



Youth Rising Above Climate Anxiety

# MODULE 2

# RESILIENCE



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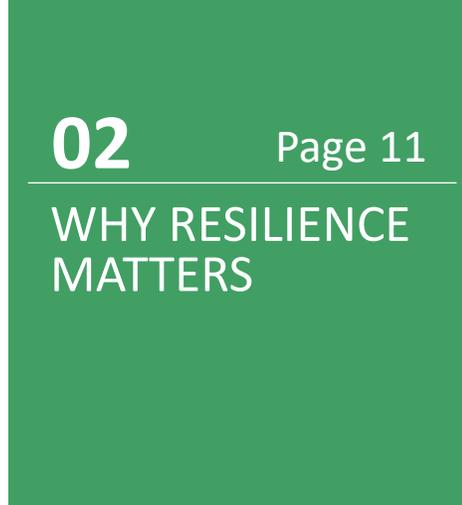
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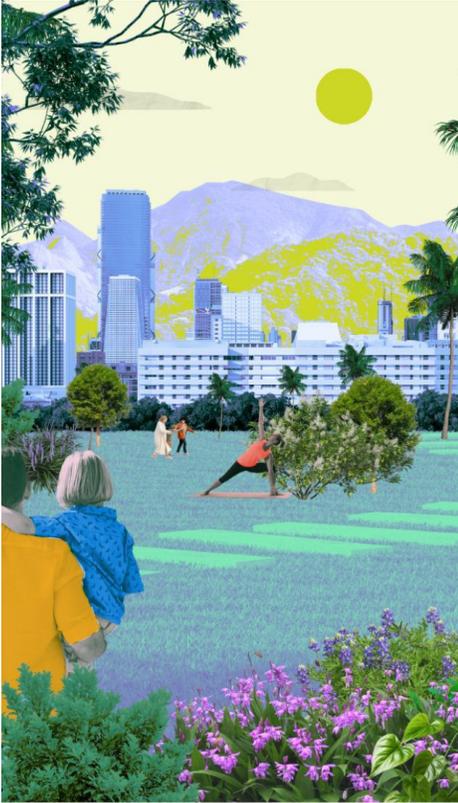
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01

# DEFINING RESILIENCE





# 1.1

## Defining resilience in the context of climate change

In its basic form, resilience is the ability to not only withstand stress and adversity, but to **adapt, grow,** and even **thrive** facing life's challenges.

Key aspects of climate resilience:

- Applies to **communities, ecosystems,** and **political beliefs**
- Goes beyond survival – includes **growth** and **transformation**
- Involves **adapting to stress and disruption**
- **Developing tools,** both **internal** and **collective** — to respond effectively to climate impacts



## 1.2

# Climate resilience

We're facing **uncertainty** – extreme weather, social shifts, eco-anxiety.

**Climate turbulence is the new normal.** Heat-waves, storms, and slow-burn shifts (like biodiversity loss) disrupt our daily lives, economies, and mental health.

**Resilience** helps us **cope, adapt, and support each other** in the long run.



**Which climate impact have you personally felt?**

Extreme heat, storms, supply-chain issues, eco-anxiety or any other?

## 1.3

# Mental resilience

The psychological and emotional strength that allows us to stay grounded in the face of uncertainty, loss, and change.

**Climate change can trigger emotions like:**

- Deep sense of **grief**
- **Anxiety**
- **Overwhelm**

**Developing mental resilience can help us:**

- **Acknowledge** these feelings — without being consumed by them
- Stay **engaged**
- Maintain **hope**
- Continue to take **meaningful action** — even when the path ahead feels unclear

Resilience **does not mean avoiding stress** altogether, and as climate change brings unavoidable stressors that are happening on a global scale, it is in fact very hard to avoid them.

**What matters most is how we respond** - meeting these challenges without being overwhelmed or paralyzed.



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Being exposed to stressors for a long time without resilience to them, can cause things such as:

- Burnout
- Depression
- Poorer cognitive function

**“Climate change can bring both external stressors — like extreme weather and displacement — and internal ones, such as fear, guilt, and helplessness.”**



02

## WHY RESILIENCE MATTERS



# It's important to know what triggers us

In the next two sub-chapters, you'll first learn:

## What Disrupts Us?

Types of changes that occur in the environment around us, how they materialise and affect us.

## Recognising the stressors

Spotting climate stressors, identifying fast and slow disruptions in your own region and how they affect mental, social, and cultural well-being.

