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Online International Forum for Academic Peer Learning

Infusing Resilience at UWE Bristol

27th May 2020

Our Aims today

1. Introduce the ResilientU PAL scheme and its beginnings.
2. Reflect on the peer-facilitated workshops.
3. Discuss the additional infusion of resilience skills across academic PAL provision, to better support students in their transition into University.

Introducing ResilientU

- PAL Scheme has been offering bespoke study skills peer support since 2002.
- Peer-led resilience workshops were developed in 2017 in conjunction with Wellbeing Services as UWE Bristol piloted the Universities UK Step Change Framework.
- UWE Mental Wealth First Strategy was then launched in 2018.



How it started

Workshops

Reflection

Developing the offer

Next academic year

What is the Resilient U Offer?

- Standalone, 60-90 minute bookable group workshops.
- Facilitated by trained student PAL Leaders.
- Open to all, regardless of programme or year level.

Why attend a workshop?

The workshops are interactive and discussion based so you don't need to know anything about Resilience before the session.

75% students who have attended the workshops rate it as either 4 and 5 out of 5 stars.

WHY NOT JOIN?

'I found the workshop useful and eye opening, I feel able to better deal with exams now'

Post Graduate Student

'Thank you for the session, it made me feel normal because everyone struggles sometimes'

Bower Ashton Student

Resilient U

DEVELOP THE RESILIENT YOU AT UWE BRISTOL

A pro-active approach to growing your confidence for when challenges hit at University and beyond





What is Resilience?

Put simply, resilience is the ability to bounce back and manage positively, the challenges/adversities that you encounter throughout life. By developing your resilience you can be more self-aware; calmer under pressure; be more able to reach out to trusted friends or support networks that can help, as well as having greater confidence in your own ability to make your life happier.

What are the skills of Resilience?

There are 3 steps of resilience which are discussed in the workshop:

- 1. Self-empowerment:** When times get tough, try to manage/fix it yourself, or get yourself into an emotional state where you can talk to others who you trust to get support/help.
- 2. Support:** Even if you think you've dealt with it yourself, it's good to talk to others to help calm you down, distract you, help fix it or talk about it.
- 3. Learning from it:** Once you dealt with the issue, learn from it so it doesn't happen again, or you get better at dealing with it.

What to expect

How confidential is it: You don't need to talk about yourself because we use case studies to discuss practical use of the skills.

What can I do after: You will be given a workbook in the session, to help you move through the workshop. You can also do the extra activities and look at helpful pages after the session.

The workshop: A safe space to discuss tips and techniques to improve your resilience. A case study is used so you don't have to talk about your personal experiences in front of strangers.

The facilitators: The facilitators are students, just like yourself. They have been through it before and know the tips and tricks to help you get the best out of the workshop and how best you can apply what you are learning to yourself.

Do I need to anything before attending: No, there is no required reading or forms needed to be able to attend as we fully explain the concepts in session. All we ask is that you sign up to the workshop before attending.

When are UWE Bristol's Resilient U sessions?

Frenchay: Wednesday (14:00-15:00, 3D42)

- 7 November
- 20 February
- 5 December
- 6 March
- 6 February
- 3 April

Glenside: in 2D09

- 13 November (13:00-14:00)
- 13 February (14:00-15:00)
- 14 March (15:00-16:00)
- 10 May (12:00-13:00)

Bower Ashton:

- 27 February (12:00-13:00, 1B13)

TO SAVE YOUR SPACE, BOOK IN INFOHUB.



The 7 Learnable Skills of Resilience - video



Based on the idea that, how you think can determine how you feel, rather than letting how you feel determine how you think.

Seven learnable skills of resilience



1



Emotional awareness or regulation

Recognising your feelings.

2



Impulse control

Give yourself thinking time.

3

Optimism

Staying hopeful (optimistic).



4

Causal analysis

Analysing the cause of problems.



5



Empathy

Empathy is the understanding of what it is like being in someone else's shoes.

6



Self-efficacy

Confidence in your ability to solve problems.



Reaching out (taking appropriate risk).

