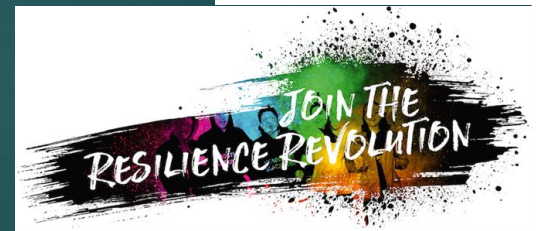


# Blackpool's Resilience Revolution: A co-produced whole-town approach to build resilience and promote social change

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20.10.2021

RESPONDING TO EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH  
NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: LEARNING FROM  
HEADSTART PARTNERSHIPS, BY NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU



**University of Brighton**  
Centre of Resilience for Social Justice

# Outline

- ▶ Blackpool, UK
- ▶ Resilience Revolution: Blackpool HeadStart
  - ▶ Aims
  - ▶ Key principles
- ▶ Practice examples of work
- ▶ Research on complex intervention
- ▶ Summary points

# Blackpool, UK - A brief background



- ▶ Seaside resort on the Irish Sea coast
  - ▶ Popular holiday destination
- ▶ Socioeconomic deprivation
- ▶ Physical and mental health issues
- ▶ Challenging environment to grow up
- ▶ Part of the HeadStart programme
  - ▶ improving mental health & wellbeing of young people aged 10-16
  - ▶ funded by the National Lottery



# Blackpool's HeadStart – Resilience Revolution

A partnership of Blackpool Council, CRSJ, and Boingboing;  
with young people and their adult supporters involved as co-leaders



# Resilience Revolution: Scope and Aims

- ▶ to support young people's mental health and wellbeing
- ▶ to embed **resilience**-building approaches **across whole** of Blackpool
- ▶ to mobilise a social movement of **collective action** to **tackle structural inequalities- system change**
- ▶ to help individuals to “**beat the odds**” whilst **also “changing the odds”** for the whole community

# Focus of Resilience Research

**Personal qualities and characteristics** that correlated with better-than-expected outcomes in individuals experiencing adversity.



**Socio-ecological approaches** recognized and accounted for the role of social, economic, and cultural environments surrounding the individual.



**Social justice-oriented understanding of resilience** recognises that social inequalities contribute to adversities to which individuals are exposed. These inequalities and disadvantages should be challenged.

# Focus of Resilience Research

Resilience as “overcoming adversity, whilst also potentially changing, or even dramatically transforming (aspects of) that adversity.” (Hart et al., 2016, p.3)

**Social justice-oriented understanding of resilience** recognises that social inequalities contribute to adversities to which individuals are exposed. These inequalities and disadvantages should be challenged.

# Fundamentals



**Coproduction** – We work alongside young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders to reach a shared goal, with shared responsibility and shared learning and mutual benefits. Co-production is a joint effort!



**Asset based** – We focus on the positives and build on strengths within a person, a family and in every situation.



**Brave and Innovative** – We work in new and exciting ways to solve the most difficult challenges.



# Fundamentals



**Systems change** – We work to change and improve systems, which create persistent barriers for young people and families within them.



**Social justice** – We address inequalities and level the playing field to make sure that everybody has access to the same opportunities.

