction, which could lead to emotional problems. Teachers, psychologists and significant others can function as facilitators in developing positive emotions which has a favorable impact on learning and general wellbeing. *"Positive emotions and related positive states have been linked to broadened scopes of attention, cognition and action and enhanced physical, intellectual and social resources. Positive emotions produce patterns of thought that are notably creative and receptive for cognitive content. Positive emotions, when channeled into effective prevention, treatment and coping strategies (resilient competencies) should be especially effective for counteracting psychological (e.g. anxiety disorders), physiological and behavioral (e.g. aggression) problems"* (Fredrickson, 2000:5). The intricate nuances and blends of emotions are identified through observing how middle adolescents' react to various situations that can allow teachers and psychologists to make the middle adolescents aware of how they express their emotions. Farnette, Forte and Loss (1991:9) suggest the following ways in which emotions can be identified:

- ❖ Emotions can be identified by asking middle adolescent to link emotions to situations that elicit an emotional reaction.
- ❖ Emotions can be identified by looking at the expressions of others and labeling the expression with an emotion.
- ❖ Categorizing emotions according to "good" and "bad".
- ❖ Making middle adolescents aware of how emotions affect the body by associating the feelings in the body with concrete objects (for example being tense is a tightly stretched rope).

The ways of identifying emotions can be incorporated within the Resilience Enhancement Kit where the identification of emotional expression can be taught with the aid of pictures as well as activities where the middle adolescent are

given the opportunity to reflect the emotions recognized in others. Labeling emotions and giving the middle adolescents the opportunity to link them to real-life scenarios can also be a way that the Resilience Enhancement Kit can foster identification of emotions. The following ways to enhance and develop the competencies to manage and appropriately express emotions are proposed by the National Association of School Psychologists (2001:4) and can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ Teaching and developing relaxation skills that could include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation and imagery exercises. *"Relaxation carries the urge not only to savor the moment but also to integrate those momentary experiences into an enriched appreciation of one's place in the world. People who practice relaxation techniques not only gain practical skills for managing subsequent stressors, but also develop more complex and resilient views of themselves" (Fredrickson 2000:8).*
- ❖ The method to stop, breathe, visualizing a serene scene as a calming and relaxing effect and then to ponder "what emotion am I experiencing now and why" can be effective in managing emotions.
- ❖ Developing the skills to identify verbal and non-verbal cues that reflect emotions.
- ❖ Identifying assets that could function as appropriate outlets for emotions like hobbies or sport also aids in the management and expression of emotions.
- ❖ The impact of positive "I-messages" or self-talk reinforces the middle adolescent's ability to accept favorable emotions and challenge unfavorable ones. This ability also has an influence on the middle adolescent's self-image.
- ❖ In the motion picture regarding Dr. Patch Adam's life his philosophy that laughter (humour) cures the soul became apparent and still rings true today. It is especially relevant in the management of emotions.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit incorporates these above mentioned ways of managing emotions where theory is put into practice. The activities can be structured that the middle adolescents are taught the skills to manage their emotions by choosing appropriate outlets; using positive self-messages as well

as strategies to calm themselves and gain control of their emotions. A detailed outline of the practical application of all the resilience modalities will be provided further in the chapter. An extension of expressing and understanding emotions is the middle adolescent's ability to empathize by displaying a considerate, caring and an unselfish concern for the welfare of others. This emotional competency is a very significant asset in functioning within a diverse society. Empathy is the second aspect dealt with in the Resilience Enhancement Kit.

5.2.1.2. Empathy

South Africa is a multi-cultural country comprising of an array of different people diverse in languages, traditions, ethnicities and abilities. It is vital that schools develop and foster competencies, which will enable the middle adolescent to function effectively in this diverse society. One such competency is empathy. Empathy is to cognitively perceive and understand other people's emotions and behaviour from their frame of reference, and then to affectively communicate that understanding and personal emotions it evoked, on a verbal and non-verbal manner. Schools are a microcosm of the society as a whole. Middle adolescents need to develop and cultivate this competency within an environment where there is guidance. *"The business of schools is to seek to develop in young people the character traits we associate with goodness, traits such as kindness, generosity, compassion and helpfulness. Successful learners are knowledgeable, self-determined, strategic and emphatic. That is, in addition to having knowledge, including critical and creative faculties; motivation to learn and confidence about themselves as learners; and tools and strategies for acquiring, evaluating and applying knowledge they also have insight into the motives, feelings and behaviour of others and the ability to communicate this understanding"* (Cotton, 2002:1). Empathy and pro-social behaviour (sharing, helping, acceptance, respect and comforting) are intertwined. Cotton (2002:5) and Freedman, Rideout and Jensen (1998:28) conclude that there are several ways of developing and enhancing empathy:

- ❖ Modelling of empathetic, caring behaviour through role-play or significant role models in society.
- ❖ Developing the skill of explaining and reasoning why certain behaviours are harmful to others and developing the appropriate behaviour in particular settings.
- ❖ Discussing emotions and problems positively.
- ❖ Giving positive comments by teachers, psychologist, peers and significant others for pro-social emphatic behaviour.
- ❖ Practising interpersonal perception and empathetic responding.
- ❖ Focusing on similarities between one self and another middle adolescent (group work).
- ❖ Exposure to emotionally arousing stimuli (e.g. films or pictures) which can foster a discussion in identifying needs and personal responses regarding the specific situation.
- ❖ Community service and interaction with for example the elderly, sick, disadvantaged and disabled where these above-mentioned skills can be implemented.
- ❖ Developing non-verbal communication and listening skills to convey positive messages (e.g. eye contact, body posture etc.).

