

# How to Develop and Maintain a Resilient Mindset

Bringing a compassion  
focused approach

Michele Lorimer, Principal Lead

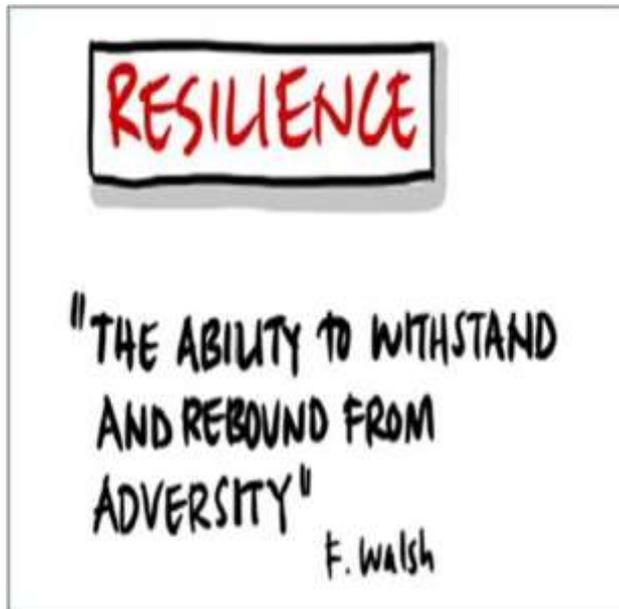


# Aims for today's session

- Introduce you to the compassion focused approach to resilience
- Apply the model to understand ourselves and others
- Provide a space to reflect, share and learn

# What is 'Resilience'?

\*People are not either resilient/non-resilient.



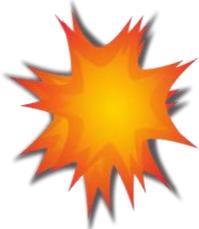
Our ability to 'bounce back' varies over time and can be affected by lots of different factors (e.g. emotional, physical, social, environmental etc.) in any given moment.

What we can cope easily with on one day may test us to the limit emotionally on another.



# Compassion Focussed Approach

Threat Mode



*Amygdala  
Adrenaline  
Cortisol*

Drive Mode



*Nucleus Accumbens  
Dopamine*

Soothe Mode



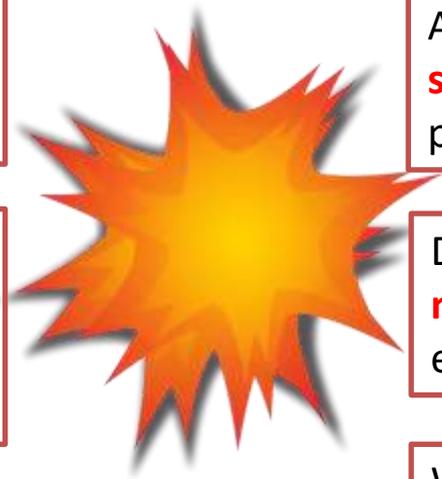
*Prefrontal Cortex  
Opiates  
Oxytocin*

# Threat Mode

Evolved to **protect** and **defend** from possible threat.

Involves one or more **uncomfortable emotions** like fear, anger, guilt, disgust etc.

Directs our behaviour to **deter, evade** and **alleviate** sources of threat.



Assumes we are '**better safe than sorry**' – so if something might be a problem, we assume that it is.

Directs our attention to **detect** and **monitor** threat (filtering out everything else).

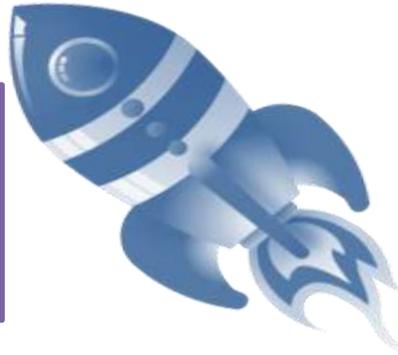
When over-activated (in threat mode too much for the needs of the situation), it can leave us **reactive, preoccupied** and **paranoid**.

# Drive Mode

Evolved to drive us to seek **resources** and **rewards**.

Involves one or more **pleasant energetic emotions** like excitement, curiosity, confidence, achievement etc.

Directs our behaviour to **push** and **strive** for what we want or need.



Gives us energy and focus – **Keeps our 'eyes on the prize'**.

Directs our attention to **seek** and **obtain** the object of our focus.

