

# Video 1 transcript

## *Understanding resilience*

Hi, and welcome to Video 1, Understanding Resilience, with myself, Sarah Oswald, from The Authentic Spark.

This and all the other videos have been produced on behalf of Museum Development North. Just to introduce myself to you. As I said, I'm Sarah Oswald, from The Authentic Spark, and I'm a consultant working in heritage, culture, and museums. I also work as a trainer, a coach, and a facilitator. And my key focus is supporting people in developing themselves, and developing their teams and their organisations.

This is the first of five fifteen minute videos that have been produced for Museum Development North, giving you an introduction to personal resilience, and also an introduction to the principles and the tools behind mindful communication.

The idea being that you can use both of these to help support you in your roles. The videos and the resources that go with them are aimed particularly at those of you who are working and volunteering front of house. They're designed so that you can pick them up, put them down again, work with them around your duties and your availability. But the content is suitable and relevant to anyone who's looking to boost their resilience and to find help in navigating challenging conversations in their roles.

They're best viewed in the order that they're listed in, i.e. videos 1 through to 5, and you can find subtitles and a transcript for each one and a PDF resource that supports them. During the videos, we will invite you to make the most of the learning in each video by undertaking some reflective activities, and you'll be invited to either pause the video to do that, do this, or watch the whole video and then return afterwards to the activities.

During the videos, you'll meet myself, but also my colleague, Joanna Taylor, who will be introducing you to mindful communication specifically.

So, let's kick off by just exploring what resilience means to you. Take a minute and just make a note of what words or phrases come up when you think about what resilience means for you. How would you describe being resilient?

Often when people answer this question, they say that being resilient is just being able to keep on going. Or they reflect on whether they actually are resilient are not and say well maybe I'm really not a resilient person.

Whilst we're going to explore in this video, resilience is not something you have or don't have, it's something that you can actually develop and build on and improve over the course of your life and that is through learning, learning from mistakes, learning from things that don't go well, understanding what's important to support you in being resilient.

I'd like to introduce you to some definitions of resilience that various people who work in the field of positive psychology have created and maybe some of these will ring a bell with you when you think about your own way of defining resilience.

The first definition says that resilience is a set of processes that enables good outcomes in spite of serious threats. So it's how you go through the process, how you get to the point where you can actually achieve something good, whatever the threat or the challenge might be, there is still a positive outcome out of it.

The second definition is that resilience is the capacity of a system, enterprise, or as we're focusing on here, a person, to maintain, in its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances.

So resilience is also about being clear in understanding what your purpose is, knowing your values, being able to keep that in mind despite the challenges that you might face.

Resilience can also be described as being your ability to overcome, steer through, and bounce back when adversity strikes. And we'll explore this a little bit in a few minutes when we talk about the three dimensions of resilience, the three ways in which resilience can show up.

And lastly, think about resilience as potentially being the ability to deal with, find strength in, and or recover from difficult times.

So resilience is about how you can draw on your strengths, how you can work on what you have within you and develop that and to allow you to deal with the challenges that you face.

This is a little exercise to help you just better define resilience for yourself and to better understand when you have been resilient, perhaps challenging that idea that I am resilient or I'm not resilient. Allowing you to explore that in a bit more detail. If you take this sentence and insert your own examples where you see these brackets, so even though I, insert an adversity or a challenge, something difficult that you've experienced in the past or experienced recently, I can still and here you want to reflect on what was the better than expected outcome that happened. Even though things may have been challenging, was there something positive, something good, something unexpected that came from that, that was better than you were thinking it would be. And then what helps me to do this, just reflect on what actually enabled you to get through that challenge. What was in your support system that made that happen?

You might like to pause and do this now, just pause the video, or wait until you've watched the whole video through and come back to this.

Sometimes the things that people identify as being factors that have helped their resilience in this example are things like reaching out to other people. It's focusing on their own well-being, so making sure they took care of their breaks, or ensuring that they still did their hobbies even though they had a challenge that they were facing at work. It's these little things that help support you in the day-to-day. There might be other factors that you can think of to complete your sentence.

And I just mentioned earlier the idea of resilience having three dimensions, different ways in which we can experience resilience. There's no right or wrong between these, it's simply three different ways that we may have experienced over time. I know personally I have experienced challenges and then noticed my resilience, often with hindsight, being within each of these dimensions.

So, recovery is where we bounce back from our challenge, we return to the same state as we were in before. We are not significantly changed in our ways of thinking or our experience, we've just brought ourselves back to where we were. So, a bit like imagining a stress ball that gets squeezed out of shape when you put pressure to it, but when you release that pressure it goes back to the original shape. That's how you experience recovery, in this resilience dimension.