It is vital that these skills must not just be a once-off occurrence, but a continuous process where the older adolescents can be engaged in peer teaching and a support. Empathy creates a much-needed caring and tolerant community. Emotionally resilient middle adolescents care about the people around them and they are not only focused on themselves and their needs and goals. The Resilience Enhancement Kit can include the discussed ways of enhancing and developing empathy through activities such as identifying role models and identifying empathetic behaviour, discussions as well as positive feedback from teachers and psychologists. The third aspect of emotional competency includes the learner's ability to apply self-regulation and delay gratification.

5.2.1.3. Ego-control and ego-resiliency

The terms ego-control and ego-resiliency are often used interchangeably, but they are different in nature. Due to the self-centered nature of middle adolescents this is a competency that is particularly difficult for them and is not purposefully taught at schools which intensifies the need for this emotional competency to be developed. Ego-control is the extent or degree to which a middle adolescent has the ability to defer immediate gratification and inhibit impulses in order to obtain future goals. Ego-resiliency refers to the middle adolescent's ability to flexibly adapt and accommodate the demands of different situations. Ego-resiliency encompasses the middle adolescent's ability to direct and apply personal rigidity, spontaneity, impulses and self-restraint for the appropriate situations.

"Ego control refers to the degree to which middle adolescents express their impulses. Ego resiliency describes the internal personality structures that function to modulate these impulses adaptively. Ego-under controlled middle adolescents are described as spontaneous, emotionally expressive and focused on the immediate gratification of desires. At the other extreme are Ego-over controlled middle adolescents, who are relatively constrained and inhibited and who tend toward minimal expression of their impulses and emotions" (Huey & Weisz, 1994:404).

Middle adolescents who exhibit ego-brittleness are more prone to develop problems at school that could include behavioural problems like hyperactivity, acting-out, anxiety, and withdrawal. Naser, Sandman (2000:2), Huey and Weisz (1994:404) identified the following aspects based on the Ego Resiliency Scale 89 and the Five-Factor Model of Personality which is important in the development of ego-control and ego-resiliency:

- ❖ Being an active participant in new activities and challenges with peers where they are required to wait their turn is important in developing ego-resilience and ego-control.
- ❖ Openness and exposure to new experiences will give the middle adolescent the opportunity to practise acquired skills.

- ❖ Developing the skills for conscientious task completion, goal directedness and persistency will foster ego-resilience and ego-control. Group work is a favourable method in developing this skill. Teaching organisational skills will also be an asset.

Middle adolescents often internalise or externalise the problems they experience. Developing appropriate skills to manage this based on reality testing is an important aspect of resiliency and according to Richardson (2000:247) behaviour modification can be utilized to teach middle adolescents self-management and to delay immediate gratification by asking middle adolescents to compare their exhibited behaviour with on-task requirements and what the teacher require of them to do at that time. The activities in the Resilience Enhancement Kit that foster ego-resiliency will be conducted in a group where the middle adolescents have the opportunity for social learning and can function as monitors regarding their peer's behaviour, for example if they are reacting impulsively or are unrealistic in what they say. The Resilience Enhancement Kit can also provide the opportunity for the middle adolescents to practice skills such as delaying of immediate gratification. The social modality of resilience is the next section dealt with in the Resilience Enhancement Kit.

5.2.2. Social competencies

5.2.2.1. The ability to form and maintain positive relationships

The formation and maintenance of positive relationships with peers, teachers, parents and significant others is an important developmental function during middle adolescents. Learning how to interact socially during recreational activities is one of the first exercises middle adolescents have of developing positive relationships in the form of friendships. Peer isolation or rejection could lead to a variety of problems such as school phobia and depression etc. *"Through the successful formation of friendships, adolescents learn social skills such as co-operation, sharing and conflict management. Friendship also foster*

their sense of group belonging and has an enduring impact on the adolescent's social adjustment in later life" (Webster-Stratton, 1999:256). The school is the ideal context to foster positive relationships and teach appropriate social interaction between peers because of the group dynamics present in a classroom. It can be concluded that children or adolescents unconsciously decide whether to be friends or initiate a relationship with someone by asking possible core questions such as:

- Is this person fun to be with?
- Is this person trustworthy?
- Will this person have a positive influence for him or her?
- Will this person help him or her achieve his or her goals?
- Does this person make him or her feel good about himself or herself?
- Does this person have similar interests to him or her?

Webster-Stratton (1999:259) and Schilling (1996:113) suggest the following ways of fostering the initiation of new relationships:

- ❖ Teachers can instruct middle adolescents in a variety of openers and closers when initiating a conversation.
- ❖ Middle adolescents can be taught to become aware of their listening skills self-disclose skills and choice of appropriate conversational topics.
- ❖ Modelling and reinforcing appropriate social scripts with regard to the following behaviours like sharing, making a suggestion, asking for permission, taking turns, giving a compliment, asking for help and being polite.

