



CULTIVATING RESILIENCE IN SCHOOLS

A Toolkit for Promoting School Mental Health
Through a Systems Approach to Social and
Emotional Learning

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The RTI Center for Education Services partners with educators to promote thriving learning environments that facilitate success for all students. From the classroom to the boardroom, our work focuses on four areas that we believe are levers for change in education: strengthening instruction, developing leaders, improving organizational operations, and facilitating collaborative networks.

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PURPOSE STATEMENT

Written by Fredrica M. Nash

Educational experiences not only shape the educators who support and encourage their students to grow but also shape students, their families, and their communities for a lifetime.

Prior to 2020, it was hard to imagine that the world would experience a global health pandemic that would impact every system. For most children and adolescents going through the education system today, particularly in western countries, there were known buildings to visit, schedules and routines that shaped the comings and goings of families, the familiar spaces, and the individuals who we gathered with to learn. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed all of these things. After 2 years of the pandemic, there are glimpses of what could be seen as normalcy returning to the education system; however, there are also calls for more equitable learning environments and conditions for students, more opportunities to rethink education, and an intentional focus on supporting the mental well-being of students and educators.

I returned to supporting educators in a middle school after 15 months of remote learning. Standing in the hallway during class transitions, I heard students in a group questioning each other about who their friends are and about the differences between having a friend on social media and having one in the school building. There were other students murmuring that they would rather be home than to have to deal with working in groups with students they don't know. A student quickly approached a member of the Student Support Services team and me. She was noticeably animated as she pulled her mask below her nose and mouth so that we could clearly hear her communicate that there was a planned fight for later in the day between a group of students. There was a group chat about the fight and videos on Snapchat, a popular social media platform. She continued to describe her own willingness to fight another student if the student did not leave her alone. She began talking faster, with a higher pitch and a slew of inappropriate words. We asked her to breathe, return her mask to cover her face, and meet us in the counselor's suite. The teacher in the nearby classroom threw up his hands and said, "I can't take this anymore. I'm stressed. They are stressed. The school is stressed!" and walked into his classroom to teach.

For many, the return to school has brought on new challenges. So much change has happened over the course of the year, with new protocols and procedures in place for what school should look like, that the "normal" amount of stress needed to thrive in learning and working environments is becoming more noticeably overwhelming.

Additionally, educators took on new roles. Principals observed from afar their students' physical, emotional, and social safety when students were learning at home. Educators heard about incidences of child abuse and child molestation, food insecurity, anxiety, depression, and suicide attempts. Many teachers were also unofficially invited into students' homes during remote learning and began to understand students' distrust of authority figures, home responsibilities, at-home learning environments, and level of

familial support. As a result, some educators blurred the boundaries of time when it came to working hours and over-extended themselves to live true to their values of encouraging all students to be successful, helping those who needed additional support, and celebrating those who were excelling. These areas of additional encouragement transferred into the buildings as students returned.

What has emerged from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic through today is the acknowledgment and understanding that resilience contributes to the academic, social, and emotional well-being of educators as well as students and their families. Dickerson (2020) argues that “Resilience isn’t really about removing the stress and stressors in our lives.” We recognize that there are limitations within educators’ sphere of control, but that resilience is “about how we as individuals learn to deal with [the] stress and stressors effectively.”

This toolkit is for all educators—teachers, teachers in training, school leaders and administrators, Student Support Services members, and families—who are involved in cultivating learning environments that support students in becoming the best versions of themselves by responding appropriately to their students’ stress and stressors, while being aware of and managing their own stress. This toolkit provides a systems approach that is comprehensive and coordinated to make plain the connections and authentic relationships among educators, students, and families; these connections and authentic relationships help build emotionally resilient communities. This approach is centered in promoting mental health and positive mental well-being through the implementation of systemic social and emotional learning (SEL). There are opportunities to discover more about professional learning that support adult well-being; the integration of SEL into academic instruction; family and community engagement; and foundations for establishing a shared vision, commitments, and understanding that promote positive school climate and culture with an emphasis on classroom culture, safety, and wellness.

This toolkit that you are about to read and review contains research, frameworks, tools, and resources to guide your school in promoting resilience in a systematic way with consideration for the cultural needs, contextual differences, and assets that your educators as well as students and their families bring to the table. It is organized to explicitly acknowledge the need for shared commitments, adult well-being, classroom wellness, family and community engagement, and approaches to measuring the impact of mental health promotion. I am sure that this toolkit will give educators and students an opportunity to develop a positive sense of well-being and to work through stress and trauma in a constructive way so that they engage in educational experiences that impact a successful and joyful lifetime.

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Key Terms

Academic Resilience—“the ability to effectively deal with setback, stress, or pressure in the academic setting” (Martin & Marsh, 2003)

Learning Community—collaborative partnerships among educators, students, families, and community members and organizations with a common goal of continuous learning and success for all

Mental Health—“a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (World Health Organization, 2018)

Resilience—the willingness to navigate through a state of stress and trauma to access resources for cultivating resilience for oneself and the learning community

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)—“the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (CASEL, 2021)

Stress—“the physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave” (American Psychological Association, 2020)

Toxic Stress—“strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support” (Shern, Blanch, & Steverman, 2014)

Trauma—“an event, series of events or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019)

INTRODUCTION

Crises—such as global pandemics and school safety concerns, among other examples—can cause a wealth of challenges for the well-being of individuals and local communities. Everyone experiences change differently. Some may experience trauma and intense stress following an event—such as the loss of a loved one, food insecurity, disruption to quality of life—while others adapt to change and adversity with little to no interruption to their lives. The effects of trauma and stress can be felt across different systems in society, including education. Teachers as well as students and their families are incredibly resilient and have many support tools to bounce back from adversity. Educators play an important role in creating the conditions for students to locate and access adequate resources so that students can cultivate individual and community resilience to mitigate the effects of traumatic stress in challenging times.

One of the main drivers of school success is *community*. School leaders and leadership teams play integral roles in establishing structures that cultivate resilience. For any innovative practice to be effective, all partners within the learning community must embrace a collaborative culture in which all members of the learning community share a common vision and understanding of what school should look like. Together, they can create a resilient learning community in which all members can learn and grow.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is intended to be used by school-based leadership teams, which include representation across all areas and stakeholder groups, to establish systems and structures for building resilient schools and learning communities. It should be used in consideration of contextual, cultural, and social factors unique to each organization and everyone within the organization. To request support with this toolkit or ask questions, please contact the RTI Center for Education Services at educationservices@rti.org.

Resilient Learning Communities Framework

The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the “process and outcome of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress” (American Psychological Association, 2012). One can further define resiliency as the willingness to navigate through a state of stress and trauma to access resources for cultivating resilience for oneself and the community. In the education field, academic resilience is crucial for students to effectively overcome setbacks and pressures in school (Martin & Marsh, 2003). There is a two-fold approach to cultivating resilience in schools: (1) promoting social-emotional competence and mental health of individuals and groups and (2) establishing and navigating an ecosystem of resources that cultivates resilience within the organization and/or community.

A framework for cultivating resilience in schools is critical for preventing and mitigating stress and trauma for individuals and for the learning community. After reviewing resilience literature and resources, we have developed a framework to help school leaders and teams establish systems and structures for cultivating resilience and ensuring equitable access to resources for wellness; this framework is based on promoting mental health through implementing systemic social and emotional learning. The *Resilient Learning Communities Framework* is based on a systems approach to cultivating resilience in individuals and within the learning community. Next, we detail each of the six components in the framework—as seen in **Figure 1**.

“Resilience is as much about what we have (our individual and collective resources) as what we think (our mindset).”

— Michael Ungar, PhD
Resilience Research Center

Figure 1. Components of the Resilient Learning Communities Framework



PART I: SHARED COMMITMENT AND UNDERSTANDING



45% of Americans think the pandemic has harmed their mental health and caused psychological trauma.

—Achenbach, 2020

Rationale

For any systemic innovation or change to occur, the organization must first understand the purpose for the change. As one of the more complex systems in our society, schools are tasked with creating systems and structures for the success of students, staff, and families. This task requires ongoing collaboration and work towards a common purpose. This section of the toolkit will give educators evidence-based tools to assist with developing a shared vision for cultivating resilience to prevent and respond to post-pandemic trauma and stress.