## 2.1

# What Disrupts Us?



**Sudden shocks:** floods, fires, heatwaves

**Slow-Onset Changes:** drought, biodiversity loss, rising costs

**Ripple Effects:** Loss of homes, water, crops, damage to culture

(e.g. local food, crafts), emotional and social strain

“Have you, or someone you know, experienced a 'climate disruption'?

What changed afterwards?”

## 2.2

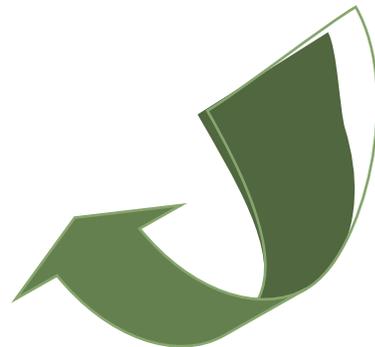
# Recognising the stressors

This helps us understand:

- What we **CAN** control
- What we **CAN NOT**
- Where our actions can have the **GREATEST IMPACT**

Climate change brings both **external stressors** — like extreme weather and displacement — and **internal ones**, such as fear, guilt, and helplessness.

Recognizing and naming these feelings is the first step toward resilience. When we acknowledge what we're experiencing instead of suppressing it, we create space to respond thoughtfully.



“Climate change is a collective issue, and while no single person can carry the entire weight, each of us has a role to play.”

But by **identifying our** personal and professional **roles**, we can:

- Align our efforts with purpose
- Avoid becoming overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis.

[Photo by Jens Johnsson](#)



*“In the end, surviving is not the same as thriving.*

*Resilience is what helps us move beyond survival, toward meaningful action and well-being.”*



# Take action!

Once you're aware, you can start to adjust your life. The next two sub-chapter explain:

## Resilience building

Step-by-step actions to building resilience.

## Dimensions of resilience

Learn what resilience is, what different dimensions it holds and how you can benefit from each aspect.

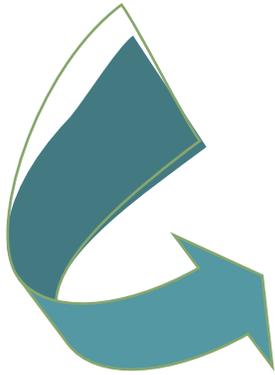


## 2.3

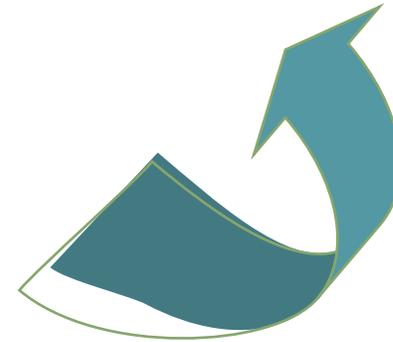
# Resilience building

1. You **cannot build resilience** by trying to **suppress** what you are experiencing.
2. If someone tells you **not to think** about something, that thought often **becomes even more present** in your mind.
3. This is especially **true** when it comes to **daily realities** like the **visible impacts** of climate change.

4. Whether it's extreme weather, rising sea levels, or changes in local ecosystems — **these events are part of everyday life for many people.**



5. **Ignoring** them only **increases stress** and awareness, rather than helping to cope.



6. Psychologically, **the effort to block out** difficult thoughts often **makes them more intrusive.**

**“Resilience comes from facing these realities, processing them, and finding ways to adapt and respond.”**



## 2.4

# Dimensions of resilience

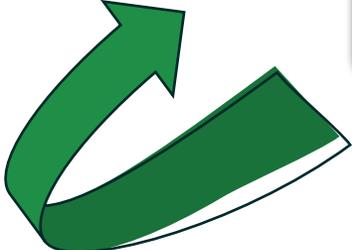
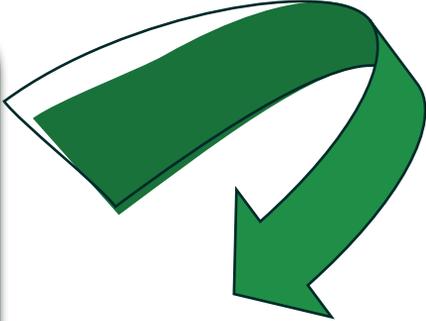
There are different sides to resilience:

- **Emotional Resilience:** Handling fear, grief, uncertainty
- **Physical Resilience:** Being ready (food skills, first aid, basic tools)
- **Cultural Resilience:** Keeping traditions alive, sharing knowledge
- **Social Resilience:** Strong networks, solidarity, community care

## Activity (2 minutes)

*Reflect:*

Think of a time when you faced a personal challenge.



