

Figure 4.1: Internal Protective Factors of Resilience



1. Relationships

Care: Is able to care for others, to express care, and to be kind

Connection: Has a sense of belonging in one or more areas of life (family, club, peers, school, or community) and provides a sense of belonging to others

Compassion and empathy: Shows feelings, understanding, and empathy for others experiencing difficult times or sorrows

Social competence: Communicates well with others in a variety of social situations; responds appropriately to others; is friendly and engaging; forms positive relationships with peers and adults

Trust: Is able to trust and rely on others in healthy ways

Altruism and helpfulness: Engages in service or helpfulness to others; gives time and energy to a cause



2. Independence

Autonomy: Is capable of making decisions and acting on them independently; can distance self from unhealthy people and situations

Responsibility: Acts in consistently conscientious, trustworthy, and reliable ways; has proven responsibility and reliability; has self-discipline

Internal locus of control: Exhibits regular sense of control of self, having the agency and ability to influence events; takes initiative; is a self-starter; has an internal moral compass—knows right from wrong or has a conscience

Positive identity: Believes in own worth and value as an individual or as part of a family, culture, or group; uses positive self-talk

Perception: Is insightful about self, others, and situations; often sees below the surface; recognizes own feelings and needs

Self-regulation: Has and uses self-regulation, patience, and impulse control skills



3. Competence

Expertise and mastery: Is an expert in one or more areas; has deep knowledge or outstanding ability and proven success; derives personal pride from mastery of skills

Confidence: Believes in own abilities, judgment, resources, and ideas; backs self up

Persistence: Continues on in the face of adversity; is unlikely to give up or quit

Self-efficacy: Influences others with own thoughts and behavior; believes in own capabilities; advocates for self

Critical thinking: Is able to think critically, explain thinking, and reason with facts

Humbleness: Is able to ask for help when needed, yet is assertive about getting what is needed; acknowledges others' competence without defensiveness



4. Creativity

Problem solving: Develops solutions to problems; meets problems head-on and views problems as opportunities

Resourcefulness: Is full of initiative; is solution oriented, especially in difficult situations

Imagination: Thinks outside the box; develops new or original ideas

Flexibility: Is able to adjust as circumstances change or new information is discovered; bends when necessary to cope with situations

Personal expression: Expresses self through artistic endeavors or by using imagination and creative thinking or other processes

Ability to learn: Has a capacity for and connection to learning and enjoys learning for learning's sake



5. Optimism

Hopefulness: Has hopes and dreams for the future; thinks of good things that can happen; has learned optimism instead of learned hopelessness

Purposefulness and motivation: Has goals and aspirations; is driven to get things done

Self-motivation: Is motivated from within; has initiative and purpose to actions; sets goals and strives to attain them; has interests or enthusiasms that inspire action

Faithfulness and anchors: Has religious or spiritual anchors, which serve as a source of sustenance; has personal faith in something greater than self

Humor: Has a sense of humor; uses humor to defuse situations; can laugh at self or difficult situations

Source: Adapted from Benard, 1993; Cherry, 2019a; Frankel, 2001; Healy, 2014; Henderson, 2012; Konnikova, 2016; National Dropout Prevention Center, n.d.b; Tileston & Darling, 2008.