Understand the impact of post-pandemic trauma and stress as well as the effects on mental health

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in one way or another. The degree of the effect looks and sounds different for each person or group of people. Although there is no large-scale collection of data that shows how the pandemic has impacted students' mental health, there have been several studies that show the prevalence of intense stress and emotional trauma on adults at different times during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For teachers, the prevalence of primary psychological trauma and stress results in many teachers leaving their jobs or taking leaves of absence. In Arizona, the number of teachers quitting or taking a leave of absence was up by 75% during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those teachers, 43% attributed leaving their jobs to the pandemic (Will, Gewertz, & Schwartz, 2020). Sometimes stress can be positive if it is contributing to good outcomes. On other hand, prolonged stress can become toxic. Toxic stress can affect anyone in the learning community. The effects of toxic stress can be seen in emotional and mental well-being as well as in teaching (i.e., what teachers are doing/experiencing) and learning (i.e., what students are doing/experiencing).

“Trauma is a risk factor for nearly all mental health challenges.”

—SAMHSA, 2021

Establish a Shared Understanding and Vision

Working together as a team does not always happen naturally. Each team members brings their own experiences and expertise to the table that can either help or inhibit the work of the team. That is the strength of organizing a team of individuals to work towards a goal. The first step in organizing a high-performing, effective team is to reach a shared understanding of the purpose of the team and the vision for the work to be done. To build a shared understanding and vision, teams must settle on a common understanding of the “why” that compels the team to advocate for the work and to act. In addition, high-performing teams share a common language to clearly communicate the vision to others and foster teamwork. This section helps teams make sense of the purpose of cultivating resilience in schools.

Adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress

To understand the purpose of resilience in schools, teams and partners must understand the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are “potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include exposure to violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress” (Centers for Disease Control, 2021). In the classroom, signs of toxic stress might include the following:

- Absenteeism
- Anxiety
- Changes in school performance
- Decreased attention or concentration
- Hyperarousal
- Irritability
- Statements about dying or death
- Withdrawal/avoidance

The key to building resilience

“Resilience isn’t really about removing the stress and stressors in our lives. It’s about how we as individuals learn to deal with that stress or stressors effectively” (Dickerson, 2020). There are many factors that contribute to resilience. Those factors can be categorized as risk factors or protective factors. *Risk factors* are things that decrease our ability to be resilient;

One in six adults experiences four or more types of ACEs.

Figure 2. Protective Factors Versus Risk Factors



examples include the loss of a loved one, trauma, grief, lack of social skills, isolation, and so on. *Protective factors* counterbalance the risk factors and help us to build resilience; these factors include self-care, coping skills, a sense of belonging, academic engagement, and good attendance in school—all of which fall within the realm of SEL competencies. To build resilience, do not focus on eliminating risk factors, which we may have little to no control over. As **Figure 2** shows, the protective factors must outweigh the risk factors to serve as a buffer for risk and mental health challenges.

Develop a Cross-Disciplinary Implementation Team

A critical element for implementing any large-scale or schoolwide innovation is shared leadership. In schools, this might look like a cross-representative team of stakeholders that has the beliefs and skills to promote and implement the systems and structures for cultivating resilience. Shared leadership builds trust and cohesion, which improves efficiency and effectiveness (Northouse, 2016).



Who should be on the team?

A cross-disciplinary team should be representative of various groups in your building. Check out the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL's) tool for guidance on how to [assemble an SEL team](#). This team could include, but is not limited to, the following

- Community representatives
- Family representatives
- Principal or assistant principal
- School staff (e.g., counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse)
- Student representatives
- Teachers

The team lead will keep the team motivated and organized to lead implementation. The [Key Responsibilities of a School-Based SEL Team Lead](#) tool from CASEL provides further insight into the team lead's role and responsibilities.

What is the purpose of this team?

This team collects and uses multiple measures of data to develop the capacity for all school stakeholders to build a resilient learning community where all students, all staff, and all stakeholders feel welcomed, valued, and appreciated. An action planning guide will help the implementation team establish roles and responsibilities, and sustain focus on action items and implementation efforts. The Team Action Planning Guide provides teams with a structure to plan activities.

Team Action Planning Guide

| Action Planning Phases and Questions | Resources and Protocols | Team Notes |
|--|-------------------------|------------|
| <p>Phase A: Preparing for Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do we want to go? • Where are we now? • Where have we been? • What has worked in the past? What has not worked in the past? | | |
| <p>Phase B: Planning for Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we get there? • What strategies will we implement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Who will implement what? – By when? – How? – For whom? – How will we measure success of implementation and outcomes? How often? • What are drivers and barriers to implementation? | | |
| <p>Phase C: Doing and Studying the Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we moving in the right direction? • Where are we in the implementation? • What are we learning in the process? • What is helping or hindering our progress? | | |
| <p>Phase D: Assessing the Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did we meet our target? • What supporting data do we have? • Do we need to pivot or realign our efforts? • Who will share what information with whom? | | |

Create a Positive and Inclusive Environment

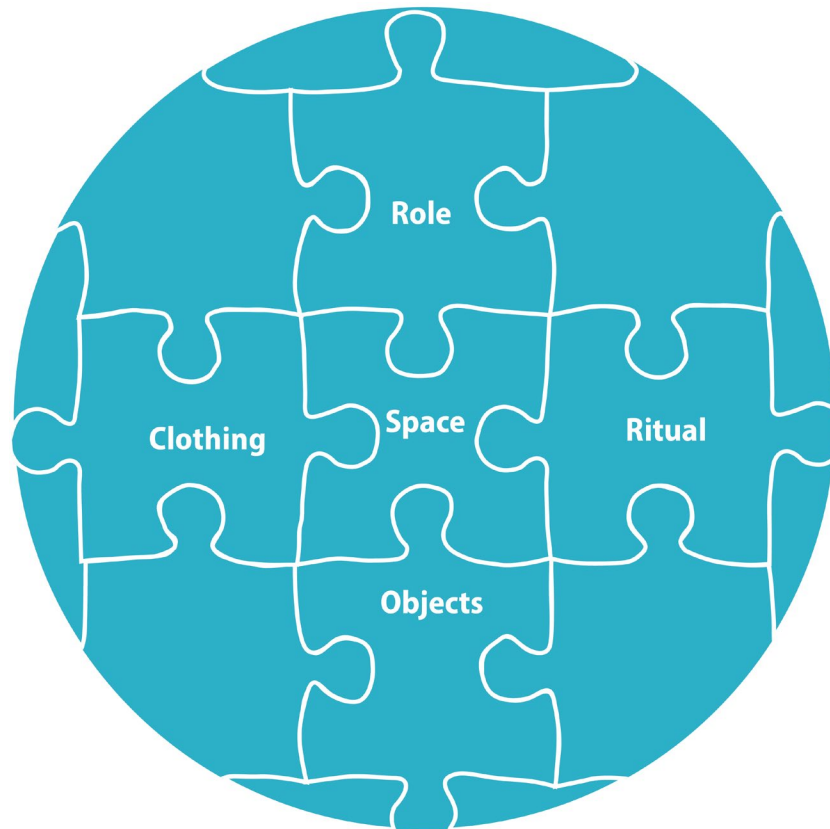
Create a sense of belonging

One established way to foster a positive, inclusive environment is to build authentic relationships and create a sense of belonging for staff and students. Stanford University's K12 Lab researchers found that teachers can design for belonging in their classrooms and schools. Researchers have found that the following five dimensions influence belongingness in the classroom.

- Is the space **inviting**?
- Is the space **welcoming**?
- Are students fully embraced and **accepted** for who they are and **known** in the organization's culture?
- Are students participating and contributing?
- Are students growing individually and as a community?

Different aspects of a classroom's culture and environment can be designed to create a sense of belonging for students and staff. These aspects—or [five levers of design](#)—are highlighted in [Figure 3](#). Each lever calls out contextual and cultural attributes that can be designed to foster a sense of belonging (Wise, 2021).