Modifying classroom management to include activities that will foster interaction will enhance relationships such as group projects, seating arrangement and peer tutors. *"Classroom practice in many subjects of the curriculum makes social demands on pupils, through working in groups, making or responding to presentations from others, dealing appropriately with social rules and authority relationships and more generally operating effectively within a social environment with peers" (Bremner & Topping, 1998:6).* The following aspects can be utilized to foster social competencies:

- ❖ Role-playing different social skills allows middle adolescent to understand each other in their middle adolescent contexts. Richardson (2000:248) reinforces the necessity to model pro-social behaviours throughout the school day and have learners practice them.
- ❖ Interactive discussion groups that allow middle adolescents to share their thoughts on belonging to a group and acceptable peer behaviour.
- ❖ Asking the middle adolescents to write positive statements about the other members of the group that can be shared with them is an effective way not only to enhance self perception but also a deeper understanding of the unique qualities that make an middle adolescent valuable as a friend.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit provides the learners with the skills to form friendships and work effectively within groups. The activities that are related to the formation of positive relationships, particularly friendship that is important for middle adolescents could be to ask them to apply the competencies taught (through interviews and role-playing) regarding interaction and establishment of relationships on an individual basis or in groups. Most of the activities in the Resilience Enhancement Kit should be conducted in groups to ensure that the middle adolescents receive exposure to practice their relationship skills on a continuous basis with the guidance of the teacher or psychologists. The ability to initiate and maintain relationships are closely related to the middle adolescents' ability to communicate effectively.

5.2.2.2. The ability to communicate effectively on a verbal and non-verbal level

"Words show a man's wit but actions show his meaning" (Freedman et al., 1998:45). Conveying a message does not only rely on the spoken content but also on the non-verbal gestures that the messenger displays. Non-verbal communication includes personal space, touch, facial expression, body language and tone of voice. Every culture has rules about the correct use of personal space. There are unwritten rules that are never taught, but they are very influential and known to all members of the culture. In South Africa for example

the African cultures have a close proximity regarding the allowed space between two individuals to that of the Western cultures.

It is therefore important that the middle adolescents be taught to respect the various cultures and learn from each other to avoid misunderstandings. Touch is the way in which one middle adolescent can convey understanding, empathy or love but middle adolescents need to know the appropriateness thereof within the various cultural contexts. Although younger children tend to shy away from physical contact, the middle adolescents tend to show more physical contact that can be seen in the way that they greet each other in unique ways, girls tend to walk arm in arm as a sign of support and boys tend to bump each other around in a teasing and playful way. Physical contact can also be observed between the genders especially when the middle adolescents are in romantic relationships and will often be seen holding hands and hugging. The face is one of the most powerful channels of non-verbal communication. Recognizing expressions on a face is closely related to the identification of emotions. Gestures made through body language can also differ between cultures and must therefore be interpreted with caution. On the basis of a middle adolescent's facial expression and body language it is possible to know when to engage in conversation or to withdraw. These accurate reading of non-verbal signals can aid in the development of relationships. The human voice reveals the ways in which voices communicate important clues about who that middle adolescent is and what he or she feels. The voice functions as the emotional carrier of the message. Although the appropriate content of the message (verbal communication) is significant, the non-verbal communication conveys the meaning of what is being said. Rourke (1994:1) suggests the following ways in which verbal and non-verbal communication can be enhanced:

- ❖ Middle adolescents can make a journal of their peer's non-verbal cues and discuss them with the facilitator.

- ❖ The appropriate communication style can be taught through modelling and role playing for different situations for example what to say, how to say it, when to say certain words.
- ❖ Teaching strategies during a conversation can serve as a guideline to middle adolescents for example to stop, look, listen and weigh alternatives in confusing situations in a conversation.
- ❖ Middle adolescents can be made aware to observe non-verbal cues and deduce the meaning behind it.
- ❖ An explanation of the rules regarding social problems may assist him or her in obtaining all the information he or she needs in social situations before making any decisions to act.
- ❖ Reinforcement through experiences for example meeting a substitute teacher, going on a field trip or a change in schedule, can build on learned skills.
- ❖ Use verbal rehearsal and step-by-step instruction or modelling in anticipation of novel experiences.
- ❖ Promote self advocacy and positive reinforcement by helping him or her know his or her strengths in learning new social skills.

An activity in the Resilience Enhancement Kit that can be utilized to explain to middle adolescents about communication is teacher demonstration. The teacher can demonstrate what is meant by non-verbal communication such as personal space, touch, facial expression and body language by demonstrating and discussing the appropriateness of these behaviors and how it affects the people around them. The middle adolescents could also be asked to role play a scenario where the other middle adolescents have to deduce what has been shown, some of the middle adolescents may speak while others may just play the role of a mime. Structuring activities so that the middle adolescents are asked to look for positive characteristics in others and give them compliments also guide them to

communicate in an appropriate way without just focusing on the negative. An important aspect in communication and social wellbeing is having a sense of humour with regard to life's difficulties and personal setbacks. This ability allows a middle adolescent to rebound swifter from adversities.

