

THE RESILIENCY QUIZ

by Nan Henderson, M.S.W. (reprinted from www.resiliency.com)
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I developed this quiz for anyone—teens, adults, elders—to assess and strengthen the resiliency building conditions in their lives. Use it for yourself or use it as a tool to help others you care about build their resiliency.

PART ONE

Do you have the conditions in your life that research shows help people to be resilient?

People bounce back from tragedy, trauma, risks, and stress by having the following “protective” conditions in their lives. The more times you answer yes (below), the greater the chances you can bounce back from your life’s problems “with more power and more smarts.” And doing that is a sure way to increase self-esteem.

Answer yes or no to the following. Celebrate your “yes” answers and decide how you can change your “no” answers to “yes.” (You can also answer “sometimes” if that is more accurate than just “yes” or “no.”)

1. Caring and Support

- I have several people in my life who give me unconditional love, nonjudgmental listening, and who I know are “there for me.”
- I am involved in a school, work, faith, or other group where I feel cared for and valued.
- I treat myself with kindness and compassion, and take time to nurture myself (including eating right and getting enough sleep and exercise).

2. High Expectations for Success

- I have several people in my life who let me know they believe in my ability to succeed.
- I get the message “You can succeed,” at my work or school.
- I believe in myself most of the time, and generally give myself positive messages about my ability to accomplish my goals—even when I encounter difficulties.

3. Opportunities for Meaningful Participation

- My voice (opinion) and choice (what I want) is heard and valued in my close personal relationships.
- My opinions and ideas are listened to and respected at my work or school.
- I volunteer to help others or a cause in my community, faith organization, or school.

4. Positive Bonds

- I am involved in one or more positive after-work or after-school hobbies or activities.
- I participate in one or more groups (such as a club, faith community, or sports team) outside of work or school.
- I feel “close to” most people at my work or school.

5. Clear and Consistent Boundaries

- Most of my relationships with friends and family members have clear, healthy boundaries (which include mutual respect, personal autonomy, and each person in the relationship both giving and receiving).
- I experience clear, consistent expectations and rules at my work or in my school.
- I set and maintain healthy boundaries for myself by standing up for myself, not letting others take advantage of me, and saying “no” when I need to.

6. Life Skills

- I have (and use) good listening, honest communication, and healthy conflict resolution skills.
- I have the training and skills I need to do my job well, or all the skills I need to do well in school.
- I know how to set a goal and take the steps to achieve it.

PART TWO

People also successfully overcome life difficulties by drawing upon internal qualities that research has shown are particularly helpful when encountering a crisis, major stressor, or trauma.

The following list can be thought of as a "personal resiliency builder" menu. No one has everything on this list. When "the going gets tough" you probably have three or four of these qualities that you use most naturally and most often.

It is helpful to know which are your primary resiliency builders; how have you used them in the past; and how can you use them to overcome the present challenges in your life.

You can also decide to add one or two of these to your "resiliency-builder" menu, if you think they would be useful for you.

PERSONAL RESILIENCY BUILDERS Individual Qualities that Facilitate Resiliency

Put a + by the top three or four resiliency builders you use most often. Ask yourself how you have used these in the past or currently use them. Think of how you can best apply these resiliency builders to current life problems, crises, or stressors.

(Optional) You can then put a • by one or two resiliency builders you think you should add to your personal repertoire.

- Relationships -- Sociability/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
- Service -- Giving of yourself to help other people; animals; organizations; and/or social causes
- Humor -- Having and using a good sense of humor
- Inner Direction -- Basing choices/decisions on internal evaluation (internal locus of control)
- Perceptiveness -- Insightful understanding of people and situations
- Independence -- "Adaptive" distancing from unhealthy people and situations/autonomy
- Positive View of Personal Future -- Optimism; expecting a positive future
- Flexibility -- Can adjust to change; can bend as necessary to positively cope with situations
- Love of Learning -- Capacity for and connection to learning
- Self-motivation -- Internal initiative and positive motivation from within
- Competence -- Being "good at something"/personal competence
- Self-Worth -- Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
- Spirituality -- Personal faith in something greater
- Perseverance -- Keeping on despite difficulty; doesn't give up
- Creativity -- Expressing yourself through artistic endeavor, or through other means of creativity

You Can Best Help Yourself or Someone Else Be More Resilient by...