What helped you get through it?

03

## WHAT MAKES US RESILIENT?



# Two Types of Resilience:

## Individual Resilience

- Your mental and emotional strength to face change
- Ability to cope with stress, adapt to new conditions, and care for your wellbeing
- Includes practices like mindfulness, rest, healthy routines, and emotional expression

## Collective Resilience

- Collective capacity to prepare, respond, and recover from crisis
- Built on trust, shared values, local knowledge, and cooperation
- Examples: community gardens, mutual aid groups, traditional rebuilding after disasters



## 3.1

# Individual resilience

## What is individual resilience?

A resilient person is someone who:

- Is less likely to experience overwhelming negative emotions
- Embraces challenges
- Maintains strong social connections

However, it's harder to stay resilient when facing **global-scale challenges** (e.g. climate change, pandemics, war).

# So how can we build personal resilience?

It depends on the individual. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

## Mind-based strategies:

- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Journaling

## Action-based strategies:

- Physical activity (sports, walking, dance)
- Hands-on tasks (crafts, gardening, repairing things)

Find what works **for you**—and **practice it regularly**.



## 3.2

# Collective Resilience

## Why is community important?

*We are not meant to face challenges alone.*

# The role of community in resilience-building

**Collective resilience** is the ability of a group to adapt and recover together.

It's built through:

- **Trust**
- **Cooperation**
- **Shared purpose**

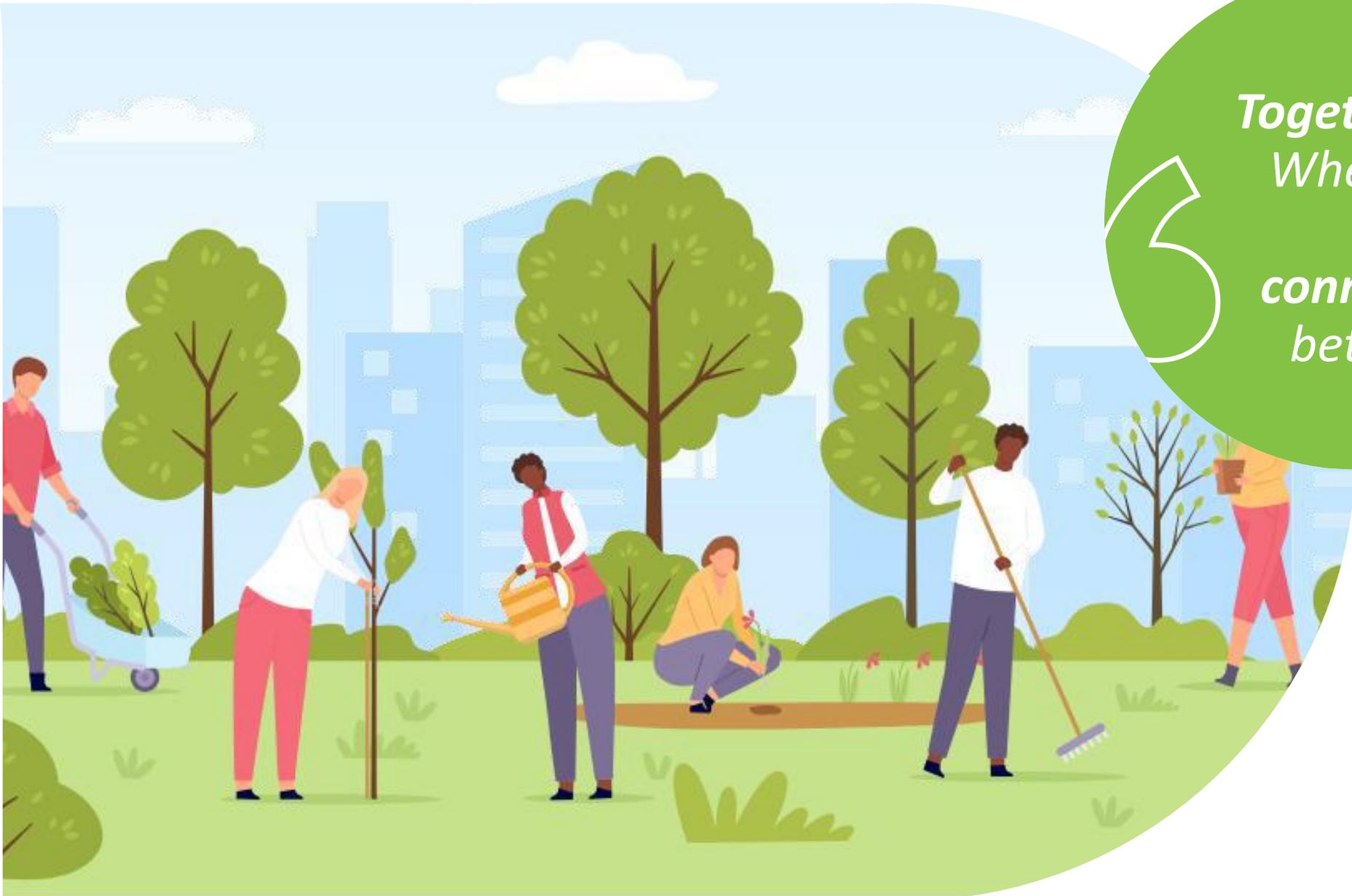
Communities that are connected—through *relationships, shared spaces, or common goals*—are better able to support one another during crises.