5.2.2.3. Sense of humour

"Humour is a complex interpersonal dynamic that has positive emotional, physical and cognitive effects. Laughter stimulates imagination, creativity and problem solving skills. It is essential to sanity and survival, it is a tonic for loneliness and depression and it is the foundation of positive social interaction" (Freedman et al., 1998:25). By interacting with middle adolescents, it becomes apparent that they have the ability to recognise humour or elicit the humorous in daily life. If a middle adolescent is able to laugh at himself or herself with regard to daily pressures or mistakes that has been made it paves the way for resilient behaviour. Teachers or Educational psychologists can enhance and develop a sense of humour in middle adolescents through the following:

- ❖ Modelling behaviour that illustrates that making mistakes is part of a learning process and can be enjoyed as well.
- ❖ Using the media for example newspapers or the television to illuminate the humorous things people do, even high standing individuals like movie stars.
- ❖ Purposefully committing to adding humour to everyday life for example sharing funny stories or jokes.

To the middle adolescents humour is an indirect way of coming to terms with aspects in their development that can be emotionally stressful and as a result, they often joke about it. These jokes can include making fun of (teasing) someone's appearance or behaviour that can also be sexual in nature. Jokes provide an opportunity to determine cultural norms and acceptable behaviour and can mask the middle adolescents' insecurities as they try to fit in with the peer group. It offers them a chance to try out boundaries and if necessary, retreat from it by saying "I was just joking." Humour is also used to determine who becomes a

member of a group based on their shared sense of humour. In South Africa, the black middle adolescent has an open sense of humour where they will imitate behaviours and laugh at each other. The white middle adolescent appears to have a subtle sense of humour with the emphasis on wordplay. Humour such as puns or reversals could pose challenges in a classroom with second language learners from other cultures and it will require the teacher to provide the background knowledge and context to make the humour accessible to all.

However, with guidance the middle adolescent can be made aware of the underlying lesson in humour and jokes. The joy of interacting, communicating and participating within a group while sharing thoughts, feelings and learning experiences related to the activities in the Resilience Enhancement Kit can provide a context where humour can occur naturally and where the teacher can harness it to alleviate tension. The nature of the large groups of learners in the South African schools makes it necessary to develop activities that can be administered in groups. Therefore, the Resilience Enhancement Kit largely makes use of activities where middle adolescents can participate in groups.

5.2.2.4. Working effectively within a group

Social competence can be enhanced and developed through participation within a group where the opportunity is given for cooperative learning. Group work forms a fundamental part of the South African education system that requires middle adolescents to work productively on academic content while at the same time developing social interpersonal skills. As social beings middle adolescents are interdependent upon each other and learning becomes effective if the content is explored and discovered within the secure and guided framework of a peer group. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1998:3) identified the following skills needed for cooperative social learning:

- ❖ **Forming skills:** The basic skills needed for a functioning, cooperative learning group (taking turns, using quiet voices). Forming skills help

organize the group and establish minimum norms for appropriate behaviours.

- ❖ **Functioning skills:** The skills needed to manage the group's activities to complete a task and to maintain effective working relationships among members. Learners need to share ideas and opinions; ask for facts and reasoning that will ease their interaction and thus their understanding of each other's work, express feelings and provide support.
- ❖ **Formulating skills:** The skills needed to understand the material being studied at a deeper level, to stimulate the use of reasoning strategies, and to maximize mastery and retention. This requires the learners to actively engage with each other, correcting each other, seeking elaboration and helping each other understand the task at hand.
- ❖ **Fermenting skills:** The skills needed to rethink the material being studied, manage cognitive conflict, search for more information, and communicate the rationale behind one's conclusion. This requires positively criticizing without breaking down other people, generating further answers and testing the work against reality.

Although the middle adolescent is capable of these skills they still need the guidance of a teacher in structuring the work in the group and keeping them on track with the requirements. In utilizing the Resilience Enhancement Kit the teacher or psychologist should be prepared for the group work and have a clear aim of what the middle adolescents are expected to do. Management of the groups will require that the teacher or psychologist should define roles and responsibilities of the members in the group, set guidelines of what is expected of the middle adolescents, encourage discussions and be aware of any learner who is not being included; guide the middle adolescents on how to disagree appropriately as well as stating their views. The teacher or psychologist should also reinforce the competencies acquired such as empathy, expressing emotions and ways of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Activities that require the middle adolescents to work within a group fosters social competence and allows them to utilize each other as valuable assets in solving problems, generating new ideas or providing support in trying times. Providing group activities that require the middle adolescent to work as a team in solving a problem, acting out a social situation or giving positive peer feedback will reinforce the acquired skills provided through demonstration, explanation or modelling. Although being accepted and participating within a group is essential, the self-efficacy the middle adolescent exhibits within the group stems from a positive self-identity and self perception.