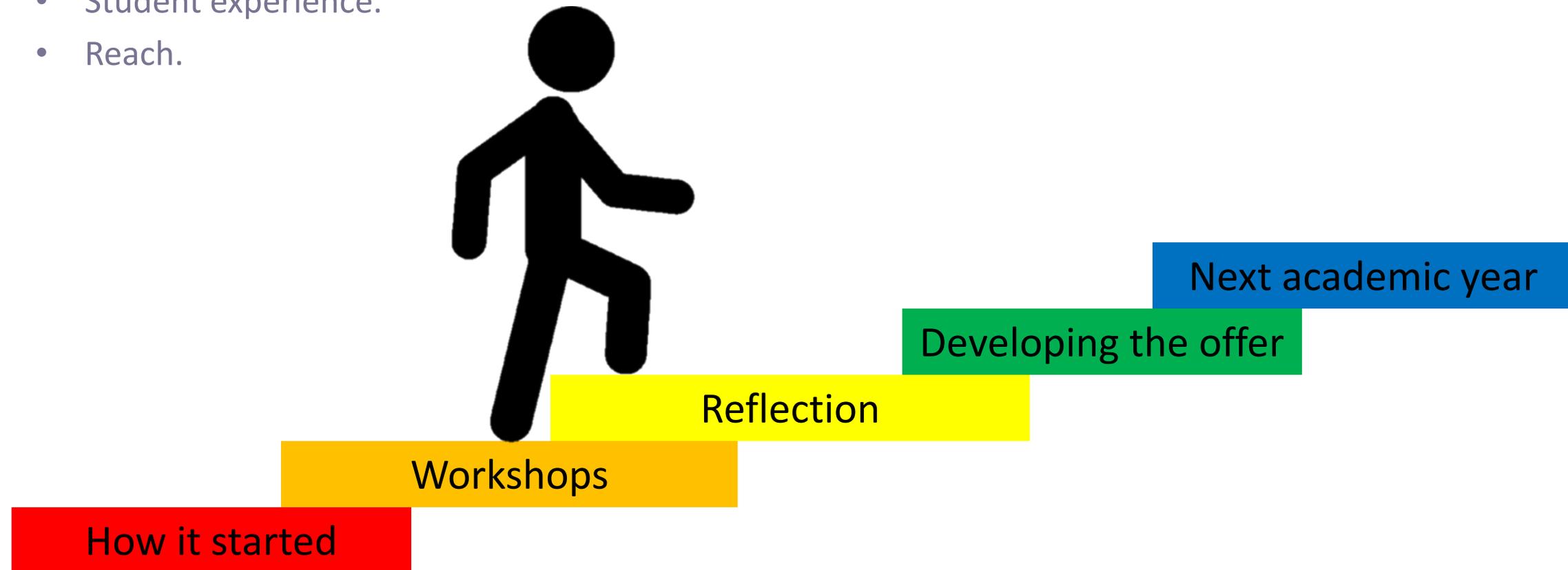
Reaching out has two parts. It is the ability to take on life's opportunities and not fear failure. It is also about being willing to ask for help.

Improve your **Mental Wealth** through **Emotional Resilience** workshops



What have we learned?

- Intention vs engagement.
- Student experience.
- Reach.



Student feedback

From workshop attendees

Most useful thing I learned was:

- Chatting with others - realizing that others have similar thoughts and feelings.
- Figuring out my strengths and weaknesses.
- Some practical techniques for managing mounting expectations and pressures (*incl. meditation/breathing*).

In the future I'm going to:

- Implement the skills & techniques more in daily life.
- Take time to analyze situations and causes of emotion.
- Try and become more emotionally aware and not act upon my impulses as much.

Other feedback:

- Ensure all students get this training before the course.
- Maybe have the workshop run as part of a series?
Would like to see more, not just a standalone session.
- Would be useful to have some experiences/examples where this can be applied.

UWE Mental Wealth Strategy (Part 2!)

- 5 Secrets to Success – Wellbeing Module:
 - Discover your student self
 - Engage with your course
 - Grow your confidence
 - Visualise your future
 - Connect with others
- Reaching out to Foundation and Year 1 students.
- Focus on pre-arrival and transition to HE.



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Infusing Resilience in PAL supported schemes

- Building on our experience to support academic colleagues.
- Current PAL Leaders involved in training content and design.
- Looking at online asynchronous, and live training & delivery.



Next academic year

Developing the offer

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Current situation – wider PAL Scheme

March – PAL Team offers and delivers online training to current PAL Leaders. Some choose to run Academic PAL sessions using the UWE Blackboard Collaborate tool.

April - Students report successful use of email, Skype and other online platforms to connect with students.

May – continuing to gather feedback.

Although attendance to the actual live session was low, engagement via other means was high, if not higher than usual before the lockdown.

Wasn't just work focused, considering the current climate with everything going on. Though they said it was nice to catch up and know I was still there to help.

