



## Quick Guide: Resilience

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*For additional resources on these and other service-learning topics visit the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Website at [www.servicelarning.org](http://www.servicelarning.org)*

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The concept of resilience is based on the theory that particular traits or “protective factors” such as caring relationships and high expectations help strengthen people’s resolve, enabling them to persist during adversity. Researchers have found that resilience is an attribute that can be developed and fostered within an individual (Benard 1999). Schools, families, and communities can all take steps to build resilience in young people.

The resiliency building process begins by focusing on underlying protective factors apparent in those who do not become involved in adverse situations. Protective factors are the characteristics within a person or the environment that serve as a defense during stressful life events. Milstein and Henry (2000) specified the following protective factors:

- Prosocial bonding;
- Clear and consistent boundaries;
- Life skills;
- Caring and support;
- High expectations; and
- Meaningful participation.

To build students’ resilience, educators first should learn to develop their own resilience to model strengths and positive characteristics. Educators can do so by intentionally developing attitudes and skills related to each of the protective factors. Modeling alone, however, will not produce fully resilient young people. Educators can strengthen others’ resiliency by helping individual students to become aware of and build upon their personal strengths.

Resiliency in the classroom or in the school is a key part of the academic culture; it encompasses your attitudes and interactions with students. For example, if educators are caring, students are likely to be more caring. If teachers and parents have high expectations, students are more likely to live up to the expectations.

Service-learning programs that build in protective factors can also help build students' resiliency. Helpful examples of resiliency frameworks used in schools are available on various Web sites. Use the following collection of the best resources to guide your research and practice.

## References

Benard, B. (1991). *Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, schools, and community*. San Francisco: Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities.

Henderson, N., & Milstein, M. (1996). *Resiliency in schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kraft, N., & Wheeler, J. (2003). Service-learning and resilience in disaffected youth: A research study. In S. H. Billig & J. Eyler (Eds.), *Deconstructing service-learning: research exploring context, participation, and impacts*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Milstein, M., & Henry, D. (2000). *Spreading resiliency: Making it happen for schools and communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Seligman, M. (1991). *Learned optimism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Waxman, H., Gray, J., & Padron, Y. (2003). *Review of research on educational resilience*. Santa Cruz, CA: University of California, Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.

Wolin, S. J., & Wolin, S. (1994). *The resilient self*. New York: Villard Books.

## Web Resources

### Creative Partnerships for Prevention

<http://www.cpprev.org/contents.htm>

A drug and violence prevention resource, including examples of resiliency programs. From the homepage, click on the link for demo sites and then the link for murals in Taos, New Mexico to visit the following source:

Patrick, S. Rocky Mountain Youth Corps & Hispanic Arts Council of Taos.

<http://www.cpprev.org/demosites/taos.htm>

### Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/index.html>

Provides information on grants and funding, programs, and other publications and resources.

### **Project Resilience**

<http://www.projectresilience.com>

Offers products, materials, and services to those in education, treatment, and prevention. From the homepage, click on the link for publications and choose the following resource: T. S. Bickart and S. Wolin. (1997, November). Practicing Resilience in the Elementary Classroom. *Principal*, 77(2). <http://www.projectresilience.com/framespublications.htm>

### **Resiliency In Action**

<http://www.resiliency.com/index.htm>

Offers products and information on resiliency, classes and presentations, and an interactive resiliency forum. From the homepage, click on the following link: Benard, B. (1999). *The foundations of the resiliency framework: From research to practice*. In N. Henderson, N. Sharp-Light, & B. Benard (Eds.). *Resiliency in action: Practical ideas for overcoming risks and building strengths-in youth, families, and communities*. <http://www.resiliency.com/htm/research.htm>

### **North Central Regional Educational Laboratory**

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrsdp/le0win.htm>

Winfield, L. (1994). *NCREL Monograph: Developing resilience in urban youth*. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's Urban Education Program.