## *What does it look like in everyday life?*

- *Neighbours helping during a flood*
- *A local group offering mental health support*
- *Babysitting a friend's child*
- *Feeding a neighbour's cat while they're away*
- *Cultural events that create a sense of identity*





*Together we are stronger.  
When people feel seen,  
supported, and  
connected, they recover  
better from crisis and  
stress.*

## Activity (2 min)

Think of 2–3 communities you are part of:

(e.g. local neighbourhood, youth group, club, church, online group...)

Creating spaces where people can connect, share experiences, and offer support helps build **emotional and practical safety nets** that benefit everyone.

Resilience isn't just about “me”—it's also about “we.”

## 3.3

# Nature's cycles and lessons

Ecosystems go through cycles of:

- Growth
- Disruption
- Recovery
- Transformation

### Examples:

- Forests regrow after wildfires
- Rivers shift course to adapt to terrain
- Animals evolve to survive in changing environments

**Nature = The Ultimate Teacher of Resilience**

*Nature's message to us:*

*Don't resist change.  
Respond to it.  
Flexibility is strength*



Let yourself change, adapt, and evolve.



## 3.4 Training to Be More Resilient

**Resilience begins  
in your mindset.**

**Shift from fear-based to  
possibility-based thinking.**

*Instead of:*

- *“What if I fail?”*

*Try:*

- *“What if I learn something?”*
- *“What if this turns out well?”*

# Small Actions, Big Change

Resilience is built by:

- Facing setbacks and learning from them
- Pursuing **meaningful goals**
- Starting small
- Being consistent

*Don't aim for overnight transformation.*  
Take small steps that align with your **values**.