5.2.2.5. Sense of self (Self identity, positive self perception and self-efficacy)

Resilience is linked to a positive attitude, a sense self worth and personal control. Those middle adolescents who manage the changes of life effectively have learned to view themselves as valuable, even when making mistakes. They also have a sense of self-worth when they do not have the approval of everyone in their lives. The resilient middle adolescent displays the ability to learn from the lessons in the school of life which is the antidote to feeling victimized or rendered powerless to the influences of the environment. Social modalities of resilience enhance the middle adolescents' feelings of self worth that in turn leads to their ability to exhibit self-efficacy. *"People who show resilience generally have been treated with appreciation, care and love from early childhood on. They have learned to see themselves in a positive light and to see themselves as people who deserve to be treated with respect by others. When a life disruption creates an assault to their self-image, they are able to restore their feelings of self-esteem quickly"* (Bellafiore 2003:2). A well developed self-identity and self perception require of the middle adolescents to reframe their thoughts and feelings about who they are and what they are capable of.

The middle adolescents' self identity and self perception are influenced by subjective experiences regarding who they are and the contributions they can make to the world. Social influences such as motives, social roles, the social groups they belong to and how they are regarded by the people around them will affect the middle adolescents' social competence with regard to their ability to assert themselves within social contexts.

De Klerk and Le Roux (2004:36) provide the following ways of enhancing self-identity and self-perception that can lead to self-efficacy:

- ❖ Gaining self-knowledge through self-analysis regarding strengths, abilities and personality for example by means of worksheets, collages and group discussions.
- ❖ The meaning the middle adolescent gives to his or her reality might need to be reframed in terms of accepting himself or herself and comparing self perceptions to reality. This can be obtained by positive peer feedback and focusing on the strengths of the middle adolescent rather than the weaknesses for example compiling a balance sheet with positive traits.
- ❖ Modelling positive self-messages to encourage and develop a positive self concept even in the face of disappointments or mistakes can create a safe environment where the middle adolescents can practice and reinforce these skills in role play and different situations.
- ❖ Middle adolescents can be taught the skill to differentiate between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour in various contexts that will allow them to practice self-efficacy and assertion through role play.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit focuses on developing learners' sense of self while also creating opportunities for self-assertion. The activities in the Resilience Enhancement Kit that can be developed to foster their sense of self could include the above mentioned ways by asking them to identify their personal characteristics that make them unique and visually illustrate them. Having class

discussion on why it is important to know themselves and to apply what they have learnt to a scenario that requires them to draw on their own strengths could also be utilized. The third part of the Resilience Enhancement Kit consists of the cognitive modalities of resilience.

5.2.3. Cognitive competencies

5.2.3.1. Meta-cognition

Cognitive competence as a modality of resilience includes meta-cognition which comprises of a thinking style of effective problem solving and decisions making. Resiliency requires cognitive restructuring of how a middle adolescent thinks about stresses and adversities. Middle adolescents' who manage well under stress perceive themselves as capable and feels confident in making decisions to face adversities. Resilient middle adolescents view mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow, which can be described as a phoenix rising from the fiery ashes to become stronger and wiser. Resilient middle adolescents have the ability to reframe negative events to maintain a realistic and optimistic perspective on their lives.

Fry (1992:282) suggests the following ways in which teachers' initiatives can foster cognitive competence in the school context:

- ❖ Teachers should analyze their own thinking processes and classroom practices and adapt them;
- ❖ a teacher should be open-minded, encouraging middle adolescents to follow their own thinking (critical thinking and judgement);
- ❖ consistently provide opportunities for middle adolescents to select activities and assignments from a range of appropriate choices;
- ❖ using the vocabulary of creative and critical thinking;
- ❖ involving middle adolescents in role plays or simulations of events for example debates or discussions;

- ❖ being alert for and encouraging middle adolescents to notice where material presented in texts, films and other communications distort reality;
- ❖ having middle adolescents attempt to solve real life problems where there is the possibility of more than one adequate solution and where different types of information is required;
- ❖ requiring middle adolescents to defend their assertions with reasons;
- ❖ utilizing analysis and synthesis of different media content as found in television, radio, films, books and newspapers;
- ❖ encouraging middle adolescents to use analogies and metaphors in descriptions and comparisons as well as attempts to understand new concepts, ideas, principles or theories.
- ❖ allowing middle adolescents to think aloud and follow the steps in problem solving and decision-making.

Kordich-Hall and Pearson (2003:3) suggest the following ways in which resilience can be promoted through new thinking skills:

- ❖ *"Accurate and flexible thinking skills can be promoted by recognizing that our beliefs about adversity affect how we feel and consequently what we do;*
- ❖ *challenging our beliefs about why things happen uncovers our thinking style;*
- ❖ *we should develop an awareness of common thinking traps and errors;*
- ❖ *we should understand that our core beliefs about the world may be preventing us from taking opportunities and therefore alternatives should be considered;*
- ❖ *stresses and adversities should be placed in perspective while calming focusing on what should be done;*

- ❖ *explanatory style thinking habits are the shortcuts we reflexively take in order to quickly process things that happen to us that must be measured against reality."*

The National Association of School Psychologists (2001:4) also suggested finding positive meanings in everyday life to change the negative cycle of thoughts. The habitual style in which middle adolescents explain why unfavorable events happen to them can lead to a pessimistic attitude and negative beliefs about themselves and the people around them. This change in thinking style strives to cultivate a positive outlook on life. *"Holding spiritual or religious beliefs or otherwise appreciating the 'meaning of life' on philosophical levels can increase people's likelihood of finding positive meanings. It can occur through multiple pathways that include reframing adverse events in a positive light, infusing ordinary events with positive value and pursuing and attaining realistic goals" (Fredrickson, 2000:11).*

In the Resilience Enhancement Kit teacher modelling of resilient (accurate and flexible) or positive thinking styles and the deployment of effective problem solving and decision making skills enables the learner to adapt new ways of dealing with adversity. The Resilience Enhancement Kit can provide middle adolescents with the necessary skills to reframe their way of thinking and encourage them to utilize the competencies necessary to solve problems and make decisions. Such activities can include asking the middle adolescents to play a game that requires them to solve problems given in a creative way and to solve a mystery indicating what process was followed in the group to obtain the answer. The middle adolescents can also be asked to identify problems in the school context and indicate what resources they would use to solve the problems. Resilient middle adolescents rebound because they work towards future goals and plans.

