The Resilient Brain

Pace Alternative High School
Yakima, Washington
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Augustana University
reclaimingyouth.org
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ReclaimingYouth.org/handouts

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The Resilient Brain

1. Thriving
2. Adversity
3. Resilience
4. Epigenetics

Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
The Resilient Brain

1. Thriving
2. Adversity
3. Resilience
4. Epigenetics

Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
The Spirit of Ubuntu

For most of human history, Indigenous peoples lived with relationships of respect.
Thriving in Indigenous Cultures

Blackfoot, Calgary
Abraham Maslow
1938

Sioux and Yurok
Erik Erikson
1938
Prevention and treatment both focus on needs.

**Abraham Maslow**

Children thrive when needs are met—this is also the pathway to healing.
George Bluebird
Lakota Artist
Belonging
Mastery
Independence
Generosity
Circle of Courage
Maori, New Zealand

BELONGING
Whanaungatanga

GENEROSITY
Atawhai

MASTERY
Tohungatanga

INDEPENDENCE
Mana Motuhake
A First Nations carver expresses the Circle of Courage in this totem.
The Circle of Courage and Resilience Science

EMMY WERNER
Presaging Positive Youth Development

American Academy of Pediatrics
Quechua Children

From the moment I entered their village, I was captivated by their respectful behavior, self-confident demeanor, and astonishing creativity.

Inge Bolin
Vancouver Island University
Belonging
Loneliness is seen as the saddest experience so all are included in circles of respect.
Mastery
Children are eager to learn and achieve but never flaunt their superiority.
Independence
Young people are given important responsibility caring for small children who idolize them. They are never harshly punished.
Generosity
Teens contribute to the community, caring for and protecting Alpaca herds.
Boys from Baltimore go to school in Kenya and live in a traditional village. They send video messages to tell their families how their lives are being transformed.
Baraka School Shuts Down
Peer Helping Groups, Adelsheim, Germany

We treat each other with respect.
We help others if they have problems.
We reject all physical or psychological violence.
Developing Group Culture

Violence includes humiliation and depreciation of the other person.

When we engage in violence, we want to make the other “small” and ourselves superior.

That stands in bold contrast to showing respect to one another.

Project Fördernde, 2017
We used to have fights every day, but now we never fight—we have learned to treat one another as human beings.

Youth in PPC Group

Many staff used to call in sick because of all the stress of this job—but now we enjoy coming to work.

Corrections Officer
We believe that no one has the right to hurt another person either physically or verbally, and everyone has the responsibility to help.

Positive school cultures celebrate the core value of respect.
The Active Ingredient in all successful outcomes with young people at risk:

Developmental Relationships

Julien Li
University of Pittsburgh
Developmental relationships are essential for optimal growth.

Urie Bronfenbrenner

1. A strong, caring bond
2. Increasingly complex tasks
3. Shifting power to the learner
4. A relationship of reciprocity

Attachment
Achievement
Autonomy
Altruism
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<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hierarchy of Needs</strong></td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Self-Actualization</td>
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<td>Maslow (1943)</td>
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<td><strong>Roots of Self Esteem</strong></td>
<td>Significance</td>
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<td>Masten (2014)</td>
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<td><strong>Indigenous Values</strong></td>
<td>Belonging</td>
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<td>Brokenleg (1990)</td>
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<td><strong>Teaching Family Model</strong></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Spirituality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys Town, Peter (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resilience Research</strong></td>
<td>Social Competence</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benard (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resilient Brains</strong></td>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Mastery Motivation</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Spirituality &amp; Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masten (2014)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pain and Pleasure

Humans also have primitive reptile brain drives to avoid pain and seek pleasure.
But human brains link pain and pleasure to biosocial needs.

Deep Pain
when needs are frustrated

Deep Pleasure
when needs are fulfilled
Universal Needs → Universal Values

- Attachment
- Belonging
- Autonomy
- Responsibility
- Achievement
- Mastery
- Altruism
- Generosity
Most emotional and behavioral problems come from unmet needs.

Abraham Maslow

Symptoms are ways to cope with frustration of psychological needs.