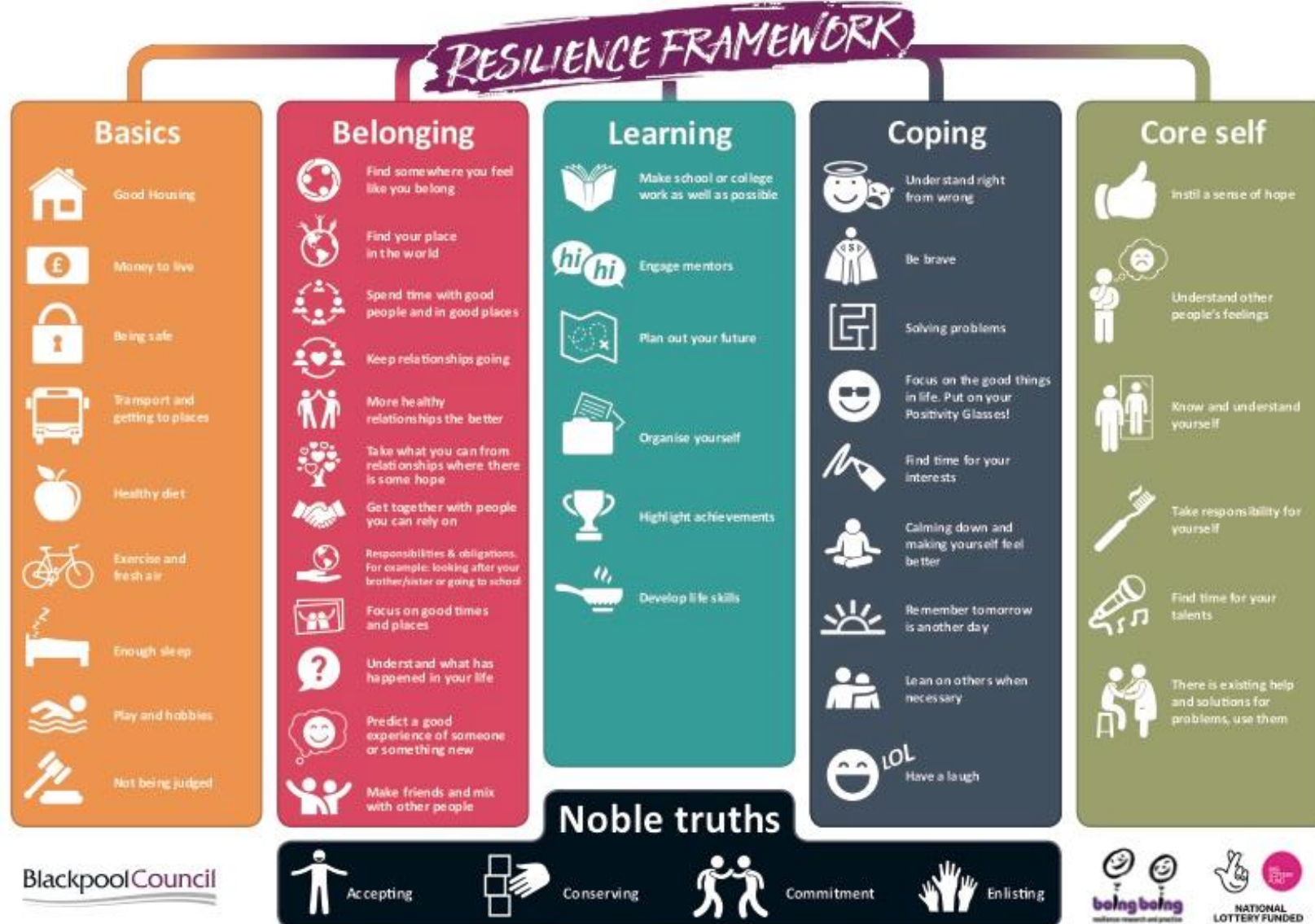


**Whole town approach** – We work across the whole town to build our Resilience Revolution.



**Research** – We are a learning programme. We aim to reflect and critique constantly, so that we can figure out what works best for young people and families.

# Based on Resilient Therapy (RT) & Resilience Framework



## Practice Examples

- ▶ Parents of the Revolution
- ▶ Blackpool Families Rock
- ▶ Empowering Young People and Families
- ▶ Youth Engagement – Campaigns
- ▶ Targeted support offers

# Parents of the Revolution

## Key parent and carer (P&C) work areas:

- ▶ Engagement with P&Cs in Blackpool
- ▶ Creating opportunities for parents and carers - employment
- ▶ Workforce development with practitioners



### Heart: Feeling

We are all human  
 We can all make mistakes  
 Trusting relationships are important  
 Respect each other  
 Be kind  
 Let's be brave together  
 Never give up on me  
 See me (I am unique)  
 See the good things  
 Share the power