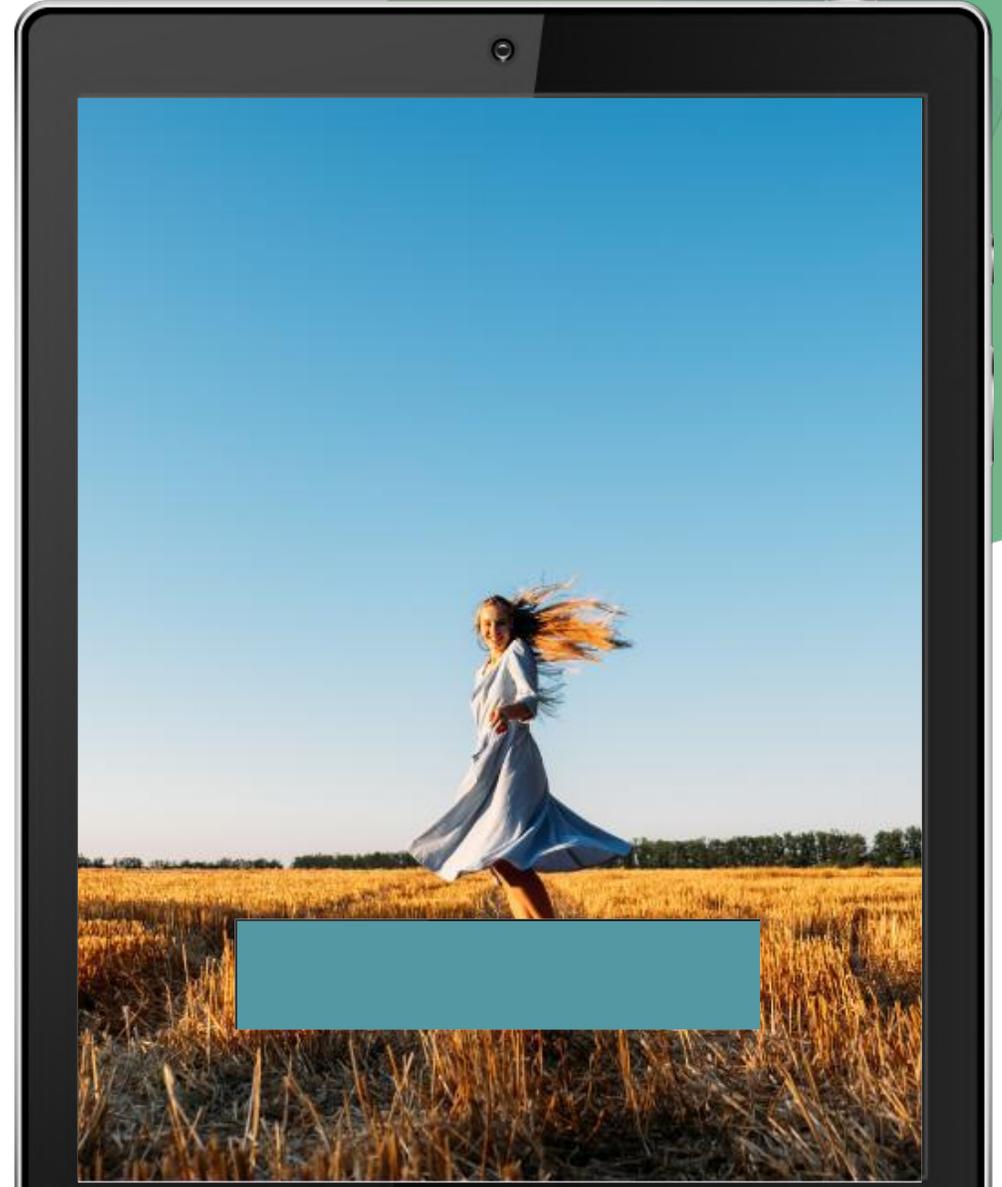


# Be Kind to Yourself

Resilience  $\neq$  never failing  
Resilience = bouncing back when you do

Be kind to yourself when progress isn't perfect—progress rarely is.

Show yourself **compassion**, not criticism, when things don't go perfectly



## Activity (2 min)

Write down 3 challenges you're facing.

Now write the **best possible outcome** for each one.

### Key Takeaways

- Start small
- Focus on purpose
- Learn from setbacks
- Be kind to yourself



Resilience is not one big moment—  
it's many small, intentional choices.

04

**PRACTICAL  
TOOLS**





## 4.1

# The Resilience Window

## Understanding hyperarousal & hypoarousal

In a world of overlapping crises, our nervous systems are under constant stress. This can push us *outside our “window of tolerance”*.

*Window of tolerance* is the state where we can think, feel, and act effectively.

When we tip into **hyperarousal**, we may feel emotionally overwhelmed and unable to calm down.

**In hypoarousal**, we may shut down, becoming numb or unmotivated.

# Balancing between hyperarousal and hypoarousal

Signs you're outside the window:

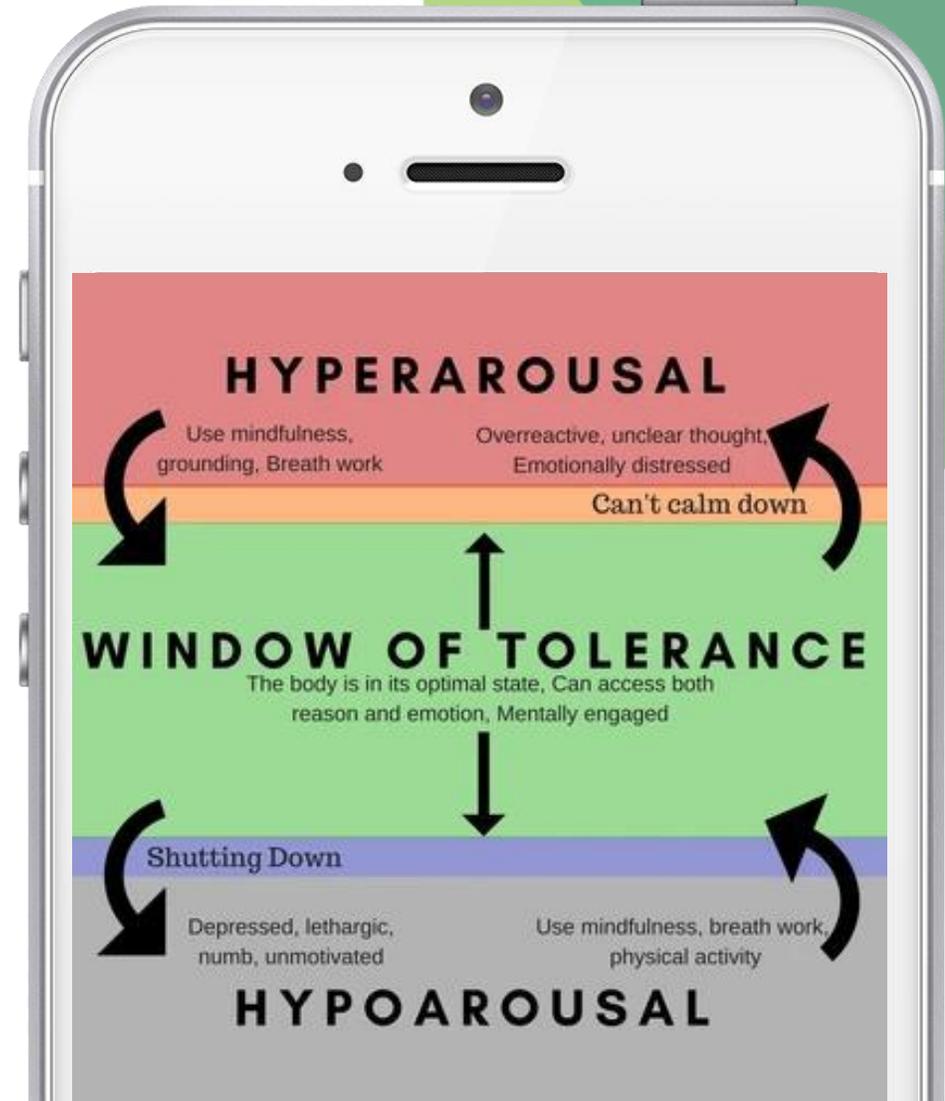
## HYPERAROUSAL

Overwhelmed  
Anxious  
Can't calm down

## HYPOAROUSAL

Numb  
Withdrawn  
Unmotivated

Resilience = noticing the signs + coming back to balance..



# Tools to return to your window:

- Breathwork
- Movement or sports
- Mindfulness
- Creativity
- Engaging with nature

The key isn't to avoid difficult emotions but to work with them, **embracing discomfort as part of growth.**

**Resilience means responding with flexibility and care,** using imagination, connection, and creative expression to thrive even in uncertain times.



## 4.2

# Turning Physical into Mental Resilience

## Small acts = big emotional shifts

For some people, **preparing for life's uncertainties through tangible actions** can significantly bolster their emotional well-being.

**Physical actions** can calm the nervous system and boost your **sense of agency**.

**Proactive, hands-on engagement** with our environment can bring **profound emotional benefits**, helping us better navigate life's challenges.

# Example: Community Gardening

## Why gardening works:

- Builds routine and presence
- Creates connection to life cycles
- Offers tangible progress and control

## Research shows\*:

- Improved **mental health**
- Increased **self-esteem** and **optimism**
- Boosted **resilience** in community gardening settings

\**International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*



*“Growing something small  
can help grow your strength  
inside.”*

66



## 4.3

# Creative & Natural Pathways to Resilience



**Building resilience through connection with self, creativity, and nature**

**Calm activities** help release stress and process emotions:

- Drawing, painting, writing, journaling
- Listening to music or creating art
- Sitting quietly in nature

# Calm activities:

- Exploring how **creative expression** fosters **emotional processing and stress relief:**

*Drawing, writing, painting, or crafting* can help you express feelings you might not have words for. These calm, personal activities help release stress and bring clarity during difficult times.

- **Engaging with nature** for **grounding, mindfulness, and perspective-shifting:**

Spending *quiet time in nature* can reduce anxiety and help you feel more present. Nature reminds us of life's rhythms and our connection to something bigger.

