

# Video 1 workbook

## *Understanding resilience*

This resource book supports Video 1 on Understanding Resilience, part of a series of five videos created for Museum Development North

In sharing these resources with you, I am sharing the understanding I have gained and lessons I have learnt from others as well as my own experience. The video and this resource draw in particular on the work of:

- Dr Chris Johnstone and Miriam Aktar, Positive Psychology Training
- Dr Martin Seligman, Penn Positive Psychology Centre
- Joanna Taylor, School of Clinical and Neuro-Linguistic Hypnotherapy
- Dr Lucy Ryan, Mindspring
- Niyce Pidgeon, Positive Psychology Coach Academy

Many thanks to everyone who has inspired me.

These materials and the video have their basis in Positive Psychology. It was developed in 2000 by Martin Seligman who identified that there was a need for more positive psychology work that focused on strengths and virtues instead of disorder, which is what psychology tended to focus on. Positive Psychology explores what helps us live good lives and finds evidence for exercises, tools and activity that can increase our well-being

Research shows that Positive Psychology can have a ripple effect. So by taking action on your own resilience and utilising these Positive Psychology tools you have the potential to also benefit others around you – your teams and colleagues, friends and family.

Disclaimer: This resource is for educational use and references models from external sources, all of which are acknowledged in the bibliography. Rights remain with the original authors.

# What is resilience?

When someone talks about 'being resilient', what does that mean to you?

How do you picture a resilient person?

What words or phrases come to mind when you think of 'resilience'?

There are various definitions of resilience out there. Do any of these match your personal perception of resilience?

***"... a set of processes that enables good outcomes in spite of serious threats"***

***Martin Seligman, Karen Reivich, Sharon McBride, American Psychologist***

*"the capacity of a system, enterprise, or a person to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances."*

Andrew Zolli and Ann Marie Healey

**"Resilience – your ability to overcome, steer through, and bounce back when adversity strikes."**

**Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatté, *The Resilience Factor***

*"Resilience is the ability to deal with, find strengths in, and/or recover from, difficult times."*

Chris Johnstone

You could think of your resilience in this way:

**Even though I ... [insert adversity],  
I can still [insert a better than expected outcome]  
and what helps me to do this is [insert helping factors]**

## **Exercise: Defining resilience for you**

Think of a time when you have experienced a challenge or adversity. Complete the following with your own example:

**Even though I ... [insert adversity],  
I can still [insert a better than expected outcome]  
and what helps me to do this is [insert helping factors]**

What do you notice when you look at your sentence?

How does it feel to recognise change, growth or a better than expected outcome in spite of challenges?

What does this show you about your resilience?

Can you identify any resilience factors that you might recognise in other experiences since?

# The 3 dimensions of resilience

Resilience can take different forms. We can experience being resilient in different ways. You might be able to think of examples when you have experienced being resilient in one or more of these ways.



## RECOVERY

Bouncing back

Returns to the same state as before

## COPING

Bouncing with

Don't dip deeply

Sustain and protect ourselves



## TRANSFORMATION

Bouncing forward

Growth and development out of adversity

Resilience is not just positive thinking or having a 'positive attitude'. It is a learned skill.

We learn from the past ...

...to cope in the present and ...

...to use that information for the future.

# Zone of Challenge

Stress, or being in a situation where we are challenged isn't always 'bad'. Through challenge, or being stretched outside of our comfort zone we can grow and develop.

Think about the different levels of challenge we can experience in our day to day lives.

Much of the time we will be operating in the **Easy zone, the green zone**. This is where we are functioning within our capacity and ability, and the level of challenge we are experiencing is low. We are well within our comfort zone.

Sometimes we move into the **Growth Edge zone, the amber zone**. The level of challenge is increased and / or what is required of us stretches us outside of our comfort zone. We have to develop greater capacity, learn something new, try a new skill, do something differently.

When the level of challenge is much greater than our capacity, we are then into the **Over the Edge zone, the red zone**. This is what can prompt panic and overwhelm.

We can cope with being in the red zone for a short time. But constantly being in that zone can lead to burnout. And being always in the green zone means that we don't have the opportunity to grow, discover and develop.

You can build your resilience during the times when you are in the green zone to help you cope when you move into the amber or red zones. Working on your resilience will help you to move out of the red zone and into the amber zone, where there is the opportunity to turn challenge into growth.

## Exercise: Mapping and reflecting on your zones of challenge

Consider your experience over the past two weeks. Map how often you were in each of the 3 zones and why. Use the zone chart at the end of this workbook.

What do you notice about your personal zone of challenge?

- Which zone were you in most?
- How did it feel?
- What was the result?

## Fixed and Growth mindsets

Part of what helps you to develop resilience is your mindset. As humans we are naturally inclined to curiosity and discovery, to growth and development. But we can get stuck. Cultivating a growth mindset can enable resilience and allow us to develop our capacity to face challenge.

### Fixed Mindset

You believe your qualities are set in a particular way and not something you can change very much.

### Growth Mindset

You believe your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your own effort.

Find out more about fixed and growth mindsets, and how to develop your growth mindset here:

<https://positivepsychology.com/growth-mindset-vs-fixed-mindset/>

## Resilience Factors

Resilience isn't fixed or constant. Our resilience levels will fluctuate. But we can better understand our resiliency and our individual tendencies to cope or not cope.



Imagine you are in a boat.

