

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE MORE RESILIENT AND BETTER ABLE TO COPE WITH STRESSES AND PERSEVERE THROUGH SETBACKS

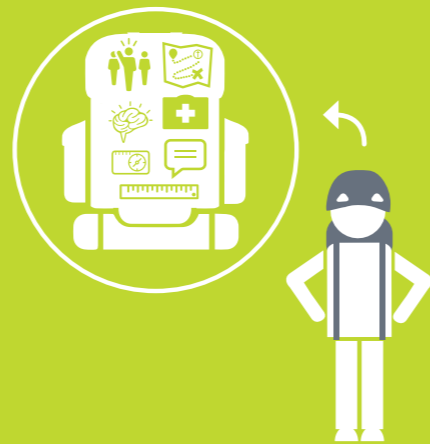
“

If I failed at something once, I think before I would have definitely given up. I'm quite a stubborn person, so if I'd have failed at something, I would have been like, 'There's no point in doing that again. I'll just fail it again.' It's made me realise that actually failing might have been a good thing because it's made me learn from my mistakes and if I did go into it again, I have an advantage in that I know what went wrong and I could probably do it again and... do better maybe.”

Kerry, age 18, speaking at the end of her Skills for Life Award course in 2015

Qualities such as resilience, determination and perseverance are fundamental to whether we succeed or fail – in school, at work, in our relationships or in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Without them, we give up at the first sign of difficulty or failure, we struggle to adapt positively to change and we're less likely to stay on track with our goals and aspirations. These qualities are particularly important for young people when they transition from one stage of education to the next and when they move into employment for the first time, as they help them to adapt positively to new circumstances.

The challenges that our instructors present young people with during their course are carefully designed so that setbacks can be positively experienced and overcome. As participants face the task of summiting a peak, they learn about what it takes to tackle a challenge – adopting a positive mindset for instance, seeking support from others, or resisting the impulse to give up in favour of something more immediately enjoyable. One of the key learning experiences is having to push themselves and persevere with physically challenging tasks such as long hikes and mountain climbing, camping in tough conditions, carrying heavy bags and jumping in cold water.

