

Resiliency Building in Youth

Resiliency gives students the ability to deal with challenges and adapt to new or difficult circumstances in a positive, productive manner. There are number of ways for schools to foster resilience.

Provide a caring, supportive learning environment. Feeling cared for and safe builds students' resiliency. Promote positive social connections between staff members and students, students and their peers, and home and school.

Foster positive attitudes. Help students believe that they can succeed if they try. Provide situations in which students are able to succeed. Frame failure as a learning opportunity. Teach them to reevaluate and adjust strategies that may not be working.

Nurture positive emotions. Demonstrate and give students the chance to practice positive emotions, such as optimism, respect, forgiveness, and empathy. Train staff members to reinforce emotional intelligence, praise students for successes, and avoid judgmental or harsh criticism for failure.

Foster academic self-determination and feelings of competence. Provide consistent clear expectations. Help students develop a menu of homework and study strategies. Encourage students to regularly attend school and complete homework as well as to develop talents in activities they enjoy. Teach them to set realistic goals and obtain necessary resources.

Encourage volunteerism. Social competence and resilience are fostered by helping others at home, in school, and in the community. Create and promote a variety of opportunities for students to contribute to the well-being of others both on and off campus.

Teach peace-building skills. Learning how to be appropriately assertive without being aggressive fosters resilience. Teach conflict resolution and peer-mediation skills, strategies for standing up to bullies, and violence-prevention strategies.

Ensure healthy habits. Good physical health prepares the body and mind to be more resilient and contributes to school success. Encourage good nutrition through school food offerings, adequate sleep, and exercise through education, and increased opportunities for exercise. Facilitate stress reduction by incorporating positive stress control strategies, such as meditation, controlled breathing, yoga, and exercise into school curricula.