The Contribution of Occupation to Children's Experience of Resilience

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MHSc

2017

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A thesis submitted to the Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Health Science (MHSc)

2017

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Linda Bowden

[Signature]   [date]

Acknowledgements

Without people things do not seem to happen and this thesis is no exception, so I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who have supported me on this journey.

Firstly, thanks to the participants of this study, the children and their families who shared with me, and enabled this study to happen. To my supervisors, Kirk Reed and Ellen Nicholson whose tireless support and continued encouragement has motivated me to continue with postgraduate study. I have appreciated your wisdom, curiosity, and critique in tautoko of this endeavour.

Thank you to Rosie Brown and Frances Russell, my dear friends and colleagues who have provided insightful comments, questions and validation when needed. Thank you to my Bowden and Scott-Woolford whānau who have supplied me with computers, babysitting, time, space, and coffee to ensure I would stay on the kaupapa.

I am grateful to my husband George, who has unconditionally motivated me to get this done. Thank you for enduring so many days and nights next to the computer, and for continuing life as usual with our baby girls. To our daughters, who do not yet understand why mummy is always on the computer, I am completely in awe of you both and I look forward to reading this to you one day.

Abstract

This qualitative descriptive study explored what occupations children aged 10-13 years participate in and how participation in occupation contributes to resilience from their perspective. Little is known about what occupations contribute to resilience, and less is known from children's perspectives. Exploring how participation in occupation contributes to resilience is important as children in Aotearoa continue to face adverse situations; resilience may help protect their development against uncertainty.

The literature available on the definition of resilience was explored from a historical and contemporary perspective, as well the development of resilience in children. Occupation, and children's participation in occupation literature was reviewed identifying a gap between participation in occupation and building resilience in children. The assumption underpinning this study is that there is a connection between engaging in occupation and building resilience in children.

This study utilised a qualitative descriptive methodology to investigate the research questions "what occupations do children aged 10-13 years participate in? and how does their participation contribute to resilience?" Eight participants (four male and four female) were recruited through intermediate schools in Central and South Auckland. Individual semi structured interviews and one focus group was conducted to gather data. The interviews and focus group were audio recorded and later transcribed. A process of thematic analysis, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was utilised to analyse the data. Three main themes emerged from this data, they were: what resilience is, occupations children do and how those occupations contribute to resilience and thirdly; and building participation and resilience.

The study revealed sophisticated descriptions of what resilience meant to the participants from their experience, which included the ideas of bouncing back and staying strong. The participants also described what occupations they participate in (using social media, listening to music, active occupations, talking with others, and creative occupations) and how these occupations connect to resilience. The participants in this study described their experience of how participation in those occupations helped them to build resilience by fostering support, letting go, experiencing distraction, and experiencing fun and happiness. Key messages from

the findings in this study are that participants identify resilience as bouncing back and staying strong through challenging situations, and that participation in occupation helps to build resilience. The findings suggest that health professionals, policy makers and educators have much to learn from children. Specifically, the need for children to participate in occupations as a way to build resilience. This indicates that a more child-focussed approach is needed to incorporate the perspective of children in practice and policy development. Practitioners working with children could utilise the findings of this study by incorporating participation in occupation in social, health and education intervention plans with children, as well as using occupation based coping strategies when teaching children skills to manage challenges in life. The findings also suggest that the education of those who engage with children such as teachers and health professionals need to understand how important participation in occupation is to children, and gain insight into children's perspectives about how resilience is developed in order to influence health and wellbeing of children.

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

Introduction

This aim of this study is to explore what occupations children aged 10-13years participate in, and how their participation in occupations contributed to their experience of resilience. This chapter introduces an explanation of the global and national context of the study, children's experiences, and definitions of key terms used, followed by my position as the researcher and the rationale for undertaking this study. This chapter closes with an overview of the structure of this thesis. The research questions were: What occupations do children aged 10-13years participate in? and How does their participation in occupations contribute to their experience of resilience? A qualitative descriptive approach was selected to elicit children's voices about two concepts not commonly discussed together: resilience, and occupation. Resilience is a widely discussed idea in the health and wellbeing literature and focusses on the ability of a person to bounce back from adversity and to become stronger than before (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012).Occupations are the things people do every day throughout their lifetime. Occupations are integral to the health and wellbeing of a person (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015; Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Whalley Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005; Law, Steinwender, & Leclair, 1998)

This study sits in the context of theliterature relating to occupation, participation and resilience. The literature was reviewed and is explored in more detail in Chapter Two. Participants were recruited from local intermediate schools in the greater Auckland area and interviewed using a qualitative descriptive approach to uncover and describe the participant's occupations and how their participation contributed to resilience. A qualitative descriptive approach was used to enable a deeper, child-centred understanding about a phenomenon of which little is known. The goal of a qualitative descriptive approach is to provide a detailed summary of phenomena in everyday language (Sandelowski, 2000). Little is known about resilience in children aged 10-13years and less is known about resilience from children's perspectives. In the occupational therapy literature there is a clear assumption that engagement in occupations can have an influence on wellbeing, however there is a paucity of literature that makes a link between occupation and resilience (Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Whalley Hammell & Iwama, 2012).

The global context of this study

The idea that every child has the right to education, health and protection, and every society has a role in enabling children's opportunities in life underpins the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2016) . However, children's experiences of adversity and vulnerability threaten this vision. According to UNICEF (2016), internationally, the number of children out of school between the ages of 6-11 years has increased since 2011. There are 250 million children around the world who live in countries affected by armed conflict and millions of children globally are affected by climate-related disasters and chronic crises, and yet children's perspectives are underutilised in understanding the ways that children cope with adversity. The ongoing global threats to children's development such as poverty, abuse and neglect, abandonment and natural disasters have placed increased demand on communities, countries and the world, to improve knowledge, services and responses to develop healthy resilient children (Masten, 2014). There is a universal belief however, that protecting and enhancing the lives of children also improves the future wellbeing of human development and global health therefore the need to understand more about resilience in children is a global issue (CPAG, 2014a; Masten, 2014; Law et al. 2011; UNICEF, 2016).

The New Zealand context

Children in Aotearoa face similar issues that affect children's lives worldwide, such as poverty, crime, disability, violence and trauma (Ministry of Social Development (MSD), 2012; CPAG, 2014a). Adversity and vulnerability is experienced by some children in Aotearoa. Children facing adversity are often referred to as 'vulnerable' based on the factors that threaten child development, including health, education, housing, trauma, violence, parenting and economic status (MSD, 2012). Despite having the rights to education, health and protection, children face inequities related to increased poverty and material hardship, inadequate housing and healthcare, and low education rates (CPAG, 2014a). The Child Poverty Action Group is a charitable group that works to eliminate child poverty through advocacy, research and education. Nationally, around 285,000 of Aotearoa's children (27% of all children) were found to

live under the poverty line as determined by the Ministry of Social Development (CPAG, 2014a). Poverty in childhood has been linked to poorer outcomes in adulthood, and impacts resilience development (D'Souza, Turner, Simmers, Craig & Dowell, 2012).

In 2010, The Ministry of Social Development (2012) reported that 209 children under the age of 15 years required hospital treatment for assault related injuries. Emotional abuse and neglect were the primary reason for children being notified to Child, Youth and Family Services in 2010 (MSD, 2012). All of these adverse experiences contribute to vulnerability and risk factors for children, and for some it even resulted in death. Between seven and 10 children, on average, are killed each year by someone who is supposed to be caring for them (MSD, 2012). The 'Doing Better for Children report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) on child wellbeing in 30 countries ranked New Zealand second to last in health and safety (OECD, 2009). This report also highlighted that investment in children is low by OECD standards and material conditions for children are relatively poor. Statistics paint a grim picture of the challenges, and outcomes for vulnerable children living in Aotearoa. Risk factors that contribute to child vulnerability are currently being explored through the 'Growing Up in New Zealand' longitudinal study which follows over 7000 children from pregnancy to five years living in Auckland and Waikato (Morton et al. 2015). The Growing Up in New Zealand study has identified that in the context of Aotearoa relative exposure to vulnerability can be estimated by the sum total of risk factors that children are exposed to at any one-time point, or over time. Māori and Pacific children tend to be exposed to a greater number of risk factors for vulnerability than New Zealand European or Asian children at each time point and across multiple time points (Morton et al. 2015).

The Ministry of Social Development 'White Paper' (MSD, 2012) was developed in response to the statistics and outcomes facing children in Aotearoa. Together with the subsequent Children's Action Plan in 2012 (New Zealand Government, 2012) these documents provide a suite of national strategies intended to reduce the impact of childhood vulnerability and to ensure that every Aotearoa child can develop, achieves and grows to their full potential (MSD, 2012). These strategies include ensuring that services for children and families are child-centred and to build on evidence about what works for vulnerable children (MSD, 2012).

The Auckland Context

As Auckland was the chosen location for the study, it is important to give some context to adversity in Auckland. Locally, Auckland now represents 33.4 per cent of Aotearoa's population and was the fastest growing region in Aotearoa in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). At that time, almost half of Auckland's entire population in 2013 consisted of couples with children (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). According to the most recent census Auckland had a higher percentage of children aged 10-14 than the rest of Aotearoa and parents in Auckland pay more of their income towards rent in comparison to the rest of the country (Statistics New Zealand, 2013; CPAG, 2014b). Auckland has been described as experiencing a housing crisis, with increased rent, and an escalating shortage of housing accessible to people on low incomes. (Auckland Council, 2012)These factors suggest some children in Auckland are facing adversi in the form of poverty and housing everyday, which can lead to poor health outcomes.For example, Counties Manukau District Health Board have reported that children and young people living in South Auckland experience poorer health status than other areas in Aotearoa, with some of the highest rates of health disease, teenage pregnancy, and child and youth mortality rates in Aotearoa (Craig et al. 2011; New Zealand Mortality Data Group, 2015). Young people living in South Auckland also tend to experience a multitude of risk factors and face additional adversity, which results in increased access to tertiary health services (Noel et al. 2013).

Despite the recognised disparities and needs of children in Auckland, and in Aotearoa, little is known about the resilience experiences of children living in Aotearoa, or more specifically South and Central Auckland. Even with government-level visions and strategies that arguably contribute to prioritisation of the development of resilience in children, across a number of sectors there are likely gaps in how these strategies inform practice in the Aotearoa context: For example, understanding what shapes resilience in children from their perspective, could help to influence policy, strategies and visions that enable improved outcomes and wellbeing for children prior to reaching adolescence and adulthood.

Understanding children's experience

As mentioned previously, this study focused on describing the experiences of children aged 10-13 years. Children aged 10-13 years are at a critical age of lifespan development (Crain, 2011, Law et al., 2011 Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015). According to Erikson's developmental theory

(1963) children, aged 10-13 years are in the 'industry versus inferiority' stage of his eight stages of psychosocial development. This could be seen as a critical time that contributes to resilience development as children in this fourth stage are considered in the 'competence' stage, where a crisis between industry and inferiority takes place. Erikson (1963) suggested the 'industry versus inferiority' stage is critical for a child to learn about themselves, their attributes and to develop their confidence. They begin to compare themselves to others, and commonly participate in environments that provide the platform for competence and confidence such as school and other activities. Furthermore, children in this stage begin to engage in activities of personal interest and develop awareness of themselves, their experiences and others (Crain, 2011). It is believed that at this age and stage, adults, particularly parents play a role in developing children's confidence, and self-belief (Crain, 2011; Erikson, 1963). It was suggested by Erikson (1963) that if children can successfully navigate this stage, they can develop the skills required to continue to adapt and resolve each subsequent stage throughout the lifespan.

Research has suggested that a critical time for resilience development is in ages 1-3 years (UNICEF, 2016) and the importance of the early years and its impact on resilience is documented (D'Souza et al, 2012; Morton et al. 2015; UNICEF, 2016). However, this study has focussed on children aged 10-13 years. Between 10-13 is when occupations can be influenced by both peers, family members, and environments (which includes inside and outside their family home). The developmental changes in the life stage are critical. Tensions arise and serious adverse experiences such as suicide are more likely to occur in the 10-13 years age group (New Zealand Data Mortality Group, 2015). Resiliency is posited as an important protective factor against suicide (Johnson, Wood, Gooding, Taylor & Tarrier, 2011; Roy, Carli & Sarchiapone, 2011). The national and local statistics on suicide alone, would suggest that a significant time for developing resilience is before adolescence and adulthood. Given the often grim realities faced by some of our children, building resilience seems paramount in childhood. However there is also a paucity of literature that focusses on children's perspectives of the factors that contribute to their resilience (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

Key terms used

Three key terms that are used in this research are occupation, participation and resilience. It is important to understand what these words mean in relation to this study as they all have varying

definitions. Occupations are defined by Polatjko et al. (2007) as "everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves, enjoying life, and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities" (p. 3). Examples include going to school, using social media applications, reading books, playing sports or dancing with friends. Participation often refers to the daily occupational experiences of individuals and the subjective contexts that occupations occur in (Borell, Asaba, Rosenberg, Schult, & Townsend, 2006; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005). From an occupational perspective, there is also an assumption that participation in occupations influences health and well-being (Case- Smith & O'Brien, 2014; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005; Law, Steinwender, & Leclair, 1998; Whalley Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Wilcock, 2006). The concept of resilience is often referred to as a protective factor against vulnerability (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). Research has previously identified family relationships, a positive sense of self and mastery, and self-regulation as protective factors in developing resilience (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Shastri, 2013). The concept of resilience is an explanation for the idea that not all children who are exposed to risk factors for vulnerability experience poor health outcomes (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Morton et al. 2015; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Shastri, 2013). In the context of this study, the concept of occupations of children is defined as what activities we spend our time doing, being or becoming, inclusive of whether they spend time with others, or on their own, doing active or sedentary tasks, paid or volunteer work because they want to or not. Participation, is a description of how we spend that time, whether there may be a pattern or theme in the manner in which we engage in an occupation. For some, participation in life may be limited by the environment or context, for example, particular culture may influence participation of people of a certain gender, disability or age, which in turn can influence access to occupation. This means that participation is always considered part of occupation. Resilience refers to a complex transactional process whereby an individual or system experiences adversity, but uses that experience to overcome challenges with new strength and growth, enabling that person/system to 'bounce back' better than before.

Situating myself as the researcher

In accordance with qualitative research methodology it is important to understand who the researcher is, and what they bring to their research process. It is therefore crucial for me to

situate myself, in relation to this study. In this section I will discuss the key influences in my own development, and some core beliefs that I bring to this study. I completed a presuppositions interview prior to beginning this study, where I was interviewed about my beliefs about resilience in children, occupation, and participation and what these terms meant to me. This interview helped me to identify my core beliefs, and how they might influence the research questions, the design of the study, and the data collection and analysis. At the outset of the study, I suspected that children's occupations could contribute to their experiences of resilience in some way. I posited that for some children, it could be that participating in a local sports team with others helped them make connections, or fostering friendships, that intern develops resilience. My work as an occupational therapist in child mental health had shown me that children face challenging lives on a daily basis, and that children seem more resilient when they participated in occupations. I had a strong curiosity about what children do to occupy themselves, and how they spend their time, especially when facing adversity. I have also experienced uncertainty amongst professionals, communities and families about what children do to occupy themselves and how doing things contributed to their experiences of resilience. It is with no doubt that both my professional and personal experiences have influenced both the research question and choice of methodology. I am an occupational therapist and have an interest in working with children, working predominantly in this area since I graduated over ten years ago. I have worked in a variety of areas with this age group, including mental health, acute inpatient, and community services, as well as child development and school settings. This collective experience has provided me with a vast knowledge of the adverse experiences that children face early in their development, and the impact this has on children. In particular, my professional roles have focused on increasing children's participation in occupations to influence their health and wellbeing. I have been privileged to enable children to participate in occupations that are meaningful to them, and occupations that make them feel good about themselves. Over time I have been part of many different social and cultural contexts both locally and internationally, and the one constant observation I have had, is the powerful impact occupations bring to improving the lives of children.

My beliefs about children

Professionally, I have been involved in a range of adult determined, adult focused projects, which determined how to enhance the lives of children who face adversity. Resilience was often

included as a requirement for children to possess or strengthen and develop. However, there seemed to be a paucity of ideas about how children viewed resilience and what resilience might mean to children on a daily basis. My personal worldview about children is influenced by my Caribbean, and Aotearoa cultural heritage. In my family, emphasis is placed on the presence and inclusion of children. Being married to a Māori male, and a mother myself, my values about children tend to align with the Māori worldview of children being treasured as 'taonga' (treasures to be protected and nurtured). This value positions children at the core of this belief, validating the idea that children are central to their community and considered future leaders. This has shaped my beliefs that children should be treasured, protected, and nurtured, by parents, their extended family, community and society. Knowing what children do every day and what they describe as contributing to their experiences of resilience therefore seemed to be important to include in this study about children's experiences.

I am interested in hearing from the perspective of the population who were being discussed, or researched, or considered in a range of forums, services and sectors in my professional life as often, the children's voices are missing from these conversations. From several years of interviewing children and working with their families, and in their communities, not all children who experience adversity had adverse outcomes, and there were important stories and experiences where children had overcome several challenging factors and pursued meaningful lives but there did not appear to be a platform to learn from them. I have always been an advocate for children and believe if society values the lives of children, we must value the voices of the lives of those we endeavor to enhance. In order to honor this perspective, this study focussed on collecting stores about what children said they do every day, in turn to understand how their everyday occupations might contribute to their experience of resilience.

My beliefs about participation in occupation

My fundamental belief is that everybody participates in occupation every day. My core beliefs about participation in occupations are predominantly drawn from my professional background as an occupational therapist but also my personal values and attitude towards a public health and population health perspective. Whilst, I do value individual health and wellbeing, I also strongly believe that a public health approach to society's wellbeing is required for all populations. As an occupational therapist, I have always enacted the people-centered values of the profession and

this is grounded firmly in my belief that all humans are occupational beings, and that participation in occupations influences health and wellbeing. I believe that people participate in everyday tasks to occupy their time, which in turn can enhance or threaten their wellbeing. I believe in occupational rights, the rights to participation in occupation regardless of age, gender, ability, social class or other difference, as discussed by Nilsson & Townsend (2014) for all individuals, and have always remained curious about people's experience of participation in occupation. For me, this is about acknowledging that whilst I value occupation, I believe that participation in occupation for some people may be restricted, exclusive and power dependent. Like many other occupational therapists, I am an advocate for social justice and inclusiveness for all persons. As an occupational therapist, I have also had an active interest in promoting participation in meaningful occupation with children who have faced challenges due to their health and their environment, which often involved experiences of adversity.

My beliefs about resilience

My personal experiences as a premature child of mixed cultural heritage, with a privileged childhood of activities and opportunity, filled with fun, love and gratitude for others has influenced my understanding that resilience is a powerful explanation for overcoming adversity. My professional experiences have influenced my belief that resilience is a process that occurs to an individual, and/or a group and/or a community facing adversity. I also believe that adversity must be present for someone to become resilient, as opposed to being resilient in the absence of adversity. I have had the privilege of working with some of the country's most resilient children, families and communities who despite increasing adversity, have succeeded beyond measure. In summary, I believe resilient children are the foundation for the development of resilient adults.

As well as my professional motivators, I also believe myself to be a leader, and for me to lead others, I value learning and the process of continuing to develop. Completing this thesis fulfills that need to continue to learn and build on my prior knowledge and experience.

It seemed logical to me that this study would focus on children, their occupations, and how their participation contributes to their resilience. Resilient children seemed to me like a positive aspiration for any population and I was curious about the influence of occupations on resilience from the real life experiences of children. This led to the development of the research questions;

about what occupations children participate in and how does their participation contribute to experiences of resilience.

Identifying the contribution of the research

There is a significant absence of literature relating to the exploration of occupations and participation of preadolescents, and their experiences of resilience in an Aotearoa context. Generating research and contributing to the body of knowledge on occupations, participation and resilience experiences is therefore important for the future of children in Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, several authors stated that research on resilience in children as vital, not only for the individual outcomes of children but also for all services concerned with the health and wellbeing of the population (Alvord& Grados; 2005; Garmezy, 2001; Werner & Smith, 2001; Benson, Scales, Hamilton & Sesma, 2006; Ullrich-French, McDonough & Smith, 2012; Armour & Sandford, 2013).

The purpose of the study was to describe what occupations children participate in and how participation in occupations contributed to resilience. There is an expectation that this information could contribute to advancing the body of knowledge available about experiences that could be protective in developing children's resilience. Acquiring specific knowledge in this area for the children of Aotearoa is important for individual outcomes but also for health and other welfare related services. It was anticipated that raising awareness and connection between experiences of participation in occupations and resilience would be of benefit to the participants, their communities and beyond.

Structure of the thesis

In this chapter, I have introduced the focus of this study and I have discussed why this particular study was of interest to me. I have also situated the study in the current political and social context by describing relevant policies and statistics relating to children in Aotearoa.

A review of literature in relation to the research questions is outlined in Chapter Two. This starts with a description of the definitions of resilience and the development of resilience in children. Occupations of children and participation are presented, and the link between occupations and resilience is explored. A discussion of what is known in the literature, and the strengths and limitations of that knowledge concludes this chapter.

In Chapter Three, the methodological approach chosen for this study (qualitative descriptive) is described, and the rationale for selection of this methodology is discussed. The research methods, including such as how the study was conducted, ethical considerations, recruitment and selection of the participants, the process of data collection and analysis and strategies of rigour are presented.

Chapter Four is the presentation of the findings identified from the data. This chapter presents the findings as three main themes; *what resilience is* and *occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience*, and *participation and building resilience.*

In the final chapter, Chapter Five, I summarise the findings, and reposition the study in relation to the literature. The study limitations and the implications for policy, practice, education and further research are also discussed.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature

Introduction

This chapter will review the literature underpinning this study. As this study focused on resilience in children the review begins with exploring definitions of resilience both from a historical and contemporary perspective. The development of resilience in children is presented both internationally and in Aotearoa. A review of the literature about children and their occupations exploring the relationship between occupation and participation and the development of resilience, will follow. A summary of the strengths and gaps within literature is provided as the justification for this study.

A search of the literature was conducted using the databases Ovid, Psychinfo and CINAHL. Search terms included resilience, children and youth, participation, activities and occupation. Various combinations of words were used. Searches were limited to English only sources and included academic journals, reports and articles. Publications spanned from the early 1970's until the present. Forty-eight articles were found. Articles that focussed on adults were discarded. Hand searching of reference lists was undertaken to access further literature.

Defining resilience

A historical perspective

A review of literature suggests that resilience has been, and continues to be, a complex phenomenon, widely debated, difficult to describe and understand (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Matuska, 2014; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar, Liebenberg & Ungar, 2015, Shastri, 2013). Resilience is often described as a concept born out of human development theory in the 1970's and 1980' where researchers aimed to understand psychological development through the lifespan and to prevent mental health disorders (Blueler, 1984; Garmezy, 1991; Gottesman, 1974; Murphy & Moriatry, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1971). These early researchers suggested resilience was a characteristic of an individual portrayed by personal traits such as easy temperament, intelligence and sociability (Hunter & Chandler, 1991; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2014). Arguably, World War II was instrumental in the development of the concept of

resilience. The lived experiences of social science researchers Rutter (1979), Werner (1971) and Garmezy (1985) who survived and recovered from the war themselves, led them to play leading roles in resilience research. As social science researchers and their experience of adversity, they were interested in understanding why some children managed to cope with adversity and others did not. These early researchers identified that resilience occurred when individuals experienced stress and that there were risk and protective factors that influenced resilience in a person (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1971). Rutter (1979) identified that when individuals had experienced stress they subsequently showed better adaptation.

Further research efforts from psychology and health researchers over time have conceptualised resilience as a complex process that is more closely linked to the interaction between risk and protective factors across several levels of an individuals' lived experience (Werner, 1971; Garmezy, 1991; Hunter & Chandler, 1999; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Sanders et al., 2015, Shastri, 2013). A more recent shift in literature suggests a consensus towards a definition of resilience that is multidimensional in nature, and more of a longitudinal process as opposed to individual traits (Hunter & Chandler, 1999; Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Sanders et al., 2015; Shastri, 2014; Zolkolski & Bullock, 2012). In addition to this, Bowlby's (1982) Attachment Theory would suggest that resilience is a behavioral outcome reflected when individuals' with a secure base of attachment overcome risk factors and adverse experiences (Mikulincer, Shaver & Pereg, 2003; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012).

A contemporary perspective of resilience

In recent times a more contemporary perspective adopts an ecological view of how resilience is developed in young children. This view suggests that wide social, political and economic systems, shaped by communities and families contribute to resiliency development. Examples of these wider systems include resources available to an individual as well as the innate characteristics of the individual (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Sanders et al., 2015; Shastri, 2013). This perspective further supports the concept that resilience is not an outcome itself, but rather a collection of resources that can be drawn upon when a child is trying to achieve 'positive outcomes' (Sanders et al. 2015). Currently, emerging resilience research is also developing from a neurobiological perspective about brain plasticity and how it may

influence resilience in people (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Puterman & Epel, 2012; Shastri, 2014).

Khanlou and Wray (2014) and Panter-Brick and Leckman (2013) also highlighted the complex, contextual construct that resilience is and how it continues to contribute to multileveled systems, societal policies, and prevention and interventions related to health and wellbeing. It would seem that resilience is multifaceted as it encompasses the normative and functional dimensions of human experience alongside the biological, psychosocial and cultural resources to sustain wellbeing. This contemporary perspective highlights that resilience exists across several spheres of health care, education, child and youth services, social development, justice and public security (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). Globally, the 21st century has seen several threats to children's development with terror attacks, wars, and environmental disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes. These threats and ongoing adversities have returned society's attention to resilience and renewed research interests (Masten, 2014). Resilience has been identified as a complex phenomenon to define but definitions are required to consider the context in which resilience is being judged and understood (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014).

The definition of resilience selected to inform this study comes from Khanlou and Wray (2014). Their definition is that "Resilience develops in response to challenges, not in their absence, and the person (or system) can become stronger than before" (p.67). This definition emphasises that resilience includes the experiences of the individual rather than demonstrate individual traits.. In relation to this study, the definition by Khanlou and Wray (2014) is important as it implies resilience is experienced, part of a system, and can develop over time. Decades of research by several disciplines and individuals' subjective experiences have contributed to the literature resulting in the varying definitions of resilience but an important progression that perhaps validates the current multifaceted understanding. The literature suggests there has been four waves of research in understanding and defining resilience, the first in psychological research about personality traits and mental health disorders, the second wave has been concerned with the identification of protective and risk factors for resilience and within specific cohorts, the third suggesting a more contemporary ecological view of a resilience as a multifaceted process and the fourth leaning towards neurobiological impacts and pathways for intervention.

In summary, resilience is a complex concept that has transformed in definition over decades of research. Research has evolved to include the definition, protective and risk factors of resilience, a systemic perspective and interventions that enhance resilience. Inconsistencies still exist in the definition, and the interventions that enhance resilience, but consistencies are emerging among the protective and risk factors for resilience with populations of particular environments such as youth in foster care. This study aims to contribute to the gap in knowledge about how occupation potentially contributes to resilience in children aged 10-13 years.

Resilience in children

In considering an understanding of the definition of resilience, it is important to also consider the significance of resilience in children. Children are viewed as active organisers of their experiences, and their interactions with others are viewed as bidirectional (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005). There is a belief that children's behavioural responses are driven partly by genetics and are inherently biological. In addition children also create reasons for their behaviour, influenced by adults and environments, the reasons they develop for their behaviour can help to guide their future (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005). While resilience literature has predominantly focussed on adolescents, the developmental influence of childhood on an individual's trajectory warrants the extension to children. More specifically, a child developmental focus of resilience would better enable early identification of critical turning points in the developmental trajectory, bridging the layered level of analysis required of resilience (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). The process of resilience development includes patterns of functional behaviour despite risks such as good mental health, social competence and functional capacity (Masten, 2001; Olsson et al., 2003). A view of resilience in children also enables a complex understanding of enhancing capability and considers resources that matter to people as opposed to exploring the relationships between risk and vulnerability (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013).

Most of the literature available on resilience looks at vulnerable youth, either young people that have experienced contextual and/or individual risk such as poverty, abuse and neglect, mental health disorders, exclusion from education and are aged over 12 years. There has also been a focus on children who are faced with adverse environments or systemic input such as youth justice, mental health services, and/or foster care. Even within literature that explores youth

resilience, the predominant perspective is sought from adults about youth, not from the perspective of youth directly.

In summary, the identified strength in the literature is the acknowledged importance of the need to understand resilience from both a developmental and societal perspective. However, despite this need, there are gaps in the literature available, as resilience is predominantly explored with vulnerable youth, or with specific cohorts facing contextual or individual risk factors and from an adult perspective.

Development of resilience in children

The literature suggests that for children, resilience is viewed as a process that occurs, when they are faced with similar experiences of adversity and hardship, negotiated risks and opportunities and still travel along successful adult paths, as opposed to those who do not face adversity (Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Gilligan, 2008).

The predominant concerns in the literature suggest the development of resilience is built upon strong self-efficacy, self-esteem and a secure attachment (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Shastri, 2013). Additionally, the enhancement of protective factors such as positive relationships with family, social connections and attachments, involvement in communities, a positive sense of self with mastery and competence, and ability to self-regulate have a significant impact on a child's experience of resilience (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Denny et al., 2004; Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Morrison et al., 2012; Shastri, 2013; Sanders et al. 2015; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). It is consistently argued in the literature that environments and experience contribute to the development of resilience (Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Robertson & Cooper, 2013). The idea that protective factors enhance the development of resilience despite the presence of risk factors in an individual's life is commonly presented in the literature by Alvord and Grados (2005); Khanlou and Wray (2014); Sanders et al. (2015); and Zolkoski and Bullock (2012). Mastering friendships and the ability to connect with others, developing skills to be competent in daily life and a sense of self-confidence in abilities to succeed are also the core outcomes of middle childhood development and the key to developing the building blocks needed for resilience (Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Shastri, 2013). Resilient children are likely to be

critical problem solvers, socially competent, more independent, and have a more cohesive sense of identity and purpose (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012).

Within resilience literature there is limited exploration of resilience in all children, as opposed to the continued focus on the population of children who experience risk factors (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Morrison et al. 2012; Zimmerman & Bingenheimer, 2002; Shastri, 2014). There is also a consistent theme within resilience literature of continuing exploration with youth from Western cultures. Interestingly, developing literature has examined resilience across cultures; for example, Ungar et al. (2007) and Zolkoski & Bullock (2012) have identified that while there is a similarity in adversity and risk factors across cultures, there is not one pathway or factor that leads to 'resilience'. Despite these limitations, several authors have agreed that the perspectives of children are required to develop improved understandings of experiences of resilience (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Ungar, 2011; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013). As resilience is a subjective construct (based on the individual's lived experience), it is paramount to explore resilience from a child's perspective, as opposed to only an adults' view.

In summary, the literature consistently identifies self-efficacy, self-esteem and a secure attachment as factors that develop resilience in children. There has also been a consistent argument presented in the literature on resilience about the positive impact protective factors such as relationships with others contributes to the development of resilience in children.

An Aotearoa Perspective

To date there has been no specific research published in Aotearoa on children's resilience. However, there is a growing body of evidence focussing on the health and wellbeing of secondary school students in the 'Youth 2000 Survey Series' (Clark et al. 2013). More specifically, the Ministry of Social Development in New Zealand has studied resilience in teenage mothers (Collins, 2010), stepfamilies (Pryor, 2004) and family resilience (Mackay, 2003). Additionally, resiliency in response to suicidal behaviours has been explored by Fergusson, Beautrais & Horwood (2003). These studies concluded that it is important to understand what successfully contributes to resilience in order for children to reach their potential and to identify the children's perspectives in relation to individual and family wellbeing. Although these studies contribute significant findings in protective and risk factors for health and

wellbeing, they focus on the youth population (13-18 years) as opposed to children aged 10-13years.

The most significant resilience research in New Zealand for children is the 'Growing Up in New Zealand' longitudinal study (Morton et al. 2015) where vulnerability and resilience are currently being explored, however the findings from the resilience part of the study have not yet been published. The Growing Up in New Zealand research is significant as it follows 7000 children in Aotearoa from pre-birth until they are 21 years exploring what makes them who they are, and tracking their growth and development. The research cohort is broad and generalisable with a diverse ethnic representation and family socio-economic status. However, the current limited national research suggests there is a need to understand resilience from the lived experience of children in Aotearoa. The next section explores resilience from an occupational perspective, and discusses the relationship between resilience and participation in occupation.

An occupational perspective of resilience

Occupation

Occupations are the things people do every day throughout their lifetime. They are an integral component to health and wellbeing (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015; Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Whalley Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005; Law, Steinwender, & Leclair, 1998). Occupations are individual and they can be guided by and relate to a person's roles and developmental stage at the time of participation (Bundick, 2011; Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015). Children's occupations are predominantly determined for them in early life and children's participation in occupations changes as they develop through the lifespan. Participation in occupations enables skills, identity and self-esteem (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015). Participation in occupation also enables mastery, satisfaction, and personal development, which in turn influences health and wellbeing of a person (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005). A common way of interpreting people's experience of occupational participation uses Wilcock's categories of doing, being, and becoming. These categories are all interconnected in a synthesis that cannot separate from occupations, or from context, nor viewed in isolation. Arguably, 'doing' in occupational therapy literature is most commonly associated with participation in occupations, and 'being' with the individual (Wilcock, 1998).

While children frequently engage in occupations at home such as daily grooming tasks, eating, and homework, they also participate in social occupations, and organised occupations such as team sports, clubs and associations (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014). Literature suggests play and school occupations are the most common for children (Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014). Several authors have examined physical occupations of children and youth (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bundick, 2011; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003; Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014; Zivani et al. 2006). The literature reviewed explores occupations more commonly with the youth age population (13 years and over) and focuses predominantly on structured physical activities such as sports (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bundick, 2011; Cairney et al., 2015; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Zivani et al. 2006). The benefits of engaging in occupations outside of school is well documented with identified positive outcomes for school achievement and a reduction in mental and physical health risk factors (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Dworkin et al., 2003; Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014; Zivani et al., 2006; Bundick, 2011; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Technological and social influences such as the internet and computers have added to the range of occupations children engage in and a decline in physical activities in youth is hypothesised to be because of these influences (Ciccarelli, Straker, Mathiassen & Pollock, 2011; Zivani et al., 2006). Within the developmental stage of 10-13 years (the stage of investigation in this study), the literature suggests that children learn through occupational experiences, either through social opportunities and/or novel activities. These occupations build skills, develop mastery and self-esteem and provide learning, which influences health and well-being (Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005; Howie, Lukacs, Pastor, Ruben & Mendola, 2010; Law et al., 2011, Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2014). In addition, Gilligan (2008) identified that the promotion of recreation, and school equally alongside friends and family could positively influence the development of resilience. Several studies have explored recreational activities, predominantly of an active physical nature that ameliorate risks, and/or develop protective factors contributing to resilience (Cinamon & Hason, 2008; McNeely & Falci, 2004; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Panter-brick & Leckman, 2013; Zimmerman & Bingenheimer, 2002).

In summary, the literature reviewed on occupation suggests occupations are determinants of health and wellbeing. Occupations of children are commonly focussed on structured physical activities like sports and are explored with youth aged cohorts. Several benefits are documented

as outcomes of occupation such as confidence, mastery of skills, social skills, and increased academic performance.

Participation in occupations

Participation is also a key concept in this study, and the literature describes participation as a concept often aligned to occupational performance, but considered a separate entity (Doble & Caron Santha, 2008). Several authors critique this view of participation suggesting that considering participation in isolation does not reflect the individual subjective nature and experience of occupations. Participation viewed in isolation does not encompass the cultural and complex context that occupations occur in and therefore how they subjectively influence an individual's health (Borell, Asaba, Rosenberg, Schult, & Townsend, 2006; Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005; Polatajko et al., 2007). While a specific link between resilience and participation has not been established, it is important to consider participation when looking at an individual's occupational engagement (Law et al., 2011). For this study participation is seen as part of the context of occupation as emerging literature suggests participation is a complex construct that exists in context and cannot be viewed in isolation (Law, Baum, & Baptiste, 2002; Piskur et al. 2013). In addition, Petrenchik and King (2011) highlight that the most significant view of participation is the inclusion of the meaning given to participation experiences by the individual and especially for children. The lived experience of participation in children, using qualitative strategies has been described as a future direction in research by King (2014). In addition, a more in-depth and wider view of participation over time, its benefits and in contexts could positively influence the lives of children and young people. Despite definition differences in the literature about participation there is a consistent agreement that participation contributes to, and is a measurable outcome of health and wellbeing (Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Law, Baum, & Baptiste, 2002; Piskur et al. 2013).

In summary, participation is viewed as part of an individual's experience of occupation and has been identified as an outcome of health and wellbeing, there is a recognised need to focus research on participation when exploring the lived experience of children.

The relationship between resilience and occupational participation

A person's health and wellbeing is viewed contextually from individuals' characteristics and their lived experience, and extends to wider influences of education, participation, safety and freedom (Herrman et al. 2011). This same holistic view of health and wellbeing is useful when studying the concept of resilience, according to Herrman et al. (2011) and Goldstein and Brooks (2011).

Occupations are integral to the development of individuals and arguably resilience is a process that is concerned with the interactions of individuals and their occupational experiences, therefore a connection between the two constructs is proposed. Case-Smith and O'Brien (2015) proposed that the developmental nature of resilience in children suggests occupations should be viewed as the interface between the child as the being (biology) and their environmental contexts (social, physical, cultural).

The literature suggests that when children participate in occupations they learn, develop and master skills to navigate life, and enhance their wellbeing (Bundick, 2011; Case-Smith & O'Brien, 2015; Dworkin, Larson & Hansen, 2003; Hemmingsson & Jonsson, 2005). These outcomes from participation in occupations are also the same concepts described in resilience literature as factors that build and develop resilience (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Morrison et al. 2012; Zimmerman & Bingenheimer, 2002; Shastri, 2013). As such, it seems likely that there is a possible influential (but under explored) understanding of the connection between participation in occupations and resilience. Occupations provide the platform for an individual's participation, and therefore could influence the development of resilience. A more robust occupational perspective of resilience could lead to a deeper understanding of what occupational factors are important to children as they develop and how the world around them contributes to these experiences. This study aims to showcase what occupations children participate in, and how their participation may contribute to their resilience. There is an emerging link between participation in occupation and resilience for children emerging from the literature reviewed but one that is relatively unexplored. The outcomes of participation in occupation, reflect similar factors that influence the development of resilience.

Summary

Resilience has been explored in the literature across several research contexts such as psychology, education and health. This could reflect a societal shift in thinking about resilience as a multifactorial and contextual concept across a person's lifespan. However, there remains a paucity of literature about resilience and children, particularly those aged 10-13 years. The current available literature on resilience is often limited to a particular environmental setting such as youth justice or foster care, and is focused on adults or youth populations, in relation to risk factors and/or risk taking behaviours. These limitations within resilience literature and the potential of occupations (and occupational therapy) to improve understandings and outcomes necessitates this study. This study seeks to contribute to wider perspectives on the impact of activities on protective factors that promote resilience, in children aged 10-13 years in the context of Aotearoa. Furthermore, it is important to understand complex perspectives from children themselves, given their developmental vulnerability and the significance that resilience in childhood has on the trajectory of adulthood.

As this study aims to describe the occupations that young children participate in and to describe how their participation contributes to their resilience with the intention of adding to understandings about resilience, this chapter has provided an overview and critique of the resilience literature coupled with an occupational lens, which provides the platform for this study. Although literature affirms the importance of resilience in developing a healthy individual, and validates the significance of children as occupational beings across the lifespan, little is known about connecting these constructs or focussing on how they might be connected if at all. Less is known about participation in occupation and resilience from a New Zealand perspective.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological considerations, philosophical approach and rationale used in this qualitative descriptive study. The methods used in this study, including ethics, data collection, and analysis will be presented. Finally, research processes to establish rigor, and trustworthiness, are also described.

Philosophical research approach

This section describes the philosophical beliefs, and worldview underpinning this study, and describes the influence these beliefs have on the research questions and approach .As stated in Chapter One, this study aimed to address two questions, "What occupations do children participate in? and "How does their participation in occupations contribute to their experience of resilience? The literature review in Chapter Two provided insights into what occupations could contribute to resilience but the literature is fairly limited in terms of children aged 10-13 years and tends to be adult focussed. As there was little description about how participation in occupations contributed to resilience a methodology was selected that would allow exploration through an in-depth description of the phenomena of resilience and occupation, from children's perspectives.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design, which provides a valuable way to explore human existence as it occurs in everyday life (Sandelowski, 2000). The choice of a qualitative descriptive design was influenced by the paucity of literature about the occupations of children in Aotearoa, and how participation in occupation contributes to experiences of resilience. In addition, there is minimal literature that explores perspectives of occupation or resilience from children themselves. Accordingly, a qualitative descriptive methodology allows for rich descriptions of children's occupations to be explored and how their participation in occupations may contribute to their experiences of resilience.

In qualitative research, there are three significant elements that contribute to a particular worldview that must be understood, these are ontology, epistemology and methodology (Crotty, 1998). Ontology focuses on 'what is', and includes coming to understand the nature of beings, and the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998; Grant & Giddings, 2002). Ontology then forms the basis

for the epistemological view, which describes what counts as knowledge and how we know what know (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The guiding ontological perspective of this study is the belief that reality is subjective and socially constructed, suggesting there can be several valid interpretations of reality. This led to relativism as the ontological basis of this study. A relativist perspective holds the assumption that reality is created by the individual experiences of the participants and that multiple realities can exist (Patton, 2002). A relativist ontological view is important in this study, as each participant's description of participation in occupations and their experiences of resilience will be different and based on their own realities and lives, even though there may be some shared elements (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A relativist ontological view then lends itself to a constructivist epistemology. This view allows for the exploration of the multiple realities constructed by study participants and the effects of those constructions on their lives and interactions with others (Baxter Magolda, 2004). In this study, a constructivist view is embedded, as it aims to describe the occupations of children and how participation in those occupations contributes to experiences of resilience.

The ontological beliefs and epistemological views are important to describe as they form the shape of the research questions and process, the methodology, and methods. The selection of a particular methodology occurs because the paradigm that it rests on is recognised for "its ability to solve a particular problem, or address a particular question" (Kuhn, 1970, as cited in Grant & Giddings, 2002, p.12). Careful consideration was given to the choice of methodology used, as a key focus of this study was to explore children's perspectives, which can differ from adults and therefore a methodology that explores description of experiences was sought. Again, the participant's perspectives needed to be grounded in their personal experiences of occupation and resilience, and an individual real account of their subjective experience. An everyday description of the phenomena is sought in this study.

The above philosophical beliefs and research aim led to qualitative description as the chosen methodology. Qualitative description as described by Sandelowski (2000; 2010) and others (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009; Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova, & Harper, 2005) is the methodology of choice when a straight description of phenomena is sought. Qualitative description allows the experience inquired about to be presented in everyday language and offers an accurate description of an event that could be described by other researchers studying

the same event (Sandelowski, 2000). The ease of the methodology can also allow for consistent research processes of phenomena that could be varied or complex in description.

This methodology is also a good fit for describing children's perspectives. Qualitative description showcases insight's that cannot be concluded from surveys or experiments: by talking to people, a deeper sense of their perspective is developed and a theoretical understanding of society can emerge (Bueving & de Vries, 2015). In order to answer the research questions, the study aimed to describe the experiences of children in everyday circumstances by listening to their stories of their daily experiences and wondering about what those stories might mean (Bueving & de Vries, 2015). A key consideration of qualitative description is to understand the topic from the participants' perspective as opposed to the researcher's agenda (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This was an important consideration, as I wanted to capture and respect the children's voices in describing their lived experiences of resilience. Reporting children's perspectives is a common challenging element for researchers when participants are children (McTavish, Streelasky & Coles, 2012). The researcher's data collection methods, and the use of transcripts from interviews, journals and field notes, for example, are processes that contribute to a rich description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative description seeks to describe phenomena in depth and with quality. Qualitative description differs from phenomenological or grounded theory research methods. These were considered but not selected because of the additional interpretation required, in which the participant's perspective could be lessened by interpretation.

Methods

The following section describes who the participants are, how they were recruited, ethical considerations, and how data was collected and analysed alongside decisions made throughout the research process. Explicitly presenting research methods adds to transparency and clarity, contributing to the overall rigour of a qualitative study (Cleary, Horsfall and Hayter, 2014).

Participant Selection and Criteria for Participation

In this study the participants are children aged between 10-13 years (enrolled in Year 7 and Year 8 of school) as it is the final two years of preadolescence, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary (1989). These crucial two years contribute to developing a child's identity and competence according to Erikson (1963). Children wrestle with 'industry versus inferiority' as a

developmental stage, and are capable of learning and developing skills but also have the potential to feel inferior or inadequate if they experience failure. In addition, there is limited literature available from a child's perspective especially those aged 10-13 years. The perspectives of children as participants are described as a gap in research literature and therefore a deficit in researchers' knowledge exists (Ward Smith, 2008). The inclusion criteria were children aged between 10-13 years, participants needed to be fluent in English in order to taken part in data collection. My first language is English, and conversations were required as per the chosen methodology for this study. Using interpreters and translation services was not in the scope or budget of this study. The exclusion criteria were any participants currently engaged with tertiary mental health services, as I did not want participation in the study to potentially add to stressors or to target a specific group of children within the population. Any participants known to me were also excluded.

Ethical Considerations

Children as participants

Key ethical considerations were the potentially sensitive information that could arise in discussion with children as participants. In addition, the age of the participants (10-13 years) required gaining assent and consent of the participants.

To address consent and assent, a Child Information and Assent Sheet (see Appendix A) and Parent/ Guardian Information Sheet (see Appendix B) and Parent/Guardian Consent Form (see Appendix C) was provided for all potential participants. Child friendly language was used, as well as a photograph of myself to help children orientate to the research and researcher. The development of the information sheets and the research questions were given to two young people unrelated to the study, who were of the age range, to advise me if information was easy to read and understand for potential participants. Parental/ guardian consent to participate was required, and verbal assent from each child was gained for participation in the study. Both verbal assent and written consent was gained to ensure that children were not coerced by adults (including their parents) to participate.

All participants were informed at the start of interviews that they could stop at any time if the interview became distressing. The researcher was sensitive to the potentially delicate nature of the study with the approach and manner used during the interview. Professional skills and

experience as a child mental health clinician was used to engage children in supportive conversations. The researcher also watched for any signs of distress or concerning comments from participants throughout interviews. Participants were also given time to ask further questions regarding the research before and after the interview.

It is important to use familiar locations such as children's home's as a venue to enable children to communicate comfortably in these environments, to ensure authentic voices of children as opposed to the 'assumed' voices of children that adults often represent (McTavish, Streelasky & Coles, 2012). In this study children were given a choice for interview location and all participants identified their homes as the interview venue. All participants had their parents/guardians present in the home at the time of the interview.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The principles of confidentiality and anonymity were used to maintain the privacy of the participants. Confidentiality serves as a means to protect participants from harm (Kaiser, 2009). Identification of the participants in this study was kept confidential by using pseudonyms chosen by the participants at the start of their interview. This was to reduce the risk of identifying the participants (Quick & Hall, 2015). The transcripts will be kept securely for a minimum of six years in locked storage. The digital recordings were deleted on completion of this study. The completed participant consent forms were stored separately to the transcripts and will remain stored for a minimum of six years. Participant's identity was protected by naming all the transcripts with an interview number and pseudonym, and any family, peers or street names that might have linked the participant to others were deleted and removed from the transcript.

Do no harm and avoidance of deceit

Beneficence ensures that the research process does no physical or psychological harm or cause deceit to participants (Kaiser, 2009). Participants were recruited through schools, and to ensure there was no coercion to participate, class teachers were asked to leave the room. Participants chose the interview venue, time, and day, and were offered to have a parent or guardian present in the interview setting, in order to help alleviate any potential discomfort participants may have had. Participants were informed about how to stop the interview at any time if they did not want to continue and reminded of this process at the start of the interview.

Interviewing participants in their own homes also helped with creating a comfortable and familiar environment.

As I am experienced in interviewing children, I watched for changes in mood, affect and behaviour throughout the interview and focus group process to monitor any potential discomfort in the participants. Although no discomfort or risk to the participants were anticipated, provisions for support for the participants were in place if they had been required. These included talking with the participant's parent or guardian about identifying support, and discussion with my supervisors. None of the participants required support.

Finally, there was no deceit of the participants about the purpose of the study and methods used throughout the research purpose. A truthful manner was used to report findings, and participants were informed of findings as they were formed.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)

In Aotearoa the Treaty of Waitangi provides an agreement between Māori and the Crown with participation, protection and partnership identified as three key principles of the Treaty (Royal Commission, 1998). This study aimed to uphold these principles by ensuring that participants were not sought or excluded on a cultural or ethnic basis. To employ the concepts of Rangatiratanga (leadership and authority) and to respect Tikanga Māori (Māori protocols and practices) a Senior Māori Cultural Advisor was consulted (see Appendix D) about the study and research processes to maintain the principles of 'protection' and 'partnership'. The Senior Māori Cultural Advisor was available to provide cultural supervision for the researcher if required in which appropriate guidance and connection with local support for Māori participants could be identified. As a result of the consultation no changes were made to the research methods, however data collection methods were sufficiently flexible to provide any changes that might have been required. For example, built in the study design was the ability for the location of the interview to be determined by the participant, and for the participants to have support people present. The consultation and ongoing access to Māori advice is a way of upholding mana whakahaere (control over decision making and involvement in research processes) in ensuring the principle of 'participation' is embedded in the research (Hudson & Russell, 2009). One of the participants in this study identified as Māori. During whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships), we discussed whether the participant required any extra support to participate

from groups such as whānau, hāpu, iwi or the cultural advisor, however the participant did not require support to participate.

This study gained ethical approval from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on the 02 July 2015 (AUTEC approval number 15/ 183). An amendment was made to the ethics application to address a limited number of participants being recruited to the study (See Appendix E and F) which was approved on the 29 April 2016. The amendment was required to widen the participant pool to include recruitment from schools in the central Auckland area, this resulted in a further two schools being contacted and a further four potential participants being recruited to the study.

Sampling

Following discussion with my supervisors, it was agreed that purposive sampling would be used to recruit 6-8 participants. Purposive sampling is choosing participants that fulfil a specific purpose in relation to the research question, and often participants are chosen because of their knowledge and/or experience of the research topic (Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014). Purposive sampling was also chosen as it allows the researcher to select participants who meet the inclusion criteria (Patton, 2002). Although determining sample size in qualitative studies can be difficult, it was agreed that between six to eight participants would generate enough in-depth data on occupations and resilience. Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014 suggest adequate participant numbers can also be reflected in the quality of the data presented in the findings, where a rich meaningful discussion should be presented as opposed to a superficial discussion of several participants.

Recruitment

Recruitment occurred by the researcher contacting 19 intermediate school Principals in South and Central Auckland via email and telephone requesting a meeting to discuss the research. Of the 19 schools contacted, 7 schools declined, 9 were unresponsive and 3 affirmed. Initial face-to-face meetings were held with the Principal of each school that agreed to discuss and outline the research. Once permission was given, the Permission to Contact Students Form (see Appendix G) was completed by the Principal and a time set up to recruit students from classrooms was confirmed.

The researcher individually addressed classrooms that had volunteered in each school with a short introduction about the researcher, the aim and purpose of the study, and the process for potential participants such as consent from parents, time commitment, interview and focus group process. Children were invited to participate by show of hand and given a pack to take home that included the Parents Information Sheet, and the Child Information and Assent Sheet, and the Parent Consent Form and postage paid envelopes. It was made explicit that this study was in no way connected to their schooling, conversations would happen out of school hours, and teachers would not be present during data collection.

Children were encouraged to discuss the research with their parents and return the forms to my primary supervisor in the postage paid envelope, if they chose to participate. A total of 70 forms were given out across the three schools, and ten potential participants returned their consent and assent forms. All respondents' parents' were contacted by telephone to confirm eligibility of their child based on inclusion and exclusion criteria and to set up and confirm the interview process including date, time and location. The first eight children to confirm were interviewed and the remaining two were notified by letter and email that their participation was not required.

Participants

There were eight participants. Based on their address, four participants were recruited from South Auckland and four participants from Central Auckland. Four female and four male participants were recruited. All participants chose home as the interview location, and all participants had a parent present in the household during the interview. The first six interviews were completed, and after discussion with my supervisors, an additional two interviews were completed to ensure there was sufficient data collected to allow for a meaningful analysis. A summary of the participants' demographic data is provided in Table 1. The participants' chosen pseudonyms have been used in the table to maintain their confidentiality along with age, school year and geographical location.

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Data on the Participants of this Study

Name	Gender	Age	Year	Auckland
Kim	Female	12	8	South
Sam	Male	12	8	South
Harry	Male	12	7	Central
Jade	Female	11	8	Central
Vanessa	Female	13	7	Central
Siphon	Male	11	7	Central
Lily	Male	13	8	South
Rose	Female	12	8	South

Data Collection

Data was collected from eight face-to-face interviews that were between 15 and 30 minutes long and 1 focus group that was 90 minutes in duration. All participants were invited to choose a location for their interview that was comfortable and convenient for them. All 8 chose their homes as the interview venue. Following the Researcher Safety Protocol (see Appendix H) I sent email confirmation of interview details (time, date, address) to my supervisor and text/email confirmation that I had returned safely following each interview. Semi structured interviews began a general conversation about the research, and introducing each other. Verbal assent was gained before starting the interview which included open-ended questions (see Appendix I). The semi structured interview process was used to guide participants in answering questions and to encourage conversation. Engaging in conversations with children is seen as a method commonly employed to elicit the perspectives of children; however adult researchers must be careful not to impose their own views and allow children the opportunity to express their lived experience (McTavish, Streelasky & Coles, 2012). Engaging children in conversation was achieved by asking about their school day and recent holiday's as well as using open-ended questions about their experiences (For example, 'tell me about a challenging time in life for you'). At the start of the interview, all participants were asked to choose a pseudonym and their choice recorded.

Focus groups were chosen as an additional data collection method to help children engage in the data gathering process and to explore the research topic in more depth. The plan was two

hold two focus groups if required. However, only one focus group was held. Following reflection on this group, and discussion with my supervisors, it was felt that sufficient amount and depth of data had been collected. Five participants attended the focus group held in a community venue central to all the participant's home locations. The remaining three participants were unable to attend due to illness. The focus group was loosely structured around introductions, an icebreaker activity to engage the participants, sharing of the preliminary findings, and questions (See Appendix J). Coloured sticky notes and coloured pens were used as well as drawing paper so all participants could participate using drawing, talking and writing methods. Elliot and Timulak (2005) describe focus groups as a common method in qualitative research to allow the inclusion of several perspectives and as a way of checking the information gathered. Preliminary findings from the interviews were shared with the participants at the focus group to offer an opportunity to add any additional ideas but also to confirm the information shared. The focus group also provided an opportunity for elaboration of ideas, and further exploration between participants about how their participation had contributed to their experience of resilience (Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014; Elliot & Timulak, 2005).

The main discussion of the focus group was participants describing their experiences of resilience, and initially what activities they did. More in depth discussion then occurred about how participation in occupations contributed to their resilience experiences. Participants described what engaging in occupations was like, and how those experiences had contributed to their resilience. Collectively, they drew a picture to explain how doing activities had contributed to their resilience experience. The participants were asked how they would explain their ideas to adults if they were asked, and they grouped their ideas into categories to help their explanation. All data was recorded on large sheets of paper, using post it notes and pens for participants to add ideas to but also move ideas around as they were discussing them. The focus group was also audio recorded. Following the focus group all participants in the study were sent a shopping mall gift voucher as a koha (token of appreciation) to thank the participants for their time.

Transcribing the data

Each interview and the focus group was recorded on a digital recorder. After an interview was complete, it was uploaded to a password-protected computer, and then transcribed verbatim. I

chose to transcribe the data myself to become familiar with it, and I listened to each of the interviews a number of times, checking them against the transcribed data in the process. Prior to printing of the transcribed interviews, names were changed using the pseudonym participants had chosen in their interview. Printed transcripts were kept in a secure concertina file in my locked office at home. The digital recordings were kept until the completion of this study, before being deleted.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen as an inductive method of data analysis as it reports the experiences and reality of the participants and offers a rich description of the data, appropriately matching qualitative descriptive methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sandelowski, 2000). This flexible method of analysis is applicable across many theoretical approaches and is often the method of choice for researchers new to qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis involves making a number of decisions that should be explicitly recorded in a reflexive journal kept by the researcher during the analysis process. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that the analytic process begins when the researcher notices and identifies patterns of meaning and data of interest. They further add, a "slow recursive back and forth process over the data then occurs, followed by report of themes from the data" (p.3)

The first decision made was to analyse the whole data set in order to gather rich descriptions of the experiences of resilience as opposed to a detailed account of one aspect. Secondly, I chose to use inductive data analysis as opposed to theoretical analysis, meaning that the analysis is explicitly from the data in a bottom up approach. Inductive analysis was chosen as it more about how themes link directly to the data (Patton, 2002). This was in order to answer the research questions of what occupations children participate in and how they contribute to resilience experiences. Coded categories are derived directly from the text data, as thematic analysis is often used in studies where there is limited or no previous research on the studied phenomenon (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I chose to use the thematic analysis process as described by Braun & Clarke (2006) as follows:

Step One: To familiarise myself with the data I immersed myself in the data by transcribing the interviews and focus group myself. I listened to the interviews twice and read all of the interview transcriptions and the focus group transcript. Initially, I read the entire data set before reading

each transcript and then reread them individually two more times. During this process I would note any words that were occupations or seemed relevant to describing resilience in the right side margin.

Step Two: Manual coding was done by generating a list of what was in the data, and organising them into meaningful codes. Each data segment was coded using highlighters, and notes written on the transcripts. Several photocopies of the data transcripts were used to ensure all data extracts were coded. Initial codes developed where occupations, meaning of resilience, participation contribution, feelings described when resilience was required and contextual comments. Different colour highlighters were used for each code. These codes were data driven and the contextual comments were coded for. This is in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) idea that inductive coding with some relevant surrounding data is useful as to avoid the context of the data being lost.

Step Three: I searched for semantic themes (themes explicit in the data) that would provide rich description of the entire data set. I used tables and a thematic map to consider the relationship between codes and between themes. The initial themes recorded in the tables were understandings of resilience, occupations, and contribution to resilience

Step Four: The themes were then reviewed in two levels. Firstly, all collated extracts for each theme were read again to analyse a coherent pattern. Secondly, themes were reviewed against the whole data set to ensure they reflect the meanings evident in the overall data. This step identified that there was an additional theme of the occupational experience. Data was then checked and coded for again. Braun & Clarke (2006) advise that repeated data coding is a common occurrence in this stage of the analysis.

Step Five: The themes were named by defining and refining the themes to identify the essence of what the data captured. The themes were also discussed with supervisors who advised using the words of the participants', to ensure the strongest representation of the data. This resulted in three main themes: What resilience is, occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience, and participation and building resilience. The three themes also resulted in sub themes, which are discussed in chapter four, where connections between the themes that were developed will also be discussed. Particularly, the focus group transcript identified participant's

words as they discussed their responses more in depth. This discussion led to the development of several sub themes in each theme. These themes are named using the participant's words.

Step Six: The final step in the analysis process according to Braun & Clarke (2006) is producing a report of the analysis. Presenting the findings in a narrative form that tells a coherent story with vivid examples and extracts.

Rigour

Rigour is required for all research to ensure trustworthiness of the research itself and the findings. Rigour in qualitative studies is an important widely debated topic with an evolving understanding (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003). Ensuring research principles are congruent with theoretical assumptions, and that beliefs and preconceptions are acknowledged as informing research choices is suggested by Caelli, Ray and Mill (2003) as a way of establishing rigour in research. The four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were employed to demonstrate rigour.

Credibility

Credibility or the truth value refers to a study presenting descriptions of participants experiences that others with the same experience can recognise and accounts for the overall representativeness of the data (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Qualitative studies can achieve credibility when using strategies such as peer review, reflexivity and member checking. Credibility of the information in this study was achieved by member checking using a focus group (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). An additional peer review strategy was participating in regular discussion about the research process and findings with research supervisors and debriefing in research supervision, which adds to creditability (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Reflexivity was enabled by completing a presuppositions interview and using a research journal to record my thoughts and research process as they developed (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This journal was used during interviews, discussion with supervisors and through analysis (see Appendix K).

Transferability

Transferability is the applicability of the research findings and methods to other contexts and/or participants (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This can be achieved with detailed

description of demographics of participants, settings and processes used so others can determine for themselves whether or not the findings reported and interpreted have relevance for their own settings (Krefting, 1991; Patton, 2002; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Although the study findings were not intended to be generalised across the whole population, demographic information, along with a detailed account of the research methods employed, is given to contribute to whether findings are applicable to other settings.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the trail of the decision making by the researcher and whether that can be followed by others (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Dense description of the research methods and processes can achieve dependability; the methods used in this study have been described in detail in this chapter. Decision-making has been consistently documented in my research journal and also in supervision notes.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the study. It is said to have been satisfied when credibility, transferability and dependability issues are addressed (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Additionally, Thomas & Magilvy (2011) suggest this is also achieved by the research being reflective, meaning the researchers own immediate feelings and biases are recorded in the field and there is an effort to follow and not lead interviews. Recording field notes during and after the interviews and discussing them and the data with my research supervisors contributed to the reflexive nature of the research. Also, establishing credibility, transferability and dependability has contributed to confirmability of this study.

Summary

This chapter has described the rationale for the selection of the qualitative descriptive research approach used in this study. Qualitative descriptive design is an appropriate approach when a daily experience in everyday language is the focus of the research. This approach is underpinned by a relativist view that all participants may describe different experiences that would result in different descriptions of resilience and occupations and how participation in occupations would contribute to resilience. The research methods in this study including ethical considerations, participant selection criteria and recruitment, data collection and analysis have been described in detail. An overview of some of the strategies to ensure rigour of the study

have been presented. In the following chapter the findings of the data are discussed. The themes that were developed in the analysis are presented and accompanied with descriptions and examples that support those findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected. The findings are discussed as three major themes, *what resilience is; occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience* and lastly *participation and building resilience*, with each theme containing sub themes. The themes and sub themes in which the findings are presented are discussed and illustrated with quotes from the data collected in the interviews and focus group. The themes are inextricably linked, in that the first theme captures the participant's ideas of what resilience means to them, which links to the second theme as it entails what occupations the participants described in relation to their experience of resilience. The final theme builds on the previous two themes as it discusses how participation in occupations may contribute to resilience.

Theme one: What resilience is

As this study explores resilience from a child's perspective it was important to establish what the participants understand and experienced resilience as. Understanding what resilience meant to the participants of the study also helped to provide the context in terms of what occupations children participate in, and how those occupations may contribute to resilience. This theme captures what the participants described as their experiences of resilience and what resilience meant to them. This theme is reflected in the language used by the participants. The participants were asked to describe what they thought being resilient was. It appears that resilience as described by the participants was a process that was experienced, and was something that could be demonstrated. Two sub themes became apparent from the participant's perspectives of resilience: *Staying strong* and *Bouncing back. Staying strong* captured the participant's feelings about their lived experience of being a person who was resilient, and what it is like to become resilient. *Bouncing back,* referred to the ideas participants shared about their resilience experience and what it is like when they saw themselves as being resilient.

Staying strong

Staying strong captured descriptions of participants' feelings about experiences of resilience. The participants described resilience as more of a static experience. For many of the

participants staying strong had been something they had to do when faced with tough times or they had noticed their friends stay strong through a tough period. *Staying strong* from the participant's perspective suggested resilience is built up over a period of time and that it is something that develops as opposed to being an inherent individual trait. The idea that resilience is about staying strong indicated that participants saw resilience as having hope in a time of despair, needing to overcome adversity, or that their feelings, and experiences may be different with time. For the participants, staying strong in essence is about not showing you are hurt, continuing on, and a sense of needing to be strong for others during challenging times.

Sam described his experience of resilience in relation to overcoming bullying in social situations at school. He described being able to take what was happening and not show any hurt, and used a metaphor of a tank to describe what staying strong meant to him.

> *To be able to take anything… without showing any damage or anything… such as a tank. When you throw a rock at it, all it's going to do is leave a dent but it doesn't seem like it's going to stop aye.*

Sam described his experiences as being able to withstand something happening to him but not stopping because of the hurt, it may leave a dent but you carry on. Similar to Sam, Siphon talked about asking others to play with him, and how he continued at school despite being upset.

> *Well yes I guess you could say I have needed to be resilient, as I have tried to overcome it… So I have tried to ask someone to play with me. Like I had to overcome that I'm not great socially, I'm good academically, but I don't have many friends but I have to go to school. I just don't show that I am upset. That's what resilience is to me.*

Resilience for both Sam and Siphon was about staying strong, continuing to put themselves out there, and not showing hurt, when things do not work out. The idea that *staying strong* was about not giving up, and continuing with daily life was mentioned firstly by Vanessa, followed by Kim and then Jade.

> *It's like getting stronger through something. Like my friend who was being bullied at school, so she didn't want to come to school. But she did stuff to help her get strong, and so she kept coming to school and now she knows how to get through it. Yeah, she's resilient I reckon.*

> *For me, it means like not giving up and staying strong, and sort of taking whatever's thrown at you, just keeping going with it, keep going and not breaking down… like maybe their parent died, it may have hurt them for a while but they just like kept going, I stayed strong and came back to school…*

> *Yeah like when my mum and dad split up, that was really hard. I was trying to be strong and not let it get to me, I was trying to be strong for my sister, and so all of us can be strong together. I was trying to not give up. For me, resilience is being strong and not backing out of anything.*

These three participants all identified resilience as staying strong by not giving up, or observed others continuing with daily life despite adversity. Staying strong seemed to be an important description of what resilience meant to the participants.

Bouncing back

Bouncing back presented the ideas from the participant's description of resilience as a coping process that happens to them, as opposed to something they were born with. Many of the participants mentioned a process that they had noticed where a change within them had occurred. They described these experiences as bouncing back. *Bouncing back* was about coming back from whatever has happened, as a changed person, different in some way than before, more prepared for the next challenge. Harry described resilience, as going through something where you become a better version of yourself than before, and therefore you know what to do next time.

> *When you get through things, like coping in bad situations. It's weird... it doesn't happen to everyone… it just comes out when you're dealing with bad things and you get angry and then you don't have a choice, it just happens and comes out... It's like going through something and then you come back as version two, better than before, and you're calm, and you know what to do next time.*

Harry's description of his experience highlighted his understanding of resilience as a process. A process where he noticed changes such as being calmer, and had learnt from it, as in he knew what to do next time. The idea that *bouncing back,* was about experiencing a change in oneself, was also described by Rusty about supporting a friend through a tough time. He noticed that despite facing challenges his friend was positively different from before. Rusty described his friend as being resilient.

> *Yeah so my friend at school…She gets help from school and people are like supporting her as much as we can, and hang out with her, so she tries to come to school. She is now bubbly, calm and laughs with us, she seems different from the earlier days. She used to miss school a lot. I would think she is a pretty resilient person.*

Rusty described his understanding of resilience by observing the changes in his friend's mood and behaviour. Rusty observed that his friend doing things such as getting help or being with friends, meant his friend was positively different than before. Vanessa referred to a noticeable

change as 'growth' during her experience. She pointed out that it that even though things are tough you can come back from a situation with confidence.

> *It was like I had to get over it. I mean I was sad and it was tough, but I had to get over it, and I had to go to school. So I was growing stronger and growing in confidence. You just become different.*

Vanessa described how a change from originally feeling sad to becoming more confident and stronger resulted in her feeling different. This 'different' feeling alluded to a change or growth in Vanessa, in her experience; resilience was about developing confidence and being different in response to a situation. Rose described resilience as bouncing back with a better version of yourself than before. The bouncing back involved thinking about and reflecting on a situation about how things could be done differently.

> *Well I had to cope with what was happening at school, and I still had to go to school. So at home I would think about it, and try to think back about what I could do differently, or how I could fix it... You know it just happens when you go through something, and you think how you can come back a better person. It's like you bounce back from it.*

Rose talked about bouncing back as a process of coping where a person has changed or reinvented themselves as a different version of their former self. Similar to Rose, Siphon talked about resilience as a process of bouncing back by coping or getting through something. While a person might not seem any different knowing their situation and that they have had to deal with something means that, for Siphon, he was aware that somehow they had dealt with the situation without showing it, that they had bounced back.

> *You know there are people in my class I am sure who have had to bounce back from some pretty awful things. But they do it, they just get through tough things and you wouldn't even know.*

Kim discussed her experience of resilience, similarly to Rose and Siphon, as a coping process that happens when you need to cope, and overcome challenges.

> *Resilience is…It's like you just bounce back you know. Like people in my class everyday…there is some people who don't have lots of money and they have lots of challenges daily…maybe there's people who have like mental disorders like anxiety or something and so they have to face that daily…but it just happens, they do things to cope through life every day.*

Here Kim described people in her class where she thinks resilience is about *bouncing back,* and is a process that happens daily, and perhaps constantly for some people depending on their challenges, which she described as the meaning of resilience to her. Several of the participants

described *bouncing back* as a change process that occurs to a person once they have gone through something challenging and have found a way to deal with a situation.

In summary, the first finding is about what resilience meant to the participants. The descriptions of their experience of resilience, highlighted their understanding of resilience as *Staying strong* and *Bouncing back.* The participants understanding of resilience was reflected in the use of language as they described their own experiences or of experiences supporting others. Several participants mentioned doing things such as getting help, or hanging out with their friends as contributing to their experience of staying strong or bouncing back. This idea is explored further in the second theme, as it focusses on what occupations the participants did and how those occupations contributed to resilience.

Theme two: Occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience

The second theme captured the occupations that the participants did in relation to resilience. Participants described their occupations as things they do every day and how they contributed to their experiences of resilience. The participants grouped their occupations in terms of what they did such as watching television, or active or creative occupations. Interestingly, they did not group their occupations in terms of whom they did things with or how much time they spent doing them. Overall, participants described six different occupations, named by the participants themselves using their language of *watching television, talking with others, listening to music, using social media, creative occupations (such as reading, writing, drawing) and physically active occupations* (dancing, singing, walking). This theme is presented in terms of the occupations described by the participants (what children do), and how participating in these occupations contributed to resilience (the experience of occupation). The six occupations described contributed to resilience in six ways of, expressing feelings, building friendships, getting advice, forgetting reality, imagining another place and experiencing enjoyment and laughter. Although the occupations may have been common among the participants, they contributed in different ways to each participant's experience of resilience. To help understand how the themes are connected in building resilience, Figure 1 helps to show who identified which occupations, how those occupations contributed to resilience, and then how participation in occupation built resilience for each participant.

Resilience								
Outcomes of participation	Letting go		Fostering support		Distraction		Fun and Happiness		
Occupation and resilience	Express feelings	Laughter and enjoyment	Build friendships	Get advice	Forget reality	Imagine another place	Laughter and enjoyment	Build friendships	Express feelings
Occupations — Watching television					6	1,3,7	5		
Talking to others	1,7,8		2	1,3					
Listening to music					2,3		1,5		
Using social media	7	4	1,7,8	1,8		4	4,5		7
Creative occupations	8		1	1	1,7		1		
Active occupations			3,7,8,		4		4,5	7,8	

Legend	
1	Kim
2	Sam
3	Harry
4	Jade
5	Vanessa
6	Siphon
7	Rusty
8	Rose

Figure 1: What occupations children participate in and how they contribute to resilience

Watching television

Watching television created experiences of enjoyment, laughter, helped to forget reality and imagine another place, which the participants highlighted contributed to resilience through being temporarily distracted and experiencing happiness. Siphon talked about his experience by escaping the real word and how he imagined another place where he could manage his situation.

> It's an escape… its takes you out of the real world and puts you in a fantasy for a little second. I watch movies and it feels like I am in the movie. Yeah… it's like I am an innocent bystander just watching what's going on around me in the movie. So you get absorbed in the movie, and you forget about what is happening for you in reality. So like I imagine being in another world where it's easier and that helps me get through it.

Siphon talked about how he can imagine another place that is easier to manage. Forgetting reality, and imagining another place appeared to be a temporal element where the experience of forgetting reality appears to provide some temporary relief. Rusty also described a temporal element to forgetting reality when watching television by pushing pause on reality, followed by Kim who described getting a break from thinking about reality.

> You know, you just get into the show, you don't think about anything else, like what's happening. You only think about the show at that time, so you get a break from all the bad stuff. It's like you push pause on the real world.

> It just distracts you, the television is good like that, you just forget about the other stuff, the stuff you just want a break from. I reckon it helps coz you really focus on the show and then you might talk about the show with someone after.

As well as offering short term relief, watching television and forgetting reality helped Harry to feel like his situation would be okay.

43

> *Yeah I would watch television with my little brother. It's good because it helps you to forget what's happening. You just don't think about it. Afterwards you feel like it's going to be okay.*

There was a common transformative experience evident where a short break from thinking about reality helps the participants to feel better after watching the television. This is similar to Vanessa's experience where watching television makes her laugh as she has described.

> *Sometimes I watch movies with my sister or my friends, and that helps me because I feel like I can do things that are fun so it's going to be okay. I can still laugh at funny things on television. When I laugh then I feel happy and that helps you cope.*

Vanessa shared how her experience of watching television enabled laughter and how being able to laugh and have fun helped her to cope and also forget reality. There is a sense that watching television helped to provide short term relief from the adverse situation for participants. In summary, the occupation of watching television contributed to resilience by helping participants to forget reality and (for one participant) to experience laughter.

Talking with others

Talking with others enabled some of the participants to express their feelings, and get advice through fostering support and letting go, which were seen as ways of building resilience. Kim began by describing her experience talking to her parents. This is followed by Rose, who shared an experience of talking with a counsellor and Rusty finishes by describing his experience of talking with friends.

> *I talk to my parents. We talk about it as a family so we can be strong together. That way I feel connected to them. Like they support me and I would stick with my family, so we would all stay together and keep helping each other through the bad times. As long as we have each other it will be fine. I talk to my family and my friend as sometimes it helps to get things off your chest. Yeah that helps I find.*
>
> *Yeah I did this group, and we talked about our feelings. Talking to councillors helps because it helps you to express your feelings…It's like after you talk all the emotions are out so you can breathe again, and start again. You just let go.*
>
> *You know if you can't talk to your parents, then someone in your family or your friends. I talked to my friends to support them. Once you talk to someone you feel better, you can feel stronger. It's a feeling of letting go all the bad feelings, you might be sad or angry, and then you can start again calm.*

Kim, Rose, and Rusty described their experiences of talking with others and how it helped them to express their feelings, which helped them to feel stronger, and start again. This differed from Harry and Kim who described talking with others as a way of getting advice which built resilience through fostering support. Harry described talking to his mum and dad.

> *I talked to my mum and dad. It was good. They gave me advice and solutions on what to do. I also talked to my teacher. It helps because you can share the problem with someone else. You feel support to get through… You feel like you have a plan, so you know what to do, and you can get through it… Talking to other people makes it feel less hard.*

Kim talked to her friends, and described her experience of how she can talk about her feelings, and get advice.

> *Talking to friends or someone else, like having someone there. Yeah like having someone supporting you, like someone to talk to you helps. Like they give you advice and how things are going. Like you can talk about your feelings, and get advice on what to do.*

Both Harry and Kim described how getting advice on what to do and talking with people was supportive. Sam identified that talking with other helps to build connection, and discussed how the connection between people makes you feel supported.

> *It's like when you put two strangers in a room, and they might not know each other well, but give them 5mins to talk about their common situations, and they will share their tough times with you. You will find that you have something in common and you are not alone. You are instantly connected just by talking to each other. Talking helps you feel supported and that makes you feel strong, to carry on.*

In summary, engaging in the occupation of talking with others seemed to build resilience by helping participants to express feelings and let go difficult thoughts and feelings; get advice and build connections that developed resilience by fostering support.

Listening to music

Listening to music was an occupation participants used to express their feelings, experience enjoyment and laughter, and forget reality which contributed to resilience by creating distraction, and experiencing fun and happiness. Participation in listening to music is described by Harry and Sam.

> *Back then; I listened to music so I could calm down. That way I could be just be by myself. It's calming. I still do that now... it just clears your mind and you listen to the music, so you're not thinking about anything else, or what's happened. You just forget coz you're just alone with the music. I find that helps to be relaxed. It's helped me cope through those times.*
>
> *You can listen to music and block everyone out. Then eventually you will cool down, you will be calm again. It helps you to not think about the bad things.*

Harry and then Sam identified listening to music was a strategy to feeling calm which built resilience by allowing them to forget about their realities, and become distracted by the music.

This is followed by Kim and then Vanessa who talked about experiencing enjoyment, and thinking about the future, which built resilience through feeling happy by listening to music

> *Listening to music definitely helped me bounce back. It's doing something you like or enjoy. You just feel happy after it you know. Feeling happy helps you to feel good again about a suck time. So I listen to music by myself or with my friends.*

> *I guess listening to music helps me bounce back and get stronger. When I am listening to music, I am thinking about stuff in the future not in the past. The words in it have a meaning, so each song has a meaning so I like to listen to happy songs and yeah it makes me happy. Well it makes me feel good about myself. I just do what I like doing, and what makes me happy. That makes me stronger.*

Listening to music was a common occupation amongst many participants. In summary listening to music helped participants to forget reality and express feelings, which build resilience through distraction and experiencing happiness.

Using social media

Using social media was described by most of the participants as an occupation they did to get advice, experience laughter and enjoyment, imagine another place, build friendships and express feelings, which in turn contributed to resilience through fostering support, letting go, distraction and experiencing fun and happiness. Kim begins, followed by Rose and then Rusty, who all mention how participating in social media helped to build friendships.

> *So when my friend's mum died, I wrote to her so she got an instant comment from me, saying I was thinking about her, and if she was okay, and what I could do to help…She replied, telling me the comment had made her day which was awesome then you know you have helped your friend through a really hard time. It helps, it's like you get support and you can support others when you use it.*

> *I like watching YouTube and using social media like Instagram… Sometimes people make videos to help people with the tough times they are going through. Then people can comment, like what you can to do to feel better, or you can comment to help them. You feel an instant connection, like they are your friends. It helps.*

> *Friendship. It's really important. Social media helps you to make friends. Friendship, it's like having back up, so if you can't help yourself other people can help you and you can bounce back, you know you can cope... Well you can see that other people might be going through similar things, or it might help make you laugh, and others will write things back to you like in support of you. If you post something, then everyone likes it and comments on it. So people will try to help you whatever situation you are in.*

There was a common idea among some of the participants that social media helped to build friendships, which contributed to resilience by fostering support. However, Jade and Vanessa talked about their experience of using social media to experience laughter and how they used that to cope through situations, feeling like things were okay if they could experience feeling happy.

Well I liked to go on YouTube and watch videos of people. Like people dancing, laughing and making challenges, you know they make videos of themselves. It's funny, so you know the laughter helps. When you laugh, you have fun and then everything seems okay again.

You know I go on YouTube and watch videos of others doing funny things, because it makes me laugh. It's funny and then you laugh and feel happy again. It's like you can laugh at things, and it then you know your stronger again.

In addition, Rusty mentioned that using social media also helped him to build resilience by expressing his feelings to people and feeling better after telling people about his experience.

Using social media helps you to write your feelings, and then you feel like you have said it or told someone. So you write what you're thinking or feeling and people write back and then you feel better that you have told someone.

Unlike the previous descriptions, Jade specifically described her experience of using Instagram on social media to build resilience by imagining another place where she could have fun.

I like Instagram…it makes you feel like your there, like with them. Like you can imagine what they're doing and what you could be doing. Yeah like you look at what they are doing and the fun they are having, and you can imagine what it would be like if you are there. At that time, it helps you to feel positive, or better about your own problems. That helps you stay strong…

In summary, the participants described using social media to build friendships, express their feelings, and imagine another place that in turn contributed to resilience through fostering support, feeling better through letting go of feelings, and being distracted temporarily.

Creative occupations

Creative occupations, such as reading, writing and drawing, were described by the participants as opportunities to express their feelings, forget reality, imagine another place and get advice. Participants comments indicated they perceived these occupations as having contributed to resilience through fostering support, letting go, providing distraction, and experiencing happiness. Rose, Kim and Rusty shared their differing experiences. Rose expressed her feelings by participating in writing, and was able to let go of emotions.

I write stuff down on a notepad. It helps me to forget what's happened and express my feelings. It stops you from thinking about it and stops you from getting all emotional inside and then helps you to like move on with everything else. I once drew a person, and wrote things on the sides that helped me to get over what I was going through. You get all your emotions out on paper. It helps I think… You need to be able to get it all out to be able to come back. You know you have to let go of it, and then you can start again better.

Rose described the connection between expressing her feelings by writing them down and then being able to move on, let go, and then start again. Kim talked about reading as a different

experience that helps her to forget her reality. This is followed by Rusty who described how doodling and drawing helped him get a break from thinking about reality. They both described how they get fully absorbed in the occupation and described forgetting reality. There is a sense that forgetting reality is a way of coping at the time, and experiencing a break from an adverse situation is helpful.

> *I read books alone... I love to read. I like to get a good book, and get lost in the story. I read a lot to make myself feel better, because it's like a different world so you can just lose this one if it's being sucky and go in a different one. It helps me forget about what is actually happening. It's relaxing and it makes me happy.*

> *Sometimes I draw or doodle on paper and see where it takes me. It helps you to just to scribble and takes your mind off whatever's really happening. So you get a break from thinking about the hard stuff and that helps you feel better, just forget about the real world for a bit.*

Kim described how participating in writing letters using pen and paper was a way of getting advice from her friend, which fostered support as a coping strategy.

> *Sometimes I write letters. My friend and I write to each other and share what's happening and then we help each other out, like with ideas for what to do. That's helpful because I know she is my friend and I trust her so we can help each other overcome the hard stuff. It's support to cope I guess.*

In summary, creative occupations such as reading, writing and drawing seemed to help participants to express feelings, forget reality and get advice. This in turn contributed to resilience by letting go of emotions to help them move on and bounce back; fostering support, and also being distracted for a short while.

Active occupations

Active occupations, such as netball, singing and dancing, provided opportunities for some of the participants to build friendships and to experience enjoyment and laughter. These experiences contributed to resilience by fostering support, providing distraction and experiencing fun and happiness. Rose and Rusty both described participation in active occupations with others that gave them friendship and helped them cope through fostering support.

> *Playing netball for me is helpful. You are in a team… If you lose a game of sport then it makes you want to play more to try to win, so you can compare it to resilience, like together, you're working harder towards a goal. Like if something fails, then you make another goal and work towards that. So you come together, with your friends to try to win, and you feel supported. Like you have support to win so then you think you can do it…that's friendship, you can win, and you feel like you can bounce back.*

Playing netball for Rose gave her feelings of friendship and support to succeed and overcome loss. Rose described how this experience made her feel supported to bounce back. Rusty described a similar experience where bike riding with his friends is reflective of his friendships, where laughter and enjoyment with others is support

> *I go bike riding sometimes by myself, or with my friends. That helps me stay strong because that's what friendship is, you do things with your friends that you enjoy. It helps you to laugh. Those times make you feel like you are supported by your friends.*

Building friendships by connecting with others through participation in occupation was also described by Harry. He explained how connecting with his brothers through participation in jumping on the tramp helped him to feel supported by his brothers.

> *I play with my little brothers…Well I feel connected because they support me by being there for me like how we play together, jumping on the tramp... Jumping on the tramp helps I reckon, it's only something I do with my little brother.*

Doing active occupations, in addition to building friendships was also described as a way to experience enjoyment and contributed to resilience by experiencing happiness as Jade described followed by Vanessa.

> *I remember not doing anything at all and was really sad. I wanted life to get better. I remember being 'in the zone' when I'm dancing. It makes me happy, and I enjoy it. It makes me laugh and its fun. As soon as I was dancing again I knew I could cope again, I was happy again. So back then I just did things, like things that I love to do. Like dancing so I could get over it.*

> *It's important to laugh and have fun. For me, singing, and dancing makes me laugh and I have fun. If doing it makes you happy, and you enjoy it, then you it makes you not think about the tough things. You can cope when you're happy.*

Jade referred to noticing a difference in herself, and coping through her tough times by experiencing enjoyment through dancing. Jade highlighted how participation in dancing was meaningful to her, as she has fun and becomes happy. Enjoyment and fun was also the outcome for Vanessa when she participated in singing and dancing. Enjoyment and laughter seems to contribute to resilience by developing a coping strategy of feeling happy and having fun. In summary, the participants made a connection between participation in active occupations, that resulted in building friendships and experiencing laughter and enjoyment, which contributed to resilience by fostering support, and creating experiences of happiness and fun.

This theme has identified a range of occupations that were engaged in by participants such as, watching television, talking to others, listening to music, using social media, creative occupations, and active occupations. These occupations seem to contribute to resilience by building friendships, getting advice, expressing feelings, letting go, forgetting reality and imagining another place. This is explored further, in the next and final theme, which captures how the experience of participating in occupations buildt resilience.

Theme three: Participation and building resilience

The final theme builds upon theme two and focusses on how participation in occupations builds resilience. The participants described six ways that occupations contributed to resilience by building friendships; getting advice; forgetting reality; imagining another place; expressing feelings; and experiencing laughter and enjoyment. These elements formed four strategies, which are named as the outcomes of participation in occupation. In this final theme, the findings are presented as four sub themes of*, Fostering support*, *Experiencing fun and happiness, Distraction, and Letting go.* These four sub themes are named by the participants as coping strategies that build resilience as a result of participation in occupation.

Fostering support

The participants described how participation in occupation seemed to contribute to resilience by *fostering support.* Support is fostered through the building of friendships and getting advice and was described by the participants as being important and vital to developing resilience. The participants described how occupations were a source of support, enabling them to either stay strong or bounce back. Support came from family members, friends, counsellors and teachers. Rose described her experience of participation in occupation and how it contributed to her developing resilience by fostering supports to help her manage her situation.

> *Doing those things helps you feel connected. It's about feeling supported by others. When you feel supported you feel like you can take on anything, and everyone is around you to help you deal with whatever. You get help, and you don't feel alone to face your problems so then you feel like you can face them to overcome them.*

Being connected, and not feeling alone, were key descriptions for Rose, as ways to foster support. Similar descriptions were also discussed by Rusty, Jade, Harry, Kim and Vanessa respectively. Rusty and Jade both described how support from others was not financial but emotional support that helped to build strength. Rusty talked about elements of trust and

friendships in support, while Jade highlighted how the support helps to give you positive self-belief in beating challenges.

> *When you are connected it give you support. Not like money support but emotional support. You want to give it to others when you know they are facing hard times. When you feel connected you start to trust others and your friendships so you start to feel strong again.*
>
> *It's with people. It really does help you. Feeling like you have people around you helps you maintain your strength. It helps you to believe you can do it. You can beat it. It doesn't come from money, its support from people. It's important to us.*

Harry described support as being a feeling and an action and how it helped him bounce back. This is followed by descriptions from Kim and Vanessa.

> *It's a feeling, and an action. It's both, knowing you are, and feeling connected helps you to get through. When you feel like that, you know you have support to bounce back.*
>
> *I do that because then I feel close to my family, so we can all stick together as family unit. It is like strong support for you. So we are all stronger together, and then we can overcome anything. That way I know I can get be strong through it.*
>
> *When I am with people, talking with family, or dancing with my friends, I feel better… you just feel like your together, and you feel listened too. You feel better by doing it. Like you know its' going to be okay in the end.*

These participants have all talked about how a sense of support came from connection with others and how support helped them feel better and stronger in order to build resilience. Vanessa also pointed out how participation in occupation creates a togetherness feeling of support, allowing her to feel heard. Feeling supported by people as an outcome of participation in occupation, has been described as a source for staying strong and bouncing back from hardship. Fostering support helped participants to develop optimism and create positive thoughts and feelings about coping through challenging times.

Experiencing fun and happiness

Participation in all six occupations described by the participants enabled experiences of fun and happiness through laughter and enjoyment. This was experienced whether they were active or more sedentary occupations, whether they were occupations done alone or with others, or with a combination of both. Every participant expressed feeling happy and having fun as crucial to his or her resilience experience. Many participants described how feeling happy and experiencing fun made them feel 'like they can do it'. Having fun and feeling happy seemed to create feelings of optimism, highlighted by experiences shared firstly by Vanessa, followed by Jade, Harry and then Siphon.

I would say just do things you love, it's really important. Doing things, you love makes you have fun, and be happy…. I like to laugh, and it's fun and so I think it makes me happier and stronger. Feeling happy makes you feel strong, so that makes you feel like you can do it, you act how you feel, so laughing and having fun makes you feel happy.

When I'm in the zone, I'm thinking about the moves. Then me and my friends will watch the video back, we laugh and I enjoy it. I feel good that I can do it, It's fun and it makes me happy. Feeling happy makes you feel like you can cope through the tough things

Doing those things makes me happy, and I laugh. You feel like there is hope, or that it will all be okay when you can feel happy again, so it's really important.

I definitely talk to my mum… But sometimes, I talk to my little brother, he doesn't always understand. I just tell him anyway, or I hug him, and I say hello to him. Just hugging him cheers me up and makes me feel like I can do it. I feel happy… and then I feel like I can take on anything.

Vanessa and Jade both described how feeling happy and having fun was about being able to cope, and feeling strong. As Harry pointed out, feeling happy instilled hope in him, but also feeling happy could be a sign of becoming resilient. Lastly, Siphon talked about how feeling happy helped with motivating or optimism about taking on anything. Rusty described his experience of how he has fun, and how that helped him as a coping strategy.

If you wana bounce back, I think it's important to have fun. We like to do things for fun. Like it's fun to do something new you haven't done before, or try and accomplish something. Like learning some new skills or trying something new… I have friends that draw, like sketch in art so I tried to learn that and get good at it. It's like pretty cool to learn something new. It made me feel happy and that helped me know that I could get through it… having fun and feeling happy again just makes you feel stronger. In that moment, you feel like you can do it, you can overcome it. It's important.

Harry discussed the importance of fun, and shared how the enjoyment of learning new skills and achieving mastery made him feel happy again, which built strength to carry on and overcome challenges. There was consistency among participants about how participation in occupations contributed to feelings of happiness that made participants have an 'I can do it' moment. There was an overall sense that feeling happy and having fun meant you were becoming resilient. Sam described his experience of feeling happy was a sign that he was coping.

I tell jokes. So I can laugh, and others can laugh. Basically, people laughing, makes me happy. I like to laugh because that means I feel happy. Feeling happy means you can do things, like just take whatever happens to you.

The participants described how participation in occupation built resilience through experiencing happiness and fun. Some participants described how feeling happy and having fun meant they learnt new skills or tried new things, and created optimism and motivation to get through. For others, it helped them to build and sustain strength during tough times. The outcome from

participation in occupation of feeling happy and having fun seemed important to the participants, giving them a sense that becoming resilient was possible, despite whatever they were enduring.

Distraction

Participation in occupations, as described in theme two, enabled participants to forget reality and imagine another place. These two elements contributed to resilience by using distraction as a coping strategy. In the moment, when participants were fully engaged in their occupations they commonly described being able to forget reality and imagine another place. Participants described how being distracted in their occupation and engaged in what they were doing, helped them to get through challenging times and build resilience by not thinking about difficult things and in some cases, experiencing temporary relief. Some participants seemed to be aware that participation in occupation helped to distract them temporarily and that distraction was a good strategy for coping through tough times. There was an element of occupations being important or of value to the participant such as something they loved to do and enjoyed that enabled the occupation to absorb them. Harry described specifically how participation in occupations that he loves such as watching a movie distracted him from troubling thoughts.

> *Well watching movies, or playing with your siblings is like a distraction. When you do things you love, you just stop thinking about the other stuff, and you focus on what you are doing. You just get distracted, which is probably a good thing.*

Siphon also explained how engaging in occupations you love helps you to be lost in the movie, so engrossed in watching that he becomes absorbed by the movie. For him, he was specifically motivated by superhero movies where he imagined he is one, and has superhero powers to take on his current world of reality, where he faces adversity.

> *Like watching movies. It helps you by doing things, to not think about the other stuff. It's hard to explain but you just get absorbed by it and in that moment you are okay.*

Forgetting reality, and imagining another world or place, was described by the participants as an outcome of participation in occupations such as reading, dancing, watching television, playing with siblings and using social media. Participants described how participation in these occupations helped them to not think about what was currently happening in their world for that moment in time while they engaged in doing the occupation. For some participants the opportunity to do that helped them to experience an 'I can do it' feeling where they were

believed they could bounce back or cope with their situation. Rusty described the moment in time for him.

> *Being in your own world helps you to forget of the one you're in so it feels like nothing is wrong in that moment. When that happens, you feel okay, like you can do it, you think I am going to come back from this, and you might be different.*

Vanessa describes her experience of how participation in using social media helps to distract her from reality because she concentrates on it and how it helps to build resilience by giving her an escape from her current situation.

> *You do things you love because it helps you to concentrate on that one thing, so you set your mind to that and forget the other stuff. I can watch YouTube for ages. It's like a break from what's happening. Afterwards I feel okay again.*

For Jade, dancing was described as an occupation that built resilience for her because she was focussed on the dancing and that created a positive belief in herself, and feeling able to cope.

> *That's what dancing does for me. It builds you up, because for that moment you just focus on the moves. You forget your world and you focus your mind and I feel good about myself. You then think I can do this.*

Participation in occupations contributed to resilience by creating a coping strategy of distraction. This coping strategy is linked to how participation in occupations is temporal in nature. The distraction was time limited and was able to distract participants from negative thoughts or feelings. Participation in occupation seemed to absorb the participants from their real world, helping them to be distracted from their current situation.

Letting Go

Letting go is another sub theme which describes how participation in occupation builds resilience. Expressing feelings and being able to laugh and feel enjoyment was described by some participants as ways in which occupations helped them to let go. The participant's reflected on their ideas of how they use letting go as a coping strategy in order to develop resilience. Jade shared about her experience of talking to friends and how it helped her to build resilience by letting go of emotions which gave her space to feel stronger.

> *Well when you talk to your friends, its gets it off your chest. Letting go of the feelings makes you feel relaxed and happy. It helps you to stop and think about becoming a better, stronger person…it's good to get all those feelings out and then you start to feel better.*

Many of the participants had similar experiences to Rose, where letting go of feeling sad, or angry and becoming calm, relaxed, and happy was how they began to bounce back from tough situations. For the participants letting go was about getting the space needed to become resilient. It appeared that letting go also facilitated the ability to accept and reflect on situations. Harry described this as 'breathing again' in his experience.

> *It's hard to explain, but when you do things like talking to people, it helps you to get your emotions out. You can let go of being angry and breathe again. You become calm and then you can focus on what you need to do, so you can recover.*

Harry highlighted how letting go, created calmness in order to bounce back. Letting go seemed to help give the participants the ability to let go of negative feelings, and develop acceptance in order to build resilience. Vanessa described how dancing, talking with her friends and using social media helped her to let it go, and accept a situation she couldn't change, but had to overcome. She described how, once she let go of sadness, she started to refocus her mind, feel acceptance, and became resilient.

> I felt sad a lot…It helps you to let go of the sad feelings, and you can let that go, then you can set your mind on something else, you can start to feel happy again. It helps you because you just let it go, you accept you cannot change it but you can get stronger once you let it go.

The acceptance of the situation, and letting go of emotions for Rose, also gave her opportunity to reflect and grow from her experience.

> *When you let go you start to bounce back because you have let that tough thing become your past. You can become a different person again by letting go, you will have learnt from it.*

Sam described his experience of yelling in the mirror, where for him letting go was more of an instant strategy that he used regularly to overcome situations that made him angry. He described this in relation to overcoming challenges at school.

> *Yell at the mirror…I do it because it helps me to calm down. Then it's over. I just let it go and forget about it. I feel good after that.*

The participants described experiences where an outcome of participation in occupation built resilience, by enabling them to let go of feelings in relation to their situation. Participants talked about letting go of feelings such as anger and sadness, and then they were able to feel new feelings, such as being calm, happy and strong which helped build resilience. They described how letting feelings go provided opportunities to breathe, reflect and accept their situation.

Summary

This chapter has presented three key themes as the findings of this study. The first theme, *What resilience is*, explored the meaning of the resilience as described by the participants as *bouncing back* and *staying strong.* The second theme, explored *What occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience, and* the final theme of *Participation and building resilience* discussed how participation in occupation contributed to resilience. Theme two   identified the occupations participants described as *talking with others, listening to music, watching television, using social media, creative occupations, and active occupations* contributed to resilience through building friendships, getting advice, expressing feelings, forgetting reality, imagining another place, and experiencing laughter and enjoyment. The last theme, *Participation and building resilience* discussed how six outcomes of participation in occupation contribute to building resilience by creating coping strategies *of fostering support, letting go*, *distraction* and *experiencing fun and happiness.* The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to the literature, and considers the implications for areas such as practice, policy, education and further research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This study has explored what occupations children aged 10-13 years participate in and how their participation in occupation contributed to resilience. These questions have remained the focus throughout this study. Why this research is important and of interest to me has been outlined in chapter one. The literature was about resilience, participation and occupations in children was reviewed, and presented in chapter two. Chapter three discussed the philosophical approach behind this study and the methodology used. In the previous chapter, chapter four, the findings from the data were presented, including supporting quotations from the participants. This final chapter of the thesis will discuss those findings in more detail, and will situate the findings in relation to the literature. The strengths and limitations of this study will also be presented and the Implications for practice, policy and education areas are discussed, followed by suggestions for further research.

Summary of findings

This research set out to explore participation in occupation and resilience, from the perspective of children. Three key themes emerged from the data, *What resilience is*; *Occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience;* and *Participation and building resilience*. All three themes were made up of sub themes. The first theme of *What resilience is* captured the participants understanding through the sub themes of *Bouncing back* and *Staying strong.* Using their language, theme two *Occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience* was described. The third and final theme of *Participation and building resilience* identified how outcomes of participation are coping strategies, which builds resilience, using four sub themes of *Letting go, Fostering support, Distraction, Fun and happiness.*

The language used by participants to describe their experiences, reflected their understanding of resilience. Participants were of the view that resilience only happened when they were faced with a challenge or they needed to overcome something. However, all of the participants could identify situations in their lives, or in the lives of peers or family whom they believed had experienced resilience. Participants described resilience as *bouncing back* and *staying strong* and both these sub themes are consistent with the resilience literature reviewed (Alvos & Grados, 2005; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Zolkolski & 2011.The participants

identified *staying strong* as what it is, and also what it is not, such as being able to take anything that comes at you, as in whatever challenge life throws at you, but also there was a sense that strength was also about not showing damage, or hurt. The sub theme of *Bouncing back* was about participants observing or experiencing personal growth or positive change in themselves or others after experiencing a period of adversity.

Understanding *Occupations children do and how they contribute to resilience* highlighted watching television, listening to music, using social media, creative occupations, and active occupations as what children do. Examples of creative occupations included drawing, doodling, reading and writing. Active occupations included occupations such as walking, playing netball, riding bikes, dancing and singing. Participation in these occupations contributed to resilience by building friendships, getting advice, expressing feelings, experiencing laughter and enjoyment, forgetting reality and imagining another place.

Participation and building resilience summarises four coping strategies that build resilience relating to engaging in occupation. Using the participant's language to capture their perspective, the four sub themes are the strategies identified as *Distraction, Letting Go, Fostering Support, Fun and Happiness.* Distraction seemed to be an important 'in the moment' strategy to build resilience, whereas *Letting Go, Fostering Support, Fun and Happiness* were more strategies that were developed or used over time, which helped to build resilience.

Situating the findings

The findings in this study demonstrate that children identify participation in occupation as contributing to the development of their experience of resilience. The participants clearly identified their understanding of resilience as *Bouncing Back* and *Staying Strong* through challenging times. Using their words of *Bouncing Back* and *Staying Strong*, accurately reflects their understanding and the understanding commonly described in resilience literature. Definitions of resilience commonly contain bouncing back or recovering strength in alignment with the English root word of resilience as 'resile' meaning to bounce back (Smith, Epstein, Ortiz, Christopher & Tooley, 2013). The literature available on resilience also suggests a complicated collection and varied understanding of definitions, however across the definitions common ideas are coping through challenging and threatening situations (Alvos & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2014; Zolkolski & 2011). Participants often talked about their experiences of

resilience as times when they need to cope with challenging or difficult situations often experienced at school.

Occupations and how they contribute to resilience

The occupations and how they contribute to resilience identified by the participants are in alignment with the literature (Akers, Muhammad, & Corbie-Smith, 2010; Cinamon & Hason, 2008; Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010; McNeely & Falci, 2004; White & Green, 2011; Youngblade et al., 2007). The findings from this study identified occupations such as listening to music, watching the television, dancing, reading and playing sports. This is consistent with the literature available that describes common occupations of children aged 10-13 years as being predominantly focused on leisure occupations, such as team sports, or social occupations (Case- Smith & O'Brien, 2014) and that these occupations commonly occur outside of school (Bundick, 2011; Case-smith & O'Brien, 2015; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Zivani et al., 2006).

This study's findings suggests that the outcomes of participation in occupation are in alignment with the protective factors described in the literature that enhance resilience, such as building friendships, expressing feelings and experiencing laughter and enjoyment (Goldstein & Brooks, 2011; Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Ungar, 2011; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013). Hasselkus (2002) has stressed that engagement in occupation for the sake of the experience, for how someone feels when doing, is equally, if not more important than its outcome or purpose.

Specifically, the experience of building friendships through participation in occupation is regularly discussed in the literature as social connectedness, a significant outcome of participation in occupation. This is often considered as part of the 'belonging' nature of occupation, where social connectedness from inclusion and reciprocity may arise because of participation in occupation (Hammell, 2009; Watters, Pearce, Backman & Suto, 2013).

 Using social media was another occupation that most participants described as contributing to resilience by building friendships, helping them to experience enjoyment and laughter, and imagine another place. These descriptions of the experience of occupation are also presented commonly in the literature as an expected outcome of using social media for researchers, are often a surprise to parents and educators (Bass, 2016).

The findings showed that although participants may have described participation in the same occupations as each other, their subjective experience of their participation differed among participants and therefore contributed to resilience in different ways. For example, one participant described listening to music as doing something he/she enjoy, for another participant the same occupation helped them to forget their reality. This study therefore supports the identified need to consider resilience from the lived experience of the individual, and in particular the perspectives of children (Goldstein & Brooks, 2011; Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Ungar, 2011; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013). Through an occupational lens, the subjective nature of the findings are consistent with the idea that the 'being' of occupation is subjective, and therefore will always be unique despite the similarities from one person to another in the 'doing' of an occupation (Hayward & Taylor, 2011).

Participation builds resilience

This theme is really about how participation in occupation built resilience as described by the participants. It seemed that there was an overall description of how participation in occupation built resilience by developing four ways of *Letting go, Distraction, Fostering support* and *Fun and happiness.* These four ways that the participants described are commonly reflected in literature as expected outcomes of participation in occupation, For example *Fun and Happiness* and *Fostering support* are established outcomes of participation in occupation according to Bundick (2011), Case-Smith & O'Brien (2015) and Hemmingsson & Jonsson (2005). The coping strategies of *Letting go,* and *Distraction* are perhaps more suggestive of how children experience the transactional and temporal nature of occupation, and support the view that occupation cannot be viewed in isolation (Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Law, Baum, & Baptiste, 2002; Piskur et al. 2013).

Distraction as described by the participants in essence was about how participation in occupation distracted them from their current reality, and helped them to imagine another place by being so absorbed in the occupation. This aligns with the idea that when one is absorbed in occupation there is potential to lose self-consciousness and negative thoughts disappear and transcendence occurs (Wright et al., 2007).

Letting go was the participant's language for capturing ways that participation in occupation contributed to resilience from the participant's perspective. The participants described how changes occurred when they experienced *letting go*, and how they could be distracted in a helpful way by participation in occupation. Some participants talked about *Letting go* as being able to breathe again and letting go of negative feelings, or past events in order to become resilient. Congruent with the literature, letting go of feelings is required for the regulation of emotions and self- control. These are considered core components in building resilience (Herrman et al. 2011; Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Seligman, 2011; Shastri, 2013). *Experiencing fun and happiness*, *Letting go* of feelings and *Support* are all consistently discussed in the literature as factors to develop self-esteem, self-regulation and sources of support required for resilience in children (Alvord & Grados; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Seligman, 2011; Shastri, 2013).

The study set out to achieve an everyday description of what occupations children aged 10-13 participated in but the participants went beyond just describing their occupations, when talking about their experience of participation in occupation. For example, many participants talked about the importance of participation in occupations by doing things that they love to do, are enjoyable and how those occupations resulted in fun and happiness. One participant talked about how dancing was important to her, and how she noticed a difference in her mood once she participated in dancing again. She described her experience of participation in dancing beyond just dancing but how it made her feel happy and experience fun when she was dancing with her friends. Many of the participants shared similar ideas about how their experience of participation in occupation helped them to cope. From an occupational perspective, this affirms that occupation (doing) is important but equally so is a focus on the meaning of the experience (being) (Doble & Caron Santha, 2008; Hayward & Taylor, 2011; Hasselkus, 2002) and arguably, that the potential agent of change comes from the meaning of the occupation to the individual (Wilcock, 2006; Reed, Hocking & Smythe, 2010).

In this study, the findings contained topics of how participation in occupation was important to participants, helping them to escape reality by forgetting their current world, and described the support they received from others. These same three examples are described in the literature as part of the experience of participation in occupation such as: participation in occupations with meaningful characteristics, social relationships and experiencing transcendence; an escape or

break from difficult situations or worries are common experiences as a result of participation in occupation (Hasselkus, 2002; Watters et al., 2013). This highlights how important the experience of participation in occupation is to understand when building resilience.

This idea of experience being part of the description of occupation, is in alignment with the current call in occupational therapy literature to revisit the categorisation of occupations, and to renew understandings about the experience of participation and occupation for health and wellbeing (Doble and Santha, 2008; Hammell & Iwama, 2012; Hayward & Taylor, 2011; Law, Baum, & Baptiste, 2002; Piskur et al. 2013). Arguably, these findings bridge the gap between resilience and occupation and pose several questions for further discussion. These include; How is participation in occupations of childhood valued, understood and influenced in Aotearoa? and Are the contextual factors that influence occupation, the same for all people of Aotearoa? Do the same health, education and poverty inequities impact occupation and resilience in the same way? and How well is the importance of occupation understood by people who work in these areas in relation to children?

Strengths and Limitations of the study

In this study, I set out to describe what occupations children participate in and how they contribute to their experience of resilience. I have been able to describe some occupations that would typically occur in a home and community environment. Perhaps the environment where the participants were interviewed influenced the occupations they chose to talk about. Possibly interviewing participants in a school environment may have provided different descriptions of occupations.

Another limitation of this study is that all intermediate schools that participants were recruited from are of the same decile (decile 5). Decile ratings in New Zealand indicate the socio-economic position that the school community is part of; for example, decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students (Ministry of Education, 2016). The study may have yielded different findings such as the occupations described by the participants if there had been a number of schools across a range of deciles.

Consideration of the methods used to gather data could be viewed as a strength and a limitation. Whilst using individual interviews and focus groups is consistent with qualitative methods, the participants were more animated and engaged in discussions in a focus group environment than in an individual interview. This could be because they are developmentally concerned with their peers and their peer opinions and could be familiar with group discussion processes. Perhaps using several focus groups as the data collection method could have gathered richer and more in-depth information about participation and resilience.

A strength of this study is that the involvement of children as participants gives rise to their voices being heard and perspective being included in the understanding of resilience as a topic. The participants discussed preliminary themes in the focus group and were able to provide feedback, and add further thoughts and clarification. Data analysis methods consistent with qualitative descriptive studies meant the language of the participants were used to identify and name themes to ensure children's perspectives were not lost. The methods chosen for this study were consistent with qualitative research, meaning that a small number of participants were interviewed. Within the small number of participants interviewed, there was an even number of males and females, and even number of Year 7 and Year 8 students, however the small sample size does limit the generalisability of the findings. Although the subjective experience of participation in occupation does differ among participants, and contributes to resilience differently for individuals, there is some common experience of what occupations participants do, which could suggest children aged 10-13 participate in some common occupations outside of school.

Reflections of the research process

At the outset of this research, I believed that children were doing things every day that contributed to their experience of resilience and this was supported by the findings. All participants described experiences of resilience in their lives and clearly articulated their experiences of how occupation contributed to their experiences. They surprised me with openly discussing their experience, which drew out their understanding of resilience. However, the fact that the participants could easily articulate and identify the connection between their experiences, and how that built resilience was inspiring.

On reflection, this study has renewed my sense of identity as an occupational therapist, grounded firmly in the power and meaning of participation in occupation, drawing me back to the security of the lived experience of individual's in the pursuit of health and wellbeing. As a result, the findings of this study have encouraged me to continue with further research that endeavours to highlight the connection between occupation and health and wellbeing.

Implications

This research aimed to contribute to and advance the limited body of knowledge on the connection between occupation and resilience in children. Therefore, it is useful to consider the findings in relation to four areas where knowledge can be applied; practice, policy, education and research.

Practice

The findings will be important to health professionals in all areas of practice such as occupational therapists, educators, and social welfare practitioners. Utilising an occupational lens to build resilience will likely require a greater emphasis on increasing children's participation in occupations as intervention in various practice settings, or a shift in how education, health promotion and health literacy programmes are delivered to children, with more of a focus on participation in occupation.

More specifically, as the findings suggest children experience occupation as strategies to help build resilience, the challenge to health practitioners, is to review prioritisation of interventions in order to develop resilience in children, where arguably, health outcomes could be achieved from using occupation-based interventions.

Furthermore, for practitioners in mental health practice or in the practice of developing wellbeing in children, the findings highlight the potential temporal aspect of occupation that builds resilience. For example, distraction seemed to be described by participants as an 'in the moment' strategy, that could be included as a focus for practitioners who teach coping skills for distress, or when focussing on building resilience in recovery from mental ill health.

Specific to occupational therapists who are concerned with people and their ability to participate in occupation and lead meaningful healthy lives, the findings in this study add to the established

need for the profession to remain focussed on participation in occupation to enable health and wellbeing of people and develop resilient children.

The findings suggest that occupational therapists must continue to have a more significant focus on the experience of participation in occupation, as opposed to the performance of occupation to enhance determinants of health such as resilience. The findings support occupational therapists' use of meaningful occupation.

Policy

This study began by considering the issues facing children both globally and in Aotearoa, highlighting the importance of developing resilient children. The need for children to overcome adversity is embedded in policies and plans that enhance children's wellbeing, and enrich their lives. The findings from this study support the need for policies that develop resilience. The findings from this study show that children know about the concept of resilience and can identify what contributes to the development of resilience from their experience. Participation in occupation was highlighted as helping to build resilience from a child's perspective, which suggests that policy needs to shift towards providing opportunities for children to participate in occupations such as using social media, sports, and listening to music.

As the findings of this study highlight, children's perspectives on complex concepts such as resilience are critically important and valuable when considering policy development in relation to successful outcomes for children. This study is attune with the need to have children participate in policy making, in relation to the critical issues facing children, demonstrating children know what works for them based on their subjective experience.

The findings of this study, responds to the call from previous parliamentary studies and reports, to understand what successfully contributes to resilience in order for children to reach their potential, and to identify children's perspectives in relation to individual and family wellbeing (Collins, 2010; Mackay, 2003; Fergusson, Beautrais & Horwood, 2003). The findings urge policy makers who use resilience as an aspirational concept, to consider how resilience in children could be achieved, and reflected in policies such as The Children's Action Plan (New Zealand Government, 2012) where the inclusion of occupations of childhood could make improvements to health and wellbeing of children.

Education

People in roles with responsibility to develop resilient children can use the findings from this study. There is consistency among the participants about the significance of feeling supported in relation to building resilience. There was a clear indication that the support came from people. Having people children can talk to, and ensuring children are connected to others is an implication for all those who support children whether that be in health, education or social areas.

The education of health professionals needs to incorporate the outcomes and impact participation in occupation has on children. The findings of this study would suggest that the pre-registration education for health professionals should focus on the connection participation in occupation has with elements of health and wellbeing such as resilience. Understanding the health professional role in enabling or increasing the opportunities children have to participate in occupation as ways of coping, building resilience and improving health will advance the healthcare workforce.

The findings of this study suggest that the education of professionals that will work with children could benefit from focussing on the lived experience of children in their environments and about how children understand and experience the context in which they participate. The education of professionals who will inevitably work with children should highlight the importance of children's perspectives being adhered to when considering the development of programmes, models and systems applied to children.

The education of teachers needs to incorporate a strong focus of how participation in occupation develops coping skills and builds resilience. The findings from this study suggest children are developing strategies to build resilience early in childhood, and educators could focus on participation in occupation in early childhood education to help build resilience. Educator-child relationships can foster resilience in children as early as possible, encouraging children to talk and express their feelings in safe and secure environments in order to build resilience for later life. Educators can encourage children to express their feelings, which helps them to learn to regulate their emotions, reactions, and social competence in relation to

situations and develops resilient adults (Archdall & Kilderry, 2016; Nolan, Taket & Stagnitti, 2014).

Further research

This study has identified what occupations children do, and how participation contributed to resilience. It has identified occupations that children participated in, and has identified ways in which participation in occupation informed coping strategies for children to build resilience. It has not explored how meaningful the occupations were to children, and whether there would be a prioritisation of how and which occupations specifically contribute to resilience. This is an area that could be explored in further research.

Furthermore, studies with a more specific focus on particular occupations could be beneficial to advance children's perspectives of resilience, such as using social media or listening to music. For example, recent research has identified that using social media can be beneficial in developing children's identity and social skills (Bass, 2016) and further studies of this nature could also explore the relationship between social media and resilience.

The participants in this research were from city suburbs and it was not known what resources they utilised or had access to in order to participate in the occupations described. Further studies, therefore could explore the enablers and barriers to participation in occupation of children that build resilience. This study was not designed to focus on specific ethnic groups, a larger study with more participants could focus on either more diversity or specific groups within Aotearoa (such as Maori, Pacific, Asian and migrant populations) to build on the perspective of children included in this study. In addition, studies exploring the contextual factors that influence occupation for children in Aotearoa would also advance the knowledge gained in this study.

Given resilience is likely to be experienced in different ways by children across the world, comparative studies in other countries would be useful to identify if the experience of participation in occupation results in the same coping strategies among children from different countries. This would enable global policy writers, and publishers to collate research on a larger scale and bring resilience research to the forefront of public, and population health fields.

Finally, this study has highlighted children's participation through an occupational lens in relation to resilience. From a child's perspective, participation in occupation can help to develop

resilience. In addition to these suggestions for further research, studies that explored the contextual factors that influence occupation and how children in Aotearoa value occupations in relation to resilience would advance the findings from this study. Further research using an occupational lens could build on children's perspectives of other elements of health and wellbeing such as identity, social participation and quality of life. Research of this nature would continue to highlight the influence occupation has on health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

This study set out to identify what occupations children aged 10-13 years participate in and how participation in occupation contributed to their experience of resilience. This qualitative descriptive study identified six occupations (using social media, talking to others, watching television, listening to music, creative occupations, and active occupations) which contributed to resilience by building friendships; forgetting reality; imagining another place; expressing feelings; enjoyment and laughter. In turn, these five elements of participation in occupation build resilience through four coping strategies; letting go, fostering support, distraction and fun and happiness. While the small sample size and homogeneity of the participants were limitations, the authentic use of the participants' experiences and language to consistently present the perspective of children is a strength of the study. The study has also advanced identification of a connection between participation in occupation and building resilience in children. Implications for practitioners working in practice, policy and education have been identified, specifically related to understanding the value and importance children place on participation in occupation, and how it builds resilience for them. However, the subjective experience of children in relation to occupation and resilience is a perspective that could be better understood, included and utilised in policy, education and research. There needs to be a future focus on occupations that are conducive to children experiencing fun and happiness, feeling supported, experiencing distraction, and being able to let go of negative thoughts and feelings. Participation in occupation has been described as a strategy that can build resilience. Perhaps Rusty and Rose best summarise the importance of children's voices in learning from their experience of resilience.

I would tell others to do things they love to do, that make you happy. It will help you bounce back; you will get stronger and feel it…You will be okay then, you've just got to keep doing what you love. Find things that help you and do them.

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Appendix A: Child Information and Assent Sheet

AUT
UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

INFORMATION SHEET AND ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

(parent/caregivers please read to children)

This form will be kept for a period of 6 years

Hello – my name is Linda Bowden. I am completing my Master's qualification at AUT University. I am doing a study on exploring resilience from your perspective.

I am finding out about resilience – you might like to find out about this as well. I am not sure how to explain the word resilience to you but we can chat about it.

Resilience is a word used about how people stay strong during bad times or when faced with bad things.

I would like to come and chat with you at your home and ask you questions to help me understand what you think and have experienced. This can take up to 1 hour and is called an interview.

Thank you for completing this form – will you ask you parent/caregiver to sign here

_____ (signature)

_____ (Date)

If they feel that you understand what the project is about and would like to participate please give this form to your parent/guardian to send back in the envelope provided.

Linda Bowden

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *enter name, email address, and a work phone number*.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

When I am there I will talk to your parents and you and answer any questions you have. I will use a tape recorder to record what we say so I don't forget.

A few weeks later we will get together a couple of times with other young people your age who have also had interviews and talk about our ideas together as a group of 8 or 9.

Let me know how you feel about this by circling one of these words

Happy
Not Sure
Worried

If you are not sure or worried you can ring me or email me, or ask your parents about this. Or you can ask your parents to contact me on your behalf.

Understanding how young people stay strong in bad times from your thoughts and experiences will help me to understand about resilience. I am asking if you would like to do the interview and maybe come to a group after the interview.

This information will be written in my research which means I will write up a summary of everything I have learnt. This information could be presented in a journal and will be submitted as my research to AUT University. I will send you a copy of the research summary

Please circle **YES** if you would like to take part in the interview

Please circle **NO** if you do not want to do this

Please circle **MAYBE** if you are not sure. If you cannot decide that is fine because you can let your parents know that you want to join in.

This is my photo

I hope we can do this together. It will be great to meet you and you will know who I am because of my photograph. I will also wear a badge with my name on. See you soon!

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

28 April 2015

Project Title

Exploring Resilience from a child's perspective

An Invitation

Hi. My name is Linda Bowden. I am currently completing my Master's qualification at AUT University. I am approaching parents of intermediate school students to participate in a study about resilience in children. Resilience describes how people overcome challenges in their daily life. This will involve your child completing one individual interview and attending up to two meetings with other young people. (in a group). Whether or not you and your child takes part is up to you and your child and is voluntary. This Information Sheet will help you decide if you would like your child to take part. Before you decide you may want to talk about the study with other people, such as family/whānau, friends, or teachers. Feel free to do this. If you agree to your child taking part in this study, please sign the Consent Form on the last page of this document (page 4) and return it in the free envelope provided Please keep one of the two copies of this Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form for your records. If you and/or your child decide they do not want to participate in the study at any point, you can withdraw any time prior to the completion of data collection.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to explore children's experiences of resilience. To understand what activities young people aged 10-13 do, and how their participation contributes to their resilience. Resilience is the ability to cope or bounce back when faced with difficult things in life. This research will be submitted to AUT university as a thesis for my Master's qualification and a summary of the research could be published in journal articles or used in presentations at conferences.

How was I/ my child identified and why am I / my child being invited to participate in this research?

Children who speak English, aged between 10-13 years who attend an intermediate school in South Auckland are being invited to participate. Your child was identified as they attend an intermediate school in the South Auckland region. They were informed about the research study at their school and volunteered to participate. Your consent and

their assent are required before they can participate. If your child is currently accessing a mental health service unfortunately they will not be able to take part in the study.

What will happen in this research?

Your child would need to participate in an interview with me, for roughly 1 hour and attend a focus group a few weeks after their interview for roughly 1.5 hours where questions about resilience and their experiences of activities that have contributed to resilience will be asked and explored. The interviews can occur in a place that suits you and your child such as home or in the community. The focus group will be at AUT in Manukau. You will be offered a petrol voucher to attend the focus group, and your child will receive a small gift/koha at the end of the focus group to say thank you.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is very little risk involved. Confidentiality will be explained and discussed with the children at both the interview and the focus group. The interview and focus group may mean that some children share certain things about their life or experiences that need attention or support. I will manage this group situation with talking to those individuals and yourselves and ensuring access to appropriate supports is given if required. I have lots of experience in working with children and helping children feel able and comfortable to talk and participate.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

These things will be managed by talking to you, and your child about the difficulties and also will be managed in conversation by explaining the purpose and process to your child continuously.

What are the benefits?

Taking part in this study will support research into understanding resilience in children that could be useful to improve services such as health and education. Your child may also share positive experiences about their daily life that have contributed to their resilience. Your child will also be assisting me in completing my Master's qualification.

How will mine/ my child's privacy be protected?

Information collected about your child is confidential to my supervisors and myself. All identifying details will be removed and be combined with information from other children in the focus groups to protect privacy.
Information will be kept confidential and stored securely at AUT for up to 6 years at which point it will be destroyed. Any reporting of this study will not include individual information that could identify you or your child. A summary of the findings from the study will be given / can be requested by you at the end of the study

What are the costs of participating in this research?

FREE- Apart from giving up time, a total of 2.5 hours.
Petrol vouchers to attend the focus groups will be given.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You wil have one week (Five working days) from the date given on the consent form

How do I agree to participate in this research?

The consent form provided with this form will need to be completed and returned in the paid envelope provided.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes- a copy of the research summary will be sent to you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Kirk Reed on (09)921 9156 or kirk.reed@aut.ac.nz.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Linda Bowden. Phone: 0210261036   Email: resiliencestudynz@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Kirk Reed. Phone: (09)921 9156 or kirk.reed@aut.ac.nz.

Appendix C: Parent / Guardian Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Project title: Exploring resilience from a child's perspective

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kirk Reed

Researcher: Linda Bowden

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 28 April 2015.

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that I may withdraw my child/children and/or myself or any information that we have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   If my child/children and/or I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

○   I agree to my child/children taking part in this research.

○   I wish to receive a copy of the summary of findings (please tick one):　Yes○　　No○

Child's Name :……………………………………………………………………………………

Parent/Guardian's signature:

      ....……………………………………………………

Parent/Guardian's name:

      ....……………………………………………………

Parent/Guardian's Contact Details:

………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 02 July 2015, AUTEC reference number *15/183*

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Appendix D: Cultural Consultation Letter

COUNTIES
MANUKAU
HEALTH

22/04/2015 9.30-10.00

Cultural Consultation

Senior Cultural Advisor: Mahaki Albert

Student: Linda Bowden 0308793 AUT University

Discussion:

How will participants understand what resilience is?

Will you give them examples and scenarios of resilience and ask participants if they fit one of the examples

If not explain the meaning of resilience before asking the interview questions.

Interview questions will be key to ensuring participation and partnership with participants.

Such as What things do you like doing?

What things do you like doing that you can't do and why?

I can confirm I have consented to continue to provide consultation and cultural supervision when required on an on-going basis to the completion of this student's thesis requirements.

Mahaki Albert

Senior Cultural Advisor

Counties Manukau Health

Appendix E: Ethics Approval Letter 1

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)
Auckland University of Technology
D-89, WA505F Level 5 WA Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

2 July 2015

Kirk Reed
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Kirk

Re Ethics Application: **15/183 Exploring resilience from a child's perspective.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 2 July 2018.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 2 July 2018;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 2 July 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Linda Bowden lindabowden23@gmail.com, Ellen Nicholson

Appendix F: Ethics Approval Letter 2

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

29 April 2016

Kirk Reed
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Kirk

Re: Ethics Application: **15/183 Exploring resilience from a child's perspective.**

Thank you for your request for approval of an amendment to your ethics application.

The minor amendment to the inclusion criteria (location) is approved.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC):

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 2 July 2018;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 2 July 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Linda Bowden lindabowden23@gmail.com, Ellen Nicholson

Permission to contact students Sheet

AUT
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TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: Exploring resilience from a child's perspective

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kirk Reed

Researcher: Linda Bowden

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 28 April 2015.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I give permission for the researcher to address classes directly and access students of this school for the purposes of the research outlined in the information sheet.

School: ……………………………………………………………………………………

Principal's signature:

....................................………………………………………………………………

Principal's name:

....................................………………………………………………………………

Principal' Contact Details:

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 02 July 2015, AUTEC Reference number 15/183

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Researcher Safety Protocol

AUT
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TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: Exploring resilience from a child's perspective

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kirk Reed

Researcher: Linda Bowden

The researcher will confirm an appointment schedule of interviews with agreed time, dates and addresses and send a copy of the planned schedule to the project supervisors. Next of kin information will also be provided in this information sheet to the project supervisors.

The researcher will send a beginning and end confirmation text message on the day.

If the confirmation text does not eventuate the project supervisor will ring the researcher's cell phone to establish contact and failing that the supervisor will contact the agreed next of kin.

When visiting participants in their homes if that is the agreed interview location the researcher will act in a cullturally and socially responsive manner.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 02 July 2015, AUTEC Reference number 15/183

Appendix I: Sample Interview Questions

Project title: Exploring resilience from a child's perspective

Project Supervisor: Dr. Kirk Reed

Researcher: Linda Bowden (0308793)

Indicative interview questions

1. Tell me about your weekend, what did you do?

2. What do you typically do during week?

3. Tell me about the things that you do that you make you feel better if you have had a bad day?

4. What are the ways you overcome or beat negative events?

5. What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?

6. What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?

7. Tell me about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, or outside your home in your community?"

8. What does the word resilience or resilient mean to you?

9. What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?

10. What do you think makes you or someone resilient? / Insert participant definition

Appendix J: Draft Focus Group Session Plan

Focus Group Structure			
Date: July 2015 **Time:** 10.00-11.30am			
Activity	**Ideas**	**Resources**	**Time**
Introductions Overview	Introduce self Thank participants for coming Explain and test recording Explain pens and coloured sticky post its Share – all discussion is good discussion	Drawing paper, post its and pens on table	10mins
Ice Breaker- Deserted island	One thing you can take and why	Verbal	10mins
Share Prelim Findings	Put up sheets with rough findings Participants to read and discuss together	Large sheets Post it notes	15mins
Questions	Focus on HOW		20mins
Discussion	Free flow		40mins
Close	1 thing you enjoyed today		5mins
Clean Up	Food and drink to be taken out of room		5mins

Appendix K: Researcher Journal Entry Sample

Thoughts of Analysis 28/09/16
Occupations contribute
different things to resilience
- WHY
    Occupations are individual
+ some have shared meaning
    - lived experience is subjective

what seems important?

- Fun / Enjoyment
- Letting Go
- Relationships / Connections
- forgetting Reality

- All common to experience of
occupation.