1. Communicating the Resiliency Attitude: "What is right with you is more powerful than anything wrong with you."
2. Focusing on the person's strengths more than problems and weaknesses, and asking, "How can these strengths be used to overcome problems?" One way to do this is to help yourself or another identify and best utilize top personal resiliency builders listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part Two.
3. Providing for yourself or another the conditions listed in The Resiliency Quiz Part One.
4. Having patience...successfully bouncing back from a significant trauma or crisis takes time.

Nan Henderson, M.S.W., is an international speaker, writer, and president of Resiliency In Action, a publishing and training company in Southern CA, which she cofounded in 1996 to "redirect the national obsession with risks and weakness to embracing the reality and power of human resiliency." She has authored several articles and coauthored four books on fostering resiliency, including Resiliency In Action: Practical Ideas for Overcoming Risks and Building Strengths in You Families, and Communities and Resiliency In Schools: Making It Happen for Students and Educators. She can be contacted at nhenderson@resiliency.com or by calling 800-440-5171. More information is available at www.resiliency.com.

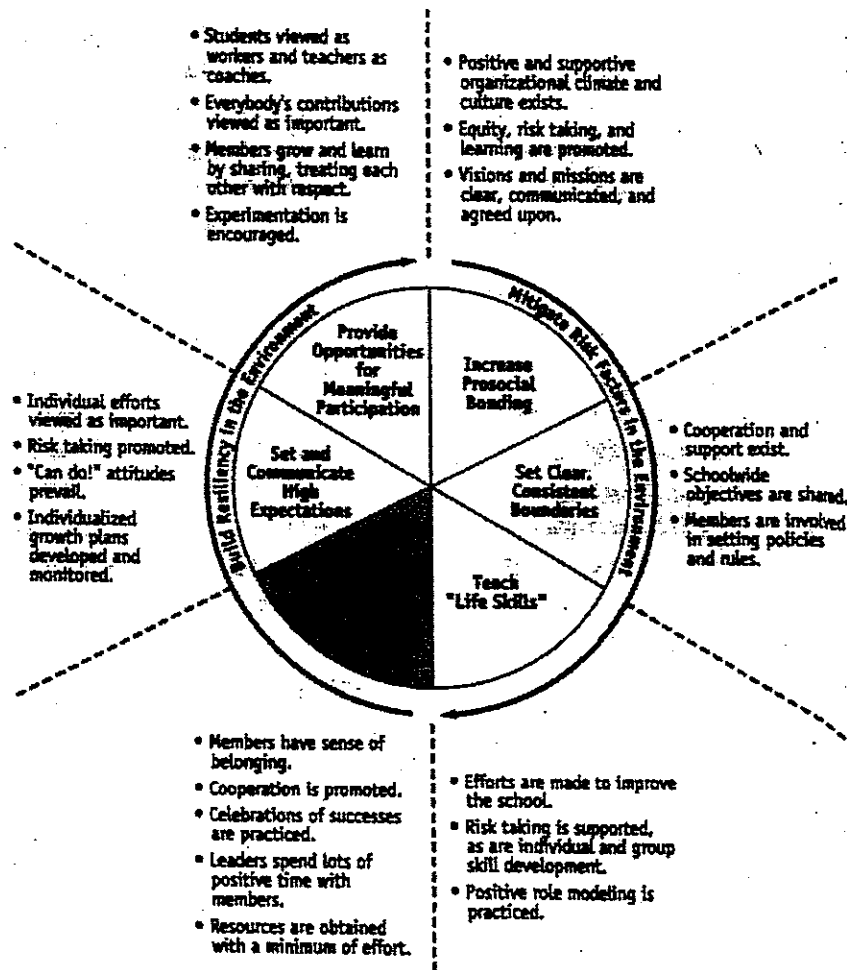


Figure 4.2. Profile of a Resiliency-Building School

