

PEP toolkit: motivation and locus control

Virtual
School

Hampshire Virtual School

Motivation and locus of control

External locus of control: many children and young people who have experienced inconsistent attachments/trauma are demotivated in their learning. They have experienced being let down by adults or negative experiences of school/learning, so they have almost given up. They feel powerless to change.

This can affect motivation for learning and learning outcomes.



Indicators of an external locus of control

Difficulties with:

- recognising they are underachieving
- making efforts to improve
- working towards tangible rewards
- responding to positive reinforcement
- accepting constructive feedback
- maintaining confidence when learning new skills
- attending school for exams
- readily answering questions
- relating success in schoolwork to themselves (their own effort)
- enjoying classroom responsibilities
- enjoying the process of learning (not just outcomes)
- enjoying choice in learning
- believing they can succeed
- persevering with challenging tasks

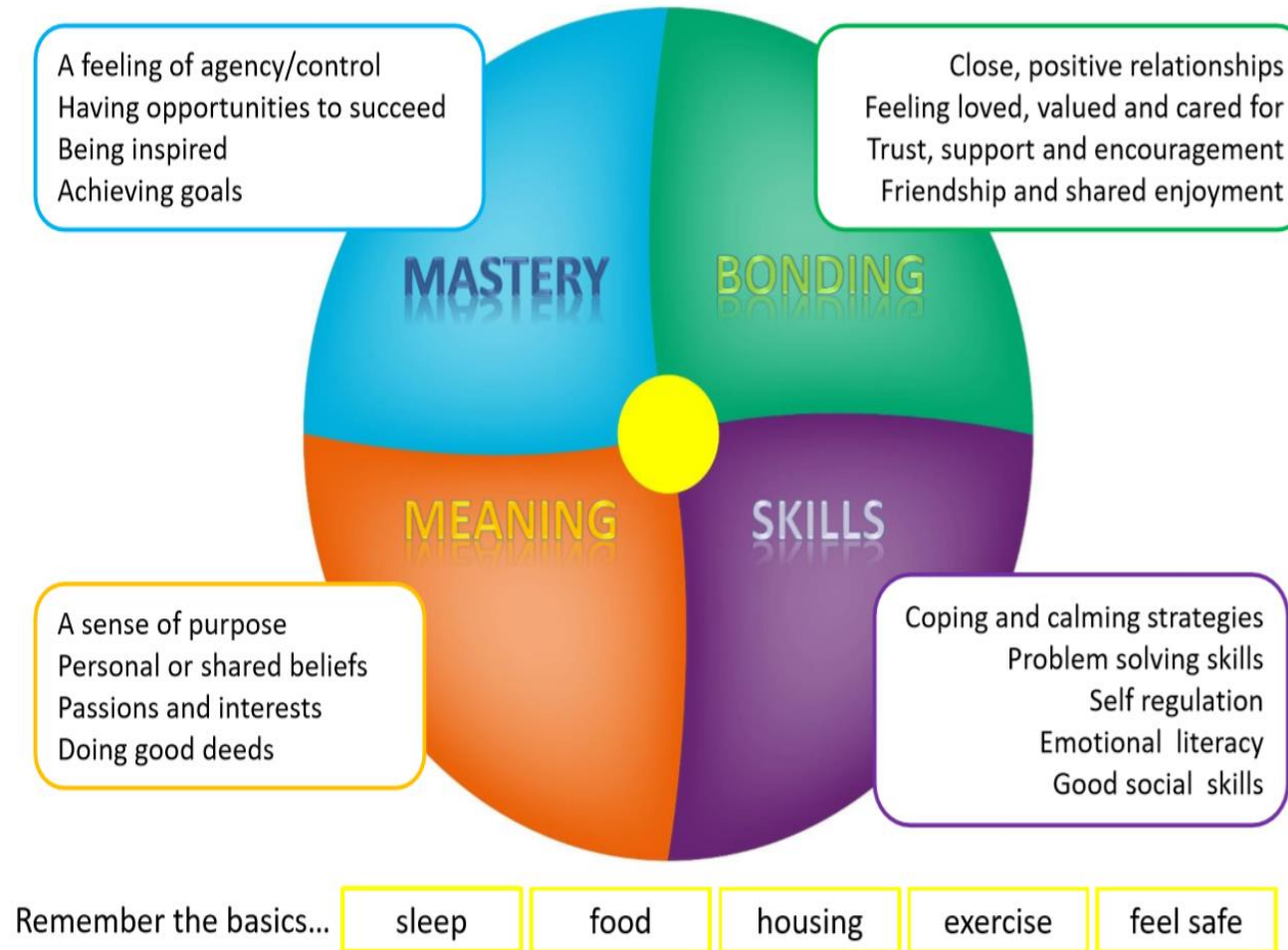


External locus of control: resilience building

Resilience refers to the strengths, skills, and resources we all possess to manage and overcome challenges and difficulties effectively. It is about doing well or having a good outcome when times have been tough. It involves our skills, strengths, qualities, and the relationships, support, and opportunities we have around us. It is a central component of our emotional and physical wellbeing.



Resilience ball



External locus of control: resilience ball

Skills: how can we support coping skills through problem-solving and teaching emotional understanding and management?

Mastery: where do they have a sense of control/agency? Where can they experience some success?

Meaning: when can they engage in activities that give them meaning and purpose within their day?

*Based on research reviewed by Ann Masten (2016) and inspired by Henderson and Milstein (2003), Hart, Blincow and Thomas (2007) and Jeni Hooper (2012), adapted by Cath Lowther (2016/7) © HIEP



Changing external locus of control: attribution feedback

Providing pupils with **attribution feedback** requires practice, but it can be given for both the success or failure of a task. Examples of the different types of attribution feedback are:

- **effort:** “Great, you have got it right now because of the extra work you did”
- **skills:** “You have cracked it, now you really understand how to divide fractions”
- **strategies:** “You got it right because you applied the steps in the right order, then checked your work”



Changing external locus of control: attribution feedback

Help pupils **reframe ability** as something that can be **developed** through **learning, practice** and **feedback**, such as “**I cannot do this yet.**”

Provide **worked examples** of how **abilities** can be **improved** (such as providing staged examples)

Provide **models of constructive attributions** that relate to **effort, skills** and **strategies**: “I got these spellings right because I used a look-cover-write-check routine and spent time practising them.”

Ask **peers** to explain the **skills** and **strategies** they use to **solve tasks**, including **coping strategies**.

Have subject-specific lessons dedicated to the above



Resilience building

Personal resiliency building activity

How have I done as well as I have done?

What are the two/three biggest challenges, including crisis or trauma/learning challenges, I've overcome in my life?

What did I use to overcome them?

What do I use daily to cope with my life's typical stresses effectively?



Locus of control: the importance of feedback

Strategy to introduce new tasks to children

Task: describe the task

Process: describe the steps in the process of completing the task

Self: praise the traits of the child. Separate the process of learning from the self

Self-regulation: use the questioning in the section on meta-cognition to help the child regulate their fear

Do not mix praise with feedback or allow feedback to draw attention to the self. Make it specific to the task.

Start with praise of the self-trait qualities of the child. Make this a class plenary!

‘When Making Mistakes Make You Quake’ by Claire Freeland is a wonderful resource
[Top Growth Mindset Resources for Parents and Educators | Big Life Journal](#)