Figure 3. Five Levers of Design



Source: www.designforbelonging.com

Focus on the assets

When building a resilient learning community, the SEL implementation team models and motivates teachers, students, and families to create a positive and nurturing environment where everyone feels safe and valued as a contributor. This requires educators to practice an asset-based mindset. An asset-based approach focuses on strengths of diverse individuals and the community. In turn, teachers are motivated to develop and maintain high expectations for students and each other. Research has shown that teachers' expectations have a greater impact on student success than a student's own motivation (Segal, 2013).

Assets in the learning community extend well beyond the walls of the school building. Each individual student, teacher, family, and community member brings diverse experiences and perspectives. Educators should emphasize and leverage those assets when establishing systems and structures that promote an inclusive environment. Similarly, each community (inside of school and outside of school) possesses unique characteristics that can support a positive, inclusive environment. Draw on the strengths and assets of the individuals and groups within the learning community to ensure inclusivity and to cultivate resilience in the entire learning community. **Table 1** from the University of Memphis' Urban-Serving Research Mission highlights the differences between asset-based and deficit-based approaches.

Table 1. Asset-Based and Deficit-Based Approaches

| Comparison Between the Approaches | |
|--|---|
| Asset Based | Deficit Based |
| Strengths driven | Needs driven |
| Opportunity focus | Problems focused |
| Internally focused | Externally focused |
| What is present that we can build upon? | What is missing that we must go find? |
| May lead to new, unexpected responses to community wishes. | May lead to downward spiral of burnout, depression, or dysfunction? |

Source: University of Memphis' Urban-Serving Research Mission

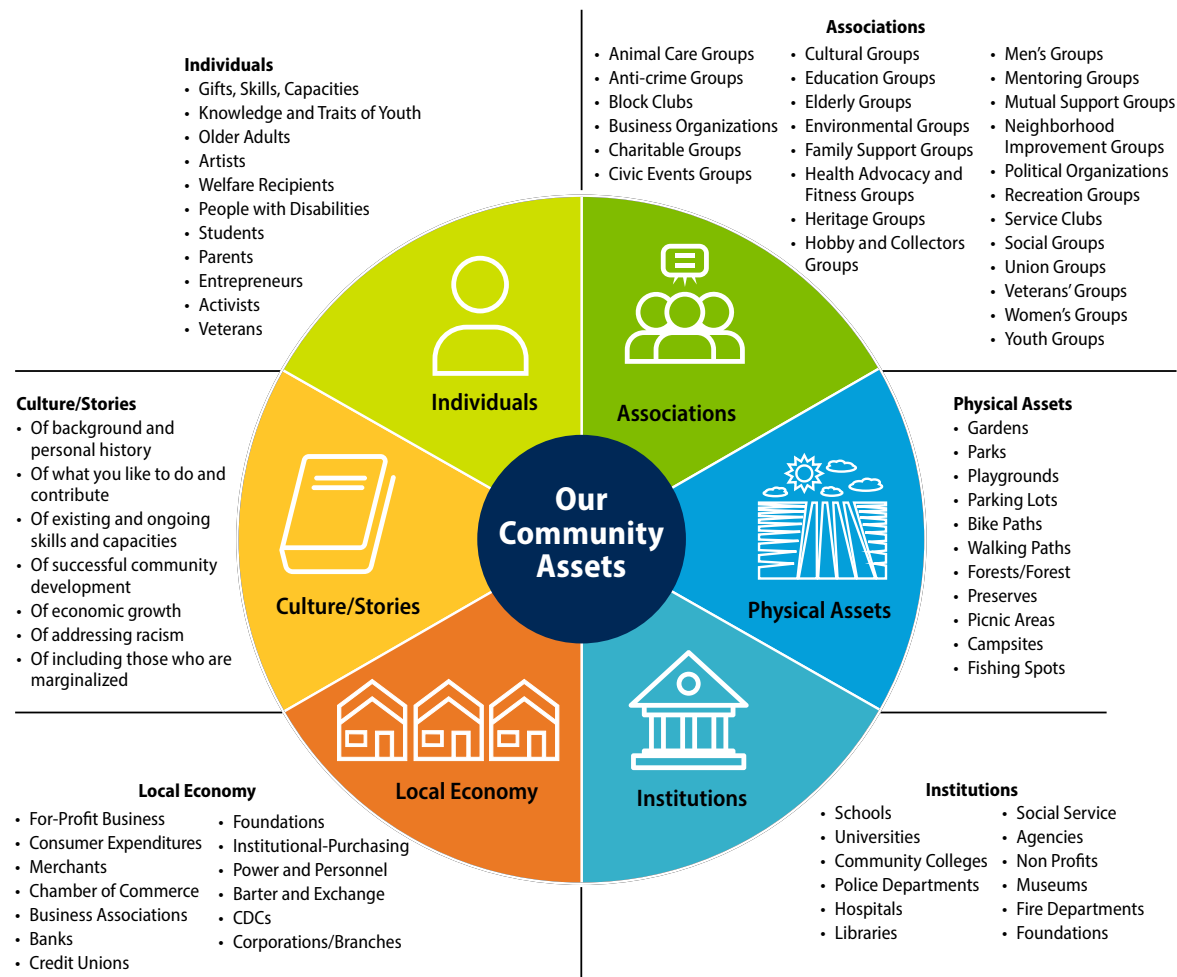
Assess for Assets

Coordinate community and school-wide asset mapping

Asset mapping brings to light the strengths, resources, and contextual and social factors that are unique to every learning community. “The goals of a SEL program must be negotiated with the communities themselves in order to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and acceptance” (Jukes, 2019). Community assets (both internal and external to the school) improve the quality of life and well-being within the learning community.

Asset mapping identifies internal and external resources that promote mental wellness through SEL. These resources should be identified across all tiers within a multi-tiered support system to meet the needs of all learners and staff in the learning community. A beneficial approach is to begin with identifying all stakeholders who support resilience and wellness within the learning community; these stakeholders include community organizations and individuals with an interest in promoting social and emotional wellness for staff and students. A tool such as the sample stakeholder asset map in **Figure 4** provides a structure for identifying relevant stakeholders. The Community Asset Map Template can also help the SEL implementation team identify stakeholders by roles and responsibilities.

Figure 4. Sample Community Asset Map



Source: Green, M. (1993), ABCD Institute Faculty

Community Asset Map Template

Part I: Identify your school's community assets that support and/or contribute to SEL and wellness

| Mental Health Services/Resources | Individuals | Physical Spaces |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | | |
| Supporting Businesses | Clubs and Organizations | Political Resources |
| | | |

Part II: List unique contributions, talents, and gifts of each community asset listed in Part I. Gifts come from the head, hands, and heart that benefit the learning community and cultivate resilience.

| |
|--|
| <p>Gifts of the Head</p> <p>What does everyone enjoy talking about with the learning community (e.g., health, wellness, mindfulness)?</p> |
| <p>Gifts of the Hands</p> <p>What skills or tasks does each person do that they would like to share with the learning community (e.g., yoga, cooking, organization, mental health supports)?</p> |
| <p>Gifts of the Heart</p> <p>What does each person care deeply about that they would like to support within the learning community (e.g., team building, teaching, student motivation, family reunification)?</p> |

Source: Green, M. (2012). ABCD Institute Faculty

NOTES



PART II: ADULT WELL-BEING



Rationale





Adults in schools play an integral role in supporting students' mental health. Students spend about 1,000 waking hours—or 6 hours per day—in schools each year (Ed100, 2021). Adults' strong mental health is essential for building relationships and nurturing environments where students can thrive. Administrators, teachers, and school staff must prioritize their own mental health and social-emotional competence to cultivate resilience in schools. This is true especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when educators face uncertainty, separation, shifts in instructional routines and practices, and personal stress or trauma. The strategies in this toolkit suggest ways to engage adults within the learning community to prioritize their own social and emotional well-being.

Promote Collective Efficacy

Build capacity and understanding

Seek opportunities for adults in the learning community to learn about both mental health as well as social and emotional learning (SEL). The SEL implementation team might coordinate workshops or professional development opportunities for educators to build resilience and increase their own social and emotional competence. A series of workshops, like in the [RTI Center for Education Services' SEL approach](#), provides customized professional learning for educators around the four strands of SEL in [Figure 5](#).