Ask members to fill in the missing elements of the following phrase: My organization is like _____ because _____. Sharing the completed metaphors can be quite helpful in establishing the extent to which members view the school to be one that promotes resiliency. If the dominant metaphors are ones that depict a non-resiliency-promoting school, write examples of metaphors that might typify a resiliency-building school.

3. Identify the resiliency-building factors present in your school as well as the areas that need improving, based on Figures 4.1 and 4.2. Share your thoughts with your colleagues and encourage them to engage in a discussion about which of these factors are present in your school and which ones are absent or need improving.

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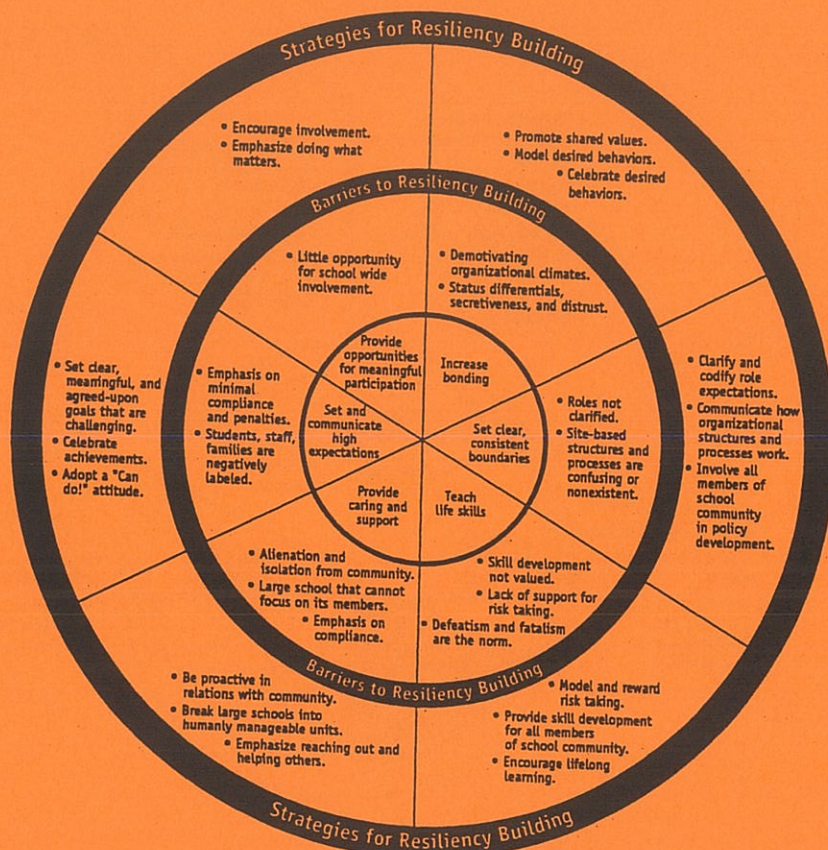


Figure 5.3. Resiliency-Building Schools: Making Organizational Changes

Intervention

Changing the situation in hopes of achieving greater resiliency is, in and of itself, another resiliency-enhancing process. People learn, change behaviors, and modify attitudes as a result of direct, shared experiences. Thus, in a sense, the process is the product. The specific objectives and strategies of the intervention will depend on the results of the assessment and the agreements reached, as well as the target of the needed changes—students, educators, or the school as a whole. Three hypothetical examples are outlined below.