Ideas for activities in nature: *walks in the park, observing trees or sky, listening to natural sounds, noticing seasonal changes*

# Calm activities:

- **Movement-based expression** as pathways to **resilience**:

*Playing music, dancing, or even gentle stretching* can shift your mood, release tension, and reconnect you with your body. These creative outlets can restore energy, boost confidence, build inner strength and emotional regulation.

- **Active time** spent in nature can be a tool to build resilience:

Not all nature time has to be calm. *Hiking, climbing, swimming, biking, or even helping in a community garden* are great ways to build physical and emotional resilience. Moving outdoors challenges your body, clears your mind, and boosts confidence—especially when done regularly or with others.



## 4.4 Flow State: Deep Focus as a Pathway to Resilience

Beyond calm reflection and nature-based grounding, resilience also grows through deep, focused engagement.

### What is flow?

A state of deep focus where time disappears, distractions fade, you're completely in the zone and you're fully immersed in an activity that challenges and excites you.

# Flow = active attention

In flow, the usual noise of the mind—self-doubt, stress, hunger—quietly drops away. What's left is pure focus and purpose.

Moments of full engagement help us build:  
**a deeper connection to ourselves, confidence, purpose, joy, fulfillment, mental strength.**

Moments of flow are often the most meaningful parts of our lives.

Recognised by psychologists *Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi* and *Jeanne Nakamura*, flow state is a kind of **moving meditation**.



# Flow = active attention

While calm activities like meditation and mindfulness help train our attention, **flow** is where that focused attention becomes active.

By **regularly engaging** in challenging and enjoyable we create the perfect conditions for flow to arise.

Examples of activities:

- dancing
- climbing
- painting,
- coding
- playing an instrument
- hiking up a trail
- rehearsing a dance routine
- writing music



*“There’s this focus that, once it becomes intense, leads to a sense of ecstasy, a sense of clarity: you know exactly what you want to do from one moment to the other; you get immediate feedback.”*

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*



05

# RESILIENCE IN ACTION



Click to type..



## 5.1

# Turning climate anxiety into constructive action

## From worry to courage

**Young people** today are growing up in the shadow of climate change—heatwaves, wildfires, floods, and political inaction.

It's normal to feel overwhelmed. That feeling has a name: **climate anxiety**.

Feelings of urgency and overload are common—but so are **innovation, solidarity, and care**

But anxiety doesn't have to lead to helplessness.

**Taking action—even small steps—can turn fear into empowerment.**



*“We are not too young to lead. We are not too young to build a better world.” – youth climate activist*

## Example: Balkan River Defence

- Began with kayakers who loved wild rivers
- Concerned by plans for hydropower dams
- Started paddling, documenting, sharing
- Grew into a movement defending Europe's last free rivers

“You don't need to be an expert or a professional activist to make a difference. Just bring together your passions with a cause you care about, you can build real momentum for change.”



## Activity – Watch: Balkan River Defence video

*The founders of **Balkan River Defence** were not famous activists or scientists—they were regular people who loved kayaking. But they used that passion to protect the rivers they cared about, inspiring thousands of others in the process.*

**Now it's your turn to reflect:**

- What do you love doing? (Biking? Cooking? Filmmaking?)
- How could that help a cause you care about?
- What's one small action you could take?

# Activity - Your Passion, Your Power

*Write a short paragraph or make a visual (like a poster or mind map) showing how your personal hobby or skill could help protect the planet, support your community, or raise awareness about something important to you.*

Show how your hobby could:

- Protect the planet
- Support your community
- Raise awareness



## 5.2

# Finding Strength in Community

## You don't have to do it alone

Joining a **supportive network** makes climate action feel less overwhelming and more hopeful.

