



Handout 5:

Seven Strategies for Fostering Resilience

Research consistently finds that schools and teachers play a critical role in the development of resilience in children and youth. The following seven strategies have been found effective:¹

1. Get to know your students and their support contexts.
 - Be aware of the environments where students spend time outside of school; the environments can be enriching or problematic.
 - Know that even short-term intervention by a single caring adult can make a difference.
2. Discover and appreciate all student strengths, especially less conventional strengths and those of both challenging and withdrawn students.
 - Avoid focusing on deficiencies.
 - Accept that each student brings unique understandings, knowledge, and awareness.
3. Encourage students to get to know each other.
 - Encourage students to develop positive social relationships with each other.
 - Provide times and means to celebrate each student for who they are to appreciate their complexities.
4. Cooperatively develop parameters for a learning environment with high expectations.
 - Use students' strengths to deal with their weaknesses.
 - Acknowledge the challenges that students face while maintaining high expectations and clear boundaries.
5. Set realistic, personal, and student-driven goals with each student and document those goals.
 - Ensure that every student has milestones to celebrate throughout the year.
 - Teachers can encourage deeper learning through opportunities for reflection with their students, using strategies such as student-led interviews.
6. Provide opportunities for meaningful participation for all students.
 - Create and monitor group projects that call on adaptive skills.
 - Encourage youth to take sensible risks and to make the world a laboratory for exploring outcomes.
7. Live resilience development as a process.
 - Systematically apply resilience principles in the classroom and school; they may provide a young person with the only or best environment to develop effective coping mechanisms.
 - Resilience development is a process that is worth it!

¹ Adapted from Hurlington, K. (2010). *Bolstering resilience in students: Teachers as protective factors* (What Works? Research Into Practice, Research Monograph 25). Ministry of Education, Ontario, Canada.
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/ww_bolstering_students.pdf



A Resilient Response

In the following list, the first statement identifies everyday setbacks, and common non-resilient reactions (described in parentheses). Describe what a resilient response might be.

1. I did not get picked for the team I wanted. (I'll never be any good.) _____

Hint: Identify feeling and make a plan.

2. I did the wrong homework assignment or misunderstood it. (I'm going to fail.) _____

Hint: This is just a problem that needs to be solved.

3. A rain shower at recess time keeps everyone indoors. (I'm angry we can't do anything because of the rain.) _____

Hint: Recognize disappointment and collaborate on a solution.

4. My best friend moves away. (I'll never have another friend like that.) _____

Hint: Identify feelings around loss and eventually work on another relationship.

5. I'm angry about something. (Everything feels terrible, so I feel like I am going to lash out.) _____

Hint: Consider the consequences of violence, identify feelings, and manage a response.

6. I was the only person to trip, and I nearly fell. (This always happens to me, and everyone is laughing.) _____

Hint: Take responsibility for your part and remember that all people have accidents.