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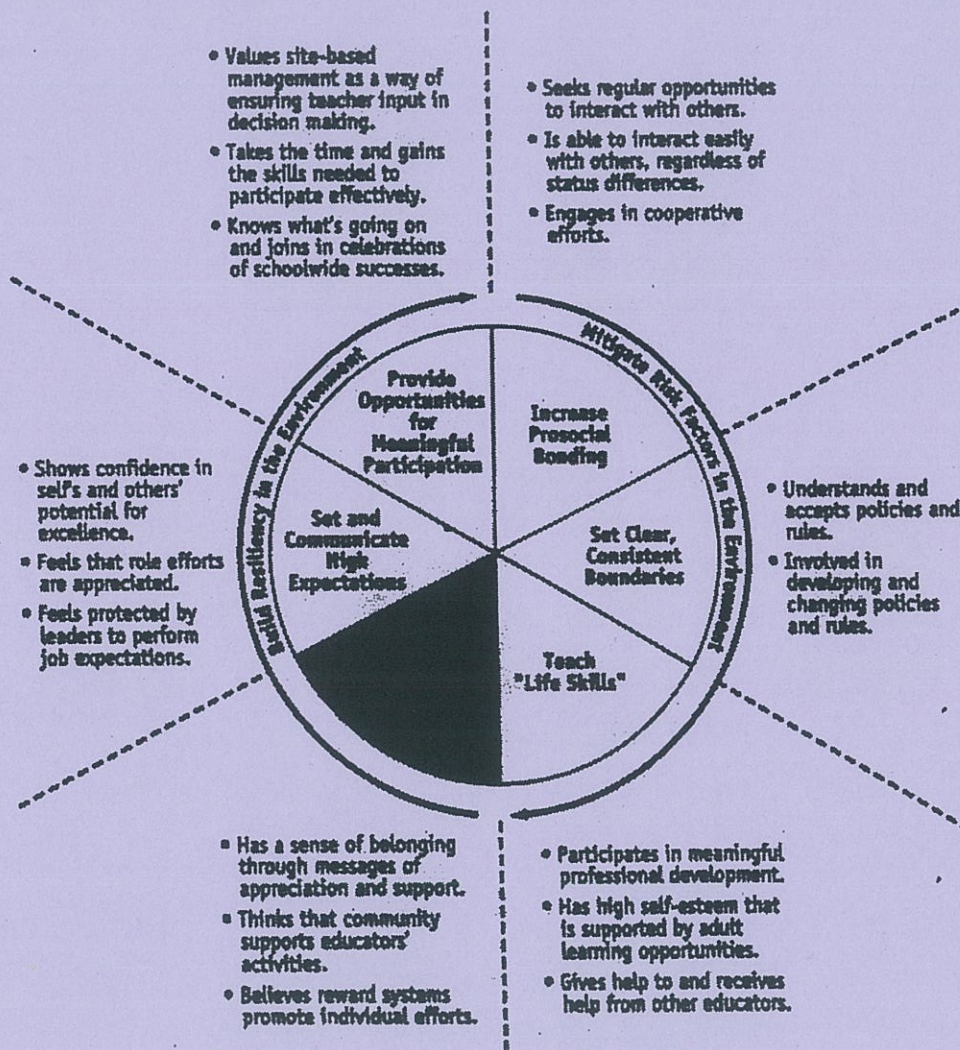