Wider PAL Scheme

Late September to mid-March

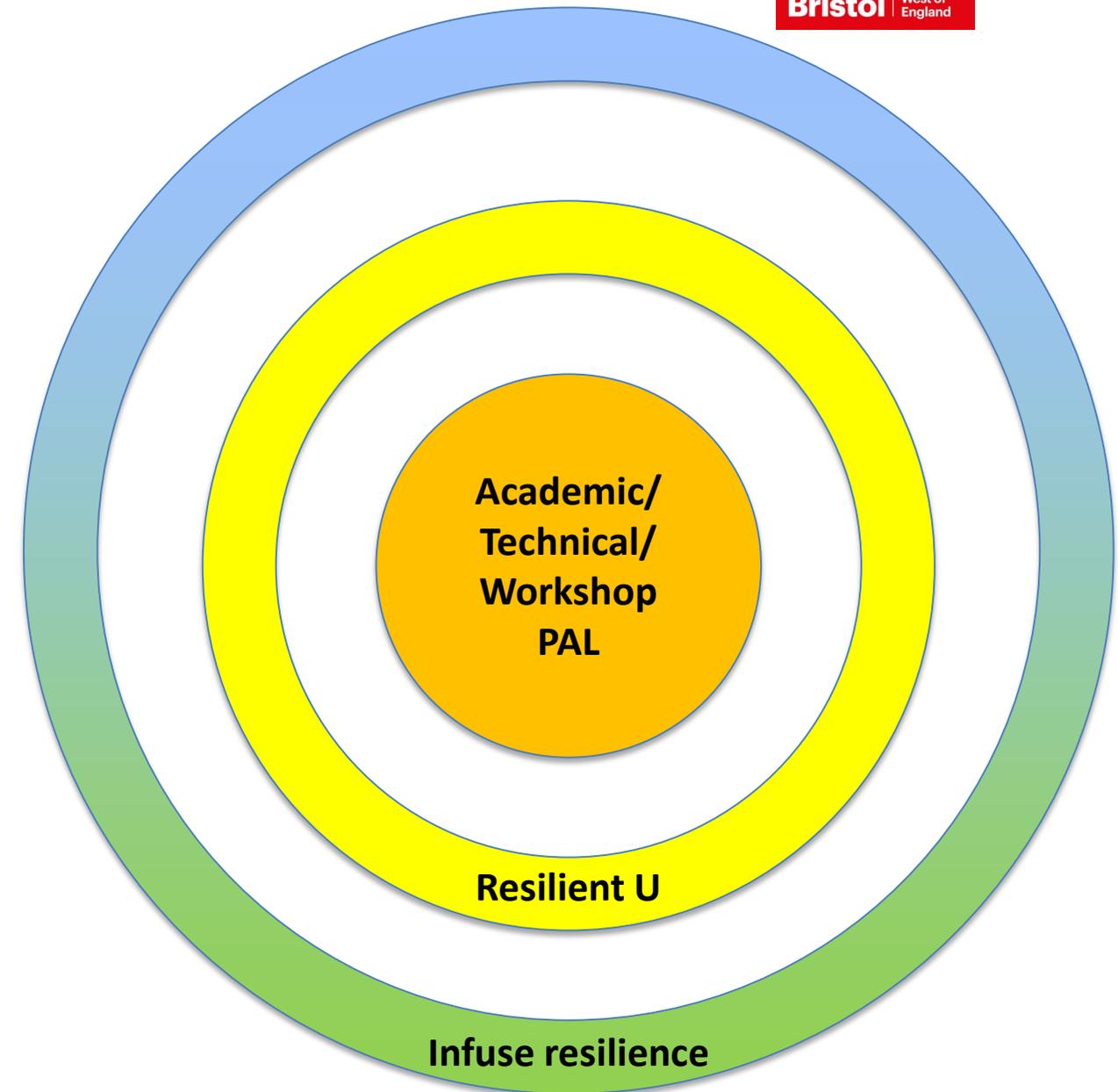
- 75 Schemes covered.
- 2,390 active session hours.
- 15K student interactions.
- 373 Senior PAL contact hours.
- 39 PAL Mentor contact hours.

17th March to 26th May

- 31 schemes supported.
- 100+ active online hours.
- 350+ student interactions.
- 12.5 SPL contact hours online.
- 6 PAL Mentor contact hours.

Our Aims going forward

- Maintain the main scheme, namely peer-led academic study skills support.
- Learn from and develop add-ons e.g. standalone resilience workshops.
- Widen and deepen our core offer by embedding academic wellbeing in PAL training and support.



References

PAL at UWE Bristol

- <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/study/study-support/peer-assisted-learning>

Resilience at UWE

- <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/life/health-and-wellbeing/get-wellbeing-support/resilient-u>

5 Secrets to Success

- <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/life/health-and-wellbeing/get-wellbeing-support/wellbeing-module>

Further reading

Times Higher Education article on the risks of “pathologising” ordinary anxieties

- <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/are-universities-encouraging-students-believe-hard-study-bad-their-mental-health>