Figure 5. RTI's Approach to SEL

| Relationships and Belonging | SEL Integrated Into Academics | Trauma-Sensitive and Resilient Schools | Advancing Equity in SEL |
|--|--|---|--|
|  <p>Emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of SEL • Shared language of SEL • Techniques to combat cognitive bias • Building, maintaining, and restoring relationships • Culture of SEL • Belonging and inclusive culture |  <p>Emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship between emotions and learning • Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) • Practices that support CRP and build academic, social, and emotional competence • High-quality student tasks • Effective integration of academic, social, and emotional teaching and learning |  <p>Emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of trauma • Trauma's impact on the brain • Adverse childhood experiences • Trauma and its impact on learning and relationships • Resilience and protective factors • Secondary traumatic stress • Educator self-care |  <p>Emphasis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of equity • Universal supports for all students • Multitiered systems of support and SEL • Policies and practices to reinforce equity and SEL • Relational trust • Local data • Scaling: professional development as one strategy toward SEL and equity |
| <p>For Whom</p> <p>All school faculty</p> | <p>For Whom</p> <p>Teaching and administrative faculty</p> | <p>For Whom</p> <p>All school faculty</p> | <p>For Whom</p> <p>All school faculty with role-specific pathways</p> |

Create opportunities for peer support

Building a community with other teachers is often a protective factor for many teachers. Research has shown that teachers learn best from one another (Foltos, 2018). Administrators and the implementation team should intentionally establish structures for wellness that provide every adult in the learning community with a sense of belonging and trust. Structures for wellness might include the following:

- **Create a safe and welcoming environment**—“Belonging, participation, identification, and school membership describe aspects of engagement and illustrate social and emotional factors necessary for academic learning” (Zins et.al, 2004). A safe and welcoming environment for adults takes into consideration the assets and needs of each staff member. Promote engagement for teachers by implementing school practices that foster collaboration, normalize risk-taking, and provide opportunities for autonomy—such as coordinating opportunities for students to have voice and choice in their learning activities.
- **Foster trusting relationships**—“When relational trust is present and school personnel feel supported, they feel safe to try new practices and reach out to parents” (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). In trusting relationships, all voices are heard and opinions are valued. Transparency is key to building trust in relationships. When trust is present, people feel comfortable reaching out to others and are committed to following through.
- **Build a culture of appreciation and recognition**—“Recognition stimulates the hypothalamus regularly and increases dopamine production, affecting the plasticity of the brain, and improving both quality of work and productivity” (Nelson, 2019). Establish structures that celebrate successes; examples include a weekly bulletin or “shout-out wall.” Encourage teachers to share their successes with one another.
- **Implement schoolwide wellness initiatives**—Burnout and secondary traumatic stress can occur in schools. “More than three in four teachers reported frequent job-related stress, compared to 40% of other working adults. Perhaps even more alarming: 27% of teachers reported symptoms of depression, compared to 10% of other adults” (Steiner & Woo, 2021). A schoolwide wellness program that includes physical activity and stress management can improve staff morale and overall teacher well-being.

“Having teachers feel safe and supported in their school environments is essential to students learning and being successful.”

—Jennifer Greif Green
(Cardoza, 2021, para. 8)



Offer wellness resources to teachers

The following resources can help teachers strengthen their own social and emotional competence and mental well-being.

Mental wellness and mindfulness apps

- *Calm* for Schools (www.calm.com/schools)
- *Headspace* for Educators (www.headspace.com/educators)
- *Stop Breathe Think* for Educators (<https://www.stopbreathethink.com/educators/>)
- *Wellness Coach* (www.wellnesscoach.live)
- *MyFitnessPal* (www.myfitnesspal.com)
- *Simple Habit* (www.simplehabit.com/teachers)
- iChill app (www.ichillapp.com)
- *Fabulous* (<https://www.thefabulous.co/>)

Books

- *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* by Elena Aguilar
- *A Little Guide for Teachers: Teacher Wellbeing and Self-Care* by Adrian Bethune and Emma Kell
- *The Teacher's Guide to Self-Care: Build Resilience, Avoid Burnout, and Bring a Happier and Healthier You to the Classroom* by Sarah Forst
- *The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health: Navigate an Unequal System, Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness, and Get the Help You Deserve* by Rheedra Walker, PhD
- *180 Days of Self-Care for Busy Educators* by Tina H. Boogren
- *Mindful Teacher, Mindful School: Improving Wellbeing in Teaching and Learning* by Kevin Hawkins

Mental wellness organizations and support

- *Happy Teacher Revolution: Create a Community for Teacher Wellness* (www.resilienteducator.com/lifestyle/happy-teacher-revolution)
- *Hope4Healers Helpline* (<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mental-health-developmental-disabilities-and-substance-abuse/hope4nc-and-hope4healers/hope4healers-helpline>)
- *United Federation of Teachers Virtual Support Groups*
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](http://www.namh.org/)

Coordinate a Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Figure 6 highlights the three main goals of a comprehensive needs assessment process. The SEL implementation team uses the data collected throughout the process to inform planning and resource allotment. **Figure 7** highlights typical methods for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment.

Figure 6. Goals of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

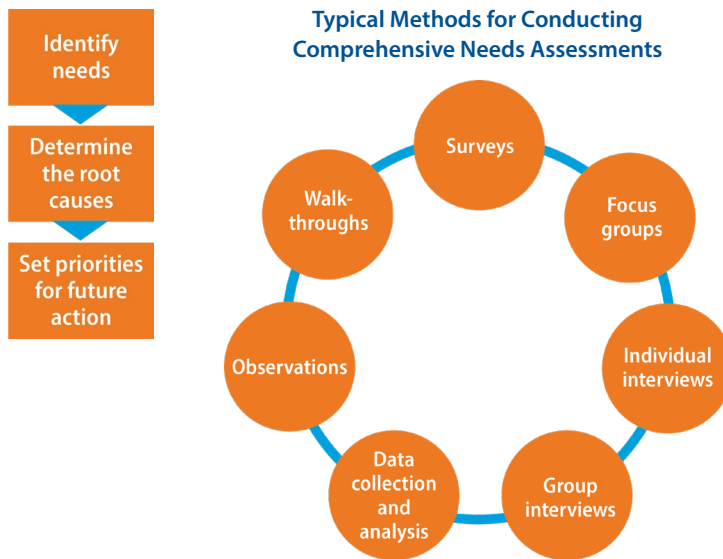


Figure 7. Five Steps for Conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment



Source: World Health Organization, 2000

During the coordination of a comprehensive needs assessment, the SEL Team considers all factors that can help or hinder the process and access to the most valuable findings. The questions below give insight into what factors should be considered during coordination.

Questions to consider

- How does your school currently coordinate and support student resilience and SEL?
- In what ways can you measure the well-being of the adults in the learning community?
- What is the student perception of your classroom culture?
- What strategies do you use in your classroom to build student resilience?
- What and how often do you communicate with families and communities about SEL efforts?

NOTES



PART III: CLASSROOM CULTURE OF SAFETY AND WELLNESS



Rationale

Research has shown that schools can prevent violence and foster resilience by focusing on designing features of the school environment (Schneider, 2010). The school environment can be organized into the following four focus areas (Piscatelli & Lee, 2011):

- Institutional Environment
- Relationships
- Safety
- Teaching and Learning

Establish Safety-Related Predictable Routines and Procedures



When possible, students and families should be afforded the opportunity to provide input on the routines and procedures during development.

Consistency and predictability are critical for creating a safe environment. This is especially true for individuals and communities that have experienced trauma and intense stress. Consistency builds trust between individuals and reduces the likelihood that students will become dysregulated; additionally, predictable routines make preparing for the next task easy for students. When possible, students and families should be afforded the opportunity to provide input on the routines and procedures during development. The tips in **Table 2** will help educators establish predictable routines and procedures in the classroom to promote safety and wellness (Trauma Responsive Educational Practices [TREP] Project, 2021).