Figure 3.2. Profile of an Educator With Characteristics of Resiliency

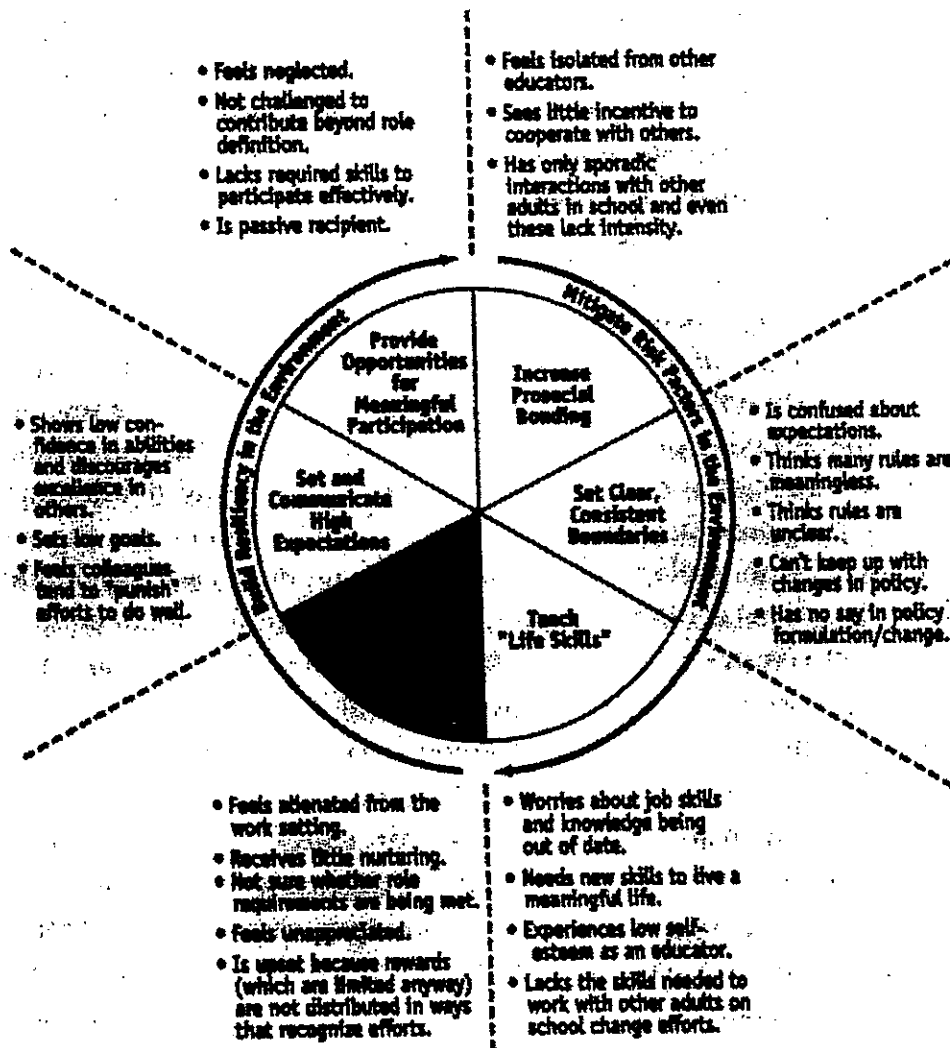


Figure 3.1. Profile of an Educator Needing Resiliency Improvement

10 ways to build resilience

Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

Make connections. Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations, or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper.

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems. You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better. Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.

Accept that change is a part of living. Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Move toward your goals. Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

Take decisive actions. Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Look for opportunities for self-discovery. People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

Nurture a positive view of yourself. Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.

Keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Maintain a hopeful outlook. An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful. For example, some people write about their deepest thoughts and feelings related to trauma or other stressful events in their life. Meditation and spiritual practices help some people build connections and restore hope.

The key is to identify ways that are likely to work well for you as part of your own personal strategy for fostering resilience.

Tips (for Teachers) to help maintain wellbeing:

(Retrieved from: http://www.responseability.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/9851/Fact-sheet-Looking-after-your-wellbeing.pdf)

- Look after yourself physically, through a healthy diet, regular exercise and adequate sleep.
- Foster and maintain your personal relationships, such as your connections with friends and family.
- Develop interests and friendships outside of your work environment.
- Make time for positive activities for yourself that will help you to relax and have fun.
- Strive for balance between your professional role and your personal life; try to leave work issues at work.
- Limit the use of alcohol and other substances; don't rely on these for relaxation.
- Learn how to monitor and manage your stress in positive ways, eg through exercise, relaxation, breathing, etc.
- Find a mentor through your workplace or professional networks and use that person's support to help you grow professionally and personally.
- Provide support and encouragement for colleagues, give constructive feedback and be a role model.
- If you have spiritual beliefs, make time for regular spiritual practice, or relationships with others who share your philosophy.
- Reach out for support when you need it – from colleagues, friends, family, your GP, a psychologist, or an employee assistance program through your workplace

What works for you?