When over-activated (in drive mode excessively or exclusively), we can be **compulsive, impulsive, restless, impatient, burnt out** etc.

# Soothe Mode

Evolved to help us to **rest, reset** and **think**.

Involves one or more **pleasant calm emotions** – safety, connection, ease.

Directs our behaviour to **pause, connect** and **regulate** excess physical and emotional arousal in ourselves and others.

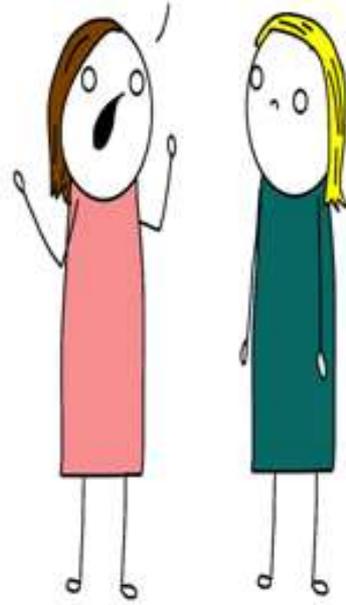


Allows us to **sleep, digest food, repair our bodies, nurture and use our relationships, think calmly and clearly**.

Directs our attention to the **bigger picture** – noticing and reflecting on what's important.

When over-used, we can become **inactive, directionless, stagnant** etc.

# Compassionate communication and understanding



## Reflections

---

How does this model help you understand some of your own and other people's reactions?

---

Can you think of times you have been in drive or threat mode when it hasn't been helpful?

---

What sets off your threat system and how does that impact on how you think, feel, behave?



## Monitor the Compassion in Your Life

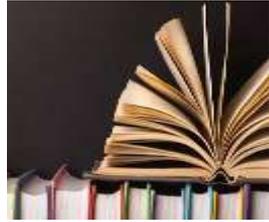
**Self to Other**

**Other to Self**



**Self to Self**

## Know What Activates Your Soothe System



What are yours?

# The power of soothe mode

Takes the foot off  
the gas of  
Threat & Drive.



This is where the  
big picture thinking  
happens.

Lets you listen  
to yourself and  
other people.

Enables the body  
to rest & repair,  
sleep, digest food.

SOOTHE MODE IS NOT AN OPTIONAL EXTRA

# Investing in soothe

Develop routines of caring for your body & mind.



Work to build relationships where communication can happen and conflict is not catastrophic.



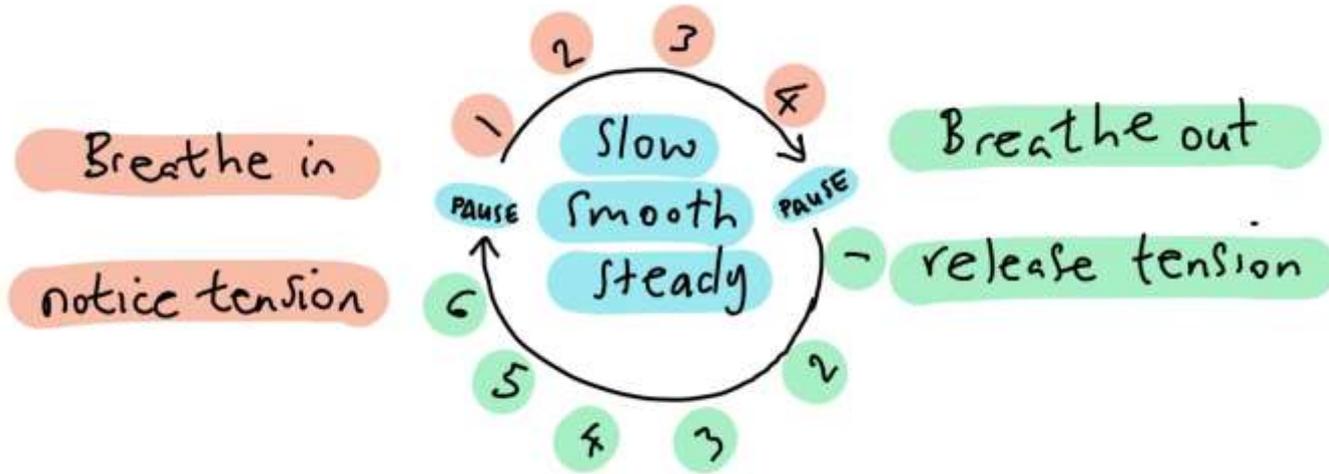
Build work practices with breaks, pauses and time for reflection.



