

# Resilience and children with learning disabilities: Norfolk Practice Week 2025



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# Agenda/Plan

Setting the scene and style of session

Thinking about what we mean by “resilience”

Thinking about what this may mean for  
children with learning disabilities

Considering ways in which we can all support  
children and young people who have learning  
disabilities (and their families)





# Before we start ....



# Before we start ....



**I think the discussion has  
gone off topic**



**I do not fully understand and  
would like more information**



**Too many people are talking  
at the same time**



# And just one more thing.....

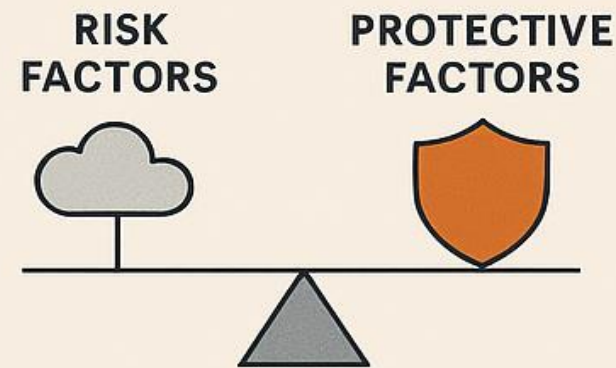




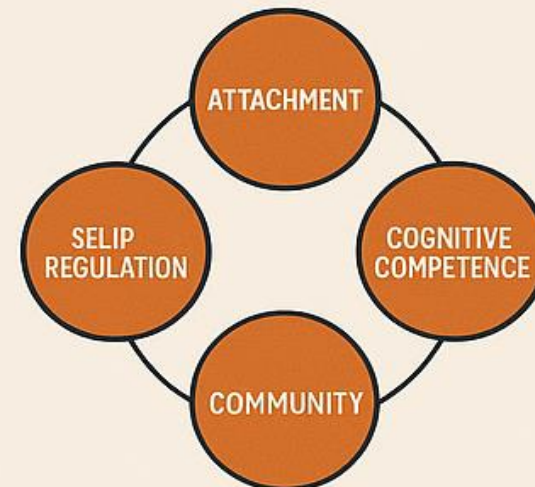
# What do we mean by resilience?

## MODELS OF RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

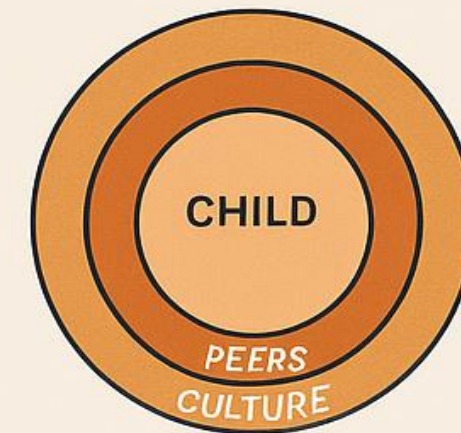
### RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS MODEL



### DEVELOPMENTAL SYSTEMS MODEL



### ECOLOGICAL/RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL SYSTEMS THEORY



### UNGAR'S SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL



### SELIGMAN'S 3 PS MODEL



### ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK



## Resilience:

- *Some important areas to consider:*
- **1. Individual Characteristics**
- **Self-regulation/emotional regulation skills:** Ability to manage emotions and behaviour under stress.
- **Optimism and positive outlook:** Seeing challenges as temporary and manageable.
- **Problem-solving skills:** Confidence in finding solutions.
- **Sense of purpose:** Having goals and meaning in life.
- **Self-efficacy:** Belief in one's ability to influence outcomes.



## Resilience:

- **2. Relationships and Social Support**
- **Secure attachment:** Strong, supportive relationship with at least one caregiver.
- **Peer support:** Positive friendships that provide belonging and encouragement.
- **Mentorship:** Access to caring adults outside the family (teachers, coaches).
- **Community connectedness:** Feeling part of a safe, supportive environment.