- Take some time to reflect on what helps you recharge and relax.
- Are there new activities you would like to try?
- Consider making specific times or days of the week for these activities so they become routine and are less likely to drop off at times of increased work demands or other competing priorities.

Response Ability

Fact sheet



Looking after your wellbeing

Taking time to look after your wellbeing can sometimes take a backseat to the other priorities and demands of life, especially during times of increased workload or stress. This fact sheet provides a reminder of the benefits of maintaining personal wellbeing and some tips to help you do this.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a state of feeling good about ourselves and the way our lives are going. We experience wellbeing when we are physically and mentally well; spiritually aware or connected; and feel that our life is worthwhile and has purpose.

Wellbeing is influenced by our culture, values, social context and our general state of health. Wellbeing can change over time, so we may experience periods of relatively good wellbeing and times when our wellbeing is challenged. Since no two individuals are the same, one person's experience of optimal wellbeing may look different to another's.

Why is it important?

Positive wellbeing is important because it helps us to function well in the world and provides us with feelings of happiness, enjoyment, curiosity, contentment and engagement. Positive wellbeing also contributes to our mental health, that is our capacity to manage our thoughts, feelings and behaviours so that we can enjoy life, maintain positive relationships and work towards our goals. If you look after your own mental health you may also be better able to help others in the workplace.

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- Find a mentor through your workplace or professional networks and use that person's support to help you grow professionally and personally.
- Provide support and encouragement for colleagues, give constructive feedback and be a role model.
- If you have spiritual beliefs, make time for regular spiritual practice, or relationships with others who share your philosophy.
- Reach out for support when you need it – from colleagues, friends, family, your GP, a psychologist, or an employee assistance program through your workplace. Lifeline – 24 hour telephone counselling 13 11 14.

Further information

W www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/ten_tips_to_stay_mentally_healthy?open

W www.mentalhealth.asn.au/well-being/resources.html

TABLE 1.1 Internal and Environmental Protective Factors

*Internal Protective Factors:
Individual Characteristics That Facilitate Resiliency*

1. Gives of self in service to others and/or a cause
 2. Uses life skills, including good decision making, assertiveness, impulse control, and problem solving
 3. Sociability; ability to be a friend; ability to form positive relationships
 4. Sense of humor
 5. Internal locus of control
 6. Autonomy; independence
 7. Positive view of personal future
 8. Flexibility
 9. Capacity for and connection to learning
 10. Self-motivation
 11. Is "good at something"; personal competence
 12. Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
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*Environmental Protective Factors:
Characteristics of Families, Schools, Communities,
and Peer Groups That Foster Resiliency*

1. Promotes close bonds
 2. Values and encourages education
 3. Uses high-warmth, low-criticism style of interaction
 4. Sets and enforces clear boundaries (rules, norms, and laws)
 5. Encourages supportive relationships with many caring others
 6. Promotes sharing of responsibilities, service to others, "required helpfulness"
 7. Provides access to resources for meeting basic needs of housing, employment, health care, and recreation
 8. Expresses high and realistic expectations for success
 9. Encourages goal setting and mastery
 10. Encourages prosocial development of values (such as altruism) and life skills (such as cooperation)
 11. Provides leadership, decision making, and other opportunities for meaningful participation
 12. Appreciates the unique talents of each individual
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SOURCE: Adapted from Richardson et al., 1990; Benard, 1991; Werner and Smith, 1992; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992