The more you carry in that boat, the more weight it holds, the more likely it is to be low in the water. It may be at risk of hitting the rocks.

If you balance that weight with buoyancy aids, or remove some of those weights altogether, your boat will sit lighter in the water, will move faster and more smoothly.

Your resilience factors include:

- Those things that weigh you down
- Those things that give you buoyancy

Once you are aware of what these are you can:

- Reduce, mitigate or remove the things that weigh you down
- Do more of or add to the things that give you buoyancy

### **Exercise: Understanding your resilience factors**

Explore your resilience factors using the diagram at the end of this workbook.

Identify everything that weighs your boat down. What do you tend to do, or believe that means you cope less well in times of stress?

Identify everything that can give your boat buoyancy. What do you tend to do, or believe that means you cope better in times of stress?

Now you are aware of them:

- How could you reduce those things that mean you cope less well?
- How could you do more of what helps you cope better?
- What could you change or stop doing that doesn't support your resilience?
- Is there anything else you could do as well?

This is the beginning of creating a 'resilience prescription' for yourself. A collection of strategies, strengths, resources and insights that you can use to build and support your resilience.

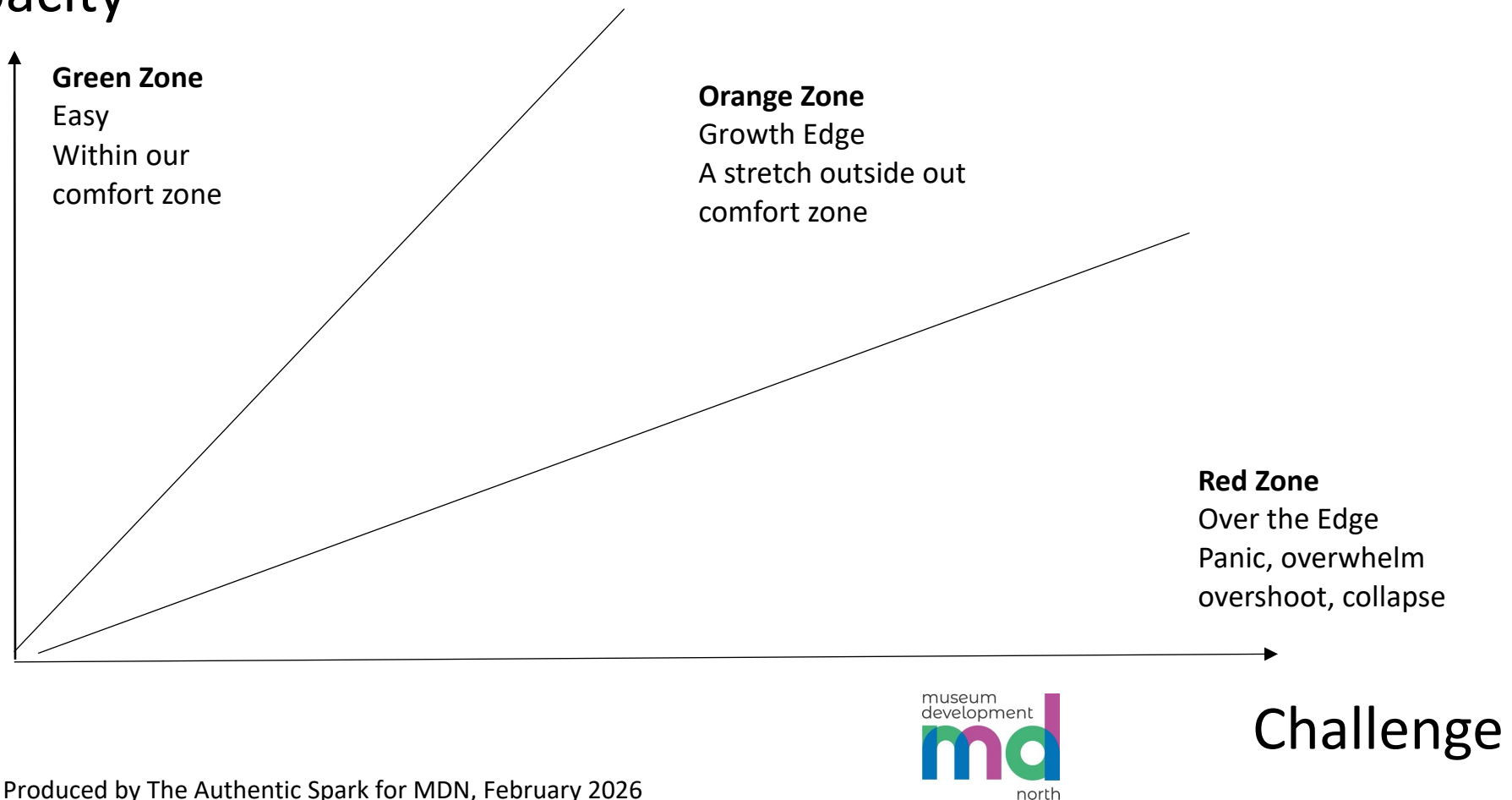
## What next?

Watch video 2 and explore the associated resources to help you build on your understanding of resilience. You will be encouraged to add to your 'resilience prescription' with tools and strategies to help you build and support yourself.

## My Zone of Challenge

Think about your experience in the last two weeks, mark which of the zones you have been in and why.  
*In the last two weeks I have been in....*

# Capacity



My resilience factors

I tend to cope less well when...



I tend to cope better when....