## Resilience:

- **3. Environmental and Contextual Factors**
- **Stable routines:** Predictability in daily life reduces stress.
- **Access to resources:** Education, healthcare, and safe spaces.
- **Positive school climate:** Encouragement and recognition of strengths.
- **Cultural identity and traditions:** Sense of belonging and continuity.



# Resilience: What do we mean?

- - ## WHAT RESILIENCE IS

- Definition of resilience –  
‘Adapting and  
recovering from  
adversity, not being  
invulnerable or avoiding  
difficulties
- Seeking support
- Adaptability
- Emotional regulation

## WHAT RESILIENCE ISN'T

- Never being emotionally  
affected by things  
happening around us
- Emotional suppression
- Constant strength

# What about children who have a learning disability?

- What do we know about children and young people who have a learning disability?
  - Mental health
  - Physical health
  - Relationships
  - Opportunities
  - Society



## “Risk factors” or areas of need

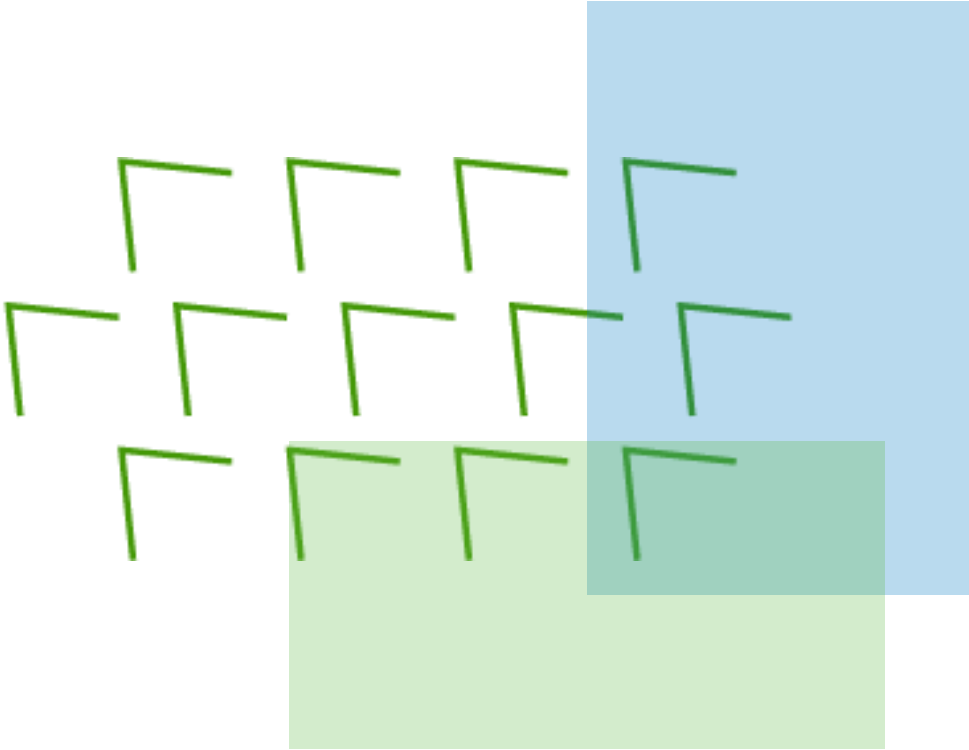
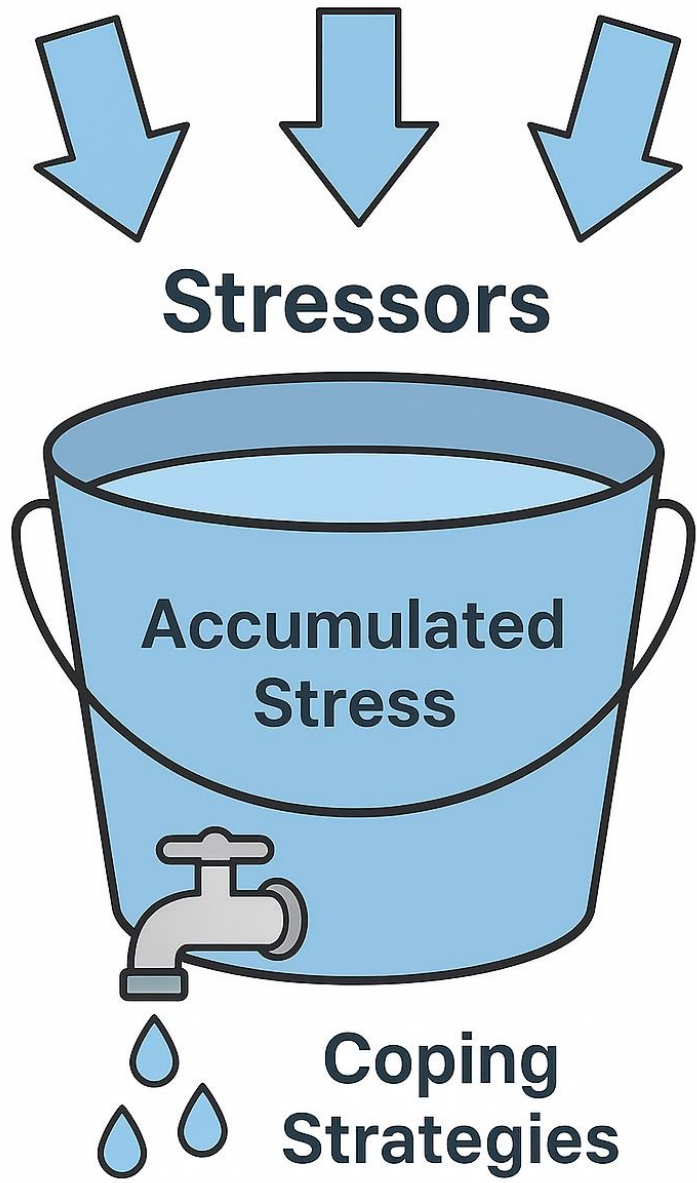
- Risk factors for mental health:
  - Academic challenges
  - Social isolation, bullying
  - Additional needs (such as health needs, or diagnoses)
  - Family stress
- Communication Communication Communication
- Diagnostic overshadowing

