Moving Beyond Risk to Resiliency: A Protective Factor Approach to Student Wellbeing and Academic Success

Presented by
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Educare

Latin, to draw forth the hidden wholeness

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Perception

The perspective from which we view things around and within us determines what we see.
“Generally presumed to be at low risk ...recent studies [on children of affluence] have suggested problems in several domains--notably, substance use, anxiety, and depression—and two sets of potential causes: pressures to achieve and isolation from parents.”

Luthar, S.S,
The culture of affluence: psychological costs of material wealth
Child Dev. 2003 Nov-Dec;74(6):1581-93.
“There is a regrettable tendency to focus gloomily on the ills of [humankind]…. the potential for prevention surely lies in increasing our knowledge and understanding of the reasons why some children are not damaged by deprivation.”

Michael Rutter, M.D.
Annals Of The Academy Of Medicine Singapore (1979)
Volume: 8, Issue: 3, 324-338
Resilire (Latin), to leap back.

The ability to bounce or spring back into shape or position; the ability to recover strength or spirits quickly; or the ability to recover in the face of hardship or trouble.
RESILIANCE

The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even sources of significant stress.

American Psychological Association
“The good news is that between 50 and 80 percent of kids in high risk environments do manage to bounce back.”

Bonnie Benard, Resiliency researcher and author
The Big Picture: Risk and Resiliency
The Kauai Study

Low Risk 67%
High Risk 33% Resilient 33%
High Risk 67%
Resilient 67%
High Risk 33%

1955 Birth Cohort (N=643) Age 18 Age 32

Risks:
- Poverty
- Parental Discord
- Parental Psychopathology
- Perinatal Stress

High Risk Behaviors:
- Delinquencies
- Mental Health Problems
- Pregnancies

Success In:
- Marriage
- Work
- Parenthood

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors in the lives of young people [are those] factors that, if present, diminish the likelihood of negative health and social outcomes.

M. Resnick
Journal of the American Medical Association

Those traits, conditions, situations, and episodes that appear to alter -- or even reverse -- predictions of negative outcome and enable individuals to circumvent life stressors.

N. Garmezy
Pioneering resiliency researcher
COMMON FACTORS IN YOUTH RESILIENCY

Levels of Listening

1. Ignore
2. Pretend
3.
4.
5.

Covey, S., *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989
Conception of Child:

Helpless
Fragile
Passive
Trapped

Steve and Sybil Wolin: *The Resilient Self*
Conception of Child:

Resourceful
Self-Protective
Active
Capable of Choosing

Steve and Sybil Wolin: *The Resilient Self*
THE SEVEN RESILIENCIES

• Insight
• Independence
• Relationships
• Initiative
• Creativity
• Humor
• Morality

Steve and Sybil Wolin: The Resilient Self
FROM “AT-RISK” TO “AT-PROMISE”

About that “at-risk” young person….
MAJOR MESSAGES FROM THE RESILIENCY RESEARCH

• All people are, by nature, resilient

• Most “at risk” youths do succeed.

• Facilitating resilience is more about orientation than it is about intervention.
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• All people are, by nature, resilient

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• Facilitating resilience is more about orientation than it is about intervention.

• It’s how we do what we do that counts.
The Significant Six

• Three protective factors from the risk reduction research

• Three protective factors from the resiliency research
The Significant Six

Communities That Care
The Common Roots of Risk Behavior

- drug abuse
- vandalism
- fighting
- gangs
- school failure
- suicide
- crime
- sexual acting-out
- STD’s
- depression
- Low self-worth
- violence
- alcohol abuse
- theft

The Common Roots of Risk Behaviors

To reduce risk factors in the lives of young persons:

• INCREASE PRO-SOCIAL BONDING
• EMPHASIZE LEARNING LIFE-SKILLS
• ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CLEAR, CONSISTENT BOUNDARIES

RESILIENCY-BUILDING RESEARCH

PROFILE OF THE RESILIENT CHILD

• Social Competence
• Problem-Solving Skills
• Autonomy
• Sense of Meaning and Purpose

RESILIENCY-BUILDING RESEARCH

PROTECTIVE FACTORS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

CARING AND SUPPORT

• Relationship with Teachers
• Relationships with Friends/Peers
• Families and School Cooperation to Form a Protective Web
• Staff Sees Itself as Care-Providers

PROTECTIVE FACTORS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

HIGH, POSITIVE AND REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

- Success Expected for All Students
  - Little or No Labeling
  - Little or No Ability-Group Tracking
- Emphasis on Positive Self-Esteem
- Policies/Procedures Are Clear, Communicated, and Fairly and Consistently Enforced

PROTECTIVE FACTORS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT

- Cooperative Learning
- Opportunities to Respond and Contribute
- Responsibility Given for Decision Making, Planning and Helping Others
- Emphasis on Engagement (versus Alienation)
- Peer to Peer Programs Utilized

Source: Benard, Fostering Resiliency in Kids, 199
Fostering Resiliency Using “Strategies of Reciprocity”

- Peer Helping
- Cooperative Learning
- Mentoring
- Service Learning
THE SIGNIFICANT SIX

From the Risk-Reduction Research:
1. Pro-social Bonding
2. Clear and Consistent Boundaries
3. Life Skills

From the Resiliency-Building Research:
4. Caring and Support
5. High Expectations
6. Meaningful Participation

“...a protective shield...”