Klaus Grawe
Problem Behavior as Strategies for Coping with Unmet Needs
Responsibility feels impotent, rebels, bullies

Mastery feels frustration, fights teachers

Belonging feels shame, hates others

Generosity feels purposeless, misuses others
Children thrive when their needs are met and are at risk when their needs go unmet.
The Resilient Brain

1. Thriving
2. Adversity
3. Resilience
4. Epigenetics

Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Household Stress
1. Divorce or separation
2. Substance abuse
3. Domestic violence
4. Criminal behavior
5. Mental illness

Abuse and Neglect
6. Psychological abuse
7. Physical Abuse
8. Sexual Abuse
9. Physical Neglect
10. Emotional Neglect

What are some other adversities?
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment

Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors

Disease, Disability and social problems

Early Death

Death

Birth
The Impact of Adversity

Adverse experiences are toxic when they interfere with developmental needs.
Pain-Based Behavior

James Anglin
University of Victoria

Physical and social pain use the same brain pathways.
Trauma reactions are *pain-based behaviors*.

What is this girl trying to tell us about her pain?
Pain-Based Behavior
These are other examples of pain-based behavior.
Trauma = Toxic Stress

Threatened and helpless
Bessel van der Kolk

Fear, terror, helplessness
Bruce Perry
Two Kinds of Emotions

Terror → Fear

Loss → Grief
Simple Trauma
One overwhelming traumatic event

Complex Trauma
Exposure to many stressful events
Developmental Trauma

Results from multiple, prolonged, adverse events, often beginning in early childhood relationships.

Includes physical, emotional, and educational neglect and maltreatment.

Bessel van der Kolk
What is the primary impact of relational trauma?
Dysregulation
A breakdown in the capacity to regulate fear, anger, and impulsive behavior.

Bessel van der Kolk

These “beset” youth need more relational support because of their distrust, anxiety, and depression.

Martin Gold
Medications only blunt sensations instead of teaching persons how to deal with distress.

Human touch is the most powerful way of healing but is proscribed in many therapeutic approaches.
Why do teens engage in high risk behavior?

Their emotional brains are surging in the need for excitement.

Their executive control areas are still under construction.
Enchanted with Chemicals
Substances can become substitutes for fulfilled relationships.

JC Chambers
After alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco, prescription drugs have become the most common substances of abuse.

Antipsychotics and anticonvulsants (marketed as “mood stabilizers”) are now prescribed for all kinds of conditions.

Opioid deaths now exceed those from traffic accidents. The brand OxyContin is 1.5 times more potent than morphine.
The conflict of interest between psychiatry and the drug companies is absolutely vicious and obscene.

Ralph Rabinovitch, MD
Big Pharma makes $10 BILLION in annual profits from opioid sales.

$240 MILLION each year is spent lobbying Congress.
Big Pharma Pays Researchers to Push $1,000-Per-Day Drugs
Off-Label Use

Once on the market, a drug can be prescribed for conditions or populations that it is not approved to treat.

Teresa Carr, Consumer Reports
OPIOIDS
Birth of a Big Lie

“Addiction rare in patients treated with narcotics.”

Hershel Jick
1980

Cited in over 600 Big Pharma-Fueled Reports to Promote Drugs

“Medical evidence overwhelmingly indicates that properly administered opioid therapy rarely if ever results in ‘accidental addiction’ or ‘opioid abuse.’”
FDA has limited oversight on the marketing and promotion of controlled drugs.

The Opioid OxyContin is 1.5 times more potent than morphine.
Expenses-paid “Pain Management” Conferences to recruit professionals for a speaker’s bureau.

Target doctors who prescribe the most opioids.

Purdue agents contact 94,000 physicians and earn an average $77,000 bonuses for their sales.

Patients are given starter coupons for a free 30-day supply of OxyContin.

Expand use for many conditions like back pain.

Hide risks in hired articles and publications.

Directly market drugs to consumers.
BIG PHARMA PROFITS
(from opiate-related drugs)

Opioid Painkillers

Drugs to Treat Side Effects
$1.9-$4.8 Billion

Drugs to Treat Overdoses
$1.3 Billion

Drugs to Treat Addiction
$1.4 Billion

$9.57 Billion
Is Marijuana the Next Big Pharma?

“Five Poison Pills You Can Replace with Marijuana”

Marijuana World News
This “atypical antipsychotic” was top-selling drug in 2014, producing 7.5 billion dollars revenue from 9 million users.

