

BE GREAT: PROMOTING EDUCATOR WELLNESS & RESILIENCE

This brief is for educators who wish to improve their resilience in the face of adversity, and for the leaders who intend to support them.

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This brief addresses how educational psychology can improve teaching and learning by empowering educator resilience.

HOW DO WE HELP OUR STUDENTS WITHOUT LOSING OURSELVES IN THE PROCESS?

As educators, our own health and wellness directly impact the success of the learning community around us. When we develop and practice skills for resilience, we hold the power to shift the entire learning culture from reactive to proactive, thereby enhancing our own work experience and wellness. By focusing on resilience, an accessible, collaborative culture of wellness can be established and sustained.

Educators are faced with overwhelming student needs; 76% of students identify at least one Adverse Childhood Experience.¹ These experiences may include exposure to violence, abuse, neglect and traumatic loss, putting educators at risk for secondary traumatic stress. This is especially true in learning environments that are more reactive than proactive.

Teachers and principals reported poorer well-being and more frequent job-related stress compared to other working adults, with 80% of other working adults reporting resilience in their careers compared to only 46% of teachers.²

Poor well-being and adverse working conditions were associated with teachers' and principals' intentions to leave their jobs.²

Supportive school environments were linked to better well-being and a decreased likelihood of intentions to leave.²

Educators need a toolbox for building resilience in the face of potentially traumatic challenges. Fortunately, skills for resilience can be embedded within ALL educational practices, including curriculum, instruction, intervention, assessment, culture and climate. The BE GREAT model for resilience is a research-based framework that guides educators beyond trauma-informed learning, into the practices of intentionally building skills for resilience.³

“Resilience is a dynamic, developmental process, encompassing the attainment of positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity.”⁴

7 PATHWAYS OF TEACHER WELLNESS & RESILIENCE

B-E G-R-E-A-T

B **BOUNDARIES = SET LIMITS FOR SAFETY & WELLNESS**

- It is okay to say NO (and YES, if it is healthy for you)
- Be consistent and follow through
- Establish routines for assessing needs and boundaries

E **EXPECTATIONS = SET GREAT GOALS THAT MATTER TO YOU**

- Identify individual and collaborative goals
- Set wellness goals that are SMART⁶
- Build common language and practice for goal-setting

G **GROWTH = MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS**

- Establish routines for monitoring progress
- Identify, address and resolve obstacles
- Replace reactive behavior with proactive behavior

R **RESPECT = HONOR SELF & OTHERS THROUGH ACTION**

- Know and utilize your own unique strengths
- Identify and celebrate others' strengths
- Replace reactive self-talk with proactive self-talk

E **EMPATHY = SEEK TO UNDERSTAND**

- Practice Active Listening: Focus-Ask-Reflect
- Show you actually care
- Establish daily routines for Focus-Ask-Reflect

A **ASSERTIVENESS = COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY**

- Find YOUR voice and USE it
- Replace passive and aggressive behavior with healthy assertive behavior

T **TRUST = PUSH PAUSE & WALK YOUR TALK**

- Push Pause: Stop, Breathe, “What do I need?”
- Push Play: Move forward in a healthy way
- Establish daily routines for focus and self-regulation

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH CENTERED ON BUILDING RESILIENCE

Great professional development mirrors great teaching. By focusing on BE GREAT skills during professional learning, teachers can actively support each other, in real time, to build their resiliency toolboxes by scaffolding the mindset and skill set for **Boundaries, Expectations, Growth, Respect, Empathy, Assertiveness, and Trust**. Individually and collaboratively, educators can use the BE GREAT pathways to identify areas for their own development, set personal goals for improvement, and reflect on progress over time. As educators build their capacity for resilience, healthy coping strategies become embedded

within daily practice, Professional Learning Communities, and instructional routines.

Exemplary professional growth must also include evidence based improvement processes⁵ for data collection, implementation, and reflection. The A.I.M. Lens is a framework by which individuals, groups, and schools can Assess, Intervene, and Monitor growth over time. Systemically, this promotes fidelity of professional growth interventions, while creating a consistent, proactive professional learning community centered on resilience.

USE THE A.I.M. LENS TO ASSESS, INTERVENE, & MONITOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

ASSESS:

- 1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** Collaboratively identify individual and group strengths/needs within each **BE GREAT** pathway, using data triangulation for validity (e.g. individual teacher survey data, systems evaluation data, teacher attendance data, anecdotal data, and teacher performance data).
- 2. AREAS OF FOCUS:** Determine individual and collaborative areas of focus within the **BE GREAT** pathways.
- 3. MEASURABLE GOALS:** Set individual and collaborative **SMART** goals for growth with identified **BE GREAT** skills.

INTERVENE:

- 1. EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES:** Align to goals, active and interactive, provide relevance and context, model effective practice with content-expert facilitator.

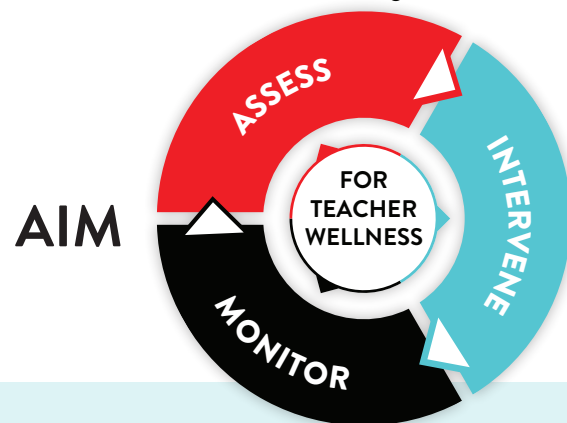
2. EMBEDDED COMMON LANGUAGE & PRACTICE:

Specific skills for resilience across all roles and content areas, woven into daily, weekly, monthly routines; becoming a natural part of climate, culture, and practice over time.

- 3. HIGH QUALITY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE:** Provide additional, confidential, individualized support through Employee Assistance Programs and community resources.

MONITOR:

PROGRESS MONITORING: Build in timeline for frequent check-ins, routines for reflection on growth, and evaluation.



SELECTED REFERENCES

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