

think  
resilient



# *Take It Forward:* activities for Leaders

Think Resilient is a programme designed to help young people aged 7-25 build their mental wellbeing and resilience and introduce them to some of the techniques they can use to do this.

Resilience is something we can develop. **Every person is different and builds their resilience in different ways.** This means that the best way to build resilience is through a range of techniques. You can help your girls get the best out of Think Resilient by continuing to practise the resilience-building techniques introduced in the peer education session.

You should complete the activities that correspond to the techniques your unit used during the session. Adapt the activities in this section to suit the girls in your unit by:

- Using the ‘Alternatively for...’ section to adjust them so they’re age-appropriate.
- Asking your unit how they want to do the activity - what way would they find most challenging, interesting and fun?



# Techniques to build resilience

Technique	What it means
 <b>Understanding emotions and limits</b>  (Knowing when things might feel too much for us)	<p>Understanding what our limits are (when things will feel too much) helps us to recognise when we might need to seek help.</p> <p>Understanding the way we react to difficult situations means that we can recognise that these reactions might not be helpful to us. We can use this to try and manage our reactions to get a better outcome.</p>
 <b>Positive thinking and problem-solving</b>  (Seeing problems as chances to learn and grow)	<p>Having a positive view of life can help you feel better, even in the face of difficult challenges. Being able to try and improve situations, and focus on taking small, positive steps towards problem-solving means challenges feel less overwhelming and we feel more empowered to improve our lives.</p> <p>Using positive thinking and problem-solving skills together can change the way we think day-to-day, help us learn from past mistakes and improve our lives in the future.</p>
 <b>Self-calming</b>  (Comforting ourselves when things get difficult)	<p>This is the ability to control or balance our emotions and calm our minds and bodies when difficult situations present themselves. Meditation and mindfulness are two techniques we can use to comfort ourselves.</p>
 <b>Identifying support networks</b>  (Knowing who to go to when things get difficult)	<p>The skill of finding a source of support is a large part of resilience. By identifying your place in a community, the positive relationships you already have, and who is there for you, you know who to turn to when you need help. Just knowing that someone is there for you can help you become more resilient to challenges.</p>
 <b>Recognising strengths and achievements</b>  (Remembering what we're good at)	<p>Building self-esteem means girls are better able to deal with challenges as they are more confident and comfortable in themselves. This can be done through encouraging individuals to repeat positive things about themselves and to take notice of their strengths and achievements.</p>

## Key to the symbols used

	Section		Aim		Prompt
	Brownies		Time	<p><i>This text can be used as a script to make sure that the girls really understand the technique and how to use it. You don't need to follow this exactly - it's just there to help you if you want it. It's written to be accessible to Brownies, so you might need to adapt your language for older girls.</i></p>	
	Guides		Resources		
	The Senior Section		Note		

## Technique:



## Understanding emotions and limits

(Knowing when things might feel too much for us)

During the peer education session, the girls worked on a technique to understand their emotions and how they can manage their reactions to difficult situations. This activity encourages the girls to think about the ways in which their reactions can affect the situations they are facing and the people around them.

## Activity:

### Emotional reactions



To consider the way our reactions affect the outcome of challenging situations and the people around us



45 minutes



Enough for each group:

- Aprons
- Teaspoon
- Baking powder
- Vinegar
- Freezer bag
- Mixing bowl
- 420g of bread flour
- 1 and ¼ teaspoon of salt
- 225ml of water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Oven



**Note:** You can do this activity as one whole group or in lots of small groups depending on oven size and access to ingredients.



### What to do



*During the peer education session, we looked at what tools and techniques we have to cope with overwhelming emotions and difficult situations. In this activity, we're going to explore how our reactions can affect the outcomes of certain situations."*

- Put the oven on to 200°C.
- Get the girls into their groups and put on their aprons.
- Give each group freezer bags, some vinegar and baking powder.



*The baking powder represents a difficult situation that you might face. Depending on how we treat that baking powder, we can get quite different results."*



- Ask the girls to put the baking powder into the bag.
- Get the girls to add the vinegar in and stand back. The acid in the vinegar will react with the alkali in the baking powder to give off carbon dioxide and leave a slush behind.

