"Resilience is a conceptual process that moves us beyond coping. It’s a result of thinking optimistically, utilising strategies and viewing challenges as opportunity for growth."

Peer Support Australia, 2014

As young people face challenges, “...the outcome of a specific situation may be important, but more essential are the lessons learned from the process of dealing with each issue or problem. The knowledge gained supplies the nutrients from which the seeds of resiliency will flourish.” Goldstein and Brooks, 2013

The rapid pace at which the world now moves leaves little opportunity for mastery and perseverance as we seek shortcuts and fight distractions. One of the greatest challenges for our young people is the provision of immediate results. There is an app or program for everything, in some cases stripping them of the skills to reach their goals. We can encourage the perception that technology is a tool to help us achieve more, not less more easily.

While the majority of young people are able to adopt some coping strategies to work through challenges, it is fair to say, not all of them learn and flourish from these experiences. Some challenges may cause students to retreat, feeling limited in their ability to change themselves or the situation.

Rethinking Challenges
This 8 session module encourages students to view challenges as opportunities to push the limitations they put on themselves and be open to new possibilities.

It allows students to identify their strengths, achievements and support networks. These factors serve to protect students and assist them in developing a strong sense of self. Students are encouraged not to feel limited by what is identified at a single point in time. They can choose to feel empowered by this information to persevere, achieve and learn.

The module has a strong focus on the influence our thoughts have on the way we view certain experiences. Sometimes the thoughts, feelings and outcomes associated with a past experience can colour the way we continue to view them. Students can choose to adopt ‘Open’ or ‘Limiting’ thoughts.

Open thoughts require students to reframe:
- strengths and achievements as changeable not static
- failure as opportunity for improvement not permanent or a mark of worth
- success as a result of effort not ability.

Although no one thinks in an open or limiting way 100% of the time, “…too many limiting thoughts will lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness in the face of mounting pressure.” Yemm, 2012

Rethinking Challenges focuses on developing skills in:
- perseverance
- critical thinking
- optimism
- communication
- empathy.

Rethinking Challenges covers skills and processes enabling students to:
- respond resiliently to challenges
- acknowledge their skills and achievements
- identify people who support them
- reflect on how they view achievement, success and failure
- support each other in their transition to secondary school
- take responsibility for their own wellbeing.