A fine of 19.5 million for marketing this drug for use with children and elderly is a tiny cost of doing business, less than 3/100ths of one percent.
The average American TV viewer watches as many as nine drug ads a day, totaling two working days per year.

Side effects include . . .
### Drugs & Tardive Dyskinesia

We have no evidence about the safety of these agents or their effectiveness in controlling aggression. Why are we doing this?

**John March**,
Duke University School of Medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Active Ingredient(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abilify</td>
<td>aripiprazole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clozaril</td>
<td>clozapine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etrafon</td>
<td>perphenazine, amitriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geodon</td>
<td>ziprasidone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldol</td>
<td>haloperidol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loxitane</td>
<td>loxapine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mellariil</td>
<td>thioridazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moban</td>
<td>molindone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navane</td>
<td>thiothixene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orap</td>
<td>pimozide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permitil and Prolixin</td>
<td>fluphenazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenergan, Phenadoz,</td>
<td>Promethegan (promethazine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reglan</td>
<td>metoclopramide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risperdal</td>
<td>risperidone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serentil</td>
<td>mesoridazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seroquel</td>
<td>quetiapine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stelazine</td>
<td>trifluoperazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thorazine</td>
<td>chlorpromazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triavil and Trilafon</td>
<td>perphenazine, amitriptyline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZYPREXA</td>
<td>olanzapine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Most drugs of abuse repress oxytocin, the trust hormone that fosters bonding, empathy, and caregiving.
Is Drug use a Disorder or a Risky Coping Strategy?

Should the Goal be Abstinence or Harm Reduction?
Is Addiction a Learning Disorder?

● Teen brains are primed for pleasure and pleasing friends, hyping risk.
● Kids *learn* habits for quick pleasure.
● Most end addiction by their 30s.
Bold, impulsive youth—often boys—like to try new things.

Sad and anxious persons may self-medicate—typically girls.

Trauma, ADHD, depression, and delinquency also put youth at greater risk.
ASETS Study: How youth feel about...

**Medications**
- Neutral: 26%
- Positive: 27%
- Negative: 47%

**Psychotherapy**
- Neutral: 28%
- Negative: 10%
- Positive: 62%

Robert Foltz
Trauma and Resilience in the Other 23 Hours

- Safety
- Connecting
- Coping

Howard Bath
John Seita
Safety is ultimately about the prevention of threat or pain.
“Felt safety” has to be determined by each individual.
Natural relationships are the most powerful forces for healing trauma and fostering growth.
Re-sil-i-ence
from Latin *resiliens*, “to leap back.”

Resilience means bouncing back from difficult life experiences.
Kauai Resilience Study

Followed children born in 1955 for over a half century. This was the classic early research on “resilience.”
Resilient children have personality traits of invulnerability.
Risk and Resilience are Human Universals

The world breaks everyone and, afterward, many are strong at the broken places.

Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms
Recruiting Relational Support

Resilience is related to extraversion, intelligence, and social skills. But resilience is not a personality trait. Instead, persons with these attractive qualities are better able to recruit relational support.
Roots of Resiliency

Children who showed resilience were loved regardless of behavior, intelligence, or attractiveness.
Children who received negative responses were most vulnerable. Those who received positive responses were stress resistant.
With positive connections, a majority can surmount almost any risk.

Emmy Werner
Resilience is not Rare but the ordinary magic of the adaptive minds, brains, and bodies of children in families, relationships, and communities.

Ann Masten
Five Decades of Research: Resilience rests fundamentally on relationships.

SUNIYA LUTHAR
Stress

- Bored
- Optimum
- Overload
- Burnout

- Laid back
- Fatigue
- Exhauastion
- Anxiety/panic/anger
- Inactive
- Breakdown
The Path to Trauma

- Positive Stress
- Tolerable Stress
- Toxic Stress

Trauma
Emotional and behavioral problems result from facing stressful life events without adequate support.

Alan Sroufe
Brain Wise
1. Two decades of Brain Development
T F 2. Teen brains have less problem-solving ability for making good choices.

2. Kids Have Great Problem-Solving Brains
3. Many Teens are Sleep Deprived
4. Teen Brains Crave Excitement

T  F  4. Teens are excitable because they read more emotional cues than adults.
5. The unsettled behavior of teens is mostly due to "raging hormones."