Table 2. Classroom Tips

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Post daily schedules and agendas in the same place. |
| 2 | Define behavior expectations clearly and post them. |
| 3 | Practice transition expectations and define them clearly. |
| 4 | Use multiple modes of communication (e.g., attention calls, non-verbal signals) for behavioral expectations. |
| 5 | Provide warnings and countdowns to prepare for change and transition. |

Build Classroom Community Through Relationships

Student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationships are the foundation for a strong classroom community. Relationships provide students and teachers with a sense of belonging and significance. According to MentalHelp.net, “The quality of your relationships with other people influences how emotionally resilient you can be in the face of an emotional or physical crisis” (American Addiction Centers, 2021, Resilience: Relationships section). To this end, relationships within the classroom are essential for bouncing back from traumatic events or stressful experiences. Teachers can use strategies outlined in **Table 3** to build authentic relationships within the learning community.

Table 3. Strategies for Building Authentic Relationships

| | Strategy | Rationale |
|---|--|--|
|  | Understand and Combat Cognitive Biases | Cognitive biases impact the way we process information and make judgments about others. To build strong relationships, we must become aware of our own biases and work to combat them (The Light Program, 2020). |
|  | Establish Trust | Trust is one of the most important components of a great relationship. In trusting relationships, people feel safe and free to be their best selves without fear of judgment (Brown, 2014). |
|  | Foster a Sense of Belonging | Belonging provides students with a psychological sense of membership (Carson, 2014). When students feel like they belong in the classroom and in the school, student achievement is positively impacted on academic, social, and emotional levels. |
|  | Use Restorative Practices to Build, Maintain, and Restore Relationships | Restorative practices are processes that improve school climate and culture by preventing and addressing conflict and repairing harm to restore positive relationships (Schott Foundation, 2014). |

Recognize the Signs of Distress (Teaching and Learning)

Adolescents have a wealth of support and protective factors available to them. Also, students who have faced adversity have practiced using their protective factors and built their resilience muscles. However, after a challenging period—such as a global pandemic—educators must not only recognize and be aware of the warning signs of distress that students demonstrate when facing mental health challenges but also consider how those challenges impact teaching and learning.

Table 4 provides common signs that students might exhibit if they are experiencing a mental health or substance abuse challenge.

Emphasize resilience and hope

Resilience is essential for recovering from mental health challenges. The educator’s role in supporting mental wellness is to recognize possible signs of a challenge, provide reassurance and hope for the student, and direct the student to the appropriate resources. The National Council for Mental Wellbeing offers a comprehensive curriculum that provides training to adults who wish to become Mental Health First Aiders to help students who face mental health challenges. Contact the RTI Center for Education Services (educationservices@rti.org) for more information about supporting youth mental health in schools, which are often equipped with mental health professionals. Consulting with a trained mental health professional (e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or school nurse) is important to help determine an appropriate response and next steps.

Table 4. Common Signs of Mental Health or Substance Abuse Challenges

Academic Indicators

- Changes in cognitive behavior
- Deterioration in quality of work
- Difficulty concentrating
- Excessive absences and/or lateness
- Missed assignments and/or late assignments

Behavioral/Emotional Indicators

- Crying or tearfulness
- Shakiness, tremors, fidgeting, or pacing
- Uncommon, angry outbursts
- Unusual withdrawal or animated behavior

Physical Indicators

- Changes in sleep habits
- Deterioration of personal hygiene or physical appearance
- Excessive sweating
- Increased somatic complaints (e.g., stomach aches, headaches)

Safety Risk Indicators

- Harassment
- Intense anger and/or aggression
- Making threats to self or others
- Unusual or extreme physical violence

Source: Indicators of Distress: What to Look For, Columbia College (n.d.)

Provide a Continuum of Support (Teaching and Learning)

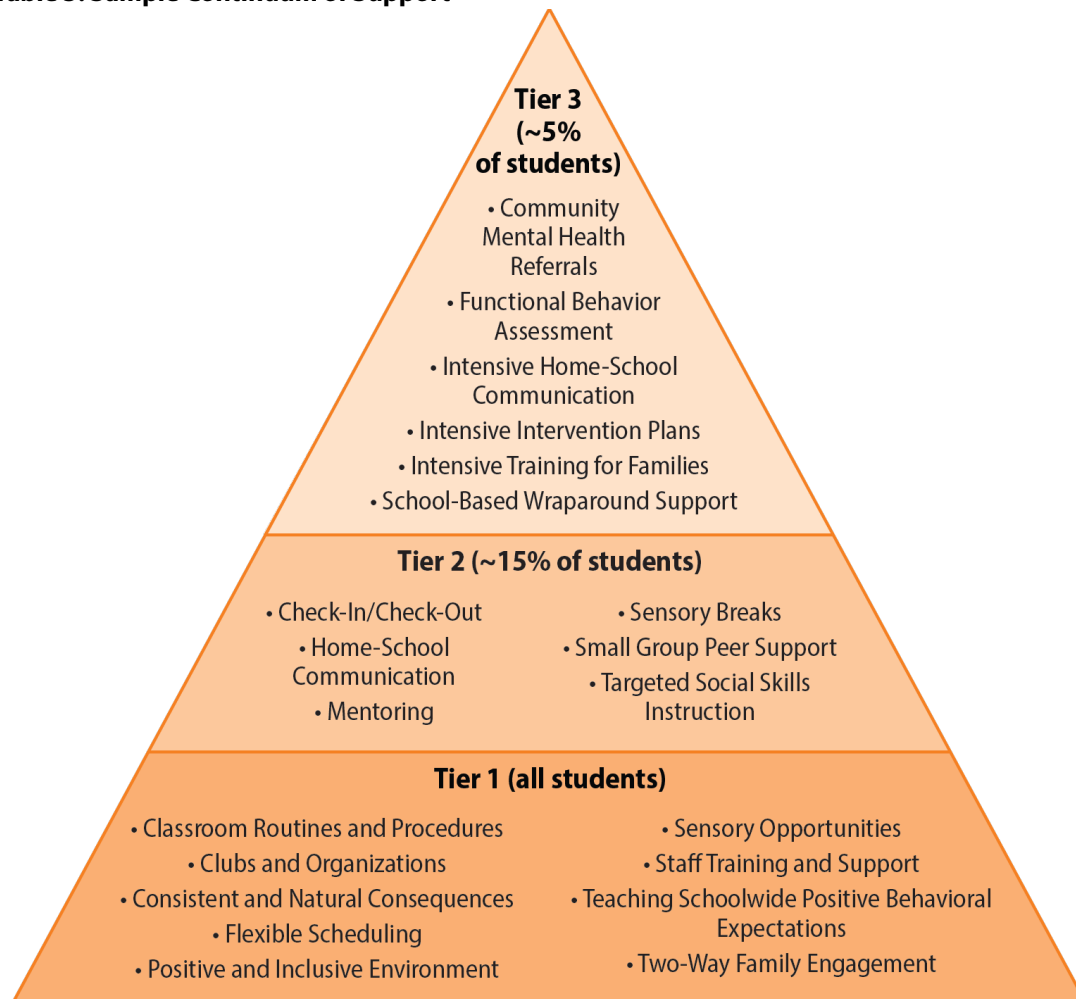
Each student within the learning community has unique capabilities and needs. In schools, Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports is a continuum of academic, behavioral, attendance, and social-emotional supports that provides the critical infrastructure and processes for implementing evidence-based instruction and intervention based on student assets and needs. In a Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, students have access to layers or tiers of support with varying levels of intensity (Whittaker & Batsche, 2019).

In a resilient learning community, students have access to a robust system and continuum of supports to meet their needs. A tiered approach, such as the one in [Table 5](#), is one way to ensure that the continuum of supports exists within the learning community. The [What Works Clearinghouse](#) provides schools and practitioners with evidence-based interventions and programs for a tiered approach for behavior and social and emotional learning.

Mental Health Statistics

A growing number of students experience stress-related mental health concerns that impact their ability to learn and cope with day-to-day activities. Schools have become the main source of mental health care for many students and their families—especially in rural communities (Prothero, 2020). An essential part of recognizing the prevalence of mental health distress is awareness. The [Mental Health Care Matters](#) resource from the National Institute of Mental Health depicts the prevalence of mental health concerns among adolescents.

Table 5. Sample Continuum of Support



Source: Quick Guide for Multi-Tiered System of Supports: The Classroom. (n.d.)

“When students feel safe and supported, they are truly ready and able to learn.”

