

IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE: RESILIENCY

Minimum Time Required: 60 minutes

Slide #2: Resiliency Defined

- ▶▶ Resiliency is all about the ability to bounce back. Think of a “Bozo” punching bag – no matter what hits it - it comes back up, ready for more. Resiliency is like that.
- ▶▶ People who are resilient seem to keep bouncing back, no matter what life throws at them.

Slide #3: Resiliency in Students Learning Task

With a partner, share the story of a student you know who has demonstrated resiliency in overcoming challenges they have faced.

What helped them to overcome those challenges?

- ▶▶ Allow time for each partnership to share both stories, then facilitate a large group synthesis of what helped the students overcome the challenges.
- ▶▶ Do not have participants share their entire story – rather, ask them to identify and share the specific factors that helped them. Do not have everyone share – but do allow those that wish to name their factors to do so.
- ▶▶ Tell participants that you will now have the opportunity to see what the research tells us about what helps students get through the tough situations in life.

Slide #4: Resiliency Factors Learning Task

In a small group, sort the provided cards:

*Does the card represent a **Skill, Opportunity or Support** that has been shown to help youth thrive in spite of life’s challenges? **YES or NO***

- ▶▶ Participants are sorting the cards into two piles – YES or NO.
- ▶▶ Allow time for groups to sort the cards, then process as a large group.
- ▶▶ ALL of the cards are identified protective factors, but allow the participants to discover that for themselves. After the small group dialogue, most groups will have come to that conclusion.

Slide #5: Resiliency – Protective Factors

As a large group, briefly review the list of 9 Resiliency Protective Factors.

Slide #6: Skills, Opportunities, Supports Learning Task

*Sort the same cards into 3 piles: those representing **Skills**, those representing **Opportunities**, those representing **Supports**.*

- ▶▶ Using the same cards, resort the cards into 3 piles – Skills, Opportunities and Supports.
- ▶▶ Allow time for groups to discuss and sort the cards, then process as a large group.
- ▶▶ Groups may have some of the cards in different piles or they may see that some cards can fit into more than one pile – that’s perfectly fine. The reason for the task is to reflect on the individual protective factors and consider exactly how they fit into a student’s life.

Slide #7: The Research Says

*When we look at the original research on resiliency in youth, **70%** of the young people named one of the listed factors as an important factor in helping them deal with life’s challenges and thrive in spite of these challenges.*

Which factor was it?

- ▶▶ The factor that has the biggest impact on youth thriving is having one caring adult in their life – making connections and being mentored.
- ▶▶ Often this adult was a teacher or coach. It did not have to be a formal mentor or involve a formal mentoring program. It was the presence of an adult who cared about them, held them accountable, and guided them through life's challenges.

Slide #8: Resiliency – Protective Factors

Take another look at the 9 factors and begin to consider our educational system and how we do at teaching these skills and providing opportunities to build resiliency.

Slide #9: Our Factors Learning Task

As a small group, rank the resiliency factors 1 to 9:

1 - the factor which schools typically do the best job in teaching & providing opportunities for,

9 – the factor which schools typically have the most challenges in teaching & providing opportunities for.

- ▶▶ Have the group sort the cards into a 1-9 row or column, corresponding to the slide instructions.
- ▶▶ Allow time for the groups to order their cards, then process as a large group to see where we have consensus and where the differences are.
- ▶▶ Each group will not have the same order, and that is fine. The purpose of this task is to begin to consider the resiliency factors and how we as educators might impact them.

Slide #10: Our Factor Focus Learning Task

Individually, select the one factor that is most important for you to focus on this year.

With a partner, answer the following question:

What are your strategies for creating change?

- ▶▶ Encourage participants to form partnerships for this task and not stay in the group.
- ▶▶ Allow time for partnerships to consider the factors, select the one they will focus on, and share their strategies.
- ▶▶ When participants are ready, process as a group and allow anyone who would like to share strategies or other insights to do so.