Coping is where we bounce along with the challenge. So, a bit like the buoy on the, on the water that you can see here, we float with the waves. We don't dip very low, we might dip a little bit, but we don't dip really deeply. We can sustain ourselves, we can protect ourselves. We've brought those factors into play that allow us to cope until the challenge is passed.

And then the third dimension is transformation. This is where through the challenging experience, we actually grow and develop and we change in some way. Like the, moth coming out of a chrysalis, the, the, the caterpillar turning into a butterfly, we experience a transformation, we bounce forward into something new or different.

And all of these dimensions are relevant. And you might like to reflect on whether you've experienced resilience and being resilient in any of these ways.

And then to try and understand a little bit about, how our resilience emerges and what makes us, what pushes us towards being resilient, we can think about it in the context of these three zones of challenge. So, our ability to be resilient is directly related to our capacity, which is the, vertical axis on this graph, and the scale, the extent of the challenge, which is the horizontal axis. So when our capacity is good, so we are feeling good about ourselves, we have all the skills that we need, and also the challenge is low, i.e. it's something that we've done regularly, that we do day-to-day, it's a task that we understand easily. We are sitting within our easy, or within our comfort zone. We need to be in our

comfort zone at times to allow us to recover, to rest, to prepare ourselves for when we may face another challenge.

But if we sit within the comfort zone too long, we lose the opportunity to grow. We stop developing and stretching ourselves.

The next zone is the growth edge. This is where we may have challenges with our level of capacity. We might be facing doing something that is not within our skill set and so therefore we have to stretch ourselves, we have to learn new skills. And develop further. Or we may just not have the energy in the same way to face the scale of the challenge. But in that growth edge, in that space, is where we can develop ourselves further and often where we can develop the extent of our resilience. We push ourselves a little bit. We need to still be sustaining ourselves while we are there. If we spend too long.

In that growth edge, we may find ourselves moving into the red zone, over the edge. And this is where the extent of the challenge is so large. Or the challenge may be small but our capacity, because we are tired, because we are overwhelmed, because we have too much going on in the rest of our lives, or we don't have the skills, we can't match that challenge with our capacity. And therefore, we hit the red zone over the edge. This is where we start to feel real overwhelmed, we panic, this is where the stress sits.

And if we spend too long in that red zone or in there too frequently, that is when we are moving towards the risk of burnout. So have a go at just reflecting on where you have been in the last couple of weeks, looking at these three zones. Take that graph and actually mark up for yourself, where have I been, what was happening, which zone was I in the most and why, and how did it feel to be there?

Just reflect on what you notice about your personal zones of challenge and what types of things put you into each one. Getting that understanding of when you may feel resilient and when things impact you can help you to plan and develop your resilience.

So either take a pause now with the video and do this or wait to the end, watch everything and then come back and do this exercise.

So thinking about these three zones, it's through building our resilience and training ourselves, developing our understanding of what makes us resilient, that we can the shift the needle from the red zone into that orange zone, into becoming growth edge. We can help ourselves move back. And when we are in the green zone, that is where we can learn more about our resilience. We are resting, we are in a good place, we have the capacity to start to help ourselves develop our understanding and improve our resilience.

What helps us, what enables and supports our resilience is having a growth mindset. A growth mindset means that you believe that those basic qualities, the strengths, the skills, the attitudes that you have, are things that you can cultivate through your own effort. They are things that you can expand more and improve and you can support. And with that

growth mindset comes the potential to then be in the growth edge more, to move yourself on.

If you approach things with a fixed mindset where you believe that you cannot influence or change very much, you are more likely to find yourself within that red zone. When we think about resilience, we need to be conscious that our resilience levels will fluctuate naturally. Month to month, week to week, day to day, perhaps even hour to hour, different things external and internal will impact on how we are feeling resilient at any given time. So to support us and be able to better bring those things into our lives that help our resilience, we need to think about what is it that pushes our resilience boat down into the water. What's the things that tend to weigh us down and stop us from coping well? And what do we know, what do you consciously know now gives buoyancy to your boat? What adds to and supports you and helps with your resilience? So take some time to think about this by making a list of what happens when you tend to cope less well. What does that mean? What things that are going on that mean you cope less well? And then what are the things that are going on which tend to help you cope better?

So create two lists and reflect on your own resilience levels. And when you've done that exercise, either by pausing now or at the end of the video, think about whether you could do more of those things. The things actually boost your resilience, how might you help support it? What more could you do? And when you notice the things that don't support your resilience, how might you change those? What could you stop doing? How could you turn that around to find more things that boost you and support your personal resilience?

So I invite you to take some time out to explore all these activities. Try the Zone of Challenge model and reflect on where you've been in the last two weeks. What do you notice about your resilience? Then look at your resilience factors. What supports and boosts your resilience and what doesn't? Make a list so you can better understand what you need in your life.

And in the next video, you're going to start to build your own resilience prescription. Drawing on what you've already identified, and working with some tools and strategies that I will share with you.