**Kia ora tatou from the Counsellors.**

While much of what we do in counselling is in response to problems brought to us, we aim also to be proactive in helping students to develop both the skills for dealing with challenges and the **resilience** to side step bumps in the road as they journey onward in life.

**Resilience -** What exactly is it and why is it so important? Here are 2 definitions:

*Resilience can be understood as the capacity to spring back, rebound and successfully adapt in the face of adversity (Henderson et al, 1999).*

*In a New Zealand context, resiliency could be considered as hauora – a state of strength and well-being. It gives individuals living in an adverse environment the capacity to surmount their difficulties (Peters and Thurlow, 2002)*

Considering the daily challenges that lie ahead for our young people, helping them to develop resilience will be very important in supporting them to enjoy fulfilling lives of emotional and social well-being.

One thing that students tell us is helpful in building resiliency is summed up well in the following words:

**Sometimes I can change things and sometimes I can’t**

**BUT … I can change the way I think about things.**

When students visit us with a problem they often describe feelings of worry, upset, fear or anger. What they don’t always notice is that these feelings sit alongside unhelpful thoughts. Negative self-talk such as “I can never keep any friends” often leads to unhelpful conclusions about ourselves, feelings of upset, and behaviours that can end up worsening the problem.

If we can challenge the negative thoughts, the feelings that accompany this thinking also become more positive, our behaviours change and these then feed into further positive thoughts. Eg. Instead of “I can **never** keep any friends” we might think “I have **some** good friends”. Our feelings might change from loneliness and upset to appreciation and confidence and we might find ourselves accepting rather than avoiding invitations to connect with others.

**Resilience** is all about having self-belief in our ability to stay in charge of our reactions to challenges.