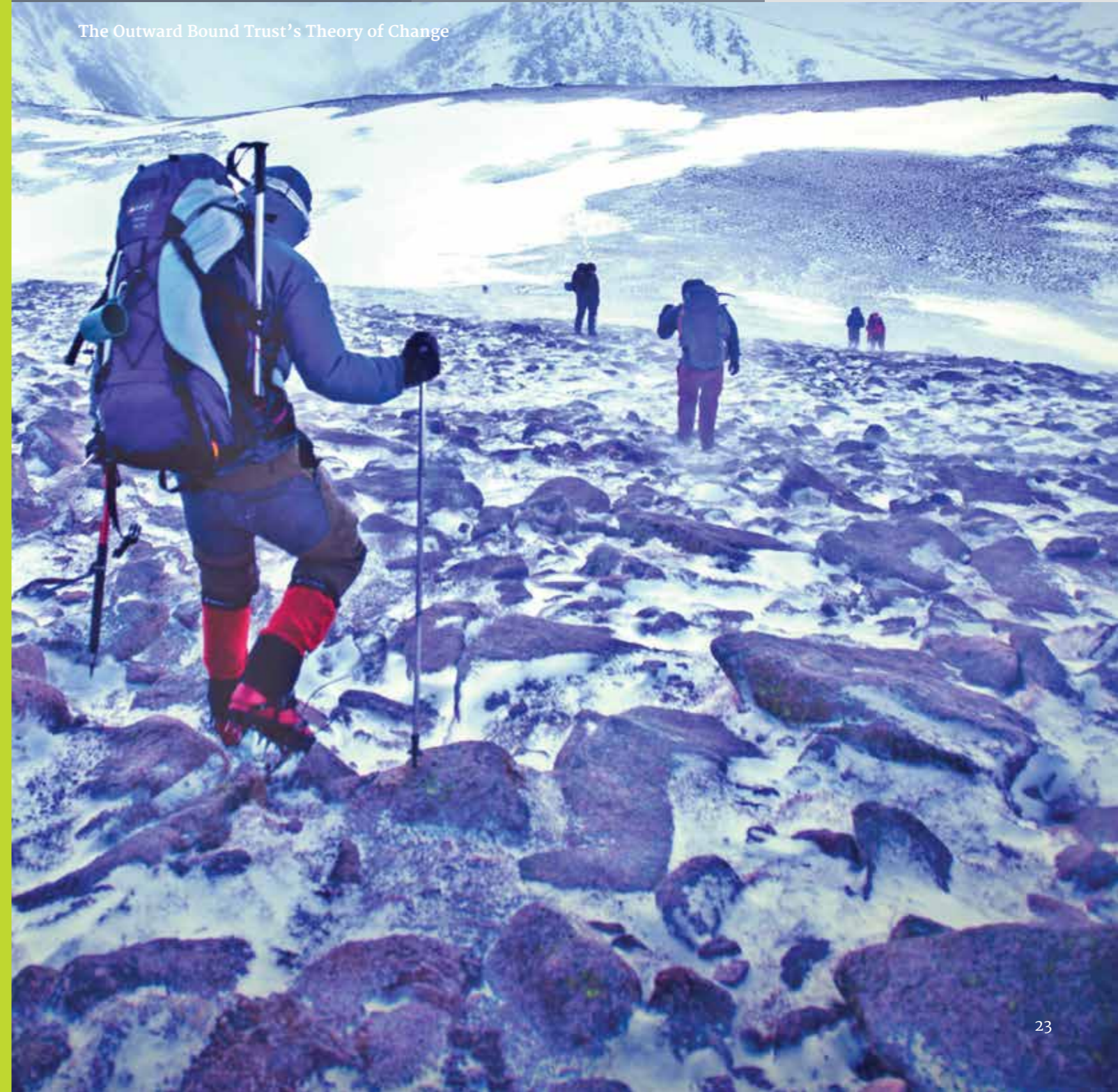


ON AN OUTWARD BOUND COURSE, PARTICIPANTS OVERCOME PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHICH REQUIRE SUSTAINED EFFORT AND RESULT IN EMOTIONAL REWARD

AS A RESULT, THEY DEVELOP PERSEVERANCE, RESILIENCE AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

THIS MEANS THAT THEY DEVELOP THE MENTAL STRENGTH NEEDED TO COPE WITH SETBACKS AND WORK TOWARDS THEIR ASPIRATIONS

The Outward Bound Trust's Theory of Change



ABILITY TO STAY CALM AND IN CONTROL WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

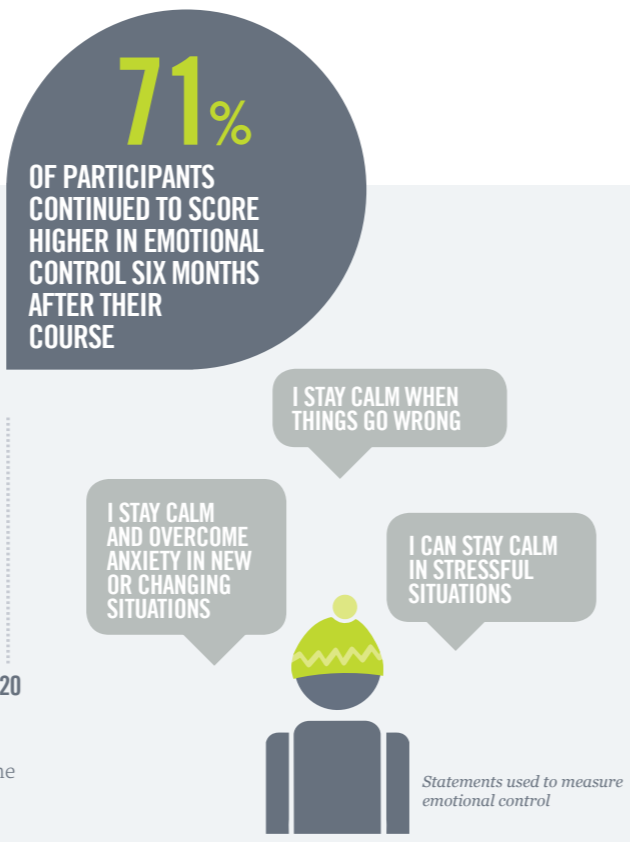
One dimension of perseverance is the ability to stay calm and in control when things don't go to plan.