**Ask the group:**

- What is happening in the bag?  
(Answer: the chemicals are reacting and creating bubbles).
- What's left after the reaction has finished? Has anything helpful been made? (They should be left with a mess in a bag).
- Would you be able to make anything good to eat out of these ingredients now?

 *So, adding vinegar made the baking powder let off carbon dioxide gas and it's made a bit of a yucky mess. This outcome represents an unhelpful emotional reaction to a situation. Now, if you approach this task in a different way, you'll end up with a more positive outcome. We're going to show that now by adding different ingredients to the baking powder."*

- Tie up and throw away the old baking powder bags.
- Hand out the other ingredients and a mixing bowl, telling the girls to mix the dry ingredients first (flour, salt and baking powder) and then add in the water and oil until it makes a dough. The girls can then break these into smaller sizes and place on a baking tray.
- Once the girls have mixed this together, ask the group:
  - What happened with these ingredients? (They are mixing together to become a dough).
  - What would happen with a little more effort, like kneading the dough and putting it in the oven? (They would have something they could eat and share with other people).
  - Is the outcome of mixing in these ingredients better or worse than the outcome of mixing in the vinegar?



*So, what this exercise is telling us is that we should all try and look at a difficult situation as a set of ingredients. By approaching the task carefully, you'll be able to make bread, rather than a mess. It's always better to make bread rather than make a mess!"*

**Ask the group:**

- What sorts of reactions are less helpful when a challenging situation happens? (For example, getting really angry and throwing a tantrum; avoiding the situation entirely; lashing out and hurting someone else's feelings).
- What impact can your negative reactions have on other people around you? (They can make the situation worse; they can have no impact on others around them; they could upset someone).
- What reactions could work better when challenging situations happen? (Taking responsibility for the situation and trying to solve the problem; looking for the positives).
- What impact could a positive reaction have on other people? (Inspire them to react well themselves; encourage them to help you; make the outcome better for them).
- Bake the dough in the oven for 20 minutes to make bread.



*Our reactions don't just make the outcome of a situation better or worse for ourselves. They can have an impact on other people, too. By using the coping techniques you have explored in the session, you can change your reaction to negative situations and improve the outcome for yourself and other people. In this activity, we've shown that by treating a situation differently you can either make a mess (hold up a messy bag) or some bread that your friends would be happy to share! Make bread, don't make a mess!"*



## Technique:



# Positive thinking and problem-solving

## (Seeing problems as chances to learn and grow)

In the peer education session, participants broke down problems into small, positive steps they could take to improve the situation. They reflected on real-life scenarios that might affect them personally and saw how by working together we can solve problems more effectively than we can alone.

## Activity:

### Electric emergency



To practise breaking down problems into smaller pieces to improve their outcomes and to practise working together to solve a problem



30 minutes for one meeting and  
15 minutes for another meeting a few weeks later



■ Torch  
■ Resources required for the activity you're running



## What to do

### Before the session:

- Ahead of the session look around your meeting room to make sure that there are no trip hazards around.
- Close the curtains or blinds.
- Keep a torch to hand and make sure it has working batteries in it.

### During the session:

- Set the girls doing an activity together. This should be from other Girlguiding programme resources. This activity should be:
  - Indoors
  - 20-minutes long
  - Collaborative.

### Some great ones to start with are:

#### For Brownies and Guides:

*Girls Matter - Hear Our Voice*: 'Poster Campaign' activity from page 30.

#### For The Senior Section:

*Girls Matter - Hear Our Voice*: 'Designing the Palace of Westminster' activity from page 15.

Alternatively, look through the magazine activities for a different option.