### Head: knowledge culture and thinking

Don't be nosy (ask yourself if you really need to know this)  
 Use plain language  
 Share knowledge  
 Take care in how you talk and write about us  
 Share what you know about us  
 Be non-judgemental  
 Walk in my shoes



### Heart: the doing of what we think and feel

See our strengths  
 Find out what works for us  
 Show you've listened by your actions  
 Be clear about expectations  
 Get to know me  
 Know who is important to me  
 Support us to develop our own plans and solutions  
 Have meaningful meetings  
 Celebrate positive changes  
 Make time for me  
 Be honest





# Empowering Young people and Families:

## Big Plan

- ▶ **Co-production group** consists of young people, parents/carers and practitioners from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, HeadStart and Boingboing
- ▶ **'Big Plan'**- support young people and families who are waiting for mental health services

# How have they been getting on with the 'Big Plan'?

1. Young people's Information Pack

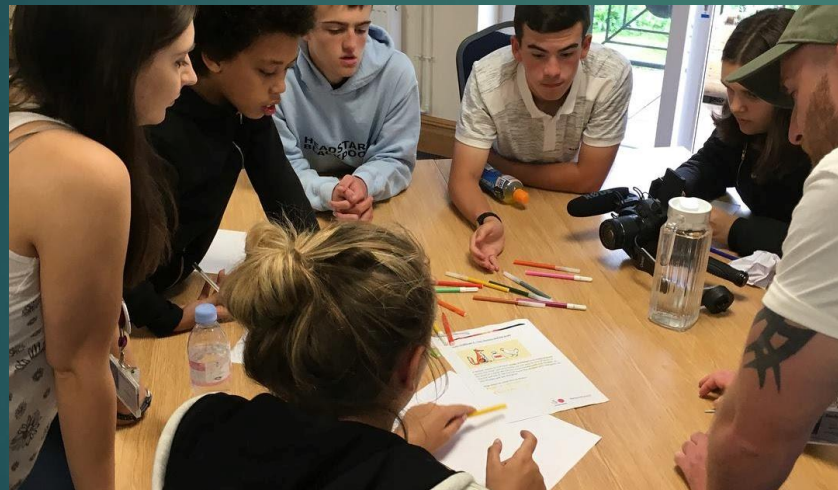
2. P&C Information pack



3. P&C Mental Health workshops

4. Peer Support

# Young People's Executive Group (YPEG)







# Resilience Pathway

# Blackpool Beating Bullying Campaign





# 'Inclusion not Exclusion, campaign

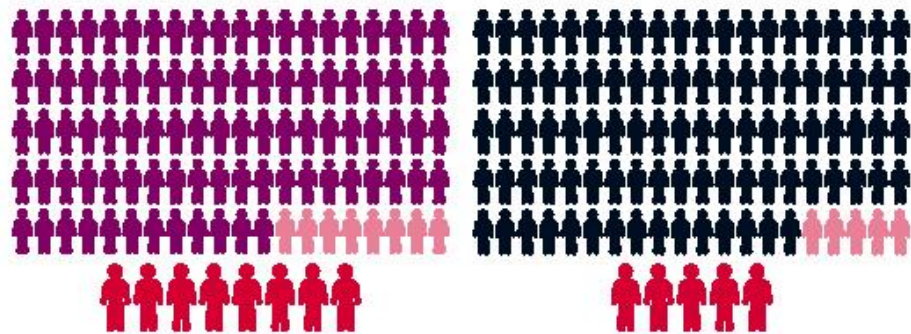


Boys are always more likely to be permanent excluded or receive a fixed period exclusion nationally and in Blackpool.



BLACKPOOL

ENGLAND



Children and young people in **Blackpool (12.48%)** are more likely to receive a fixed-period exclusion than the **North West (5.30%)**, and across the whole of **England (5.36%)**.