Our evaluations show that by participating in one of our courses, young people get better at managing their emotions when they're facing stressful situations or adapting to change. 60% of participants on our 5-day Education courses and 71% of participants on our 19-day Skills for Life Award course recorded an increase in their emotional control score from their baseline score at the end of their course.

When we surveyed the young people who had completed the Skills for Life Award again six and twelve months afterwards, we found that the improvements recorded in their emotional control had been sustained.

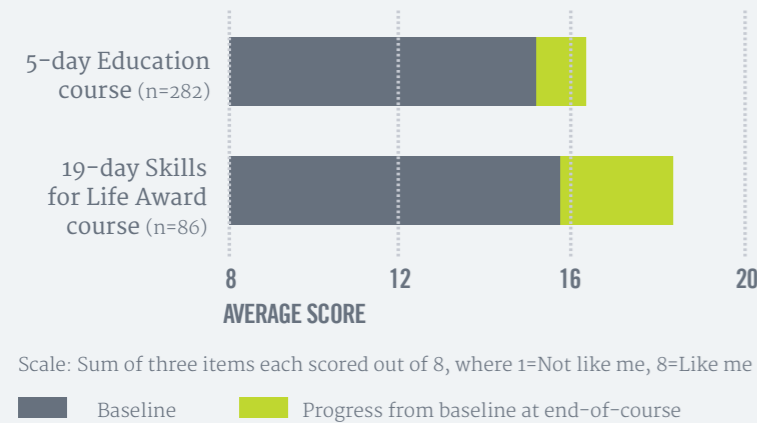
“ I have seen a difference in a young boy who would often get into trouble for low level disruption in lessons and is often on report. He has certainly been much improved and there haven't been so many incidents of 'removes' (where they have to go and work in another class due to their disruption). ”

Rachel Kanes, Teaching Assistant, Broadoak School (Manchester). Feedback provided in February 2016, four-six weeks on from the course.



IMPROVEMENTS RECORDED IN PARTICIPANTS' EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Life Effectiveness Questionnaire: emotional control measure



Full results can be found in Additional Research, page 61, Figures 1-3; and page 65, Figure 16.

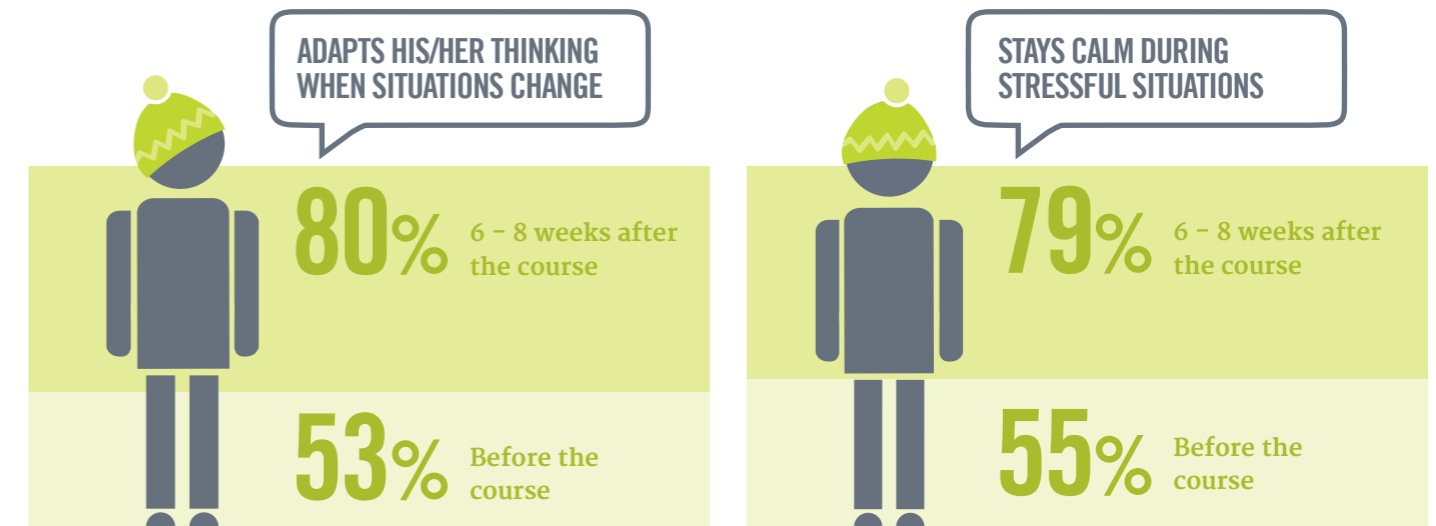
FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Our evaluations involving the parents of participants provide further evidence that young people develop their ability to cope with challenges and change after taking part in the Skills for Life Award. Parents and guardians have recorded improvements in how well individuals adapt when situations change, how calm they are in stressful situations and how likely they are to look for solutions to problems.