- Stop the meeting abruptly.
  - Switch off the lights, switch on your torch and say:
- We've had a power cut and the lights are completely off. You've got to complete your activity - but without any electricity to work with. What are you going to do?"***
- Make sure that everyone is calm.
  - Let older girls self-organise into how they are going to manage this situation.
  - For younger girls, you might need to help them organise themselves into groups to deal with the situation. Details about how to support this can be found in the 'Alternatively for...' below.
  - Let the girls find the tools they need to plan their next steps (torches, phones with torches, candles, pens and paper etc - alternatively, the girls could move the session to somewhere with more light or open the curtains) and gather resources.
  - Once everyone is finished, turn the lights back on.

- Ask the group:
  - What did you come up with?
  - What do you think worked?
  - What didn't work?
  - What would you do differently next time?

***Throughout this meeting, you've broken down this situation into smaller steps. You've also worked as a team to solve these problems. So, remember that whenever you face difficult times you should team up with the people around you to help you make solving your problem more manageable."***

### A few weeks later:

- Repeat the scenario with the girls running a shorter activity.

- Once the girls have finished, turn the lights back on and ask:
  - Did they notice a difference in how they felt between this time and last time?
  - Did the problem seem less overwhelming because you've practised it?
  - How did you react differently?
  - What better solutions did they come up with?
  - How did you work together to improve this situation?

### Alternatively for younger girls...

you may need to provide them with some steps they can take to deal with the situation. Help them to break down the big problem into:

- How are they going to see what they need to do?
- How are they going to make sure they communicate effectively with one another?
- How are they going to divide their roles? Will there be a leader etc?



## Technique:



## Self-calming

(Comforting ourselves when things get difficult)

During the peer education session, girls explored different techniques for managing their emotions and keeping calm. In this activity, you'll help the girls to remember their 'anchor' from the session - a mental picture or visualisation that makes them feel safe and calm during difficult times.

## Activity:

### Remembering your anchor



To create a mental picture or visualisation that the girls can use to calm themselves in stressful or difficult situations



35 minutes



- Photos
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Old Leaflets
- Inspirational words printed on paper
- Glue
- Coloured and plain paper
- Scissors



### What to do



*Together, we're going to make a collage that reminds us of the 'anchor' that some of you created during the peer educator session. If you didn't do this during the session, you can do it today. An 'anchor' is a mental picture or visualisation that you can 'hold onto' when you feel stressed, overwhelmed or unhappy, helping to make you feel safe and calm during difficult times. Remember, this can be anything you like: a thing, a place, a person, an animal, a memory. The important thing is that it makes you feel positive and secure."*



**Note:** If the girls created one during the peer education session then you could ask them in advance to bring them in.

- Ask the girls to gather together a collection of items, photos and words from the resources you provided, which can become a visual representation of this place (anchor).
- They should use these pictures to make a collage of this image.



*You should keep this picture safe so that when you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or unhappy, you can use it to help you feel calmer."*



## Activity:

# Remembering your anchor



To create a visual representation of their 'anchor' - a mental picture or visualisation that the girls can use to calm themselves in stressful or difficult situations



20 minutes



■ Mobile phones  
■ Internet connection



## What to do



*Together, we're going to remember the 'anchor' that some of you created during the meditation activity in the Think Resilient session. If you didn't do this during the session, you can do it today. An 'anchor' is a mental picture or visualisation that you can 'hold onto' when you feel stressed, overwhelmed or unhappy, helping to make you feel safe and calm during difficult times. Remember, this can be anything you like: a thing, a place, a person, an animal, a memory. The important thing is that it makes you feel positive and secure."*

- Ask the girls to remember their anchor from the previous session.
- Ask if any girls would like to describe their anchor.
- Ask the girls to create a Pinterest or Instagram account to gather pictures that remind them of this anchor.



*Now that you've created a visual representation of your anchor online, you can access it anytime you like. Use this as a tool to help yourself feel calmer and happier during challenging times. In the future, take some time to update this to help yourself continue to be more resilient to challenges."*

## Technique:



# Identifying support networks

## (Knowing who to go to when things get difficult)

In the peer education session, girls identified how they can support each other when things get tough. Being part of someone else's support networks is really important in building resilience and will help girls to see how they're an important part of their community's resilience.