On average, children and young people in Blackpool experience permanent exclusions and fixed period exclusions at a younger age than the national average.  
**12-13 years old**



**Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic** pupils experience a disproportionately high number fixed period exclusion:



13% of Black and White Caribbean pupils in Blackpool



21.2% of Gypsy Roma pupils across England

Pupils on **Free School Meals** are almost x2 as likely to be excluded than their classmates who are not

Children and young people from **deprived families** are more likely to receive a permanent (0.06%) and/or fixed period exclusion (7.08%) across England

Children and young people in Blackpool with **Special Educational Needs** but without a statement are x2 as likely to be excluded their classmates with no **Special Educational Needs**

In England, pupils with **Social Emotional Mental Health Needs** are the most likely to be excluded out of all SEN groups



Research has shown that there is little evidence that exclusion reduces or stops poor behaviour.

Excluded pupils are twice as likely to have a temporary supply teacher

More than half of UK prisoners were excluded from school



## FRIEND FOR LIFE



Facilitating adult friends to offer a lifelong friendship for our children (in care) to have fun, go on adventures and be there for them through thick and thin, on the good days and the not so good days.

## WALK AND TALK



Taking counselling into the community, supporting young people at risk of self harm to choose the space they want to meet and talk in, walking, baking, sport... anything goes!

## COMMUNICATION FRIENDLY SPACES



Speech Bubble are working alongside Educational Diversity to build communication friendly classrooms, so all young people are able to engage fully in learning.

## SELF HARM SUPPORT



Short term support for young people who self-harm and their families, ensuring they have the help they need in the community.

## ACADEMIC RESILIENCE APPROACH



A whole school approach to resilience, facilitating school led discussions that result in a resilience action plan for the whole school community, including young people, teachers and staff, offering support and training where required.

## BOUNCE FORWARD



A whole class 10 week resilience course for all young people in year 5, building knowledge and developing young people's expertise in resilience practice for themselves, friends, family and school community.

## SADDLE UP



A 12 week project combining horse care with art therapy, focusing on communication and relationship building.

## BACK ON TRACK



Up to 2 years work alongside young people, schools, social workers and foster carers to support our children (in care) to remain in mainstream school where appropriate.

## PEER MENTORING



Supporting schools to embed the resilience framework into their peer mentoring programmes, offering training to mentors and schools staff.

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES



Offering creative activities for young people to enjoy a new activity and have the opportunity to develop their skills further, and hopefully find a lifelong talent!

## MOVING ON UP



Working alongside young people, parents/carers and schools: resilience coaches offer up to 2 years of resilient therapy or 7 weeks of group work to ensure young people are settled and happy in high school.

## DIGITAL LEARNING SPACE



Young people and practitioners share a digital space to collaborate and develop the work.

# Researching complex interventions

## **An evaluation of a complex intervention should show:**

- ▶ A clear picture of the intervention context,
- ▶ Outcomes of the intervention
- ▶ Underpinning mechanisms- expected? Unexpected?
- ▶ Long-term impact

# Mixed- Method approach:

## Data Sources

### Quantitative

- Reach figures
- Surveys with young people (measuring self-esteem, self efficacy, civic engagement, and identity formation)
- Education data (pupil absences, exclusions)
- National survey data: Wellbeing Measurement Framework

### Qualitative

- Case studies
- Interviews with young people, parents/carers, school staff, and internal staff
- Interviews with external stakeholders
- Annual focus groups with resilience committees



# BACK ON TRACK



## Back on Track

Resilience Coaches worked alongside young people, foster carers, school and social workers on one-to-one basis to support Our Children to remain in mainstream education where appropriate.

Since November 2016, a total of **29** young people (66% male) aged between 11 and 15 were referred for Back on Track support. Between September 2019 and August 2020, 5 young people took part in Back on Track.



## Strengths and Difficulties

13 young people completed a questionnaire about their strengths and difficulties before and after taking part in Back on Track. After receiving support young people reported better social behaviours.