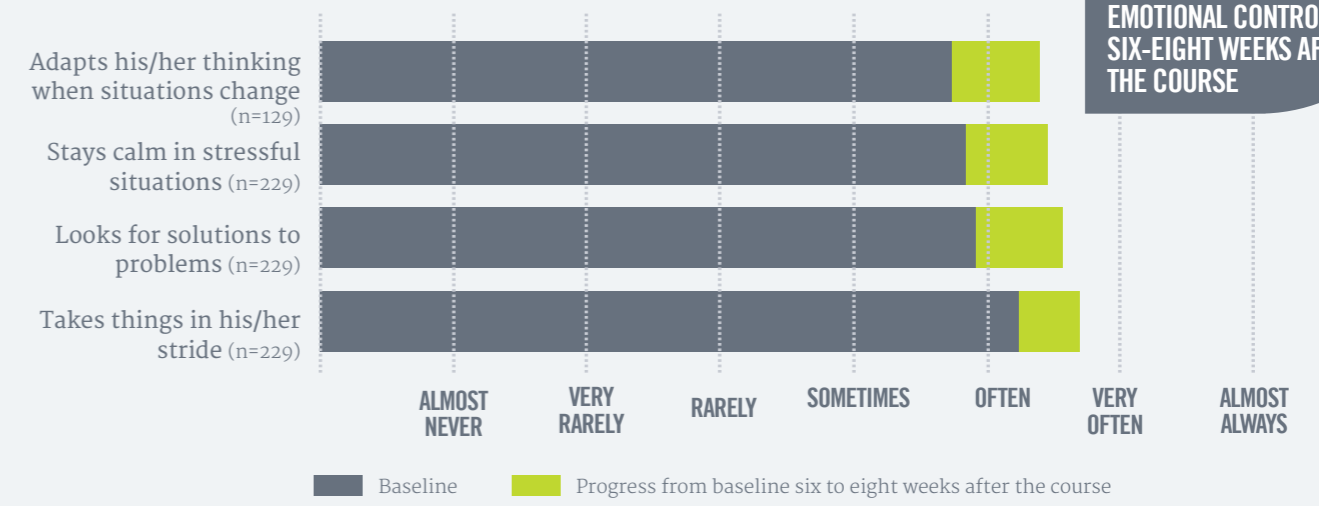
“ Luke came back from the course very upbeat and positive, and was also better able to cope with the wait for the exam results coming in as he was still on a conditional offer. In the last two years, he would become more and more stressed and his behaviour / temper would become poor. Even though he didn't get the results he wanted, he has coped well and returned to an even temper and is looking forward to college. I would like to thank you for the course as it's made living with him this summer much easier. ”

Parent of Luke, age 18, who completed his Skills for Life Award in 2015.



Percentages shown are for parents who reported that the participant displays the behaviour 'often' or 'very often'.

IMPROVEMENTS IN EMOTIONAL CONTROL RECORDED BY PARENTS OF SKILLS FOR LIFE AWARD PARTICIPANTS



68% OF PARENTS RECORDED AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE PARTICIPANTS' EMOTIONAL CONTROL SIX-EIGHT WEEKS AFTER THE COURSE

Full results can be found in Additional Research, page 64, Figure 15.

RESILIENCE



Over the last 18 months, we have used the Resilience Scale* to measure changes in young people's capacity to adapt positively to challenge and change after completing their Outward Bound course.

The scale measures five separate characteristics of resilience: purpose, perseverance, equanimity (living with acceptance and balance), self-reliance and authenticity (knowing who you are).