5. The Idea of Raging Teen Hormones is a Myth
T  F  6. Teenagers are no more at risk for drug addiction than are adults.

6. Teens More Easily Get Hooked on Chemicals
7. The primary purpose of sleep is to refresh and renew the tired body.
Two Levels of Sleep

REM
25%

Vivid dreaming
Eyes track dream action
Solve pressing problems
Night time therapy session

non-REM
75%
Stage 1
Stage 2
Stage 3
Stage 4

No dreaming
No eye movement
Discard Trivial Memories
Build Long-term Memories
8. The Teen Brain can Redesign Itself
9. The Resilient Brain Bounces back after Adversity
10. Epigenetics: Experience Alters Genes

T  F  10. You have the brain you are born with, and there's not much you can do about it.
The Resilient Brain

1. Thriving
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Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
The Resilient Brain

Humans have highly adaptive brains, and 84% of our 20,000 genes affect the brain.
Neuroplasticity

The human brain has remarkable powers to change itself to cope with new challenges across the lifespan.

Norman Doidge
Our genes are not locked in one way of responding. Life experiences turn genes off or on to adapt to the environment.

Bruce Perry
Epi is Greek: on top of
Chromosomes carry 20,000 + inherited genes.

All genes are in the nucleus of virtually every body cell.
The sperm and egg each bring 23 chromosomes.
Embryonic Stem Cells

These first cells can become any of more than 200 types of cells in the human body.
Embryonic Stem Cells Specialize

- Neurons
- Blood
- Muscles
Genes occupy only 5% of our chromosomes.

Until recently, the rest was called “junk DNA.”
So-called “Junk DNA” actually contains four million *epigenetic switches* that can turn genes on and off.

*Project ENCODE*
The Dutch Hunger Winter (1944-45)

Children conceived in this famine were tiny but stored fat to survive. Following the war, they became obese.

Children for four generations were small at birth and likely to become obese and diabetic.
Diet and Epigenetics
Dad’s life style also can affect offspring.
Boys who smoke before puberty can pass on harmful epigenetic effects to their offspring.
Industry produces 83,000 substances not natural in human history. Exposure can affect health and growth and is related to autism, aggressiveness, and learning problems.  

Grandjean & Landrigan
High Nurture

Low Stress
Low Anxiety
Low Nurture

High Stress
High Anxiety
RESILIENCE
Social
Curious
Adaptive

TRAUMA
Withdrawn
Fearful
Impulsive
Nurturing care turns on genes in the brain that regulate stress which makes these offspring less fearful and more resilient. But poor rearing turns off genes that calm stress.

Michael Meaney
Parenting has Potent Epigenetic Effects

Stress
Personality

Intelligence
Neuroplasticity

Health
Immune System

Growth
Metabolism
Epigenetics is most potent during fetal development when an average of 250,000 new neurons are created each minute throughout pregnancy.
Prenatal Epigenetics

Drugs
Stress
Poverty
Nutrition
Pollution
Bereavement
Natural Disaster
Cultural Disruption
Cultural trauma can affect up to four generations.
Epigenetics and Indigenous Health

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Kidney Disease
- Heart Problems
- Reduced Life Span

Among Native Americans, it is projected that 1 of every 2 children will develop diabetes.
Epigenetic Effects:
Brief or Long-term

Resetting your circadian clock
Neuroplasticity for long-term learning
Passing trauma to future generations
Drugs Disrupt Genes

These drugs do not just have the action we are told about but often have much greater effects throughout the body than the one the company markets.

David Healy
University of Cardiff, Wales
Drugs and Autism

John has little speech while his identical twin Sam uses his iPad. Drugs used during surgery at three months made the difference.
Telomeres: Our Aging Clock

These protective caps on our chromosomes shorten with aging.

When they wear away, the cell dies.
Extreme Stress Erodes Telomeres

Children exposed to domestic violence, physical abuse, or frequent bullying will show significantly more telomere loss between ages 5 and 10.
But supportive relationships can halt this effect.
The Good News

Meeting growth needs builds resilient brains.

Epigenetic problems are potentially reversible.
The Resilient Brain

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Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
Belonging

Creating Circles of Courage
The Prime Need

Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her.

