

Fostering Resilience in our Students

Resilience Defined

- Resilire: “to bounce back”
- The capacity to return to good mental health after challenging and difficult situations
- The process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances
- The skills, attributes, and abilities that enable individuals to adapt to hardships, difficulties, and challenges

Sources of Resilience

- Biological
- Environmental
- Dynamic interplay between biology and environment
- Although some attributes are biologically determined, we believe resilience skills can be strengthened as well as learned.

Protective Factors

Internal Protective Factors

- **Relationship skills.** Is sociable; able to be a friend; able to form positive relationships.
- **Humor.** Has a good sense of humor, can laugh at difficult situations.
- **Inner Direction** (Internal Locus of Control). Bases choices and decisions on internal evaluation.
- **Positive View of Personal Future.** Is optimistic; expects a positive future.
- **Flexibility.** Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations.
- **Love of Learning.** Shows capacity for and connection to learning.

- **Life Skills.** Good decision making, assertiveness, and impulse control; self-regulation
- **Service/Helpfulness.** Gives of self in service to others or a cause.
- **Self-motivation.** Has internal initiative and positive motivation from within.
- **Competence.** Is good at something; has personal competence.
- **Self-Worth.** Has feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

(Henderson, 2012)

External Protective Factors

- Caring, encouraging relationships and positive attachment (adults and peers can notice and reinforce students' internal protective factors)
- Role models
- Mentors
- Clear and fair expectations and boundaries
- Regular structures/routines
- Broadening of mind/possibilities
- Basic human respect and dignity
- School climate of care and respect

(Werner, 2003; Thompsen, 2002; Walsh, 2012, Birdsall, 2013)

Educators are Resilience Builders

Foster Relationships and Healthy Attachment

Connections & Attachment

- Social connection is a fundamental human need (Baumeister)
- Friendships provide support systems that can foster emotional, social, and educational adjustment (Rubin, 2002)

Fostering Healthy Relationships

- Teach students how to make and maintain friendships
- Provide opportunities for collaboration and cooperation through your instructional practice
- Get to know your students
- Greet students each day by name; greet students in the hallway

Develop Self-Regulation Skills

Self-Regulation

- The skills required to manage emotions, thoughts/attention and behaviours
- Self-regulation creates positive feedback loops that impact relationships and attachment, self-concept, and mindset

Fostering Self-Regulation

- Teach emotional literacy skills
- Teach mindfulness
- Provide students to engage in meaningful play
- Use imaginary role play and imaginative games
- Use SEL supports and tools (How is your engine running? MindUp; Tools of the Mind; RULER)

Develop a Growth Mindset

Mindset of the Educator

- Differing mindsets that educators have about **themselves** and **their students** play a significant role in determining their expectations, teaching practices, and relationship with students

Case Study

- “John is the one of the most defiant, oppositional, unmotivated, lazy, irresponsible students we have at this school.”
- “I have a different view. I think John is really struggling with learning and we should figure out the best ways to teach him.”

Case Study

- “She hates me, but that’s ok because I hate her. And I won’t do any work in her class... In her eyes, I am a failure. Whatever I do in her class is never going to be good enough. She doesn’t expect me to pass, so why even try?”
- “I love her. She went out of her way the first week of school to tell me something. She said that she knew I was having trouble with learning but she thought I was smart and she had to figure out the best way to teach me. She said that one of the reasons she became a teacher was to help all her students learn. She’s always there to help.”

Mindset of Effective Educators

- Understand the lifelong impact they have on students
- Believe that ALL students want to be successful
- Believe that the focusing on social and emotional needs of the students is not an “extra curriculum” that draws away from academic instruction
- Appreciate that the foundation for successful learning and a safe and secure classroom climate is the relationship that teachers forge with students
- Realize that one of the greatest obstacles to learning is the threat of making mistakes and feeling embarrassed or humiliated

Shifting Mindsets

- Focus on students’ strengths
- Praise effort, not “smarts”
- Focus on process not product
- Remind students that there may be discomfort in learning something new, and that’s ok
- Make “failure” normal

Focus on Strengths

Reflect a Student’s Strengths

- How a child’s self-concept develops over time depends on the environmental *mirrors* in that child’s life (Wolin & Wolin, 1993)
- We want mirrors that are caring, kind and affirming

Strengths Promote a Sense of Self-Efficacy

- Proactive orientation; self efficacy; self-esteem; positive future expectations; good coping
- Realistic, positive sense of self; they regard themselves as survivors
- They have a sense of agency and feel that they can have an impact on their environment/situation
- Hopeful about the future
- Believe they can overcome obstacles
- View hardships as learning experiences

Finding Strengths

- Review internal protective factors
 - Have students choose which two factors they exhibit (writing assignment, illustrated assignment, etc.)
- Find out students’ passions and “spark” outside of academic work
- Share students’ strengths- the more caring adults that affirm the student, the better!

Provide Structure and Clear
Expectations

Setting Clear Guidelines

- Does not necessarily mean have an exhaustive list of rules
- Co-construct class values and expectations
- Establish norms for behaviour in the classroom, the hallways, the playground, etc.