## Activity:

### Random acts of support



To practise providing support to other people



20 minutes and some time over the coming weeks



■ Pens  
■ Paper



### What to do



*Helping other people is part of our Promise - it builds relationships and strengthens our support networks. It also helps us grow as individuals by improving tricky situations for ourselves and other people. Now you're going to think about one of your friends outside of Guiding who you support.'*

#### Ask the group:

- Think about someone who you give/offer support to when times are tough.
- Without naming names, ask if any girls would like to share what kind of support they give that person.
- Ask the girls to plan one helpful thing they could do for a friend in the next few weeks to show that they are there for them when times get tough.
- Ask if any girls would like to share their plans.
- You could suggest that girls invite their friend to Brownies to help them feel supported by all the other Brownies.
- Let the girls know you will catch up with them once a month to see what action they are taking to support a friend.
- Plan these into your unit programme over the following four weeks.



## Activity:

# Random acts of support



To practise providing support to other people



30 minutes and some time over the coming weeks



- Paper
- Pens
- Recent local newspapers



## What to do

### Before the session:

■ Consider what organisations or support systems are in place in your local area to help those who are vulnerable and print off details of them eg homeless shelters, nursing and elderly care homes or providers, food banks, refugee support groups. Check out these websites for inspiration:

- <https://do-it.org>
- <https://vinspired.com>
- <http://timebank.org.uk>

■ Source local newspapers which talk about local interest groups who may want volunteer time or support.

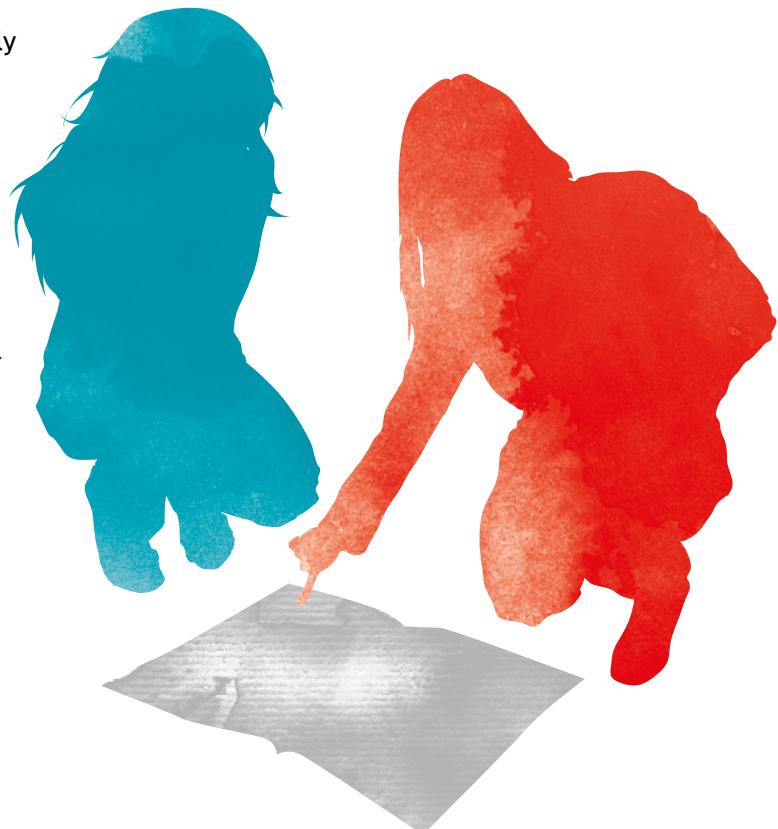
■ Bring this information to the meeting.

### During the session:



*Part of building resilience is working out who to go to when difficult things happen and where we can go for help and support. During the peer education session, we identified the different people who were in our support networks. This activity is on how we can offer support to others and become part of a support network for those most vulnerable in our local area. By being a part of someone else's support network, we also increase our own sense of achievement, which is another resilience-building technique."*

■ Get the girls into groups and hand out the information about the local organisations. Ask the girls to read through the information.