—Laura Weaver & Mark Wilding, 2013

Create a Safe and Inviting Space (Environment)

Schools with safe and inviting classroom environments are associated with greater academic success, and these environments increase student engagement (McPartland, 1994). A study of urban middle school students revealed that perceptions about the school environment impacted engagement and academic achievement (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Engagement-related suggestions from the study include the following:

- **Offer authentic feedback and praise and emphasize student efforts** while avoiding pressure for correct answers and perfect performance.
- **Refrain from establishing a competitive learning environment**, which undermines the development of a sense of belonging in the school and classroom.
- **Differentiate tasks and offer more guidance** for students who are passive or anxious about exercising autonomy or participating in learning tasks.
- **Encourage students to interact and discuss ideas** with each other in class while using self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills

Additional tips

- Teaching approaches that enhance student engagement include **student choice, cooperative learning activities, service learning or project-based learning models, student participation** in school management, and policy (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2012).
- Learning must be presented as **interesting and challenging** for students (Parsons & Taylor, 2011).
- Integrated **metacognitive strategies** involve (1) teachers talking about the process of learning and how to improve learning and (2) students evaluating and taking ownership for their own learning.



NOTES



PART IV: INTEGRATED SEL STRATEGIES



Rationale

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) promotes five areas of competence for social and emotional learning (SEL): Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (2021). To this end, the *Resilient Learning Communities Framework* focuses on structures and practices to build resilience through the five CASEL areas of SEL competence. In the classroom, teachers should intentionally promote mental well-being and integrate SEL activities and practices into the day-to-day classroom instruction, curricular materials, and environmental considerations.

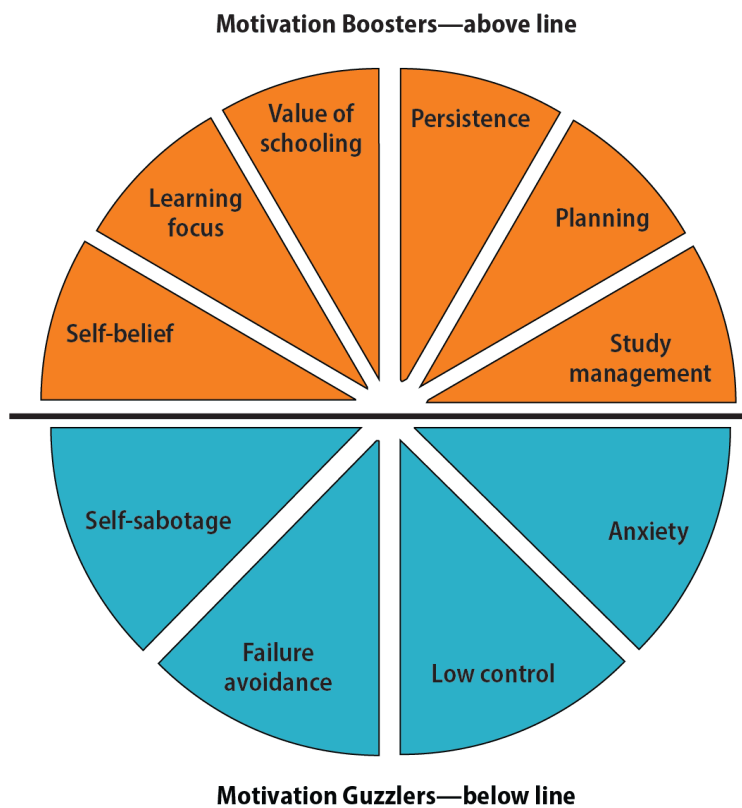
One foundational factor that can help or hinder resilience is motivation. Students can be motivated intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic motivational factors come from within, and extrinsic motivational factors are driven by outside causes. Some students learn better when teachers and family members support them through encouragement and motivation. Similarly, some students have an internal drive to improve grades or be successful (Chapa De La Rosa, 2018). **Table 6** provides examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors.

Table 6. Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Motivational Factors

| Intrinsic Motivational Factors | Extrinsic Motivational Factors |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Autonomy • Engagement • Purpose • Recognition • Self-Efficacy • Sense of Belonging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Support • Avoidance of Undesired Consequences or Outcomes • Classroom/School Environment • Expectations of Teachers and Adults • Gratification/Reward • School Engagement and Belonging • Social Collaboration |

Andrew Martin (2003) developed a *Student Motivation Wheel* (Figure 8) that highlights the impact of intrinsic motivation on school success and beyond. He divides the *Student Motivation Wheel* into two categories: Motivation Boosters and Motivation Guzzlers.

Figure 8. The Student Motivation Wheel



Source: Martin, A. (2012). *How to motivate your child for school and beyond*. Sydney, Australia: Random House.

SEL Integration Strategies

The integration strategies and resources in **Table 7** boost student motivation and cultivate resilience through the lens of SEL competencies.

Table 7. SEL Strategies That Cultivate Resilience

| SEL Competency | Strategies That Cultivate Resilience |
|-------------------------|---|
| Self-Awareness | Support Identity Development |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an Identity-Safe Classroom • 5 Powerful Lesson Ideas to Help Students Find Self-Identity • 15 Ways to Leverage Distance Learning for Student Identity Development • How Schools Can Help Cultivate Learner Identity and Agency |
| Self-Management | Promote Self-Efficacy |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Efficacy: Helping Students Believe in Themselves • Building a Culture of Self-Efficacy • Self-Efficacy Toolkit • 10 Ways Teachers/Principals Can Celebrate Student Success |
| Social Awareness | Teach Emotional Regulation |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Steps to Teach Emotional Self-Regulation • How Can We Help Kids with Self-Regulation? • Emotional Regulation Activities for Tweens and Teens • Managing the Classroom by Teaching Emotional Regulation |
| | Encourage Mindfulness |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pause That Refreshes: 6 Ideas for Creating Mindfulness in the Classroom • Best Practices for Bringing Mindfulness Into Schools • Mindfulness in Education: 31+ Ways of Teaching Mindfulness in Schools • Mindfulness in the Classroom: How It Helps Kids Regulate Behavior and Focus on Learning |
| | Emphasize Empathy |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Ways to Teach Empathy in the Classroom • 4 Proven Strategies for Teaching Empathy • Four Strategies for Introducing Empathy in the Classroom • 20+ Strategies for Teaching Empathy • How a Simple Visual Tool Can Help Teachers Connect With Students |
| | Model Cultural Awareness and Respect |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Cultures in Your Classroom: Fun Activities to Try • How Schools and Teachers Can Get Better at Cultural Competence • 5 Ways to Help Create a Culturally Sensitive Classroom • Creating a Climate of Respect |

Table 7. SEL Strategies that Cultivate Resilience (continued)

| SEL Competency | Strategies That Cultivate Resilience |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Relationship Skills | Encourage Cooperative Learning |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Collaborative Learning Tips and Strategies for Teachers • Group Work: Using Cooperative Learning Groups Effectively • Encourage Cooperative Learning • Kagan Cooperative Learning |
| | Implement Restorative Practices |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing Restorative Practices in the Classroom • Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools—A Guide for Educators • Using Restorative Justice to Build School Community • Classroom Management Reconsidered |
| Responsible Decision-Making | Support Goal Setting and Follow Through |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Framework for Student Goal-Setting • Goal Setting and Reflection • Student Goal Setting: An Evidence-Based Practice • Set SMART Goals |
| | Promote Critical Thinking Skills |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Problem Solving • 12 Strategies for Creating an Atmosphere of Problem-Solving in Your Classroom • Teaching Strategies to Promote Critical Thinking |

NOTES



PART V: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT




Rationale


Families and communities work in many ways to support students who may experience toxic stress and trauma. To enhance mental wellness as well as social and emotional learning (SEL), learning communities must implement a systems approach that aligns and *partners* with families and community stakeholders by recognizing and appreciating the many assets and strengths of these learning communities. A systems approach includes intentional relationship-building, alignment, and coordination of support. “The science of resilience teaches us that the best way to respond to this problem [stress and trauma] may not be to focus entirely on the child, but on the systems that surround the child (Ungar, n.d.).