# Resilience and children and young people with learning disabilities

- *This does not mean children and young people with learning disabilities are NOT resilient or are less resilient*
- *This does not mean that factors increasing or reducing resilience are “different”*
- *This does not mean that what we aim to do for all children and young people isn't important*
- *It does mean that we may need to do it differently and think about individual adjustments (such as communication, how, repetition, processing)*



# Stress bucket



# “Protective factors” – for each young person?

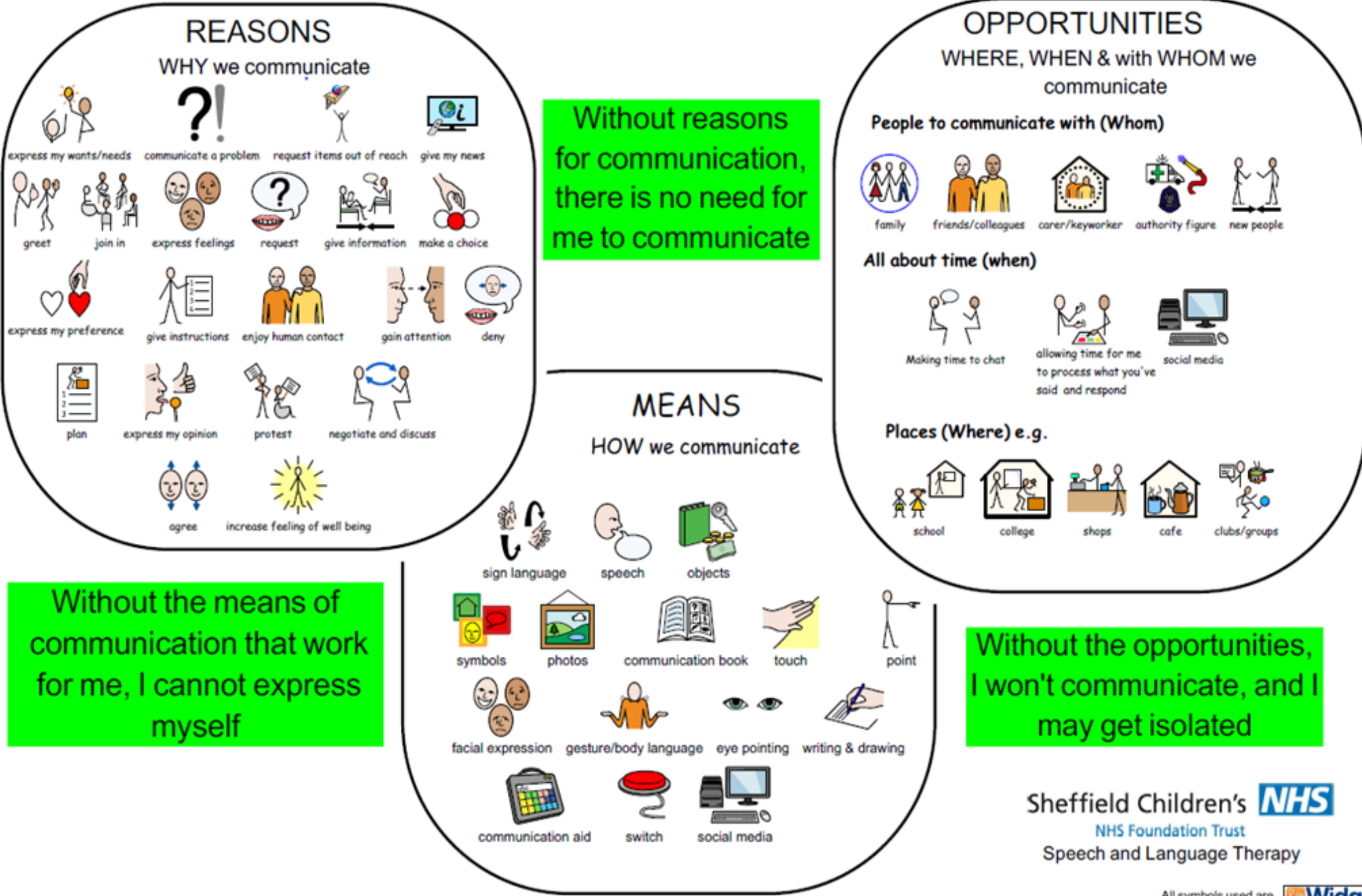
If we think about the key areas:

- Regulation and co regulation
- Positive outlook
- Self esteem- feeling proud, important and valued
- Identity
- Purpose and meaning
- Relationships – family and all relationships
- Community

*\*are some practical examples helpful?\**



# MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

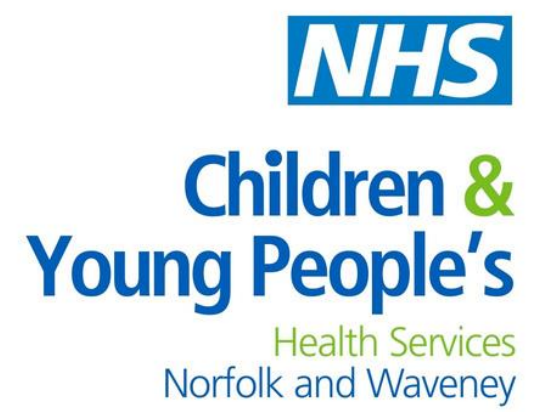


Sheffield Children's   
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All symbols used are 



Thank you



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