- Ask each group to work through the following questions:
  - What sorts of issues are there in your local area?
  - What sorts of issues are you interested in doing something about? Why?
  - What sort of things could you do to support this vulnerable group of people? What will help to make the situation better? Ask the groups of girls to consider what skills they have that might be helpful, or if they can dedicate time, how much time they might be able to commit to the cause.
  - Which organisations can you get involved with to help this group? What sort of things do they recommend doing?
- Ask the group to plan what actions they are going to take moving forward to get involved with supporting these groups in their area and build positive relationships with them? Together they should plan out:
  - What they want to achieve
  - What steps they are going to take
  - When they are going to do this by
  - The unit should decide together whether to do one thing, or whether each group will do separate things.
- The Leader should note down their proposed timeframes and support them to achieve these goals, challenging them to do the immediate action by the next meeting (this could be, for instance, contacting the organisation that they want to do something for).
- Once, they have decided this, they should put the plan into action - these girls should do at least one good thing to make a positive connection in their local community and help other people.
- For older girls, the Leader should keep note of their proposed timeframes and discuss their progress over the next few meetings to see how they are coming along.
- For younger girls, the Leader may need to help to put this plan into action as a unit and plan this into the timetable for the next term.



## Technique:



# Recognising strengths and achievements

## (Remembering what we're good at)

In the peer education session, the girls will have practised saying positive things about themselves or other people. This activity continues to build their self-esteem and self-confidence by helping them to reflect on their strengths, abilities and achievements. This will help them to react better to future challenges and become more resilient.

## Activity:

### Triumph bunting



To emphasise that the meeting place is a safe space. To encourage girls to celebrate their achievements



20 minutes, and some time each week over a period of a term



- Triangles of paper, cut out from the centre of an A4 page - one per girl
- String
- Decorating materials (pens, coloured paper, glue, glitter etc)

- Give each girl a triangle of paper or ask them to cut one out themselves.
- Ask the girls to decorate the borders of the triangles as they wish - leaving the centre empty so that they can be written on.
- Each girl should write their name on the edge of the triangle, and design/decorate it to reflect their personality. Once everyone has completed their triangle, pierce two small holes at two corners of the triangle.
- Thread the string through each triangle to make a line of bunting and put them up around the room. Once you have put it up, explain that the girls will use this bunting to record their own and each other's achievements throughout the weeks/term/year (depending on how much space you have, and how much bunting you wish to make). They can record:
  - Something supportive they have done (eg they were kind to someone when they were sad). Ensure that the girls know that it's not appropriate to name names or disclose any details.



### What to do

 *It's important that we all feel like we belong here in the unit meeting place. We're all part of each other's support network when times are tough. Over the weeks and months, it's also important that we recognise our achievements, as this helps us become more confident in dealing with difficult situations."*



- Something they have achieved (eg they are brilliant at drawing and they might have won a competition).
- Something about them as a person (eg they are always really funny, which cheers everyone up).
- Then, ask the girls to decide how they wish to celebrate their achievements. It may be that they'd like to spend 10 minutes each meeting to celebrate their strengths and achievements, or to fill out the bunting out at the end of every half term. Explain that if you do this regularly, it can help to build their resilience over time.
- Depending on what the girls decide, ensure you plan this reflection time into your term's plans.
- Finally, ask them to think about ways that they could make the unit a more resilient space. Ask the group:
  - How can we make new people feel like they belong and celebrate their achievements using the bunting?
  - What else they can do to help improve everyone's resilience?



**Note:** Don't forget, girls should not focus on how they look, because this can reinforce the 'Image Myth', that to be successful in life, people have to look a certain way. This 'ideal look', as determined by society, is a myth because it is impossible to achieve - images of celebrities are often digitally altered and retouched! Challenging the Image Myth gives girls the freedom to embrace themselves for who they are and can build self-esteem.

**For more information on the Image Myth, see Free Being Me:  
[www.free-being-me.com](http://www.free-being-me.com)**

## Take it even further!

For more information about how to build positive mental health in Guides and The Senior Section see *Me in Mind*, available from:  
[www.girlguidingshop.co.uk](http://www.girlguidingshop.co.uk)



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[www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk)  
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