Figure 9. Strengths-Based Steps for Engaging With Families

Strengths-Based Steps for Engaging with Families

 **In every Interaction**

- 1** Express empathy.
- 2** Ask good questions.
- 3** Provide information and perspective.

 **When longer interaction allows**

- 4** Develop strategies.
- 5** Coach, model, and mentor.
- 6** Lift up successes.

Source: www.strengtheningfamilies.net

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2021). *Strengthening families: Increasing positive outcomes for children and families*. Retrieved from www.strengtheningfamilies.net

Nurture Relationships

Establishing authentic relationships is one area of social and emotional competence. Relationships are at the heart of all meaningful interactions and learning experiences. Individuals and groups within the learning community must take time to establish and nurture relationships to ensure a resilient learning community with the mindset, ability, and resources to overcome adversity. In a systems approach, school-based teams utilize strengths to engaging with families and community stakeholders; this systems approach presumes that families can be effective advocates (Blitz et al., 2018). (See **Figure 9** for more information.) Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach that increases family strengths and enhances child development by engaging families and communities in building the following five protective factors (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2021):

- Concrete support in times of need
- Familial resilience
- Knowledge of child development
- Social and emotional competence of children
- Social connections

Prioritize empathy

Empathy is the ability to take on and understand another person's perspective. Educators empathizing with and listening to the families and communities they partner with is critical to educators (1) improving the ways they serve and include students as well as (2) creating a resilient learning community overall. Two ways to build empathy are through *empathy mapping* and *empathy interviews*

Empathy interviews

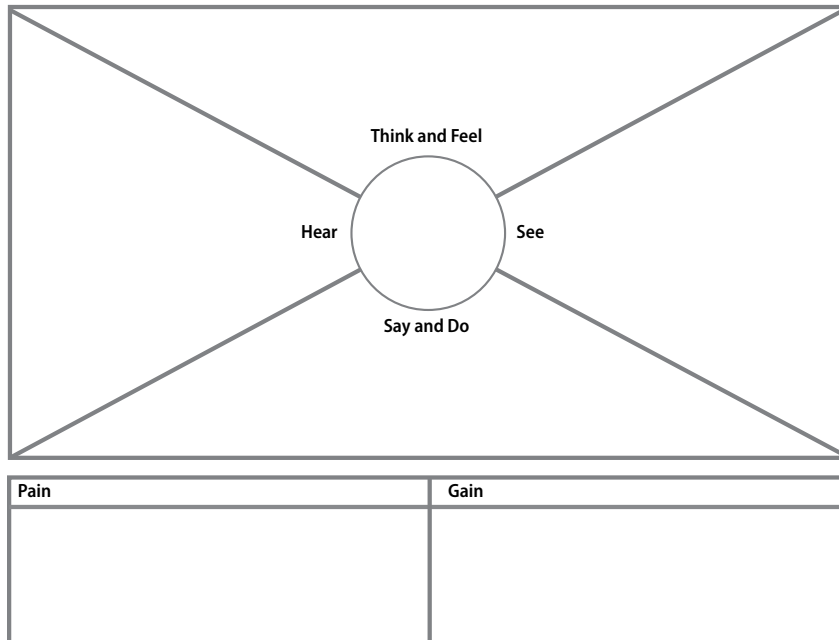
“Empathy interviews usually are one-on-one conversations that use open-ended questions to elicit stories about specific experiences that help uncover unacknowledged needs” (Nelsestuen & Smith, 2020). Empathy interviews might include focus groups, design sessions, calls home, home visits, or forums to identify issues, delve into root causes, and inspire change ideas. This tool from Learning Forward supports teams with planning, designing, and conducting empathy interviews (<https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/tool-empathy-interviews.pdf>).

Empathy interviews can also be used to check in with families regularly to gather and share information about progress and collect feedback. The Family + Student Wellness Check-In provides educators with frame and guiding questions ([Family + Student Wellness Check-In \[pcdn.co\]](#)).

Empathy mapping

Empathy maps are typically used in marketing to understand the needs of end users of a product or service. Educators might use empathy maps to understand the perspectives of students, colleagues, families, or community stakeholders. Refer to **Figure 10** for more information.

Figure 10. Sample Empathy Map Template



Source: Ferreira, B. et al. (2015)

Develop an Aligned Vision About Resilience

Explain that resilience can be taught and is influenced by many factors such as coping skills, wellness habits, and healthy thinking habits. Assure families and community members that a need for building resilience is not something that is viewed as a skill deficit, but rather a necessity for *all* individuals—no matter the situation. One metaphor that can help with explaining resilience to families is to “imagine a plane in mid-flight encountering poor weather. The poor weather represents adversity. The ability of the plane to get through the poor weather and reach its destination depends on its level of resilience” (Beyond Blue Ltd., 2017). All planes must weather the storm, so acknowledging the tools, training, and knowledge that each plane must use to navigate through it is important.

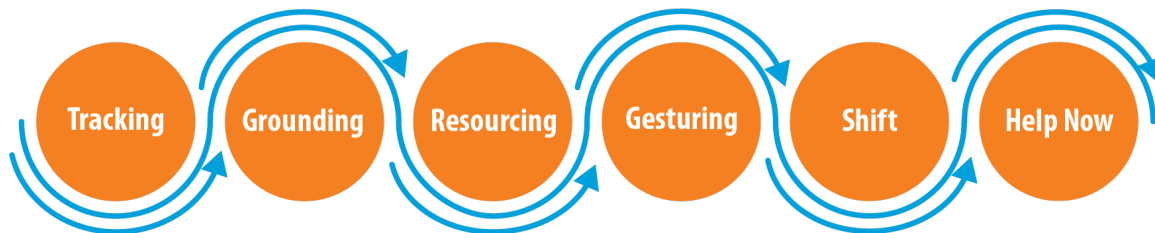
Ideas for families to build children’s resilience

- Focus on child’s strengths.
- Establish predictable routines.
- Use visual aids to help your child plan.
- Ask about feelings.
- Model emotional regulation.
- Talk about difficult times.
- Connect with each other and the community.
- Encourage self-care and wellness habit-forming.

Emphasize self-care strategies for adults

Self-care for adults is essential for building resilience in children and learning communities because children often learn from observing the actions and behaviors of those around them (Bandura, 1977). As seen in **Figure 11**, the Community Resiliency Model® focuses on six wellness skills that foster resilience and reset the natural balance of one’s nervous system after a destabilizing event or an adverse situation (The Trauma Resource Institute, 2021).

Figure 11. The Community Resiliency Model Wellness Skills



Source: The Trauma Resource Institute

Self-care plan

Adults who adopt a self-care plan and form wellness habits improve their own mental and social well-being and model resilience and self-care for children. **Table 8** shows that self-care strategies can typically be grouped into three broad areas: Physical, relational, and cognitive (Shannon et al., 2014).

Table 8. Common Self-Care Strategies

| Physical | Relational | Cognitive |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing deeply• Doing sensory activities, like burning a scented candle or listening to running water• Engaging in shopping, cooking, or other physical movement• Exercising• Getting a massage• Listening to music• Practicing good nutrition• Practicing relaxation strategies• Sleeping• Taking a hot shower or bath | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building trust• Practicing forgiveness• Practicing self-compassion• Sharing feelings and emotions• Spending time with family, friends, or pets | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing the narrative• Facing your fears• Meditating• Practicing gratitude• Praying and worshipping• Reading• Reframing to focus on the positive occurrences in life |

Partner to Support Student Transitions

Transitions in schooling are inevitable. Students transition between schools and move through grade levels regularly. Transitions within family dynamics can also occur, which can sometimes cause adversity for some students and families; these transitions can include family separation and reunification. Educators must understand how to support families and communities as they support children who are experiencing these often emotional, stressful, and traumatic experiences. Schools partner with families and community stakeholders to offer resources and align and coordinate services and supports.

“Students and families feel as if school is their ‘second home.’ The school building serves as a hub for the community, where not just staff have the power to make decisions about how the space is used.”