Urie Bronfenbrenner
Humans have two chemicals for bonding

**OXYTOCIN** tames aggression and fear. Females have more oxytocin for use in *nurturing*.

**VASOPRESSIN** can enhance aggression. Males have more vasopressin for *protecting*. 
Oxytocin and Vasopressin: Social Bonding Hormones
Oxytocin
Trust and Bonding

EROS
PHILIA
AGAPE
Bids to Connect include behavior, emotions, physical appearance, and verbal conversation.

What are some bids young people make?
Both the right and left brain evaluate whether to connect.
EXCLUSION
triggers
SHAME

BELONGING
triggers
PRIDE
Building Rapid Trust

The Vagal System makes instant decisions about whom to trust—even with those we have just met. This is the *preamble to a social bond*.

Steven Porges
## The Brain’s Social Engagement System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Emotional Signals</th>
<th>Reading Emotional Signals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facial Expression</td>
<td>We can perceive emotions on the faces of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial muscles signal our emotions to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Tone</td>
<td>The middle ear tunes in emotion in tone of voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larynx muscles convey emotion in tone of speech.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Contact</td>
<td>Eye contact is perceived as engaging or intrusive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaze and head position convey social intentions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gangs as a way to meet needs.

1. Safety and Belonging
2. Economic Achievement
3. Power and Thrills
4. Loyalty to Friends

Gregory Acevedo (2017)
Relationships and School Success

Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002

Number of Close Adult Relationships

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
The Resilient Brain

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Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
Creating Circles of Courage

Mastery
All children have an inborn drive to learn and master.
Learning builds neuron connections

Myelin insulates Neurons making them 100 times faster.

Adding 40 layers of myelin builds expertise.
SCHOOL FAILURE damages self esteem and predicts poor life outcomes.
Defending Self-Respect

Hostility to authority is a rebellious performance of kids whose self-respect has been degraded by rejection and school failure.
School Success has a lasting effect on life adjustment in spite of other problems.
Performing versus Learning

Egoistic Motivation

Task Motivation
Task Motivation
*Learning Lots*

Egoistic Motivation
*Don’t Look Dumb*
Cooperative Learning
The brain achieves optimum efficiency by using peers and mentors.

Lev Vygotsky
Growth or Fixed Mindsets

Carol Dweck

I can make myself smart.

I just wasn’t born smart.
We can all learn, but we cannot change basic intelligence very much.

You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.
Mindsets Change the Brain—and the Meaning of Failure

Try Again.
Fail Again.
Fail Better.

Samuel Beckett
One million Texas public school students were followed for six years in a study by the Council of State Governments.

Nearly 60 percent of students were suspended or expelled during middle and high school years.
15% of students studied were suspended or expelled 11 times or more. Half of this group were involved in the juvenile justice system.
Only 3% of disciplinary actions were for conduct where state law mandated suspensions and expulsions. 97% were at the discretion of school officials, mainly in response to violations of local schools’ conduct codes.
School Climate

Schools with similar racial and economic composition varied greatly in suspension and expulsion.
Effective Schools

Teachers who connect with students who distrust teachers.

Teachers who help struggling students achieve success.
The Widening Gap

- Average Achievement
- 1000 Students in Alternative School
1.8 to 2.0 grades achievement per year in alternative school

.65 grade achievement gain per year across prior school history
Intelligence Equals Resilience

intelligence (noun)

A person’s ability to respond successfully to challenges and to learn from such experience.

Robert Sylwester
Private Logic

Young people are scientists checking out hypotheses:

*I am...*
*Others are...*
*The world is...*

*Alfred Adler*
Outside Kid

Behavior

Logic

Emotions

Inside Kid
BAMMS Thinking Errors

Blaming
The teacher isn’t fair.

Assuming the worst
You can’t trust anybody.

Minimizing
I just slapped her.

Mislabeled
He is just a wuss.