- 69% of young people said that their difficulties decreased. This reduction was by about 14% (on average)
- 50% of young people that the impact the difficulties had on specific areas of their lives like friendships and in the classroom family, reduced. This was a reduction of 54% (on average)

Difficulties	Before support	After support
• Emotions	5 in 20	2 in 20
• Behaviour	5 in 20	2 in 20
• Hyperactivity	10 in 20	4 in 20
• Peer Relationships	5 in 20	4 in 20
<b>Total from all above difficulties</b>	<b>10 in 20</b>	<b>5 in 20</b>
<b>Impact difficulties have on daily life</b>	<b>10 in 20</b>	<b>4 in 20</b>

While the changes were not statistically significant in some areas of this questionnaire, this could be because of the small sample size. Nevertheless, the changes are in the right direction such as lower emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and hyperactivity after taking part in Back on Track.



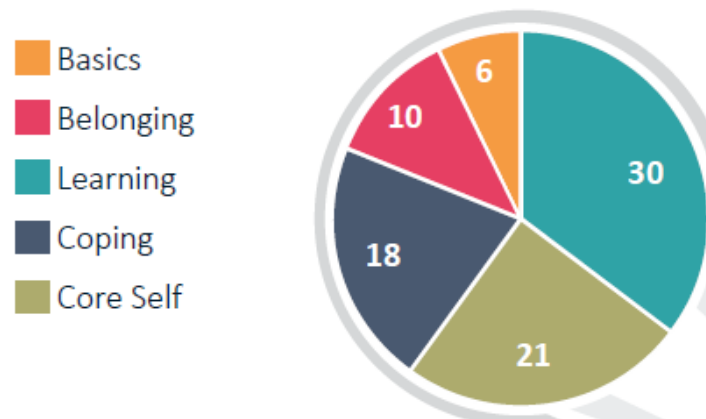
## Goals

Young people set and worked towards goals with their Resilience Coaches and picked the areas they wanted to see improvement. Between March 2017 and June 2020, **85** goals were recorded for **19** young people. The number of goals ranged between 1 and 5, at the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals. On average, young people reported that their goals increased by 2 or 3 points.

### The goals were linked to section(s) of the Resilience Framework:

- **266 goals related to Coping**, e.g. "To learn strategies to help me feel calmer."
- **232 goals related to Learning**, e.g. "I want to get better at science because it teaches you how to be safe and smart."
- **178 goals related to Belonging**, e.g. "To make friends at high school."
- **156 goals related to Core Self**, e.g. "To take responsibility for myself."
- **55 goals related to Basics**, e.g. "I would like to do more sport activities over summer."

### Goals linked to the Resilience Framework



Young people also rated their progress towards reaching their goals. They scored themselves when setting the goal and reviewed this regularly. At the end of their support, young people rated themselves significantly closer to reaching their goals.

## Education

- In line with the national trend, school attendance rates decreased between the referral and at the end of support - 93.5% and 89.5% respectively.
- School exclusion rates were available for 7 young people. Among them, 5 young people received a total of 18 fixed term exclusions before and during Back on Track support but 0 young people received further instances of exclusion after their support ended.

# TRIANGULATION INTERVIEWS



Every 4 months, Resilience Coaches, young people and families who took part in the support were invited to interviews. Below are some quotes from these interviews showing the impact of their Back on Track experience.

## Young Person

*"I started being nice. There is a girl that came back to school, and I kept like bullying her, like picking on her, but now I stopped since I've seen my Resilience Coach. Now, we've just started being best friends again."*

*"I used to argue with my sister but now I've stopped that."*

## Parent

*"If you weren't around, where would we be? The Resilience Coach's been vital in helping and supporting my child and all of us as a family, with school and everything else. (...) You've done wonders with not just my child but probably all the other children as well."*

*"The major thing I have to say about HeadStart is they worked massively on her anger issues, I do think that has helped greatly her anger. (...) It's (BoT) made a lot for us because our Resilience Coach has also supported me in meetings, she's come along with me, stood by my side and spoke about my daughter and praised her highly, and recommended things for her within the school setting. So for me it's good that I've had another person on board that knows my daughter's needs."*

*"The Resilience Coach supported my daughter through transition from primary school to high school, which was great. (...) It was another face that my daughter could go and speak to if she needed to, even if she just needed to rant. It was mainly about the transitioning from primary school to high school, she had that friendly face, she had somebody to hold her hand and support her, not just us all the time."*

