

HUBS Workshop: Resilience in and out of the curriculum.

The HUBS workshop on building student resilience was hosted by Dr Heather McQueen and Dr Patrick Walsh on 13 June 2019 at the University of Edinburgh. The workshop took a reflective look at resilience in Higher Education, highlighting a variety of perspectives. There were presentations from clinical psychology, undergraduate students, and academics and professionals working in university career services, community engagement and undergraduate academic affairs. The meeting had an international flavor with guest speakers from Washington (Anne Browning), Leeds (Lydia Bleasdale) and Edinburgh Universities (Emily Taylor, Ellie Edwards, Rhianna Queen, Julia Auer and Lynsey Russell-Watts), with attendees from a further 3 Scottish and 5 English Universities.

Throughout the day participants were challenged to consider mechanisms for building resilience as well as potential barriers (Figure 1), and it was made clear that building resilience is a process rather than an event, and one that relies on recognising and dealing with adversity rather than avoiding it.



Figure 1: Participant suggestions of difficulties that might commonly prevent students from building resilience

Many practical example activities were shared (e.g. failure CVs and failure walls), as excellent ways to convey the notion that failure is not the opposite of, but a part of success. Our student presenters were a key element of the day's success; playing an important role in giving student perspectives throughout our discussions and sharing their adapted stress bucket exercise (Figure 2).

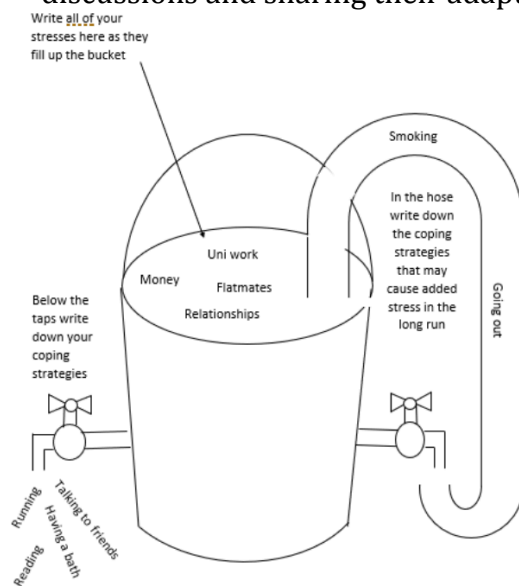


Figure 2: The stress bucket activity (adapted from Brabban and Turkington, 2002).

Our guest speakers highlighted the importance of good student relationships (including those between staff and students), of reflecting on identity and personal assets to promote inclusion, and to recognise success. Anne Browning shared some data from a large longitudinal study on student well-being that pointed to the critical need for self-compassion to be integrated into the curriculum.

It was gladly noted that the necessary systems of support for students could only be effective if staff welfare was also taken care of. A before and after survey of participants saw a notable rise in confidence towards being able to build resilience, and the day was agreed to be wholly worthwhile by all present.