Self-centered
Why should I care?
Correcting Errors: Sandwich Scripts

Support  Correction  Support
Problem Solving

Connect

Clarify

Restore
Connect

Clarify

Challenge
Logic
Emotions
Actions
Response

Restore

STRENGTH SUPPORT
CLEAR Solutions
Using the Brain’s Natural Problem-Solving Process

**Challenge**
What triggered the event?

**Logic**
What was the person thinking?

**Emotions**
What was the person feeling?

**Action**
What was the specific behavior?

**Response**
What was the final outcome?
Timeline
CLEAR Team Problem Solving

Logic
Emotions
Action
Response
Challenge
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Logic</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What hassles do you face right now?</td>
<td>What do you say to yourself about this?</td>
<td>What are the feelings that you have?</td>
<td>How do you deal with this situation?</td>
<td>Then what happens after you do this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get suspended.</td>
<td>I hate teachers.</td>
<td>I’m mad.</td>
<td>Swear at them.</td>
<td>I get kicked out of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My grades are bad.</td>
<td>I want to quit school.</td>
<td>I’m afraid I’ll fail.</td>
<td>I worry a lot.</td>
<td>I can’t sleep at night.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLEAR Coping Cycles

- Challenge
- Logic
- Emotions
- Actions
- Response

Crisis

CALM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlling Problems</th>
<th>Solving Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems are abnormalities—signs of ignorance, immorality, or mental disorder.</td>
<td>Problems are a normal part of life. By solving problems, we build resilience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with problems are different because they show deviant behavior.</td>
<td>People with problems sometimes act in ways that hurt themselves or others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acknowledging that one has problems is a sign of weakness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If a person has problems, these should be concealed from others.</td>
<td>If a person has problems, these can be shared with persons we trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When problems arise, there should be consequences for bad behavior.</td>
<td>When problems arise, others can help the person develop better ways of coping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respectful Alliances
Turning Problems into Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRESSED</th>
<th>RESILIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCONSIDERATE OF SELF</td>
<td>RESPECTS SELF</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Authority Problem</td>
<td>1. Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Easily Misled</td>
<td>3. Self-Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intimidates Others</td>
<td>4. Helps Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Difficulty</td>
<td>5. Social Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Easily Angered</td>
<td>7. Self-Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lying or Stealing</td>
<td>8. Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Alcohol or Drug Abuse</td>
<td>9. Healthy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Resilient Brain

1. Thriving
2. Adversity
3. Resilience
4. Epigenetics

Belonging
Mastery
Responsibility
Generosity
Creating Circles of Courage

Responsibility
Responsibility = Positive Power
Self-Regulation is central to social and emotional adaptation and maturation.

(Dishion & Kavanagh, 2003, p. 108)
How do children learn emotional regulation?
They borrow their caregiver’s calm brain.
Calming Cycles: Teaching Self-Regulation

Vera Fahlberg
Self-Efficacy

The belief in one’s power to cope with challenges.

Albert Bandura
Persistence and Grit were assets that enabled youth with serious behavior problems in childhood to have resilient outcomes.

Emmy Werner & Ruth Smith
Kauai’s Children Come of Age
Powerlessness
The most robust trigger of stress and cortisol release

Dacher Keltner
Power corrupts by high-jacking the brain.

Brainstem dominance programs stifle empathy.
A dopamine high fuels impulsive pleasure seeking.
Countering the Pitfalls of Power

Dacher Keltner

**Arrogance**
Sees others as inferior

**Disrespect**
Rude to less powerful

**Impulsivity**
Addicted to pleasure

**Selfishness**
Ego overrides empathy

**Humility**
Sees others as equals

**Respect**
Treats all with dignity

**Responsibility**
Practices self-restraint

**Generosity**
Meets needs of others
Co-Regulation
Goal: help person calm
Tone: soothing, confident
Climate: respectful
Discipline: teaching
Self: manage own feelings

Coercion
Goal: stop bad behavior
Tone: harsh, aggressive
Climate: authoritarian
Discipline: punishing
Self: vent own feelings
Transforming Discipline

**Martin Hoffman**

- **Power Assertion**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Love Withdrawal**
Adversarial Encounters

Distrust. Youth believes adult won’t care, understand, or help.

Antagonism. Youth and adult are in conflict and power struggles.

Alienation. Rancor leads to aggression or avoidance.

Positive Alliances

Trust. Youth believes the adult cares, understands, and can help.

Cooperation. Youth and adult work together to solve a problem.

Attachment. Mutual attraction develops from working together.
Avoiding Responsibility

Until persons own their problems, they are unlikely to change.

Those who dodge responsibility get a simple verbal challenge.
Student: So I missed school. What’s the big deal?

Youth: Why should I care? Nobody cares about me.