5.2.3.2. Future expectations and goals

The Resilience Enhancement Kit encompasses the necessity for learners to express their future expectations and goals. As mentioned earlier if the middle adolescent has future expectations and goals it serves as a motivator to rise above adversities and to persevere. During the middle adolescent phase, they begin to ask questions about what they want out of life as part of forming their own identity. Mountain (2000:4) suggested the following ways in which teachers or psychologists can encourage future goal setting:

- ❖ Listen to learners in order to learn about who they are and what they want out of life and discuss it with them.
- ❖ Model personal interest in goal getting by sharing some personal goals, risk taking, strategies, responses to setbacks, and celebrations of achievement.
- ❖ Build conversations about goals and goal getting with learners in groups and one-on-one.
- ❖ Provide clear, immediate, and constructive feedback to learners on a regular basis, and have learners practice giving one another the same kind of feed back.
- ❖ Integrate the concepts of goal getting into the curriculum content of all subjects.
- ❖ Organize lessons, assignments, and projects to build the basic skills of goal getting into the routine of classroom experiences.
- ❖ Use clearly defined rubrics, benchmarks, and performance standards to guide students to target clear, specific outcomes.
- ❖ Practice decision making and problem solving, as in dealing with setbacks and obstacles.

- ❖ Help learners see their knowledge and experience as resources.

Future expectations and goals can be fostered in the Resilience Enhancement Kit by involving learners in participating in projects where it is required of them to plan and set goals that need to be achieved. The middle adolescents could also be required to anticipate how their life would be like during different times in the future and discussing it in the group. The development of the Resilience Enhancement Kit will be discussed where the theory is put into practice.

5.3. The development of the Resilience Enhancement Kit

The Resilience Enhancement Kit is developed to be utilized within the South African inclusive, Outcomes Based Education system. *"The learning outcomes are future-orientated, learner-centered, focuses on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. The learner is facilitated towards the achievement of the outcomes and active participants in the learning process. The focus is on being able to use and apply learned knowledge, skills and attitudes rather than on merely absorbing specific or prescribed bodies of content. Each learner's needs are catered for by means of assessment tools and the learner's entry level in terms of foreknowledge and level of proficiency. The learners are guided to critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action. The integration of knowledge is connected to real-life situations"* (Van Der Horst et al., 1997:13). As described in previous chapters, the theoretical framework underlying the development of the Resilience Enhancement Kit encompasses the social learning theory (learning within groups; observing others and modelling behaviours) and the cognitive behavioural theory (interplay between emotions, cognition and behaviour, reinforcement, positive self-statements, role-playing, self-management and self-evaluation). The health realisation theory (shaping real life experiences, creativity, strengths based resources, self-help); the ecological systems theory (drawing from interdependent life experiences, holistic development) and the positive psychology and asset-based perspective (drawing support from internal and external assets and strengths) also form part of the theoretical framework.

The Resilience Enhancement Kit focuses on the resilience modalities and content described in chapters 2-4 (emotional-, social-, cognitive competencies), keeping in mind that the resilience modalities lie on a continuum and are influenced by the interaction between the middle adolescent and their contexts. Resilience needs to be fostered throughout an middle adolescent's development and the Resilience Enhancement Kit was developed with the middle adolescent in mind but can be adapted and expanded to adhere to the developmental levels of learners. The outline of the Resilience Enhancement Kit is according to a didactic lesson format that makes it accessible and practical for teachers and psychologists to ascertain the learner's prior knowledge, provide guided exposition of new knowledge through self-directed models (mind maps) and facilitate the application of acquired skills and knowledge to real life situations.

5.3.1. The content and duration

The content for each session is divided according to the definition of a resilient middle adolescent that can be stated as follows: The resilient middle adolescent has a disposition, when faced with perceived diverse situations to ***identify, manage and utilize*** apposite personal modalities (capacities; competencies and strengths) and assets within their contexts to rebound in an optimal manner. The interaction between the middle adolescent and their contexts elicits sustained constructive outcomes that include continuous learning (growing and renewing), fulfilment of needs and flexibly negotiating the situation (***as reflected in the board game***).