Caring & Support

- Meaningful participation
- Clear & consistent boundaries
- High expectations
- Bonding
- Life skills
MOVING BEYOND RISK TO RESILIENCY: Strategic Questioning
MOVING BEYOND RISK TO RESILIENCY: Four Strategic Questions

What are we doing well already?
What could we be doing better?
Specifically, how could we do it?
How will we know when we have accomplished it?
Assessing Protective Factors For Students

Assess the following protective factors for youth using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating that “nothing has been done,” 2 indicating that “we are getting started,” 3 indicating that “we’ve done a lot in this area, but could do more,” and 4 indicating that “we have this together.”

Pro-Social Bonding
___ Staff see themselves as nurturers and work to build positive relationships with students.
___ Lots of positive before, after, and in-school activities are available to students.
___ Total Score

Clear, Consistent Boundaries
___ A clear, firm policy addressing student behaviors is in place and is consistently and fairly enforced.
___ The intervention process for students (e.g., core- or care-team in schools) is fair and effective.
___ Total Score

Teaching “Life-Skills”
___ Refusal skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution, decision-making and stress-management skills are consistently taught to students, in a format that emphasizes role-playing and relevance to “real life” situations.
___ Cooperative learning for students, focusing on both social skills and academic outcomes, is effectively utilized.
___ Total Score

Caring and Support
___ A climate of kindness, mutual respect, encouragement and recognition surrounds students.
___ Structures and programs are in place in the school (e.g., counseling, support groups, home rooms, etc.) to enhance the web of support for students.
___ Total Score

High, Positive Expectations
___ A belief that all students can succeed is communicated clearly and frequently.
___ Little or no labeling (officially or unofficially) or ability-group tracking of students.
___ Total Score

Opportunities for Meaningful Participation
___ Student programs which emphasize service to other students, the school, and community are in place.
___ Students are meaningfully involved in decision-making, including governance and policy.
___ Total Score
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Pro-Social Bonding
3 Staff see themselves as nurturers and work to build positive relationships with students.
3 Lots of positive before, after, and in-school activities are available to students.
Total Score 6
The Six Components of The Technology of Development

6. The Planning of Strategy

5. The Sources of Design
   Prescribed Structure
   Developmental Process

4. The Levels of Networking

3. The Spectrum of Attitudes

2. The Elements of Change

1. The Arenas of Action

William A. Loosli, Development Publications, PO Box 3928, Tucson AZ 85740
Arenas of Action

Purpose

DEVELOPMENT  PROBLEM SOLVING

INDIVIDUALS

Focus

1. Community Development

2. Personal Growth and Development

3. Community Problem Solving

4. Personal Problem Solving

CONDITIONS
THE ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

A \quad \text{Action Steps} \quad \rightarrow \quad B

\underline{A = \text{Current situation}}

\underline{B = \text{Future vision}}
ACTION PLANNING BLUEPRINT: Harnessing the Elements of Change

Elements of Change

A

B

1. Specific Area of Focus A Clear, Brief Statement

2. Present Situation What is Happening Now
   List Identifiable Symptoms:

3. Desired Outcomes Achievable Results
   List Symptoms/Underlying Conditions as Areas of Focus:

4. Indicators How progress can be gauged
   List Possible Underlying Conditions:

5. Actions Specific Steps to Get From A to B

6. Key People/Resources to Engage
Elements of Change: Checklist
Directions: Use this checklist with the Elements of Change worksheet in order to arrive at the new reality you wish to bring about.

- **STEP 1: Specific Area of Focus**
  Establish a clear focus by being as brief, specific, and concrete as possible.

- **STEP 2. Present Situation - What is Happening Now**
  Describe the Current Reality or “Condition A”:
  - List any obvious symptoms, behaviors, issues that might possibly be related to your area of focus.
  - Below this list possible contributing factors/underlying causes or conditions.
  - Decide which, if any, of the above you are least likely to have an impact upon. Bracket and set these aside.
  - Of those symptoms and/or underlying conditions that remain, list those that, if focused upon in a planned and systematic way, would have the greatest ripple effect upon the others.

- **STEP 3. Desired Outcomes - Results You Want to Achieve**
  Rewrite the Present Situation statements that you decide to focus upon as “Condition B” or desired outcomes/changes. Do this at both the symptom and contributing factor levels. Keep them few in number, selecting those that would have the greatest ripple effect.

- **STEP 4. Indicators - How Progress Can Be Gauged**
  Create some indicators of change: pointers or key pieces of evidence related to the change or end result being sought. Indicators are stated in numbers or percentages. They are tangible and observable.

- **STEP 5. Actions - Specific Steps to Get From A to B**
  Create critical action steps, then prioritize and list them. Your first one should be the very first thing that you plan to do after this workshop.

- **STEP 6. Key People and Resources to Engage**
  Identify those people deemed key to the success of your change initiative. Write their names, positions, and phone numbers in the box. If there is room add the resources needed to ensure success – or, if necessary, list on the back of the worksheet.