Our evaluations show that young people improve their ability to bounce back from setbacks and learn from difficult experiences after taking part in one of our

courses. At the end of one 5-day Education course, 58% of students increased their score for resilience and six months afterwards 41% recorded an increased score. At the end of the Skills for Life Award course, 82% scored higher and six months on 64% scored higher. When we surveyed them again twelve months on, we found that the improvements had been retained.

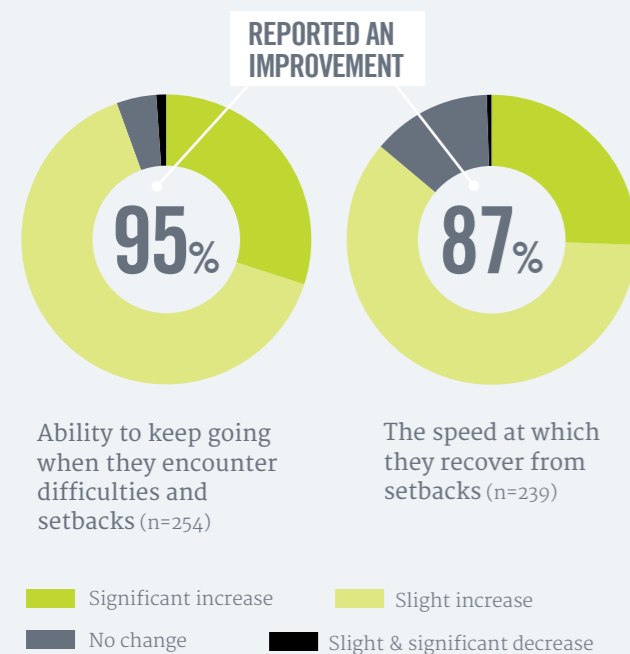
Improvements were recorded across all five characteristics, with the biggest increases observed in relation to participants' authenticity and self-reliance.



“Nathan has handled a change of plan regarding his education path with calm purpose. In the past, this change to ‘routine’ and plan would have made him unsettled, defensive and emotional. Now he refers to lessons learned at Outward Bound, and is calm and forward looking. He is far more confident in presenting himself, ideas and views. He is not daunted by the prospect of new people / places / skills. Thanks to Outward Bound!”

Parent of Nathan, age 17, who completed his Skills for Life Award in 2016

FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE CHANGES IN PUPILS' RESILIENCE REPORTED BY TEACHERS FOUR-SIX WEEKS AFTER THEIR OUTWARD BOUND COURSE



Full results can be found in Additional Research, page 66, Figure 19.

* The Resilience Scale is a psychometric questionnaire used to accurately measure resilience. For more information visit www.resiliencecenter.com/

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

A STUDY OF RESILIENCE & MINDSET

INTRODUCTION

A study was conducted in 2014²¹ into the effects of using the positive psychology concept of growth mindset* during an Outward Bound residential course. Two school groups were involved in the study, one of which was an ‘experiment’ group, which received a mindset-specific course; the other was a ‘control’ group, whose experience was absent of mindset-specific processing. Students were randomly assigned to the experiment and control group by the course administrator. A questionnaire was completed by students at the start and end of the course, and again one month afterwards.

KEY FINDINGS

A significant increase was found for self-efficacy in both the control and experiment group. However a significant increase was only found for the participants’ resilience and growth mindset when the Outward Bound course included deliberate and structured learning around mindset. It is likely that the increase in resilience was linked to these students’ move towards a growth mindset, as previous research has found strong links between these two areas.

The researcher concluded: “If participants are explicitly encouraged towards the belief that they have personal control over their development, gain an understanding of the utility of effort when facing challenges and have built up a bank of transferable strategies to use when facing setbacks, they are more likely to feel resilient and display resilient behaviours in future situations.”

IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR PRACTICE

This study suggests that developing resilience in young people may not be as straightforward as providing them with a series of progressive outdoor challenges to overcome. It is more likely that structured processing specific to overcoming challenge with support, application of effort and highlighting transferable strategies for overcoming setbacks is required for improvements in resilience and mindset.

* Fixed and Growth Mindsets describe the underlying beliefs that people have about learning and intelligence, and are terms developed by Dr. Carol Dweck. With a fixed mindset, young people are more likely to avoid challenges and give up easily. With a growth mindset, young people are more likely to embrace challenges and persist despite failure. For more information visit www.mindsetonline.com/