The middle adolescent's school related behaviour is seen as a manifestation of the quality of the actualization of the middle adolescent's resilient modalities within the school context. Various methods of instruction are utilized to accommodate the learner's multiple intelligences and strengths for example role-playing, debating, music and game play. Each session is approximately an hour long. The duration of the sessions can be altered depending on the developmental level of the learners and their mastery of the content. The last

session consolidates the competencies learnt throughout the sessions and is presented in the form of a board game. The Resilience Enhancement Kit consists of the following:



- ♣ A manual outlining each session and the activities.
- ♣ Three Emotional resiliency mind maps (red), three Social resiliency mind maps (yellow) and two Mental / cognitive resiliency mind maps (green).
- ♣ A Definition of Resiliency mind map and a progress chart.
- ♣ Hand drawn facial expression cards. The intensity levels are indicated by pink (light /first degree), orange (medium/ second degree) and red (intense third degree).
- ♣ Cards: emotional vocabulary and positive and negative indicators.
- ♣ Idiom cards: "If life hands you lemons make lemonade".
- ♣ A Sand timer
- ♣ Two envelopes containing cards: "Play it save" and "Take a chance".
- ♣ Mystery puzzle clues.

5.3.2. Participants in the Resilience Enhancement Kit

The Resilience Enhancement Kit was used with 14-year old middle adolescents in grade 8. Due to the small learner population in a private school all the learners in the grade 8 group was chosen to participate. The Resilience Enhancement Kit can also be used for other learners from grades 6 and older, but is ideally suited

for middle-adolescents. The sessions can be administered with groups consisting of 4-6 learners.

5.3.3. Purpose of the Resilience Enhancement Kit

The Resilience Enhancement Kit was created to enable Educational psychologists and teachers to appraise and enhance the modalities of resilience of the South African middle adolescent within the school context.

5.3.4. Procedures: Resiliency Scale (Likert-type questionnaire)

The learners start with a Likert-type questionnaire to ascertain their level of resiliency. The teachers can also measure his / her understanding of the level of resiliency of each learner in their class to gain insight into anticipated and realistic level of support the learners need. The question categories are composed of the essential competencies that constitute resilience related to the emotional competencies (questions 1-30 for learners scale and 1-15 for teacher's scale), social competencies (questions 31-55 for learner's scale and 16-28 for teacher's scale) and cognitive competencies (questions 56-75 for learner's scale and 29-40 for teacher's scale). The following resiliency questionnaires were drawn upon as a guidelines: "The middle adolescent Protective factors index" developed by Springer and Phillips (1997), "Resiliency and mental health questionnaire" by Skehill (2001) and "Health kids Resilience assessment" by Constantine, Benard and Diaz (1999). The questionnaire is designed with a four-point scale in order to prevent the learners from choosing and rating a mid-section that could result in an inaccurate view of the learner's level of resilience.

5.3.4.1. Data collection

Great care was taken to avoid overlapping questions in the questionnaire and to ensure that the degree of language difficulty is appropriate for the learners by asking five learners from grades 9 to 10 (3 boys and 2 girls) to critically look at the questionnaire. These five learners were asked semi-structured questions regarding the lucidity of the format of the scale; the difficulty of language; the time

it took to complete the scale and any other aspects they felt could contribute to a middle adolescent's resiliency. They were asked how they felt about their own resiliency as well as if they gained any insight from completing the questionnaire. Adaptations were made to the questionnaire based on the above-mentioned information. Observations of the group revealed that one of the boys tried to alter his answers based on the evaluation scale and therefore the evaluation scale was not included in the multi-cultural sample group.

Five teachers that teach the grade 8 learners were asked to identify a learner whom they felt exhibited resilient or less resilient behaviour. Two different teachers were asked to look at the Resilience Scale and comment on any changes or additions they might want to bring to the teachers questionnaire. The two teachers however did not consider it necessary to make any changes. The teachers participating in the research were also multi-cultural consisting of one Black male teacher, one Indian female teacher, one White male teacher with a lot of teaching experience, one White female teacher with a lot of teaching experience and one Coloured female teacher. The division of the questionnaires into the different competencies of the resilience modalities enables the facilitator to ascertain which competencies the middle adolescent needs to develop further and which is the areas of strengths.

Hunter and Chandler (1999:5) emphasized that the middle adolescent's level of resilience varies with each developmental phase and can vary on a continuum of less optimum resilience to optimum resilience based on the middle adolescent's developed competencies. The interpretation scores of the resilience questionnaires are an amalgamation of the four level descriptor codes the Outcomes Based Education and has some similarities with the level descriptors of Skehill's (2001:2) "Resiliency and mental health questionnaire". The level descriptors indicated by Skehill (2001:2) can be outlined as follows:

75-100	Very resilient
50-74	Average in resiliency
25-49	Need some booster shots to increase resiliency
0-24	At risk-heavy immunization required

The questionnaire for the teachers and learners can be obtained by contacting L. Kruger on the e-mail address: lifchoice2@absamail.co.za

5.3.5 Design and content of the Resilience Enhancement Kit

The Resilience Enhancement Kit sessions are divided into a first contact session where the principles of co-operative group work are discussed as well as clarifying the concept of Resilience. A computer drawn logo is used throughout the Resilience Enhancement Kit which represents a young adolescent who is rebounding (illustrated by running up steps or bungee jumping) against changes, adversities and risks.

The sessions are divided into the emotional-, social- and cognitive resilience competencies. The various competencies are colour coded according to the colours of a traffic light in order to assist the learners in associating and remembering the aspects of each competency. Seeing these colours in everyday life might also act as a reminder to the learners to reinforce and practice the principles they have learnt. Emotional resilience is represented by red, social resilience is represented by yellow and cognitive competence is represented by green.