Student: Most of the other kids drink or use drugs.

Adult: Well, really you are the big deal.

Adult: Seems it is up to you to take charge of your life.

Adult: I always think of you as a leader.
The Resilient Brain

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Belonging
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Generosity
The Transformative Power of Compassion
Altruism and Empathy are Inborn

Max Planck Institute
Germany
Children are biologically hardwired, not only for close connections to others but also for “deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning.”

Commission on Children at Risk
In all primates but humans, a few dominate the many.

But egalitarian generosity has insured human survival.
Humans lived in harmony as hunter gatherers for 99% of history.

Peter Gray
Survival of the Fittest Most Compassionate

We developed egalitarian social brains and cultural values.
Generosity

Children are born with a generous disposition. The need to give is just as vital as the need to receive.

Children who sense that their gifts are being rejected feel bad and unlovable.

IAN SUTTIE
The Origins of Love and Hate
1935
A Cause Beyond Self

Only a positive prosocial purpose can provide the lasting inspiration, motivation, and resilience that is characteristic of a truly purposeful life.

William Damon
Stanford Center for Adolescence

Naelyn Pike, 16, opposes mining on her Apache reservation.
Service Learning
Helping gives proof of one’s worth – being of value to others.
Does aggression in small children predict antisocial behavior as teens?
Research on compassion in small children.
Being Mean is Not in Genes

Both identical and fraternal twins are similar in showing compassion or disregard to a person in distress.
Helping, sharing, and consoling in third grade is the best predictor of achieving in eighth grade.
We must look at children in need not as problems but as individuals with potential to share if given the opportunity.

Desmond Tutu
Reclaiming Youth at Risk
Building Positive Peer Cultures
What is the Adult’s Role?

- Focus on Both Behavior & Needs
- Focus on Behavior
- Focus on Needs
Making Caring Fashionable

Caring is Devalued

Caring is Revalued
Relabeling

Youth thinks bad behavior is cool

Bad behavior is recast as uncool

Nobody messes with me

Picking on weaker persons
Labeling Harmful Behavior

- Immature
- Thoughtless
- Easily Misled

Labeling Helpful Behavior

- Mature
- Thoughtful
- Thinks for Self

Labels apply to BEHAVIOR, not the person.
Obedience
Punishment and Reward

Brain Pathways for "Discipline"

Empathy
Prosocial Values
Positive RELATIONAL Support

- **PRO Assessment**
  - Comprehensive reclaiming plan
- **CLEAR Teamwork**
  - Targeted positive relational support
- **Universal Supports**
  - School climates to meet growth needs.
Curtain Call for a Cure

Sioux Falls theatre students performed Broadway musical hits to a packed audience with the goal of raising $10,000 for research on Friedereich’s Ataxia, a rare neuromuscular disorder.

They were inspired by fellow student Raena Brendtro who was diagnosed with FA at age 13.
We need a unifying theme.
Social Equality

Helpers have the same needs as those they serve.
Teams who respected and empowered young people had the most positive peer group cultures.
Four Measures for Positive Staff Cultures

University of Michigan

1. Team cohesion
2. Team involvement
3. Belief in program success
4. Optimism for youth success
Teamwork Primacy Checklist

- Teams include staff regularly serving a specific group of students.
- Status is minimized so all have opportunity for full participation.
- Teams meet regularly to provide time for full communication.
- Teams work directly with leadership in fulfilling their mission.
Problems as learning opportunities

“Please coach me, don’t scold me.”
Provide fail-safe relationships.

“A kid like me really needs a fan club.”
Increase dosages of nurturance.

“I need to know you really care.”
Don’t crowd.

“If you get too close, I will back away.”
Decode the meaning of behavior.

“I try to hide what I really think.”
Model respect to the disrespectful.

“Your respect helps build mine.”
Enlist youth as colleagues.

“I am the only real expert on me.”
Touch in small ways.

“*I am watching you very carefully.*”
Give seeds time to grow.

“I am still learning.”
Strengthen spiritual roots.

“I need to find a purpose for my life.”
Grandfather, what is the purpose of life?

Eddie Bellerose
Cree Elder
The Resilient Brain

Pace Alternative High School
Yakima, Washington
August 27, 2018

Larry K. Brendtro, PhD
Augustana University
reclaimingyouth.org