

South Lanarkshire Council
Psychological Service

Framework of Assessment and Intervention for Resilience (F.A.I.R)



**An Assessment and Intervention tool to promote
educational resilience for vulnerable children and
young people**

The concept of Resilience

There is now a growing recognition of individual differences in children's responses to stress and adversity, and emerging research findings have had the effect of shifting the emphasis towards studying children's coping strategies and towards identifying protective factors both within the child and in the interplay between the child and the environment. The concept of resilience and the associated research findings offer a theory base for such alternative ways of thinking. Resilience can be defined as normal development in spite of serious adversity and research suggests that individuals are not considered 'resilient' if there has never been a significant threat to their development. However, some people may have the potential to be resilient in the face of adversity depending on what protective mechanisms are available to them.

FAIR Rationale

By taking the resilience perspective, South Lanarkshire Council Psychological Service carried out research in 2004 based on the concept of 'educational resilience', which can be described as 'the ability to do well socially, emotionally or academically in education despite major difficulties or negative life experiences'. The purpose of the research was to identify a group of Looked After and Accommodated Children described as 'educationally resilient' and to investigate the factors that may have made the difference for them in school.

Factors identified as most strongly associated with educational resilience included:

- the ability to express emotions;
- the ability to manage difficult emotions;
- the ability to see things from another person's perspective;
- having plans for the future;
- reading for pleasure; and
- meeting up with school friends outside school.

About FAIR

The FAIR was developed as a practical application of resilience theory derived from the action research outlined above. Its purpose is to enable adults to work collaboratively with young people in identifying protective factors available to them and to plan how best these can be mobilised in the interest of the young person's development. Perhaps more importantly, the FAIR will help identify those protective factors not currently available for the young person and from here the process of planning how best to support these needs and to promote educational resilience can begin.

There are three sections to the FAIR, each consisting of an assessment, planning and review part. These 3 sections are grounded in Grotberg's (1997) model of 'I HAVE', 'I CAN' and 'I AM', and relate to different areas of the child's life, namely the child's external supports and resources (I HAVE), social and emotional skills (I CAN) and internal, personal strengths (I AM). The items within each section are considered important predictors of resilience.

The FAIR philosophy is that in order to work with a young person in thinking more positively about the future and feeling better about themselves (I AM) it is first necessary to take a step back and understand where the protective factors and risks lie in the environment (I HAVE) as well as addressing strengths and difficulties they may have with social and emotional skills (I CAN). For this reason The FAIR was developed as a staged model of assessment and intervention where the HAVE section is completed first followed by the CAN and AM sections.

Using the FAIR

The Framework of Assessment and Intervention for Resilience was designed for use by both social work and education staff working directly with vulnerable young people. Ideally it should be used by those individuals in both sectors with whom the young person has developed a positive relationship. The FAIR was designed to be used with young people aged 10 and upward although it often depends on the child's developmental stage and can sometimes be used with younger children. The FAIR can also be used in a number of systemic ways. It can provide a framework for meetings by offering a shared language and understanding of protective factors and risks around for young people. The FAIR can also be used as a training resource for developing whole school resilience or can form the core ingredients of parenting programmes.

The FAIR was launched on Friday 26 October 2007 and was jointly published by South Lanarkshire Council and the Scottish Government. It comes in both paper copy and interactive CD-Rom and can be purchased at a cost of £350. If you are interested and want to find out more please contact:

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