Mind maps are used to instruct the learners regarding the competencies necessary to manage their resilience modalities. Geometrical forms represent the outline of the mind maps to aid in the retrieval of the information to manage the resiliency competencies from memory. The emotional competencies are represented by triangles, the social competencies by circles and the cognitive competencies by squares. The emotion cards divided into three colours (red, orange and pink) that represent the intensity of the emotion while the expression on the faces reveals the emotion.

The face was created by using circles and then taking out the unnecessary lines and adding hair. The facial expressions of the cards were hand drawn. The emotional vocabulary is divided according to the intensity levels of emotions as well as the positive or negative meaning attribution. The format of the sessions' activities was designed with the interest of middle adolescents in mind so that they would engage and participate fully in the activities.

The final session consist of playing the board game. The game is developed with the aim of giving the learners an opportunity to apply and consolidate the competencies learnt in the sessions, which consist of the emotional-, social- and cognitive modalities of resilience, to real life situations by means of a fun and non-threatening method. The game employs group participation as well as the enhancement of the middle adolescents' self-concept through positive reinforcement (tokens). The desire to play is a natural part of developing and gaining new knowledge and skills. *"Game playing has been traced back to prehistoric times and is thought to play a significant role in adaptation to the environment. Games invoke behaviour that is more goal-directed and carries a greater sense of seriousness than merely playing. Games have played a significant role in the child's understanding and acceptance of societal rules. The rules and structural components of games provide a natural medium for children to learn how to be civilized and well adjusted. Games can bring the most difficult and painful subjects to the surface and can be discussed in a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere. Using a game approach can effectively help children learn new behaviours, become better problem solvers, and gain insight into their difficulties"* (Schaefer & Reid, 2001: vi-viii). The board game does not place an emphasis on skill, competition or strategy but rather focuses on cooperation and reward self-expression and application of learnt competencies. Bow and Quinnell (2001:131) refer to the following aspects that can be inferred from game play:

- ∞ Cognitive strategies;
- ∞ response to feedback;

- œ drive for mastery, reflects the child's degree of investment, persistence and desire to accomplish;
- œ sense of competency which leads to self-confidence;
- œ self-control over drives and impulses;
- œ improved attention span;
- œ frustration tolerance;
- œ competitive drive;
- œ willingness to follow rules;
- œ ability to deal with pressure;
- œ reaction to success and failure;
- œ locus of control.

Streng (2001:179) refers to the following therapeutic qualities that game play enhances that can be areas for Educational psychologists to observe:

- œ Developing interpersonal relationships;
- œ practicing verbal and non-verbal communication;
- œ assertiveness;
- œ practicing adaptive behavioural responses in peer groups;
- œ facilitating discussion of emotional and behavioural responses;
- œ clarifying adaptive and maladaptive belief systems;
- œ understanding group processes and facilitating group membership;
- œ enabling skill acquisition via a medium with which the learner is familiar;
- œ encouraging the generalization of newly acquired skills;
- œ encouraging the accommodation and assimilation of life experiences;
- œ using similar peers as models;
- œ learning new ways to cope.

5.3.5.1. *The complete game layout*



The board is in the form of a spring or pyramid that represents reaching the fulfilment of needs by using competencies of the resilience modalities to bounce back (rebound). The victory pedestal is a combination of a pedestal and laurel wreath typically found at the Olympic Games. This was chosen to convey the message that every middle adolescent is a winner and has strengths that enable them to bounce back effectively. The interior of the victory pedestal has a "thumbs up" image to reinforce the sense of accomplishment. The starting disk image gives the impression that this is the departure point to "start bouncing back" while the logo representing an adolescent shows the message on his T-shirt that he is a winner. The colours of the placeholders and the question cards correspond to the colours of the Resilience Enhancement Kit: red for emotional resilience, yellow for social resilience and green for cognitive resilience (traffic light) to assist in the retrieval of information from memory. The tokens are positive remarks and do not contain words that might seem to be positive but has a negative connotation for example the word "unbelievable" which implies that the person cannot believe that the other person could achieve this particular

competency. There are a 120 positive remark tokens and the image of the token reflect a facial expression conveying acclaim.

The way the moving pieces were developed aimed to reflect an African sense. The playing pieces are representative of the learners playing with them and they can bounce back. The spinner indicates the order of participation by corresponding with the coloured beads on the playing pieces. The images illustrate what the learners should do for example gain a token (face), pick a card (hand) or move a space (foot). The complete Resilience Enhancement Kit can be obtained by contacting L. Kruger at the e-mail address: lifechoice2@absamail.co.za

The Educational psychologist uses games to engage learners in the therapeutic process because they are familiar activities and a natural medium of expression. Games create an informal atmosphere and assist in establishing the interpersonal interaction between psychologist and learner, which alleviates initial discomfort and anxiety. Games can be used diagnostically and in the promotion of therapeutic growth as seen in the Resilience Enhancement Kit. Games provide learners with the opportunity to practice adaptive behaviour in various roles. The game can therefore be used on its own as an assessment and therapeutic tool.