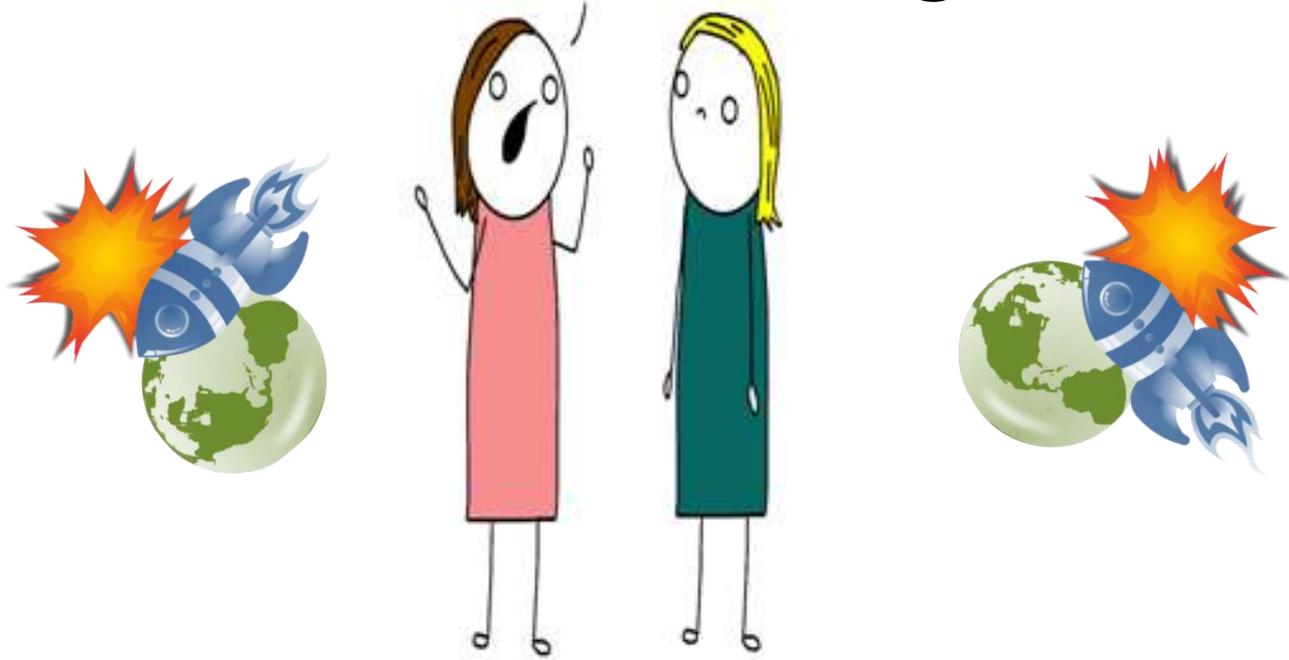
Notice and adjust your self-talk to develop a calm, wise "inner coach".



# Instant access soothe



# Compassionate communication and understanding



# Using the model for yourself and others

## Yourself

Get to know your threat triggers & reactions.

Dial down threat mode - just because it feels right doesn't mean it's useful.

Be selective with drive - it can get in the way of thinking and listening.

Do not rely on assumptions - they will be skewed and incomplete.

## the space between

Minimise the need for anyone to resort to interpretations, mind-reading, reading between lines, filling in blanks.

Actively seek to create safety and not be a source of threat.

Monitor your tone and non-verbals - how do you come across? Are you triggering threat systems?

## Other people

Approach people from a stance of curiosity -

- what mode are they in?
- where might this behaviour be coming from?
- How might I be making this worse?
- How can I help them feel heard and soothed?

## Reflections

---

How could you make adjustments to your routine to help keep your systems in balance?

---

How could you bring your soothe system online more often to help you rest, think, re-set and act calmly?

---

How could you help create feelings of safety in other people so they can think and act more effectively?



YOU WOULDN'T LET THIS  
HAPPEN TO YOUR PHONE.  
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU EITHER.  
SELF-CARE IS A PRIORITY  
NOT A LUXURY.

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages.  
Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email **altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk** to discuss how  
we can best meet your requirements.



NHS Education for Scotland  
Westport 102  
West Port  
Edinburgh  
EH3 9DN  
[www.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk)