S10E11- Building Wellbeing Communities for Kids & Families

The Resilient Kid Podcast Transcript

So welcome back to The Resilient Kid, the podcast that is all about helping children and teens thrive, not just survive. I'm really glad you're here today because we have a brilliant conversation lined up.

I'm joined by Neil and Becky from the Warrington Wellbeing Festival — a fantastic community event that's on a mission to bring wellbeing to the heart of Warrington and beyond, making it accessible for everyone, including our kids and teens.

Now, if you've never heard of it before, you're in for a treat, because what Neil and Becky have built is something really special. It's warm, it's welcoming, and it's exactly the kind of thing our communities need more of.

We're going to be talking about what inspired them to start the festival, what resilience looks like for them, and also what's coming up at the festival that you won't want to miss.

Ashley

Neil, Becky, welcome to The Resilient Kid podcast. It's brilliant to have you both here.

Please introduce yourselves. Becky, you go first. Tell us about you, and then we'll bob over to Neil.

Becky

Thank you so much, and I'm very excited to be on your podcast, Ashley. I've been listening to your podcast since you mentioned you had one, so I love it. Thank you very much.

I just wanted to get that in there.

The Family Pot one, by the way — smashed it. Loved it.

Ashley

We'll come back to that in a second.

Becky

So my name is Becca Percival, and I have a business called Rebecca Percival Coaching.

In my business, I'm a self-development and mindfulness coach. I tend to work with adults around confidence. A lot of people come to me with anxiety as well, and they're often stuck in a bit of a rut, so I kind of help get them moving again.

I'm a bit of a soundboard, but I call myself "The Unpolished Coach" because a lot of people assume you should have all your shit together, and I'm like:

"Nobody's got their shit together. You've just got to be okay with the fact that you haven't."

That's my little tagline.

I'm also a Mental Health First Aid instructor, so I go into companies and teach people how to become mental health first aiders.

Obviously, I'm also a founder of the Warrington Wellbeing Festival with the lovely Neil.

And three days a week I work for the Brianna Ghey Legacy Project, which is something else I absolutely love doing.

I'm a very busy bee. I'm also on the PTA and I'm a mum of two girls as well.

Ashley

Two beautiful and awe-inspiring girls as well. They are awesome.

Neil, tell us about yourself and then we'll come back to the Warrington Wellbeing Festival.

Neil

Okay, so my name is Neil Lewis, and I am "The Empathy Coach."

My business specialises in empathy and empathic practice, particularly around the relationships we have with other people, and most importantly, the relationship we have with ourselves.

A lot of the work I do is around self-awareness and awareness of others.

My business has three arms:

- A learning arm
- A coaching arm
- A consultancy arm

The learning side is training people in empathy and empathic practice. I do that with teams and businesses.

I coach people too — individuals, parents and children, married couples, leaders and direct reports.

I also do workplace mediation around all of that.

Then on the consultancy side, I work with businesses to understand how empathic they are in every way, usually through their people policies.

So that's The Empathy Coach.

I'm also a founder of the Warrington Wellbeing Festival, which is kind of the wellbeing arm of The Empathy Coach because wellbeing is really grounded in everything I do.

My logo is actually the mandala for the heart chakra because a lot of my work is driven by my own spiritual practices. Sometimes that comes into the work, sometimes it doesn't.

But ultimately, wellbeing is really, really important to me.

Ashley

Thank you for that.

There's a couple of things you said there. We met up last week to talk about the festival and I said, "Are you going to come on the podcast?"

What I really loved is that although some of the things you talk about might be spiritual, you're really practical in your application.

We talked about a trust exercise and stuff which was just beautiful.

So absolutely check out Neil because what he does is really different.

And Becky, when you were talking about being "The Unpolished Coach" and us not having our crap together — absolutely.

Nobody has.

One of the things about being a therapist is that you have to do your own therapy first, but that's a continual journey. Nobody's got all their stuff together because we're human beings.

So I really love that you put that front and centre.

Becky

Yeah, definitely.

There's too much pressure on us to be perfect, and nobody is, are they?

So that's why I like to say:

"You've just got to be okay with the fact that you've not got everything together — and that's okay. That's life."

Ashley

Absolutely.

So, question for you both.

What inspired you to create the Warrington Wellbeing Festival? How did it all begin?

Neil

Oh, you tell this story really well, Becca. Go on.

Becky

Okay, I'll try and do the short version because I do tend to digress.

Basically, I was doing a talk at a networking event and I bumped into a guy I went to school with. I hadn't seen him for years.

We ended up arranging to go for a brew because he loves a brew.

He told me he does a business podcast and asked if I wanted to go on it.

I was like:

"Yes! I'd love to go on a podcast."

Then he said he'd interviewed another Bridgewater alumni and thought I'd really connect with him because we were similar in our values and the work we do.

That was Neil.

So I listened to Neil's podcast and thought:

"Wow."

Then Neil reached out to me on LinkedIn. We met for a brew and we got on really well straight away.

Then one of us said:

"Wouldn't it be brilliant, as people born and raised in Warrington, if there was a Warrington Wellbeing Festival where we could promote all these amazing wellbeing businesses?"

A lot of them are small businesses that don't always get to shine or showcase their services.

And then eight weeks later… there was the Warrington Wellbeing Festival.

The first one was organised in eight weeks.

Neil

Yeah, we did.

It was all very… I don't know. We just had such a great connection from the start.

It felt like there was an instant need to do something together.

We're both big dreamers and slightly crazy people.

“Should we do a festival?”

“Yeah, alright then.”

And somehow we pulled it off in a really short space of time.

We learned loads from it, and it really set us up to think:

“Actually, we can do this.”

Ashley

One of the biggest things I’ve noticed about you two is that you’re action takers.

I love that because I don’t want to sit on an idea.

I’ve got a big theory that if you have an idea and you don’t action it, the universe gives it to somebody else.

So I love the fact that you two just went for it.

How has the festival evolved since it started?

Neil

The first festival was at a different venue, and one of the things we were really anxious about was the British weather.

If it rained, we literally couldn’t go ahead.

So we had to rethink the venue and move somewhere more flexible.

That’s when we moved to The Engine Rooms at Birchwood Park, which is just amazing.

They’ve got:

• space

• facilities

• parking

And because they’re not normally open at weekends, the whole place becomes ours.

The team there have been incredibly supportive from day one.

That was the first big evolution.

Then year after year it’s grown:

• more vendors

• different vendors

• bigger community

This is our first year working with you, Ashley, which we're really excited about.

And one of the biggest fringe benefits of the festival has been this amazing community we accidentally created.

We call them the "Wellbeing Warriors."

We've now got nearly 300 wellbeing businesses on our mailing list.

It's this incredible community of light workers all coming together for the wellbeing of the region.

Ashley

Absolutely.

One of the things that stands out for me is how accessible you make it.

You really encourage people to try different things and you keep the costs low.

And it genuinely feels like a community.

How did you build that?

Becky

I don't think it was even a conscious decision.

That's just who me and Neil are.

We want everybody to feel involved.

It's not:

"This is our festival and everyone else are the minions."

It's everybody's festival.

We want:

• stallholders

• speakers

• attendees

• families

…all to feel like they're part of something.

And wellbeing can be expensive.

Yoga classes, coaching, massages — it all adds up.

We wanted to create a day where people could sample loads of different wellbeing experiences in one place and discover what works for them.

That's why tickets are affordable:

• £15 for adults

• children free

Because we wanted families to come and not feel priced out.

Neil

Exactly.

Our mission was really twofold:

• Champion all these amazing wellbeing businesses

• Educate people

A lot of people know something's wrong but they don't know what help they need.

So instead of endlessly searching online, we thought:

"What if we just brought everything together in one place?"

And because that's been the mission from day one, it's never really been about money.

In fact, it's probably the busiest thing we do and the thing we make the least money from.

But it's also the thing we love the most.

Ashley

Tell me what people can actually expect when they arrive.

Say a family of four comes along — what's the experience?

Becky

There's honestly so much.

The venue is beautiful.

There's a lake called Moondazzle Lake and a lovely big field.

Last year it was 34 degrees, so this year we're manifesting:

• 24 degrees

• rolling cloud

• a light breeze

That's what we want this year.

We've got:

• a teen tent

• a kids tent

• marketplace stalls

• talks

• demos

• workshops

Children under 18 are free.

We've got five different venues inside the Engine Rooms with talks and sessions running all day.

There's Reiki, crystals, coaches, counsellors, magicians — honestly everything.

I definitely recommend people check the programme beforehand because there's so much to choose from.

Neil

At last count, we had around 50 different things happening throughout the day.

Each venue has around seven or eight sessions running.

You can explore:

• counselling

• therapy

• hypnotherapy

• yoga

• chakras

• physical health

• spinal health

• nutrition

• mental health

• consultant doctors talking about hip and knee pain

We really run the full spectrum of wellbeing.

And the idea is: whatever you're curious about, there'll be something there for you.

Ashley

One of the things I love most is the conversations.

Sometimes somebody comes over and says:

"I've always been interested in this, but I'm not really sure what it is."

And that conversation alone can change things.

I can imagine families arriving, exploring the stalls, kids going into the kids tent, teens into the teen tent, parents going to talks, grabbing food together…

You've genuinely got something for everyone.

And the fact kids and teens go free is incredible.

Neil

It was really important to us.

I know for me personally, there are wellbeing tools and practices I've only discovered as an adult that I really wish I'd had access to as a child.

For adults, sometimes wellbeing work is crisis management.

But for kids and teens, it can be crisis avoidance.

We can help future-proof them.

That's why we've always said: we have to make this accessible for children and young people.

Ashley

That's why The Resilient Kid aligned with you so much.

Kids' mental health is a community issue.

It's not just solved in therapy rooms or doctors' offices.

We all have a collective responsibility.

And today I saw research saying the UK is ranked 24th for children's mental health.

That's heartbreaking.

And in the North, one in five children are struggling.

We can't just sit around waiting for systems to fix it.

We have to do something.

And what you two are doing is amazing.

Neil

Thank you.

Ashley

Is there a moment from the festival that's really stayed with you?

Neil

One story that sticks with me is about one of our vendors.

She came to the 2024 festival and loved it so much that she decided to start her own wellbeing business.

She set herself the goal of returning to the next festival as a business owner.

And she did.

Honestly, I still get goosebumps thinking about it.

We never expected the festival to inspire new light workers.

Shout out to Polly.

Becky

Mine is my friend Lynn.

She originally came just to support me and planned to stay an hour.

She stayed all day.

Then she came back the next year and stayed all day again.

She ended up booking a healing session at the festival and said she released loads of stress she'd been carrying.

Now she's training to become a wellbeing practitioner herself so she can bring wellbeing into her workplace.

That's just beautiful.

Ashley

What are you most excited about this year?

Neil

Honestly, every year gets smoother.

We learn lessons every year and things feel more natural now.

Last year I remember actually enjoying it instead of just surviving it.

And this year I'm especially excited about the collaboration with you guys and the kids and teen tents.

When we planned those sessions together, I was so excited.

Becky

For me it's the atmosphere.

Every year it's been so positive and full of love.

And my whole family gets involved:

• my husband helps

• my youngest has a jewellery stall

• my eldest will probably live in the teen tent

It's just lovely.

Ashley

We are genuinely so excited too.

It really feels like a mini festival within the festival.

We've got:

• the kids tent

• the teen tent

• confidence sessions

• anxiety sessions

• friendship workshops

• mindset work

Because kids and teens want to learn this stuff too.

They want to understand:

• anxiety

• friendships

• confidence

• inner critics

• busy brains

And we don't really teach this in schools.

Becky

Last year at another festival, my daughter — who struggles with anxiety — had a conversation with one of your team.

And she opened up more in that short conversation than she ever had before.

It was amazing.

Ashley

That's the power of giving kids permission to talk openly.

When they realise:

"Oh, this is normal. We can talk about this."

…it changes everything.

Ashley

One thing I really want to mention is the Family Pot sessions.

We're doing two family sessions this year, which is really exciting.

Neil, do you want to explain how that came about?

Neil

When we met up and started talking, Ashley was explaining the Family Pot exercise.

I use a marble jar exercise with clients around trust, and Ashley started explaining how the Family Pot works.

And I just thought:

“If parents are already sitting in the tent with their children, why don’t we run something for families together?”

And Ashley said:

“Absolutely.”

Becky

I listened to the Family Pot podcast episode while driving to Birmingham and I thought:

“This is brilliant.”

Then I explained it to my husband and he immediately said:

“That is such a great idea.”

Because life is busy:

- work
- school
- PTA
- festivals
- family life

And he loved the idea of having a Sunday sit-down as a family and saying:

“What’s going into the pot this week? What’s coming out?”

Ashley

So for anyone listening, there is a podcast episode all about the Family Pot.

And at the festival we’ll actually walk families through how to do it together.

That’s normally part of a paid family session, but at the festival people are getting access to it included in the day.

Neil

And this is something we constantly wrestle with.

We know there’s huge value in what’s being offered at this festival.

But we also desperately want it to stay accessible.

That's why tickets are:

• £15 pre-booked

• £20 on the day

Not because it's low value — it's incredibly high value.

But because accessibility matters to us.

Ashley

I actually think it's underpriced.

Honestly.

So get your tickets now while you can.

Tell us:

• when it is

• where it is

• where people can get tickets

• where they can follow you

Becky

The Warrington Wellbeing Festival is on the 11th of July.

It runs from:

• 10am until 4pm

It's at:

• The Engine Rooms at Birchwood Park, Warrington

You can find us on:

• Facebook

• Instagram

Just search: Warrington Wellbeing Festival

And the website is:

www.warringtonwellbeingfestival.co.uk

Ashley

Honestly, thank you both.

Thank you for:

• creating this

• looking after community wellbeing

• making it accessible

• creating space for kids and teens

You two are absolute angels.

Neil

And thank you to you, Ashley, for getting involved because we were so excited when you said yes.

Ashley

We cannot wait.

And to everybody listening:

Resilience doesn't build in isolation.

It grows in community.

It grows when people create spaces where families can feel:

• seen

• heard

• supported

And that's exactly what the Warrington Wellbeing Festival does.

Please remember: you are raising resilient kids every single day.

And it starts with you.

Lots of love.

See you at the festival.

Becky & Neil

Bye!