



LETTERS

IS RESILIENCE A TRAINABLE SKILL?

Resilience training: help us be resourceful

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The R word is becoming prevalent in discussions of the NHS workforce and needs to be banned.¹ It seems to have spilled over from industry and management, along with the other R word, robustness, and is now seen as an absolute prerequisite for working in the NHS. Comparing army combat stress and working for the NHS is interesting and entirely appropriate. The incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder might also be similar.

In terms of medical students being taught resilience, as they progress through SATS, GCSEs, AS levels, university clinical aptitude tests, biomedical admissions tests, medical school interviews, and then A levels, any unresilient people would have fallen by the wayside.

The question is whether we should make doctors even more resilient, if that's possible, or try to lessen the factors for which they need to be increasingly resilient and provide them with more support in their job. It speaks volumes for the NHS that we now have a dedicated helpline for desperate doctors. So the

term resilience has negative connotations for the doctor and for the job.

If I were a medical student and had to undergo resilience training before working for the NHS I would be seriously worried about what awaited me. Doctors shouldn't need to be increasingly resilient; what they need to be—and are—is resourceful.

Resourcefulness is the ability to find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties, to be good at problem solving, to adapt well to new and difficult situations, and to think creatively.

No more resilience training—help us to be more resourceful.

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1 Ripullone K, Womersley K. Is resilience a trainable skill? *BMJ* 2019;365:l2162. 10.1136/bmj.l2162 31085582

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