## Resilience Coach

*"I've noticed that the young person was willing to expect more of herself, that she wasn't being written off, that she could manage school. And I think that changed her behaviour. She became less volatile and more content in school."*

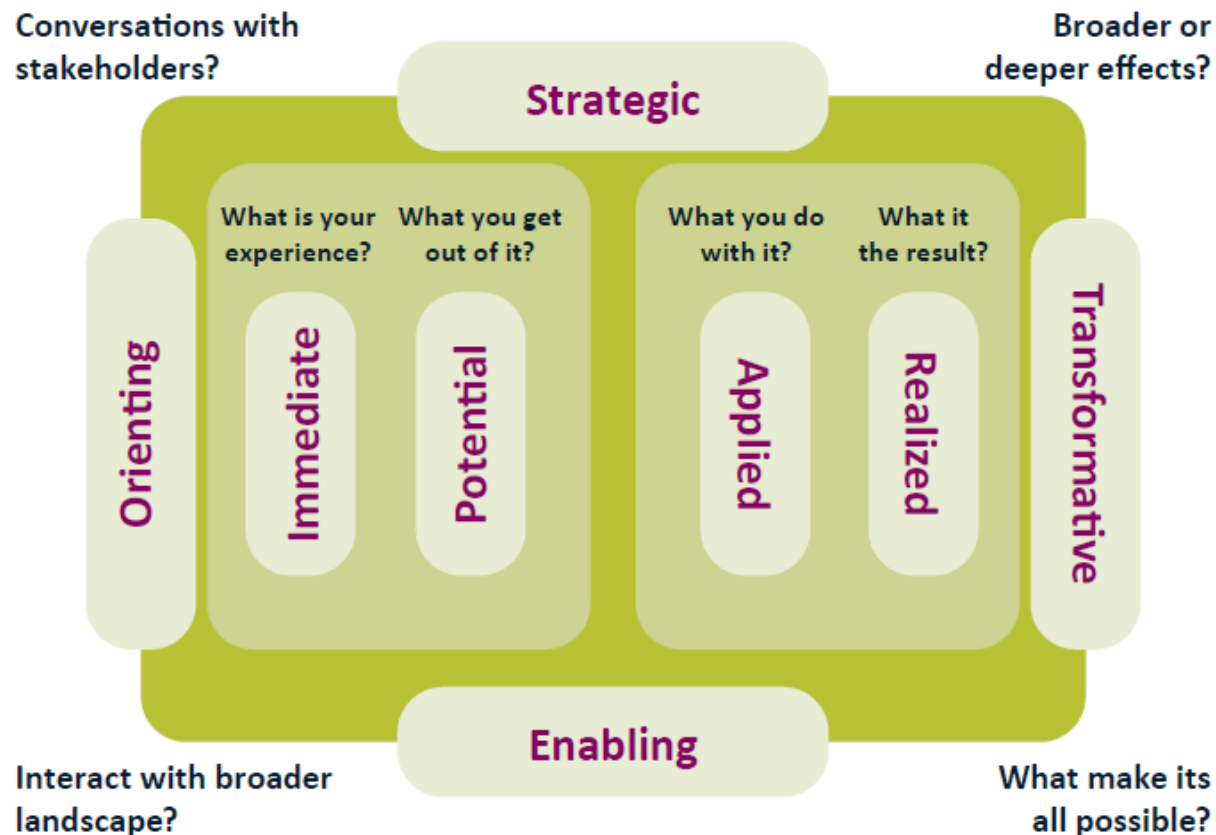
*"The young person looked more empowered, and she would say, 'I think I can do this' and she did in the end. (...) I think she's got more self-worth and more, she believes in herself more."*

Looking at the surveys scores and interviews, we can conclude that young people feel they are improving their relationships and developing better social skills. We can also say that Back on Track helps families through school meetings and processes. Working with young people, families and schools for a minimum of 12 months, setting goals and building resilience can combine to drastically minimise the chances of being excluded from school.

