# Why shielding young people today could be stunting their resilience



In discussions about today's youth, common sentiments about their lack of resilience frequently emerge from employers, educators, and parents alike. The criticism often points to a desire for young people who are dependable, hardworking, and responsible. However, rather than simply bemoaning rising expectations, perhaps it's time to delve deeper into the underlying questions: Why do some young people seem to struggle? What factors contribute to their perceived shortcomings?

Resilience, it is crucial to note, is not an innate trait; it is a skill built through experience and challenge. Many observers suggest that current societal practices may be depriving young people of the critical experiences needed to cultivate this essential skill. As they face demands to manage risk and safeguard well-being, educational institutions increasingly prioritise safety and conformity. In doing so, they can unintentionally strip away the very frictions that enable growth.

Parents, too, often find themselves enmeshed in this protective milieu. The advent of technology has resulted in an environment where every movement of a child can be monitored, a stark contrast to past liberties where young people roamed freely and learned through their mistakes. This continual oversight might offer immediate reassurance, but it can ultimately hinder the development of independence and resilience in young people.

Reflecting on their own upbringings, many adults recall a time when they were afforded the freedom to explore and the space to make mistakes without an omnipresent safety net. Such experiences, while risky, were fundamental in fostering a sense of responsibility and self-discovery. These lessons, often accompanied by an element of failure, are crucial for building resilience, which cannot simply be gifted but must be earned through effort, reflection, and setbacks.

In contemporary workspaces as well, the desire for resilient young professionals is frequently met with a low tolerance for mistakes. However, without the opportunity to learn from failure, how can resilience be nurtured? For instance, recent observations from the Powering Futures Challenge in Scotland reveal that many young participants faced significant challenges during their final presentations. Strikingly, it was often those who struggled the most who found the greatest satisfaction in their achievements, realising they had successfully navigated difficulties.

The notion of equipping young people with resilience aligns closely with various studies suggesting its broad benefits, including improved emotional regulation, enhanced academic performance, and stronger interpersonal relationships. Resilient youth tend to engage in healthy risk-taking and develop self-esteem, which are crucial for thriving in everyday life.

Moreover, research highlights that adventure education significantly impacts resilience development. Engaging in activities that challenge social connectedness and coping strategies can build a stronger foundation for resilience, leading to better mental health outcomes in adolescents. By placing young people in environments where they can experience controlled risks, educators and parents alike can facilitate vital learning moments.

Ultimately, if we are serious about fostering resilient generations, a paradigm shift is necessary. It is essential for adults to step back—not out of neglect, but from a place of genuine care—to create opportunities for young people to tackle challenges independently. Embracing persistence over perfection and effort over ease is key. Our role should be supportive, walking alongside them as they navigate obstacles instead of clearing every hurdle they encounter.

Increasingly, it appears the discomfort with allowing failures can often stem from an adult desire for control rather than a clear commitment to fostering independence in youth. Therefore, the real question we must confront goes beyond young people's attributes: It asks us why we feel compelled to shield them—and how we might instead empower them to face life with resilience.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25174574.pupils-robbed-experiences-will-make-resilient/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://sparkcurriculum.org/resilience-in-youth/> - This article discusses the importance of resilience in young people, highlighting benefits such as better emotional regulation, improved academic performance, stronger relationships, enhanced problem-solving skills, greater confidence, reduced anxiety and depression, increased adaptability, and long-term success. It emphasizes that resilience equips youth with tools to face life's challenges, leading to healthier, more fulfilling lives.
3. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27679628/> - A study published on PubMed examines the impact of adventure education programs on adolescents' resilience. The research found that participating in such programs led to increased resilience, with social connectedness playing a significant role in this improvement. The study underscores the positive effects of adventure education on adolescent mental health and resilience.
4. <https://blog.oeg.edu.au/the-importance-of-resilience-in-students> - This blog post emphasizes the significance of resilience in students, noting that it contributes to better emotional regulation, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. It highlights that resilient students are more likely to take healthy risks, develop independence, and have higher self-esteem, which are essential for thriving in daily life and society.
5. <https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/development/social-emotional-development/resilience-in-teens> - An article from the Raising Children Network defines resilience as the ability to 'bounce back' during or after difficult times. It explains that resilience helps teenagers adapt to challenging circumstances, learn from difficult situations, and develop personal attitudes like self-respect and self-compassion. The article also discusses the role of supportive relationships and social skills in building resilience.
6. <https://www.alliedacademies.org/articles/building-resilience-mental-health-and-coping-strategies-for-young-people-31581.html> - This article explores the factors contributing to resilience in young people, including social support, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. It emphasizes that resilience is about learning to cope with and navigate through hardships effectively. The piece also discusses the role of mental health support and coping strategies in building resilience.
7. <https://www.educationnext.in/posts/how-to-build-resilience-in-young-people-for-a-bright-future> - An article from Education Next discusses the importance of resilience for young people, stating that it equips them to handle life's challenges and setbacks. It highlights that resilient youth are better able to manage adversity, build confidence, and overcome obstacles to achieve goals. The article also emphasizes the role of support networks and modeling resilience in fostering these qualities.