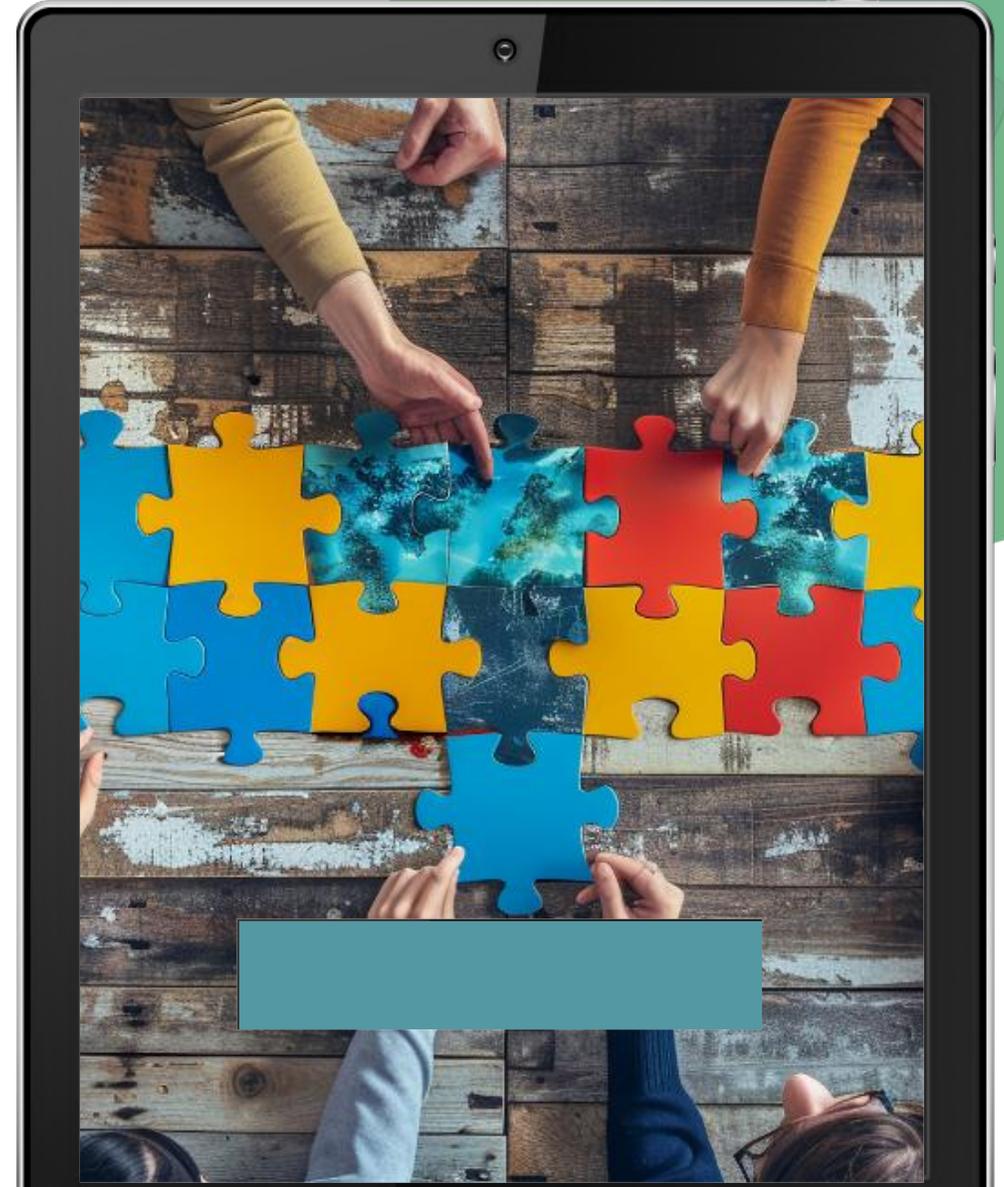
Supportive networks:

- youth climate organizations (e.g., Fridays for Future),
- school eco-clubs,
- community garden groups,
- online forums for youth action

# Resilient Spaces: Where we gather shapes how we cope

- Shared motivation
- Tools and resources
- Emotional support
- A chance to make friends and allies

Talking with others who share your concerns, learning from experts, or collaborating on local projects can make the work feel lighter and more hopeful.



# Local action matters!

You also don't need to launch a global campaign to make a difference. Most of the time small, local efforts matter just as much if not more.

For example, if you're in a hiking or climbing group, you can:

- Share how to respect nature while outdoors
- Help newcomers understand local ethics
- Pick up trash or organize clean-ups
- Talk about wildlife and habitat care
- Set a good example for others

These acts build:  
**Environmental responsibility**  
**Social connection**  
**Community care**

By encouraging others around you, you're **creating a ripple effect** that spreads beyond yourself.



“Working together makes climate challenges feel more manageable, and it strengthens your sense of belonging and purpose.”

# Activity – Watch: Stone Locals

Watch parts of this [film](#) about a family of climbers creating a more sustainable outdoor culture:

 [Climbing, community, and resilience](#)

Watch:

Intro: 08:30–13:00

Climbing community: 25:15–27:10

Responsibility & action: 37:25–39:45

Reflect:

What values do they show?

How do they connect passion with care for others and the planet?

*„We build resilience by showing up for ourselves— and each other—one small step at a time.“*

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# Thank you

## Any Questions?

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