## The differences we have made and how we achieved them

We have used the Value Creation Framework (VCF) to guide our learning and identify the differences we have made over the last year. The box below summarises the 8 different types of value that are seen when people work together.

- 1. Orienting Value:** How we see ourselves related to the world, e.g., shared beliefs and values that inform what we decide to do.
- 2. Immediate Value:** Things that people do or share that have immediate value.
- 3. Potential Value:** Values that have a potential to make an impact on the world.
- 4. Applied Value:** When people try and put something (like a new idea or approach) into practice.
- 5. Realised Value:** When real difference has been made to the world around us.
- 6. Transformative Value:** Things that have dramatic and broad or deep effects on people and their world.
- 7. Enabling Value:** The approaches that people take or things that they do to try and achieve their aims
- 8. Strategic Value:** This value arises when we take notice of and engage with people who have a stake in what we are doing.



A graphic representation of the VCF  
(Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020)

To draw together this year's report, we looked specifically for examples of these 8 types of value within all the activities across the RR. The VCF helps us to capture our learning in a consistent and structured way and it evidences how real differences are being generated from the work across the partnership.

- ▶ **Orienting value-** RR has united as a social movement that is committed to improving resilience for everyone in the community.
- ▶ **Immediate value-** Young people felt valued, understood, listened to and respected as a result of being involved in RR.
- ▶ **Potential value-** RR provided young people, families and practitioners with a broad range of strategies to respond to challenges.
- ▶ **Applied value-** Hundreds of parents and carers, school, health and voluntary sector practitioners attended our training activities and apply the learning in practice.
- ▶ **Realised value-** Young people have increased: resilience; wellbeing; attendance at school; self-esteem; ability to cope and respond to challenges; ability to take responsibility and ability to trust and open up to others.
- ▶ **Transformative value-** Blackpool Beating Bullying campaign is the first co-produced charter mark in the UK and is helping to transform young people's experiences of schools.
- ▶ **Enabling value-** Adopting strengths-based approaches to address challenges by using the assets within young people and the community.
- ▶ **Strategic value-** Transformations are happening at the system level where work of co-leaders of the RR are developing and delivering sustainable activities within schools, Local Authority services, health services, and other support agencies.

# Community-University Partnerships

- ▶ To build capacity in young people and community
- ▶ Enable young people and adults to gain new skills and experience, improve their future employability
- ▶ We offer opportunities to young people, such as:
  - ▶ Apprenticeships
  - ▶ Training in research, analysis and reporting skills
  - ▶ Being part of the R&E team (e.g., Revolution Researchers)
  - ▶ Co-producing academic publications and presentations



# Summary points

Social justice approach to resilience

Beating the odds, whilst changing the odds

Working co-productively with communities to challenge systems that create inequalities in the first place

Shared language and understanding- Resilience Framework

Young people at the heart of the Resilience Revolution

Research across programme and specific components

# Discussion points

- ▶ How the approach we have talked about would work in your local area?
- ▶ How would you engage and involve young people and to what extent?
- ▶ How would you progress towards social transformation and system change?
- ▶ How would you aim sustainability?



# Resources and contact information

## Presenter:

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- ▶ **Resilience Revolution: Blackpool HeadStart**  
<http://www.rrblackpool.org.uk/>
- ▶ **University of Brighton – Centre of Resilience for Social Justice:**  
<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/crsj/index.aspx>
- ▶ **Boingboing Resilience CIC:**  
<https://www.boingboing.org.uk/>
- ▶ **Twitter:** @bb\_resilience
- ▶ **Contact:** [info@boingboing.org.uk](mailto:info@boingboing.org.uk)



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- ▶ Hart, A., Gagnon, E., Eryigit-Madzwamuse, S., Cameron, J., Aranda, K., Rathbone, A., & Heaver, B. (2016). Uniting resilience research and practice with an inequalities approach. *SAGE Open*, 6(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016682477>
- ▶ Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2020). *Learning to Make a Difference: Value Creation in Social Learning Spaces*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/97811086774>
- ▶ Publications including blogs by parents, young people, students, etc.: <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/blog/>

# Further reading

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