



FOSTERING RESILIENCE

How You Can Help Your
Students Be Successful

Jennifer Scully
Maplebrook School

jscully@maplebrookschool.org

THINKING OF THEIR FUTURE

Students spend the majority of their time in school and teachers have great influence on their outcome, both academically and as a person.

This workshop is designed to help you look for gaps in resiliency in your school setting and formulate a plan to address those concerns and learn some tools to help your students be successful.

RESILIENCE

Resilience, or the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, or stress, is a challenge facing everyone, but proves to be more difficult for students with learning challenges.

Fortunately, resilience can be learned.



RESILIENCE

Research shows that students who develop secure attachments, healthy emotional regulation, and good interpersonal skills tend to develop a stronger inclination to be resilient.



ONE PROBLEM

Far too much time has been spent “protecting” our students’ self-esteem, rather than allowing for supportive failures.

Let them skin their knees!



STRUCTURE OR NOT?

Students need to know what to expect and what is expected of them. Structure provides a sense of security and comfort and can reduce the sense of chaos that stress can bring. Structure also requires creating rules and expectations and applying them consistently.

- ❖ Most students say they want more freedom, but when given even a small amount of independence without proper support, they will most likely fail.
- ❖ This is why structure in their lives is crucial and why it is important to wean them off of needing structure.
- ❖ It requires a great deal of responsibility on the part of the student.
- ❖ Students with learning difficulties are often confused as to what to do when a problem comes up or when they need to make a decision. Most times, they need to be given specific instructions and the proper tools.

ENABLING VS. EMPOWERING

- ❖ Enabling does not allow the student to find a solution to a problem or learn the process for making the wrong choice.
- ❖ Enabling is making excuses for the student and relieving them from responsibility.
- ❖ Enabling is blaming others, yourself or the learning disability.
- ❖ Enabling is doing things for the student, rather than letting them learn from their mistakes.

ENABLING VS. EMPOWERING

- ❖ Empowering allows the student to express their feelings without being judged as right or wrong.
- ❖ Empowering is being supportive, not nagging or excessively criticizing. Encourage *independent* decision making.
- ❖ Empowering allows a student to own their successes and failures. Let them do things for themselves.
- ❖ Empowering is allowing students to make choices and respecting their decisions no matter how hard it is for you to not correct them.



YOUR RESILIENCE

Think about a situation where you were faced with where you had to be resilient.

What helped you to bounce back, overcome that adversity and move on from the problem?

Factors to consider:

- ❖ Attitude - Emotional state
- ❖ Self Awareness
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Social Awareness



KEYS TO BUILDING RESILIENCE

- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Prosocial Behaviors/Character
- ❖ Relationships: model and discuss self-control and problem-solving
- ❖ Self and Social Awareness
- ❖ Enhance Social/Emotional Skill Building

ACCOUNTABILITY

- ❖ Effective accountability requires a particular attitude on the part of the teacher
- ❖ The responsibility for making choices about their behavior lies solely with them - help them avoid the blame game
- ❖ In holding students accountable, you're doing what is best for them
- ❖ Let them fail - supportive failures are invaluable, as is their role in it

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIORS/CHARACTER

There are many ways to give students the tools to manage themselves socially:

- ❖ Understand and accept their learning challenges
- ❖ Problem solving
- ❖ Goal Setting
- ❖ Decision Making
- ❖ Communication Skills
- ❖ Managing Relationships

HOW RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE STUDENTS

- ❖ Help your student understand and accept their learning deficiencies
- ❖ Support them, don't advocate for them
- ❖ How we act and the decisions we make are determined by what we believe - positive or negative
- ❖ You are who you hang around with - encourage healthy relationships
- ❖ Encouragement, hope and the ability to correct mistakes independently.
- ❖ Being strong role models

SELF & SOCIAL AWARENESS

- ❖ Thinking - we may not be able to control a situation, but we can control how we view it.
- ❖ Help your student filter out what they are seeing on social media
- ❖ Courage - help them understand that not everything will work out as they want it to. Rejection and failure are learning opportunities.
- ❖ Perspective taking and being able to view things from another's point of view and showing empathy
- ❖ Encouragement, hope and the ability to correct mistakes independently
- ❖ Building a sense of purpose

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ❖ Managing emotions when faced with change, the unexpected, disappointment, etc.
- ❖ Flexibility - keep an open mind, managing disagreements
- ❖ Coping - distinguish a big deal from a little deal
- ❖ Persistence - asking for help, alphabet planning
- ❖ Self-Management - understanding strengths & weaknesses, knowing abilities
- ❖ Ownership - admit to mistakes and learn from them, learn to compromise
- ❖ Motivation & advocacy - no one will do it for them, hearing and accepting no for an answer

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Resiliency Builders: Teach our students to meet expectations, which builds character. This helps in the emergence of compassionate, respectful and responsible adults.

- ❖ Determination, Motivation & Courage
- ❖ Self-Advocacy
- ❖ Independence & Building Routine: partnership between school and home
- ❖ Attitude
- ❖ Perseverance
- ❖ Humor
- ❖ Life Skills - make choices in both their online and off line lives: let them have a seat at the table.

THEMES TO SUCCESS

- ❖ Preparation & Be Proactive
- ❖ Cultivate Self-Esteem
- ❖ Self-Advocacy
- ❖ Embrace Social Media as social - it's here to stay
- ❖ Collaboration with those in a student's life & the student
- ❖ Be involved



The Dos & Don'ts of Building Resilience

Some tips to helping students become more resilient and foster independence are:

DO:

- ❖ Be available with advice when requested.

DON'T:

- ❖ Rush in and fix whatever the problem is, no matter how hard it is to not help.

DO:

- ❖ Strike a balance - pick your battles

DON'T:

- ❖ Nag, punish, threaten. That didn't work with you, it won't work with them.

The Dos & Don'ts of Building Resilience

DO:

- ❖ Be willing to share stories from your own experience in gaining independence.

DON'T:

- ❖ Compare how you handled things better when you were that age.

DO:

- ❖ Help them build self-help skills and be comfortable with that.

DON'T:

- ❖ Close the doors if he/she needs support when things get tough.

A FINAL WORD

Success breeds success.

Geese fly in formation because each goose is pulled along by the energetic warp left by the next bird in line.