—Kelly Bush &
Kristen McInerney
RTI International

Coordinate Services and Supports

“Services delivered in silos, each standing along with a limited role in a child’s life, seldom serve young people well when their problems are complex. Effective programs draw together supports from many service providers, family and friends, and the wider community in ways that are easy to navigate. Coordinating programs makes it easier children and families who need help to navigate their way through the maze of opportunities available to them” (Ungar, M., n.d.). Continuous, coordinated support meets the diverse needs of the learning community and offers predictability and stability. In turn, this support enhances the likelihood of engagement and greater outcomes.

Embed SEL strategies into communication and collaboration techniques

Families and community members have a wealth of knowledge and experience that schools can learn from and use to cultivate student resilience and impact academic growth. The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Mapp & Bergman, 2019) explains that teachers should honor families’ funds of knowledge and engage families as cocreators. Communication and collaboration techniques should be embedded in social and emotional strategies to ensure that families and community members feel welcomed, connected, heard, and valued. Tools such as the Communication Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Analysis can help educators measure the impact of their communication efforts. The SEL implementation team should discuss the SWOT analysis and use the results to drive decisions that improve engagement efforts.



Emphasize restorative practices and equitable learning environments

When defining a resilient learning community’s vision with families and community members, school leaders and staff must emphasize the importance of equitable and restorative practices within the learning environment. “Restorative practices are an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as develop social connections within communities” (CASEL, 2020). SEL and restorative practices both build equitable learning environments and improve school climate by strengthening relationships. Restorative practices can be integrated into discipline procedures and classroom structures. Teachers and administrators should help families and community members understand their roles in restorative practices to build school community and cultivate resilience.

Communication SWOT Analysis

Use the SWOT analysis technique and template in **Table 9** to explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are driven by school-family communication and school-community communication.

Table 9. SWOT Analysis Template

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Strengths</p> <p>Identify programs, activities, or ways we have communicated well to ENGAGE family and community members in our learning community.</p> | <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Identify any barriers to communication, focusing on potentially underrepresented families that may be experiencing disability, poverty, or homelessness; lacking internet access; or learning English. In what ways have we failed to engage community members? Who is being excluded? Who are we missing?</p> |
| <p>Opportunities</p> <p>What suggestions, strategies, and activities would support successful school-family and school-community interactions and two-way communication? How could we better ENGAGE parents, family, and community members?</p> | <p>Threats</p> <p>What challenges might we face in ENGAGING more parents, families, or community members? What challenges might negatively impact our resources and ability to effectively communicate?</p> |
| | |

Create a Resilience and Wellness Resource Center

Learning communities are often well equipped with an array of community support. A community asset map can help schools identify assets in the community to help cultivate student and school resilience. Many school districts have wellness policies that guide schools' efforts in creating safe school environments. A Resilience & Wellness Resource Center can integrate school, family, and community wellness resources to support students, staff, and families in cultivating resilience. Schools can determine if the center will be virtual, brick and mortar, or both. The Resilience & Wellness Resource Center Planning Guide in this toolkit provides a structure for opening and evaluating the wellness center.

Resources for school resilience and wellness centers

- [Putting Local School Wellness Policies into Action: Stories from School Districts and Schools \(U.S. Centers for Disease Control\)](#)
- [Wellness Centers \(Centinela Valley Union High School District\)](#)
- [Virtual Calming Room \(Branham High School\)](#)
- [Sunset Elementary Wellness Center \(video\)](#)
- [Wellness Center \(North Tahoe High School\)](#)

Plan ongoing SEL and resilience activities to build partnerships

Partnering with families and community members reinforces SEL skills and gives students a chance to utilize those skills in the home and community environments. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has developed [tools for schools to use to plan for establishing partnerships with families and community stakeholders](#) in SEL efforts and activities.

RESILIENCE AND WELLNESS RESOURCE CENTER PLANNING GUIDE

As a team, use this planning guide to open and evaluate a resilience and wellness resource center.

Resilience and Wellness Resource Center Planning Guide

| | |
|---|--|
| Center Name and Purpose Statement: | |
| School Improvement/Policy Alignment (list goals and policies): | |
| Steering Committee (list name/role): | |
| Funding Source: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Federal (e.g., Title I)• Grant• Local School/Community | |
| Equipment and Supplies Needed: | |
| Accessibility, Hours, and Staffing Plans: | |
| Activities and Events Schedule: | |
| Evaluation of Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review date• Meeting time• Who is involved?• Who needs to know? | |
| Additional Notes: | |

Provide Crisis Response Resources

Being prepared for crisis response and management after a pandemic is very important for schools and communities. In a resilient learning community, every stakeholder is equipped with resources and contacts for effective crisis management in preparation for a crisis or mental health emergency. Staff might have access to local and national resources (see [Table 10](#)). School-based mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, counselors, social workers and nurses) typically have additional local community resources to support individuals and families in crisis.

Table 10. Crisis Response Resources for Families

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Disaster Response Helpline Provides crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster</p> | <p>Call 1.800.985.5990 (TTY for Deaf/Hearing Impaired: 1.800.846.8517) For 24/7 emotional support, text “TalkWithUs” or “Hablamos” to 66746.</p> |
| <p>National Suicide Prevention Helpline Offers 24/7 support and assistance for anyone feeling depressed, overwhelmed, or suicidal</p> | <p>Call 1.800.273.8255 For TTY Users: Use your preferred relay service or dial 711, then 1.800.273.8255. For Spanish, call 1.888.628.9454.</p> |
| <p>Childhelp (National Child Abuse Hotline) Provides 24/7 assistance in 170 languages to adults, children, and youth with information and questions regarding child abuse; all calls are anonymous and confidential.</p> | <p>Call 1.800.4.A.Child For 24/7 support, text 1.800.422.4453 or chat live with a representative.</p> |
| <p>National Runaway Safeline Serves as a crisis line for youth thinking about running away, for youth already on the run, and for adults worried about a runaway; 24/7 help is available.</p> | <p>Call 1.800.RUNAWAY</p> |
| <p>Trevor Project Line Provides 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth</p> | <p>Call 1.800.488.7386</p> |

NOTES



PART VI: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS



Rationale

A systems approach to promoting mental health through social and emotional learning (SEL) implementation should regularly assess and evaluate the system to continuously improve structures and processes. These efforts occur through establishing expectations for data collection and data-based problem-solving. The role of data in continuous improvement is to serve both as a starting point for planning and a place to return to assess the system (Skoog-Hoffman & Jagers, 2020).

Data collection techniques

Throughout each section of this toolkit, we have highlighted several data collection techniques to inform the systems approach to SEL. The goal is to gather information about the learning environment. Processes for data evaluation are valuable; therefore, we are sharing the following specific techniques for data collection:

- Asset mapping
- Climate or culture surveys
- Focus groups
- Historical data review
- Interviews
- Needs assessments
- Observations
- Polls
- Questionnaires
- Resource mapping

Data-based problem-solving steps

Data-based problem-solving is important in SEL implementation because it highlights strengths and problems that the learning community may be facing. (See **Table 11** for more information.) Continuous improvement requires that SEL teams and stakeholders regularly return to the data to assess the system's internal structures and processes to ensure that these internal elements are feasible and appropriate for the learning community. The goal of analyzing data is to use the findings to inform changes and scaling efforts that may need to occur. **Figure 12** shows the steps of data analysis.

Table 11. Data-Based Problem-Solving Steps

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Problem Identification | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the difference between where we are and where we want to be?• What is the scope of the problem? |
| Problem Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is there a difference between where we are and where we want to be?• What is the hypothesis? |
| Plan Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the plan?• How will we measure effectiveness? How often? |
| Plan Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes the plan successful?• Did we follow the plan with integrity?• Where do we go from here? |

Christ, T. J., & Arañas, Y.A. (2017). Best practices in problem analysis. In P. Harrison, & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Data-based and collaborative decision making* (6th ed., pp. 87–98). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Figure 12. Data Analysis Steps



NOTES

KEY RESOURCES

- [Assemble an SEL Team](#)
- [Understand the Key Responsibilities of a School-Based SEL Team Lead](#)
- [Design for the Five Levers of Design for Belonging](#)
- [Integrate RTI Center for Education Services SEL Professional Learning Suite](#)
- [Utilize Resources From the What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [Consider Ways to Strengthen Families](#)
- [Organize a Family + Student Wellness Check-in](#)
- [Establish Partnerships With Families & Stakeholders](#)



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